



TOMIYASU Yoko

2026 H.C.Andersen Award Nominee from *Japan*



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Photo by Masashi Asada

TOMIYASU Yoko

Born in Tokyo in 1959. During early childhood, she lived in Canada with her family. After returning to Japan at the age of five, she grew up listening to numerous stories filled with yokai and mysterious tales from her talkative and mischievous grandmother and great-aunts.

At university, she majored in *Heian-period* (the ancient Japanese era lasting from the 8th to 12 centuries AD) literature. She was deeply attracted to stories of ghosts and ogres in *Genji Monogatari* (The Tale of Genji), and fell more and more into the world of traditional folklore.

Since elementary school, she had loved creating stories, and in 1979, while still a university student, she made her literary debut when piece she had written during high school was published in a monthly magazine for children. In 1990, she won the Newcommer Prize of Japanese Association of Writers for Children for *Noisy House in Oak Forests*. Since then, influenced by the growth of her two sons, she has published numerous works ranging from picture books to young adult literature, primarily focusing on small children's literature, and has received numerous domestic children's literature awards.

Mokko in Mount Yamanba was selected as IBBY Honor List in 2002, and her books have frequently been included in *White Ravens* recommended book list by the International Youth Library in Munich. Then, In 2020, she was nominated for the Hans Christian Andersen Award, and her book *Invitation to the Festival of Bon* was selected the recommended books by the International Jury team. She was also awarded the 7th JBBY Award Author category.

There was a long era of writing stories that I wanted to read for myself. The origin of my creativity is the desire to write about a wondrous world that children can walk into from their everyday life. I want to write about the strange and mysterious world that I have loved since I was a child.

STATEMENT

Nominating Yoko Tomiyasu for the Hans Christian Andersen Award

Nogami, Akira editor/critic

Yoko Tomiyasu has written more than 120 books grounded in Japanese folklore and folk beliefs. One of the top children's authors in Japan today, her works are humorous, magical fantasies filled with yokai and other unique characters. Young readers are delighted to discover the characters and lore that spring out of settings depicting their own daily lives. Tomiyasu's books are requested more than any other writer at libraries, *kodomo bunko* (private children's libraries) and for read-aloud groups.

1. An avid reader makes her debut as an author at age 20

Tomiyasu was born in Tokyo on February 18, 1959. When she was 3, her father's work took the family to Toronto, Canada. Even after returning to Japan when she was 5, her experience overseas influenced her reading: she devoured *Winnie-the-Pooh*, *My Father's Dragon*, *Pippin Longstocking*, *The Little Witch*, the *Moomintroll* books, and more. Her favorite was *Mary Poppins*. When she read it as a 10-year-old, it inspired her to write her own stories. In her biography, Tomiyasu writes that she lived with her grandmother and an aunt who had been born and raised in rural Japan. They told Tomiyasu traditional tales of mythical Japanese creatures—kappa living in rivers, mountain witches, and talking raccoon dogs to name a few. It is clear that all of her childhood experiences led to her creative endeavors.

By the time she was in high school, Tomiyasu

was busy writing short stories. As a graduation gift, her parents self-published 100 copies of a book of three of the stories: *The Winter Wind Whistle*, *Nanoko the Teacher*, and *Higashi-ike*. The year was 1977 and Tomiyasu was 18. She went on to college, where her writing professor submitted her book to publishers. In 1979, *The Winter Wind Whistle* and *Nanoko the Teacher* were published in Fukuinkan's monthly periodical *Kodomo no yakata*. This was the debut of Yoko Tomiyasu, children's author.

Both of the above stories were set in places where the wind was strong and played a major role in the magic of the plot. The tales included nature and seasonal changes that went on to be signature features of her work. These early pieces were so beautifully written that readers had no idea they were the work of a high school student.

Indeed, both were published as picturebooks. *The Winter Wind Whistle* was illustrated by Toshio Kajiyama and released in 2002 (Akane Shobo), and *Nanoko the Teacher* was developed into a series that began publication in 2003 (Fukuinkan Shoten). Both are still read and loved by children today.



The Winter Wind Whistle

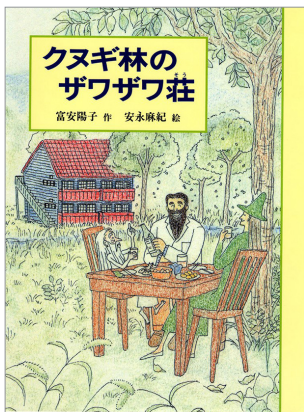


Nanoko the Teacher

2. Early works: fantasies combining the real world with folktales



Mokko in Mount Yamamba



Noisy House in the Oak Forests

In 1986, Tomiyasu published *Mokko in Mount Yamamba* (Fukuinkan Shoten). Mokko are creatures who live in the mountains, and Yamamba is a female creature with special powers. Her daughter, Mayu, is a good-natured child whose adventures make this such a delightful book. She plays her way through changes in the seasons accompanied by mythical creatures, such as *tengu* demons, *kappa* river creatures, and the Snow Woman. *Mokko in Mount Yamamba* is a long-seller, and was chosen for the IBBY Honour List in 2002.

Noisy House in the Oak

Forests (Akane Shobo, 1990) is perhaps the book that best represents Tomiyasu's early works. The main character, Professor Yanari, works in a tofu shop and attempts to create clouds that people can ride through the sky. An experiment gone wrong, however, gets him evicted from his apartment. Fortunately for him, a mysterious real estate agent recommends he move to Noisy House, an old apartment building in a forest of oaks on Mt. Katura.

His new neighbors include a bean washer who collects human souls and a water sprite who was expelled from an underwater palace a hundred years before. Professor Yanari's life with his new and highly unusual friends is comical. The characters are rooted in folk



Holiday in Fox Mountain

beliefs and shared cultural illusions, but the author gives them humorously unique personalities that provide readers with no end of fun. *Noisy House in the Oak Forests* received the Shogakukan Children's Publication Culture Award and the Japanese Association of Writers for Children Prize.

Next came *Summer Holiday in Fox Mountain* (Akane Shobo, 1994). A ten-year-old boy goes to spend the summer with his grandmother, who lives alone out in the countryside. On Fox Mountain, the boy discovers the 108 legendary foxes who protect it and has amazing and mysterious experiences there.

Fox gods (*inari*) are revered as the protectors of grain, and there are countless small inari shrines all over the country. Foxes are respected as emissaries of these sacred places. The story, written and illustrated by Tomiyasu, has this folklore at its core.

Suzuna, The Little Mountain Goddess (illustrated by Kazuyoshi Iino, Kaiseisha, 1996) is the first book in the Little Suzuna Goddess series. There are said to be gods in all mountains, and they protect the trees, grass, insects and other creatures who live there. They keep a close watch on the movement of the moon and sun, as well as the circulation of water. Goddess Suzuna looks forward for many years to being put in charge of Mt. Suzuna, with which she shares her name. As a present for his daughter on her three hundredth birthday, Suzuna's father, the current god, promises he will fulfill her wish if she can create a beautiful autumn scene, thus proving her ability to watch over a mountain. With the help of the fox brigade and the wisdom of the Great Owl, Suzuna successfully changes the colors of all the trees on the mountain and is able to take over the role of the mountain's deity.

In the three books in the series that follow, Goddess Suzuna uses her powers to work with animals to protect her mountain. The series won



Suzuna, The Little Mountain Goddess

many awards for children's literature including the Niimi Nankichi Children's Literature Prize .

Up to this point, Tomiyasu's works are set in the present, in a place where the magical world of traditional culture is revealed. The combination of reality and a world of illusion and imagination is humorously portrayed and mixed together with nature to create a uniquely tantalizing fantasy.

3. Series in diverse genres: from mysteries to picturebooks



Mujina Detective series

Tomiyasu's *Mujina Detective* series began publication in 1999 (Doshinsha). *Mujina* pairs up with Genta, a boy brimming with curiosity, and the two solve cases together. The series has been a hit as entertainment in the form of mysteries.

In the first book of the series, *Mujina Detective Agency: a Great Sleuth Appears!*, the first story is "The White Wooden Box." Detective *Mujina* runs a used book store, where he and Genta, a frequent visitor, are playing chess when a mysterious woman appears. In a dream, she saw a white box placed on the floor of a room in an old estate, and she wants *Mujina* to find out what is inside of it. *Mujina* and Genta go to the estate to investigate the box, and discover the tail of fox inside—one their client has cut off its owner. In the witty banter between the sleuth and the boy as well as the mysterious way in which the story unfolds, we learn about how damage to the natural environment has created contradictions in modern society that make it difficult for foxes to

survive. In the second story, "The Little Horsefly," an old man in a luxurious mansion asks *Mujina* to sell off his book collection. The man suddenly dies, but a pesky horsefly leads *Mujina* to a gift the man had planned to give to his grandson. The tale keeps up the reader's interest as *Mujina* tries to figure out how the dead man's desire has been transferred to the fly. Meanwhile, we see through Genta's eyes how bored and lonely the man's grandson has been in the mansion. At present, there are nine volumes in the *Mujina* series.

The success and number of books in series by Tomiyasu are proof of the many young readers waiting for the next installment of each. *The Shinoda!* series began in 2003, with *Shinoda 1: The Little Dragon and Magic Fruit* (Kaiseisha). The three main characters are children of a human father and a mother who is actually a fox. In their adventures, the three use the magical fox powers they've inherited from their mother. This fantasy series is based on the legend *Shinoda-zuma*, which is also performed in *kabuki* and *yoruri* puppet performances, but Tomiyasu has given it a unique setting with many twists and turns. The plots transcend time and take the characters to exciting locations around the world. This is a series that keeps its readers looking forward to the next book. The latest volume, *The Foxes of the Hatsune Family* published in November 2024, is the twelfth of the series.



Shinoda! series



Mayu & Ogre

Tomiyasu also has many picturebooks to her name. *Mayu & Ogre* (illustrated by Nana Furiya, Fukuinkan, 2004) features Mayu, the daughter of Yamamba (from *Mokko in Mount Yamamba*), as its main character. An ogre meets Mayu in the forest and invites the child to his house, secretly intending to eat her.

