

# Workshop to Enjoy Audience-Participation Type KAMISHIBAI

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## 1. Introduction

There are many cultural heritages for children born in Japan such as paper puppet theater (or *pepusato* in Japanese), panel theater, apron theater, and so on. In our workshop, we will focus on *KAMISHIBAI*. A certain number of separate sheets of thick paper with drawings on the front are placed on the stage or mini-theater called *butai* in Japanese, and a performer slid the sheet out and slid it back in reading of the text on the back. The performer faces the audience to convey the content of the work. The performer and audience then empathize or *kyokan* with the world of the work through communication. *Kyokan* occurs when people can confirm the meaning of life with each other through the same feeling about one thing [Matsui 2008: 5].

To start this workshop, let us introduce how *KAMISHIBAI* was born and how performed in Japan. There are two types of *KAMISHIBAI*. The first is the Complete (Self-Contained) Story Type, and the second is the Audience-Participation Type. Audience-Participation Type is a type that participation from the audience completes the story. After that we perform two works of Audience-Participation Type *KAMISHIBAI*. Let's enjoy it together.

## 2. What is KAMISHIBAI?

It is said that *KAMISHIBAI* has its roots in peep marionette or *nozokikarakuri* and projected picture or *utsushie* from the late 18th century to the early 19th century, and paper puppet or *tachie* from the late 19th century to the early 20th century. Contemporary *KAMISHIBAI* of flat picture or *hirae* style was supposedly born around 1930 and performed on the streets selling candies or cheap sweets. Around 1935, kindergarten *KAMISHIBAI* shows also appeared. During World War II, it was used as a tool to support heightening Japanese people's fighting spirit. After the WW II, street *KAMISHIBAI* were revived as entertainment for children. Nowadays, with the spread of television and electronic devices, they are rarely seen. But *KAMISHIBAI* is enjoyed at kindergartens, libraries and other places. Several publishers in Japan publish various works of *KAMISHIBAI* and make *butai*.

Also, organizations of *KAMISHIBAI* associations were born. One of the biggest one is the International Kamishibai Association of Japan (IKAJA), which aims to communicate with people in Japan and around the world through in-depth research, study, and performance of *KAMISHIBAI*. Members of it would like to study and learn from each other about *KAMISHIBAI* as a culture and to make it take root all over the world. Actively spreading *KAMISHIBAI* outside of Japan, IKAJA have 311 international members in 56 countries and regions in total as of May 2023. IKAJA held online *KAMISHIBAI* seminars for TK Park in Thailand in 2021.

## 3. How we Enjoy KAMISHIBAI in Japan today?

*KAMISHIBAI* are often performed in kindergartens, day care nursery, center for early childhood education and care and so on. For example, Japanese Handbook of Course of Study for Kindergartens (2018) says that "Reading picture books, stories, *KAMISHIBAI* to children, who only know the world in which they live in reality, will give them the pleasure of imagining various things." Since it is mentioned in Handbook of Course of Study for

Kindergartens and so on, university students in kindergarten teacher and child care worker training courses in Japan often learn how to perform *KAMISHIBAI*. They practice how to read the text on the back, to slid the sheet out and to slid it back for children to enjoy before they going to kindergartens as practice teachers. Many books or DVDs on how to perform *KAMISHIBAI* are available. These days most students visit website to improve their skills of performing *KAMISHIBAI*. And also, students are advising each other for better performance. Some students also make their own original works in classes at university.

*KAMISHIBAI* also performed in various places such as libraries, children's centers, child nurturing-raising support centers, senior citizen facilities and hospitals. And a wide variety of *KAMISHIBAI* for babies to that for the elderly are published by various publishing companies. In addition to being sold by professional publishers, from some of children who belong to kindergarten to the elderly enjoy making original works, either individuals or groups, and performing Complete (Self-Contained) Story Type and/or Audience-Participation Type *KAMISHIBAI*.

#### 4. Now It's Time for you to Enjoy *KAMISHIBAI*!

We prepare *butai* and two works of Audience-Participation Type *KAMISHIBAI* such as 8 sheets of " EVERYBODY CLAP ! /MIN'NADE PON!" by Noriko Matsui and also 8 sheets of " GROW GROW GROW BIGGER ! /OOKIKU OOKIKU OOKIKU NA'ARE" by Noriko Matsui (both published by Doshinsha Publishing Co., Ltd.) . There is no regulation to choose any *KAMISHIBAI* for children at any stage of development. But usually, most student teaches read 8 sheets *KAMISHIBAI* for younger children as age of three or younger and choose that of 12 or 16 sheets for older.

Now at first, we will perform *KAMISHIBAI* in English and Japanese. Remember both are Audience-Participation Type, which means that without you, these *KAMISHIBAI* will not be completed. Please join us and speak out loudly. And if you want to use language other than English or Japanese, please don't hesitate to speak in your favorite language as well. Also, if you want to try perfuming *KAMISHIBAI*, please let us know. It is so fun performing *KAMISHIBAI* in various languages. Again, feel free to use your own words and actions, and enjoy *KAMISHIBAI* in a various manner!

#### <References >

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