

JAPANESE BOARD ON BOOKS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

# Japanese Children's Books

2020



*JBBY*

Cover illustration

## Chiki KIKUCHI

Born in 1975 in Hokkaido. After working at a design firm, he decided at age 33 to become a picture book artist. His book *Shironeko kuroneko* (White Cat, Black Cat; Gakken Plus) won a Golden Apple at the 2013 Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava (BIB), and his book *Momiji no tegami* (Maple Leaf Letter; Komine Shoten) won a plaque at the 2019 BIB. His other works include *Boku da yo, boku da yo* (It's Me, It's Me; Rironsha), *Chikiban nyaa* (Chiki Bang Meow; Gakken Plus), *Pa-o-po no uta* (Pa-o-po Song; Kosei Shuppan), *Tora no ko Torata* (Torata the Tiger Cub; Shogakukan), and *Shiro to kuro* (White and Black; Kodansha).

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## 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 board member.



### 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 board member.



### 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.



### 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 Enzaro 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.



### Junko SHIOZAKI

Researcher, part-time lecturer at Keio University, and a member of the steering committee of the Association of Children's Libraries (Jitoken). She obtained her PhD in Library and Information Science after working as a librarian in school and public libraries. She now researches children's books and reading while also teaching theory of children's library service at multiple universities, educating future librarians. Her publications include *The History of Library Services to Children—Development of Public Library Services to Children in Postwar Japan* (Sogensha). JBBY board member.

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)

# Japanese Children's Books

## ABOUT JBBY AND THIS CATALOG

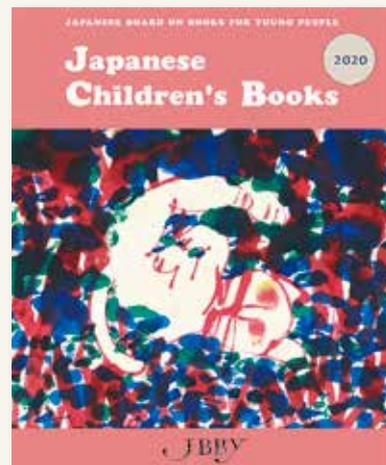
The Japanese Board on Books for Young People (JBBY) was founded in 1974 as the Japanese Section of the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY).

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](mailto:info@jbby.org)



Cover illustration © Chiki Kikuchi

Yumiko SAKUMA, JBBY President

# RECENT PICTURE BOOKS



## Let's Search for a Cool Place

(あついあつい／Atsui atsui)

Text/Illus. Taruishi, Mako | Fukuinkan Shoten | 2019 | 24 pp. | 22 x 21 cm | ISBN 9784834084610 | Ages 0+ | *Penguins, Seals, Hippopotamus, Elephants*

A penguin trots around sweating heavily and complaining, "It's too hot!" Finally he finds a cool, shady spot, but then realizes it's in the shadow of the seal's body. So now the two of them go around looking for somewhere cool, and gain more friends along the way as the hippopotamus and the elephant join them in their search for a somewhere else cool. And eventually they reach the big wide ocean! As you turn the pages, children can guess which animal will appear next, and enjoy the rhythm of the words that are repeated. This is a cheerful picture book with a bright yellow background, and amusing pictures of the animals who are so hot they can't stand it. (Shiozaki)



## The Snail Taxi

(かたつむりタクシー／Katatumuri takushii)

Text/Illus. Tamura, Shigeru | Fukuinkan Shoten | 2018 | 24 pp. | 22 x 21 cm | ISBN 9784834084160 | Ages 2+ | *Ant, Snail, Taxi, Family*

A young ant's mother sees him and his father off from their fruit candy tin home as they go to his grandmother's house. It starts to rain, so they take a snail taxi and enjoy the ride to Rocking Horse Park. Father and son enjoy the landscapes as the taxi climbs a mountain, crosses over on the underside of a bridge, and passes through a pond. Along the way they drink some juice at a juice stand, and eventually arrive safely at Granny's house. It is interesting to see the world from the perspective of an ant, and fun to see how insects use leaves and mushrooms as umbrellas, and how they devise ways to convert bottles and flowerpots into their homes. (Doi)



## Granny Bo-Peep

(いないいないばあさん／Inai inai baa-san)

Text/Illus. Sasaki, Maki | Kaiseisha | 2019 | 32 pp. | 24 x 19 cm | ISBN 9784032326000 | Ages 3+ | *Grandmothers, Nonsense, Hide-and-seek*

This picture book is about a boy who goes for walks with his granny, but she keeps suddenly disappearing and reappearing somewhere totally unexpected. His granny pretends to be a mannequin in a show window, hides under a bridge and jumps out at him, poses on top of a statue in the park, hangs upside down behind the stairs, stands on top of a chimney, and suddenly appears out of a snowman. The pictures of the chubby granny as she goes to extraordinary lengths to surprise her grandson are amusing, and it's fun to see the boy wide-eyed as he is continually being surprised. (Doi)



## Little Shadow

(くろいの／Kuroi no)

Text/Illus. Tanaka, Kiyo | Kaiseisha | 2018 | 64 pp. | 19 x 23 cm | ISBN 9784033328805 | Ages 3+ | *Girls, Imaginary creatures, Attics*

On her walk home, a little girl encounters the small, completely black Little Shadow, which no one else can see. One day, the girl works up her courage and talks to Little Shadow, and it leads her down a lane and through a wall to a house. An adventure all their own begins, as the two climb from a storeroom into an attic room, where a mysterious play space awaits. This 64-page picture book is illustrated entirely with copperplate etchings. Detail and the black tone stimulate the senses, lending wonder to a pool of sunlight on the porch; a shadow in the storeroom; plants. Even the smell of the old house is evoked. Winner of the Nami Concours Purple Island Prize and Shogakukan Children's Book Award. (Hiromatsu)



## Maple Leaf Letter

(もみじのてがみ／Momiji no tegami)

Text/Illus. Kikuchi, Chiki | Komine Shoten | 2018 | 32 pp. | 23 x 31 cm | ISBN 9784338261326 | Ages 3+ | *Maple leaves, Animals, Winter preparations, Letters*

A thrush brings a mouse a letter from beyond the mountains. Consisting of a single maple leaf, this letter brings tidings of winter. The mouse, gathering the squirrel and brown-eared bulbul, goes in search of maple leaves on the mountain where they live. At first, when they see something red, it turns out to be a mushroom or a camellia. But before long, a pure red scene of maple leaves spreads before them. The expansive, free illustration style brings the animal characters to life. Watercolor paintings with bleed and blur, involving a limited palette, make the reds stand out. A 2019 Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava plaque winner, this book's covers and endpapers also deserve close attention. (Hiromatsu)



### The Mirage Picture Book

(まぼろしえほん / Maboroshi ehon)

Text/Illus. Inoue, Yosuke | Suzuki Shuppan | 2018 | 28 pp. | 27 x 22 cm | ISBN 9784790253631 | Ages 3+ | *Nonsense*

Each page of this nonsense picture book begins with the words "Nobody knows but..." and follows up with startling revelations of strange things humans don't realize, such as the moon really being a light bulb or a bear sleeping in a train. When a road is rolled up and taken away, the reader is left pondering what a road really is, while the image of a dog walking a human makes the reader reconsider the relationship between animals and humans. The allegorical illustrations are drawn with a warm touch and capture the humorous gap between the unique reality imagined here and the reality we know. (Doi)



### The Ororon Parade

(おろろん おろろん / Ororon ororon)

Text/Illus. Ishiguro, Ayako | Kaiseisha | 2019 | 32 pp. | 19 x 24 cm | ISBN 9784033520803 | Ages 3+ | *Monsters, Parade, Parents and children*

This picture book is inspired by a sixteenth-century illustrated scroll called *Night Parade of the One Hundred Demons*. Here the parade of monsters and spirits is called Ororon. On the night of a red moon, the parent monsters and spirits go out for the Ororon Parade. Left behind at home, the children decide to do their own Ororon Parade. They call together their friends, sing and dance, make strange faces, and practice music. They start out in high spirits, but after a while they lose their way and become discouraged and uneasy. They are beginning to feel really scared when they have a pleasant surprise. It is a slightly scary but delightful book by an author known for painting pictures of monsters. (Sakuma)



### Peace and War

(へいわとせんそう / Heiwa to senso)

Text: Tanikawa, Shuntaro | Illus. Noritake | Bronze Publishing | 2019 | 32 pp. | 19 x 19 cm | ISBN 9784893096579 | Ages 3+ | *Peace, War*

As a teenager, the author was forced to flee from fire bombs during World War II, at which time he saw countless corpses. In this book, however, he neither shares those painful experiences nor talks about peace in abstract terms. Instead, he takes familiar things and actions that we take for granted and juxtaposes what they look like during a time of peace and a time of war. The book begins with a child (me at peace, me at war) and progresses through a father, a mother, a family, a tool of peace (a pencil) and a tool of war (a gun), as well as such things as a queue, a tree, the sea, a town, night, and a cloud. Except for the mushroom cloud rising from the atomic bomb, which is a photo, the pages are illustrated with simple black-and-white drawings. In the last spread, "a baby on our side" and "an enemy baby," the pictures are identical. (Sakuma)



### The Pea-sized Boy Patufet:

A Folktale from Catalonia, Spain

(まめつぶこぞうパトウフェ / Mametsubu kozo Patoufe)

Text: Uno, Kazumi | Illus. Sasameya, Yuki | BL Shuppan | 2018 | 32 pp. | 29 x 22 cm | ISBN 9784776408628 | Ages 3+ | *Folktale, Cow, Fart, Errand*

Patufet is an active little boy who tries to do everything even though he is pea-sized. When his mother asks him to go and buy some saffron, he successfully fulfills his mission. To make sure no one steps on him, he sings "Patan, patine, paton" the whole way there. When he goes to take lunch to his father, however, it begins to rain. Patufet shelters under a cabbage leaf, but is swallowed by a cow that eats the cabbage. What does he do? The resourceful boy sings loudly inside the cow's stomach so that his parents can find him and leaps out when the cow farts. The illustrations and text are fun and entertaining. (Sakuma)

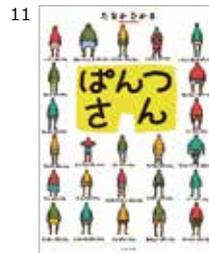


### Turning on a Flashlight

(かいちゅうでんとう / Kaichu dento)

Text/Illus. Miyakoshi, Akiko | Fukuinkan Shoten | 2018 | 24 pp. | 23 x 21 cm | ISBN 9784834084191 | Ages 3+ | *Flashlight, Night, Shadow, Science*

I'm never scared in my room at night, even when it gets dark. I switch on my flashlight, and start exploring with my older brother. When I shine it on the wall, the light is round. If I go closer to the wall, the circle of light gets smaller. Light and shadows dance, and the room I thought I knew really well always looks completely different. Can you catch light? How far does light go? This picture book is mostly black and white, capturing the contrast between light and dark with a soft touch, making it easy for small children to understand the fascination of light. (Shiozaki)



### Undies People

(ぱんつさん / Pantsu-san)

Text/Illus. Tanaka, Hikaru | Poplar | 2019 | 36 pp. | 31 x 22 cm | ISBN 9784591160497 | Ages 3+ | *Underpants, Big, Small, People*

Clay figures emerge from the mud wearing colorful undies. A giant hand appears and grasps a clay figure. The picture zooms out and we see that the man to whom the hand belongs is also a man wearing undies. He uses the figure to open a bottle and take a drink. The picture zooms out again, and an even larger man is stringing the man taking a drink on a chain as a pendant and fastening the pendant to his girlfriend's neck. The picture zooms out again and the man and his girlfriend are being hung by their undies on the clothesline to dry by an even bigger woman dressed in undies. A sudden shower falls, and when it stops, we see that this whole world fits under the hand of a little girl playing in a sandbox. A nonsense book that challenges the reader's sense of scale as absurd figures wearing undies grow ever larger from one page to the next. (Nogami)

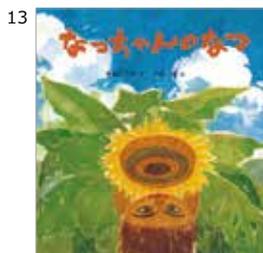


### Gorobe in the Land of Mononoke

(ごろべえ もののけのくにへいく / Gorobe monoke no kuni e iku)

Text/Illus. Otomo, Yasuo | Doshinsha | 2018 | 32 pp. | 21 x 23 cm | ISBN 9784494016297 | Ages 4+ | *Mononoke, Samurai, Wit stories, Folklore*

Long ago, there lived the strongest samurai in all Japan: Gorobe. He wanted to experience fear, an emotion he had never felt. On the advice of a Buddhist temple's head priest, he journeyed to the land of *mononoke* (evil spirits). But though he happened upon a *mononoke* banquet, and a giant monster tried everything to scare him, he merely felt amazed or amused. Then, when he returned to the temple, a young monk offered to teach him fear. This folktale-like story of studying fear resembles some of the Grimms' fairy tales. The ending has a witty twist that leaves the courtly, tenderhearted Gorobe—and readers—shuddering. (Hiromatsu)



### A Japanese Summer

(なっちゃん の なつ / Nacchan no natsu)

Text: Ito, Hiromi | Illus. Katayama, Ken | Fukuinkan Shoten | 2019 | 28 pp. | 26 x 23 cm | ISBN 9784834084665 | Ages 4+ | *Summer, Nature, Life, Senses*

O-Bon is a Japanese summer ritual of honoring one's ancestors. On the day of O-Bon, a little girl named Nacchan goes alone to the riverbank, encountering plants and creatures. The kudzu vine tickles her heel so she laughs. The sunflower watches her with its round eye, seeming unwell today. From the shadows, Nacchan watches a grey heron move, sips some salvia nectar, and uses a four o'clock flower to paint her fingernails and nose. The reader shares in her enjoyment of the wind through the grasses, the discomfort of a mosquito bite, the loneliness of seeing a dead cicada fall. Prose poem-like writing and watercolor illustrations stimulate the senses as well as the emotions. This book portrays a full summer day when life and death intertwine. (Hiromatsu)



### The King of Circles

(まるのおうさま / Maru no osama)

Text: Tanikawa, Shuntaro | Illus. Awazu, Kiyoshi | Fukuinkan Shoten | 2019 | 24 pp. | 26 x 23 cm | ISBN 9784834084535 | Ages 4+ | *Circle, King, Nonsense*