Upon their arrival, the ogre puts a pot of water on to boil. The girl, however, has a superhuman strength that catches the ogre by surprise, and Mayu ends up tossing him in the pot, where he is badly burned. Horrified at the turn of events, Mayu runs home with the ogre on her back so her mother can treat his injuries. From that day on, Mayu and the ogre become fast friends. The story itself is full of tension, but the happy ending is a welcome relief. Very young readers find themselves rooting for Mayu, as she—like them—asks question after question, all followed with a string of whys. This tale led to a new series, *Story of Witch's Daughter*, which is made up of six books, including *Mayu & Dragon* and *Mayu & A Little Boar*.

4. Portraying society through fantasy: war, urbanization, destruction of nature



Invitation to the Summer Festival of Bon

Invitation to the Summer Festival of Bon (Kaiseisha, 2011) is a novel-length fantasy that links a sad story of a family living through World War II with its next generation. The novel is set during the Bon festival, three days

beginning on August 13, when souls of ancestors come home to feast with family who have gathered to welcome them. A girl, the main character, listens to her grandfather's story of his two brothers who died in the war. On the last day of the festival, August 15, a scaffolding is put up on the grounds of a local temple, and the people in the neighborhood gather to dance around it. The girl puts on her cotton kimono and heads for the temple, only to have a mysterious experience. At the end of the story, the author begins writing again: "I have another story—a true story—to tell you." In this epilog, Tomiyasu writes about one of her uncles on her father's side. In May of 1945, he took off in a Zero aircraft carrying 500 kilograms of bombs and enough fuel for a one-way flight. He was a suicide bomber. Tomiyasu's uncle headed out from his base to an American warship in the ocean, and died flying into it. The author goes on to say, "This isn't fiction, our country undeniably went to war.... More people than I can count died in that war. I never want to forget what happened, because I don't want people to die like this ever again." With these words, she shares her fervent hope for peace so that children are never again sent off to war. Tomiyasu's stories are based on an underlying appreciation for traditional beliefs and customs. The actions of her yokai and other mystical characters are the antithesis of urbanization and environmental destruction. They press forward without opposition to either the progress of science or the general belief in technology, instead using magic and fantasy to fight modern society as it destroys the nature and culture around us. The fantasy works as a sort of ecological irradiation on the technological myths of today. In *Invitation to the Summer Festival of Bon*, we see Tomiyasu's characteristic symbolism as a prayer for peace. This book was selected for one of the recommendations by the 2020 Hans Christian Andersen Awards Jury team.

5. Going back in time to write about the mystical: from recent works



Illustrated Stories from the Record of Ancient Matters

Tomiyasu is still writing. One of her recent works is *Illustrated Stories from the Record of Ancient Matters* (Kaiseisha, 2017), which brings ancient myths described in *Kojiki* (Record of Ancient Matters, 712), the oldest known book in Japan, into the present day to make them easier for children to understand.

Illustrations are by Koji Yamamura, a painter and an internationally known animation artist.

2021 saw the release of *A Girl at the Museum: The Mysterious Research Begins* (Kaiseisha). The story is set in the latter half of the 1800s, a time when Japan was experiencing a cultural renaissance as the country opened to the outside for the first time in 300 years. Our protagonist is an orphaned girl who helps out in the Supernatural Research Lab. Before long, she is involved in an attempt to untangle a baffling incident. The second book in the series, *The Clamorous Ghost*, was published in 2023. Both books feature actual historical figures, realistically weaving their stories with characters

who are confused at the sudden modernization of the country where bits and pieces of feudal society remain. Tomiyasu adds scientific examination of archaic traditions and superstitions, and keeps the reader glued to the page as the protagonist solves the mystery of a supernatural incident. Here and there are suggestions of similarities with the equally weird present day, where SNS is used for political purposes to confuse and brainwash the world with fake information.

With the conflicts in Ukraine and the Gaza strip and so many other places on the globe, we fear for the future of our children. In the turmoil and division of the 21st century, we are fortunate to have the writings of Yoko Tomiyasu with their call for peace. Indeed, it is in this age that we desire to connect the spirit of IBBY founder Jella Lepman to the future through our recommendation of Yoko Tomiyasu for the Hans Christian Andersen Award.



A Girl at the Museum 1:
The Mysterious Research Begins



A Girl at the Museum 2:
The Clamorous Ghost

AWARDS & other distinctions

***Mokko in Mount Yamamba* (1986)**

IBBY Honour List IBBY Honour List for the new edition

***Noisy House in Oak Forests* (1990)**

Newcomer Prize of Japanese Association of Writers for Children
Shogakukan Children's Publication Culture Award

***Summer Holiday in Fox Mountain* (1994)**

Selection of the School Library Association

***Suzuna, The Little Mountain Godness* (1996)**

Niimi Nankichi Children's Literature Award
Selection of the Japan Library Association
Selection of the Japan School Library Association
Selection of the Japan Children's Book Research Society
Akai Tori Illustration Award
Ministry of Health Central Child Welfare Council Recommendation
Selected for *White Ravens* (Germany)

***Fox's Candy Store* (1998)**

Selection of the School Library Association

***The Nature God of the Skies* (2000)**

Sankei Children's Publishing Culture Award

***Mountain Witch in the Acorn Mountain* (2002)**

Selection of the School Library Association

***The Little Dragon and Magic Fruit* (2003)**

Cultural Property Recommended by the Social Security Council
Selection of the Japan Library Association
JBBY Selection

***Invitation to the Summer Festival of Bon* (2011)**

Noma Prize for Juvenile Literature
Sankei Children's Publishing Culture Award Fuji TV Prize
Selection of the School Library Association
Selection of the Japan Library Association
Selection of Japan Association for the Study of Child Literature
JBBY Selection
IBBY HCAA Jury Recommends
Selected for *White Ravens* (Germany)



Mokko in Mount Yamamba



Noisy House in Oak Forests



Suzuna, The Little Mountain Godness



The Nature God of the Skies



The Little Dragon and Magic Fruit



Invitation to the Summer Festival of Bon

Awards & others

Tales of Ayakashi (2014)

JBBY Selection

The Magic Starts with a Pinky Promise (2016)

JBBY Selection

Illustrated Stories from the Record of Ancient Matters (2017)

JBBY Selection

Selection of the School Library Association

Cultural Property Recommended by the Social Security Council

Mr. Octopus Comes to My House (2019)

JBBY Selection

Valley of Cherry Blossoms (2020)

JBBY Selection

Kodansha Publishing Culture Award for Picture Book

Selected for *White Ravens* (Germany)

A Girl at the Museum 1:

The Mysterious Research Begins (2021)

JBBY Selection

Selected for *White Ravens* (Germany)

Selection of the School Library Association

Cultural Property Special Recommended by the Social Security Council

Mystery Book: 8 Mysterious Tales (2023)

JBBY Selection



Tales of Ayakashi



Mr. Octopus Comes to My House



Valley of Cherry Blossoms

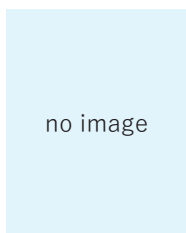


Mystery Book: 8 Mysterious Tales

- Nominated for the ***Hans Christian Andersen Award 2020***
- ***7th JBBY Awards*** (2021)

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Don't Need Shoes | クツなんて
いらな (Kutsu nante iranai) |
| Tokyo: Akane Shobo | 1982



**Mokko in Mount Yamam-
ba** | やまんば山のモッコたち
(Yamanbayama no mokko
tachi) | | illus. Nana Furiya
| Tokyo: Fukuinkan Shoten |
1986

1990s ▶



Noisy House in Oak Forests |
クヌギ林のザワザワ荘 (Kunugi
bayashi no zawazawaso) | illus.
Maki Yasunaga | Tokyo: Akane
Shobo | 1990



**Summer Holiday in Fox
Mountain** | キツネ山の
夏休み (Kitsune yama no
natsuyasumi) | Tokyo: Akane
Shobo | 1994



Father's Mystery Box | おと
うさんの玉手箱 (Otosan no
tamatebako) | Tokyo: Holp
Shuppan | 1994



**The Night of the Moonlit
School** | まんげつ小学校の
夜 (Mangetsu shogakko no
yoru) | Tokyo: Shinnihon
Shuppansha | 1995



**The Primary School in the
Mount Nekonaki** | ねこなき
山小学校 (Nekonaki yama
shogakko) | Tokyo: Kyoiku
Gageki | 1996



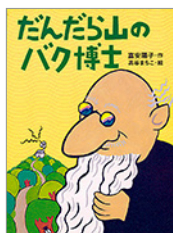
**In the Middle of the Chinese
Milk Vetch Field** | レンゲ畑の
まんなかで (Renge batake no
mannakade) | Tokyo: Akane
Shobo | 1997



Leave It With Dr. Gamata
| ガマ田先生にまかせなさい
(Gamata sensei ni
makasenasai) | Tokyo: Gakken
| 1997



**The Riddle of the Kadoya
Restaurant** | カドヤ食堂のな
ぞなぞ (Kadoya shokudo no
nazonazo) | Tokyo: Shinnihon
Shuppansha | 1997



**Dr. Tapir of the Dandara
Mountain** | だんだら山のバク
博士 (Dandara yama no Baku
hakase) | Tokyo: Rironsha |
1997

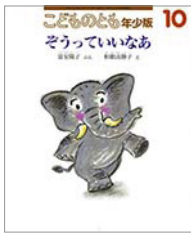


Bokko | ぼっこ (Bokko) |
Tokyo: Kaiseisha | 1998



Fox's Candy Store | キツネ
のまいもん屋 (Kitsune no
maimonya) | illus. Shinozaki,
Mitsuo | Tokyo: Shinnihon
Shuppansha | 1998

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I'd Like To Be An Elephant | ぞうっていいなあ (Zo tte iina) | illus. Wakayama, Shizuko | Tokyo: Fukuinkan Shoten | 1999



Welcome to the Shop of Mr. Cat | ねこじゃら商店へいらっしやい (Nekojara shoten e irasshai) | Tokyo: Poplar | 1999

