

# Mythstories Gallery Guides



where  
words  
work

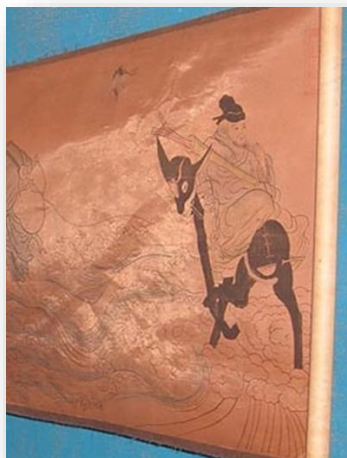
**Mythstories**

museum of myth and fable

Mythstories museum of myth & fable  
University Centre Shrewsbury  
Guildhall  
Frankwell Quay  
Shrewsbury  
Shropshire  
SY3 8HQ

Registered Charity no. 1161594

*Entering Block A 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Corridor turn right to SGH306*



## Scroll of the 8 Immortals

**Silk scroll on canvas backing  
Donated by storyteller, Ben Haggarty.**

This scroll depicts ancient Chinese super heroes. Although some of their stories were first told way back in the mists of time many still have a contemporary resonance.

“Zhang Guo Lao” rides backwards on a mule, which carries him through time and space to a situation which can only be resolved by his ‘superpower’ of thought. Zhang Guo Lao can fold the mule up and put it in his pocket.

“He Xian Gu” holds a health giving lotus flower, she may also carry a musical instrument known as a sheng, a bamboo ladle or fly-whisk.

“Cao Guojiu” dresses in official robes and holds a jade tablet or castanets. He is the patron deity of acting and theatre.

“Li Tieguai” is irascible and ill-tempered, but also benevolent to the poor, sick and the needy, whose suffering he alleviates with special medicine from his gourd. Often shown as an ugly old man with dirty face, he walks with the aid of an iron crutch.

“Lan Caihe” is a boy or girl dressed in sexually ambiguous clothing and carrying a bamboo flower basket and/or a pair of bamboo castanets. Lan left the human world by riding on a celestial swan or crane into Heaven.

“Lü Dongbin” is a Chinese scholar and poet who is considered to be one of the earliest masters of the tradition of neidan or internal alchemy. He often bears a sword on his back that dispels evil spirits.

“Han Xiangzi” studied Taoist magical arts. He is the patron deity of flutists and often depicted carrying a dizi (Chinese flute).

“Zhongli Quan” is shown with his chest and belly bare, and holds a feather or horsehair fan. He has wisps of hair on his temples, a beard down to his navel and is often shown drinking wine.

*Continue to the opposite end of the Corridor to SGH302*



## The Kebra Negast

**story cloth on loan from storyteller Helen East**

They worshipped the serpent. / They planned to kill the serpent .... And so begins the story of the Kebra Nagast (the Glory of Kings).

This story is central to Ethiopian society and history. The scroll's focus is the meeting between Sheba (Maqeda) and King Solomon. Maqeda becomes Queen of Ethiopia, goes to meet King Solomon and is seduced. Their son is Menelik (Nebuchadnezzar in the Old Testament). At the heart of the story is the belief that Menelik brought the ark of the covenant from Israel, and hid it in Ethiopia.

The scroll has been represented by painters through the generations. It always has 44 squares, each square telling a specific part of the story. The quality and detail differ, depending on the talent of the painter. Storytellers use the scroll to tell the story, elaborating and embroidering around each depicted scene.

Read the images like a book left to right:

1. They worshipped the serpent.
2. They planned to kill the serpent.
3. They mixed poison.
4. Fed the poison to a goat.
5. Went with the goat.
6. Gave the goat to the serpent.
7. It killed the serpent.
8. They tell the king the serpent is dead.
9. They speak to Maqeda.
10. Maqeda's father dies.
11. Maqeda reigns.
12. Merchants go to Jerusalem.
13. They will send spices.
14. They depart with the spices.
15. The spices are presented.
16. Maqeda will visit King Solomon.
17. Maqeda and boat.
18. Maqeda at Solomon's gate.
19. Maqeda and Solomon meet.
20. Solomon gives a banquet.

21. Maqeda's dinner.
22. Solomon confronts Maqeda.
23. Solomon seizes Maqeda's maid.
24. Solomon sleeps with Maqeda's maid.
25. Solomon seizes Maqeda.
26. Solomon sleeps with Maqeda.
27. Solomon gives Maqeda a ring.
28. Maqeda goes home.
29. Maqeda gives birth to Menelik,  
the maid's child is also born.
30. Menelik and his friends play ganna (hockey)
31. Menelik says: 'tell me about my father?'
32. Maqeda shows him a mirror.
33. Menelik sets off to see Solomon.
34. He arrives in Jerusalem.
35. Menelik meets Solomon.
36. Menelik understands.
37. Menelik goes to school and learns Hebrew.
38. Menelik is given the ark of the covenant.
39. Menelik takes the ark.
40. Menelik shows the ark.
41. Maqeda enthrones her son.
42. The seal prevails.
43. Maqeda's deathbed.
44. The obelisks to Maqeda.



Performance Storyteller  
Sally Pomme Clayton  
rehearsing with her  
Ethiopian story scroll,  
preparing to tell 'The  
Tales of Solomon and  
Sheba' at Derby's  
Flying Donkey's  
storytelling club. (2007)



## Horus

**cloth on loan from storyteller Helen East**

The applique cloth shows Horus, the falcon-headed son of Isis and Osiris. In a complicated saga the god Osiris is first duped by his brother, rescued by his wife Isis and eventually decides to rule the Underworld. It is left to Horus to avenge his father.

On the next page is a version of the story told by Bilston school children, part of a project delivered by artist in residence Dez Quarréll in 1992.



