

HEISEI NAKAMURAZA

Heisei Nakamura in New York; Natsu Matsuri Naniwa Kagami
(Reference #FSV3966)

The Heisei Nakamura troupe was founded in 2000 by Nakamura Kanzaburo XV111, one of Japan's leading kabuki actors. This was the fifth edition of the 100 strong all male troupe and the first time they performed outside Japan in July 2004 in the USA. This DVD is mostly a documentary about Nakamura Kanzaburo, with two other options on the main menu, scene selection and excerpts from the production, but not the entire play, Natsu Matsuri Naniwa Kagami. This performance was from the Lincoln Center in New York, 17-25 July. Heisei Nakamura is noted for productions that add a contemporary creative energy and humour while respecting the ancient heritage of kabuki, and are considered by some to be close to the earlier days of kabuki in the 17th century. Natsu Matsuri Naniwa Kagami (Summer Festival: Mirror of Osaka) was originally written for bunraku (puppet theatre) and staged for the first time in 1745. Danshichi is a fishmonger and otokodate (chivalrous commoner) who looks after the welfare of ordinary townspeople against the samurai. He had been imprisoned for wounding a samurai, but after receiving a pardon he is to be released. His wife, Okaji, son, Ichimatsu and Sabu, another otokodate, go to meet him. While they are praying, Danshichi is brought out and released, goes to the barber and gets a clean set of clothes. The courtesan Kotoura enters trailed by the evil samurai Sagaemon. Danshihsi gives him a beating and then gets into another fight with Tokubei who has come to get Kotoura, although the two men realizing they are both loyal to the same samurai Hyodayu, swear eternal friendship. In the final act, a festival is in progress and Danshichi catches up with Giheiji, his evil father-in-law. Giheiji says he kidnapped Kotoura in order to sell her. Danshichi offers to buy her but as he has no money. Realizing he has been tricked, the two get into a fight and Danshichi kills him. Stripped down to his loin cloth, we see Danshichi's tattooed body and a series of mie poses, while the festival continues in the background. He tries to wash himself in a well, and his final lines of the play are 'Evil though he was, a father-in-law is still a parent. Father, please forgive me!'. NTSC, 150 minutes, Japanese only, Region Code 2.

DANJURO ICHIKAWA, TOMIJURO NAKAMURA, KIKUGORO ONOE
The Best Selection of Kabuki - Kanjincho
(Reference #FSV2399)

Kabuki is the great Japanese theatrical tradition from the Edo period. It has inherited all the previous theatrical forms, such as noh. According to tradition kabuki began in 1596 with a shinto dancer called Okuni. Kabuki has a history of struggles against government resistance to its sexuality, until it became recognized as a theatre and at the center of social life during the Edo period. Edo actors became as popular as any modern day idol, the theatre a valve for the pent up energy of people at the time. Music is an intrinsic part of the theatre, but to be appreciated Kabuki needs to be seen. Now these series of DVDs from the national broadcaster NHK provide that spectacle, all with English subtitles. Kanjin-cho is one of the greatest kabuki plays, its reputation resting not only on its dramatic quality, but also on its fine Nagauta (type of singing) and Geza music (musical ensemble). 78 min, Region Code:All NTSC.

KANKURO NAKAMURA, MITSUGORO BANDO, FUKUSUKE NAKAMURA
The Best Selection of Kabuki - Togitatsu No Utare
(Reference #FSV2400)

Kabuki plays often relate to historical events, love stories and moral conflicts. The actors speak in an old language, difficult for most Japanese to understand. The drama takes place on a rotating stage, complete with trapdoors and a footbridge. Originally, both, men and women acted in Kabuki plays, although the practice soon was restricted to men only, who also perform the women characters. Togitatsu no Utare is another of the great kabuki dramas. However, this version is not a traditional kabuki production, but Hidekai Noda's take on kabuki, like a trendy twentieth century production in period costume with Japanese actors. Hidekai Noda's productions have been popular in Japan, although are not to the taste of kabuki purists. 112 min, English commentary. Region Code:All NTSC.

KOSHIRO MATSUMOTO, JAKUEMON NAKAMURA, SADANJI ICHIKAWA, SOMEGORO ICHIKAWA
The Best Selection of Kabuki - Kumagai Jinya
(Reference #FSV2401)

Kabuki actors influenced various facets of life from dress to morals. At first kabuki was accompanied by simple noh flute and drums, later developing to add the large odaiko drum and the shamisen, which led to the creation of edo nagauta, or long song, which became the core of kabuki. Kumagai Jinya is another of the most famous kabuki plays, that dramatizes the battle between Genji general Kumagai and Heike warrior Atsumori at the battle of Ichinotani, one of the most famous passages in the epic "The Tale of the Heike." 78 min, Region Code:All NTSC.

ENNOSUKE ICHIKAWA, TAMASABURO BANDO
The Best Selection of Kabuki - Yoshitsune Senbon-zakura
(Reference #FSV2402)

A tale of the Genji and Heike clans who waged war during the twelfth century. The Heike were the dominant clain until the Genji, under the young general, Minamoto no Yoshitsune osted the Heike, in land and then sea battles. Minamoto declared his younger brother Yoshitsune an outlaw, his flight becoming the subject of Yoshitsune Senbon Zakura (Yoshitsune and the Thousand Cherry Trees) In 5 acts, written by Takeda Izumo II, Miyoshi Shoraku, and Namiki Sosuke in 1747. 99 min, Region Code:All NTSC.

