

**Original transcript of “Anecdotes of Mahatma Gandhi’s Inner Circle” by Peter Ruehe at the Metta Center for Nonviolence, Petaluma, California, USA, on 31 October 2017**

**[00:00:00.000]**

Welcome to my presentation *Anecdotes from Mahatma Gandhi's Inner Circle*. How did I get interested in the life and work of Mahatma Gandhi? In the early '80s, I was a member of the German Peace Movement, and we discussed Gandhi's life and work, the ethics of nonviolence, and we practiced nonviolent resistance and civil disobedience. And so, I came to know Gandhi's political aspects. At the same time, I worked at the Technical University in Berlin, in an institute for theoretical chemistry. I had a colleague from India, from Chandigarh, and he told me about India, Indian culture, and his wife cooked wonderful Indian meals for me. So, I got interested in India in general, and together we went to India in 1983. That was the time when Attenborough's feature film, *Gandhi*, came out. I saw it a few days after its release, or a few weeks after its release in Bombay. I visited the Gandhi Museum also, and I read the autobiography, and I had a good chance to meet the director of Mani Bavan, Dr. Usha Mehta, who was a veteran freedom fighter, and she told me a lot about Gandhi, and she gave me addresses of Gandhian institutions in the country, and I visited them.

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And still on the very first visit, I had the idea to share my own fascination for Gandhi with my countrymen, and upon my return to Germany, together with three friends, we prepared an exhibition on the life and work of Mahatma Gandhi, which was the first exhibition on Gandhi in a German-speaking country. It was presented in early 1984 in Berlin. And from that time onwards, we did public work. We started a small institution called Gandhi Information Centre. We organized lectures, seminars, film shows on a regular basis. We had exhibitions on Gandhi. And I went to India regularly. Every year, I spent three to six months in India. I had a special arrangement with my university, which allowed me to travel long stretches. And so, I went to India at a time when there was no email, no mobile phones, and I was quite cut off from home and dependent on the help of the local people. So, it so happened that I mostly stayed in private homes, which gave me a very good insight into the life of the people in India, and we had very good exchanges. I got addresses of associates and relatives of Gandhi.

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I did quite a bit of oral history, taped interviews with them, and they always showed me their materials, like letters, documents, films on Gandhi. I started advising them how they can keep the material safe and preserve the material better. Through this, I happened to meet the photographers of Gandhi, the main photographers. One of them was Kanu Gandhi, the *Royal photographer*, so to say. He was allowed to take Gandhi's photograph at any time on three conditions: no flesh was to be used, Gandhi would not finance it, and Gandhi would not pose. But we come back to Kanu Gandhi a little later. First, I want to tell you about the biographer, Vithalbhai Jhaveri. He had the largest collection of photographs on Gandhi,

including the oldest photograph. Including the oldest known photograph of Mahatma Gandhi. This was taken at the age of seven in Porbandar. And Jhaveri belonged to a jewelry family, a family of jewelers, who moved from Bhavnagar in Gujarat to Bombay in the 1930s. In the beginning, Vithalbhai Jhaveri worked as a designer for him, for his family business. But then in the late '30s, he joined Gandhi's movement, the Independence Movement, and became instrumental in the foundation of the Congress Radio, an underground radio which worked for three months in Bombay.

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And when they were caught after three months, he was put to prison for two years. And after release from prison, he started collecting photographs of Gandhi. He was entrusted with the design of a photo book on the occasion of the 75th birthday of Mahatma Gandhi. The book was called Gandhiji. And he liked the work so much that he continued collecting photographs of Gandhi from sources all over the world. And these photographs were used in the eight volumes biography of D. G. Tendulkar. And they were published from 1954 to '58. And for the Gandhi centenary in 1969, he prepared a five and a half hours documentary film. Here we see him filming in India. This film is by far the best documentary on Gandhi, very detailed, very well-researched. And Vithalbhai Jhaveri was probably... Well, he was the first and only one who understood the value of different media, of using different media to convey Gandhi's message. So, he did a photo selection for a book. He prepared exhibitions himself, photo exhibitions, various exhibitions in India, and he did this marvelous documentary film. So, we come back to Gandhi's life story. I'm going to show you select photographs of his life in chronological order.

**[00:06:09.020]**

This is his family, his wife, and three of his sons in South Africa. The boy on the left is actually the son of Gandhi's sister. And the boy with a white dress is the youngest son of Gandhi, Devadas. He was born in 1901. And together with Gandhi's children and his wife, other relatives of Gandhi lived in South Africa. Gandhi brought them over to South Africa to work with him. Here we see on the top right, his nephew, Chaganlal Gandhi, and on the left, Maganlal Gandhi, both with their wives and children. And in the bottom centre, the boy is Prabhudas Gandhi. Prabhudasbhai was born in 1901, the same year as Devadas Gandhi, Gandhi's youngest son. And they grew up like brothers. Prabhudas was considered Gandhiji's fifth son. And throughout his life, he remained very close to Gandhi. In fact, his father became the first manager of Sabarmati Ashram, later on in India. And Prabhudasbhai was in charge of the magazines of the Ashram. And throughout his life, he worked for the Gandhian cause. And in fact, he is known in the Gandhi family as the one who understood Gandhi best and implemented his values in his own life to maximum extent.

