



DATE: 15 NOV 2025
TIME: 10:00–16:30 (UTC+8)
VENUE: ZOOM

Picturebooks in and across Asia in the 21st Century Online Symposium

Organized by
Hong Kong Shue Yan University
National Cheng Kung University
National Taitung University



Meeting ID: 998 8041 8695

Programme

9:50 – 10:00 Zoom Log-in and Registration

10:00 – 12:00 Keynote Panel

Moderator: Prof. Andrea Mei-Ying Wu, National Cheng Kung University

- (1) Prof. Yang Li-chung – Life Narratives Across Generations in Two Crossover Picturebooks from Taiwan
- (2) Dr. Sharifah Aishah Osman – Saya Anak Malaysia: Responses to Local and Global Issues in Malaysian Picturebooks
- (3) Dr. Sung-Ae Lee – Encounters with Otherness: The Picture Books of Baek Heena

12:00 – 13:00 Lunch

13:00 – 14:30 Room A

A1 - Crossing Borders and Views

Moderator: Dr. Michelle Chan,
Hong Kong Shue Yan University

- (1) Prof. Juwen Zhang – Stereotypes in an English Picturebook Translated from a Chinese Folktale
- (2) Dr. Sarah Park Dahlen and Dr. Yeojoo Lim – Adoption in Korean Picture Books: The View In/From the Motherland
- (3) Sujata Patel and Dr. Smriti Singh – From Erasure to Inclusion: Disability and Diverse Childhoods in Indian Picture Book

13:00 – 14:30 Room B

B1 - Exploring New Spaces

Moderator: Dr. Hsin-Chun Jamie Tsai,
National Taitung University

- (1) Dr. Jonathan Klassen – The Bicycle as Time Machine: Nostalgic Landscapes in Asian picturebooks
- (2) Dr. Ping-Shi Kao – Reimagining Urban Heritage Through Children's Eyes: Bei Lynn’s *Dadaocheng Zoo*
- (3) Sridipa Dandapat – From Children’s Book Trust to Digital Story Books: A Historical Lens to Indian Picturebook Industry

14:30 – 14:40 Break Time

14:40 – 16:10 Room A

A2 - Interacting Culture and History

Moderator: Dr. Michelle Chan,
Hong Kong Shue Yan University

- (1) Dr. Cheng-Ting Chang – Crossover Picturebooks in Japan and Taiwan: Uncovering Underexplored Phenomena
- (2) Dr. Faye Dorcas Yung Schwendeman – Making the Reader Feel: Nostalgia and Theory in Japanese and Western Picturebook Scholarship
- (3) Dr. Miki Yamamoto – History of Wordless Picturebooks in Asia: Focusing on Japanese Children's Magazines

14:40 – 16:10 Room B

B2 - Unfolding Historical and Geographical Narratives

Moderator: Dr. Hsin-Chun Jamie Tsai,
National Taitung University

- (1) Dr. Bess Yukuan Chen – Experiments of “Void”: Creative Narratives of Asian Picturebooks for Museums
- (2) Pao-Yu Huang – Uncovering Concealing Narratives: Rethinking “Plurality” in Taiwanese Children’s Picturebooks
- (3) Dr. Virine Hutasankas – Filling the Void with Local Voices: Northern Thai Picturebooks and National Environmental Awareness

16:15 – 16:30 Closing Remarks

Keynote Speakers

**Voicing Mothers: Life Narratives Across Generations
in Two Crossover Picturebooks from Taiwan
Lichung Yang**

This talk examines how contemporary Taiwanese picturebooks reimagine motherhood through innovative narrative and artistic strategies. While many picturebooks on motherhood are translated from English, Japanese, or Korean, an increasing number of local writers and illustrators are producing original works that challenge traditional portrayals and expand the range of maternal experiences represented. Focusing on *Phonetic Practices* (2021) and *The Diary of Mom* (2021), I will show how these works combine life narratives with experimental designs to question established boundaries of genre and readership. Taken together, the two picturebooks also chart a rare, multi-generational view of motherhood across three distinct historical and cultural contexts in Taiwan. By situating these picturebooks within the broader category of crossover literature, the talk highlights their significance for picturebook studies and their resonance across Asian cultural contexts.

Lichung Yang is a Professor in the Department of English Instruction at University of Taipei, Taiwan. She is interested in picturebook reading in Taiwan's literacy practices. She has published papers on various topics in picturebook studies, and her recent research focuses on the role of picturebooks as cultural mediators in cross-cultural contexts.

