Jürgen Schick
THE GODS ARE LEAVING THE COUNTRY
Art Theft from Nepal

White Orchid Books
To Chandra Maya,
Michael and Nina
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The valley of Kathmandu, which is like an open treasure house, has been the seat of ancient art and culture for over two thousand years. Although this Himalayan kingdom remained almost isolated from the vast Gangetic plains of India, yet she imbibed all the cultural flow of the subcontinent from the time of the Buddha, who was born in Lumbini in the south-western region of Nepal in the sixth century B.C. It may sound strange, though, the valley of Kathmandu has attracted many outsiders from ancient times, including some Chinese travellers or monks and also a number of western scholars and art lovers, especially during the last two centuries.

Mr. Jürgen Schick, the author of this book, is one of those outsiders to have visited the valley of Kathmandu some nine years ago. The moment he arrived in Kathmandu, his eyes did not fail to appreciate what he saw in this ancient city: magnificent wood-carvings on windows and doors, beautiful sculptures in stone and metal found in temples, monasteries, old palaces, houses... almost everywhere. His first thought was to take photographs of these Nepalese art objects of the valley as photographic documentations. But he soon realized that some of the objects he photographed were missing or stolen shortly afterwards. At first, maybe he was not aware that such things were happening already for more than two decades. Indeed, Nepal has lost some of her most valuable art works, most of them sculptures in stone and metal, during the last twenty-five years. In view of this, Mr. Jürgen Schick, who compiled this book with great pains and care for the past eight years, has been able to produce most valuable photographic evidence of the stolen art of Nepal.

Those stolen art objects may someday appear again, especially in the Western art world: in auction houses, art museums, galleries, private collections or antique shops. Under such circumstances, this book will be of great value, for it can provide authentic photographic evidence and confirm from where these images were stolen.

A number of sculptures of great historical value are also included in this book. Although they were not stolen, yet many unsuccessful attempts to steal them have been made. By publishing their photographs, the future collectors of Asian art will know where these sculptures belong to. In this way, Mr. Jürgen Schick has done a great service toward safe-guarding and preserving the cultural heritage of Nepal. The author of this book, who loves Nepal and Nepalese art, certainly deserves our sincere thanks for this remarkable contribution.

3 March, 1989

Lain S. Bangdel
Chancellor
Royal Nepal Academy
PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

It is eight years now since the German edition of the present book was published. 1

Although the political situation in Nepal has changed considerably in the interim, the situation in which Nepalese art finds itself has not.

Art theft is still occurring, and if perhaps not on such a grand scale as during the 1970s and 1980s, the reason seems to be largely that nowadays not very much remains worth stealing.

The most valuable pieces of art have been taken out of the country, and it will be the government's task to undertake the necessary steps to repatriate them to their homeland.

The fact, however, that almost all those images I marked as “threatened” in the former edition have so far remained in Nepal seems to indicate that Western collectors and museums of Asian art have meanwhile become well aware that stolen art from Nepal is no longer available without risk to any and all takers.

That this is so is no doubt owed to LAIN S. BANGDEL'S recent publication “Stolen Images of Nepal” 2 which provides a wealth of photographs and detailed descriptions of some 120 pieces of Nepalese art, all of them stolen from the country during the past thirty years. This book, more than anything else, clearly indicates that Nepal is no longer willing to tolerate the plundering of its art treasures.

The present English edition is based on the German edition, of which it is a thoroughly revised and updated version.

I regret not being able to reproduce photos documenting some thefts of recent years (i.e. since the publication of the German edition in 1989). The reason for this is the same as that for the late appearance of this, the English edition, namely, the fact that in March 1996, in Bangkok, the entire illustrational material for the book, including eighty 6 x 6 original slides, of which no duplicates exist, were stolen from my publisher. With great effort and cost on his part, the photos of the 1989 edition were “reproduced”, but the photos from the intervening period are irretrievably lost.

This is regrettable for many reasons, among others because now the theft, for instance, of the torana of Chusya Bahal in Kathmandu in 1993 (for me the most beautiful wood-carved torana in the whole Kathmandu Valley) can no longer be documented with “before-after” photos.

I trust, nevertheless, that the quality of the photos – for which I can only, under the circumstances, ask the reader's indulgence – is sufficient for the purposes they are meant to serve. A number of photos have been enlarged to facilitate identification, and 20 new photos have been added to this English edition.

