

## National Bunraku Theatre

Saturday, August 22 – Sunday, August 23, 2026

11:00 (scheduled to end at 14:15) , 16:00 (scheduled to end at 19:15)

Kabuki performance by young performers of Kyoto-Osaka District

# Kamigata Kabukikai

In the performances of the **Kamigata Kabukikai**, young actors keen to carry on the tradition of *Kamigata* Kabuki challenge themselves by playing leading roles to nourish their artistic growth. The annual events of the association have been held at the National Bunraku Theatre since 1990 as a kind of new study forum. The participants are largely members of the *Waka Ayu no Kai*, a Kyoto-Osaka-based volunteer study group for young actors, along with some other *Kamigata*-style actors.

## Sugawara Denju Tenarai Kagami

(Sugawara and the Secrets of Calligraphy)

This is a masterpiece that marks its 280th anniversary this year, since it premiered at the Takemotomza theater, Osaka, in August 1746 as Ningyō Jōruri. It is also counted as one of the most popular pieces in Kabuki.

Centering on the tragedy of Sugawara no Kan Shōjō (Michizane), who was deported to Kyūshū due to a conspiracy by his political rival Fujiwara no Shihei, the story depicts the tragic fate of the triplet brothers who are separated as a way to return a favor to Shōjō.

The scenes presented in this performance include Kamo Zutsumi, the First Act of the original work, which depicts an event that led to the deportation of Kan Shōjō; and Satamura Ga no Iwai, the Third Act of the original work in which the tragedy of Sakuramaru and his family, who are responsible for this event, unfolds during the celebration of his father Shiratayū's 70th birthday.

## Kamo Zutsumi (The Kamo Riverbank)

Shirokurō — a peasant in Satamura village, the domain of the Minister of the Right Kan Shōjō (Sugawara no Michizane) — has triplet sons: Umeōmaru, Matsuōmaru and Sakuramaru. Umeōmaru serves Kan Shōjō, Matsuōmaru serves the Minister of the Left Fujiwara no Shihei, and Sakuramaru serves Tokiyo Shinnō (the emperor's brother) as a valet, respectively. Knowing that Shōjō's adopted daughter Princess Kariya and Tokiyo Shinnō are in love with each other, Sakuramaru and his wife Yae arrange a tryst for them. However, it is interrupted by Miyoshino Kiyotsura, a retainer of Shōjō's political rival. Meanwhile, Tokiyo Shinnō and Princess Kariya disappear from the scene. Sakuramaru asks Yae to look after his affairs during his absence, and he chases after the couple.

## Satamura Ga no Iwai (The Birthday Celebrations at Sata Village)

At the celebration of Shiratayū's 70th birthday, the wives of the triplets (Haru, Chiyo, and Yae) tend to their father-in-law's every need, while Umeōmaru and Matsuōmaru get into a big argument as usual. Each consulting Shiratayū as to what they should do, they both manage to offend him. Shown the door by Shiratayū, Umeōmaru and Matsuōmaru leave with their wives.

Then, from the inside of the house appears Sakuramaru. Blaming himself that his decision to act as a go-between for his lord Tokiyo Shinnō and Kanshōjō's daughter, Princess Kariya, has led to a series of political upheavals, Sakuramaru is determined to commit seppuku (ritual suicide). Through the sad sounds of a kane-shumoku (gong with wooden bell hammer) rung by Shiratayū, Sakuramaru puts an end to his young life.

This is a jewel of a scene in which an inevitable tragic destiny and the grief of those involved will move the hearts of every spectator.

## Noriaibune Ehō Manzai

(Manzai Entertainers on a Ferry Boat)

Premiered at Edo Ichimura-za theater in 1843, this piece was created as an ōgiri-mono — the last piece on a Kabuki program in which the entire troupe performs together. Set in the Sumida River in early spring, it depicts the passengers on a ferryboat enjoying the entertaining performances, taking turns in displaying all or many of their repertoire. Joined by Manzai and Saizō from Mikawa Province (present day Aichi Prefecture) at the halfway point, it eventually comes to an end in a grand finale with cheerful group dancing.

Please enjoy this delightful Kabuki dance depicting the customs of the common people of Edo and its light touch in comparing the characters to the Shichifukujin (Seven Deities of Good Fortune).

Learn more about KABUKI

Visit → <https://www2.ntj.jac.go.jp/unesco/kabuki/en/index.html>



**INVITATION TO KABUKI –Guidance for Japanese Traditional Performing Arts Kabuki**

\*This website is provided in Japanese / English / Simplified Chinese / Traditional Chinese / Korean / German / French / Spanish.