

# Theater at Monmouth 2017 Page to Stage Tour Teacher Resource Guide



## Inside This Guide

- |   |                               |   |                        |
|---|-------------------------------|---|------------------------|
| 1 | From the Page to the Stage    | 6 | Adapting a Classic     |
| 2 | About the Play                | 7 | Before the Performance |
| 3 | Japanese Folklore & Mythology | 8 | After the Performance  |
| 4 | There Be Dragons              | 9 | Resources & Standards  |
| 5 | Journey to Save the Planet    |   |                        |

## From the Page to the Stage



This season, the Theater at Monmouth's Page to Stage Tour brings a world premiere adaptation of classic literature to students across Maine. *The Tale of Princess Kaguya* (grades PreK-8) was adapted to build analytical and literacy skills through the exploration of verse and playwriting, foster creativity and inspire imaginative thinking. *Page to Stage* Tour workshops and extended residencies offer students the opportunity to study, explore, and view classic literature through performance.

TAM's Education Tours and complimentary programming challenge learners of all ages to explore the ideas, emotions, and principles contained in classic texts and to discover the connection between classic theatre and our modern world.

Teacher Resource Guide information and activities were developed to help students form a personal connection to the play before attending the production; standards-based activities are included to explore the plays in the classroom before and after the performance.

The best way to appreciate classic literature is to explore. That means getting students up on their feet and physically, emotionally, and vocally exploring the words. The kinesthetic memory is the most powerful—using performance-based activities will help students with a range of learning styles to build a richer understanding of the language and identify with the characters and conflicts of the plays.

Thank you for taking some of your classroom time to teach your students about *The Tale of Princess Kaguya*! If you need more information to support your preparation for the production, please call 207.933.2952 or email us at [boxoffice@theateratmonmouth.org](mailto:boxoffice@theateratmonmouth.org).

Enjoy the show!

Dawn McAndrews  
Producing Artistic Director  
Theater at Monmouth

## About the Play: *The Tale of Princess Kaguya*

### THE STORY



One day, an old bamboo cutter happened across a strange, glowing bamboo stalk. He cut it open to find a baby girl the size of his thumb. He and his wife had no children, so he was overjoyed to find her, and brought her home where the couple raised her lovingly. They named her *Nayotake-no-Kaguya-hime*, the Princess of the Glowing Bamboo. After that, whenever the man cut down a stalk of bamboo, he would find a gold inside, and soon became rich.

Kaguya-hime, meanwhile, grew to an ordinary size and became an extremely radiant young woman. Hearing of her radiance, five suitors came to ask for her hand in marriage. The Bamboo Cutter didn't want her to marry them, but the princes convinced him to let her choose. Kaguya-hime challenged each of them to bring her an item that would be impossible to find, such as the Buddha's Begging Bowl or a Jewel from the Neck of a Dragon. Three of them, unable to complete the task, presented her with fakes, one gave up, and one never returned. The Emperor of Japan sent a messenger asking for her hand in marriage, but she refused.

Kaguya sunk into a sadness and her parents grew worried. That summer, when she gazed at the full moon, she began to cry. She revealed that she was from the Moon and must soon return. Hearing the news, the Emperor set guards around the house to keep the people of the Moon from getting to her, but it was all in vain. The beings from the Moon blinded the guards with light and Kaguya announced that though she loved all her family and friends on Earth, she had to leave. She wrote letters of apology to her parents and the Emperor, giving her parents her robe as a memento, and the Emperor a small vial with an elixir of immortality. As she handed the note to the Emperor's Imperial Guard, she was adorned with a feather robe that allows heavenly beings to fly between the heavens and the Earth. Her parents watching with tears in their eyes, the lunar entourage brought her home to the capital of the moon.

### ABOUT THE STORY

*Kaguya-hime*, the Shining Princess, is one of Japan's oldest fairy tales and was written in the Heian period (about 900 AD). It is the story of a moon princess who is found in a shining bamboo stalk and brought up by a bamboo cutter and his wife. She grows up to be a beauty and is courted by many noblemen. She is finally taken back to the moon. It is also known as *Taketori Monogatari* (*The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter*).