Kathmandu, July, 1997

Jürgen Schick

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1 "Die Götter verlassen das Land”, Akademische Druck-und Verlagsanstalt, Graz, Austria, 1989.
INTRODUCTION

Seventeen years ago I made the decision to leave Germany in order to take up residence in Nepal, and this decision has since proved to have been a fortunate one for me.

The beauty of the country, the cultivated sense of friendship among its inhabitants, the spiritual tenor of its religions and the overpowering richness of its art— all of this has given back to me more than I shall ever be able to repay to the country. I am deeply in Nepal's debt.

Once I arrived, one of the strongest impressions made on me came through my contact with Nepalese art. At that time, the end of the 1970s, it could still be viewed in its undiminished fullness; the art treasures of a culture that was more than two thousand years old still seemed almost untouched.

I was fascinated by the strange beauty and the deep symbolism of this art, whose exuberance and masterful quality would immediately have deprived anyone with opened eyes of the illusion that Nepal was what we so deprecatingly call an "underdeveloped country."

What I was confronted with, rather, was testimonial proof of one of the last old high cultures—older than our own, its equal in artistic mastery, superior to it in its spiritual depths—a culture that had managed by some miracle to preserve its works almost whole up to the middle of the twentieth century.

At the time I still was unaware that the spectre of the modern age was already hovering over the country and had begun to plunder its treasures.

Enthused as I was, I conceived the plan to produce as comprehensive a photographic documentation of the art of the Kathmandu Valley as possible. Such a thing had never been attempted before, and in fact it appeared to be a hopeless undertaking. For how would a single person ever be able to document this incredible wealth, these thousands of images in hundreds of temples?

Still, I wished to remain in Nepal many years, and during the course of those years, I thought, I would gradually succeed in assessing the situation and coming up with a documentation of all the essential pieces of art of the Kathmandu Valley.

During the following years I made many outings through the lovely valley, through its villages and its three old royal cities: Patan, Bhaktapur and Kathmandu. I constantly reexperienced the joy of discovering a half-forgotten work of beautiful art in an out-of-the-way forest shrine or in a hidden corner of a temple courtyard— the masterly Sarasvati statue of Pharping (pl. 5), for example, a work of art that, like so many here in Nepal, had never been described or photographed.

Soon, however, and with increasing frequency, such joy gave way to other feelings: sorrow and consternation. Consternation at the fact that during my outings I was coming to the ever clearer realization that the days of this art, which had survived over so many centuries, were numbered. Its final hours were approaching, and I was a witness to its fall.

With ever greater frequency I found myself standing in front of emptied niches, disfigured temple walls, shrines plundered down to their last contents and the headless statues of deities. With ever greater frequency I came across a hole in the wall where a
few weeks before I had photographed a beautiful statue of a god.

It dawned on me gradually, but I finally became fully convinced of the fact: I was witnessing a phenomenon that had begun a few years earlier, and that by then was reaching its high-water mark: the systematic plundering of Nepal's art treasures by well-organized bands of thieves, who were stealing the images of Nepal's gods under commission to the international art theft network, and were then smuggling them abroad, to collections and museums of rich countries in the West.

It was clear to me: I would never be able to finish my planned documentation. Nor would the many foreign scholars — all the art historians, Indologists and Tibetologists who had just begun to tap the rich field of study represented by Nepalese art — ever be able to transmit a complete knowledge and the true glory of Nepalese culture to coming generations. For the works of Nepalese art were now being stolen much more quickly than one could ever have thought possible.

When, in the spring of 1984, I turned the corner of Nasamana Square in Bhaktapur with a group of Western visitors in order to show them the Lakshmi-Narayana statue there (pl. 2), and to explain to them the rich symbolism of this significant 11th-century image of the god — only to find myself standing like a fool in front of an empty niche, whose image had been stolen only a few days before —, it finally hit me that no work of art in Nepal was any longer secure, no matter how famous and revered.

It was then that I decided to pursue this phenomenon of cultural larceny and, if possible, to document it.

Thus, necessarily, my topic changed: Out of the planned documentation of Nepalese art there arose a documentary work on the theft of art in Nepal; from a documentation of beauty, a documentation of destruction: the present book.