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Here, he is seen in New Delhi in 1945, where Prabhudas was running a girls' school, and Gandhi visited him at his place. I met Prabhudasbhai Gandhi in 1985 for the first time, and he appeared to be a living encyclopedia on Gandhi. He told me many details about Gandhi's life and work. Moreover, as he has

implemented the values of Gandhi in his own life, it was just wonderful to see him interacting with people. I could really see Gandhi in him. That was a wonderful relationship. So, he became my mentor and also my close friend in spite of the age gap of about 60 years. We travelled the country wide and far. He had a Freedom fighter pass. He could travel first class train in India, and his family did not want to travel with him because he was considered a complicated traveler as he used to take a lot of luggage along. But I volunteered and I was so glad to travel with him to all parts of India to visit his family, Gandhian projects. Here we are in Gopuri at the place of Madalsabehn Bajaj, who was the widow of Shreeman Narayan, the governor of Gujarat.

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And her house was a meeting place for Gandhi and social workers and also for people who were close to Vinoba, Vinoba Bhave, who was a spiritual successor of Gandhi. On the right-hand-side, we see Vinoba's brother, Shivaji, who, after Vinoba's death, became the head of the ashram Brahma Vidya Mandir in Pauniar. That was an ashram founded by Vinoba Bhave. This is a kind of official photograph showing Shivaji and Prabhudasbhai together, who were close friends, and they were about the same age. And, of course, they amongst themselves had to talk a lot about the good old days. It was very interesting to listen to them. We travelled mainly by train. Here we are at Sevagram train station together with Nirmala Gandhi.

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She is the daughter-in-law of Gandhi, the wife of Ramdas Gandhi. She lived at Sevagram Ashram, was a senior there, but she considered Prabhudasbhai as a senior of the family as there was an age gap of, I don't know, exactly, about 20 years still. He lived with Gandhi in South Africa, so he had an insight which none of the other relatives had who know Gandhi from his Indian days only. We also travelled by on camel, if necessary. That was during a drought period in Gujarat from '85 to '89. There was drought, and we started a relief campaign, delivering food to the needy people in the hilly areas of the Barda Hills near Porbandar. These villages could be reached only by camel. This was a fantastic opportunity for me to see the Taj Mahal on a trip from Rajkot to Delhi by train, the train stopped in Agra, and we didn't know about that. When the train reached Agra, Prabhudasbhai said, "Oh, the last time I visited Agra was 60 years ago. Let's get off and visit the Taj Mahal." So, we took our luggage very quickly and went off the train, deposited the luggage in the guest house of the train, and took a rickshaw and went to see the Taj Mahal.

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And for me, this was a fantastic experience to see the Taj Mahal for the first time, together with Prabhudasbhai who could tell stories of the good old days. Here we are visiting the German ambassador in New Delhi, who was a great admirer of Gandhi, and for him, it was also a very special moment to meet Prabhudasbhai, an authentic person of India's Independence Movement and of the inner circle of Mahatma Gandhi. This is during the 40th death anniversary of Gandhi at the Birla House in New Delhi. And Prabhudas, being the guest of honour on this occasion, he sat next to Sonia Gandhi and Rajiv

Gandhi, who was then the Prime Minister of India at that time. And me being a foreigner was the only one allowed to take a photograph in this position. Otherwise, photography was not allowed. Here we see Prabhudasbhai sitting next to Sonia Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, and second left, again, Nirmala Gandhi, the daughter-in-law of Gandhiji. Now we are back in South Africa. This is Gandhiji's second settlement, the Tolstoy Farm. The land for the Tolstoy Farm was given to Gandhi by the German Jewish architect, Hermann Kallenbach, whom we see sitting right of Gandhi in the picture.

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He was a very close friend to Gandhi and a close coworker. They shared a lot of ideas. And Kallenbach remained a bachelor throughout his life, but he had a pet niece who visited South Africa regularly. She lived in Israel but she visited Kallenbach, and her name was Isa Sarid, Dr. Isa Sarid. He was a medical doctor later in Haifa in Israel. And I met her first in 1987. And she showed me the material which she had inherited from her uncle, Hermann Kallenbach. A lot of documents and diaries of the South African period, which gave me another insight into Gandhi's South African period from a different angle than what I got from Prabhudasbhai Gandhi. So that both completed each other very well. And Dr. Isa Sarid, she inspired me to do an exhibition on Gandhi in Israel, which happened in 1987, late '87. It was an exhibition in Arabic, Hebrew, and English language in an ecumenical centre in Tantur, that is between Bethlehem and Jerusalem. This exhibition was the first exhibition in that region where Palestinians and Israelis worked together along with the Indian community in Israel. We had a first meeting of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, together with the Palestinian Centre of Nonviolence,

