

JAPANESE BOARD ON BOOKS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Japanese Children's Books

2021



JBBY

Shigeru TAMURA

Born in Tokyo in 1949, Shigeru Tamura attended the Kumasawa Design School. He is a picture book, film and digital content artist with a unique poetic sense and humour. His picture books include *Uchu suketo* (Space Skate; Libroport), *Suna no oshiro* (Sand Castle; Kaiseisha), *Katatumuri takushii* (The Snail Taxi; Fukuinkan Shoten), and *Ari to suika* (The Ants and the Watermelon; Poplar), as well as the illustration collection *Metaphysical Nights*, winner of the Shogakukan Illustration Prize. He directed the films *Ursa Minor Blue*, winner of the Mainichi Film Awards Noburo Ofuji Prize, and *Glassy Ocean*, winner of the Japan Media Arts Festival Animation Grand Prize. His picture book *Yoru no oto* (Night Sounds; Kaiseisha) was named to the 2020 IBBY Honour List.

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Contents

- Book Selection Team 2
- About JBBY and this Catalog 3
- Recent Japanese Children's Books Recommended by JBBY 4
- The Hans Christian Andersen Award
Five winners and 14 nominees from Japan 22
- Japanese Books Selected for the IBBY Honour List 24
- Recent Translations into Japanese Recommended by JBBY 26

JBBY BOOK SELECTION AND REVIEW TEAM

The JBBY Book Selection and Review Team collaboratively chose the titles listed in this publication. The name in parentheses after each book description is the last name of the team member who wrote the description.

**Yasuko DOI**

Director and senior researcher at the International Institute for Children's Literature (IICLO). Besides researching reading activities and the history of Japanese children's literature, she plans projects such as training courses for teachers and librarians, as well as lectures and symposiums for children's book authors from Japan and overseas. Coeditor of *I Could Read by Myself!*; *Book Guide of 200 Books for Young Children* (Hyoronsha) among others. Jury for the 2018 and 2020 Hans Christian Andersen Awards. JBBY managing director.

**Yukiko HIROMATSU**

Picture book author, critic, and curator. Her writings in Japanese include the series *Picture Books of Old Tales for Now* Vols. 1-11 (Iwasaki Shoten). Her translations into Japanese include *Run, Toto!* by Eun-young Cho (Bunka Shuppanyoku), winner of the Japan Picture Book Awards Translation Award, and *A World of Your Own* by Laura Carlin (BL Shuppan). She has sat on the jury of the Bologna Illustrators Exhibition, the Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava, and the Nami Concours. Former chief curator of Chihiro Art Museum, Tokyo. JBBY vice president.

**Akira NOGAMI**

At Shogakukan, served as editor of First Grader monthly magazine, head of children's books, company director, and finally president and CEO of Shogakukan Creative. Taught children's literature and culture at Shirayuri University and Tokyo Seitoku University. His writings in Japanese include *To the Modern Children's Literature of Japan* (Parorusha), *Children's Literature Crossing Borders* (Nagasaki Shuppan), and *Contemporary History of Children's Culture* (Otsuki Shoten). Coeditor of *When I Was a Child, There Was a War* (Rironsha) among others. Managing director of Japan PEN Club. JBBY vice president.

**Mikako SAKAGUCHI**

Member of the Japanese Society of Science Books for Children. With the motto "science books and experiences play catch," she teaches some 270 sessions annually from play-with-science times, to elementary/middle school and university classes, to workshops targeted to library and children's center staff and read-aloud volunteers. She has authored the books *Science Mysteries* (Froebel-kan) and *The Price of Life and Welfare* (Otsuki Shoten), translated *Michael Faraday and Electricity* by Brian Bowers (Tamagawa University Press), and contributed to the volume *Let's Start Science Reading* (Iwanami Shoten) among others. JBBY member.

**Yumiko SAKUMA**

Translator, editor, reviewer of children's books, representative of the Japan-Africa Children's Books Project (JACBOP), and former professor at Aoyama Gakuin Women's College. Her writings in Japanese include *The Cooking Stoves of Enzo Village* (Fukuinkan Shoten). Her more than 250 translations of books from English to Japanese range from *Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White and the picture books of Maurice Sendak to *Refugee* by Alan Gratz. Her translation of *Last Summer with Maizon* by Jacqueline Woodson made the IBBY Honour List. JBBY president.

For each selected title in this catalog, we provide the following:

Title in English
 (Title in Japanese/Title in Romanized Japanese)
 Author/Illustrator | Publisher | Publication Year | Number of
 Pages | Trim Size | ISBN | Target Age | Keywords
 Basic Book Description (Last Name of Reviewer)

ABOUT JBBY AND THIS CATALOG

The Japanese Board on Books for Young People (JBBY) was founded in 1974 as the Japanese Section of the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY).

JBBY is dedicated to enhancing international understanding, and to providing information on children's books to people around the world. We promote IBBY's mission in a broad range of ways. Our international network allows us to take advantage of the prolific information generated by IBBY and to encourage mutual understanding. Our mission is to create a peaceful future for children worldwide through books.

JBBY hosts international book exhibitions in Japan that provide information about global titles to Japanese readers. In addition, we provide information on Japanese children's books to people around the world. We nominate titles for international recognition, as a means to deepen global understanding towards Japan.

In this catalog, we provide information about recent Japanese books recommended by a JBBY book selection and review team in several categories: picture books, chapter books and novels, and nonfiction. In addition, we introduce Japanese winners of and nominees for the Hans Christian Andersen Award; books selected for the IBBY Honour List from Japan; and recent translations into Japanese recommended by JBBY.

We list the recent Japanese books by category and in order of target age, including cover images and synopses along with bibliographic information. We hope you will enjoy reading about these books. For further information, please contact us: info@jbby.org

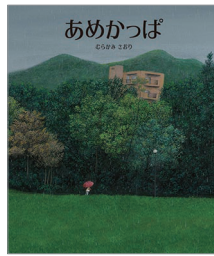


Cover illustration © Shigeru Tamura

Yumiko SAKUMA, JBBY President

RECENT PICTURE BOOKS

1

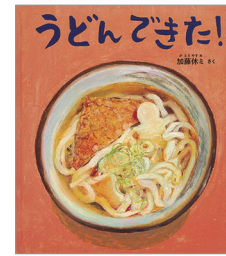


Rain Kappa

あめかっぱ (Ame kappā) | Text/Ill. Murakami, Saori | Kaiseisha | 2020 | 32pp | 26x22cm | ISBN 9784033327600 | Ages: 3+ | *Yokai, Home alone, Rain, Nature*

One rainy day, someone knocks on the door of Nao's house. She opens it to find a strange green creature standing there. It's a Japanese yokai known as a kappa. When children in Nao's town have to stay home alone, a kappa comes to play. Little Nao is afraid at first, but soon she is enjoying a picnic in the rain with lunch prepared by the kappa. The kappa takes her to a secret place she could never have found on her own. Readers share Nao's excitement as the two play under a huge tree. In this maiden work, each blade of grass and even the tiniest insects are carefully rendered, stimulating the imagination. The darker toned pages conceal endless discoveries, enticing the reader deeper into this delightful picture book. (Hiromatsu)

2



Noodles Are Ready!

うどんできた! (Udon dekita!) | Text/Ill. Kato, Yasumi | Fukuinkan Shoten | 2020 | 24pp | 23x21cm | ISBN 9784834085518 | Ages: 3+ | *Noodles, Cooking, Family*

Udon noodles, a Japanese soul food made from wheat flour, are loved by children and adults alike. The entire process of turning flour into delicious noodles is presented through appealing illustrations that evoke the texture of the dough at various stages and every action, from stirring salted water into powdery flour and kneading the dough to patting it into a ball and finally treading on it. The main character has fun making handprints in the dough, sculpting it like clay, and dancing on it. The realistic drawings rendered with crayons elicit a spontaneous desire to try making, and of course eating, udon. This is a celebration of the joy of eating one's own cooking, and the author includes not only an udon recipe using wheat flour, but also one using rice flour. (Hiromatsu)

3



Melon Vine Coils Round and Round

うりのつるくるくる (Uri no tsuru kurukuru) | Text/Ill. Tashima, Seizo | Mitsumura Educational | 2020 | 24pp | 20x20cm | ISBN 9784895722414 | Ages 3+ | *Plants, Natural enemies, Onomatopoeia*

A vine sprouts from a melon seed that an old man spits on the ground. Bugs flock to the vine and eat the leaves. The plant has to deal with the bugs itself while the old man naps. A bird comes to the melon's rescue, but then a snake goes after the bird's eggs. Whether plants, bugs, birds, reptiles or humans, all living creatures in the world depend on one another in a delicate balance of eating and being eaten, nurturing and killing. The text unfolds in a rhythmical singsong fashion with little explanation, but through the illustrations even a very young child can grasp such concepts as the circle of life and the value of all living things. (Hiromatsu)

4



The Children are Waiting

こどもたちはまっている (Kodomo tachi wa matte iru) | Text/Ill. Arai, Ryoji | Aki Shobo | 2020 | 32pp | 31x22cm | ISBN 9784750515984 | Ages: 3+ | *Horizon, Scenery, Time, Expectation*

The book opens with a dazzling view of the horizon in yellow tones. With each page turned, a new landscape spreads before the readers' eyes, and the phrase "The children are waiting" is repeated. Small children are hidden within warmly depicted scenes from daily life. The children are waiting for many different things: a boat, a donkey, the rain to stop, summer, etc. Each time the page turns, the children's wishes are answered. The author, who won the 2005 Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award, continues to share positive messages for the present and the future during these anxious times. The layout, as well as the pleasant rhythm and singsong quality, fills the reader with hope that this world is indeed enough to fulfill our expectations. (Hiromatsu)

5



Hello! My Picture

こんにちは! わたしのえ (Konnichiwa! Watashi no e) | Text/Ill. Hata, Koshiro | Holp Shuppan | 2020 | 32pp | 25x22cm | ISBN 9784593100835 | Ages: 3+ | *Painting, Colors, Freedom*

A bold brush stroke sweeps across the front cover, inviting the reader inside. Even the colors and lines on the sleeve protector and inside flap exude a creativity that stimulates the reader's senses. With a "splat", a girl applies a brush thick with paint to a snow-white page. From that point, a line emerges, twisting and dancing. Colors are born and merge. Midway through, the girl begins using her hands and feet as brushes, following the impulses of her body and mind to draw with her entire being. The colorful illustrations and use of onomatopoeia realistically convey the joy that comes from creating just for the sake of it instead of aiming for the perfect picture. The author specializes in dynamic workshops with children, and here he is at his very best. The book is bound to liberate and inspire the reader to create their own picture. (Hiromatsu)



Drum

たいこ (Taiko) | Text/Ill. Hikatsu, Tomomi | Fukuinkan Shoten | 2019 | 24pp | 22x21cm | ISBN 9784834085051 | Ages: 3+ | *Drum, Rhythm, Companionship, Fun*

When someone finds a drum and plays ton, ton, to-to-ton, someone else asks, "May I join you?" As the two play ton ton, poko poko together, a third and fourth ask to join. As they play with delight, an alligator grouches, "You're too loud! Gaah!" and they all flee. But then the alligator sidles up to the drum, taps it, and finds out playing is fun! When the four hear the alligator playing, they gradually come back. Everyone's rhythms join together: ton poko peta bon gaah gon! The rhythms and fun of taiko drumming spill forth. (Sakuma)



Chinchiraka and the Giant

チンチラカと大男 (Chinchiraka to o-otoko) | Text: Katayama, Fue | Ill. Suzuki, Koji | BL Shuppan | 2019 | 32pp | 29x22cm | ISBN 9784776409274 | Ages: 3+ | *Wisdom, Giant, King, Georgia*

A folktale from Georgia in the Caucasus unfolds in this dynamically illustrated picture book. Chinchiraka, the youngest of three brothers known for his wisdom, is commanded by a moody king to snatch a golden vase from a giant who lives inside a magic mountain. When Chinchiraka succeeds, he is told to go take a golden panduri instrument that speaks human language. After that, he must go and catch the giant himself. Chinchiraka somehow tricks the giant into a box and catches him, but when the giant comes out of the box, he gobbles up the king and his servants! Scary parts are balanced by a happy ending, in which Chinchiraka becomes the king. (Sakuma)



Gotcha!

つかまえた (Tsukamaeta) | Text/Ill. Tashima, Seizo | Kai-seisha | 2020 | 32pp | 29x23cm | ISBN 9784032220209 | Ages: 3+ | *Boy, Fish, Life, Touch*

A boy goes alone to the river and spots a large fish in the shallows. When the boy moves closer, he slips and falls into the water, but he tries hard to catch the fish, struggling with his bare hands. The feel of the wriggling fish is expressed through onomatopoeia such as nururu (slimy) and guriguru (googly). Textures of water, air and emotions seem to well up from the rough brush strokes, blurs, and white space in the illustrations. The face-off between boy and fish—by turns rough, wild, humorous, and sad—evokes the sympathy of living things. The eighty-year-old author-illustrator's formative experiences in nature come forth vividly, awakening the reader's sense of aliveness. An ambitious new work released after Seizo Tashima made the shortlist for the 2020 Hans Christian Andersen Award for Illustration. (Hiromatsu)



Crane and Tortoise

つるかめつるかめ (Tsurukame tsurukame) | Text: Nakawaki, Hatsue | Ill. Azumimushi | Asunaro Shobo | 2020 | 32pp | 20x19cm | ISBN 9784751529683 | Ages: 3+ | *Charms, Encouragement*

For lightning protection, kuwabara kuwabara. For calming an earthquake, majaraku majaraku. This book introduces seven charms that people have chanted in times of worry or fear. The author and illustrator rushed publication for the sake of children and adults suffering from anxiety due to Covid. From charms chanted for generations in regions with harsh nature, to a phrase that grown-ups used to comfort the author when she was a child—daijobu, daijobu—the book offers scenes of chanting with brief language and pleasing tempo. Unique, primitive illustrations of cut aluminum collage resonate well with the charms. The creators of the book do not aim to dismiss readers' feelings of fear, but rather to share it and offer companionship and courage. (Hiromatsu)



Tetsuko Puu: The Girl Who Turned into a Balloon

テツコ・プー (Tetsuko puu) | Text/Ill. Kojima, Naomi | Kaiseisha | 2020 | 32pp | 25x21cm | ISBN 9784033329703 | Ages: 3+ | *Grumpy, Siblings, Sky, Balloon*

Tetsuko Puu has been grumpy since she woke up this morning. At breakfast, she pinches her brother and gets in trouble. Grumpier than ever, she hides herself inside the curtains. But then, when she stays grumpy, her body puffs up like a balloon and flies right out the window, into the sky! This is the first picture book in ten years from a creator who empathizes with young children's ineffable feelings of frustration. She expresses them in light lines and soft colors, adding just the right humorous words. Tetsuko Puu remains fiercely stubborn even while flailing through the sky, but in the end, she manages a small smile and returns to her mother's arms. After reading, readers are sure to relax and feel at ease. (Hiromatsu)



Seaweed Wrap

のりまき (Norimaki) | Text/Ill. Konishi, Eiko | Fukuinkan Shoten | 2019 | 24pp | 22x21cm | ISBN 9784834085082 | Ages: 3+ | *Seaweed wraps, Cooking, Food, Japanese food*

Traditional Japanese food is registered as an Intangible World Heritage. Norimaki, or wraps made with nori seaweed, have long been made for special occasions such as gatherings. Spreading out a sheet of nori, one layers on rice, vegetables, and fish or seafood and rolls it all up with the nori to the outside. Then, one slides the roll. This picture book shows the process with large illustrations that each fill a two-page spread. Rhythmic language and warm illustrations get readers more and more excited to see next steps. The final image of many colorful, tastefully arranged norimaki brings joy and satisfaction in their completion. The book also shows why every norimaki from a roll has the same pattern, and how to use a tool like a mini bamboo mat called a makisu. (Sakaguchi)

12

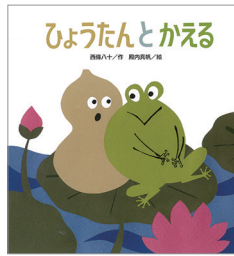


It's a Secret, OK?

