

Japanese Children's Book Recommendations from JBBY 2026

Nonfiction

For each selected title, we provide the following:

Title in English

Title in Japanese | Author | Illustrator | Publisher | Publication Year | Number of Pages | Cover Size |

ISBN | Target Age | Keywords

Contact details of foreign rights handler (only for the titles for 2026)

Basic Book Description (Last Name of Reviewer)

36



Japanese New Year dishes

おせち

Text/Ill. Yumi UCHIDA | Cooking Kuniko MITSUDOME | Expert Adv. Yasuko

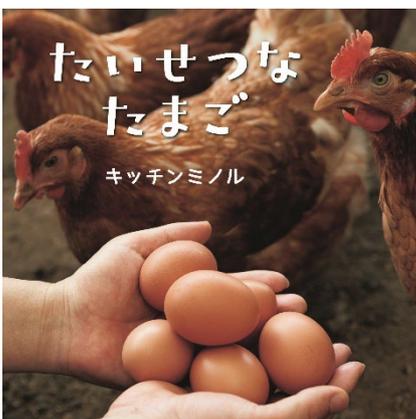
MIURA

Fukuinkan Shoten Publishers. Inc. | 2024 | 32pp | 20×27cm | ISBN978-4-8340-8813-7 | Ages:3+ | *Tradition, Cuisine, New Year*

Contact | international-rights@fukuinkan.co.jp attn. Ms. Yoko UESUGI/
International-rights/,Fukuinkan Shoten

A three-tiered lacquered box filled with traditional New Year dishes, such as shiny stewed black beans, a sweet rolled omelet, and dry-roasted sardine fry candied in sugar and soy sauce. The illustrations are so realistic that the colorful slices of fish cake, kelp-wrapped herring and other foods packed in each tier look like photographs. Rhythmical text introduces the richness of Japanese culture. Known as osechi, traditional New Year dishes are imbued with prayers for good fortune. Every ingredient, shape and color has a meaning, even the pine sprigs used for decoration. Over double-page spreads, the contents of the top appetizer tier, the grilled food tier in the middle, and the stewed dishes tier on the bottom are so finely reproduced, it makes the reader want to examine every detail. (SAKAGUCHI)

37



Precious Eggs

たいせつなたまご

Text/Photos Kitchen Minoru

Hakusensha | 2024 | 24p | 21×21cm | ISBN978-4-592-76350-5 | Ages:3+ | *Poultry farming, Labor, Food, Life*

Contact | rights3@hakusensha.co.jp attn. Overseas Sales Dept./ Hakusensha

This photo picture book introduces egg production at Hakoniwa Farm, a free-range poultry farm operated according to humane farming practices. Double-page spreads present daily routines for the farmers and the chickens through photos and easy-to-understand text. There is Koike who

checks the chickens' condition every morning, Kaneko who is in charge of their feed, and Ueno who keeps their space clean. The hens lay shiny eggs, which are washed, packaged, and delivered to the store from which they finally reach the customers' tables. The book captures how everyone and everything involved, including the farmers, the hens and even the eggs, are treated with care and respect. (OKUYAMA)

38



Dandelions Love People

たんぽぽはひとがすき

Photos Shabou HANI | Text Yasuko SHIMADA

Poplar Publishing | 2025 | 42p | 21×26cm | ISBN978-4-591-18508-7 | Ages:3+ |

Weeds, Seasons, Flowers

Contact | rights-inquiry@poplar.co.jp attn. Mr. Takashi OMURA/ Overseas

Business Division/ Poplar

Dandelions are often seen near where people live, growing where other plants cannot, such as the narrow cracks in concrete and pedestrian sidewalks and on roadsides. Their flowers look like they have many petals, but each "petal" is actually a flower with a stamen and a pistil. When the flowers are finished, they turn into fluffy wands with a seed attached to the bottom. Forming a sphere, they look like a beautiful burst of fireworks. The wands are blown by the wind, scattering the seeds far and wide. Even when crushed underfoot or dug up, dandelions are not defeated. The secret to their vitality is in their roots which penetrate deep underground. Through spectacular photography, the book introduces the fascinating ecology of this familiar weed. (NOGAMI)

39



Amazing Ice Shapes

つめたいこおり どんなかたち?

