

Spiritual Themes and Virtues in Children's Literature

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This is a very brief overview of recently published children's literature that are related to spiritual values, virtues and Japanese culture. Many of these titles are available in both English and Japanese. Children's literature can be used in the family, in schools, and community events. They can supplement regular Baha'i Children's Classes. Appropriate literature contributes to children's appreciation of Japan's rich spiritual heritage.

About the organization of schools:

"...They must be constantly encouraged and made eager to gain all the summits of human accomplishment, so that from their earliest years they will be taught to have high aims, to conduct themselves well, to be chaste, pure and undefiled, and will learn to be of powerful resolve and firm purpose in all things." (*Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Baha*, 110, page 135)

About joyfulness:

"Joy gives us wings! In times of joy our strength is more vital, our intellect keener, and our understanding less clouded. We seem better able to cope with the world and to find our sphere of usefulness." (*Paris Talks*, Abdu'l-Baha, *Pain and Sorrow*, page 109.)

Picture Books

The Adventures of Momotaru, The Peach Boy, retold by Ralph F. McCarthy
Kodansha, 2000. Series: Kodansha Bilingual Children's Classics (*The Inch-High Samurai, The Moon Princess, Kintaru-The Nature Boy, Urashima and the Kingdom Beneath the Sea*). Cooperation.

Amy and Ken Visit Grandma, by Akiko Hayashi (trans. Peter Howlett and Richard

McNamara, R.I.C. Publications, 2003). Courage and Loyalty.

Basho and the River Stones, by Tim Myers

Illustrator - Oki S. Han

Marshall Cavendish, 2004

Honor and Creativity

Gifts from a Mailbox, by Yoriko Tsutsui

Illustrator - Akiko Hayashi

Translators - Jaylene Mary and Susan Howlett

R.I.C. Publications, 2004

Friendliness & Courage

Grandfather's Journey, by Allen Say

Scholastic Inc., 1995

(*The Bicycle Man, Milk with Tea, Tree of Cranes*)

Confidence

Honda: The Boy who Dreamed of Cars, by Mark Weston

Lee & Low, 2008

Determination and Creativity

In the Eyes of the Cat: Japanese Poetry for All Seasons

Selected and Illustrated by Demi

Translator - Tze-si Huang

Henry Holt, 1992

Excellence

The Magic Fan, by Keith Baker

Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1989

Idealism and Creativity

The Origami Master, by Nathaniel Lachenmeyer

Albert Whitman & Co., 2008

Excellence and Humility

Passage to Freedom: The Sugihara Story, by Ken Mochizuki

Lee & Low Books, Inc., 1997

Compassion and Idealism

The Perfect Sword, by Scott Goto

Charlesbridge, 2008

Excellence and Justice

The Pet Dragon: The Story about Adventure, Friendship and Chinese Characters

Christoph Niemann

Greenwillow Books, 2008

Loyalty

Sudsy Mom's Washing Spree, by Wakiko Sato

Translator - Sako Laughlin

R.I.C. Publications, 2006

Enthusiasm and Joyfulness

The Two Bullies, by Junko Morimoto

Red Fox-A Mark Macleod Book, 1997

Humility

Wabi Sabi, Mark Reibstein

Little, Brown & Co., 2008

Peacefulness

The Wakame Gatherers, Holly Thompson

Shen's Books, 2007

Understanding

Yoshi's Feast, by Kimiko Kajikawa

Dorling Kindersley Publishing, Inc., 2000

Cooperation

Chapter Books

Guardian of the Spirit (Moribito), by Nahoko Uehashi

Translator - Cathy Hirano

Arthur A. Levine Books, 2008

(Guardian Of The Darkness (Moribito) Book 2, 2009)

Trustworthiness and Loyalty

Kazunomiya: Prisoner of Heaven, Japan 1858, by Kathryn Lasky

Scholastic Inc., 2004 - Series: The Royal Diaries

Self-Discipline and Assertiveness

Shipwrecked!: The True Adventures of a Japanese Boy, by Rhoda Blumberg

HarperCollins, 2001

True biography - Older readers

Diligence and Loyalty