



Japanese Traditional Theater

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Thursday, October 9, 2025 - 6:45 p.m. to 8:15 p.m. ET

Periods of Japanese History

- [Early Japan](#) (until 710)
- [Nara and Heian Periods](#) (710-1192)
- [Kamakura Period](#) (1192-1333)
- [Muromachi Period](#) (1338-1573)
- [Azuchi-Momoyama Period](#) (1573-1603)
- [Edo Period](#) (1603-1868)
- [Meiji Period](#) (1868-1912)
- [Taisho and Early Showa Period](#) (1912-1945)
- [Postwar Period](#) (since 1945)

<https://www.japan-guide.com/e/e641.html>

Key Vocabulary

Theatrical Forms

Kagura
Bugaku/Gagaku
Nō
Kyōgen
Kabuki
Bunraku
Butoh

Stage

Hashigakari
Hanamichi

Playwrights

Zeami
Chikamatsu
William Butler Yeats

Role types

Shite
Waki
Aragoto
Wagoto.
Onnagata
Gidayū

Categories of plays

Mugen Noh
Genzai Noh
Jidaimono
Sewamono

Principles

Jo-ha-kyū
Ge-koku-jo
Michiyuki
Hana
Yūgen
Kata
Mie
Ma

Plays

Takasago
Hagoromo
The Monkey Quiver
Tied to a Pole
Sukeroku
At the Hawk's Well

Films

KUROSAWA Akira, *The Men Who Tread on the Tiger's Tail* (1945/52)
Throne of Blood (The Spider-Web's Castle, 1957)
Dreams (1990)
ICHIKAWA Kon, *An Actor's Revenge (Revenge of a Kabuki Actor, 1963)*
SHINODA Masahiro, *Double Suicide* (1969)

Some suggested references

A History of Japanese Theatre (ed. Jonah Salz)

Kabuki: Five Classic Plays (James Brandon)

The Noh Theatre: Principles and Perspectives (KOMPARU Kunio)

Japanese Nō Drama (Royal Tyler)

Butoh: Metamorphic Dance and Global Alchemy (Sandra Fraleigh)

Some suggested websites

<https://www.the-noh.com/en/plays/index.html> Noh plays

<https://www.theatrenohgaku.org/> Original Noh plays in English

<https://bunraku.library.columbia.edu/> Bunraku plays