Photos Masayo HOSOJIMA | Struct./Text Hidenobu IJICHI

IWASAKI Publishing Co.,Ltd. | 2024 | 32pp | 25×19cm | ISBN978-4-265-83153-1 |

Ages:3+ | *Water, Temperature, Nature*

Contact | kanaoka@iwasakishoten.co.jp attn. Ms. Kate KANAOKA/ Associate Cross Content Manager/ Iwasaki Publishing

When water freezes, it becomes ice. Although we can make ice in the freezer, in the natural world, many types of ice form when winter comes. Water frozen in the ground becomes frost columns. Water frozen while dripping from above forms icicles. Snowflakes are tiny ice particles floating in the air. Hail and sleet are other forms of ice. Water in a bucket and in ponds also freezes when it gets cold. This photo book introduces the many shapes and ways in which ice forms, including a breathtaking photo of a giant icicle 13 meters tall and 8 meters in circumference created by a frozen waterfall. A photo of delicious-looking fluffy shaved ice made with ice taken from a pond is the perfect finale. (NOGAMI)

40



When a Whale Dies

クジラがしんだら

Text Eri EGUCHI | Ill. Shun'ichi KAWASAKI | Expert Adv. Yoshihiro FUJIWARA
DOSHINSHA PUBLISHING, CO., LTD. | 2024 | 40p | 25×26cm | ISBN978-4-494-
01599-3 | Ages:7+ | *Whales, Deep sea creatures, Life*

Contact | k_inoue@doshinsha.co.jp attn. Mr. Koji INOUE/ Doshinsha

In the darkness deep at the bottom of the ocean where we cannot see, living creatures wait patiently for food. One day, a dead sperm whale sinks to the seabed.

The first to notice is a roughskin dogfish. It tears at the whale's skin with its sharp teeth. Once the dogfish leaves, snubnosed eels, spider crabs, sea urchins and other creatures gather. Even after all the flesh has been devoured, osedax japonicus come to eat the bones and lay their eggs. Through eye-catching illustrations and text, this picture book describes how a dead whale gives life to creatures deep below the sea. All the creatures that appear in the story are introduced in the appendix. (SAKUMA)

41



There's a Ladybug!

テントウムシみつけ！

Struct./Text Masaki SATONAKA

Tokuma Shoten Publishing Co.,Ltd. | 2025 | 32p | 18×26cm | ISBN978-4-19-
865975-2 | Ages:7+ | *Insects, Observation, Raising*

Contact | rights@shoten.tokuma.com attn. rights dept./ Tokuma Shoten

Using large, clear photos and easy-to-understand text, the author shares tips for finding ladybugs, such as the kind of plants they like, so that even small children can find them. Consecutive photos trace the insect's physiological structure, its progression from egg to larvae, and how it molts three times to reach the pupa stage before finally reaching its adult form. The author also presents photos of seventeen types of ladybugs, including the seven-spotted ladybug, along with explanations of how to raise them. This information is complimented with fascinating insights into the workings of nature, such as why ladybugs flip over when touched and why ants attack ladybugs when they eat aphids. (SAKAGUCHI)

42

Friends

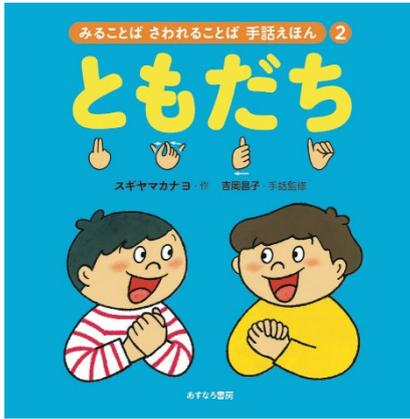
Words to See, Words to Touch

みることば さわれることば

ともだち

Text/Ill. Kanayo SUGIYAMA | Expert Adv. Masako YOSHIOKA

Asunaro-Shobo Publishing Co.,Ltd. | 2024 | 60pp | 17×17cm | ISBN978-4-7515-3222-5 | Ages:7+ | *Sign language,*



