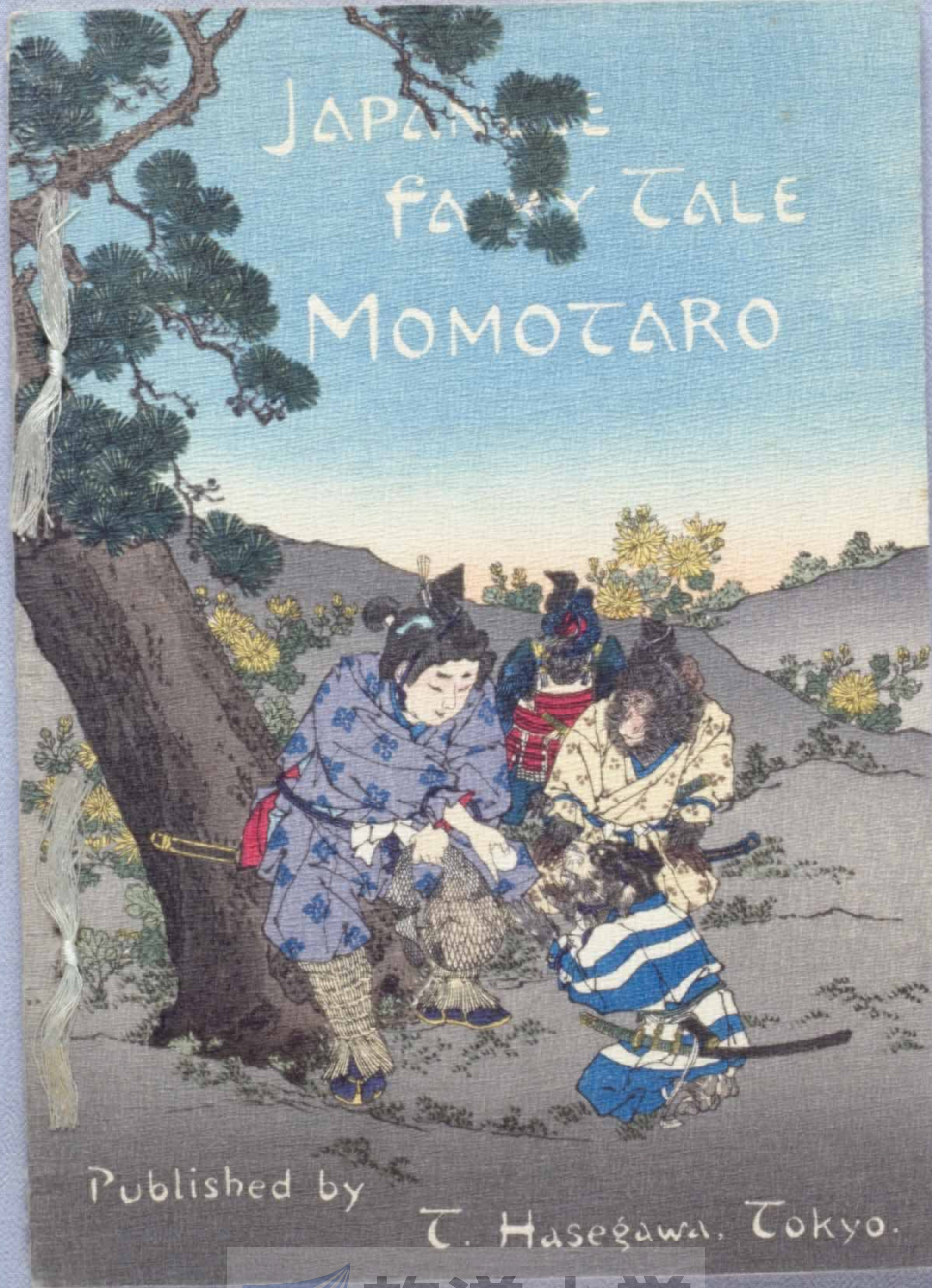


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JAPANESE FAIRY TALE

MOMOTARO

or

Little Peachling

TOLD IN ENGLISH BY

KATE JAMES



Published by

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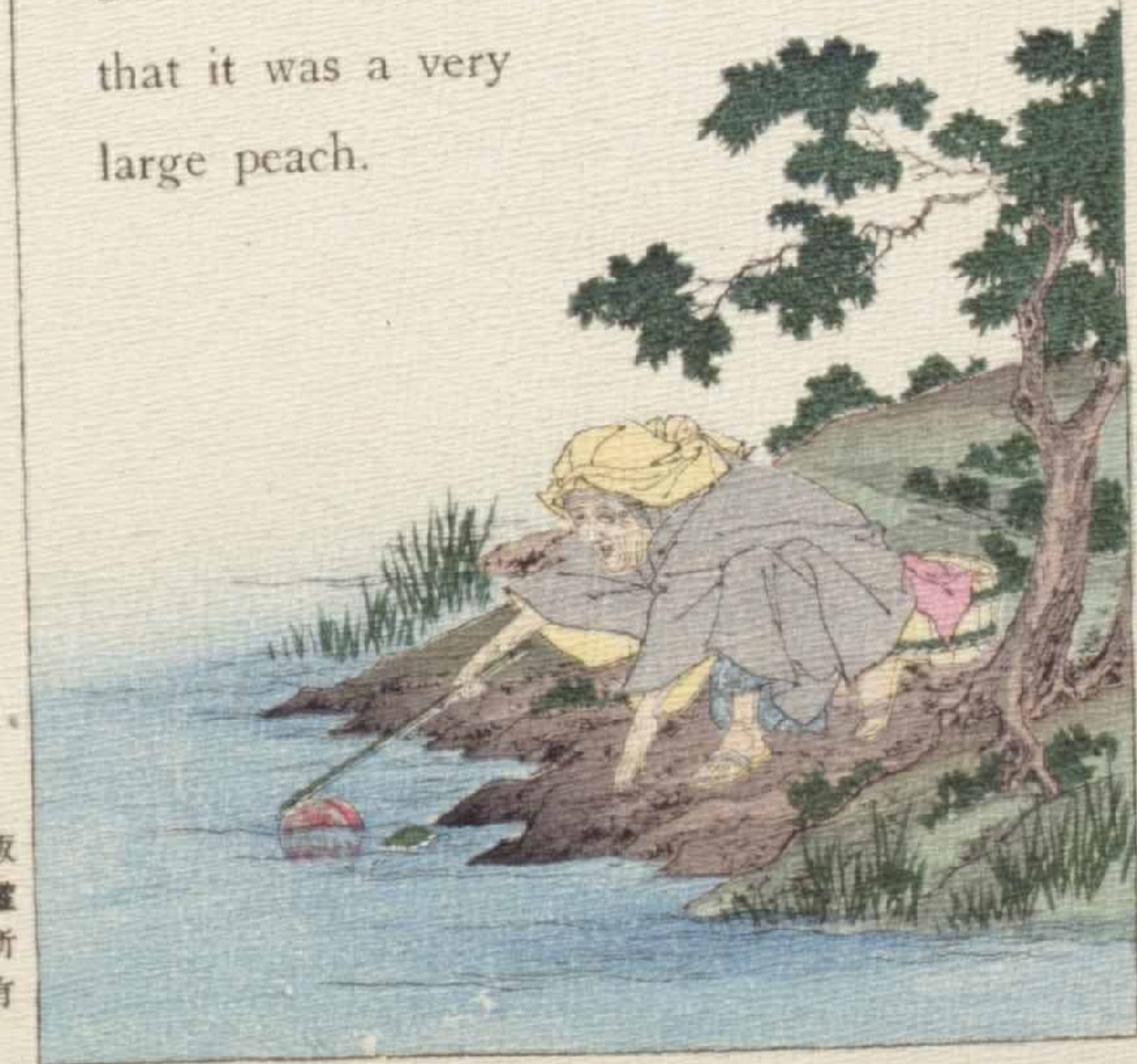


MOMOTARO  
OR  
LITTLE PEACHLING

**A** long long time ago there lived an honest old wood-cutter and his wife. One day the old man went to the hills to cut grass, and the old woman went down to the river to wash clothes.

