



# BOOKS FROM Japan

When selecting 10 Japanese picture books, the Children and Young Adults Section of the Japan Library Association (eleven members in all, most of them are active in public libraries and others were once librarians) discussed selection criteria and decided not to select new books but ones which have been read by many children over many years.

In the 1960s, librarians, writers, illustrators, and publishers were eager to distribute quality books to children. Eight out of the ten books in this list were published during the 1960s. Picture books, especially by native authors, are the best tool for understanding countries. There are many good books published after the 1970s: we hope this project will grow and another 'Ten Picture Books' list will be published in the near future.



## 1 Ken Kawata • Masayuki Yabuuchi, ill. **Animal Tails**

Fukuinkan Shoten, 1969 • ISBN 4-8340-0315-9

This book presents the motions and roles of various kinds of animals' tails. After a questioning page of, "Whose tail is this?" comes the answering page. Making use of animals' upper bodies and lower bodies, readers match the pictures to make

a complete animal. The warm and realistic style of the paintings exactly catches the distinctive features of each animal. This science picture book is good for reading aloud, and preschool children will readily participate and enjoy it.



## 2 Eriko Kishida • Chiyoko Nakatani, ill. **Hippopotamus**

Fukuinkan Shoten, 1962 • ISBN 4-8340-0081-8

This book is about one day in the lives of two hippopotamuses in a zoo. The storyteller is a boy who went to the zoo for his own enjoyment. Rhythmical expressions and words charm the

reader. The layout makes for a big impression. The drawings express massiveness and a substantive feel making an appealing story.

### 3 Satoshi Kako **Little Daruma and Little Tengu**

Fukuinkan Shoten, 1967 • ISBN 4-8340-0124-5

Little Daruma and Little Tengu are good friends. Little Daruma asks his father, Darumadon, to let him put on the same things as Little Tengu. However, it's not possible to have exactly the same things. So, Little Daruma works out a way to make similar things and becomes

deeply satisfied. However, is it possible to make the same long nose as Little Tengu's? This book clearly represents the psychological characteristics of a little child who wants to have the same things as his friend.

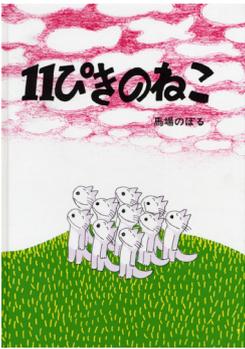


### 4 Noboru Baba **Eleven Hungry Cats**

Koguma Publishing, 1967 • ISBN 4-7721-0004-0

Eleven cats that are always hungry send a big, strong, and monstrous fish to sleep with a lullaby and catch it in a remote lake. However, the big fish, which is tied up to a raft, becomes a mere bone when the dark night is over. On the other hand, the cats' stomachs become completely full

and round like the stomachs of raccoons. The broad-minded story about cats who act as they wish, gets children's sympathy. Additionally, the attached pictures have been attractively drawn by a cartoonist. Consisting of six volumes, the stories are widely appealing to children.



### 5 Rieko Nakagawa & Yuriko Omura **Guri and Gura**

Fukuinkan Shoten, 1967 • ISBN 4-8340-0082-6

Two field mice, Guri and Gura, are fond of cooking and eating. They find a big egg in the forest. After talking, they decide to make a sponge cake. Gathering twigs, they build a fire place, and put a big pan on the fire. Then, a nice smell wafts into the forest and various kinds of

animals gather around the fire. All the animals eat the softly baked cake. The theme of "eating", which children like, and the conversational style of the book arouse children's sympathy and lead them into the world of this picture book.