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who were our partners on the West Bank, that was held in Ramallah. Here you see our main partners, and I think you can see from the face of the people how serious the situation was. It was quite unusual that Israelis went to the occupied territories. They were a bit scared, actually. But for the cause, for the preparation of the Gandhi exhibition, they agreed to go there. And it was a very good example how it is possible that Palestinians and Israelis can work together. The exhibition was quite successful. It went on for a month near Jerusalem. Now we come back to South Africa. This is probably the most extraordinary photograph of Gandhi's campaign because the photographer, who was unknown, clicked just the right tens of a second. We see Gandhi together with mine workers from Natal, how they tried to cross the border to Transvaal. They were demonstrating for better working conditions and for more rights. I think you can make out from the gesture of the officer telling Gandhi, 'if you cross the border, you will be imprisoned.' And that's actually what happened. Gandhi was very determined. He didn't care what he said, together with the mine workers that crossed the border, and they got arrested.

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He wanted to create more awareness in Transvaal for the condition of the mine workers, and the officials felt that it may create a movement, and it was bad for them. You see Gandhi in the typical Satyagraha dress, which he developed during that campaign. And he took to white dress because that is a mourning

colour in India and most countries in South Asia and Southeast Asia in sympathy to the poor and underprivileged people, which he kept throughout his life. But he reduced his dress in the mid '20s to just a loin cloth around his waist. This is a photograph I found in South Africa, which shows him at a garden party in Madras in the mid '20s. To me, it shows what a free thinker he was. In this garden party, you see people, distinguished people with nice formal dresses, and Gandhi just with a loin cloth around his waist in a very relaxed position. He discussed, he talked to the people there. This photograph shows him riding a bicycle on his way to reach evening prayer at Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad. In time, he was late. He came from a meeting at Gujarat Vidyapith, the university he established.

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As he was late for his evening prayer, he stopped a bicyclist on the road and asked him to give him his bicycle, which the boy did. And he cycled to the Ashram and reached evening prayers in time. This is a few years later on the way to England together with the daughter of Sardar Patel, Manibehn Patel. It's a very sharp and nice photograph. It shows the affection he had for his coworkers and the people around him and the affection they had for him. Basically, he saw the whole world as his family, where sometimes his real family complained about it. But I think that was his greatness as he was very emotionally, very open and receptive. He was also very much aware of his feminine side, which he tried to develop further and he understood this also as a virtue he had. This is on the ship SS Rajputana on the way to England to attend the Second Roundtable Conference. Here we see his British disciple, Mirabehn. Her actual name was Madeleine Slade. She was a daughter of a British admiral who actually was a great fan of Beethoven, Beethoven's music. She used to organize concerts, Beethoven's concerts in England.

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The French author, Romain Rolland, wrote a biography on Beethoven, and she visited him in Switzerland. During this meeting, he told her that he recently wrote a book on a person called Mahatma Gandhi. He gave her the book to read. And she read the book and was fascinated by Gandhi and wrote to Gandhi whether it's possible to visit him. And Gandhi's secretary, Mahadev Desai, wrote back that if you're prepared to live in the Indian conditions, you are most welcome. So, in the mid '20s, she came to India, she visited Gandhi, and she never left him. She stayed with him till his death in 1948. She was very close to Gandhi and also his wife, Kasturba. Here we see him with mill workers in Lancashire. And although, Gandhi protested against the exploitation of the Indian cotton by the Britishers who took the cotton to England, processed it there and sold it back to India. The mill workers, the women there, they understood Gandhi and what he demanded, and they had great sympathy for him and cheered him, as we can see in this photograph. This is one of the few official photographs of Gandhi where he got a photograph done in a studio by Elliot and Frey in London.

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He posed for this photograph, which he normally would not do. It's a rare photograph. He stayed in the East End of London during the Second Roundtable Conference. Although he was provided with a very

luxurious hotel in the centre of London, he stayed there for one night, and then he decided, no, he wants to stay with the poor people of London, and he moved to a community centre in the East End, the Kingsley Hall, which was run by Muriel Lester, who can be seen in the second row from bottom, second right. She was a social worker in that area, and she had communicated with Gandhi before, and she invited him to stay at her centre, which he gladly accepted. Here we can also see Mirabehn, second row, top, second right, who accompanied Gandhi throughout his trip in England and being of British origin, she, of course, could help him to make his visit to England a success. After England, Gandhi went to France, from France to Switzerland. Here he is on the train to Switzerland, photographed by a Swiss photographer, Max Kettel. It can be seen that all the eyes were directed toward Gandhi, and he attracted the attention of the people wherever he went.

