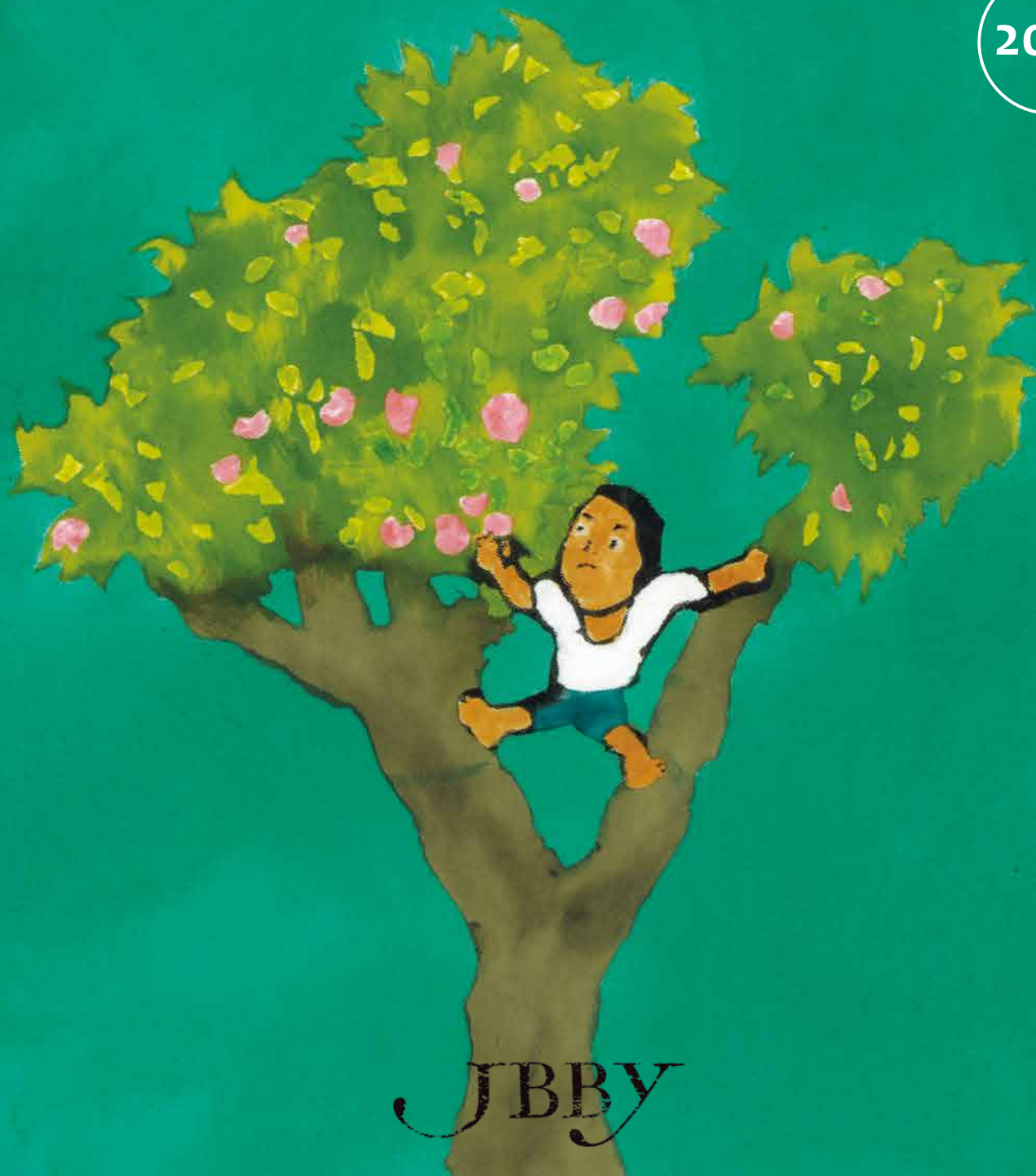


JAPANESE BOARD ON BOOKS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Japanese Children's Books

2024



JBBY

Cover illustration

TAJIMA Yukihiro

Born in the city of Sakai near Osaka, this illustrator graduated from the dyeing and weaving program at Kyoto City University of Arts. In 1976, he began publishing picture books that incorporate stencil dyeing, and his early work *Jigoku no Sobe* (Sobe in Hades; Doshinsha) won an inaugural Picture Book Nippon Award. He vigorously created more works that won a Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava Plaque, the Shogakukan Illustration Award, the Leipzig International Book Design Silver Medal, and many more awards. Recently, his *Fushigi na tomodachi* (My Mysterious Friend; Kumon Shuppan) won the Japan Picture Book Award Grand Prize, and *Nakimushi Seitoku* (Crybaby Seitoku; Doshinsha) won the Kodansha Picture Book Award. His numerous other publications include *Sobe gokuraku e yuku* and *Sobe makuroke no ke* (Sobe Goes to Heaven, and Sobe in the Pitch-Darkness; Doshinsha). He was selected for the 2024 IBBY Honour List.

Japanese Children's Books 2024

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JBBY Book Selection and Review Team



OKUYAMA Megumi

Children's literature critic. A former high school teacher in Tokyo, she owns the children's specialty bookshop Huckleberry Books and serves as an adjunct lecturer at Shirayuri and Nishogakusha Universities. She has authored *'Story' Wavering: Children's Books in an Unclear Age* (Kurosio Shuppan) and *Lessons in Layeredness* (Ryoyo Shuppan) as well as co-authored *A Guide to World Children's Literature Based on Time* (Hara Shobo). She edits the journal *Japanese Children's Literature* (Japanese Children's Literature Association). JBBY member.



SAKUMA Yumiko

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



SHIOZAKI Junko

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



NOGAMI Akira

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. Visiting Professor at Tokyo Junshin 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.



SAKAGUCHI Mikako

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. She has authored the books *Science Mysteries* (Froebel-kan) and *The Price of Life and Welfare* (Otsuki Shoten), and translated *Michael Faraday and Electricity* by Brian Bowers. JBBY member.



SASAOKA Tomoko

Librarian at the Tokyo Children's Library. After working at an Italian bookstore, she was in charge of the foreign language picture books collection at the Itabashi Central Library. Involved in the "Picture Book Town Itabashi Project" and the "Sister Library Exchange Project" with the Sala Borsa Children's Library in Bologna, Italy. A member of the Association of Children's Libraries (Jitoken). JBBY board member.



DOI Yasuko

Director and senior researcher at the International Institute for Children's Literature, Osaka (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.

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

Title in English

Title in Japanese | Author/Illustrator | Publisher | Publication Year |
Number of Pages | Trim Size | ISBN | Target Age | Keywords

Basic Book Description (Last Name of Reviewer)

Japanese Children's Books

About JBBY and This Catalog

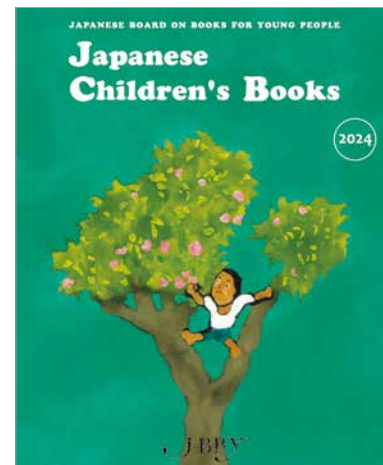
The Japanese Board on Books for Young People (JBBY) was founded in 1974 as the Japanese section of the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY). In keeping with IBBY's ideals, JBBY undertakes a range of activities in Japan. Since 2015, we have also curated this yearly catalog, *Japanese Children's Books*, to introduce superb Japanese children's titles abroad.

In this catalog, we provide information about recent Japanese books recommended by a JBBY 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.

The titles in *Japanese Children's Books* were selected after rigorous consultation and consideration by experts who have been involved in children's literature for many years. This year's books had to:

- have been published in Japan between September 2022 and August 2023
- contain fine content representative of Japan
- enable children to explore Japanese cultures and the real lives of children in Japan
- be worthy of translation overseas
- be worthy of further introduction to children, caregivers, libraries, and publishing professionals in Japan as well

We list the selected books by category and in order of target age, including cover images and synopses along with bibliographic information. We hope that our listings will help you discover recent children's titles from Japan. For further information, please contact us: info@jbby.org



Cover illustration © Yukihiro Tajima

UNO Kazumi, JBBY President

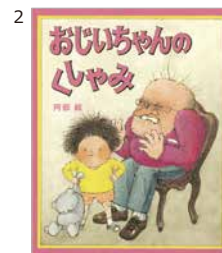
Recent Picture Books



Treasures of the Sea

うみのたからもの | Text/Ill. TAKAO Yuko | Kodansha | 2023 | 32pp | 25×27cm | ISBN978-4-0653-2147-8 | Ages: 3+ | *Sea, Seashells, Fantasy*

Readers turn the cover of the book to be met with an endpaper filled with illustrations of all kinds of shells. The detailed illustrations are so realistic they almost look like photographs. As they turn the pages, each shell reveals a new scene, such as a room, the prehistoric sea, or a starry night sky. They are drawn into a world of fantasy to the sound of the waves and the smell of the tide: "When you go to the seaside, look for shells/Try shaking it/Jingle jangle... if it makes a sound, there is a teeny tiny treasure inside." A breathtakingly beautiful book, itself a treasure. (Sasaoka)



My Grandpa's Big Sneeze

おじいちゃんのくしゃみ | Text/Ill. ABE Yui | Fukuinkan Shoten | 2023 | 44pp | 27×22cm | ISBN978-4-8340-8713-0 | Ages: 3+ | *Grandpa, Sneezes, Humor*

Grandpa's sneeze is really big. It sends crayons and slippers flying. And that's not all. Grandpa says he can blow apples off the tree, make wild animals flee, and fly wherever he likes with the propulsive power of his sneeze. His granddaughter thinks he's just making it all up, but then... The dotting grandpa's face and gestures, and the fantastical ending, are delightful and amusing. We also get a sense of the everyday life of grandpa caring for and playing with his granddaughter from the illustration on the back endpaper. (Sakuma)



The Good Morning Birds

おはようどり | Text/Ill. MURO Maiko | Fukuinkan Shoten | 2023 | 32pp | 22×21cm | ISBN978-4-8340-8718-5 | Ages: 3+ | *Morning, Birds, Town*

The branches of a large tree are full of the colorful houses where lots of birds live. When morning comes, the first bird wakes up and then rouses the second bird, and the two birds knock on the doors of birds three and four. All the birds wake up one after another and then fly around the town, knocking on the windows of all the houses. The townspeople wake up and greet each other with "Good morning!" Shopkeepers, buses, and dogs all say "Good morning!" The morning bustle of the town is festive and fun in these colorful collages made up of comical three-dimensional clay figures of birds and drawings. (Nogami)



Kite

カイト | Text/Ill. ISHIKAWA Eriko | Kodansha | 2023 | 44pp | 30×22cm | ISBN978-4-0653-2037-2 | Ages: 3+ | *Kites, Sky, Adventure, Travel*

"Today I'm going to fly Kite higher than ever!" says Haru, dashing out of her house holding her white kite. But suddenly a strong gust of wind takes Kite high up into the sky. Kite wants to go back to Haru right away, but he can't. He is saved by some magpies, and flies over the sea. He is used as a mattress by a family of foxes, and gives a ride to a baby swallow who is frightened of flying. And at last he makes his way back to Haru's house! The dynamic illustrations show the view from the perspective of the kite protagonist flying high in the sky, and you really feel like you are flying with it. (Shiozaki)



Dr. Burdock Root's Busy Day

ごぼうせんせいのいそがしいいちにち | Text/Ill. UEGAKI Ayuko | Kosei Shuppansha | 2023 | 32pp | 25×22cm | ISBN978-4-3330-2888-7 | Ages: 3+ | *Vegetables, Hospital*

A story where all the characters are vegetables. It portrays a day in the clinic of the kindly, clear-headed Dr. Burdock Root. He puts a mustard spinach who has wilted from lack of water into a bath, prescribes ladybirds for a lettuce covered in aphids, and in the afternoon is busy examining lots of vegetable babies. In these detailed illustrations showing the clinic and all the vegetable patients, there is a simple and slightly nostalgic atmosphere in which we can feel the warm connection between people. The view of Dr. Burdock Root's daily life outside the clinic portrayed on the endpapers and back cover is also fun. It is the second in the Vegetable Village Series, following "Ms Maize Corn's Transformative Salon" portraying a hairdresser's. (Okuyama)



The Cherry Blossom Boat

さくらのふね | Text/Ill. KIKUCHI Chiki | Komine Shoten | 2023 | 32pp | 24×31cm | ISBN978-4-338-26143-2 | Ages: 3+ | *Cherry blossoms, Spring, Ladybirds*

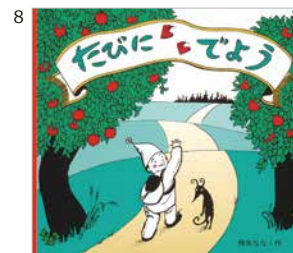
The title page shows a small, cold ladybird flapping her wings. Turning the page, we are presented with a spring landscape with cherry blossom petals fluttering down. The ladybird makes a petal that lands on the surface of the river into her boat, and goes to inform the creatures of the forest that spring has arrived. A bee and two butterfly friends come and join her on the boat, and the four of them float downstream telling everyone "Spring has come!" The beautiful spring forest is full of vitality, depicted in delicately hued watercolors with a bold, and there is a pleasant rhythm to the words gently speaking to us. This illustrated book is overflowing with the creatures of the forest joyfully welcoming the long-awaited spring. (Shiozaki)



The Biggest Cat in The World

せかいでいちばんおおきなネコ | Text: KAZEKI Kazuhiro | Ill. HIROKAWA Saeko | Ehonjuku Shuppan | 2022 | 36pp | 22×19cm | ISBN978-4-8648-4190-0 | Ages: 3+ | *Cats, Gigantism, Earth*