The plate says, "I'm the roundest thing in the world. I am the king of circles." No sooner have the words left his mouth than he falls from the shelf and shatters. A pair of cymbals laughs and declares that he's the true king of circles. But as soon as he says so, he is crushed by a bouncing, rolling wheel. Many others, including a compass, an orange, and a record claim to be king. Finally, the Earth declares that they do not need a king of circles. He points out that there are countless stars in the universe that are even bigger than the sun. The last page encourages readers to draw their own circles, concluding with a graceful brush-drawn circle in black ink. The creative design and bright colors transmit the beauty, mystery and freedom of circles. (Doi)



### Little Frogs Play Hide-and-Seek

(あまがえるのかくれんぼ / Amagaeru no kakurenbo)

Text: Tateno, Hiroshi | Illus. Kawashima, Haruko | Sekai Bunkasha | 2019 | 24 pp. | 27 x 24 cm | ISBN 978441819-8085 | Ages 4+ | *Tree frogs, Camouflage, Hide-and-seek*

Three frog children are playing hide-and-peek in the grass, when all of a sudden one of them turns brown. The other two wash and scrub him, but his color remains stubbornly brown. They are wondering why when suddenly a heron swoops down from the sky. The shocked frogs freeze, and the heron moves away without noticing them. Through a fun story, this picture book informs the readers how as frogs grow, their bodies change color to blend in with their surroundings. The illustrator spent a number of years watching tree frogs breed, and her illustrations accurately capture the actions of the frogs. It is also fun discovering the other small creatures. (Sakuma)



### I've Started Playing Japanese Chess

(しょうぎをはじめました / Shogi hajimemashita)

Text: Mabe, Kayo | Illus. Tanaka, Rokudai | Bunken Shuppan | 2019 | 32 pp. | 27 x 22 cm | ISBN 9784580823471 | Ages 5+ | *Shogi, Traditional games, Board games, Grandfathers*

Shogi, often called Japanese chess, is a traditional board game played by two people. In this book, the main character learns to play shogi at after-school recreation, but he always loses games to older students or his father. When summer comes, he goes to stay with his grandfather, an excellent shogi player, and asks him for lessons. Even readers who have not played shogi will be able to follow their story and absorb shogi rules, beginner practice methods, and winning strategies. While the book conveys the fun of shogi, it also shows with warmth the interactions between generations of a family. The cover and back cover turn into shogi pieces and a board, letting readers play right away! (Hiromatsu)

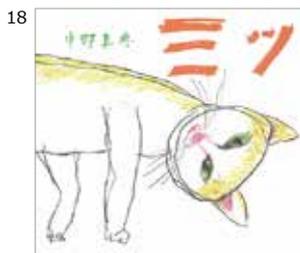


### Let Me Tell You a Long Story

(なんげえはなしっこしかへがな / Nange hanashikko shikahagana)

Text: Kita, Shosuke | Illus. Ota, Daihachi | BL Shuppan | 2018 | 32 pp. | 31 x 22 cm | ISBN 9784776408819 | Ages 5+ | *Folktale, Endless story, Aomori*

Narrated in the Tsugaru dialect of Aomori in northern Japan, the book begins with the phrase "Let me tell you a long story." The author relates many long tales such as that of a crow that cawed each time a chestnut fell from a tree until the very last nut fell after a year and three days, a singing contest between a cicada and a turtledove, a snake who came out of a hole, a carpenter bee who flew out of a storehouse, kappa children who dived one by one into the water, and the loincloth of the thunder god. In the last story, a monk chants "Tagazugu, tagazugu" to make a hag grow until she reaches the clouds. The unusual northern dialect along with the Japanese-style illustrations make this book endless fun. (Doi)



### Mitsu

(ミツ/Mitsu)

Text/Illus. Nakano, Masanori | Kosei Shuppansha | 2019 | 32 pp. | 23 x 25 cm | ISBN 9784333028009 | Ages 5+ | *Cats, Life, Death, Nature*

The author takes his cat, Mitsu, for a walk in a spring field. Mitsu is dying, and the fresh brightness of the yellow daffodils is the author's final gift for his beloved pet. The author holds Mitsu, who is now as light as a ball of fluff, through the dark and rainy night. At dawn, Mitsu closes his eyes as though squinting against the spring sunshine. The lives of all the little animals in the field full of dandelions are portrayed in colorful detail as if in celebration of Mitsu's life. On the last page, Mitsu smiles. The gentle language and illustrations portray the departure of a little life from this world, profoundly touching the heart. (Nogami)

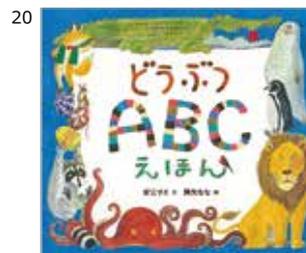


### Mr. Octopus Comes to My House

(タコヤン/Tako-yan)

Text: Tomiyasu, Yoko | Illus. Minami, Shinbo | Fukuinkan Shoten | 2019 | 32 pp. | 26 x 24 cm | ISBN 9784834084658 | Ages 5+ | *Octopus, Friends, Play*

One day, Mr. Octopus comes over to Sho-chan's house wanting to play. Sho-chan is hesitant, but Mr. Octopus turns out to be good at video games, soccer, and hide-and-seek. Everyone is impressed and praises him, but he is quite bashful. In the evening, Mr. Octopus goes back to the sea waving one of his eight legs. The exchanges between Mr. Octopus and the children are full of humor. A delightful picture book by an author nominated for the 2020 Hans Christian Andersen Award, who is an illustrator as well as editor and essayist. (Shiozaki)



### Animal ABC Picture Book

(どうぶつ ABC えほん/Dobutsu ABC ehon)

Text: Yasue, Rie | Illus. Furiya, Nana | Nora Shoten | 2019 | 56 pp. | 18 x 19 cm | ISBN 9784905015437 | Ages 6+ | *ABC, Picture books, Animals, Word games, English*

An illustrated ABC book that introduces animals and other things familiar to children from A to Z in both English and Japanese. Using humorous characters, such as an alligator, an albatross, and an anteater, and crisp, rhythmic sentences such as "An alligator ate an apple," the book entices readers into the world of words. Children can piece together each story as they discover many words and intriguing things in the colorful and detailed illustrations. (Shiozaki)



### A Big Festival on a Small Island

(ちいさな島のおおきな祭り/Chisana shima no okina matsuri)

Text/Illus. Hamada, Keiko | Shin Nihon Shuppansha | 2019 | 32 pp. | 27 x 22 cm | ISBN 9784406063531 | Ages 6+ | *Island, Festival, Gods, Seeds*

The small island of Taketomijima, with its 9-kilometer circumference covered in white coral sand, is in Okinawa on the westernmost tip of Japan. Every October, the Tanedori Festival is held to pray for the prosperity of the islanders' descendants and for abundant harvests. The time-honored preparations for this traditional festival, along with various unusual Shinto rituals and a sacred play, are portrayed in bright colors from the perspective of a six-year-old girl who will appear for the first time in the play performed on the last day of the festival as an offering to the island gods. The detailed descriptions of this festival, which has developed over 600 years against a background of nature where it is always summer, will also be of interest to cultural anthropologists. (Nogami)



### The Day The Lions Saw the Wind

(ライオンの風をみたいちにも/Raion no kaze wo mita ichinichi)

Text/Illus. Abe, Hiroshi | Kosei Shuppansha | 2018 | 32 pp. | 23 x 25 cm | ISBN 9784333027828 | Ages 6+ | *Lion, Wind, Africa*

A father lion with a mane like fire takes his five children for a walk through the African savanna to "see the wind." Scattered across the broad panorama of the plain are many kinds of animals. The short manes of the giraffes flicker in the wind. A family of warthogs marches through the tall grass, holding their tails high. A black rhinoceros stands like a black stone in a sea of grass. The magnificent savanna and the animals that live there are depicted in bold brush strokes, and the dynamic images vividly convey the atmosphere of the wild kingdom and the movement of the wind. (Nogami)



### Golden Bird: A Tale from Bulgaria

(金の星/Kin no tori)

Text: Yaoita, Yoko | Illus. Sakata, Kiyoko | BL Shuppan | 2018 | 40 pp. | 29 x 22 cm | ISBN 9784776408635 | Ages 6+ | *Folktales, Bulgaria, Adventure, Illusion*

A Japanese illustrator and author takes on a once-upon-a-time story from Bulgaria. A king orders three princes to go in search of a golden bird. The two older princes prove lazy and selfish, but the youngest prince proves honest and intelligent. Stumbling at times due to temptations, he nonetheless overcomes obstacles due to magical elements such as a flying horse and a fine bridal garment tucked in a chestnut shell. East and west combine in this tale from a country with complex ethnic history. Ms. Sakata debuted as a picture book illustrator in Europe, but this title came out first in Japan. The refined use of color, bold composition, and exquisite detail draw readers into the adventure. (Hiromatsu)

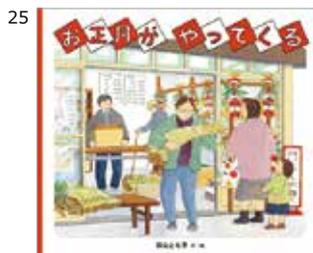


### I Dream of a Journey

(ぼくのたび／Boku no tabi)

Text/Illus. Miyakoshi, Akiko | Bronze Publishing | 2018 | 32 pp. | 28 x 22 cm | ISBN 9784893096470 | Ages 6+ | *Travel, Hotels, Letters, Animals*

The main character in this book manages a hotel in a small town. Every day, he welcomes guests from around the world and listens to their stories. After work, when he climbs into bed, the wish to travel wells up inside him. Never having left town before, he travels to unknown places in his dreams. Then, a letter from a former hotel guest arrives, further stirring his desire to visit guests around the world. The illustrations, by an artist who ardently loves travel, are all lithographs. The softly layered, beautiful colors draw readers into the hero's imaginary journey. This is the latest work by internationally renowned illustrator Akiko Miyakoshi, recognized at the Bologna Ragazzi Awards and by The *New York Times*/New York Public Library Best Illustrated Children's Book Awards. (Hiromatsu)



### It's New Year!

(お正月がやってくる／O-Shogatsu ga yatte kuru)

Text/Illus. Akiyama, Tomoko | Poplar | 2018 | 32 pp. | 24 x 27 cm | ISBN 9784591160657 | Ages 6+ | *New Year, New Year's Eve, Lion dance*

This picture book portrays traditional Japanese New Year customs. The protagonist is Naoko, who lives in a modern city where her husband manages a construction firm. As the year draws to a close, they buy a special lucky rake from a shrine fair, and then some materials for New Year decorations at Asakusa's Gasa-ichi fair. They use these materials to make traditional decorations, which they sell to local people. When they've finished that, their family thoroughly cleans their house from top to bottom, she prepares the special New Year's food, and on New Year's Eve they eat buckwheat noodles as they see in the New Year. And once the New Year has started, in order to chase out bad luck, Naoko's husband and others put on the Lion Mask and dance to the accompaniment of drums and flutes as they go around the neighbourhood wishing everyone a Happy New Year. (Sakuma)



### Konton

(konton／Konton)

Text: Yumemakura, Baku | Illus. Matsumoto, Taiyo | Kaiseisha | 2019 | 40 pp. | 27 x 19 cm | ISBN 9784033328904 | Ages 6+ | *Chaos, Chinese legend, Imaginary creatures*

This picture book is never simply funny or sad. Its theme is *konton*—chaos!—and it grew from the Chinese legend of a mysterious monster. Having no name, the monster is no one. Since the monster is no one, it can be anything. Wait, it has ears but can't hear? No, it has no ears, eyes, or mouth! But Konton is always looking up at the sky and laughing! This collaboration between a well-known novelist and manga artist exudes chaos in every way—with its text, illustrations, and even binding and printing. If read repeatedly, however, with an openness to the unknown, it gradually imparts joy, sadness, and beauty. (Hiromatsu)



### Yamashita Doesn't Speak

(やましたくんはしゃべらない／Yamashita-kun wa shaberanai)

Text: Yamashita, Kenji | Illus. Nakada, Ikumi | Iwasaki Shoten | 2018 | 32 pp. | 28 x 22 cm | ISBN 9784265086436 | Ages 6+ | *Classmates, School life, Individuality, Voice*

The narrator of this book has a classmate named Yamashita, whose voice no one has heard. Yamashita makes mischief in class without speaking, and at the choir competition, he only lip-syncs. Shortly before elementary school graduation, on a parent observation day, Yamashita is due to present an essay. He brings a cassette recorder into the classroom and plays a recording of his voice. The author himself did not speak throughout the nine years of preschool and elementary school, and he based this book on an episode in his life. Written from the point-of-view of a girl classmate, the book shows Yamashita's individuality and growth. The illustrator, also a manga artist, created facial expressions that convey nuanced emotional changes. (Hiromatsu)



### The Boy of Yanbaru

(やんばるの少年／Yanbaru no shonen)

Text/Illus. Tajima, Yukihiko | Doshinsha | 2019 | 40 pp. | 25 x 26 cm | ISBN 9784494012459 | Ages 8+ | *Forest, Nature, War, Osprey*

The word *yanbaru* refers to the original forest that covers the northern part of Okinawa island, the westernmost part of Japan. It is a treasure trove of rare animal and bird species threatened with extinction. To the children in this story, the forest is a natural playground where they climb trees, jump into the river, and fish. But the great trees are to be felled to build an American air force base for Ospreys. Local men and women protest by blocking the road to stop the bulldozers. The powerful illustrations convey from a child's perspective the cruelty of razing this bountiful forest to build a military base. (Nogami)



### The Imaginary Museum of Fossils

(空想化石はくぶつかん／Kuso kaseki hakubutsukan)

Text/Illus. Mori, Yoko | Josai University Publishing | 2018 | 48 pp. | 31 x 22 cm | ISBN 9784907630591 | Ages 8+ | *Fossils, Museums, Prehistoric life, Imagination*

A young girl finds herself in a museum of mysterious fossils. The bones of a great dinosaur speak: "We have been waiting for you! Imagine us when we were alive, will you?" As the girl imagines, the fossils of an extinct species of coelacanth, the winged dinosaur Anchiornis, and other creatures from millions of years ago come alive, take on skin and color, and move! Inventory from the Oishi Fossils Gallery of Mizuta Memorial Museum, Tokyo, was used as the basis for creating this picture book. Realistic pencil drawings lead one to ponder how life on Earth has miraculously continued for such a long time. The end-matter includes a fossil guide. (Hiromatsu)

# RECENT CHAPTER BOOKS AND NOVELS

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## A Forgetful Granny

(おばあちゃんのわすれもの / Obaachan no wasuremono)  
Moriyama, Miyako | Illus. 100%ORANGE | Nora Shoten |  
2018 | 56 pp. | 22 x 16 cm | ISBN 9784905015420 | Ages 5+ |  
*Granny, Bus, Shopping, Forgetfulness*

Tonta the piglet loves riding on public transport. When his granny has to go to the hospital in town to have her knees treated, he goes with her since it means he can go on the bus, and also she'll stop at a café on the way home and treat him to an ice cream. After her knees has been examined, Granny goes to the local shopping street to buy lots of things for the family. Tonta squeezes all of her purchases into her large rucksack. He hates walking around town with her carrying the rucksack since he thinks it looks uncool, but that's all part of the outing and he has to put up with it.

