**National Bunraku Theatre**

# Autumn Bunraku performance, 2026

Date: Saturday, October 31 - Monday, November 23, 2026　*No performance on Nov. 6 & 16

**Part 1**

## Shinjū Yoigōshin (Love Suicides on the Eve of Kōshin Festival)

This play by Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653-1724), called the Shakespeare of the East, has a rare theme of a married couple committing double suicide for love.

Hanbē, the adopted son of a greengrocer in Shin-utsubo, Osaka, on his way home after visiting his biological father's grave, visits his wife Ochiyo's parental home in Ueda Village (present-day Souraku County, Kyoto Prefecture). There, he meets Ochiyo, who was divorced by his adoptive mother whilst he was away. Hanbē is reproached by Ochiyo's father Heiemon for insincerity—contrary to the facts—and Hanbē almost kills himself, but thinks better of it and takes Ochiyo back to Osaka with him. They are seen off by Ochiyo's older sister Okaru, who lights a fire in front of the house, an act symbolizing the wish that a woman marrying into another family would stay there and not return to her parental home.

Hanbē's adoptive mother, who does not like Ochiyo, presses Hanbē to divorce Ochiyo. Hanbē, a dutiful son, in grievance, tells Ochiyo of his resolution to divorce her and commit double suicide with her. Ochiyo, in return, consents to the act out of filial duty. The couple then head off to their dying place.

**Part 2**

## Imoseyama Onna Teikin

(Husband and Wife Mountains: A Guide for Virtuous Women)

Omiwa, a daughter of the Sugi Sake Shop in Miwa Village, is in love with her neighbor Motome. Omiwa, who suspects Motome of seeing another woman, asks him whether it is true or not; then appears the woman in question, which leads to trouble. Actually, Motome is Fujiwara no Tankai, who is living as an ordinary person aiming to suppress Soga no Iruka, a powerful regional family member with an eye to the imperial throne. Motome chases after the fleeing woman, while Omiwa chases Motome; each has a thread from an *odamaki* (spindle) attached to their kimono.

The scene takes place at the splendid palace of Iruka at Mt. Mikasa. Claiming to be a messenger for Fujiwara no Kamatari (Tankai's father), the fisherman Fukashichi comes along. Then appears the woman in question — who is actually Iruka's sister Princess Tachibana. Motome catches up with her by following the thread and asks her to betray her brother Iruka if she wants to marry him, which the Princess agrees to. Omiwa also arrives after losing sight of the two. She is bullied by a group of court ladies and is driven into a frenzy when hearing about the engagement of Motome and the Princess. Then comes Fukashichi, who suddenly stabs Omiwa and reveals the real identity of Motome, adding

that the lifeblood of a jealous woman is required to vanquish Iruka. Omiwa feels happy to be of help to her sweetheart and dies wishing to stay together with him in the next life.

**Part 3**

# Honchō Nijūshikō (The Japanese Twenty-Four Examples of Filial Piety)

The Nagao family never returns a treasured helmet borrowed from the Takeda family, creating a tense relationship between two families. As a reconciliation plan, the Ashikaga shogun arranges marriage between Takeda Shingen's son Katsuyori and Nagao Kenshin's daughter Princess Yaegaki. However, the shogun is assassinated, which puts the two families under suspicion. They are given a three-year deadline to find the murderer but are unable to find the assassin in time. Consequently, they are ordered to offer the severed heads of their own children to prove their innocence. Minosaku, a rickshaw puller who resembles Katsuyori, is taken by Itagaki Hyōbu, a retainer of the Takeda family.

Accordingly, Katsuyori commits *seppuku* (ritual suicide); however, he is the son of Hyōbu, who was switched at birth with the real Katsuyori. At the behest of Shingen, Nureginu, a sweetheart of the late false Katsuyori, and the real Katsuyori infiltrate the Nagao family to search for the treasured helmet. The Nagao family has also been brought to bear for the assassination of the shogun. Having been informed about the death of Katsuyori, Princess Yaegaki sits before a portrait of her beloved fiancé, mourning for him. To her surprise, she spots Katsuyori's look-alike. While the Princess is delighted to know that the real Katsuyori is alive, Kenshin sends an assassin for Katsuyori, who has just departed. Out of her sheer desire to save Katsuyori, Princess Yaegaki picks up the heirloom helmet of the Takeda family and prays. Then appears a white fox spirit, a messenger of Suwa Myōjin. Protected by the spirit's magical power, the Princess hastens to her love, crossing over the frozen Lake Suwa.

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