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This is just at the arrival in Switzerland. He was welcomed by Professor Edmond Privat, this person reading the magazine. He also communicated with Gandhi before he came to England, to Europe, and he and his wife were great admirers of Gandhi, and Gandhi gave them even spiritual names. Also, Edmond Privat was called Bhakti. The person on the left with a hat, he was Gandhi's bodyguard during his stay in England. He was assigned this job for making sure that Gandhi has a safe stay in England. During this stay, spending many hours together with Gandhi, he understood Gandhi better and he quite liked him and the ideas he stood for. He voluntarily accompanied Gandhi until he boarded the train in Italy, Brindisi, on the way back to India. He became a great friend and admirer of Gandhi. Here we see Gandhi in the official function in Geneva, in Switzerland, translated by Edmond Privat and his wife. Mirabehn accompanied Gandhi during his evening walks and during his trip to Europe. She belonged definitely to the inner circle of Gandhi. They shared a lot of intimate ideas and aspects, and their letter correspondence is huge. Mirabehn sometimes wrote a multi-pages letter to Gandhi, and the longest letter I've seen is of 64 pages, which Mirabehn wrote to Gandhi when she was travelling and not with Gandhi.

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She worked with Gandhi here at the Sevagram Ashram on the development of spinning wheels. She was an interesting character. She was very devoted to Gandhi, and one story can show her devotion brilliantly. At that time, in the mid '30s, a young German man visited Gandhi. His name was Herbert Fischer. He was a great admirer of Gandhi, and he, just like Mirabehn, wrote to Gandhi whether he can come and stay with him. He received the same reply as Mirabehn: "If you're prepared to live in the Indian conditions, you're welcome." He left Germany in 1933 on foot. Then, later on, by bicycle, by train, and by ship. He went to India, and he joined Gandhi during the Faizpur Congress. He was immediately assigned the job to look after the book table. Then he lived for four years in Gandhi's vicinity. He lived in Maganwadi in Wardha, and he got one hour every Sunday to spend with Gandhi, and he was able to ask him questions, and they had talks. After one of this talk, they sat together for lunch. And in the ashram, all ashramites sit in a row on the floor, and one person served them.

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And this day, it was Mirabehn who served the meals. And she was so much focused on Gandhi serving the food to Gandhi that she turned her back just right in the face of Herbert Fischer. This shows how much she was focused on serving Gandhi. Like this, there were a couple of Ashramites who were more interested in getting Gandhi's affection and recognition than they were interested in his programme and what he actually stood for. And once, Gandhi said, "For me, it's pretty easy to fight the Britishers, but it's more difficult to deal with the people around me." Because several of them did not really want to understand what he really stood for. And it created problems within the ashram. Another incident, another story is that Gandhi had lost his smelling sense, and he was very particular about cleanliness in the ashram. And he used to visit the toilets every morning to see whether they were cleaned properly. And because he could not smell, he took Mirabehn along and she had to smell for him whether there's still a foul smell in the toilets or not. So, this gives a bit an impression of the atmosphere in the ashram.

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Here we see Mirabehn at her old age. In fact, after Gandhi's death, she went to the Himalayas and she lived in a small place called Pashulok, and she worked for the afforestation of trees and protection of environment. When in the 1950s, the freedom fighters were assigned or were granted a pension, a freedom fighter pension, and she was not recognized as a freedom fighter, she left the country and she went to Austria to stay close to Beethoven's grave in the Vienna Forest. Here we see her in the old people's home where she used to spend her last years. She changed quite a bit compared to her days in India, and she became pretty gentle and a friendly woman. She had an Indian secretary with her, Brahmachari Dutt, who lived with her a couple of years, the last years of her life in Austria, and happened to meet Brahmachari Dutt in 1985. And he said it was a great opportunity to be with Mirabehn, but he hated Austria, as it was just too cold. This is Sunderlal Bahuguna, the ambassador founder of the Chipko movement. He visited Mirabehn in Austria. He was very close to her. And here we see him in deep contemplative mood next to Beethoven's grave in the Vienna Forest.

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I met Sunderlal Bahuguna a number of times. He visited us in Germany, and he told us a lot about ecology in Himalayas and the Chipko movement, and it was very interesting to talk to him. I even joined him on a Padyatra, on a foot march in the Himalayas for creating more awareness of the protection of environment and for afforestation. These marches were without food and without money. So, wherever we went, whenever we reached a village, we had to knock the doors and asked "Do roti do", that means, "Can you give us some food"? We always got food, and we never had to walk hungry, actually, because people were very friendly and very welcoming. It was a great experience to walk with Sunderlal and these guys in the Himalayas. In 1985, Austrian TV team hired my service as an advisor for a production on Mirabehn, the Chipko movement and ecology in the Himalayas. They brought Mirabehn's ashes along from Austria, which we see on the bottom right. The Ashes were brought illegally. It was actually not allowed to take ashes out of the country, but they did it. Swami Chitananda, whom we see at the right, he was the guru of Sunderlal Bahuguna, and then head of a famous Hindu mission in Hardwar, in the north of India.