ひみつだからね (Himitsu dakara ne) | Text/Ill. Karube, Takehiro | Kaiseisha | 2020 | 32pp | 31x23cm | ISBN 9784032326208 | Ages: 3+ | *Secret, Daydream, Independent play*

A young boy tells the reader of this book all about his special secrets: If you walk around a small, empty barn on tin can stilts, a horse made of straw and wood will run out! If you scramble over a log and then whistle with a blade of grass, a train with a raccoon dog conductor will arrive! Many children have such special places and rules for unlocking their magic, and by sharing his with the whisper, "It's a secret, OK?" the boy shares the joy of his independent play and daydreams. The writer-illustrator, who excels at ghost story and monster illustrations, brings the boy's imaginary world to vivid life, arousing rich emotions such as delight, surprise, and fright at what the boy sees. (Hiromatsu)

13



The Gourd and the Frog

ひょうたんとかえる (Hyotan to kaeru) | Text: Saijo, Yaso | Ill. Tonouchi, Maho | Suzuki Shuppan | 2020 | 24pp | 22x21cm | ISBN 9784790254102 | Ages: 3+ | *Gourd, Pond, Frog, Rhythm*

When a gourd on a vine extending over a pond drops into the water—bokkuriko!—a frog that had been relaxing, stretched out on a lotus leaf, jumps onto it—gekkoriko! When the gourd sinks due to the frog's weight, the frog carries the gourd on its back instead. It's a simple story, but the onomatopoeia repeats, adding delight until the finale: "Go, go, gekkoriko, gekkori! Bokkuri, bokkuriko!" The basis is a 1932 poem by Saijo Yaso, a poet representative of the Taisho and Showa eras (1926-89), who released the poem with music on a record. The illustrator brings it back to life as a humorous picture book with fun, enjoyable illustrations. (Sakuma)

14

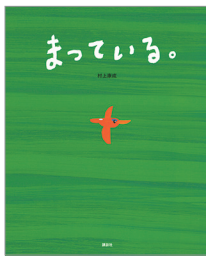


Blow Gently

ふーってして (Fut-te shite) | Text/Ill. Matsuda, Nanako | Kadokawa | 2020 | 32pp | 22x22cm | ISBN 9784041091371 | Ages: 3+ | *Colors, Paint, Making*

Colored water has been drip-dropped on white paper. The text says, "Hey, can you blow gently?" When you turn the page, you can see the result of blowing on the colored water: the yellow drop is a sun, the green drop grows into grass, and the purple water extends like needles to become a hedgehog parent and child. Using the contemporary art technique of dripping (blowing), monochrome line art overlaid with vivid hues changes unexpectedly, creating a story. The author-illustrator, who teaches children's art classes, presents the picture book as if running a workshop with young readers, deftly drawing them into the book's world and kindling their desire to create. Upon reading the play ideas at the end of this book, you will want to give them a try! (Hiromatsu)

15

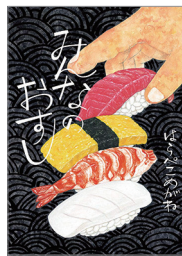


I'm Waiting.

まっている。 (Matte iru.) | Text/Ill. Murakami, Yasunari | Kodansha | 2020 | 32pp | 27x22cm | ISBN 9784065200940 | Ages: 3+ | *Nature, Time, Living things*

Surrounded by nature, a boy casts his fishing line. He watches the float bob above the hook and waits for a bite. A spider, too, deftly spins its web and waits for prey. Flowers exude color and scent and wait for bees or butterflies to stop. A salamander behind a rock, a cicada larva in the soil ... all are waiting patiently for a certain moment. In nature, waiting is important for life. This book's creator is himself a fisherman and a nature lover; while employing a simplistic style, he captures the characteristics of the featured creatures. His backgrounds use only a rough touch and color, creating the effect of screen layout. As if drawing in a deep breath of fresh air, the reader of this book comfortably recalls the abundant "waiting time" that is being lost in today's society. (Hiromatsu)

16



Everyone's Sushi

みんなのお寿司 (Minna no osushi) | Text/Ill. Hara-pekomegane | Poplar | 2019 | 50pp | 27x19cm | ISBN 9784591162514 | Ages: 3+ | *Sushi counter, Flap book, Black humor*

A sushi counter is illustrated from above: a sushi chef at the left, sushi ingredients like sashimi in the middle, and customer(s) on the right. Customers come and go as the chef makes sushi to order. At first, only the hands of the chef and each customer are seen, and then when one lifts the flaps, one can see who is eating the sushi. Customers include an office worker, a parent and child, and fictitious creatures. Who belongs to the green hand that likes cucumber, the hairy hand that orders meat, the huge hand of one who eats an entire wooden tub of chirashi zushi? Parents and children will have lively conversations! After closing, the sushi restaurant's unexpected true form is revealed to much surprise. The male and female duo behind this title are masters at illustrating food deliciously. (Hiromatsu)

17



The Vegetables Slay the Damon

やさいのおにたいじ (Yasai no oni taiji) | Text/Ill. Tsuruta, Yoko | Fukuinkan Shoten | 2020 | 32pp | 20x27cm | ISBN 9784834085471 | Ages: 3+ | *Folk tale, Demon, Vegetable*

Many short, illustrated stories were created in Japan from the 14th through 16th centuries. This book adapts one such story for children: a demon-slaying tale set in Kyoto. A demon (oni) is an imaginary, symbolic monster with a horn on its head that brings misfortune to humans. In this book, Kyoto vegetables such as carrot, eggplant and matsutake mushroom join forces and use wisdom and courage to fight the demon. It is possible to follow this story entirely through the illustrations, which flow from right to left continuously like a picture scroll (emakimono). The defeated demon is konnyaku, a jelly-like food made from a plant in the taro family, often eaten in Japan. (Sakaguchi)

18



The Ghost in the Attic

やねうらべやのおばけ (Yaneura beya no obake) | Text/Ill. Shiotani, Mamiko | Kaiseisha | 2020 | 32pp | 25x19cm | ISBN 9784033500102 | Ages: 3+ | *Ghost, Night, Friendship*

A small ghost living alone in the attic of an old house is a shape-shifter and can fly in the sky, but rarely does due to fear of the outdoors. One night, the moon is so beautiful that the ghost goes out and flies just once through the night sky around the house. Starting the next day, a little girl who lives in the house begins to visit the attic each day. The ghost tries to scare the girl to protect its room, but to no avail. The curious, spirited girl becomes friends with the ghost in this humorous, charming story. Illustrations are drawn in detail with charcoal pencil, in monotone with minimal color used to effect; the soft expression and scene development warm the heart. (Nogami)

19



I'm Going To Be a Sumo Announcer

おれ、よびだしになる (Ore yobidashi ni naru) | Text: Nakagawa, Hiroataka | Ill. Ishikawa, Eriko | Alice-kan | 2019 | 32pp | 28x22cm | ISBN 9784752009085 | Ages: 7+ | *Sumo, Announcer, Growth, Pursuing your dream*

Sumo wrestling, Japan's national sport, has a history of 1500 years. Traditional Japanese culture is still alive and well within the sumo world. This story is about a boy who longs to become a yobidashi, the man who stands in the sumo ring announcing the names of the wrestlers before each bout. On his fifth birthday, the boy's family take him to a large sumo tournament where he meets a yobidashi. The story follows the boy's apprenticeship when he graduates from junior high school and his emergence as a full-fledged yobidashi. Along the way, readers learn about the many traditional jobs that form the foundation of the sport. (Sakaguchi)

20



Cherry Valley

さくらの谷 (Sakura no tani) | Text: Tomiyasu, Yoko | Illus. Matsunari, Mariko | Kaiseisha | 2020 | 32pp | 26x22cm | ISBN 978403330006 | Ages: 7+ | *Cherry trees, Ogres, Ancestors, Hide-and-seek*

Walking along a mountain path in early spring, a man stumbles upon a valley where the cherry trees are already in full bloom. The sound of voices raised in song draws him down into the valley. There a band of colorful ogres invite him to join their blossom-viewing party. Their picnic lunch smells familiar, and the man notes with surprise that it looks just like the ones his mother used to make. The ogres and the man launch into a game of hide-and-seek, but when the man is "it", he opens his eyes to find that the ogres have disappeared. Instead, among the trees, he sees his parents and grandmother, who have all passed away. The dreamlike images set against a backdrop of falling petals and the hint of loneliness within the spectacular settings are eloquently rendered. (Nogami)

21

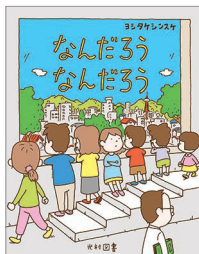


Tiny Dragon

ちび竜 (Chibi ryu) | Text: Kudo, Naoko | Ill. Abe, Hiroshi | Doshinsha | 2019 | 36pp | 26x26cm | ISBN 9784494012466 | Ages: 7+ | *Dragon, Life, Identity*

Tiny Dragon was born from a tiny drop in a puddle. Where is this? Who am I? Taught and helped along by creatures around him, he practices his dragon powers. He takes off from the puddle and whirls with dandelion fuzz. Learning from a dragonfly in the air, a Crucian carp in the water, and a mole in the earth, he grows into a Great Dragon. A double-page spread with foldouts stunningly shows the dragon, now able to create mountain twilight, ocean billows, rainbows, mist, and thunder. The illustrator of this book, a former zookeeper, uses black and white with limited color to express natural forms from mosquito larvae to the Milky Way reverently. The dragon grows large enough to cradle the whole world, from specks to space to the reader. Magnificently humorous and moving. (Hiromatsu)

22



I Wonder What

なんだろうなんだろう (Nandaro nandaro) | Text/Ill. Yoshitake, Shinsuke | Mitsumura Educational | 2019 | 48pp | 24x19cm | ISBN 9784813802648 | Ages: 7+ | *Morality, Philosophy, Doubt*

On the way to school, a boy is greeted by local adults. In the midst of this everyday conversation, the boy wonders suddenly, What is school, exactly? What is fun? This picture book pulls together episodes the author drew for morality education textbooks for grades one through nine, plus new material. In an omnibus format where the main character's grade goes up as you read, twelve themes that children may ponder at different ages (school, fun, truth, friendship, happiness, self, justice, forgiveness, independence, perspective, normality, dreams) are approached with the question, What is it? Full of humor, this book offers jumping-off points for individual readers to think on their own. (Hiromatsu)

23



No

の (No) | Text/Ill. junaida | Fukuinkan Shoten | 2019 | 78pp | 24x18cm | ISBN 9784834085303 | Ages: 7+ | *Words, Neverending story, Daydream*

This picture book is built around の, a character in Japan's hiragana syllabary and a particle that is said not to map exactly into any other language. Depending on the context, it can mean of, on, in, and more. The reader follows these meanings while paging through the book. "Mine," "my favorite coat," "the castle in my coat pocket" and more connect in a surprising progression of images and story. Detailed, fantastical drawings capture the eye, and when a long sentence ends on the final page, one wants to turn back to the beginning and start again. The book is almost a labyrinth. Its physical form also merits attention: The lack of endpapers or colophon and a cover the same trim size as the pages suit the cyclical content; on the front, の is embossed in gold on white with an illustration that ties all the contents together. (Hiromatsu)



Ranka: The Girl Who Came to Japan

ランカ (Ranka) | Text: Noro, Kikue | Ill. Matsunari, Mariko | Kaiseisha | 2020 | 32pp | 23x25cm | ISBN 9784034351505 | Ages: 7+ | *New student, Immigration, Friendship*

Ranka is a 10-year-old girl, who has come to Japan from a country that is warm all year round and filled with green. Arriving at a school where she does not understand the language or the writing, she feels “alone in the world.” she gets confused by the various customs and grows worried and nervous. One day, when recalling her home she tries to climb a tree in the playground as she used to, a classmate pulls her leg to stop her because of the danger. But Ranka mistakes this for bullying and it makes her cry. Schools across Japan now serve more than forty thousand children with roots overseas. The author, who teaches Japanese, conveys the need to connect despite the language barrier—not only for students who arrive from different countries, but also for students who receive them. (Hiromatsu)



One Day, One Time

あるひあるとき (Aru hi aru toki) | Text: Aman, Kimiko | Ill. Sasameya, Yuki | Nora Shoten | 2020 | 35pp | 27x22cm | ISBN 9784905015543 | Ages: 7+ | *Kokeshi doll, War, Evacuation*

During the Second World War, Japan occupied northeastern China, which it named Manchuria. Many Japanese moved there as settlers. The main character in this story is a little girl who lives in Manchuria. Her favorite toy is a wooden kokeshi doll that her father brought back from Japan as a gift. She names the doll Haruko and takes it with her everywhere, even to her friend’s house and the air raid shelter. When Japan loses the war, however, the girl and her family have to sell or burn everything they own, and Haruko is thrown on the fire. The author, who lived as a child in Dalian in northeastern China during the war, imbues this book with her yearning for peace and reveals the deep sorrow that children experience in the shadow of wars waged by grownups. (Sakuma)



Pulsatilla Cernua

おきなぐさ (Okinagusa) | Text: Miyazawa, Kenji | Ill. Jin-saki, Soko | Miki House | 2019 | 40pp | 26x24cm | ISBN 9784895881432 | Ages: 9+ | *Flowers, Nature, Light, Wind*

Pulsatilla cernua is a perennial in the buttercup family. When the sunlight hits their dark reddish-purple flower petals at a certain angle, they turn a deep vibrant red. The stem, leaves and flowers are covered in soft down that shines like silver velvet. Early one spring, two of these flowers gaze up at the clouds flowing across the snowy mountains and wish they could float in the sky. Two months later, their flowers turn to silver tufts. One by one, the shining tufts are carried into the northern sky. The author imagines that their small flower spirits have ascended into the heavens to become variable stars. The breathtaking illustrations capture the magical effect of light transforming the flowers and shimmering on the fuzzy down. (Nogami)



The Mirror and Chikori

かみとチコリ (Kagami to Chikori) | Text: Kadono, Eiko | Ill. Oikawa, Kenji | Kodansha | 2019 | 32pp | 23x22cm | ISBN 9784065172155 | Ages: 9+ | *Mirror, Growth, Love*

A young couple moves into a house that was built 105 years ago and has been empty for years. One wall is covered in a large mirror. Whenever something happy occurs, the mirror sparkles. After the couple’s daughter Chikori is born, the mirror watches over her, entertaining her, comforting her, and at times, envying her. Chikori grows from a precocious child into a beautiful woman and falls in love with a handsome young man. As the day when she and the mirror must part approaches, the mirror’s love for Chikori vacillates between that of a parent and that of a lover. It takes great skill to personify a mirror but the illustrator, using vivid four-color illustrations, has done a superb job of visually expressing the mirror’s emotions with a graphic and humorous touch. This is the author Eiko Kadono’s first picture book since she won the 2018 Hans Christian Anderson Award for Writing. (Hiromatsu)



Fire

ファイアー (Faia) | Text/Ill. Hasagawa, Shuhei | Rironsha | 2020 | 32pp | 27x19cm | ISBN 9784652203781 | Ages: 9+ | *Monsters, Fire, Friendship, War*

After watching a monster movie on TV, the boy in this story gets excited and can’t sleep. Soon the wails of fire engines and ambulances rouse him. It’s a fire! When he goes out onto the balcony, he sees that a fire has broken out near the apartments where a girl in his class lives. When he goes to school the next day, the girl and her family are sheltering in the gym, and she does not come to class. The main character and his friends decide to visit her, and they hear about her scary experience of evacuating her home. Images of fire-breathing monsters, house fires, and war come together in the illustrations, which add further discoveries and depth. The main character receives a talisman that his classmate claims protected her from the fire. More than just a charm to ward off disaster, it can also be seen as a talisman for peace. (Nogami)



My Dad is Cool

とうちゃんは むしゃんよか (Tochan wa mushan yoka) | Text: Uchida, Rintaro | Ill. Nishimura, Shigeo | Mitsumura Educational | 2020 | 32pp | 27x22cm | ISBN 9784895722629 | Ages: 11+ | *Festival, Dialect, Friendship, Father*

On the way to school, a boy is greeted by local adults. In the midst of this everyday conversation, the boy wonders suddenly, What is school, exactly? What is fun? This picture book pulls together episodes the author drew for morality education textbooks for grades one through nine, plus new material. In an omnibus format where the main character’s grade goes up as you read, twelve themes that children may ponder at different ages (school, fun, truth, friendship, happiness, self, justice, forgiveness, independence, perspective, normality, dreams) are approached with the question, What is it? Full of humor, this book offers jumping-off points for individual readers to think on their own. (Hiromatsu)

RECENT CHAPTER BOOKS AND NOVELS

31



Rettsu, Tummy

レッツはおなか (Lettsu wa onaka) | Text: Hiko Tanaka | Ill. Yoshitake, Shinsuke | Kodansha | 2020 | 64pp | 20x16cm | ISBN 9784065184165 | Ages: 5+ | *Parent and child, Baby, Birth, Tummy, Heaven*

Mommy is sitting on the sofa and says, "I need a break!" Lying down with her head on Daddy's lap, she says, "Oh, that feels good." Later, Daddy places his head on Mommy's lap and says, "Ah, this is heaven."

