Shigeru TAMURA

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

Japanese Children's Books

**Contents**

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

**JBBY Book Selection and Review Team**

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

**Yasuko DOI**

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

**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 Seiitoku 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 Enzoro 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.

**Yukiko HIROMATSU**

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

**Mikako SAKAGUCHI**

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

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)
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

Yumiko SAKUMA, JBBY President
Recent Picture Books

**Rain Kappa**


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

**Noodles Are Ready!**


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

**Melon Vine Coils Round and Round**

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

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

**The Children are Waiting**

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

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

**Hello! My Picture**

こんにちは！ わたしのえ (Konnichiwa! Watashi no e) | Text/Ill. Hata, Koshiro | Holp Shuppan | 2020 | 32pp | 26x22cm | ISBN 9784593100835 | Ages: 3+ | Painting, Colors, Freedom

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


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

Chinchiraka and the Giant

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

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

Gotcha!


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

Crane and Tortoise

| つるかめつるかめ (Tsurukame tsurukame) | Text: Nakawaki, Hatsue | Ill.: Azumimushi | Asunaro Shobo | 2020 | 32pp | 20x19cm | ISBN 9784834085051 | Ages: 3+ | Charms, Encouragement

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

Tetsuko Puu: The Girl Who Turned into a Balloon


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

Seaweed Wrap


Traditional Japanese food is registered as an Intangible World Heritage. Norimaki, or wraps made with nori seaweed, have long been made for special occasions such as gatherings. Spread- ing out a sheet of nori, one layers on rice, vegetables, and fish or seafood and rolls it all up with the nori to the outside. Then, one slides the roll. This picture book shows the process with large illustrations that each fill a two-page spread. Rhythmic language and warm illustrations get readers more and more excited to see next steps. The final image of many colorful, tastefully arranged norimaki brings joy and satisfaction in their completion. The book also shows why every norimaki from a roll has the same pattern, and how to use a tool like a mini bamboo mat called a makisu. (Sakagu- chi)
A young boy tells the reader of this book all about his special secrets: If you walk around a small, empty barn on tin can stilts, a horse made of straw and wood will run out! If you scramble over a log and then whistle with a blade of grass, a train with a raccoon dog conductor will arrive! Many children have such special places and rules for unlocking their magic, and by sharing his with the whisper, “It’s a secret, OK?” the boy shares the joy of his independent play and daydreams. The writer-illustrator, who excels at ghost story and monster illustrations, brings the boy’s imaginary world to vivid life, arousing rich emotions such as delight, surprise, and fright at what the boy sees. (Hiromatsu)

Surrounded by nature, a boy casts his fishing line. He watches the float bob above the water and waits for a bite. A spider, too, deftly spins its web over a log and then whistle with a blade of grass, a train with a raccoon dog conductor will arrive! Many children have such special places and rules for unlocking their magic, and by sharing his with the whisper, “It’s a secret, OK?” the boy shares the joy of his independent play and daydreams. The writer-illustrator, who excels at ghost story and monster illustrations, brings the boy’s imaginary world to vivid life, arousing rich emotions such as delight, surprise, and fright at what the boy sees. (Hiromatsu)

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

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

A sushi counter is illustrated from above: a sushi chef at the left, sushi ingredients like sashimi in the middle, and customer(s) on the right. At first, only the hands of the chef and each customer are seen, and then when one lifts the flaps, one can see who is eating the sushi. Customers include an office worker, a parent and child, and fictitious creatures. Who belongs to the green hedgehog parent and child. Using the contemporary art technique of dripping (blowing), monochrome line art overlaid with vivid hues changes unexpectedly, creating a story. The author-illustrator, who teaches children’s art classes, presents the picture book as if running a workshop with young readers, deftly drawing them into the book’s world and kindling their desire to create. Upon reading the play ideas at the end of this book, you will want to give them a try! (Sakuma)

