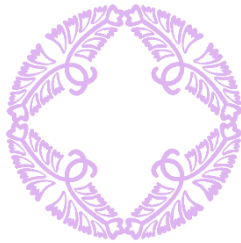




Souke's eldest son, Yuta succeeds his father to take the name Michinori, becoming Michinori Fujima III



As of the succession ceremony in March 2021, the eldest son of Souke, Yuta (7) took the name Michinori and has become Michinori Fujima III. Regarding this, we delightfully present a name succession announcement performance on September 30th, 2022, at National Noh Theater for Michinori (formerly Yuta, the eldest son of Souke Kanjuro VIII), and Kanyoshiro (formerly Hiromu). Further details and the program will be announced in the next issue.



Souke Fujima-kai

Yearly Magazine

Issue No.4 (November 2021)

Michinori has already been performing on stage with great vigor- he performed as the hare at *Iroha-kai* hosted in April, as the butterfly of *Kagami Jishi* at Dance Association by Tanenosuke Nakamura in August and performed in *Cho Hakkai* at Kanjuro Fujima Dance Performance in September.



News

On October 7th, 2021, Souke Kanjuro Fujima and his family welcomed the newest member of their household- their 3rd son, Shun. 51cm tall, weighing 3.3kg, Shun is a happy baby full of energy- the family is happy to announce the arrival of their newborn son, and asks for your continued love and support.

Greetings from Kanjuro Fujima VIII



Kanjuro Fujima VIII

I hope this letter finds you well in this glorious season of golden autumn leaves. Two years ago when the pandemic was still at its beginning, I was assuming that everything would be under control in a couple of years- however, this has proven to be naive of me and the whole world is still in the dark. Fortunately, such desperate times seem to be gradually approaching the end after going through several declarations of emergency.

While *Fujima-kai* has been repeatedly postponed and rescheduled, we have been seeking the best way to perform on stage based on the infection prevention measures and the current situations. We now feel that we have established adequate know-hows to present the stage safely, and we are pleased to announce that on September 30th, 2022, at National Noh Theater, we will be presenting the debut performance for Michinori and Kanyoshiro celebrating their name successions. Me and my mother, Kanso, will also be performing on the stage.

I have danced on the stage of the Noh Theater countless times, but never as a part of a name succession announcement performance. I have been consulting with my mother to make sure that the stage will be worthy of the theater as well as unique to *Souke Fujima-ryu*. I hope to welcome as many of you to the theater to present the performance to.

It was in 1990 when I took the name Michinori- being only a child, I had no idea of the responsibility that entailed and the pressure that name would hold for my future self; all I could think of was to do my best, and to finish the announcement performance successfully.

Little did I dream that the very performance would be my last opportunity to be on the same stage with my grandfather, and I only wish I could have more time to watch and learn from him, dancing by his side.

Despite growing up in a time of turmoil with the pandemic that can take the stage away from him any time, my eldest son, now Michinori, truly loves Japanese dance, and the fact that he shows interest in my profession gives me great hope and a sense of blessing. I hope he will continue to cherish his passion and curiosity and mark his own endeavour one stage at a time.

My grandfather often said, "Do what you like and do it right, and you'll be the master of it". My wish for Michinori is to stay positive, overcoming the difficult challenges along the way, and to feel the joy to the fullest.





I would also like to announce here that Hiromu, who has been giving my family great support over the years as an aide in many occasions such as Kabuki related works, will take the name Kanyoshiro. My hope is that her talent will flourish, not only in dancing but also in choreography, which is why I picked the stage name of the former master Gonjuro Kawarasaki for Hiromu to inherit, making her the second to take the name. She has long been my family's right-hand person, and I am certain that she will continue to be the wonderful example and the perfect tutor for my eldest son, Michinori, his younger brother Tomoki, and the newborn, Shun, paving the path for *Souke Fujima-ryu's* future endeavors together.

Both successors are expected to work even more diligently on their skills, and we humbly ask for your continued support and advice in helping them become respectable dancers and choreographers.

