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In the late 1920s, the inventors of kamishibai (Japanese "paper theatre") took simple materials and created the magical illusion of the "big screen" in miniature. When television first entered Japan, it was called "electric kamishibai" because of the outward similarity of a screen with moving images and audio enclosed within a frame. Twenty-first-century technologies, which still rely on moving images and screens, are often credited with enabling a "new" remixing of modes and media, but kamishibai's history illustrates that technological progress, like a möbius strip, often folds back upon itself, offering scholars and practitioners opportunities for time travel, as forgotten ideas are rediscovered and taken in new directions. Drawing upon examples of early kamishibai-related artefacts in the Cotsen Children's Library at Princeton University, this article traces how kamishibai developed in close relation to other audio-visual media, such as magic lantern and film, until the 1950s, after which kamishibai has been increasingly compared with picture books and other paper-based media. Placing kamishibai within a global audio-visual history that extends from the magic lantern to the internet provides us with fresh perspectives and opens up new possibilities, as artists, storytellers and educators from around the world engage with kamishibai in relation to media from their own traditions, as well as new developing technologies. The non-digital, audio-visual aspects of kamishibai free it from the constraints of technological development and provide the versatility and potential for play that continue to inspire multiple, hybrid adaptations of the form.

Keywords: kamishibai performance, multimedia history, magic lanterns, new literacy, transmediation, convergence

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Time Travels with Kamishibai

The Ongoing Adventures of a Magical Moving Medium

Scholars and practitioners alike tend to describe kamishibai as a uniquely Japanese medium. While this may be true, kamishibai would certainly not have developed in the way it did without several timely technological innovations from abroad. The story of kamishibai's emergence in relation to early cinematic forms, such as shadow-theatre, magic lantern and silent film, reveals that, unlike narrative retellings of events, lived history does not always progress forward in a linear fashion, but often folds back upon itself like an infinite möbius strip. Exploring these non-linear chronologies opens up opportunities for "time travel" in a very real sense, as forgotten aspects of the past are rediscovered, and old ideas are picked up and taken in new directions.

In their introduction to *Multimedia Histories from the Magic Lantern to the Internet*, James Lyons and John Plunkett write:

> New media […] refashion pre-existing artistic forms […] this process reminds us not only that new media technologies are invariably introduced into aesthetic and social contexts that shape their contours, but that those new media appropriate and transform facets of earlier arts (xx).

This paper traces the development of kamishibai as an evolving new medium during the 19th and 20th centuries and reveals how its introduction involved the appropriation and transformation of earlier art forms, which have continued to intersect and cross-fertilise with each other over time.

In *Gentō no seiki* (The century of the magic lantern), Iwamoto Kenji[1] describes what he sees as the chronologically backward nature of kamishibai's development:

> The emergence of kamishibai is a strange phenomenon. At a time when many different audio-visual technologies were tied in some way to modern scientific instruments, kamishibai was made of just pictures and narrative and seemed to be a throwback to Edo-period spectacles created for a child audience. Using noisemakers to gather the children to buy candy is completely reminiscent of Edo-period traveling salesmen. But,

1 I will use Japanese name order with last name appearing first and first name second.

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> while kamishibai was new, the fact that the details of its emergence are unclear is also strange. (197; author's translation)

Iwamoto is reluctant to embrace the idea that kamishibai is an offshoot of the magic-lantern show because he thinks of it as a "throwback", rather than a forward-looking innovation. He goes on to use the conflicting historical accounts of kamishibai's development to question its connection to the history of the magic lantern.

