



Asian American Pacific Islander Booklist from the Bank Street College of Education's Children's Book Committee (CBC) 2021

Crimes against people of Asian/Pacific Islander descent have been gaining in frequency, in violence, and in breadth of Asian ethnic groups targeted. Those of us who have Asian roots know well that systemic discrimination against Asians in the U.S. is by no means a new phenomenon. It goes all the way back to the 1800s, when Chinese laborers started arriving in numbers to work, first in Gold Rush jobs, then on the Transcontinental Railroad.

For grown-ups of all races who are having conversations with children to expand inquiry and empathy among Asian and non-Asian peoples, we offer a selection of books from the CBC Best Books of the Year, organized by age with child development in mind. Please note that this is not intended to be a comprehensive list. For more titles, please see our searchable archives at: <https://www.bankstreet.edu/library/center-for-childrens-literature/childrens-book-committee/best-childrens-books-of-the-year/>.

Five and Under

Bee-bim Bop!

by Linda Sue Park, illustrated by Ho Baek Lee
(Clarion) 0-618-26511-2

A young girl helps her mom prepare her favorite Korean dish. Rhymed text and humorous watercolors. (4-6)

Danbi Leads the School Parade

written and illustrated by Anna Kim
(Viking) 978-0-451-47889-4

New to America from Korea, Danbi bravely goes to school, but no one plays with her until a magical moment at lunchtime. Soft, sweet illustrations. (4-7)

Eyes That Kiss in the Corners

by Joanna Ho, illustrated by Dung Ho
(Harper Collins/Harper) 978-0-06-291562-1

An Asian American girl celebrates the shape of her eyes that connect her to her family and her heritage. Boldly colored Asian-inspired digital illustrations (5-8)

Festival of Colors

by Kabir Sehgal and Surishtha Sehgal,
illustrated by Vashti Harrison
(Beach Lane Books/Simon & Schuster)
978-1-4814-2049-5

Chintoo and Mintoo prepare for the Indian Festival of Holi, a celebration of color and community. Vibrant illustrations. (3-6)

Grandma and the Great Gourd

retold by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, illustrated by Susy Pilgrim Waters
(Neal Porter/Roaring Brook/Macmillan)
978-1-59643-378-6

In this Bengali folktale, Grandma goes to meet her daughter, encountering a hungry fox, a bear, and a tiger who want to eat her. Can she outwit them? Vibrant collage illustrations. (5-7)

Natsumi's Song of Summer

by Robert Paul Weston, illustrated by Misa Sauri
(Tundra Books) 978-7352-6541-7
Young Natsumi welcomes her mixed-race American cousin to Japan and shares her favorite things about summer, including cicadas! Traditional Japanese verse is showcased by soft vibrant illustrations. Back matter. (4-6)

A New Year's Reunion

by Yu Li-Qiong, illustrated by Zhu Chen-Liang
(Candlewick) 978-0-7636-5881-6
Maomao's father works far away and only comes back to China for New Year's, but the family finds a way to stay connected all year long. Illustrations portray the emotional bond. (4-7)

'Ohana Means Family

by Ilima Loomis, illustrated by Kenard Pak
(Neal Porter Books/Holiday House)
978-0-8234-4326-0
The making of poi, a favorite dish, involves the customs, values, people, and countryside of Hawaii. Vivid, evocative, panoramic illustrations. Author's note, glossary. (5-7)

Suki's Kimono

by Chieri Uegaki,
illustrated by Stéphane Jorisch
(Kids Can Press) 1-55337-084-8
On the first day of school, a Japanese American girl shares her culture and unique spirit. Lively watercolors. (5-8)

Thukpa for All

by Praba Ram and Sheela Preuit, illustrated by Shilpa Ranade
(Karadi Tales) 978-81-9338-898-3
Excited that his grandmother is making his favorite Tibetan noodle soup, Tsering invites friends to join them. Will there be enough? Bright folk art-style illustrations. (5-8)

The Trip Back Home

by Janet S. Wong, illustrated by Bo Jia
(Harcourt) 0-15-200784-9
A young girl describes her trip to Korea to visit family. Descriptive watercolors. (5-7)