# ISIS & OSIRIS



OSIRIS AND HIS WIFE  
ISIS WITH THEIR  
EGYPTIAN SUBJECTS



OSIRIS BIDDING HIS WIFE,  
ISIS AND HIS SON, HORUS  
GOODBYE, BEFORE SETTING  
OUT ON HIS TRAVELS



SET, OSIRIS'  
BROTHER,  
GATHERING 72  
FAT MEN TO  
OVERTHROW  
OSIRIS



SET CHALLENGING THEM  
TO GET INTO THE JEWEL  
COVERED BOX



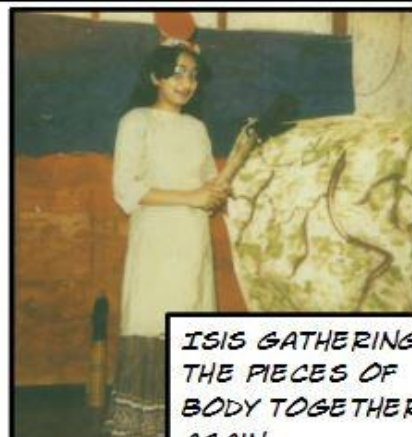
OSIRIS IS FITTING HIMSELF  
INTO THE BOX WHILE SET AND  
THE FAT MEN HOLD THE LID



THE BOX, NOW A  
COFFIN, WASHES  
UP NEXT TO A  
TAMARISK TREE  
ON AN ISLAND



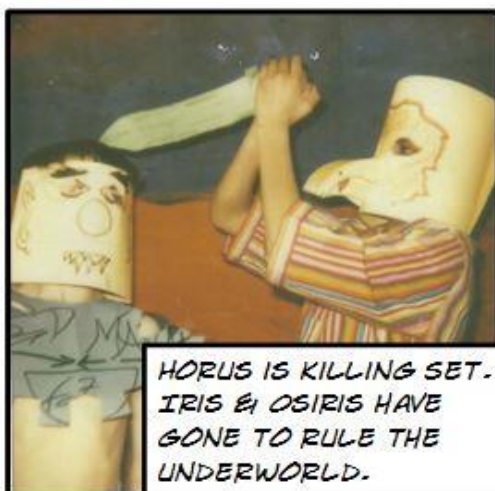
SET CHOPS THE  
BODY OF OSIRIS  
INTO 14 PIECES



ISIS GATHERING  
THE PIECES OF  
BODY TOGETHER  
AGAIN



ISIS USES MAGIC TO SEW  
THE BODY TOGETHER



HORUS IS KILLING SET.  
ISIS & OSIRIS HAVE  
GONE TO RULE THE  
UNDERWORLD.

Told by pupils  
from St Leonard's  
Primary School,  
Bilston 1992  
part of The Mosaic  
Herb Wheel project

*And take a look in what appears to be a store in the corner of the room it is, in fact, our “Story Hoard”, here are just some of the artefacts you can find there...*



## Palekh Story Plate

**Manufactured by Tianex**

*An oak tree greening by the ocean;  
A golden chain about it wound;  
Whereon a learned cat, in motion  
Both day and night, will walk around;  
On walking right he sings a ditty,  
On walking left, he tells a lay*

from the preface to “Lukomorye” by Aleksandr Pushkin

Not one story, but many, are shown on this fabulous Russian plate. Museum friend, Gretel, was searching through bric-a-brac shops in Shrewsbury for something completely different when she came across this beautiful Palekh plate, one of a series of 12 on Russian legends. She donated it to the museum in 2007.

Can you find:

- 30 handsome armoured heroes?
- A mermaid sitting in a tree?
- The woodsprite?
- A warlock carrying a warrior?
- Kashey with the treasure?



## Palekh Box

**showing a scene “The Tale of Tsar Sultan”**

**Donated by storyteller Roisin Murray**

Palekh is a Russian folk handicraft of a miniature painting, which is done with tempera paints on varnished articles made of papier-mâché.



It dates back to 1923 in the village of Palekh, and is based on a long local history of icon painting. The Palekh miniatures usually represent characters from real life, literary works, fairy tales and songs. They are painted with local bright paints over the black background and are known for their delicate and smooth design, abundance of golden shading, and accurate silhouettes of flattened figures, which often cover the surface of the lids and sides of the articles completely.

The miniatures are usually set off with a complicated pattern made with gold dissolved in aqua regia.

### ***THE TALE OF TSAR SALTAN***

Tsar Saltan overheard 3 sisters day-dreaming about being married to him: 'I would prepare a feast for the world' said one, 'I would weave linen for the world' said the second 'I would give him an heir, handsome and brave beyond compare' said the third.

Tsar Saltan married the third sister, the first became the palace cook and the second the palace weaver. The sisters and their friend, Barbarika grew jealous of the new Queen.

The Queen had a beautiful baby boy and sent a messenger to tell the Tsar.

But the sisters substituted the message for one which read 'your wife, the queen, has borne neither a son nor daughter, neither a mouse nor a frog, but has given birth to an unknown little creature'.

The horrified Tsar sent a message back saying no action should be taken until his return.

But the sisters substituted the message for one which read 'the queen and her baby must be put into a barrel and thrown into the sea'.

And so it was

Inside the barrel the Queen wept and her son grew stronger.

They were washed up on an island, the son made a bow & arrow and went hunting. He saw a black hawk attacking a swan and killed the hawk. The white swan thanked him, explained that the hawk had been a wicked wizard and promised to serve the son forever.

The son returned to the Queen and told her his tale. They both fell asleep. When they awoke they saw that the swan had created a wondrous city for them to rule. The son took the title of Prince Gvidon.

One day a merchant ship put in at the city trading furs. The merchant told Prince Gvidon they planned to sail on to the Kingdom of Tsar Saltan. The Prince told the swan he wanted to see his father. The swan turned the Prince into a gnat and he hid himself in a crack of the ship's mast.

When the merchants met Tsar Saltan they told him of the wondrous island and city and sang the praises of Prince Gvidon. The Tsar wanted to see this land for himself, but the sisters and Barbarika played down the marvels of this new land saying 'what is really amazing is a squirrel that sits under a fir tree cracking golden nuts containing kernels of pure emerald and singing a song'. The gnat stung Barbarika in the right eye, flew home and told the swan about the squirrel.

The swan created the singing squirrel in Prince Gvidon's courtyard. The Prince built a crystal house for it and ordered a guard to stand watch and a scribe to record each nut shelled.

One day a merchant ship put in at the city. The merchant told Prince Gvidon they planned to sail on to the Kingdom of Tsar Saltan. The Prince told the swan he wanted to see his father. The swan turned the Prince into a fly and he hid himself in a crack of the ship.