**Saya Anak Malaysia: Responses to Local and
Global Issues in Malaysian Picturebooks
Sharifah Aishah Osman**

Global publication trends of children's literature in the last two decades of the twenty-first century have indicated a clear recognition of the role of children's literature as a tool for empowerment, and as a means of providing children with a voice for the expression of self-definition and agency. The scholarship of contemporary childhood studies and youth literature reflects a similar impetus (Stephens 2013, Beauvais 2015, and Seelinger Trites 2018), all of which emphasize subjectivity, agency, and autonomy as prominent themes. In line with the view that young people should be guided to understand and appreciate their roles as active global citizens to deal with the numerous challenges of the future as stated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the need to expose young people to the 17 SDGs is essential. To facilitate this, children's literature and its many virtues can be harnessed to create a strong awareness of sustainability, health, and social issues, topics that are readily present in a diverse range of children's picturebooks from Malaysia. Using an interdisciplinary approach that integrates theories from literary, gender, folklore, as well as cultural studies to analyse selected Malaysian children's picturebooks, this paper will demonstrate how Malaysian youth literature can be used to engage children in discussions of sustainability, health, and social issues. The textual analysis will revolve around four specific SDGs, namely SDG 3 (good health and well-being), SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 15 (life on land), and SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions), as found in the following books: Kimberly Lee and Liyana Taff's *What If?* (2020), Emila Yusof's *My Mother's Kitchen* (2012) and *Legendary Princesses of Malaysia* (2017), Kimberly Lee's *Boys Don't Fry* (2023), Dendangan Hep et al.'s *Why Can't We Take More?* (2023), Ammi's *Guardian of the Hornbills* (2024) and *The Music of Inner Land* (2024), Jainal Amambling's *Longhouse Days* (2011), and Awang Fadilah's *Land Below the Wind* (2011).

Keywords: climate action; gender equality; health and well-being; cultural diversity; Malaysian children's literature; sustainability.

Sharifah Aishah Osman is an Associate Professor and Head of the Department of English, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Universiti Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, where she teaches courses on Youth Literature and Nineteenth-century British Literature. She holds a PhD in English Literature from Boston University, U.S.A. Her areas of expertise are Children's and Young Adult Literature in Malaysia, and Nineteenth-century British Literature. She also has research interests in women's writings, feminist youth literature, and folklore studies. Her recent publications have appeared in *The Asian Family in Literature and Film: South Asia, Southeast Asia and Asian Diaspora* (Palgrave Macmillan 2024), *The Routledge Companion to Girls' Studies* (Routledge 2024), *Asian Children's Literature and Film in a Global Age: Local, National, and Transnational Trajectories* (Palgrave Macmillan 2020), *Making Heritage in Malaysia: Sites, Histories, Identities* (Palgrave Macmillan 2020), *Girlhood Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, *Bookbird: A Journal of International Children's Literature*, and *Southeast Asian Review of English (SARE)*. She is co-editor of *The Asian Family in Literature and Film*, Volumes 1 and 2 (Palgrave Macmillan 2024, with Bernard Wilson), *The Principal Girl: Feminist Tales from Asia* (Gerakbudaya 2019) and *The Principal Girl Redux* (Gerakbudaya 2023, with Tutu Dutta). She is currently working on two projects: an academic monograph on feminist folktales and folk tale adaptations in Malaysian youth literature, and a research project on sustainability, health, and social issues in Malaysian children's literature.

**Encounters with Otherness:
The Picture Books of Baek Heena
Sung-Ae Lee**

In 2020, the prestigious Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award went to South Korean picture book artist, Baek Heena, only the second author from an Asian country to win this award. Including her first book, *Cloud Bread* (published in 2004), she has produced 14 picture books and some of these have been translated into one or more of at least 11 languages. Circulation through translation can be very uneven – for example, Baek’s books are widely available in Spanish but at present only three are available in English, and not the most recent. However, while I want to address the international circulation of Baek’s work, my concern here is not with translation, but with the qualities of that work, why it merits wide attention, and the nature of its interactions between global narrative forms and Asian places and people.