Having been to the café and finished all the shopping, they are on their way to catch the bus home when Granny realizes that she has lost her walking stick somewhere along the way. Tonta runs around the town going to all the shops they visited. He eventually finds the stick in the hospital they'd been to first, and the doctor tells him that if Granny had forgotten all about the stick after leaving the hospital, then her knees must be healed. Tonta is so tired after all the running around that he has a nap on the bus on the way home. The final amusing twist is that Tonta belatedly remembers that he was supposed to meet his friend that day.

This is a fun book for children, as all the animals living in the town are humorously and amusingly depicted, and it conveys the heartwarming bond between Tonta and his Granny. (Nogami)

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## Kai and Tim's Nighttime Adventures

(カイとティムよるのぼうけん / Kai to Timu yoru no boken)  
Ishii, Mutsumi | Illus. Sasameya, Yuki | Alice-kan | 2019 | 144  
pp. | 22 x 17 cm | ISBN 9784752008613 | Ages 5+ | *Night,  
Dinosaurs, Ghosts, Vehicles, Playing Cards*

It's Kai's sixth birthday. His Mom and Dad give him a soft-toy Tyrannosaurus, while Granny and Grandpa's present is a picture book about dinosaurs. Kai's Mom keeps telling him that now he's six he's a big boy, so

he declares that from now on he will sleep alone. After his Mom has turned out the lights and left his room, he suddenly gets anxious, and sees a small ghost in the dimness.

"Who are you?" he asks. "Tim," comes the answer. Kai thinks his toy tyrannosaurus must have spoken, so he asks it, "Tyra, can you talk?", but it wasn't his toy. It was a fairy called Tim, who is 422 years old and looks after children who are afraid of the dark and can't sleep. Tim tells Kai that when you close your eyes, you can see places you've never been to and things you've never seen before.

Kai closes his eyes, and when he opens them again on Tim's signal, he is in the Jurassic world of the dinosaurs. He rides on an iguanodon's back and is targeted by a pterosaur. Now he can't wait for night to come! On the second night, he rides a ghost train through outer space, and crosses the milky way in a ghost ship. On the third night, he plays cops and robbers with some playing cards. This humorous and magical bedtime fantasy gracefully captures the feelings of a boy who likes dinosaurs as he is guided to independence by an exciting sense of adventure. (Nogami)

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## Kururu and Kororo

(クルルちゃんとコロロちゃん / Kururuchan to Kororochan)  
Matsumoto, Satomi | Illus. Hirasawa, Tomoko | Shuppan  
Works | 2018 | 80 pp. | 22 x 16 cm | ISBN 9784907108281 |  
Ages 6+ | *Friends, Length, Rulers, Addition, Body*

Kururu is tall with round glasses while Kororo is plump with pigtails. Although they are the same age and go to the same elementary school, Kururu and Kororo tend to avoid each other because they are very different in appearance and personality.

One sunny day, however, they bump into each other at the park and buy a rainbow-colored ribbon from a peddler. They run into another peddler who sells rulers and measures the distance from the tips of their thumbs to the tips of their baby fingers. Kururu's measures sixteen centimeters, while Kororo's measures fourteen centimeters. Added together, the total length is thirty centimeters. When they put their pinkies together, the width is two centimeters. Using their fingers, they measure the length of the ribbon they bought and find that it is one meter long. Excited by this discovery, they decide that sixteen centimeters is one *kururu*, fourteen centimeters is one *kororo*, and one meter is one ribbon and start measuring the length of everything in the park using their hands and fingers. How long is the lost kitten's tail? How tall is the clown's hat? How wide is the ginkgo tree's trunk? By the end, Kururu and Kororo are best friends! At the bottom of the cover page is a life-size picture of a ruler, while on the last page are ideas for using parts of the body to measure things.

The story is engaging while introducing creative ways for children to discover the fun of measuring different things such as the span of both hands or the length of a single stride. (Shiozaki)



### Garden of Wonder

(あららのはたけ / Arara no hatake)

Muranaka, Rie | Illus. Ishikawa, Eriko | Kaiseisha | 2019 | 216 pp. | 21 x 16 cm | ISBN 9784035309505 | Ages 9+ | *Fields, Letters, Bullying, Nature*

This story unfolds through the letters exchanged between ten-year-old Eri, who has moved to Yamaguchi, and her friend Emi left behind in Yokohama. Through these letters we learn how Eri's grandfather has given

her a small patch of land where she grows strawberries and herbs. She writes all her thoughts to Emi, like how vigorously all the weeds grow even if you step on them; about a spider that only spins a temporary web when it senses a typhoon is about to hit; how her face swelled up when stung by hairs from caterpillars on the peach tree; and the feeling of being in contact with nature. The reader can appreciate the fresh amazement and wonder that a city-raised child feels upon moving to the countryside.

Emi tells Eri how she has studied about spiders and caterpillars thanks to her letters, and also about their classmate Kenji, who now won't leave his bedroom. Kenji has been their friend since they were little, and they are both worried about him.

Other people in their lives include Eri's grandfather, who emphasizes learning from experience and only tells her what to do after she has made a mistake; a new transfer pupil Marumo, who sticks to her own ways without realizing the pressures on her to change; and Kazuki, who bullied Kenji but deep down wants to apologize.

It is interesting to see how in this day and age Eri and Emi deepen their connection not by telephone or email, but by letters, and the story ends on a refreshing note when a frog jumps out of a box of vegetables that Eri sends Kenji, prompting him to step outside and begin to change. This book won the Joji Tsubota Prize. (Sakuma)



### Robert, the Cat Pediatrician

(ねこの小児科医 ローベルト / Neko no shonikai Roberuto)

Kiji, Kaeko | Illus. Igarashi, Daisuke | Kaiseisha | 2019 | 72 pp. | 21 x 19 cm | ISBN 9784033137704 | Ages 9+ | *Cats, Pediatricians, Families*

One night, Yuki's two-year-old brother Yu suddenly vomits as he sleeps next to her, and he complains of stomach pain. Their parents don't know what to do and can't decide whether to

call an ambulance.

Then, Yuki finds an entry in the phonebook for "Robert Matsuda, Emergency Night Pediatrician," which is somehow glowing. Yuki finds this odd but calls the number. Soon, a doctor arrives on a small motorbike, wearing a small helmet and goggles. Dismounting in his white coat, he turns out to be a black and white cat! The cat doctor diagnoses a rotavirus, has Yu drink a rehydration solution, and tells the family what to do in case of further symptoms. Everyone is relieved. But the next morning, Yuki's parents don't remember the pediatrician at all! "Dr. Robert Matsuda helped us!" Yuki insists. "If it's Robert you mean, he's over there," Yuki's mother says, pointing at a cat asleep in the living room.

Was the whole thing a dream? Yuki begins to doubt herself, but a week later, she wakes to see Robert talking on a cell phone and changing into his white coat. Robert does not return after that house call, and soon everyone but Yuki forgets him. A fantasy that skillfully explores the mysteries only children can see. (Shiozaki)



### Angel's Baggage

(天使のにもつ / Tenshi no nimotsu)

Ito, Miku | Doshinsha | 2019 | 224 pp. | 20 x 14 cm | ISBN 9784494020553 | Ages 11+ | *Work-experience program, Middle school, Nursery school*

Futa is in eighth grade and has to choose a workplace to visit for five days as part of his class work-experience program. None of the options offered appeal to him, but he chooses the Angel Nursery School assum-

ing that he will spend his time playing with children. Things he never imagined begin to happen once he starts. The lively children refuse to leave him alone even when he escapes into the washroom, and the teacher keeps giving him more work to do. Although Futa claims he is a sloppy guy who leaves jobs half done and isn't interested in anything, it gradually becomes clear that he is a kind and sensitive young man.

He cares for an abandoned puppy in his apartment complex even though he knows pets are against the rules. He worries about Shion, a five-year-old boy at the nursery school who seems strangely attached to him, and about his relationship with his mother. As he struggles to overcome various challenges, Futa begins to grow and change. His inner kindness, of which he is unaware, is drawn out by the nursery school teachers, Makun who is three years his senior, and the nursery school children. The way the adults and Makun interact with Futa and affirm his individuality is particularly heartwarming. The children's acceptance of Futa as one of their own demonstrates how discerning children can be. The good feeling generated by the book lingers long after the reader is finished. (Shiozaki)



### Artificial Soul

(つくられた心 / Tsukurareta kokoro)

Sato, Madoka | Illus. Urata, Kenji | Poplar | 2019 | 176 pp. | 20 x 13 cm | ISBN 9784591162057 | Ages 11+ | *Near Future, Android, Doubt*

The story is set in the near future. A newly established model school not only offers small classes and high-tech facilities but also has a super security system to prevent cheating, bullying and violence. Each class has a guard-droid that looks and behaves just like one of the students, but is actually an android programmed with the same intelligence as a human and equipped with a built-in mike and camera through which the school can watch over the students. The androids each have their own personality and are indistinguishable from humans.

Mika comes to this new school with great expectations and makes friends with three students sitting near her. The students are forbidden to look for the guard-droid, but Mika's class secretly tries to find out. Mika starts suspecting everyone. She and her group of friends visit the home of a girl who appears suspicious and closely observe a boy who never gets out of breath even when he runs a marathon.

But perhaps the guard-droid is really one of Mika's friends. Are their smiles fake? Is one of them being operated by remote control and just pretending to have feelings? Is it all an act?

In the end, the students find out that even the guard-droid doesn't know who the droid is, and its identity is never revealed. The author vividly conveys the frightening nature of a society in which everyone is watched and where it is impossible to tell the real from the fake. *Artificial Soul* warns us that the human mind could one day be subdued and controlled. (Sakuma)

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### August Light

(八月のひかり／Hachigatsu no hikari)

Nakajima, Nobuko | Chobunsha | 2019 | 128 pp. | 20 x 13 cm | ISBN 9784811326061 | Ages 11+ | *Families, Summer, Poverty, Food, War*

One August day, hot from first thing in the morning, fifth grader Miki hangs laundry on the porch, slices carrots and cabbage, and makes grilled soba noodles to eat with her second-grade brother Yuuki. Yuuki gulps his portion of five bites, and Miki gives him her one bite. The two of them don't have enough to eat. They go hungry for hours, but they never tell their mother. Their father, who was once kind, quit his job and began playing pachinko constantly. Then he started hitting their mother, and when Yuuki was three, he left.

Miki and Yuuki's mother works as a supermarket cashier, but her body is weak, and she can't handle long hours. With little income, the family of three barely scrapes by. Miki takes her mother's place cooking refrigerator leftovers into daily meals, but food runs low. Electricity costs money, so the family runs the air conditioner just an hour a day.

Yuuki tells Miki that at school, he's been teased: "You're basically living on school lunch, aren't you?" "Do you ever take a bath?" Miki's been told the same. Their mother was born when their grandmother was only 18, unmarried, and grew up in poverty herself. The cycle seems unbreakable. In the midst of this, Miki and Yuuki's determination and the support of one friend of Yuuki's and his dad, is what keeps them going. The end of the book includes the note, "In Japan today, in seven children under 17—about 2.7 million young people—can be found living in poverty." This novel brings their struggle to life. (Nogami)

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### Happy Tokoi

(ゆかいな床井くん／Yukai na Tokoi-kun)

Tomori, Shiruko | Kodansha | 2018 | 192 pp. | 20 x 14 cm | ISBN 9784065139059 | Ages 11+ | *School, Point of view, Humor*

This novel vividly portrays a year in the class of two Japanese sixth-grade students: Koyomi, a girl, and Tokoi, a boy.

One episode unfolds per chapter. In one episode, a boy named Toya blurts out that a student teacher has large breasts. In another, a girl named Omori realizes in the school bathroom that she's gotten her period and doesn't know what to do. Another girl, Suzuki, can speak freely at cram school but struggles to speak at school. Katsuta's father has lost his job and unfortunately takes his stress out on her, so she takes her stress out on her classmates. Many different stories fill the class.

For her part, Koyomi is the tallest student and has been called "Giant" and "Amazon Woman," but the shortest student in the class, Tokoi, once expressed jealousy of her, saying, "I wish I could be tall." Now, nobody makes fun of height. Koyomi often feels pressured by classmates but dislikes playing along with them; in contrast, Tokoi voices his thoughts freely and finds the good in everyone. Koyomi gradually comes to admire Tokoi; when something happens, she considers it, observes Tokoi's reaction, and takes a step toward trying someone else's point of view.

Humorously narrated and filled with the appeal of Tokoi, this book keeps readers turning pages and offers them the appeal of new viewpoints. Winner of the Noma Children's Literature Prize. (Sakuma)

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### Kofuji the Cat: Number 3 Ash Street

(ねこのこぶじさん／Neko no Kofujisan)

Yamamoto, Kazuko | Illus. Ishikawa, Eriko | Alice-kan | 2019 | 168 pp. | 21 x 16 cm | ISBN 9784752008934 | Ages 11+ | *Cat, Event, Stay-at-home, Diversity*

Kofuji the cat once worked very hard at an advertising company. When her coworkers began to treat her coldly, however, she quit her job. Now she stays at home, never leaving the house. One day, however,

her grandmother asks her to take care of her house on Ash Street while she travels around the world. Instead of rent, she asks Kofuji to plan a monthly event, each one befitting the month in which it is held.

Although reluctant at first, Kofuji plans a picnic under the cherry blossoms in April, a seasonal change of clothing in May, plum juice-making in June, a star festival in July, fireworks in August, moon viewing in September, chestnut gathering in October, a festival for children aged three, five and seven in November, wreath making in December, making traditional New Year's dishes in January, bean throwing in February, and a dolls' festival in March. The neighbors on Toneriko Street are a diverse group of characters. There is a tapir who moved back from overseas and thinks she has to conform to fit in, a young fox who throws tantrums because she's upset that her mother has a new fox cub, and an elderly monkey living on his own. Through her interactions with these different neighbors, Kofuji gradually perks up and by the end of the year, she has decided to start weaving traditional textiles.

