



Dinesh Sharma

**BARACK OBAMA
in HAWAII and INDONESIA**

The Making of a Global President

Dinesh Sharma

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Dinesh Sharma, Ph.D., is a cultural psychologist and a marketing consultant, and currently a Senior Fellow at the Institute for International and Cross-Cultural Research at St. Francis College, Brooklyn Heights, NY.

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BARACK OBAMA IN HAWAII AND INDONESIA

The Making of a Global President

Barack Obama is the first American president born and raised in Hawai'i, the most diverse state in the Union, and the first American president to have spent a significant part of his childhood in a Muslim-majority nation, namely, Indonesia. What effect did these—and other early experiences—have on the man who is now, arguably, the world's most popular political leader?

The first 18 years of President Obama's life, from his birth in 1961 to his departure for college in 1979, were spent in Hawai'i and Indonesia. These years fundamentally shaped the traits for which the adult Obama is noted—his protean identity, his nuanced appreciation of multiple views of the same object, his cosmopolitan breadth of view, and his self-rooted "outpost" patriotism. *Barack Obama in Hawai'i and Indonesia: The Making of a Global President* is the first study to examine, in fascinating detail, how his early years impacted this unique leader.

Existing biographies of President Obama are primarily political treatments. Here, cross-cultural psychologist and marketing consultant Dinesh Sharma explores the connections between Obama's early upbringing and his adult views of civil society, secular Islam, and globalization. The book draws on the author's on-the-ground research and extensive first-hand interviews in Jakarta; Honolulu; New York; Washington, DC; and Chicago to evaluate the multicultural inputs to Obama's character and the ways in which they prepared him to meet the challenges of world leadership in the 21st century.

"I have engaged in two close reads of Dinesh Sharma's *Barack Obama in Hawai'i and Indonesia: The Making of a Global President* because there was a large number of cogent insights and fresh data in the manuscript. Having read Obama's two books fairly carefully and having studied all of the President's speeches since 2007, I conclude that Sharma's volume trumps all others that are currently out. The concept of a global President is fleshed out with considerable detail and conceptual exploration; it is not simply asserted as some journalists have. The analytic lines of this book run deep and the narrative sometimes moves into a level of artistic brilliance." — Lawrence J. Friedman, Professor, Mind-Brain-Behavior Initiative, Harvard University, Professor of History Emeritus, Indiana University

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"Academics, students and the public will be riveted by this compelling and original perspective about the formative years in the development of Barack Obama that offers a unique psychological and sociological lens on the ascendancy of a young African American boy to become the leader of most powerful country in the world. The author's personal journey in his quest to learn about Obama's roots are artfully woven with historical facts and psychological theory, resulting in a brilliant book that at times reads like an historical novel but is all that much more important a tome given that it is real history. The result is a book that should be read by everyone interested in the state of the world today." — Dr. Judy Kuriansky, Clinical Psychologist and Author of *Beyond Bullets and Bombs: Grassroots peacebuilding between Israelis and Palestinians*, March 7, 2011

"Dr. Dinesh Sharma has produced a masterful analysis of Barack Obama's psychosocial journey from his early identification as Barry, a young boy attempting to define himself, to a sophisticated world leader and America's first African-American president. Dr. Sharma's training and scholarship as a cross-cultural psychologist coupled with his own cross-cultural roots has given him an implicit understanding of both the benefits Obama has gleaned and challenges he has faced as a multicultural person with African ancestry. Insightfully commingling relevant theory and research, politico-historical data, and first-hand accounts from primary sources, Sharma has contributed an exhaustive depiction of Obama's evolution." — Holly O. Houston, PhD, Licensed Clinical Psychologist, Director/Clinical Supervisor at Anxiety & Stress Center and Former Clinical Faculty at University of Chicago and University of Illinois, March 7, 2011

"This deeply researched book provides a new understanding of how Obama's varied childhood environments contributed to his development and his outlook as an adult. Its vivid glimpses of his life in Jakarta and Honolulu, and its portraits of his relationships in these places, answer questions raised by previous accounts and make better sense of the man who became, as Sharma calls him, our "first global president." — Robert A. LeVine is a Professor Emeritus of Education and Human Development and Professor Emeritus of Anthropology at Harvard University

"In this fascinating cultural biography, Dinesh Sharma considers the ways in which Barack Obama has assumed the unique role of *global President*. Sharma casts an astute psychological eye on Obama's early years, tracing the sources of the president's life story in his childhood and adolescent experiences in Indonesia, Hawaii, and the U. S. mainland. In the complex and multi-cultural identity that is Barack Obama, Americans may find new clues about who they are now and what America itself may come to mean in the 21st century." — Dan P. McAdams, Professor of Psychology, Northwestern University, Author of *George W. Bush and the Redemptive Dream*

"The child is father to the man," said Wordsworth. In this biography, Obama's key relationships with mother, his grandmother, his stepfather, and his absent biological father are examined in both factual and psychological detail to show how Obama constructed his own life from the life experiences that made him President and the global man that he is today. Special attention is given to Obama's formation of identity, the well known developmental concept of the renowned psychoanalyst Erik Erikson. Given the complexities of his multicultural upbringing in a non-nuclear or non-traditional family structure, the formation of Obama's sense of place and cultural context is captured in great detail....The result of Dinesh Sharma's far-reaching and penetrating portrait makes one feel a great sense of congruence and parallelism between the multiple and multilayered geographical, cultural, and interpersonal forces that shaped President Obama and his pivotal role as President of the United States in these complex, global, and challenging times we live in today." — Professor Karen Vander Ven and Associate Professor Andrew Schneider Munoz, School of Education, University of Pittsburgh, PA

"Dr. Sharma has chosen the important task of showing us how Obama's thinking arose on a global scale. He gives us a picture of Obama in Java, where his step-father introduces him to many things, for example, that life is tough for many people. Obama also learns that there are many types of Islam and most are benign. Sharma also introduces us to Obama's strong-minded Grandmother who, with just a high school education became the first woman to become a Vice-President in a Hawaiian Bank, where she literally wrote the book on escrow. He also analyzes the impact that his mother had on him. She has been described as a pragmatic idealist who implemented social reform not just in Java or even in Indonesia but in other Southeast Asian countries and Pakistan and Kenya, best known for her work on micro-credits for women. These are some of the influences which make him truly a Global President." — Alice Dewey, Professor Emeritus of Anthropology at University of Hawaii, Honolulu, HI

"This intriguing book helps us understand not only who Barack Obama is but *why* he is the way he is. We are all products of our life experiences. Sharma helps us understand the impact of the compelling life experiences that made the man who is now our President." — Jerry Burris, Former Editorial Page Editor, Honolulu Advertiser and co-author, with Stu Glauberman, of "*The Journey Begins: How Hawaii Shaped Barack Obama*"