When the merchants met Tsar Saltan they told him of the wondrous island and city and the squirrel and sang the praises of Prince Gvidon. The Tsar wanted to see this land for himself, but the sisters and Barbarika played down the marvels of this new land saying 'a greater wonder is thirty-three handsome young knights, led by old Chernomor, rising from out of the raging sea'. The fly stung Barbarika in the left eye, flew home and told the swan about the knights.

The swan told Gvidon the knights were its brothers. The Prince climbed his tower in time to see the knights and old Chernomor coming out of the sea. They promised to come each day to protect his island.

One day a merchant ship put in at the city. The merchant told Prince Gvidon they planned to sail on to the Kingdom of Tsar Saltan. The Prince told the swan he wanted to see his father. The swan turned the Prince into a bumblebee and he hid himself in a crack of the ship.

When the merchants met Tsar Saltan they told him of the wondrous island and city and the squirrel and the thirty-three knights led by old Chernomor who came out of the sea each day to protect the island and sang the praises of Prince Gvidon. The Tsar wanted to see this land for himself, but the sisters and Barbarika played down the marvels of this new land saying 'what is really amazing was a Princess who lives beyond the seas. The light of day pales against her beauty, the dark of night is lit up by it and her words are like the



murmur of a tranquil brook. The bumblebee stung Barbarika on her nose, flew home and told the swan about his adventure and how he wanted a wife.

The swan said there was no such Princess beyond the seas and that a wife could not simply be cast off like a glove. Prince Gvidon said he would search the world for the Princess. The swan sighed.

“There’s no need to travel, there’s no need to tire. The woman that you desire, is now yours to spy. The Princess is I”. The swan flapped its wings and turned into the beautiful Princess. She and Gvidon were married that evening.

One day a merchant ship put in at the city. The merchant told Prince Gvidon they planned to sail on to the Kingdom of Tsar Saltan. The Prince asked them to convey his greetings to the Tsar. He had no wish to leave his bride and travel with them.

When the merchants met Tsar Saltan they told him of the wondrous island and city and the squirrel and the thirty-three knights led by old Chernomor who came out of the sea each day to protect the island and sang the praises of Prince Gvidon and his lovely Princess whose beauty was beyond compare.

The Tsar wanted to see this land for himself, and this time would not be put off and set sail immediately with all his household.

Prince Gvidon met the Tsar and escorted him, the two sisters and Barbarika to the palace. They walked past the thirty-three knights and old Chernomor, they walked past the squirrel and there was the beautiful Princess. But next to her the Tsar saw his own long-lost wife. Then he realised Gvidon was his son and that he had been tricked.

The two sisters and Barbarika ran and tried to hide, but they were found and confessed everything. The Tsar was so happy that he forgave them. Then the Tsar, the Queen, Prince Gvidon and the Princess lived the rest of their days in happiness.



## Story Gourd

from Peru

Once a fruit, a relation of the humble marrow, it's maybe not an auspicious start to life. Just look at him now, an artwork and a story, shake him and he'll rattle his seeds with glee.

This gourd has been slowly dried and then had a design etched into its flesh. Not just pictures but the story is there in captions you'll need good eyesight to see and a good command of Portuguese to read.

Come and see if you can fathom out the story of Juana, or ask our resident storyteller to tell you the tale. Just get ready to hold back the tears because this Peruvian saga of life and death doesn't have a happy ending.

This is one of a group of storytelling artefacts acquired for the museum by storyteller Helen East on a busy tour of South America in 2006.

This kind of rotatable artefact is ideal for telling stories from the 'circular' or 'there and back' archetypes



## Portable Nativity

**A retablo from Northern Chile  
acquired for Mythstories by Helen East 2006**

Retablos are a tradition in Andean folk art, miniature three dimensional scenes housed in a portable box. It is thought the tradition was introduced to Latin America by Spanish priests who used the boxes in church ceremonies.

This portable, pocket nativity comes from Northern Chile, and tells the story of the birth of Jesus including the odd cactus here and there.

It is a beautifully crafted artefact with baked dough figures painted and varnished enshrined in a case of split bamboo held together by tiny leather straps. It folds together fastened by a string of red and white wool to fit in the pocket. The partitions between the tableaux are made from recycled card.

With one of these to carry with you you'd never be without an altar for your prayers, wherever you go.

See also the Mythstories retablo made by Mythstories Home Ed Group 2019...





# Hahoe Mask

## From South Korea

This small replica Hahoe mask was gifted to the museum in 2008 by the South Korean cultural mission. They accompanied a camera crew who filmed the museum as part of a world-wide fact-finding mission before establishing a museum of Hahoe storytelling.

Hahoetal masks are the traditional Korean masks worn in the Hahoe Pyolshin-gut t'al nori ceremony, which dates back to the 12th century. They represent the stock characters needed to perform the roles in the ritual dance dramas included in the ceremony. The masks are considered to be among of the most beautiful and well known images representing Korean culture and the government have named them a "National Treasure"

*It is said that a young man named Hur received instructions in a dream from his local protecting deity to construct the masks. The decree was that he had to create all of the masks in private, completely unseen by any other human being. He closed himself off in his home, hanging straw rope around the house to prevent anyone from entering while he finished his task. A young woman in love with Hur grew impatient after not seeing him for several days. She decided to secretly watch him by making a small hole in his paper window. Once the deities'*

*rules were broken, Hur immediately started vomiting and haemorrhaging blood, dying on the spot. It is said he was working on the final mask of Imae when he died, leaving it unfinished without a chin. The girl then died of guilt and a broken heart. The villagers performed an exorcism allowing for their souls to be raised to the rank of local deity, and they were able to marry in the afterlife. The Hahoe Pyolshin-gut ritual ceremony was developed to honour them and console their tormented souls.*



The masks represent the characters in the Hahoe pyolsin-gut dance.

They are:

**Chuji (the winged lions):** They act as protectors from evil during the ritual performance. They are long ovals adorned with feathers and often painted red. They are not worn over the face, but held.



**Kaksi (the young woman/bride):** A goddess in the first play of the cycle and a young bride in later episodes. This mask has a closed mouth and closed downward lowered eyes, indicating that she is both shy and quiet. Her eyes are not symmetrical, and the mask is carved and painted to have long black hair. The mask is constructed from one solid piece of wood.