"Heaven?" says five-year-old Rettsu.

"The place we go when we die," Daddy replies.

"Daddy, are you going to die?"

Daddy quickly explains that he said "heaven" to mean something felt good. After that, Rettsu puts his head on Mommy's lap. As Mommy strokes his head, she murmurs, "This makes me think of when you were in my tummy." Rettsu doesn't understand, so Mommy explains how he grew bigger and bigger inside her tummy and then was born. Rettsu learns that he was connected to Mommy from his belly button and wonders why he wasn't connected to Daddy. Daddy says, "Rettsu, you are a gift from heaven." Rettsu answers, "Oh, I see, you're taking care of me while you have me." He seems oddly persuaded.

Loving, big-hearted parents respond to the wonderings of a five-year-old about his birth. The conversation leads to some interesting places. Rettsu learns how important it is that he is here in his family. While re-creating a happy, everyday moment in a family that enjoys being together, this book also brings out how three people's ideas and words can get mixed up, which is funny and fun. (Nogami)

30



Hello from the Wildcat

やまねこの こんにちは (Yamaneko no konnichiwa) | Text: Hasegawa, Satomi | Akane Shobo | 2019 | 64pp | 21x17cm | ISBN 9784251011060 | Ages: 5+ | *Animals, Friendship, Moving, Greeting*

A wildcat who has moved into a small house in the forest steps out to greet the neighbors. While wondering just how to greet them, the wildcat hears voices ahead on the road. "Someone has just moved into that house, right?" "I wonder who

it is." "I hope we can meet them!"

This perks the wildcat up, but then the conversation goes on. "I hope the person is stylish," says a squirrel girl. The wildcat races home to get as stylish as possible. Next the hedgehog says, "I hope the person knows many things." The piglet says, "I hope the person likes singing." With every comment, the wildcat races home to spiff up and meet the animal's expectations before starting out again.

Then the badger says, "I hope the person likes snacks at three o'clock," so the wildcat hurries home to make prize cookies and invite everyone to eat. But while baking the cookies and singing a song, the wildcat sees smoke pouring out of the oven and quickly removes the cookies. That makes the wildcat's tail catch on fire, and it races out of the house crying!

Hearing this, the other animals race over, and while dousing the wounded tail in the garden pond, the wildcat greets them in a small voice. With this unexpected incident, the animals instantly become friends, and by the end of the story, they are playing hide-and-seek with the wildcat in the woods. This is a humorous, smile-bringing story; the illustrations of animal characters in pale tones are cute and charming. (Nogami)

32



Together On Rainy Days

雨の日は、いっしょに (Ame no hi wa issho ni) | Text: Okubo, Usagi | Ill. Tonouchi, Maho | Kosei Shuppansha | 2020 | 64pp | 20x16cm | ISBN 9784333028276 | Ages: 7+ | *Umbrella, Rain*

This tale follows the adventures of a yellow umbrella that is swept away from its owner, Haru, a boy in grade one. In the first scene, the umbrella waits in a stand by the door, wishing he was collapsible and could change his size or was made

of clear plastic that could take on any color. Just then, Haru grabs him and opens him up as he steps outside. But Haru trips and falls, and a gust of wind grabs the umbrella and carries it up into the sky.

Thus begins the umbrella's journey. First he meets a polka dot umbrella in the park. He feels a pang of envy when he learns that her owner has given her a name: "Miss Polka-dot." Next he meets a big black umbrella that belongs to an old man. The man takes the yellow umbrella to a police station, but the umbrella slips from the policeman's hand and once again rides the wind until he is caught in a tree branch. Gazing down on all the umbrellas and people passing below, he begins to feel lonely.

Haru sees him in the tree and asks an older boy with a blue umbrella to fetch him down. Catching sight of his reflection with Haru in a curb mirror, the umbrella thinks, "Maybe Haru and I make a good pair." The next day, the umbrella shares tales of his adventures with his friends in the umbrella stand.

A humorous portrayal of an umbrella that learns to see where he belongs through his misadventures. The entertaining collage-like illustrations help the reader to see things from the umbrella's perspective. (Doi)



The School Kappa Moves

がっこうかっぱのおひっこし (Gakko kappa no ohikkoshi)
| Text: Yamamoto, Etsuko | Ill. Ichii, Mika | Doshinsha | 2019
| 96pp | 22x16cm | ISBN 9784494020591 | Ages: 7+ | *Frogs, Ponds, School, Kappa, Friendship*

Told in the first person, this is the story of a boy who lives with his single mother. Because he attended a preschool located near her workplace, he has no friends in his own neighborhood and finds it hard to fit in when he starts elementary school. Even after a

few months, he spends recesses on his own, feeding the carp in the school pond or hunting for lizards. The school announces that it will be draining the pond to build a biotope. The day before construction begins, the boy goes to the pond, feeling sad because he won't be able to talk with the fish and lizards anymore. Suddenly, a frog-like creature climbs up his leg. Looking closely, the boy realizes that it is a kappa. He brings it home but goes to bed without knowing how to tell his mother. In the morning, perhaps because he has been worrying all night, he wakes up with a fever and stays home from school. One of his classmates comes to bring him his homework. He notices the kappa, who is starving, and finds it something to eat. Thanks to the kappa, the boy becomes friends with his classmates and together they return the kappa to the pond once the biotope is finished. The kappa gives them a guided tour of the mysteries of the pond. Through the medium of the imaginary creature who serves as the pool's guardian spirit, the solitary boy makes friends and becomes part of the class. This enjoyable fantasy captures the psychology of a lonely boy who has difficulty at first making friends. (Nogami)



Head-Top Elementary School

区立あたまのてっぺん小学校 (Kuritsu atama no teppen shogakko) | Text: Mabe, Kayo | Ill. Tanaka, Rokudai | Kin-nohoshisha | 2020 | 96pp | 22x16cm | ISBN 9784323074528 | *Friendship*

On his first day of the second term of second grade, Ryo feels something odd on top of his head, so he checks a mirror. On his head, he sees small desks, chairs, a chalkboard, four tiny green people, and a sign that says Head-Top Elementary School! The sign

says that the school belongs to the city ward, so Ryo goes to the ward office. There, Mr. Tanaka tells Ryo that because he plays outside a lot, his head gets good sun; because he eats his lunch slowly, the little people can eat some of his food. Because his hair is short, they can get along very easily. Ryo, however, says he doesn't want to be unlike everyone else. "Please find a different head-top as soon as possible!" he says.

The four little people—three children and their teacher, Ms. Kimidori—occupy Ryo's head only while he is at school. One day, Ms. Kimidori says that they wish to go along on Ryo's field trip the next day. With the principal's permission, they accompany Ryo to the aquarium, but the little boy named Jiro becomes lost. Ryo's classmates help to search for him, and he appears at last. After that, even if Ryo's classmates tease him, he replies that it's natural for him to have the little people on his head. He even tells Mr. Tanaka that Head-Top Elementary School can stay. Mr. Tanaka informs Ryo that the little people have been helping with their area's greening project.

This book combines the delightful idea of a tiny school on top of one's head, with Ryo's experience of learning an important truth: it's OK to differ from others. Both the illustrations and the text skillfully convey a humorous atmosphere. (Doi)



Bitter Persimmon, Dried Persimmon, Sweet Persimmon

しぶがきほしがきあまいかき (Shibugaki, hoshigaki, amai kaki) | Text/Ill. Ishikawa, Eriko | Fukuinkan Shoten | 2019 | 88pp | 22x16cm | ISBN 9784834084788 | Ages: 7+ | *Persimmons, Making, Preserving food, Traditional food*

Autumn in Japan is the season of harvest. One autumn day, a girl named Chie joins her siblings, parents and grandma in a group of six to pick persimmons in their garden. Her brother climbs a tree

and gets a sweet persimmon. Not wanting to be bested, Chie climbs as well, only to taste her first bitter persimmon. She cries! Her grandma tells her a secret: if you work magic on a bitter persimmon, it turns sweet. Peel and boil it, and then hang it in the sun to make a dried persimmon.

Chie puts persimmons on hangers; her sister deftly threads them onto strings; and her brother heaves the strings over a long branch. Together, they create a kaki sudare, which is like a colorful curtain of persimmons drying outdoors. The persimmon curtain bathed by the sun, which is rendered in only two colors—scarlet and black—is beautiful. Through a traditional method of food preservation, the wisdom of forbears and richness of autumn come to life.

When the dried persimmons are almost ready, it turns out that something has been snacking on them. Chie springs from her futon at night to spot the thief! The illustration of her stuffing her mouth with sweet, dried persimmon the next morning is the picture of delicious bliss.

This book's storyline is easy to follow, and its ending will impart a sense of security and satisfaction to children. The panoramic art that occupies the first and last six pages incorporates Chie's house, her family's two persimmon trees, and the bamboo grove that supplies material for their tools, letting readers enjoy searching for where the story takes place. A children's story with ample, warm illustrations and relaxed typography. (Sakaguchi)



Snow White Chirika, Oh So Small

しらゆきちりか ちっちゃいな (Shirayuki Chirika chicchaina)
| Text: Kun, Kumiko | Ill. Oshima, Taeko | PHP Institute | 2020 | 80pp | 22x16cm | ISBN 9784569789163 | Ages: 7+ | *Friendship, Lion, High bar, Moving*

The main character in this book is a young girl named Chirika, who hates school. Why? The boy Lion who sits behind her is big and wild like a lion, and he teases her: "Snow White Chirika, oh so small!" He pulls her hair, hides her indoor shoes, and even puts

a frog in her pencil box.

One rainy day, on the way home from school, Chirika encounters Lion on the footpath between two rice fields, blocking the way with his arms spread wide. When Chirika draws near, she sees that some tiny, newly metamorphosed frogs are on the move, and Lion is guarding them.

Lion is usually good at sports, but he struggles with the high iron bar. He can't do a back hip circle. He practices with Chirika after school, and he manages to do the move with advice from Chirika, who succeeded at it first. Unfortunately, the blisters on Chirika's hands hurt, and she drops her backpack when she picks it up. Lion grabs the backpack and runs off with it. Angry and about to cry, Chirika goes home—to find the backpack at her front door. And before she has a chance to thank him, Lion transfers to another school.

Through various episodes involving Chirika, the smallest girl in the class, and Lion, who appears huge and rough through her eyes, something changes. Chirika begins to feel differently toward Lion. This work freshly portrays the subtle emotions felt by children new to school, who are learning to get along with people of other genders. A work of juvenile literature that will resonate with and stay in the hearts of children the same age. (Nogami)

37



Handkerchief Friends

ハンカチともだち (Hankachi tomodahcci) | Text: Nakagawa, Chihiro | Alice-kan | 2019 | 96pp | 21x16cm | ISBN 9784752009047 | Ages: 7+ | *Handkerchief, Little people, Friendship*

A young girl makes a friend thanks to a mysterious handkerchief.

One morning, Haru finds a handkerchief in her drawer with the design of a tiny person sleeping in a bed. As she watches, the person rolls over! Haru

puts the handkerchief in her pocket and goes to school, but the little person is constantly on her mind. When she peeks during class, the person is awake and reading a book.

Haru tries not to use her handkerchief that day, but it's hard. When she doesn't take it out to help a classmate who spills her food at lunch, the classmate gets angry. Fortunately, a girl named Miyon, who sticks out a bit in their class, brings a bunch of cloths to wipe up the mess.

In art, Haru sketches on her own. When she peeks, the person on the handkerchief is busily planting a flower bed. After school, Haru can't help mentioning her handkerchief and showing it off to Mion. Mion shows her own handkerchief, which has a green iguana on it, and the person on Haru's handkerchief makes friends with the iguana on Mion's. Haru and Mion also grow closer.

Each page of this book has an illustration; Haru's handkerchief and Mion's slightly stubborn, unique personality come through. Even as the fun of enjoying one's own world comes across, the joy of making a friend to share secrets with is also shown. (Doi)

39



Atelier Kiki

ぼくとキキとアトリエで (Boku to Kiki to atorie de) | Text/ Ill. Nakagawa, Hironori | Bunken Shuppan | 2020 | 128pp | 22x16cm | ISBN 9784580824065 | Ages: 9+ | *Painting, Friendship, Shopping area*

This novel has two halves. In the first half, nine-year-old Ryo invites peevish Teppei to a painting class for kids. In the second half, the painting class does a commemorative project before a major renovation of their town's shopping area.

Ryo studies art with Ms. Kiki, who is slightly older than his mother. Kiki teaches seven students from kindergarten-age to sixth grade. Ryo loves it when Ms. Kiki looks at his art and says "great!" and gives him a hug. His classmate at school, terrible Teppei, tells him, "So what, you can paint! You'll never amount to anything." Ryo suspects that Teppei says this because he actually wants to paint, so he invites him. Presently, in the shopping area, there's an event to sell paintings for 100 yen apiece. Teppei takes some paintings he made with adult help, but they barely sell. While some children disparage Teppei's way of doing things, Ms. Kiki helps him understand that art is something we do for pleasure.

After that, when the art students find out that the whole shopping area will close for two years for renovations, they think of a plan to paint the area as a group, and they make it happen. At the end, all of the students paint Atelier Kiki itself.

The author of this book is also a picture book artist, whose work explores what art and painting are and can do. His text and illustrations engagingly portray the different children who study at Atelier Kiki, and the adults in the shopping area who help Ryo. (Doi)

38



Me, Mom, and the Caravan

ぼくと母さんのキャラバン (Boku to kasan no kyaraban) | Text: Kashiwaba, Sachiko | Ill. Izumi, Masashi | Kodansha | 2020 | 160pp | 22x16cm | ISBN 9784065186152 | Ages: 9+ | *Camels, Mother, Parallel world, Ghosts*

This book features a fifth-grade boy nicknamed Tomo by his parents and friends. Lately, Tomo's mother has been up to something. She doesn't normally go out a lot, but recently she has gone all over town, and when Tomo and his father talk to her, she is in

another world. Literally, it turns out!

One night, when Tomo's father is away on business, Tomo finishes his bath and goes to get a drink from the fridge. Standing behind him is a mouse that is taller than his mother and can speak! Alarmed, Tomo calls for his mother but hears no answer. It's after ten at night, but she seems to have gone out.

Apparently, Tomo's world crosses every few years with another world that has giant mice, bears, and rabbits. His mother has made a promise to the animals of that world to lead a caravan of camels to a mountain observatory, bearing important cargo. While trying to figure out the route, she seems to have gotten lost. Tomo does not fully understand but leads the caravan of ten loaded camels while questing to find his mother. Strange characters are released from bridge's guardians, from animal-shaped playground equipments, and even from signs and displays in Tomo's town's shopping area. Some of these characters hinder Tomo, and some help him. He narrowly escapes threatening ghosts. When set upon by a legendary princess and her son, who were separated during the Warring States period (1467-1568), Tomo and his mother barely escape with their lives. Tomo's incredible, time- and space-crossing quest to find his mother makes for an unpredictable, exciting adventure. (Nogami)

40



The Contrary Prince and the Black Cat from Tang

天邪鬼な皇子と 唐の黒猫 (Amanojaku na miko to To no kuroneko) | Text: Watanabe, Senshu | Ill. Tanji, Yoko | Poplar | 2020 | 304pp | 20x14cm | ISBN 9784591164921 | Ages: 11+ | *Heian period (9th century), Cat, Emperor*

In the ninth century, a black tomcat is caught in China and brought back to Japan as a gift for the emperor. The emperor gives the cat to Sadami, one of his sons.

In his previous life, the cat had been a Chinese warlord, and he can still understand and speak with humans. First Sadami keeps the cat in a basket and walks it on a leash. The cat, however, negotiates with Sadami for his freedom on the condition that he will always come back to Sadami's house. Sadami names the cat "Kuro".

In the human world, the Fujiwara clan, not the emperor, controls political power. Commanded by his father, Sadami marries a woman named Taneko from the Fujiwara family, even though he is already married to a woman named Yoshiko. Yoshiko loves reading and studying. Likewise, Taneko loves waka poetry and dreams of her son becoming emperor and compiling a waka collection. Taneko and Yoshiko become good friends. Meanwhile, in the cat world, Kuro takes up residence in Ukyo on the west side of Kyoto, and secures himself a position by winning a match with Kitora, the boss of stray cats in that area. Hakutaku, the boss of Sakyo on the east side of Kyoto challenges Kuro to a duel. Kuro injures Hakutaku during this battle only to discover that she understands human language and is, in fact, the reincarnation of his lover Gu in their previous life. Hakutaku is subsequently killed by one of her underlings, and Kuro ends up raising her son Haku.