* * *

The purpose of this book is threefold:

1. First, to document clearly and to provide unimpeachable evidence for what is currently happening to Nepal's art.

   The photographs published here serve this purpose, particularly the "before-after" documentation. Those people in Western countries need to have their eyes opened who have resolutely kept them closed up to now; who have pretended not to know what has to be obvious to everyone: that practically all the art that has ended up in the West from Nepal during the past thirty years, that is being traded there, and that fills its collections and museums, was obtained in Nepal by theft.

2. Were the purchasing policies of Western collectors and museums to change in light of this knowledge — which remains to be seen —, then this book will have gone a good way towards reaching its goal: namely, to help ensure that at least the works of Nepalese art that have not yet been stolen remain in their homeland.

3. Furthermore, this book will for the first time provide conclusive documentary material in support of Nepal's right to have its stolen works of art returned.
The present report is a limited attempt to document the activities of the international art theft network in the art landscape of the Kathmandu Valley from the beginning of 1981 to the middle of 1993.

The present work does not claim to be a scholarly study. I came into contact with Nepalese art not as a scholar – for that I lack the background – but as a lover of art, which is a form of legitimation in its own right.

I have naturally taken pains to present all facts as accurately as possible. This applies to the names of the represented deities, their location and their measurements, where noted, as well as to the act and date of theft. This date could usually only be given approximately, namely as the interval between the last viewing and the detection of the theft. In the case of measurements, a range of error of from two to three centimetres needs to be granted, as it was often difficult to take them precisely – in those instances, for example, when a statue that risked being stolen was so encrusted in cement that its exact contours were no longer definable.

Given my lack of competence in the matter, Prof. Adalbert Gail of the Free University of Berlin was kind enough to provide datings for the images. I should here like to express my sincere gratefulness to him for his most valuable support.

I have made only scant use of the relevant literature. Of the mass of books that have recently been published about Nepalese art, it is only the few listed in the bibliography that I have drawn upon; they are all easily obtainable in Kathmandu’s fine bookshops. All of these books were of great help and use to me in one way or another. I am indebted to their authors, without whose efforts and knowledge the present book could never have been written.

In contrast to the majority of books that have appeared on Nepalese art, this book contains not a single picture from a museum. To be sure, a number of fine and important works of art may be seen in the two museums of the Kathmandu Valley, the National Museum in Kathmandu and the Art Gallery in Bhaktapur. They do not even begin, however, to represent the wealth of art in the Kathmandu Valley. The vast majority of Nepalese art – that portion of it still inside the country, that is – is not found in museums but out in the open. For Nepal’s sacred art does not “take place indoors”; its objects are not museum pieces from the past but part of the living present, everywhere leaving their imprint on day-to-day life.

Thus the Kathmandu Valley can be termed a large open-air museum – certainly one of the most beautiful and richest in the world.

The aim of this book is to present this art – the works of art in the middle of the Kathmandu Valley accessible to one and all.

This necessarily involves a number of limitations and restrictions:

The restriction to the Kathmandu Valley appears to me to be justifiable. For that is the true “Nepal.” Nepalese still call the Valley by this name. It has always been the country’s cultural and artistic centre. And it is here that the fate that now hangs over Nepal’s art is exemplified with all clarity.

As for limitations in the subject matter, the reader will soon realize that the documentation principally concerns stone images, whereas the metal statues, the “bronzes,” for which Nepal is famous, along with wood carvings, are represented only sparingly, and there are almost no works of Nepalese pictorial art. The reasons for this are the following:

In the first place, during the period in which this account was written, acts of theft
centred mainly on stone sculptures, almost all of Nepal’s bronzes having previously been smuggled out of the country in the 1960s and 1970s – so that nowadays there is not much left to take.

Almost the only places where Nepalese bronzes can still be found today in the open are the toranas, the temple tympana adorned with sculptures of gods. They were, and still are, pried loose from the toranas; entire toranas, containing up to twelve sculptures, have even been stolen – for example, the one of the Bagh Bhairav temple in Kirtipur, or the beautiful torana of Chusya Bahal in Kathmandu.

A number of such thefts of toranas are documented in this book.

An additional reason for overlooking bronzes in this book is the self-imposed restriction to open-air sites in the Kathmandu Valley accessible to the public. This means that works of art from the – generally inaccessible – inside of shrines (even though many acts of theft occur there too), or from private houses and house altars, are not depicted. Bronzes may be found today, to the extent that they exist at all, in these more protected locations.