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

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

I’m Going To Be a Sumo Announcer  

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

Cherry Valley  

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

Tiny Dragon  

Tiny Dragon was born from a tiny drop in a puddle. Where is this? Who am I? Taught and helped along by creatures around him, he practices his dragon powers. He takes off from the puddle by creatures around him, he practices his dragon powers. He takes off from the puddle and flies just once through the night sky around the moon. The sound of voices raised in song draws him down into the valley. There a band of colorful ogres invite him to join their blossom-viewing party. Their picnic lunch smells familiar, and the man notes with surprise that it looks just like the ones his mother used to make. The ogres and the man launch into a game of hide-and-seek, but when the man is “it”, he opens his eyes to find that the ogres have disappeared. Instead, among the trees, he sees his parents and grandmother, who have all passed away. The dreamlike images set against a backdrop of falling petals and the hint of loneliness within the spectacular settings are eloquently rendered. (Nogami)

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

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

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

One Day, One Time

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

Fire

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

My Dad is Cool

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

A wildcat who has moved into a small house in the forest steps out to greet the neighbors. While wondering just how to greet them, the wildcat hears voices ahead on the road. “Someone has just moved into that house, right?” “I wonder what it is.” “I hope we can meet them!”

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

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

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

Rettsu, Tummy

“Heaven?” says five-year-old Rettsu.

“The place we go when we die,” Daddy replies.

“Daddy, are you going to die?”

Daddy quickly explains that he said “heaven” to mean something felt good. After that, Rettsu puts his head on Daddy’s lap, says, “Oh, that feels good.” Later, Daddy places his head on Mommy’s lap and says, “Ah, this is heaven.”

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

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

“Daddy, are you going to die?”

Daddy quickly explains that he said “heaven” to mean something felt good. After that, Rettsu puts his head on Daddy’s lap, says, “Oh, that feels good.” Later, Daddy places his head on Mommy’s lap and says, “Ah, this is heaven.”

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

Told in the first person, this is the story of a boy who lives with his single mother. Because he attended a preschool located near her workplace, he has no friends in his own neighborhood and finds it hard to fit in when he starts elementary school. Even after a few months, he spends recesses on his own, feeding the carp in the school pond or hunting for lizards. The school announces that it will be draining the pond to build a biotope. The day before construction begins, the boy goes to the pond, feeling sad because he won’t be able to talk with the fish and lizards anymore. Suddenly, a frog-like creature climbs up his leg. Looking closely, the boy realizes that it is a kappa. He brings it home but goes to bed without knowing how to tell his mother. In the morning, perhaps because he has been worrying all night, he wakes up with a fever and stays home from school. One of his classmates comes to bring him his homework. He notices the kappa, who is starving, and finds it something to eat. Thanks to the kappa, the boy becomes friends with his classmates and together they return the kappa, who is starving, and finds it something to eat. Thanks to the kappa, the boy becomes friends with his classmates and together they return the kappa to the pond once the biotope is finished. The kappa gives them a guided tour of the mysteries of the pond. Through the medium of the imaginary creature who serves as the pool’s guardian spirit, the solitary boy makes friends and becomes part of the class. This enjoyable fantasy captures the psychology of a lonely boy who has difficulty at first making friends. (Nogami)

**Bitter Persimmon, Dried Persimmon, Sweet Persimmon**

Autumn in Japan is the season of harvest. One autumn day, a girl named Chie joins her siblings, parents and grandma in a group of six to pick persimmons in their garden. Her brother climbs a tree and gets a sweet persimmon. Not wanting to be bested, Chie climbs as well, only to taste her first bitter persimmon. She cries! Her grandma tells her a secret: if you work magic on a bitter persimmon, it turns sweet. Peel and boil it, and then hang it in the sun to make a dried persimmon.

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

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

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

**Snow White Chirika, Oh So Small**

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

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

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

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

**Head-Top Elementary School**

On his first day of the second term of second grade, Ryo feels something odd on top of his head, so he checks a mirror. On his head, he sees small desks, chairs, a chalkboard, four tiny green people, and a sign that says Head-Top Elementary School! The sign says that the school belongs to the city ward, so Ryo goes to the ward office. There, Mr. Tanaka tells Ryo that because he plays outside a lot, his head gets good sun; because he eats his lunch slowly, the little people can eat some of his food. Because his hair is short, they can get along very easily. Ryo, however, says he doesn’t want to be unlike everyone else. “Please find a different head-top as soon as possible!” he says.

