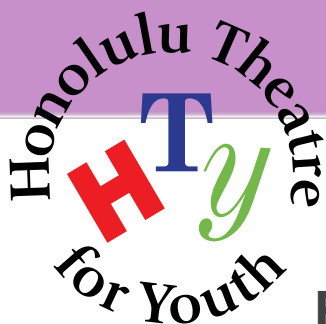




PERFORMANCE GUIDE

ANIME MOMOTARO

BY ALVIN CHAN, ERIC JOHNSON,
AND THE HTY ENSEMBLE



WWW.HTYWEB.ORG

**ALOHA FROM ARTISTIC DIRECTOR,
ERIC JOHNSON**



Aloha and welcome to Honolulu Theatre for Youth! We are delighted to share these resources with you. We believe wholeheartedly in the power of stories to bring us together across time and distance. When that happens we often find great similarities with our fellow humans that strengthen our sense of belonging, heritage and shared purpose. We also find profound differences which should be equally celebrated. Differences stretch our sense of self and tickle our curiosity for what is possible. Coming from a place that is both geographically remote and culturally diverse, we treasure stories in our community and are deeply honored to share this one with you now. If you would like more information on the company or our work, look us up at htyweb.org.

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OUR PARTNERS

We have been fortunate to work with generous partners and funders on the creation of this project.

Hawai'i State Department of Health, Office of Public Health Preparedness

TYA Tour Development Collective:

Fox Cities Performing Arts Center, Zoellner Arts Center, Playhouse Square, Segerstrom Center for the Arts

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Written by Alvin Chan, Eric Johnson, and The HTY Ensemble

Directed by Eric Johnson

**Set, Lighting,
and Prop Design by**
Chesley Cannon

Costume Design by
Sandra Payne & Anna Foster

Additional Costume Design by
Iris Kim

Sound Design by
Barrett Hoover

**Additional Music
and Sound Design by**
Mattea Mazzella

Performed by
Jarren Amian
Serina Dunham
Anastacia Narrajos
Hermenigildo Tesoro, Jr.

Technical Direction
Eric West

Stage Manager
Sarah Danvers

Study Guide by
Reiko Ho

**National Core Arts and Related
Standards compiled by**
Daniel A. Kelin II



ABOUT THE SHOW

Back by popular demand, this original staging of Japan's most famous folktale draws inspiration from the visually rich world of anime as well as traditional Japanese theatre techniques and music. Teaching powerful lessons about inner strength and one's ability to stand up against bullying, the story features cute ogres, brave animals, and a miraculous boy born from a peach.

SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT THEMES IN THE SHOW

Most Japanese folktales contain themes and messages that embody Japanese cultural beliefs and morals. In addition to the kindness, generosity, loyalty and bravery exemplified by our hero, Momotaro, we have included important messages about **bullying** and empathy in this stage adaptation. Most versions of the story include a violent defeat of the ogres. However, HTY has intentionally changed the story to show Momotaro's inner strength and to provide a different solution which is based on compassion to address the issues of bullying. Whether reading a traditional version of the story or responding to the play itself, we encourage teachers to have students imagine different outcomes and relate this to their own policies and values about bullying in the classroom.

Here are a few resources about **bullying** and **Social-Emotional Learning** to share with your students:

1. Foster Social-Emotional Learning with 2-6 Minute Activities from HTY's Online Library of Social-Emotional Learning Videos:

<https://www.htyweb.org/social-emotional-learning/>

2. Watch with your class: "Bullying" Episode from HTY's Emmy® award winning television series, *The HI Way*: <https://www.htyweb.org/bullying/>

3. Websites with Information, Activities, and Resources about Anti-Bullying:

<https://www.pacerkidsagainstbullying.org>

<https://www.stopbullying.gov>

<https://www.schoolsafety.gov/bullying-and-cyberbullying>

<https://www.childrenssafetynetwork.org/resources/csn-bullying-prevention-resource-guide>

ABOUT MOMOTARŌ

Momotaro is one of Japan's most beloved and famous folktales. All children in Japan know this story. The tale embodies core cultural beliefs, such as the importance of respecting one's elders, protecting the weak, kindness, generosity, loyalty, and teamwork.

Many scholars trace the earliest form of the legend to the historic Kibi Province, which corresponds to modern-day Okayama. The story we know today is actually a blend of regional myths, historical military battles, and adaptations documented during the Edo and Meiji periods.