**Chung (the Buddhist monk):** A lecherous and gluttonous character. The mouth of the mask is a separate piece from the top and attached with cords, allowing for movement to represent laughter. The eyes are narrow, and there is a small horn-like bump on the forehead. The mask is often painted red to represent middle-age.

**Yangban (the aristocrat):** The character with the most power, and therefore the object of extreme mockery in the plays. The eyes are painted closed, with deep dark eyebrows and wrinkles surrounding them. The chin is a separate piece from the top of the mask, and the actors can lean forward and back to make the mask smile or frown as needed.

**Ch'oraengi (the aristocrat's servant):** The wise fool, providing much of the comedy for the plays. He has a crooked mouth with his sharp teeth showing and bulging eyes set in a deep socket with a solid dark eyebrow. The expression of the mask shows stubbornness, anger and a mischievous and meddling nature.

**Sonpi (the teacher/scholar):** Another character holding high social status, the mask has flared nostrils and sharply defined cheekbones to show an air of disapproval, conceit and disdain. It is wider at the top, coming almost to a point at the chin to represent and mock the large brain of the know-it-all scholar. The mask has a separate jaw attached with a chord or string.

**Imae (the scholar's servant):** This character is portrayed as a jolly fool, with a drooping eyes to express foolishness and naivety. The forehead and cheeks are slanted and there are many wrinkles around the entire face and eyes. It is the only mask without a chin.

**Punae/Bune (the concubine):** Punae is a forward and sexual character, appearing in the plays as the concubine of either the scholar or the aristocrat. The mask is symmetrical and made of one solid piece of wood. She has a very small mouth with red rouged lips, cheeks and forehead. Her eyes are closed and she has a general look of happiness and good-humour. The mask is constructed with black hair painted on the top of her head and 2 cords/strings hanging from the sides of the mask.

**Paekjung (the butcher):** The mask has narrow eyes and a separate jaw, allowing the mask to have an evil grin when the actor leaned forward, and appear to be in maniacal laughter when leaning back. The hair and eyebrows are painted black

and the mask is covered with wrinkles. The brow is slanted to represent an ill-tempered nature.

**Halmi (the old woman):** The mask has wide round eyes and an open mouth, both surrounded by wrinkles. The forehead and chin are both pointed to represent a character without the blessings of heaven above or the promise of good fortune later in life. The mask is one solid piece of wood.

Three of the original twelve masks are lost. These represent:

**Ttoktari (the old man)**

**Pyolch'ae (the civil servant/tax collector)**

**Ch'ongkak (the bachelor)**

The Pyolshin-gut t'al nori ceremony consists of ten "episodes." They are:



**Opening rituals/"Piggyback" episode:** The ceremony begins with a forty to fifty foot pole being erected to honor the village's guardian deity. The pole has five brightly coloured pieces of fabric and a bell on top. A second, smaller pole is built for the "Deity of the Home-site," also with five pieces of fabric on the top. The villagers and audience then prays for the Gods to descend and bless the proceedings, and the bell on top the larger pole rings to signify their approval. The villagers then throw pieces of clothing at the poles, trying to have them drape over them. Success would ensure personal blessings of prosperity. The master of ceremonies and performers then start marching down to the performance site followed by the audience, playing music and dancing along the way. The performer wearing the Kaksi bride mask is carried to the performance, as she is representing the deity of the girl, and deities cannot touch the ground. This action earns the deity's blessing for the proceedings.

**The Winged Lions Dance:** Two performers carry the Chuji masks and dance around the playing space, loudly opening and closing the mouths of the masks. The purpose of this dance is to ensure the safety of the playing space and actors by expelling evil spirits and demonic animals, which would be scared of the winged lions. Once the dance is done, the stage has been purified.

**The Butcher Episode:** Paekjung, dances around and taunts the audience. He kills a bull and then starts trying to sell the heart and other organs to the audience. The audience refuses and he shows frustration by throwing tantrums and shouting. He then makes an energetic attempt to sell the bull's testicles. He runs through the audience trying desperately to finish his task.

**The Old Widow Episode:** Halmi, tells the story of losing her husband the day after their wedding, and expresses her grief at having been a widow since she was fifteen. She sings a song at her loom telling her tale.

**The Corrupt Monk Episode:** Chung watches Punae/Bune dance around the stage. She then urinates on the ground, Chung scoops up the wet earth and smells it, and is instantly taken over with lust. The two dance a lascivious dance unknowingly being watched by Sonpi and Yangban. They then run off together to the disapproval of the scholar, aristocrat and their servants.

**The Aristocrat and the Scholar Episode:** Sonpi and Yangban fight over their shared desire for Punae/Bune. They argue about their worthiness, citing examples of their education and desire, and then compete to buy the bull testicles from the butcher as a sign of virility. The three come to amiable terms and all dance together. Their servants mock them and tell them the tax collector is coming so Yangban, Sonpi and Punae scatter.

**The Wedding Episode:** Villagers compete to present the couple with their personal mat to be used for their wedding night. It is believed that anyone successfully adding their mat to the pile will be blessed with prosperity. A small wedding ceremony is then performed on a collection of mats piled from the offerings of the audience.

**The Wedding Night/Bridal Chamber:** Ch'ongkak ceremoniously removes Kaksi's robe and they lay down together on their pile of wedding mats, acting out the consummation of their marriage. Afterwards, the couple falls asleep and Chung jumps out of a wooden chest and murders Ch'ongkak. *This scene is played at midnight, and due to its graphic nature women and children were forbidden to attend.*

Japanese rule of South Korea halted the Hahoe pyolsin-kut ceremony in 1928. From 1974-1975 The Hahoe Mask Dance Drama Preservation Society collected all existing manuscripts, meticulously recreating the ritual performance. They continue to perform the dances domestically and internationally, as well as training and passing on the traditions to younger generations.





Shining Threads by Julie Long



The Green Knight



Silver Hoof



Bright Crowns



The Fish & The Star



The Marriage of the  
Northern Lights  
& the Milky Way



The Easter Hare

These textiles were made by Julie Long as part of her Level 2 City & Guilds course in Hand and Textile Embroidery. They are on long-term loan.

The bags, pictures and cushions are all designed as props to help tell the stories they depict.

The workbook that accompanies "The Green Knight" serves as a window to examine their making process.

