

# Discover the Soul of Edo vol.3

Exploring the World of Joruri:  
Japan's Narrative Music



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## 2. 🎵 Eight Distinct Styles of Joruri

## 3. 🥰 Why It Captivates Us: Timeless Human Drama

Why has Joruri been loved for centuries? The secret lies in its **shift from history to humanity**.

Early narrative music focused on tragic wars and Buddhist teachings. However, Joruri revolutionized entertainment by focusing on **romance, real-life incidents, and social scandals**. Just like today's movies, dramas, and celebrity gossip, Joruri speaks to **universal human interests**. Whether it was a headline-making event 300 years ago or a classic love story, these themes remain as compelling now as they were then.

## 1. 🌸 The Origin: A Tale of Forbidden Love

The term "**Joruri**" dates back to the Muromachi period. It originates from the **Joruri Gozen Monogatari** (The Tale of Princess Joruri), a romantic story about the legendary samurai **Minamoto no Yoshitsune** and **Princess Joruri**. Initially performed by lute-playing priests (biwa hoshi), the story became so popular that audiences began calling it simply "Joruri." Over time, the performance evolved to include the **shamisen**, eventually becoming the foundation for Japan's traditional puppet theater, **Ningyo Joruri**.



Since the Edo period, Joruri has branched into various lineages known as "**-bushi**" (styles), each reflecting the unique artistic identity of its founder. Today, there are eight distinct traditions that continue to preserve their own unique character: **Gidayu-bushi, Kato-bushi, Itchu-bushi, Tokiwazu-bushi, Tomimoto-bushi, Kiyomoto-bushi, Shinnai-bushi, and Miyazono-bushi**. Even though they all fall under the name "Joruri," each style has its own unique tone and musicality, ranging from powerful and heavy to elegant and lyrical.

**Joruri is not just a classical art form; it is a living narrative that captures the essence of human emotion through the unique resonance of the shamisen and the power of storytelling.**



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