For this issue, we would like to share more of the history and anecdotes of *Fujima-kai*. We interviewed several Kabuki actors who also hold Fujima's names- Mr. Tokizo Nakamura, Mr. Matagoro Nakamura, and the head of the relatives, uncle Tozo Nakamura, and asked them to share some stories from the past. So many of the episodes were new to me, and as I am editing this newsletter, I too feel as if I am studying how *Souke Fujima* used to be, or I am seeing a glimpse of the past. Not many people know my grandfather these days, but through the opportunity like this we hope to present what *Souke Fujima-ryu* is and what we stand for.

With the spirit of studying the old to understand the new, soon I would also like to reflect on my great-grandmother, Kanjuro V, as well as what Kanjuro VI has achieved- I hope you will enjoy our second feature articles on the memory and history of *Fujima-kai*.

Lastly, we regret to inform you that we are not having 2022's new year gathering and performances. New year's gatherings are an essential opportunity to meet the members from the various communities across the country, and we are hoping to find a good time, taking the situation into consideration, and plan our visit to hold events at various communities then instead. Time flies and the new year will be with us in two months' time- I wish you all a happy and healthy time.

Special Feature



The Name Michinori

Kanzo Fujima III

I was the first of the name Michinori. My father, Kanzo II's eyes were always looking to the future, a quality that meant he did not wish for me to take any of the stage names from the past. One can easily assume that each one of those names had certain reputations, implications and stories associated with them given the 400 years of history the house of Kanjuro has. My father was adopted into the family at the age of 16, and he must have seen some of that and went through it himself as well.

Perhaps my grandmother, Kanjuro V, also shared the view with my father. They both chose not to assume the original name "Kanbei", instead becoming the first and the second of Kanzo. Prior to my father's passing, the current Iemoto, Kan'emon and I (Michinori back then) agreed neither of the houses would assume the legendary name "Kanbei" in respect of my father's will. After that, my father succeeded as Kanzo II, and I succeeded as Kanjuro VII.

The name Kanjuro has always been taken by adopted individuals, and I was the first biological child to take the name from their parent. My father must have had mixed feelings about it. Being born in 1900, Meiji 33, he had seen many things, thought about many things, and I cannot help but think that he wanted me to start my own journey anew, that he wanted to create a new name that would later evolve to Kanjuro. Looking back, that may have been more of a preparation for my son, the current Kanjuro, than for me; he may have wanted me to start the lineage of the name for my son to succeed later.

One of the meanings of the name "Michinori" is "to make it widely known". By creating this name, my father built one, strong path starting with Michinori, then Kanjuro, then Kanzo to lay the steady ground for us to protect and nurture the school.

When we celebrated the successions of Kanzo II, Kanjuro VII, and Michinori II, my father was not in an ideal state of health to perform on stage. He insisted, however, to perform for me and for my son despite his condition.

My father passed away only after two months of his succession to the name Kanzo. Before his passing, he asked me to show him the video recording of the stage- I did not want to make him watch given how little he could do on the stage, but it was his final wish, and I could hardly refuse.

After watching the video, he looked very pleased, and said "Just as I thought, I was the worst. Michinori has done a very good job, he worked very hard."



Michinori



Kanjuro (Sukemasa back then)



Kanso (Kouko back then)

3 generations of Souke performing as the butterfly

I always wished to prepare his final moments in glory of his legacy, and that made the decision of having him on the stage very difficult to make. But my father was determined, and he convinced me in the end. Many showed concern and gave me words about having the legendary figure perform in his deteriorating state, but “grandmaster” was not at all how he deemed himself as. For his last performance, his only wish was to break new ground for us, and to ask for everyone’s warm support for the next generation.

After seeing his reaction on the recording, my mixed emotions on deciding to have him on stage turned to a sense of relief and gratitude for being able to grant my father’s final wish, then to be my spiritual rock throughout my life since then. When he passed, my son Michinori II was only ten. But my view was clear- upon his coming of age, I will make him Kanjuro VIII, and I will pass the baton then support him behind the screen. I could then see why he created the name Michinori, and why it was important.

Kanjuro, in my father’s mind, was perhaps a figure destined to carry the long history on their back while soaring high into the new future. No matter how unprecedented the ideas and challenges are, the path we walk on should be solid and wide, leading from Michinori, Kanjuro then to Kanso. I am more certain than ever that this is my father’s wish and so is mine. My grandson, Yuta, now has the name Michinori. He is still young, not knowing left from right, but I hope with all my heart that he will receive the torch from the four generations of Kanjuro before him, making the name Michinori proud, and eventually grow to be a superb dancer walking on the main street.

