

Anori's Puppet Theater's Program



Show dates September 15 2019 19:00
 September 16 2019 18:30

(Ceremony
from 5:00pm.)

Place: Anori's Puppet Theater's stage (inside Anori Shrine)

Organizer: Anori Shrine, the Association for Anori's Puppet Theater

Sponsor: Shima city, Shima Board of Education, Anori Local Council,
Shima Tourism Bureau, the Shima Chamber of Commerce
and Industry, Okada Foundation for Public Utility and Culture

What is Japanese Puppet Theater?

"Bunraku", Japanese puppet theater, is a performing art originated in the early 17th century. Each doll is operated by three manipulators. Although wearing a black costume, the three manipulators are visible on stage. The puppets also share the stage with a shamisen player and the jouriru reciter, the storyteller, who chants the story and dialogues of the puppets.

The history of Anori's Puppet Theater

Anori's puppet theater has successfully been telling legends and folk customs as an offer to the Gods at Anori Shrine festival for centuries. This led to its recognition as an important and intangible folk culture asset for the country in 1980.

The legend goes that during Toyotomi Hideyoshi's campaign against Korea, Kuki Yoshitaka, the naval commander of Hideyoshi, and his fleet left Toba to the open sea approaching Anori. Suddenly, an adverse wind scattered the ships. Consequently, Kuki Yoshitaka visited Anori Shrine to pray for his fleet's safety and for a continued luck in the fortunes of war. "Funatsuke", where Yoshitaka disembarked and "Oogori" where Yoshitaka performed his ablutions are still visited to this day.

It seems like his prayer was heard as he and his fleet arrived to their destination with the help of favorable winds. After their victory, they stopped by Anori, on their way home, to show their gratitude. Yoshitaka allowed them to perform art which marked the beginning of Anori's Puppet Theater.

Kamakura Sandaiki (Three Generations of Kamakura Shoguns)

The chapter of Miuranosuke's parting with his mother

Miuranosuke is leaving the battlefield to go visit his mother who is very sick. Princess Toki, the daughter of Hojo Tokimasa, the enemy of Miuranosuke, is betrothed to marry Miuranosuke. She is looking after her mother-in-law. The old woman knows that Miuranosuke is coming to visit her, abandoning his duties. Disappointed in him, she refuses to see him. Her son listens to his mother and decides to go back to the battlefield but Princess Toki begs him to stay, telling him how much she loves him. Miuranosuke is conflicted, he wants to make his mother's proud before she dies but he also does not want to cause any sadness to Princess Toki; he cannot make a decision.

Date musume koi no higanoko (The love of the lady with a red kimono)

The chapter of the fire lookout tower

Once upon a time in Takashima, in Omi province, a young lord, Samonnosuke, was planning to deliver Amakuni's sword to the Emperor. Unfortunately, the sword was lost resulting in its guardian, Yasumori Genjibee, performing seppuku to atone for its loss.

Kichisaburo, first son of Yasumori, who became a page at Kichijoin temple in Edo, is searching for the sword. He is romantically involved with Oshichi, who he met during the recent city fire. Sadly, Oshichi must marry Yorozyu Takebee as Oshichi's father borrowed money from him to rebuild his shop.

On the last day of the search for the sword, Oshichi finds out that Takebee stole the sword. She wants to deliver the news to Kichisaburo but as a consequence of the fire, the nine bells fire alarm rang and the wooden gate of Edo closed down, prohibiting anyone to go neither in nor out of the city. If she does not find a way to contact Kichisaburo, he will perform seppuku just like his father did.

Oshichi thinks hard until she finds the solution; if she bangs the bells of the fire lookout tower, the wooden gate will open up again to let people escape from the fire; she will then be able to go to Kichisaburo's house to help him. Oshichi understands that triggering a false alarm will sentence her to death but she accepts the consequences to save her lover's life, slipping off the frozen ladder, she finally arrives at the tower and, in trance, bangs the bell with a hammer.





Ehon Taikouki

The chapter of Amagasaki

This story occurs ten days after the forced suicide of Oda Nobunaga. It became very popular from its first performance in 1799.

Satsuki, the mother of Takechi Mitsuhide, the general who vanquish his lord, Oda Harunaga, is living alone in Amagasaki city sorrowed by the disloyalty of her son toward his lord. Mitsuhide's wife, Misao; her son, Jujiro, and his fiancée, Hatsugiku, decide to pay her a visit. In that time, a travelling priest is looking for a place to stay for the night. Midori courteously invites him in. The reason for Jujiro's visit to his grandmother is to ask permission to depart for the front. Satsuki is pleased that her grandson is leaving for war; she would like Hatsugiku and Jujiro to get married before he leaves.

