

[Lindsay's Luminous Lens](#)

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BOOKS

Lindsay's Luminous Lens

A stunning book of photographs focuses on India's diversity and bares its soul

By Tara Katir, Kauai, Hawaii

Today's India is a mesmerizing blend of modern-day city excitement, ancient village equanimity and multicultural

tension. For those who have not spent enough time in the "holy land of Bharat" to take it for granted, the country's kaleidoscopic diversity can be overwhelming. Lindsay Hebbard, an internationally acclaimed photographer and producer of educational photographic exhibitions, helps synthesize India's mishmash magic in her comprehensive book, *Cultural Portraits of India*, (205 pages, Cultural Portraits Productions, Inc., USA 1998, ^{us}\$65.00).

Originally assembled to commemorate India's fiftieth anniversary of independence in 1998, the photos of Portraits, which represent over ten years of Hebbberd's life and photography in India, take the viewer on a extensive journey throughout the country while focusing on seven themes—Independence

, Landscapes, People,
Daily Life, Religion, The
Arts and Architecture.
Essays by Mira Kamdar
provide descriptive
commentary.

In India there are
seven major religions:
Hinduism, Islam,
Christianity, Jainism,

Buddhism,
Zoroastrianism and
Judaism— as well as a
multitude of village
faiths. There are 17
official languages and
nearly 900 dialects.
By the year 2020,
Hebberd speculates,
India will surpass
China as the most
populated nation on

Earth. Even now among its very dissimilar population, every possible body height and shape, every conceivable skin and eye color can be found represented somewhere. Certainly, the term "multicultural" was never more aptly

applied than to the
people of India.

Capturing all this on
film would be a
challenge for any
professional
photographer, but
Hebberd does well
even while including

a visual feast of
India's
environmental and
geographical
vastness. But it is
her stunning
photographs of
ordinary people that
allow us an
unguarded, intimate
peek into the soul of

Bharat. Marigold
vendors standing
knee deep in
flowers, a dignified
Rajput gentleman
proudly wearing his
colorful turban, a
laughing girl
decorating her
family's house for
Dipavali all these

sweetly capture the
sense of India's
timeless existence.
From a simple
banyan tree
adorned with flags
and bells to the
lavish Golden
Temple of Amritsar,
the lens of Hebbard
captures, as a fact

of life, India's
ingrained
perspective that
God is everywhere.
Here in the holy
land, it is difficult if
not impossible to
separate the sacred
from the profane
when such a deep
spirituality so

permeates even ordinary life. This is the elusive spirit that Hebbard's book so successfully embraces. More than a tribute, it is a sacramental testimony. Cultural Portraits of India is available for sale

only on line. Visit:
www.culturalportraits.com.