

Tamayo Otsuka

Kamishibai Performer, Cultural Heritage Practitioner, Educator, and Cultural Producer

Osaka, Japan

### Professional Profile

Tamayo Otsuka is one of Japan's leading practitioners of traditional street kamishibai and a cultural heritage practitioner dedicated to preserving, transmitting, and promoting Japanese kamishibai culture both in Japan and internationally.

For more than 45 years, she has been engaged in kamishibai performance, exhibitions, publishing, and educational activities. Beginning her career as a traditional street kamishibai performer traveling by bicycle to neighborhood parks, she has devoted her life to preserving and transmitting Japan's kamishibai heritage.

In recent years, she has focused on discovering, preserving, reproducing, and publishing handmade kamishibai created by children and community members. Working in collaboration with museums, libraries, schools, and community organizations, she promotes cultural heritage preservation and international exchange through kamishibai.

Through performances, exhibitions, workshops, publications, and international collaborations, she has introduced kamishibai to audiences throughout Japan, North America, and Europe.

She currently serves as President of the Handmade Kamishibai Museum.

### Major International Activities

- 1993 – Performer, 12th Japanese Traditional Culture Festival, Versailles, France
- 1994 – Kamishibai Performer, Japan-America Society Festival, Phoenix,

## USA

- 1995 – Performer at the Los Angeles Japan Festival; presentations in San Diego and at UCLA, USA
- 2009 – Presenter of Japanese traditional culture at the National Cherry Blossom Festival, Washington, D.C., USA
- 2026 – Invited Lecturer, The Japan Foundation, Toronto, Canada • The World of Kamishibai: Japan’s “Paper Theater” and Storytelling
- 2026 – Invited Performer, Festa Junina Boston, USA

## Major Cultural Activities

- 1981 – Certified Kamishibai Performer
- Studied under Genichiro Shiozaki, one of the last traditional kamishibai publishers in Japan
- More than 40 years of experience performing traditional street-style kamishibai
- 2020 – Founded the Handmade Kamishibai Association
- 2022 – Published Tamachan’s Kamishibai Begins!
- 2024 – Co-organized Welcome! Into the Forest of World Kamishibai with Osaka Prefectural Nakanoshima Library
- 2024 – Presented Jigoku-Gokuraku Nozoki Karakuri at Suita City Museum
- 2025 – Curated The Mysterious World of Nozoki Karakuri Exhibition at Kids Plaza Osaka
- 2026 – Executive Director and Artistic Director of Atsumare! Marugoto Kamishibai! at Osaka Municipal Central Library

## Selected Publications and Media

### Publication

#### Tamachan’s Kamishibai Begins! (2022)

A book introducing the appeal, cultural significance, and performance practices of kamishibai, based on more than four decades of experience.

### Film

#### Reviving Kamishibai: Nurturing Dreams (1996)

A documentary exploring the charm and potential of traditional street kamishibai.

Recipient of the Special Prize at the Osaka Video Contest.

#### Major Exhibitions and Cultural Projects

- Welcome! Into the Forest of World Kamishibai (2024)
- Jigoku-Gokuraku Nozoki Karakuri (2024)
- The Mysterious World of Nozoki Karakuri Exhibition (2025)
- Atsumare! Marugoto Kamishibai! (2026)

#### Awards and Honors

- 1989 – Sukiyanen Award, Osaka 21st Century Association
- 1996 – Special Prize, Osaka Video Contest
- 1997 – Osaka Prefectural Governor's Encouragement Award

#### Current Positions

- President, Handmade Kamishibai Museum
- Member, Shiozaki Otogi Kamishibai Museum
- Certified Curator (Museum Act of Japan)

#### Education

- Bachelor of Arts, Kyoto University of the Arts

#### Areas of Expertise

- Traditional Street Kamishibai
- Preservation and Transmission of Handmade Kamishibai
- Children's Creative Education
- Reading Promotion and Storytelling
- Museum and Exhibition Planning
- Community Cultural Heritage Projects
- International Cultural Exchange through Kamishibai
- International Lectures, Workshops, and Performances

#### Mission

To preserve kamishibai as a living cultural heritage and to connect children, communities, and people through storytelling and cultural exchange.

Kamishibai is not only a traditional Japanese performing art but also a universal medium that connects people across generations, cultures, and national borders.

Through her lifelong work, Tamayo Otsuka is committed to passing on the rich heritage and potential of both traditional street kamishibai and handmade kamishibai to future generations, while building bridges of understanding through cultural exchange around the world.