Each monthly event is described by Nezumori, the postmouse who lives in the cupboard of her house. His own story also unfolds within this book, and the last scene is his wedding, which is attended by all the characters who have appeared, including Kofuji's grandmother who has returned from her travels. With one story per chapter and plenty of illustrations, the book is easy and entertaining even for children unused to reading. (Sakuma)

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### Luna and Sango

(月と珊瑚／Runa to Sango)

Kamijo, Sanae | Kodansha | 2019 | 176 pp. | 20 x 14 cm | ISBN 9784065162224 | Ages 11+ | *Okinawa, Military bases, Family, Friendship*

Sango Oshiro is in the sixth grade at an elementary school in Okinawa. Her name, which means "coral," was chosen by her grandmother in honor of the coral, as well as the blood and tears, upon which the island of Okinawa was built. But the Chinese characters for "sango" are quite difficult, and Sango, who hates studying, has trouble writing her name. Her classmate Shion Mizuhara teases her about this. To improve her writing ability, Sango decides to keep a diary. Through her entries, we learn what happened in Okinawa during and after World War II and the issues surrounding the American military bases on the island.

Because Sango's mother, a hair dresser, works in Kyushu, Sango lives with her grandmother who performs traditional Okinawan songs in pubs. But they are so poor that Sango cannot afford a smartphone like her friends and sometimes has to use a meal program for disadvantaged children that charges only one hundred yen (about US\$1.00) per meal.

American fighter jets frequently fly over the school with a deafening roar that throws Shion into a panic but sets the boys guessing the type of aircraft from the engine sound. The great-grandmother of Sango's classmate has been arrested numerous times for demonstrating against the construction of a military base in Henoko. When Sango learns that her own great-grandmother was forced to work in the brothels due to poverty, she is devastated. She is helped, however, by the arrival of Luna Izumi, a student who transfers in from another area. This ambitious work sheds light on the history of war, the vicious cycle of poverty, the background to the military bases in Okinawa, and the current situation. (Nogami)



### Someday, a Sun Ship

(いつか太陽の船 / Itsuka taiyo no fune)

Muranaka, Rie | Illus. Koshida, Mika | Shin Nihon Shuppansha | 2019 | 176 pp. | 20 x 14 cm | ISBN 9784406063371 | Ages 11+ | *Tohoku 2011 Earthquake and Tsunami, Family*

This story is about a family who moved to Nemuro in Hokkaido following the great earthquake and tsunami that hit their hometown of Kesennuma, Miyagi prefecture, six years earlier in 2011, narrated from the perspective of eleven-year-old Kaito. Kaito's father is a boat builder, and he shows the local youths the techniques he uses. Kaito and his six-year-old brother Hikaru attend the local elementary school, which has only 13 pupils. At school they have to draw a picture of a mackerel pike, and their drawings will be made into a calendar to sell at the festival. However, Kaito is terrified of the fish's eyes and can't bear to look at it. One day, his mother disappears, and Kaito and his father go to his grandmother's house in Sendai in search of her. When they find her there, she tells them she has been trying so hard to keep her life going that she is worn out. She had come to see Granny out of a need to reconnect with people she holds dear.

Before returning to Nemuro, the three of them go to Kesennuma and his father vows to rebuild his boat-building workshop. However, Kaito feels that Nemuro is home too, and he studies mackerel pike so that he can draw them. He sees thin seagulls swallowing the fish, the catch being brought in as the sun comes up, and visions of boats and Spanner, the dog they lost in the disaster. Finally he is able to draw a picture of a fish.

A Vietnamese trainee whose father used to work in Nemuro comes to see Kaito's father's workshop, prompting us to consider what family means. Kaito's thoughts about life and death are symbolically portrayed through the seagulls that appear throughout the book. The bold illustrations in India ink provide a lively portrayal of people going energetically about their lives. (Doi)



### Tokujiro and I

(徳治郎とボク / Tokujiro to boku)

Hanagata, Mitsuru | Rironsha | 2019 | 240 pp. | 19 x 14 cm | ISBN 9784652203057 | Ages 11+ | *Grandfather, Family, Death*

The story follows the relationship of a boy and his grandfather, Tokujiro. Stubborn and cantankerous Tokujiro is a widower who lives alone and is hard of hearing. He has three daughters including the boy's

mother but when they and their families come to visit during the summer, Tokujiro just sits silently in front of the TV.

Yet this same taciturn and difficult old man teaches the boy how to make bamboo-copters, takes him beetle hunting in the woods, and teaches him the wonders of nature. The boy is fascinated by his grandfather's stories. Born in 1923, the year of the Great Kanto Earthquake, his grandfather was a rebellious boy of whom even his parents despaired. Although a poor student, he excelled at sports. He and his friends had dangerous stone-throwing fights and snuck into other people's fields and orchards to steal tomatoes, loquats and oranges. If they had been caught, they would have met a horrible fate, Tokujiro tells the boy.

The life of this stubborn old man whom the boy loves dearly is vividly and richly portrayed from the boy's perspective, including the old man's gradual demise after a heart attack. The man's boyhood and way of living overlap with the family's history, linking with the boy's present life. Tokujiro's unique approach to living is scrupulously portrayed through his interactions with his grandson, his experiences during the war, and the family's response to nursing him after his heart attack. Each memory of Tokujiro is a precious gift that enriches the boy's life. (Nogami)



### Star Traveler:

**Tadataka Ino and the Legendary Ghost Fish**

(星の旅人 伊能忠敬と伝説の怪魚 / Hoshi no tabibito)

Komae, Ryo | Komine Shoten | 2018 | 288 pp. | 20 x 14 cm | ISBN 9784338081627 | Ages 11+ | *Edo period (1603-1868), Maps, Hokkaido*

In the year 1800, a 56-year-old man named Tadataka Ino walked the island of Hokkaido in order to survey and map it for the first time. This documentary-like novel follows a fictional 12-year-old boy named Heiji who travels with Ino on this journey. Heiji's reason for accompanying Ino is that he received news that his father died in Hokkaido, and he wants to confirm this with his own eyes. Ino's real son, Shuzo, is on the journey, too, and appears in the story.

Ino runs into trouble crossing the Tsugaru Strait between Japan's main island, Honshu, and Hokkaido; he also struggles with measurements for the map. For his part, using a piece of wood given him by an indigenous Ainu person, Heiji finds a letter from his father and learns that he fell off a cliff and was picked up in nearby waters by a Russian vessel.

At the end of each section of the book, a column with text and diagrams presents background information on Ino's life; early studies of the West by Japanese; and the fine reputation of Ino's Hokkaido map today. In one memorable passage of the book, Ino—who only became a scholar at age 50, yet left a significant legacy—scolds Heiji for filling in blanks in mapping logs with numbers that seem apt. "Filling in numbers you want doesn't make them right!"

This book can function as a biography of Ino, an introduction to the Edo period, and even an absorbing primer on cartography. In addition, with Heiji as the main character, the book reads as a story of sons and fathers: Shuzo and Ino, Heiji and his missing father. The ghost fish in the subtitle turns out to be the shape of the cliff where Heiji discovers his father's letter. (Doi)



### Cabinet of Curiosities: A Fascinating Museum

(ヴァンダーカンマー / Vunderkammer)

Kashizaki, Akane | Rironsha | 2018 | 240 pp. | 19 x 14 cm | ISBN 9784652202845 | Ages 13+ | *Work experience, Museums, Friendship, Discovery*

This story is about a day's work experience at a museum undertaken by five children (two boys and three girls) in year two of middle school. The placing was decided at the last minute and, not having any idea of what work they will be doing, the children are not very enthusiastic. On the day, they draw lots to decide who will do what: Ikumi, who isn't good at anything and lacks confidence in himself, gets fish; Renka, a spoiled girl with an over-protective mother, gets vertebrate paleontology; Madoka, a loudmouth from the girls' basketball club, gets birds; Chie, an introverted girl who is shy with everyone, gets mammals; and Manabu, a straight A-seeming student who finds it hard to live up to his nickname of "Prof.," gets inanimate objects. Once their jobs have been decided, they split up to go to their relevant departments.

Each recounts their experience in a chapter of their own, describing their job and their exchanges with the experts, curators, and volunteers they meet in the course of their work. They all have new experiences and make discoveries, and grow a little as a result. While the day is described from the different perspectives of the five children, the author has skillfully created an overall flow by using names as a key to the story, and by including similar scenes in all the chapters, such as discussions during the lunch break.

The term Cabinet of Curiosities comes from the German word *Wunderkammer*, which refers to a room in which rare articles from all over the world are displayed, and was the forerunner of museums. This book conveys the charm and role of the museum, and the people who work there are extremely convincing. (Shiozaki)

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### Captain Mark and the Bathhouse

(キャプテンマークと銭湯と / Kyaputen maku to sento to)

Sato, Itsuko | Illus. Sato, Makiko | Kadokawa | 2019 | 248 pp. | 20 x 14 cm | ISBN 9784041077054 | Ages 13+ | Soccer, Public Baths, Captain, Friendship

This interesting story links soccer, which is all the rage among children these days, and the public bathhouses that are now slowly disappearing.

Shuto, a junior high school student who belongs to the soccer club team, is shocked when he is replaced as captain by newcomer Daichi, and gets irritated when he is criticized by his team mates for saying cruel things to him. When he comes across the public bathhouse where he used to go with his late grandfather as a little boy, he decides to go in and feels his irritation melt away as he soaks in the hot water. After this he goes to the bathhouse regularly, and it not only becomes a place of healing for him, but he also begins to see things from a new perspective as he chats with the people he meets there. He comes to understand that even Daichi, who he used to resent for being able to do everything well, has a big problem of his own.

Most of the regular customers at the bathhouse are local elderly people, but there are also young people too. A plasterer called Hiro, who grew up in a children's home, has been blessed with a good boss and does his best at work. Kona is a high school student obsessed with bathhouses, and she posts on Instagram about their attractions.

However, after 77 continuous years of business through two generations of ownership, the bathhouse is finally to close down. The old couple who run the place can no longer cope with burning the wood to heat the water. On closing day the entire soccer team, having won a game and with all the ill-feeling between them dispelled, all crowd into the bathhouse along with the regulars. But then there is a power cut . . . Readers are sure to sympathize with the efforts of Shuto and the others to support the business right until the end. (Sakuma)

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### The Captains' Meeting Will Come to Order

(部長会議はじまります / Bucho kaigi hajimarimasu)

Yoshino, Mariko | Asahi Gakusei Shimbun | 2019 | 264 pp. | 19 x 13 cm | ISBN 9784909064738 | Ages 13+ | School clubs, School life, Friendship

This novel unfolds in a private middle school in Japan. Part 1 is a meeting of the student captains of culture-related clubs, and Part 2 is a meeting of the student captains of sports clubs. The novel unfolds with each captain speaking in the first person. (School club activities in Japan happen after school, each led by a captain. If a problem occurs, club captains meet to discuss it.)

In Part 1, the art club's diorama for a school festival has been vandalized. Participating in the culture club meeting are an angry art club captain, a discouraged occult research club captain, a less-than-confident gardening club captain, a Miss Perfect-like flower-arrangement club captain, and a deep-in-love cooking club captain. Who committed the crime? Did the vandalism stem from bullying? From a grudge? The captains' opinions clash at first, but they eventually find an answer.

In Part 2, one of the gyms is being razed, so the table tennis and Japanese drumming clubs that used it need new spaces to practice. At first, the various sports captains try to defend their own clubs' practice spots, but then they work toward a fix. The captains of table tennis, basketball, ballet, drumming, soccer, baseball and even ParaSports—a student with a prosthesis—find themselves in unexpected territory.

In this book, as various captains' distinctive voices weave together, the reader starts to see the full picture. The reader also gathers that each captain faces struggles the others could never know. While entertaining to read, this book promises to make readers a bit kinder to others, too. (Sakuma)

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### Green Whales that Swim in Summer

(夏に泳ぐ緑のクジラ / Natsu ni oyogu midori no kujira)

Murakami, Shiiko | Shogakukan | 2019 | 208 pp. | 19 x 14 cm | ISBN 9784092897724 | Ages 13+ | Adolescence, Isolation, Friendship, Helpers, Divorce

The summer between semesters of her third year in middle school, Okyo is taken by her mother to a small island where her grandmother lives. Until now, the island has been a place for family vacations, but this

time is different. Okyo is staying with her grandmother due to her parents' divorce. Not fully understanding the adults' problems, Okyo believes that she has been cast off. Anxiety and anger envelop her, leaving her lost.

When told by her grandmother to go and harvest a watermelon in the field, she sees a strange boy who calls himself Tsuchinko. He's shaped like a human, but his head has no hair, and his face is smooth like a mud dumpling. Tsuchinko refers to watermelons as "green whales that swim in summer," and he teaches Okyo how to find a ripe one. Tsuchinko is only visible to children who feel alone and who struggle; he says that he helps them grow up, then gets forgotten. Besides Okyo, a boy named Kai whose mother died, who refuses to leave his house, can see Tsuchinko; and Okyo's sensitive cousin Manami can see Tsuchinko. Over the course of the book, these three adolescents weather the storms in their hearts. Okyo learns that her mother, exhausted from life with her father, has huge mental scars of her own. Thought at first able to think only of herself, Okyo gradually grows able to see other people's perspectives and understand their feelings. A coming-of-age novel that portrays one summer and three vulnerable children. (Shiozaki)

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### moja

(moja / moja)

Yoshida, Momoko | Kodansha | 2019 | 208 pp. | 20 x 14 cm | ISBN 9784065154014 | Ages 13+ | Appearances, Inferiority complex, Friendship

Risa, age 14, has been called Moja (Shaggy) ever since grade school due to the dark hair on her legs and arms. She never swims in the pool, and she wears long sleeves and pants even in the summers, so as not to show her limbs. Risa hangs out with Noa and Konomi, two girls who sit near her in middle school, but she has never told them about her real appearance.

Summer vacation rolls around again, and Noa proposes that the girls go on a three-couple date with some boys, but all Risa can think of is hiding her secret. She asks her mother for hair removal at a salon, but the two of them have a massive fight, and the salon attendant refuses Risa service due to scarring from a shave. Then, Risa quarrels with Noa and Konomi, who sense that she is hiding something.