How big is the biggest cat in the world? As big as a dog? As big as a lion? Bigger! Bigger! The black cat with golden eyes gets bigger every time we turn the page. As big as a house? Smaller than a high rise, surely? No, bigger! Bigger! It is amusing to see the cat growing and growing until it is bigger than a mountain and higher than the clouds, and the final scene of two golden eyes shining in the pitch black night sky is impressive. (Nogami)



On a Journey

たびにでよう | Text/Ill. FURIYA Nana | Doshinsha | 2023 | 48pp | 18×19cm | ISBN978-4-4940-1251-0 | Ages: 3+ | *Trip, Transformation, Dog, Monsters*

A boy with a pointy hat sets off with his dog. He plucks and eats an apple, and his ears grow bigger and bigger. He eats a strawberry, and his nose grows long and red, and birds perch on it. A fish jumps out of a pond into the boy's mouth, turning him into a fish. A sip of syrup changes him into a flea, a mouthful of daikon makes him a giant, and a mushroom turns him into a monster. The boy dances around the campfire with a band of monsters until his dog, transformed into a giant after eating a mushroom, chases them away. Together, the dog and the boy return home safely. The book has no text, and the bizarre journey unfolds like a funny cartoon. (Nogami)



Earth Passport

ちきゅうパスポート | Text/Ill. 24 Picture Book Authors | BL Shuppan | 2023 | 46pp | 18×10cm | ISBN978-4-7764-1080-5 | Ages: 3+ | *Passport, World, Peace*

This picture book was initiated by a group of six authors. When Russia began invading Ukraine, one of these authors, Yuki Sasameya announced, "Even if there's nothing we can do, we must still try. Even if we can't fix the broken buildings, at least we can carry a stone or two." The group reached out to picture book authors in Japan and elsewhere, gathering a total of twenty-four contributors. Each one created their own imaginary country over a two-page folding spread. Some element from each country links the adjoining countries together, such as a hand touching a tail, and the book, which unfolds in accordion style, is designed like a passport. Countries include places like Flyingstan and Slowland. Part of sales proceeds goes to support children in Ukraine. (Doi)



Summer Holiday

なつやすみ | Text/Ill. AISO Tomoko | Fukuinkan Shoten | 2023 | 36pp | 26×26cm | ISBN978-4-8340-8720-8 | Ages: 3+ | *Family, Gathering, Summer festival, Fireworks*

During the summer holidays, Kota's cousins and their parents come to stay. The children eat cake and swim in a nearby pool, then come home for a lunch of chilled noodles, tempura, and sushi rolls. After an afternoon nap, they enjoy watermelon, change into summer kimono and head off for the festival. At the end of the day, the children fall asleep with contented expressions on their faces. Packed with the joys of summer vacation, the book leaves a happy afterglow. Each frame contains multiple perspectives and angles, and the colors utilize the texture of the canvas, resulting in a distinctive style. The summer festival scene, a gatefold featuring festival goers enjoying different stalls, is superb. (Sasaoka)



Going to Make a Winter Coat

ふゆのコートをつくりに | Text: ISHII Mutsumi | Ill. FUKAWA Aiko | Bronze Shinsha | 2022 | 32pp | 24×20 cm | ISBN978-4-8930-9711-8 | Ages: 3+ | *Winter, Clothes, Dressmaker*

One snowy morning, a little bunny named Saki went to Miko, a dressmaker fox, to have her mother's red coat refitted for herself. While deciding on the design for the refurbished coat, Miko asks Saki all kinds of questions about what she likes to do when she's outside in winter and what she likes about her mother's coat. The fine illustrations capture such details as buttons of various shapes and colors and bolts of beautifully patterned cloth, fostering in the reader an appreciation for the handiwork that breathes new life into old clothes. This is the third book in a series on clothes, following upon *Going to Make a Spring Dress* and *Going to Make a Fall Sweater*. (Okuyama)



Invisible Ryu

みえないりゅう | Text/III. mirocomachiko | Mishimasha | 2023 | 32pp | 30×22cm | ISBN978-4-9093-9490-3 | Ages: 3+ | *Sea, Life, Nature*

The author moved to Amami Island, a Natural World Heritage site in a subtropical zone. Amami islanders refer to things they can sense but can't see in nature as "ryu." This is also the name of the protagonist of this dynamic picture scroll. Born in a small sea, Ryu plows through the water, making waves as he ventures out into the ocean. He swims and flies through the seasons, giving life to many creatures, from tiny fish to seagulls, from whales to foxes, then makes his way back to where he came from. An awe-inspiring ode to nature with illustrations that give the invisible Ryu a constantly changing shape and colorfully depict a story that transcends time and space. (Nogami)



Road

みち | Text/III. MIURA Taro | Asunaro Shobo | 2022 | 36pp | 21×23cm | ISBN978-4-7515-3116-7 | Ages: 3+ | *Road, Line, Adventure*

An orange line runs through the book from the front cover to the back, representing a road along which a girl, a boy and a dog travel and encounter many adventures. In one place, the line is broken and the three characters must jump over the gap. They walk along the road, pedal bicycles uphill, ski through a snow-covered forest, and cross a desert on the back of a camel. Along the way, they take a detour and wander lost in back lanes, get caught at a train crossing, take the long way around to avoid the rain, and make their way through mazes and down long roads. Using a line to represent a road provides a humorous touch, and the changing scenery keeps readers entertained. (Doi)



Rui's Adventure

ルイの冒険 | Text: NAMBU Kazuya | III. UNO Akira | Collab. TASIMA Seizo | Kodansha | 2022 | 36pp | 27×22cm | ISBN978-4-0652-9301-0 | Ages: 3+ | *Cat, Lost child, Adventure*

Rui, a kitten that lives on a farm, crawls inside a cart while playing hide-and-seek and falls asleep. He wakes to find himself in a strange place and decides to cut through the forest to get home. On the way, he meets a snail who warns him a scary spider lurks in the forest, a frog who teaches him how to jump across the river, and a bunny rabbit who teaches him to dance. When he meets a fawn who is crying for its mother, Rui cries too. A giant spider attacks him, but he is saved by his mother who has come looking for him. Home again, Rui teaches his siblings to dance. The illustrations capture the kitten's actions and expressions in this enchanting adventure story. (Doi)



I'm Going to Be a Big Sister

わたし おねえちゃんに なります | Text/III. AIZAWA Fumi | Kogumasha | 2023 | 36pp | 20×22cm | ISBN978-4-7721-0261-2 | Ages: 3+ | *Siblings, Baby, Letter, Animal*

Uta will soon be a big sister. She decides to ask the animals in the forest what she can do for her baby sister. She makes a mailbox and takes it to the forest, asking the animals to put letters in it with ideas. Many animals put in letters with their suggestions. "You can take your baby sister to a meadow full of flowers," "What about going on a boat together at night?" "It would be nice to make the baby a hat." Uta falls fast asleep, relieved to know there is so much she can do as a big sister. The charming story is perfectly complimented by the soft touch and warm colors of the illustrations. (Sasaoka)



A-I-U-E-Oh! Monster Festival

あいうえおばけのおまつりだ | Text: UENO Akio | III. MINO Hyogo | Rokurinsha | 2023 | 36pp | 27×22cm | ISBN978-4-8676-1007-7 | Ages: 7+ | *Monster, Wordplay*

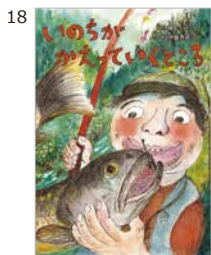
"The A-I-U-E-O monsters are here, and tonight is their festival!" As the sun goes down, spooks gather excitedly. They party all through the night to the rhythms of a festival, and then they race away at dawn. There's a cloth-like yokai called Ittan-momen that soars through the sky, and another called Amefurikozo that causes the rain to fall. Some 73 spirits from around Japan are introduced in the order of Japanese hiragana. The sounds and the wordplay beg to be read aloud. The illustrations are creepy but also somehow humorous. The back matter includes a chart of all the supernatural beings included, inviting readers to search for them in the pages. A re-publication from a new publisher. (Sasaoka)



Aleutian Magic

アリューシャン・マジック | Text/III. ABE Hiroshi | Nora Shoten | 2022 | 36pp | 26×26cm | ISBN978-4-9050-1567-3 | Ages: 7+ | *Sea otter, Magic, North Pole*

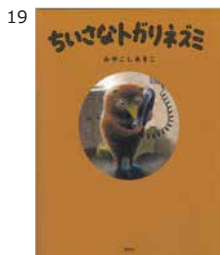
A sea otter boy receives an invitation from the magician Polar Man, to an "amazing magic show" set for the summer solstice. The sea otter boy floats on top of his mother to the Aleutian Islands, where together they enjoy magic with polar bears, seals, and even cliff-dwelling spirits. The magic makes scores of fish issue from an octopus's suckers, and it makes whales jump and eggs hatch so that numerous birds come flying out. The seven starfish that the sea otter boy brought as an admission fee, turn into stars climbing into the sky, and Polar Man soars away on them. The phenomenon that the islands' residents call Aleutian Magic is portrayed with immense imagination and power. (Doi)



The Place Where Life Leaves

いのちが かっていくところ | Text: MOGAMI Ippei | Ill. ITO Hideo | Doshinsha | 2022 | 32pp | 27×20cm | ISBN978-4-4940-1582-5 | Ages: 7+ | *River, Fishing, Life, Food*

This book portrays a boy named Tamon and his father as they spend a day fishing. They gather live bait in the glow of sunrise and cast a line into the river. When a fish finally bites, a mighty struggle ensues. With encouragement from his father, Tamon uses the rod and a net to bring in a large, beautiful char. At noon, Tamon's father grills the char with care for lunch. Tamon watches fearfully as the life leaves the fish; then, its delicious aroma and taste bring tears to Tamon's eyes. The snow-capped mountains in the distance, the blue river, the huge fish, the boy's artless face... striking illustrations give a sense of being right there fishing, and feeling Tamon's awe for life itself. (Okuyama)



The Tiny Shrew

ちいさなトガリネズミ | Text/Ill. MIYAKOSHI Akiko | Kaiseisha | 2022 | 72pp | 21×16cm | ISBN978-4-0343-9580-6 | Ages: 7+ | *Daily life, Friends*

A tiny shrew who lives in human society is the main character of three stories in this book. In "The Tiny Shrew's Daily Life," the shrew rides the train, toils at work, and then goes home to sleep. In "The Tiny Shrew's Dream," the shrew buys a TV at a garage sale, views the sea on it, and then begins wishing to travel to a tropical island. In "The Tiny Shrew's Friends," the shrew spends an evening at year's end with two mates. The shrew's life (lower middle class) may seem mundane, but at a time when war and disaster have stolen normal life from many, this book causes the reader to see its value anew through detailed depictions. The watercolor and charcoal illustrations exude warmth. (Sakuma)



The Mountain, the Wool Sweater, and Me

ぼくとお山と羊のセーター | Text/Ill. IINO Kazuyoshi | Kaiseisha | 2022 | 32pp | 30×22cm | ISBN978-4-0335-0250-2 | Ages: 7+ | *Mountain village, Boyhood, Goat hair*

The author spent his mid-1950s childhood in a mountain hamlet of only three households in Chichibu, Saitama Prefecture. Back then, he was looking forward to having a wool sweater knitted for him. Spring brought caring for sheep and chickens, and summer brought picking mulberry leaves to feed silkworms being raised in the house. Autumn meant hanging persimmons to dry, and winter meant gathering firewood and sledding. In this book, a life of self-sufficiency unfolds against the backdrop of the four seasons. In spring, a yarn merchant comes to shear the sheep and spin wool into string, and at last, a sweater is made. The boy's joy comes through vividly. (Nogami)



Snow Theater

ゆきの げきじょう | Text/Ill. ARAI Ryoji | Shogakukan | 2022 | 32pp | 31×22cm | ISBN978-4-0972-5193-4 | Ages: 7+ | *Snow, Theater, Friend*

A boy who lives in a snowy region gets into a tug-of-war with a friend, tearing Dad's treasured butterfly guide. Without thinking, the boy puts on his skis and heads for the slopes. As he skis, he drops into a snowy hollow where he discovers some "little people" and a tiny theater. Spinning ballerinas, dancers in soft white dresses, snow-white horses, snowmen, and even a queen who makes snow fall... Before long, the boy is up on the stage singing along. Fantastical illustrations, all with snow as the basis, evoke the richness and depth of the snowy countryside. The ending, where Dad comes to get the boy, is full of warmth. (Okuyama)



The Seven Secrets to Talking with a Horse

ウマと話すための7つのひみつ | Text/Ill. KAWATA San | Kaiseisha | 2022 | 48pp | 25×19cm | ISBN978-4-0343-5170-3 | Ages: 9+ | *Horse, Words, Communication*

Horses are large and highly intelligent creatures, who have a kind of words that only they understand. Humans and horses may be different, but there are certain ways in which humans can understand horses' language. For example, take a lot of time approaching a horse, and do nothing except wait until the horse takes an interest in you. The author of this book has longed to speak with animals since childhood and even moved to Yonaguni Island in Okinawa—the westernmost island in Japan—to be near the horses who live there in a near-wild state. Observation revealed that everything the horses do has a meaning. This picture book shows the importance of slowly, quietly seeing the animals around us and bonding with them. (Shiozaki)



A Rampo Picture Book The Man Traveling with the Raised-Cloth Picture

乱歩えほん 押絵と旅する男 | Original: EDOGAWA Rampo/Text.Ill. FUJITA Shinsaku | Asunaro Shobo | 2023 | 56pp | 29×22cm | ISBN978-4-7515-3120-4 | Ages: 11+ | *Steam train, Love, Mystery*

On a steam train home from seeing the mirages at Uozu, on the Japan Sea coast in Toyama, the narrator of this story meets a man nearing old age. Oddly, the man is holding a raised-cloth picture up to the window of the train. Exquisitely worked, the picture is stuffed and mounted so that it looks halfway three-dimensional. It shows a white-haired man and a beautiful woman in an elegant room; both people look alive. In fact, the man is the older brother of the man who is holding the picture, and the woman is someone the brother saw in the picture and fell in love with, so he entered the art to be with her. This spooky story told by Japan's Edgar Allan Poe comes at you in realistic illustrations. (Nogami)

Recent Chapter Books and Novels



Tenko chan at School

がっこうの てんこちゃん | Text/Ill. HOSOKAWA Tenten | Fukuinkan Shoten | 2023 | 96pp | 22×16cm | ISBN978-4-8340-8704-8 | Ages: 7+ | *School, Anxiety, First time*

Tenko chan the Japanese marten has just started at elementary school. She doesn't like doing things for the first time and immediately becomes anxious. She is the protagonist of these five episodes featuring a class of ten children.