Here is a summary of the story:

SYNOPSIS OF THE FOLKTALE

The story begins with an elderly couple who long for a child. While washing clothes by the river, the old woman spots an enormous peach floating downstream and brings it home. When the couple attempts to slice the fruit, a miraculous baby boy emerges. They name him *Momotarō* (Momo, meaning “peach” and Tarō, a traditional Japanese boy's name that translates to “eldest son”) and raise him as their own.

Momotarō grows up and becomes a remarkably strong, courageous, and kind young man. When he learns that a group of destructive *oni* (ogres/demons) are terrorizing the nearby villages, stealing riches, and capturing people, he decides to travel to *Onigashima* (Ogre Island) to stop them. His loving parents make *kibidango* (millet dumplings) for provisions while he travels.

On his journey to the island, Momotarō encounters a talking dog, a monkey, and a pheasant. Instead of fighting them, he graciously shares his meager rations of kibidango. His kindness and respect earn him the loyalty and assistance of the animals. Together, they travel to Onigashima to face the oni.

When the brave adventurers arrive, they work together as a team- the pheasant flies in to distract the oni, the monkey scales the fortress walls to unlock the gates, the dog helps fight them off, while Momotaro defeats the chief of the oni. The remaining oni surrender, vowing to give up their evil ways.

Momotaro and his companions return home triumphantly, bringing the stolen treasure back to their village to live in peace.

PDF of Momotarō story: <https://www.japansociety.org.uk/rsn/lessons/resources/RSN-Resources-MomotaroStory.pdf>

(More videos, books, and websites on our “Resources” page.)



Momotarō (Peach Boy)

Artist: Tsukioka Yoshitoshi (Japanese, 1839 - 1892)
Woodblock print; ink and color on paper

PERFORMANCE TRADITIONS IN OUR SHOW

Our show is filled with references and inspiration from traditional Japanese theatre forms, music, and movement styles. *Check out the Resources page for more websites and videos.*



Kyōgen photo courtesy of Noh Society

Kyōgen is a traditional form of Japanese theater that originated in the 14th century. It is characterized by witty dialogue and slapstick physical comedy. Plots center around satirizing human flaws and foibles. The goal of the performance is to make audiences laugh. While these short plays were originally done as intermission pieces during longer, more solemn Noh performances, the form has since become an independent and much beloved art that is still practiced today.

Kyogen for Kids website: <https://web-japan.org/kidsweb/cool/13-12-16/index.html>

Video: Kyōgen “Bōshibari” with English subtitles by Noh Society
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UL3sUvbLc0E>

Kabuki originated in the 17th century and is a classical Japanese dance-drama form. The word ‘ka-bu-ki’ is made up of three characters that mean “song, dance, and acting skill,” indicative of the different elements that comprise the form. It is known for its highly stylized performances, combining music, dance, mime, and elaborate staging and costumes. Kabuki performances were developed for the common people, unlike Noh, and are still popular today!

Website- Kabuki Facts for Kids: <https://kids.kiddle.co/Kabuki>

Video: PBS Learning Media: What is Kabuki?
<https://hawaii.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/jacult.arts.drama.kabuki/japanese-culture-what-is-kabuki/>



Photo: Wikimedia Commons



Still from “Kiki’s Delivery Service” by Studio Ghibli

Anime (pronounced ah-nee-may) as defined by Merriam-Webster is “a style of animation originating in Japan that is characterized by stark colorful graphics depicting characters in action-filled plots often with fantastic or futuristic themes.” Some of the design elements of our show are inspired by the vibrant colors and even hair shapes of the genre. Many anime are based on Japanese graphic novels called “manga.” The word anime is actually borrowed from English and is short for animation. The very first anime were produced in Japan in 1917 by three famous artists: Jun’ichi Kōuchi, Ōten Shimokawa, and Seitarō Kitayama who founded Japan’s first animation studio in 1921, predating the start of Disney in 1923.