One day, since her bathtub at home needs repair, Risa goes to a public bath. A granny at the bath scrubs her back and tells her that she's lovely, but Risa finds she can't believe that—and realizes the "Moja" problem is really inside her. Risa reveals her secret to Noa and Konomi and makes up with them, then goes with them to the beach, where they help each other get over their various inferiority complexes. Risa also develops a crush on Satoshi, a boy embarrassed by his shortness, and realizes that everyone has a complex about something.

She has obsessed over her appearance ever since being teased, but the novel humorously shows her learning to accept herself as she is. (Doi)



### Opposite Shore

(むこう岸 / Muko gishi)

Yasuda, Kana | Kodansha | 2018 | 256 pp. | 20 x 14 cm | ISBN 9784065139080 | Ages 13+ | *Poverty, Friendship, Racism*

Three 15-year-olds come of age while struggling with school placement, poverty, and study. Kazuma, a boy, got into the middle school his doctor father insisted on, but he can't keep up in class and switches to a public school. One day he gets drunk and is leaning off a bridge when he is saved by Itsuki, a girl in his class, who takes him to Café Your Place. Itsuki agrees to keep the secrets about Kazuma's past that he tells, if he agrees to tutor her friend Aberu, a boy whose father is Nigerian.

By teaching Aberu, Kazuma begins to find meaning in his life; Aberu himself does not speak in front of others but begins to grow confident. Itsuki's father has died, leaving her mother subject to panic attacks and her family, including her and her younger sister, on public assistance. With Kazuma's help, Itsuki learns that she can enter private school while on public assistance, and she begins to strive in life. Then, just when all three teens are finding reasons to live, Kazuma tells off a man who bullied Aberu, saying, "I don't want to be an adult like you. I reject you." The man sets fire to Café Your Place, and Kazuma becomes a shut-in.

This novel is written from the alternating viewpoints of Kazuma and Itsuki and conveys the importance of diverse perspectives. While illuminating hard realities such as poverty, discrimination, and pressure parenting, it vividly portrays three young people who learn, think, and help one another find their futures. (Doi)



### Traveler of the Wind:

**Unofficial Tales of the Moribito**

(風と行く者 / Kaze to yuku mono)

Uehashi, Nahoko | Illus. Satake, Miho | Kaiseisha | 2018 | 448 pp. | 22 x 16 cm | ISBN 9784035405504 | Ages 13+ | *Fantasy, Bodyguard, Parallel universe, Repose of souls*

Balsa, now in her late thirties, is a bodyguard second to none. One day she is at the market with her husband Tanda, a herbalist, when she runs into the group Sadan Taram and saves them from a dangerous situation. Sadan Taram is a group of musicians that travels through the plains of Lota carrying out rites for the repose of the souls of the dead with song and dance. Balsa and her late foster father Jiguro had in fact escorted them on their travels twenty years earlier. As a result of this incident, Balsa is again employed as Sadan Taram's bodyguard, and sets out for Lota.

The group's young female leader, 19-year-old Eona Le Sari, has a special power of playing the shata, a "river koto," to open the way to the spirit world in order to perform a memorial service for the souls of the dead. She is the daughter of Sari, the group's leader when Balsa accompanied them twenty years earlier. Balsa suspects that Sari might be Jiguro's daughter and she tries to get to the bottom of this puzzle while protecting the group, whose lives are in danger from relentless attacks wherever they go. In the end, a hidden secret and the long-term relationship of the Tahsa and Lota clans are revealed. By juxtaposing what happened twenty years ago with current events, and fleshing out Balsa's memory from a different angle, the person of Jiguro and his bond with Balsa are seen in a new light. This is a multilayered work depicting long-standing feuds between nations and the people at their mercy. Cathy Hirano's translation of the first Moribito volume won a Bachelard Award. (Shiozaki)



### Sensing Your Presence

(きみの存在を意識する / Kimi no sonzai o ishiki suru)

Nashiya, Arie | Poplar | 2019 | 336 pp. | 20 x 13 cm | ISBN 9784-591163566 | Ages 13+ | *Reading, Family, Friends, Disability*

A collection of linked short stories each narrated by one of five friends in Year 2 of the same junior high school. Their monologues, in which they speak of their hidden troubles and conflicts, intertwine to vividly reveal the delicate inner lives of the protagonists and their feelings for their friends. Hisui and Takuma are sister and brother in the same year. Their homeroom teacher is passionate about teaching reading and makes her class compete for the number of reading record cards on the books they read.

Takuma sails through even difficult books, but Hisui is so bad at it that she can't even get through text books. Even so, the teacher seems to think she is a top student who loves reading, and this makes her anxious. Meanwhile Riki hates boys and girls being segregated and is determined that people should be themselves. She refuses to hand in her reading record cards as she feels it infringes upon her privacy, and she openly confronts the homeroom teacher over the issue. Takuma was adopted by Hisui's family after he lost his own parents, and he is confused when a woman resembling his birth mother appears. Riki happens to get together with Takuma at summer camp, and somehow they get along well and she shares his troubles. Koharu, the class president who tends to overeat and makes out he's a straight A student, and Rumina, who nobody can understand has a chemical allergy, make an odd pair. Each of the five have their own various burdens, and they struggle against old values while being aware of each other's existence. The words of another student called Koharu, who has moved from another school and has a reading and writing disability that nobody understands, leave a particularly strong impression: "Hey, you all, don't die! Keep on living, okay?" (Nogami)



### You Are on the Other Side of this River

(この川のおこうに君がいる / Kono kawa no muko ni kimi ga iru)

Hamano, Kyoko | Rironsha | 2018 | 224 pp. | 20 x 14 cm | ISBN 9784652202890 | Ages 13+ | *Tohoku 2011 Earthquake and Tsunami, Friendship, Falling in love*

Rino from Miyagi prefecture and Ryo from Fukushima prefecture are both survivors of the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami, and both of their families relocated to cities near Tokyo, on opposite sides of the same river. But their experience of the disaster and their reaction to it are quite different. Written from Rino's perspective, the story depicts how these two are drawn together despite their differences. Rino's older brother died in the tsunami. Ever since, her mother has suffered from insomnia and her father has buried himself in his work. Rino, who hated being pitied by her classmates in junior high school, decides to enter a senior high school on the other side of the river where no one will know her past.

She joins the brass band club, keeping her background a secret. Ryo belongs to the same club, but he speaks openly about his experience of the disaster. At an all-school brass band competition, Rino runs into some of her classmates from junior high, and Ryo finds out that she is also from the disaster-stricken area. They begin to share their experiences. Rino tells Ryo that she dated her older brother's friend for a while, but broke up, while Ryo confides that he was bullied in junior high because he was from Fukushima and that his relationship with his girlfriend in Fukushima is rocky. At the end of the year, Rino is able to open up to her band mates. She finds that sharing her past helps her feel more comfortable at school.

The novel explores situations common to many survivors such as the after effects of the tsunami in Miyagi and the dislocation caused by nuclear contamination in Fukushima. Rino and Ryo's efforts to communicate and bridge the gap give the reader hope. A winner of the Japan Juvenile Literature Association Prize. (Doi)

# RECENT NONFICTION

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## Adzuki Beans

(あずき／Adzuki)

Text/Illus. Arai, Maki | Fukuinkan Shoten | 2018 | 28 pp. | 25 x 23 cm | ISBN 9784834084276 | Ages 4+ | *Adzuki beans, Sweet bean paste, Japanese food culture*

When it comes to adzuki beans, the first thing that comes to mind is sweet bean paste. Sweet bean paste has many uses, such as a filling in a bread bun and in sweet red-bean soup. Adzuki beans are also used in the red bean rice made for special occasions. Since ancient times red has been considered a lucky color that protects us from evil, and Japanese people have always eaten a lot of adzuki beans hoping to benefit from their auspicious powers. What sort of plant is this adzuki bean that has underpinned our eating habits in various ways? This is an educational book that provides realistic depictions of the stages of the bean's growth, and makes you think about the place of this familiar ingredient in Japan's food culture. (Shiozaki)

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## The Life of Sardines

(イワシ／Iwashi)

Text/Illus. Okata, Tadaaki | Fukuinkan Shoten | 2019 | 28 pp. | 25 x 23 cm | ISBN 9784834084504 | Ages 5+ | *Sardines, Fish, Life, Ocean, Group living*

The spawning season for sardines is from winter through spring. One female can lay tens of thousands of eggs in a night, but sardines have many natural enemies in the ocean. Only a few of the young can survive. The sardines that overcome danger and reach adulthood form a shoal. Sardines are small and weak, and living in a group is an instinct and knowledge necessary for them to live in harsh nature. The author, who illustrates living creatures and science for reference books, provides a minutely detailed portrayal of the life of sardines in the setting of the solid blue ocean. This is an educational book on how life is born and grows, and on the importance of connecting. (Shiozaki)

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## Power Lines in the Sky

(そらのうえの そうでんせん／Sora no ue no sodensen)

Text/Illus. Kamata, Ayumi | Alice-kan | 2019 | 32 pp. | 27 x 22 cm | ISBN 9784752008606 | Ages 5+ | *Work, Electricity, Daily life, Safety*

Power lines supported by tall metal poles are found in the sky all over Japan. This book introduces the job of lineworkers, who inspect power lines as high as 50 meters off the ground. To keep safe, lineworkers use special tools and clothes and call out to one another, working carefully as a group. A foldout page in this book shows the poles' height; panels in the illustrations evoke the feeling of tension and bring one close to the action. Info-packed endpapers also make the book effective. Illustrations of the mechanical elements are accurate yet warm, inviting the reader to absorb all the details of electrical work. (Hiromatsu)

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## Radiolarians: Tiny, Wondrous Beings

(ほうさんちゅう／Hosanchu)

Spv. Matsuoka, Atsushi | Text: Kanchiku, Takako | Alice-kan | 2019 | 36 pp. | 24 x 22 cm | ISBN 9784752008958 | Ages 5+ | *Sea life, Bones, Electron microscopes*

Radiolarians are single-celled marine organisms just a few millimeters in length. They have lived on Earth for five hundred million years, but their skeletons are complex and beautiful, displaying a breathtaking diversity of shapes. Some structures even look like rockets, spider webs, or eyeglasses! This book shows photos of radiolarians' skeletons enlarged by electron microscope, displayed as striking white shapes on black background. After drawing readers in with these nature-made designs, the book delivers another surprise: radiolarians are made from the same ingredients as glass! The book's unique composition effectively emphasizes the visual. The photos captivate readers, causing them to notice nature and want to learn more. The end-matter features detailed information on radiolarian habitat and research. (Hiromatsu)

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## Sea Cucumber Paradise

(ナマコ天国／Namako tengoku)

Text: Motokawa, Tatsuo | Illus. Koshida, Mika | Kaiseisha | 2019 | 44 pp. | 28 x 22 cm | ISBN 9784034372708 | Ages 5+ | *Sea cucumbers, Sea life, Diversity*

They have neither eyes nor ears nor nose, nor heart nor brain. Rub them and they disintegrate, but a few weeks later they're back. Cut them in half, and two grow! Sea cucumbers challenge our very concept of living creatures. They do not flee, hide, or fight; they may eat nothing but sand, and then excrete the unneeded bits. As this book describes them from various angles, they come to seem very peaceful, simple creatures. Learning how a being wholly different from oneself lives, leads readers to a reverence that is the hidden message of this work. The writer is a biologist known in Japan for the bestseller *Elephant Time, Mouse Time*. The artist's bold, humorous illustrations show her affection and respect for sea cucumbers. The end of the book features music notation for a song, all about sea cucumbers! (Hiromatsu)

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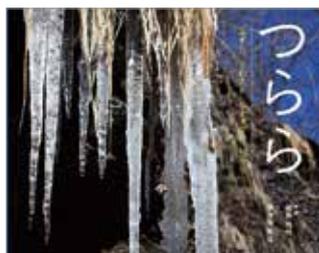
### A Stick Insect Is Born!

(うまれたよ！ ナナフシ／Umareta yo! Nanafushi)

Text/Photos: Yasuda, Mamoru | Iwasaki Shoten | 2019 | 32 pp. | 29 x 25 cm | ISBN 9784265020805 | Ages 5+ | *Birth, Insects*

This is a picture book about the stick insect, whose body is often mistaken for a twig. We see how the newborn nymph sheds its skin to grow to its adult size, eats leaves, poops, reaches adulthood, lays eggs, and dies, and then how eggs hatch and a nymph is born, through clear close-up photos and simple text that even infants can understand. We can feel the life force of the stick insect in photos of a newly hatched nymph that looks like it could easily be blown away in the breeze as it climbs up a tree. This series also features small cabbage white butterflies, ricefish, crayfish, grass lizards, and hermit crabs, all of which are captured in photos and text from the moment of their birth. (Doi)

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### Icicles: Water, Cold, and the Power of the Earth

(つらら／Tsurara)

Text: Ijichi, Eishin | Photos: Hosojima, Masayo | Poplar | 2019 | 36 pp. | 21 x 26 cm | ISBN 9784591161074 | Ages 6+ | *Icicles, Winter*

This picture book introduces the icicles we often see in a cold winter through stunning photographs. How are they formed? Why do they grow so long? Their changes in appearance are explained in simple terms using beautiful photographs. Readers are informed that there are places where we can still see icicles in spring, caves where they can be seen all year round, and sometimes ice sprouts up from the ground like bamboo shoots. There are several appendices, including instructions on how to conduct an experiment to grow icicles in the refrigerator using familiar items such as cup noodle containers, and a map showing the various names for icicles in different dialects around Japan. (Sakuma)

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### Jumping Spiders: The Small Hunter

(ハエトリグモ／Haetorigumo)

Photos/Text: Sakamoto, Norihisa | Poplar | 2019 | 36 pp. | 21 x 26 cm | ISBN 9784591162941 | Ages 6+ | *Spiders, Flies, Hunting, Eyes*

Jumping spiders are found almost everywhere, both inside and outside the home. Unlike many other spiders, jumping spiders do not build webs to trap their prey. Instead, they use their eight round eyes to spot and pounce on small insects. When observed at close range, jumping spiders resemble crabs, while in zoom shots, they look like monsters. And when the camera zooms even closer, they resemble owls. Mating for jumping spiders is a life-and-death business. A female may eat a male if she dislikes his mating dance. This book is full of surprises as it introduces a world invisible to the naked eye and uncovers the mysteries of this small life form. The impressive mini-encyclopedia in the appendix introduces fifteen different types of jumping spiders. (Nogami)

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### Seabird Island

(うみどりの島／Umidori no shima)

Text: Terasawa, Takaki | Illus. Abe, Hiroshi | Kaiseisha | 2019 | 32 pp. | 30 x 22 cm | ISBN 9784033329208 | Ages 6+ | *Seabirds, Islands, Nature, Daily life*

Hokkaido's Teuri Island, located in the northern Sea of Japan, has a circumference of just 12 kilometers and a population of only 300 people, but it annually welcomes some 1 million seabirds who migrate there to raise young. It is known as a seabirds' paradise. This picture book portrays a year on the island in terms of both seabird and human life. The author, who moved to the island as a grade school teacher and then became a nature photographer, has lived there for nearly 40 years. The illustrator, who worked as a zookeeper for 25 years, has also been captivated by the island's rich natural world and has visited often. His unique perspective and bold composition and color scheme evoke dynamic wild creatures going about seasonal tasks. (Hiromatsu)

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### What Are Stones Made Of?