In "What Do You Like?", the teacher asks the children to introduce themselves and tell everyone what they like, but Tenko chan just can't think of anything at all and hides by wrapping herself in a curtain. But everyone thinks this looks like fun, so they all start saying "Me too! Me too!" and wrapping themselves in curtains. Relieved, Tenko chan is at last able to talk. In "A Brown Lunch," Tenko chan feels embarrassed at her plain, brown packed lunch and can't bring herself to open the lid in front of the others. But when she finally does open it, everyone says how envious they are at having only the things she likes in it. In "Nervous About the Excursion," they go to the mountains on a school trip. While Tenko chan is worrying about what will happen if she falls over or gets lost, it starts raining. She gets even more anxious, but it turns out that other children too had been feeling scared and they all decide to hold hands.

Through these five episodes, worrier Tenko chan learns that everyone is different and that are various ways of looking at things, and she gradually starts to enjoy school life. With plenty of joyful pictures, it is easy to understand even for children who have only just learned how to read. (Sakuma)



Tales of Mount Seven Crows 1~3

ナナカラヤマものがたり1~3 | Text/Ill. DOI Kaya | Asunaro Shobo | 2022 | 64pp | 19×14cm | ISBN978-4-7515-3141-9 | Ages: 7+ | *Animals, Stories, Mountains*

This is a collection of early childhood fairy tales told by the animals living on Mount Seven Crows. In "Granny Bear's Jam," Granny Bear goes to the forest with her grandson to pick wild strawberries to make some jam. They are given some honey by the honeybees, and by way of thanks they tell them how Mount Flower Sheep got its name. Back home, Granny Bear makes the jam, and at night she tells how the tanuki's daughter met with misfortune when she tried to keep the nuts her granny gave her all to herself.

In "Stories from the Cat Family," Daddy Cat is secretly building a new house for the family. He takes his five kittens to get water from the lake, and tells them the story of a cat that was punished by the water god for wasting water. In "Mr and Mrs Bamboo Partridge's Small House," a grass lizard and her boyfriend the skink lizard come to visit Mr and Mrs Bamboo Partridge, and the grass lizard tells them how Auntie Dog helped her remember something she had forgotten. The Bamboo Partridge couple tell them the story of how they built the house they currently live in. Then everyone goes to the Mount Seven Crows festival, and Mr Bamboo Partridge tells the story of how the mountain got its name.

All the pages are illustrated in color by the author, vividly portraying all the animals that live on the mountain sharing their stories and food, and the richness of living with nature. (Doi)



Pickles and His Friends

ピクルスとともだち | Text: KOKAZE Sachi | Ill. NATUME Chisa | Fukuinkan Shoten | 2023 | 120pp | 22×19cm | ISBN978-4-8340-8714-7 | Ages: 7+ | *Piglets, Friends, Play*

This is the third book in the series portraying Pickles, an energetic piglet in elementary school. It includes four stories about Pickles meeting his friend Jinbu and the experiences the pair have from spring to autumn.

It won't stop raining and Pickles goes in search of the strong spring wind that can blow away all the rain clouds, and meets a brown piglet called Jinbu sitting in the grass under an umbrella collecting snails. Jinbu has just moved to a house in the neighbourhood where his granny lives alone ("Pickles and the Spring Wind"). Jinbu transfers to Pickles' elementary school at the start of the new school year. Pickles promises him some of his mother's egg cookies, but Jinbu gets lost on the way and doesn't turn up at first ("Pickles and His Important Promise"). In the summer vacation Buske, the biggest baddest kid in the class, brings a watermelon that he himself had grown to the beach and the three of them share it. All the bad things Buske had said came flying out of the big watermelon ("Pickles and the Astonishing Watermelon"). In the fall, Jinbu's friends decide to set off some fireworks from the beach so his grandmother, who is unsteady on her feet and can't walk to the sea any more, will be able to see them from her house in the forest ("Pickles and the Fireworks").

The friends' days are full of excitement, anticipation and fun. The delicately colored illustrations vividly capture the characters individual characteristics, drawing us into their world. (Shiozaki)

27



Have a Look in the Forest Postbox

森のポストをあけてごらん | Text: YAMANAKA Mariko
| Ill. KOGASHIWA Kaori | Poplarsha | 2022 | 72pp
| 22×16cm | ISBN978-4-5911-7522-4 | Ages: 7+ | *Forest,
Letter, Delivery, Acorn*

One sunny day after the end of the rainy season, Mr Gaku has to make a delivery deep in the forest where his van can't enter. Walking with his package he meets a little girl, Hinata, taking a leaf letter out of a postbox attached to the trunk of an oak tree. Mr Gaku's parcel is for Hinata's grandfather, Mr Ohki, the forester. Hinata is staying with him while she recovers from an illness. She says she exchanges leaf letters with the trees, and that a Mongolian oak had sent her a letter saying it had lots of ripe wild strawberries growing around it. On his way back, Mr. Gaku finds there are indeed lots of strawberries.

In autumn, Mr. Gaku goes back to the forest to deliver another package to Mr. Ohki. The forest is full of autumn leaves, and he sees five small postboxes labeled "sawtooth oak," "jolcham oak," "Mongolian oak," "red-bark oak," and "bamboo-leaf oak." This is the "Acorn Post" set up by Mr. Ohki for people to post the acorns they collect so he can grow seedlings to return to the forest. Meanwhile, Hinata has recovered and is going to school again, and has brought some of her classmates to visit.

Soft watercolor illustrations on every page enhance the gentle atmosphere of the story. It is fun to see some of the leaf letters on the back endpaper. Our interest in nature is stimulated by the various plants and trees that appear in the story. (Sasaoka)

28



Mei Yamada's Picture Diary

やまだめいたちの えにっき | Text/Ill. YAMADA Mitsuko
| Rironsha | 2022 | 64pp | 21×16cm | ISBN978-4-6522-
0522-8 | Ages: 7+ | *Homework, Stationery, Food*

Mei Yamada doesn't know what to write in the picture diary assigned for homework. While lying in bed thinking how lovely it would be if someone else could do the picture diary, Mei falls asleep.

Mei wakes up to find entries in the diary that are a complete surprise—although the pictures and writing both look just like Mei's. Something describes how the sweets Mei had been eating yesterday had spilt and the ants had come to eat them, and how it wishes it could go outside to bask in the sunlight. Mei wonders who could have written this, but from the content realizes it must have been the cushion.

Something had been lying in the pencil case with more time to itself after the eraser had gone outside, and sometimes gets sticky when Mei holds it after eating sweets, so Mei deduces this was the pencil.

Everything in Mei's bedroom has written about Mei's daily life in the picture diary, ending with a single leaf, which Mei thinks must have been the wind's entry.

Reading the diary is like enjoying a riddle as Mei works out who wrote it. Mei had thought there would be nothing to write about, but actually so many things had happened during the day. Mei records all of it on a large piece of paper, so it looks like the board game Sugoroku (similar to snakes and ladders). Just with a change in perspective, Mei's daily life now seems richly full. (Nogami)

29



The Color of the Car Is the Color of the Sky Even if it's a Dream

車のいろは空のいろ ゆめでもいい | Text: AMAN Kimiko
| Ill. KUROI Ken | Poplarsha | 2022 | 124pp | 20×16cm
| ISBN978-4-5911-7558-3 | Ages: 9+ | *Taxi, Animals,
Kindness*

This volume is a new addition to a series that has been read for over half a century, featuring seven stories about a kindhearted taxi driver called Goro Matsui who witnesses strange happenings in his sky-blue taxi.

He pretends to be taken in by a young tanuki (raccoon dog) that believes that it has changed into a human boy and tries to pay the fare with a ginkgo leaf instead of money. In return, he is helped by a family of tanukis when he ends up with a wheel in a ditch after braking and swerving to avoid a little girl (actually a tanuki) who runs out in front of him chasing a ball.

Driving through the park at night he sees a little boy fall off the swing, and stops his taxi to help, eventually realizing that the children are kittens that had taken on human form in the moonlight. And when he sees a stuffed toy in the snow, he picks it up and puts it somewhere it will easily be found. Later a mother and son get into his taxi carrying the same toy.

Mr. Matsui's taxi also transcends time and space. When he picks up a boy searching for his pet dog, they find the dog playing happily with his friends in the moonlight. On the way back, he discovers that the boy was actually an old man who had longed to see his pet dog that had been taken away during the war.

A heart-warming collection that provides glimpses into the space between dreams and reality. (Sakuma)

30



The Jungle Gym

ジャングルジム | Text: IWASE Joko | Ill. AMINAKA Izuru
| Goblin Shobo | 2022 | 144pp | 19×14cm | ISBN978-4-
9022-5744-1 | Ages: 9+ | *Family, Children's feelings*

A collection of five short stories featuring elementary school pupil protagonists, by an author nominated for the International Andersen Award.

In "The Yellow Leaf," Ryota comes home from school to find a good-for-nothing uncle has come to stay. Ryota is skeptical about this uncle who has never had a proper job and spends all his time sleeping, but gradually warms to him as begins to notice his uncle's rich imagination, awareness of the beauty of nature, and kindness to lost children. In "Jungle Gym" nine-year-old Sumire gets revenge on the girl who bullies her elder sister by jumping off the top of the jungle gym to better her. In "The Rucksack," Ippei is about to start elementary school, but has to go to live alone with his father as his parents have divorced. He talks with his stuffed toy crocodile as he tries to overcome his anxiety and come to terms with this new life. In "Color Pencils," Mami has been feeling angry, sad, and bitter since her father died, and she starts drawing her memories of him with the color pencils she found in his bag. In "Fried Chicken," Haruki worries about grandpa, who has come to live with them on a trial basis.

All the stories are sketches of daily life, with realistic depictions of the children's feelings and thoughts. In addition to the individual personalities of each of the children, we also get a sense of the adults in their lives. This is a literary work of high quality. (Sakuma)

31



A Summer of Rakugo

じゅげむの夏 | Text: MOGAMI Ippei | Ill. Mameikeda
| Kosei Shuppansha | 2023 | 128pp | 22×16cm
| ISBN978-4-3330-2903-7 | Ages: 9+ | *Friends,*
Adventure, Muscular dystrophy, Summer vacation

Akira, Yama chan, Shu chan, and Kacchan are four classmates who have grown up together in a small village. Kacchan dreams of becoming a rakugo storyteller and is good at performing a famous story called Jugemu. He is gradually losing his mobility due to muscular dystrophy, and the four friends all know that he will eventually lose the ability to walk, and may not even live to adulthood.

On the first day of the summer vacation in year four of elementary school, Kacchan says "Let's make this the best summer vacation ever!" In their first adventure, they go to investigate the mystery of Kumakitsuan, who is said to have wrestled a bear to the ground, but are taken aback to find this brave man tending to his chicks. On the last day of July, Kacchan decides to take part in the annual ritual challenge for village boys to jump off the bridge into the river as it is probably his last chance due to his illness, and his three friends watch on with bated breath. In August, Kacchan says he wants to see the thousand-year-old haunted horse chestnut tree on Mt. Ikazuchi. His three friends put him on a wheelbarrow and push him unsteadily along the rough farm track. When they finally arrive, they lie down together in a large cavity at the base of the tree, and they talk about what they want to do when they grow up.

The boys are radiant as they put all their energy into living for the present and having a great time together rather than thinking about an uncertain future. (Shiozaki)

33



I Want to Be...

なりたいわたし | Text: MURAKAMI Shiiko | Ill. KITAZAWA
Heisuke | Froebelkan | 2022 | 132pp | 21×16cm
| ISBN978-4-5770-5071-2 | Ages: 9+ | *Children's clubs,*
Friends

Chinaru really loves the time she spends studying and playing with her elementary school classmates Aira, Mao, and Fuka at the Crayon Children's Club they attend after school.

She particularly admires Aira, who is cute, a good dancer, and can speak clearly. After she points out a hole in Aira's sock, however, she feels shunned as Aira won't talk to her and leaves her behind on the bus from school to the club, and she can no longer say what she thinks. Then one day her three friends inform her that they are going to leave the club in year three, as Aira is joining a theater, Fuka is joining a sports club, and Mao is starting cram school. Chinaru's friends all have dreams for the future, but she doesn't have anything to offer and doesn't know what she wants to be. She is shocked to see them leave the club, but eventually she decides to change so that she can do things on her own and also makes friends with the other children.

Chinaru gradually gains confidence and courage thanks to the teachers at the club who keep an eye on the children's daily troubles, and the words and actions of the younger pupils who depend on her. The book minutely describes the daily lives of the children as they become emotional and argue, cry, and lash out, and gradually learn how to put their feelings into words and try to understand each other. (Okuyama)

32



Folktales of Girls Around the World

世界の女の子の昔話 | Text: NAKAWAKI Hatsue
| Ill. UENO Ao | Kaiseisha | 2023 | 216pp | 20×14cm
| ISBN978-4-0351-2720-8 | Ages: 9+ | *Folktales, Girls*

A collection of eighteen folktales from around the world featuring girls and women.