# Shining Threads

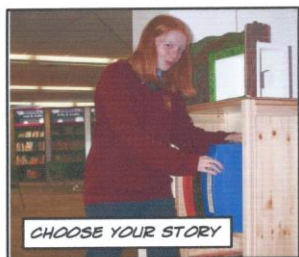
Made by Julie Long



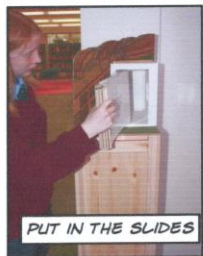
## two takes on the Japanese Kamishibai

A Kamishibai of Welsh Fairy Tales  
By Dez Quarréll funded by Arts Council Wales

A Kamishibai of tales of Victorian Wellington  
made by the Away With Words Storytelling Club



CHOOSE YOUR STORY



PUT IN THE SLIDES



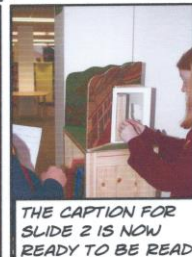
CHECK THEY  
ARE IN NUMBER  
ORDER, WITH 1  
AT THE FRONT



THE KAMISHIBAI  
TELLER READS  
THE CAPTION...



MOVE THE  
FIRST SLIDE  
TO THE BACK



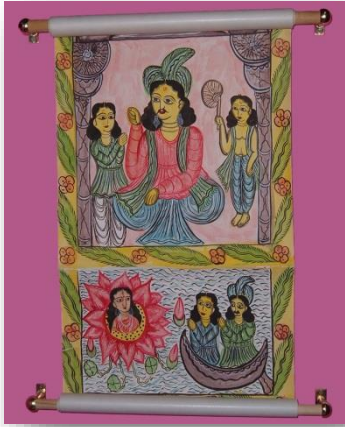
THE CAPTION FOR  
SLIDE 2 IS NOW  
READY TO BE READ

### How It Was Made!



THE STORIES FOR  
THIS KAMISHIBAI  
WERE RESEARCHED  
AND ADAPTED BY  
MEMBERS OF THE  
AWAY WITH WORDS  
STORYTELLING CLUB  
DURING 2014/2015.





# Story Pat

## Singing scroll from Bengal On loan from storyteller Helen East

Unrolled it extends to nearly five metres in length. It is made up of separate sheets of paper which are stitched together to form the complete pat.

Pat is the Bengali word for scroll and the artist is called a patua. The patua is a form of minstrel who travels West Bengal from village to village singing the story as he unravels his pat showing one frame at a time. When his show, which may consist of two or three scrolls, is over the villagers will reward him with food or money and he will travel on to the next village to perform.

The singing scrolls are often moral tales from the Hindu religion such as the Chandi Mangal illustrated above. However this is not always the case they are also used to depict Muslim stories and transmit topical news events.

This storytelling, or more exactly story-singing tradition dates back to pre 12<sup>th</sup> Century and its origin is unknown.

Although most villages have access to news via radio and television the tradition continues to this day in West Bengal with many present day events painted and sung utilizing pats.

### Chandi Mangal

(as sung by Mina Chitrakar, from Naya, Pingla, Midnapur  
- courtesy Academic Media Studio, Wesleyan University)

#### Image 1

Durga, Durga, Tara oh mother, the remover of distress

Hard to vanquish Dakshina Kali, the daughter of the king of mountains (Himalaya)

Lakshmi and Saraswati are on the left. Kartik, Ganesh, the lion, the Demon, Jaya and Bijoya (the two friends – sakhi) are with the mother.

#### Image 2

One day mother Durga was very pleased. She showed the jewels under the pomegranate tree.

Kalketu got the jewels from under the dalim tree and established a city, cutting down the Gujarat jungle.

Sadhu was imprisoned for 14 years, Srimanta was born in Khullana's womb.

### Image 3

Srimanta grew up, was educated and wanted to go in search of his father.  
You are my only son, the apple of my eyes. I'll be lost if I let you go.  
If you must go, first invoke Durga.  
When she was invoked, she appeared.

### Image 4

His mother gave him to the goddess. He started the boat Sying - jai (hail) Bhabani.  
In a storm in Magra Srimanta saw Kamini swallowing an elephant, sitting on a lotus.  
Kamala Kamini - in a lotus, swallowing an elephant, the mother of Genesha.  
The goddess swallows an elephant in a silence unbroken by any movement.  
Sadhu Srimanta does a million pronams.

### Image 5

After bowing to her Srimanta shows up in Ratnamala's ghat.  
There is the sound of Dhamsa (a kind of drum) in the ghat. The king's officers are fighting among themselves.  
Whose is the kingdom? The officers are bleeding it white. They don't bother to ask or inform the king.

### Image 6

King Shalibahan was sitting, having neglected his golden kingdom. Srimanta stood before him with folded palms.  
He said oh king I have seen a goddess on a lotus swallowing an elephant in your kingdom.  
Where is that Srimanta. Show it to me - I will give you half my kingdom and marry you to my daughter. But if you can't, listen to my words, you will be killed in the execution ground in the south.

### Image 7

Having made that promise, King Shalibahan came to Kalidaha to see Kamala Kamini.  
Mother Bhagabati played a trick. She hid within the hundred petals of the lotus.

### Image 8

Being unable to show her Srimanta was in a fix. The city keeper came to execute him and tied him up.  
Ensnared, Srimanta prayed to Durga. She displayed herself, resplendent with 18 arms.

### Image 9

Where did you go mother; who worshipped you.  
I'm giving you this boon, Srimanta. You will marry King Shalibahan's daughter



See also this **story pat** created by Mythstories Home Ed Group illustrating the story of "The Queen of the Cats" from Zimbabwe.

Created, stitched and sung in just three hours during their March 2020 Group Session at UCS, University Centre Shrewsbury.

Go to <https://youtu.be/yFz2WZ5XCBE> on Mythstories Youtube Channel to see the Group's improvised sung performance.

The group make and use storytelling artefacts at each of their sessions, also on display in the story hoard you will find a self assembly Pollocks Theatre which they assembled and told the story of Cinderella with in the Panto season during January 2020.



