

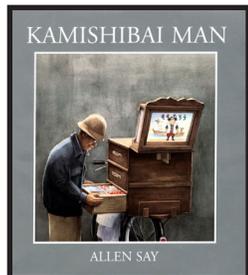


# CRUCHLEY'S COLLECTION

Diana Cruchley is an award-winning educator and author, who has taught at elementary and secondary levels. Her workshops are practical, include detailed handouts, and are always enthusiastically received.

(H. Diana Cruchley©2013, dianacruchley.com)

## KAMISHIBAI MAN



The retired Kamishibai man misses his old days as an itinerant story teller and goes to the city recalling in the story how he was once popular but now the kamishibai are out of date. Surprisingly the adults who remember him as part of their past, gather to adore his story telling and he resolves to go to the city again tomorrow.

Allen Say, Houghton Mifflin, ©2005, ISBN 13: 978-0-618-47954-2

## KAMISHIBAI HISTORY

The back page of this picture book describes how Kamishibai came to thrive in the world-wide depression of the 30's and then again in the hardships during and after WWII. In fact, television was first referred to as "electric kamishibai". Nice for cultural literacy when studying Japan in the context of the experiences of other countries at the same time.

## TRADITIONAL JAPANESE TALES

The book mentions 4 traditional Japanese folktales which the kamishibai might have told:

- Peach Boy
- Inch Boy
- Bamboo Princess
- The Old Man Who Made Cherry Trees Bloom

Students could tell these stories (and other Japanese folktales) as kamishibai or simply as a part of oral skills development and cultural knowledge.



## MAKE YOUR OWN KAMISHIBAI

Students could work in teams to design a story in 12 - 16 frames that acts as a kamishibai tale - either one they have created themselves, or one of the traditional Japanese tales.

If you don't have class time for illustration, used picture books telling the story can be mounted on card. If the theatre is raised, the English version the students have written can be printed on the back and then told in the style of an illustrated Reader's Theatre. ([www.kamishibai.com](http://www.kamishibai.com) has lots of information.)





ALLEN SAY

# KAMISHIBAI MAN, P. 2

## STREET ENTERTAINMENT

This is a good time to discuss entertainers that come to you or entertain on the streets:

1. Street musicians and jugglers
2. Silver bells at Christmas
3. Travelling carnivals
4. Ice-cream truck
5. Organ grinder (long out of vogue)
6. Children's party entertainers

## WRITING IDEAS

Some ideas for journaling or other kinds of writing are:

- My favourite television shows and why I like them.
- Memories of my favourite stories or being read to from childhood.
- Things in my lifetime that are new inventions: internet, e-mail, cel phones, Wii, i-pod or MP3 and the impact they have on my life.
- Activities that were once part of the life of children: skipping, marbles, games such as ante-I-over, kick-the-can, chinese skip rope, hop scotch, nursery rhymes, counting rhymes, autograph books, etc. Are any part of my life? In what way?

## KAMISHIBAI AND SILENT FILM

### INVENTION OF THE SILENT FILM

In Paris, 1895, Georges Lumiere showed the first silent film. The audience was accustomed to magic slide presentations accompanied by narration. The audience first thought it was another of those, and then suddenly, it moved. Their jaws dropped and they knew that they had seen something that would change entertainment forever.

Between there and 1913 silent film just exploded all around the world. At first silent films were part of a vaudeville act or available at a nikolodeon where exhibitors rented space and showed films for a nickel, or where you had a kiosk you leaned over and dropped a nickel in to see a show (These can be seen at Disneyland today.)

### JAPANESE SILENT FILM

Japan produced silent film for its own market alone and out-produced all countries around the world, even in some years including the USA.

### BENSHI, SILENT FILM STORY TELLERS

Accompanying the film were the benshi. As in the rest of the world they stood on one side of the film and provided commentary and the voices. In Japan, however, this was elevated to an art form so much appreciated that exhibitors showing the film were more likely to advertise the benshi than the actors. They were also accompanied by music, as in the west, but in their case the traditional Japanese instruments. This meant that when sound was introduced in the late 20's it caught on more slowly in Japan.

Nevertheless, eventually sound film triumphed and some of the benshi during the depression became the kamishibai street entertainers selling candy and telling stories.

### AFTER THE KAMISHIBAI

During the depression you could eke out a living as a kamishibai street storyteller, and during the war the shows were popular because they could be performed in bomb shelters. In the 50's, when Japan was still poor, kamishibai were still so popular that when TV was introduced it was called "*electric kamishibai*".

### ANIME

What do you do when there is no work as a kamishibai man? You become a manga (comic strip) artist, or produce anime (Japanese animation) both of which have had a huge influence in the international art world.