A greedy, lazy girl is kicked out of home by her angry mother, but the woman innkeeper who takes her in tricks a rich knight into marrying her. Thanks to a misunderstanding and the girl's own quick wit, she is able to live happily ever after without having to work ("The Lazy Glutton," Spain).

Village girls dress up in their best finery and go to visit a handsome young man, hoping to marry him. On the way an old woman bathing in the river asks them to wash her back, but the well-dressed girls coldly refuse. Only a poor, ugly girl called Njigali obliges, and the old woman reveals her true identity as the young man's mother and Njigali marries him ("The Handsome Young Man and the Ugly Girl," Cameroon).

The goddess of fire, who lives in the Kilauea volcano, transforms into an old woman and comes begging for poi, a Hawaiian staple food made from taro. A rich couple coldly turn her away, but the wife in a poor household entertains her with all the poi they have. The next morning, the poor household produces a bumper crop of bananas and taro, but at the wealthy house the bananas never ripen and the taro dries up due to the goddess's curse ("Abundance of Poi," Hawaii).

It is refreshing and encouraging to see all the girls actively and sometimes shrewdly overcoming their difficulties. Notes on each story are included at the end of the book. (Sasaoka)

34



I'm All Alone ?

ひとりかもしれない | Text: IWASE Joko | Ill. TAGUCHI
Michiyo | Froebelkan | 2023 | 132pp | 21×16cm
| ISBN978-4-5770-5190-0 | Ages: 9+ | *Remarriage,*
Family, Friendship, Love

Kai is in year 4 of elementary school. Her mother remarried just one week ago, and while her new stepdad Kosuke is a really nice guy she just can't bring herself to call him Dad yet. She can't even tell him that she doesn't like the fact that they will soon be moving and she will be changing schools. Sometimes she remembers her dad before the divorce, and feels guilty.

At school she finds herself in the same class as Takahiro for the first time. The two have been close friends since pre-school, when Takahiro had always stuck close to her like a little brother, and she is puzzled by how he has changed. When her friend Seri confesses that she fancies Takahiro, Kai realizes that she herself is in love with him. She is jealous of Seri for being able to express her feelings so clearly, and feels miserable. She feels depressed at home and at school.

One day she is on her way home from school when a neighbor accuses her of scratching his car. Kosuke sticks up for her and she is grateful, but she still can't open up to him. She is consumed by anxiety and feels all alone, but then Takahiro shows a side of himself that is unchanged since pre-school and she is finally able to talk about her feelings.

The sensitive portrayal of the protagonist confronting her feelings and disentangling them, and the problems and complex feelings faced by children approaching puberty, against a backdrop of ordinary daily life leaves an unforgettable impression. (Sasaoka)

35



Strange Tales

ふしぎ草子 | Text: TOMIYASU Yoko | Ill. YAMAMURA Koji
| Shogakukan | 2023 | 192pp | 19×13cm | ISBN978-4-0928-9324-5 | Ages: 9+ | *Ghosts, Other worlds, Strange*

A collection of eight strange and slightly scary short stories.

"Piano" takes place in an elementary school after school hours. Ms. Nonaka, a teacher, hears the piano being played in the school's unused music room. When she looks inside, she sees an elephant standing beside the old piano. It nudges her to sit down on the piano stool. When she touches the keys, her fingers begin moving of their own accord, playing a piece she doesn't know. She remembers another teacher telling her the keys are made of ivory, and Ms. Nonaka suddenly realizes the elephant is missing its tusks.

In "Cat Valley," Mr. Yajima uses his car navigation system to get to Cat Valley Hot Spring. The narrow road, however, runs deep into the mountains, and snow falls unseasonably. When he reaches the hot spring inn, the owner serves him coffee and pancakes and tells him how the valley got its name. During a drought, he says, the starving villagers ventured into a forbidden part of the forest. There they found a strange fruit known as cat pears. Although this saved them from famine, those who ate the fruit turned into cats in the light of the full moon. Feeling suddenly uneasy, Mr. Yajima rushes outside. The hot spring, the inn and the snow vanish, leaving only a receipt in his hand for "pancakes with cat pear jam."

Each short story draws the reader into a strange unknown world and sends chills up the spine. The eerie illustrations augment the thrilling content. (Sasaoka)

36



The Papermaker of Yusuge Village

ゆうすげ村の紙すき屋さん | Text: MOICHI Kumiko
| Ill. KADOTA Ritsuko | Kodansha | 2023 | 192pp
| 22×16cm | ISBN978-4-0653-1952-9 | Ages: 9+
| *Mountain, Washi, Animals, Mysterious*

Kaede Harada works at the local community center. While helping her relatives who run an inn, she is charmed by the yamaga washi (handmade paper) in which their dishes are wrapped and learns that farmers used to harvest and steam paper mulberry to make yamaga washi in the winter. Inspired, Kaede quits her job to learn papermaking. She turns an old hut into a workshop where customers come to buy her products.

The book is a collection of six short stories about Kaede's intriguing visitors and her washi. In "Mount Genpei Owl Delivery Service," Kaede finds an akebi-vine basket on her doorstep one spring morning. It's filled with butterbur and fatsia sprouts. The new delivery owl left it there by mistake, but this sparks an exchange of paper objects and mountain vegetables between Kaede and the delivery owl in an episode that conveys the fragrance of early spring. In "The Magic Thread," a nymph turns a young florist into a magpie and a fairy-like little girl into a frog and casts them from the heavens. Kaede uses washi to send them back home. "Wishing Medicine" is a mysterious tale in which washi as a traditional craft is overlaid with such magical images as carding paper covering the mouth of a bag used for catching meteor trails from the Perseids showers. The Prologue and the Epilogue are also deft compositions that subtly convey the origin of the magical power in yamaga washi and its connection to the legend of Yamamba, the mountain witch. (Nogami)

37



Ratta and Kamiyama

ラッタくんと かみやまくん | Text/Ill. TANAKA Rokudai
| Poplarsha | 2023 | 128pp | 21×15cm | ISBN978-4-5911-7863-8 | Ages: 9+ | *School, Friends, Play, Monsters*

In fourth grade, Rakuta Harada (Ratta for short) becomes classmates with Kamiyama, who lives in an apartment complex near Ratta's house. This manga depicts essay-like episodes in the daily lives of Kamiyama and other people that Ratta knows. Each episode covers a double-page spread with six frames per page and is presented from Ratta's point of view, providing amusing glimpses into his life from April to July.

Kamiyama always does things his own way. He talks familiarly to the principal and falls asleep in class. While this behavior often surprises Ratta, he is drawn to Kamiyama's creativity and unique use of words. Kamiyama makes up original monsters like Fuji Cactus, a fusion of Mount Fuji and a cactus, and Pickled Plum Spring, and also helps Ratta overcome his aversion to gym class by teaching him to imagine running like a cheetah.

Ratta has his own idiosyncrasies. He finds a stick that he likes and hides it, makes dragons out of clay, and sets up a secret hideaway. The way teachers and parents accept the children as they are is reassuring. The humorous portrayal of the boys' daily lives makes readers laugh while at the same time leading to the realization that we are all a little different, we all feel embarrassed or lack confidence sometimes, and we live together by accepting these things about each other. The author is well known for his simple artistic style, and his illustrations are used in many children's books. (Okuyama)

38



The Girl Who Liked Rainy Days

雨の日は好きな人 | Text: SATO Madoka | Ill. DAKE Maiko
| Kodansha | 2022 | 224pp | 20×14cm | ISBN 978-4-0652-8117-8 | Ages: 11+ | *Found family, Illness, Friends*

Nanami is in sixth grade. Her father died before she was born and her mother has just remarried. Nanami looks forward to getting close to her stepsister Yuki, who is two years older, but Yuki has been sickly since birth and rarely leaves the hospital. Nanami's mother and stepfather are always worrying about Yuki, and Nanami feels forgotten. At school, something Nanami says causes a rift with her best friend. Feeling like a failure, she shoplifts but gets caught and stops going to school. One day, she decides to visit Yuki without telling her parents. It's their first meeting, and Nanami is surprised to see how small Yuki is and that she's not the selfish little princess Nanami had imagined. Yuki is thrilled to meet her new stepsister. Knowing only the in-hospital classroom, she urges Nanami to tell her all about school. They talk about many things and agree to keep Nanami's visit a secret. After this experience, Nanami resolves not to judge people by appearances or assumptions and to get to know them personally instead.

Yuki falls into a coma, and Nanami, who has grown very fond of her, is beside herself with worry. Once, Yuki told her she loved rainy days because it evens the status quo: no one can go out and play, just like her. Remembering this, Nanami makes tissue dolls and hangs them upside down to wish for rain. The book offers many hints about how we can get to know others and learn to see things from their perspective. (Sakuma)



Etsuko

エツコさん | Text: HIRUTA Mitsuko | Ill. MITSUMOCHI Chiharu | Alicekan | 2022 | 200pp | 19×13cm | ISBN978-4-7520-1021-0 | Ages: 11+ | *Grandmother, Dementia, Memory*

A collection of short stories about Etsuko, former elementary school teacher in her seventies who has dementia, and her interactions with her grandchild and children in her area.

In "Lost," a boy named Tatsuki who recently moved in loses his way and runs into Etsuko. She offers to guide him, but then slips into memories of herself as a teacher and thinks she's on her way to visit her student's parents. As they walk past Tatsuki's former school, he remembers an uncomfortable parting with a friend. In "Sheltering from the Rain," Hina, a girl who loved Etsuko when Etsuko worked as a volunteer, takes Etsuko home because she wants help with her homework. Hina's older sister is surprised to see Etsuko when she comes home, but also happy when Etsuko remembers her name. In "Protective Charm," a boy named Kohei finds Etsuko's charm and takes it to her, and Kohei sees the ghost of Etsuko's husband. In "Yellow Mountain," Etsuko helps a boy named Yuto remember his interactions with a man he'd met two years earlier in the park. The story "Etsuko" depicts her going back and forth between past and present and celebrating her birthday with her family. In "Memory," Etsuko walks in the park with her granddaughter Mana, causing Mana to think about what memories are. In each story, memory is a keyword. The way in which the children's encounters with Etsuko touch their hearts and help them to confront their problems is thought provoking and helps reveal how Etsuko has lived her life. (Doi)



Grade 5 Class 3 Surprised

5年3組びっくりだ | Text: YOSHINO Mariko | Ill. SATO Makiko | Seizansha | 2023 | 180pp | 19×13cm | ISBN978-4-5931-0407-9 | Ages: 11+ | *Mysterious, Classmates, Short story series*

The third volume in the Elementary School Short Story Series, this book consists of fifteen chapters, each with a different protagonist, that depicts children in a grade five classroom. The school is located in the middle of an industrial district in Suimei City, and each episode shares an experience that surprised the fifteen children in the class.

In "Scout," Seiya has fun at the river making sounds with his body as an instrument. There he's discovered by a high school human beatbox group. In "Catch Phrase," Mizuki, who has come up with a slogan for the city's tourism campaign, is surprised by the winning slogan of her classmate Mia. In "Singer," Leo is at Jasmine's Filipino restaurant when he hears a Filipino singer on TV say she wants to meet Jasmine. In "Invitation," Junki and Kohei go to Marine Port Tower after school and run into penguins, a whale shark, and other creatures from an aquarium that was once located on the site.

Other stories depict school excursions and field trips, a long jump rope contest, interactions with students from other schools and falling in love, a humanoid housekeeping robot that comes to a student's house, getting to know a classmate's grandparents, and a conversation with a stingray that wanders into the river.

Each chapter is short and easy to read. What surprises each student, as well as the students' cultural backgrounds and family compositions, are diverse, and the concerns and discoveries of each protagonist are presented with gentle humor. (Doi)



Shadow Tag

かげふみ | Text: KUTSUKI Sho | Ill. AMINAKA Izuru | Mitsumura Toshio | 2023 | 168pp | 20×14cm | ISBN978-4-8138-0423-9 | Ages: 11+ | *War, Atomic bomb, Hiroshima, Ghost*

Takumi, who is in fifth grade, spends the summer holidays in Hiroshima with his grandmother. At a nearby library, he meets a girl named Sumi reading on her own. She only comes to the library on rainy days and is searching for a book on how to catch shadows. Takumi starts helping her, but along the way, realizes that no one else sees her. From the librarian he learns that the library was once a school where many children perished in the atomic bomb explosion. When the blast incinerated one fifth grader, her body left an imprint on the wall as though her shadow had remained behind. On August 6, the anniversary of the explosion, Takumi goes to the library and looks for the girl's shadow in the yard. The bright sunshine burns away even Takumi's shadow. When Sumi sees that, she laughs happily for the first time. They play hopscotch instead of shadow tag.

The author is the child of an atomic bomb survivor. From episodes such as one of children collecting glass shards scattered by the blast and things lost in the river by those who fled into the water, readers realize this is not some past event, but rather a part of history still linked to our present. Because Takumi comes from Tokyo, children unfamiliar with the atomic bomb can learn and think about it through him. The short story "Tazunebito" (Visitor), which was published in a grade five textbook is also included. (Sasaoka)



How to Be a Sumo Champion

どすこい! | Text: MORINO Komichi | Ill. SATO Makiko | Kokudoshya | 2023 | 192pp | 20×14cm | ISBN978-4-3373-3658-2 | Ages: 11+ | *Sumo, Contest, Challenge, Friendship, Summer holidays*

Bon, a sixth grader who is the tallest, heaviest kid in Ayase Elementary School, loves sumo. A year earlier, the sumo wrestling team, of which he was sub-captain, won the autumn school tournament. In the spring tournament, however, Go Manabe, a sixth grader from Takasago Elementary School, beats Bon easily. Go and his two younger brothers transferred in from Tokyo where they had trained at a sumo club. Upset, Bon fears his team won't be able to win the fall tournament. His friend and fellow teammate, Kenta, learns that the old man running the nearby penny candy store used to be a sumo wrestler but quit because of an injury.