Website: Anime Facts for Kids: <https://kids.kiddle.co/Anime>

BOOKS FOR THE CLASSROOM



- ***Momotaro and the Island of Ogres***
by Stephanie Wada and Kano Naganobu
- ***Momotaro: Peach Boy***
by Ruth Tabrah and Kirsten Whatle, illustrated by George Suyeoka
- ***Momotaro (The Peach Boy): A Japanese Folktale***
by M. J. York, illustrated by Betsy Thompson
- ***Momotarō: The Peach Boy: A Japanese Folktale***
by Jacob Sato
- ***Japanese Children's Favorite Stories: Anniversary Edition***
by Florence Sakade, illustrated by, Yoshisuke Kurosaki
- ***Ame Goes to Japan: A Book About One Cool Cat's Travels In Japan***
by Mami Bacera
- ***All About Japan: Stories, Songs, Crafts and Games for Kids***
by Willamarie Moore, illustrated by Kazumi Wilds
- ***Japanese Myths, Legends & Folktales: Bilingual English and Japanese Edition (12 Folktales)*** by Yuri Yasuda
- ***I Live in Tokyo: A Picture Book About a Year of Japanese Food and Festivities for Kids (Ages 4-7)*** by Mari Takabayashi
- ***Japanese Fairy Tales (Classics)*** by Yei Theodora Ozaki (Compiler, Translator)

WEBSITES AND VIDEOS

Video:

Momotaro Peach Boy - Read Aloud Stories for Children (Cozy Little Nook)

<https://youtu.be/AwSktsXcbD0?si=yNaTLpkV2c00voPd>

Introduction to Kyōgen Websites:

- <https://www.nohgaku.or.jp/en/guide/kyogen>
- https://afe.easia.columbia.edu/special/japan_1000ce_kyogen.htm

Introduction to Kabuki Videos:

Ted-Ed- Kabuki: The People's Art

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oidE2SSDczw>

PBS Learning Media: What is Kabuki?

<https://hawaii.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/jacult.arts.drama.kabuki/japanese-culture-what-is-kabuki/>



POST SHOW DISCUSSION

MOMOTARO IS A FAMOUS JAPANESE FOLK TALE. ARE THERE SIMILAR TALES FROM YOUR CULTURE?

DISCUSS THE CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY. DESCRIBE THE TRAITS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF MOMOTARO AND HOW THEY ARE DEMONSTRATED THROUGH HIS ACTIONS. DISCUSS OTHER CHARACTERS.

DISCUSS THE PLOT OF THE PLAY. A PLOT IS THE SEQUENCE OF INTERCONNECTED EVENTS THAT MAKE UP A STORY OR NARRATIVE. WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE PLAY?

JAPANESE FOLKTALES OFTEN EXPRESS THEMES OR MORALS MEANT TO TEACH IMPORTANT LESSONS ABOUT HUMILITY AND RESPECT THAT FOSTER COMPASSION AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MESSAGES IN THIS FOLKTALE?

SHOW-RELATED ACTIVITY: EXPLORE THE STORY

TEACHER NARRATED STORY – READ ALOUD

Objective: Explore and engage with the original tale.
Read the following version of Momotaro to your students.

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| STEP 1 | Use this link for a downloadable and printable PDF of the story:
https://www.japansociety.org.uk/rsn/lessons/resources/RSN-Resources-MomotaroStory.pdf |
| STEP 2 | Prepare your students.
Please note to your students that this is a version the original story.
The HTY Artistic team used the original story as inspiration for the play.
The HTY production is both similar and different in a number of ways. |
| STEP 3 | Prompts for Students <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If doing this activity post-show, challenge your students to identify some of the differences as you read the original folktale.
• If you are reading this before viewing of the show: Pause occasionally at particularly engaging or exciting parts. Ask students to make predictions about what might happen, giving reasons for their predictions. |
| STEP 4 | Discuss
If post show: What are the similarities and differences between the HTY show and the original story: Characters, Plot, Themes?

If pre-show:
Who are the major characters?
Where does this story take place?
What is the problem in the story that has to be solved?
What do you think the story is trying to teach you?

Culture
This story takes place in Japan.
What do you learn about Japan from this story?
What does this folktale say is important for the listener to learn? |
| STEP 5 | Retell
If time, divide the class into pairs or small groups, have the students take turns retelling the story to each other. |

SHOW-RELATED ACTIVITY: MAKING CONNECTIONS

HEROES AND BULLIES

Objectives: Explore the important theme of Bullying that is part of the show.
To define the qualities of a hero.

It is all too common for the word 'hero' to represent 'superhero' and for 'superhero' to be synonymous with physical force; breaking through things, smashing things and physically defeating the 'enemy.'
However, using physical force is often a part of real life bullying.

This activity is designed to help students consider what defines a hero besides physical prowess or use of force.

Instructions

1. Share definitions of Hero and Bully

HERO - A person—or a main character in a story—admired for exceptional courage, outstanding achievements, or noble qualities. Heroes are typically defined by their selfless acts and willingness to endure hardship for the common good.

