

[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, <sup>us</sup>\$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](http://www.culturalportraits.com).