During summer vacation, the boys ask the old man to train them, but he ignores them. They keep coming, buying candy and pestering him. He tells them to show him a sumo move, but even then, he won't teach them. The boys begin practicing hard at the local shrine while continuing to frequent the store. Gradually, the old man starts sharing some sumo basics. Once the boys grasp the fundamentals and apply themselves, they begin to see what to do. After diligent practice, they're ready for the fall tournament. In the final round, Bon throws Go. Only then does he see the old man in the audience. Its heartwarming to watch the boys develop and mature, and the gradual change in the crusty old man, who was forced to quit the sport he loved, lingers in the mind. Readers can also appreciate the appeal and depth of sumo. (Shiozaki)

43



In Summer, Looking for a Cat

夏に、ネコをさがして | Text: NISHIDA Toshiya | Ill. SUKAI Ema | Tokuma Shoten | 2023 | 272pp | 19×14cm | ISBN 978-4-1986-5640-9 | Ages: 11+ | *Cat, Death, Children and the elderly, Family*

At the end of July when Keito is in sixth grade, his family moves into Grandma Natsu's house. Grandma Natsu had died suddenly, and Keito, who was very close to her, can't accept her death. The family plans to adopt her cat Ten, but it disappears. As Keito searches for the cat, he meets Ran, a sixth grader with long hair. He knows the neighborhood cats well and offers to help look. The town is full of elderly people and empty houses, and the two children make flyers and talk to everyone they meet. Keito finds many of them knew Grandma Natsu. As he walks, he recalls places he went and things he did with his grandmother, gradually processing his feelings about her death. He realizes that memories of her are found everywhere in the town and that, even when someone dies, they live on in the hearts of others. Ran, whose mother is Thai, takes care of his grandmother with dementia and has been dealing with own grief over his pet cat's death. While searching with Keito, he decides to adopt a stray cat. The two children find Ten in an animal hospital being treated after an accident.

The book warmly depicts the blossoming of a new friendship and the interactions between children and the elderly and explores a variety of themes, including the challenges faced by senior citizens, multiculturalism, cat hunting, and the "donation" of pets and livestock for leather and food during World War II when supplies ran low. (Shiozaki)

43



Midday Ghosts

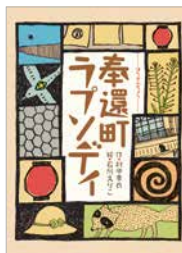
真昼のユウレイたち | Text: IWASE Joko | Ill. ASINO Kohei | Kaiseisha | 2023 | 180pp | 20×14cm | ISBN978-4-0364-3250-9 | Ages: 11+ | *Ghosts, Friends, Family, Daily life*

This is a collection of four short stories in which children encounter ghosts, not at night but in the daytime. Both the main characters and the reader are led to ponder the meaning of life and death.

In "Child of the Sea," a ten-year-old girl named Harumi visits the home of her friend Hamao's great-aunt Umi—and meets the ghost of a nine-year-old girl. The girl turns out to be the ghost of Umi's younger sister, who drowned in the ocean as a child. In "Face Off," an eleven-year-old girl named Kasumi seeks to help her friend Chika, who is being bullied; instead, Chika's parents, who passed away in a car accident when Chika was four, end up being the ones to help. In "Wish," a ten-year-old boy named Haruo meets the ghost of Dan, an American who was drafted to fight in Vietnam and killed; Dan had known Haruo's grandmother. In "Fune's Room," eleven-year-old Yōji wonders why Ren, his new nine-year-old stepbrother, is hiding something in his room; it's the ghost of Fune, a white cat who died three months ago.

None of these ghosts is scary or threatens the children. Each of them continues to love someone who was precious to them in life, and keeps an eye on them. Though the main characters in the stories are not connected each other, they see and interact with the ghosts, and being sensitive and open children, the main characters accept the spirits naturally. And good changes happen as a result of the encounters. Having ghosts make casual appearances in everyday life, shows that their love endures even after death. (Shiozaki)

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Hokan Town Rapsody

奉還町ラブソディ | Text: MURANAKA Rie | Ill. ISHIKAWA Eriko | BL Shuppan | 2022 | 208pp | 21×16cm | ISBN 978-4-7764-1061-4 | Ages: 11+ | *Shopping district, Elderly, Local community*

The narrator, an elementary school student who moved from Yamaguchi to Okayama, makes friends with Atsushi, whose family runs a manju shop in Hokan Town shopping district. The district was founded in the late 19th century by disbanded samurai who used their severance pay to start shops. Despite its interesting history and TV coverage, however, it has fallen into decline. The book is a collection of six short stories about various happenings in Hokan Town seen through the eyes of the narrator.

The owner of Beniya clothing store, an intimidating old man who always stands outside the mannequin-filled window, actually dreams of flying away with those mannequins. Mr. Inoue, an elderly barber, mourns the deaths of the animals from which the hair and hides for his tools are made, yet he still fights with stray dogs. Mitsu, an elderly woman, lies on the ground and recalls the Manchurian flower meadows of her childhood. And Granny Nami goes to Hakata to buy spicy cod roe because it reminds her of her late husband. While sometimes bewildered by the unusual actions of the people they meet, the narrator and Atsushi recognize the significance of each person's life. Newcomers are also portrayed with a light touch, such as young people and foreigners who have started cafes and secondhand clothing stores, and Atsushi's older brother, who plans weddings. Set in a real shopping district, each episode has a unique flavor derived from the intersection of old and new, ordinary and extraordinary, past and present. (Okuyama)

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I'm Making My Lunch Tomorrow.

あした、弁当を作る。 | Text: Hiko TANAKA | Ill. OKANO Kensuke | Kodansha | 2023 | 272pp | 20×14cm | ISBN978-4-0653-0595-9 | Ages: 13+ | *Parent and child, Friends, Gender, Independence*

Tatsuki Kusakabe loved his mother's attention when he was small, but as a middle schooler, he tires of her saying things like, "I'm glad I can make your bento packed lunch for you every day, Tat chan." And he cringes at her soft touch on his back in the mornings when he leaves the house. Raising him seems to be her reason for living, which makes him feel pressured. On the other hand, Tatsuki's classmate Mashiro's parents both work, and Mashiro makes her own bento in the mornings. Hearing this, Tatsuki decides to do the same. Following Mashiro's instructions, he stops at the frozen food section in the supermarket by the train station for the first time. The next time he opens his lunch, Mashiro asks if it's his "first frozen food creation" and smiles.

Tatsuki's parents oppose this change; his mother protests that "boys don't make their lunches," and his father snaps that "your job is studying, not making lunch." They even revoke his allowance. But Tatsuki searches up *bento, side dishes, simple and middle school* on the computer, and despite his parents' resistance, he keeps making his lunch and even begins doing his laundry.

This book follows Tatsuki through thirteen days, from a Monday through the Saturday of the next week. It explores a young man's new desire for independence, awakened by bento, and the rift this causes with his parents. Lively dialogue between Tatsuki and his friends accents the story. It is exhilarating how this work, written from Tatsuki's perspective, skewers traditional notions of men's work and gender roles. (Nogami)



Iko Traveling, 1948-

イコ トラベリング1948- | Text: KADONO Eiko
| Ill. KYO Machiko | KADOKAWA | 2022 | 304pp |
19×13cm | ISBN978-4-0410-7211-0 | Ages: 13+ | *Postwar
period, School, World, Travel*

Sequel to *The Tunnel Through the Woods, 1945*, this book features Iko aged 13–22 (Iko was the Andersen-winning author’s childhood nickname). World War II ends, and Iko’s family moves from their refuge in Chiba to Koiwa, suburban Tokyo. In 1948, Iko enters girls’ school in Ichigaya; on the train to school, she smells the charred odor of neighborhoods burned in air raids even as she witnesses the rebuilding of Tokyo. English appears on signs, and the occupiers broadcast American music on the radio. Once prohibited as the enemy’s language, English becomes a new class at school.

Eager to see an American’s house, Iko peeks at a commissioned officer’s residence near the school. Iko gets caught by a maid, but the maid, who is Japanese and two years older, shows Iko inside. Iko is amazed by the officer’s lifestyle—and by the English ability of the maid, who has not gone to high school. Determined to learn English and see the world, Iko attends Waseda University. In the English department, she writes her thesis on a female American author, and after graduation, she works at the Kinokuniya bookstore and publishing house. Assigned odd jobs, she admires the authors who visit the editorial department and yearns to travel. She hears from her senior that a Japanese school in Brazil is seeking a teacher. Iko decides to go to Brazil and spends two months traveling there by ship.

From wartime militarism to democracy: Though shaken by the changes around her, Iko’s curiosity and adventurous spirit nonetheless lead her to pursue her dreams. Her story is thrilling. (Nogami)



Us on Fridays

金曜日のあたしたち | Text: HAMANO Kyoko | Ill. Awai
| Seizansha | 2023 | 200pp | 20×14cm | ISBN 978-4-
8638-9771-7 | Ages: 13+ | *Climate crisis, Protest
demonstration, Romance*

Rejected by her first-choice high school, Hinata struggles with motivation at the school she ends up going to instead. One Friday, she sees some high school students holding placards about the climate crisis, standing outside a train station. One of the students, Ryoma, points out her ignorance on climate, and out of chagrin, Hinata reads on websites and in books about the abnormal changes and disasters occurring around the world. She decides to stand with the protesters at the station. She also begins to talk with the classmates and family close to her about how aspects of their daily lives, such as plastic disposal, meat consumption, and food waste, are harming the environment.

While the story continues to circle environmental issues, it also explores Hinata’s relationship with Momone, a girl in her year who got into the school Hinata had hoped to attend. The story also develops Hinata’s relationship with Ryoma, who seemed haughty at first but turns out to be fair and honest. The reader comes to share Hinata’s unvarnished feelings of embarrassment and love. Students at Hinata’s new school such as Shizuho, who helps at a free cafeteria for children, and Elena, who carries scars related to her Brazilian roots, become known and trusted as well.

This book weaves information about the Climate Clock, International Panel on Climate Change, and Fridays For Future with realistic portrayals of teens interacting in settings such as Shibuya, Yoyogi Park, and the Ueno Zoo in Tokyo. It strikes a marvelous balance. (Okuyama)



Tell Me Your Story

きみの話を聞かせてくれよ | Text: MURAKAMI Masafumi
| Ill. Kashiwai | Froebelkan | 2023 | 336pp | 20×14cm
| ISBN978-4-5770-5186-3 | Ages: 13+ | *School, Friends,
Gender*

At the beginning of this book, a mysterious prologue unfolds, in which a girl with long, braided hair asks a black stray cat living at a school to take care of the students who will come in the future.

Then, some seven stories unfold about students who attend the school, Arafune Middle School. The narrators are Rikka Shiraoka of the art club, cake-baking enthusiast Toranosuke Todoroki, Kaho Sugitani of the band, Aoi Nishijima of the track team, Masaki Kashiwagi and Usa Gionji of the kendo team, and finally Kaede Misumi, the school nurse. The stories connect little by little via class, club, or sibling bonds between students.

Gender norms surface as a theme. For example, Usa wants to maintain a “cool” masculine image she has, even among the girls, so when she asks Toranosuke to make her sweets, which she loves, she does so secretly. For his part, Toranosuke reveals that he feels odd being called “cute,” even by girls. Kaho worries about a younger band member who had a crush on Toranosuke but was rejected. And so it goes . . . buffeted by assumptions about what’s “girl-like” and “boy-like,” and injured and injuring, the students struggle to build relationships and pursue what is “me-like” in these fresh narratives.

Ryosuke Kurono also plays a part. Appearing in all the stories, roaming the school grounds, and keeping track of everyone, Kurono is like the cat in the prologue and helps to keep the tone of the collection light. (Okuyama)



Scramble Crossing

スクランブル交差点 | Text: SATO Madoka | Ill. KURITA
Yuki | Shogakukan | 2023 | 272pp | 19×13cm
| ISBN978-4-0928-9326-9 | Ages: 13+ | *Friends, Italy,
Intercultural exchange, Romance*

On the first day of the second trimester, an exchange student appears in Tsuyoshi Yanagida’s high school class. The student is from Italy and has retro round glasses and blond hair with curls like ramen. His name is Marco De Luca. Since his homestay is near Tsuyoshi’s house, Tsuyoshi gets assigned to look after him.

Marco likes the artist Hokusai (1760–1849) and is knowledgeable about Japanese culture, sayings, and literature. He’s also good at English and swimming, and handsome when he removes his glasses, so he’s popular with the girls. Unfortunately, a group of three bullies picks on Marco, and Tsuyoshi, who until now had steered clear of the trio, can no longer stay silent. Yui Hatano, who has been in Tsuyoshi’s class since elementary school, and her friend Ai Nogami also get involved. Many ups and downs ensue, including a romance between Ai and Marco, before Marco returns home at the end of the third trimester.

Then, two years later, the final year of high school begins in the midst of a pandemic. Ai, who has maintained a long-distance relationship with Marco, crams to get into an Italian university. Yui gets admitted to her design school of choice based on recommendation. Tsuyoshi, unfortunately, does not get into university. Marco and Ai have a misunderstanding that threatens to break them up. Like pedestrians in a scramble crossing, the characters in the novel come and go all around Marco, as seen through the eyes of Tsuyoshi. Tsuyoshi himself experiences a change of heart toward the end that is immensely satisfying. (Nogami)



The World I See with My Hands

手で見るぼくの世界は | Text: KASHIZAKI Akane
| Ill. SAKAI Sane | Kumon Shuppan | 2022 | 280pp
| 20×14cm | ISBN978-4-7743-3380-9 | Ages: 13+
| *Visual impairment, Truancy, Friends*

This book traces a year in the life of Tasuku and Futaba, two students who are entering junior high at a school for the visually impaired.

