

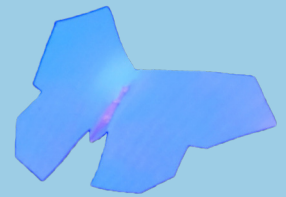
# *The Carp Who Would Not Quit and Other Animal Stories* Audience Guide



2023-2024 Season

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children's  
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company  
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At CTC, our mission is to create extraordinary theatre experiences that educate, challenge, and inspire young people and their communities. This Audience Guide is just one of the ways in which we aim to enhance your experience and further your engagement with the shows on stage.

It includes a summary, context, fun facts, and activities plus details that can help you decide what’s right for your kids.

If you have any further questions, please contact our friendly Ticket Office Associates at 612.874.0400 during their regular business hours or email them at [tickets@childrenstheatre.org](mailto:tickets@childrenstheatre.org).



## Synopsis



### What is this show about?

Could YOU climb up a waterfall??! See a heroic carp who tries just that in this energetic and interactive retelling of traditional fables from Japan and Okinawa. Through artful puppetry and three imaginative actors, you'll also meet a grateful crane, a wonderfully generous mouse, and an industrious rabbit who teaches everyone to do the *mochi* dance! During this invigorating show from Hawai'i, live music played on the *koto*, *shakuhachi*, and *taiko* drum will accompany young audiences as they dance, clap, and sing along.

## Content Advisories

### Language: 0 out of 5 stars



Actors engage the audience in call and response with Japanese vocabulary. While the stories are told in English, the actors sing and speak Japanese intermittingly throughout.

### Violence and Scariness: 0 out of 5 stars



There is a stylized dance-like battle between a sea serpent and a *shisa* (lion dog).

### Sensory Advisories: 1 out of 5 stars



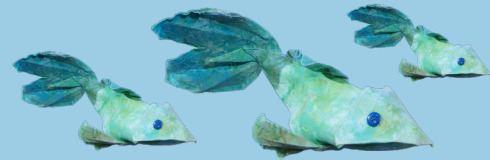
The *shisa* (lion dog) roars, and the actors encourage the audience to roar as well, which could be loud. There is drumming throughout that may be loud.

### Potentially Anxious Moments: 0 out of 5 stars



Actors interact with audience members through call and response.

Please contact [tickets@childrenstheatre.org](mailto:tickets@childrenstheatre.org) with any questions.



### Where do the stories in this show come from?

The stories in this play come from traditional fables from Japan and Okinawa. Similar to Aesop's fables, each story teaches a lesson or the importance of a specific character trait. The stories featured in this play are part of the *Mukashibanashi* or the "tales of long ago."

**Listen carefully**, each story begins with "*Mukashi mukashi aru tokoro ni*" which means "long long ago in a place." This is the Japanese equivalent of "once upon a time."

### Japanese and Okinawan Theatre

The stories in this play are told in a traditional Japanese style, incorporating a narrator and the Japanese *koto* and *taiko* drums to accompany and accent actions being performed.

**Koken** - At times, the actors in the show will become *koken* or "stagehands that are visible who rearrange the set or props." Traditionally, *koken* are dressed all in black, but not in this show.

**Bunraku puppetry** - *Bunraku* is a form of traditional Japanese puppet theatre. In *bunraku*, the puppeteers are completely visible, but not acknowledged by the audience or other actors. While the puppets in this play are not traditional *bunraku*-style puppets, the visible puppeteering is.

### Japanese Cuisine

Two of the stories in *The Carp Who Would Not Quit* center around food: "The Rabbits Making Mochi in the Moon" and "The Mice and the Musubi."

#### **Mochi**

*Mochi* is a rice cake that is pounded into paste and then molded into a shape. *Mochi* is often served sweet as a dessert, but it can also be savory. While people in Japan eat it year-round, it is a popular food to eat to celebrate the new year.



#### **Musubi**

Often eaten as a snack or small lunch, *musubi* is a ball of rice covered with *nori* (seaweed).



People often add meat or fermented vegetables to *musubi*.



