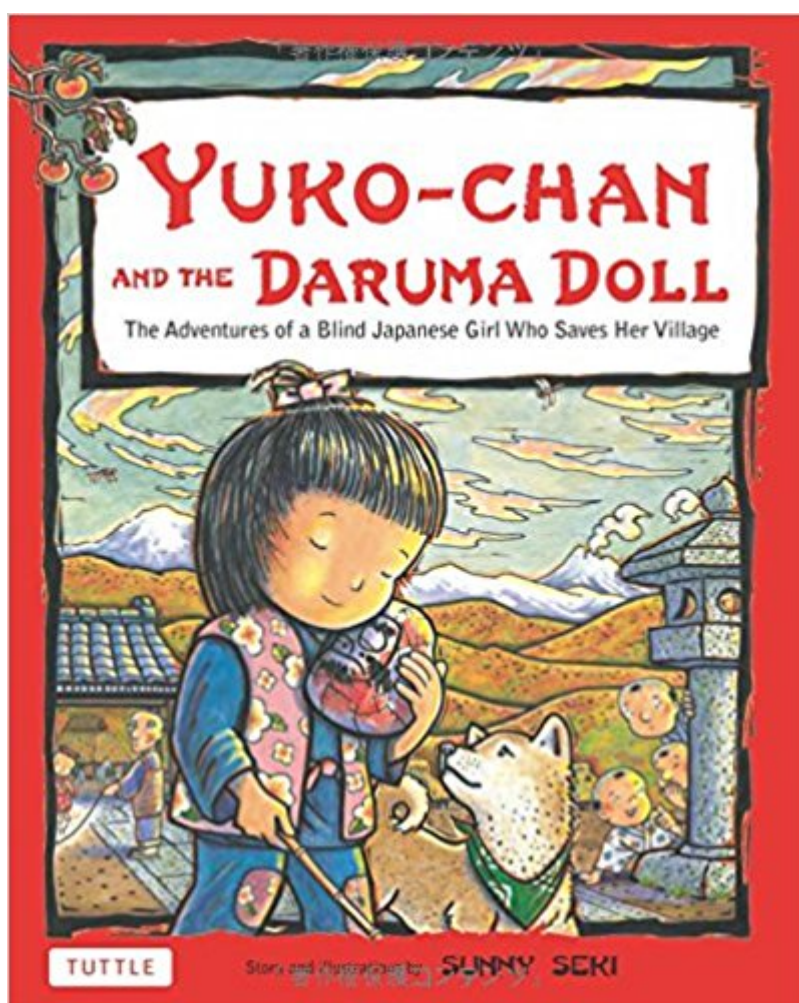


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# Yuko-chan And The Daruma Doll: The Adventures Of A Blind Japanese Girl Who Saves Her Village - Bilingual English And Japanese Text



## Synopsis

**\*\*2012 Creative Child Magazine Book of the Year Award Winner!\*\***Yuko-chan and the Daruma Doll, a gorgeous multicultural children's book by author/illustrator Sunny Seki, takes readers on a journey into ancient Japan and the story behind the famous Daruma Doll. Yuko-chan, an adventurous blind orphan, is able to do amazing things. She confronts a burglar in the dead of night, and crosses treacherous mountain passes to deliver food to hungry people. During her travels, Yuko-chan trips and tumbles down a snowy cliff. She discovers a strange thing as she waits for help: her tea gourd, regardless of how she drops it, always lands right-side-up. The tea has frozen in the bottom of the gourd! Inspired by this, she creates the famous Daruma doll toy, which rights itself when tipped—a true symbol of resilience. Thanks to Yuko-chan's invention, the villagers are able to earn a living and feed themselves by selling the dolls. Yuko-chan never gave up, no matter the obstacles she faced, and the Daruma doll is a charming reminder of the power of perseverance. With text in English and Japanese this book is of special interest to bicultural families.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 32 pages

Publisher: Tuttle Publishing; Hardcover with Jacket edition (March 10, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 4805311878

ISBN-13: 978-4805311875

Product Dimensions: 8.5 x 0.4 x 11 inches

Shipping Weight: 15.5 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars 24 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #447,696 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #101 in Books > Children's Books > Fairy Tales, Folk Tales & Myths > Other #335 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Explore the World > Asia #451 in Books > Children's Books > Fairy Tales, Folk Tales & Myths > Multicultural