Five to Nine

Crouching Tiger

by Ying Chang Compestine, illustrated by Yan Nascimbene
(Candlewick) 978-0-7636-4642-4
When his grandfather visits from China, young Vinson learns tai chi and what it means to be part Chinese. Delicate, vibrant ink and watercolor illustrations. (6-9)

A Different Pond

by Bao Phi, illustrated by Thi Bui
(Capstone Young Readers/Capstone)
978-1-62370-803-0
In Minneapolis, a boy shares his experience of fishing with his Vietnamese father for the dinner meal. Evocative animated illustrations. (6-9)

Drawn Together

by Minh Lê, illustrated by Dan Santat, Thai text transcribed and translated by Nancy Santat and Adam Santat
(Disney Hyperion Books) 978-1-4847-6760-3
An American boy and his Thai grandfather bond when they discover that they both love drawing. Expressive mixed-media illustrations (7-9)

The Firekeeper's Son

by Linda Sue Park, illustrated by Julie Downing
(Clarion) 0-618-13337-2

In 1800s Korea, Sang-hee must decide whether to light the signal fire of peace or set the army on the march. Soft watercolors and pastels. (6-9)

Ginger and Chrysanthemum

by Kristen Mai Giang,
illustrated by Shirley Chan
(LQ Levine) 978-1-64614-001-5

Young Chinese American girl cousins of different temperaments work out their differences to bake a special cake for their grandmother's birthday. Supportive bright digital art. (6-8)

Golden Threads

by Suzanne Del Rizzo, illustrated by Miki Sato
(Owlkids) 978-1-77147-360-6

Emi's much-loved stuffed fox is ripped away by a big storm. Will he find his way back home? Vibrant, textured collages honor the Japanese art form of kintsugi. (5-8)

Grandma and the Rooster

by Yimei Wang, illustrated by Hechen Yu
(Reycraft) 978-1-4788-6974-0

A rooster doomed for chicken soup is saved by a granddaughter who discovers the bird's positive impact on others. Eye-popping watercolors capture the Chinese New Year. (5-8)

Hot, Hot Roti for Dada-ji

by F. Zia, illustrated by Ken Min
(Lee & Low) 978-1-60060-443-0

In this humorous fantasy about an Indian family in the United States, Aneel's grandfather tells stories about how eating roti (flatbread) gave him superpowers. Will it still work? Expressive acrylic and colored pencil illustrations. (6-9)

Mindy Kim and the Yummy Seaweed Business (Mindy Kim series)

by Lyla Lee, illustrated By Dung Ho
(Aladdin) 978-1-5344-4009-8

Seven-year-old Mindy finds her way as the only Asian American in her new school. Black-and-white digitally realized cartoon illustrations. (7-9)

Music for Alice

written and illustrated by Allen Say
(HMC) 0-618-3118-1

A Japanese American girl dreams of dancing, but marriage, life as a farmer, and forcible removal to an Oregon internment camp upend her plans. Detailed, realistic watercolors. (6-9)

My Day with Gong Gong

by Sennah Yee, illustrated by Elaine Chan
(Annick Press) 978-1-7732-1439-0

May isn't very happy about spending the day with her maternal grandfather. He only speaks Chinese and doesn't seem to understand her English. Or does he? Colorful watercolor illustrations. (5-8)

The Only Child

written and illustrated by Guojing
(Schwartz & Wade Books/Random House)
978-0-553-49704-5

In this wordless book, when a young Chinese girl gets lost en route to her grandmother, she befriends a magical creature to find her way back home. Softly rendered black-and-white pencil illustrations. (6-8)

The Perfect Gift (Confetti Kids series)

by Paula Yoo, illustrated by Shirley Ng-Benitez
(Lee & Low Books) 978-1-62014-568-5

As her baby brother's 100-day celebration approaches, Chinese American Mei struggles to find the perfect gift for him. Watercolor and digital illustrations. Craft activity instructions. (6-8)

Red Kite, Blue Kite

by Ji-li Jiang, illustrated by Greg Ruth
(Hyperion Books for Children/Disney)
978-1-4231-2753-6

When Chinese Tai Shan's father is sent to a labor camp, the two are able to keep in touch with each other by flying their kites. Realistic watercolor illustrations (6-10)