Directed at an audience primarily in an age range of four to ten years, the books address a general, and global, concern of picture books with the expansion of childhood experience from the domestic sphere into a wider world and hence with an empirical and imaginative encounter with otherness. The appeal of Baek’s books in many cultures can be attributed to the visual effects of her highly innovative production techniques, but this would be less effective without the glocalised nature of her stories. I draw here on the concept of glocalisation to explore how an interaction of global and local scripts in picture books enables a blending and mutual enrichment – for example of well-known, international story types and local cultural practice and artifacts. The paper will consider a selection of Baek’s books, from her earliest (*Cloud Bread*) to her most recent (*Happy Birthday*, 2024).

Sung-Ae Lee is a Lecturer in the School of International Studies at Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia. Her research areas range across Asian cinema, adaptation studies, trauma studies, Korean diaspora, and Korean literature, film and TV drama.

She is the author of 40 book chapters and journal articles. Her recent publications include “Past in the present: film and TV drama, Korean families, and the palimpsestic Neo-Confucian family schema” (in *The Asian family in literature and film: changing perceptions in a New Age-East Asia*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2024) and “Coming-of-age in South Korean Cinema” (in *The Oxford handbook of children's film*, OUP, 2022).

Presenters

(in alphabetical order)

**Experiments of “Void”:
Creative Narratives of Asian Picturebooks for Museums
Bess Yukuan Chen**

Similar to a visitor guide, picturebooks inspired by or commissioned to promote museum exhibits commonly carry the mission of enhancing readers’ understanding and experience of the subject matter on display. This notion of enhancement is often tied strongly to the connotation that there is a sort of “void”—as a lack or a gap between the visitor and the visited (as in the readers and the text)—that should be or needs to be “filled,” particularly with factual information which draws cultural, historical or even scientific significance. How to creatively strike an appealing yet faithful balance between offering visually and textually rich information to “fill the void” is then a rewarding challenge for curators as well as picturebook makers.

For young readers, many books of this kind are designed or categorized as what Joan I. Glazer defines as “informational books,” or “nonfictions,” serving primarily as educational tools which “deal with rudimentary knowledge” by presenting facts, concepts, and generalizations about a particular topic rather than [telling] a story” (*Introduction to Children’s Literature* 430). However, in reviewing Glazer’s definition alongside the publication and the circulation of picturebooks developed to complement or promote museum exhibits in the 21st century, market research in East Asia indicates that “storytelling”—whether through fictional or nonfictional narratives—consistently functions as a popular approach of bringing insightful factual information to life. Furthermore, there are adventurous book creators persistently experimenting with the middle ground via their visual and textual compositions: depicting “the void” both as “the void” itself and as “a space” filled with surprising possibilities.

In this light, the paper seeks to examine several picturebooks about museum exhibits by Korean and Taiwanese authors and illustrators working in this experimental spirit, including Suzy Lee (이수지), Page Tsou (鄒駿昇), Zheng Ruoxun (鄭若珣) and Joyce Tsao (曹一竹).

Bess Yukuan Chen (陳聿寬) is currently the adjunct assistant professor in the Department of English Language and Literature, Soochow University, Taiwan. She is also the member of CIRCL (the Graduate Centre for International Research in Childhood: Literature, Culture and Media at the University of Reading, UK), and of TCLRA (Taiwan Children’s Literature Research Association). Her present research interests focus upon the object-ness of perception in the formation of identity in English literature, children and young adult literature, literary criticism, cultural studies, and philosophy.

**Crossover Picturebooks in Japan and Taiwan:
Uncovering Underexplored Phenomena
Cheng-Ting Chang**

Following the rise of crossover literature—works that appeal to both children and adults—at the end of the 20th century, scholarly attention has increasingly turned to picturebooks. In *Crossover Picturebooks: A Genre for All Ages*, the first monograph to examine picturebooks as crossover texts, Sandra Beckett introduced the term “crossover picturebooks,” highlighting their unique ability to foster shared reading experiences between adults and children. Unlike many other narrative forms, picturebooks tend to empower both readerships more equally, promoting a balanced and collaborative engagement with the text. While crossover picturebooks have attracted considerable scholarly interest, research has largely focused on Western contexts, with developments in East Asia often overlooked.

