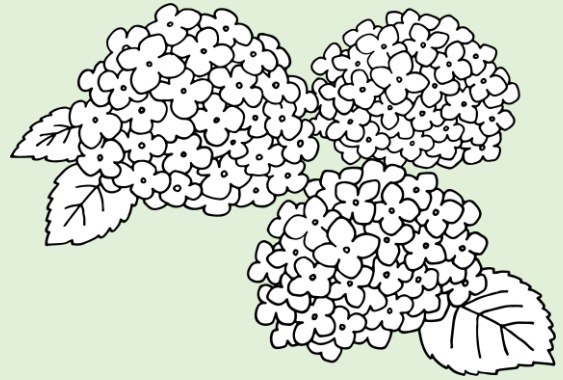


National Bunraku Theatre

June 20 – 21, 2026

13:00 (scheduled to end at 17:05)



Bunraku Wakatekai

–Bunraku performance by young performers–

Bunraku performance by young performers is a program that allows young performers leading the next generation of Bunraku to play roles that they usually have no opportunity to play in public performances. As you watch the play, please anticipate how this valuable stage experience will help them improve their techniques and skills going forward.

Gshozakura Horikawa Youchi (The Night Attack on the Horikawa Palace)

– Benkei Jōshi (Benkei, the Emissary)

Minamoto no Yoshitsune, who rendered his distinguished services in the subjugation of the Taira clan, is suspected of treason by his elder brother Yoritomo. He is ordered to offer the head of his wife Kyō-no-kimi, who is descended from the Taira clan.

Yoshitsune's messenger Musashibō Benkei then appears at the house of Jijū Tarō, who has been taking care of Kyō-no-kimi. In order to save Kyō-no-kimi, Shinobu, a koshimoto (chambermaid) who closely resembles Kyō-no-kimi in age and appearance, is asked to be the scapegoat. Shinobu, who wants to repay her debt to the lord, accepts their request, but her mother Owasa refuses to allow it. Shinobu was born of Owasa and a young man she spent the night with 18 years ago.

With a man's kimono sleeve — an item of evidence — in hand, Owasa appeals that she wants her daughter to meet her father. Leaping from his hiding place, Benkei stabs Shinobu to death with a sword. He then shows the disturbed Owasa the sleeve of his undergarment, revealing that he himself is the father of Shinobu. Feeling sorry for the daughter who died without knowing her father, Benkei sheds tears for the first time in his life.

Sesshū Gappō ga Tsuji (The Tale of Tamate Gozen)

– Gappō Anjitsu (Gappō's Hermitage)

At Gappō's home, Gappō and his wife prayed for their daughter, Tamate Gozen, who was almost certainly punished for the immoral act of loving her son-in-law. Then Tamate appeared, and though confused, they allowed her to enter out of parental love for their daughter. Afterward, they were further dumbfounded by Tamate's wish to marry and remain with Shuntokumaru for life despite everything. Shuntokumaru and his fiancée Princess Asaka take refuge in the cottage of Gappō Dōshin and his wife, who are Tamate's parents. Tamate finds the couple there and violently confronts Princess Asaka, seemingly out of jealousy. Overcome with anger at his daughter's selfishness, Gappō stabs Tamate, but she then reveals that she acted thusly to save Shuntokumaru. Tamate's act of putting her own life at risk and the affection between her and parents are quite touching

Yoshitsune Senbon Zakura (Yoshitsune and One Thousand Cherry Trees)

– Michiyuki Hatsune no Tabi (The Travel on Mt. Yoshino)

Shizuka Gozen (Minamoto no Yoshitsune's lover) and Satō Tadanobu (Yoshitsune's servant) are heading to Mount Yoshino (in present-day Nara prefecture) as they believe Yoshitsune is there. The mountains are decorated with cherry blossoms in full bloom, and both of them recall Yoshitsune, with Shizuka beating the treasured Hatsune drum that Yoshitsune gave her and Tadanobu bringing out his master's armour.

Tadanobu turns the battle of Yashima over in his mind. The Taira Clan is in the ocean, and the Minamoto Clan is on the land. Thus, it happened that the contest of strength between Akushichibyōe Kagekiyo and Mionoya Shirō became widely known as "Shikorobiki". Tadanobu's older brother, Tsuginobu, dies in the battle as he is pierced in the chest by the arrow shot by Noto no Kami Noritsune.

Shizuka and Tadanobu hold back their tears and encourage each other to hurry on their way ahead.

Learn more about BUNRAKU

Visit → <https://www2.ntj.jac.go.jp/unesco/bunraku/en/>

INVITATION TO BUNRAKU

–Guidance for Japanese Puppet Theatre Appreciation–

*This website is provided in Japanese / English / Simplified Chinese /

Traditional Chinese / Korean / German / French / Spanish.