(石はなにからできている？／Ishi wa nani kara dekite iru?)

Text: Nishimura, Hisao | Photos: Takeda, Shinichi | Editing/concept : Bokoyama, Kurita | Iwasaki Shoten | 2018 | 32 pp. | 27 x 22 cm | ISBN 9784265043743 | Ages 6+ | *Stones, Earth, Plate tectonics (geoscience)*

Photos and simple, non-technical text depict how stones are formed. Eight different kinds of stones are featured, each with its own page that includes a closeup photograph and easy descriptions such as "a sparkly white stone." The book concludes with the words "The Earth has mountains, rivers and seas and many more kinds of stone" and a beautiful portrait of the Earth taken from the moon, suggesting that to know stones is to know the universe. The appendices include the scientific names of stones and their classifications, as well as information about atoms, the smallest components of stone and other materials. (Doi)

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### The Life of Sparrows

(スズメの暮らし／Suzume no kurashi)

Text/Photos: Hirano, Nobuaki | Fukuinkan Shoten | 2019 | 40 pp. | 26 x 20 cm | ISBN 9784834084429 | Ages 8+ | *Sparrows, Life, Group living*

We can see sparrows everywhere: around our house, in the streets, in the park, in the fields, and on the plains. Even though they are such a familiar creature, few people know much about their habitat or ways of life. Being so small and weak, sparrows have to be cautious and on their guard at all times. In order to protect themselves from their many natural predators, they form flocks. The author has loved animals ever since he was a small child and grew up to become a photographer specializing in wildlife. In this educational book he provides a vibrant account of the lives and actions of sparrows year round through photos and accompanying commentary. (Shiozaki)



### Cutting Tools: Scissors and Utility Knives

(切る道具 / Kiru dogu)

Ed. WILL Kodomo Chiiku Kenkyujo | Froebel-kan | 2018 | 32 pp. | 31 x 22 cm | ISBN 9784577047064 | Ages 9+ | Scissors, Cutters, Stationery, Design

Second in a four-volume series about stationery and tools used at school, this volume takes up cutting tools, which must be used correctly to prevent injury. Methods for proper use, tips for fail-free cutting, design of common tools, and different uses for different purposes are covered, along with tools' invention and history, a "crest-cutting" activity born in the Edo period (1603-1868), and the recent trend of carving rubber erasers to make them into rubber stamps. This series' other volumes cover tools for writing, fastening, and measuring. (Hiromatsu)



### A Family in Hiroshima: Their Vanished Dreams

(ヒロシマ 消えたかぞく / Hiroshima kieta kazoku)

Text: Sashida, Kazu | Photos: Suzuki, Rokuro | Poplar | 2019 | 40 pp. | 23 x 23 cm | ISBN 9784591163139 | Ages 9+ | Hiroshima, Atomic bomb

Rokuro Suzuki, a barber who lived in Hiroshima, recorded the life of his family in photos near the end of World War II. Each photo captured their daily life with a loving touch: the smiling face of Suzuki's wife, the laughter on his children's faces as they played, and the innocent antics of their pet cats and dogs. On August 6, 1945, the entire family was wiped out by the atom bomb that fell on Hiroshima. When author Kazu Sashida first saw their photos in the Hiroshima Peace Museum, she was intrigued. Based on the photos and interviews with Suzuki's relatives who saved the photos, Sashida brings the Suzuki family back to life. Suzuki's photos and Sashida's text, which is written in both Japanese and English, inspires readers to ponder such themes as life and peace. (Sakuma)



### Hungry Elephant Poo

(はらぺこゾウのうんち / Hara peko zo no unchi)

Text/Photos: Fujiwara, Koichi | Kaiseisha | 2018 | 40 pp. | 26 x 21 cm | ISBN 9784033327808 | Ages 9+ | Jungle, Elephants, Environmental destruction, Scat

The setting of this book is a south Asian rainforest near the equator. Due to drought stemming from global warming, food and water have grown scarce for some wild Asian elephants. They begin to approach areas where humans live, winding up at a garbage dump. The hungry elephants end up eating food in plastic bags and other hazardous items, including broken glass, sharp knives and needles. Near the dump, elephant scat is found that is full of plastic bags, and a young, female elephant is found dead nearby. What she ate seems to have killed her. Environmental destruction caused by climate change and irresponsible development comes to be symbolized by the elephant scat in this galvanizing picture book illustrated with photos. (Nogami)



### Journeys to Find Frogs in Japan

(日本カエル探検記 / Nippon kaeru tankenki)

Text/Photos: Seki, Shintaro | Shonen Shashin Shimbunsha | 2019 | 56 pp. | 19 x 26 cm | ISBN 9784879816719 | Ages 9+ | Frogs, Environment

This photographic picture book introduces all forty-eight frog species in the Japanese archipelago. It begins with an introduction to the Japanese brown frog (*rana esculenta*), which lays its eggs in February, and continues on in order of egg-laying season to introduce the mating and egg-laying habits of different species. It then reintroduces these frogs based on specific characteristics, such as beautiful appearance, melodious voice, and interesting shape. The author, a nature photographer, traveled the length of Japan to capture photos that spark the imagination and help the reader to envision the life of each kind of frog. He also explains in easy-to-understand language which species are endangered by the destruction of certain environments. (Doi)



### Namahage:

Divine Protection Ritual in Oga, Akita

(なまはげ / Namahage)

Text/Photos: Ogano, Minoru | Poplar | 2019 | 48 pp. | 27 x 22 cm | ISBN 9784591162675 | Ages 9+ | Masks, Gods, New Year's Eve, Demons

The Namahage ritual carried out on New Year's Eve on the Oga peninsula, Akita prefecture, is listed as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Asset. This picture book features photos of Namahage taken over some 35 years. On December 31 at nightfall, a crowd in demon-like masks and straw capes descends a snowy mountain road carrying torches. They circulate among village houses, raising a large knife and asking "Any crying children here?" to galvanize the young. Ample powerful images of this ritual are accompanied by legends and historical information, as well as humorous spot introductions of curious masks. The end-matter includes a guide to similar rituals around Japan, which involve god-visits, masks and costumes. (Nogami)



### A Volcano Awakens

(火山はめざめる / Kazan wa mezameru)

Text/Illus. Hagiwara, Fugu | Spv. Hayakawa, Yukio | Fukuinkan Shoten | 2019 | 40 pp. | 27 x 23 cm | ISBN 9784834084641 | Ages 9+ | Volcanoes, Earth science, History

This picture book portrays different kinds of volcanic eruptions in easy-to-understand format. Explosive eruptions like cannon fire; eruptions that leave a tall column of smoke in the air; eruptions that cause slow lava flows, or dangerous pyroclastic flows; eruptions that wipe out the mountain. No two eruptions are alike, even on the same volcano. This book focuses on Mt. Asama in central Japan, tracing its eruptions through four periods: several decades ago, 200 years ago, 900 years ago, and 25,000 years ago. Incorporating both geology and history, the book's detailed illustrations and design get readers closely observing the lifestyles, expressions and reactions of people in different eras, as well as the movements of Nature itself. (Hiromatsu)

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### Wild Plants and Dreams:

#### The Story of Tomitaro Makino

(草木とみた夢 / Kusaki to mita yume)

Text: Tanimoto, Yuji | Illus. Ono, Yayoi | Shuppan Works | 2019 | 32 pp. | 27 x 22 cm | ISBN 9784907108328 | Ages 9+ | *Plants, Botanist, Professions, Research*

An illustrated biography of Japanese botanist Tomitaro Makino, who is known as the father of botany in Japan. Born in Kochi in 1862 just before Japan opened its borders to the world, he was fascinated with plants from childhood. His longing to know more about them was his starting point and inspired him to become a botanist. Although he never finished elementary school, he continued to study plants on his own for the rest of his life. At the age of seventy-eight, he completed the Makino Japan Plant Encyclopedia, and he continued to study until his death in 1957 at the age of ninety-four. The gently-hued illustrations vividly convey his life as well as his character and his deep love for nature. The end of the book presents well-researched documentation of his life and achievements along with a chronological table. (Shiozaki)

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### An Illustrated Reference of Wheelchairs: Understanding Accessibility

(車いすの図鑑 / Kurumaisu no zukan)

Ed. Takahashi, Gihei | Kinnohoshisha | 2018 | 80 pp. | 29 x 22 cm | ISBN 9784323056586 | Ages 10+ | *Wheelchairs, Accessibility*

This book aims to make us think about universal accessibility through wheelchairs. Chapter 1, Guide to Wheelchairs, tells us about what they are, what kind of people use them, their structure and how to use them, and how to assist those using them. Chapter 2, Wheelchairs and Accessibility, is about the types of barriers that exist in cities, ways to make roads, toilets, and public transport accessible, assistive vehicles and UD (universal design) taxis, universal design, wheelchair sports, assistance dogs, and so forth. Chapter 3, Illustrated Wheelchair Reference, introduces various types of wheelchairs from those for daily use to those used for disabled sports. This book is an extremely useful way to introduce issues of accessibility. Index included. (Sakuma)

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### The Mathematical Ant

(アリになった数学者 / Ari ni natta sugakusha)

Text: Morita, Masao | Illus. Wakisaka, Katsuji | Fukuinkan Shoten | 2018 | 48 pp. | 26 x 20 cm | ISBN 9784834084344 | Ages 10+ | *Mathematics, Numbers, Quest*

Mathematics is the field of study that considers what numbers and diagrams are. In fact, numbers do not have a specific form. There is a number called "3," but a tangible item called 3 doesn't exist. So what is it? The protagonist is a mathematician who studies the mysterious world of numbers, but somehow one day he suddenly turns into an ant! Now in the ant world, he tries to explain about numbers to the other ants. We take many things for granted in our daily lives, but actually there are lots of things we don't know about them. This is an educational book that provides an opportunity to find a new perspective through considering the hows and whys of numbers. (Shiozaki)

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### Come Visit the Mosque

(モスクへおいでよ / Mosuku e oide yo)

Text/Illus. Takii, Hiroomi | Komine Shoten | 2018 | 152 pp. | 20 x 14 cm | ISBN 9784338321020 | Ages 11+ | *Islam, Sacred sites, Religion, Terrorism, Earth*

Japan's largest mosque is found in Shibuya ward, Tokyo, and called Tokyo Camii. In this book, Tokyo Camii PR staff member Shigeru Shitayama takes readers on a tour of the mosque. As readers view the spectacular colors inside the worship hall, they learn that about one in four people on Earth is Muslim, and they encounter Islamic history and culture. Arabic numerals, algebra, aspects of science, surgical tools, and much else in human civilization turn out to have roots in the Islamic world—perhaps even cameras and coffee! Mr. Yamashita explains why he became a follower of Islam, affirming the belief that all humans are equal under God. This book begs to be read far and wide to reduce prejudice and discrimination against Islam and Muslims. (Nogami)

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### The Secrets of the Owl: Interesting Creatures

(おしえて フクロウのひみつ / Oshiete fukuro no himitsu)

Text: Shibata, Yoshihide | Illus. Matsuda, Yuka | Kodomo no Miraisha | 2019 | 144 pp. | 21 x 15 cm | ISBN 9784864121538 | Ages 11+ | *Owls, Witches, Legends, Gods*

There are about 240 owl species in the world. Although owls appear in many myths and legends, most people know very little about them. Using photos, illustrations and cartoons, this book reveals the mysteries of the owl in approachable language. Owls have 100 times more light-detecting cells in their eyes than humans. That is why they can hunt at night when there is little competition. People have often depicted owls as gods or forest sages because of their wise appearance, but crows and ravens are actually far smarter than owls. The book brims with such fascinating facts about owls, and covers everything from these creatures' role in folklore as guardian gods and witches' messengers to the white owl Hedwig which appears in the Harry Potter series. (Nogami)

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### Save the Grouse from Extinction

(ライチョウを絶滅から救え / Raicho wo zetsumetsu kara sukue)

Text: Kunimatsu, Toshihide | Komine Shoten | 2018 | 176 pp. | 20 x 14 cm | ISBN 9784338321013 | Ages 11+ | *Grouse, Natural environment, Global warming, Ecosystem*

The *Lagopus mutus Japonicus Clark* is a species of grouse native to high mountains such as the Japanese Alps. Due to drastic changes in their ecosystem, global warming and other factors, the species faces extinction. Japanese ornithologist Hiroshi Nakamura identified the Japanese grouse as a key to the mountain ecosystem and has spent years studying and protecting them. In 2013, he launched a project to protect these chicks in cages in the mountains, with positive results. This book represents an important record that teaches us about the natural environment through the Japanese grouse and urges us to rethink our relationship with nature. (Shiozaki)



### What Sort of Star is the Sun?

(太陽ってどんな星? / Taiyo te donna hoshi?)

Miyahara, Hiroko | Shin Nihon Shuppansha | 2019 | 160 pp. | 22 x 16 cm | ISBN 9784406063678 | Ages 11+ | *Sun, Climate, Research*

The author studies the relationship between changes in the Sun's surface, including sunspots, and the Earth's climate. In this book she explains her methods of research and what she learns from it, and the future prospects. No sunspots were recorded when the River Thames froze over in the 17th century during the Little Ice Age. From our efforts to know more about this relationship, by surveying the ice at the South Pole and the year rings in the cedar trees on Yakushima we now know there are changes in the Sun's activity in units of 1000, 200 and 11 years. Her extremely interesting writing style consists of repeatedly laying out the process of hypothesis, investigation and experimentation, and result, so that little by little the reader learns about the sun, while also getting a feel for the charms of studying science. (Doi)



### The Emperor System of Japan:

**Let's Think about the Emperor System from the Perspective of Democracy**

(天皇制ってなんだろう? / Tennoseitte nan darou?)