Jujiro who has accepted his fate to die in battle, does not want to get married before his departure for the front as it will make it more painful for Hatsugiku but his fiancée does not comply with Jujiro's wish. Soon after, Jujiro, wearing an armor and a helmet, unites in marriage with Hatsugiku.

His grandmother does not realize that Jujiro will die in battle so Jujiro and Hatsugiku hide their tears, Jujiro is determined to fight in the battlefield and he knows the pain it will eventually cause to his family. Without regrets, they drink the traditional sake to celebrate their wedding before his departure for the front.

Satsuki offers the traveling monk to run him a bath. Mitsuhide, who is hiding, stare intensely at the monk and is persuaded that he is, in fact, Hideyoshi. Without hesitation, he stabs him with a bamboo spear. He then looks at the corpse but instead of Hideyoshi's, it is his own mother's corpse, Satsuki. Hideyoshi was never there. Satsuki knew that her son was hidden in the shadow, she deliberately let her son stab her instead of Hideyoshi hoping that her son would understand the sin he committed by killing his lord now that he has murdered his own mother.

Afterwards, Jujiro who has been severely wounded, comes back home to die by his family's side. They had a crushing defeat due to a stratagem made by an ally of Hideyoshi. As one can imagine, despite Misao and Hatsugiku's supplications, the loss of his mother and son around the same time profoundly saddens Mitsuhide.

At that time, the loud sound of men and horses can be heard; it is Hideyoshi who is seeking revenge on his lord's death, Oda Nobunaga. Mitsuhide with his majestic figure stands in front of Hideyoshi and challenges him to a duel in Yamazaki. Will Mitsuhide, the man who committed the sin of murdering his lord, be punished for his sin?

Ebisumai (Ebisu's dance)

Ebisu went to the village headman with his fishing rod on his shoulder. The headman offers sake to Ebisu. Ebisu drinks up the sake and starts dancing while telling stories about his birth and life as a God of fortune. Before the fortune of the sea and the fortune of the mountain, he prays for everyone's wishes to be granted, he drinks sake and spreads happiness. Ebisu, drunk, rides a boat, goes to the open sea, catches a big sea bream, the fish symbol of happiness, and concludes with the "happily ever after dance". Ebisu's dancing is a Shinto ritual spreading happiness and making us think positively.

Keisei Awa no Naruto (The family troubles' whirlpool of Awa)

The chapter of the pilgrimage's song

After Jurobee left his home to escape from his debts, a postman delivered a letter. The letter was sent by a friend of Jurobee to warn him about debt collectors chasing after him. Oyumi, who has just read the letter, fears for her husband's life. While she joins hands in prayer to ask the Gods to protect him, she hears an enchanting pilgrimage's song. A lovely girl comes to her door; she tells Oyumi that she came from Awa no Tokushima Island to find her parents. Listening to her story, Oyumi realizes that the girl is her daughter.

The girl, Otsuru, lost her grandparents who were raising her and consequently, went on this pilgrimage to find her real parents. Oyumi is conflicted between her desire to become a mother and hold her daughter in her arm and the thought of her present situation making it impossible for them to live together.

Although it breaks her heart, she finally makes the decision to send her daughter on her way. Be that as it may, once her daughter's singing voice fades away, she cannot bear the pain and she runs after her.

The chapter of Jurobee's dwelling

Without knowing that she is his daughter, Jurobee happens to walk besides Otsuru. When he finds out that she has some gold coins on her, he asks her to lend him some but Otsuru starts panicking and Junrobee kills her by accident. Oyumi who has just arrived on the scene, witnesses the death of her daughter and breaks down in tears. She rushes to Otsuru's corpse, carries it back home and light her house on fire before running away with her husband.



Tsubosaka Reigenki (The Miraculous Story of Tsubosaka Temple)

In Tsubosaka, in the Yamato province, lives a couple, the beautiful Osato and the blind masseur Sawaichi. Osato is dedicated to her husband and helps him as much as she can. Eventually, Sawaichi notices that Osato leaves home every evening. He starts to think that she has a lover.

The truth is, Osato goes to Tsubosaka temple every night to pray for her husband to recover his sight. The masseur believes that his dear wife cannot be happy as long as she stays with him so he commits suicide. Osato, who loves her husband, cannot live without him and takes the decision to follow him in his death.

The Goddess Kannon, moved by the deep love that unifies Osato and Sawaichi, brings them back to life and allows Sawaichi to see again.