SERIES | Suzuna the Little Mountain Goddess

小さな山神スズナ姫シリーズ (Chiisana yamagami Suzuna-hime shirizu) | illus. Iino, Kazuyoshi | Tokyo: Kaiseisha | 1996



#01 Suzuna, The Little Mountain Goddess | 小さな山神スズナ姫 (Chiisana yamagami Suzuna hime) | 1996



#02 The Big Catfish in Suzuna Marsh | スズナ沼の大ナマズ (Suzuna numa no o namazu) | 1996



#03 The Evening of the Big Cloud Payday | 大雲払いの夜 (Okumo barai no yoru) | 1996



#04 The Devil of Darkness Valley | くらやみ谷の魔物 (Kurayami dani no mamono) | 1996

SERIES | Mujina Detective Agency

ムジナ探偵局シリーズ (Mujina tanteikyoku shirizu) | illus. Okabe, Rika | Tokyo: Doshinsha | 1999-2014



#01 A Great Sleuth Appears! | ムジナ探偵局名探偵登場! (Meitantei tojo!) | 1999



#02 A Mystery Challenge | なぞの挑戦状 (Nazo no chosenjo) | 2000



#03 The Man Disappeared into the Darkness | 闇に消えた男 (Yami ni kieta otoko) | 2001



#04 The Secret of the Full Moon Pond | 満月池の秘密 (Mangetsu ike no himitsu) | 2002



#05 Closed Today | 今日休業 (Honjitsu kyugyo) | 2004



#06 Ghost of Enoki Inari Shrine | 榎稻荷の幽霊 (Eniki inari no yurei) | 2007



#07 The Perfect Twins | 完璧な双子 (Kanpeki na futago) | 2008



#08 Seven Wonders in the School | 学校の七不思議 (Gakko no nana fushigi) | 2012



#09 The Fireball Battle | 火の玉合戦 (Hinotama gassen) | 2014

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The Nature God of the Skies | 空へつづく神話 (Sora e tsuzuku shinwa) | Tokyo: Kaiseisha | 2000



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The Fox Priest and A Big Owl | キツネ和尚と大フクロウ (Kitsune osho to o fukuro) | Tokyo: Akane Shobo | 2002



The Winter Wind Whistle | 虎落笛 (Mogari bue) | illus. Kajiya, Toshio | Tokyo: Akane Shobo | 2002



God of the Shrine | ほころの神さま (Hokora no kamisama) | Tokyo: Kaiseisha | 2002



Who Swings The Leaves? | はっぱをゆらすのどんなかぜ (Happa o yurasuno donna kaze) | illus. Ogi, Taro | Tokyo: Fukuinkan Shoten | 2002



Octo, the Octopus Boy | タコのオクトくん (Tako no Okuto kun) | illus. Takabatake, Jun | Tokyo: Poplar | 2002



Dragon's Nest | 竜の巣 (Ryu no su) | Tokyo: Poplar | 2003



Is That So? - A Record of My Experiences | さいでっか見聞録 (Saidekka kenbunroku) | Tokyo: Kaiseisha | 2007



Chug-chug, Hiss, What's This Sound? | ガタゴトシュットンなんのあと? (Gata goto shutton nanno oto?) | illus. Hata, Koshiro | Tokyo: Gakken | 2008



Convenience DORONPA | コンビニエンス・ドロシバ (Konbiniensu Doronpa) | illus. Tsuchida, Nobuko | Tokyo: Doshinsha | 2008



Grimm's Fairy Tales: Sweet Porridge | グリム童話 おいしいおかゆ (Gurimu dowa: Oishii okayu) | Tokyo: Felissimo | 2008



If I was a Friend of Santa Claus... | もしも、ぼくがサンタクロースとともだちだったら... (Moshimo, boku ga santakurosu to tomodachi dattara...) | Tokyo: Kumon Shuppan | 2009

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SERIES | A Story of Witch's Daughter

やまんばのむすめまゆのおはなしシリーズ (Yamanba no musume Mayu no ohanashi shirizu) | illus. Furiya, Nana | Tokyo: Fukuinkan | 2001-2018



#01 Mayu & Ogre | まゆとおに (Mayu to oni) | 2004



#02 Mayu & Dragon | まゆとりゅう (Mayu to ryu) | 2008



#03 Mayu & A Little Boar | まゆとうりんこ (Mayu to urinko) | 2013



#04 Mayu & Kappa | まゆとかっぱ (Mayu to kappa) | 2018



#05 Mayu & A Big Cake | まゆとおおきなケーキ (Mayu to okina keki) | 2023



#06 Mayu & Monster Bukabukaboo | まゆとブカブカブー (Mayu to Bukabukabu) | 2024

SERIES | A Mountain Witch

やまんばあさんシリーズ (Yaman-basan shirizu) | illus. Oshima, Taeko | Tokyo: Rironsha | 2002-2008



#01 Mountain Witch in the Acorn Mountain | ドングリ山のやまんばあさん (Donguri yama no yaman-basan) | 2002



#02 Mountain Witch Going to the Sea | やまんばあさん海へ行く (Yaman-basan umi e iku) | 2003



#03 Mountain Witch at the Sport Festival | やまんばあさんの大運動会 (Yaman-basan no dai undokai) | 2005



#04 Mountain Witch in the Old Days | やまんばあさんのむかしむかし (Yaman-basan no mukashi mukashi) | 2007



#05 Mountain Witch and Her Friends | やまんばあさんとなかまたち (Yaman-basan to nakamatachi) | 2008

SERIES | Nanoko the Magical Teacher/ Nanoko's Japan Mystery Guide

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#01 First Stage - Teacher Nanoko Came! | 菜の子先生がやってきた! (Nanoko sensei ga yatte kita!) | 2003



#02 Second Stage - Teacher Nanoko is Super Busy! | 菜の子先生は大いそがし! (Nanoko sensei wa o-isogashi!) | 2005



#03 Third Stage - Where is Teacher Nanoko Going? | 菜の子先生はどこへ行く? (Nanoko sensei wa doko e iku?) | 2008



#04 Teacher Nanoko Special - Nanoko's Out of School Patrol! | 菜の子先生の校外パトロール (nanoko sensei no kogai patororu) | 2011



#05 Nanoko and The Dragon Kids | 菜の子ちゃんと龍の子 (Nanoko chan to ryu no ko) | 2015



#06 Nanoko and The Kappa Stone | 菜の子ちゃんとカッパ石 (Nanoko chan to kappa ishi) | 2016



#07 Nanoko and The Fox Sumo Wrestler | 菜の子ちゃんとキツネ力士 (Nanoko chan to kitsune rikishi) | 2018



#08 Nanoko and Majimun Forest | 菜の子ちゃんとマジムンの森 (Nanoko chan to majimun no mori) | 2019

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シンダ! シリーズ (Shinoda! shirizu) | illus. Ohba, Kenya | Tokyo: Kaiseisha | 2003-2019



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#02 Tree Words and Stone Seals | 樹のことばと石の封印 (Ki no kotoba to ishi no fuin) | 2004



#03 The Secret Lake in the Looking Glass | 鏡の中の秘密の池 (Kagami no naka no himitsu no ike) | 2006



#04 A Strange Night in the Enchanted Forest | 魔物の森のふしぎな夜 (Mamono no mori no fushigi na yoru) | 2008



#05 Mermaid Island, Lost in Time | 時のかなたの人魚の島 (Toki no kanata no ningyo no shima) | 2010



#06 To the Fox Shrine | キツネたちの宮へ (Kitsune tachi no miya e) | 2012



#07 In Pursuit of the Missing White Fox | 消えた白ギツネを追え (Kieta shiri gitsune o oe) | 2012



#08 Treasure of the Palace Fox | 都ギツネの宝 (Miyako gitsune no takara) | 2014



#09 Secret Summer Holiday Friends | 夏休みの秘密の友だち (Natsuyasumi no himitsu no tomodachi) | 2015



#10 The Magic Starts with a Pinky Promise | 指きりは魔法のはじまり (Yubikiri wa maho no hajimari) | 2016



#11 Tea Party in the Forest of Dreams | 夢の森のティーパーティー (Yume no mori no ti pati) | 2019



#12 The Foxes of the Hatsune Family | 初音一族のギツネたち (Hatsune ichizoku no kitsune tachi) | 2024

SERIES | Hozuki Clinic, expert in Ghost

内科・オバケ科・ホオズキ医院シリーズ (Naika, obakeka, Hozuki iin shirizu) | illus. Komatsu, Yoshika | Tokyo: Poplar | 2006-2011



#01 Even Gohst Catches a Cold! | オバケだって、カゼをひく! (Obake datte kaze o hiku) | 2006



#02 A Big Trouble at the Raccoon Palace | タヌキ御殿の大そうどう (Tanuki goten no o sodo) | 2007



#03 Ghostbusters in the School | 学校のオバケたいじ大作戦 (Gakko no obake taiji dai sakusen) | 2007



#04 Two Doctor Hozuki!? | 鬼灯先生がふたりいる!? (Hozuki sensei ga futari iru?) | 2008



#05 Monster Eats Dreams | オバケに夢を食べられる!? (Obake ni yume o taberareru?) | 2010



#06 SOS! Monsters of Nanabake Mountain SOS! | 七化山のオバケたち (Esu o esu! Nanabake yama no obake tachi) | 2010



#07 I am an Assistant of Dr. Monster! | ぼくはオバケ医者の助手! (Boku wa obake iin no joshu!) | 2011

2010s ▶



Mekke, the Abyss Boy | とどろヶ淵のメッケ (Todorogafuchi no Mekke) | Tokyo: Kosei Shuppansha | 2010



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I am a Faceless Gohst | わがはいはのっぺらぼうかっこ (Wagahai wa nopperabo) | illus. Iino, Kazuyoshi | Tokyo: Doshinsha | 2011



The Battle in The Moonlit Night | つきよのかっせん (Tsukiyo no kassen) | illus. Futamata, Eigoro | Tokyo: Fukuinkan Shoten | 2011



Baby of Mountain Witch | やまんばあかちゃん (Yamanba akachan) | illus. Oshima, Taeko | Tokyo: Rironsha | 2011