In Japan, nonfiction writer Kunio Yanagida has, since 1999, advocated that “picturebooks should be read three times in life,” encouraging adults to revisit them. His message resonated widely, contributing to the rise of a crossover reading culture in Japan. Meanwhile, in Taiwan, Jimmy Liao began publishing picturebooks aimed at adults in 1998. However, his early works quickly gained widespread popularity and were awarded major children’s literature prizes, with later titles continuing to receive similar recognition—reflecting a distinct crossover phenomenon in Taiwan. The crossover trend has continued to evolve and thrive in both Japanese and Taiwanese contexts throughout the 21st century. Building on previous research, this presentation examines the relatively underexplored phenomena of crossover picturebooks in Japan and Taiwan. Drawing on critical scholarship, insights from acclaimed picturebook authors, and examples of works with crossover appeal, it identifies distinctive features of Japanese and Taiwanese crossover picturebooks. It also considers how these characteristics differ from those observed in Western contexts and discusses potential cross-cultural differences between Japan and Taiwan.

Cheng-Ting Chang is an adjunct lecturer at Kokushikan University in Tokyo, Japan. She earned her PhD in Cultural Interaction from Sophia University and was a research fellow at the East Asian Academy for New Liberal Arts, University of Tokyo. She also holds an MPhil in Critical Approaches to Children’s Literature from the University of Cambridge. Formerly an editor and translator at Grimm Press, a Taiwanese picturebook publisher, her research explores death, childhood, and adulthood in picturebooks across cultures, crossover picturebooks, and the translation of children’s literature.

**Adoption in Korean Picture Books:
The View In/From the Motherland
Sarah Park Dahlen, Yeojoo Lim**

In 2009, Sarah Park (Dahlen) observed that the majority of American youth literature featuring transnationally adopted Koreans was not written by adopted Koreans; rather, they were mostly written by white women, and notably, two-fifths of the books were written by white adoptive mothers. This outsider authorship resulted in significant silences, absences, and inaccuracies regarding Korean adoption. In 2024, Sarah Park Dahlen and Yeojoo Lim began reading and analyzing representations of adoption in South Korean picture books in order to evaluate how writers in the sending country depict adoption for child readers. Their goal was to understand how the Republic of Korea—the largest adoption sending country in the history of transnational adoption—imagines adoptive experiences. This research is being conducted at a time when Korean adoption is highly visible in media across the globe, as a South Korean Truth and Reconciliation Commission announced in March 2025 that they had found wide instances of fraud and abuse on the part of adoption agencies and the Korean government. Also, a 2024 Associated Press investigative report found that many birth mothers were lied to or that their children were kidnapped into the adoption pipeline, but stories like these hardly make it into literature for young readers. In this presentation, Dahlen and Lim draw on Critical Adoption Studies and present their findings of how South Korean picture books depict Korean adoption, with particular attention paid to authorship, adoptee consciousness, and how birth and adoptive mothers are portrayed. They also situate this research within the larger trends in Korean picture book publishing, such as in terms of how sociopolitical issues are presented in picture books.

Yeojoo Lim 임여주, PhD, is an Associate Professor at Library, Archive and Information Studies Department at Pusan National University, Republic of Korea. Her research interests include diversity in children's literature, youth librarianship, and library services for underserved populations. She co-authored *Theory and Practice of Reading Education and Reference Information Services* with other researchers. She is also an author of two published children's books.

Sarah Park Dahlen 박사라 is an Associate Professor at the School of Information Sciences at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, where she is also affiliate faculty in the Department of Asian American Studies and the Center for East Asian & Pacific Studies. Her research is on Asian American youth literature and transracial Korean adoption. She co-edits *Research on Diversity in Youth Literature* and co-edited *Harry Potter and the Other: Race, Justice, and Difference in the Wizarding World*. Her next book with Paul Lai addresses Asian American youth literature. She is a board member of the International Research Society for Children's Literature.