*Tsukimi*, *O-tsukimi*, moon viewing is a tradition dating back to the Heian period (794-1185 AD), when the evenings were spent with court aristocrats writing and playing music. The tradition later spread to warriors, townspeople, and farmers and became a harvest festival. *Otsukimi* is celebrated on the night of the full moon in autumn. The full moon in September is considered to be the most beautiful of the year and is called *Chushu no meigetsu*, or harvest moon. During this festival, sprays of *susuki* (Japanese pampas grass) and *dango* (small sticky rice dumplings) were offered to the moon.



# Japanese Folklore & Mythology

Japanese folklore is influenced by the two primary religions of Japan—Shinto and Buddhism—as well as by the literature of India and China. Japanese mythology, like other world myths, is a complex system of beliefs that embraces religious as well as agriculture-based folk traditions.

**Japanese folktales involve humorous or bizarre characters including an assortment of supernatural beings and animals with supernatural powers such as:**

Kami—Revered Spirits

Yōkai—Monster-Spirits

Kappa—Water Sprites

Yūrei—Ghosts

Kitsune—Fox

Tanuki—Raccoon Dog

Mujina—Badger

Bakeneko—Transforming Cat

**Japanese folktales are divided into several categories including:**

Mukashibanashi—Tales of Long-Ago

Namidabanashi—Sad Stories

Obakebanashi-Ghost Stories

Ongaeshibanashi--Stories of Repaying Kindness

Tonchibanashi—Witty Stories

Waraibanashi—Funny Stories

Yokubaribanashi—Stories of Greed

**Some famous Japanese folktales include:**

*Kintarō, the Superhuman Golden Boy*

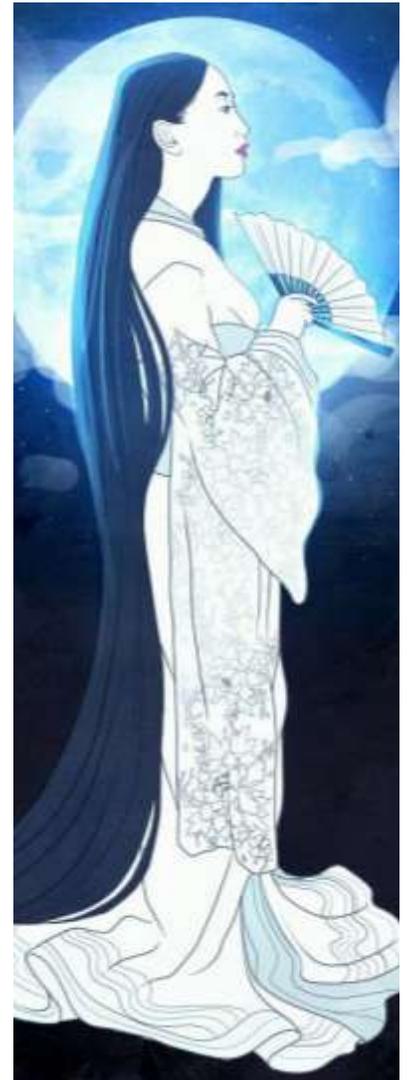
A child of superhuman strength, Kintaro was raised by a mountain ogress on Mount Ashigara. He became friendly with the animals of the mountain, and later, he became Sakata no Kintoki, a warrior and loyal follower of Minamoto no Yorimitsu. It is a Japanese custom to put up a Kintarō doll on Boy's Day, in the hope that the sons of the family will become equally brave and strong.

*Momotarō, the Oni-slaying Peach Boy*

Momotarō came to earth inside a giant peach, which was found floating down a river by an old, childless woman who was washing clothes there. The woman and her husband discovered the child when they tried to open the peach to eat it. The child explained that he had been sent by Heaven to be their son. The couple named him Momotarō, from momo (peach) and tarō (eldest son in the family). He grew up and became a famous warrior, battling ogres and other supernatural beasts.

*Bunbuku Chagama, the Shape-changing Teakettle*

“Bunbuku Chagama” tells the story of a poor man who found a tanuki caught in a trap. Feeling sorry for the animal, he set it free. That night, the tanuki came to the man's house to thank him for his kindness. The tanuki transformed itself into a chagama and told the man to sell him for money. The man sold the tanuki-teapot to a monk, who brought it home and set it on the fire to boil water. Unable to stand the heat, the tanuki-teapot sprouted legs and, in its half-transformed state, ran away. The tanuki returned to the poor man with another idea. The man would set up a little circus and charge admission for people to see a teapot walking a tightrope. The plan worked, and each gained something good; the man was no longer poor and the tanuki had a new friend and home.