Kana and Hana | かなと花ちゃん (Kana to Hana chan) | illus. Hirasawa, Tomoko | Tokyo: Alice-kan | 2012

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の月の物語 (Futatsu no tsuki
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I am a Snow Woman | あたし
ゆきおんな (Atashi yuki onna)
| illus. lino, Kazuyoshi | Tokyo:
Doshinsha | 2012



Missing of Monster | かい
じゅうのさがしもの (Kaiju
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の夜 (Oni matsuri no yoru) |
Tokyo: Kodansha | 2013



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Shoten | 2013



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The Greatest Present in the
World** | ねこじゃら商店世界
一のプレゼント (Nekojara
shoten: Sekai ichi no
purezento) | Tokyo: Poplar |
2013



Tales of Ayakashi | アヤカシ
さん (Ayakashi san) | Tokyo:
Fukuinkan Shoten | 2014



**A Mess Brought By Teo
Ogres** | ケンカオニ (Kenka
oni) | illus. Nishimaki, Kayako
| Tokyo: Fukuinkan Shoten |
2014



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Bokko kun) | illus. Komatsu,
Yoshika | Tokyo: Kaiseisha |
2015



**An Equation of Heaven
and Earth, 3 vols.** | 天と地
の方程式 (Ame to tsuchi no
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2015-2016



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こども (Moto kodomo) | illus.
Ito, Hiroshi | Tokyo: Poplar |
2016



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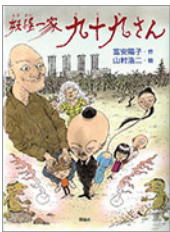
What's That Cloud? | あのくもななに? (Ano kumo nani?) | illus. Yamamura, Koji | Tokyo: Fukuinkan Shoten | 2018



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SERIES | Monster Family the Tsukumos

妖怪一家九十九さんシリーズ (Yokai ikka Tsukumo san shirizu) | illus. Yamamura, Koji | Tokyo: Rironsha | 2012-2021



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#03 Monsters in the Whispering Forest | ひそひそ森の妖怪 (Hisohiso mori no yokai) | 2014



#04 Monser Siblings Go to the School | 妖怪きょうだい学校へ行く (Yokai kyodai gakko e iku) | 2015



#05 Monster Family at the Amusement Park | 遊園地の妖怪一家 (Yuenchi no yokai ikka) | 2016



#06 Beware of Monster, Beware of Fire: Counting Rhyme of Tsukumo | 妖怪用心火の用心: 九十九さんちのかぞえうた (Yokai yojin hi no yojin: Tsukumo sanchi no kazoe uta) | 2016



#07 Monster Family's Halloween | 妖怪一家のハロウィン (Yokai ikka no harouin) | 2017



#08 Monster Family Go to the Hot Spring | 妖怪一家の温泉ツアー (Yokai ikka no onsen tsua) | 2018



#09 Monster Family's Wedding Big Strategy | 妖怪一家のウェディング大作戦 (Yokai ikka no uedingu daisakusen) | 2019



#10 Monsters and their Secret Base | 妖怪たちと秘密基地 (Yokai tachi to himitsu kichi) | 2020



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#02 A Hard Business Trip | しゅっちょうはつらいよ (Shuccho wa tsurai yo) | 2017



#03 Bon Festival in the Hell | じごくの盆やすみ (Jigoku no bon yasumi) | 2019



#04 Sports Day Hell and Heaven | じごく・ごくらく運動会 (Jigoku gokuraku undokai) | 2021



#05 Freshman in the Hell | じごくのしんにゅうしゃいん (Jigoku no shinnyu shain) | 2023

SERIES | Sara and Pinky

サラとピンキーシリーズ (Sara to Pinki shirizu) | illus. Tomiyasu, Yoko | Tokyo: Kodansha | 2017-2018



#01 Going to Paris | サラとピンキー パリへ行く (Sara to Pinki: Pari e iku) | 2017



#02 Going to Himalayas | サラとピンキー ヒマラヤへ行く (Sara to Pinki: Himaraya e iku) | 2017



#03 Going to Treasure Island | サラとピンキー たからじまへ行く (Sara to Pinki: Takara jima e iku) | 2018



#04 Going to Santa's Land | サラとピンキー サンタの国へ行く (Sara to Pinki: Santa no kunie iku) | 2018

SERIES | Hozuki's Ghost Case

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#02 Ghost is inside that Girl! | オバケはあの子の中にいる! (Obake wa anoko no naka ni iru!) | 2019



#03 Ghost Detectives in the 4th Grade Class 1 | 4年1組のオバケ探偵団 (Yonen ichi kumi no obake tanteidan) | 2020



#04 Ghost Steals the Time? | オバケに時間をぬすまれる? (Obake ni jikan o nusumareru?) | 2021



#05 School is Full of Ghosts! | 学校はオバケだらけ! (Gakko wa obake darake!) | 2023



#06 Ghost is in the Mirror! | オバケは鏡の中にいる! (Obake wa kagami no naka ni iru!) | 2023



#07 A Cat dances, Ogre will Come! | ネコがおどれば、鬼が来る! (Neko ga odore ba, oni ga kuru!) | 2024

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Children of Yurinoki-so | ゆりの木荘の子どもたち (Yurinokiso no kodomo tachi) | ill. Satake, Miho | Tokyo: Kodansha | 2020



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Doshinsha | 2024

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博物館の少女シリーズ (Hakubutsukan no shojo shirizu) | illus. Zennosuke | Tokyo: Kaiseisha | 2021～



**#01 The Mysterious
Research Begins** | 怪異研究事
始め (Kaii kenkyu kotohajima)
| 2021



#02 The Clamorous Ghost
| 騒がしい幽霊 (Sawagashii
yurei) | 2023

SERIES | Leave It to Papa Nurari-hyon!

ヌラリヒョン・パパにまかせなさい! シリーズ (Nurarihyon papa ni makasenasai! shirizu) | illus. Yamamura, Koji | Tokyo: Rironsha | 2022～



**#01 Friends of Dororon
Village** | ドロロンむらのな
かまたち (Dororon mura no
nakama tachi) | 2022



**#02 Shooting Star in the
Osoroshi Mountains** | オソ
ロシ山のながれ星 (Osoroshi
mura no nagare boshi) | 2022



**#03 The Treasure in the
Cat's Eye** | ねらわれた宝もの
(Nerawareta takara mono) |
2023

Translated editions

		Chinese complex	Chinese simplified	Korean	Russian	Vietnamese
ケンカオニ A Mess Brought By Two Ogres	Fukuinkan Shoten			●		
小さな山神スズナ姫 Suzuna, The Little Mountain Goddess	Kaiseisha		●			
スズナ沼の大ナマズ The Big Catfish in Suzuna Marsh	Kaiseisha		●			
大雲払いの夜 The Evening of the Big Cloud Cleanse	Kaiseisha		●			
くらやみ谷の魔物 The Devil of Darkness Valley	Kaiseisha		●			
だんだら山のバク博士 Doctor Tapir of the Dandara Mountain	Rironsha			●		
まゆとおに Mayu & Ogre	Fukuinkan Shoten			●		
まゆとりゅう Mayu & Dragon	Fukuinkan Shoten			●		
まゆとおおきなケーキ Mayu & Big Cake	Fukuinkan Shoten					●
ぞうっていいなあ I'd like to be Elephant	Fukuinkan Shoten			●		
タコのオクトくん Octo the Octopus Boy	Poplar			●		
ドングリ山のやまばあさん Mountain Witch of the Mt. Acon	Rironsha			●		
やまばあさん海へ行く Mountain Witch Going to the Sea	Rironsha			●		
やまばあさんの大運動会 Mountain Witch at the Sports Festival	Rironsha			●		
竜の巣 Dragon's Nest	Poplar			●		

		Chinese complex	Chinese simplified	Korean	Russian	Vietnamese
葉の子先生がやってきた！ Nanoko the Magical Teacher 1	Fukuinkan Shoten	●	●			
葉の子先生は大いそがし！ Nanoko the Magical Teacher 2	Fukuinkan Shoten		●			
葉の子先生はどこへ行く？ Nanoko the Magical Teacher 3	Fukuinkan Shoten		●			
葉の子先生の校外パトロール Nanoko the Magical Teacher 4	Fukuinkan Shoten		●			
チビ竜の魔法の実 The Little Dragon and Magic Fruit	Kaiseisha	●	●	●		
樹とことばと石の封印 Tree Words and Stone Seals	Kaiseisha	●	●	●		
鏡の中の秘密の池 The Secret Lake in the Looking Glass	Kaiseisha	●	●	●		
魔物の森のふしぎな夜 A Strange Night in the Enchanted Forest	Kaiseisha	●	●	●		
時のかなたの人魚の島 Mermaid Island, Lost in Time	Kaiseisha	●	●	●		
キツネたちの宮へ To the Fox Shrine	Kaiseisha	●		●		
消えた白ギツネを追え In Pursuit of the Missing White Fox	Kaiseisha	●		●		
都ギツネの宝 Treasure of the Palace Fox	Kaiseisha	●	●	●		
夏休みの秘密の友だち Secret Summer Holiday Friends	Kaiseisha	●		●		
指きりは魔法のはじまり The Magic Starts with a Pinky Promise	Kaiseisha	●	●	●		
夢の森のティーパーティー Tea Party in the Forest of Dreams	Kaiseisha	●	●	●		
オバケだって、カゼをひく！ Ghost Catches a Cold!	Poplar	●	●	●		●
タヌキ御殿の大そうどう A Big Trouble at the Raccoon Palace	Poplar	●	●	●		●
学校のオバケたいじ大作戦 Ghostbusters in the School	Poplar	●	●	●		●
ぼくはオバケ医者助手！ I am an Assistant of Doctor Ghost	Poplar	●	●	●		●
鬼灯先生がふたりいる！? Two Doctor Hozuki!?	Poplar	●	●	●		●
オバケに夢を食べられる！? Ghost Eats Dreams!?	Poplar	●	●	●		●
SOS! 七化山のオバケたち Ghosts of Nanabake Mountain	Poplar	●	●	●		●