Special Features



Fujima-kai in My Memories

Kanzaemon Fujima II/ Tozo Nakamura

When I think of *Souke Fujima-kai*, the memories of giants in Kabuki world, Souke Kanjuro VI and his top apprentices, my stage brothers and sisters, and countless stages all flash before my eyes- the sheer number of cherished memories are almost overwhelming, even considering my age, now being well over 80.

It was not a performance from *Fujima-kai*, but I cannot forget how intense “*Sano Genzaemon Tsuneyo*” at the first *Kanjuro no Kai* was, and how it left me speechless and in awe. I would say that the program has then grown into the current group dancing form with Souke as the main act, and has become the key part of the performance, the grand finale of the near-triennial *Fujima-kai* ever since. I would also pick “*Tunemasa*” performed with additional interpretations at the celebration stage of Succession of Souke Kanjuro VII as another unforgettable program.

I am ever so grateful for all the learning opportunities I was given through *Fujima-kai* stages since I was young. I particularly remember two occasions very fondly: the Gidayu performance of *Hidakagawa's Kiyohime*, in which I was allowed to express my interpretation, and *Yasuna* with a unique direction. I can hardly say I could achieve what I was hoping for, but I remember the joy of performing my dream programs.

I was also blessed that I could perform with my child and grandchild. *Ame no Gonpachi* in 1973, then *Shoujou* with my son, current ‘Matsue Nakamura’, then *Gojo-zaka no Kagekiyo* with my grandchild- looking back, those were truly blessed moments. I look forward to witnessing how the talented Souke evolves to an even higher place, and how *Souke Fujima-ryu Fujima-kai* will continue to flourish with the torch of history and tradition passed on from the former and current Souke successors, to Michinori and his brothers.



Fujima-kai in My Memories

Kanzo Fujima/ Matagoro Nakamura

Back in those days, for *Fujima-kai*, we used to rehearse every single day until morning, once we finished with the Kabuki-za performances, starting from nearly a week before the performance. We would split up in groups, rehearsing on stage as well as in the lobby. Souke Kanjuro VI and Master Kouko (currently Master Kanzo) were both rehearsing very vigorously- most of those who were rehearsing in the lobby were Kabuki actors, and one time there was my senior who even traveled back directly from their provincial tour, went straight into the rehearsal in the lobby, then on the stage to prepare the performance for the very next day.

For the large-scale group performance programs such as “*Nankou*” and “*Kisen*”, having from Kyoya-no-ojisan (“uncle” of the House of Kyo, Nakamura Jakuemon IV), Tennoji-no-niisan (“big brother” of the House of Tennoji, Nakamura Tomijuro V), the former Gonjuro-no-ojisan (Gonjuro Kawarasaki III), to us youngsters on stage, we would rehearse at the backstage right until the program started. That level of intensity lasted throughout the 3-day program of *Fujima-kai*.

One day, in the middle of the night, we were rehearsing as usual- and we saw a ramen cart passing by in front of Kabuki-za theater. He must have been finishing up for the day, probably after a night shift in the Ginza area. We asked if he still has any food left, and he said, “just a little bit if that’s OK”.

He probably had no idea what was going on at Kabuki-za near midnight, but he kindly asked if we wanted him to come around again the next night. So, we said yes please, and on the next day he came back, this time with a cart full of ramen. Convenience stores and late-night diners were not available in those times, and that ramen cart was a true blessing, feeding many who were working hard at and around rehearsal. I remember Souke Kanjuro VI also enjoyed his ramen on both days, saying “very good” with a big smile.

A Memory of Street-cart Ramen at Kabuki-za Theater, at Dawn



Fujima-kai in My Memories

Kanzaburo Fujima III/ Tokizo Nakamura

I recall my very first stage at *Fujima-kai* was when I played the *kamuro* in *Modorikago*, in 1969. Ever since then, I'm grateful to Souke Fujima not only for giving me a part in every *Fujima-kai*, but also for letting me have a Fujima stage name.

