



Gandhi: A Photo Biography

Peter Rihe

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This striking compilation of almost 300 photographs offers a profound insight into the life and work of Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) as both a public figure and a private individual. It embodies a precious and intimate view of a side to Gandhi's life with which many are not as familiar, through a perspective that is at once pragmatic and personal. This book pursues a compelling visual narrative and permits us a very rare and highly privileged understanding of Gandhi - given via a diverse range of photographic lenses from the witty and ardent press, to the sensitive and intelligent agency and the ingenuous eye of a great nephew. Many of these images have never been seen before. They are derived from two essential and exclusive collections: the photo-archives of Gandhi's foremost biographer Vithalbhai Jhaveri, and those of Kanu Gandhi, Gandhi's great nephew. After Jhaveri's death, Peter Ruhe assimilated the extensive photo collection of over 9,000 prints into a photo-archive of the highest standard, using scientific cataloguing and computerization. The second photographic source, that of Kanu Gandhi, is especially breathtaking because of its history. Kanu Gandhi lived with Mahatma Gandhi for the last 12 years of the latter's life. He was the sole person by whom Gandhi consented to be photographed - and, even so, only on three conditions: that the freedom movement would not fund them; that there was to be no use of flash; and that Gandhi would not pose for him. In Ruhe's book, Gandhi's extraordinary life is brought to light by means of this astounding collection of images. The pictures in this compilation are also unique in that they follow Gandhi all the way from his early life in India, to his law studies in London, his work in South Africa, and finally his return to lead the struggle for Indian independence, which won him the title 'father of the nation' in India. A magnificent accomplishment in itself, this volume identifies the encompassing sweep of world politics and the perpetual struggles of the poor with the life of a single individual, whose impact on the world is matched by few in the history of mankind.

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