# There Be Dragons

## A Brief History of the Mythical Creature



Dragons are among the most popular and lasting of the world's mythological creatures. Stories of dragons appear throughout history and almost every culture has their own dragon lore. Some think that dragons must have existed in the distant past—otherwise how could different cultures on different continents describe the same monster?

It's not clear when or where stories of dragons first appeared, but the huge, flying beasts were described by the ancient Greeks as early as 4000 BCE. For centuries no one knew what to make of the giant skeletons that were unearthed around the globe, and dragons became the logical explanation for dinosaur bones. Dragons' habitats ranged from the center of the earth to the middle of the ocean; in caves, fire, or any place dark and damp. In some early cultures, comets in the sky

were believed to be dragons as the bright burst of flame flew through the heavens trailed by a long tail.

In ancient Rome, dragons were thought to hold the mysteries of the earth. Romans looked to dragons as a source of knowledge and used them as symbols of strength for their military. In the ancient cultures of Mexico and South America, a divine feathered serpent was believed to renew the world after each cycle of destruction. In medieval times, most people knew about dragons from the Bible, and it's likely that many people at the time believed in their existence. After all, Leviathan, the massive monster in the Book of Job depicts a dragon in great detail.

In China, dragons were amphibious creatures that dwelled in oceans, lakes, rivers, and even raindrops. They were revered as symbols of fortune and fertility, capable of bringing rain in times of drought. They were creatures made up of various animal parts with the body of a snake, the scales of a fish, the talons of an eagle, and the antlers of a stag.



One type of dragon, or sea monster, was feared during the age of discovery and the journeys of Christopher Columbus. During this time when the world was thought to be flat, dragons were



said to dwell at the edges, waiting to eat any one who dared to sail into the unknown. Maps were made marking the location where dragons lived. At the edge of the map the words "Here Be Dragons" were printed with illustrations of the fearsome beasts.

There were also eyewitness accounts from sailors returning from the Far East who reported encountering dragons—Komodo Dragons—a type of monitor lizard that can be aggressive, deadly, and reach 10 feet in length. Western scientists verified their existence around 1910, but rumors circulated long before that.

Dragons, in one form or another (sometimes good and other times terribly evil) have been around for centuries. Today dragons appear in fantasy books and films; they continue to fuel imagination and, unlike the dinosaurs that inspired the myths, they show no signs of becoming extinct.

# Journey to Save the Planet

Kaguya sends each suitor on a journey to find a treasure. In the original tale, the suitors seek specific items for their value. In our play each treasure is located in a habitat that she wishes the suitor to save. Read the journeys below and compare to the production.

## Stone Begging Bowl of the Buddha

The suitor who was sent to India in search of the bowl was a very lazy man. At first he really meant to go, but the more he thought about it the lazier he felt. At the end of three years, instead of venturing to India, he went into a little temple near his home. There he found an old stone bowl sitting in front of the shrine. He took this bowl and wrapped it in a silk cloth and tied a letter telling of his long, hard journey to find the bowl for her. This he sent to the princess. The princess read the letter and was sorry that he had suffered so much for her until she opened the wrappings and saw a bowl of common stone. When he came to see her she sent the bowl back. He kept the bowl to remind him that you get nothing good unless you work for it.



## Branch of the Jewel Tree



The suitor sent in search of the branch of the jewel tree was cunning and lazy. He did not believe there was a floating mountain called Horai. He did not believe there were trees of gold with jewels for leaves. He decided to hide at the seashore for three years with servants, who were also craftsmen. He then visited the princess and spun a fantastic story of his journey fraught with terrible storms and lack of food. "At last, I saw a great mountain lifting its head out of the sea. I made the treacherous climb and broke off a branch to bring to you." Just then three men entered, "Could you pay us now?" The suitor tried to drive them away but the princess asked for their story. "For three years we have worked to make this beautiful golden branch. Now that it is finished we want our pay." The suitor left in shame. The princess gave the golden branch to the men for their work.

## The Shell in the Swallows Nest

The suitor sent to find the Shell in the Swallow's Nest was a very proud and lazy man. When he returned home he called his head servant to him, "Find out everything about the shell the swallows hide in their nests." The servant asked the gardener, the cook, and all the other servants but no one had ever seen the shell. The kitchen boy said that he had seen one once when he was on the roof looking for eggs. The suitor's men could not get onto the roof to search the nests, so they fashioned a basket and rope to pull up one to look. Still they found nothing. The furious suitor insisted on looking himself. His noise alerted the swallows who swooped back in alarm. He reached in and grabbed for the magical shell before crashing to the ground. For his trouble he recovered an eggshell and a face full of egg. He never returned to the princess.