The same applies to the masterworks of Nepalese wood carving. These can be found in the open nowadays almost only on the richly carved struts of temple roofs – there, to be sure, in great numbers. This has led to entire sets of struts being stolen, with the consequence that the roofs have collapsed. Two such cases (those of Itum Bahal, Kathmandu and the Jyotilingeshvar temple, Sankhu) are documented in this book (cf. pls. 77, 149-158).

Examples of Nepalese painting, finally, are not cited since, but for a very few exceptions, they have disappeared from an outdoors setting. This applies both to paintings on outer temple walls and to the pictures of deities on the outside of private houses. The frescoes in the interiors of buildings, such as in Kumari’s residence in Kathmandu or the house shrines of Brahmin priests, are not freely accessible.

The same may be said with regard to the magnificent old thangkas and the no less precious illuminated manuscripts of Nepal as was said with regard to the bronzes: with a few exceptions, in the form of family property and collections in monasteries, almost all of them are now in Western museums and hardly seen any longer in Nepal.

If numerous limitations have thus been placed on this study, the most basic one has still to be mentioned: namely, that it was impossible, of course, for a single person to document with any degree of exhaustiveness the multitude of thefts that have been ravaging the Kathmandu Valley like a wildfire over the past years. The book has had to restrict itself to a few examples; it has touched only the tip of the iceberg, and has had to leave it up to the reader to form, by extrapolation, a picture of his own of the actual dimensions of the thievery that is in the process of destroying Nepal’s cultural heritage. One walk through the Kathmandu Valley with open eyes will reveal more than many words.

Finally, it should be noted that the term “the West,” which is frequently used in the book (“the rich countries of the West,” “museums in the West,” “Western visitors” etc.) must not be taken in a precise geographic sense. I use it, rather, as a summary notation for highly industrialized countries, in contrast to those of the Third World.

In that sense, therefore, along with the United States and Western Europe, Japan and even a number of East European countries fall under this rubric. It should not be forgotten either that many of the artistic works stolen in Nepal land up in collections of
its neighbour to the south, India.

Photo Credits

All photos in this book were taken by the author, with the exception of pl. 2 (Birendra Shrestha) and pl. 83 (Elfriede Möller).

Pl. 83 was published before in the Goldstadt travel guide “Nordindien-Nepal” (p. 281) and is reproduced here with the kind permission of the publisher.

A large set of photos show Nepalese works of art that have never previously been brought before the public eye. This may be taken as an indication of the degree to which the art of Nepal has remained unknown up to the present.

In other words: Nepal’s art is being stolen before it can be taken note of and its significance appreciated by the world.

Words of Thanks

I express my thanks to those friends in Europe and Nepal without whose help and suggestions this book would not have been written.

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PART ONE:
ART AND ART THEFT IN NEPAL
CHAPTER 1

THE FATE OF OLD ART IN MODERN TIMES
THREE EXAMPLES FROM NEPAL

ONE

On Nasamana Square in the royal city of Bhaktapur in the Kathmandu Valley there stands an old black-stone sacred image, the right half of which portrays the mighty Hindu god Vishnu. Narayana, as the Nepalese call him, the creator and preserver of all life, bears the insignia of his power: a mace, a flaming discus, a conch (in its resemblance to the womb a symbol of fertility), and a lotus. The left half of the statue portrays Lakshmi, the wife of the god, and the goddess of wealth and good fortune, who holds a book, mirror, lotus flower and water jar (pl. 2).

The god and goddess have been masterfully melded together in this image—a perfect expression of Asia’s deep wisdom that the beautiful and the mighty, female and male, are not contrasting pairs but rather two sides of the same coin, different expressive forms of the Great Unity which contains all living beings and is beyond all opposition.

This sacred image was worshipped in Bhaktapur for more than eight hundred years; and in Nepal worship of the gods means daily acts of devotion in front of their image.

Expectant mothers who felt the hour of delivery drawing near were particularly fond of this statue. For the image had a wonderful property: it foretold to the mothers the sex of their child.

Praying, the women would pour consecrated oil over the forehead of the image. If it trickled down to the breast of the goddess, the child would be a girl; to the breast of the god, a boy.

After eight hundred years this custom came to an abrupt end. In February 1984 the image was stolen. Ever since then there has been a yawning gap in the wall where once the preserver of life and the goddess of fortune had been worshipped for hundreds of years (pl. 3).