**From Children's Book Trust to Digital Story Books:
A Historical Lens to Indian Picturebook Industry
Sridipa Dandapat**

This paper examines the evolution of the Indian picturebook industry from its foundational years at the Children's Book Trust (CBT) to the digital age transformation with web archive platforms like Storyweaver and Literacy Cloud. Emerging in 1957, CBT pioneered picturebook publishing in India, emphasizing high-quality, culturally relevant stories and illustrations for young readers. This analysis will further discuss how other early institutional publishers such as National Book Trust (NBT), India Book House, and National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), diversified offerings, translated books into regional languages, and conducted workshops to nurture writers and illustrators. By the 1980s, independent publishers like Tulika Books, Tara Books, and Karadi Tales emerged, championing local stories, indigenous art forms, and diverse representations previously marginalized in mainstream narratives. It further discusses how despite industry challenges like limited distribution, weak library infrastructure, and a focus on educational rather than creative content, the picturebook sector gradually expanded its reach and inclusivity. The digital revolution marked a major shift, with platforms like Storyweaver (launched by Pratham Books in 2015) or Literacy Cloud (launched by Room to Read in 2018) democratizing access to picturebooks for children across India and beyond. These web archives, with storybooks for children, enabled free, multilingual distribution, crowd-sourced content creation, and open digital access, bridging gaps in representation and geographical outreach. This transition from institutional print to digital open-source models reflects the industry's adaptive response to India's linguistic, cultural, and socioeconomic diversity. The trajectory from CBT's foundational narrative-driven approach to digital platforms reveals the expanding horizons of Indian picturebooks: from limited print runs to a vibrant, inclusive, and accessible storytelling landscape capable of reflecting the multiplicity of Indian childhoods.

Keywords: Indian picturebook industry, Children's Book Trust, Storyweaver, Digital publishing, Inclusive children's literature

Sridipa Dandapat is a doctoral candidate (UGC-SRF) in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at IIT Patna and the newly appointed executive editor of *International Research in Children's Literature* (Edinburgh University Press) and Diversity Committee member at Children's Literature Association. She has been awarded the International Youth Library Fellowship (2023-24) for her research on Indian immigrant girlhood. Along with several award and grants, she has published extensively on picturebooks, children's literature and social justice discourse. She can be reached at shreedipaa@gmail.com.

**Uncovering Concealing Narratives: Rethinking “Plurality”
in Taiwanese Children’s Picturebooks
Pao-Yu Huang**

This study examines a pervasive narrative tendency in Taiwanese children’s picturebooks: while these works ostensibly promote empathy, kindness, and positive values, they often simplify conflicts, suppress differences, and predetermine resolutions. I conceptualize this tendency as “*concealing narratives*,” which compress ethical complexity and construct “*temporal traps*.” Such narratives translate inherited values into a preordained future, thereby foreclosing spaces of present reflection and ethical engagement for young readers.

Drawing on Hannah Arendt’s reflections on “Plurality” alongside Clémentine Beauvais’s critical theory of children’s literature and through case studies of well-known Taiwanese picturebooks such as *Guji Guji* and *The Orange Horse*, this paper analyzes how concealing narratives operate within Taiwan’s socio-cultural fabric and how they reflect broader tendencies shaped by the values of harmony and collectivism. It argues for the cultivation of intentional spaces of ambiguity and interpretive openness within stories, enabling young readers to engage ethically and imaginatively with complexity and uncertainty. Grounded in Taiwanese picturebooks, the study offers a critical perspective that diversifies and enriches theoretical approaches to children’s literature within Asian contexts.

Keywords: Hannah Arendt, Clémentine Beauvais, Taiwanese Children’s Picturebooks, critical reading, Temporality in Children’s Literature

My name is **Pao-Yu Huang**, a Ph.D. student in Children’s Literature at National Taitung University. My research develops the concept of “*concealing narratives*” in Taiwanese picturebooks by integrating perspectives on adult and child temporalities, contemporary reflections on *storytelling*, and rethinking of *subjectivity* and *children’s agency* in children’s literature studies. Drawing on my interdisciplinary background in journalism, media critique, gender advocacy, and early childhood education, I seek to bridge academic inquiry with social practice. My research is conceived as a thought experiment that challenges dominant narrative frameworks in contemporary Taiwanese picturebooks. Through this work, I aim to open a dialogic space where children’s literature, education, and social critique intersect to rethink and reimagine “*The Children of Taiwan*.”

**Filling the Void with Local Voices:
Northern Thai Picturebooks and National Environmental Awareness
Virine Hutasangkas**

Northern Thailand, home to the country's fourth-largest city, Chiang Mai, faces recurrent and severe environmental issues, such as, annual PM 2.5 pollution, devastating floods, and frequent earthquakes. Despite the significant impact of these issues on local communities, the central government's response and acknowledgment have been notably insufficient. This oversight is mirrored in the dominant Thai publishing landscape, largely concentrated in Bangkok. To achieve broader commercial appeal, major publishing houses often prioritize "universal" themes in their picturebooks, inadvertently neglecting pressing local environmental concerns that are highly relevant to regional audiences.

