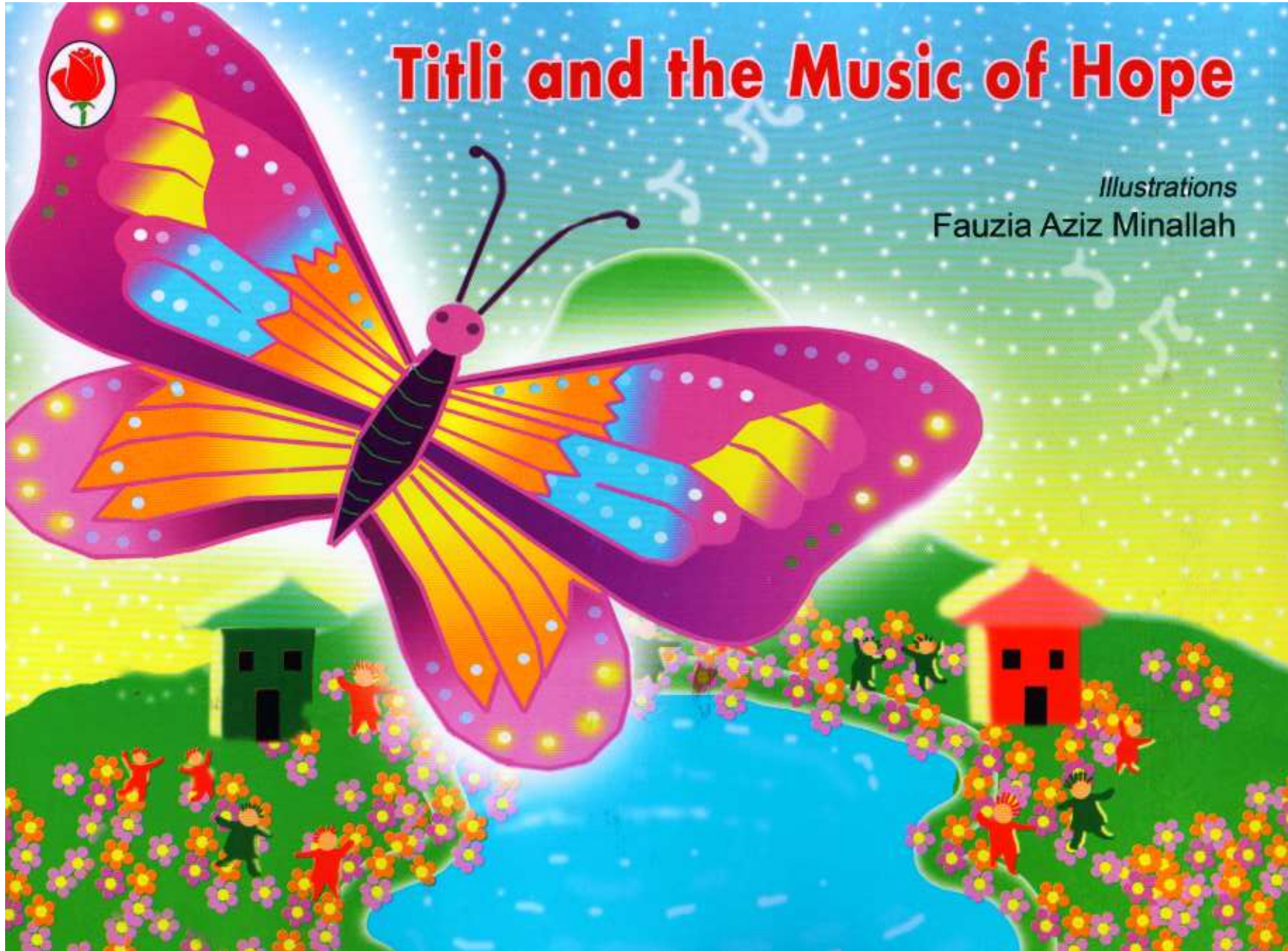


# Titli and the Music of Hope

*Illustrations*  
Fauzia Aziz Minallah



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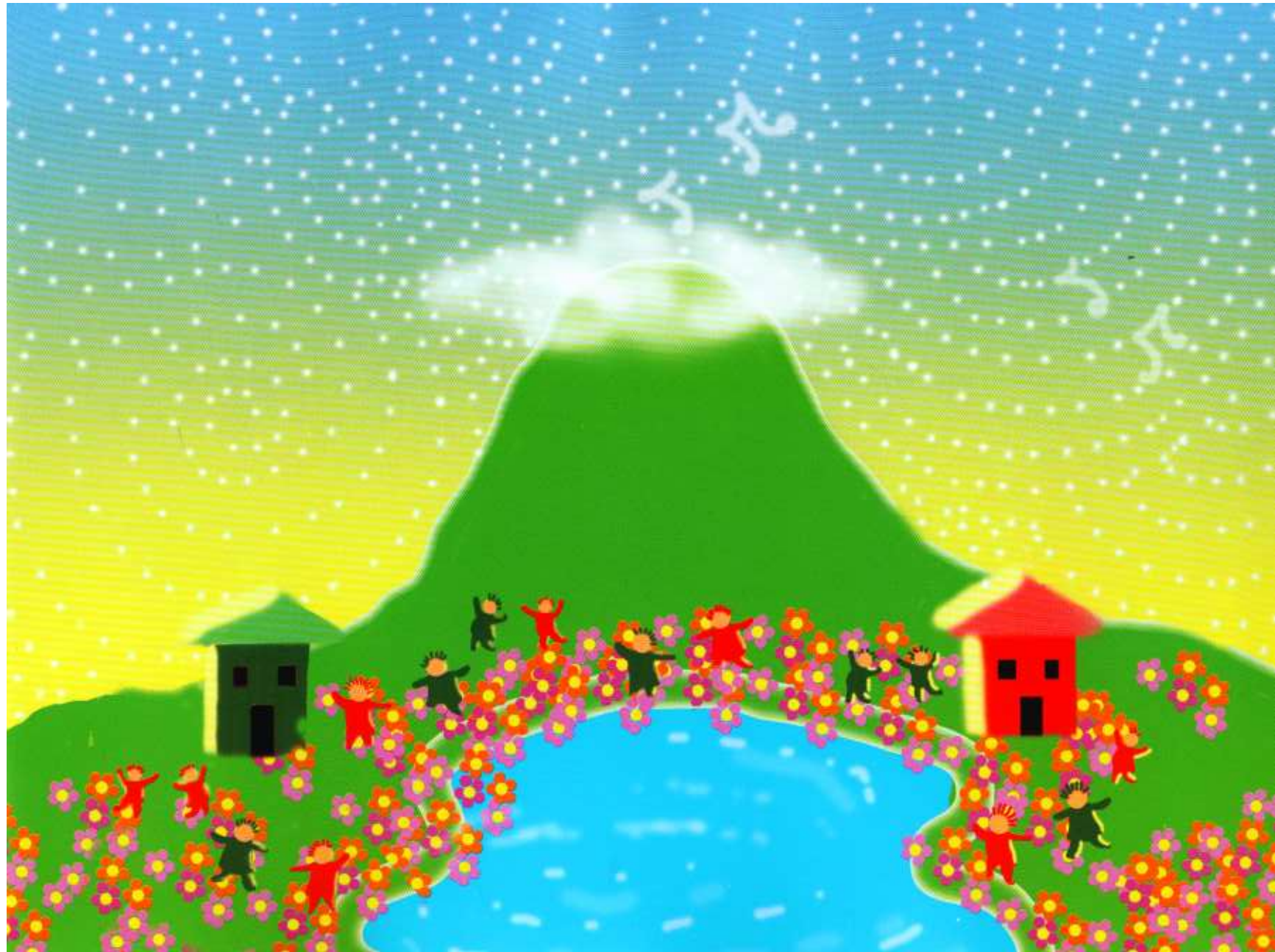
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**NATIONAL BOOK TRUST, INDIA**



Once upon a time there was a beautiful place called Apupur. There lived a family of Red people in a red house and the Green family in a green house. They all loved the millions of beautiful flowers, colourful butterflies and the blue lake of Apupur. They used to dance to the soft and happy music coming from the top of the mountain.