Given its humble beginnings as a street-performance art, it is not surprising that the history of kamishibai's development is largely anecdotal, but Iwamoto's dismissal of it as a chronological anomaly reveals the limitations of examining any medium in isolation. Lyons and Plunkett write that "In contemporary media practice, 'convergence' stands for the dominance of fusion and transferability between different forms […] We are in an era in which media are always used *in relation* to each other" (xxii; emphasis added). Although they claim this as a new phenomenon, the history of kamishibai demonstrates that this is anything but new. Children's cultural scholar and illustrator, Kako Satoshi examines eight differing accounts of the origins of kamishibai, but unlike Iwamoto, he concludes that kamishibai is not "just pictures and narrative", but that it was born from "light" (光) and "shadow" (影) (Kako 7). He goes on to claim that kamishibai was a product of a hybridisation of Chinese shadow-theatre (literally, "shadow pictures" 影絵) and early magic-lantern technology from Holland. This explanation is supported by the fact that Edo-period magic-lantern shows, which were called *utsushi-e* (projected pictures) in the eastern part of Japan, were called *nishiki kage-e* (錦影絵, or "brocade shadow theatre") in the western region.

According to Kako's account, kamishibai was an important innovation because it took the magic of light and shadow – the foundation of all cinematic technologies – and *transmediated*[2] it into what remains perhaps the most mundane and commonly available material of all: paper. The question then arises, what steps could have led from the technology of the magic lantern to a paper simulation of it? In what follows, I will examine examples of transmediated objects from the Cotsen Children's Library collection to demonstrate a possible missing link in our understanding of the invention of kamishibai and to show that its emergence was not such a strange phenomenon in a cultural context where media convergence, or transmediation, particularly to paper, was quite commonplace. Evidence from the Cotsen Collection reveals that kamishibai not only converged with magic-lantern technology from the outset, but also confirms Kako's later assertion that the two audio-visual technologies – kamishibai and magic lantern – continued to develop *in relation* to each other, cross-fertilising and intersecting as they moved in tandem over time (Kako 7). The imaginative leap that translated the "magic" of light and shadow to the mundane material of paper provides at least a partial explanation for why kamishibai is such a remarkably adaptable and

2 I will use the term transmediation, rather than convergence, because it retains a sense of crossing back and forth.

versatile medium, the possibilities of which continue to appeal to artists, teachers, puppeteers and storytellers around the world today.

Before proceeding further, it is important to distinguish between two different but related types of kamishibai. The first, which I will call the puppet-style of kamishibai (*tachi-e*), was developed in the 1890s and is considered to be the direct descendant of Edo-period magic-lantern shows. The second type, which I will call the card-style of kamishibai (*hira-e*), emerged around 1928. The development of this second type of kamishibai – the most common format today – was a hybridisation of a storytelling medium called *ebanashi* (picture-story) and silent film. As we shall see, it was also inspired by Western-style magic lantern shows (*gentō*), which, like silent film, had entered Japan at the turn of the century.

Omocha-e (play prints): The missing link between magic lantern and kamishibai

During the long Edo period (1603–1868), Japan pursued a policy of seclusion from the outside world, but that did not stop technologies and ideas from trickling into the country from abroad, most notably through the Island of Dejima, where Japanese merchants carried on a limited trade with the Dutch. It is thought that a magic lantern from Holland first entered Japan in the 1700s because records of a uniquely Japanese adaptation of the instrument, called *utsushi-e* (projected pictures), began appearing in the city of Edo in 1801 (Tsuchiya, Okubo & Endō 33). With *utsushi-e,* animation of the characters was possible because the quick pulling of a series of slides – like a flipbook – before a light source fooled the audience into thinking the characters projected on a screen had moved (see Fig. 1).

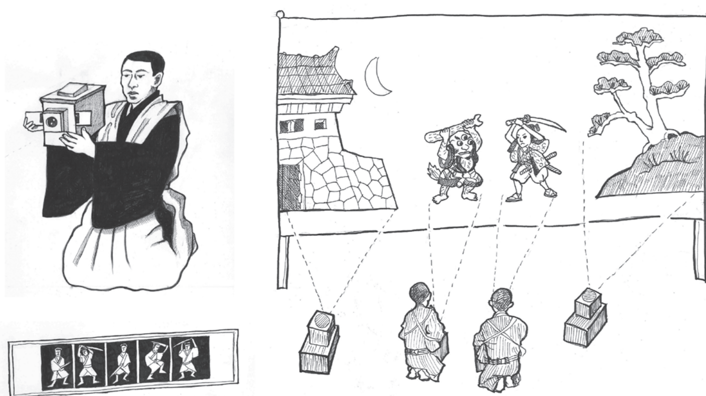

Figure 1. An *utsushi-e* performer with a close-up of an animated slide (left). An example of an *utsushi-e* performance with several *furo* (lanterns).