Conversation, Deafness

Contact | y-house@asunaro-shobo.co.jp attn. Mr. Shin YAMAURA/ Asunaro-Shobo

A picture book that urges both people who use sign language and those who don't to take an interest and enjoy conversation. The simple, cheerful illustrations depict two boys, one who is deaf and one who is a hearing child of deaf adults (CODA), playing together with things like paper airplanes while communicating in sign language unique to Japan. The margins under the illustrations show not only how to express certain words in sign language, but also provide information related to sign language, expression and actions. It uses creative means to make the book easy to use, including QR codes linked to sign language videos and an index in the appendix. Most significantly, it conveys the importance of understanding one another's feelings. (SAKAGUCHI)

43



Always Together with Others The Life of the Long-tailed Tit

いつも仲間とっしょ エナガの暮らし

Text Narisa TOGO | Photos Yoshiteru EGUCHI

Bun-ichi Sogo Shuppan Co.,Ltd. | 2024 | 48p | 26×18cm | ISBN978-4-8299-9021-6 |

Ages:9+ | *Wild birds, Seasons, Families*

Contact | charlie@bun-ichi.co.jp attn. Ms. Chihiro KIKUCHI/ Bun-ichi Sogo Shuppan

The adorable fluffy little wild bird known as the long-tailed tit weighs a mere seven grams and lives in flocks to avoid being targeted by predators. When danger is sensed, they alert each other with calls, and they occasionally form flocks with other species such as Japanese white-eyes or great tits. The long-tailed tit is small and darts about swiftly, making it difficult to spot, and photographing its behavior is a formidable challenge. This groundbreaking photographic picture book masterfully captures a rare glimpse of the life of the long-tailed tit throughout the seasons: from nine birds huddling together to ward off the night chill, to nest-building and the rearing of chicks. The Q&A section at the end is both enjoyable and easy to understand. (NOGAMI)

44

Transporting Giant Stones! Crossing the Sea to Osaka Castle

巨石運搬！海をこえて大阪城へ

Text/III. Ayumi KAMATA

Alicekan Ltd. | 2024 | 36p | 27×22cm | ISBN978-4-7520-1121-7 | Ages:9+ | *Castles,*

Stone walls, Technology

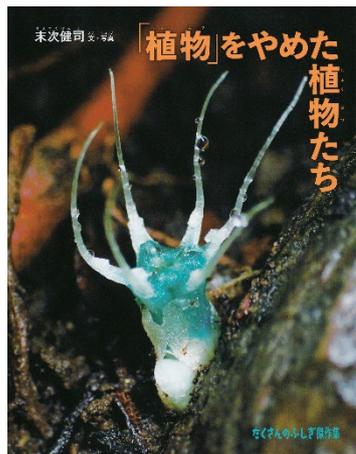
Contact | nishida@alicekan.com attn. Ms. Kikue NISHIDA/ Editorial Dept./ Alicekan

The construction of Osaka Castle, starting with the main keep, was a major architectural



and civil engineering undertaking. This picture book meticulously depicts the craftsmanship of the artisans who built the stone walls protecting it. Four hundred years ago, on Shōdoshima Island in the Seto Inland Sea, stonemasons used hand-made tools like chisels and sledgehammers to cut massive stones. They then employed sledges and pulleys to load these huge stones onto ships for transportation to Osaka, where they are still conspicuously present in the walls of the castle today. Fold-out pages demonstrate the progress of the work over time, while the songs sung by the stonemasons and boat crews to coordinate their work convey a sense of their pride and elation. A masterful work conveying human endeavour and history. (SAKAGUCHI)

45



MUSHROOM MUNCHERS : The Fascinating World of Non-Photosynthetic Plants

「植物」をやめた植物たち

Text/Photos Kenji SUETSUGU

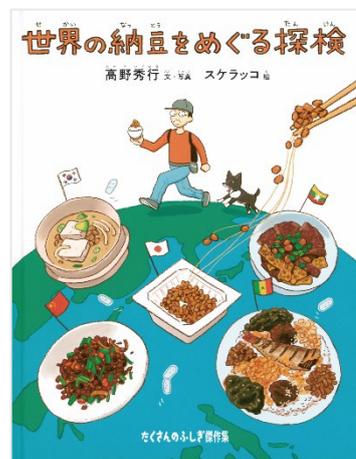
Fukuinkan Shoten Publishers, Inc. | 2024 | 40p | 26×20cm | ISBN978-4-8340-8811-3 |