When in elementary school, the two formed a class by themselves, but now there are boarding students as well as students who commute a long distance, and their class has seven members. Moreover, Tasuku used to rely on active Futaba, but unfortunately, when out and about during school break, Futaba ran into someone and fell, and the man she ran into snarled discriminatory language at her. In shock, she is staying home from school.

At first, Tasuku struggles to get along with his new classmates, and he hesitates to have the walking trainer Mr. Tsukada teach him to use a white cane. But because he wants to meet Futaba, who neither answers the phone nor comes to school, Tasuku overcomes setbacks to use the cane and go out on his own. He goes to a convenience store nearby and rides the subway. In the process, he opens his heart to the five other members of the class.

For her part, at her mother's urging, Futaba connects with a group of walking and running guides for the visually impaired. Futaba gradually begins to go out again. She also answers Tasuku's calls and enters a marathon with her mother.

Through the perspectives of Futaba and Tasuku, this book explores how young people with visual impairments may process their surroundings, negotiate daily life and school life, struggle and grow. It is written with great care and realism. (Doi)



We Have Not Yet Met

ぼくたちは まだ出逢っていない | Text: YATSUKA Sumiko
| Ill. Furoku | Poplarsha | 2022 | 296pp | 20×13cm
| ISBN978-4-5911-7499-9 | Ages: 13+ | *Kintsugi, Traditional handicrafts, Bullying, Belonging*

One of Japan's traditional handicrafts, passed down for four or five thousand years, is kintsugi—the art of repairing ceramics by mending the breaks with lacquer and gold. In this book, three middle school students in Kyoto seek a place to belong through kintsugi, and they become friends.

Riku has a British father and a unique appearance, for which he is bullied violently. Though he tells himself that he can endure the pain, his body feels it. Miu's mother has just remarried and moved to Kyoto, but Miu struggles to see her stepfather and stepbrother as family and to fit in at her new school. Meanwhile, Riku's close friend Itsuki was born with gastrointestinal troubles and is in and out of the hospital.

Riku finds his way to kintsugi by going to the mountains with his dad. There, he is moved by how the lacquer trees stand tall despite being slashed with knives (to collect the sap). Miu is entranced by a bowl at an antique store, and she begins to learn kintsugi at a lacquer art repair shop. Then, through Riku, Itsuki meets Miu and learns she has been repairing a cup his grandmother brought in. The three explore how kintsugi does not hide scars but rather shows them off beautifully. Kintsugi requires dealing with nature, temperature, and humidity, which takes time, so they learn that traditional arts cannot be measured in terms of efficiency. They encounter the world of craftspeople, and they find a place to escape the stresses of life—a place they can be themselves. (Sakuma)



Good Morning through a Mask

マスク越しのおはよう | Text: YAMAMOTO Etsuko
| Ill. TANAKA Miho | Kodansha | 2022 | 304pp | 20×14cm
| ISBN978-4-0652-8367-7 | Ages: 13+ | *Pandemic, Identity, Friends*

Covid 19 spreads around Japan. School closures turn to partial closures turn to masking . . . which is when the students in this book are in the second year of middle school. The chapters are from their perspectives.

"Three-Year Masker" Chiriko has been masking since upper elementary school. Friendship troubles led to a period of truancy, but when her whole class dons masks to start this school year, she returns and reconnects with a friend.

"Leopard-Print Mask Princess" Serina lives with her mother, who works at a pub at night, and her sister, who is seven years younger. To save money, Serina makes a mask from her mother's scarf. Classmate Koyama-san, whose mother is a doctor, claims Serina's mother going to work is spreading Covid.

In "Blown by the Wind," Mugi wears a face shield so that his mother, who left home in Mugi's infancy, will recognize him if she comes to check on his during Covid. But his mother does not come, and Mugi ends up going himself.

In "Performance of Different Person #28," Saori has been truant since being bullied about her hair. But heeding the advice of her late grandfather to "try going to school as a different person," she returns.

Misaki in "The Seventh Baby Goat" is the only member of her family who does not catch Covid; she finds herself alone in their apartment feeling anxious.

While worrying about the pandemic, the adolescents in this book also try to use it as an opportunity and move forward. Their changes are portrayed with great care. (Doi)



Open the Night Sky

夜空にひらく | Text: ITO Miku | Ill. SUGIYAMA Takumi
| Alicekan | 2023 | 256pp | 20×14cm | ISBN978-4-7520-1072-2 | Ages: 13+ | *Fireworks, Fireworks shop, Juvenile justice system, Family, Work*

Ento Narumi, age seventeen, caused a major injury at his part-time job and was sentenced to probationary observation. For a period of time, he will live and work with Seiichi Fukami, who manufactures fireworks.

Ento was abandoned by his mother in infancy and raised without affection by a grandmother, so he has a hard time believing in people. But by living with Mr. Fukami and his workers and helping them, Ento begins to open his heart little by little. He begins to think he would like to be a fireworks specialist.

Mr. Fukami himself carries the weight of losing his four-year-old son in a hit-and-run accident. After learning that the unlicensed teenage driver who caused it committed suicide, Mr. Fukami volunteered to help rehabilitate juvenile offenders. But Mr. Fukami's decision led to divorce, and his ex-wife and daughter have since kept him at a distance.

Mr. Fukami, and his mother who likes to help out, and his cheery live-in twin workers, and Mr. Iwakiri, the lawyer who referred Ento to Fukami . . . the adults around Ento are all warm and kind.

Ento himself has the sensitivity to shed tears over beautiful fireworks, and the character to tell the difference between right and wrong. The reader sympathizes with him and wants him to succeed. His actions also lead to a rapprochement between Fukami and his daughter.

This book ends with a scene showing Ento as a fireworks specialist three years later. He clearly has a bright future awaiting him. (Shiozaki)

Recent Nonfiction



All About Vegetable Flowers

やさいのはな なんのはな? | Text: MIYAZAKI Shoko
| Photos: AMINO Fumie | Iwasaki Shoten | 2023
| 32pp | 25×19cm | ISBN978-4-2658-3151-7
| Ages: 3+ | *Vegetables, Flowers*

With vibrant photographs, this book introduces seventeen types of flower we don't often get to see from vegetables that are common on Japanese dining tables, such as the yellow flowers of cucumbers, purple flowers of sweet potatoes, and white flowers of lotus roots. It is fun to see the flower first and have to guess what vegetable it is, then have the answer revealed when you turn the page. There is an infinite range of colors and numbers of petals and pistils and so forth. Each vegetable's fruit, roots, stem, buds, leaves, and which parts we eat are clearly explained. We also find out fun facts, that the flowers of potatoes, peppers, tomatoes, and eggplants look similar. (Sakaguchi)



It's Born! Mole Crickets

うまれたよ! オケラ | Text/Photos: YASUDA Mamoru
| Iwasaki Shoten | 2023 | 36pp | 29×25cm
| ISBN978-4-2650-2155-0 | Ages: 7+ | *Mole crickets, Birth, Rice paddies*

This is a large format photo book about mole crickets, an insect similar to crickets and grasshoppers that lives around rice paddies and sheds its shell six times, and is adept at burrowing. Close-up photos with short captions introduce the life of a mole cricket, from the egg to the nymph and all the way to the adult form. Specifically, we see the mole cricket around the rice paddy, a close-up of its forelegs that can dig tunnels, being born from an egg, eating leaves and worms, shedding its shell, making a tunnel, and flying. Growth records and a summary of its body features are provided at the end of the book. The fascinating photographs give a strong sense of the life force of this insect. (Doi)



Campervan Travel

キャンピングカーのたび | Text/Ill. MINEO Mitsu
| Fukuinkan Shoten | 2023 | 36pp | 26×27cm
| ISBN978-4-8340-8711-6 | Ages: 7+ | *Campervans, Fathers, Traveling*

This picture book depicts a two-day trip by a boy and his father in a campervan called Noronoro-go (The Rambler). They get in the van taking as little luggage as possible with them, and set off. They cross the sea by ferry, and arrive at a campground in the mountains. On the ferry and at the campground, they meet people using small trucks converted into campervans, and get to look inside them. We also see them using the facilities in the van to prepare their meals, and going to sleep on the van's beds. It is super interesting to see all the gadgets in the van throughout the trip. The endpapers show the map of the trip and the way the van is fitted out. (Doi)



A Day in the School Canteen

給食室のいちにち | Text: OTSUKA Nao | Ill. ISHIYAMA Azusa
| Shonen Shashin Shinbunsha | 2022 | 32pp | 26×22cm | ISBN978-4-8798-1760-0 | Ages: 7+
| *School meals, Elementary school, Nutritionist, Work*

Mr. Yamanaka is the school's nutritionist. The menu for today's lunch is curry and rice, salad, and jelly. He works together with seven other staff to prepare lunches for 450 pupils. This picture book is set in the school canteen and follows the stages in the preparation of lunch in a lively manga-style format. It is exciting to see the huge cooking utensils and large quantities of ingredients they use. In addition to cooking, we see there are many other jobs involved in preparing a delicious and safe school lunch, such as ensuring a healthy diet and inspecting the ingredients and the finished meals. With introductions to the staff and a map of the school canteen provided on the endpapers, the entire book is enjoyable. (Sasaoka)



The Broadclub Cuttlefish Are Here!

コブシメがやってきた! | Text/Photos: TAKAKU Itaru
| Alicekan | 2023 | 32pp | 28×23cm | ISBN978-4-7520-1066-1 | Ages: 7+ | *Cuttlefish, Mollusks, Coral*

This photo book is full of fascinating facts about the broadclub cuttlefish, a relatively unknown species. A member of the golden cuttlefish family, it has frill-like undulating fins around its pillowy body. It can change the color of its body to match its surroundings, to the extent that it can be hard to make it out in the photographs. In fights between males, their bodies can be half white and half black. The photographs of males and females mating and spawning are majestic and beautiful. In particular, the photographs capturing the simultaneous spawning of coral and hatching of broadclub cuttlefish is a marvelous example of the symbiosis of living organisms in nature. (Sakaguchi)



Little Dalia, Who Loves the Tundra

草原が大好き ダリアちゃん | Text/Photos:
NAGAKURA Hiromi | Alicekan | 2023 | 40pp
| 27×22cm | ISBN978-4-7520-1032-6 | Ages: 7+
| *Siberia, Nature, Reindeer*

A book in the *I Found A Friend! Series* of photo books introducing different cultures around the world with children living there as the main characters. The protagonist of this volume is Dalia, a five-year-old girl from the nomadic Nenet people of Siberia. She lives in a harsh land that is far from the conveniences of the city and covered in snow for over eight months, but the pictures of her daily life making most of her own food and clothing convey the joy of running around the wide open steppe and picking berries and mushrooms. They also show how much Dalia loves living in this wilderness surrounded by reindeer and family. (Sakuma)



Tomatoes

トマト | Text/Ill. ARAI Maki | Shogakukan | 2023
| 32pp | 25×22cm | ISBN978-4-0972-5221-4
| Ages: 7+ | *Observing nature, Growth*

A picture book in which a world-renowned artist minutely observes and beautifully illustrates the growth of a tomato plant from a single seed to producing lots of red fruit. The seed sprouts in the earth and puts down roots, the first shoot appears and rapidly grows foliage. Buds enveloped in fuzzy hair open into yellow flowers. When the flower wilts, the ovary swells and develops into a plump fruit and gradually turns red. This picture book shows us this process slowly and carefully. There is also a page depicting the 272 seeds taken from a single fruit, all different, conveying the life force hidden in each individual seed. (Sakuma)



Golden-Ringed Dragonflies, The Jewel of Summer Streams

夏の小川にかがやく宝石、オニヤンマ | Text/Photos:
TSUTSUI Manabu | Shogakukan | 2023 | 44pp
| 21×24cm | ISBN978-4-0972-5219-1 | Ages: 7+
| *Insects, Rivers*

This photobook portrays the life cycle of the golden-ringed dragonfly, the largest of Japan's dragonflies. Through vivid photos and clear explanations, the book shows the dragonfly as it emerges with wings in the lush greenery at the end of the rainy season, flies over the stream, its emerald eyes shining, catching and eating insects, and mating, until its life ends in autumn. In the latter half, close-ups and underwater photos show how the larvae emerge from the laid eggs and shed their skin repeatedly over several years to become large nymphs then adults with wings. The image of the adult emerging at the end and flying over the stream again. (Okuyama)



Sea Urchins

He Secret of the Spiny Northern Sea Urchin

うに とげとげいきもの きたむらさきうにの ひみつ | Text:
AGATSUMA Yukio, AOKI Masakazu | Ill. HATANAKA
Fumiko | Kasetususha | 2022 | 52pp | 24×22cm | ISBN
978-4-7735-0322-7 | Ages: 9+ | *Sea urchins, Ecology,
The Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami*

We know the sea urchin as food, but not so much the creature itself. This picture book introduces us to many different aspects of the sea urchin, from its body, food, and reproduction to the birth of sea urchin young, aquaculture, its features as an echinoderm, sea urchins around the world, and sea urchin predators. It features specialist content, but we feel a sense of intimacy as the protagonist is a boy who goes to visit his grandparents on the Sanriku coast in Miyagi Prefecture, Tohoku, and hears his grandfather's explanations in the local dialect. The sea urchins disappeared after the 2011 tsunami, but they have since been increasing and causing denudation of the rocky shore. The pictures are powerful, and the big-eater sea urchin's mouth is particularly impressive. (Sakaguchi)



Living in the Sea! Hanako, The Baby Sea Turtle

海に生きる!ウミガメの花子 | Text/Photos: KUROBE
Yumi | Sv. OKUYAMA Junichi | Kaiseisha | 2022
| 40pp | 26×21cm | ISBN978-4-0333-3740-1
| Ages: 9+ | *Sea turtles, Environment, Ecology*