Sugar in Milk

by Thrity Umrigar, illustrated by Khoa Le
(Running Press Kids) 978-0-7624-9519-1
When an immigrant girl is lonely and homesick, her auntie tells her an ancient story of Persian refugees finding a home in an Indian kingdom. Lush colorful illustrations. (5-8)

Where's Halmoni?

written and illustrated by Julie Kim
(Little Bigfoot/Sasquatch Books)
978-1-63217-077-4
Two siblings crawl through a portal in search of their grandmother and meet characters from Korean folktales. Colorful illustrations; Korean translations in back matter. (6-8)

Nine to Twelve**Angel Island: Gateway to Gold Mountain**

by Russell Freedman
(Clarion Books/HMH) 978-0-547-90378-1
Chinese immigrants who arrived at the "Ellis Island of the West"—Angel Island, in San Francisco Bay—provide accounts of the difficulties they faced. Photographs, reproductions of immigrants' poetry, notes, and bibliography. (9-13)

Blackbird Fly

by Erin Entrada Kelly, illustrated by Betsy Peterschmidt
(Greenwillow Books/HarperCollins)
978-2-06-223861-0

A Filipina immigrant in Louisiana, bullied and mislabeled Chinese by local boys, dreams of running away to New Orleans and finding a new life as a musician. Black-and-white spot illustrations. (9-12)

Bronze and Sunflower

by Cao Wenxuan, illustrated by Meilo So, translated from the Chinese by Helen Wang
(Candlewick Press) 978-0-7636-8816-5
During China's Cultural Revolution, an orphaned city girl is adopted by a poor village family, and together they survive poverty, floods, and famine. Black-and-white spot art. (10-12)

The Dragon's Child: A Story of Angel Island

by Laurence Yep, with Dr. Kathleen S. Yep
(HarperCollins) 978-0-06-027693-5
Life in rural China and emigration to America are depicted in this tale based on the life of the author's family. (10-12)

Drawing from Memory

written and illustrated by Allen Say
(Scholastic) 978-0-545-17686-6
Through the masterful blending of original drawings and photographs, Say recounts his journey as a Japanese youth to develop his artistic talent in spite of his father's disapproval. (9-12)

**Fred Korematsu Speaks Up
(Fighting for Justice series)**

by Laura Atkins and Stan Yogi,
illustrated by Yutaka Houlette
(Heyday) 978-1-59714-368-4
A Japanese American seeks justice for himself and others. Told in verse. Photographs, sources, bibliography, and other back matter. (9-13)

Front Desk (Front Desk series)

by Kelly Yang
(Arthur A. Levine Books/Scholastic)
978-1-338-15779-6
When the motel they manage outside Disney World is suddenly up for sale, Chinese immigrants Mia, 10, and her parents lead a campaign to buy it. Will they succeed in time? (9-12)

**The House Baba Built:
An Artist's Childhood in China**

by Ed Young, text as told to Libby Koponen
(Little, Brown/Hachette) 978-0-316-07628-9
In mixed-media illustrations, the artist creates a captivating portrait of his childhood in World War II Shanghai and pays tribute to his remarkable father. (9-12)

Inside Out and Back Again

by Thanhha Lai
(Harper/HarperCollins) 978-0-06-196278-3
Hà and her family find new battles to fight in Alabama when they flee South Vietnam in 1975. (9-12)

The Kite Fighters

by Linda Sue Park,
illustrated by Eung Won Park
(Clarion) 0-395-94041-9
In 15th-century Korea, a father interferes in his sons' participation in a battling kite contest. His actions risk the family's honor and test the brothers' bond. (9-13)

The Night Parade

by Kathryn Tanquary
(Sourcebooks Jabberwocky/Sourcebooks)
978-1-4926-2324-3
Tokyoite Saki, 12, is unhappy spending the summer in the Japanese countryside with her grandmother. She accidentally unleashes a curse during the annual Festival of the Dead. How can she undo it? (9-12)

Prairie Lotus

by Linda Sue Park
(Houghton Mifflin Harcourt/Clarion)
978-1-328-78150-5
Fourteen-year-old Chinese American Hanna and her white father hope to be accepted in an 1880s Dakota Territory frontier town. Author's note. (10-12)

