

*Rakugo: now and then*  
今ここにある落語  
A virtual roundtable

Join us for a roundtable on the art of *rakugo*, featuring celebrated *rakugo* master Tatekawa Shinoharu in dialogue with prof Satō Yukiko (The University of Tokyo) and Sarah Stark (Ghent University)

Tuesday 3 May 2022  
15.00-16.30 UK time

[Time converter](#)

[Link to registration](#)

Everyone is welcome!



With roots in early modern Japan and yet very much alive and ever-changing, *rakugo* is a type of performance that defies any easy description. Sitting on his *zabuton* cushion, one performer creates through words a world populated by different characters; a world filled with humour, suspense, tragedy, horror, and much more. Akin to storytelling, but equally different, *rakugo* shares aspects with stand-up comedy, but is no stand-up comedy. It is a living art that needs to be experienced to be fully comprehended. Join us to discover *rakugo*'s complex and multifaceted world!

As part of Shinoharu's [one-week \*rakugo\* residency for students at the University of Cambridge \(Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies\)](#) this roundtable discusses the creative process behind the creation of *shinsaku rakugo*, it tackles issues of diversity in performing *rakugo*, and reflects on the universality of this art.

The roundtable will be conducted mainly in English, with some parts in Japanese.



*Rakugo* master [Tatekawa Shinoharu](#) 立川志の春 is a performer born in Osaka, Japan. After graduating from Yale University, he worked at Mitsui & Co. Ltd for three years. In 2002, he was so greatly impressed and inspired when he went to Tatekawa Shinosuke's *rakugo* performance, that he decided to give up his corporate career to become a professional *rakugo* performer himself by taking up a discipleship with Shinosuke. Master Shinoharu trained in the art of *rakugo* for seventeen years reaching the highest rank of *shin-uchi* (a master rank *rakugo* performer). He performs traditional and original stories, both in Japanese and English, and travels around the world to bring *rakugo* to new audiences.

Prof Satō Yukiko is Associate Professor at the University of Tokyo. She was awarded her PhD at the same University. Her research focusses on novels and performative arts from the late early-modern period into the Meiji era. More recently she has been working on the production of the modern *rakugo* writer and performer San'yūtei Enchō. She has also clarified how censorship hit the playful fictional prose known under the label of *gesaku*. Major publications include: *Edo no e-iri shōsetsu: gōkan no* (2011); *Santō Kyōden: kokkei share daiichi no sakusha* (2009); *Edo no shuppan tōsei: dan'atsu ni honrō saretā gesakucha tachi* (2017).

Sarah Stark is PhD candidate at the Institute of Japanese Studies, Faculty of Arts and Philosophy of Ghent University, Belgium. In her thesis, she examines training processes on and off Tokyo's *rakugo* stages. Next to laughing in yose audiences, she enjoys translating children's books for fun, collecting *tenugui* and taking pictures of Tokyo's store fronts. Were it not for the pandemic, Sarah would currently be jetting around Europe, producing *rakugo* shows with supertitles in the local language.

Facilitators: Prof Barak Kushner and Dr Laura Moretti (University of Cambridge)