KICHIUEMON NAKAMURA, BAIGYOKU NAKAMURA, SADANJI ICHIKAWA
The Best Selection of Kabuki - Kouchi-yama
(Reference #FSV2403)

Kouchiyama, (the bogus priest) is disguised as a poor priest, but in reality is the leader of a gang. He discovers a shopkeeper's daughter, Namiji, is being kept in the palace of Matsue against her will as she refuses to become a concubine. Her parents and relatives want her to return home and marry a suitable young man. This gives Kochiyama an idea for a scheme that will exploit the situation. An evil character named Daizen tells Matsue that Namiji and his rival, Kazuma, are secret lovers. Before he can order an inquiry, the arrival of a messenger from the Archbishop of Kanei Temple is announced. The messenger introduces himself as Kitadani no Dokai, a high ranking priest in the temple and asks for a private interview. In fact, this priest is Kochiyama in disguise. What follows are more intriguing plots and sub-plots. Will Kochiyama triumph in the end? 90 min, Region Code:All NTSC.

KIKUGORO ONOE, TATSUNOSUKE ONOE, SADANJI ICHIKAWA
The Best Selection of Kabuki - Shiranami Gonin Otoko
(Reference #FSV2625)

Shiranami Gonin-otoko (The Five Shiranami Men) was written in 1862 by Kawatake Mokuami. Shiranami means literally 'white waves', and deriving from the Chinese reading of the kanji 'bai-bo', came to mean bandits or men who lead a thoroughly dishonest lifestyle. Mokuami specialized in such shiranami themes, that reflected political and social uncertainty towards the end of Tokugawa period. His characters extol the good and condemn the bad, the heroes of his plays are rascals rather than villains. Sets range from the sparkling scene in a Kamakura temple to the finale set in Gokurakuji temple with a folding roof. One of the highlights is the scene with a twist whereby the character Benten visits a kimono store posing as an alluring woman dressed in a black kimono. His true identity is exposed by a samurai, himself, a disguised Nippon Daemon (leader), Benten strips to reveal a bright red underwear and tattoos of cherry blossoms on his shoulders and arms. Another highlight when the five Shiranami men are presented, standing under cherry trees holding umbrellas on which 'shiranami' is written. Each briefly introduces himself before engaging in a fight with policeman. As if this wasn't involved enough, there is also a sub-plot. All very intriguing and a delight to watch. 102 min, Region Code:All NTSC.

GANJIRO NAKAMURA, TOMOJURO NAKAMURA, SENJAKU NAKAMURA
The Best Selection of Kabuki - Fuin-giri (The Broken seal)
(Reference #FSV2626)

Set in Osaka, a well off client holds a banquet in a tea house for Umegawa, a courtesan working in the tea house. She is however missing her lover, Chubei, who is from a farming family but married into a family that owns a delivery company. A rich man from the countryside decides to claim Umegawa for himself, forcing Chubei to pay more money than he can afford, while another of Chubei's friends also sets his sights on redeeming Umegawa. The mistress of another tea house allows Chubei and Umegawa to meet there. Chubei promises to come up with the required amount, and so commences a series of bids and from different suitors. He is later forced to prove he can afford the redemption fee, and allows one of his rivals to touch the bundle of money inside his kimono. However, he was keeping this money for a samurai, and when coerced into breaking the seal, according to law this means he will be sentenced to death for using the money for his own purposes. Chubei counts out the gold coins, but realizes his only escape is to commit suicide. Umegawa pleads to be his wife only for three days, before the couple agree to commit suicide together. 83 min, Region Code:All NTSC.

TAKAO KATAOKA(NIZAEMON KATAOKA), JAKUEMON NAKAMURA, KANKURO NAKAMURA
The Best Selection of Kabuki - Ise-ondo Koi No Netaba (The Ise Dances and Love's Dull Blade)
(Reference #FSV2627)

Mitsugi, an apprentice at the Ise shrine, endeavors to find a stolen sword belonging to his clan. A courtesan called Okon, is in love with Mitsugi and must pretend to reject him in order to obtain the sword. Ise Ondo Koi no Netaba is best known for it's emotional depiction of the character of Okon, and the finale involving a beautiful and violent dancing killing scene to the music of the Ise pleasure quarters. 109 min, Region Code:All NTSC.

UMEYUKI ONOUE VII, SHIKAN NAKAMURA, TAMASABURO BANDO
The Best Selection of Kabuki - Fuji-musume, Yasuna, Sagi-musume
(Reference #FSV2628)

Outstanding DVD of three classic kabuki dance stories. Fuji Musume (The Wisteria Maiden) features a kabuki dance, most famously performed and choreographed by a kabuki actor, Onoe Baiko VII in 1938. The story is set in the town of Otsu, known for its streets lined with paintings. A passerby notices a painting of the wisteria maiden who comes to life, carrying a wisteria (a type of flowering plant). She writes love letters to her admirer, which remained unanswered, so the dancer expresses her feelings of sadness and heartbreak eventually returning to the painting. The accompanying music is particularly evocative. Yasuna is also famous for its kabuki dancing. The dancer performs through various pieces, changing roles and costumes. Yasuna is deeply hurt after his lover commits suicide, remembering happier times with her. Features beautiful shamisen playing in the kiyomoto style. The final classic dance story is Sagi Musume (The Heron Maiden) a woman with the spirit of a heron suffering from unrequited love. There are five costume changes as the heron transforms from a young to an old woman, before reverting to a heron in the final death scene. A magical DVD with much musical interest. 73 min, Region Code:All NTSC.

