

Japanese Children's Book Recommendations from JBBY 2026

About the 2026 Selection

● 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). Since 2015, we have curated a yearly catalog to introduce superb Japanese children's titles abroad.

In Japanese Children's Book Recommendations from JBBY 2026 catalog, we provide information and descriptions of recent Japanese books in 3 categories: picture books, chapter books and novels, and nonfiction. These titles were selected after rigorous consultation and consideration by experts who have been involved in children's books for many years, based on the points below:

- published in Japan between July 2024 and April 2025
- contain fine content representative of Japan
- enable children to explore Japanese cultures and the real lives of children in Japan
- worthy of translation overseas
- worthy of further introduction to children, caregivers, libraries, and publishing professionals in Japan

We hope that our catalog will help you discover recent children's titles from Japan.

For further information, please contact us: info@jbbby.org



Kazumi UNO, JBBY President

Cover Illustration of small leaflet: **Hiroshi ABE**

Born in 1948. Worked as a zookeeper for 25 years and became known for his illustrations on the zoo's walls, signboards, and newsletters. In 1981, his first book, *Asahi-yama Zoo Diary* was published, then he made his debut as a picture book author/illustrator in 1989 with *Zoo on the Snow: The Mystery of Footprints*.

In 1994 he received 2 major children's book prizes in Japan for *One Stormy Night*, text written by Yuichi KIMURA. This series gained widespread popularity and was adapted into an animated film, musical, and even a Kabuki performance. After retiring from the zoo in 1996, he has travelled widely, continuing to create picture books featuring animals as protagonists. In 2014, *To the New World* was selected for the IBBY Honour List and won the 4th JBBY Award. He has been nominated for the Biennial of Illustration Bratislava (BIB) seven times, and he is nominated for Illustration Award of Hans Christian Andersen Award 2026 from Japan.

• JBBY Book Selection and Review Team



Yasuko DOI

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.



Kimiko KONDO

After working at a public library, a community-based elementary school library, and a university library, she currently works as a school librarian at a junior and senior high school library. She is a member of the selection committee for *Children's Bookshelves* (published by the Japan Children's Book Research Association). She is also the editor of *Children and Reading* (published by the Parents and Children Association). She is a reading advisor for JPIC. Member of the Japanese Society of Science Books for Children. JBBY member.



Akira NOGAMI

At Shogakukan, served as an editor of *First Grader* monthly magazine, head of children's books, company director, and finally president and CEO of Shogakukan Creative. 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. Vice-president of Japan PEN Club. JBBY member.



Megumi OKUYAMA

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 University. She has authored '*Story*' *Wavering: Children's Books in an Unclear Age* (Kurosio Shuppan) and *Lessons in Layeredness* (Ryoyu Shuppan) as well as co-authored *A Guide to World Children's Literature Based on Time* (Hara Shobo), *Lunch with Authors: Interviews with 13 Children's Book Writers* (Ryoyu Shuppan). JBBY member.



Mikako SAKAGUCHI

Member of the Japanese Society of Science Books for Children. With the motto "science books and experiences play catch," she teaches some 270 sessions annually from play-with-science times, to elementary/middle school and university classes, to workshops targeted to library and children's center staff. 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.



Yumiko SAKUMA

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