In Japan, under the auspices of free speech and press freedom, over 80,000 books are published every year, offering a diverse selection of literature for the nation’s readers.

In this great ocean of books, we believe there are many works that should be enjoyed by not only a Japanese audience, but by a wider global audience as well. However, many such books, due to the language barrier and the limited number of translations, remain, for the most part, unread overseas.

Amid such a situation, the establishment of JAPAN LIBRARY promises to be a significant and welcome step toward creating more opportunities for people around the world to discover Japan’s superb publications. JAPAN LIBRARY will make careful selections of publications from a wide range of fields and offer their English editions as gifts to public libraries and research institutions. Plans for e-book versions are also underway.

Japan possesses troves of timeless knowledge amassed across the ages—treasures that are distinctively Japanese that, nonetheless, transcend history and international borders.

JAPAN LIBRARY is loading these treasures onto ships we call books and venturing forth into the open sea. The voyage of these books will cover great distances over time, and reach a countless number of readers across the globe. And once it does, the treasures on board will shine anew, as these readers polish them with their own, distinctive intellects and sensibilities. This new shine—this new radiance—will surely light the way to the world’s shared future.

With our faith firmly placed in such boundless powers of the book, we here at JAPAN LIBRARY’s vision.

March 2015
Japan Publishing Industry Foundation for Culture (JPIC)
(JPIC is supported by many companies and groups active in Japan’s publishing circles)
Titles of the First Five JPIC Publications

Flower Petals Fall, but the Flower Endures
The Japanese Philosophy of Transience

If There Were No Japan
A Cultural Memoir

Listen to the Voice of the Earth
Learn about earthquakes to save lives

Saving the Mill
The amazing recovery of one of Japan’s largest paper mills following the 2011 earthquake and tsunami

Tree-Ring Management
Take the Long View and Grow Your Business Slowly

Life is short and transient—Japanese people call this sentiment susukiai. However, what if we could sweep away the “despair” looming over the present age by proactively accepting this maigo (transience)? Perusing the thought of maigo from the perspectives of philosophy, literature, art and religion, Takeuchi delves into the view of life and death unique to the Japanese people who have shared “grief” and “pain” with each other, as well as into the very core of their underlying spirit. This book presents a full record of his “valedictory lecture” in commemoration of his retirement from the University of Tokyo.

As an award-winning writer and translator who has immersed himself in Japanese culture for half a century, Itofuku provides a firsthand account of the country’s customs and the profound changes occurring in contemporary Japanese society.

Originally published in Japanese, If There Were No Japan: A Cultural Memoir was acclaimed for its insights into Japanese life, bringing together aspects of history, culture and everyday life to paint an original and revealing portrait of the Japanese people and the pressing issues facing them today. This national bestseller was hailed as a roadmap for “innovation of the mind”—a roadmap that could sweep away the “despair” looming over the present age.

"I wrote this book so that readers would be able to save their own lives as well as those of the ones they love when an earthquake next strikes, so that the tragedy of March 11, 2011, would never be repeated.”—Satoko Oki

What our chatty planet teaches us
Would you be surprised to hear that there are scientists who listen to the Earth? Yes, the Earth does talk in many different voices—the voice of the air, the voice of the sea, the voice of volcanoes, and the voice of the Earth. Seismologists listen to the voice of the Earth.

We use high performance seismometers that do not miss the slightest muttering by the Earth. That way, we can learn about what causes earthquakes and even what it is like inside the planet.

Earthquakes occur because it is hot inside the planet—because the Earth is dynamic. We cannot escape earthquakes as long as we live on the Earth. But from listening to the planet, seismologists have discovered what causes earthquakes and how we can live with them to protect our lives.

On March 11, 2011, one of the largest earthquakes in human history struck offshore of northeast Japan, triggering a massive tsunami that devastated surrounding coastal areas. One of the many victims of this epic disaster was Nippon Paper Industries’ Ishinomaki Paper Mill, which was so flooded and covered in debris that it was completely shut down. NPI provided a steady stream of visiting executives from Murata Manufacturing and the Toyota Group. Chairman Tsukakoshi declares. His unique management principles include such ideas as “rapid growth is not necessary,” “the essence of management is creating fans,” and “the essence of management is creating fans.” His approach has resulted in rising sales and profits for half a century since the company’s founding, and his company welcomes a steady stream of visiting executives and analysts from major corporations, including Murata Manufacturing and the Toyota Group. Chairman Tsukakoshi’s philosophy of seeking steady growth over the long term will enlighten businesspeople around the world about a better way to manage corporations.

If you have any requests on Japanese books that you would like to have translated, please contact us at the following e-mail address: japanlibrary@jpic.or.jp

JAPAN LIBRARY publications will be donated principally to overseas universities, research institutions, public libraries, and other worthy organizations. We look forward to publishing more books in the future and hope you look forward to reading them.