		Chinese complex	Chinese simplified	Korean	Russian	Vietnamese
盆まねき Invitation to the Summer Festival of Bon	Kaiseisha		●			
ふたつの月の物語 Two Moons Story	Kodansha			●		
トラのナガシッポ Tiger with a Long, Long Tail	Fukuinkan Shoten			●		
ねこじゃら商店 世界一のプレゼント The Shop of the Cat	Poplar		●			
オニのサラリーマン Papa Works in the Hell	Fukuinkan Shoten	●	●			
オニのサラリーマン しゅっちょうはつらいよ A Hard Business Trip - Papa Works in the HELL Vol.2	Fukuinkan Shoten	●	●			
オニのサラリーマン じごくの盆やすみ Busy Summer Cleaning - Papa Works in the HELL Vol.3	Fukuinkan Shoten	●				
オニのサラリーマンじごく・ごくらく運動会 Fight at the Athletic Festival—Papa Works in the HELL Vol.4	Fukuinkan Shoten	●				
天と地の方程式 1 An Equation of Heaven and Earth 1	Kodansha	●		●		
天と地の方程式 2 An Equation of Heaven and Earth 2	Kodansha			●		
天と地の方程式 3 An Equation of Heaven and Earth 3	Kodansha			●		
もとこども Everyone was a Child	Poplar		●			
絵物語 古事記 Illustrated Stories from the Record of Ancient Matters	Kaiseisha				●	
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10 important titles

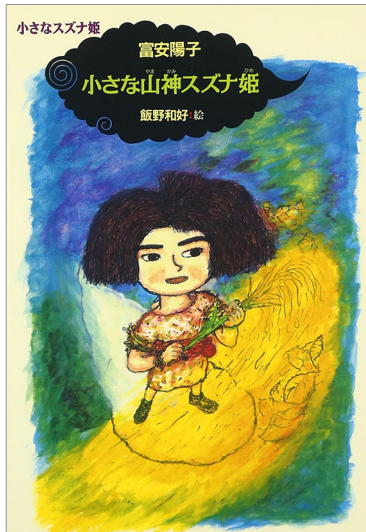


★ = books sent to jurors

- ***Suzuna, The Little Mountain Goddess (Suzuna series #01)*** ★
illus. Iino, Kazuyoshi | Tokyo: Kaiseisha | 1996
- ***Mayu & Ogre (Witch's Daughter series #01)*** ★
illus. Furita, Nana | Tokyo: Fukuinkan Shoten | 2004
- ***Invitation to the Summer Festival of Bon*** ★
illus. Takahashi, Kazue | Tokyo: Kaiseisha | 2011
- ***Illustrated Stories from the Record of Ancient Matters*** ★
illus. Yamamura, Koji | Tokyo: Kaiseisha | 2017
- ***A Girl at the Museum, The Mysterious Research Begins*** ★
Tokyo: Kaiseisha | 2021
- ***Mokko in Mount Yamamba***
illus. Furiya, Nana | Tokyo: Fukuinkan Shoten | 1986
- ***Noisy House in the Oak Forests***
illus. Yasunaga, Maki | Tokyo: Akane Shobo | 1990
- ***The Little Dragon and Magic Fruit (Shinoda! series #01)***
illus. Oba, Kenya | Tokyo: Kaiseisha | 2003
- ***Tiger with a Long, Long Tail***
illus. Abe, Hiroshi | Tokyo: Fukuinkan Shoten | 2013
- ***Doi-kun the Raccoon Dog***
illus. Oshima, Taeko | Tokyo: Fukuinkan Shoten | 2022

★ Book Sent to the Jurors

Suzuna, The Little Mountain Goddess **Suzuna series #01**



original title	小さな山神スズナ姫
romanisation	Chiisana yamagami Suzuna hime
illus.	Iino, Kazuyoshi
publisher	Tokyo: Kaiseisha
publication year	1996
awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Niimi Nankichi Children's Literature Award • Selection of the Japan Library Association • Selection of the Japan School Library Association • Selection of the Japan Children's Book Research Society • Akai Tori Illustration Award • Ministry of Health Central Child Welfare Council Recommendation • Selected for <i>White Ravens</i> (Germany)
translations	Chinese Simplified

REVIEW

■ MOE Monthly

August 1996

Suzuna, The Little Mountain Goddess **and *The Big Catfish in Suzuna Marsh*** Sueyoshi, Akiko (author)

Recently, there has been a noticeable rise in authors who settle in rural areas and dedicate themselves to children's literature in a deliberate and focused manner. (Of course, one could argue that this trend isn't new—it's been around since the days of Kenji Miyazawa.) Among these writers is Yoko Tomiyasu. Tomiyasu has consistently written fantasy stories rooted in Japan's indigenous folklore and mythical creatures, as seen in works like *Noisy House in Oak Forests*, *Mokko of Mount Yamamba*, and *Summer Holiday in Fox Mountain*. Her latest series, *Suzuna, The Little Mountain Goddess*, is another tale set against the quintessentially Japanese backdrop of the Kisens

Mountains, telling the story of a young female mountain deity.

Suzuna, the only daughter of the Mountain God, is about to turn 300 years old. However, in human years, she's roughly equivalent to a six-year-old, making her just a fledgling in her father's eyes. Yet, when she asks for the Suzuna Mountain as a birthday present, her father is taken aback. Little does he realize that Suzuna has secretly learned incantations and grown wiser over time.

In response, the father God proposes a challenge: if Suzuna can transform Suzuna Mountain into autumn colors in just one day, she will be granted her wish, symbolizing her independence. Filled with determination, Suzuna boards her personal cloud, *Ame no Suzushiro*, and descends to Suzuna Mountain. The name *Suzushiro* (another name for daikon radish, one of the spring herbs) is a clever nod to tradition. The charm of the story lies in its simple yet grand narrative, supported by delightful and imaginative details. For instance, the "Cloud Bread" Suzuna eats is made by gathering clouds from the valley at

dawn, kneading them, and baking them to a golden finish using the light of the setting sun. Additionally, Suzuna creates clouds by exhaling mist, cupping it in her hands, and spinning it into fluffy cotton candy-like formations. Naturally, the method she devises to color Suzuna Mountain with autumn hues is equally inventive and worth savoring in the text.

After successfully earning her independence with the help of the animals living on the mountain, Suzuna secures Suzuna Mountain. In the second volume, she embarks on a new mission: to restore water to the dried-up “Withered Marsh.” This time, she joins forces with deities such as the God of Wind and celestial boys representing the Big Dipper, engaging in a fierce battle to achieve her goal. Personally, I believe that Japanese mythology and folklore are treasure troves of fantasy. It’s clear that Tomiyasu shares this perspective.

Kazuyoshi Iino’s illustrations of the vibrant and spirited Suzuna capture her earnest and competitive personality well. However, I must admit to feeling a slight sense of unease within this purely Japonism-inspired world.



From left:
#02 *The Big Catfish in Suzuna Marsh*
#03 *The Evening of the Big Cloud Payday*
#04 *The Devil of Darkness Valley*

■ Sankei Shimbun Newspaper

April 26, 1996

Little Mountain Goddess

Kisaka, Ryo (poet)

The Exciting Adventures of a Spirited Young Girl
Suzuna is the daughter of *Ooiwa-no-mikoto*, the mountain god who governs the Kisen Mountain Range. She’s about to celebrate her 300th birthday—but why is she still considered a “young girl” at 300? That’s because one year in the life of a god is equivalent to 50 human years. Despite her small stature, Suzuna is fiercely independent. She’s tired of being left behind to look after things while her father makes his rounds of the mountains. She’s also fed up with being called a “little girl.”

When her father asks her what she’d like for her birthday, Suzuna boldly declares that she wants to be put in charge of Suzuna Mountain—the mountain she was named after. Thus begins the story of *Suzuna, The Little Mountain Goddess*. Her father sets a condition: if Suzuna can complete the task of “Leaf Dyeing,” transforming the landscape into autumn colors within a single day, her wish will be granted. The illustrations of Suzuna, with her bobbed hair and her boundless enthusiasm, perfectly capture the personality of this lively character. Suzuna’s cunning and resourcefulness infuse the story with energy. The theme of a child’s quest for independence is subtly woven into the narrative, and the beauty of the fantasy, grounded in the dynamic forces of nature, is truly captivating.

In the sequel, *The Big Catfish in Suzuna Marsh*, Suzuna learns that the water in Suzuna Mountain has dried up. She sets out to investigate the cause and find a solution. The Suzuna series comprises four books, including these two.

Halfway through the story, I found myself wishing I could be Suzuna.

★ Book Sent to the Jurors

Mayu & Ogre Story of Witch's Daughter series #01



original title	まゆとおに
romanisation	Mayu to oni
illus.	Furiya, Nana
publisher	Tokyo: Fukuinkan Shoten
publication year	1999
translations	Korean

■ Asahi Shimbun Newspaper

24 October, 2024

Mayu × Yoko Tomiyasu

interview by Kawai, Mamie (reporter)

When I was a child, I grew up feeling as though I had a close relationship with *yokai* (monster/specter). My grandmother, who lived with us, told me countless stories about them. “Back when we lived in Tsushima, we hired a maid named Okatsu for our shop, but it turned out she was actually a *tanuki* in disguise...” The stories included names and places. My father and aunt were also great at telling such tales. We were quite the family of storytellers, and I naturally grew to love *yokai*.

As a university student studying Japanese literature and other subjects, I came across a folktale called *Yamanba no Nishiki* (The Yamanba's Brocade). In the story, an elderly lady goes as the village representative to bring gifts and help with the postpartum care of a

yamanba (mountain witch) who has just given birth. In return, the elderly lady receives a mysterious bolt of brocade, and she and her family live happily ever after.

I began to wonder—how would a *yamanba*, known for eating people, live as a mother? This curiosity led me to start writing a story about a *yamanba* mother and her daughter. However, I struggled to imagine the *yamanba*'s appearance. One day, while riding the Yamanote Line, I saw a woman sitting across from me. “That’s it! A *yamanba*!” I thought. She had a sharp presence, was wearing a sleeveless dress, and had her hair tied in a bun. My imagination took off from there.