Ages:9+ | *Photosynthesis, Plants, Survival strategies*

Contact | international-rights@fukuinkan.co.jp attn. Ms. Yoko UESUGI/ International-rights/ Rights &Permissions Dept./ Fukuinkan Shoten

Animals obtain their own food, taking in nutrients from the outside world. Plants create their own nutrients through photosynthesis, using water and carbon dioxide. However, of the approximately 300,000 known plant species, around a thousand do not perform photosynthesis. Lacking chlorophyll, they are unusual colours such as white, red, or blue, and many are less than 1cm in size. So how do they survive? They cleverly deceive fungi, the forest's decomposers, to obtain their nutrients. This picture book presents their ingenious survival strategies—such as self-pollination or relying on insects and animals to disperse their seeds—through beautiful colour photographs and accessible illustrations. It also explores the cutting edge of research, inspiring curiosity in the reader.(SAKAGUCHI)

46



Exploring the World of Fermented Soybeans "Natto"

世界の納豆をめぐる探検

Text/Photos Hideyuki TAKANO | Ill. Sukeracko

Fukuinkan Shoten Publishers, Inc. | 2024 | 48p | 26×20cm | ISBN978-4-8340-8810-6 |

Ages:9+ | *Fermented beans, Natto, Cooking, Asia, Africa*

Contact | international-rights@fukuinkan.co.jp attn. Ms. Yoko UESUGI/ International-rights/ Rights & Permissions Dept./ Fukuinkan Shoten

Fermented beans are both healthy and delicious and are enjoyed not only in Japan as natto, but in many places around the world. While in Asia soybeans are used, in Africa people make use of various legumes, such as daddawa from Nigeria. Eating methods vary greatly; in Myanmar, for instance, fermented beans are made into rice crackers for longer preservation. This picture book introduces diverse

fermented bean dishes from across the globe. The author has spent over 30 years traveling to remote regions across Asia, Africa, and South America, and here presents a fascinating account of fermented beans around the world over seven years, highlighting them as an important source of protein for people worldwide. (KONDO)

47



So That's How It Is! Snails and Slugs

そうだったのか!カタツムリとナメクジ

Text Yasuko SHIMADA | Ill. Koshiro HATA

DOSHINSHA PUBLISHING.,CO.,LTD. | 2025 | 135p | 22×15cm | ISBN978-4-494-02084-3 |

Ages:9+ | *Ecology, Breeding, Evolution*

Contact | k_inoue@doshinsha.co.jp attn. Mr. Koji INOUE/ Foreign rights& Promotion/
Doshinsha

After coming across a snail by chance, the author wanted to measure its speed. She started breeding common slugs before moving on to snails. Observing the snail's anatomy, she traced its evolution from sea snails some 310 million years ago. Studying its cycles of hibernation and estivation, she identified one factor that likely helped it survive mass extinction events. She also noted that slugs evolved from snails and shed their shells—which served to retain bodily moisture—instead developing the ability to secrete copious amounts of mucus. Through raising both creatures, unexpected occurrences provided clues to solving mysteries, making this an engaging read that conveys the joy of breeding the organisms.(SAKAGUCHI)

48

Living Together

Japanese Black Mountain Bears

ともに生きる

山のツキノワグマ

Phoptos/Text Takayuki MAEKAWA

Akane Shobo | 2024 | 32p | 26×19cm | ISBN978-4-251-09977-8 | Ages:9+ | *Coexistence,*