### 6 Masamiki Nasu • Shigeo Nishimura, ill. **Hiroshima: a tragedy never to be repeated**

Fukuinkan Shoten, 1995 • ISBN 4-8340-1265-4

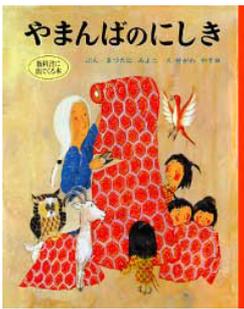
This diverse book tells of the dropping of the atomic bomb on August 6<sup>th</sup>, 1945 using large 27 by 31 centimeter pictures. Considering the pre-history of the war, which includes explanations of the development of the atomic bomb and the process of the dropping of the bomb, it explains the history from both offensive and defensive perspectives. It is composed using evidence as told by 61 survivors of the atomic-

bombing of Hiroshima. The pictures illustrate the everyday lives of people at that time and elaborately reconstruct a bird's-eye view of the horrific disaster of the atomic bomb. A chronological table of peace related matters and detailed explanations of the 18 pictures attached at the back of the book are included.



## 7 Miyoko Matsutani • Yasuo Segawa, ill. **The Witch's Magic Cloth**

Poplar Publishing, 1966 • ISBN 4-591-00375-2



A mountain witch who lived in Chofuku Mountain had a baby. The witch asked the village people to pound steamed rice into cakes and bring them to her. Two young men, led on the way by an old woman "Akazabanba", carried the rice cakes to the witch. During the journey, the young men scared the witch and ran off. Akazabanba went up the mountain alone to prevent a disaster to the village. The witch asked Akazabanba to lend her a hand for 21 days. As a

reward she gave Akazabanba a magic cloth that would not diminish even if used continuously. Akazabanba gave the magic cloth to the village people. Akazabanba's love and courage towards the villagers helped the village and made the people happy. This story has been told for many years in the Akita district of Tohoku. The pictures have been created with a beautiful and elegant touch like Japanese-style paintings, evoking a bright and happy atmosphere.

## 8 Tadashi Matsui • Suekichi Akaba, ill. **Oniroku and the Carpenter**

Fukuinkan Shoten, 1962 • ISBN 4-8340-0085-0



A Japanese folktale picture book. A skilful carpenter, who had been asked to build a bridge over a rapid river, was watching the stream and pondering his task when an ogre appeared in the water. He offered to do the task in exchange for the carpenter's eyeballs. The bridge was completed in a flash. When the carpenter begged the ogre not to take his eyes,

he said he would let him go if the carpenter could guess the ogre's real name. A similar story to 'Rumpelstiltskin', children age 4 to 8 can enjoy the thrill of the conversation between the ogre and the carpenter. Pictures drawn using traditional Japanese techniques complement the atmosphere of the folktale.

## 9 Akiko Hayashi **Good evening, dear moon**

Fukuinkan Shoten, 1986 • ISBN 4-8340-0687-0



"It's nighttime. / Look, the sky is really, really dark. / Now look above the roof. / There's a light. / It's the moon! / Good evening, dear Moon!" Two cats on the roof are cheerfully greeting the beautiful, rising moon. However, a big cloud passes, hiding the moon's face behind it. "Please move, Cloud, we can't see the Moon's face," the two

cats cry. Then the cloud gradually passes over, and the smiling moon comes out again... The moon's grace and its bright face are beautifully depicted in warm and soft strokes. Each illustration in this handy, square format abundantly describes the gentle atmosphere of the night.

## 10 Minami Nishiuchi **Grumpa's Kindergarten**

Fukuinkan Shoten, 1966 • ISBN 4-8340-0083-4



Grumpa, the young elephant, was ordered to start work. He went to work for a biscuit maker, a shoe maker, a car maker, and so on. However, his efforts were in vain because all he could make were jumbo-sized goods that nobody would buy. Grumpa was very disappointed and began to think that he would never be able to work properly. Just then, he happened upon

a busy mother with 12 children, and so found a job which would make him the happiest elephant in the world. He set to work creating a wonderful playground with the huge things he had already made. Children love the elephant-sized things and enjoy Grumpa's success story. Simple pictures and a cheerful atmosphere attract little children.