These early projectors were made of wood, with an opening at the top for the chimney of an oil lamp (closed off in the illustration above). Several performers, each holding a different projector, would animate different parts of the story onto a screen in a darkened room. Similar to phantasmagoria in the West, *utsushi-e* shows were projected from behind the screen instead of in front, like film projectors today. This made the performances even more magical because the ghostly images seemed to materialise out of nowhere. Performers could freely adjust the size of the image by moving the hand-held projector closer or farther from the screen.

Utsushi-e shows were adapted to be performed in a popular theatrical venue called *yose*. Although today *yose* is primarily associated with a humorous form of oral storytelling called *rakugo*, in the Edo period, it was more like vaudeville in the West, featuring many different kinds of magical acts and dramatic spectacles (*misemono*). Against the backdrop of *yose*, it becomes easier to understand the development of the first kamishibai in 1899 (Ishiyama 26). Quoting from a survey conducted in Tokyo in 1935, historian Kamichi Chizuko introduces the inventor of the first kamishibai as follows:

> Shin-san was a *rakugo* storyteller, but he was not very good [at *rakugo*]. Instead, he excelled at drawing, so his master, Enchō (Sanyūtei Enchō) had him draw scenes from his popular plays, *Journey to the West* and *Chūshingura* (The 47 loyal retainers). These were made into wood-block prints and sold in the candy stores, one print for one *sen*. The children would cut out the pictures and paste them onto bamboo skewers so they could play with them […] Later, Shin-san collaborated with the incense seller Maruyama Zentarō to come up with a *tachi-e* puppet that was not just a wood-block print for children. (24)

As Kamichi goes on to explain, these wood-block prints are referring to *omocha-e* (play prints), a genre of *ukiyoe* designed for children. According to this explanation, kamishibai did not develop directly from Edo-period magic-lantern shows but was first transmediated into an *omocha-e* play print. Before examining Shin-san's invention of the first kamishibai, it becomes necessary to highlight the overlooked role of the *omocha-e* play print as a paper "bridge" between *utsushi-e* and kamishibai.

Omocha-e play prints were a widely popular medium of entertainment that flourished, alongside other *ukiyoe* wood-block print genres for adults, during the Edo period. They were ostensibly designed for children but were probably enjoyed by people of all ages. Inexpensive and portable, they were the perfect gift to bring back from the urban centres to the provinces. As such, they were a particularly effective medium for spreading new concepts, technologies and fashions around Japan. In fact, most titles of *omocha-e* prints begin with *shinpan* (or "the latest"), claiming that they provided the most up-to-date information on any given topic. Although largely dismissed until recently as juvenile ephemera, *omocha-e* are now receiving increasing scholarly

attention for the light they shed on early popular cultural trends.

Omocha-e came in a dizzying array of genres, but theatre was a particularly popular theme, especially for prints that could be cut up and assembled to recreate performances at home. This is the genre of *omocha-e* that Kamichi describes above, and it may well be the missing link in our forming a clear understanding of how a Japanese form of paper-theatre developed out of Edo-period magic-lantern shows. In the Cotsen Children's Library Collection, there is an *omocha-e* print titled *The Latest Magic-Lantern Show Pictures* (Shinpan utsushi-e) by Tsunashima Kamekichi from 1884. This single-sheet, wood-block print was designed for children to cut and assemble, but in this case, instead of putting the images on bamboo skewers, they would have fortified them with wood or cardboard. The slides would be moved quickly behind the *yose* stage at the bottom of the print, to simulate an *utsushi-e* performance. Just as with the kamishibai puppet invented by Shin-san, the animation of *utsushi-e* slides depended on the quick movement of the images behind the stage. These paper "slides" would be pulled out incrementally from right to left, just like the cards in a typical kamishibai stage (for a detailed analysis of this print, see https://blogs.princeton.edu/cotsen/2018/02/omocha-e/).