Lunar Shapes

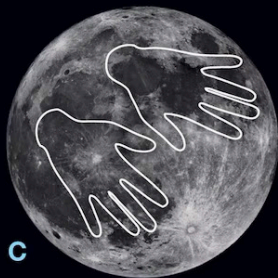
The moon’s surface is a complex mixture of dark areas and lighter areas. Over the ages, humans have observed different shapes on the full moon that remind them of people, animals, and other objects, often related to folklore or cultural symbols. Below you’ll see some of the fascinating interpretations from around the world. You may be familiar with the Man in the Moon. In Japanese culture, people see a rabbit pounding mochi. In The Carp Who Would Not Quit, the performers will teach the audience and get them involved with a catchy song about this rabbit making mochi.



A



B



C



D



E



F

**A. MOON RABBIT (EAST ASIA)**  
Moon gazers in Japan see a rabbit making rice cakes with a mortar and pestle. In China and Korea they see him too—except he’s mixing an immortality elixir. Moon rabbits also appear in Mesoamerican myths.

**B. MAN IN THE MOON (EUROPE)**  
Many European cultures see an old man bearing a bundle of sticks. Christian lore holds that he’s been eternally condemned for violating the Sabbath.

**C. HANDPRINTS (INDIA)**  
Astangi Mata, mother of all living things, sent her twins into the sky to be the sun and moon. Her hands brushed Chanda’s cheek in a poignant farewell.

**D. MAN IN THE MOON (U.S.)**  
The face of a man is visible to many in North America. Ancient lava flows form his eyes, nose, and mouth.

**E. TREE IN THE MOON (HAWAII)**  
A woman called Hina uses this banyan tree to make cloth for the gods. *Mahina*, Hawaiian for “moon,” is derived from her name.

**F. WOMAN IN THE MOON (NEW ZEALAND)**  
This is Rona, a Maori maiden who disrespected the moon and must spend eternity there as penance.

## “The Rolling Musubi”—Story Exploration

*The Carp Who Would Not Quit and Other Animal Stories* includes many stories in the play, including “The Rolling Musubi.” Read this story together and then engage your kids in the drama activities following the story.

### ***Omusubi Kororin: The Rolling Musubi***

Long ago and far away across the wide blue sea, there lived a hard-working old man and old woman. One day, the old man went up into the mountains to gather wood. When he sat down to eat his lunch, one of his rice balls tumbled away. Down the slope of the mountain it tumbled until it finally rolled into a large hole. The old man chased after the rice ball and stopped at the hole. He bent down to look inside and from within the hole he heard a soft song.



The old man was very excited, so he climbed back up the mountain, picked up another rice ball and rolled it away. Down it tumbled into the hole. When he crouched down near the hole, he heard the song once more.

The old man peeked into the hole, but as he did, he lost his balance and tumbled right into the hole itself. As he tumbled, he heard another song.

In the hole was a mouse world, where hundreds of little mice were happily singing and making rice cakes. “Thank you for the rice balls, kind sir. We will treat you to a feast to repay your kindness. Come and join us in our song,” they called. And so, the old man and the mice sang.

The old man had a wonderful time singing and dancing with the mice. “Thank you for the feast, but now it is time for me to go home,” he said. “Wait, old man,” said the smallest mouse, and he gave him a box. “Here is our gift to you.” When the old man returned home, he opened the box and was astounded to find it filled with money and treasure. “There are enough riches to last us all our days,” the old man said to the old woman. And they were very happy for the rest of their lives.

However, when the old man told his story to a greedy, old neighbor, the greedy old man thought he would do exactly the same thing, so that he, too, could receive a fortune from the mice world. He immediately went into the mountains and dropped two rice balls into the hole, then tumbled in himself.

Hundreds of mice were happily singing and making rice cakes. After the greedy old man entered the mouse world, he decided to chase away the mice and keep all of the treasures for himself. So, he pretended to be a cat and began to meow. “Meow, meow.”

The frightened little mice scattered every which way and disappeared. Just as the greedy, old man thought he could now take all the treasure, everything went black. He realized that the money and treasure had vanished with the mice and now he was left with nothing. Not even a rice ball. Only after a long time scrabbling around on his hands and knees in the darkness, was he able to find the entrance to the hole and leave the mouse world.

Since that time, no one has ever found the mouse world again. Although sometimes, if you are walking high up in the mountains of Japan, you may hear the mouse song carried by the wind.

