

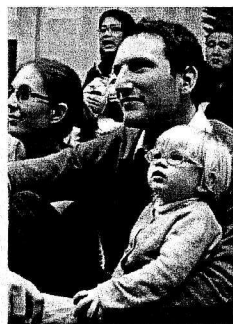
Kamishibai in Shanghai!

In January 2011, Karine Lespinasse Sabourault achieved her ambition of organizing the first *kamishibai* lecture in Shanghai. As a librarian at the Alliance française in Shanghai, she teamed up with colleagues to organize a lecture session at the first School Library Symposium at Dulwich College hosted by Shanghai Librarian Network I and Shigeko Kusakabe (editor at Doshinsha Publishing Co., Ltd. and planning and PR Coordinator of IKAJA) set off for Shanghai to attend this symposium and after that *kamishibai* performances and lectures were given at four international schools.

In Shanghai, I found children born in different countries, and adults dedicated to their future happiness. First, we performed the most popular *kamishibai* work *ookiku, ookiku, ookikunaare* (Grow, grow, grow bigger), at all venues. The audience at these performances participated loudly in a spirit of *kyokan* by shouting out "Ookiku, ookiku, ookikunaare," expressing the universal human impulse to grow up. In Shanghai, everybody called out this phrase in English, French, Chinese and Japanese. A wave of joy engulfed the audiences, creating ties of the heart between strangers from different countries.

In the afterglow of the performances, we explained to an audience of librarians leaning forward keenly the unique features of *kamishibai*, and discussed to what extent it was different from picture books. We also stressed the quality of the texts. We explained that it is not the case that anything is okay as long as it is *kamishibai*. Because *gaito kamishibai* was a means of gathering people together to buy sweets, the stories themselves were trivial. When Japan launched its wars of invasion, the military regime abused the ability of *kamishibai* to bring people together in a spirit of *kyokan*. Many

by Japanese Board on Books for Young People (JBBY). Never Again has been touring 28 venues all over Japan in the two years since 2009. IKAJA has supported and co-sponsored roughly half these events. Between June and September 2011, this exhibition is scheduled to go on display at the Maruki Gallery, which is well-known for its images of the atomic bombings. As a loan from the International Youth Library in Munich, it has been to South Korea, Mexico and other countries, under the leadership of director Christiane Raabe. It is showcasing a cultural artefact that is a source of pride to the Japanese. According to Marie-Charlotte Delmas, director of the Médiathèque (multimedia library) Louis Aragon, which served as venue for *kamishibai* lectures in France in 2002



At a meeting of school librarians

Parents and children in Shanghai enjoying *kamishibai*

kamishibai works were intended to support the war effort. In China too, where the Japanese army took many lives, to perform such manipulative *kamishibai* works would be to violate people's hearts.

I want to see *kamishibai* taking root in helping to prevent other wars of aggression and ensuring a bright and peaceful future for our children. This is the reason I introduced quality works which, in their depths, address the meaning and wonder of life, works such as *Ahiruno ousama* (Duck the King).

After the lectures, people tightly clutching full notebooks asked questions, bought *kamishibai* stages for use in their own schools, or said they just kept crying. Said Karine, "For many librarians, this has truly opened the doors to another world."

I will never forget the time in Shanghai when the peace story *Nido to* (Never again) was performed to 100 11-year-old children. In the spirit of *kyokan* engendered by the *kamishibai* piece, children of different countries sang out "No More Hiroshima, No More Nagasaki," their minds full of thoughts of peace. I thought, how wonderful is this power of *kamishibai*.

Eiko Matsui (muralist and *kamishibai* author, Domestic Project Coordinator of IKAJA)

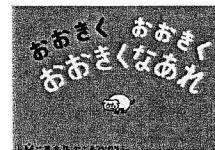
and 2006, "There is a philosophy in *kamishibai*." From Geneviève Patte, director of Laissez-Les Lire! association, which jointly organized the 2002 above-mentioned lecture with IKAJA (she is former director of La joie par les livres library and current honorary president of La Petite Bibliothèque Ronde), we received letters expressing thanks for enabling contact with "a culture that respects peace, that is why we love peace all the more."

On 4-5 April 2012, La Petite Bibliothèque Ronde is scheduled to host a "European *Kamishibai* Meetings" at UNESCO in Paris. *Kamishibai* is steadily taking root in Europe.

Now let us look at Asia. According to Nguyen Thanh Vu, the late president and chairman of Kim Dong Publishing

From Osusume *kamishibai* (Recommended *kamishibai*) (IKAJA)

Audience participation type



ookiku, ookiku, ookikunaare
(Grow, grow, grow bigger)
Text and illustrations by Noriko Matsui



Gokigenno warui kokku-san
(The bad-tempered cook)
Text and illustrations by Noriko Matsui

Story completion type



Fuuchanno sori
(The sleigh of Fu-chan)
Text by Toshiko Kanzawa
Illustrations by Shunsaku Umeda



Otousan (Father)
Text by Jun'ichi Yoda
Illustrated by Seiichi Tabata



Ahiruno ousama
(Duck the King)
Text by Seishi Horio
Illustrated by Seizou Tajima



Nido to (Never again)
Text and illustrations by Eiko Matsui

Translated from Japanese by Ian Channing

House, the largest publisher of children's books in Vietnam, with which a Japanese group headed by Noriko Matsui has had exchanges over *kamishibai* for over 10 years, "*kamishibai* brings to children the joy of living." Vietnam has already produced several dozen *kamishibai* authors and many works have been produced. There is also an association of *kamishibai* authors and lovers. Taiyouha dokokara deru no (Where does the sun come from?) by Chung Hieu has been published in Japan, and won the special mention of Takahashi Gozan prize, the only award for published *kamishibai* works. *Kamishibai* writer Bui Duc Lien has produced excellent works including *Zouge no kushi* (The ivory comb), describing the Vietnam war, and is a central figure in the *kamishibai* scene in Vietnam. He told NHK (Japan Broadcasting Cooperation) reporters, "*Kamishibai* is what I have always been looking for. I will dedicate the rest of my life to spreading *kamishibai* and among the children of Vietnam."

There are also new initiatives in *kamishibai* in China. In January 2011, Shanghai's first *kamishibai* lecture was organized, thanks to the hard work of librarian Karine Lespinasse Sabourault (see article, *Kamishibai* in Shanghai)

It all starts with communication

In a society where the bonds between people have weakened, *kamishibai* brings people together. It uses the story-world as a vehicle for communication, giving both

adults and children a new zest for life, because the culture of *kamishibai* is based on deep bonds of human trust. When a performer is skilled, excellent *kamishibai* results. Hope for the future and the wish for peace can be experienced communally.

I hope to further explore the possibilities inherent in the culture of *kyokan*, which looks simple but which runs deep, together with friends in Japan and around the world. Most of all, I want to work for a brighter future for children.

Profile of Etsuko Nosaka

Translator and International Project Coordinator of IKAJA. Introduces Dutch and other children's literature to Japanese readers. Has translated more than 100 titles, winner of the grand prize in the fiscal 2003 Sankei Children's Publishing Culture Award for the translation of *Ojichan wasurenaiyo* (Een Opa om nooit te vergeten, [A grandfather never to be forgotten] written by Bette Westera and illustrated by Harmen van Straaten). She is also author of *Kamishibai* works including *Yasashii Mamono Wapper* (Kind Monster Wapper), illustrated by Furiya Nana. Member of JBBY board (2007-2011).



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