

[Plan Your Wedding](#)

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Published by Anonymous on Oct. 02, 2003

BOOKS

Plan Your Wedding

A comprehensive guide

Tara Katir, Kapaa, Hawaii

Indian weddings often are grand affairs, with celebrations stretching over a number of days and the price tag occasionally passing beyond \$100,000. Sarbjit Gill's A Comprehensive Indian Wedding Planner (300 pages, Bookmark Press, \$28.95) is a "how to" guide covering everything you ever needed to know about Indian weddings. The book covers all regions of India, plus the basics of Sikh and Muslim weddings, but mostly it is focused on Hindu traditions. Gill, a professional US-based wedding planner, includes photos, attire and pages of check lists for everything. The wedding options range from completely traditional to an eclectic mix of Eastern and Western customs and celebrations. Gill explains the basics of Hinduism and the Hindu view of marriage, making the book useful for explaining the Hindu wedding to non-Hindus. And she hasn't forgotten that not everyone has an unlimited budget, providing possible cost-cutting measures at every step while still designing a grand affair.

A Comprehensive Indian Wedding Planner, Sarbijit K. Gill, 304 pages, Bookmark Press, US\$28.95 Bookmark Press, P.O. box 807, Voorhees, NJ 08043-0807 USA

<http://www.bookmarkpress@onebox.com>

Dada's Message

For his dedicated service to hinduism and world peace, Dada J.P. Vaswani was the 2002 "Hindu of the Year" and the 1998 recipient of the U Thant Peace Award. Living his belief that the "world is one family," Dada uplifts spiritual seekers worldwide with his message of compassion and love. Sandhya Nankani, one of those inspired by Dada, has written Moments with a Master, Meetings with Dada J.P. Vaswani (212 pages, Sterling Publishers Private Ltd., \$3.50), a gentle and sweet personal reflection of Dada's influence in her life. Meeting Dada as a young girl, then again after a gap of many years, Nankani has the opportunity to interview Dada--asking penetrating questions on the nature of life and death. One of the most poignant chapters details the passing of Nankani's father and Dada's insightful letters to him.

Moments with a Master, Meetings with Dada J.P. Vaswani, Sandhya S. Nankani, 212 pages, Sterling Publishers Private Ltd., US\$3.50. Sterling Publishers Private Limited, A-59 Okhla Industrial Area, Phase-I New Delhi 110020 India.

<http://www.sterlingpublishers.com>

Hindu Rituals

Bochsanwasi shri akshar purushottam swaminarayan sanstha, BAPS, are renowned for their disciplined, dedicated swamis and large, enthusiastic grihastha membership. Because the traditional samskaras (rites of passage) and religious ceremonies are important in their tradition, BAPS has detailed these in Hindu Rites & Rituals (196 pages, Swaminarayan Aksharpith, Rs.30). The book covers in detail both the how and why of rituals. Though focused on the tradition of Lord Swaminarayan and his present successor, Sri Pramukh Swami Maharaj, it is a valuable resource for every Hindu.

Hindu Rites & Rituals, 196 pages, Swaminarayan Aksharpith, RS.30.
Swaminarayan Aksharpith Shahibag, Amdavad-4, India

<http://www.swaminarayan.org>

Aussie Temples

In an area roughly the size of the United States, but with just seven percent of the population, the land "down under" has seen a remarkable building boom of Hindu temples. Dr. A. Kandiah's *Hindu Temples in Australia* (56 pages, Natajalaya Publication), is a small labor of love describing fourteen of Australia's temples. Prior to 1981 there were just 2,000 Hindus living in Australia. By 1996 their population had grown to over 67,000, and with that growth came a temple building boom. Despite their small numbers, the immigrant Hindus' temple building has been remarkably fervent and fertile. Kandiah's chronicles cover the history of Ganesha, Muruga, Siva and Siva-Vishnu temples spread throughout the country from the bustling capital of Sydney in the south, to Perth on the farthest western coast.

Hindu Temples in Australia, Dr. A. Kandiah, 56 pages, Natanalaya Publication, (no price given) Natanalaya Publication, 17 Edward Street, Strathfield South, NSW 2136 Australia. <http://www.kandiahjaya.com>

Chachaji's Cup

Quality Hindu storybooks for children don't come our way often enough, but a recently published book by Uma Krishnaswami, *Chachaji's Cup* (32 pages, Children's Book Press, \$16.95), is a sweetly gentle and poignant story you don't want to miss. Through a simple teacup and the ritual of brewing afternoon tea with Chachaji, an elderly great uncle, a little boy named Neel comes to understand his family's Indian heritage and value its traditions. In 1947, when Chachaji is young, his family has to leave their home with only what they can carry, as they are caught up in the Partition. Chachaji remembers people laughing at his mother who insists on carrying a delicate teacup "instead of something useful." Neel wonders what he would take if he had to leave home like that, but "it was unthinkable." Soumya Sitaraman's wonderfully expressive illustrations add grace to this sensitive story. A short explanation of Partition is included at the end of the story, but better yet is a PDF file from the website with a complete lesson plan, aligned to California State education standards. Teachers can use this lesson plan to conduct an informative and entertaining class.

Chachaji's Cup, Uma Krishnaswami, illustrated by Soumya Sitaraman, Children's Book Press, 2211 Mission Street, San Francisco, California, USA. US\$16.95 <http://www.childrensbookpress.org>