This theft is only one of many. At present hundreds of old images and statues of gods are disappearing from Nepal. International art theft is making away with everything.

The Rising Nepal, one of Nepal’s leading English-language dailies, has expressed the belief, probably justifiably, that the stolen image “today adorns the spiritually sterile living room of a western connoisseur.”

1 The Rising Nepal of 27 April 1984
2. BEFORE: the Narayana-Lakshmi statue from Nasamana Tol, Bhaktapur. This deeply symbolic image was stolen in February 1984. 11th century. h: 0.95 m.
Photo: November 1983.
3. AFTER: A view of the hole in the wall after the Narayana-Lakshmi image (pl. 2) had been stolen. Photo: 19.3.84.
4. STOLEN: This powerful image of Shiva in his creative aspect (Shiva Kamdeva) was much revered by women who prayed here to be blessed with child. The statue was stolen from the Rajarajeshvari temple courtyard in Pashupatinath in December 1981. Photo: May 1981.
Two

Nepal’s most sacred site is the temple of Pashupatinath north of the capital, Kathmandu. This, the place where pious Hindus – among them the kings of Nepal – have their mortal remains cremated on the banks of the sacred Bagmati River, has for centuries been the domain of Shiva, the destroyer, the most powerful of all Hindu gods.

In the age-old shrine, however, which no one from the outside has ever set foot in, Mahadev, “the Great God,” is not worshipped in his aspect as lord of death. His cult image here is rather the lingam, the phallus as a symbol of the god’s procreative power. In this, his creative aspect, Shiva is found represented in the temple courtyards around the main shrine as Kamdeva (the “god of love”) in human form, naked and with erect phallus, a trident (the symbol of his power) and a vessel of life-giving water in his hands.

A powerful grey-stone image in the courtyard of the Rajeshvari temple showed the god in this form (pl. 4). Women who had remained barren came to him. They prayerfully touched the image’s phallus in the hope of being blessed with child.

Today this is no longer possible. The statue was pried from its socle in the autumn of 1981 and has disappeared from Nepal, and is not likely to be seen again. It, too, presumably ended up in a country where a taste for Nepalese art exists.

Three

Sarasvati, the wife of Brahma, is the goddess of learning and wisdom, and at the same time the guardian of the fine arts. She is greatly worshipped in the Kathmandu Valley; her likeness is found in many temples. Basanta Panchami, the first day of spring, is devoted to her worship. On that day solemn acts of devotion to Sarasvati are performed in all the schools of the Valley. This is the day on which children are traditionally taught the first letters of the alphabet.

The most frequent visitors to her shrines are students facing tough examinations. They offer the goddess flowers and grains of rice and solicit her favour.

This custom too, however, is likely to die out soon, as the Sarasvati statues in the Valley are becoming rare. It is perhaps because the statues of the goddess are so beautiful that they are so often stolen. No matter which of her many forms she assumes, and whether with or without her mount, the swan, Sarasvati is always represented as a beautiful young woman in the full bloom of youth.

A particularly fine statue of the goddess was located up until recently in a small temple bordering Kamal Pond in the village of Pharping, in the southern part of the Kathmandu Valley (pl. 5). It was a masterful work, hewn out of stone, showing the goddess with a lithely young body, expressive hands fingering a vina (lute), a face with large almond-shaped eyes and a tender, half-veiled smile. Some unknown Newar artist had succeeded in eliciting a vibrant beauty from the stone. The centuries in which it survived in its small out-of-the-way temple took nothing of the statue’s beauty.

Until one day...

The thieves came in November 1984. During the night, as always. Unable to carry off the heavy statue, they made short shrift of things and chopped off the head. A five-hundred-year-old irreplaceable work of art was gone forever (cf. pl. 6).

What’s behind it all? “Head of Sarasvati, 16th cent.” still attracts customers.
5. BEFORE: Sarasvati, the goddess of wisdom and learning, is much revered in the Kathmandu Valley. This beautiful image of the goddess, at Kamal Pond in Pharping village, goes back to the 16th century. h: 1.07 m.
Photo: 8.5.84
6. **AFTER:** When looters tried to steal it in November 1984, the statue’s right foot broke off. Thereupon the thieves summarily chopped off the head, destroying its beauty forever.

