



Multi-cultural Supplement

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A follow-up to Books for Keeps No. 4.

After our special multi-cultural issue last September several minority publishers sent us material we think you might be interested in. There have also been some new titles from mainstream publishing houses. So, to keep you up to date:-

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Tales of Mozambique, Young World Books, 0 905405 04 8, £2.00

A collection translated from the Portuguese, of over thirty stories from the African oral tradition. The book is based on an anthology published by Frelimo in 1978 to promote the tradition of popular storytelling. It is A4 size, beautifully designed and printed in black and white with illustrations by eighteen artists from all over the world.

Available from Liberation, 313/5 Caledonian Road, London N1 1 DR. (Please add 35p for postage and packing. 15% reduction for 10 copies or over.)

The King's Picture, 0 978 153 006 5, 75p

The Gold Digger, 0 978 153 001 4, 75p

The Door: The Crafty Tailor: The Bundle of Sticks, 0 978 1 53 004 9, 95p

All published by West African Book Publishers.

These three Atoka books originally published in Nigeria are now available here. They contain moral tales, some traditional, some with contemporary settings, all with African backgrounds. The plentiful, brightly coloured illustrations give a lively picture of another culture; the stories reflect values which we share.

Available from Hambleside Publishers Ltd, 21 Southgate Street, Winchester, Hampshire S023 9EF.

Ravi of India, Aruna Hardy, ill. Gordon Stowell, Lutterworth, 0 7188 2419 9, £2.50 One in a new series designed to give young children an understanding of different ways of life around the world. This one is about Ravi who lives in Pune (Poona). Written by Aruna Hardy who grew up in Pune, it gives a lively and clear account of Ravi and his Hindu family, touching on India's history, traditions, changing and varied life styles, and religions. Useful for top infants and onwards.

Gifts and Almonds, 0 241 10422 X

Shabnam's Day Out, 0 241 10420 3

Both by Joan Solomon, Hamish Hamilton, £3.50

These simple texts feature a Muslim family in London. References to football, darts, school, playing in the park, the night shift, occur naturally alongside learning the Koran at Prayer School, arranged marriages and celebrating the end of Ramadan. The coloured photographs are a brilliant complement to text, showing so naturally one of the many facets of our multi-cultural society.

The Story of Prince Rama, Brian Thompson, Kestrel, 0 7226 5684 X, £7.95 'This version of the Ramayana,' writes Brian Thompson, 'originated in an account of the exiling of Rama written by a boy, Jitander Dudee, in my class at Lionel Primary School, Brentford. The English lesson turned out to be a prolonged Indian lesson for his teacher.' The book is an attempt to make a complex and difficult saga accessible to most readers. To keep the narrative clear parts have been condensed or omitted; what remains is a strong and lively rendering of this epic struggle between good and evil. It is brilliantly illustrated by reproductions of original paintings from ancient manuscripts, supplemented by specially commissioned paintings by Jeroo Roy. Exploring the narrative within these illustrations is a fascinating activity for junior or secondary children. Expensive, but worth it if you are serious about the myths of other cultures.

The Carnival Kite, Grace Hallworth, Methuen, 0 416 87880 6, £2.95 One of Methuen's Picture Story Books for children moving on to longer fiction. This one has two stars (for more adventurous readers) and is interesting not just because of its Caribbean setting, but for Grace Hallworth's use of West Indian speech patterns.

'Mammy, what happen to mi kite?'

'Now Arty, yo' know you aint have no kite.'

There's also a really smashing Gramma who helps Arty make his beautiful multi-coloured dream kite come true. (But I wonder why the kite's tail, 'a long crimson ribbon' at the planning stage, becomes blue in the final version. The kids wondered too!) Readers keen to make their own carnival bird kite will find instructions inside the back cover.

An addition to Longman's Whizz Bang Books - a bright series of early readers - is

Winking Witch, Anne Diack, Longman, 0 582 1 841 5 0, 80p (paper)

The storyteller, a small West Indian girl, tells of the chaos created by her tiny invisible friend (Winking Witch) in supermarket and classroom. A jokey fantasy with lively pictures to help the reader, and for good measure it's Dad who is doing the shopping in the supermarket.

The Commonwealth Institute

The library at the Commonwealth Institute has a collection of over 800 children's books, mostly in English, which 'demonstrate the backgrounds, cultures and imaginative horizons of children living in a variety of Commonwealth countries, including many in the third world.' Just available is their **Checklist of Commonwealth Children's Literature** (60 pages, £1.00 +25p postage). This booklist has titles under Asia, Antarctica, Australia and New Zealand, Canada, Caribbean and Oceania.

Michael Foster, the Librarian, tells us that the staff are always ready to give advice on multi-ethnic books and A/V materials.

The Commonwealth Institute is in Kensington High Street, London W8 6NQ (Tel. 01-602 3252).

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