Three years after Kuro came to Japan, the emperor dies, but by a strategy set in place before his death, Sadami ascends to the throne. Fujiwara no Mototsune, however, interferes with Sadami's attempt to rule, and Kuro pitches in to help Sadami.

The story is a humorous depiction of territorial conflicts occurring within both the Japanese aristocracy and cat society in the ninth century through the eyes of Kuro, the black cat. (Doi)

41



Ali Baba's Cat Is Listening

アリババの猫がきいている (Aribaba no neko ga kiite iru) | Text: Shindo, Etsuko | Ill. Satake, Miho | Poplar | 2020 | 224pp | 21x16cm | ISBN 9784591165829 | Ages: 11+ | *Cat, World, Folkcrafts, Refugees*

The main character is a Persian cat name Sheik who understands the language of people and objects. His owner, Ali Baba, is a linguist who fled from Iran with his parents when he was a child and now lives alone in Tokyo. When Ali Baba has to attend

an international conference, he leaves Sheik in the care of the owner of a world folkcraft shop called Open Sesame. On the first night, while the owner sleeps, all the folkcrafts begin introducing themselves to Sheik. The first to speak is Blue Glass from Herat, Afghanistan. The next is Sister Cord who comes from the Turkmen plains of Afghanistan where many horses, sheep and camels roam and who once adorned wedding camels. Round Auntie Tile, who hangs on the wall, is from the city of Shiraz in Iran. The Amazon Yancha are a noisy bunch of animal and fish dolls brought from the jungle of Peru. The folkcrafts talk all night long. No one but Auntie Tile has talked to a cat before.

The next night, Sheik is curled up in a sheet, sound asleep, when he is woken by Blue Glass who tells him the folkcrafts want to share the stories of their past. Auntie Tile goes first, relating how she started out as the lid to a bee hive over a hundred years ago. Each night Sheik is regaled with dramatic tales from the objects' lives. Sensing their love for their homelands, he strives gallantly to respond to their longing to be heard. Through their strange and wonderful stories, readers also learn about past events in various parts of the world. (Nogami)

43



The Fox Bridge

きつねの橋 (Kitsune no Hashi) | Text: Kubota, Kaori | Ill. Satake, Miho | Kaiseisha | 2019 | 216pp | 22x16cm | ISBN 9784035405603 | Ages: 11+ | *Heian period (10th century), Fox, Thieves, Fantasy*

This fantasy is set in tenth-century Kyoto and follows the adventures of fifteen-year-old Sadamichi who befriends a shape-changing fox and captures a band of thieves.

Sadamichi has just been assigned to serve under Minamoto no Yorimitsu. He captures a fox that can turn into a human, only to let her go again when he finds his coworkers bullying her. Later, Sadamichi and his friend Suetake make a name for themselves by defeating the underlings of Hakamadare, a master thief, but Hakamadare exacts revenge by stealing Sadamichi's sword and horse.

The freed fox, who calls herself Hazuki, is the handmaiden of Princess Takako, a young maiden who has been separated from her mother to serve at Kyoto's Kamo Shrine. The princess's family is poor, and Hazuki asks Sadamichi to help her obtain a fan for the princess to use at a festival. When Sadamichi and his friend Suetake visit the home of another friend, Kimitomo, they run into the fifth prince and end up saving from an attack by a demon. In return, the prince gives Sadamichi a fan.

Sadamichi, Suetake and Kimitomo come up with a plan to capture the master thief, Hakamadare. Sadamichi disguises himself as Princess Takako and joins the festival procession with the fan. Hakamadare attempts to steal the fan but fails. Instead, however, he steals all the weapons of Sadamichi's master from the storehouse. After this, he attacks Princess Takako once again, but this time it is the fox, Hazuki, who is impersonating the princess. Sadamichi hears Hazuki's voice and runs to her rescue.

The fast-paced, action-packed story keeps the reader engaged, as does the rich and sometimes humorous portrayal of the trust that blossoms between man and fox and the friendship among the three young men. (Doi)

42



Solving Riddles Through Science!

科学でナゾとき! (Kagaku de nazo toki) | Text: Asada, Rin | Ill. Sato, Odori | Spv. Takayanagi, Yuichi | Kaiseisha | 2020 | 208pp | 19x13cm | ISBN 9784036491407 | Ages: 11+ | *School, Mystery, Science, Father and son*

Set in a school, the story relates four episodes rich in scientific knowledge. Shogo, a cocky sixth-grader, is head of the children's association. His father is a science teacher who teaches at many different schools, one of which is Shogo's. But Shogo is embarrassed by

his father's clumsiness and begs him not to let anyone know they are related.

However, mysterious things are happening at Shogo's school. First, the anatomical model in the science room bursts out laughing. When Shogo's tall, lanky father, who carries a giraffe toy in his pocket and has been dubbed Professor Giraffe, hears that the children are frightened, he takes them to a park and uses a hose to show them that sound travel can long distances. It becomes clear that the sound of laughter must have traveled along an unused water pipe from another location.

The second mystery surrounds a transfer student from a distant island who is upset that his classmates laughed because he painted the sunset green. The third mystery involves a tube of lip gloss that disappears from the classroom and shows up in a flower bed. In the final episode, a mermaid doll in the school library weeps red tears. Professor Giraffe conducts experiments to solve each case, explaining the scientific facts behind them, such as light wavelength, liquefaction, and the alkalinity and acidity of chemicals. During this process, Shogo's opinion of his father changes. The author expertly weaves scientific information into the story to make this a fascinating and informative read. (Sakuma)

44



Gifted, In My Case

ギフト、ぼくの場合 (Gifuto boku no baai) | Text: Imai, Kyoko | Shogakukan | 2020 | 232pp | 20x14cm | ISBN 9784092893030 | Ages: 11+ | *Guitar, Poverty, Single-mother family, Craftsman*

This story of a brave, honest child who forges his own path in the face of adversity is reminiscent of such classics as Burnett's *A Little Princess*. But in its portrayal of children and families who cannot escape poverty and fall through the cracks in the public

safety net, it is a very contemporary tale.

The main character, Yuta, is in sixth grade. He lives with his mother and his sister, who is in second grade. His mother, who divorced because of her husband's infidelity, has never worked before and has a hard time making ends meet as she juggles her work at a screw factory with a part-time job at a convenience store.

Yuta cares deeply about his family, but the death of his younger sister due to delayed treatment for appendicitis and the family's deepening poverty take an emotional toll. In his rage at his father for deserting them, Yuta destroys the guitar his father gave him in a symbolic act that severs their relationship. A student who is supposed to play the guitar at the school festival, however, breaks an arm, and Yuta is asked to fill in. Although he hasn't touched a guitar for some time and doing so brings back painful memories of his father, he begins to see the world differently once he tastes again the joy of playing music.

Yuta's gift is his musical ability. His perfect pitch allows him to reproduce a melody when he has only heard it once. But he is also gifted in his upright character and humanity, which attract the support and friendship of Mr. and Mrs. Konishi, who own the screw factory, Mr. Sawaguchi (commonly known as Joe), who directs music for the school festival concert, and Mrs. Yugawara, the school counselor. (Sakuma)

45



Sandwich Club

サンドイッチクラブ (Sandoiocchi kurabu) | Text: Nagae, Yuko | Ill. Konishi, Eiko | Iwanami Shoten | 2020 | 240pp | 20x14cm | ISBN 9784001160246 | Ages: 11+ | *Sand, Friendship, Summer vacation, Cram school*

While attending summer cram school to prepare for middle school entrance exams, Tamako becomes friends with Hikaru, a girl who attends a different grade school who is very bright and attending cram school on scholarship. Influenced by her late grand-

mother, Hikaru dreams of eliminating war by becoming the president of the United States.

One day, when Hikaru is having a sand sculpture competition in the park with Yoma from her school, she invites Tamako to join them. Hikaru nicknames Tamako "Tamago" (Egg), and Tamako nicknames Hikaru "Ham-chan" (using part of her last name, Hamura), and they hold practices to beat Yoma in sand sculpting. They think it's funny how they seem to have started a club all by themselves, and their nicknames Ham and Egg lead them to call it Sandwich Club. They receive helpful advice from Mr. Shirabe, a sand artist Yoma admires who even goes overseas to sculpt. He tells them how when digging sand in various places, he has found bullets and even human bones, which speak to wars and refugee crises—realities too often invisible on the surface.

Hikaru, whose family is poor but who has big plans, urges Tamako to try to become the self she wants to be. Mr. Shirabe says that every sparkling grain of sand holds the memory of this planet's birth. The different yet beautiful grains symbolize the two girls of different personalities and backgrounds, who come together in an irreplaceable present. The conclusion of this novel is positive and inspiring. (Nogami)

47



Dad, Mom, and Me

父さんと、母さんと、ぼく (Tosan to, kasan to, boku) | Text: Ochi, Noriko | Ill. Nishizaka, Hiromi | Fukuinkan Shoten | 2020 | 252pp | 20x14cm | ISBN 9784834085600 | Ages: 11+ | *Parallel world, Fisherman, Fantasy*

This is the fifth and final book in the series Rabintotto, the Fisherboy of the Sky. The setting is a parallel world called Tonkana, where fish fly through the sky, birds swim in the earth, and the inhabitants of the surface are not humans, but mysterious people.

The main character is a fisherman's son named Rabintotto, who hails from a long-eared clan and is apprenticing to become a fisherman himself one day. He is afraid of heights, however, and he runs away from his master. He decides to support himself by catching sardines, which move low in the sky only at dawn.

The first four volumes of this series are *The Tuna's Dandelion Fishing*, *Happy are the Prepared*, *Riddle of the Red Moon*, and *A Village of Forest Thieves*. Throughout the series, Rabintotto goes through mishaps and surprise encounters on an unending, unchosen journey of adventures.

In this fifth volume, as Rabintotto is journeying toward his home, he hears that many have been threatened by spinetail devil rays, and he hurries to the scene: Tsukimi (Moon Viewing) Mountain. Rabintotto saves the spinetail devil ray child that caused the disturbance, and then he hears that long ago on this mountain, there was a history of long-eared tribes fighting. He also learns that his fear of heights was not innate, and that there has been a great gulf between his mother's family and his father. Upon visiting his parents' relatives, he is told that he can stay, but having learned his roots and history, Rabintotto vows to become a proper fisherman after all and sets out on a new journey.

This fantasy is fun to read, with illustrations that aptly convey Rabintotto's world. (Sakuma)

46



The Jirijiri Mobile Library

じりじりの移動図書館 (Jirijiri no ido toshokan) | Text: Hiroshima, Reiko/ Mahara, Mito/ Hamano, Kyoko/ Kudo, Junko and Sugano, Yukimushi | Ill. Kumaori, Jun | Kodansha | 2020 | 224pp | 20x14cm | ISBN 9784065202838 | Ages: 11+ | *Library, Fantasy*

Five authors who debuted in 2006 challenged each other to write about a mobile library that travels through time and space. (Jirijiri is the sound it makes when it departs.)

In the story "This Book Continues After the Mist," Kenta transports to a different world. Here, books are seen as the devil's tools, and book hunters go house-to-house seizing books to burn. The mobile library offers to protect people's beloved books.

In "Find Yanme, Save the Legend," Kosei is a boy living on an island near Okinawa, who discovers the library's efforts to save endangered books and legends. Kosei and his sister Nanami join in, finding an old tale faintly carved on a seaside boulder. This tale turns out to have a connection to Yanme (Older Brother in local dialect), sought obsessively by their great-grandfather.

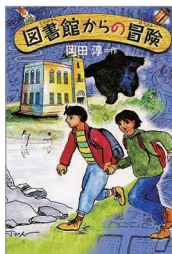
In "The Sketchbook Left Behind," Fumika is a girl who gets transported to 1943. She meets a nineteen-year-old boy about to depart for the war, who adores art. When Fumika returns to the present, she learns that the boy became a painter after the war.

In "Al Utopia," Hiroto travels in the library to a future in which robots rule humans and paper books have been banned.

In "Even if the Siren Sounds," Ayu meets two young men from another dimension, who are being pursued because they wrote novels; she shelters with them in the library. Ayu tells the youths about her difficulties with her stepfather, and she realizes that reading and the library are ways she can escape her discontent.

Every work in this collection explores the meaning of reading and the freedom of thought—all through experiences traveling in the Minerva library. (Doi)

48



Adventure from the Library

図書館からの冒険 (Toshokan kara no boken) | Text/Ill. Okada, Jun | Kaiseisha | 2019 | 304pp | 22x16cm | ISBN 9784035405702 | Ages: 11+ | *Fantasy, Adventure, Dragon*

Wataru attends sixth grade at Shibanozaki Elementary School, which is on the verge of being closed. He spends a night holed up in the school library trying to make a plan. When a girl his age named Saki arrives from another world, she takes him back

with her. Her world turns out to be Shibanozaki Island—a place Wataru had thought his great-uncle Keijiro made up for a story. Saki takes Wataru to the island's eastern estate, where they find Goda, a man who can become a badger; Mari, a woman who can become an otter; and Baku, the gardener. Goda says that they once grew a medicinal plant on the island that earned lots of money, but they learned that it had a bad effect on humans, and so they threw all the plants and the soil they grew in into the river. Then an earthquake and a massive storm occurred, and many people fled. Since that time, black-ish figures that can take the shape of people or animals have appeared, and the rivers and lakes have dried up.

Wataru shares a story that Keijiro once told him, about how an island woman named Mirei is the dragon who protects the island's water. Everyone goes to the island's western estate, expecting to find Mirei, but she is gone. They realize that the black-ish figures are actually people from the island, and Mirei is leading them. Working with people from the western estate, Wataru and Saki get the black-ish beings to an underground lake and restore their humanity.

Mysterious happenings occur one after the next, and it's fascinating to watch Wataru and Saki solve them. This island's crisis is allegorical, causing readers to consider our modern society. (Doi)



Abdallah Next Door

となりのアブダラくん (Tonari no Abudara-kun) | Text: Kurokawa, Yuko | Ill. Miyao, Kazutaka | Kodansha | 2019 | 208pp | 20x14cm | ISBN 9784065175743 | Ages: 11+ | *Friendship, Immigration, Islam*

Haru is 12 when Abdo, a boy from Pakistan, transfers into his class. Abdo introduces himself as “Abracadabra Abdallah,” so everyone calls him Abdallah. The teacher asks Haru to look after the new arrival, so Haru goes to Abdo’s house every day to ask him

to hang out, and he supports him as best he can at school. Abdo never says thank you, however, which bothers Haru. When he conveys this via Japanese language assistant Ms. Denya, Abdo responds, “If I say thanks, it’s like we’re not friends!” Haru gets a shock at how his and Abdo’s thinking differ. Ms. Denya is an active knitter, however, and Haru, who secretly enjoys knitting, feels drawn to her.

On a field trip, the destination is changed suddenly to a Buddhist temple, and Abdo, a Muslim, abruptly leaves. Haru’s classmate says that this is selfish of him, so Haru does not go after Abdo. He and Abdo struggle to connect after that, but when a girl in Haru’s younger sister’s class rips the hijab off of Abdo’s younger sister, Haru consults Ms. Denya and tries to think of ways to help more people learn about the new family. He also reveals his love of knitting.

Told from Haru’s perspective, this novel thoughtfully conveys the challenges of accepting someone from another culture. It also shows how being true to oneself matters to everyone. (Doi)



My Diagonal Stitch: The Boy Who Loves Crafts Can't Say So

ぼくのまつり縫い (Boku no matsuri nui) | Text: Kobe, Haruma | Ill. Ida, Chiaki | Kaiseisha | 2019 | 168pp | 19x13cm | ISBN 9784036491209 | Ages: 11+ | *Needlework, Club activity, Friendship, Gender*

At the beginning of junior high, Yuto Hariyama moves in from another school district and knows no one in his class. He joins the soccer team at the invitation of the first person to speak to him, but he

has never been into sports and doesn’t get very far. He even gets injured at practice so has to take a break.

One day while mending his frayed uniform trousers after class, he attracts the attention of his classmate Rika Itoi, who begs him for “help” and drags him to the school sewing room on the second floor of another building. There, Itoi and the president of the sewing club are frantically working on costumes for the drama club. They need more hands to help. They ask Yuto to assist with the staggered diagonal topstitching on some costumes; Yuto has done handicrafts since he was little and enjoys embroidery, so he finishes quickly. Then, he helps the awkward Itoi sew on some buttons. His finishes quickly earn praise from the club president. After that, he makes some more visits to the sewing room and gets invited to join the club, but he stays on the fence. Yuto was teased as a preschooler for liking pink and had been hiding the fact that he enjoys crafts.