Utsunomiya, Kenji | Heibonsha | 2019 | 224 pp. | 19 x 13 cm | ISBN 9784582837933 | Ages 13+ | *Emperor system, Democracy, Constitution of Japan*

How did Japan's current Emperor system come about? This book explains the emperor's position under the present Constitution and the one in force before World War II, and compares the current state of Japanese politics under the Emperor system, with other countries. Simple and appropriate questions such as "Japan's emperor system has continued from really ancient times, hasn't it?" "Is there a relationship between wartime responsibility and the emperor system?" are answered. Also, the author makes the significant point that "Furthering your thoughts about the issue of the emperor system means going back to its origins while also considering our human rights, democracy, and freedom." (Doi)



### Give Me a Chance:

**A Fresh Start for Dogs and Boys**

(ギヴ・ミー・ア・チャンス / Gibu mi a chansu)

Otsuka, Atsuko | Kodansha | 2018 | 208 pp. | 20 x 14 cm | ISBN 9784065130001 | Ages 13+ | *Juvenile reformatory, Dogs, Training*

In 2014, a program was started at Yachimata Reformatory in Chiba prefecture to have young inmates train rescued dogs. Three boys joined the program in the first phase, and were paired up with three abandoned dogs from a shelter. The program lasted for three months during which time the dogs were trained in order to be rehomed with ordinary families. This book closely documents the day to day process, vividly demonstrating how a sense of trust developed between the neglected or abused dogs and the delinquent juveniles as they began to understand each other, and together they began to change. Readers will be deeply moved by the photos capturing the dogs' facial expressions and the neutral written account. (Sakuma)



### Learning to Love Bugs from the Experts

(虫ぎらいはなおるかな? / Mushi girai wa naoru ka?)

Text/Illus. Kanai, Maki | Rironsha | 2019 | 160 pp. | 19 x 13 cm | ISBN 9784652203095 | Ages 13+ | *Bugs, Likes and dislikes*

The author hates bugs, even butterflies and cicadas. In this book, she records her encounters with seven bug experts she visits in an attempt to overcome her aversion. She meets an expert in the field of education who is studying the relationship between children and bugs, the director of a bug museum, an expert on wildlife observation and outdoor play, an artist who makes clay bug objects, a scientist researching harmful insects, a cognitive scientist studying the psychology of fear, and a bug keeper at the Tama Zoo. With a humorous touch, the author describes how the experts' enthusiasm sometimes has the opposite effect, turning her off bugs even further. Her persistent efforts to like bugs are endearing, and the illustrations make this a fun read. (Sakuma)



### Mensore! Chemistry:

**Classes with Local Grandmas**

(めんそーれ! 化学 / Mensore! kagaku)

Moriguchi, Mitsuru | Iwanami Shoten | 2018 | 240 pp. | 17 x 11 cm | ISBN 9784005008896 | Ages 13+ | *Okinawa, Science, Night school*

During the war, many children in Japan were unable to finish school, but some later studied at night school as mature students. The author taught local Okinawan women in their sixties elementary chemistry at night school, using familiar things from daily life to illustrate his lessons. In one class, for example, he explained the difference between material change and chemical change by cooking meat and potatoes. In another, he conducted a distillation experiment using wine and millet brandy. As he got to know his students, they began sharing with him what they had experienced during the war. The author learned that there was much that he thought he knew but really did not. This record of the author's lessons and experiences stimulates readers to think about what science really is and what it means to learn. (Doi)



### Peace Baton: Memories of August 6 Depicted by Hiroshima High School Students

(平和のバトン / Heiwa no baton)

Yugari, Masazumi | Kumon Shuppan | 2019 | 160 pp. | 20 x 14 cm | ISBN 9784774327778 | Ages 13+ | *Hiroshima, Atom Bomb, Pictures, Memories*

Kazunuki Hashimoto taught a creative expression course at Hiroshima Motomachi High School. In 2007, the Hiroshima Peace Museum asked him to undertake a project for high school students in which they would illustrate the stories of atom bomb survivors. To date, 111 students have participated, depicting the experiences of forty survivors. This book presents the resultant illustrations along with the narratives of atom bomb survivors, the students' experiences, and the teacher's thoughts and observations. A unique way of conveying the survivors' experiences to succeeding generations, this work provides readers with insight and understanding through the eyes of the high school students. (Doi)



# The Hans Christian Andersen Award

## Winners

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**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 anthropology. 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-  
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.

These authors and illustrators, among the finest creators of Japanese children's literature, were all nominated for the Hans Christian Andersen Award. Five were named winners.

## Nominees since 2000

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**TASHIMA, SEIZO** 1940-  
2018, 2020 ILLUSTRATOR



**TOMIYASU, YOKO** 1959-  
2020 AUTHOR



**KATAYAMA, KEN** 1940-  
2014, 2016 ILLUSTRATOR



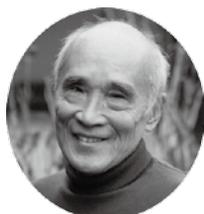
**KAKO, SATOSHI** 1926-2018  
2012 ILLUSTRATOR



**NASU, MASAMOTO** 1942-  
2012 AUTHOR



**HAYASHI, AKIKO** 1945-  
2008, 2010 ILLUSTRATOR



**TANIKAWA, SHUNTARO** 1931-  
2008, 2010 AUTHOR



**KANZAWA, TOSHIKO** 1924-  
2000, 2006 AUTHOR



**OHTA, DAIHACHI** 1918-2016  
1970, 2002-2006 ILLUSTRATOR



**SATO, SATORU** 1928-2017  
2004 AUTHOR



**ISHII, MOMOKO** 1907-2008  
2002 AUTHOR



**CHO, SHINTA** 1927-2005  
1998, 2000 ILLUSTRATOR

# 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 2018  
Furuuchi, Kazue  
**Hula Boys**  
*Furadan*  
Komine Shoten



Writing 2016  
Iwase, Joko  
**Since the New One Came**  
*Atarashii ko ga kite*  
Iwasaki Shoten



Writing 2014  
Mahara, Mito  
**Where the Steel Sparks Fly**  
*Tetsu no shibuki ga haneru*  
Kodansha



Writing 2010  
Hamano, Kyoko  
**Fusion**  
*Fyujon*  
Kodansha



Writing 2008  
Takadono, Hoko  
**Let's Be Frrrriends**  
*Otomodasa ni narimasho*  
Froe-bel kan



Writing 2006  
Ogiwara, Noriko  
**The Tale of the Flute Player**  
*Fujinhisho*  
Tokuma Shoten



Writing 2004  
Uehashi, Nahoko  
**Guardian of the God**  
*Kami no moribito*  
Kaiseisha



Writing 2002  
Tomiyasu, Yoko  
**Mokko in Mount Yamamba**  
*Yamamba yama no Mokko tachi*  
Fukuinkan Shoten



Writing 2000  
Ito, Yu  
**A Bridge to the Other World**  
*Oni no hashi*  
Fukuinkan Shoten



Writing 1998  
Okada, Jun  
**The Stories of the Kosoado Woods**  
*Kosoado no mori no monogatari*  
Rironsha



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



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



Writing 1992  
Mitamura, Nobuyuki  
**When I was a Dinosaur**  
*Boku ga kyoryu datta koro*  
Holp Shuppan

## ILLUSTRATION



Illustration 2020  
Tamura, Shigeru  
**Night Sounds**  
*Yoru no oto*  
Kaiseisha



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



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



Illustration 2014  
Abe, Hiroshi  
**To the New World**  
*Shin sekai e*  
Kaiseisha



Illustration 2012  
Inoue, Yosuke  
**Hats**  
*Boshi*  
East Press



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  
Matsuo, 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  
Yabuuchi, 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, Takao  
**A Season of Gifts** by Richard Peck  
*Shikago yori tondemonai machi*  
Tokyo Sogensha



Translation 2010  
Trans. Kodama, Tomoko  
**Dido and Pa** by Joan Aiken  
*Daido to tochan*  
Fuzanbo



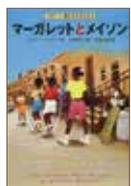
Translation 2008  
Trans. Chiba, Shigeki  
**Dumb Creatures** by Jeanne Willis  
*Ori no naka no himitsu*  
Asunaro Shobo



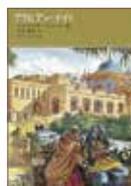
Translation 2006  
Trans. Hishiki, Akirako  
**Maj Darlin** by Mats Wahl  
*Mai ga ita natsu*  
Tokuma Shoten



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



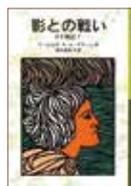
Translation 2000  
Trans. Sakai, Haruhiko  
**The Arabian Nights**  
edited by Wiggins and Smith  
*Arabian naito*  
Fukuinkan Shoten



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

# Children's Literature as a Part of Japan's Publishing Statistics

By Akira Nogami, JBBY Vice President

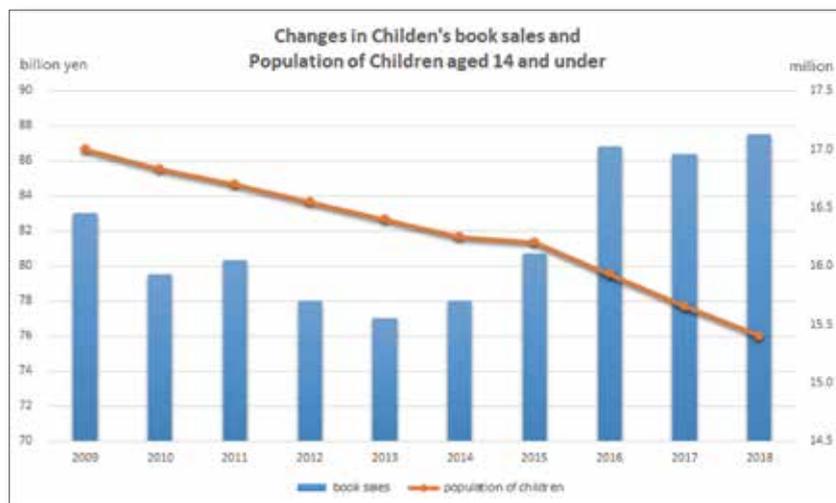
Translated by Deborah Iwabuchi

## Total book sales have halved since their peak, but children's books show growth

Sales of books in Japan peaked at 2.6 trillion yen in 1996, and have been on a steady decline ever since. Sales in 2018 were down to 1.3 trillion yen, a half of what they were at their highest. The decline is most dramatic among magazines. Figures in this field have fallen from 1.5 trillion yen to about 600 billion yen, only 40 percent of top figures. Books have declined from 1.1 trillion yen to 700 billion yen, still maintaining about 60 percent of their peak sales.

Total sales for children's books are 87.5 billion yen, accounting for only seven percent of all books, but this figure has actually increased by close to 20 billion yen, from 70 billion yen at the end of the 1990s. It should be noted, however, that sales of children's literature soared to 100 billion yen in 2002, 2004, and 2006, when books in the Harry Potter series came out, and the present situation, while good, is not as strong as it was at those times.

The population of children aged 14 and under has declined 1.6 million, from 17 million ten years ago to 15.4 million today. Despite this, sales of children's books have continued to grow slightly almost every year since 2014. The general book market puts out more books than before, but the strategy is to make quick sales before books are removed from shelves after a very short period of time. Even hits come and go at a rapid rate. In contrast, the children's market has many long-sellers, reprints of which play an important role in its support. The selection available is based on books children have loved over the years. Popularity transcends generations, and publishers have done their best to recognize these books for the successes they are, keeping them on store shelves. Several children's book publishers were making 60 to 70 percent of sales in reprints, a situation that continued to 2018. As sales of publications in general continue to decline, some general publishers have attempted to enter the children's market, copying the efforts of children's publishers. So far, however, there have been very few successes.



## The picture book market and problems with popularity concentrated on particular works

Research Institute for Publications provides statistics on the Japanese publishing industry. Let's look at the details. In 2018, 4721 new children's books were published, up 8.5 percent from the previous year. The estimated net sales were, as previously mentioned, 87.5 billion yen, up 1.3 percent over the previous year. Of all children's books, picture books saw the most growth. There were 2003 new picture books, up 10.2 percent from the previous year. New reading and chapter books, etc. numbered 2718, up by 7.3 percent. Net sales of picture books was 31.4 billion yen, a small 0.3 percent increase over the previous year, but an increase of 1.5 billion yen over 2014 (net sales 29.0 billion yen). Particular successes include Kagakui Hiroshi's *Daruma-san ga* (Dharma series; Bronze Publishing). More than 300,000 copies a year are reprinted, for a total of 2.545 million so far. *Inai inai baa* (Peek-a-boo, written by Matsutani Miyoko, illustrated by Segawa Yasuo; Doshinsha) is a long-seller, with about 200,000 copies reprinted each year for a total of 6.636 million so far.

Among new books, super bestsellers of more than 100,000 copies include books by Yoshitake Shinsuke: *Oshikko choppiri moretaru* (A Little Pee Leaked; PHP), *Mieru to ka mienai to ka* (It's Not About Whether You Can See It or Not; Alice-kan) and *Sore shikanai wake*

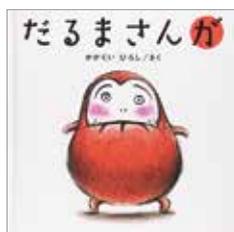
*nai deshou* (That Can't Be All There Is To It; Hakusensha). When these new books were launched, other books already published by the same author had surges in sales. Much of this was because the author was featured on special TV programs and had an overwhelming amount of media exposure. In recent years, this kind of exposure tends to link directly to book sales.

The same thing can be said for chapter books. The *Oshiri tantei* series (Detective Oshiri series, written and illustrated by Troll; Poplar) occupies the top seven ranks in sales. A small number of books are getting most of the sales, with readers failing to notice the rest. JBBY has taken measures to offset this trend by uncovering excellent books hiding behind the bestsellers. Each year we publish a catalog of recommended books entitled *Japanese Children's Books*. We also put together a list of books in translation available for Japanese readers. We distribute both publications at overseas book fairs, to JBBY members, and to other interested parties.