Photo: 10.12.84.
CHAPTER 2:
NEPAL AND ITS ART

Nepal, the poor but beautiful kingdom in the Himalaya, is a treasure trove of old art. Here, in the remoteness of the country behind a thousand mountains, the artistic heritage of many successive cultures, created during a period of over 2,000 years, has been preserved almost in its entirety. The country was never colonized, and long remained sworn to an immemorially engrained pace of life. During the last century, moreover, it was fully sealed off from the rest of the world as the result of a deliberate policy of isolation.

These are some of the reasons why a very old type of art - art such as was found in India more than 1,000 years ago - could be preserved almost untouched up to modern times.

All of this art is dedicated to the gods, the gods of the country’s two great religions; Hinduism and Buddhism.

Nepal has often been called, and rightly so, the “land of the gods.” The latter live in the hearts of the people; belief in them is deeply rooted, and the country is adorned by thousands of their images. The snow-covered peaks of the Himalaya that bear their names are their abode. Offerings are brought to them everywhere throughout the country, large festivals are celebrated in their honour, and children are named after them.

A journey to Nepal - and this is its particular charm - is above all a journey through time. A world opens up again that was at one time our own, and from which we have long since been expelled: a world in which the people, as those of Western cultures formerly did, live in natural communion with the gods, whom they revere and who they devoutly expect will shape their lives.

The feeling of security in the omnipotence of the gods is something the Nepalese know and still enjoy – something that we lost long ago and that no amount of insurance will ever be able to replace. This is one of the sources of the fundamentally serene and anxiety-free attitude towards life taken by Nepalese – and one of the reasons, too, why psychological illnesses are largely unknown in the country.

Nepal’s faith and piety have found expression down through the centuries in masterworks of art.

This art could be found in particular abundance and beauty in the heart of the country, in the Kathmandu Valley. Temples stood literally by the hundreds, and the statues of the gods by the thousands, in this small valley of some twenty-five by thirty kilometres in size.

The unique feature about this art was that one did not have to visit a museum to admire it. Rather, it was situated out of doors, in an open setting, scattered throughout the villages and royal cities of the Kathmandu Valley in overwhelming abundance, in the forest and mountain shrines, on the banks and at the sources of rivers, along paths and in small bamboo groves, where they could be seen, touched and worshipped by everyone.

The freedom enjoyed by art within the landscape at times endowed the act of
walking through the valley with a positively dreamlike character. How wonderful it was to stroll through fields of rice bending with the wind and, in the midst of the hustle and bustle of life, to come across the beauteous statue of a deity – an image of the sun god perhaps, or the goddess of wisdom, who had been greeting passers-by silently and solemnly for well over a thousand years.

Luminously classical images in small temples in the middle of green fields. One felt as if one were wandering through ancient Greece.

And in what richness, with what incomparable abundance this ancient art was found here!

The Kathmandu Valley owes this fullness, this unique feature of its art, to the deep religiousness of its inhabitants, which for centuries made it one of the prime destinations of pilgrims in Asia.

For here, in the country of the Buddha’s birth, and at the foot of the Himalayan peaks, where the gods of India dwell, the two world religions Hinduism and Buddhist touch and blend. Two great cultural spheres meet and intersect: those of Hindu India and Buddhist Tibet.

To be sure, seen from the perspective of India and Tibet, Nepal lies “at the edge” of things. If the Indo-Tibetan cultural sphere is viewed as a unit, however, then Nepal lies in the middle, and the small valley in the high mountains is the heart and centre of this huge region.

For many centuries it was a happy valley. It was rich and fertile, and largely spared the ravages of war, thanks to its aloofness. Instead of foreign armies there came other, peaceful visitors to the valley, which was a great emporium for the accumulation and exchange of goods and cultural artifacts between India and Central Asia.

Here was a place to stop and rest from the stresses of months of travelling, or to make preparations for such, before the time came to head for the dangerous passes and cross the huge mountain barrier of the Himalaya.

Together with the traders and travellers, a continuous stream of pilgrims and believers poured into the sacred valley, with pilgrimage guides in hand to tell them where the sacred sites were and in which order they should be visited. They came from Tibet, from India, and even from far-off China. And the early Buddhist monks from China reported of miraculous sights of the Valley’s grandeur and wealth.

This tradition of making pilgrimages to the shrines of the Kathmandu Valley is far from dying out:

Every year, during the winter months, the mountain tribal groups of Nepal descend into the Valley to perform circumambulations of its sacred sites.

