

## LEGEND OF MOMOTARO

Momotaro is strongly associated with Okayama and his tale may have its origins there. There is a statue of Momotaro at the Okayama train station, a street named after Momotaro and even a Momotaro Festival.

The ogre island of the story is sometimes associated with Megi-jima, an island in the Inland Sea near Takamatsu.

There are a few variants to the story, depending on geographical regions. Some say Momotaro floated by in a box, a white peach, or a red peach. In other stories Momotaro took with him a bee, a crab, a mill stone, a chestnut, and a cowpie. In the past all these animals and objects were believed to possess spirits and could move by their own will. The cowpie was sometimes given the honorific "don." This was to appease the cowpie spirit so as it won't move to be under you when you stumble or take a step.

In the performance of Momotaro, I have made some small changes to the traditional story in order to make it more theatrical and also to accommodate a solo performance.

### Momotarō



Bisque doll of Momotarō

**Momotarō** (桃太郎) is a popular hero from Japanese folklore. His name literally means *Peach Tarō*; as Tarō is a common Japanese boy's name, it is often translated as *Peach Boy*. *Momotarō* is also the title of various books, films, and other works that portray the tale of this hero.

## Momotarō's song



The popular children's song about Momotarō titled *Momotarō-san no Uta* (*Momotarō's Song*) was first published in 1911. One version of it is included below with romanization and translation.

Momotarō-san no uta (Momotarō's Song) 桃太郎さんの歌

Momotarō-san, momotarō-san (Momotarō, Momotarō) 桃太郎さん、桃太郎さん

Okoshini tsuketa kibidango (Those millet dumplings on your waist)  
お腰こつけたきびだんご

Hitotsu watashi ni kudasai na? (Won't you give me one?) 一つ私に下さいな!

Agemashou, agemashou (I'll give you one, I'll give you one)  
あげましょう、あげましょう

Ima kara oni no seibatsu ni (From now, on a quest to conquer the ogres)  
今から鬼の征伐に

Tsuite kuru nara agemashou (If you come with me, I'll give one to you)  
ついてくるならあげましょう