Age Range: 4 - 8 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

## Customer Reviews

"A wonderful fictional story that explains a way the Daruma dolls and their customs came about."  
"Crafty Moms Share blog" Seki tells us not only a beautiful story, but on every page he has richly painted images of Yuko-Chan, her Daruma Dolls, and her village that bring the words both in

English and in Japanese "to life." "Story Circle Book Reviews" Daruma dolls are traditional Japanese talismans of good luck and resilience, often given as a gift to encourage the recipient to persevere in reaching a personal goal. The heartening sentiment behind them is expressed in this story. Brilliantly colored and delightfully detailed illustrations are the true highlight here. The use of bold line gives the impression of woodblock prints and cleverly echoes the broad paint strokes that decorate Daruma dolls. Pages are attractively laid out, and characters' faces are expressive and slightly cartoonish, holding great appeal for young audiences. "School Library Journal" Seki's friendly illustrations supply a wealth of visual information about pre-WWII rural Japan, showing farmhouse interiors, a temple with a rock garden and a schoolroom, and a village festival. His story is a character-building tale about an orphan girl named Yuko, whose blindness doesn't prevent her from participating fully in village life. Lost in the snow one winter day, she realizes that the tea frozen in the bottom of her tea gourd makes the gourd reorient itself when it's knocked over, reminding her of the Buddhist teacher Daruma and his encouraging words: "If you fall down seven times, you should get up eight times!" Sales of the Daruma doll she designs save her village, whose crops have been ruined by a volcanic eruption. With Japanese text that parallels the English on every page, this is likely to find its most enthusiastic audience among students of Japanese language or culture. "Publishers Weekly" Their crops devastated by a volcano, the villagers of Takasaki struggle to recover until Yuko-chan, an orphaned blind girl, envisions a way they can recover. After an accident, she tips over her gourd of tea, but the frozen tea always returns it upright, reminding her of Daruma's maxim that "If you fall down seven times, you should get up eight times." Yuko-chan suggests that the town make "Daruma Dolls" from gourds and sell them, a craft that saved Takasaki and continues to this day. [ ] Cartoon-style art features bright colors and pictures filled with traditional Japanese activity. An attractive glimpse of Buddhist images and ideas, this original story fills a unique niche for libraries. "Booklist" Award-winning author-illustrator Sunny Seki brings the feisty and adorable Yuko-chan vividly to life in word and image. He captures the simple beauties of nature and the rustic built environment of the time as well. A Japanese translation follows the English text on each page, with hiragana (phonetic) symbols printed in superscript so novice Japanese readers can more easily follow the story. The back matter gives additional information about Daruma and the Daruma doll tradition. Tuttle's expert design and high production quality further enhance the experience of Yuko-chan and the Daruma Doll. Its impact will deepen with repeated reading. "PaperTigers.org blog" It's a lovely book that is wonderful to read again and again. It teaches wonderful lessons about being resourceful and brave. It is well told and entertaining. I love the positive story, the beautiful illustrations, and the introduction to some aspects

of Japanese culture. At the end of the book there is a list of cultural notes that defines Daruma, Daruma Doll, the Daruma Doll Festival, Daruma Games, and Gourds." â "The Picture Book Review" This Japanese folk tale tells the story of how a blind Japanese girl came up with the idea for the Daruma doll, and saved her village in the process." â "PragmaticMom.com blog

Sunny Seki is the award-winning author and illustrator of *The Last Kappa of Old Japan* and *The Tale of the Lucky Cat*. A native of Japan, Sunny studied illustration at Pasadena Art Center of Design. Sunny presents his books and other Japanese folktales at festivals and schools, invigorating his storytelling through shadow puppetry. Sunny is the leader of a Japanese senryu poetry group. He published *Gardeners' Pioneer Story*, an account of the 100-year history of Japanese gardeners through the sensitive senryu poems created by this group of immigrants. Sunny is now documenting the milestones of Japanese Americans in North America, again through their senryu poetry. Sunny, his wife Judy and their nine children live in San Gabriel, CA.

Rather I should say my 3 and 5 year old love it. I don't know why.... It's about a little blind girl in a foreign country with a moral that's not so easy to grasp. Yet they ask me to read it all the time.

A gift for a friend with Japanese grandchildren. A lovely story and beautiful illustrations.