This paper explores how local initiatives are bridging this gap in environmental awareness. We specifically examine Mountain Mind Publishing, an independent publisher in Chiang Mai, and analyze their three picturebooks: *Doi Suthep Our Home* (2018), *What Would You Like to Eat Today?* (2022), and *Another Breath to Live* (2023).

Our analysis reveals that while all three picturebooks address critical local environmental issues, *Doi Suthep Our Home* and *What Would You Like to Eat Today?* primarily foster awareness by showcasing the inherent value of nature and the need for its preservation. In contrast, *Another Breath to Live* offers a highly informative and poignant explanation of the causes and effects of pollution. By illustrating how these problems affect both local communities and the broader national landscape, these three picturebooks serve a powerful dual purpose: they equip Northern Thai readers with essential knowledge, and they cultivate crucial awareness and empathy among a wider readership regarding the region's specific ecological challenges and their profound connection to global environmental well-being.

Keyword: Northern Thailand, Environmental issues, Picturebooks, Local initiatives, Mountain Mind Publishing

Virine Hutasangkas is a lecturer in children's literature at Chiang Mai University, Thailand, with a primary research focus on French children's literature. Her academic interests are diverse, ranging from stylistics and text-image relationship in contemporary French picturebooks to the portrayal of society in 19th-century French children's novels. Beyond her research, she is involved in promoting literacy in Northern Thailand, regularly organizing reading-based activities for children in Chiang Mai and Lampang.

**The Bicycle as Time Machine:
Nostalgic Landscapes in Asian picturebooks
Jonathan Klassen**

In the Korean picturebook, *Bicycle Trip with Uncle* (Ch'ae, In-son, 2003), a small girl rides on the back of her uncle's bike through space and time to an idyllic stream where he had played as a child, a place now urbanized and paved over. Panoramic illustrations contrast the crowded city streets in the opening and closing scenes with the lush natural environment depicted in the central pages. In other Asian picturebooks, adult authors likewise employ the bicycle as a vehicle for traveling through memory to environs of their youth. These include Allen Say's *The Bicycle Man* (1989) set in the countryside of post-World War Two Japan, Tu Huwei's *San Lun Che Pao de Kuai* [Tricycle Run Fast] (2018) set in Singapore of the 1960s, Yu, Dawu's *A Bicycle in Beijing* (2019) set in the hutongs of 1960s Beijing, and Ander's *Me and My Bike* (2008) from rural Taiwan of the 1970s.

For many adults, the bicycle is an object of nostalgia, valued during their childhood for play, exploration, and short journeys, but later abandoned as impractical. In these stories, the bicycle intensifies that nostalgia by placing characters in landscapes that are sparsely populated, safe, slow-paced and picturesque. Movement unfolds at bicycle speeds, enabling readers, alongside the characters, to notice details and develop an intimate sense of place. Such embodied movement through remembered landscapes transforms the abstract openness of *space* into what Yi-Fu Tuan sees as the rootedness of *place*, linking physical movement connected to cycling with emotional growth. This paper demonstrates how these picturebooks use the bicycle not only to evoke idyllic visions of the past but also to critique the unrestrained industrial growth of later modernity, inviting readers to reflect on ways in which mobility shapes both personal histories and shared landscapes.

Jonathan Klassen is associate professor of English at Soochow University in Taipei, Taiwan. He is the founding and current president of the Taiwan Children's Literature Research Association (TCLRA). His research interests are in ethical and narrative approaches to children's and adolescent literature, and applications of literature in language learning.

**Reimagining Urban Heritage Through Children's Eyes:
Bei Lynn's Dadaocheng Zoo
Ping-Shi Kao**

This paper examines Bei Lynn's 2022 picturebook *Dadaocheng Zoo* (大稻埕動物園) as a pivotal work that redefines zoological space in children's literature by transforming an urban heritage site into an imaginative, multispecies environment. It argues that children's literature can function as a form of place-making, challenging institutional boundaries between zoos, cities, and cultural heritage. Bei Lynn's work originated from observing children's fascination with urban animals during a visit to Dadaocheng. This encounter catalyzed the creation of vernacular poetry written in Taiwanese Hokkien (Tâi-gí), reimagining Taiwan's commercial heritage site as an accessible zoological space through a child's perspective. The opening poem proclaims: "Where is Dadaocheng Zoo? / At each mountain pass / Between people's shoulders / No children's tickets required." This challenges zoo studies discourse by envisioning meaningful human-animal encounters beyond institutional confines, activated through children's imaginative engagement. Through the interplay of words and images, traditional culture emerges not as a static repository of the past but as a living, creative medium for contemporary expression. The work foregrounds Taiwanese linguistic expression and the visual narrative of the heritage space. The children's interactions inspire vernacular verse that functions as "linguistic LEGO blocks," inviting playful engagement with both language and sensory experience. This paper draws on scholarship on multispecies urbanism and children's geographies to illustrate how picturebooks act as place-making texts, rendering Taiwan's urban heritage sites as imaginative, multispecies, and dynamic cultural environments.