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He delivered the ashes of Mirabehn to the Ganga, the holy river Ganges, and also present was Brahmachari Dutt and Sunderlal Bahuguna, who are not in this picture. Finally, Mirabehn went back to India. This is a very interesting and special photograph. I saw this photograph on my very first visit to India in several museums. The caption always said, 'The leader being led', giving the impression that this is one long stick, one long lathi, and the boy is pulling them. But I felt from the very beginning, something is wrong with this caption. And in fact, at that time, the picture I saw in the museums were not of the same quality like this. They were more blur, and it was more difficult to make out whether it's one stick or not. But I kept it in my mind that maybe someday I will find out the truth about this photograph. And indeed, when I visited Prabhudas Gandhi again in the mid '80s, I happened to meet the grandson of Gandhi, Kanayak Gandhi, who was the small boy in the picture. And who we see here at the left. So, after greeting him, I immediately ask him, "Can you tell me the true story behind the photograph?"

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And he said when he was a boy, he was very lazy. He walked very slowly. And he used to accompany Gandhi on his evening walks on the beach. And Gandhi told him, "Walk in front, walk in front". And he walked in front, but again, he fell back. Then, Gandhi used his stick to poke him in the back and told him, "Walk faster, walk faster". So, that is the actual story of this photograph. And it's quite a different caption than what I saw at first. I told this story to a journalist in Bombay in 1988, and he printed it in the Indian Express. And after that, the photograph was always captioned right in all the museums. Now we come back to Kanu Gandhi. This is one of his first photographs. In 1935, Kanu Gandhi was given a photograph camera by Jawaharlal Nehru, and he started taking photographs of Gandhi on the three conditions I mentioned earlier. He took very intimate photographs, not only the representative photographs, Gandhi with other leaders of India, but very personal photographs. Gandhi, Kanu Gandhi and his wife Abhabehn, who we see here, they worked very closely with Gandhi.

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In fact, Kanu Gandhi was in-charge of Gandhi's luggage during his journeys, and he also used to sing the Bajans in the prayer meetings. And Gandhi said, "We were three bodies, but one soul." So, this shows how close the three were. And Mahatma Gandhi arranged the marriage of the two, Abhabehn and Kanu Gandhi at Sevagram Ashram. He even celebrated the marriage and represented the parents of Kanu and Abha Gandhi. He said, "It's too expensive for them to come to Sevagram Ashram. I'm like your parents." And so, he played the role of the parents in the wedding. I met Kanu and Abhabehn in 1985, and Kanu Gandhi had a collection of about 1,300 photographs of Gandhi, which he showed me very proudly and told me small, small stories. We agreed that we will meet again next year when I visit Rajkot again, and he would tell me more about the photographs of Mahatma Gandhi. But when I reached the next year, his wife, Abhabehn, told me that, "Peter, you know, Kanu Gandhi expired 10 days ago, and he is no more." I attended the mourning session, the mourning period of 12 days.



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After that, Abhabehn locked up the room of the photo lab, where he kept his photographs. When she opened the room, the whole room was flooded with photographs, and mainly of Mahatma Gandhi on the floor, and the shelves, and the cupboards. It was fantastic material! But then I asked her, "What are you going to do with the material?" She said, "You know, Kanu Gandhi has not left much money for me, so I have to rent out the room to have some income. So, I'll throw the pictures away and rent out the room as soon as possible." So, I told her, "Well, for our work in Germany, the photographs would be very valuable." So, we agreed on a lump sum, and I shipped the material to Germany. And you can imagine how important the photographs were for us, for our exhibitions, our public work there. And since then, I stayed in touch with Abhabehn. Every year, I visited her and we actually worked on the captions. For each and every photograph, we were sitting... In total, we were sitting for a couple of weeks, actually, over a period of years, three, four years, to work on the...

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To get the captions right of all the photographs. Then once this job was done, on the next visit, she told me, "Peter, you know what I found at a very hidden place in our house? A notebook of Kanu Gandhi, in which he wrote all the captions of the photographs." So, in the end, we got all the authentic captions. That is very precious because normally in India, people don't care much for the captions, to get the captions right. And Kanu Gandhi mentioned all the where the photograph was taken, when it was taken, who can be seen. And also in his collection, I found a wooden overseas trunk with discarded negatives. After Gandhi's death, Kanu Gandhi took a lot of photographs of local people in Rajkot, and it had a lot of photographs which were either blur, out-of-focus or double exposure, and he threw them away. But he didn't throw them away. He kept them in a wooden trunk. When I went through this trunk of thousands of photographs, I found 40 photographs which showed Gandhi, and these photographs were either blur or double-exposed. They were not useful for him at that time. But I found, for us, these are like artistic photographs.