Helped along by Momo, an androgynous Gothic Lolita he meets at the craft shop when buying fabric scraps—and by Itoi and the club president—Yuto finally decides that he likes what he likes, and he joins the sewing club with its three other members, all female. Through showing Yuto’s internal discord, when his embarrassment keeps him from saying he likes crafts, this story refreshingly breaks down gender stereotypes and offers readers a fun school club story. Widely popular with a sequel on the way. (Nogami)



What I Found at the Library During Summer Vacation

夏休みに、ぼくが図書館で見つけたもの (Natsuyasumi ni, boku ga toshokan de mitsuketa mono) | Text: Hamano, Kyoko | Ill. Morikawa, Izumi | Akane Shobo | 2019 | 192pp | 21x16cm | ISBN 9784251044372 | Ages: 11+ | *Books, Summer vacation, Book reports*

A fifth-grader named Tatsuki loves books and has been going to the library by his house his entire life. Because he reads so much, he is good at recommending books to people. Having read even more of the library’s holdings than the sixth graders in the upper-elementary reading club, he actually knows the juvenile inventory.

Tatsuki is asked by Ayu, a girl in his class who hasn’t said much to him before, to find a book her mother read to her when she was five. Ayu knows neither the title nor the author, just that the book originated overseas and features an orphan. Tatsuki searches hard based on these hints, but comes up empty at first.

Then, one day during summer vacation, Tatsuki and Ayu see their classmate Reo, who likes soccer, looking bored at the library. At Ayu’s urging, Tatsuki picks out a book that Reo might like for the assigned summer book report.

With the library and books as connection points, the three students, who had not spent much time together before, become close. They begin to share their personal struggles and family circumstances. Their book searches introduce how to use the library and reveal the role and importance of libraries—and the thrill and wonder of finding the right book.

Why is Ayu searching now for a book that her mother read to her at age five? The reason grows clear at the end, when the book is found in a comforting, invigorating conclusion. During summer when students cannot meet at school, the library sets the stage for invaluable experiences that echo strongly in the heart. (Nogami)

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Another Turn in the Road

もうひとつの曲がり角 (Mo hitotsu no magari kado) | Text: Iwase, Joko | Ill. Sakai, Komako | Kodansha | 2019 | 256pp | 20x14cm | ISBN 9784065168806 | Ages: 11+ | *Cram school, School, Time (time slip), Path, Reading aloud*

Tomo is a fifth-grader who moves over spring break because her parents have bought an old house. She starts the school year at a new school, and she begrudgingly attends cram school for English conversation, since her mother says it will help her future.

Her brother, a new middle schooler who has joined the baseball team, gets rebuked by their mother for poor test grades. He tells Tomo, “At school, students are ranked and forced to compete. I hate it, but there’s no way out.”

One day when cram school is closed, Tomo walks down a street she has never taken and sees a house with an old sign for a café on the front. In the yard, an old woman is reading something aloud. Mystified, Tomo watches for a moment and finds herself invited in and treated to some recitations. The next week, she decides to skip cram school and go listen some more, but before she reaches the house she encounters a strange girl who performs cartwheels on top of a wall. Tomo thought she had taken the same street and turned at the same T junction, but she gets lost in a different flow of time. She explores the connections between the girl and the old woman.

Tomo ends up quitting the English conversation school, and her brother quits baseball even though he just bought new gear. Their parents do not understand that the things they have been doing for their children’s future are in fact burdens for them. Tomo, while uncertain, chooses the turns she will take for her future herself, and when she tells her parents, they reluctantly agree. It is impressive and inspiring to watch this fifth grader think hard and act decisively. (Nogami)

53



Red Hair Certificate

赤毛証明 (Akage shomei) | Text: Mitsuoka, Mari | Kumon Shuppan | 2020 | 144pp | 20x14cm | ISBN 9784774330730 | Ages: 12+ | *School rules, Appearance, Disability*

In Japan, school rules forbid junior high school students from dyeing their hair; everyone's hair should be black. Meg, however, was born with a natural red tint. The story follows her struggle against the school rules which require her to provide a certificate proving

that her hair is naturally red.

Every morning, Meg has to show the teacher at the school gate her certificate. She begins to wonder if she is abnormal and even what the word "normal" means. Her childhood friend Hiro, who is a year older than her, is missing his lower limbs and plays wheelchair basketball. Meg talks with him about what it means to be normal.

Hiro's friend Mamo likes Sawa, Meg's friend, but Sawa has a crush on Hiro. In a fit of jealousy, Mamo punctures Hiro's wheelchair tires. Although Meg is mad at Mamo, she also realizes that she herself envies Sawa. Troubled by these conflicting emotions, Meg tries to understand her dilemma through the famous short story, *Rashomon*, by the renowned Japanese author Ryunosuke Akutagawa. The protagonist, a lowly servant who has just been fired and is contemplating robbery in order to survive, struggles with his conscience. Meg comes to accept that such moral dilemmas are part of being human and strives to stay true to herself.

This is a convincing and sensitive portrayal of one girl's struggle against irrational rules. Through Meg, who looks different, Hiro, who lives with a disability, and Sawa, who has been raised by a single mother, the book also explores the diverse possibilities of "being oneself". (Doi)

55



Even

イブン (Ibun) | Text: Murakami, Shiiko | Ill. Mame-fuku | Shogakukan | 2020 | 208pp | 19x14cm | ISBN 9784092893016 | Ages: 12+ | *Divorce, Food truck, Abuse, Domestic violence*

Twelve-year old Miori's parents divorced because of her father's abuse, and Miori now lives with her mother, a school counselor. Miori has stopped going to school because of difficulties getting along with her friends. One day, she meets Takao, a man who

runs a curry food truck, and his assistant, Tom, a high school student who, like Miori, is not going to school. When she begins helping Takao with his food truck, she learns that Tom's mother not only neglected him as a child but used him to commit crimes and that he now lives with Takao, who has become his guardian. Meanwhile, Miori is constantly thinking about her parents' divorce. Through conversations with her mother and father, she starts to see the complexity of human relationships. She also gains many insights through talking with Tom, with whom she is falling in love. During this process, she comes to realize that being on an equal or even footing is the key to good relationships, whether between parent and child, man and woman, or a couple, and begins exploring how to make such relationships possible.

One day, Miori's father attends a meeting hosted by Miori's mother about women's rights. There he confides that he suffered abuse from his own parents and struck out both physically and verbally because he had trouble expressing himself in words. Gradually, Miori and Tom find the next step they can take.

Miori's story gives us hope, demonstrating that it's possible to find a way forward by sharing our weaknesses and speaking honestly about our shortcomings. The author, who was a victim of abuse herself, helps readers to explore this serious issue. (Sakuma)

54



Ad-Live

アドリブ (Adoribu) | Text: Sato, Madoka | Ill. Shimazaki, Joze | Asunaro Shobo | 2019 | 240pp | 20x14cm | ISBN 9784751529423 | Ages: 12+ | *Italy, Flute, Music*

Yuji, a Japanese boy, was born and raised in Italy. At the age of ten, he attends a concert performed by students from a national conservatory in a cathedral in Florence. This inspires in him the desire to play the flute. Despite his lack of experience, he applies

for the conservatory's entrance exam and is one of three people selected from twenty-seven applicants. He begins studying under Professor Santini. Yuji lives with his mother who works as a waitress at a Japanese restaurant. His mother buys him a flute even though she is struggling financially. Yuji progresses from his first lesson through each test, passing from the preparatory level to become a first-year student in the regular program. From there, the story depicts Yuji's struggle to balance his academic studies with his music, along with such aspects of his daily life as his lessons, his friendships, his encounter with a flutist, and his application for a scholarship. When Yuji is preparing for his fifth-year exam, his teacher asks him, "Who do you want to play music for?" Yuji begins to wonder why he wants to play the flute, whether he wishes to become a professional flutist, and whether he even has the ability to do so. During summer music camp, he experiences the joy of interpreting music, which helps him to surmount this obstacle. He abandons the idea of buying a silver flute, but through the help of his mother and those around him, he is able to obtain one after all and auditions for the Italian Young Orchestra.

The book begins just before Yuji is to take his exam to enter the fifth year of the music course, then returns to Yuji at the age of ten and fills in the years between. The many challenges that Yuji faces, and the way in which he surmounts each one, make this a dramatic story. Through it, the reader can grasp both the joy and the agony of pursuing one's dreams, the magical lure of music, and the impact of the people we meet on our lives. (Doi)

56



Saku and Aki

朔と新 (Saku to Aki) | Text: Ito, Miku | Ill. Kato, Kensuke | Kodansha | 2020 | 288pp | 20x14cm | ISBN 9784065175521 | Ages: 12+ | *Visual impairment, Marathon, Brothers*

Saku, 18, lost his eyesight in a bus accident. Home for the first time in a year from his dormitory at a school for the blind, he finds that his brother, 15-year-old Aki, blames himself for the accident and is punishing himself by refusing to run track, which he once enjoyed. Saku decides to run long-distance and ask Aki to be his guide runner.

Saku had been poor at sports, but as he runs daily, he gradually improves. Hearing encouraging words from Aki and meeting people in a marathon training group, he eventually has to admit he likes running.

One day, Aki runs too fast in practice and Saku falls and gets injured. Aki does not want to hurt Saku anymore, so he insists he will never be his guide again. Saku tells him about the struggles he has faced since the accident, and about how running with Aki has helped him make many discoveries. At length, Aki agrees to guide Saku in a marathon.

The day of the marathon, Saku confesses that he actually began running and had Aki be his guide because he wanted to see Aki suffer. Aki replies that even if that's true, they have both changed while running together. Aki also says that Saku has shown him things he had lost sight of.

Reading Saku's and Aki's alternating perspectives, readers share both brothers' feelings and are forced to think hard about families and about sight. Azusa, Saku's girlfriend since before the accident, and Saku and Aki's mother, who herself blamed Aki for the accident, are also portrayed. The whole work evokes the hardships and joys of getting along with other people. (Doi)



The Non-Slip Alliance

スべらない同盟 (Suberanai domei) | Text: Nikaido, Ao | Ill. Kitamura, Minami | Kodansha | 2019 | 256pp | 20x14cm | ISBN 9784065171363 | Ages: 13+ | *Friendship, Bullying, Manzai comedy, Gender*

Leo is a second-year junior high student who learns that Keiichi, who sits directly ahead when the new term begins, is being bullied by their classmate Hosoki. Their homeroom teacher Mr. Saito, also the advisor for the pop music club Leo is part of, asks Leo

to keep an eye on Keiichi.

Leo invites Keichi to the pop music club, but Keichi prefers to read. When Leo borrows a book from Keiichi and discovers some of Keichi's fan fiction inside, the talent in the work is clear. Leo ends up forming a manzai comedy duo with Keichi to transform him from bullied to popular; they will perform a script by Keichi at the school's culture festival. When they begin to practice at Leo's insistence, they imitate professional duos and perform for small groups, but their routine flops. Even though they're discouraged, they aim for the festival with their original script.

As they practice, they grow more and more open with each other. Then, during summer vacation, they are on an outing when Keichi gets beaten up by Hosoki. Leo tongue-lashes Hosoki, and when the next school term begins, Hosoki takes revenge by bullying Leo. Keiichi also learns that Leo approached him because of the teacher and refuses to perform at the festival.

Leo considers how she has misrepresented the truth and mocked people. She changes from the track suit she always wears into a feminine yukata, and she confesses her truth and performs Keiichi's sketch at the culture festival.

The difficulties of friendship, the various complexes that we all juggle at puberty, and the self-consciousness of adolescence come to life in the humorous dialogue in this book. (Doi)



Beyond the Butterfly's Flutter

蝶の羽ばたき、その先へ (Cho no habataki sono saki e) | Text: Morino, Komichi | Ill. Bannai, Taku | Komine Shoten | 2019 | 160pp | 20x14cm | ISBN 9784338287210 | Ages: 13+ | *Hearing impairment, Sign language, Single-parent family*

Yui lives with her mother. The first day of her second year of junior high, in April, she suddenly experiences ear-ringing and that notices she cannot hear well out of one ear. She does not want to make her mother worry, however, so she does not tell her right away.

In May, she goes to the doctor, but the ringing does not stop. Yui hesitates to tell her close friend Maki. In July, Yui learns from the doctor that it will be difficult to restore her hearing. When she grows depressed, a boy in her class named Ryosuke worries for her and takes her to the park. Yui asks him if he has ever heard the sound of a butterfly's wings, which is apparently the outer limit of what healthy human ears can hear. But Yui cannot seem to tell him about her hearing loss.

After summer break, Yui goes to the park again when feeling down, and she notices some people who are conversing animatedly in sign language. Then she visits a sign language circle and meets Kyoko, who has suffered sudden deafness and cannot hear at all. Hearing about Kyoko's experience, Yui is able to put her own into perspective. She continues to attend the circle. In November, Yui attends a lecture about a pamphlet regarding how deaf people should be treated in hospitals. Yui offers to distribute the pamphlet at a sign-language rakugo comedy event. In December, when arranging a meeting with other hearing-impaired people about pamphlet distribution, Yui is shocked to be treated with discrimination when she books the room. She begins to think about her own internalized prejudices, and she finally tells her friend Maki about her hearing loss. She invites her classmates to the rakugo event, and on the day of the event, she greets them with both voice and sign language.

From April through December, the chronology of Yui's medical treatments and the evolution in her feelings are sensitively portrayed. The process of growing able to face her deafness is evoked in a way that readers will find relatable. (Doi)



Little Bird of the Apartment Block

団地のコトリ (Danchi no kotori) | Text: Yatsuka, Sumiko | Ill. Nakamura, Yukihiko | Poplar | 2020 | 208pp | 20x13cm | ISBN 9784591167243 | Ages: 13+ | *Missing child, Elderly living alone, Compassion*

Mitsuki is a junior high student living with her mother in a large apartment complex. Hina is an 11-year-old being hidden from authorities with her mother, by a single elderly man living one floor below. This novel brings together Mitsuki and Hina's two stories.

Hina's mother had been drifting around the country, taking her daughter with her to various jobs and not sending her to school. After Hina's mother collapsed at a train station and got taken away by ambulance, Hina was put in an institution and began to attend school. But after her mother collapsed again in a park and was taken in by the elderly man, Mr. Shibata, her mother nabbed Hina from the institution and brought her into hiding with her.

One day, Mr. Shibata suffers a subarachnoid hemorrhage while at the supermarket, loses consciousness, and is taken to hospital. Stuck in his apartment and unable to leave, Hina and her mother run out of food. Hina, reduced to skin and bones, appears in front of Mitsuki and says, "Help." Hina had known about Mitsuki and had even nicknamed her Kotori-chan (Little Bird), because Mitsuki keeps a parakeet.

Hina's mother coughs up blood and dies after being taken to hospital. Hina returns to the institution. Mitsuki now thinks of Hina as a younger sister, but at the same time, she is scared by the darkness she sees in Hina's eyes. Knowing that helping Hina will not be simple, Mitsuki's mother nonetheless agrees to foster her during vacations, and Mr. Shibata offers financial support.

This YA novel takes up issues lately pressing in Japan, as elsewhere: missing children and the isolated elderly. With realistic episodes, it turns our gaze toward people showing compassion to other people. It contains a number of heavy scenes, but the talking parakeet lends a saving humor. (Sakuma)



Watashigoto: 14 Years Old in Hiroshima

ワタシゴト (Watashigoto) | Text: Nakazawa, Shoko | Ill. Sasameya, Yuki | Chobunsha | 2020 | 128pp | 20x14cm | ISBN 9784811327273 | Ages: 13+ | *School trip, Atomic bomb museum*

This is a collection of five stories about 14-year-olds on a school trip to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum.

In "Lunchbox," Shunsuke's mother never makes him a lunch, and Rinko's makes her ostentatious ones. In the museum, they see a lunch box charred black when the atomic bomb fell, and they talk. Shunsuke learns Rinko feels uncomfortable with the lunches made by her stepmother.

In "Dress," a girl named Misaki got injured before the trip and has come in a wheelchair. She views a dress in the museum. Bloodied and charred, the dress nonetheless makes her think of a dress her mother sewed her when she was small, which she never wore.

In "Shoes," honor student Yukito has a cheeky younger sister. Yuto has come on the trip in some fancy shoes; at the museum, he sees some destroyed shoes displayed with comments by the younger sister of the deceased.

In "Stone," Kazuki keeps a rock collection. During studies before the trip, he had experimented to learn how roof tiles would respond to the heat of the atomic bomb. At the museum, he sees actual roof tiles from the blast.

In the final story, "I'm Sorry," Akari was five years old when she got caught in the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami and let go of her friend's hand. She is unable to enter the museum no matter how she tries. Outside the museum, she meets an old woman who also feels sorry toward her friend, who died in the atomic bombing.