BULLY - A person who uses aggressive, threatening, or coercive behavior to intimidate, frighten, or dominate others, particularly those perceived as weaker or more vulnerable. Bullying is often repeated behavior.

If needed, briefly go over types of bullying and examples:

Physical Bullying	Verbal Bullying	Social Bullying
• Hitting, kicking, pushing someone or threatening to do it • Stealing, hiding or ruining someone's things • Making someone do things he or she doesn't want to do	• Name-calling • Teasing • Insulting	• Spreading rumors • Excluding someone • Cyber-bullying (sending mean texts or messages on social media)

2. Make two lists: What are the characteristics of a 'Hero' and of a 'Bully.'

What does each do? What is the attitude of each? What is the goal of each?

3. Compare the lists.

Do Heroes and Bullies have anything in common? Differences?

Can both a hero and a bully use force? What is the difference?

4. Read the original folktale of MOMOTARO story in this guide. (PDF in previous activity)

• List the actions that make Momotaro a hero.

Next, discuss which actions from your list could also be the actions of a bully? Circle these.

Finally discuss other ways that Momotaro might have defeated the ogres without force or intimidation.

(See p. 4 for anti-bullying resources)

SHOW-RELATED ACTIVITY: EXPLORE PERFORMANCE TECHNIQUE

BECOME A KOKEN!



Objective: Deepen understanding and appreciation for the traditional Japanese performance techniques used in the production.

HTY's production of Anime Momotaro uses a variety of performance techniques and conventions from traditional Japanese theatre forms, such as Kabuki. One of the stage conventions you see in the show are **Koken**. **Koken** are stage assistants dressed entirely in black who help create special effects by moving props or changing an actor's costume on stage. Sometimes they may even manipulate puppets or scenery.

The audience is meant to regard **koken** as invisible.

Check out these videos as examples:

Modern scene using kuroko: <https://youtu.be/tCJqeUK8dr4?si=OHG2Fd7hf6f1s10N>

Traditional Kabuki costume change: https://youtu.be/_INZRr08-OI?si=6M-HAGMcs-mCNp1l

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| STEP 1 | Divide into groups of 3 (or 4)
Assign students roles A, B, and C.
Pass out a random object to each group. |
| STEP 2 | “Throw” the object using a koken to create stage magic.
Student A will pretend to “throw” the object to Student B, while Student C becomes the kuroko. The koken takes the object from Student A and makes it travel in a creative way to Student B.

Prompts for Students <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use your imagination to make the object’s journey from A to B fun to watch.-maybe it flies through the air in slow motion-maybe it rolls or bounces in a funny way. |
| STEP 3 | Switch Roles
Rotate A, B, and C, so that each person in the group can practice being the koken. |

MY HERO

My real life hero is _____

Draw a picture of your hero.

This person is my hero because _____



ABOUT HTY

Honolulu Theatre for Youth (HTY) is a theatre of place, deeply rooted in the cultures and people of the Pacific and dedicated to serving young people, families and educators across the Hawaiian Islands.

Founded in 1955, Honolulu Theatre for Youth (HTY) is one of the oldest professional TYA companies in the country and is recognized for its long history of innovative drama education programming and the creation of original theatrical works that celebrate the diverse cultures of Hawai'i. In addition to serving more than 100,000 students in Hawai'i every year, HTY has commissioned over 300 new plays.

During the pandemic, the company turned to digital creation and garnered 8 Emmy® nominations, and won 3 Emmy® awards for its television show, The HI Way. In 2023, the company received the Orlin Corey Medallion from The Children's Theatre Foundation of America, the highest honor in the field.

OUR COMPANY

Eric Johnson
Artistic Director

Daniel A. Kelin, II
Director of Drama Education

Rebecca Dunning
Development Director

Reiko Ho
Artistic Associate/Marketing Dir.

Tamara Smith
Drama Ed. Administrator

Stu Hirayama
School Reservations

Moses Goods
Artistic Associate/Actor

Brandon Caban
Teaching Artist

Brad DeCaires
Box Office

Annie Cusick Wood
Artistic Associate

Lisa N.
Teaching Artist

Stephanie Conching
House Manager

Artistic Team
Jarren Amian
Chesley Cannon
Sarah Danvers
Serina Dunham
Lokomaika'i Lipscomb
Mattea Mazzella
Hermenigildo Tesoro Jr.
Eric West
Emily Wright

Erin O'Hara
Teaching Artist

Kirsten Erickson
Teaching Artist

Jian Gu
Accounting

Monica Lee
Development Associate