HAKUO MATSUMOTO, GANJIRO NAKAMURA II, SHIKAN NAKAMURA
The Best Selection of Kabuki - Terakoya (The Village School)
(Reference #FSV2629)

Terakoya ("The Village School") an act of the play 'Sugawara denju tenarai kagami' is a powerful melodrama about a father who ultimately sacrifices his own son as a debt of loyalty to another lord. Kan Shusai the only son of Kan Shojo lives under the shelter of one of his retainers, Genzo, when he is banished to Kyushu. The chief magistrate orders Genzo to kill and bring the head of Kan Shusai to the authorities. At the suggestion of his wife, Tonami, Genzo decides to kill another child, Kotaro, the son of a noble, in place of Kan Shusai. The magistrate, Gemba, comes to the school with the noble Matsuômaru, whose ex-master was Kan Shojo, to make sure Genzo will do his duty and make certain it is the head of Kan Shusai. They inspect the boys of the school, and Gemba questions Tonami suspiciously. Matsuômaru knows that his son, Kotaro is in the school. Gemba gives Genzô an empty head box, and tells him to get the job over with. Genzo takes the box, a sound is heard and Matsuomaru's son is killed, If Matsuomaru is to deny that the head is Kan Shusai's, Genzo is ready to cut him down Matsuomaru lifts the cover of the box, revealing his son's head , but confirms it to be the head of Kan Shusai. Kan Shusai comes out of hiding. Matsuômaru's wife Chiyo calls out for her son and Genzo, tries to kill her. Matsuomaru reveals Kotaro was his son who Genzo says died with honour. Kan Shojo's wife and Kan Shusai comfort each other and honor the soul of Kotaro. 86 min, Region Code:All NTSC.

TOMIJURO NAKAMURA, JAKUEMON NAKAMURA
The Best Selection of Kabuki - Dattan, Ninin Wankyu
(Reference #FSV2630)

Dattan is an evocative dance story, that takes its name from a Buddhist rite held every March at Todaiji Temple in Nara. The story is about a monk yearning for a woman he left behind. Ninin Wankyu is based on the true story of a playboy (Wankyu) from an Osaka merchant family who spent an inordinate large amount of his time and money in the local red light area, in pursuit of a geisha called Matsuyama. To control him, his family tried to keep him locked up in their house. Wankyu, became crazy, escaped and became a beggar for money on the streets to be reunited with Matsuyama and his former lifestyle. 84 min, Region Code:All NTSC.

UTAEMON NAKAMURA VI, KANZABURO NAKAMURA XVII
The Best Selection of Kabuki - Sumidagawa, (Sumida River) Hanabusa Shujaku-jishi (The Bridge Between this World and Buddhist Land)
(Reference #FSV2631)

In the classic Sumidagawa (Sumida River) a deeply disturbed mother is wandering in search of her son, who has been stolen and sold into the slave trade. At the Sumida River, she hears from a boatman the tragic story of child who had got killed on the road. She discovers this child was her son. Hanabusa Shujaku Jishi (The Bridge Between this World and Buddhist Land) is a dance that dates back to 1754, based on the Noh play "Shakkyo". The dance features a shishi or an ancient Chinese lion, a guard of Buddha. Butterflies cause a sleeping princess to wake. She plays with the butterflies and begins to dances. She hold two small lions heads, and becomes embroiled in the spirit of lion. She reappears as the spirit of the lion with a dynamic dance, in contrast to the gracefulness of the earlier dance. Breathtaking. 84 min, Region Code:All NTSC.

UTAEMON NAKAMURA VI, UMEYUKI ONOE VII, SHIKAN NAKAMURA
The Best Selection of Kabuki - Jusshuko, Kenrei Monin
(Reference #FSV2632)

The most popular act of Honcho Nijushiko, Jusshuko starts with Princess Yaegaki burning incense and crying over the picture of the man she had promised to marry, Katsuyori who has supposedly died. Nureginu is doing much the same, over the death of her husband, who was killed instead of Katsuyori. Between them on stage appears a disguised Katsuyori, feeling sorry for causing their grieving. When she sees Katsuyori, Nureginu cries because of resemblance to her lover. Yaegaki hears them and is amazed at his exact likeness to the portrait of Katsuyori and calls out his name. Katsuyori insists he is the gardener, Minosaku, and not the son of a lord. Furthermore he says he is an official emissary of the Princess's father Kenshin and is soon to depart. Yaegaki falls in love with him, and asks Nureginu to be their matchmaker. Katsuyori is astonished at the strength of her love and asks for a sacred helmet in Lake Suwa as a token of love. Nureginu suspects that he is in fact Katsuyori but he still insists he is Minosaku. Yaegaki attempts suicide for trying to win his love although they are not betrothed prompting Katsuyori to decide to reveal his identity. Kenshin gives a letter to Minosaku, and asks him to take it to a town near Lake Suwa. He gives the order to kill Katsuyori, while the two women plead his case. 117 min, Region Code:All NTSC.

ENNOSUKE ICHIKAWA
The Best Selection of Kabuki - Yamato Takeru
(Reference #FSV2633)

Ichikawa Ennosuke's troupe have developed a modern and spectacular style of theatre, which is called "Super Kabuki". The costumes are elaborate, the music has a contemporary edge, and it is generally easier to comprehend the stories, which are nevertheless extremely involved. The first of these so-called super kabuki plays was Yamato Takeru. 180 min, Region Code:All NTSC.

KANZABURO NAKAMURA XVII, UTAEMON NAKAMURA
The Best Selection of Kabuki - Ippon-gatana Dohyo-iri
(Reference #FSV2634)

Premiered in July 1931, Ippon-gatana Dohyo-iri centres around a failed sumo wrestler called Mohei. He is aided by a prostitute (although Mohei doesn't know) called Otsuta, who gives him money to visit his mother's grave. Mohei resolves to become a reach the top of the sumo ranks and to invite Otsuta to watch him perform the ring-entering ceremony. Fast forward ten years and Mohei is an abject failure in the sumo world, but is a fairly successful gangster. He has never forgotten the kindness of Otsuta and seeks her out to repay the money. He finds her living poor lifestyle with a daughter and husband being pursued by gamblers after he cheated them. Otsuta doesn't recognize Mohei at first, until he uses some sumo moves to fight the gangsters. Mohei is able to repay her kindness and let her family start a new life. 83 min, Region Code:All NTSC.

