

Raghav, from Pune

Maharastra, India

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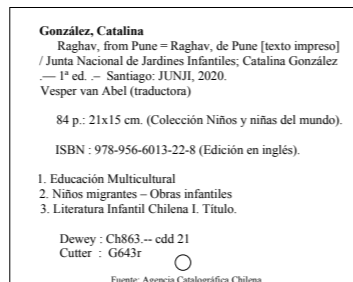
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Research and texts by Catalina González
Photos by Marcela Miravalles

This book contains QR codes to complement graphics and text.



Asia



India



Maharashtra

PUNE





Children are the same always and everywhere: curious, playful, restless, caring, enthusiastic and original. The environments where they are born and raised mark them and enable them to share unknown experiences with children from other latitudes.

Knowing different realities and valuing diversity expressed in customs, environments and experiences is the objective of this book of the Junta Nacional de Jardines Infantiles in co-edition with the Bernard van Leer Foundation called Children of the World. Through stories and a great variety of photos from different corners of the planet it invites small preschool children, their families and educators to discover different ways of living and being a child.

Rushing rivers, stilt houses, cacao seeds, wild animals, lush vegetation, joyful dances, ancestral rites and journeys of children after immigrating with their parents are part of the scenario shown by this collection of stories aiming at delighting old and young and showing diversity as a value to respect and spread.

Adriana Gaete Somarriva

Executive vice-president

Junta Nacional de Jardines Infantiles (JUNJI)



The world of today requires stories to make us learn about and value the riches of diversity in all its dimensions. The collection Children of the World of the JUNJI is a wonderful tool to share stories about harmonious coexistence of children in different contexts and diverse cultures.

Human beings need moments of leisure, of plenitude, of enjoying free time. This story collection is a unique opportunity to create these spaces and build magical connections between educators and children. These moments of bonding through stories are essential for personal growth, sharing with family and friends, improving living in community and enhancing our children's capacities from early age.

At the Bernard van Leer Foundation, we firmly believe that the best investment one can make is in children younger than five years old. Therefore, we have been working across the globe for seven decades in over fifty countries seeking to support a good beginning for all children. We trust that in Chile these stories will tighten bonds between children and adults and help to broaden the view on the lives of children in different corners of the world.

Cecilia Vaca Jones
Directora de Programas
Fundación Bernard van Leer



-Namaste! I am Raghav Kunjir, I am 4 years old and I live in the city of Pune with my dad Sharad, my mom Snehal, my brother Rudra and my grandparents –says Raghav cheerfully.

Raghav lives in India, the second most populated country in the world.



-Pune is a city in India. My parents were born here, and my grandparents have lived here all their lives too. Through the centre of Pune flow the rivers Mula and Mutha, which are sacred to us, and there are also many motorbikes! We speak Marathi, but we also communicate in English or Hindi. The inhabitants of Pune are very spiritual and Lord Ganesha, the god with the head of an elephant and the body of a human, is the city's patron –says Raghav with pride.



Raghav and his family live in the Balaji Nagar neighbourhood in the south of Pune.

–I love to live here! I know all my neighbours. My grandparents helped building the houses in the neighbourhood for the people who could not buy one. I also live close to my cousins –Raghav explains.





As in many families in India, it is tradition for the son to live in the house with his parents and his wife and children. Sharad, Raghav's father, is the only son. He has three elder sisters who live very near the family house, so they spend a lot of time together, they support each other and are always united.



–Our house has two floors. The place we use most is the living-room, where we get together as a family. On the second floor there is a large balcony where in the afternoon my grandma sits down to rest and take care of us while we play among cousins and neighbouring children –Raghav points out.



-We also have a large kitchen where my mom works miracles! –Raghav screams, gloating. While my mom prepares food, we play, watch television, tell stories, laugh and study. My mom always prepares our favourite dishes, like chapati,¹ tea, vegetables and desserts.

¹ Chapati is a kind of bread prepared with wholemeal flour, water and salt.



Snehal, Raghav's mother, is a lovely, cheerful and amusing woman. Apart from being a good cook, she loves dancing. Together with other mothers and Raghav's schoolteacher, she prepares choreographies which they present every end of the year in an event organized by Raghav's kindergarten.