The inside flap of the front cover explains that *Watashigoto*, the title of this collection, can mean the act of passing on a memory, or it can mean a person's own private matters. As one reads, one can clearly imagine students with their private struggles going on this trip, encountering others' memories, and making the atomic bomb a part of who they are. (Doi)

RECENT NONFICTION

61



Sea Pill Bugs, Hill Pill Bugs

うみのダンゴムシ やまのダンゴムシ 増補版 (Umi no dangomushi, yama no dangomushi) | Text/Photos: Minagoshi, Yosei | Iwasaki Shoten | 2020 | 36pp | 23x27cm | ISBN 9784265043767 | Ages: 3+ | *Pill bug, Habitat, Diversity, Scientific research*

Children find pill bugs very approachable creatures. Not only can they be spotted easily from a child's eye level, but they do not sting or bite and have no smell. Although their name includes the word "bug", they are not insects but rather are related to shrimps and crabs. The author has published several books on pill bugs, and this one uses sharp, colorful photographs to introduce pill bugs found on the seashore and in the hills, as well as in the city. Pill bugs come in a variety of colors and patterns: some are a stunning blue, while others have panda-like black and white patterns. The author also introduces their role in the ecosystem as nature's "cleaners" who consume dead bugs and insect feces. (Sakaguchi)

62



The Secrets of Crayfish

ざりがにの ひみつ (Zarigani no himitsu) | Photos: Takeda, Shinichi | Spv. Takeda, Masatsune | Hisakata Child | 2020 | 32pp | 21x24cm | ISBN 9784865492040 | Ages: 3+ | *Crayfish, Aquatic creatures, Pet care, Foreign species*

This photographic picture book introduces the American crayfish, an aquatic creature beloved by children. The focus is from the child's point of view with pages that take a close look at such body parts as the large, front claws, the little claws on the tips of the walking legs, the whiskers, and tail, as well as fold out spreads. The text, which is written in a familiar conversational voice, explains how each part works. Additional explanations aimed at adults are included here and there to help in answering questions that are likely to arise when reading the book with a child. The author also explains that to protect the natural environment, American crayfish should not be released into the wild once they have been pets because they are a foreign species in Japan. (Sakaguchi)

63

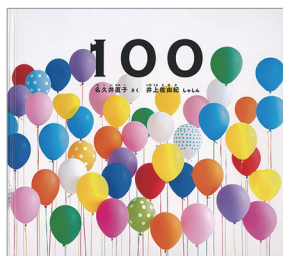


Giant Airport

巨大空港 (Kyodai kuko) | Text/Ill. Kamata, Ayumi | Fukuinkan Shoten | 2019 | 36pp | 23x31cm | ISBN 9784834084795 | Ages: 3+ | *Airport, Job, Airplane, Cargo*

This picture book follows a typical day at Japan's largest airport, Narita International Airport. Dynamic illustrations depict planes taking off and landing, and travelers and airport staff, along with their workplaces, are shown in fine detail. When spreads are opened up, they measure 1.2 meters, offering cross-sections of the airport building. The book is full of clever devices, reflecting the author's plentiful experience in producing books on various passenger vehicles. The story follows a mother and her daughter from their arrival at the airport to departure, while at the same time showing us scenes that we normally never see because they take place behind walls. Cargo shipping and people working night shift are introduced, and the reader learns the charms of the airport and the mechanisms and systems that keep it running. (Sakaguchi)

64



One Hundred

100 (Hyaku) | Text: Nakui, Naoko | Ill. Inoue, Sayuki | Fukuinkan Shoten | 2020 | 24pp | 21x23cm | ISBN 9784834085280 | Ages: 3+ | *Numbers, Photography, Design*

One block. Turn the page, and a hundred blocks make a big castle. One goldfish in an aquarium. Turn the page, and a school of a hundred fish swims around. A hundred erasers packed together looks like a handful, but scatter them and they fill a two-page spread! For small children still mainly counting numbers on their fingers, 100 can be a hard concept to understand. Using bouncy balls, acorns and other fun items, this photo picture book conveys "100" not through counting, but rather through the senses. The author, a well-known book designer, collaborated with the photographer for this project. No computer graphics were used. With white backgrounds and soft lighting setting off items, readers feel at home. They can enjoy the surprising page turns, and they may want to play more with numbers after reading! (Hiromatsu)

65



My Book of Pine Cones

ぼくのマツボックリ図鑑 (Boku no matsubokkuri zukan) | Text/Ill. Moriguchi, Mitsuru | Iwasaki Shoten | 2020 | 36pp | 29x22cm | ISBN 9784265043750 | Ages: 3+ | *Pine cones, Pine trees, Seeds, Wildlife*

This picture book introduces lots and lots of pine cones, which children seem to love just like acorns. The author has gathered pine cones of many types, shapes and sizes. Detailed illustrations show them from the top, from the sides, and even on the inside where seeds can be found. We learn that pine cones open "umbrellas" to scatter seed when the air is dry, and sometimes when mountain wildfires generate heat. This is a shrewd strategy to get seeds into the ground as quickly as possible. The author not only helps us identify pine cones we might find, but also asks (for example) how a pine cone curved like a fried shrimp might present traces of an animal eating. Readers enjoy intriguing finds in atypical shapes, and the fun of making discoveries in nearby nature. (Sakaguchi)



Winter and Water Magic: Ice

ふゆとみずのまほう こおり (Fuyu to mizu no maho-kori) | Text/Photos: Katahira, Takashi | Poplar | 2019 | 36pp | 21x26cm | ISBN 9784591164099 | Ages: 3+ | *Ice, Water, Winter, Variation*

Winter cold and water combine to create beautiful, mysterious shapes in this photo picture book. All of the shapes were made naturally, but they were not easy to find: the author has been photographing the world of snow and crystals for many years. In his photos, ice melts into shapes like flower petals, and gases from a lake bed create foam that freezes into ice bubbles. Some ice sparkles like jewels. Others ice "grows" up from the ground. Waterfalls freeze. Together, these images offer detail, dynamism, and variation that boggles the mind. How do these unusual ice formations, whose names themselves are rare, come to be? Why does ice float in water? How do ponds freeze over? The backmatter offers further information about the properties of water. (Sakaguchi)



Apple, Bit by Bit

りんごだんだん (Ringo dandan) | Text/Photos: Ogawa, Tadahiro | Asunaro Shobo | 2020 | 36pp | 20x21cm | ISBN 9784751529614 | Ages: 3+ | *Apple, Decay, Change, Life*

A photo of a bright red apple appears with the text "Smooth Apple." The same apple changes little by little over time, becoming wrinkly, swollen, soft, limp, and then bug-eaten. But is that the end? The author observed and photographed the same apple for about a year to create this picture book. Each photo has only brief words with no explanations, but the idea that all living things change, ultimately becoming nourishment for future life, comes across in the realistic photos. (Sakuma)



Strawberry

いちご (Ichigo) | Text/Ill. Arai, Maki | Shogakukan | 2020 | 32pp | 25x22cm | ISBN 9784097250524 | Ages: 3+ | *Strawberries, Farming, Observation, Plants*

Not one of the three hundred strawberry seeds depicted on the page looks the same. The book begins with the riddle of why strawberries make little popping sounds when we eat them and follows the strawberry-growing process. The illustrations and text make it easy for children to understand the principle that plants flower, grow fruit and make seeds to pass life on to the next generation. The author has an excellent eye for observation, depicting such details as the downy fuzz on plant stems and the hairs on bee legs. A richness of expression that can only be achieved through illustrations as opposed to photos conveys the deep secrets of the familiar strawberry plant. The author won a Golden Apple Award at the 2017 Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava for her work Tanpopo (Dandelion). (Sakaguchi)



I Thought So! Workplaces

やっぱりしごとば (Yappari shigotoba) | Text/Ill. Suzuki, Noritake | Bronze Publishing | 2020 | 44pp | 30x23cm | ISBN 9784893096708 | Ages: 7+ | *Work, Tools, Search-and-find*

An explorer, a glass blower, a culinary researcher. This picture book introduces nine types of work and the related work environment. A paleontologist's workplace, which fills a two-page spread, has equipment such as scaffolding and fishing line and bursts with a staff of fourteen people who clean fossils, perform micro CT scans, and do other specialized tasks. The paleontologist works together with people from many fields, as we see on the next page where a typical workflow and related tools are described. The reader can concretely envision what this professional does. The illustrations in this book incorporate fun interactive features; readers can enjoy thinking about the meaning of certain words and searching for hidden ninjas and instructions. (Sakaguchi)



Thread and Silk from Silkworms

お蚕さんから糸と綿と (Okaiko-san kara ito to wata to) | Text/Photos: Onishi, Nobuo | Alice-kan | 2020 | 52pp | 26x20cm | ISBN 9784752009252 | Ages: 9+ | *Silkworms, Silk making, Life*

This photographic picture book portrays an elderly couple engaged in sericulture: a labor-intensive process which involves growing and tending mulberry trees, supplying silkworms with mulberry leaves, collecting the cocoons, and drying them just before the chrysalis turns into a moth and breaks free. The cocoons are boiled and then made into raw silk and floss silk by hand. In the past, sericulture and silk reeling were a major industry, but today it is very rare to see the process. Awe-inspiring photos convey the farmers' expressions and the movement of their hands, as well as the nature of the silkworms which, although addressed with the honorific of Okaiko-san (Honorable Mr. Silkworm), are sacrificed to make silk. The reader gains a realization that we garb ourselves in the lives of countless creatures. (Hiromatsu)

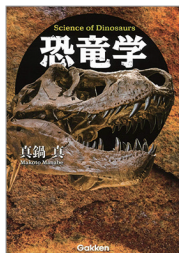


Kyle's Piano: Sounds That Bring Kyle Joy

カイルのピアノ (Kairu no piano) | Text: Takayama, Ryo | Photos: Tominaga, Yasuhiro | 2019 | 144pp | 22x16cm | ISBN 9784265083183 | Ages: 9+ | *Piano, Developmental disability*

This book describes how the gifted pianist Kyle Kihara (born 2001) discovered the piano and began composing, following his progression up to his first solo recital at the age of eighteen. Kyle was diagnosed with autism at the age of two. At the age of six, he began playing piano. By fourth grade, he had completed the study of mathematics up to the end of the grade nine curriculum. He began to dream of becoming a pianist from around the fifth grade, despite having autism-related hyper-sensitivity to noise. In junior high school, he became sensitive to visual stimuli as well, but he continued to grow under the tutelage of his piano teachers Akiko Kubota, who let him play freely, and Masahiro Kawakami, who taught him to play Nikolai Kapustin's music accurately. His story inspires us to keep looking for and developing the things we can do, rather than focusing on eliminating the ones we can't. (Doi)

72



Science of Dinosaurs

恐竜学 (Kyoryu gaku) | Text: Manabe, Makoto | Gakken | 2020 | 200pp | 19x13cm | ISBN 9784052051852 | Ages: 9+ | *Dinosaurs, Fossils, Extinction, Earth*

Based on the latest information, the author, a paleontologist explains dinosaurs to children in an accessible way. The book begins with the history of the planet Earth and dinosaurs, then describes what Tyrannosaurus, a dinosaur popular with children, were like, what fossils can tell us about confrontations between Tyrannosaurus and other dinosaurs such as Triceratops, and what has been discovered through the most recent paleontological research. The author explores the relationship between birds and dinosaurs, comparing them, and also the reasons for the extinction of dinosaurs. One chapter is devoted to Dr. Manabe's answers to questions he is frequently asked at events and lectures, such as how paleontology can be useful. The book is well-designed for children with illustrations and photos on every page to draw the eye and excite curiosity. (Sakuma)

73



The Taste of Home Crosses the Sea: Living in Japan as a Refugee

故郷の味は海をこえて (Kokyo no aji wa umi o koete) | Text/Photos: Yasuda, Natsuki | Poplar | 2019 | 232pp | 20x14cm | ISBN 9784591164204 | Ages: 9+ | *Refugee, Cuisine*

The author, a photojournalist, records her interviews with seven people living in Japan as refugees or asylum seekers, asking them why they came and about their life now, while they cook their traditional cuisine. While serving the author coffee, Judi, a Kurd from Syria, shares how he was targeted by police for participating in a demonstration and fled to Japan in 2012. Two and a half years later, he sent for his family who were living in a refugee camp in Iraq; he now runs a café. Other speakers include people from Myanmar, Nepal, Bangladesh, Cameroon, and Cambodia, who have experienced torture in their home countries as well as discrimination in Japan. Through their stories, the reader learns about situations in other countries and also considers Japan's response. (Doi)

74



A Child's Dictionary of Monyo Designs

こども文様じてん (Kodomo monyo jiten) | Text: Shimonaka, Nabo | Heibonsha | 2020 | 48pp | 29x23cm | ISBN 9784582407495 | Ages: 9+ | *Paper cutting, Design, Family crest, Tradition*

Traditional design motifs that appear on kimono, furniture, and dishes in Japan are called monyo. This book divides key monyo into three categories—nature, living creatures, people's lives—and introduces their names, histories, and symbolic meanings and uses. Warriors used a monyo for "good fortune in battle" as an insignia; Edo townspeople in the 17th and 18th centuries created monyo to look chic and smart. Monyo that incorporate symbols for good harvest, safe childbirth, prosperity, and long life convey deep-seated wishes still cherished today. The back of this book has patterns for all 72 of the monyo listed. When copied and cut using folded paper, they turn into beautiful shapes from Japan. A book that also supports a making experience. Sequel to A Child's Book of Monyo Designs. (Sakaguchi)

75



Search

さがす (Sagasu) | Text/Photos: Nagakura, Hiromi | Alice-kan | 2020 | 40pp | 26x20cm | ISBN 9784752009375 | Ages: 9+ | *World, Happiness, Meaning in life*

Photojournalist Nagakura has taken photos of children the world over while asking, "Why were humans born?" "Where do we belong?" "What is the meaning in living?" He has asked these questions in places where bullets fly, such as Afghanistan and Kosovo; in a refugee camp in El Salvador; in Greenland with its extreme cold; and on the Arabian Peninsula with its scorching heat. He has met all kinds of people living in different ways in contrasting environments. Now, Nagakura says, what he was searching for is in his own hands. This picture book invites us to experience touching photos and text and to think together with the author. (Sakuma)

76



Forest of the Blakiston's Fish Owl

しまふくろうの森 (Shimafukuro no mori) | Text/Photos: MaeKawa, Takayuki | Akane Shobo | 2020 | 48pp | 27x22cm | ISBN 9784251099310 | Ages: 9+ | *Forest, Birds, Wildlife, Gods, Environment*

In the darkness, an owl spreads both wings wide and stares straight ahead with piercing eyes. The symmetrical, striking photo on this book's cover leaves an instant impression. The Blakiston's Fish Owl used to live throughout Hokkaido, the northernmost part of Japan, but since development dramatically reduced the amount of forest and the number of large, old-growth trees with cavities, where the owls nest, they have been driven nearly to extinction, with less than 100 alive at one point. The indigenous Ainu people revere them as gods of the forest. This book explores the owls' habitat and growth, beginning at chick stage, using rare photographs and with Hokkaido's rich nature and contrasting seasons in the background. These majestic gods of the forest, facing extinction, seem to see right through humans' folly in harming the environment with their penetrating gaze. (Nogami)

77



One Year in the Rice Paddy

たんぼの1年 (Tanbo no ichinen) | Text/Ill. Senaga, Takeshi | Kaiseisha | 2019 | 64pp | 27x25cm | ISBN 9784039712400 | Ages: 9+ | *Rice farming, Living creatures, Natural environment, Encyclopedia, Agriculture*

This book shows a year in the life of a rice paddy, also portraying seasonal changes in the satoyama (cultivated mountain foothill area) that surrounds it. While carefully introducing the process of rice farming, this book brings to life the creatures who dwell in the paddy, with detailed illustrations so skilled that they almost overwhelm. Besides aerial views of the satoyama through the four seasons, this book offers close-ups of wildlife living in the paddy, grasslands, water, and soil, as well as of insects and birds flying through the air. The colored-pencil renderings are realistic and precise, introducing more than 280 species. The backmatter includes further details indexed by page. It is sad to think that residential development and pesticide use have made areas like this rare for nearly the past half-century. (Nogami)



What's the Difference between Octopus and Squid?