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I want to show you a selection of these pictures which have not been published so far because they are normally seen as not attractive photographs but I see a high artistic value in them, actually. We purposely did not colourize these photographs because they are not seen as documents of history, but more of artistic photographs. All right, now we come to another person who was very close to Gandhi, that was his medical doctor, Dr. Sushila Nayar. After completing her studies of medicine, she joined Gandhiji and remained with him till his end, and she became his medical adviser, his medical doctor. She told me when I met her together with Prabhudasbhai in 1987 in New Delhi, that Gandhi was actually not fit to fast. Gandhi used to fast a lot, but he could not drink a lot of water at the time. He took only zips, which was not enough to flush his kidneys. She was always afraid that he would get kidney failure or kidney stones. She said that Gandhi was actually not meant for fasting, not fit for that. She was the sister of Pyarelal

Nayar, another secretary of Gandhiji. And after Pyarelal died, she looked after the Pyarelal Archive, a huge collection of material on Gandhi's life and work, which was kept at the Connaught Place in New Delhi, where this photograph was taken.

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Here we see Gandhi and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Sushila Nayar, and another co-worker of Gandhi, Amtus Salam, on the left, in the Northwest frontier provinces, which today is the border region between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Badshah Khan was known as *Frontier Gandhi*, and he had organized an army of 100,000 non-violent soldiers, which were called *Khudai Khidmatgar*, or popularly known as the *Red Shirts*. You see two members of this army in the back. And Gandhi visited them twice in 1938. And that was a fantastic example that it's possible in that very violent region. The Pashtuns who live in this region are known for their violence. But Bachchan converted 100,000 of them who worked for peaceful solutions and to keep peace in that region. That was the first substantial peace army in the world. Here we see him with the secretary, Mahadev Desai, who very close to Gandhi till he died in the Aga Khan Palace in 1942. This is the only photograph showing Gandhi with his sister, Raliatbehn, also known as Gokibehn, at the right. They're giving massage to Gandhi during his fast in 1939 in Rajkot. The woman on the left is the wife of Kanu Gandhi's brother, Purushottam Gandhi.

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This is another amazing photograph showing Gandhi sitting on a silver chair in Rajkot when he visited the ruler of Rajkot, right after his fast. So, Gandhi was in touch with the richest of the rich and the poorest of the poor. And he used to sit on silver chairs as well as he used to sit on the floor and used a wooden backrest as here. It can be seen at Sevagram Ashram, and this backrest is still there. Visitors of the Ashram can still see the place where Gandhi sat. This is a meeting of Sarvodaya workers, of Gandhian social workers. And on the right, we see Dr. Sushila Nayar. One of my favored photographs, showing Gandhi at Sevagram Ashram with his co-ashramite, Shardabehn, and her son. Gandhi was a very unconventional person. He questioned each and everything, and he came to his own conclusions. Sometimes it was not easy for his associates to cope with him or to understand him right. But he had a great reach out, and he really got the love of the population in India at that time. He gives massage to a Sanskrit scholar, Parchure Shastri, with whom he was imprisoned together in 1922.

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This photograph was taken in '39. And Parchure Shastri had developed leprosy. And he believed that his life is coming to an end, and he wanted to visit Gandhi for a last time. So, he travelled a long distance to Sevagram to meet Gandhi. But when he reached the Ashram gates, he did not dare to enter the Ashram because he knew that people are afraid of leprosy. They didn't want to meet any leper patient. And he waited for Gandhi to come out for his evening walks. And when Gandhi saw him, he immediately recognized him. And Parchure Shastri explained what happened, and Gandhi said, "Okay, I need to speak to my co-ashramites, and let's see what we can do for you." And he convinced his co-ashramites

that Parchure Shastri was accepted in the ashram, and they constructed a small hut for him at the outskirts of the ashram, in the border of the ashram, quite a distance to the other inmates. And Gandhi went to give him massage every day for a long period, and he recovered from leprosy. He lived in the Ashram for a couple of years before he died. And Gandhi also convinced his co-ashramites to give massage to Parchure Shastri when he (Gandhi) was on a journey.

**[00:45:17.330]**

So, it served two purposes. It helped the leprosy patient, but also he took the superstition away from his co-ashramites, and he made them giving massage to a leprosy patient. This is a famous picture of Gandhi with his wife at Sevagram Ashram and in writing pose before the Quit India movement in 1942 in Bombay. These are all photographs by Kanu Gandhi, spinning the Charkha, which he developed. He and his people, they modified the spinning wheel a great deal. For each purpose, they had a different model. They were great engineers, actually, improving the quality of spinning wheels, which was very dear to him. The spinning wheel was very important for Gandhi. He always carried a spinning wheel even on his travels. When he travelled by train, he used to spin. This is during his convalescence after release from Aga Khan Palace in 1944. He stayed with a friend of his, the owner of Sindhia Steamer Company in Bombay, at Juhu Beach. Here we see the lady at the right. She is the wife of the owner of the steamer company. Her name was Sumati Morarji, together with Sushila Nayar in the centre.