### **Drama Activities**

1. Talk about how each of the characters feel, how they would move (fast or slow), and what they would be doing as they walk about.
2. Act out each character.
3. Finally, in character, act out a scene together.

## 3 Things to Look and Listen for During the Performance

### Look for...

1. Animal puppets and actors playing animals.
2. Actors playing multiple characters.
3. A string of lights that look like paper lanterns.



Paper Lanterns



### Listen for...

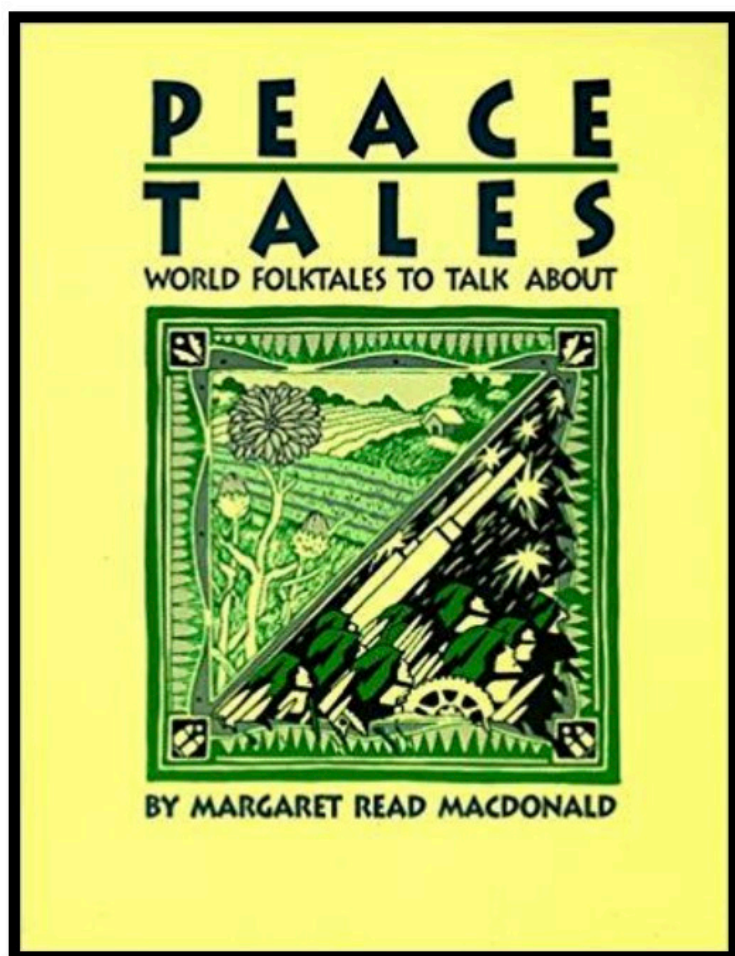
1. Japanese words. How many can you remember?
2. A *taiko* drum and a *koto*, a stringed instrument that is plucked.
3. The roar of the *shisa* or lion-dog!





## Explore Other Books After the Performance

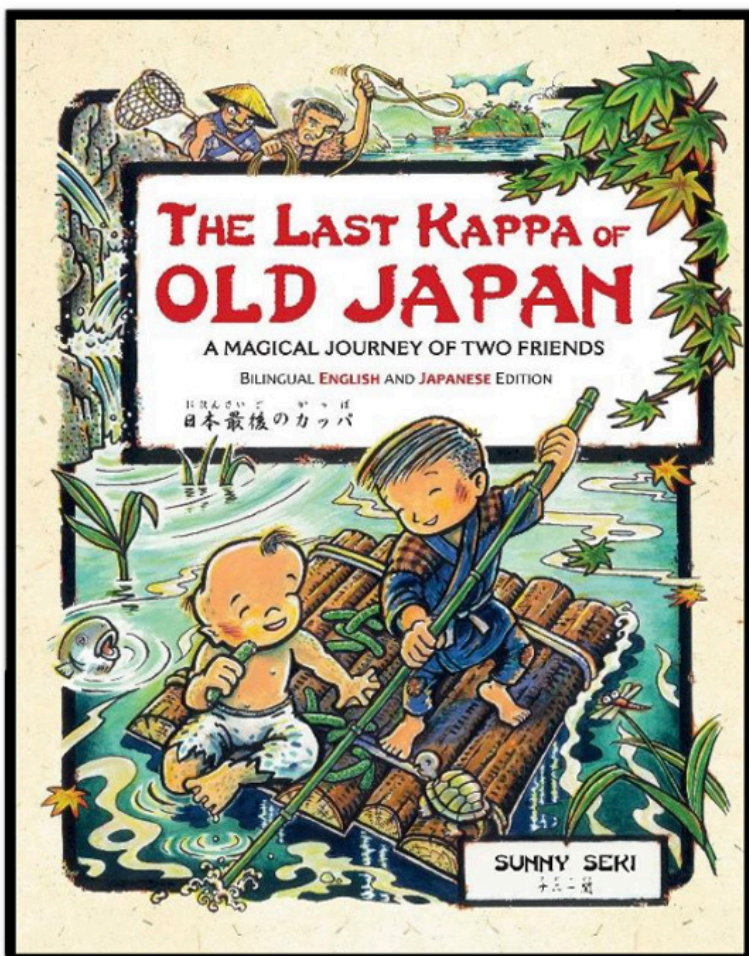
Head to the library to read other engaging tales that share an important lesson and spark conversation:



### Talk About:

**Respect**—How do the characters in the story show or NOT show respect for each other? How does their attitude help or hurt their relationship?

**Peace**—Which characters want peace? How do the characters help peace happen?



### Talk About:

**Friends**—Who were the friends in the story? What did they do?

**Caring**—How did the friends care for each other?

**Persistence**—How did the friends work to help the world?





## CTC Theatre Etiquette

At CTC, we encourage audiences to engage with the live theatre experience and react freely. It's ok to laugh if something is funny, exclaim if something is surprising, gasp if something is scary, and maybe even dance along in your seats if the music inspires you. We value the real-time, honest reactions of our audiences.

We do, however, thank you for your partnership in making sure that any reactions are kind and respectful towards the actors onstage and towards all of the people who worked so hard to make the show possible.

## Accessibility

### Mobility Accessibility

The MacMillan Family Lobby and Cargill Stage are fully accessible on the ground level. CTC's accessible seating area is located in the front row of the theatre. Please email [tickets@childrenstheatre.org](mailto:tickets@childrenstheatre.org) in advance to request accessible seating, if needed. The rest of the seating can be accessed by going up a set of stairs.

The restrooms in the MacMillan Family Lobby are fully accessible.

### Sensory Sensitivities

The performance is live streamed in the lobby for anyone needing to take a break during the performance. Please feel free to come and go from the lobby as you need to throughout the show.

Please let an usher know if someone in your group would benefit from a fidget, ear plugs, noise canceling headphones, or coloring/activity sheets during your visit.

### Assistive Listening Devices

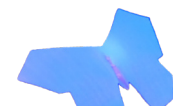
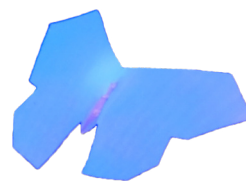
Please let an usher know if you would like to use an assistive listening device. These devices come equipped with an over-the-ear earpiece. This earpiece can be unplugged, and other devices, such as cochlear implants, can be plugged into the receiver using the 1/8" jack. If you will be plugging in your own device, please bring the appropriate cord as CTC does not have these on hand.

### Sign Interpretation and Audio Description

Each CTC production has a sign interpreted and/or audio described performance for each production. These performances are noted in the [list of performance dates](#).

### Prayer/Private Nursing Space

During your visit, please ask a member of our staff to use our private space for nursing, pumping, prayer, or other needs.



## Full Plot Description

### **THIS IS A COMPLETE DESCRIPTION OF THE PLAY, SO IT IS FULL OF SPOILERS.**

**The play is a series of short Japanese fables told with hand puppets and music. We begin with....**

#### **The Carp Who Would Not Quit**

Hiro the carp loves to swim, jump, and eat with his brothers and sisters. One day, he has an idea to swim up the highest waterfall. As they swim, one of the fish gets distracted and swims away to go play. The remaining three fish keep swimming and trying to go upstream. The current is so strong, that one of the fish stops to rest, leaving two fish to keep trying. They make it to the waterfall, but one of the fish is too scared to try and make it to the top, leaving Hiro by himself. He perseveres and makes it to the top. His perseverance is rewarded, and he becomes a dragon.