Keywords: Dadaocheng, Bei Lynn, children's geographies, multispecies urbanism, Taiwanese Hokkien

Ping-Shi Kao is a full-time Lecturer in English at the General Education Center, Tatung University. She received her M.Phil. in Children's Literature from Trinity College Dublin. Her research interests center on visual texts, wartime animals, and material culture in children's fiction. She has directed international storytelling initiatives, from The Magical Island Project to the ongoing Food Flights, inviting young voices from Ireland, Japan, and Taiwan to weave and share narratives across borders.

**From Erasure to Inclusion:
Disability and Diverse Childhoods in Indian Picture Books
Sujata Patel and Smriti Singh**

Historically, Indian children's literature imagined childhood through an idealised lens where the protagonists used to be male, upper caste, middle class, healthy, and able-bodied. In this vision, disability rarely appeared, and when it did, it was often reduced to a symbol of tragedy, a challenge to be overcome, or a condition to be hidden. These kinds of omissions and distortions denied young readers the chance to encounter the breadth of human experience and erased the voices of disabled children from literary spaces. However, in recent years, a growing number of Indian picture books have begun to tell a different story that is both inclusive and diverse.

In this context, this paper attempts to examine three contemporary picture books *A Walk with Thambi* written by Lavanya Karthik and illustrated by Proiti Roy, *Kanna Panna* written by Zai Whitaker and illustrated by Niloufer Wadia, and *Catch That Cat!* by Tharini Viswanath and illustrated by Nancy Raj. The selected picture books centre disabled protagonists whose disabilities are never hidden but embraced as part of their identity. These characters are not defined by limitation; they are curious, resourceful, and fully engaged in the worlds around them. Through their agency of making choices, solving problems, and building relationships; the books portray diverse childhoods and celebrate multiple ways of living. Drawing on Critical Disability Studies and employing multimodal analysis, this paper explores how text and illustration work together to create nuanced and inclusive representations. It examines how visual composition, narrative perspective, and character positioning dismantle ableist assumptions while affirming the value of difference. By situating these narratives within broader socio-cultural and literary contexts, the paper argues that contemporary Indian picture books signal a transformative moment and moves away from the erasure of disability toward a vision of childhood that is plural, inclusive, and enriched by the full range of human experiences.

Sujata Patel^{a*} is a Ph.D. Research Scholar in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Patna, India. She is working in the fields of children's literature and disability studies. She has presented her papers at conferences and is researching the nuances of disability in children's literature in India. She can be reached at sujatapatel0987@gmail.com.

Dr. Smriti Singh^b is a Professor in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at the Indian Institute of Technology Patna, India. Her areas of research are Diasporic Writings, Postcolonial Literature, and Indian Writings in English. She has three books and numerous articles to her credit.

**Making the Reader Feel: Nostalgia and Theory
in Japanese and Western Picturebook Scholarship
Faye Dorcas Yung Schwendeman**

In the 1970s, picturebook creator Takeichi Yasuo proposed the idea of 感じる絵本, “picturebook that makes you feel.” This philosophy of picturebook creation guided the publication of many picturebooks, including the iconic *Donkuma san* (どんくまさんシリーズ) series and Iwasaki Chihiro’s six-volume *Picturebook that Makes You Feel* series (感じ絵本シリーズ). While influential in Japan, this concept has minimal presence in international scholarship. This presentation takes 感じる絵本 as a starting point to consider how Japanese approaches to picturebook theory might enrich cross-cultural conversations on the artform. I will place this Japanese philosophy in dialogue with Western picturebook theories such as Barbara Bader’s definition of the picturebook as a “text, illustrations, total design” (1976), Kristin Hallberg’s concept of “iconotext” (1982), and Lawrence Sipe’s semiotic approach (1998), alongside later frameworks from Maria Nikolajeva and Carole Scott (*How Picturebook Works*, 2001). Through close reading of *Donkuma san* and related works, I will explore how these frameworks converge and diverge in their understanding of image–text relationships, reader engagement, and the affective dimensions of picturebooks.