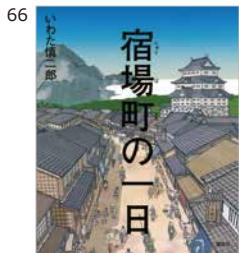
Hanako is a baby green sea turtle, an endangered species that lives in the sea in Okinawa, southern Japan, where she is loved by the local residents. This picture book starts with photos of Hanako swimming leisurely with her human and sea turtle friends. We see loggerhead turtles spawning and hatching, and the baby turtles swimming off to sea. On the other hand, photos of sea turtles caught up in ropes thrown away by humans, dead turtles in amongst the garbage washed up on the beach, and coral bleached by rising seawater temperatures convey a looming crisis. Readers will feel the importance of environmental conservation even more strongly as they learn about Hanako's lovable nature. (Sakaguchi)



The Small Mountain Hut in Kurobe Gorge

黒部の谷の小さな山小屋 | Text/Photos: HOSHINO
Hideki | Alicekan | 2023 | 44pp | 29×22cm
| ISBN978-4-7520-1062-3 | Ages: 9+ | *Kurobe,
Mountain huts, Mountains, Valleys, Nature*

Every June, a small mountain hut is constructed in Kurobe Gorge, Toyama Prefecture. In winter it is dismantled to prevent it being crushed by snow, and its parts stored in a tunnel. In just three days, the pillars are raised, walls attached, the roof put on, and the Azohara Hot Springs Hut is ready. October is the busiest season. Hikers can take a rest at the hut, soak in the natural hot spring bath, eat some delicious curry, and ease their tired legs. When the November frosts arrive, it's time for the hut to close again. The hut staff smile and say "See you again next year." This photobook vividly captures the natural beauty of the Kurobe Gorge in summer and autumn, and its visitors. (Shiozaki)



A Day in an Old Post Station

宿場町の日 | Text/III. IWATA Shinjiro | Kodansha | 2023 | 36pp | 27×22cm | ISBN978-4-0653-2039-6 | Ages: 9+ | *Edo period, Post stations, Cost of living, Lifestyle*

In the Edo Period, towns on the old highways with lodging houses catering to travelers were called post stations. We follow one day in a small family-run lodging house, learning details about how time was measured, preparations for travel, the members of the daimyo's entourage, how to get into a goemonburo bathtub, and even the toilet facilities. We are given the prices in today's monetary values, with a one-night stay with two meals costing 8,000 yen, a cup of tea 200-800 yen, a massage 2,400 yen, and the obligatory visits to Edo by a daimyo and his entourage costing about 400 million yen. The pictures will make you want to know more about Edo. (Sasaoka)



Shinkai 6500

Investigate the Secrets of the Deep Sea

しんかい6500 深海のみみつをさぐれ! | Text: YAMAMOTO Shozo | Ill. TOMONAGA Taro | Kumon Shuppan | 2023 | 40pp | 26×20cm | ISBN978-4-7743-2854-6 | Ages: 9+ | *Deep sea, Ocean research*

Often referred to as “another universe,” the deep sea is found in many places around Japan. Deep Sea 6500, Japan's world-class submersible research vehicle, can carry people to depths of 6,500 meters. This book introduces such things as how the vehicle submerses and rises, why it doesn't collapse due to water pressure, and sea floor exploration methods. The explanations are easy to understand with fun illustrations that follow the mechanisms allowing the boat to float, sink and then rise again. The clear-cut pictures accentuate the fascinating mechanisms of machines. (Sakaguchi)



The Story of Petroleum

石油のものがたり | Text: OKOCHI Naohiko | Ill. YAMAFUKU Akemi | Fukuinkan Shoten | 2023 | 44pp | 26×20cm | ISBN978-4-8340-8727-7 | Ages: 9+ | *Petroleum*

Petroleum is dead plant matter that settled on the sea bottom long ago and changed over the passage of time. Viewed from the perspective of the Earth's long history, the book offers an overview of how people have extracted and used the solar energy that was stored in plankton through photosynthesis. The earliest use of petroleum was as an adhesive, but now it is used as an energy source and as raw material for many substances that are useful in our daily lives. The book also clearly explains how the use of petroleum produces carbon dioxide and alters the natural environment. The woodcut illustrations give this book a warm, nostalgic feel. (Sakaguchi)

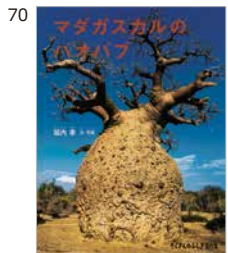


Close Approach! Factory Tour

SDGs Recycling Volume 3: Paper

大接近! 工場見学 SDGsリサイクル編3 紙 | Struct./Text: TAKAYAMA Ryo | Photos: SOEDA Kohei | Iwasaki Shoten | 2023 | 36pp | 29×25cm | ISBN978-4-2650-9118-8 | Ages: 9+ | *Factory, SDGs, Waste reduction*

A photo-picture book that follows the papermaking process at an Osaka paper recycling plant from shredding to pulping to producing crepe paper using processes passed down for more than half a century. Various machines involved in the process are introduced along the way. One hundred tons of water is needed to produce a ton of paper, and the plant produces an average of 2,000 tons of waste water which is treated and discharged into the river. This is one volume in a series of books on familiar things that help children think about SDGs. Other themes in the series include water, plastic, batteries, houses, and garbage trucks. (Sakuma)



Madagascari Baobabs

マダガスカルのパオバブ | Text/Photos: HORIUCHI Takashi | Fukuinkan Shoten | 2023 | 44pp | 26×20cm | ISBN978-4-8340-8725-3 | Ages: 9+ | *Africa, Baobab, Lifestyle*

This photo-picture book presents photos by a Japanese photographer who visited and photographed all eight varieties of baobab that grow on Madagascar, an island off the coast of southeast Africa. The author also captured the lives of the local people which are closely linked to these trees. The baobab is known as “the mother of the forest” because its bark, leaves and fruit are used in many ways. Large, long-lived baobab are worshipped as the home of spirits, and their shade offers people a place to rest. Recently, however, baobabs are being cut down to make farmland, and their numbers are decreasing. Some varieties are at risk of extinction. The text is easy to understand and well-complemented by the photos, which convey various mysteries of the baobab. (Sakuma)



Rooftop Relay

The Southernmost Thatched-Roof House in Japan

屋根のうへのパトシリレー 日本でいちばん南にある かやぶきの家 | Photos/Text: YOKOTSUKA Makoto | Holp Shuppan | 2022 | 44pp | 27×21cm | ISBN978-4-5931-0308-9 | Ages: 9+ | *Okinawa, Roof, Tradition*

A photo-picture book that records the rethatching of the oldest thatched-roofed house in Okinawa Prefecture located in Sonai Village on Iriomote Island. Villagers cut mangrove trees for the rafters and collect bamboo and coconut fibers. They replace damaged rafters, then tie the bamboo ribs in place with woven vines. Some villagers climb on the roof while others help them from inside the house as they rethatch the roof. The fact that the villagers reroof the house every six to ten years themselves, rather than relying on professionals, gives the reader a fascinating glimpse into how the villagers keep traditions alive. The appendices include a description of Sonai Village and of Shinmorike, the house being rethatched. (Doi)

72



Launching a Bag Company in Africa

アフリカで、バッグの会社をはじめました | Text: EGUCHI Eri | Ill. OBATA Saki | Sa E Ra Shobo | 2023 | 140pp | 20×14cm | ISBN978-4-3780-1563-7 | Ages: 11+ | *International cooperation, Africa, Entrepreneur, Contributing to society*

Often, international aid results in dependency rather than independence. Chizu Nakamoto, however, sought to solve the problem of poverty by establishing equal business relationships. After many twists and turns, she launched her own company in Uganda. The company employs local women, many of whom are destitute single mothers, and makes eco-friendly products from colorful African prints to sell in Japan. The concept is to create attractive products that people want to buy and that connect the consumers with the producers, rather than relying on people to buy products out of pity. This true story of Nakamoto's struggles opens readers' eyes to what international cooperation should really be like. (Sakuma)

73



Many Ways Of Living! Illustrated Encyclopedia of Insect Metamorphosis

生きかたイロイロ! 昆虫変態図鑑 | Text: KAWABE Toru, MAEHATA Mami | Sv. HIRAI Norio | Ill. YOKOYAMA Kanta, etc | Poplarsha | 2022 | 288pp | 27×22cm | ISBN 978-4-5911-7529-3 | Ages: 11+ | *Insects, Metamorphosis*

Of the 1.75 million known species of living creatures on this planet, over one million are insects. The author divides insects in Japan into three categories based on how they develop and introduces them in detail with text and photos. The categories are Archaeognatha, which are primitive insects that don't metamorphose, insects that mature into adults without becoming pupa (65 species), and insects that metamorphose from pupa to adults (156 species), including swallowtail butterflies and rhinoceros beetles. Each description is accompanied by basic data such as the insects' characteristics and where they can be found. Just looking at the photos showing the diversity of species and development patterns is fun. The appendix provides explanations of technical terms. (Sakaguchi)

74



Living Creatures Are Teachers

生き物たちが先生だ | Text: HARIYAMA Takahiko | Ill. ANZAI Shun | Kumon Shuppan | 2023 | 96pp | 22×16cm | ISBN978-4-7743-2815-7 | Ages: 11+ | *Research, Living creatures, Electron microscope, Biomimetics*

Biomimetics is the study of the mechanisms of living things and their application to manufacturing. The author developed the "nanosuit method," in which an electron microscope is used to study creatures while they are alive. This method made it possible to observe creatures' characteristics down to the minutest detail and led to new technological advances. The specific examples cited are intriguing, such as technology that applies the structural colors of jewel beetles to investigate warping in buildings and the development of non-slip gloves based on the adhesive grip of gecko fingers. The manga-style illustrations and accessible text makes even the technical content fun to read. (Sasaoka)

75



Shine Seal

A School Newspaper That Encouraged March 11 Disaster Victims

海よ光れ! 3・11被災者を励ました学校新聞 | Text: TAZAWA Satsuki | Kokudoshia | 2023 | 160pp | 22×16cm | ISBN978-4-3373-1013-1 | Ages: 11+ | *Great East Japan Earthquake, Yamada Town, Iwate Prefecture, School newspaper*

Osawa is located in northeastern Japan on the coast of Yamada Town in Iwate Prefecture. It was a thriving fishing district, but was badly damaged during the Great East Japan Earthquake on March 11, 2011. The book describes how the students of Osawa Public Elementary School, which served as an evacuation shelter, responded to the disaster. Written in a personal, realistic style, the story is gripping right to the end. The students clean the toilets, massage evacuees' stiff shoulders, relaunch the school newspaper for which they had won an award in Tokyo just six days prior to the disaster, and keep encouraging the local people. The appendix includes a newspaper made by the same children ten years later. They are now grown up, and it's clear how much they have matured. (Sakaguchi)

76



Orihime the Avatar Robot

オリヒメ | Text: YOSHIFUJI Ory, KATO Etsuko | Kodomonomiraisha | 2023 | 36pp | 27×19cm | ISBN978-4-8641-2227-6 | Ages: 11+ | *Robot, Disability, Social services, Communication*

Orihime is a robot that makes it possible for people who can't work outside the home to connect with society through remote control. With the robot, they can work at such jobs as café baristas or company receptionists. A young man who had once dropped out of elementary school went on to study at a technical college where he researched robots that used AI to comfort people. The aim was to eliminate people's loneliness. He soon realized, however, that what had solved his own loneliness was meeting and engaging with people. He therefore decided not to equip the robot with AI and instead developed Orihime, a robot that connects people to people. The numerous photos convey the researcher's enthusiasm and his constant consideration of the users' viewpoint. (Sasaoka)

77



Kitchen Lab

How Does That Work? Experiment Recipes: Ingredients

キッチンラボ どうしてそうなる? 実験レシピ 食材編 | Text/Photos: TSUYUKUBO Mika | Kaiseisha | 2023 | 48pp | 28×23cm | ISBN978-4-0352-5620-5 | Ages: 11+ | *Cooking, Science, Heat*

There is a lot of science involved in cooking. If you extract the stickiness from fermented beans (natto) and mix it with ice cream, you get stretchy ice cream. If you put cream in a bottle and shake it, you get homemade butter. Or you can make multi-colored fried noodles by boiling and extracting the pigment from purple cabbage and adding it to fried noodles while cooking. This book explains how heating and stirring can alter ingredients to create different kinds of cuisine. Recipes are presented with color photos, while explanations of the scientific principles involved are easy to understand. The series also includes a volume on seasoning and another on temperature. (Nogami)



You Too Are a Paleontologist! Dr. Manabe's Dinosaur Class

きみも恐竜博士だ！ 真鍋先生の恐竜教室 | Text: MANABE Makoto | Ill. KIKUTANI Utako, MIKI Kenji | Iwanami Shoten | 2022 | 128pp | 21×15cm | ISBN 978-4-0011-6042-0 | Ages: 11+ | *Dinosaurs, Fossils*

This book is based on online lessons given by the Deputy Director of the National Museum of Nature and Science. The first lesson “What is excavation?” is followed by detailed lessons on dinosaur heads, front legs, hind legs, and tails, then the extinction of dinosaurs and their evolution into birds. It also introduces the most recent research such as how it was discovered that certain dinosaurs had a keen sense of smell by reconstructing the brain from a scan of a dinosaur skull. The book captures and retains readers’ interest through colorful photos, dynamic illustrations, specimen making, and quizzes. At the end, the author encourages the reader to keep searching for what interests them. (Sakaguchi)



Quietly AMAZING! Encyclopedia of Living Creatures That Support Agriculture

地味にスゴイ！ 農業をささえる生きもの図鑑 | Text: TANIMOTO Yuji | Ill. ISHIDA Ko | Komine Shoten | 2023 | 152pp | 29×23cm | ISBN978-4-3380-8173-3 | Ages: 11+ | *Insects, Natural enemies, Agriculture*