#### **The Tale of the Crane Who Was Grateful**

We see an old man carrying heavy wood through the snow. He hears rustling feathers and sees a crane stuck in a net. He untangles the net and sets her free. That night, the old man and his wife hear a knock at the door. It is a young girl asking for shelter from the snowstorm. The couple let her inside to stay the night. In the night, the girl cleans the floor and makes the couple tea in the morning. She asks if she can stay and be their daughter. The couple is overjoyed as they have always wanted a daughter. To repay them for their kindness, the girl asks for some cloth to weave for them to sell at the market. She asks them not to peek while she works on it.

After three days, she shows them the beautiful cloth she has made. The couple says that they cannot sell her beautiful cloth, but she insists that they need the money for food. A rich man buys the cloth for many gold coins. The old man buys rice with the coins and has more money to spare. The girl says she'll weave more cloth. As she weaves, the couple is curious about how she weaves the cloth so beautifully. The old man decides to peek on her. The girl is actually a crane! She adopts her crane form when she weaves and weaves her feathers into the cloth. This is what makes it so beautiful.

The girl explains that she is the crane that the old man saved that one winter night. She had come to them as a human to weave cloth to repay him for his kindness. But now that they have seen her true form, she must leave them. Before their eyes, she transforms into a crane and flies away.

The couple lived on the money she had made for them for the rest of their lives and were very happy. The memories of the days they shared as a family were their true fortune.

#### **The Rabbit (Usagi) in the Moon**

A rabbit tells the audience that in Japan, they believe there is a rabbit (usagi) in the moon making mochi. Mochi is a sweet Japanese rice cake. The actors lead the audience in an interactive song and dance where they pat, knead, and pound the mochi.

## Full Plot Description cont.

### The Mice and the Musubi

A hardworking woodcutter sits down at the end of the day to eat his musubi, a Japanese snack made with blocks of rice. He drops his food, and it lands in a mouse hole. He enters the mouse hole and finds a group of mice. They are working on turning his musubi into mochi. He joins them in making mochi, using the same song that the rabbit taught earlier. He eats the mochi, and the mice insist he choose a box to take with him.

He chooses a box and exits the mouse hole. The box is filled with gold! He can't believe his good fortune and runs to tell his neighbor. His greedy neighbor decides to try the same thing the next day to get gold of his own. Once in the hole, the neighbor does not help the mice make the mochi. The mice invite him to choose a box to take with him, but the neighbor wants both of the boxes. The neighbor decides to scare the mice by pretending to be a cat so he can take both boxes with him.

When he opens the boxes, he finds that they are both empty. The neighbor is upset; it never pays to be greedy.

### The Shisa Story

This story takes place in a village by the sea that is guarded by a stone shisa, a lion dog of Okinawa. Legend has it that the stone shisa could come alive. An angry sea serpent attacks the village. The villagers' cries wake up the stone shisa, and the shisa defends the village. Using stylized movement, the sea serpent and the shisa fight to drumbeats. The shisa roars, and the audience helps roar as well. The sea serpent is defeated, and the villagers rejoice!

### The Mouse's Match

Our last story is about a smart and brave little mouse who wants to climb mountains, run like the wind, and go on adventures. Her father says she should be quiet and still and isn't strong enough to take on the world. So she sets off to find the most powerful being in the world to learn to be strong. She finds the sun, a cloud, and then the wind who sends her back home to the wall where she lives with her family. The wall tells her if there are enough mouse holes in the wall then it would crumble and thus, she is even more powerful than it is. Sometimes you only need to look inside yourself for the strength you need.







### Watch the Fastest Mochi Maker in Japan Pound Mochi

Mitsuo Nakatani is a mochi master, and to watch him do his work is a genuine thrill. Turning sticky rice into Japan's traditional soft and chewy treat requires pounding, flipping and smashing the glutinous rice at high speeds in perfect coordination with a team.

[WATCH VIDEO](#)



### Explore Okinawan Lion Dances

Shishimai—Okinawan Lion Dance - mixes traditional and modern elements with a costumed flair that often includes thick rope hair. Lion dances are a traditional way for some Asian cultures to mark the beginning of the Lunar New Year. If the lion bites you, it brings good luck.

[WATCH VIDEO](#)