I submitted a story titled *Mokko in Mount Yamanba* to the monthly magazine *Kodomo no yakata* (Children's House) published by Fukuinkan Shoten at the time. It was an adventure tale about a *yamanba* mother, her daughter Mayu, and a human boy named Keita. That story was later compiled into a children's book, marking my debut.

The picture book *Mayu & Ogre* was born from that earlier story, but only after I realized the charm of picture books by reading them to my two sons. If they didn't find a book interesting, they would just look at the cover or ask, "What's for dinner?" But if they did like it, they would ask me to read it over and over. Seeing their reactions inspired me to try writing a picture book.

Before I start writing, I delve deeply into developing my characters. I imagine them in various situations—crying, laughing, getting angry—until they feel like friends to me. Once that happens, their names come to me naturally. At some point, I call out to them, like saying "Mayu." That's how Mayu came to life.

Mayu is a strong girl who knows no fear. Her actions are bold and dynamic. The illustrator Nana Furiya suggested giving Mayu red hair to symbolize her extraordinary strength and power. Mayu thrives because she is loved and watched over by her mother. No matter what dangers her adventures bring, she can always return home to her mother, where she feels safe and where delicious food awaits her. It's like a utopia.

People often tell me, "The yamanba mother is so cool." Since I originally wrote the story as a student, the mother ended up being a figure who allows her child great freedom without being overly strict. Now that I'm a mother myself, I often find myself scolding my children, which makes me reflect on that contrast.

When children become engrossed in a picture book, it turns into nonfiction for them. If the world of the story isn't seamless, they can't fully immerse themselves, so I pay close attention to realism in every detail.

My wish is for children to thoroughly enjoy these stories. If a tale makes their hearts flutter with excitement, it can become a light for them even when they grow up and face tough times. A beloved story can be a personal refuge or a special retreat. They can play with friends in that world and then return to reality. I hope Mayu's world becomes a place they want to visit again and again, imagining all the fun they could have there.



From up left:
 #02 *Mayu & Dragon*
 #03 *Mayu & A Little Boar*
 #04 *Mayu & Kappa*
 #05 *Mayu & A Big Cake*
 #06 *Mayu & Monster Bukabukaboo*

★ Book Sent to the Jurors

Invitation to the Summer Festival of Bon



original title	盆まねぎ
romanisation	Bon maneki
illus.	Takahashi, Kazue
publisher	Tokyo: Kaiseisha
publication year	2011
awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noma Prize for Juvenile Literature • Sankei Children's Publishing Culture Award Fuji TV Prize • Selection of the School Library Association • Selection of the Japan Library Association • Selection of Japan Association for the Study of Child Literature • JBBY Selection • Selected for <i>White Ravens</i> (Germany) • 2020 HCAA Jury recommends
translations	Korean Chinese Simplified

REVIEW

■ *The Power of Children's Books*

Tokyo: Otsuki Shoten, 2019

War Narrated by Absence

Shimizu, Masako (translator/critic)

I always think that passing on the experience of war is a difficult task. In a newspaper article about “peace picture books” by Japanese, Chinese, and Korean authors, a Japanese author described peace as “a state where bombs don’t fall.” Korean authors pointed out the victim mentality underlying this statement, prompting the Japanese author to revise it to an active expression: “We don’t drop bombs.”

The majority of what has been called Japanese war children’s literature to date has been products of victim mentality. Moreover, because the sense of agency is often absent, the horrors of war depicted

in these works are frequently indistinguishable from those caused by natural disasters. An exception that has always stood out in my mind is Akira Saneto...

It was in such a context that I encountered *Invitation to the Summer Festival of Bon*. The author, Yoko Tomiyasu, is well-known for works like the *Nanoko the Teacher* and *Suzuna the Little Mountain Goddess* series. She is a children’s book author I have quietly regarded as one of the finest storytellers.

Invitation to the Summer Festival of Bon, spanning 178 pages, touches on war explicitly for less than four pages. Even then, it appears only briefly as an exchange between the protagonist and her great-grandmother. The story is set during the lively four days of the *Obon* festival, including the day before, when relatives gather at the grandparents’ house. Amid this festive atmosphere, the story unfolds through moments of quiet when a third-grade girl overhears bits of conversation.

Each day, the girl listens to tales from a different family member—her grandfather one day, her great-aunt the next, and her great-grandmother the day after that. These stories, which hover between truth and fiction, recount the childhoods of the ancestors being honored during *Obon*. As the story progresses, the reader begins to notice the absence of one particular child from these tales. On the final day, the protagonist, along with the reader, experiences a mysterious encounter.

Through these moments, the author subtly conveys to the reader the absence of a boy—the one who once kept slugs as pets with his younger brother, the one who saw a rice field in the moonlight with his little sister, and the one who couldn't suppress his laughter in a solemn family photo. This boy is no longer here, his life cut short, along with the days he might have lived. Tomiyasu communicates this absence quietly, not by focusing on war itself, but by vividly portraying the bright and lively four days of a family reunion.

The family never explicitly discusses war during their gathering. Yet, precisely because of this, the horrors of war resonate all the more deeply in this work. I feel as though I am witnessing the birth of a new form of “war children’s literature” in this book.

■ Jury's review for the Noma Prize 2011

True Story

Kadono, Eiko (author)

Yoko Tomiyasu's *Invitation to the Summer Festival of Bon* first overwhelmed me with its sheer number of characters. It was lively, warm, and irresistibly charming without needing a logical explanation. All of Tomiyasu's works carry a sense of nostalgia, as if depicting familiar landscapes seen somewhere before. This nostalgic connection often ties into stories you've heard somewhere, but what makes her works feel fresh are the vividly written characters. Their conversations flow effortlessly, and their movements are bustling and busy. Yet, the underlying atmosphere is somehow calm and soothing, leaving the reader feeling at ease.

Obon is a time to meet the departed but also a period that feels slightly removed from the everyday. During this time, adults take turns sharing small stories with the children, which are delightfully engaging. Among them, the grandfather's story of “Namekuji Nametaro” is a standout. It's a masterpiece of short fiction, showcasing Tomiyasu's exceptional skill in the genre. However, the final chapter, “The Real Story,” became a topic of debate during the selection process. Was it necessary to include, or not? The author's uncle was one of the last *kamikaze* pilots. After his death, his family lived with the “void” of losing a loved one. It seems likely that what the author truly wanted to express lies within this final chapter. Moreover, it could be said that the story itself was born because of this chapter's inclusion. Still, there might have been another way to integrate the “void,” the uncle's missing presence, into the narrative throughout the work, dissolving it seamlessly into the story. I would have loved to read *Invitation to the Summer Festival of Bon* in such a form as well.

★ Book Sent to the Jurors

Illustrated Stories from the Record of Ancient Matters



original title	絵本 古事記
romanisation	Ehon kojiki
illus.	Yamamura, Koji
supervising	Miura, Sukeyuki
publisher	Tokyo: Kaiseisha
publication year	2017
awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cultural Property Recommended by the Social Security Council• Selection of the School Library Association• JBBY Selection
translations	Russian

REVIEW

■ **Da Vinci**

February 7, 2018

Readable, Easy to Understand, and Entertaining! A Perfect Introduction to the *Kojiki*, the Records of Ancient Matters

Ameno, Suso (writer)

“The White Rabbit of Inaba,” “Umisachihiko and Yamasachihiko,” “Ama-no-Iwato,” and many more—there are probably few people who have never encountered a phrase or story originating from the *Kojiki*, even if they’ve never read it themselves. For example, the manga *Yakumo Tatsu* (by Natsumi Itsuki, published by Hakusensha) and the place name “Yakumo” in Tokyo’s Meguro Ward are derived from a poem in the *Kojiki*. Once you start delving into the *Kojiki*, you’ll likely find yourself frequently saying, “Oh, so that’s what this means!” in everyday life. The world of the *Kojiki* is surprisingly close to us.

However, the *Kojiki* is notoriously difficult to read. As a history student in college, I once took a course where we read the *Kojiki* in its original text, and I have to say, it was dreadfully boring. Being written entirely in *kanji*, it was incredibly hard to read. The use of phonetic approximations and unconventional characters made it feel almost like deciphering a code.

The content, too, often left modern readers scratching their heads with its perplexing developments, and I couldn’t get into it at all back then.

But what dispelled those bitter memories for me was *Illustrated Stories from the Records of Ancient Matters*, written by Yoko Tomiyasu, illustrated by Koji Yamamura, and supervised by Sukeyuki Miura (published by Kaiseisha). It was overwhelmingly accessible, easy to read, and entertaining. Presented like a collection of folk tales, the *Kojiki*’s worldview is told in a way that both adults and children can enjoy. What’s more, while carefully maintaining the “essence” of the original text under expert supervision, this book vividly depicts the gods’ very human traits in a way modern readers can relate to.

Despite being “gods,” they’re not portrayed as perfect beings—they fail, act recklessly, or show weaknesses. This “humanness” is undeniably one of the charms of the *Kojiki*.

The book’s elegant simplicity, clear structure, and illustrations on every page by international animation artist Koji Yamamura further enhance the *Kojiki*’s allure and make it even more understandable. One striking scene involves Izanagi peeking into the chamber where his wife, Izanami, resides in the underworld, despite being warned not to look. Shocked by her decayed, maggot-ridden body, he flees in terror.

The illustrations of Izanami’s grotesque yet somehow endearing form and Izanagi’s desperate escape have a sense of motion unique to an animation artist. The depiction of the pursuing underworld hags (Yomotsu-shikome) and thunder gods rushing toward him is imbued with an exhilarating sense of speed.

This book covers only the first volume of the three-part *Kojiki*, summarizing mythological events as an illustrated tale. It includes stories like Susanoo’s battle with the Yamata-no-Orochi, which inspired the place name “Yakumo,” and the tale of Konohanasakuya-hime and Iwanagahime, which also appears in the manga *Hozuki no Reitetsu* (by Natsumi Eguchi, published by Kodansha).

This makes it a great opportunity to discover the origins of many references found in manga and anime.

Additionally, for those who have tried and failed to read the *Kojiki*, this book serves as an excellent introduction.