## Jewel on the Dragon's Neck



The fourth suitor was sent to bring the Jewel on the Dragon's Neck. He was a great boaster and a great coward. He called together his servants and soldiers, gave them food and money for the journey, and ordered them never to return unless they brought the jewel. The men took the money and went away, but not to find the jewel. He waited a whole year and then decided to go himself. He set out on a boat, alone, because his remaining servants feared the dragon and the sea. "Cowards, watch me. Learn how to be brave. Do you think I will be afraid of any dragon?" All went well for two or three days, then the boat rocked and dipped in a fierce storm. The suitor huddled in the bottom of the boat seasick and frightened. Fearing it was the Dragon's wrath, the suitor vowed that he would never touch the dragon, not even the least hair on the tip of his tail. Once he reached land he vowed never to travel again.

# Adapting a Classic

An interview with the playwright, Max Waszak



Max Waszak was a member of the TAM Acting Company for three summers and has been an actor and director for TAM's Shakespeare in Maine Communities and Page to Stage touring productions. This year we asked him to step into a new role as adaptor/ playwright for *The Tale of Princess Kaguya*, and we asked him to share his thoughts about the experience.

## What inspired you to write this adaptation?

Upon reading the original tale, I felt that now more than ever, young minds deserve exposure to different cultures from around the world. As a Japanese-American theater artist, I was especially excited to heighten awareness of my ancestors' stories. I also find it to be an incredibly imaginative story and in today's world of hyper-realism, it is of the greatest importance to encourage children's sense of play.



## To which moments in the original tale were you most drawn?



I was especially drawn to the moment when Kaguya disappears in the presence of the Emperor. I loved that she begins to discover her origins and her power at this point. It reminded me of Harry Potter setting the python free at the zoo. I was also excited about the suitors as they seemed like a great opportunity for some comedy.

## In what ways have you adapted the tale for a 21<sup>st</sup>-Century audience?

In many ways. Most noticeably, the adaptation has become a vehicle for environmental education. This story about a princess who is found inside a plant already had an earthy vibe. Additionally, the original title of the story was *The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter*, but that has been changed to support Kaguya as the story's protagonist. Finally, I've incorporated some comedic moments into the tale and restructured the storytelling to create a more interesting audio-visual experience.

## What do you think the moral or message is in your version?

I'd say something like "You don't know what you've got 'til it's gone"--or to think more positively, "Care for and nurture what you have." I think everyone in the story experiences this feeling on at least one level and I hope the audience is able to identify with the characters and know that the same experiences are possible in their lives. With regard to Kaguya's wishes, I hope audience members come away with a better sense of stewardship of the planet--that we must support it, if we hope for it to support us.



# BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE

## 1. Folktales and Myths

*The Tale of Princess Kaguya* is considered a folktale. Folktales, like myths, usually take place “long ago” and have a moral or a lesson they wish to convey to the reader. Often they have both a good character and a not-so-good character, and the good character usually triumphs or learns something in the end. There is almost always royalty and castles, and sometimes magic. Folktales often contain a problem, and by the end, a solution.

Ask your students:

- Does *The Tale of Princess Kaguya* fit all the criteria for a folktale?
- What lesson or moral was learned?
- Who were the good and not-so-good characters?
- Was there magic?
- Can you identify the problems and the solutions?

## 2. Haiku

Haiku is a revered art form in Japan for its ability to communicate tranquility and balance with few words. By limiting the length to a set number of syllables, young writers explore how to let go of unnecessary details and focus on the most important elements. Haiku poems consist of three lines; the first and last lines have five syllables and the middle line, seven. The lines rarely rhyme.

Share the following example with students:

*I am first with five  
Then seven in the middle  
Five again to end*

Because haiku are such short poems, they are usually written about things that are recognizable to the reader. Animals and seasons are often inspirations. Provide students with some visuals from the original *Tale of the Bamboo Cutter* and ask them to write a Haiku about how it makes them feel or what they see in the image.

