

*Pakistan: The Land.* Carolyn Black. Crabtree, 2003. 32 pp. \$19.96 cloth, \$8.96 paper. ISBN 0-7787-9346-X, 0-7787-9714-7.

*Pakistan: The People.* Carolyn Black. Crabtree, 2003. 32 pp. \$19.96 cloth, \$8.96 paper. ISBN 0-7787-9347-8, 0-7787-9715-5.

*Pakistan: The Culture.* Carolyn Black. Crabtree, 2003. 32 pp. \$19.96 cloth, \$8.96 paper. ISBN 0-7787-9348-6, 0-7787-9716-3.

These three volumes are part of Crabtree's Lands, Peoples, and Culture series, which includes volumes on 25 countries to date. The most striking point about these volumes on Pakistan is the profusion of photographs, which indicate a feel for the many paradoxes of this country: the ancient landscape dotted with modern cities, traditional costumes and culture jostling side by side with the realities of mechanized existence, one part of this fairly small country suffering annual floods while another part remains a desert.

The script is simple and straightforward, with descriptions and annotations where necessary. Let me give just a few examples of how the script helps readers understand an unfamiliar culture. In *Pakistan: The Land*, the chapter on transportation includes three photographs: one of three-wheelers, one of a railway engine, and one of a colourful collage that is striking but makes no sense at first and appears to be a huge mural. The caption explains that it is quite common for buses to be decorated and that bus owners believe a decorated bus will attract more passengers, in part because passengers think that a driver who takes care of his bus will be a careful driver. I choose this example because one of the really touching scenes I remember of Delhi is the early morning scene when drivers of long-distance lorries decorate the nose of their vehicles with the same affection farmers show for their oxen — both are, after all, their means of making a living.

In the overall project of educating young people about the countries from which immigrants have arrived in Canada, the volume on culture is the most pertinent and interesting. For instance, the volume offers basic information about Islam and its rites and rituals: that a Muslim should pray five times a day facing Mecca, and that the dates of the month of Ramadan, which is observed by fasting without food or water from sunrise to sunset, changes from year to year because the Islamic calendar follows the lunar cycle. The book also explains that Islamic visual art does not delineate human or animal figures because creation is Allah's alone, and so geometric patterns dominate on tiles, ceramics, mosaics, and so on. The last two pages round off this glimpse of Pakistan with two folktales. Overall, this volume has much useful information to offer in the context of Canadian multiculturalism.

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