**[00:46:53.620]**

And Gandhi went there to recover from the internment at Aga Khan Palace, where his wife died and his secretary died. But when people came to know that Gandhi stayed there, they gathered on the beach and wanted to get a glimpse of Gandhi. So, in the beginning, Gandhi just went there and greeted them. But then he had his evening prayer meetings right behind the fence, and the people gathered in front of the fence on the beach and were able to participate in the prayer meetings. This is on the evening walk on the beach with his associates. This is a nice photograph because of the reflection. And here he is seen with his youngest son, Devadas. And you can see the agony of Gandhi and his son in the faces. It was just a few weeks after Gandhi's wife and Devadas' mother died in the Aga Khan Palace in Poona. This picture shows Gandhi with the niece of Pyarelal Nayar, who is at the right. The niece's name is Nandini, and she received the banana on her birthday from Gandhiji. She is a daughter of the brother of Pyarelal Nayar. I knew this picture from the very beginning.

**[00:48:31.280]**

In 1998, I stayed in India for a year. During the stay, I wanted to pay a visit to Dubai. So, I went to the embassy of United Arab Emirates to apply for a visa to the Emirates. And normally, I should have got the visa in Germany being a German citizen. So, the officer at the United Arab Emirates embassy asked me, "What are you doing in India?" I said, "Well, I'm interested in Gandhi. I'm visiting projects, speak to people, and do a bit of oral history." And she said, "Oh, that's interesting. You know, my uncle, he was Gandhi's secretary." So, in a fraction of a second, I asked her, "By any chance, are you Nandini?" She

said, "Yes, how do you know?" And I told her, that "I know your photograph. When you had your birthday, you got this banana presented by Gandhi." So, I happened to meet this little girl in the picture many years after this photograph was taken! Here we see Gandhi on the way to a meeting with Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the Muslim leader in Bombay. Muhammad Ali Jinnah was known as a very dry person who could hardly smile. And in spite of the political differences, Gandhi was able to make Jinnah smile.

#### **[00:49:59.020]**

This is probably one of the very few pictures showing Jinnah with a smile on his face. But again, politically, they were worlds apart, and there was no way to convince him to have a united India after independence. Jinnah wanted his Pakistan, and he finally got it. Now, we see a few pictures of Gandhi with his associates, interacting with his associates. This is another Muslim politician, Maulana Kabul Alam Azad, but he was in the Congress at that time and a close coworker of Gandhi. This is the... Later on, he became the Ironman of India, Sardar Patel, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, who was very close to Gandhi and probably the one who understood Gandhi's political ideas best. Acharya Kripalani, very outspoken and free thinker, an outspoken person and free thinker, whose opinion, Gandhi appreciated a lot. Chakravarti Rajagopalachari, later on became the governor of Tamil Nadu, and he even got related to Gandhi. His daughter married Gandhi's youngest son, Devadas. You will see him with a few of his associates, Sardar Patel, Abha Gandhi, Acharya Kripalani, Badshah Khan, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Sita Gandhi, Gandhi's granddaughter, Manilal Gandhi's daughter, who visited him from South Africa. This is probably the picture perfect of Gandhi because it was taken just at the right fraction of a second, the angle.

#### **[00:51:52.300]**

He walks and carries the newspaper and the smile on his face. It's a very attractive photograph. This is a proof that Gandhi travelled third class by train, which was not always easy because he and his party occupied a whole compartment in the train and the travelling conditions for them was not easy, especially when they travelled long distances. But he insisted in travelling third class. He would not accept any higher class. He wanted to travel just like the poor people in the country. Here he's visiting a prison in Kolkata, Dumdum Jail. Well, he was in prison so many times but here he was not in prison, but he was visiting a prison in Kolkata. Gandhi was a good fundraiser. He always collected funds for his Harijan work, and he just needed to stretch out his hands, and he got money and ornaments, and gold and jewelry put in his hands or in a basket like in this photograph. On the bottom, just next to Gandhi's Dhoti, we see Ramkrishna Bajaj, who was the son of Jamnalal Bajaj, the then treasurer of the Congress. When Mahatma Gandhi collected money or jewelry, he immediately handed it over to the treasurer and Ramkrishna Bajaj recorded the donations.