–I love to dance and practice new choreographies! My culture is wonderful, I love the dances of the different regions of India, because they are beautiful and because, through them, children learn about the culture of our beautiful country –Snehal says proudly, wearing a colourful sari, the traditional clothing for women in India.



Women in India are known for their bright dresses. Apart from kurta, shalwar kameez or jeans, the most traditional women wear sari, a more than six metres long piece of fabric which, by some almost magical folding only, are transformed into the most charming dresses.

–The women of my family wear beautiful dresses. My grandma has many saris and when she opens her wardrobe, there is an exhibition of colours! –Raghav exclaims.





–I like to go to kindergarten very much, because we play and learn a lot –Raghav says smiling.

Every morning, Raghav gets up, has breakfast, puts his rucksack on his back, says goodbye to his grandmother and climbs onto the back of the motorbike to go to his kindergarten Blooming Buds, together with his cousin. At the door, his teachers Tanuja and Sarika are waiting for him to receive him with a broad smile.

–Raghav is a very happy boy, he loves to sing and learn new things while playing with his friends and cousin –Sarika says.

–My cousin is my best friend! –Raghav says while they are sharing the pomegranates and other fruit they brought as snacks.



-It is time to go home! After an entertaining morning during which Raghav and his friends have made drawings, have painted, sung and even done some writing, Raghav says goodbye to his teachers to go back home. His mother is waiting for him at the entrance of the kindergarten. They walk to the motorbike together, and on the way home he tells her about all the new things he has learnt.

-I like to come home to play with my brother Rudra. He is seven years old and already goes to school. He is very clever and funny. He always takes care of me and keeps me company. I like it when we put on the same clothes.





Indians are very kind people. To them, guests are like gods (*Guests are God*). –We want people to feel welcome when they visit our country and our home. We receive guests at the door of our house, with delicious fragrances, candles, fruit, sweets, rice and flowers –Raghav’s mother says.

India is a country that is very rich in diversity, history, traditions, architecture, dances, sounds, flavours, colours and fragrances. It is filled with impressive temples, palaces, mosques, churches, parks and animals.



In the afternoons, after a jolly day at kindergarten, Raghav accompanies his mother to different activities. Sometimes they go to the centre of Pune together. They mount the motorbike and go and do shopping, especially in times of festivities and celebrations. Halfway the afternoon, it is time for some refreshment. There is nothing better than a sugar cane juice, a gold-coloured, sweet and refreshing liquid people drink in India when it is hot.

–What I like most is to see how a machine crushes the sugar cane branches and extracts the juice that drips directly into my glass –says Raghav thirstily.



The Pune market or Market Yard is located in the south of the city. It is large and full of colours and flavours. Every day, thousands of people from all over the country go there to sell and buy the most delicious fruit and vegetables. Early in the morning, this place is so full of movement that it looks like the middle of daytime. In the centre of the market, there is a beautiful temple everybody can enter.

–My dad and granddad work on the Pune market. Here people have known my granddad for 40 years and they are very fond of him. He always wears white clothes and gets up very early in the morning, because that is what the world of fruit is like –Raghav explains.



Raghav and Rudra very much enjoy going to the market and play while their father and grandfather work.

–The market is a great place, because there is lots to do in a cheerful atmosphere. My favourite fruit is mango. Mango is the king of fruits! When I go to the market, I sit down with my granddad. He takes out his knife and cuts off pieces of our favourite fruit to share.



-Some days, after going to kindergarten, we go to the market to fetch my dad and go to the park all together as a family. The Sarasbaug² park is one of our favourite parks. Here we stroll around, play and share food. In the middle of the park there is a lake with lotus flowers and lots of fishes.

²In the Sarasbaug park, there is a small temple dedicated to Ganesha. Therefore, the place is known as Talyatala Ganesha.







A strong wind is blowing, the sky is clouding over, and thunder is rumbling... rain is coming! Between the months of July and September Pune receives the famous monsoons.³ Due to these winds, the rain comes down with such force that people become totally soaking wet. So, as soon as they feel the first drops, all the people in the park run towards the trees for shelter.

–I like it when it rains. Sometimes I play outside in the rain –Raghav says.

³ Monsoons are winds producing torrential rains and heavy inundations. They are characteristic of India and the rest of Southeast Asia..





After an amusing afternoon in the park, Raghav and Ruda feel like having a delicious ice-cream.

