This project reconsiders silent Asian film exhibition of the early 20th century and the remediation of those performance practices today.

Motivation
- Today, we have seen a renewed interest in silent film narrators (benshi and pyeonsa) and orchestral silent film performance.
- How can we understand such projects: these new, remediated works and the "reframing" that occurs when we combine older works with contemporary interpretations?
- What are the implications for performance, historical scholarship, and contemporary film viewing?

Context
- Contemporary film scholarship has begun to reconsider the relationship between the viewer and the mode of viewing, particularly about early film and silent works.
- Today, artists are revisiting and remediating older texts, adding new material, changing the mode of viewership (from a Nickelodeon to an art theater, for example), the format (often, from 35mm to a digital restoration), and other crucial elements.
- Additionally, archivists and scholars are finding and reviving older silent film-era performance recordings.

Project Description
- Feature three silent film performance events over the three semesters.
- Record and interview the performers.
- Bring in scholars to discuss the attributes and effects of these contemporary performances.

Potential Impact
- The research will create a digital repository for recordings and interviews.
- These events will become catalysts for scholarly inquiry, working both as a reflection on the past as an archeology of older media forms and an examination of the present through the lens of contemporary film.
- The project will experiment with ways to use digital media to reconceptualize past performances.

Project Deliverables
- After 1 year, the group will have staged performances and amassed recordings.
- Over the course of 2 years, we will host a larger roundtable to discuss scholarly implications and establish a digital framework for a repository of recordings and scholarship.
- We will measure success qualitatively and quantitatively, in terms of events held, recordings taken, and the quality of the scholarly implications.

Images
From left to right:
- Archival image
- http://www.taito-culture.jp/customs/engei_hall/english/page_03.html
- Illustration of a silent film/benshi performance.
- Photoplay theater district with film advertisements.
- Contemporary benshi performer Ichiro Kataoka.