KOSHIRO MATSUMOTO VII, HAZAEMON ICHIKAWA XV, KIKUGORO ONOE
 The Best Selection of Kabuki - Kanjincho (1943)
 (Reference #FSV2635)

A quite incredible DVD of Kanjincho, the most popular play in the Kabuki repertoire. The leading role of Benkei is equally the most famed and demanding role, requiring all the skills of kabuki acting. The most legendary performer of the role of Benkei is Koshiro Matsumoto, who performed it over 1600 times, and it is he that is featured on this performance from 1943. A noble named Togachi Saemon urges his men to intercept a fleeing Minamoto Yoshitsune and his party, who are disguised as wandering priests. As musicians are performing, enter Yoshitsune and four retainers, wearing a straw hat and a load on his back. At the barrier, Benkei, an ex-priest, travelling with the party announces they are priests and wishing to pass freely, as they are collecting funds to restore Todaiji temple in Nara. Togashi at first suspects, then realizes they are not who they say are, but is impressed with Benkei's courage and knowledge of buddhism. He lets them pass, but another soldier recognizes Yoshitsune. Realizing the game is probably up, Benkei pretends to beat Yoshitsune and asks Togashi to detain him. Togashi is further impressed by Benkei's loyalty to his master, and pleads with Benkei to restrain himself from beating Yoshitsune. The party get through and Yoshitsune is eternally grateful to Benkei, yet Benkei apologizes for beating him. Benkei displays his sense of loyalty by saying he would die for his master, and weeps with emotion. 77 min, Region Code:All NTSC.

UTAEMON NAKAMURA VI, HAKUO MATSUMOTO I
 Kanadehon Chushingura (The Treasury of Loyal Retainers) (Daijo, Sandanme, Yodanme)
 (Reference #FSV3203)

Performed in 1977, 190 mins. Comes with English commentary, subtitles and liner notes. Region Code : All, NTSC. Kanadehon Chushingura (The Treasury of Loyal Retainers) popularly known as simply Chushingura is one of Japan's best known revenge stories and was first performed in 1748. The play is based on a true story that occurred between 1701 and 1703, although to avoid shogunate censorship the play is set in the Muromachi period (1333-1568). The play is comprised of 11 acts, and is performed over four separate DVDs which would make up a full day performance. The story is based around the daimyo Enya Hangan who is goaded into drawing his sword and striking a senior lord, Ko no Morono, a capital offence in the shogun's palace. Hangan is ordered to commit seppuku or ritual suicide. This ceremony is performed with solemnity and with his dying words tells his chief retainer, Oboshi Yuranosuke, that he wishes to be avenged upon Morono. Forty seven of Hangan's masterless samurai (ronin) plan their revenge. Yuranosuke, appears to live a life of debauchery in Kyoto's Gion pleasure quarters, a ploy to leave the enemy off guard. In the depths of winter they storm Morono's Edo mansion and kill him. The ronin carry the head of Morono to their lord's grave at Sengaku-ji temple in Edo, where they themselves commit seppuku. This 2 DVD set features Act I (Tsurugaoka Kabuto Arame- The Helmet Selection at Hachiman Shrine) Act III (Shinmotsu, Matsu no ma Ninjo- The Pine Room in the Shogun's Palace) and disc 2, Act IV (Enya Hangan Seppuku- Shiro Akewatashi- the Hand-over of the Castle). In the famous opening sequence, a curtain is pulled open slowly accompanied by forty seven beats of the ki, as the ronin are revealed in front of Hachiman shrine in Kamakura, slumped as lifeless puppets. As the gidayu narrator says the name he comes to life. Indeed Chushingura was originally written for Bunraku (puppet theatre). Act IV ends with the ronin planning their revenge on Morono.

SHOROKU ONOE II, UMEYUKI ONOE VII
Kanadehon Chushingura (Michiyuki, Godanme, Rokudanme)
(Reference #FSV3204)

Performed in 1977, 154 mins. Comes with English commentary, subtitles and notes. Region Code : All, NTSC. This DVD includes Act V (Yamazaki Kaido Teppo Watashi- The Musket Shots on the Yamazaki Highway) and Act VI (Kanpei Harakiri- Kanpei's Harikiri). Yochibei's murder is discovered and Kanpei believing he is responsible commits suicide. With his last breath, the truth is revealed and Kanpei adds his name to the vendetta list.

KANZABURO NAKAMURA XVII, NIZAEMON KATAOKA XIII
Kanadehon Chushingura (Nanadanme)
(Reference #FSV3205)

Performed in 1977, 106 mins. Comes with both Japanese and English commentaries, subtitles and notes. Region Code : All, NTSC. Act VII. Gion Ichirikijaya (The Ichiriki Teahouse at Gion) This is the longest and one of the most famous kabuki acts. It gives a taste of the bustling atmosphere of the Gion pleasure quarter in Kyoto. Yuranosuke pretends to fall into a life of debauchery at the same tea house as Okaru has been bound. He is forced to accept food on the anniversary of their lord's death, and his sword is found to be rusty, giving the impression he has no thoughts of revenge. When he thinks he is alone, Yuranosuke reads a secret letter scroll about preparations for the vendetta. Okaru comes out to cool herself in the evening breeze and also reads the letter reflected in a mirror. Kudayu, standing under the verandah reads the scroll too as it is unrolled. Yuranosuke realizes he has to kill them both to silence them. Okura's brother Heimon enters and realizing Yuranosuke intends to kill her, persuades her to let him kill her instead, saving their family honour. Yuranosuke stops them, and gives Okura a sword and guides her hand through the floor boards to kill Kudayu.

SHIKAN NAKAMURA, FUKUSUKE NAKAMURA VIII
Kanadehon Chushingura (Kyudanme, Juichidanme)
(Reference #FSV3206)

Performed in 1978. Comes with both Japanese and English commentaries, subtitles and notes. Region Code : All, NTSC. Act IX (Yamashina Kankyo -The Retreat at Yamashina) and XI (Morono Yakata Uchiri (The Attack on Morono's Mansion). Act IX is set in mid Winter, Kakogawa Honzo's wife Tonase and daughter Konami arrive at Yuranosuke's home in Yamashina near Kyoto. Yuranosuke's wife forbids the marriage of Konami and Rikiya, so they decide to take their own lives. Honzo arrives dressed as a wandering priest. To make up for restraining Hangan from killing Morono he pulls Rikiya's spear into his own stomach and gives Yuranosuke and Rikiya a plan of Morono's mansion in Edo. The final act XI takes place at Morono's mansion on a snowy night. Various fights (tachimawari) take place before Morono is captured and finally killed.