–When we go to the centre with my parents and my brother, we like to go and have an ice-cream at Sujata Mastani, Pune's city centre's most famous ice-cream parlour. My favourite ice-cream is strawberry. My brother likes chocolate best –Raghav says.

-My grandma on my mom's side is the best cook in the world! Her name is Sangeeta and she lives with our great-grandmother and Gaurav, my mom's youngest brother, who is very creative and funny. He composes music. We like to go and see them in the afternoons, after kindergarten.

Grandma cooks some of our favourite dishes such as chapati, chole sabj or vanga masala, she plays with us and tells us nice stories. In her house we also build altars and honour our gods.





Ganpati Bappa Morya! Like every year, together with the rains and monsoons, Raghav and his family get ready to receive Lord Ganesh. –Ganpati is our favourite festival! We celebrate it at home, in our neighbourhood, at my kindergarten and in the entire city of Pune –Raghav explains.

The Ganesha festivities last 10 days. During this period, Hindu families invite Lord Ganesh and celebrate together with him. People dance in the streets, decorate him with jewels and offer flowers. Ganpati, as Lord Ganesh is called affectionately, likes to eat; so, he is offered coconuts, mangos and other delicious food.

–I like to celebrate this party in all the places I go to! –says Raghav, jumping up and down





Ganpati is the god of intellect, wisdom and prosperity.

He takes obstacles out of the way and makes things happen. He is the patron of arts and science.

–I like Ganpati because he has the body of a human being and the head of an elephant, and he travels around in a... mouse! Ganpati has large ears to listen, very small eyes because he is very intelligent and an enormous trunk –says expert Raghav.

–On festive days we all celebrate. My granddad, as always, dresses in white and women put on their prettiest saris. On this day there are no distinctions, we go all together, regardless of nationality, caste or social background. We are all welcome!



Apart from this beloved elephant named Ganesha, India knows many animals. Elephants walk through the streets as well as camels guided by their owners and monkeys look for food in the trees. Outside the city crocodiles, antelopes, cobras, pythons and even lions can be found.

One of the most special animals to the Hindus is the cow. Cows are considered holy animals, so they can be seen all around. Sometimes, they even sit down in the middle of a motorway or walk around calmly in the middle of a street.

–My favourite animal is the tiger. It is very strong and runs very fast!
The Bengal tiger is my country's national animal –says Raghav.



India has many different types of climate and diverse landscapes. There are deserts, mountains, forests, valleys and beaches.

–We love to go to the beach. My mom and I have our birthdays in the same week; so, every year we celebrate this as a family in the sand and the sea. My favourite beach is Konkan Coast, because it is very large, and we play with the waves and see how camels stroll along the seaside –Raghav says, laughing.

I am very happy that children in Chile can get to know my country. I would also like to know about Chile. Can you tell me about your country? –Raghav asks, hugging his parents and brother.



TO KNOW AND SHARE

India is a country in the south of Asia. It is the seventh largest country in the world and the second most densely populated one, after its neighbouring country China. Over 1.350 billion people live here. Its capital is New Delhi, although the largest city in India is Mumbai. In India, hundreds of languages and thousands of dialects are spoken. Hindi and English are the two official languages. In Pune, Marathi is spoken, which, even though this language is not very well-known to us, is spoken by 74 million people, mainly in the state of Maharashtra.

India also houses the highest mountains of the world, the Himalaya, as well as one of the planet's longest rivers: the Ganges.

An interesting fact about India is that in this country buttons, shampoo, chess, the digit zero, the board game snakes and stairs, card games, cotton fabric and yoga were invented.

INDIA, INDIAN, HINDU AND HINDI...

Country: India

Nationality: Indian

Religion: Hindu (as well as Islam, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Jainism, Christianity, among others)

Language: Hindi (as well as English and 20 other official languages)

Namaste: Is the way to greet in Hindi. Both hands are joined in front of the heart and the head is slightly bent. This is a way of showing respect. The word is also used to say thank you.

Similarly, Muslims say "As Salaam Alaykum" (Peace be upon you) and Sikhs greet others saying "Sat Sri Akaal" (God is truth).

COLUMBUS AND HIS ARRIVAL IN INDIA?

