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| Mayama Seika (1878-1948) |
| **[Enter any *variant forms* of your headword – OPTIONAL]** |
| Novelist, historian and one of the most prominent playwrights in Japan’s modernist theatre movement.  Born Mayama Akira in Sendai, he studied medicine in high school and worked as a lay doctor in 1902. While in middle school, he showed interest in literature. Inspired by Tokutomi Rokka (1868-1927) to become a novelist, he moved to Tokyo in 1903. Mayama’s first story was published when his mentor Satō Kōroku (1874-1949) submitted it to meet his own deadline signed with Seika, a name subsequently adopted by Mayama as his own. Also under Satō, he helped adapt *Konjiki Yasha* (The Golden Demon) by Ozaki Kōyō for stage. In 1907, he published *Minami Koizumi-mura* (The South Koizumi Village) winning recognition as a major Naturalist novelist. His novelist career ended disgracefully in 1910, however, for double-publishing his manuscripts. Ostracized from the bundan, he turned to scholarly research on Edo history, an abiding passion that engaged him for most of his life, which not only produced authoritative studies on Ihara Saikaku but, later, lent his drama depth and historicity.  Invited by actor Kitamura Rokurō, he joined Shōchiku in 1913 as a playwright, gaining life-long patronage from Ōtani Takejirō and Noma Seiji, founders of Shōchiku and the Kōdansha publishing house respectively. In 1915-1917, he wrote pieces of mostly contemporary social drama for shinpa, including *Mihana Adahana* (A Flower is Useless that Blossoms without Bearing Fruits). A turning point came in 1918, when he wrote two historical plays which were produced by kabuki, a much more prestigious genre. |
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