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

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

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

One morning, Haru finds a handkerchief in her drawer with the design of a tiny person sleeping in a bed. As she watches, the person rolls over! Haru puts the handkerchief in her pocket and goes to school, but the little person is constantly on her mind. When she peers during class, the person is awake and reading a book.

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

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

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

Me, Mom, and the Caravan

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

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

Apparently, Tomo’s world crosses every few years with another world that has giant mice, bears, and rabbits. His mother has made a promise to the animals of that world to lead a caravan of camels to a mountain observatory, bearing important cargo. While trying to figure out the route, she seems to have gotten lost. Tomo does not fully understand but leads the caravan of ten loaded camels while questing to find his mother. Strange characters are released from bridge’s guardians, from animal-shaped playground equipment, and even from signs and displays in Tomo’s town’s shopping area. Some of these characters hinder Tomo, and some help him. He narrowly escapes threatening ghosts. When set upon by a legendary princess and her son, who were separated during the Warring States period (1467-1568), Tomo and his mother barely escape with their lives. Tomo’s incredible, time- and space-crossing quest to find his mother makes for an unpredictable, exciting adventure. (Nogami)
The main character is a Persian cat name Sheik who understands the language of people and objects. His owner, Ali Baba, is a linguist who fled from Iran with his parents when he was a child and now lives alone in Tokyo. When Ali Baba has to attend an international conference, he leaves Sheik in the care of the owner of a world folkcraft shop called Open Sesame. On the first night, while the owner sleeps, all the folkcrafts begin introducing themselves to Sheik. The first to speak is Blue Glass from Herat, Afghanistan. The next is Sister Cord who comes from the Turkmen plains of Afghanistan where many horses, sheep and camels roam and who once adorned wedding camels. Round Auntie Tile, who hangs on the wall, is from the city of Shiraz in Iran. The Amazon Yancha are a noisy bunch of animal and fish dolls brought from the jungle of Peru. The folkcrafts talk all night long. No one but Auntie Tile has talked to a cat before.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The story relates four episodes rich in scientific knowledge. Shogo, a cocky sixth-grader, is head of the children’s association. His father is a science teacher who teaches at many different schools, one of which is Shogo’s. But Shogo is embarrassed by his father’s clumsiness and begs him not to let anyone know they are related.

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

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

While attending summer cram school to prepare for middle school entrance exams, Tamako becomes friends with Hikaru, a girl who attends a different grade school who is very bright and attending cram school on scholarship. Influenced by her late grandmother, Hikaru dreams of eliminating war by becoming the president of the United States.

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

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

Dad, Mom, and Me

This is the fifth and final book in the series Rabintotto, the Fishboy of the Sky. The setting is a parallel world called Tonkana, where fish fly through the sky, birds swim in the earth, and the inhabitants of the surface are not humans, but mysterious people. The main character is a fisherman’s son named Rabintotto, who hails from a long-eared clan and is apprenticing to become a fisherman himself one day. He is afraid of heights, however, and he runs away from his master. He decides to support himself by catching sardines, which move low in the sky only at dawn.

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

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

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

The Jirijiri Mobile Library

Five authors who debuted in 2007 challenged each other to write about a mobile library that travels through time and space. (Jirijiri is the sound it makes when it departs.)

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

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

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

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

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

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

Adventure from the Library

Wataru attends sixth grade at Shibanozaki Elementary School, which is on the verge of being closed. He spends a night holed up in the school library trying to make a plan. When a girl his age named Saki arrives from another world, she takes him back with her. Her world turns out to be Shibanozaki Island—a place Wataru had thought his great-uncle Keijiro made up for a story. Saki takes Wataru to the island’s eastern estate, where they find Goda, a man who can become a badger; Mari, a woman who can become an otter; and Baku, the gardener. Goda says that they once grew a medicinal plant on the island that earned lots of money, but they learned that it had a bad effect on humans, and so they threw all the plants and the soil they grew in into the river. Then an earthquake and a massive storm occurred, and many people fled. Since that time, black-ish figures can take the shape of people or animals have appeared, and the rivers and lakes have dried up.