I liked it because I liked it. I liked Yoko Chan because she was nice and blind and considerate. I loved it.

Written and Illustrated by Sunny Seki, *Yuko-Chan and the Daruma Doll: The Adventures of a Blind Japanese Girl Who Saves Her Village* is a gentle story about an adventurous little girl who wouldn't let others' perception of disability shape her world. In stores March 10, 2012, this charming 32-page hardcover storybook introduces a determined girl, Yuko-Chan, and a society with which many children are not familiar. The book is printed in both English and Japanese. Following the story, Seki offers "Cultural Notes" that help the reader understand customs described in the book. The story begins with the eruption of Mount Asama 200 years ago. The volcano did not destroy Takasaki, Yuko-Chan's home, it did cover the village in ash and damaged all the crops. Yuko-Chan lived at the Daruma Temple and, although she wasn't permitted to attend school, she sat outside the classroom every day absorbing the lessons being taught. Being blind did not stop her from being a contributing member of her community; she caught a burglar who was stealing from the Temple's

offering box and she helped deliver food to those in need. She also taught herself to play the taiko. After a mercy mission, she and her guide dog get lost and disoriented in a snowstorm. It is during the storm that she is inspired to create a doll that will honor Daruma and help her village earn money, saving it from ruin. Following her rescue, Yuko-Chan fabricates the doll, presents it to the head monk, and soon has the entire town involved in the manufacture of the dolls, which did, indeed, save the town. The dolls continue to be made to this day. Yuko-Chan and the Daruma Doll emphasizes cooperation, altruism, and the importance of community. Through her studies, Yuko-Chan learns the value of not giving up as taught by Daruma. Her optimism and inventiveness are inspiring. She represents a positive role model for children, and illustrates the idea that people are valuable no matter what their different abilities. Entertaining as a story, Yuko-Chan and the Daruma Doll also offers adults opportunities for positive interaction with kids, discussing ideas in the book and how they relate to everyone's life.

This fascinating book for young readers recounts the legend of the Daruma Doll complete with Sunny Seki's glorious illustrations and with text in both English and Japanese. It tells of the little blind girl named Yuko-Chan whose village had been devastated by the eruption of nearby Mount Asama. With the town at a loss about how to raise money to rebuild, little Yuko-Chan remembered the teaching of the Monk Daruma-san: "If you fall seven times, you must pick yourself up eight times." By chance, the little girl also remembered that a gourd with frozen tea in its rounded bottom righted itself when it was knocked over. Starting with a bamboo frame, she covered it with paper and painted it, creating the first Daruma Doll. A rock in the bottom gave it the weight to pop up whenever it was knocked over. When the other villagers saw her doll, they also began to create them and when the Spring Festival arrived, they sold their popular creations and were able to raise enough money to help save the village. This lovely story provides readers with a touching and inspirational theme and is a marvelous way to help children learn about persistence, overcoming obstacles, and the triumph over adversity. Sunny Seki has taken a legend, told it in a delightful fashion, and provided many beautiful illustrations to instruct and delight children of all ages. It is indeed a story that can inspire us all to set our goals and then work hard to achieve them. (Review written by my dad, author Gerald A. Schiller)

I find it rare in children's books to have an author both masterfully write and beautifully illustrate his/her book. In this case, Sunny Seki has done a remarkable job on both counts. I found this story of an orphaned, physically-challenged Japanese girl helping her village recover from a natural

disaster compelling. Her adventure in tracking down a thief with the help of her guide dog is remarkable because she shows compassion for this thief who is only stealing to buy medicine for his sick father. Her compassion is later rewarded when she is lost in the snow and the thief finds her and her dog and leads them home. However, it turns out that her accident has given her an idea because her tea gourd which she was carrying kept falling and would get back up. Her idea was to make a doll out of the gourd's shape and sell it to raise money to help the village. These dolls are called Daruma dolls and the money made by selling them saved the village. The illustrations are vivid and colorful. Although I do not read Japanese, I thought the inclusion of the language enhanced the illustration because this is a very visual and cultural story. The cultural notes at the end also are very helpful in understanding the background of the story. I am looking forward in sharing this book with my young nieces because I want them to learn about other cultures. As a teacher, I believe this book would be useful in the primary grades because of the cultural aspect and the illustrations. This book would make a great Christmas gift for a young child. Well done, Mr. Seki.

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