ENNOSUKE ICHIKAWA, SOJURO SAWAMURA VIII

Kurozuka

(Reference #FSV3207)

Performed in 1995, 78 mins. Comes with both Japanese and English commentaries and notes but only Japanese subtitles. Region Code : All, NTSC. Kurozuka is a modern dance drama premiered in 1939. It is considered a masterpiece of 20th century theatre, with innovations in music and movement some inspired it is believed by Russian ballet. The play is based on the legend of a man eating hag of the moors of Adachi ga Hara. Set in the Autumn, the sound of insects fills the air. The silhouette of an old woman, Iwate, appears from a tiny hovel. The opening words describe the woman endlessly spinning a reel of thread, waiting in vain for someone's return. Travelling priests enter, searching for shelter and see the light in her room. The head priest, Ajari Yukei notices her spinning reel and asks for a demonstration. She demonstrates and sings a sad song. She tells them her life story, that her father was banished to this lonely place. Her lover returned to the city leaving her feeling only hatred and hurt. Yukei assures her she will be forgiven. She goes to collect firewood and warns them not to look inside her room. The porter, Tarago, however, looks inside her room and seeing bones and limbs realizes she is the demon of Adachi ga Hara. The classic dance scene follows, accompanied unusually for kabuki, by the koto. Iwate feels hope and sings joyfully, then bumps into Tarago and from his demeanour realizes he has betrayed her. She flies into a bitter rage and changes into a demon. For the final scene we see a large mound of earth, the demon's lair. The priests come in search of the demon. A battle ensues, with Iwate sapped of her strength, unlike traditional kabuki demons who are not usually seen to be weakened. Instead the audience witness the psychological struggle inside Iwate's mind.

DANJURO ICHIKAWA XII, JAKUEMON NAKAMURA III

Sukeroku Yukari no Edozakura

(Reference #FSV3208)

Performed in 2003, 119 mins. Comes with both Japanese and English commentaries, subtitles and notes. Region Code : All, NTSC. Sukeroku Yukari no Edo Zakura (Sukeroku, Flower of Edo) written by Tsuuchi Jihei II and Tsuuchi Hanemon was first performed in 1713 by Ichikawa Danjuro II. The Soga brothers are seeking revenge for their father's murder. When performed by actors other than from the Danjuro line, the title is changed and the music from Kato Bushi to Kiyomoto. Set in Yoshiwara, Edo's red light district, Agemaki, the top courtesan of the Miura-ya teahouse, enters. Her lover is the handsome Sukeroku, an otokodate (kind of Robin Hood figure). Agemaki also has an admirer, a wealthy old man called Ikyu. She hates him and insults him in a famous speech, called akutai. The sound of the shakuhachi floats over the stage, as Sukeroku, or rather Soga no Goro in disguise enters. Holding a magnificent umbrella, the actor and character make a series of poses linked by dance in a breathtaking sequence. He wears a black kimono that woos the ladies of the pleasure quarter. Sukeroku comes to Yoshiwara in search of the sword that slew his father. He fights with different men, so they draw their swords and he might recognize the blade. Goro's more gentle brother, Soga no Juro arrives to try and stop the fighting but once he understands the reason, becomes involved himself. They pick fights but their mother brings a halt to it. Ikyu tries again to woo Agemaki, but having promised not to fight, Sukeroku is powerless to help. Ikyu insults and beats him, but ends up suggesting he and his brothers could rule the country. He likens them to an incense stand with two legs and cuts off the leg of one such stand to make his point. He reveals the blade of his sword to be the one that killed Sukeroku's father.

DANJURO ICHIKAWA, EBIZO ICHIKAWA

Daigoji - Maki Kabuki

(Reference #FSV3209)

Performed by the very popular actors Danjuro Ichikawa and Ebizo Ichikawa, father and son in April 2005 at Daigoji Temple in Kyoto. They perform 'Kanjinchō' which was once suspended in 2004 when Danjuro was diagnosed with leukaemia. Kanjincho is Danjuro's speciality and includes his famed 'nirami' or crossing of the eyes glare. They also perform a new dance 'Yukari no Haru Daigo no Sakura'. 138 mins. Comes with bonus DVD featuring an interview with Danjuro and a film introducing the treasures of Daigoji, first broadcast in 2001, (55 mins).

SHOROKU ONOE II, UMEYUKI ONOE VII

Sakanaya Sogoro, Ibaraki

(Reference #FSV3348)

With English commentary and subtitles, Region Code All, NTSC. Sakanaya Sogoro filmed in 1968 and Ibaraki filmed in 1982. Onoe Shoroku II (1913-89) was one of the greatest kabuki actors of his time, playing some of the main roles during the first kabuki tour of the USA in 1960. He was a disciple of Onoe Kikugoro VI. One of his best known roles was that of the fishmonger Sogoro in Sakanaya Sogoro. The play was first performed in 1883 and takes place in Shiba, downtown Tokyo. In Sogoro's house, his father and wife are grieving over the death of Sogoro's younger sister, Otsuta. She had been a concubine of Lord Isobe, who killed her for having betrayed him by sleeping with another man. This would have been out of character for Otsuta. An apprentice delivering sake explains how Otsuta had been innocent of any wrongdoing and had been killed unjustly by Isobe under the influence of alcohol. Sogoro had vowed to give up drink himself but filled with rage, he drinks again, building himself into a rage, and heads for Isobe's house in search of an explanation. He kicks up a fuss but is eventually subdued by Isobe's chief retainer Urato. Eventually Isobe apologizes for killing her, confessing he was drunk and offers him condolence money. Ibaraki is one of the great dance dramas first performed in 1883. The story is based on Ibaraki Doji, a demon who lived at Rashomon gate in Toji temple in Kyoto. There are some memorable dance scenes, in particular where Mashima dances to celebrate the exploits of her brave nephew Tsuna. She later reveals herself to be a demon. This play is derived from the nagauta piece, Tsuna Yakata.