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

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

Haru is 12 when Abdo, a boy from Pakistan, transfers into his class. Abdo introduces himself as “Abacadora Abdallah,” so everyone calls him Abdallah. The teacher asks Haru to look after the new arrival, so Haru goes to Abdo’s house every day to ask him to hang out, and he supports him as best he can at school. Abdo never says thank you, however, which bothers Haru. When he conveys this via Japanese language assistant Ms. Denya, Abdo responds, “If I say thanks, it’s like we’re not friends!” Haru gets a shock at how his and Abdo’s thinking differ. Ms. Denya is an active knitter, however, and Haru, who secretly enjoys knitting, feels drawn to her.

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

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

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

At the beginning of junior high, Yuto Hariyama moves in from another school district and knows no one in his class. He joins the soccer team at the invitation of the first person to speak to him, but he has never been into sports and doesn’t get very far. He even gets injured at practice so has to take a break.

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

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

What I Found at the Library During Summer Vacation

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

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

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

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

Another Turn in the Road

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

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

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

Tomo ends up quitting the English conversation school, and her brother quits baseball even though he just bought new gear. Their parents do not understand that the things they have been doing for their children’s future are in fact burdens for them. Tomo, while uncertain, chooses the turns she will take for her future herself, and when she tells her parents, they reluctantly agree. It is impressive and inspiring to watch this fifth grader think hard and act decisively. (Nogami)
In Japan, school rules forbid junior high school students from dyeing their hair; everyone’s hair should be black. Meg, however, was born with a natural red tint. The story follows her struggle against the school rules which require her to provide a certificate proving that her hair is naturally red.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The difficulties of friendship, the various complexes that we all juggle


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

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

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

She begins to think about her own internalized prejudices, and she finally tells her friend Maki about her hearing loss. She invites her classmates to the rakugo event, and on the day of the event, she greets them with both voice and sign language.

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


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

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

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

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

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

**Sea Pill Bugs, Hill Pill Bugs**

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

**Giant Airport**

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

**The Secrets of Crayfish**

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

**One Hundred**

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

**My Book of Pine Cones**

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

Ice, Water, Winter, Variation

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

Apple, Bit by Bit

Apple, Decay, Change, Life

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

I Thought So! Workplaces


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

Thread and Silk from Silkworms

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

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

Strawberry


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

Kyle’s Piano: Sounds That Bring Kyle Joy

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

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

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

The Taste of Home Crosses the Sea: Living in Japan as a Refugee
故郷の味は海をこえて (Kokyo no aji wa umi o koete) | Text/Photos: Yasuda, Natsuki | Poplar | 2019 | 232pp | 20x14cm | ISBN 9784591164204 | Ages: 9+ | Refugee, Cuisine

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

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

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

Forest of the Blakiston’s Fish Owl

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

A Child’s Dictionary of Monyo Designs

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

One Year in the Rice Paddy

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

Tokyo and Kanagawa have different histories and cultures. For example, Tokyo is known for its bustling city life and modern architecture, while Kanagawa is more agricultural and rural. The book uses photographs and illustrations to compare the two regions, highlighting differences such as the type of buildings, transportation, and local customs. It also includes information on the history of the area and the people who live there.

Giant Book of Antarctic Fish

This book introduces 91 Antarctic fish, providing for each a common name, scientific name, typical habitat, and photograph. Some fish are shown actual-size. Unlike tropical fish, Antarctic fish have slight coloration, and unlike many fish we are accustomed to, they do not have a swim bladder. There are even fish with colorless blood! Such characteristics are the evolutionary result of living near the ocean floor, trying to improve blood flow, and otherwise trying to survive a harsh environment. Viewing the strange world of Antarctic fish and discovering the mechanisms of evolution makes reading this book a discovery-filled experience.

