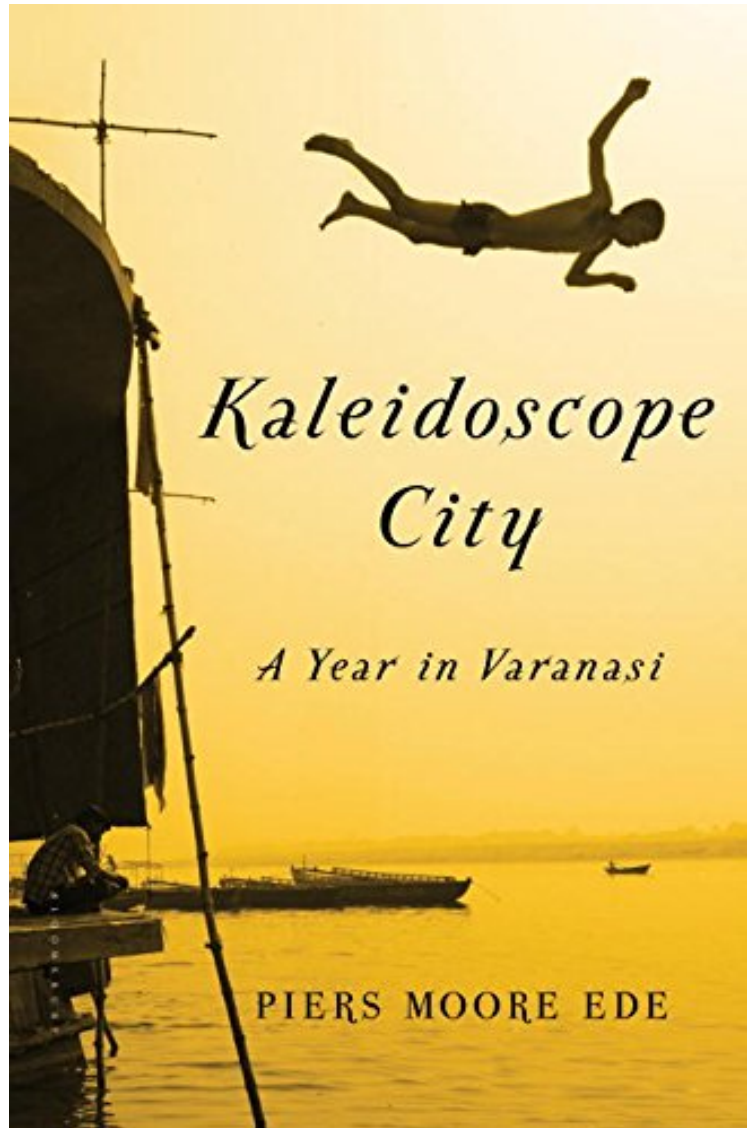


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## Kaleidoscope City: A Year in Varanasi

*Piers Moore Ede*

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**Piers Moore Ede : Kaleidoscope City: A Year in Varanasi** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Kaleidoscope City: A Year in Varanasi:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Travel VicariouslyBy ADVNCHRI really enjoyed this book. I felt like I was there and I really didn't want my stay to end. I would set the book down and reflect. I found myself going to YouTube to tour the city so I even felt more like I was there. When reading about the music I listened to it and meditated in the sun of my backyard. Enjoyed the book so much got a copy of Honey and Dust, another book by Piers. And I find myself taking a slow trip along with him, not wanting it to end to soon. If you love to travel vicariously,

this is a great read for you.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating!By G.B.As fascinating, colorful and moving as India itself. I loved the author's respectful tone; he does not demean what he doesn't understand, but tries to, and succeeds, in illuminating it for those of us who have never been to this country of staggering contrasts.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Interesting read on a Mystical city.By rpvI bought for reading on a long flight. Author has done lot of analysis on writing the book and gives interesting details of the city of Kashi or Varanasi. It is a very mystical place and I love reading stories around great cities. The efforts to clean Ganga mentioned in the book may be coming to fruition with recent Clean Ganga projects in India in 2015. Overall an interesting read.

Situated on the left bank of the Ganges, in the state of Uttar Pradesh, Varanasi is one of the oldest continually inhabited cities in the world. For Hindus there is nowhere more sacred; for Buddhists, it is revered as a place where the Buddha preached his first sermon; for Jains it is the birthplace of their two patriarchs. Over the last four thousand years, perhaps no city in the world has stood witness to such a flux of history, from the development of Aryan culture along the Ganges, to invasions that would leave the city in Muslim hands for three centuries, to an independent Brahmin kingdom, British colonial rule, and ultimately independence. But what is the city like today? Home to 2.5 million people, it is visited by twice that number every year. Polluted, overpopulated, religiously divided, but utterly sublime, Varanasi is a living expression of Indian life like no other. Each day 60,000 people bathe in the Ganges. Elderly people come to die here. Widows pushed out by their families arrive to find livelihood. In the city center, the silk trade remains the most important industry, along with textiles and the processing of betel leaf. Behind this facade lurk more sinister industries. Varanasi is a major player in the international drug scene. There's a thriving flesh trade, and a corrupt police force that turns a blind eye.As with Suketu Mehta's *Maximum City* Piers Moore Ede tells the city's story by allowing inhabitants to relate their own tales. Whether portraying a Dom Raja whose role it is to cremate bodies by the Ganges or a khoa maker, who carefully converts cow's milk into the ricotta like substance that forms the base of most sweets, Ede explores the city's most important themes through its people, creating a vibrant portrait of modern, multicultural India.

[Moore Ede's] careful detailing of the world around him shows a keen and tender sensitivity . . . We find ourselves gunning for him unreservedly . . . The arc of Moore Ede's journey . . . is so sincere and carefully told that the result cannot help but move. *Financial Times on All Kinds of Magic*[Moore Ede] is acutely sensitive to landscape, light, people and mood . . . He gives us a sympathetic and nuanced account of [the countries he visits] . . . This is a good and engaging book whose real importance is to give notice of a fine new talent. *The Guardian on Honey and Dust*An extraordinary handbook on the art of escapism . . . Unusual, compelling and restorative. *Mail on Sunday on Honey and Dust*About the AuthorPiers Moore Ede was educated at Winchester College, Exeter University and the University of California, Santa Cruz. Two previous travel books were published in the UK by Bloomsbury: *Honey and Dust*, nonfiction winner of the DH Lawrence Prize, and *All Kinds of Magic*. Moore Ede is also a photographer and blues guitarist, and runs the popular website [TheIndiaphile.com](http://TheIndiaphile.com).