

The Wallpaper that Talked

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Visuals for flashcards are included after the story.

(Visual 1) Koto San and Grandmother San were eating one morning, huddled over their little teacups. Koto San thought to herself, I don't know why Grandmother insists on calling it breakfast when we have only tea and bread, but I guess that's the right name for it. Koto San was a very obedient little girl.

My, but I wish we had enough money to buy wallpaper for our little room - surely that would make the room much warmer," said Grandmother San. "This crisp fall breeze is blowing through the cracks in the walls, and certainly causes a bad draft. You better put a shawl around your shoulders on the way to school today."

Koto San assured Grandmother that she would, and after breakfast, she began getting ready for school.

"Grandmother", she called, "Could you maybe get red paper with tiny white figures on it?" Grandmother said she would try, but that they had just a little bit of money and

she just didn't know if it would be possible to get any wallpaper at all.

(Visual 2) Koto San skipped merrily along to school. She was so glad that Grandmother had sent her to the Mission School. The teacher seemed happy all the time, and she told Koto San all about Jesus and how He loved her. Koto San had already asked Jesus to come into her heart and wash away her sins, and she longed to tell Grandmother - but she couldn't. Grandmother had warned her that she could never bring home the "foreign devil's terrible book." Surely God would make a way when He was ready.

(Visual 3) As soon as Koto San left the little home, Grandmother got dressed in her very best kimono with the long sleeves and a bright red sash. She began to wonder if she did the right thing in disobeying the priest and sent Koto San to the Mission School. Well, the child had to go to school, and the Mission School was by far the cheapest. And so, Grandmother soothed her doubts and started out to the market place.

Her little feet took small steps that went slip, slip, slip down the pathway.

When she got to the market, she found stalls of sweetbreads, fish, cloth and just about everything that anyone could want. But she had no money to spend on those things. At the far end of the market, she came to the wallpaper booth. She looked over the various kinds. She felt some of them and asked the price. Each time the merchant told her the price, she sadly shook her head. Not a single piece of wallpaper was cheap enough for Grandmother to buy.

Slowly and sadly, Grandmother shuffled toward home. Not only were her little feet going slowly, but her head hung low as she looked at the ground in front of her. However, she did notice how green the grass was on the lawn near that white house. She hadn't noticed that on the way to market. **(Visual 4)** Then she noticed a box on the lawn. She quickly looked up and down the street, but there was no one who looked interested in the box. Maybe it was thrown out on purpose. Grandmother quickly picked it up.

Inside the box was a pile of paper sheets, paper with little black marks all over it. The box wasn't very large, but there were so many sheets inside that she thought maybe she could use them to paper her wall at home. She glanced around again, but no one was watching her. Swiftly she tucked the box of paper under the big sleeve of her kimono and held it close against her side. Her little feet shuffled quickly now, even quicker than on the way to the market.

Koto San came right home from school. She opened the door wide and ran inside.

"Grandmother," she cried, "you did get some paper for our walls. How very nice." **(Visual 5)** Koto San moved closer to the walls and stopped ... she caught her breath to keep from squealing with joy, for on the wall before her was the Bible. She was afraid of what grandmother would say when she realized what she was doing, so she said nothing.

Grandmother paid no attention to Koto San and she continued with her pasting and papering. Grandmother could not read and did not know that all the wallpaper she was using were pages out of the Bible.

Koto San was thrilled beyond words. Quickly she asked Grandmother if she could help.

(Visual 6) “I’ll paste the wallpaper down here on the bottom of the walls so you won’t have to tire your back bending over,” said Koto San. She hurried over to the Bible and began picking the verses and the stories that were her favorites. All of these she pasted right where she could sit and read them while she was eating her meals. She pasted other passages on the other side of the room where her little bed was. Never before did Grandmother have such a willing worker as she did these days.

It took several days to finally finish papering the entire wall. Grandmother was glad because it would make the room much warmer for the coming winter and the paper had not cost her anything. But Koto San was glad because she could read God’s Word anytime - right off the wall.

One evening after dinner, Koto San said, “Grandmother, as I sit here drinking my tea, the wallpaper talks to me.”

“Talks to you? What are you saying, child? How can that be? I don’t hear anything. ... What does it say?” Grandmother was a little confused, but she played along, thinking it just a childish game.

(Visual 7) “Well, it tells me how the great God up in heaven made the sun, moon and stars, and the wonderful world we live in. Over and over it tells me that He made all the little fishes, the sheep and all the animals, and people all over the world.” Koto San’s voice was soft.

