

Special Interview Alumni Today

# Alumni Report

*Rakugoka* (Performer of traditional Japanese comic storytelling, *Rakugo*)

## Sanyutei Onimaru

I have established myself as a *rakugoka* by drawing on what I learned at the University.

The first memories that come to mind when recalling my university days are club activities and seminars. After coming from my hometown of Nagano to Tokyo to enter the University, I chose to join the Lacrosse Club because I wanted to try something new. The club was just established, and lacrosse itself was not yet known widely. Therefore, the club attracted students with strong personalities, who greatly inspired me in various ways.

At the seminar group, I studied a marketing. Although I was far from a serious student, the time in seminar sessions was special. While our seminar group often discussed case studies, I truly enjoyed considering cases to which there could be various answers.

I was deeply impressed by the “four Ps of marketing” (place, product, price and promotion), which I learned at the University. This principle still helps me promote myself as *rakugoka* Sanyutei Onimaru. To differentiate myself from other *rakugokas*, I always consider what I should do and how Onimaru as a product should be promoted to the general public. Probably thanks to this way of thinking, I currently have an increasing number of opportunities to demonstrate my talents at vaudeville theaters and on radio.

The principle of the four Ps also helps me in my performances at vaudeville theaters. Since many people among the audience at vaudeville theaters listen to my radio program, I keep in mind to perform stories that are interesting and easy-to-understand even for *rakugo* beginners. In contrast, at one-man shows, I try to showcase a new side of *rakugoka* Sanyutei Onimaru. In this way, I adopt different self-presentation approaches according to the situation. I believe this way of thinking has enabled me to establish what I am today.

Hoping to be amusing person and value interest and curiosity.

I'm happy to be a *rakugoka* because I can secure my livelihood by doing what I love. I became a pupil of Sanyutei Enka (the third) and began my career as a *rakugoka*. I advanced to *shinuchi*, the highest rank of *rakugoka*, and started my own radio program. I'm also able to hold one-man shows. All this has been achieved not by myself, but with the great support of those around me. I'm truly grateful to them.

I have repeated the process of repaying each opportunity given to me by achieving a good result after making thorough preparations to do so. I believe that the Sainokuni Rakugo Grand Prix 2019 was awarded to me as a result of my steady efforts to repeat this process. I'm really happy to have received a prize that many of my great predecessors have received. However, I shouldn't be content with my current status. My seniors at over 70 remain curious, asking young *rakugokas* about the latest comic performances and trends. I hope to become a much more amusing person. I hope to see, hear and experience various things and make many more people laugh.

That's why I value having curiosity and interest. A few years ago, I traveled alone in the U.S. for the first time, and when watching a major league baseball game, I was so tremendously impressed that I wished I would work in the world of sports business if I were reborn. We are in an age of a ceaseless flow of information on the Internet, which makes us feel as if we know everything. However, if you stop being curious at this point, you are missing good opportunities. It is most important to make the information you obtain contribute to your in-depth knowledge and first-hand experience, and finally to your own value. Even if you are over 40, you can have experiences that will change your values, just as I did. If I had been an impressionable student, that experience would have become a precious asset for me. I recommend young people to experience various things, which will be truly valuable for them.



### Profile

After graduating from the Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Business Administration in 1996, Sanyutei Onimaru became a pupil of *rakugoka* Sanyutei Enka (the third) in January 1997. In May of the same year, he made his stage debut. In 2010, he advanced to *shinuchi*, the highest rank of *rakugokas*. In March 2020, he received the Sainokuni Rakugo Grand Prix 2019. He also appears on radio and TV, including the FM radio channel NACK5's program GOGOMONZ, where he serves as host.



A special feature article has been uploaded to the LINK UP TOYO webpage.  
(English unavailable)

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