The story hoard cupboards also contain many group made storytelling artefacts. To learn how to make your own go to <http://www.mythstories.com/techart.php>



# Coyolxauhqui

## A jigsaw of an Aztec Goddess

This eleven piece jigsaw from Mexico City and its accompanying story will tell you all you ever needed to know about why the Sun continues in its incessant race to catch the Moon. And for that matter it will explain just why the Moon is determined not to be caught.

The puzzle of the Aztec story of Coyolxauhqui is an illustration of a giant stone plaque unearthed in construction work in Mexico City in 1978. The discovery led to the excavation of the Templo Mayor. The 3.25 metres in diameter stone was found at the foot of the South stair of the fourth rebuilding of the temple, which dates it between 1469 and 1481.

The jigsaw was donated to the museum by Lucy, a former education officer at Mexico City Museum who had come to live in the UK.

Coyolxauhqui literally means 'face painted with bells'. The completed jigsaw shows how her dismembered body was reassembled by her new-born brother Huitzilopochtli into the moon before he ran after her into the sky as the bright golden sun.

Prior to Huitzilopochtli's immaculate conception; his mother Coatlicue had not only given birth to Coyolxauhqui, she also had 400 sons (twenty times twenty meaning "innumerable") who became the stars.



Our curator delights in trying to tell the tale before the jigsaw is completed.





# L'auca del senyor Esteve

## two prints of a Catalan Auca

Clive Booth, a maker of ingenious 'tellers', from Barcelona, donated a copy of L'auca de senyor Esteve to the museum in November 2011.



Here's a picture of a tile version of 'L'Auca de Senyor Esteve' by Barcelona based photographer, Carlos Lorenzo. This version also allows you to view the other three pictures.

Here is a typed transcript of Clive's letter which arrived with the Auca...

*'Dear Dez & Ali,*

*Please find enclosed a copy of 'L'auca de senyor Esteve'. If you search "auca (cartoon)" on Wikipedia, you will discover it is a comic sheet that dates from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, particular to Cataluna, which is in the north east of Spain (capital, Barcelona).*



*This particular auca dates from the 20<sup>th</sup> century, being the comic book form of a novel 1907 (later 1917 play) by a famous Catalan writer, Santiago Russinyol.*

*Some streets in old Barcelona have tiled aucas on their walls, for example, the one on the Wikipedia site.*

*I have tried to find information about, I suppose, an earlier oral storytelling practice, that of setting up a series of pictures with a rhyming commentary to bring them alive as the story unfolds; I have not had any luck: but, there again, my ability with the computer is poor!*

*However, it is quite something in itself to know that the comic format goes back centuries. If you would like a copy of, say, the auca of Montserrat or of any of the Spanish “aieluya’s”, please let me know.*

*I am currently over-loaded with new English classes so my teller making has come to a halt. I made one for a public event 2 weeks ago and I very much surprised myself by bringing my texts alive with mime and gestures (it was too noisy to speak) and the public liked the content a lot.*

*Happy stories!*

*Clive*



# God of the Portal

**Machu Pichu, Peru**

Everywhere needs someone to keep a lookout at the door, and the story hoard is no exception.

Our chosen guardian is the pre-Inca god of the portal. Worshiped by the Tiwanaku civilisation from around 200BC until about 600AD, his image was later taken by the head of the Inca pantheon Viracocha, the God of Creation.

The embroidered image that keeps watch next to Mythstories' door is one of a group of storytelling artefacts acquired for the museum by storyteller Helen East on a busy tour of South America in 2006.



# Baboushka

## Russian nested dolls

Baboushka dolls (matryoshka dolls) were first made in 1890. Traditionally the outer layer is a woman dressed in a shapeless jumper dress, the inner dolls can be of either sex but the smallest is usually a baby made out of a single piece of wood. Baboushka literally means 'elderly woman' or 'grandmother'.

Later Russian iconographers unable to work after the Russian Revolution used this tradition to tell many Russian Folktales painting sequential scenes on the chest plates such as this example...



However here is Baboushka's story....

Baboushka was an old Russian widow who lived in a remote country village. She was fabled for miles around for keeping the finest, cleanest home and cooking the most delicious breakfasts, so when travellers came looking for lodgings nobody hesitated but said, "Go to Baboushka" and they did and they all left happy and content with a full stomach. And after they left Baboushka would immediately whisk around the house removing every speck of dust and dirt, washing the bedclothes and linen and putting her house back to its pristine condition.

Now one day three very special visitors came to the district. Three fine men, richly dressed and carrying expensive-looking parcels. Everybody wanted to know who they were and what was their business. And as in any little village soon everyone knew exactly who they were and what their business was. These were three wise men, following a star to be present at the birth of the king of kings and bearing gifts for the baby.

Well, they needed somewhere to stay and, of course, only one place would be fit for such eminent visitors. You have guessed it; Baboushka would be their host for the night. After a pleasant evening meal and before a restful night's sleep between crisp sheets they sat around the fire and told Baboushka of their mission. She had always been a stay-at-home kind of person, but this was no ordinary occasion and Baboushka was moved to join the kings on their journey. But she was an ordinary woman, nor rich, not wise. So long after the wise men had retired to their beds she sat thinking about how she could play her part and do her homage.

It was quite early in the morning that the idea came to her. In the attic she had her dolls still in nearly as good condition as when she had received them as a child. Maybe they could be a little dusty and require a spot of paint here and there and a shine with her magic cleaning fluid, but they would be an ideal present for a baby. 'Every baby, no matter how grand their birth, loves dolls' she thought and she set off to the top of the house to find them.

There in a trunk she found the nest of dolls. She tenderly took them in her hands and examined them with a critical eye. Yes, there was work to be done on them, but first she must prepare the breakfasts for the wise men. She had her reputation to keep and that cost time and care. The restoration of the dolls could come later and, if the men left, well ... she could follow later and catch up with them on their long journey.

After breakfast the three wise men left, leaving many thanks and a good generous quantity of coinage on their bedside tables. Baboushka set about cleaning the dolls. She did a fine job. You or I might have said "well, that is fair enough" but "fair enough" was not anything Baboushka would accept. After many an hour had been lavished on those toys they were fine beyond belief, a gift fit for the king of kings.

Baboushka went to collect her coat and outdoor shoes. But she remembered three unmade beds, dust on the hearth rug, a fire grate to clean and all those other tasks necessary to keep the neatest home in the countryside of Russia. It surely would be letting her standards drop if she left without tidying her house and doing her chores? And she would surely catch up with those wise men on their long journey.