Fujima-kai used to be hosting a 3-day program once every three years at Kabuki-za theater, and to perfect the long list of programs, the rehearsals were very demanding. We would start after our regular Kabuki-za performances until past midnight, and we even rehearsed on the days of *Fujima-kai* stages. Souke Kanjuro VI and VII oversaw most of the rehearsals, and while the demand must have been beyond imaginable, they somehow always seemed brightly energetic when it came to *Fujima-kai* affairs.

I danced to "Onatsu" of Tomimoto-bushi at 1978 *Fujima-kai*. Since Kiyomoto-bushi gained popularity, Tomimoto-bushi has faded and was rarely played on regular occasions. I danced without fully understanding the essence of Tomimoto-bushi, but looking back, I think Souke wanted to preserve those dying chants and music for the later generations. One can say one of the things that make *Fujima-kai* unique and distinctive is the wide range and variety in its program, including rarely played Ogie-bushi, Tomei-ryu, and Koto pieces.

Each time, the stage has a grand finale with Souke and all of the Kabuki actors performing in Suodori style, and I remember feeling honored but very nervous for being a part of such a rare opportunity to be on stage with Souke Kanjuro VI.

I am still in awe whenever I remember the stage of "Futatsudomoe" and the performance of Narikomaya-no-ojisama ("uncle" of the House of Narikoma) and Souke Kanjuro VI, playing Okaru and Yuranosuke respectively- even though it was performed in Suodori style, they expressed the world of *Chushingura* Act 7 so vividly. I was, and still am, completely starstruck by their wonderful skills. Only *Fujima-kai*, and *Souke Fujima-ryu* which has cherished relationships with the Kabuki world can carry this program out in Suodori style.

I am very saddened to hear that *Fujima-kai* was postponed last year due to the pandemic, as I was very much looking forward to it. When this disaster is finally over and when we can roll open the curtain of *Fujima-kai* again, I wish to be able to perform, to be a humble part of it as one of the disciples.

Activity Report①

“Fujima Kanjuro Buyo-Koen”

“Fujima Kanjuro Buyo-Koen” held at Uchisaiwaicho hall on 17th September. “Kimama-Uta-Shichihenge” was written by Ukon Nishikawa and composed by Kanjuro Fujima during stay-at-home. Mr. Nishikawa requested Kanjuro to sing, play instruments and choreograph the program. Last fall, Kanjuro did studio recording for the program. In memory of Mr. Nishikawa, Rin Hanayagi, Momoyo Nishikawa and Kikunojo Onoe gave us willing consent to perform at the program.

“Seigensakurameguruiriai” is a drama written by Kazuhisa Tobe. We developed the plot during self-restraint time. Some performances and techniques are seen scattered throughout the drama, for example, Kanjuro played the role of four characters by *hayagawari*. Mr. Tobe contributed an article about the “Seigensakurameguruiriai” The article is printed on the next page. Some parts of the “Fujima Kanjuro Buyo-Koen” will be uploaded on Fujima Kanjuro youtube channel.



「気まま唄七変化」

The Quest for Sakurahime

Kazuhisa Tobe

When Souke told me that he wishes to perform *Sakurahime*, I thought he would play the title role, Sakurahime. I was instantly intrigued and asked for more details, but he had an even better idea- he said he would like to perform Futaomote of Seigen.

When people say “*Sakurahime*” they usually mean the *Azuma Bunsho* version these days, but as you know, Seigen-Sakurahime saga has many interpretations. Some of them have a Futaomote for the last scene such as seen in *Houkaibo*, and we decided to have a Futaomote as the finale.

So, we started our brainstorming, first to establish what kind of Futaomote we want, and how we can build the story up to that moment. Our excitement then led to a fairly complicated storyline- first, we set the story as the monk Seigen and Sakurahime fighting over Sakurahime’s fiance, Chibanosuke Kiyoharu, then Sakurahime turns into a good spirit and an evil spirit, and the ghost of Seigen merges with the evil spirit of Sakurahime, and they form a combined spirit- Futaomote.

With Souke’s enthusiasm for immersing in the chaotic drama, he agreed to play Seigen, Tsurigane Gonsuke and the yakko. We based the story on the family feud of *Saikai Zakura Misome no Kiyomizu*, and set the first scene at Hatsuse-dera Temple in golden autumn, where Gonsuke and Sakurahime fell for a trap exploited in their love affair. Then the monk Seigen Ajari takes the blame and helps Sakurahime and Chibanosuke Kiyoharu, and is banished for the sin.