Many years ago, people wanted to travel to India in search for highly appreciated spices such as cinnamon, pepper and clove, that did not exist in Europe. Using all his wit and belief that the earth was round, Christopher Columbus convinced the Catholic kings of Spain, Isabel of Castille and Fernando of Aragon, to travel to India. The queen decided to sell the crown jewels to finance the journey.

After sailing from Puerto de Palos, Columbus and the crews of his three ships Niña, Pinta and Santa María, went through a thousand vicissitudes before the sailor Rodrigo de Triana shouted the famous sentence "Land ho!" Because Columbus and his companions thought they had really arrived in India, they called the inhabitants of the new continent Indians.

Years later, when it was discovered that Cristopher Columbus had not reached India but had discovered a so far unknown territory called America, nobody changed the name given to the occupied people and they continued calling the people who lived there Indians.



TAJ MAHAL, A SWEET (AND SAD) LOVE STORY

You have undoubtedly heard of the famous Taj Mahal, a world heritage site and one of the seven wonders of the modern world. This impressive building of white marble embedded with more than 28 kinds of precious stones (including diamonds) is located in the Indian city of Agra. However, what you may not know, this building is... a tomb!

The Taj Mahal was built by the Muslim emperor Shan Jahan of the Moghol dynasty, in honour of his favourite wife, Mumtaz Mahal, with whom he was married for 19 years. Together they had 14 children. On the day she gave birth to their last daughter, Mumtaz passed away. The emperor loved her so much and he was so sad when she died, that he called all the best builders and specialists of the time to build a tomb as beautiful as his beloved, an unforgettable and perfect building.

For 20 years, more than twenty thousand craftsmen worked tirelessly at the construction. Marble was brought in on carts pulled by oxen, buffaloes, camels and even elephants, and beautiful precious stones were brought in for decoration, such as turquoises, lapis lazuli, sapphires, corals and diamonds.

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), a Bengal poet and artist who was awarded the Nobel prize of Literature in 1913, wrote a famous poem dedicated to the power of the Taj Mahal's love symbol.

*But you made this tear of love, this Taj Mahal,
stream immaculately bright,
down the cheek of time,
forever and ever.*





RELIGIONS AND BELIEFS

India is a very spiritual country. Even though it is a secular republic, that means, the inhabitants' right to practice any faith or religion is protected, in India 8 out of 10 people practise Hinduism, a very old religion (or dharma), probably the oldest in the world.

Hindus believe in karma, reincarnation and yoga. Hinduist practices include rituals such as prayer reciting, meditation, ceremonies for different important moments in the life of a person, annual festivals and occasional peregrinations. The main gods are Visnú, Shiva, Kali, Brahma, Ganesha and many others.

There is also a significant Muslim population that practices Islam. Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism have their origin in India.

GANESHA, THE ELEPHANT GOD

Ganesha, the elephant god, is the eldest son of the gods Shiva and Parvati. He is much beloved in the whole of India. He has the face of an elephant, big ears, small eyes and a human body. He represents the removal of obstacles, success, education, knowledge, wisdom, riches and science.

Difference versions of his birth exist. The most popular version says that Parvati, his mother, gave the order to be guarded and not let anybody in while she was bathing. When Shiva, her husband, arrived, little Ganesha would not let him in, because he did not know him. Very angry, Shiva took his sword

and cut his head off. His mother Parvati came running in and could not bear the sadness and anger for what Shiva had done, so her husband promised to replace Ganesha's head by the first living being to cross in front of the door... and that happened to be an elephant!



RECIPE TO TASTE THE FLAVOUR OF INDIA

CHAPATI BREAD

Ingredients

- 3 cups of flour
- less than 1 cup of water
- 1 teaspoon of salt
- 2 teaspoons of oil
- bread preparation without yeast

Preparation

Chapati bread is also known as pulka, Indian roti bread or naan. It is sometimes used as a spoon to scoop up food or as an accompaniment.

There is no meal in India without chapati bread!

In a bowl, mix flour, salt and oil and knead while adding water little by little until obtaining a soft dough that does not stick to your fingers.

The dough should be kneaded on a surface covered in flour. Leave to rest for 30 minutes covered with a tea towel. Separate in balls the size of an egg and stretch them out with a rolling pin, constantly sprinkling flour so they do not stick. The balls must all be very fine and round.