## 3. Make Your Own Illustrations

Donald Keene’s illustrations for *The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter* explore ways to communicate the period, the location, and a mood of that particular moment in the story. Give students two pieces of paper divided into four quadrants. Ask students to draw an illustration for three sections of the story and title it appropriately. The last box is for them to write the lesson they learned from the tale and how it applies to their life today. Bind these into books and share with the class. Ask students to discuss how they each represented the characters, the places, and the treasure? Write a list on the board of the lessons that were learned.

# AFTER THE PERFORMANCE

## 1. What's the Message?

One message in *The Tale of Princess Kaguya* is that of empathy. Empathy is defined as the ability to identify with and feel other people's needs and concerns. Ask students how they felt about each character before the play, during the play, at the end of the play, and now. Discuss how and why their feelings toward each changed. Ask students how they show empathy for others at school in their actions and words. Have the students stand in two lines facing each other and ask them to demonstrate how they show empathy without words and then with words. Make a chart on the board (Sounds Like and Looks Like at the top of each column) and track the examples of how they and other students demonstrate empathy in the classroom and on the playground.

## 2. Imagining the World

Designers translate the world of the play into the real space and time of the performance, creating the music and sound, set, costumes, and props for the production. Designers transform the ideas of the story into real elements that convey the mood, meaning, and magic for the audience. What choices did the designers make for this production? How did they represent the characters, the places, and the magic of the tale? How was it different than what the students imagined? Divide students into groups and ask them to pick a design element of the play (sets, costumes, props) and re-design it for their own production.

## 3. The Suitor's Journey

Mythologist Joseph Campbell felt that everyone followed the path of the "hero's journey"—encountering challenges in life, attempting to overcome them, and changing as a result of conquering them. Ask students to pick one of the suitors and trace his "hero's journey" over the entire play. Discuss specific moments when he confronted obstacles, barriers, friends, allies, and teachers. Ask students to create a timeline of the adventure and draw a box of comic strip of each step of the journey. Be sure to include visuals of the events, places, and treasures encountered along the way.

## 4. What a Wonderful World

In the play, Kaguya cares deeply for the earth home that she has come to cherish and is pained to see its citizens not caring for its wonders. There is much concern in our world today about the fate of our planet. Have students pick an environmental issue in Maine (animal habitats, rivers & streams, rising tides or ocean temperatures) and working in groups, have them make a poster in support of their cause. The poster should be:

- No bigger than 11 x 17 inches
- Feature images and words supporting the issue
- Have a call to action for what people can do

Create a gallery, hang them from the ceiling, or arrange them in order of where they occur in the state of Maine

# RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

## Books on Fairytales and Folktales

- Osaki, Yea. *Japanese Fairy Tales*. Tuttle Classics, 2007.
- *The Uses of Enchantment: the Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*, by Bruno Bettelheim. Knopf, 1976.
- Moore, Willamarie (author) & Wilds, Kazumi. *All About Japan: Stories, Songs, Crafts and Games for Kids*. Tuttle Publishing, 2017.

## Books for Early & Middle Readers

- Kawauchi, Sayuma & McCarthy, Ralph F. *The Bamboo-Cutter's Tale*. Classic Bilingual Picture Books. June 2001.
- Sakade, Florence. *Little One Inch and Other Japanese Children's Stories*. Tuttle Publishing, 2008.
- Lear, David. *The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter and Other Fantastic Stories*. Firestone Books, 2013.
- Grand, Elena. *The Tale of Princess Kaguya*. Create Space, 2016.
- Williston, Theresa Pearce (author), Marsh, Dilleen (Illustrator). *The Bamboo Cutter and the Moon Maiden: A Japanese Folktale*. Silverleaf Press, 2006.
- Kawabata, Yasunari (author) & Keene, Donald. *The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter*. Kodansha's Illustrated Japanese Classics, 1998.

## Recommended Web Sites

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NM9ObFCIDpg> Five-minute animated video of *The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter* for children.
- <http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/japan.html> *Folktales from Japan*, edited by DL Ashliman.
- <http://www.gkids.com/films/the-tale-of-the-princess-kaguya/>. *The Tale of the Princess Kaguya*, Studio Ghibli. DVD.
- <http://jpfpsyd-classroomresources.com/r14.html> . Japanese Mythology Classroom Resources.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7gnJigiN6rY> *Little One-Inch Boy*, Student Storytelling Video.

## Common Core Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy: Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening

- Comprehension and Collaboration
  - Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
  - Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
  - Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.
- Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas
  - Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
  - Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.
  - Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.