KIKUGORO ONOE, MITSUGORO BANDO, SHIKAN NAKAMURA

Gosho Gorozo

(Reference #FSV3349)

English commentary, subtitles, Region Code All, NTSC, filmed in 2002. Three fantastic actors are featured on the performance of Gosho Gorozo. Onoe Kikugoro VII, (born 1942) is known for his flexible style for playing all roles, both male and female parts. Bando Mitsugoro X is another leading actor, the third generation of his family to belong to the Yamatoya guild, and Nakamura Shikan VII (born 1928) is one of the greatest onnagata (female role) actors. Gosho Gorozo takes place in the Gojozaka pleasure quarters. The story is a tragic tale involving among others, Gorozo, his wife Satsuki, who is a courtesan, Hoshikage Doemon and another courtesan Oshu. In the final moving scene, Gorozo and Satsuki commit harikiri.

TAMASABURO BANDO, KANKURO (KANABURO) NAKAMURA
Dannoura Kabuto Gunki - Akoya
(Reference #FSV3350)

English subtitles and commentary, Region Code All, NTSC, filmed in 2003. Bando Tamasaburo V is possibly the most popular onnagata (female role) kabuki actor, while Nakamura Kanzaburo who at the time this was filmed was known as Kankuro, comes from a long line of actors (his great great great grandfathers being Onoe Kikugoro III and Ichimura Uzaemon XI and his father Kanzaburo - 1909-1988) and is one of the most famous current actors known for adding his own brand of surprise into whatever character he is playing. Akoya (The Courtesan Akoya) was originally written for the bunraku puppet theatre, and first staged as kabuki in 1733. It is the twelfth century and civil war rages between the Heike and Genji military clans. The Genji forces capture the courtesan Akoya in order to torture them into telling them the whereabouts of her lover the Heike commander Kagekiyo. Her entrance, dressed in magnificent robes, is one of the great kabuki moments. Presiding over the interrogation are the wise governor Shigetada and the vicious Iwanaga. Iwanaga brings his torture equipment, but Shigetada brings not instruments of torture but of music. He demands Akoya plays the koto, the shamisen and the kokyū. This is another highlight of the play, regarding great skill of the actor. Shigetada knows that Akoya will pour out her true feelings and emotions. The kokyū music becomes increasingly emotional with screeching high notes. In the end, Shigetada is convinced she doesn't know Kagekiyo's whereabouts and she is free to leave.

DANJURO ICHIKAWA, TOKIZO, NAKAMURA, EBIZO ICHIKAWA IX, UMEYUKI ONOE VII
Kenuki, Narukami
(Reference #FSV3351)

English subtitles and commentary, Region Code All, NTSC. Kenuki performed in 2006, Narukami in 1956. Ichikawa Danjuro is one of the most famous names in kabuki, and the present one (born 1946) is a truly fantastic tachiyuki (male role) actor. Nakamura Tokizo (born 1955) is another talented and versatile actor. Kenuki is the third act of five of the play Narukami Fudo Kitayama Zakura, first staged in 1742. The play involves the story of a missing poem, that prays for rain to help the drought. The person responsible for the missing poem is called Gamba, plotting the overthrow of the Ono family who had inherited the precious poem. Many props are used in this play including a giant pair of tweezers (the meaning of kenuki) which float in the air due to a hidden magnet. Narukami (The Thunder God) derives from the noh play Ikkaku Sennin. A high priest, Narukami, uses his special powers to trap the dragon gods of rain, causing a drought. The emperor sends the most beautiful woman from his court, Princess Taema, to seduce Narukami and set the dragon gods free. What ensues is an often amusing story, as Taema relates a bogus story in a suggestive way causing the priest to lose consciousness. She later feigns pain in her stomach, and Narukami offers to massage her, an action that causes immense physical longing in him, leading him to renounce his religious vows. Taema frees the dragon gods and there is a sudden downpour of rain. Narukami realizes he has been tricked and vows to transform into a bolt of lightning and take revenge on Taema. A tachimawari fight ensues between Narukami and some acolytes, during which the actor performs several well known mie poses, including the hashiri maki, or pillar winding pose. Narukami makes a famous roppo exit.

KOSHIRO MATSUMOTO, KIKUGORO ONOE, SHIKAN NAKAMURA
Kiwametsuke Banzui Chobei
(Reference #FSV3352)

English subtitles and commentary. Region Code All, NTSC. Performed in 1988. Koshiro Matsumoto (born 1942) is one the leading kabuki actors, from three generations of actors belonging to the Koraiya guild. Onoe Kikugoro VII is a versatile kaneru yakusha actor, while Nakamura Shikan VII (born 1928) is a legendary onnagata (women's role) actor. Kiwametsuki Banzui Chobei (also known as Yudono no Chobei) premiered in 1881 and is an unusual play. The story deals with the final days of a chivalrous commoner Banzui Chobei, and is a product of the new Meiji era of enlightenment, criticizing the corrupt samurai class. It is a play within a play, with the kabukiza auditorium part of the actual play and the audience also the fictional audience. The gallant hero Chobei faces his death at the hands of the arrogant samurai with great honour, humility and bravery as he bids farewell to his wife and son.