Bears, Nature

Contact | solan@tuttlemori.com attn. Ms. Solan NATSUME/ Tuttle-Mori Agency



The Japanese black bear, inhabiting Honshu and Shikoku, stands alongside the brown bear of Hokkaido at the apex of Japan's ecological pyramid. This picture book conveys the beauty of these bears and Japan's natural landscapes through vibrant colour photography. In July's Tohoku forests, we search for bears concealed in lakeside thickets. In August, bears are shown catching fish washed ashore and resting calmly amidst the rich natural surroundings. However, in recent years, contact with humans has increased due to the ageing and depopulation of mid-mountain regions. It has become more necessary than ever to maintain the boundary between human and bear habitats. When we look the bears directly in the eye in this book, we are encouraged to reflect on human behavior and consider ways to coexist with them. (SAKAGUCHI)

49



We Live in a Vast Ocean

ひろい海にぼくたちは生きている

Text/Photos Hiromi NAGAKURA

AliceKan Ltd. | 2024 | 50p | 26×23cm | ISBN978-4-7520-1122-4 | Ages:9+ | *Sea, Freedom, Nature*

Contact | nishida@alicekan.com attn. Ms. Kikue NISHIDA/ Editorial Dept./ AliceKan

This picture book with captivating photographs portrays the lives of seafaring peoples and their children living in harmony with nature across three locations worldwide: the western Pacific's Sulu Sea and Kapingamarangi Atoll, and the island of Madagascar in Africa. The simple lives of people who make what they need and freely sail the sea in small boats, receiving nature's bounty and sharing it, are contrasted with the lives of people in the developed world surrounded by AI and robots, and exposed to territorial wars and hatred. The contrast illustrates that a different kind of happiness does exist. The author's words are deeply moving: "I too want to keep in my heart a sea in which there are no borders and divisions between people." (SAKUMA)

50



If I Lose My Leg Tomorrow

もしも明日、ぼくの足がなくなったら

Text Izumi FUNASAKI

Gakken Inc. | 2025 | 192p | 20×14cm | ISBN978-4-05-205721-2 | Ages:11+ | *Disabilities, Prostheses, Sports*

Contact | info@gakken.co.jp attn. Mr. Steven Sun/ International Business Dept./ Gakken

This book presents the stories of five people who have had leg amputations. Second-year middle school student Minami underwent amputation due to osteosarcoma and began to run using an artificial leg. High school student Yuzuki dreams of competing in the Paralympics. Saki caused a train accident at age 16 when suffering from depression, and she now uses a wheelchair. Kei was injured and lost her leg below the knee at age 29; she now runs with a prosthetic leg. Illustrator Sugawa uses a prosthetic leg from the hip joint down. The symptoms and challenges faced by each amputee are introduced in careful detail, causing readers to consider what constitutes a barrier-free society. (DOI)

51

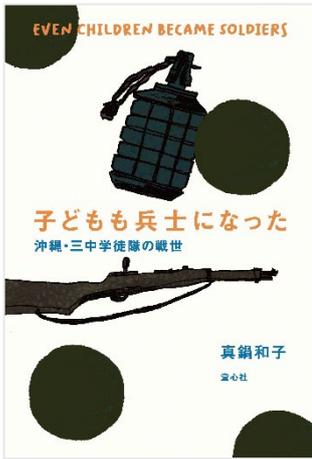
Even Children Became Soldiers

子どもも兵士になった

沖縄・三中学徒隊の戦世

Text Kazuko MANABE | Ill. Mitsuhiro TAYA

DOSHINSHA PUBLISHING.,CO.,LTD. | 2025 | 239p | 20×14cm | ISBN978-4-494-02089-8 | Ages:13+ | *War, Okinawa,*



Student soldiers

Contact | yurika@jfc-tokyo.co.jp attn. Ms. Yurika YOSHIDA/ Japan Foreign-Rights Centre

During World War II, students who entered Okinawa's Third Prefectural Junior High School had no choice but to go to war. This book traces how students aged 14 and up were made into soldiers without proper training. In April 1945, amid an artillery barrage, student soldiers were sent as infantry and communications troops to the front lines, and many died. Siblings with roots in Okinawa also appeared in the battle on the US side, symbolizing how Okinawa found itself utterly trapped. The written and oral testimony of students who survived provides a vivid account of the days they spent surrounded by death. Their personal stories carry devastating weight. The inhumanity of war pierces the reader's heart. (SAKAGUCHI)