Of course, the real *utsushi-e* projectors relied on light and shadow – a fire-source and a darkened room – to work their magic, but, as the play-print in the Cotsen Collection demonstrates, a dramatic simulation of this effect could be achieved on paper using dark and light pigments so the images could be appreciated in open daylight as a child's amusement. From here, it is not such a big leap for the imagination to go where Shin-san's evidently did – to the invention of *tachi-e* kamishibai. Although Shin-san's original *omocha-e* play print is long gone, play prints of the same genre, no doubt inspired by Shin-san's prototype, can still be found.

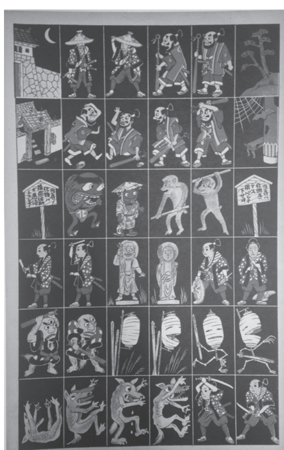

Figure 2. Kamishibai puppets of Sarutobi Sasuke driving out demons (*bakemono taiji*), artist unknown, c. 1920–30, Cotsen Children's Library (Cotsen ID No. 98569).

This *omocha-e* play print from the Cotsen Children's Library collection (Fig. 2) provides all the kamishibai puppets needed to recreate the story of legendary *ninja* Sarutobi Sasuke, driving out ghosts and demons. Just as with the Edo-period magic-lantern shows, still images of scenery are provided on right and left to be used for the setting – in this case a castle and a haunted temple – but otherwise, each character is depicted in two different poses side by side. The two poses would be cut out and glued to either side of a bamboo skewer, just as Kamichi describes above, so that, when the puppet was flipped around quickly – just like the quick pulling of the lantern slides out of the stage – the puppet would appear to move.

The *tachi-e* kamishibai print in Figure 2 dates from the 1920s or 30s, but it depicts many of the same themes and characters as the *utsushi-e* print described above. The two samurai in the *utsushi-e* print (not shown) battle the stock figures of the three-eyed monster and the lantern ghost, just as ninja Sarutobi Sasuke does in the *tachi-e* print in Figure 2, revealing how these media – magic lanterns, play-prints, and kamishibai – continued to develop *in relation* to each other over time. In fact, these same figures continue to appear in Japanese animated movies, picture books and videogames today. It is not entirely clear whether Shin-san was the first to create this particular kind of *omocha-e* play print, but what Kamichi does clearly state is that he was the first to recognise that this child's toy could be developed into a type of dramatic spectacle in its own right. By making larger versions of these puppets and performing them in a stage against a black curtain, which made the animated images stand out, Shin-san created a new kind of performance, which he dubbed "the *new* magic lantern show" (*Shin-utsushi-e*). Audiences, however, saw that he was using paper puppets to perform theatre, so they took to calling it *kamishibai* (Kata 8).

Shin-san's innovation freed him from the challenges of performing actual magic-lantern shows, which required fire, expensive glass for the slides, and the darkness of an interior space. It also gave him autonomy as a one-man show, instead of having to coordinate with several performers. Although initial performances occurred inside, these shows were later taken out into the open and performed on the streets, offering audiences of all ages and walks of life the novelty of the magical illusion of cinematic animation. In an outdoor setting, selling candy was adopted as a way to ensure remuneration for street performers. To say that this invention was a "throw-back" is to ignore the technological leap from magic lantern to paper, which, it could be argued, is analogous to paintings in Europe after the discovery of three-point perspective. The materials used may be simple and mundane, but the way of seeing (and, in this case, animating) was entirely new.