■ *Tri-Hawks Quarterly* vol. 69

2022

From the Bookshelf

The *Kojiki*, Japan’s oldest surviving historical text, is divided into three volumes. The upper volume narrates the myths of the nation’s origins, while the middle and lower volumes recount events from the reigns of successive emperors. *Illustrated Stories from the Records of Ancient Matters* focuses on the myths in the upper volume, presenting them in a style reminiscent of folktales. Accompanied by illustrations on every page, the book reads like a scroll, making the content accessible and engaging. The deities featured in the *Kojiki* are far from flawless. They are emotional and highly individualistic—crying tears so abundant they dry up mountains and seas, squabbling like children, and even engaging in trickery and mischief. The text introduces a wide array of gods, from those of the sky, sea, and mountains to the smallest of deities, including ones who produce delicious foods from their noses, mouths, or even posteriors.

Charming animals also play a role in these stories, adding depth to the mythology. The mischievous White Rabbit of Inaba deceives sharks but ends up being outwitted and punished—a hapless and sympathetic character. The brave mouse that helps Ōnamuji face trials of marriage tirelessly retrieves an important arrow, showing its endearing diligence. Koji Yamamura’s illustrations, rendered in soft, fluid lines, blur the boundaries between gods, animals, and nature. This approach beautifully aligns with the *Kojiki*’s worldview, where every element of existence is imbued with divine presence. The art further stirs the imagination, drawing readers into the mythical world.

Imagining the thoughts and feelings of the ancient people who compiled the *Kojiki* may be challenging. However, reading this book offers a glimpse into what those distant times might have felt like. The vivid tales of gods and animals unfold like a mesmerizing storybook, inviting readers into the enchanting world of the *Kojiki*.

★ Book Sent to the Jurors

A Girl at The Museum #01 ***The Mysterious Research Begins***



original title	博物館の少女 怪異研究事始め
romanisation	Hakubutsukan no shojo: Kaii kenkyu kotohajime
illus.	
publisher	Tokyo: Kaiseisha
publication year	2021
awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cultural Property Special Recommended by the Social Security Council• Selection of the School Library Association• Selected for <i>White Ravens</i> (Germany)• JBBY Selection

REVIEW

■ Side Street Café

August 8, 2024

A Girl at the Museum **Kondo, Ayako** (bookseller)

The 165th Naoki Prize-winning novel *Hoshi Ochite, Nao* by Touko Sawada is a biographical tale centered on Toyo, the daughter of Kyosai Kawanabe, the genius artist known as the “Demon of Painting.”

[omission]

A novel that portrays Toyo’s girlhood is Yoko Tomiyasu’s *A Girl at the Museum*, now with two volumes available. While categorized as children’s literature, it is highly enjoyable for adults as well. The first volume, *The mysterious research begins*, begins with the story of Ikaru, the daughter of an antique dealer, who moves to Tokyo from Osaka. Her visit to the Ueno Museum (now the Tokyo National

Museum) at the request of a relative sparks the tale. Recognized for her discerning eye, Ikaru is tasked with assisting “Tonosama,” a custodian researching strange phenomena in the museum’s old storehouse.

One day, an incident occurs—the theft of the “Kurotebako (black lidded box),” a mysterious artifact said to be linked to the hidden Christians. Who stole it, and for what purpose?

The newly established museum and its storehouse, hidden Christians, the black lidded box, Kanda Church—so many intriguing and mysterious elements abound. The plot thickens as one mystery leads to another, with Ikaru and Tonosama working together to uncover the truth.

With elements of mystery and fantasy, the story is both compelling and richly detailed. The writing is well-paced, and the intrigue makes it impossible to put the book down. Above all, the characters are captivating! The protagonist Ikaru, who has lost both parents and moved to Tokyo alone, faces

her challenging circumstances with resilience, energy, and optimism. Her sharp eye and extensive knowledge make her remarkable, even as a child. Chasing mysteries alongside Tonosama and the others is so impressive—it's almost like she's some kind of famous detective! One standout feature of this novel is its inclusion of real historical figures. Tonosama, or Kenji Oda, is among them, as are Kyosai Kawanabe and his daughter Toyo, the very person who asks Ikaru to deliver a task to the museum. The friendship that develops between Ikaru and Toyo, both of the same generation, is depicted with the charming nuances unique to girls their age, making their interactions delightful to read.

The second volume, *The Clamorous Ghost* introduces more historical figures, such as Iwao Ooyama, Suteomatsu, and their daughters. In this installment, Ikaru undertakes a sort of undercover investigation, encounters robbery and murder cases, and ultimately sees these mysteries resolved in a brilliant, well-foreshadowed conclusion—satisfying for any mystery enthusiast. Meanwhile, Toyo's struggles and dedication toward an exhibition are depicted, highlighting her internal conflicts. Knowing the historical Toyo makes these scenes even more poignant. There's a moment when she raises her voice at Ikaru out of frustration, and it's heart-

wrenching to see her turmoil. While future volumes may delve deeper into her struggles, her casual chats and shared sweets with Ikaru remain heartwarming, showcasing her ordinary girlhood. One can't help but hope that the real Toyo experienced such a childhood as well.

Toyo and Suteomatsu are women who lived through a time of even greater gender inequality than today, facing their challenges with grace and determination. Meanwhile, Ikaru, though fictional, performs extraordinary feats as a young girl, holding her own among adults. Though I'm not particularly a feminist, I hope children of Ikaru's generation, especially young girls, read this book. It will inspire them to dream big and stay positive.



#02 *The Clamorous Ghost*

Mokko in Mount Yamamba



original title	やまば山のモッコたち
romanisation	Yamanbayama no mokko tachi
illus.	Furiya, Nana
publisher	Tokyo: Fukuinkan Shoten
publication year	1986
awards	• IBBY Honour List

REVIEW

■ [Narita Area Shimbun Online](#)

July 24, 2016

Mokko in Mount Yamamba

Sasaki, Keitaro (editor)

In the Mount Yamamba surrounding the village where the protagonist Keita lives, there are creatures called “Mokko.” Humans rarely venture into this area.

The Mokokos are fearsome beings like snow women, *kappa*, and other small, unnamed creatures.

At the top of the mountain, under three pine trees, live a tall *Yamanba* and her daughter Mayu, a young girl. The story revolves around Keita forming a friendship with Mayu and embarking on various adventures.

While one might think, “Yamanba sounds scary!” *Yamanba* and her daughter Mayu featured in this story are kindhearted. They are also very strong, and when Keita is about to be captured by a snow woman, Mayu comes rushing to his rescue like the

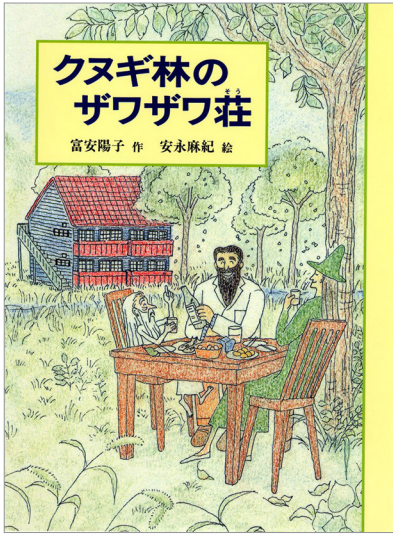
wind when he plays his bamboo flute. There’s even an episode where the *Yamanba* invites him into her warm home and treats him to her special *Yamanba* rice cakes.

Keita and Mayu’s playful interactions with the Mokokos and their adventures in nature are vividly depicted, along with the delicious seasonal treats made from the mountain’s bounty, such as “Chestnut Honey Stew,” “Wax Myrtle Liqueur,” and the “Yamanba Soup” that the *Yamanba* serves to the Mokokos at the arrival of spring. As a child, I was captivated by this story.

The first edition of this book was published in 1986, making it over a quarter-century old. Recently, when I visited the Ghibli Museum in Mitaka, I was delighted to see it featured as a recommended children’s book in the museum’s library.

I highly recommend this book to elementary school children, especially those in middle grades and older, who enjoy reading. For younger children, there’s a picture book series featuring Mayu as the protagonist. I encourage you to explore this *Stories of Witch’s Daughter* series with your children, tailored to their age.

Noisy House in the Oak Forests



original title	クヌギ林のザワザワ荘
romanisation	kunugi bayashi no zawazawaso
illus.	Yasunaga, Maki
publisher	Tokyo: Akane Shobo
publication year	1990
awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Newcommer Prize of Japanese Association of Writers for Children• Shogakukan Children's Publication Culture Award

REVIEW

■ Yomiuri Shimbun Online

December 8, 2023

Mori, Kumi (School Librarian)

Have you ever been confused by conflicting advice from family, teachers, or neighbors? People's perspectives often differ based on their circumstances and roles. When you're lost, this book will give you the push to "believe in yourself and move forward."

Set in an apartment called "The Noisy House" deep in the mountains, the story follows a scientist who moves in and ends up living with *yokai* like water spirits and shape-shifting foxes. Despite their differing values, the humans and *yokai* each do their best from their unique perspectives to overcome a mountain water shortage crisis.

One scene I revisit often involves *Azukitogi*, a *yokai* who collects human souls. Though this task was essential for maintaining harmony with nature, the scientist feels sorry for the souls and tries to set them

free. You might expect a confrontation when the secret is discovered, but instead, they honestly admit, "There was no other choice."

Fulfilling one's role often benefits others while also requiring sacrifices. *Azukitogi's* line, "Good and bad always come as a pair," resonates deeply, especially now that I'm an adult.

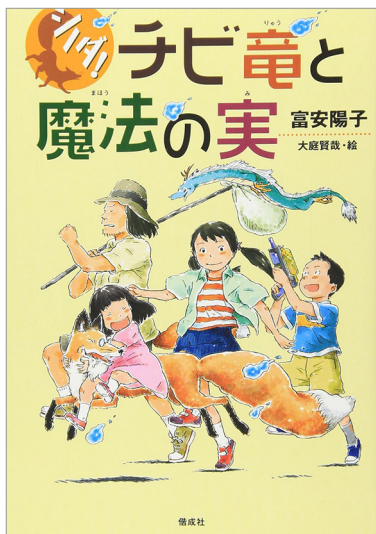
I first encountered this book in fifth grade. Back then, I believed "smart kids are better," and I was scared to acknowledge that I couldn't keep up in cram school. But after reading this book, I realized, "Nobody's perfect, and I'm not a failure either." It helped me move on, and even now, I keep it on my bookshelf as a kind of "charm."