This book introduces 56 creatures, from ducks to ladybugs, that support rice farming and other agriculture in Japan. Each page has a photo, an illustration, and a detailed introduction of the creature. Scientific classification and distribution, habitat, and other data are included, along with the creature’s actual size and interesting trivia. Creatures with special powers such as fighting pests, weeding, pollinizing, and decomposing are introduced at a glance. In addition, reviled creatures such as mosquitoes, snails, and aphids are shown to be useful for developing new technology and nourishing helpful insects. The themes in this book could offer clues for independent research, and the rich content merits many reads. (Sakaguchi)



The Complete Sushi Encyclopedia From History to the Creatures Served in Sushi

お寿司まるごと図鑑 歴史から寿司種になる生きものまで | Photos/Text: ABE Hideki | Sv. FUKUCHI Kyoko | Kaiseisha | 2023 | 128pp | 27×19cm | ISBN978-4-0343-6840-4 | Ages: 11+ | *Marine products, Cuisine, Fishing industry, Market*

This is a full-color visual encyclopedia packed with info about a food known all over the world—sushi! Its origin was in southeast Asia, in a fermented dish prepared using fish and other ingredients. This dish made its way to Japan in the eighth century, and by the fourteenth century, it was being eaten with rice as *iizushi*. Would you like to know about the fish and seafood currently used in sushi, and where they’re procured, cultivated, and sold, and how they make their way into sushi restaurants? And would you like to know who works with sushi? Finally . . . *akami*, *hikarimono*, *shiroimi*, *kai* . . . check out the seventy-page listing of sushi ingredients! (Nogami)



Tetsu Nakamura The Doctor Who Turned the Desert Green with Life-Giving Water

中村哲 命の水で砂漠を緑にかえた医師 | Text: HAMANO Kyoko | Akane Shobo | 2023 | 144pp | 22×16cm | ISBN978-4-2510-4629-1 | Ages: 11+ | *Afghanistan, Aid work, Drought, Irrigation canals*

This is a biography of doctor Tetsu Nakamura, who revived agriculture and saved lives in Afghanistan by building irrigation channels. An insect lover from his youth, he was drawn to mountainous regions with rare insects, and he opened a medical aid NGO in the mountains of Pakistan and Afghanistan. During a drought from about the year 2000, he threw himself into building wells and irrigation ways to conserve water. He saw such efforts as a cornerstone of coping with the climate crisis, and he used traditional techniques that respected nature. Nephew of the writer Ashihei Hino, Dr. Nakamura was a reader and left many writings and lectures. This book uses photos, a timeline and other features to support understanding. (Okuyama)



The Evolution of Whales

クジラの進化 | Text: MINAKUCHI Hiroya | Ill. ODA Takashi | Sv. KIMURA Toshiyuki | Kodansha | 2022 | 44pp | 25×26cm | ISBN978-4-0652-8422-3 | Ages: 11+ | *Whales, Evolution, Mammals*

This picture book shows the evolution of whales, which have long been beloved in Japan. The blue whale is the heaviest creature alive today, and sperm whales have teeth. How did they evolve? This book goes back some fifty million years to a wolf-like ancestor of whales. The tail fin and repositioning of the nose for breathing are shown, as well as the difference between teeth and the baleen. The illustrations help readers to follow the whales’ evolutionary history. The image of a sperm whale next to a giant squid in the deep sea, and of a blue whale gobbling up Antarctic krill, are stunning and worth gazing at repeatedly. The end of the book offers further information about the whales described in the book. (Sakaguchi)



Seeking the Secrets of the Bowerbird

ニワシロリのひみつをもとめて | Text/Ill. SUZUKI Mamoru | Rironsha | 2023 | 208pp | 20×14cm | ISBN978-4-6522-0552-5 | Ages: 11+ | *Building, Journey, Unexplored regions*

As a child, this book’s author found a photo in a library of a bird that builds. In middle school, he learned that the bird was a type of bowerbird that builds a structure like a small garden shelter. Later, after becoming a picture book artist, the author decided to investigate more about the birds, and he journeyed to natural habitat in Australia, Papua New Guinea, and West Papua. His illustrations bring out the secrets of the bird’s building method, as well as details of the areas where the bird live. The author’s exchanges with residents of unexplored regions, as well as his observations of human interaction with nature, make this a thought-provoking work of reportage. (Shiozaki)

84



Toshi Maruki

Showing War to the World Through the Hiroshima Panels

丸木俊「原爆の図」を描き世界に戦争を伝える
| Text: OKAMURA Yukinori | Akane Shobo | 2023
| 152pp | 22×16cm | ISBN978-4-2510-4631-4
| Ages: 11+ | *Atomic bomb*

At a time when a woman becoming an artist was rare, Toshi Maruki overcame innumerable obstacles to become a compassionate, resilient painter. Then she began a collaboration with Iri Maruki to portray the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, Iri's hometown, in the Hiroshima Panels. The artists wanted the panels to belong to all, and they visited more than twenty countries to enable people to experience them. In addition, they opened a museum with the panels on permanent display. By rendering scenes where civilians lost their lives in manmade horrors—Nanking, Auschwitz, the Bikini Atoll, Minamata, Okinawa—the artists continually empathized with and memorialized the powerless. (Sakaguchi)

85



Save the Great Cedar Barrel!

巨大おけを絶やすな! | Text: TAKEUCHI Sakiko
| Ill. MORINAGA You | Iwanami Shoten | 2023
| 224pp | 18×11cm | ISBN978-4-0050-0962-6
| Ages: 13+ | *Soy sauce, Barrels, Cedar, Food culture*

On Shodoshima in Kagawa prefecture, the Yamaroku Shoyu company ferments the starter for soy sauce in huge cedar-wood barrels (oke) some two meters tall and two meters wide. One day, a barrel that had been used for over a century cracked. But there was no longer a craftsman anywhere in Japan who made such items. Mr. Yamamoto and others at the company decided that it would be interesting if a soy sauce company itself tried to make the barrels. They embarked on a quest that helped to preserve a traditional soy sauce preparation technique. Cedar wood has a deep connection to Japanese cuisine, and wooden buckets of various sizes are a mainstay in daily life. This book introduces these items and provides an opportunity to think about their future use. (Shiozaki)

86



I Sat on the Bench for Three Years But Became a Soccer Coach in Germany

3年間ホケツだった僕がドイツでサッカー指導者になった話 | Text: NAKANO Kichinosuke
| Ill. HAYAKAWA Yoshio | Rironsha | 2023 | 192pp
| 19×13cm | ISBN978-4-6522-0581-5 | Ages: 13+
| *Sports, Soccer, Germany, Team*

The author of this book was largely benched for three years on his high school soccer team in Japan, before he attended a German soccer school. He was fascinated by how Germany nurtured local teams all over the country, with league games for children through adults and opportunities for anyone and everyone to participate. He decided to move to Germany and, while studying German, he obtained a license to coach soccer there. After that, while teaching children to play the game, he also enjoyed playing it as an athlete, and he even became a writer who specializes in soccer. His autobiography recounts the uncertainties and encounters that led to living his dream life with soccer. (Okuyama)

87



I Want to Know the Secrets! A Story of Slugs

チャコウラさんの秘密を知りたい! ナメクジの話
| Text: UDAKA Hiroko | Ill. YONEMURA Toshinori
| Kaiseisha | 2022 | 188pp | 21×15cm | ISBN978-4-0363-6340-7 | Ages: 13+ | *Slugs, Research, Living creature*

The author of this book is a biologist who has been researching land slugs for nearly twenty years. Why did she choose the much-hated slug to research? In fact, she did not start out this way, but while researching the slug that is the most common in Japan, the *Ambigolimax valentianus*, she discovered that she found it interesting. In this book, she talks about loving animals as a child and wanting to become a veterinarian, and then becoming a slug researcher as an adult—even starting the Slug Survey Network, a project to look for slugs that invites private citizens's participation. Readers discover the world of scientific researchers, who can find something interesting and then strive to uncover all they can about it. (Shiozaki)

88



Arakawa: A River Made by People Preventing Disaster, Enriching Lives

人がつくった川・荒川 水害から命を守り、暮らしを豊かにする | Text: HASEGAWA Atsushi | Ill. TEZUKA Masae, KAWAI Chiaki | Junposha | 2022 | 204pp | 20×14cm
| ISBN978-4-8451-1770-3 | Ages: 13+ | *River, Water, Edo, Environment*

This book tells the story of the Arakawa river, which flows from the Oku Chichibu mountains through Saitama Prefecture and into Tokyo Bay. In the Edo period (1603–1868), its westward flow was adjusted as a public works project, establishing the paddy fields and boating ways of the Kanto plain. In the Meiji period (1868–1912), when factories multiplied and Tokyo needed protection from floods, the river was divided into the Arakawa Floodway to Tokyo Bay and the Sumida River. The civil engineers who masterminded these projects—Tadaharu Ina, Akira Aoyama—gave their utmost in cooperation with many laborers. Currently, local citizens help to manage the river basin in response to global warming. This book's hand-illustrated maps and images, tucked in all over, make the content accessible and engaging. (Okuyama)

89



Yokai (Monsters) Are in the Sea?! Natural History Class, Aramata-Style

妖怪は海にいる!? アラムタ式 海の博物教室 | Text: ARAMATA Hiroshi | Ill. YONEMURA Toshinori
| Kaiseisha | 2022 | 240pp | 21×15cm | ISBN978-4-0363-6360-5 | Ages: 13+ | *Marine life, Earth, Natural history*

This book introduces marine organisms that the renowned naturalist and author Hiroshi Aramata loved and thought were like yokai. In a freewheeling, fun style, the book imparts knowledge about the history of Earth and its natural life. It touches on the spongelike Venus flower basket . . . the classification of organisms by digestive systems . . . the giant tube worms that live near underwater volcanoes . . . the five mass extinction events . . . the larva seen while night diving that are totally different from their parents . . . and more! The opening illustrations of deep-sea life and color photo of Phronimidae are unique and lovely. This book passionately shows that if you have curiosity and courage, life will be fun! (Sakaguchi)



The Hans Christian Andersen Award

Winners



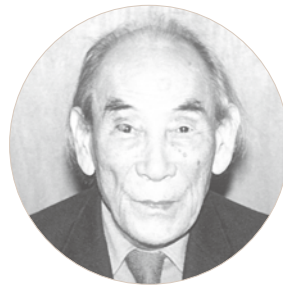
KADONO Eiko 1935- **2018 Author Award**

Born in Tokyo, KADONO Eiko 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 MIYAZAKI Hayao. Kadono has been decorated by the Emperor of Japan for her significant contributions to children's literature.



UEHASHI Nahoko 1962- **2014 Author Award**

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



MADO Michio 1909-2014 **1994 Author Award**

MADO Michio 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 KITAHARA Hakushu, 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.



ANNO Mitsumasa 1926-2020 **1984 Illustrator Award**

Born in Tsuwano, a village located in a valley surrounded by mountains, ANNO Mitsumasa 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.



AKABA Suekichi 1910-1990 **1980 Illustrator Award**

Born in Tokyo, AKABA Suekichi 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.

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

Nominees since 2000



ARAI Ryoji
1956-

2022, 2024 Illustrator



CHO Shinta
1927-2005

1998, 2000 Illustrator



HAYASHI Akiko
1945-

2008, 2010 Illustrator



ISHII Momoko
1907-2008
2002 Author



IWASE Joko
1950-

2022, 2024 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



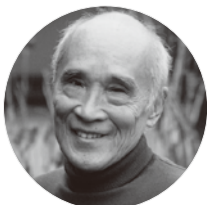
OHTA Daihachi
1918-2016

1970, 2002-2006 Illustrator



SATO Satoru
1928-2017

2004 Author



TANIKAWA Shuntaro
1931-
2008, 2010 Author



TASHIMA Seizo
1940-

2018, 2020 Illustrator



TOMIYASU Yoko
1959-

2020 Author

Japanese Books Selected for the IBBY Honour List

JBBY has selected books for three categories (writing, illustration, translation) of the IBBY Honour List every two years since 1996. Since 2008, JBBY has given these books the JBBY Award.

Writing



Writing 2018
FURUUCHI Kazuo
Hula Boys
Furadan
Komine Shoten



Writing 2010
HAMANO Kyoko
Fusion
Fyujon
Kodansha



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



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



Writing 2022
HANAGATA Mitsuru
Tokujiro and I
Tokujiro to boku
Rironsha



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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

Illustration

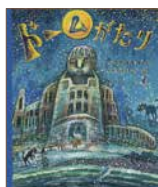


Illustration 2018
SUZUKI Koji
Dome Story
Domu gatari
Text: Arthur Binard
Tamagawa University Press



Illustration 2022
TASHIMA Seizo
Gotcha!
Tsukamaeta
Kaiseisha



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



Illustration 2020
TAMURA Shigeru
Night Sounds
Yoru no oto
Kaiseisha



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



Illustration 2012
INOUE Yosuke
Hats
Boshi
East Press



Illustration 2010
ITO Hideo
Ushio
Ushio
Billiken Shuppan



Illustration 2008
ARAI Ryoji
A Sound of Taiyo-Organ
Taiyo organ
Kaiseisha



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



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



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

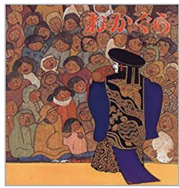


Illustration 2000
ONO Kaoru
The Night of Kagura
Okagura
Text: WAKI Akiko
Poplar



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



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

Translation



Translation 2022
Trans. NAGANO Toru
Folo, il Centauro
by Roberto Piumini
Kentauros no Porosu
Iwanami Shoten



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



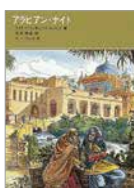
Translation 2006
Trans. HISHIKI Akirako
Maj Darlin by Mats Wahl
Mai ga ita natsu
Tokuma Shoten



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



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



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



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



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

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