The story goes on, bejeweled with romance and quick costume changes- after the scene in Mimeguri shown in Danmari, performed in the dark and is expressed only with instrumental music, we show a scene of Seigen and Chibanosuke getting together in their dreams. Then the story goes onto showing depraved Seigen waking up from his dream in a hermitage, fallen deep into an immoral and broken lifestyle and sodomy. He kills Sakurahime and courts Chibanosuke, but his passion is returned by a deadly sword, leaving his spirit lost and wandering. The family feud has been resolved, and the scene moves on to Shin Kiyomizu with cherry blossoms in full bloom- Chibanosuke finds an image of late Sakurahime in the scenery, and it leads to the climax of the story, Futaomote.

By telling a story with dancing as the core medium, I believe we could elevate the saga of Sakurahime to a level that acting alone cannot achieve. The beauty of Kabuki is its flexibility and inclusiveness that allows performers to adopt and combine a variety of styles and stories. However, also because of that, the modern Kabuki scene has somewhat fallen into a mannerism inclined to a certain set of pieces. I hope our attempt has helped in any way to be a breath of fresh air, and I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude here to Souke for giving me this wonderful opportunity to grow and learn.



“Fujima Kanjuro Buyo-Koen”



Nagauta *“Kotobuki”* Tomoki



Nagauta *“Kisen”* Kansami and Keima



Nagauta *“Wakashuuodori”* Yua



Nagauta *“Cyohakkai”* Michinori, Kanchie, Kanshoune and Kanjurou

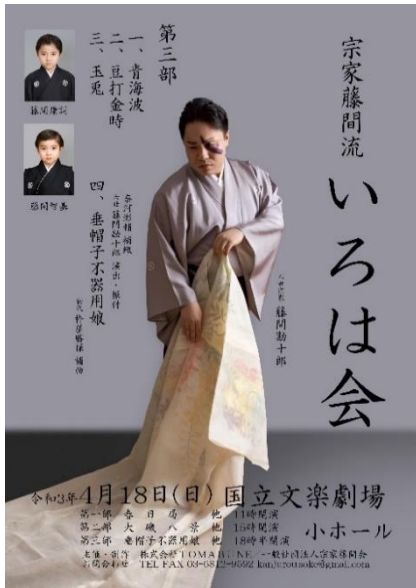


Nagauta *“Shoujou”* Kanshoune



Toumei *“Yuki”* Kanteruka

Activity Report②



【Iroha-Kai】

18th April, 2021 at National Bunraku Theatre.

春の鳥	吉野山	此の若	扇敷	第一節	いろは会	第二節	第三節
老松	善の島	此の若	船	大磯	茶笥	二人	豆打
山姥	藤間	此の若	藤	大磯	茶笥	二人	豆打
山姥	藤間	此の若	藤	大磯	茶笥	二人	豆打

“Seigaiha”,
 “BirariboushiZaishonofutsutsuka”.
 Michinori appeared on “Tamausagi”.
 Tomoki appeared on “Mameuchi-Kintoki”.



“Mameuchi-Kintoki” Tomoki



“BirariboushiZaishonofutsutsuka” Kanjuro



“Tamausagi” Michinori



【Tanenosuke Nakamura Odori-no-Kai】

6th, 7th August, 2021 at National Theatre (small theatre).

Michinori appeared on “Shunkyo-Kagamijishi”.



Workshop/Lecture

A workshop for the *natori* dancers are held at the Soke Fujima rehearsal studio on 17th and 18th July. Kanjuro Fujima taught two Japanese classical dance programs, “Chanokokoro” from “*Soke Fujima buyo kadaikyokushuu#6*” and “*Hokushu*” which is designated as assigned programs for *Shihan natori* test. In “Chanokokoro” there is a character who is not good at making tea. The choreography of this program represents that the character felt shy by someone seeing her practicing tea. After that, Kanjuro and dancers performed “*Hokushu*” together. Kanjuro said that he wants to teach Soke Fujima’s masterpiece programs such as “*Hokushu*” at the workshop. New *natori* dancers and young dancers participated in the workshop and learnt a lot from Kanjuro.