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As she was washing, a great big thing came tumbling and splashing down the stream. The old woman saw it, and drew it to the bank with a bamboo stick that lay near. When she took it up and looked at it, she found that it was a very large peach.



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Then she was glad, and quickly finished her washing and went home, taking the peach with her that she might give it to her old man to eat.

But when she cut the peach in two, out came a little child from the heart of it. So the old couple, having no children, rejoiced, took the baby and brought it up as their own, and named it Momotaro, or Little Peachling, because it came out of a peach.

Momotaro grew up big and strong and brave. Having often heard stories about the ogres who lived in an island not far off, he made up his mind to cross over to this island and carry away the riches which the ogres had stored there. His foster parents gave their consent, and helped him to prepare for the journey. They ground some millet which



the old woman made  
into dumplings,  
and placed in  
his pouch.



The  
old man  
provided

him with a sword, and when all was ready  
he took leave of them and set out.

First he met with a dog which came run-  
ning up to the side of the path, and said,  
“Bow! wow! wow! where are you off to,  
Momotaro?”

“I’m going off to the ogres’ island, to  
carry away their treasures,” answered Momo-  
taro.

“What have you there hanging at your

belt?” asked the dog.

“Some of the very best millet dumplings  
in all Japan,” said Momotaro.

“Give me one, and I will go with you,”  
said the dog.

So Momotaro took a dumpling out of his  
pouch and gave it to him, and the dog be-  
came his follower.

Next he met with a monkey, and the  
monkey said, “Kia! kia! kia! where are  
you off to, Momotaro?”

“I’m going off to the ogres’ island,” an-  
swered Momotaro, as before. Then the  
monkey said, “Give me a dumpling and I  
will go with you.” So Momotaro gave the  
monkey a dumpling, and he followed him too.

Last of all came a pheasant crying, “Ken!  
ken! ken! where are you off to, Momotaro?”





“I’m off  
to the ogres’  
island to  
carry  
away  
their  
treasures,”

again

Momotaro answered.

“Give me a dumpling and I will go with you,” said the pheasant. So the pheasant got a dumpling, and all three followed Momotaro.

Very soon they got to the ogres’ island. Then the pheasant flew over the castle gate, the monkey climbed over the castle wall, while Momotaro, with the dog at his heels, forced the great gate and got into the courtyard.