#### **[00:53:33.610]**

He even tried to get money from Kanu Gandhi on this photograph for taking his photograph. Here's a picture with a former American President, Herbert Hoover, taken in New Delhi. And a picture showing him with his closest associates. On the left, we can see Dr. Sushila Nayar, Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur, his son,

Devadas, Pyarelal Nayar, Sushila Pai, Sita Gandhi. Gandhi is leaning on Sita Gandhi and on Abhabehn Gandhi, then Kanu Gandhi, and (Brijkrishna) Chandiwala, at the right. He was known as the *Delhi Gandhi*. A few pictures by Margaret Bourke-White showing him next to his spinning wheel. One of the pictures was used for a large campaign by Apple Macintosh a few years ago, this one. Margaret Bourke-White wrote that it was very difficult to take these photographs because Gandhi insisted not to use flash bulbs, and he was not very patient, posing, She considered herself very lucky to have taken these photographs. You will see Gandhi with some of his relatives in a prayer meeting in New Delhi, and they left his granddaughter Sumitra, now Sumitra Kulkarni, Abha Gandhi, Dr. Sushila Nayar, and Tara Gandhi, who was the Director of the Governmental Gandhi Institution in Delhi for a few years, and on the right, half covered, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, who was a princess from the north of India.

### **[00:55:42.050]**

In this prayer meeting, we can see Kanu Gandhi singing Bhajans and Sushila Nayar in front and the representative of the Muslim community on the right. This is an interesting photograph: we see Lord Patrick Lawrence, a representant of the British Administration with Gandhi after a meeting. And the significance of this picture is that Gandhi is looking, and from us in the right direction from him to the left. And this picture was used by the Indian government for the Rupee notes. Right after Independence, the Rupee notes carried Gandhi's features, but they twisted the head in the other direction. And only a few months ago, when the new Rupees were released in India, they twisted them back into the right direction, as we can see here. The top Rupee note is the old one where his face was twisted vertically, 180 degrees, and on the bottom, it was twisted back into the right position. So, it's an example how Gandhi was used or even misused used in India by the highest officials. On this picture, when you see it first, you may believe that this person is a beggar coming to Gandhi, begging for a favour or begging for money.

### **[00:57:14.590]**

Interestingly, it is a beggar, but he had fasted for one day, he did not eat, and the money he saved on that day, he begged Gandhi to accept as a donation. So, this shows the great affection even the poorest of the poor had for Gandhi and their willingness to contribute to the cause. A close co-worker of Gandhi, Professor Abdul Bari, from Calcutta, got murdered the day before, assassinated. And here he is consoling the son of Abdul Bari during the cremation ceremony. And this photograph was taken by a photographer called Jagan Mehta from Ahmedabad. He was a professional photographer, but he was not only a photographer, he was also a poet and philosopher. I happened to meet him in 2001, and he showed me his collection, including this very photograph, and he asked me, "Can you see the significance in this photograph? What is the significance?" I could not really make out what he meant. And he said, "it's the way Gandhi held his hand." Just going back to the picture, his left hand has a very special position, which, according to Jagan Mehta, is very feminine. And he could see the feminine side in Gandhi, which Gandhi himself always tried to develop.

### **[00:58:51.760]**

He told many people, I'm not only your father, but I'm also your mother. And he was very much aware of his female qualities, which he always tried to develop further. Jagan Mehta was a marvelous person. He accompanied Gandhi only for two weeks during the Noakhali March in March 1947. But he got an insight in Gandhi's behaviour and life like hardly anybody else got because he was of a different nature himself. He saw Gandhi with different eyes than others. He was very passionate about his (own) work and very proud about his photographs. When he talked about it, as you can see, he got this glow in his eyes and his face. Well, as he said, and as many others said, he spent the best time of his life together with Gandhi. This is a very rare photograph showing Gandhi in an operation theatre in Patna during the appendicitis operation of his granddaughter, Manu, whom he loved a lot. And Gandhi had a very difficult appendicitis operation himself in the early 1920s. And so he insisted that he would be present during the operation of his granddaughter, Manu. Everything went well. And so it shows his love and affection to the people who were dear to him, and he even went to a operation theatre.

**[01:00:38.920]**

This is the only known colour photograph of Gandhi taken by a French photographer, Constantin Joffé, who was sent by the Vogue magazine, a fashion magazine, to take Gandhi's photographs. That was just a few days before he got assassinated. He had a last fast in January '48 in New Delhi. This is shortly after he finished the fast. This is the last prayer meeting on 29th January, 1948. The next day, five minutes past 5:00, he got assassinated. And there was mourning throughout the world. Even the United Nations, lowered their flags and had a few minutes of tribute to Gandhi and the legacy he left. It needs to be continued, but it can be seen that this legacy is getting continued when we see the polls that were taken in 1999 about the personalities who shaped the 20th century. Of course, Gandhi was always amongst the first 10 or 15, but then who were the other people who were considered the shapers of the 20th century? There were Martin Luther King, His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, Albert Schweitzer, Mother Teresa, Michael Gorbachev, Nelson Mandela, and all these people called themselves students of Gandhi. So, this is a proof, actually, that his legacy moves on and goes beyond time and borders.

**[01:02:35.680]**

So, I'd like to finish my presentation, referring to our book, *MAHATMA - Gandhi's Life in Colour*, which carries 1,280 colourized photographs of Mahatma Gandhi.