

ISSUN-BOSHI

There was an old lady and an old man. One day they went to a shrine to pray for a child no matter how big or small. The next day a baby boy was born he was only the size of the old man's thumb, so they called him Issun-boshi.

They raised the child lovingly and he became a wonderful adolescent, but he grew not at all.

One day, Issun-boshi announced he was going to go to the capital and asked, "please help me prepare for my journey."

So Issun-boshi's parents used a rice bowl as a boat with a chopstick as an oar, a sewing needle as a sword with a straw as a sheath, a hat weaved out of bamboo and clothes sown out of special fabrics like silk and fire rat fur.

Then the old lady (with Issun-boshi in her hand) walked to the river (which was near the house) and she put the rice bowl down onto the water, gave the chopstick too Issun-boshi and he climbed aboard the boat and sailed all the way to the capital.

After a few days of sailing Issun-boshi arrived in the capital and looked for work. Just then he found a Lord's stately house and shouted to the man guarding the gates, "I'm Issun-boshi! I want to work here!".

The guard didn't see him because he was so tiny! Then he looked down and he saw Issun-boshi. The guard bought Issun-boshi in to see the Lord. The Lord liked Issun-boshi, eventually he became the Lord's daughter's bodyguard!

One day, Issun-boshi accompanied her to the Kyomizu temple where an ogre attacked them. Issun-boshi unsheathed his sword, suddenly the ogre swallowed him up whole. Issun-boshi poked at its insides with his needle sword and it threw up Issun-boshi. Then he leaped on the ogre's eyebrow and poked it in the eye with his sword. Half-blinded the ogre ran away, dropping its magic hammer in the process.

Then the princess picked up the magic hammer and explained, "you can get anything with this hammer like money or rice."

Issun-boshi replied, "I want neither money or rice I want to be full-grown"

The princess shook the hammer and sang, "gggggrrrrrrrrroooooowwwwwwwww!" and in a blink of an eye he was a full-grown man.

Then they returned to the mansion and got married and they lived happily, ever after.