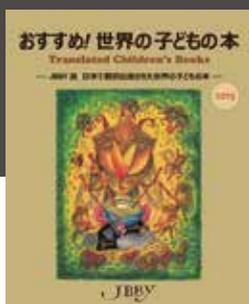
The trend of sales concentrated on a few popular books became even more pronounced in spring of 2019. Word got out from the publishing industry that reprints of *Inai inai baa* and other longsellers had begun to slow down. It turned out that parents and teachers who buy children's books were focusing more and more on what the mass media had to say. Even longsellers that had been read and loved over the generations were beginning to lose ground to media recommendations. We fear that part of the problem is the lack of importance the current administration places on culture as well as its manipulation of media. On top of that, sales tax was raised from 8 to 10 percent in October 2019, and this has somewhat slowed sales of children's books, which had been doing well up to that point.

## Fewer books in translation from overseas

Up until recently, the Japanese children's book market had a large share of works in translation available, much larger than in most countries. Iwanami Shonen Bunko, a juvenile literature imprint established in 1950, was a frontrunner in publishing children's books from overseas. It was followed in 1953 by Sogensha which published the fifty volumes of *Sekai Shonen Shojo Bungaku Zenshu* (World Literature Series for Boys and Girls). In 1958, Kodansha published a similar 50-volume series. These resulted in a boom for children's classics in translation. At its peak, these series accounted for a half of all sales in children's books. The trend continued even into the 21st century with a fantasy genre boom triggered by the popularity of the Harry Potter books. There was a sudden increase in translated children's books, sales of which accounted for almost 40 percent of all juvenile literature. Recently, however, translated versions of both picture books and other children's works have been on the decline. Even in terms of numbers of books, books from overseas are estimated to be down to about 15 percent of all children's books. We wonder if this is a reflection of the times, as Japanese society as a whole seems to be more inward than outward looking. Because of this, JBBY began in 2019, as mentioned earlier, to put out *Osusume! Sekai no kodomo no hon* (Translated Children's Books), an annual publication introducing new books from other countries that have been translated into Japanese. Children's books had been doing well, but 2019 shows signs of a sudden slowdown. In the midst of all this, JBBY is active in its efforts to improve children's books in Japan—in terms of both quality and a more vigorous market environment. JBBY's activities include courses for new editors, and fairs and lectures on children's books from around the world.



From left: *Daruma san ga* (by Kagaku Hiroshi; Bronze), *Inai inai baa* (by Matsutani Miyoko and Segawa Yasuo; Doshinsha), *Oshikko choppiri moretaro* (by Yoshitake Shinsuke; PHP), *Oshiri tantei* (by Troll; Poplar), *Sekai shonen bungaku zenshu* (Sogensha), *Osusume! Sekai no kodomo no hon* (JBBY)



# 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

**Archie Snufflekins Oliver Valentine Cupcake Tiberius Cat** by Katie Harnett (UK) | *Tottemo namae no oi neko*, trans. Mayumi Matsukawa; Hyoronsha

**Baby Goes To Market** by Atinuke and Angele Brooksbank (UK) | *Chi-to kun to nigiyakana ichiba*, trans. Yumiko Sakuma; Tokuma Shoten

**Baby on Board** by Allan Ahlberg and Emma Chichester Clark (UK) | *Akachan ga donburako!*, trans. Chihiro Nakagawa; Tokuma Shoten

**Because of an Acorn** by Lola M. & Adam Schaefer and Frann Preston-Gannon (US) | *Tatta hitotsu no donguri ga*, trans. Aiko Sena; Hyoronsha

**Bonshommes des Bois** by Elisabeth Ivanovsky (FR) | *Mori no tanjobi pati*, trans. Misao Fushimi; Iwanami Shoten

**The Boy From The Mars** by Simon James (UK) | *Sutanri to chiisana kasejin*, trans. Shigeki Chiba; Asunaro Shobo

**Camino a Casa** by Jiro Buitrago and Rafael Yockteng (MX) | *Issho ni kaero*, trans. Kazumi Uno; Iwasaki Shoten

**A Cat Named Swan** by Holly Hobbie (US) | *Koneko no Suwan*, trans. Izumi Mihara; BL Shuppan

**Children of the Northlights** by Ingri and Edgar Parin d'Aulaire (US) | *Orora no kuni no kodomo tachi*, trans. Yumiko Kamijo; Fukuinkan Shoten

**The Dam** by David Almond and Levi Pinfold (UK) | *Damu*, trans. Tai-chi Hisayama; Hyoronsha

**In Our Mothers' House** by Patricia Polacco (US) | *Futari mama no ie de*, trans. Akiko Nakayama; Thousands Books

**The Journey** by Francesca Sanna (UK) | *Jani*, trans. Machiko Aoyama; Kijitora Shuppan

**Katinka's Tail** by Judith Kerr (UK) | *Fushigina shippo no neko Katinka*, trans. Tomoko Kodama; Tokuma Shoten

**Lines** by Suzy Lee (US) | *Sen*, Iwanami Shoten

**L'oiseau du sommeil** by Isabelle Simler (FR) | *Nemuri dori*, trans. Mariko Kono; Froebel-kan

**Looking for Yesterday** by Alison Jay (UK) | *Kino o mitsuketai*, trans. Mimi Hachikai; Tokuma Shoten

**Maurits Muise** by Ingrid & Dieter Schubert (NL) | *Nezumi no Maurits*, trans. Etsuko Nozaka; Bunka Shuppanyoku

**Potatoes, potatoes** by Anita Lobel (US) | *Kachan no jagaimo batake*, trans. Mayumi Matsukawa; Hyoronsha

**Schellen-Ursli** by Selina Chöns and Alois Carigiet (CH) | *Urusuri no suzu*, trans. Yuzo Otsuka; Iwanami Shoten

**The Secret Project** by Jeanette Winter and Jonah Winter (US) | *Kono keikaku wa himitsu desu*, trans. Yumiko Sakuma; Suzuki Shuppan

**The Snow Lion** by Jim Helmore and Richard Jones (UK) | *Daisuki raion san*, trans. Yumiko Fukumoto; Froebel-kan

**Sophie's Squash** by Pat Zietlow Miller and Anne Wilsdorf (US) | *Sofi to chiisana otomodachi*, trans. Yukiko Ninomiya; Mitsumura Kyoiku Toshō

**When We were Alone** by David A. Robertson and Julie Flett (CA) | *Watashi tachi dake no toki wa*, trans. Kazue Yokoyama; Iwanami Shoten

**Whose Cat Is That?** by Virginia Kahl (US) | *Kono neko, uchi no neko!*, trans. Tomoko Kodama; Tokuma Shoten

**The Wolf, the Duck and the Mouse** by Mac Barnett and Jon Klassen (UK) | *Okami no onaka no nakade*, trans. Chihiro Nakagawa; Tokuma Shoten

**喀噠喀噠喀噠** by 林小杯 (TW) | *Katakatakata obachan no takaramono*, trans. Noriko Hosako; Holp Shuppan

## Chapter Books and Novels

**Der Bär und die Leute** by Reiner Zimnik (DE) | *Kuma to ningen*, trans. Maniko Ueda; Tokuma Shoten

**De Blauwe Maansteen** by Tonke Dragt (NL) | *Aoi tsuki no ishi*, trans. Yumi Nishimura; Iwanami Shoten

**The Boy at the Top of the Mountain** by John Boyne (US) | *Hitora to kurashita shonen*, trans. Masaru Harad; Asunaro Shobo

**Burton and Dudley** by Marjorie Weinman Sharmat and Barbara Cooney (US) | *Hoihoi to Fumufumu*, trans. Yumiko Fukumoto; Holp Shuppan

**An Eagle in the Snow** by Michael Morpurgo (UK) | *Tonneru no muko ni*, trans. Nanae Sugita; Shogakukan

<b>The Egg Tree</b> by Katherine Milhous (US)   <i>Isuta no tamago no ki</i> , trans. Yumiko Fukumoto; Tokuma Shoten
<b>Folo, il Centauro</b> by Roberto Piumini (IT)   <i>Kentauros no Porosu</i> , trans. Toru Nagano; Iwanami Shoten
<b>Fuzzy Mud</b> by Louis Sacher (US)   <i>Doro</i> , trans. Shigeki Chiba; Shogakukan
<b>Gracefully Grayson</b> by Ami Polonsky (US)   <i>Boku ga sukato o haku hi</i> , trans. Yoshiko Nishida; Gakken Plus
<b>The Hate U Give</b> by Angie Thomas (US)   <i>Za heito yu gibu</i> , trans. Rika Hattori; Iwasaki Shoten
<b>Mr. Piper's Bus</b> by Eleanor Clymer and Kurt Wiese (US)   <i>Paipa san no basu</i> , trans. Yu Komiya; Tokuma Shoten
<b>Ms. Bixby's Last Day</b> by John David Andersen (US)   <i>Kaneishon dei</i> , trans. Yoko Kubo; Holp Shuppan
<b>The One Memory of Flora Banks</b> by Emily Barr (UK)   <i>Furora</i> , trans. Ritsuko Sanbe; Shogakukan
<b>The Other Boy</b> by M. G. Hennessey (US)   <i>Henkakyu danshi</i> , trans. Nanae Sugita; Suzuki Shuppan
<b>Out of Left Field</b> by Ellen Klages (US)   <i>Sono makyu ni mada na wa nai</i> , trans. Megumi Hashimoto; Asunaro Shobo
<b>A Piglet Called Truffle</b> by Helen Peters (US)   <i>Kobuta no Toryufu</i> , trans. Sumiko Moriuchi; Saela Shobo
<b>Pippi Långstrump</b> by Astrid Lindgren (SE)   <i>Nagakutsushita no Pippi (new ed.)</i> , trans. Akirako Hishiki; Iwanami Shoten
<b>Project Mulberry</b> by Linda Sue Park (US)   <i>Juria ga ito o tsumuida hi</i> , trans. Fumiko Naito; Tokuma Shoten
<b>Save Me a Seat</b> by Sara Weeks and Gita Varadarajan (US)   <i>Ashita no ranchi wa kimi to</i> , trans. Yoko Kubo; Froebel-kan
<b>Sidetracked</b> by Diana Harmon Asher (US)   <i>Saidotorakku</i> , trans. Hiroko Taketomi; Hyoronsha
<b>A Story Like the Wind</b> by Gill Lewis (UK)   <i>Kaze ga hakonda monogatari</i> , trans. Yumiko Sakuma; Asunaro Shobo
<b>The Story of Holly and Ivy</b> by Rumer Godden (UK)   <i>Kurisumasu no onna no ko</i> , trans. Miki Kuji; Tokuma Shoten
<b>Train I Ride</b> by Paul Mosier (US)   <i>Atashi ga notta densha wa susumu</i> , trans. Akako Daida; Suzuki Shuppan
<b>Train Kids</b> by Dirk Reinhardt (DE)   <i>Ressha wa kono yami o nukete</i> , trans. Haruki Amanuma; Tokuma Shoten
<b>The White Fox</b> by Jackie Morris (UK)   <i>Soromon no shiroi kitsune</i> , trans. Shigeki Chiba; Asunaro Shobo

<b>The Wild Robot</b> by Peter Brown (US)   <i>Yasei no robotto</i> , trans. Akie Maezawa; Fukuinkan Shoten	
<b>Wishtree</b> by Katherine Applegate (US)   <i>Negaigoto no ki</i> , trans. Kaoru Odaka; Kaiseisha	
<b>Withering-by-Sea</b> by Judith Rossell (AU)   <i>Umibe no machi no kai jiken</i> , trans. Yoko Hinata; Hyoronsha	
<b>Zachráněné Vánoce</b> by Lenka Rožnovská (CZ)   <i>Kurisumasu no akari</i> , trans. Yuko Kimura; Fukuinkan Shoten	
<b>Nonfiction Books</b>	
<b>All about Anne</b> by Anne Frank Stichting, Amsterdam (NL)   <i>Anne no koto subete</i> , trans. Erika Kobayashi; edit. Fumiko Ishioka; Poplar	
<b>Bloom: A Story of Elsa Schiaparelli</b> by Kyo Maclear and Julie Morstad (US)   <i>Shokkingu pinku shokku!</i> , trans. Kyoko Yagi; Froebel-kan	
<b>The Boo-Boos That Changed the World</b> by Barry Wittenstein and Chris Hsu (US)   <i>"Itai" ga unda dai hatsumei</i> , trans. Tomoko Kodama; Mitsumura Kyoiku Toshō	
<b>De gans eet het brood van de eenden op: Mijn Kindertijd In een Jappenkamp p Java</b> by Anne-Ruth Wertheim (NL)   <i>Haha ga tsukutte kureta sugoroku</i> , trans. Saki Nagayama; Tokuma Shoten	
<b>Grandma Gatewood Hike the Appalachian Trail</b> by Jennifer Thernes (US)   <i>Emā obaachan yama o iku</i> , trans. Yuriko Matsumura; Kosaido Akatsuki	
<b>The Great Big Book of Families</b> by Mary Hoffman and Ros Asquith (UK)   <i>Iroiro ironna kazoku no hon</i> , trans. Emi Sugimoto; Shonen Shashin Shinbunsha	
<b>Jan Vermeer e l'attesa della luce</b> by Chiara Lossani and Andrea Alemanno (IT)   <i>Ferumeru</i> , trans. Masako Yuki; Nishimura Shoten	
<b>Keith Haring: The Boy Who Just Kept Drawing</b> by Kay Haring and Robert Neubecker (US)   <i>Kisu Heringu</i> , trans. Kaoru Yanase; Hyoronsha	
<b>The Polar Bear</b> by Jenni Desmond (US)   <i>Hokkyoku guma</i> , trans. Yukiko Fukumoto; BL Shuppan	
<b>The Shape of the World</b> by K. L. Going and Lauren Stringer (US)   <i>Shizen no katachi sekai no katachi</i> , trans. Shigeki Chiba; BL Shuppan	
<b>The Usborne Official Astronaut's Handbook</b> by Louie Stowell (UK)   <i>Kimi wa uchu hikoshi!</i> , trans. Sanami Takeuchi; Kaiseisha	
<b>Van Gogh Paints the Night Sky: Vincent Can't Sleep</b> by Barb Rosenstock and Mary GrandPre (US)   <i>Gohho no hoshizora</i> , trans. Chihiro Nakagawa; Holp Shuppan	
<b>Where Will I Live?</b> by Rosemary McCarney (CA)   <i>Watashi wa dokode ikite ikeba iino?</i> , trans. Yoshiko Nishida; Nishimura Shoten	
<b>モンゴル大草原 800 年</b> by Ichinnorov Ganbaatar and Baasansuren Bolormaa (MN)   <i>Mongoru daisogen happyaku nen</i> , trans. Noriko Tsuda; Fukuinkan Shoten	

## Japanese Children's Books 2020

JBBY's recommendations for young readers throughout the world

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