Though I worked in a bookstore for a long time, this is only my second year as a school librarian. I try to lift the spirits of the children I work with, saying, "You've found an interesting book!" or "You've read so much!" I want the library to be a special place for kids, distinct from the classroom.

Through various books, I hope they'll discover words that help them navigate unanswered questions and hold onto their inner strength.

Shinoda! series #01

The Little Dragon and Magic Fruit



original title	シノダ！チビ竜と魔法の実
romanisation	Shinoda! 1: Chibi ryu to maho no mi
illus.	Oba, Kenya
publisher	Tokyo: Kaiseisha
publication year	2003 ~
awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social Security Council Recommended Cultural Property• Selection of the Japan Library Association• JBBY Selection
translations	Korean Chinese Complex Chinese Simplified

Comentary of the Book

December 2011

Asano, Atsuko (author)

Whenever I read Yoko Tomiyasu's works, countless thoughts and emotions bubble up within me. Truly, countless. For instance...

There's the satisfaction of being transported to a world utterly unknown—one that has never appeared in any story, movie, or drama before—a world we've neither heard of, seen, nor touched. And yet, within that wholly unfamiliar world, there's a vivid sense of connection, a feeling that it is undeniably tied to us. I believe this is a power only genuine stories possess. You could call it the true strength of storytelling.

The Little Dragon and Magic Fruit is another work that delivers a plethora of emotions.

The setting isn't a magical kingdom, the depths of the ocean, or the edges of the universe. It takes place in an ordinary apartment (specifically, the bathroom) and at a regular elementary school. How modest, right? These days, even family dramas feature more diverse locations.

Yet despite such a small stage, such an unassuming backdrop, the story itself is astonishingly grand in scale, delightful, exciting, and—most importantly—real.

It captures your heart so completely that you might find yourself glancing around, wondering if you've fallen under some kind of fox's spell.

The story begins with a sentence like this:

"For Yui, the fact that her mother was actually a fox wasn't such a big deal."

This shocking opening sentence had me hooked the moment I read it (many years ago now). By the time I finished reading, I couldn't stop marveling.

How masterful!

I could only stand in awe of Yoko Tomiyasu's prowess as a writer.

With that single sentence, readers are already pulled into the world of the story. "What does it mean that her mom is a fox?" you wonder, leaning forward with curiosity. At the same time, you're charmed by Yui—the girl who casually dismisses her mother being a fox as "not a big deal."

That's how it is with all of Tomiyasu's works. It's not just the fun and excitement of the stories she weaves, but the vibrancy and charm of her characters that make them leap to life right before our eyes.

Tomiyasu never commits the mistake of tediously listing out her characters' qualities. With a single sentence, a single line, or even a single word, she conveys their essence vividly. It's akin to the beauty of a single real rose compared to an artificial tree cluttered with decorations.

All of Tomiyasu's works exude a sense of clarity and simplicity, free from unnecessary embellishments. I secretly believe that this is one of the reasons why she has garnered so many readers (though perhaps it's not so secret now).

And so, the story that begins with that jaw-dropping sentence unfolds like a summer cloud swelling on the horizon.

A little dragon gets lost and builds a nest in the family's bathroom. There's a mysterious stone, a ground covered in snakes, and a magical fruit. One peculiar event after another throws the Shinoda family (with a fox for a mother) into chaos... or does it?

In fact, neither the father, the mother, Yui, Takumi, nor Moe are ever swept away or blown off course. Each one, in their own way, faces the bizarre challenges head-on—with even a touch of humor. And one by one, they overcome each difficulty.

"So if you don't want to be defeated by shadows, always stand tall and face the sun. If you look toward the light instead of the darkness, shadows won't seem scary at all."

This is a line spoken by the mother.

Don't run away; confront it. Don't avert your eyes; face it head-on.

What a proud, dignified, and resilient line. It makes me understand why the father fell in love with her. What a magnificent woman, standing firmly on her own two feet (or is it four in her case?).

Indeed, this mother is described as:

"Mom was tall and, if anything, solidly built. Her lively eyes sparkled with a hint of laughter and an indomitable spirit. Her lips always seemed slightly upturned in a smile. Whether it was at a school event or a trip to the store, the area around Mom seemed brighter and more cheerful, as if she were bathed in a special light."

When I read this, I couldn't help but think—perhaps secretly—"This is just like Tomiyasu herself." Could it be that she modeled this character after herself? Perhaps Yoko Tomiyasu is part of the fox clan. That would explain her ability to create story after story, filled with such joy, humor, and profound resonance. To me, the very existence of Yoko Tomiyasu as a writer feels magical.

By the way, this story draws upon the legend of "Shinodazuma" (The Wife of Shinoda). Personally, I never liked this tale.

In it, a white fox transforms into a woman, marries a man named Abe no Yasuna, and even has a child with him, but her true form is revealed, and she flees back to the forest of Shinoda. She leaves behind the famous poem:

"If you long for me, come seek me out in the forest of Shinoda, where the bitter kudzu vines grow."

I always found it melancholic—both the fox and Yasuna seemed pitiable, and the whole story left a gloomy impression. But Tomiyasu approaches it differently.

She takes this ancient tale, brings it into the modern day, and transforms it into a bright, straightforward, and irresistibly charming story filled with fascinating people—and foxes.

It's a feat that could only be accomplished by someone of the fox clan, don't you think?



Latest in the Shinoda series
#12 The Foxes of the Hatsune Family (2024)

Tiger with a Long, Long Tail



original title	トラのナガシッポ
romanisation	Tora no Nagashippo
illus.	Abe, Hiroshi
publication year	Tokyo: Fukuinkan Shoten
publish year	2001
translations	Korean

AUTHOR'S NOTE

■ *Kodomo no tomo*, vol. 541

Father's Magic Tomiyasu, Yoko

When I was little, my father would occasionally tell me fascinating stories. On a humid Sunday in August, I noticed a large scar from a vaccination on my father's shoulder as he lounged in a sleeveless undershirt at the kitchen table. Curious, I asked, "What's that?" and that was the cue for my father's adventurous tales to begin.

He would say the scar was the bite mark left from wrestling a giant crocodile during an expedition in the jungle, or sometimes he'd boast it was a battle wound from fighting a man-eating shark at the bottom of the ocean. Each time I asked, his answer would change, and I found it so amusing that I kept asking the same question over and over again.

As my two younger brothers were born and I grew older, taking walks with our dog in the mountains near our house became a family tradition. One summer evening at dusk, as we were walking home

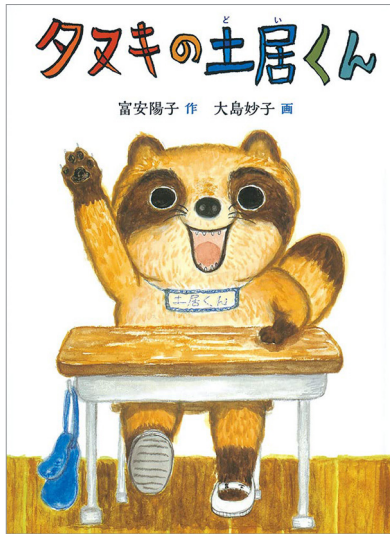
through the darkening streets, my father suddenly lay down flat on the asphalt road ahead of us. Startled, I asked, "What are you doing?"

Still lying there, he pressed his ear firmly to the asphalt and replied, "Listen, you can hear the sound of cars far away. This is how ninjas used to detect the sound of footsteps in the distance." My brothers and I mimicked him, lying on the road and pressing our ears to the rough, warm surface of the asphalt. That was the first and last time we ever listened to the sound of cars resonating from far off, with our ears to the ground.

My father was a busy man, and I doubt he spent a lot of time with us children. But perhaps because of that, the moments with him stand out vividly in my memory. The words he spoke, the pictures he drew — they carried a special, almost magical quality.

For this picture book, Hiroshi Abe created truly bold and stunning illustrations of a tiger. When I draw, my tigers tend to end up looking like ill-tempered cats. Seeing Abe's artwork, I felt inspired to practice. I hope to one day draw a tiger so dependable and adventurous that, when a child asks me to draw one, it can lead them on an exciting journey of their own.

Doi-kun the Raccoon Dog



original title	タヌキの土居くん
romanisation	Tanuki no Doi-kun
illus.	Oshima, Taeko
publisher	Tokyo: Fukuinkan Shoten
publication year	2022

REVIEW

■ Akahata Newspaper

April 8, 2023

Iwamura, Akie (researcher)

In April, Akane-chan woke up early and headed to the small elementary school at the foot of the mountain. When she tried to enter the classroom, she was shocked to see a raccoon dog sitting in the seat next to her neighbor, Doi-kun! It turned out that Doi-kun was actually a young raccoon dog who had been disguising himself as a human to attend school. When Doi-kun's true form was revealed, the whole school was thrown into an uproar. Doi-kun's decision to live honestly and embrace his raccoon dog nature while attending school is both amusing and heartwarming. The bright and lively illustrations beautifully bring the story to life.

■ Yomiuri KODOMO Shimbun

2 June, 2022

Tamura, Shizuko (bookseller)

When I arrived at school as usual, I discovered that a classmate I thought was human was actually a raccoon dog. From the very beginning of the story, such a surprising event unfolds. Just like how a raccoon dog rhythmically pats its belly, the story develops with a lively rhythm.

Doi-kun, the raccoon dog, decided to stop disguising himself because the class set a goal: "Be friendly, cheerful, and honest!" Even in his raccoon dog form, Doi-kun is still Doi-kun. His personality doesn't change one bit. In a small school with just ten students ranging from first to sixth grade, everyone enjoys their time together. And at the very end, there's yet another surprising twist. You might figure it out by comparing the illustrations at the beginning and end of the book!