タコとイカはどっちがう? (Tako to ika wa do chigau?) | Text: Ikeda, Natsumi | Photos: Minemizu, Ryo | Spv. Sugimoto, Chikatoshi | Poplar | 2020 | 32pp | 22x29cm | ISBN 9784591163504 | Ages: 9+ | *Octopus, Squid, Ocean*

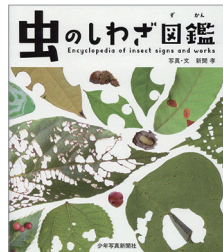
Octopus and squid appear often on Japanese tables. Both are cephalopods (like heads on legs!) with soft bodies, but how are they different? This picture book compares them from several angles. From differences that we can see with our eyes (number of legs) to differences in how they catch prey and release ink, where they live, how they protect themselves from their enemies, how they change color, how they parent, and even how their babies survive, we get the full story in photos, illustrations, and text. Did you know that some squid can put their long arms in pockets? Or that an octopus can memorize routes and not get lost? Did you know that the squid and the octopus both have multiple hearts, big and small? Many surprising facts fill this book. (Sakuma)



Giant Book of Antarctic Fish

南極のさかな大図鑑 (Nankyoku no sakana daizukan) | Text: Iwami, Tetsuo | Ill. Hirono, Ken-ichi | Fukuinkan Shoten | 2020 | 52pp | 26x20cm | ISBN 9784834085587 | Ages: 9+ | *Fish, Antarctica, Deep-sea fish, Habitat*

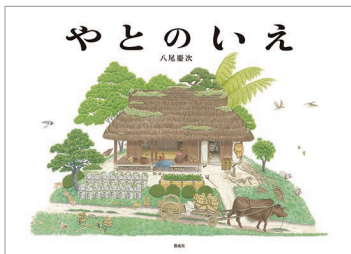
The temperature of Antarctic seawater is -2 degrees Celsius, the coldest in the world. Most fish would freeze in an instant at this temperature, but there are fish that can only be found here. This book introduces 91 Antarctic fish, providing for each a common name, scientific name, typical body length, chief characteristics, and a detailed illustration. Some fish are shown actual-size. Unlike tropical fish, Antarctic fish have subtle coloring, and unlike many fish we are accustomed to, they do not have a swim bladder. There are even fish with colorless blood! Such characteristics are the evolutionary result of living near the ocean floor, trying to improve blood flow, and otherwise trying to survive a harsh environment. Viewing the strange world of Antarctic fish and discovering mechanisms of evolution makes reading this book a discovery-filled experience. (Sakaguchi)



Encyclopedia of Insect Signs and Works

虫のしわざ図鑑 (Mushi no shiwaza zukan) | Text/Photos: Shinkai, Takashi | Shonen Shashin Shimbusha | 2020 | 160pp | 21x19cm | ISBN 9784879816924 | Ages: 9+ | *Insects, Leaves, Eggs, Dung*

Have insects left any chew marks on leaves, branches, or fruit near you? Have you seen eggs, nests, or galls? This book divides common signs of insect activity into sixteen fun types, such as "chew-through," "see-through," "wrap-wrap," "tent," and more, and presents the activity in photos and text. The book is made so that, for example, if children find a leaf with one of the designs shown, they can compare it to the book and find out which insect was at work. Objects such as eggs, dung, husks, spiderwebs, and cocoons are also introduced in column-like format. An encyclopedia-picture book with a fresh approach, created by a specialist in insect photography. (Sakuma)



Yato Home

やとのいえ (Yato no ie) | Text/Ill. Yatsuo, Keiji | Spv. Senni, Kei | Kaiseisha | 2020 | 40pp | 22x31cm | ISBN 9784034379004 | Ages: 9+ | *Home, Development, Urbanization, Sixteen arhats*

This picture book portrays 150 years in the life of a farmhouse in a yato area, with gently sloping hills and valleys. The book is narrated by stone statues of the sixteen arhats (disciples of the historical Buddha) that stand nearby. The farmhouse with thatched roof is first surrounded by rice paddies, fields, and forests; later, it becomes enclosed by a monorail, department store, and condominiums and apartment buildings. It is given a tiled roof. Planting and threshing processes, children's play, festivals, weddings, funerals, and development are all depicted in detail. Until a certain period, wild birds and animals also visit the stone statues. The backmatter contains detailed explanations, including about the Tama Hills in southwest Tokyo/northeast Kanagawa, which served as the model for this book. (Sakuma)



There Was a Country Called Ryukyu

琉球という国があった (Ryukyu to iu kuni ga atta) | Text: Uezato, Takashi | Photos: Tomiyama, Yoshinori | Ill. Ichinoseki, Kei | Fukuinkan Shoten | 2020 | 44pp | 26x20cm | ISBN 9784834085495 | Ages: 9+ | *History, Okinawa, Diplomacy, World Heritage*

Today, Okinawa is one of Japan's 47 prefectures. Until 140 years ago, however, it was the independent Kingdom of Ryukyu. Many people do not realize this, even in today's Japan. This book uses photographs and illustrations to portray the World Heritage-registered sites and history of the kingdom. Comprised of many islands, it had limited land area but featured freedom of movement over a wide span of ocean. The Ryukyuan engaged in trade with Japan, southeast Asia, and China, enjoying a prosperous relationship with the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). Incorporating many cultures and engaging in diplomacy, the Kingdom of Ryukyu also nurtured its own culture. This book first came out in 2012 in a monthly series. After a fire destroyed historic Shuri Castle in fall 2019, it was reissued as a stand-alone title. (Hiromatsu)



Our Stink Bug Book

わたしたちのカメムシずかん (Watashitachi no kamemushi zukan) | Text: Suzuki, Kaika | Ill. Hata, Koshiro | Fukuinkan Shoten | 2020 | 44pp | 26x20cm | ISBN 9784834085525 | Ages: 9+ | *Stink bug, Encyclopedia, Observation*

Stink bugs (shield bugs) are often seen as smelly pests, but in the town of Kuzumaki in northern Iwate prefecture, children got excited about them and wanted to know more. They gathered specimens of some 35 types over a year's time, and they created an encyclopedia. Now they think the stink bugs are great! This picture book uses enjoyable illustrations and easy-to-understand text to tell us how the students' project came about. The book also offers basic information about stink bugs, why they give off odors, and why they form groups. The backmatter offers space for readers to begin their own encyclopedias. (Sakuma)

84

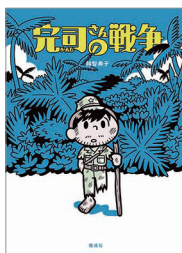


I Want to Meet an Orangutan

オランウータンに会いたい (Oranutan ni aitai) | Text: Kuze, Noko | Ill. Akikusa, Ai | Akane Shobo | 2020 | 188pp | 22x16cm | ISBN 9784251073105 | Ages: 9+ | *Orangutan, Borneo, Jungle, Endangered species*

Written by a Japanese scientist who studies wild orangutan, the text is very easy to follow. Readers learn what motivated the author to study orangutan, how she conducts fieldwork in Borneo, the ecology of orangutan, the fact that they are an endangered species, and what we can do to help them. The author also explores the differences between orangutan and chimpanzees, which live in groups, and differences in the parent-child relationships of orangutan as compared to humans and other ape species. Not only do we gain a deeper knowledge of orangutan, but we also learn how our own lifestyle is intricately connected to their habitat, the forests of southeast Asia. The author urges us to not only buy products that are good for us, but ones that are good for the environment of the whole planet. (Sakuma)

85



Kanji's War

完司さんの戦争 (Kanji-san no senso) | Text: Ochi, Noriko | Ill. Korushika | Kaiseisha | 2020 | 200pp | 22x16cm | ISBN 9784036451104 | Ages: 11+ | *Moss, War, Jungle, Survival*

The author, who was seeking unusual mosses for a photographic picture book on the subject, ran into an old man named Kanji, who told him ferns had saved his life. Intrigued, the author visited Kanji to thank him for photos of moss and ask him to explain what he had meant. Kanji shared that he had been sent to Guam as a soldier when he was twenty-two during the Second World War. Attacked by American troops, he lost his left leg and was in danger of being discovered. He survived, however, by hiding among the ferns. He crawled through the jungle to escape and lived as a fugitive. Back home in Japan, his family received news that Kanji had been killed, and they even held a funeral. Although it may seem like an exciting survival story, the tragic loss of so many young men in the war is powerfully conveyed. (Nogami)

86

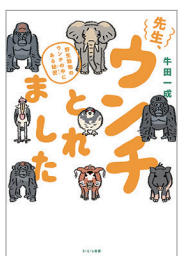


Catching Meat with My Own Strength

自分の力で肉を獲る (Jibun no chikara de niku o toru) | Text: Senmatsu, Shinya | Ill. Tezuka, Kenyo | Junposha | 2020 | 198pp | 21x16cm | ISBN 9784845116119 | Ages: 11+ | *Hunting, Wild game, Forest, Life*

Having wondered as a child what it would take to live on a deserted island, the author became a hunter of wild boars in the mountains near Kyoto. Using only traps, never a gun, he pitted his knowledge against the animals'. He became an expert on tracks and droppings, how branches break, how to observe game trails, how to set up traps and put down the ensnared animals, as well as how to butcher, cook and preserve meat, and utilize bones and hide. All of this is portrayed here in color photos and illustrations, as well as concrete, detailed text. The title emphasizes the author's independence, but his reverence and gratitude for the mountains' natural wonders comes through. This book also gets readers thinking deeply about environmental conservation. (Sakaguchi)

87



Teacher, I Got the Poo: Secrets in Wild Animals' Droppings

先生、ウンチとれました (Sensei, unchi toremashita) | Text: Ushida, Kazunari | Ill. Nakajima, Ryoji | Saela Shobo | 2019 | 162pp | 20x14cm | ISBN 9784378039206 | Ages: 11+ | *Wildlife, Intestinal bacteria, Fieldwork, Scientific research*

The author of this book studies wild animals' droppings. By analyzing the intestinal bacteria found within, he hopes to protect endangered species. This research requires fresh poo. In African forests, using his sense of smell and measuring specimens' temperature with a thermometer, he gathers the newest poo possible. To encourage its bacteria to multiply, he sticks the container to his torso, covers it in wrap, and warms it for 19 hours! In Japan, to capture rock ptarmigan whose population has over-expanded, he stands for ages in blizzard conditions. He gives gut bacteria to ptarmigan chicks and then returns them to the wild. Fieldwork never seems to go as planned, but even with hardships, he is passionate about his work. This comes across to children in his story. (Sakaguchi)

88



To the Children Living a Hundred Years from Now

百年後を生きる子どもたちへ (Hyakunengo o ikiru kodomotachi e) | Text/Photos: Toyoda, Naomi | Rural Culture Association Japan | 2020 | 32pp | 27x22cm | ISBN 9784540192067 | Ages: 11+ | *Fukushima, Radiation, Hometown*

This is part of a photo picture book series about people displaced by the 2011 nuclear disaster. Former residents of Tsushima area, Fukushima prefecture, are introduced, along with their project to collect memories going as far back as 850 years ago. Mr. and Mrs. Sekiba are a couple who have moved five times since the disaster, who now live in a rural town with similarities to the one they left. Mr. Yoshito Konno, a former mayor, has been living in temporary housing while returning once per month to measure the radiation. He runs a study group focusing on radioactive pollution, and he works on the memory project. "Sometimes it seems that even our memories have been polluted by the radiation." These poignant words by the Sekibas linger in the heart. (Doi)

89



Diet Fantasies: Lose Weight, Be Loved

ダイエット幻想 (Daietto genso) | Text: Isono, Maho | Ill. Harada, Arisa | Chikuma Shobo | 2019 | 224pp | 18x11cm | ISBN 9784480683618 | Ages: 13+ | *Diet, Love, Cuteness, Eating disorders*

The world is full of diet methods that come and go. This book does not negate or critique them; rather, the author, a cultural anthropologist, considers why Japanese women are encouraged to diet, thinking that they want to "slim down" or "be cute." What is behind this? Japanese society's fixation on childlike women; the tendency to see women as passive, "chosen" (or not) or "loved" (or not); the loss of power to live when eating based on facts accumulated in one's head. Many issues come up with plentiful examples, all presented in understandable text. (Sakuma)



The Hans Christian Andersen Award

Winners



KADONO Eiko 1935- 2018 Author Award

Born in Tokyo, Eiko Kadono moved to Brazil for two years when she was 25, and based on her experiences there she wrote her first book. Since then she has written many books for children of several generations. Her chapter book *Majo no takkyubin* (Kiki's Delivery Service), written in 1984, won a number of prizes and was included on the IBBY Honour List. This story was adapted into a wildly popular animated film by Hayao Miyazaki. Kadono has been decorated by the Emperor of Japan for her significant contributions to children's literature.



MADO Michio 1909-2014 1994 Author Award

Michio Mado was born in Tokuyama. When he was a small child, his family left for Taiwan, leaving him behind with his grandfather. He began to write poetry at the age of 19. In 1934, two of his poems were recognized by Hakushu Kitahara, the most respected poet of the time. This marked the beginning of Mado's career as a creator of nursery rhymes, songs and poems for children. *The Animals*, co-published in the USA and Japan as a bilingual book, was translated by then Empress Michiko of Japan.



AKABA Suekichi 1910-1990 1980 Illustrator Award

Born in Tokyo, Suekichi Akaba emigrated to Manchuria at the age of 21. He worked in industry and began to paint while still there. He was awarded special recognition three times at the Manchurian National Art Exhibition. After returning to Japan at the age of 36, Akaba mastered painting techniques on his own; he published his first picture book in 1961. His influences include traditional Japanese painting and Felix Hoffmann.



UEHASHI Nahoko 1962- 2014 Author Award

Born in Tokyo, Nahoko Uehashi researched indigenous people in Australia for her PhD in cultural authorology. Her literary debut came in 1989, when her first book won an award that brought her into the spotlight. In 1996, she began to write her historical fantasy series *Moribito* (Guardian), which became a huge hit and received several literature awards in and outside of Japan, including the IBBY Honour List and the Batchelder Award in the USA. Her series *The Beast Player* is now out in the USA and the UK.



ANNO Mitsumasa 1926-2020

1984 Illustrator Award

Born in Tsuwano, a village located in a valley surrounded by mountains, Mitsumasa Anno developed a strong desire to experience places beyond those mountains while growing up. This is reflected in his books. He taught art in elementary school for ten years; his first two picture books reflect his love of playing with visual perception, and his drawings, often compared to Escher, not only abound with visual trickery and illusions but also display a playful sense of humour.

Nominees since 2000



ARAI Ryoji
1956-
2022 Illustrator



CHO Shinta
1927-2005
1998/2000 Illustrator



HAYASHI Akiko
1945-
2008/2010 Illustrator



ISHII Momoko
1907-2008
2002 Author



IWASE Joko
1950-
2022 Author



KAKO Satoshi
1926-2018
2012 Illustrator



KANZAWA Toshiko
1924-
2000/2006 Author



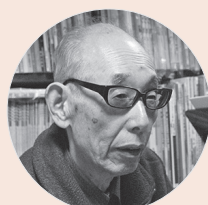
KATAYAMA Ken
1940-
2014/2016 Illustrator



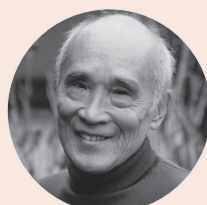
NASU Masamoto
1942-2021
2012 Author



OTA Daihachi
1918-2016
1970/2002/04/06 Illustrator



SATO Satoru
1928-2017
2004 Author



TANIKAWA Shuntaro
1931-
2008/2010 Author



TASHIMA Seizo
1940-
2018/2020 Illustrator



TOMIYASU Yoko
1959-
2020 Author

Japanese Books Selected for the IBBY Honour List

JBBY has selected books for three categories (writing/illustration/translation) of the IBBY Honour List every two years since 1992. Since 2008, JBBY has given these books the JBBY Award.

