

## *About the "Bunraku"*

The origin of the **Bunraku**, the traditional Japanese puppet play, goes back several hundred years. It was born in Osaka. By the early 17th century, **Joruri**, the story-telling music, became popular. When Gidayu TAKEMOTO (1651-1714), a great Joruri singer, and one of the most famous playwrights, Monzaemon CHIKAMATSU (1653-1724), started a collaboration at Osaka, Joruri reached its peak of fame around 1703. CHIKAMATSU wrote 103 plays during his lifetime. Many of his scenarios found their way to **Kabuki** and even to modern day movies. CHIKAMATSU is called "the Japanese Shakespeare" due to his dominating influence in Japanese theatrical plays.

When puppets ("ningyo" in Japanese) are used to enhance the drama visually, it is called **Ningyo-Joruri**. Between 1729 and 1749, many improvements were incorporated to the puppets. Now they can open and close their eyelids and move their eyeballs. By 1736, three manipulators started to work together for each puppet to provide more sophisticated movement. Movement of eyebrows and ears followed. As the famed theater "Bunraku-ken" opened in 1804 and provided excellent Ningyo-Joruri plays, people started to call the Ningyo-Joruri as "**Bunraku**". This name is still used today. One would think that an audience would see the manipulators and not the puppets since there are many more manipulators and humans are significantly larger than the puppets. When you are taken into the magic world of Bunraku, you are amazed to realize that you do not notice the manipulators on the stage and watch the puppets as the live actors/actresses.

On July 27, there is an evening program to introduce the Bunraku for you. However, it is only the introduction and not the play. Please try the real Bunraku play at the theater (see below) which is only 20 minutes walk from the conference site.

### ***The Programs at The National Bunraku Theater***

See the real Bunraku at the dedicated national theater. The discount ticket price for ICHEP2000 participants and their accompanying persons is 3680 Yen for each morning, afternoon or evening performance (the price is 1800 Yen for children under 12). You need to order your tickets no later than **June 10** via ICHEP2000 web site.



**Evening program on July 28** (and July 30) (Starts at 18:30)

**'Kunikotoba Kudoki Ondo '**

(This play is a tragic love story based on a real killing incident in 1737 at Sonezaki Shinchi, 1/2km south of present Osaka Umeda station. )

A warrior, Hatsuemon, met and fell in love with a "yujo" (entertainer/prostitute of old days), Kikuno, while he was entertained by a merchant, Nisabro. Since then, he has been trying to get attention from Kikuno. When his retainer tries to persuade Hatsuemon to forget about Kikuno by showing a letter written by her, Hatsuemon neglects the letter although the letter made it clear that Kikuno is a mistress of Nisabro and she thinks of Hatsuemon as no-good idiot. However, when a ship passes by and Hatsuemon could hear Nisabro and Kikuno loudly bad-mouthing about him, he became very angry.

At a "chaya" (Japanese style brothel) where Kikuno works, Hatsuemon is having a farewell party with acquaintances. He gives the revealing letter back to Nisabro and Kikuno, telling them that he can forget about the whole thing and leaves the chaya. Relieved Nisabro goes upstairs to sleep, when Omisu, Nisabro's acknowledged fiancée, came to see him. Kikuno sends Omisu to the bed side of Nisabro by letting Omisu pretend to be Kikuno, to let them get back together. Kikuno stays downstairs. Hatsuemon came back to the chaya later, abuses and kills Kikuno. Then, Hatsuemon searches for Nisabro, but he has already escaped. In the course, Hatsuemon kills everyone in the chaya.

**Morning programs on July 30** (starts at 11:00) Program intended for children (and parents)

PLAY 1: **'Urikohime and Amanjaku'**

Urikohime, a lovely girl was weaving alone when her parents were away to a town. An evil spirit, called Amanjaku, came to fool Urikohime.

PLAY 2: **'Tokai Dochu Hizakurige'**

This one is based on a comic story published in 1802. A couple of men were traveling together, going through all sorts of strange or funny accidents.

**Afternoon programs on July 30** (starts at 14:00 )

PLAY 3: **'Kamakura Sandaiki'**

Original story was about the war in Osaka, but Tokugawa Government considered it to be an insult to the family and prohibited the performance. Hence it was changed into a story of the war that took place 300 years earlier. (Just like the case for the opera "Un Ballo in Maschera" by Verdi.)

PLAY 4: **'Kinuta and Daimonji'**

A story of two beautiful sisters with lovely poems and dances in the play.

**Evening program on July 30** (starts at 18:30 )

**'Kunikotoba Kudoki Ondo '**

See the descriptions for July 28.