Encyclopedia of Insect Signs and Works

This picture book portrays 150 years in the life of a farmhouse in a yato area, with gently sloping hills and valleys. The book is narrated by stone statues of the sixteenth arhats (disciples of the historical Buddha) that stand nearby. The farmhouse with thatched roof is first surrounded by rice paddies, then by gently sloping hills and valleys. The book includes about the Tama Hills in southwest Tokyo and northeast Kanagawa, which served as the model for this book. (Sakuma)
I Want to Meet an Orangutan

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

Kanji’s War

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

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

The author of this book studies wild animals’ droppings. By analyzing the intestinal bacteria found within, he hopes to protect endangered species. This research requires fresh poo. In African forests, using his sense of smell and measuring specimens’ temperature with a thermometer, he gathers the newest poo possible. To encourage its bacteria to multiply, he sticks the container to his torso, covers it in wrap, and warms it for 19 hours! In Japan, to capture rock ptarmigan whose species. This comes across to children in his story. (Sakaguchi)

To the Children Living a Hundred Years from Now

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

Diet Fantasies: Lose Weight, Be Loved

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

KADONO Eiko 1935-2018 Author Award
Born in Tokyo, Eiko Kadono moved to Brazil for two years when she was 25, and based on her experiences there she wrote her first book. Since then she has written many books for children of several generations. Her chapter book *Majo no takkyubin* (Kiki’s Delivery Service), written in 1984, won a number of prizes and was included on the IBBY Honour List. This story was adapted into a wildly popular animated film by Hayao Miyazaki. Kadono has been decorated by the Emperor of Japan for her significant contributions to children’s literature.

ANNO Mitsumasa 1926-2020
1984 Illustrator Award
Born in Tsuwano, a village located in a valley surrounded by mountains, Mitsumasa Anno developed a strong desire to experience places beyond those mountains while growing up. This is reflected in his books. He taught art in elementary school for ten years; his first two picture books reflect his love of playing with visual perception, and his drawings, often compared to Escher, not only abound with visual trickery and illusions but also display a playful sense of humour.

UEHASHI Nahoko 1962-2014 Author Award
Born in Tokyo, Nahoko Uehashi researched indigenous people in Australia for her PhD in cultural authoropology. 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.

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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.
Nominees since 2000

ARAII Ryoji
1956-
2022 Illustrator
1998/2000 Illustrator

CHO Shinta
1927-2005

HAYASHI Akiko
1945-
2008/2010 Illustrator

ISHII Momoko
1907-2008
2002 Author

IWASE Joko
1950-
2022 Author

KAKO Satoshi
1926-2018
2012 Illustrator

KANZAWA Toshiko
1924-
2000/2006 Author

KATAYAMA Ken
1940-
2014/2016 Illustrator

NASU Masamoto
1942-2021
2012 Author

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

SATOU Satoru
1928-2017
2004 Author

TANIKAWA Shuntaro
1931-
2008/2010 Author

TASHIMA Seizo
1940-
2018/2020 Illustrator

TOMIYASU Yoko
1959-
2020 Author
Japanese Books Selected for the IBBY Honour List

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

**WRITING**

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

**Writing 2018**
FURUUCHI Kazue
Hula Boys
Furadai
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**
HAMAHO Kyoko
Fusion
Fudjon
Kodansha

**Writing 2008**
TAKADONO Hoko
Let’s Be Frrrrriends
Otomo dasa ni narimasho
Froebel-kan

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

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

**Writing 2002**
TOMIYASU Yoko
Mokko in Mount Yamamba
Yamanba yama no Mokko tachi
Fukuiinkan 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
Tanikawa Said It’s Not a Lie
Uso janaiyo to Tanikawa kun wa itta
PHP Institute

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

**WRITING**

**Illustration 2020**
TAMURA Shigeru
Night Sounds
Yoru no oto
Kaiseisha

**Illustration 2018**
SUZUKI Koji
Dome Story
Domu gatai
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
Recent Translations into Japanese Recommended by JBBY

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

**Picture Books**

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


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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Chapter Books and Novels**

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


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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*The Eleventh Trade* by Alyssa Hollingsworth (US) | *Juichi banme no torihiki*, trans. Sumiko Moriuchi; Suzuki Shuppan
**Every Falling Star** by Sungju Lee and Susan McClelland (US) | *Sonju no mita hoshi*, trans. Kaori Nozawa; Tokuma Shoten

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

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

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

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

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

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

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


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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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**Nonfiction Books**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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