But one day there started a horrible war. People in both the houses were fighting with each other. The father in the Green house said that the top of the mountain is mine. On the other side, the father in the Red house said, "No! It is mine."

The Green people were dropping their Green bombs on the Red people. And the Red people were dropping their Red bombs on the Green people. Everyone was so busy in fighting that they had no time to care for the flowers. The flowers died, and the lake was not so blue anymore. All the butterflies left the valley too.





In this war no one could hear the beautiful music coming from the mountain. The children from both the sides started hating each other just like their parents.

One day a beautiful butterfly came to Apupur. She met Laali, a Red girl and Hara, a Green boy. "Hello! I am a butterfly, my name is Titli. You seem to be very angry with each other."







"Yes! I am very angry with him," said Laali.

"And I am very angry with her too," said Hara.

"Why are you angry with each other?" asked Titli.

"Because he is Green and the Green people want to take the top of the mountain and my parents say that the top is ours." said Laali.

"No! She is lying. My *Baba* says the top of the mountain belongs to us," said Hara.

Titli asked, "But do you know what is exactly there on the mountain, behind the clouds? Have you ever been on the top?"

"No!" Hara and Lali said angrily.

"Would you like to see it for yourself?" Titli asked.

"Yes, of course," said both of them.

Next day Titli along with Hara and Laali started climbing the mountain following the music playing on the mountain.





On the top, they saw a broken hut, the most beautiful flower and a sad boy called Neela playing beautiful music.

“Why is the hut broken down?” asked Laali.

“Why is the boy so sad?” asked Hara.

Titli narrated his sad story. “Neela is sad because he is alone. The war between the Red and Green people has destroyed everything on the top. He has lost his parents, his beautiful sister and all the flowers, which he was taking care of, except for one. Neela plays flute for this flower so that it remains alive. The music makes the flower happy and keeps it alive.” Hearing the story both Laali and Hara got emotional and were touched by Neela’s music. Saying goodbye to Neela they came back home.





At home, all the time Laali and Hara were thinking about Neela, the flower and the music. One day, the war between the Red and the Green people became very noisy and took an ugly turn. Then Titli visited Laali and Hara once again. She looked very worried and said, "Come. Quick. Neela and the flower are in great danger." Laali and Hara immediately left their homes and ran up to meet Neela and the flower.

They saw Neela protecting the beautiful flower from the bombs of the Red and the Green people.

"We must protect this flower," said Hara and Laali.

So Hara, Laali and Neela held their hands together and protected the flower from destruction.





Back home, the parents of Laali and Hara were waiting for them.

Knowing that their children had gone up to the mountain, they all went there.

When they reached the mountain, they saw Laali, Hara and Neela desperately trying to protect the beautiful flower.

“This is beautiful,” said the Green parents.





“Yes! This is so beautiful,” said the Red parents.  
Realising their mistake they all pledged, “We will make our Apupur full of flowers again.”





## JOINT PUBLICATION PROGRAMME OF BOOKS ON PEACE FOR CHILDREN IN ASIA

Children are the main sufferers from disasters arising out of conflicts and wars. To develop peace, love and harmony in children's innocent minds for their fellow beings without any discrimination through picture books, a project idea '**Listen to Me**' was initiated in 1998 and completed in 2010 by the joint efforts of experts from India, Pakistan, Nepal and Japan. It was organized by the International Center for Literacy and Culture (ICLC), Tokyo in Kathmandu, in collaboration with The Peace Stone Foundation (for Hiroshima) and The Japan Foundation.

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