We Interviewed Kanjuro about the workshop

“Today, I taught a newly- choreographed dance, “*Chanokokoro*” and “*Hokushu*”. Me and my mother have already decided to make new program for the workshop. However, from today’s workshop, I chose to teach specific programs which is my grandfather, Kanjuro (6) and my mother, Kanso(3) designated as assigned programs for *shihan natori* test. As time goes by, It usually happens that the choreography of the programs changes in various way since oral instruction is the major way to teach and learn Japanese classical dance. To pass down the original choreograph of the programs and also to train *shihan natori* dancers, I made up my s mind to teach *shihan natori* test programs in workshops. This time I taught “*Hokushu*” in the workshop. I have an article about “*Hokushu*” written by my grandfather. The article is printed on the bottom of the page.”



New Natori Dancers

21st March,2021

Shuumei (name succession)



勘喜郎 Kanyoshiro,
whose former natori name was Hiromu.

Hiroko Nomura

Changes of teacher



勘恵理 Kaneri,
disciple of Kanjuro Fujima.

Youko Niinou



勘喜恵 Kankie,
disciple of Kanjuro Fujima.

Kiyoko Omuro

Shihan (certified) Natori Dancer



勘深凰 Kanmiou,
disciple of Kansaou.

Tara miyuki

Futsu Natori Dancers

悠乃 Yuuno, disciple of Kankiku. Yuuno Saiki

馥恵 Fukue, disciple of Kaneri. Ikuko Nakazawa



Futsu Natori Dancers from overseas

May,2021

勘須艶 Kansuen, disciple of Kansuma. Kristen Megumi Toyota

勘須恭 Kansukyou, disciple of Kansuma. Christine Shimabara.



Soke Fujima Kai Information

Schedule of Soke

【Nabirou-kouen】 at National Noh Theatre, 30th September, 2022.

【Ichikawa Ennosuke • Fujima Kanjuro Shunjuza-hanagata-buyo-kouen】 at Shunjuza on 19th and 20th February, 2022.

【Cancellation of 2022 New Year's Reception】 The new year reception has been canceled.



Soke Fujima LINE official account

YouTube Fujima Kanjuro channel



Instagram



K2THEATRE (online community)



Twitter

Schedule of Soke Fujima School Member's

【Kaname-kai benkyou-kai #2】 at Nihonbashi-shakai-kyoiku kaikan hall on 16th April, 2022.

“Kodakarasabaso” and “Yoshiwarasuzume”.

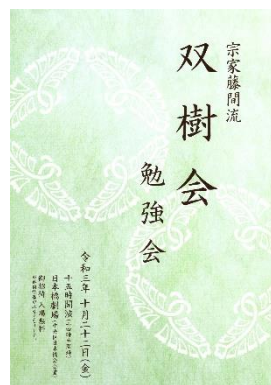
【Hanan-kai】 at Uchisaiwaicho hall on 5th May, 2022. Cosponsor, Suzuka Fujima. “Ama” etc.

※Due to the pandemic, there is a possibility of changing schedules. For details, please contact Fujima office or the casts of each performances.

Soke Fujima School Member's Activity Report

【Souju-kai】 at Nihonbashi theatre on 22th October, 2021.

Cosponsor, Kankie Fujima and Sachiyo Fujima. “Yumenocho” and “Tamausagi” etc



About the Information of Soke Fujima School Member

We are willing to list the information of member's performances. Feel free to let us know.

Changes of Your Personal Information

Please let the Fujima office know when you change your personal information such as name and address.

Payment of Membership Fee

Please complete your annual membership fee payment of 2020, if you have not paid yet. In case, you want to adjourn Soke Fujima, please contact to the office. It is regarded as unpaid, if you paid the same amount of money as adjournment without submitting adjournment notice.

Information About Next Issue of Bulletin

The next issue of bulletin will be April 2022

Obituary Column

若松 美知子	Michiko Wakamatsu	美知 Michi
喜多村 和子	Kazuko Kitamura	二代目勘市郎 Kanichiro II
小林 幸子	Sachiko Kobayashi	勘福幸 Kanhukuyuki
伊藤 恵子	Keiko Ito	寿恵久 Suehisa
下口 としゑ	Toshie Shimoguchi	勘都史 Kantoshi