GANJIRO NAKAMURA II, NIZAEMON KATAOKA XIII
Igagoe Dochu Sugoroku - Numazu
(Reference #FSV3387)

Performed in 1980, 109 minutes, English commentary and subtitles, Region Code All, NTSC. Nakamura Ganjiro II was born to be a kabuki actor in 1902, (died 1983) being the son of the great Nakamura Ganjiro I. However, he always brought his own originality into his roles, which were many and varied. Kataoka Nizaemon XIII (1903-1994) also came from a long line of kabuki actors and enjoyed one of the longest kabuki careers. Igagoe Dochu Sugoroku is based on a true story that occurred in 1634, when Shizuma Watanabe killed Matagoro Kawai, who had murdered his younger brother with the help of Mataemon Araki. In the play Wada Yukie, a senior retainer, is killed by Sawai Matagoro, who had lusted after Wada's daughter, Otani. Wada's son, Shizuma sets out to avenge his father's death with the help of his brother-in-law Karaki Masaemon. Numazu is act VI of Igagoe Dochu Sugoroku, is divided into 3 scenes and is the most popular act. It is about the sacrifices of those who are not directly involved in the vendetta, but members of the same opposing families.

ENNOSUKE ICHIKAWA, SOJURO SAWAMURA, ENJAKU JITSUKAWA III
Hajimomiji Ase no Kaomise - Date no Juyaku
(Reference #FSV3388)

Performed in 1986, 177 minutes, English commentary and subtitles, Region Code All, NTSC. Ichikawa Ennosuke is one of the most popular contemporary kabuki actors. He is known for creating 'super kabuki', and is head of the troupe that modernized kabuki with stage tricks, amazing costumes, action and fights. Sawamura Sojuro (1933-2001) was the heir of his renowned grandfather, while Jitsukawa Enjaku III (1921-1991) was a great tachiyaku (male role) actor. Ennosuke Ichikawa also revived many forgotten plays such as Date no Juyaku (full title Hajimomiji Ase no Kaomise) in which Ennosuke makes some 47 quick costume changes, plays different roles and does his chunori stunt, flying over the heads of the audience. One of the great all time performances.

NIZAEMON KATAOKA, FUKUSUKE NAKAMURA, SHIKAN NAKAMURA
Yoshitsune Senbon Zakura - Tokaiya, Daimotsu no Ura
(Reference #FSV3389)

108 minutes, English commentary and subtitles, Region Code All, NTSC. One of the most popular tachiyaku (male role) actors, Kataoka Nizaemon is joined by onnagata (female role) actor Nakamura Fukusuke and one of the greatest contemporary actors, Nakamura Shikan. Yoshitsune Senbon Zakura (Yoshitsune and the Thousand Cherry Trees) was originally written for the Bunraku puppet theatre and staged for the first time in 1747, and in kabuki the following year in 1748. It has some of the most performed and popular acts in all kabuki. The story is set during the Genji-Heike civil wars of the 12th century. The Heike have suffered defeats at several battles and Yoritomo has established himself as the shogun in Kamakura. Yoshitsune is his younger half brother, a successful warrior, but the object of Yoritomo's jealousy. Tokaiya (The House of the Boatman Tokaiya Ginpei) is Act II, Scene II, when Yoshitsune and his men arrive at Daimotsu and hire a boat from Tokaiya Ginpei. Daimotsu no Ura (the Beach at Daimotsu) is the following scene III, set by the seashore where Suke no Tsubone and other ladies are waiting for the outcome of a battle and with the battle lost, some of them leap to their deaths. Yoshitsune saves the child emperor, Antoku, who says they should make peace.

KICHIEMON NAKAMURA, TOMIJURO NAKAMURA
Kajiwara Heizo Homare no Ishikiri - Ishikiri Kajiwara
(Reference #FSV3390)

Performed in 2000, 85 minutes, English commentary and subtitles, Region Code All, NTSC. Nakamura Kichiemon comes from a long line of actors, and is a very popular actor, specializing in male hero roles. Nakamura Tomijuro is the owner of one of the greatest current kabuki voices. Ishikiri Kajiwara (full title Kajiwara Heizo Homare no Ishikiri) was first staged as kabuki in 1795. Ishikiri Kajiwara (stone-cutting Kajiwara) is the most famous scene of the original longer drama 'Miura no Osuke Obai Tazuna'. The role of Kajiwara is thought of as being especially demanding as it requires the actor to appear to be a loyal Heike warrior while demonstrating to the audience that he sympathizes with the Genji.

SHIKAN NAKAMURA, TOMIJURO NAKAMURA
Bo Shibari, Toshima, Tomo Yakko
(Reference #FSV3391)

English commentary and subtitles, Region Code All, NTSC. Bo Shibari performed in 2005, 40 mins, with Nakamura Kanzaburo (formerly Kankuro), one of the most dynamic kabuki stars of modern times, supported by Bando Yajuro and Bando Mitsugoro, known for his graceful dance. Bo Shibari is a dance drama with Nagauta musical accompaniment, a humorous and lighthearted play. Toshima, performed in 2003 is an elegant dance performed by Nakamura Shikan (21 mins) while Tomo Yakko is another superb dance with a colorful kimono performed in 1984 by the brilliant Nakamura Tomijuro (14 mins).

JAKUEMON NAKAMURA, KOSHIRO MATSUMOTO, SHIKAN NAKAMURA
Gion Sairei Shinkoki - Kinkakuji
(Reference #FSV3392)

Performed in 2004, 97 minutes, English commentary and subtitles, Region Code All, NTSC. Featuring the amazing veteran onnagata actor Nakamura Jakuemon (born 1920), Matsumoto Koshiro, and another popular veteran Nakamura Shikan (born 1928). Kinkakuji is the 4th act of the full play Gion Sairei Shinkoki. It is set in Kinkakuji, the famous Golden Pavilion in Kyoto. The set is quite magnificent, with golden walls and black laquer trims. The evil Daizen lives in the pavilion, who had killed the shogun and was keeping the shogun's mother captive. Daizen is a keen player of the board game called 'go', and is joined by a strategist called Daizen, who had in fact come to rescue the shogun's mother and helps poor Princess Yuki, the unfortunate object of Daizen's desire.