When everything was done and the house was clean as a new pin, Baboushka set off. She followed the fading star ahead of her, but she was far behind and had a lot of time to make up.

She scurried and hurried, always following the traces of those men and the light of the now-faint star. But no matter how she exerted herself she was unable to catch up with them.

Finally, after many a day of anxiety, she found her way into a little stable in Bethlehem, deserted bar a few beasts chewing at the yellowing hay. After many a question she was told the baby was long gone, with his parents on his way to Egypt. Off she went on their trail and, you know, people they tell me she is following them still.

*and the contents of the story hoard continues overleaf...*



# a little box of Shropshire Treasures

Created by  
Yr 11 Work Experience Students  
Daragh Quinn & Holly Byrne 2008

In 2008, work experience students Holly Byrne and Daragh Quinn were challenged with turning a display case that had been donated to Mythstories by storyteller, Helen East, into a little box of Shropshire Treasures during their two week sojourn in the museum.

That involved researching stories of the mythical creatures of some of the county's diverse landscapes and breathing life into them so they could be discovered by visitors inside the drawers of the cabinet, like stories frozen in time.

Holly and Daragh rose to the challenge. The asrai from the bottom of Ellesmere Lake was created by Holly; she took the model home one night to bake the clay figure in the oven, and by the end of the week both Holly and Daragh had permanently green fingers from dying each strand of the mermaid-like creature's hair. If you want to see what is in the other drawers – open them and find out.



## Puppets & Marionettes

on the left  
2 Rajasthani Puppets  
donated by  
Jude Willerton

on the right  
2 Tunisian Puppets  
donated by  
Amy Douglas





## **Pinnochio, Prague**

donated by Jude Willerton



## **Tchantchès, Belgium**

The equivalent of our Mr Punch  
Donated by puppet master  
George Vetters of  
Li Teyate Dèl Clignète of Liège



## **Two faced Nepalese Nava Durga puppet**

donated by Jude Willerton



# The Cottage Craftbox

**Automata by Andy Hazell  
on permanent loan from Shropshire Council**

The cottage was commissioned for the ARTBOX touring project 2005/6 by the Eric Robinson Art Trust administered by Shropshire County Council.

The Cottage Craftbox was used to carry small craft objects from the Eric Robinson collection to schools on a touring exhibition.

**Gently each of the red handles in turn and watch the figures on the adjacent sides as they go about their domestic activities. The poor lady frying eggs in the kitchen has become disconnected at her waist.**

**And, if the red handles fall off, don't panic. It's happened many times before. Just tell one of the curators and they will organise a repair.**

*Or look inside the picnic hamper to find...*



The teddy bears' picnic knitted for the museum by Beth Quarrell





# three ways to tell Little Red Riding Hood

Stories come in small boxes as this modern version of a German matchbox theatre shows.

Little Red is having a chat with Granny unaware of the rotter, Big Bad who's lurking behind a tree. Hopefully the last surprise will be sprung upon that dastardly wolf as the woodcutter is busy sharpening his axe close by.

With its wooden lid doubling as the stage apron, and the bottom of the box reversible; slotting in and out to change scene from a rustic interior to the deep, dark woods; this little theatre is incredibly versatile, ready for any twists and turns to unfold in the telling of the story.



3 dolls in 1 - Little Red Riding Hood, Granny and a very evil looking Big Bad Wolf.

Dating back to the 1960's these popular **"topsy-turvy" dolls** were regularly used in storytimes in schools and libraries.

We have two in our collection, donated by Amy Douglas (storyteller) and Jude Willerton (former headteacher).



## The Big Bad Wolf from IKEA

The stuff that big bad dreams are made of? No!

The Big Bad Wolf has a huge appetite and a Velcro button-band to his shirt to give access to his stomach so Granny can be retrieved safe and sound. Donated by Kate Norgate and Ben Haggarty of the Crick Crack Club.

# The House of Fairy Tales

In 2007 we received a donation of a Doll's House.

It's maker, Margaret Burns, had found it, in a slightly disheveled state in her loft and had thought of us. Margaret had been on a storytelling training workshop at the museum and knew that we loved adapting objects into exhibits.

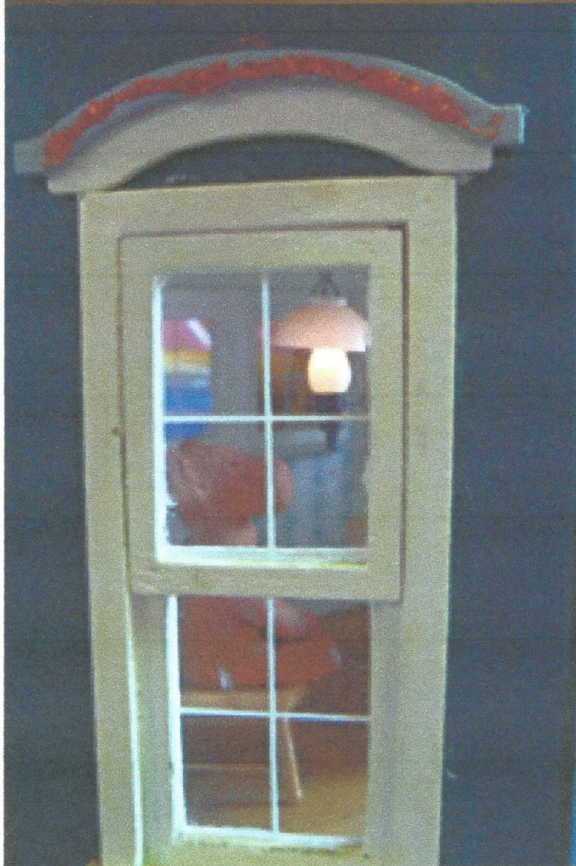
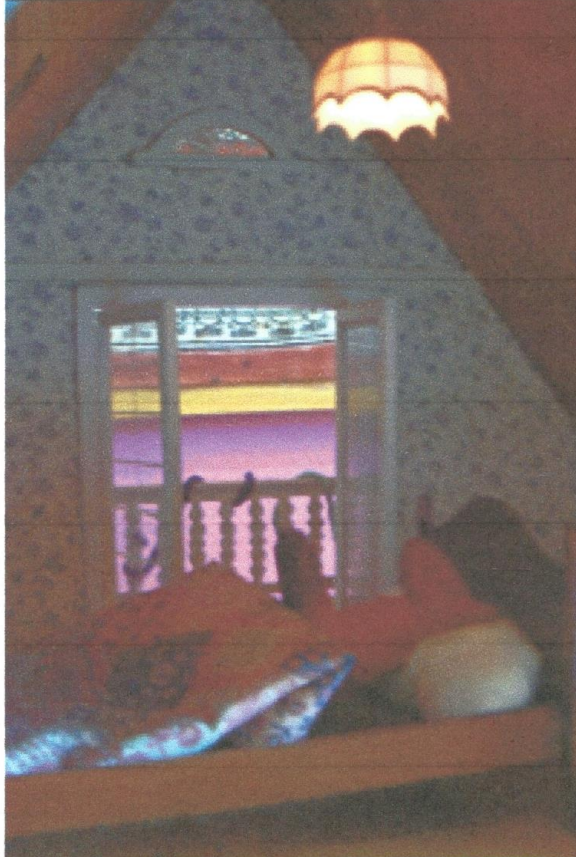
After a little work by the curators the Dolls' House was almost back to prime condition and a blank canvas for the imagination to build upon.