WRITING



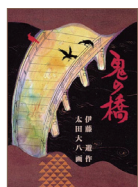
Writing 2020
NASHIYA Arie
Sensing Your Presence
Kimi no sonzai o ishiki suru
Poplar



Writing 2014
MAHARA Mito
Where the Steel Sparks Fly
Tetsu no shibuki ga haneru
Kodansha



Writing 2006
OGIWARA Noriko
The Tale of the Flute Player
Fujinhisho
Tokuma Shoten



Writing 2000
ITO Yu
A Bridge to the Other World
Oni no hashi
Fukuinkan Shoten



Writing 1994
IWASE Joko
Tanikawa Said It's Not a Lie
Uso janaiyo to Tanikawa kun wa itta
PHP Institute



Writing 2018
FURUUCHI Kazue
Hula Boys
Furadan
Komine Shoten



Writing 2010
HAMANO Kyoko
Fusion
Fyujon
Kodansha



Writing 2004
UEHASHI Nahoko
Guardian of the God
Kami no moribito
Kaiseisha



Writing 1998
OKADA Jun
The Stories of the Kosoado Woods
Kosoado no mori no monogatari
Rironsha



Writing 1992
MITAMURA Nobuyuki
When I was a Dinosaur
Boku ga kyoryu datta koro
Holp Shuppan



Writing 2016
IWASE Joko
Since the New One Came
Atarashii ko ga kite
Iwasaki Shoten



Writing 2008
TAKADONO Hoko
Let's Be Frrrriends
Otomodasa ni narimasho
Roebel-kan



Writing 2002
TOMIYASU Yoko
Mokko in Mount Yamamba
Yamamba yama no Mokko tachi
Fukuinkan Shoten



Writing 1996
ITO Hiroshi
Hurrah, I'm a Monkey
Osaru ni naru hi
Kodansha

ILLUSTRATION



Illustration 2020
TAMURA Shigeru
Night Sounds
Yoru no oto
Kaiseisha



Illustration 2014
ABE Hiroshi
To the New World
Shin sekai e
Kaiseisha



Illustration 2018
SUZUKI Koji
Dome Story
Domu gatari
Text: Binard, Arthur
Tamagawa University Press



Illustration 2012
INOUE Yosuke
Hats
Boshi
East Press



Illustration 2016
YOSHIDA Hisanori
The Ranch of Hope in Fukushima
Kibo no bokujo
Text: Mori, Eto
Iwasaki Shoten



Illustration 2010
ITO Hideo
Ushio
Ushio
Billiken Shuppan



Illustration 2008
ARAI Ryoji
The Sun Organ
Taiyo orugan
Kaiseisha



Illustration 2006
CHO Shinta
The Story of the Earthworm Named Ossan
Mimizu no Ossan
Doshinsha

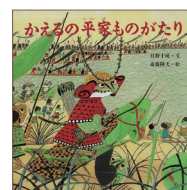


Illustration 2004
SAITO Takao
The Frogs and the Cat: Story Inspired by Heike Monogatari
Kaeru no Heike monogatari
Text: Hino, Kazunari
Fukuinkan Shoten



Illustration 2002
CHO Shinta
The Magical Fun of the Long-nosed Ogre
Tengu no hauchiwa
Text: Kayama, Yoshiko
Kyoiku Gageki

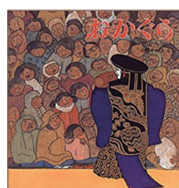


Illustration 2000
ONO Kaoru
The Night of Kagura
Okagura
Text: Waki, Akiko
Poplar



Illustration 1998
KOBAYASHI Yutaka
My Sweet Village
Sekai ichi utsukushii boku no mura
Poplar



Illustration 1996
MATSUOKA Tatsuhide
Exploring the Dinosaur Age with My Robot
Boku no robotto kyoryu tanken
Fukuinkan Shoten



Illustration 1994
AKINO Isamu
Oral Poetry of the Native Americans
Ore wa uta da ore wa koko o aruku
Text: Kanaseki, Hisao
Fukuinkan Shoten



Illustration 1992
YABUCHI Masayuki
Wild Birds of Japan
Yacho no zukan
Fukuinkan Shoten

TRANSLATION



Translation 2020
Trans. NISHIMURA Yumi
De Blauwe Maansteen
by Tonke Dragt
Aoi tsuki no ishi
Iwanami Shoten



Translation 2018
Trans. MOTAI Natsuu
Please Be Quiet, My Father is Taking a Nap: Jewish Folktales
Oshizukani, chichi ga hirune shite orimasu
Iwanami Shoten



Translation 2016
Trans. HARADA Masaru
No Crystal Stair
by Vaunda Micheaux Nelson
Haremu no tatakau honya
Asunaro Shobo



Translation 2014
Trans. JINGU Teruo
Swallows and Amazons
by Arthur Ransome
Tsubame-go to Amazon-go
Iwanami Shoten



Translation 2012
Trans. SAITO Michiko
A Season of Gifts by Richard Peck
Shikago yori tondemonai machi
Tokyo Sogensha



Translation 2010
Trans. KODAMA Tomoko
Dido and Pa by Joan Aiken
Daïdo to tochan
Fuzanbo



Translation 2008
Trans. CHIBA Shigeki
Dumb Creatures by Jeanne Willis
Ori no naka no himitsu
Asunaro Shobo



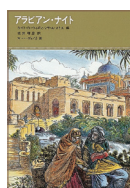
Translation 2006
Trans. HISHIKI Akirako
Maj Darlin by Mats Wahl
Mai ga ita natsu
Tokuma Shoten



Translation 2004
Trans. MATSUOKA Kyoko
Ramona Forever by Beverly Cleary
Ramona to atarashii kazoku
Gakken



Translation 2002
Trans. SAKUMA Yumiko
Last Summer with Maizon
by Jacqueline Woodson
Magaretto to Meizon
Poplar



Translation 2000
Trans. SAKAI Haruhiko
The Arabian Nights
edited by Wiggins and Smith
Arabian naito
Fukuinkan Shoten



Translation 1998
Trans. WAKI Akiko
The Silent Shore by Ruth Elwin Harris
Oka no ie no Sera
Iwanami Shoten



Translation 1996
Trans. KAKEGAWA Yasuko
Darkling by K. M. Peyton
Unmei no uma Dakuringu
Iwanami Shoten



Translation 1994
Trans. SHIMIZU Masako
A Wizard of Earthsea
by Ursula K. Le Guin
Gedo senki
Iwanami Shoten



Translation 1992
Trans. UCHIDA Risako
Russian Folktales
Roshia no mukashi banashi
Fukuinkan Shoten



Recent Translations into Japanese Recommended by JBBY

JBBY selected books in three categories (picture books/chapter books and novels/nonfiction) for its recent publication *Translated Children's Books*. JBBY publishes this catalog every year for Japanese readers.

Picture Books

The Ballad of the Small Tugboat by Joseph Brodsky and Igor Oleynikov (RU) | *Chiisana taguboto no barado*, trans. Kyoko Numano; Tokyo Gaikokugo Daigaku Shuppankai

Blanket Backpack by Lee Choon Hee and Kim Dong Seong (KR) | *Chekupo*, trans. Kiyomi Otake; Fukuinkan Shoten

Colette's Lost Pet by Isabelle Arsenault (US) | *Koretto no nigeta inko*, trans. Misao Fushimi; Kaiseisha

A Letter to My Teacher by Deborah Hopkinson and Nancy Carpenter (US) | *Daisuki na sensei e*, trans. Mayumi Matsukawa; Hyoronsha

Little Boy Brown by Isobel Harris and André François (FR) | *Buraun boya no tobikiri saiko no hi*, trans. Misao Fushimi; Rokurinsha

Lubna and Pebble by Wendy Meddour and Daniel Egnéus (UK) | *Rubuna to koishi*, trans. Ryo Kisaka; BL Shuppan

Me and My Fear by Francesca Sanna (UK) | *Himitsu no Bikubiku*, trans. Chihiro Nakagawa; Kosaido Akatsuki

The Moon Was at a Fiesta by Matthew Gollub and Leovigildo Martinez (US) | *Omatsuri o tanoshinda otsukisama*, trans. Yumiko Sakuma; Nora Shoten

The Night Gardener by Terry Fan and Eric Fan (US) | *Yoru no aida ni*, trans. Masaru Harada; Goblin Shobo

¡Qué suerte tengo! by Lawrence Schimel and Juan Camilo Mayorga (ES) | *Oniichan to boku*, trans. Kazumi Uno; Mitsumura Kyoiku Toshō

The Remember Balloons by Jessie Oliveros and Dana Wulfkotte (US) | *Tonde itta fusen wa*, trans. Keiko Ochiai; Ehonjuku Shuppan

The Rough Patch by Brian Lies (UK) | *Fokkusu san no niwa*, trans. Aiko Sena; Hyoronsha

Le Ruban by Adrien Parlange (FR) | *Ribon*, trans. Masao Kitamura; Dainippon Kaiga

Saturday is Swimming Day by Hyewon Yum (US) | *Puru no hi wa, onaka itai hi*, trans. Misao Fushimi; Mitsumura Kyoiku Toshō

Schneller Hase by John Kilaka (CH) | *Nakayoshi no mizu*, trans. Yumiko Sakuma; Nishimura Shoten

The Strange Visitor by Baek Heena (KR) | *Okashina okyakusama*, trans. Hirota Nakagawa; Gakken Plus

The Toad Goes by Jong-Chae Park (KR) | *Hikigaeru ga iku*, trans. Myonhou Shin and Yukiko Hiromatsu; Iwanami Shoten

Chapter Books and Novels

Anti by Jonathan Yavin (IL) | *Anchi*, trans. Satoko Kamoshida; Iwanami Shoten

Almond by Sohn Won-Pyung (KR) | *Amondo*, trans. Akiko Yajima; Shodensha

Alla Vi Barn I Bullerbyn by Astrid Lindgren and Ingrid Vang Nyman (SE) | *Yakamashi mura no kodomo tachi*, trans. Toshiko Ishii; Iwanami Shoten

Ban This Book by Alan Gratz (US) | *Kashidashi kinshi no hon o sukue!*, trans. Fumiko Naito; Holp Shuppan

The Best Man by Richard Peck (US) | *Besutoman*, trans. Shigeki Chiba; Shogakukan

Beyond the Bright Sea by Lauren Wolk (US) | *Kono umi o koer-eba, watashi wa*, trans. Haruno Nakai and Reiko Nakaigawa; Saera Shobo

Une bouteille dans la mer de Gaza by Valérie Zenatti (FR) | *Bin ni ireta tegami*, trans. Misao Fushimi; Bunken Shuppan

The Cat and the King by Nick Sharratt (UK) | *Neko to osama*, trans. Izumi Ichida; Tokuma Shoten

Cento Passi per Volare by Giuseppe Festa (IT) | *Tobu tame no hyappo*, trans. Ari Sugimoto; Iwasaki Shoten

Crenshaw by Katherine Applegate (US) | *Kurensho ga arawarete*, trans. Tomoko Kodama; Froebel-kan

La distanza tra me e il ciliegio by Paola Peretti (IT) | *Sakura no ki no mieru basho*, trans. Eiko Sekiguchi; Shogakukan

The Dreamer by Pam Muñoz Ryan and Peter Sís (US) | *Yume miru hito*, trans. Masaru Harada; Iwanami Shoten

The Eleventh Trade by Alyssa Hollingsworth (US) | *Juichi banme no torihiki*, trans. Sumiko Moriuchi; Suzuki Shuppan

Every Falling Star by Sungju Lee and Susan McClelland (US) | *Sonju no mita hoshi*, trans. Kaori Nozawa; Tokuma Shoten

Finding Langston by Lesa Cline-Ransome (US) | *Kibo no toshikan*, trans. Naomi Matsuura; Poplar

Flamingo Boy by Michael Morpurgo (UK) | *Furamingo boi*, trans. Nanae Sugita; Shogakukan

Ghost by Jason Reynolds (US) | *Gosuto*, trans. Fumiko Naito; Komine Shoten

The Giant Horse and Other Stories (Africa) | *Kibaraka to maho no uma*, edit/trans. Yumiko Sakuma; Iwanami Shoten

The Girl Who Drank the Moon by Kelly Barnhill (US) | *Tsuki no hikari o nonda shojo*, trans. Mikamu Sato; Hyoronsha

Many Moons by James Thurber and Louis Slobodkin (US) | *Takusan no otsuki sama*, trans. Chihiro Nakagawa; Tokuma Shoten

Mästerdetektiven Blomkvist by Astrid Lindgren (SE) | *Meitantei Karre joseki no nazo*, trans. Akirako Hishiki; Iwanami Shoten

The Miscalculations of Lightning Girl by Stacy McAnulty (US) | *Tensai Rushi no keisan chigai*, trans. Natsuko Tanaka; Kodansha

More About the Little Old Woman Who Used Her Head by Hope Newell (US) | *Atama o tsukatta chiisana obaasan ganbaru*, trans. Kyoko Matsuoka; illus. Nana Furiya; Fukuinkan Shoten

The Most Important Thing by Avi (US) | *Boku ga ichiban kikitai koto wa*, trans. Minami Aoyama; Holp Shuppan

The Mousehole Cat by Barbara Anthony and Nicola Bayley (UK) | *Arashi o shizumeta neko no uta*, trans. Yuko Obika; Tokuma Shoten

A Necklace of Raindrops and Other Stories by Joan Aiken and Jan Pienkowski (UK) | *Shizuku no kubikazari*, trans. Yoko Inokuma; Iwanami Shoten

Refugee by Alan Gratz (US) | *Ashita o sagasu tabi*, trans. Yumiko Sakuma; Fukuinkan Shoten

Running on Empty by S. E. Durrant (UK) | *Boku no kaeru basho*, trans. Nanae Sugita; Suzuki Shuppan

The Secret Horse of Briar Hill by Megan Shepherd and Levi Pinfold (UK) | *Burairahiru no himitsu no uma*, trans. Masaru Harada and Asami Sawada; Komine Shoten

Three Gay Tales from Grimm by Wanda Gág (US) | *Gurimu no yukai na ohanashi*, trans. Kyoko Matsuoka; Nora Shoten

Trick or Treat by Louis Slobodkin (US) | *Yanagi dori no obake yashiki*, trans. Yu Komiya; Zuiunsha

The War I Finally Won by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley (US) | *Watashi ga idonda tataikai 1940 nen*, trans. Michiko Osaku; Hyoronsha

Wish by Barbara O'Connor (US) | *Hontou no negai ga kanau toki*, trans. Reina Nakano; Kaiseisha

Wolf on the Fold by Judith Clarke (AU) | *Okami ga kita asa*, trans. Yoshiko Funato; Fukuinkan Shoten

Nonfiction Books

Así es la dictadura by Equipo Plantel and Mikel Casal (ES) | *Dokusai seiji towa?*, trans. Kazumi Uno; Akane Shobo

Because I am a Girl: I Can Change the World by Rosemary McCarney and Jen Albaugh (CA) | *Watashi wa onnanoko dakara*, trans. Yoshiko Nishida; Nishimura Shoten

Buiten Is Het Oorlog by Janny van der Molen and Martijn van der Linden (NL) | *Kakurega no Anne Furanku*, trans. Yumi Nishimura; Iwanami Shoten

Curiosity by Markus Motum (UK) | *Kyurioshiti boku wa kasei ni iru*, trans. Motoko Matsuda; BL Shuppan

Eyes of the World: Robert Capa, Gerda Taro, and the Invention of Modern Photojournalism by Marc Aronson and Marina Budhos (US) | *Kyapa to Geruda*, trans. Masaru Harada; Asunaro Shobo

Freddie Mercury, Una biografía by Alfonso Casas (ES) | *Furedi Makyuri*, trans. Kazu Uno and Kyoko Ohara; Iwasaki Shoten

The Great Big Body Book by Mary Hoffman and Ros Asquith (UK) | *Iroiro ironna karada no hon*, trans. Emi Sugimoto; Shonen Shashin Shimbunsha

How Colour Works by Catherine Barr and Yuliya Gwilym (UK) | *Iro ga mieruno wa doshite?*, trans. Shigeki Chiba; Shogakukan

Library on Wheels by Sharlee Glenn (US) | *Hashiru toshokan ga umareta hi*, trans. Hiroko Shibuya; Hyoronsha

Loudly, Softly, In a Whisper by Romana Romanyshyn and Andriy Lesiv (UA) | *Urusaku, shizukani, hisohiso to*, trans. Yukiko Hiromatsu; Kawade Shobo Shinsha

The Mummy Makers of Egypt by Tamara Bower (US) | *Miira gaku*, trans. Kodomo Club; Imajinsha

Nothing Stopped Sophie by Cheryl Bardoe and Barbara McClintock (US) | *Suji wa watashi no kotoba*, trans. Yumiko Fukumoto; Holp Shuppan

Peace and Me by Ali Winter and Mickaël El Fathi (UK) | *Pisu ando mi watashi no heiwa*, trans. Haruno Nakai; Kamogawa Shuppan

Plastic Planet by Georgia Amsom-Bradshaw (UK) | *Purasuchikku puranetto*, trans. Izumi Oyama; Hyoronsha

A Ray of Light by Walter Wick (US) | *Hitosuji no hikari*, trans. Shigeki Chiba; Shogakukan

Syria's Secret Library by Mike Thomson (UK) | *Senjo no himitsu toshokan*, trans. Ayako Oguni; Bunkeido

Willewete, Naar de film by Florence Ducatteau and Chantal Peten (NL) | *Eiga tte doyatte tsukuru no?*, trans. Etsuko Nozaka; Nishimura Shoten

Japanese Children's Books 2021

JBBY's recommendations for young readers throughout the world

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Cover illustration: Shigeru Tamura

Supported by

The Foundation for the Advancement of Juvenile Education in Japan