Saving Kabul Corner

by N. H. Senzai
(A Paula Wiseman Book/Simon & Schuster
BFYR) 978-1-4424-8494-8
An 11-year-old Afghan American girl, her cousin, and her best friend investigate the vandalization of her family's store and a rival shop. Glossary and bibliography. (9-12)

When You Trap a Tiger

by Tae Keller

(Random House Children's Books)

978-1-5247-1570-0

Korean American Lily makes a deal with a magical tiger—she'll return the stories her ailing grandmother stole if the tiger will cure her grandmother. (9-12)

Where the Mountain Meets the Moon

written and illustrated by Grace Lin

(Little, Brown) 978-0-316-11427-1

Enchanted by her father's stories, Minli sets off on a quest to find the Old Man of the Moon and her family's fortune. Inspired by many Chinese folktales and enriched with jewel-like illustrations. First book of a trilogy. (8-12)

Twelve to Fourteen

All Thirteen: The Incredible Cave Rescue of the Thai Boys' Soccer Team

by Christina Soontornvat

(Candlewick) 978-1-5362-0945-7

An amazing international effort led to the rescue of 12 Thai children and their coach trapped in a flooded cave. Endnotes, bibliography, archival photos. (12-15)

Any Day with You

by Mae Respicio, illustrated by Mark Koerner

(Wendy Lamb Books) 978-0-525-70757-8

When her treasured great-grandfather announces his intention to return to the Philippines, Kaia, devastated, resolves to convince him to stay in Santa Monica. Ink-sketch spot illustrations. (11-14)

Boxers (Boxers & Saints, book one)

written and illustrated by Gene Luen Yang,

color by Lark Pien

(First Second/Roaring Brook Press/Macmillan)

978-1-59643-359-5

A rebel leader's and a Chinese Christian's opposing views of the Boxer Rebellion convey the emotions of an impossible conflict. (12-15)

Brother's Keeper

by Julie Lee

(Holiday House) 978-0-8234-4494-6

When war erupts, the Pak family is separated. Twelve-year-old Sora must flee with her younger brother from North Korea and travel south 370 miles to safety. Author's note, family photographs, glossary. (11-13)

Dear Miss Breed: True Stories of the Japanese American Incarceration During World War II and a Librarian Who Made a Difference

by Joanne Oppenheim

(Scholastic) 0-439-56992-3

A librarian encourages interned Japanese American children to correspond with her, forming lifelong friendships and inspiring her to advocate on their behalf. (12-14)

Enemy Child: The Story of Norman Mineta, a Boy Imprisoned in a Japanese American Internment Camp during World War II

by Andrea Warren

(Margaret Ferguson Books/Holiday House)

978-0-8234-4151-8

A young child forcibly interned with his family grows up to become a congressman committed to constitutional rights. Archival photographs and extensive back matter. (11-14)

Kira-Kira

by Cynthia Kadohata

(Atheneum) 0-689-85639-3

As her family struggles to survive in rural 1950s Georgia, Katie is inspired by her older sister. Then illness strikes. (12-14)

Monsoon Summer

by Mitali Perkins

(Delacorte) 0-385-73123-X

“Jazz” Gardner reluctantly leaves California for a life-changing summer in India, helping her family at the orphanage that had once been her mother’s home. (12-14)

The Night Diary

by Veera Hiranandani

(Dial BFYR/Penguin YR/PRH)

978-0-7352-2851-1

Through diary entries dedicated to her deceased Muslim mother, Nisha describes the conflicts that tear India apart and force her Hindu father and family to flee their home in Pakistan. (11-14)

A Place to Belong

by Cynthia Kadohata, illustrated by Julia Kuo

(A Caitlyn Dlouhy Book/Atheneum BFYR/Simon & Schuster) 978-1-4814-4664-8

Hanako, 12, recounts the family’s return to Hiroshima after their confinement in a U.S. internment camp during World War II. Occasional black-and-white illustrations. (11-13)

Superman Smashes the Klan

by Gene Luen Yang, illustrated by Gurihiru

(DC Comics) 978-1-77950-421-0

Deftly portrayed, complex racial issues get a bold graphic treatment as Superman sweeps into Metropolis’s Chinatown. Colorful, retro illustrations; graphic format. (11-14)