In 2014 work experience students Charlotte and Chloe were set the task on converting the New England Colonial Home into a house of fairy tales. Look into the windows and you will see the three bears eating porridge and the big bad wolf fast asleep in an upstairs bed, while a giant beanstalk grows by the front door.



Once upon a time...



What extra adaptations can you think of?



There's also:-



Like them or loath them; if you find them charming or twee these **flower fairies** certainly encapsulate the image of the fairy that became prevalent in the later half of the twentieth century.

There are **pencils** with members of an archetypal royal family which can be used as puppets to tell your own stories, and a wealth of **finger puppets** including many beautifully knitted ones from Peru.

You can also find many variations of **traditional corn dollies**.

**You will also find a modern game, TalkTent.**

This was created in 2001/2 by storytellers Jan Blake, Malika Booker and Helen East, working with artists Ali Pretty and Lucille Tuitt and pupils from ten schools in London.

The pupils batiked 10 panels, each depicting three stories, that were put together to create a life-size tent for storytelling and story creating.



The tiny tent you see on the desk was designed and produced by Kavi and Leela Mahipat to contain a game that linked some of those stories together.

Open the tent **VERY CAREFULLY** and explore the pockets and boxes inside.



Why not see if you can play the game?

## Take a look in the creature peepers



Some people will tell you that you are looking at a dragonfly larva case and a mummified sand lizard. Others believe these are **baby dragons**.



This **dragon's dropping** was collected from a secret location in the heart of Snowdonia by storyteller Andy Harrop-Smith, who donated it to the museum. Andy tells us his grandfather was a dragon-tamer who taught Andy all he knew. Andy says this is probably a dropping from a snow dragon.







This poster of the **Midgard Serpent** was donated to the museum by storyteller Michael Dacre. It depicts the mythical beast that features in many stories from Norse mythology.



And the paper Chinese Dragons features in many festivals today.

Also see the wooden Viking dragon hanging from the ceiling, all these dragon artefacts can be used to tell stories.



And is the **Chinese Lion** a dragon or maybe just a close relative?

Probably the most common historical reference to Chinese Lion Dance is the story of Nian. According to legend, a monster was terrorizing a small village; eating the livestock, crops and villagers. One day, a Buddhist monk visited the village and witnessed the events that had taken place. To rid the villagers of this menace, the monk instructed the villagers to get their best martial artists and build a 'monster'. In addition to this, the monk instructed the villagers to fill bamboo shoots with gunpowder and to cover the village in red decorations.



The following year, when Nian came back (its coming had become an annual occurrence), the village's best martial artists ran out with their 'monster', whilst the rest of the villagers rushed out banging their pots and pans, throwing their homemade firecrackers. Seeing this, Nian fled the village, scared for its life.

From this day, the Chinese perform this dance to not only celebrate their besting of Nian, but also to ward off bad-spirits or, if Nian should return, scare it away.

*There is so much more to see but we have to mention...*





# Patupaiarehe, Kete and Talking Stick

From New Zealand

**A Kete, a plaited flax bag, is a 'basket of knowledge'**

*The kete has its own stories. Firstly it is the flax that grows forth from Papatuanuku – there is the link between the flax and Papatuanuku. Rituals are observed. Secondly, there is the link between the kete and the person who plaited it – the person who caressed the blades of flax to give the kete shape and design. Thirdly, the kete may be given to another person thereby creating a link between people. Fourthly, when a kete is given to another it is because of a special occasion.*

Our Kete was a gift from Thelma Pugh, after her visit to New Zealand. Inside the basket you will find a book about kete and their makers. There is a card on the native Bellbird, a power shell, containing fragments of other power shells **(be very careful when touching these, they can be sharp).**



Walking Sticks 'Toko toko', or 'Rakau Korero' (Talking Stick) are generally decorated either by carving a representation of an ancestor, or a legend. This stick was hand carved by Te Karuhiruhi and acquired for the museum by Trustees Geoff Hardy and Peter Roscoe on a visit to the Te Puia Maori Cultural Centre in Rotorua.

When the Maoris have a Hui (meeting), on the Marae the men carrying the toko toko are generally recognised as being orators and having the authority to speak.

This keyring depicts a Patupaiarehe, a fairy from the Maori tradition. It was donated by Thelma Pugh.

Patupaiarehe are well-known for their love of stealing shadows and reflections.



You will see that both carved objects have 'eyes' made out of small fragments of power shells.

Nearby you will find:-



**A selection of Guatemalan worry dolls.** These tiny little Central American dolls are made for, and often by, children to take away the worries of real life. When the dolls are placed under your pillow you're certain to have a good night's sleep and wake up worry free in the morning. You will find a Guatemalan Worry Doll Nativity, complete with baby worry doll in a straw lined crib, with llamas looking on. This, together with the three single dolls, was donated by young storyteller, Jen Ward. The story sash was donated by Cumbrian storyteller, Heather Edwards.



and there are Buddhist **Prayer Flags** and a **Prayer Wheel**

*...there is so much more, you'd never believe your eyes!*

