In the Footsteps of Mahatma Gandhi in India

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Jacket - front - inside

Mahatma Gandhi - the *Father of the Indian Nation*, and the *Apostle of Nonviolence*. He worked for India's independence from the British rule. And gave us the awesome power of nonviolence. A social reformer, he taught the world the eternal values of love and truth. His fight for human rights, protection of environment and religious tolerance was mankind's finest hour.

This book introduces the reader to today's India through excellent current images and gives an impression of the historic figure of Mahatma Gandhi by selected rare photographs. The journey follows the cause of Gandhi's life: Porbandar, Rajkot, Ahmedabad, Wardha, Mumbai and Delhi are the stations where the present day life is shown.

The photographs were taken by renowned photographer Eduard Friedl from Berlin.

Jacket - back - inside

**Peter Rühe**

specialized in the collection and conservation of visual material related to Gandhi. He presented multimedia events on Gandhi in many countries and has contributed to several TV productions. Rühe is the founder of the GandhiServe Foundation, Berlin and webmaster of the largest resource on Gandhi on the internet, GandhiServe’s Mahatma Gandhi Research and Media Service – www.gandhiserve.org


**Eduard Friedl**

is the former director of the photostudio at the Technical University of Berlin. He tours Asia extensively and he has prepared audio visual shows about Thailand, China and India. In his photostudio two major photo collections of Mahatma Gandhi received a preservation treatment and were reproduced.
In Memoriam

Prabhudas Ch. Gandhi
Greetings

We invite you to a journey across India following the footprints of Mahatma Gandhi. This journey will be an experience of the senses. It will give you an insight into the life and influence of the man, who cultivated the ethics of nonviolence and who himself, by being a living example, spread this concept beyond the borders of India. Is some of his teaching still in effect? And has it survived the jump of the Indian Republic into the 21st century? What meaning does Gandhi’s teaching have for the future? Questions for which this journey will try to find answers.

Peter Rühe
Eduard Friedl
Greetings

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Foreword
I have the greatest admiration and respect for Mahatma Gandhi. He was a great human being with a deep understanding of human nature. He made every effort to encourage the full development of the positive aspects of the human potential and to reduce or restrain the negative. His life has inspired me ever since I was a small boy.

Ahimsa or nonviolence is the powerful idea that Mahatma Gandhi made familiar throughout the world. But nonviolence does not mean the mere absence of violence. It is something more positive, more meaningful than that, for it depends wholly on the power of truth. The true expression of nonviolence is compassion.

Some people seem to think that compassion is just a passive emotional response instead of a rational stimulus to action. To experience genuine compassion is to develop a feeling of closeness to others combined with a sense of responsibility for their welfare. This develops when we accept that other people are just like ourselves in wanting happiness and not wanting suffering.

What is the relevance of nonviolence and compassion to the future of humanity? As Mahatma Gandhi showed by his own example, nonviolence can be implemented not only in politics but also in day-to-day life. That was his great achievement. He showed that nonviolence should be active in helping others. Nonviolence means that if you can help and serve others you should do so. If you cannot, you must at least restrain yourself from harming others.

I believe that it is very important that we find positive ways in which children and adults can be educated in the path of compassion, kindness and nonviolence. If we can actively do this I believe we will be fulfilling Mahatma Gandhi’s legacy to us. In this context I am pleased that Peter Rühe has produced this illustrated book, In the Footsteps of Mahatma Gandhi in India, that presents a vivid picture of the historic figure of Mahatma Gandhi in the context of contemporary India. It is my prayer that, as we have entered this new century, nonviolence and dialogue will increasingly come to govern all human relations.

May 8, 2000
Mahatma Gandhi - Early Years
On October 2, 1869, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born to the trader caste of the Modh Bania. His family worshipped Vishnu, who personifies the blessed and loving aspect of God in the Hindu philosophy. The Gandhi’s played an important role in the political life of the then miniature state of Porbandar. Just like the grandfather, Gandhi’s father was also Diwan, a sort of Prime Minister of the state. Grandfather and father were men of firm principles and had a great love for truth. They were renowned for their courage, and for their hot temperament and their sensuality. His mother, Putlibai, was described by Mohandas as "a saint of deep religiousness". She was a strong personality with much self-discipline. Her strict vows, as well as her regular fasts, left a deep impression on Gandhi. After the family moved to Rajkot in 1876, Mohandas, at the age of 7, attended primary school, which he completed at the age of 12 with average success. He developed a strong sense of pride during this time and attached great importance to developing his character. He was deeply impressed by the plays Harishchandra and Shravana, which highlighted the unconditional search for truth and the devotion of a son to his blind parents. Shortly after he changed to the Kathiawad High School. At the age of 13, Gandhi was married to Kasturba Nakanji of Porbandar, who was the same age.