From *ebanashi* (picture-stories) to the "new" kamishibai

The development of the card-style of street-performance kamishibai, which emerged around 1928, in some ways mirrored the first. Just as the puppet-style of kamishibai tried to bill itself as the "new magic-lantern show" (*shin-utsushie*), the card-style of kamishibai likewise presented itself as the "new picture-story" (*shin-ebanashi*). According to Kata, this was a sly tactic to avoid confrontation with the police, as well as competition from more senior puppet-style kamishibai performers (25–26). At the time, *ebanashi* would have been considered more innocuous than the street-performance puppet-style of kamishibai because it was a medium already in use in formal educational settings. In *Educational Research into Kamishibai* (Kamishibai no kyōiku teki kenkyu), authors Nomura Shōji and Uchiyama Kendō (1937) describe two major types of *ebanashi*: drawn pictures and expressive pictures. The "drawn" variety included simultaneous drawing with chalk on a blackboard or painting with a brush on paper while telling a story in front of an audience. The "expressive" kind included telling stories using hanging scrolls, rolling scrolls (*emaki*-style), or, finally, card-pulling (80).

Nomura and Uchiyama acknowledge that outwardly, there was no difference between the last variety of *ebanashi* and the new kamishibai, but they do make an important distinction. Whereas *ebanashi* consisted of still images, like a series of dramatic tableaux, designed in response to an existing text or story, kamishibai required movement in the transition from one card to the next. Nomura and Uchiyama describe kamishibai cards as similar to a reel of film with some of the frames missing (81–83). In other words, the creators of the "new" *ebanashi* made the imaginative leap from silent film to paper cards by *transmediating* the movement and visual techniques – zooming in, panning out and montage – of film to the *ebanashi* card format and adopting the narrative style of the popular film narrators (*katsudō benshi*). Just as with the puppet-style, it was the audiences who took to calling this invention *kamishibai* because it offered cinematic drama on paper.

Although early puppet-style kamishibai may have emulated kabuki or bunraku theatre, later puppet-style kamishibai were based on silent films. Kata recalls that the very first kamishibai he was asked to make was a *tachi-e* puppet of the eponymous hero from Charlie Chaplin's film *The Kid*. In fact, terms used for the two types of kamishibai were so fluid that it can be confusing for researchers (Orbaugh 329), and even early film was variously referred to as "Moving Shadow Pictures" or "Moving Magic-Lantern Pictures" – indicating that there was a similar confusion between magic lantern and film (Fukujima 6–7). What is clear is that

both styles of kamishibai arose from a similar impulse – to *transmediate* cinematic media onto paper – and this apparently "backwards" innovation freed the performer from the inconvenience and expense of complicated technology and allowed them to perform in the open air and interact with audiences in new ways.

By 1937, according to Nomura and Uchiyama, there were 2,000 kamishibai storytellers on the streets of Tokyo, and about 800,000 children were watching kamishibai stories on a daily basis nationwide (1).[3] The power of this informal educational mass media soon attracted the attention of innovative instructors, who wanted to harness its popularity for their own purposes. An early proponent of educational kamishibai, Matsunaga Kenya wrote, "All things considered, kamishibai is a marvelous weapon in the educational arsenal. I cannot begin to imagine what a powerful influence it will have five or ten years down the road in every aspect of teaching" (McGowan 16; Suzuki 55). Matsunaga's words turned out to be prophetic, not only for classroom teachers, but also for the militaristic Japanese government. With the onset of WWII, kamishibai soon became one of the government's pedagogical "weapons" of choice for instructing the whole nation to pull together for the war effort (Suzuki; Orbaugh).

Western-style magic-lantern shows and the rise of educational kamishibai

By the mid-1930s, when religious leaders, teachers and government officials were just discovering the potential of street-performance kamishibai as a teaching tool, Western-style magic lanterns had already long established themselves as permanent fixtures in educational environments. The *re*-introduction of the magic lantern to Japan provides a perfect example of the möbius strip of history mentioned at the outset. Magic-lantern technology had continued to evolve in Europe and America, and, when Japan opened its doors to international trade in the 1860s and participated in the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876, Tejima Seiichi brought back Western-style magic-lantern projectors called *gentō* (literally "illusion lantern") (Ishiyama 23). The Meiji government promptly commissioned the creation of educational magic-lantern projectors and slides to teach about constitutional reforms and civic responsibilities in a new era. Again, the Cotsen Children's Library collection offers an *omocha-e* play print in the form of a sugoroku game board to illustrate.

