

## How to Perform Kamishibai

Each time we perform a kamishibai, we have a chance to deepen the audience's experience of the story by capitalizing on kamishibai's key features. Here's how.

### Basic Principles

(1) Think about the essence of the story.

- Choose a story that explores the meaning and joy of life.
- Ask whether the contents engage you, the performer, and are appropriate for a group experience of *kyokan*.
- Choose a story that begs to be told as a kamishibai, due to its use of key features.

(2) Make the most of key features of kamishibai:

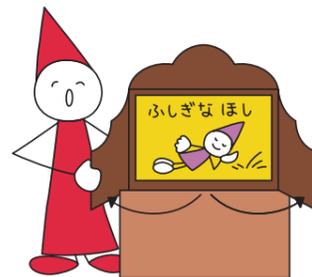
- Feature 1: The world of the story emerges and extends into the real world.
- Feature 2: The group's concentration on the story and communication with one another
- produce *kyokan*, a feeling of oneness with the story and everyone gathered.

### Performance Based on Basic Principles

(1) Prior reading: After you choose a work, read and reread it in advance, so that its theme and inner drama become part of you.

(2) Beginning:

- Present the stage with the three doors closed.
- Stand next to the stage, facing the audience.  
→ Performer and audience anticipate communication with one another.
- Open the doors one by one.  
→ Performer and audience anticipate emergence of story-world into real world.
- Read the title and author's name.  
→ Performer and audience begin to explore story-world created by this author.



(3) Performance:

- Remain next to the stage, facing the audience.  
→ Communication between performer and audience enriches everyone's experience of the story.
- Perform using your normal voice.  
The voice of the performer, as someone present in the room now, conveys that the story-world is also present in the room now.



#### Notes of caution:

- Stand beside the stage, not behind it. Take care not to hide behind it as one would a puppet theatre. If your face is not visible, your voice and facial expressions will be hidden, hindering performer-audience communication.
- Stay close to the stage. If a performer moves too far from the side of the stage, the audience's concentration on the story weakens.
- Do not alter your voice for different characters. This makes the performer's presence striking, but it limits the scope for the audience's imagination.
- Match your performance to the tone of the story. A "mismatched" performance blocks the author's message and brings focus to the performer. Never use kamishibai as a mere tool for showcasing yourself.
- Do not change the content of the story. Focus instead on bringing out the world the author has created.

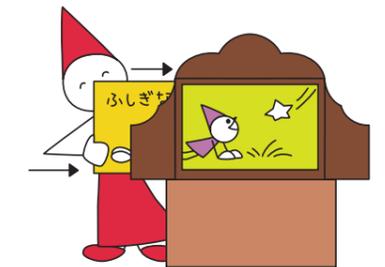
(4) Sliding out the pictures

- Use the stage with three doors.  
→ The doors' shape enhances a sense of the story-world emerging into the real world with each movement.
- Put your heart into sliding out each picture.  
→ When each picture comes out and appears next to the stage, the story physically expands into the surrounding world.  
→ As the picture begins to slide out and the next scene appears, the audience begins to concentrate on the next scene.  
This process is what is known as the continuity of kamishibai, which helps to create strong concentration.  
→ The pause to slide out each picture creates silence for reflection.



(5) Sliding in the pictures

- Use the stage with three doors.  
→ The doors' shape enhances interest in the new scene that appears as the former picture gradually slides into the back of the stage. The sliding-in motion helps the expanded story-world to converge with the next scene. This naturally leads the audience to concentrate on the next scene.
- Put your heart into inserting each picture.  
→ As the old picture slides slowly into the back of the stage, the audience begins to focus on the new picture, concentrating on the world of the story.  
→ The pause to slide in each picture creates silence for reflection.



#### Notes of caution:

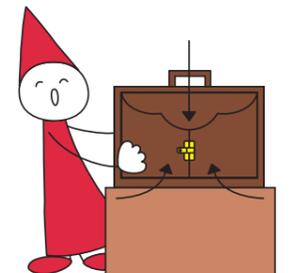
- Do not place finished scenes somewhere outside the stage or hold them in your hands. This approach reduces concentration and communication.

(6) Ending

- Take care at the end, giving time and stress to closing words, such as "The End."  
→ Final words impart closure and ease the audience out of intense concentration on the story.

#### Note of caution:

- Do not return the kamishibai to starting position, with sheet number 1 displayed. This prevents the story from ending, and actually begins it again.



- Close the doors of the stage deliberately, one by one.  
→ The inward motion of the doors shows that the story-world, which expanded into the real world during performance, is contained again within the stage.

### Reminder: Types of Kamishibai

- (1) **Complete (Self-Contained) Story Type:** The work itself tells a complete story.
- (2) **Audience-Participation Type:** Participation from the audience completes the story.