“Oh, is that what it says?” asked Grandmother. “How strange, I cannot hear it. Does it say anything else?”

“Oh yes, it tells me how the first man and woman disobeyed God, even after He gave them a beautiful garden to live in and everything to make them happy. The wallpaper said that God made the man and the woman leave the beautiful garden.” Little Koto San’s voice faded off.

Grandmother began to get excited. “Does the wallpaper say anything else? Strange I can’t hear it,” and she pressed her ear to the wall.

“The wallpaper said that because of the sin in their hearts, God couldn’t allow them to stay in the garden,” Koto San told Grandmother.

(Visual 8) Grandmother sat quietly for a little bit. She had been playing along with Koto San, but she did find the story very interesting. “We must listen again tomorrow and see if it tells us any more,” she said.

Everyday, Grandmother waited patiently for little Koto San to come home from school. Everyday, Koto San would tell Grandmother about the stories on the wallpaper. In no time at all grandmother learned that God had sent His Son to die for the sins of the whole world and that anyone could believe on Him, and have their sins forgiven. What wonderful news the wallpaper gave. Just think, all these years Grandmother never knew about Jesus and His love for her.

(Visual 9) Grandmother went to the priest one day while Koto San was in school. She wanted to ask if this beautiful story were true or not. It must be true, for it spoke to her heart like no other story ever had? When the priest heard what she had

done with the box of white paper, he was furious.

“It is the foreign devil’s book,” he screamed at her. “You have pasted this thing on your walls.” And with that, he pushed her out of the door and slammed it behind her.

Her little feet dragged down the pathway from the priest’s house. Her head was bent, and her eyes were filled with tears. Grandmother was trembling. Was it really that terrible book? If so, how did it give her such joy as she listened to Koto San tell what the wallpaper was saying? If the wallpaper was the Bible, then it was indeed a good book. Grandmother slowly headed homeward. The tears were now running down her cheeks and to the road beneath her.

Suddenly, she stopped. If that book were the Bible, then whoever lived in the house where she found the box should know if the story were true or not. She headed straight for the white house. Across the lawn, up the steps and to the door went Grandmother. She knocked softly, then waited.

(Visual 10) A white-skinned, foreign lady opened the door and invited her in. Grandmother watched the lady's lovely face and her big smile and thought "Surely I do not have to be afraid here." She sat there and began to tell the lady what had happened. The story just bubbled out. The missionary (for that's who she was) listened very intently, and then reached over to the small table nearby and picked up a Bible. As she opened the book, Grandmother peeked over the top of it to see the pages.

"That's it," shouted Grandmother, "That's my wallpaper. Oh please tell me. Are the stories in the book true? Does God really love me."

With great joy, the missionary told her that God loved her. "See here," said the missionary, "John 3:16 says, *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*" John 6:37 says, *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*" Before the missionary could read an-

other word, Grandmother said, "Oh, I want God's Son to be my Saviour."

The missionary and Grandmother knelt, and the missionary prayed out loud and asked for God to help Grandmother San to trust Jesus to be her Saviour. Soon Grandmother was crying with joy and thanking God for letting her find the Bible. Her wallpaper had indeed talked, for it told her of God's love for her. Right then, she did ask Jesus to come into her heart and be her Saviour.

Happily she hurried home, and as Koto San came into their house, she called out, "Koto San, do you know what I found out today about our wallpaper?"

(Visual 11) Koto San stopped quickly and turned around to face Grandmother. She knew that she should have told Grandmother what the wallpaper really was, but she just couldn't. Now she probably would be punished for not telling. She listened quietly as Grandmother said, "Our wallpaper is really the Bible. I went to see the missionary lady and she told me. Best of all she told me about Jesus and He is now my Sav-

your,” said Grandmother.

(Visual 12) Koto San jumped with joy, “Oh, Grandmother, He is my Saviour too!”

“This news is too good to keep for ourselves, Koto San. Let’s invite our friends in for tea and let them listen to our wallpaper talk.”

Koto San raced around to several of their friends, inviting them to join her Grandmother for tea.

Soon the neighbors sat around sipping tea and listening as the wallpaper talked to Koto San. She told them what it said, and when the neighbors were ready to leave, they said, “How wonderful that you have wallpaper that talks, but it’s even more wonderful that it tells of God’s wonderful love. We will gladly come again anytime.” And that was how Grandmother and Koto San held Bible classes in their little room, surrounded by the wallpaper that talked.