Every year in the month of Phagun (February/March), tens of thousands of people come here on a pilgrimage from India in order to celebrate the great Shivaratri festival, the night of Shiva, at Pashupatinath.

Every year during Buddha Jayanti, the Buddha’s day of birth on the full-moon day of May, the whole Buddhist Himalaya, from Ladakh in the far west to Sikkim and Bhutan in the east, converges on the Kathmandu Valley to visit its shrines, temples, stupas and monasteries in Bodnath, Swayambhunath and Patan.

And now that the border with Tibet is slowly opening up, the presence of what is the source of all Himalayan Buddhist cultures – Tibet and the Tibetans – can once again be felt. Tibet, whose unique culture has been subjected to such brutal and total destruction, but whose faith has proved that it is not so easily suppressed – this Tibet is
7. This beautiful wood carved balcony window, with an old brass oil lamp hanging in front of it, is just one example of the artistic genius of the Newar craftsmen who created the works of art of the Kathmandu Valley.

The carved figures represent four Hindu deities: (to the left) Shiva, carrying a snake, standing upon his mount, the bull Nandi; (centre left) the river goddess Ganga on her mount, a makara monster; (centre right) the river goddess Yamuna on a tortoise; (to the right) a male deity standing on a horse (?) and bearing a parakeet, whom I am, sorry to say, not able to identify.

The goddesses, divine personifications of the great Indian rivers Ganges (Ganga) and Yamuna, display the abhaya mudra, the gesture of protection. The moon is depicted above Ganga; the sun above Yamuna. On the wooden lattice below, there are dancing couples and an image of Bhairav, the wrathful form of Shiva, framed by snakes. Vidyeshvari Vihar, Kathmandu. Photo: 18.1.84.
again undertaking pilgrimages to the south, as it has been doing for more than 1,300 years.

It was this centuries-old stream of faithful worship, and with it the wealth that kings and pilgrims, merchants and monks brought to the country, that allowed the kingdoms of the Valley, and in particular their art, to flourish – in the courts and in the cities, and even in the Valley’s smallest villages.

All of this art that we admire today, and that is in the process of being eradicated from its land of origin, was created by one of the many peoples and tribes of Nepal. Even though they make up only a small percentage of the population, they are the people who form and transmit its culture: the Newars.

Too little is known of this extraordinary people, which has been settled in the Kathmandu Valley since time immemorial, and whose farmers and merchants, artists and scholars make up the majority of the local population in the Valley.

There is scarcely an outsider who can speak the complicated language of this people, whose farmers and artists are among the best in the world. Even today scholars still argue over whether its origins are Indian or Tibetan, or something else - this people who claim that Gautama Buddha, of the lineage of the Shakyas, was one of their own sons, a Newar.

We – or at least I for one – still know too little about this mysterious and pivotal people. The present book cannot at least fail to mention, in any case, that it was the Newars who created what goes by the name of Nepalese art: the magnificent architecture of the pagoda temples and the masterly statues of the Kathmandu Valley.

The names of the masters who created this art have long since sunk into oblivion, but their works still proclaim their glory.

They proclaim it no longer only to the pious pilgrims, but also to the hosts of tourists who descend upon Nepal, year after year, in ever larger numbers. They come from all the countries of the world, drawn by the magical call of an enchanted land, expecting to find here what no longer exists in their own countries: untouched nature, undestroyed culture.

Have they come in time?
CHAPTER 3

MODERN TIMES COME TO NEPAL

In 1951, following the fall from power of the Rana rulers, and after a hundred years of isolation, during which period practically no foreigner was allowed to cross its borders, Nepal for the first time opened up to the outside world, without restrictions.

Then the first visitors from the West entered the country. They must indeed have felt that they had been set down in a fairyland.

Whoever made the long trek (at the time Nepal had no paved roads) through the virgin forests of the Terai and over the high mountain ranges and penetrated to the heart of the country was seized by a feeling of awe and rapture at the sight of one of the world’s most beautiful cultural landscapes.

Below lay, framed by the snow peaks of the high Himalaya, the lovely Kathmandu Valley. It was covered with green fields of rice softly revealing the contours of the land, studded with small ochre-coloured farmhouses and adorned with three old royal cities and a host of villages, from which the golden roofs of temples shone everywhere over the land.

This was the time in which effusive books with titles like “Dreamland Nepal”, “Gold Pagodas and Silver Mountains” and “Fairyland of the Gods” were written.