3 Ishiyama puts this figure closer to 700,000 (57).

Figure 3. *Kyōiku hitsuyō gentō furiwake sugoroku* (Important slides for education board game), Artist: Hiroshige III (1842–1894), depicting Meiji educator Tsurubuchi Hatsuzō lecturing, 1896 (Cotsen ID No. 101597).

This image, used at the "start" (*furidashi*) of the game, depicts the government-commissioned educator Tsurubuchi Hatsuzō, instructing a group of young people about an exemplary episode from the life of the legendary emperor Nintoku. It is important to note the similarity between the way Tsurubuchi explains the slide and the way silent film was performed in Japan with a narrator alongside (*benshi*), providing oral explanation of the pictures, often with piano accompaniment (Dym). The game follows a series of magic-lantern slides illustrating moral behaviours and exemplary historical figures. Depending on the path the player follows through the game-board slides (analogous to life), they could end up at one of several possible destinations – as a merchant, agriculturalist, engineer or government official – illustrating the new sense of upward mobility made possible with modernisation. Thanks to the success of Tsurubuchi and others, magic lanterns soon became a widely accepted educational tool in schools, religious settings and private homes, leading to what Iwamoto describes in the title of his book as "The Century of the Magic Lantern".

What becomes apparent is that from the 1930s until the 1950s, kamishibai and magic lanterns were viewed together as similar or complementary audio-visual formats. Sharalyn Orbaugh, who has written extensively about the appropriation of street-performance kamishibai for the purposes of propaganda, notes that one of the first propaganda kamishibai used in the war effort was, in fact, a *gentō* magic-lantern show (53). The Cotsen Children's Library collection holds one such kamishibai-style set of

magic-lantern slides titled *Daitōa sensō!!* (The War for Greater East Asia!!) (https://catalog.princeton.edu/catalog/9908471). It begins with the patriotic display of Japanese flags in front of the imperial palace in Tokyo and proceeds to the dramatic bombing of the island of Hawaii. The narrative progresses over 12 scenes, much like a typical kamishibai story.

Even after the war, magic lanterns and kamishibai continued to commingle. In the 1950s, Takahashi Gozan, director of the Magic Lantern Kamishibai Association and a leading voice in educational kamishibai, oversaw a series of historical kamishibai designed to mimic magic-lantern shows. The visual style of this series clearly transmediates the colours and techniques of magic-lantern slides to the medium of paper with the distinctive use of shadow and light. This series, beginning with the historical transition from Edo to Tokyo, was designed for older students in public schools. As kamishibai and magic lantern continued to converge and transmediate one another in this manner, there was increasing danger of confusion. In Volume 33 of *Educational University Seminars: Audio Visual Education,* Saki Akio (1951) wrote, "Many people think kamishibai and magic lantern are the same, but they should be treated as different media" (189). In fact, in the 1950s, when a turn to audio-visual education took Japanese schools by storm, books on the topic almost invariably place *gentō* magic lanterns together with kamishibai to weigh their similarities and differences.

As the technology for developing photographic slides improved, however, magic lanterns were increasingly considered more appropriate for close examination of scientific phenomena, whereas kamishibai, by contrast, was considered more suited to figurative and plot-driven narrative content. This distinction was in many ways arbitrary because there were plenty of examples of animated, narrative-style magic-lantern shows, as well as photographic, news-reel kamishibai (especially during the war years), but perceived distinctions between photo realism and narrative increasingly worked to drive a wedge between the two formats.