TAMASABURO BANDO
Tamasaburo Bando Kabuki Dance 1, Kyokanoko Musume Dojoji (The Maiden at Dojoji)
(Reference #FSV3353)

English commentary (by Paul M. Griffith) English menu, Region Code All, NTSC. Performed in 1994. 70 mins. Bando Tamasaburo V is in the kabuki world a legend. He is the greatest onnagata actor of his generation. Born in 1950 he has performed in the US, China and South Korea, and once collaborated with cellist Yo-Yo Ma, creating a dance to Bach's Cello Suite no 5. This series focuses on his incredible kabuki dances. Kyokanoko Musume Dajoji is based on the noh play Dojoji and was first performed in 1753. Perhaps this play contains the greatest single dance in the kabuki repertoire, requiring the utmost skill of the performer. The drama is set at Dojoji Temple, which has just had a new bell installed. A young woman, Hanako, the disguised spirit of Kiyohime, arrives and offers to dance. She dances with a hat, then a hand towel, then with one after the other. The dance begins with the slow, ranbyoshi, 'mad rhythm', putting out her right foot which she slowly raises, which is followed by the kyu-no-mai or fast dance. She later depicts the life of a happy city girl, then after a costume change, portrays the different types of women found in the pleasure quarters. The highlight is the kudoki, when Kiyohime imagines being in the company of her lover, noted for its sensuality. In the end, the dance increases in tempo where she can seek her revenge on the priest she had believed had promised to marry her, by causing the bell to crash to the ground.

TAMASABURO BANDO
Tamasaburo Bando Kabuki Dance 2. Sagi Musume plus Kurokami, Kanegamisaki, Inabune, Yamamba
(Reference #FSV3354)

English commentary (by Paul M. Griffith) English menu, Region Code, All, NTSC. Performed in 1993, 82 minutes. Sagi Musume (The Heron Maiden) (33 mins) portrays the anguish of a maiden's love. The woman is dressed in a pure white kimono and hood with a black sash, the dance includes birdlike movements. Later the teodori or hard dance is performed to popular 18th century songs and there is the catalogue of umbrellas section, where the maiden shields herself with a parasol. Sagi Musume (nagauta) is followed by four more dances to different styles of music ; (jiuta) Kurokami (8 mins), (jiuta) Kanegamisaki (17 mins), (ogie) Inabune (9 mins), (Tokiwazu) Yamamba (15 mins)

TAMASABURO BANDO

Tamasaburo Bando Kabuki Dance 3. Yokihi, Takao, Orochi, Yugiri, Kanegasaki
(Reference #FSV3355)

English commentary (by Paul M. Griffith) English menu, Region Code, All, NTSC. Performed 1992-94, 108 minutes. Five kabuki dances. Yokihi, a mix of kabuki and Peking Opera (29 mins), Takao (ogie-bushi style) about the courtesan, Orochi (Great Serpent) (24 mins) a recent adaptation from bunraku, Yugiri (12 mins) (Kiyomoto style) about a high ranking courtesan, and Kanegasaki (Jiuta) about a jealous young woman (18 mins).

TAMASABURO BANDO

Tamasaburo Bando Kabuki Dance 4, Kagami Jishi, Kanaya Tanzen, Kosu no To
(Reference #FSV3356)

English commentary (by Paul M. Griffith) English menu, Region Code, All, NTSC. Performed 1992-93, 89 minutes. In Kagami Jishi (the Mirror Lion) (65 mins) Yayoi, a lady in waiting at the Shogun's palace, performs the lion dance at the New Year Celebrations. She holds a wooden lion head, but as she is hesitant she is locked into a room to practice. She becomes gradually more engrossed, the spirit of the lion entering into her and taking charge of her movements. Two butterflies appear, and the lion chases them. The dancing maiden disappears completely leaving only the raging spirit of the lion, he shakes his mane in great fury. This is followed by Kanaya Tanzen (13 mins) Ogie style dance about vain men comparing their looks and Kosu no To (11 mins) dance set to Jiuta style music, composed by an 18th century geisha.

Tamasaburo Bando Kabuki Dance 5, Onatsu Kyoran, Matsu Noko, Konokimi, Ume, Yuku Haru, Shirayuri
(Reference #FSV3357)

English commentary (by Paul M. Griffith) English menu, Region Code, All, NTSC. Performed 1993-94, 119 minutes. Onatsu Kyoran is a modern dance originally staged in 1914. The story evolves around Seijuro falling in love with Onatsu, the daughter of a merchant where he is working. They elope, are caught and Seijuro is killed after which Onatsu loses her mind. The play is known for being realistic, dark and heavy. Also included are the dances Matsu Noko (13 mins), Konokimi (12 mins), Ume (13 mins), Yuku Haru (13 mins) and Shirayuri (12 mins).

TAMASABURO BANDO

Tamasaburo Bando Kabuki Dance 6, Fuji Musume, Yukari no Tsuki, Yasuna, Aoi no Ue, Kane no Saki

(Reference #FSV3358)

English commentary (by Paul M. Griffith) English menu, Region Code, All, NTSC. Performed in 1992-93, 95 minutes. Fuji Musume (The Wisteria Maiden) was first performed in 1826. The stage is completely dark, the opening lyrics emanate out, when suddenly the lights are turned on and we can see a tree, flowers and standing at the base of the tree with a branch of wisteria over one shoulder is the Wisteria Maiden. She dances with the flowers, then later the kudoki section contains a series of puns, and during Fuji Ondo, she accepts a cup of sake which first she pours away, then drinks and becomes slightly drunk, the most demanding section for the dancer. Also included are the dances Yukari no Tsuki, Yasuna, Aoi no Ue and Kane no Saki.

TAMASABURO BANDO

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(Reference #FSV3359)

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