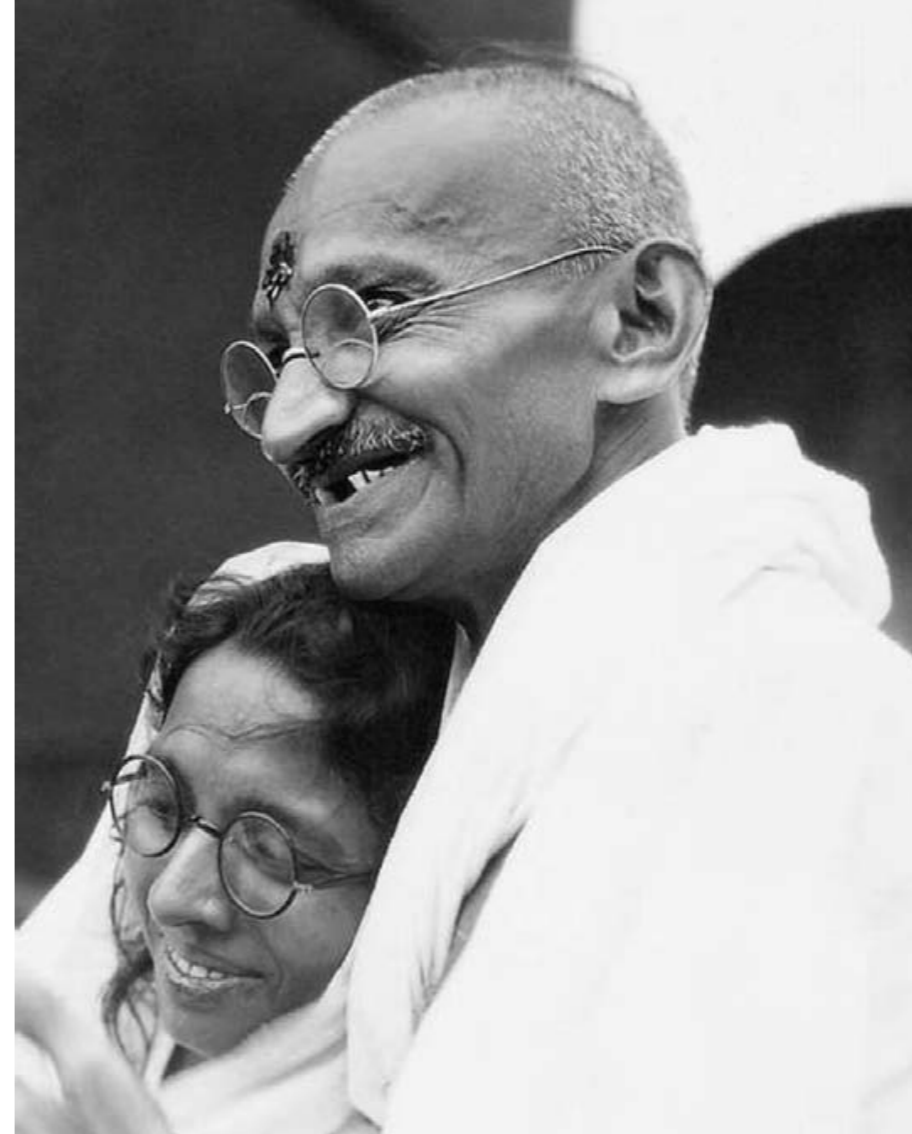
Finally, the balls are placed onto a very hot and slightly greased grill or pan. When small bubbles appear, it is time to turn them round and bake them a few instants longer until they are gold coloured... Enjoy!



INDIA'S INDEPENDENCE AND MAHATMA GANDHI'S LEADERSHIP

India has been an independent country since 1947. A man called Mahatma Gandhi led his country peacefully in order to make it independent from the United Kingdom... using peace as his main weapon! The people called him affectionately Mahatma, which means *great soul*.

Before this date, for 200 years, India was part of the colonies the United Kingdom had in the world, such as Australia and South Africa.



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The series **CHILDREN OF THE WORLD** is about diversity and similarities in children and tells their stories through their own eyes and with their own voices.

Stories and photos showing children in their own, previously invisible, everyday lives, cultures and territories to share in homes, kindergartens, and schools, with children and families everywhere around the Globe.