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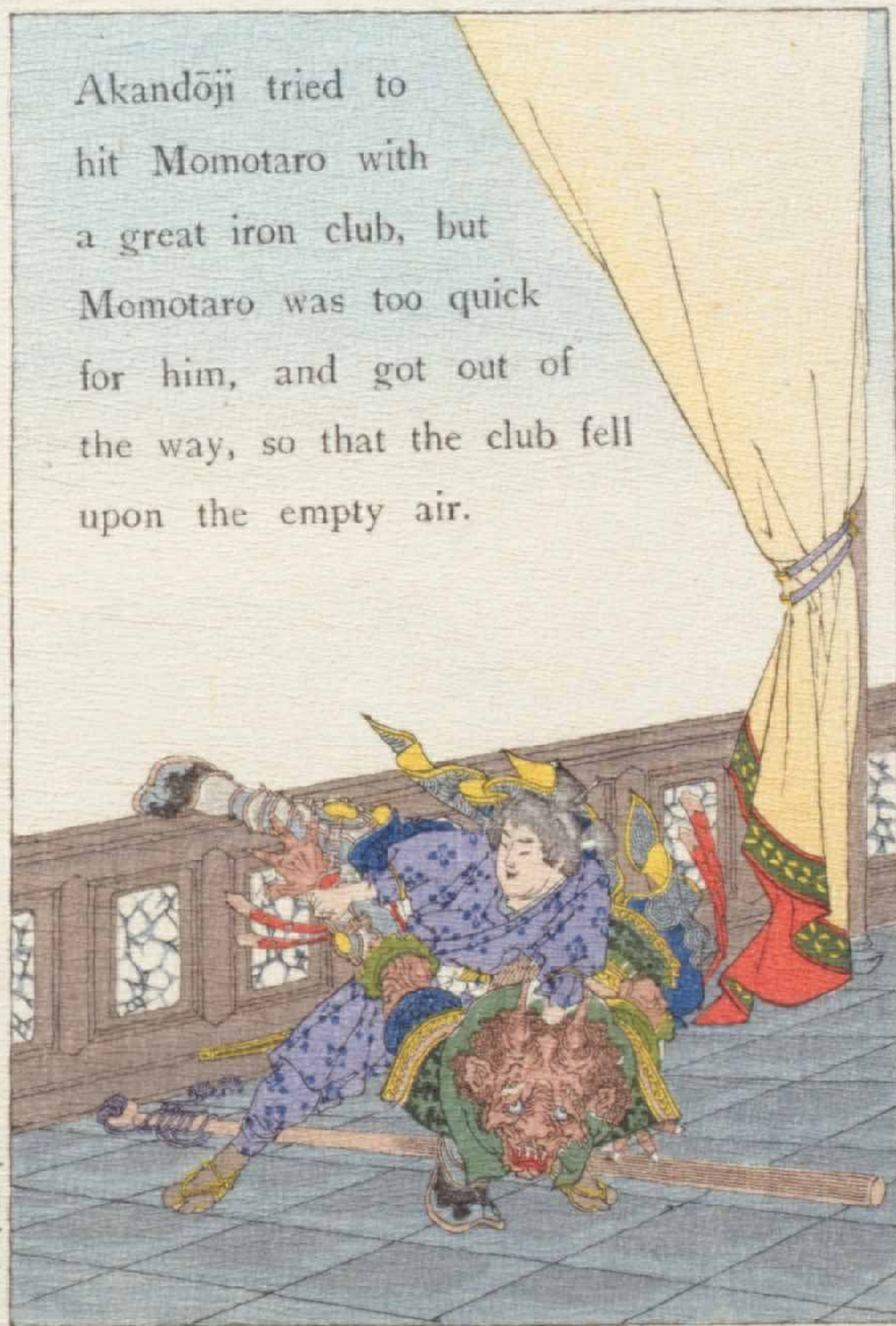


Here they were met by the retainers of the ogre who came out to fight with them; but they pressed on, and at last came face to face with Akandōji, the king of the ogres. Then came the tug of war.



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Akandōji tried to hit Momotaro with a great iron club, but Momotaro was too quick for him, and got out of the way, so that the club fell upon the empty air.



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At last, after a long struggle, in which the dog, the monkey and the pheasant gave great help to their master, Akandōji was overcome, taken prisoner and bound with a rope. Moreover, all this was done in fair fight.



Then the king of the ogres, and all his retainers did homage to Momotaro.

“Only spare my life” said Akandōji, “and I will give up all my treasures.”

“Then out with them” said Momotaro, laughing.







So the ogres brought out all their treasures and ranged them in order at the feet of Momotaro. There were caps and coats that made their wearers invisible, jewels which governed the ebb and flow of the tide, coral, musk, amber, emeralds and tortoise-shell, besides plenty of gold and silver.

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So Momotaro and his followers went home laden with riches. The old wood-cutter and his wife received them joyfully, and gave a great feast in their honour. Momotaro kept his foster-parents in peace and plenty for the remainder of their lives. He himself lived to be an old man, happy and prosperous and beloved by everybody.