After his schooling, Gandhi wanted to study medicine, which was refused by his family due to religious reasons, since the dissection of flesh was forbidden by his caste. He then decided to study law in England. Although he took a vow to his mother not to touch meat, wine or women, he was expelled by the headmen of his caste, since it was forbidden for members of his caste to travel over the 'Black Waters', as the Arabian Sea was then called. At first in London, Gandhi strove to live like an Englishman, which he had to give up soon due to financial reasons. After he started his studies, he invested instead in books, which he read eagerly. He even learned Latin in order to study Roman law. He lived modestly in a small room and cooked for himself. He became a member of the Vegetarian Society, where he met a lot of interesting people, who made him aware of his own Indian roots. Consequently he read the Bhagavad Gita for the first time, one of the holy Hindu scriptures, which was an enlightenment for him. Above all, the statement, "Abstention and renunciation reflect the highest form of religion", left a lasting and deep impression on him. For Gandhi, the Bhagavad Gita became the "book par excellence for the recognition of truth", and was for him, all through his life, a source of optimism and hope. As secretary of the Vegetarian Society, Gandhi wrote articles about Indian customs and eating habits. In June 1891, at the age of 21 years, he
successfully completed his studies of British law, and received the title barrister-of-law. The joy of his return to India was clouded when upon his arrival at Mumbai, he learnt of the death of his beloved mother. Only after he took the ritual baths of atonement, necessary because of the expulsion from his caste, and paid the demanded fine, was he accepted back into the caste as a full member.
Gujarat lies northwest from Mumbai, the former Bombay, on the Arabian coast of India. The approximately 40 million inhabitants of Gujarat live, as most Indians do from agriculture. Rapidly developing industry has contributed to the fact that Gujarat is counted as one of the three economically strongest states of India. The largest area of cotton cultivation in India and the prominent textile industry are complemented by oil and gas fields as well as a booming mineral, cement and chemical industry. The name Gujarat is derived from Gurjar ratta, the 'Land of the Gurjars', who came from the North approximately 2,000 years ago and settled in this area. The Gujaratis are distinguished in history by their courage against invaders and are reputed to be competent seamen and business people. They have a distinct tradition in music, dance and drama. Just under 90% of the Gujaratis are Hindu, approximately 10% are Muslim and there are also some Christians, Parsis and Jains living in Gujarat. In fact, the latter have one of their important places of worship there. You have seen the mountain Shetrunji near Palitana, on which there are over 900 Jain temples. The Jains are characterised by their distinct philosophy of nonviolence, which left a deep impression on the young Gandhi, although he was Hindu, and which decisively influenced his later behaviour. In the Indian tradition, nonviolence is called Ahimsa, which means non-violence or in a wider sense: all embracing love. In the port city of Porbandar, also described as the 'White City', lies Gandhi’s birthplace. The place where he was born, is marked by a Swastika, an ancient Indian symbol for prosperity and well-being. The house is managed by the Indian government and ranks as a religious memorial, second to no other place of worship.
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I114 - The spot where Gandhi was born at Porbandar is marked by a swastika, the ancient symbol for progress and prosperity
"I claim no perfection for myself. But I do claim to be a passionate seeker after truth, which is but another name for God. Search for truth is search for God. Truth is God. God is because truth is."

Mahatma Gandhi
The Kathiawad High School is now named after its most renowned student - Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi High School. On the ground floor there is an exhibition, where amongst other things, Gandhi’s report cards are exhibited, which prove that the later Mahatma was an average student and who, due to the marriage preparations, had to repeat a school year. In Rajkot, just like all over India, one finds statues of Gandhi, and there are streets and squares named after him and his wife Kasturba. In this way, he receives a kind of reverence, which he himself would have surely refused. Gandhi wanted his fellow Indians to reassess and reform their own lives in the same way he himself did. What he wanted to inspire was that in the aspiration for truth, every person should recognize his own capabilities and use them for the well-being of society. As a Hindu, Gandhi saw God in everything and everyone around him and hence service to society is also the ideal service to God. Gandhi was described as a Karma Yogi, as someone who strives to become one with God by working for public well-being. When Gandhi was asked to give a message to the world, he answered, "My life is my message". Even today, more than 2,000 institutions in India work according to his philosophy. And outside India too, there are more than 30 institutions, upholding his name and hundreds more devoting themselves to Gandhian social work.

Rajkot today is an industrial city with a million inhabitants. As well as the schools Gandhi studied in, his parent’s house is preserved and has been converted to a small museum, in which a photo exhibition of Gandhi’s childhood and youth, as well as his relationship to Rajkot, is documented with rare photographs. The Rashtriyashala
Ashram, inspired by Gandhi, even today contains workshops which correspond to the Sarvodaya concept developed by Gandhi. The 'well-being of everybody', which is a loose translation of Sarvodaya, should not be achieved, according to Gandhi, by industrial mass production but through the production by the masses. As much automation as necessary but at the same time as little automation as possible, should result in the fact that every person in the country has work and autonomous village republics come into being, which are economically independent of the cities.
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