Fourteen Plus**Almost American Girl:****An Illustrated Memoir**

written and illustrated by Robin Ha

(Balzer + Bray/HarperCollins)

978-0-06-268510-0

Life in Alabama is difficult for Chuna, 14, a South Korean immigrant. A comic drawing class helps her find the way forward. Colorful comic art. (14-17)

Banned Book Club

by Kim Hyun Sook and Ryan Estrada,

illustrated by Ko Hyung-Ju

(Iron Circus Comics) 978-1-945820-427

Joining a banned book club opens college student Kim Hyun Sook’s eyes to political realities in the authoritarian regime of 1980s South Korea. Illustrations in manhwa (Korean comic book) style. (14-17)

Butterfly Yellow

by Thanhà Lại

(Harper/HarperCollins) 978-0-06-222921-2

A Vietnamese refugee lands in Texas on the trail of her younger brother, but sadly he does not recognize her. She is determined to awaken his memories. (14-16)

Displacement

written and illustrated by Kiku Hughes

(First Second/Roaring Books/ Macmillan)

978-1-2501-9354-4

Teen Kiku travels back in time to experience the traumatic World War II incarceration of Japanese Americans, including the grandmother she never knew. Nuanced colored graphic panels. Back matter. (13-16)

Finding My Voice

by Marie Myung-Ok Lee
(Soho Teen) 978-1-64129-197-2

In a small Minnesota town, Korean American Ellen Sung grapples with pressures of college choices, overt racism, and demanding parents. (13-16)

**Hunt for the Bamboo Rat
(Prisoners of the Empire Series)**

by Graham Salisbury
(Wendy Lamb Books/Random House)
978-0-375-84266-5

Zenji Watanabe, 17, is sent from Hawaii to the Philippines to spy on the Japanese but gets captured by them when Manila is invaded in World War II. (13-17)

I'll Be the One

by Lyla Lee
(Katherine Tegen/HarperCollins)
978-0-06-293692-9

Sixteen-year-old Korean American Skye dreams of becoming a K-pop star, but everyone—especially her mother—says that fat girls can't dance. Can she prove them wrong? (14-17)

**I. M. Pei:
Architect of Time, Place, and Purpose**

by Jill Rubalcaba
(Marshall Cavendish) 978-0-7614-5973-6
This detailed account of how a great architect's masterpieces were planned and constructed is designed as elegantly as Pei's structures. Time line, sources, bibliography. (13-17)

Indigo Girl

by Suzanne Kamata
(Gemma Media) 978-1-936846-73-3
In this sequel to *Gadget Girl*, Aiko Cassidy travels from Michigan to rural Japan to spend the summer with her biological father, an indigo farmer. (13-16)

Lucy and Linh

by Alice Pung
(Alfred A. Knopf BYFR/Random House/PRH)
978-0-399-55-48-5

When Lucy, an immigrant from Vietnam, wins a prestigious scholarship, she must learn how to navigate the world of privilege without losing herself or her beloved heritage. (14-18)

**This Light between Us:
A Novel of World War II**

by Andrew Fukuda, illustrated by Euan Cook
(Tom Doherty Associates) 978-1-250-19238-7
Leaving Manzanar, Japanese-American Alex enlists in an all-Nisei combat unit, hoping to find his French Jewish pen pal, who has disappeared. Black-and-white drawings. Back matter. (14-17)

**Uprooted: The Japanese American
Experience during World War II**

by Albert Marrin
(Alfred A. Knopf/Random House/PRH)
978-0-553-50936-6
This book examines early Japanese immigration to America and the forces that led to the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. Archival photos. (13-15)

Warcross

by Marie Lu
(G.P. Putnam's Sons/PRH) 978-0-399-54796-6
Hacker and virtual bounty hunter Emika Chen goes to work for the creator of a highly popular online video game to expose its security flaws. (13-17)

We Are Not Free

by Traci Chee, illustrated by Julia Kuo
(Houghton Mifflin & Harcourt)
978-0-358-13143-4
Fourteen West Coast Japanese American teenagers tell intertwining stories of their incarceration in internment camps during World War II. Archival photos and ink drawings. Back matter, maps. (14-17)