

Long, long ago in a village far from the capital, a baby boy was born. He was no bigger than your little finger. His parents didn't care how tiny he was, though. They were very happy. They named him 'Issun Boshi', which means 'Inch-High Priestling'. Issun Boshi never grew much taller.

One day, he announced to his parents that he wanted to travel to the capital of Kyoto, to become a samurai. His parents could not change his mind. So his father found a needle and straw to serve as a sword and scabbard, and his mother gave him a rice bowl to use as a boat and a chopstick to paddle with.

The next day they all walked to the river. The inch-high youngster launched his boat and began paddling downstream toward the capital.

'Bye Mum! Bye Dad! Take care of yourselves!!'

'You too, son!'

When he arrived in Kyoto, he looked for the house of one of the greatest noblemen of the day. He found it, and was able to secure the job of companion to the nobleman's daughter.

The princess and Issun Boshi studied and played together every day. They went everywhere together.

They especially liked to walk in the garden because the boy was able to tell the princess the names of the flowers, plants and birds.

One day as they wandered out of their garden, a big ogre pounced on the princess.

'No!!' shouted the Issun Boshi as loudly as he could. 'She's a girl! If you want to fight, fight me!!'

The ogre looked in the direction of the voice and found a tiny little boy.

'Did you say something, you little worm?'

'I did indeed. Come, fight with me!'

The ogre laughed and picked the boy off the ground and swallowed him up in one gulp.

Inside, the boy pricked the walls of the ogre's stomach with his needle. The ogre cried out in great pain, and vomited him up.

The ogre ran away, clutching his stomach in pain. In his haste, the ogre dropped his magic hammer. 'This is a magic hammer', said the princess. 'Anything you wish for will come true, Princess', said Issun Boshi. The princess did not need long to think before she said, 'Oh I wish that you would be tall'.

With that, the boy instantly grew and became tall. He was very handsome. Well, you guessed it! Issun Boshi and the princess were married and lived happily ever after.