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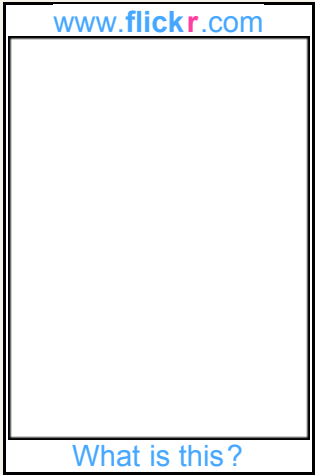
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LIBRARY SHOWCASE

By Rebecca Zeren, Trinity School Librarian, Menlo Park, California, *California School Library Association Newsletter*, December 2007

Kamishibai

Trinity School, located in Menlo Park, California, is home to the Trinity School Library, an incredible resource with over 13,000 volumes of books and media. The School is "passionate about its library and providing students with a love for books as well as the ability to access, evaluate, and use information in the course of their projects and individual pursuits."

Rebecca Zeren, Trinity School's librarian, is an expert on Japanese and Korean children's literature. Four years ago, she introduced Kamishibai, a traditional Japanese storytelling technique, into her storytelling repertoire and has been entertaining and inspiring students with it ever since.



Becky Zeren introduces Kamishibai to her students.

Momotaro assembles his friends and shares his kibidango snack as they hike to Onigashima to retrieve the villagers' stolen treasures...

Kamishihbai is a traditional Japanese technique for illustrating and telling a story. I performed my first Kamishibai story four years ago using a *Momotaro (The Peach Boy)* retelling by Hazuki Kataoka and David Battino. When I finished the story during a family literacy evening, the children, ages 4 to 12, spontaneously applauded. I have since collected eight Kamishibai stories, both contemporary and traditional, and include them in my storytelling repertoire.

A set of 12 cards (number and size varies) is illustrated with traditional Asian or contemporary art on one side with words printed on the back in such a way that the words for the first card are actually printed on the back of the last card. The combination of visual images, story told in dialog, sound effects, and audience eye contact actively engages all listeners. The sudden snap or slow slide to the next picture (rather than the usual page turn) supports the dramatic sequences, building momentum toward the conclusion of the story. Using some Japanese words throughout the story further captures the attention of the audience.



Kamishibai illustration from
The Tongue-Cut Sparrow.

Using pictures to enhance stories is not new. Kamishibai dates to the 12th century when Buddhist monks traveling in Asia used pictures to help tell stories. Allen Say, in his book, *Kamishibai Man*, tells his readers how this style of storytelling became popular in Japan in the 1930's. Children and their families would gather in parks or on streets and listen to stories delivered from small wooden stages mounted on the back of bicycles. Children who purchased small handmade candies sat in front. The Kamishibai storyteller would leave the audience in suspense so they would return the next day or the next week to find out what

happened. Kamishibai storytelling continued to be popular in Japan after WWII. Today it is seen mostly in museums and schools. The library I visited in Zushi three years ago had a large collection of Kamishibai fiction, non-fiction, and folktale story card sets. A family could even borrow a traditional wooden theatre to hold the cards!

Kamishibai is a compelling tool to add to any librarian's "tool box." Today students enjoy creating their own Kamishibai storytelling cards working together as illustrators, writers, and storytellers, retelling or creating and "publishing" original stories to share with other students. The art of Kamishibai creatively integrates the successful achievement of many Language Arts, Social Studies, and Performing Arts National Standards.

Traveling Exhibitions



The [Rowland Medical Library](#) at the University of Mississippi is one of 61 sites to present a new traveling exhibit that honors the lives and achievements of American women in medicine—both past and present. "Changing the Face of Medicine" began on March 7, 2008, and will continue for six weeks at the Jackson Medical Mall. Visit the exhibit and plan to attend some of the many free planned programs, which include "Women and Heart Disease: Leadership and Contributions of Women Physicians"; a celebration of Mississippi Women Physician's Day; "Health Career Accomplishments of African-American Women," with a book signing by Dr. Evelyn Walker; "Healthy Children for a Strong Mississippi"; "The Future of Women's Health in Mississippi"; "A Lady Alone: Elizabeth Blackwell, First American Woman Doctor," a one-woman play written by N. Lynn Eckert, M.D. and performed by Linda Gray Kelley; "Women's Health Update 2008: A Woman's Health Throughout Her Life Span"; and Recruiting the "Next Generation: Women in Biomedicine." In addition, a raffle for a handmade quilt will be held on April 8.

The exhibit also will include two interactive kiosks traveling with the exhibition that offer access to the NLM's "[Local Legends](#)" web site, which features outstanding women physicians from every state, and to a [web site](#) created for the larger exhibition at the NLM. The exhibition web site offers access to educational and professional resources for people considering medicine as a career, as well as lesson plans for classroom activities. A section of the

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