

What's Rakugo?

Rakugo is an art of traditional Japanese entertainment of storytelling that has been enjoyed for more than 400 years. Dressed in Kimono and kneeling on a cushion on a stage, a solo performer tells stories that depict the everyday lives of ordinary citizens. There are three types of stories: funny, emotional, and ghost stories, which often end with a punch line.

Stories consist mainly of dialogues. By changing the pitch and the tone of the voice and turning of the head, the performer depicts multiple characters and acts out different scenes.

The stage is very simple and only a traditional folding fan and a small hand towel are used as props. The performer uses them for various actions such as eating soba noodles, writing letters, paying coins, smoking a pipe and so on.

There are some rules about Rakugo performances. The performer alternates the direction of the face as they talk to a different person. A senior character sits at stage left, and young sits at stage right. But please do not be bothered to remember the rules. You will know what's going on immediately once the story starts.

Tamasudare (Bamboo Mat Show)

Tamasudare is a kind of traditional Japanese street performance. A performer manipulates a unique screen made of loosely knotted bamboo sticks to create various shapes while chanting songs.