In addition to its theoretical implications, 感じる絵本 reflects Takeichi Yasuo’s call to create picturebooks that “speak to the invisible child living within every person” (1977, p.3, English translation my own). Many of these works dwell on quiet, ordinary moments—seasonal change, stillness, and the sensory details of nature—that Takeichi saw as essential to “making the reader feel,” often recalling the textures and rhythms of earlier childhood. By comparing the background, theoretical priorities, and interpretive tools of 感じる絵本 with Western approaches, this study aims to make visible a strand of Japanese picturebook thought that has not yet crossed the language barrier. Just as Anglophone frameworks have shaped Japanese criticism, this presentation suggests that Japanese perspectives can likewise offer new insights to the English-speaking scholarly community, fostering a more reciprocal exchange of ideas and enriching our understanding of picturebooks across cultures.

References

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**History of Wordless Picturebooks in Asia:
Focusing on Japanese Children's Magazines
Miki Yamamoto**

Wordless picturebooks have notably increased in the 20th century, but how such wordless picturebook expressions were formed has not been clarified. This study conducts a case survey of wordless picturebooks in the Asian region up to 1965 and considers the development and evolution of wordless picturebooks.

In Japan, children's magazines began to be published in the late 19th century, with numerous titles being launched, such as *Children's Garden* (Shōnen-en 少年園), *Little Citizen* (Shōkokumin 小国民), *Children's Literature and Martial Arts* (Shōnen Bunbu 少年文武), *Japanese Children* (Nihon no Shōnen 日本之少年). These magazines copied many silent comic strips published in Western magazines, with reprints reported from the German magazine *Fliegende Blätter* (Iuchi, 2018) and the American magazine *Life* (Exner, 2023). In *Children's Pictorial Paper* (Yōnen Gahou 幼年画報) launched in 1906, reprints from the works of French illustrator Benjamin Rabier can also be confirmed. On the other hand, there are also original works that reflect Japanese culture, such as pounding rice cakes and cherry blossom viewing. In those examples, the characters wear traditional Japanese clothing.

There is also a report that in the inaugural issue of the Chinese children's magazine *Little Friend* (Xiao peng you 小朋友) in 1922, a wordless story was published (Narumi, 2010). In the 1950s, in addition to educational wordless picturebooks used in kindergartens, works featuring more entertaining stories were also published in China. For example, *Catch the Black Cat* (Zhuo hei mao 捉黑猫) from 1957 is a wordless picturebook starring two boys who struggle to catch a black cat, involving a slapstick comedy.

The wordless format in Asia began with magazines and became established in each country, developing independently.

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Stereotypes in an English Picturebook
Translated from a Chinese Folktale
Juwen Zhang

As a critical approach to decolonization through analyzing picturebooks in the Asian/Asian American context, this presentation focuses on the popular picturebook, *The Five Chinese Brothers* (1938), and argues that while the tale has its origin in China, the English translation and subsequent re-translation and illustration has reinforced for several generations the existing racial stereotypes against the Chinese. The English version has been translated into several European languages. In 2018, it was translated back into Chinese and published with the title *Zhongguo Wuxiongdi* (中国五兄弟). It is still on the list of Teachers' Top 100 Books for Children that is recommended by the American National Education Association. Yet, the criticism of this English picturebook from Asian American individuals and institutions as well as non-Asian educators since the 1970s has mostly been ignored. Nevertheless, a wave of resistance against stereotyping the Chinese through picturebooks has brought forth several publications since the 1990s such as *The Seven Chinese Brothers* (1990). This presentation discusses how we may unwittingly perpetuate those racial stereotypes against the Chinese or other non-European cultural groups, and emphasizes the importance of cultivating a new awareness of anti-racism. Through textual and contextual analyses as well as examination of the historical and cultural backgrounds of the translators and illustrator, this presentation calls for a paradigm shift in translation practices grounded in decolonization and anti-racism to ensure respectful and inclusive representation of diverse cultures, especially between the colonizing and colonized languages and cultures. It also offers insights for translators, illustrators, researchers, and educators seeking to leverage folktales and picturebooks for effective children's education and entertainment, and challenges our preconceived notions of translated and adapted folk and fairy tales.

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