When discussing the similarities and differences between kamishibai and magic lanterns in the early 1950s, Saki acknowledged that both of these media were relatively new to education – especially in the case of kamishibai – but that they both held great promise and had become essential to classroom teaching (187). Although this may have proved true in the case of the magic lantern as it morphed into the slide projector and, more recently, into power-point slides, it could be argued that several historical setbacks in the intervening years prevented kamishibai from reaching its full potential in classrooms in Japan. The first major setback came in 1967, when the ministry of education decreed that kamishibai stages and cards were "expendable goods" and no longer required in schools. By the 1970s, kamishibai cards had been

moved from the audio-visual to the picture-book sections of libraries (Kamichi 99–100). During the 1980s and 90s, kamishibai illustrations were increasingly juxtaposed with picture books and were deemed to be crude by comparison. In a period of rapid economic growth, kamishibai was viewed as backwards and tainted by association with the war. By the early 2000s, the few publishers that still published kamishibai stories tended to focus on stories for the very young. Today, the general public in Japan has largely forgotten that kamishibai were once created for audiences of all ages and that they have their roots in audio-visual film and theatre.

A new era for Kamishibai: An emerging "new literacy" for a global audience

When kamishibai were no longer housed in the audio-visual section of libraries but were placed instead alongside picture books, transmediations of picture books into kamishibai became commonplace. Whereas books on kamishibai written in the 1950s endeavoured to keep the confusion between kamishibai and magic-lantern slides at bay, today, we see the same energy being exerted to differentiate kamishibai from picture books (Matsui; McGowan; Ute).

As we enter a new era of digital technology, it seems clear that kamishibai will continue to evolve *in relation* to other media, including picture books, as it travels both inside and increasingly outside Japan. The coordination of moving image, words and sound have only become more important to communication in the 21st century (Jewitt), and kamishibai can be used to teach many of these "new" multimodal literacies without the expense of technology (McGowan). The materials necessary for making kamishibai are still universally available, whereas internet technology continues to be expensive and in constant need of upgrading. For school districts that cannot afford libraries, much less computer facilities, kamishibai offers students an opportunity not only to combine multiple modes into one communication but also to practise these skills for different audiences with each performance (McGowan). At the same time, a renewed interest in do-it-yourself "maker spaces" and interactive user-generated content has made the hands-on (*tezukuri*) potential of kamishibai increasingly attractive to storytellers around the globe.

Online hybridisations of kamishibai, like the animated series *Yami Shibai* (literally, "theatre of darkness"), or the use of iPads to perform kamishibai for a new generation of audiences familiar with scrolling through images, actually brings the format back to its roots in intriguing ways. The screen of an iPad is closer to the size kamishibai cards were in the 1930s at the time of the street-performances, and the popularity of stories about ghosts and the supernatural hails back to kamishibai's beginnings in Edo-period

magic-lantern shows. The cinematic media that gave rise to kamishibai in the first place continue to make it an easily assimilated format in the digital age. However, the non-digital aspects of kamishibai may be even more appealing to a new generation of puppeteers, teachers and storytellers around the world. In Peru, graphic designer and storyteller Pepe Cobana Kojachi creates stages "with Peruvian art and the Japanese heart", drawing upon the talents of local artists to create colourful kamishibai stages resembling Peruvian retablos (http://kamishibai.com/spotlight/kojachi.html). In Slovenia, puppeteers and ethnomusicologists, Jelena Sitar and Igor Cvetko create original kamishibai out of Slovenian poetry and song. In Honduras, performing artist Laura Yanes, combines dolls and other three-dimensional props with kamishibai, using the card transitions for changes of scene and backdrop (http://kamishibai.com/spotlight/interview5.html).

In a particularly intriguing synthesis of old and new media, the Japanese kamishibai troupe Spice Arthur 702 has developed a performance of Bunraku *Star Wars*, which transports the kamishibai format back to its roots in both traditional Japanese theatre and film, while at the same time recreating that most well-known of futuristic galaxies far, far away. The möbius strip of historical inspiration that enabled George Lucas to cross jedi/ninja warriors with space travel transported Sarutobi Sasuke as Luke Skywalker into the hearts and minds of 21st-century viewers. These multiple and varied transmediations of the kamishibai format provide ample sources of optimism that our "time travels" with kamishibai are only just beginning and that its potential may yet be realised as its adventures continue.

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