

A HAPPY GATHERING AT THE KYOTO TOY FILM MUSEUM

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On 26 February 2022 Takashi Kawata organised a special afternoon meeting at the Toy Film Museum in Kyoto, Japan. With the title 'Happy Gathering: Three Great Comedy Kings', this was narrated by Kumiko Omori with musical accompaniment by Haruka Amamiya – and Charlie Chaplin, Harold Lloyd and Buster Keaton were the three comedy kings. The films in the programme were as follows:

- Charlie Chaplin, *The Adventurer* (1917)
- Harold Lloyd, *Haunted Spooks* (1920)
- Buster Keaton, *Cops* (1922)
- Charlie Chaplin, *The Star Boarder* (1914).

The last film, *The Star Boarder*, features a boy giving a magic lantern show. Just before the movie started Yoneo Ota, the manager of the Toy Film Museum, chose from the museum's collection the most similar toy lantern to the one in the movie (see Fig. 1) and showed us several lantern slides in order to set the scene and to help the audience understand what the child in the movie was trying to do as he made mischief.

Takashi Kawata explained the background of *The Star Boarder* (1914) as follows. The film was made at Keystone Studios during Chaplin's first year in the film industry and was the tenth of a total of 36 productions he appeared in that year. The director was George Nichols but very shortly after this Chaplin began directing his own films, then wrote the scripts and later the music.



1. Yoneo Ota showed us some standard travelogue slides then some toy lantern slides on a projector very like the one in the Charlie Chaplin film



2. Takashi Kawata in front of the screen and Yoneo Ota on the left projecting a magic lantern slide



4. The audience and presenters at the Museum



3. (from left to right) Museum Manager Yoneo Ota, Curator Fumiyo Ota, narrator Kumiko Omori, musician Haruka Amamiya and event organiser Takashi Kawata

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Yoneo Ota added his own comments on the magic lantern scenes in the film, pointing out that the projection and slides by the boy are not realistic but fictional. He also felt that his camera looked more like an example of a 70mm Kodak model.

Altogether the 32 people who attended (Fig. 4), including MLS members, enjoyed a very 'happy gathering' at the Museum. If you are ever in Kyoto do visit the Toy Film Museum which has an excellent collection of magic lanterns as well as early film exhibits.