52



Ten Things to Know as You Become an Adult: How to Overcome Difficulty and Love Yourself

これから大人になるあなたに伝えたい10のこと

自分を愛し、困難を乗り越える力

Text Sahel Rosa

DOSHINSHA PUBLISHING.,CO.,LTD. | 2024 | 223p | 20×14cm | ISBN978-4-494-02085-0 |

Ages:13+ | *Autobiography, Bullying, Discrimination*

Contact | k_inoue@doshinsha.co.jp attn. Mr. Koji INOUE/ Foreign rights & Promotion/ Doshinsha

Born in Iran, the actress Sahel Rosa performs "the work of expression" both onstage and in the mass media in Japan. In this book, she retraces her painful life story with candor. After being orphaned in the Iran-Iraq war, she immigrated to Japan with her adoptive mother. Over the years, she endured poverty, homelessness, bullying, sexual abuse, and discrimination. Her recollections spring from deep in the heart and linger long with the reader. Her writing exudes her open acceptance of and wish to support all young people who are growing up here and now. Looking outward, and connecting her experience to others, she firmly conveys the need to support and care for oneself. (SAKAGUCHI)

53

Problem-Solving Handbook for Teens Facing Barriers: Hints for Living as Yourself

障害のある10代のための困りごと解決ハンドブック

あなたがあなたらしく生きるためのヒント

Edit./Text Akina NOGUCHI, Megumi MATSUNAMI

Gendai Shokan Publishing Co.,Ltd. | 2025 | 256p | 21×15cm | ISBN978-4-7684-3611-0 | Ages:13+ | *Disabilities, Hardship, Problem-Solving*

Contact | harashima@gendaishokan.co.jp attn. Mr. Yasuharu HARASHIMA/ Gendai Shokan



School. Friendships. Romance. Family. Career planning. Day-to-day needs. Work. Barriers. Grouping the key issues faced by young people under themes, this book offers 61 concrete problem-solving approaches in accessible language accompanied by illustrations. All ideograms have phonetic helps, and all explanations list services and resources for further consultation, in addition to introducing real people who have used the approaches. The straightforward advice clearly applies to tweens and teens who are dealing with a wide range of circumstances, including but not limited to disabilities. It emphasizes that, to create a society where everyone can live well, every person must assert their needs and benefit from those around them thinking together logically and taking action. This book offers youth the gift of frank, detailed support. (SAKAGUCHI)

54



Series: Thinking Between Connecting with a Neighboring Country

シリーズ「あいだで考える」

隣の人々と出会う

Text Mariko SAITO

Sogensha | 2024 | 160p | 17×13cm | ISBN978-4-422-93118-0 | Ages:13+ | Korean language, Words, Poetry

*Translation rights not available

The author, a translator of Korean literature, describes her first encounters with the Korean language and offers an easy-to-understand history of the Korean Peninsula, the birth of the Hangul writing system, and more. With historical examples, she emphasizes that to study Korean is to study “between” cultures, which leaves a deep impression. The strong voice (sori) of Korean and its long poetry tradition also comes into clear focus. A literature guide at the back of the book gives helpful information about the various works quoted and introduced throughout the text. This book is one in a series about “thinking between” diverse perspectives. (KONDO)

55



“Weak Robot” Philosophy: Humans, Society, and Life

〈弱いロボット〉から考える 人・社会・生きること

Text Michio OKADA

Iwanami Shoten Publishers | 2024 | 246p | 11×17cm | ISBN978-4-00-500989-3 | Ages:13+ | Robots, Research, Society

Contact | rights@iwamami.co.jp attn. Foreign Rights Division/ Iwanami Shoten

This book shows how the author and his students research and develop robots in a lab at a university. In addition, it asks readers to consider the concept of “weak robots.” By introducing a robot that involves children in helping to collect trash, and by discussing robots that actually

totter and stammer about by design, the author gets readers to think about ways of living that center on mutual relationships and cooperation. His skepticism about society's emphasis on convenience and efficiency is invaluable. The process by which people create robots in his lab—engaging in frank discussion and debate, using available materials, and getting help from one another—is also fascinating. (OKUYAMA)