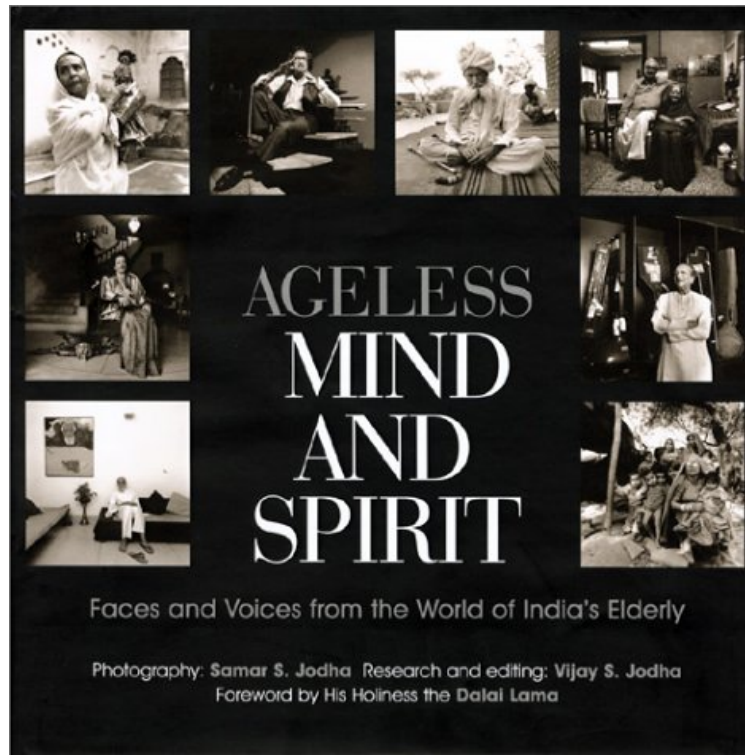


# Ageless Mind and Spirit: Faces and Voices from the World of India's Elderly

Samar S. Jodha, Vijay S. Jodha

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**Samar S. Jodha, Vijay S. Jodha : Ageless Mind and Spirit: Faces and Voices from the World of India's Elderly** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Ageless Mind and Spirit: Faces and Voices from the World of India's Elderly:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. An Unusual BookBy Steve RosenbergPhotography on serious themes like homelessness, HIV, old age homes are always being done in that grabbing shots/reportage style which work very well in a newspaper context but don't have the same effect when put out in the form of a book. This book however goes in the other direction, taking the large format environmental portrait route more common to celebrity portraiture. More importantly, both in terms of the pictures and the narrations accompanying them, it addresses its theme with a lot of thought and patience. Just as well, since the book deals with the theme of ageing. Although, it has its share of celebrities, I could recognize only one - Pandit Ravi Shankar the famous sitar player, what makes it more interesting and valuable is its focus on the unknown, the forgotten or those who are simply down and out. In another important change from the work done with such people and such environments, this one lets the people do the talking for a change, even when they don't seem to take very kindly to the book's writer or photographer. In the process this book highlights a world that even when far removed from ours, has human connections and concerns that are universal. The optimism, as one lady in this book puts it, "the years are like sugar in your tea cup. The last sip is sweetest," or the pessimism, as a traditional toy maker puts it, "what is a long life worth for those with limited means?" Then there are

characters with their own peculiarities, a 100-year old soldier who thinks his teeth are coming back or a Chinese newspaper publisher, (that India also has a Chinese population was a revelation), who feels that the motto of the young is, "go for the cupboard keys first, then just say bye-bye." The most inspiring person I came across among the 130 in this book was an eye surgeon who has been going around to really far removed places that have no hospitals and treating people for free. He has done more surgeries than anybody else in the world and has been at it for last 50 odd years. To me he seemed to be like Dr. Sheiwitzer who spent all those years in Africa and was immortalized in Eugene Smith's photo essays for LIFE magazine. But unlike the missionary-doctor this one wears his achievements lightly and says, "I am just an ordinary man and will serve as God wants me to. My instruments are my prayer and the operating room is my temple. My work has therefore been my pilgrimage." 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. An Unusual Book By Steve Rosenberg Photography on serious themes like homelessness, HIV, old age homes are always being done in that grabbing shots/reportage style which work very well in a newspaper context but don't have the same effect when put out in the form of a book. This book however goes in the other direction, taking the large format environmental portrait route more common to celebrity portraiture. More importantly, both in terms of the pictures and the narrations accompanying them, it addresses its theme with a lot of thought and patience. Just as well, since the book deals with the theme of ageing. Although, it has its share of celebrities, I could recognize only one - Pandit Ravi Shankar the famous sitar player, what makes it more interesting and valuable is its focus on the unknown, the forgotten or those who are simply down and out. In another important change from the work done with such people and such environments, this one lets the people do the talking for a change, even when they don't seem to take very kindly to the book's writer or photographer. In the process this book highlights a world that even when far removed from ours, has human connections and concerns that are universal. The optimism, as one lady in this book puts it, "the years are like sugar in your tea cup. The last sip is sweetest," or the pessimism, as a traditional toy maker puts it, "what is a long life worth for those with limited means?" Then there are characters with their own peculiarities, a 100-year old soldier who thinks his teeth are coming back or a Chinese newspaper publisher, (that India also has a Chinese population was a revelation), who feels that the motto of the young is, "go for the cupboard keys first, then just say bye-bye." The most inspiring person I came across among the 130 in this book was an eye surgeon who has been going around to really far removed places that have no hospitals and treating people for free. He has done more surgeries than anybody else in the world and has been at it for last 50 odd years. To me he seemed to be like Dr. Sheiwitzer who spent all those years in Africa and was immortalized in Eugene Smith's photo essays for LIFE magazine. But unlike the missionary-doctor this one wears his achievements lightly and says, "I am just an ordinary man and will serve as God wants me to. My instruments are my prayer and the operating room is my temple. My work has therefore been my pilgrimage." 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A funny, moving book By Jon Mizale I have recently picked up this book and read it only in bits and pieces but I must say that I am enjoying it immensely. I am not much of an expert on photography and can't speak about the technical aspects of this book but I must say that the photos with matching oral histories make this one a really absorbing affair. Some of the stories are quite hilarious, such as a patriarch who is bit of a tyrant as well an expert on time pieces, having written many books on the subject including a dictionary! He has got his own wife, his sons and their wives, and the grandchildren into this subject and so you have this extended family living with an unbelievable collection of watches and clocks. There are clock fashioned inside a banjo and a guitar, and there are these five-foot high, giant alarm clocks. It is also a very fascinating insight into the whole extended family system that you find less and less in neighborhoods today. The old patriarch says that nobody grudges the watches and clocks taking away all the space in their small flat because this was the condition "I put before my own marriage and then before the marriage of my two sons." So you have this photo of this eight-member family living in this one room tenement with these 2000 watches and clocks.

Photography: Samar S. Jodha Research and editing: Vijay S. Jodha Foreword by His Holiness the Dalai Lama Essay by Dr. Martha Chen 11"x11", 324 pages, 140 photographs, 30,000 words text. Ageless Mind and Spirit is a path-breaking photography book. It is a product of an eight-year effort covering 400 elderly people all over India to create a series of engaging human-interest stories in the voices of the elderly themselves. Each story represents one or more facets of ageing. Together they form a picture of the way we are or will be. Meet the man whose family once owned whole of Calcutta or the eye doctor who spent over half a century traveling across India to examine and treat some ten million people without charging a penny! Or a man continuing a 900-year old textile tradition that is now confined to only three families; the man behind Indias green revolution or the one responsible for the white revolution that took India away from shortages to worlds largest milk producer, the swashbuckling female doctor who commandeered worlds first women military regiment, or an illiterate woman who planted and nurtured hundreds of trees even though she couldnt count them; a social worker who sorted out 70,000 disputes in remote villages and now finds his approach changing the Indian judicial system; an actor who was called in to essay the same role over and over again in films and ended up in the Guinness Book of records; the film maker who began in the silent era and is still active after eight decades! A perfect book to light up your life and those of your loved ones.

A coffee table book that has no age barriers in its appeal. -- India Today A rich visual and verbal experience. -- Elle If a coffee table book can set you thinking, this is it. -- Business India Samar and Vijay Jodha capture the beauty of ageing. -- The Times of India Stark portraits of men and women in the autumn of their lives. -- India Today This is the big picture on ageing in India. -- The Times of India From the Publisher This book uses the common thread of ageing to capture the diversity of India in words and photographs. Whether unknown, famous or forgotten, each of the 140 stories reveal an interesting facet of India. From the Author At an average shutter speed of 1/125th of a second, the total time taken to expose all the photographs in this book is shockingly less than two seconds! Yet it has taken nearly eight years to create this body of work. The genesis of this project lies in my work with numerous non-profit and development oriented projects and organizations in India and overseas. While I have had an opportunity to work on issues as diverse as leprosy, women reproductive health, heritage conservation, polio immunization, ageing, AIDS, abandoned widows etc., what often struck me is the subservience of photography to the research, copy and other elements in the communication pieces that emerged at the end of our combined efforts. As a photographer, I wished for projects where photography drives every other element. Since few such opportunities materialized, this personal project seemed to fulfill that longstanding craving. An equal concern was that while serious issues were worked upon and hotly debated by the specialists working on them in different capacities, often little of this work or debate went out to the general public, especially in an engaging form. This project was an attempt to address one such serious issue using this approach. Any project of this nature requires a variety of inputs at each stage. However, resource limitations forced Vijay and I to work as only a two-member team handling almost every aspect starting from research to travel, interviews, photography, editing as well as numerous design and production issues.