It seems to be the characteristic of our time, however, to destroy dreams and fairy tales wherever we find them, even though we long for them.

Thus all was to change very quickly after the first contacts with the West.

Still untouched by the spirit and unspirituality of the modern world, and having just awoken from another period, Nepal entered upon the larger scene from its mountain-encircled retreat. It was unknowing and innocent, like the shy girls in its mountains who do not have even an inkling of their own beauty, having never seen themselves in a mirror.

With typical Nepalese hospitality, the poor country gave all it possessed to the foreigners who arrived:

- To the mountaineers, the unblemished peaks, the seats of the gods.
- To the scholars, a fascinating, unbelievably rich field for research, where ethnologists and architects, Indologists and Tibetologists, students of art and religion, and zoologists and botanists – not to mention writers and photographers – from all over the world could pursue individual interests to their heart’s content.
- To trekkers who came to the country drawn by the fame of its beauty, it showed its unmarred landscapes: monasteries in unworldly isolation at the foot of peaks that touched the sky, lush valleys cut by mighty rivers and filled during warm nights with the fragrance of tropical blossoms, luminous snow mountains above the flaming red of flowering rhododendron forests.
- To those, particularly the young, who poured into Nepal in search of some
8. The West not only takes from Nepal its masterpieces of ancient art; it also gives what is called "development aid". A typical example of such aid is the German-built cement factory at Chobhar near Kathmandu, one of the biggest polluters of Nepal's environment. Photo: 16.11.85.
intangible goal, it granted a sense of its peace, its timeless tranquillity, and
the depth of its thousand-year-old spirituality. Many a person who came
from the West afflicted and harrowed learned here the special power that
marks out Nepal above all other countries: the power to heal wounds of the
soul.

Nepal let all foreigners who came partake of its serenity, its joy of life and
celebration, its warm and inbred hospitality.

It was a good country, and has remained so even today for the most part, the
country where age is still honoured, not despised; where people address one another as
"elder brother" and "elder sister," and children as "little brother" and "little sister" (daju
and didi, bhai and bahini).

Nepal has given so much to so many. What have the rich countries of the West
given it in return?

The first thing they did was to brand this country of deep spirituality and
venerable cultural traditions with a mark of inferiority: they called it an
"underdeveloped" country.

For its culture had developed in a way different from our own; thus it was
"underdeveloped," and thus had to be "developed," that is, made the same as our
countries.

This goal is not likely to appear very attractive to one caught up in the hustle and
bustle, anxiety and solitude that is characteristic of the life in the rich industrialized
countries. Such a person knows that we pay a steep price for our material superfluity.

But Nepal did not know that; it did not know this world. It was fascinated,
blinded by this superfluity, of which it wished to partake. It had no idea of the dark
shadows behind the bright façades of our world.

And thus Nepal's nosedive into modern times began—"development," they called
it. A nosedive that has continued with ever increasing speed up to the present, and
nobody knows the outcome.

One thing is already certain, though. This "development" of Nepal according to
Western standards (which may more accurately be called an attempt to bring a hitherto
pristine country down to our own level) has occasioned within only forty years the
almost total destruction of its landscapes, its way of life, its traditions and its cultural
identity.

The poor country obtained everything that it did not have and know. Dollars
flowed in by the millions. Nepal was overwhelmed, at one blow, with the blessings of
the modern age: automobiles, paved roads, motorcycles, radios, telephones, computers,
wristwatches, video equipment, cement factories. And even—how do we live without
it?—television. Long resisted, it was recently introduced, making Nepal one of the last
countries to succumb. A particularly sensible contribution to the "development" of a
country of mountain farmers, eighty percent of whom are unable to read or write.

The veil of magic that once lay over Nepal is now torn. In the Kathmandu Valley
the signs of modernity are there for all to see:

The snow peaks no longer glow with radiant clarity over the Valley. Now they
shine but dimly through the grey-brown haze that the cement factory of Chobhar,
Nepal's environmental enemy number one (pl. 8), a particularly useful development
gift from the Federal Republic of Germany, spews out day and night from its unfiltered stack. In Germany it wouldn’t be allowed to operate for a single day. But this is Nepal, poor and far away.

Today the rivers and streams flowing through the Valley are no longer silver. The first chemical factories have seen to it that the clear waters have turned into a blue-grey brew of noxious odours. The Newar farmers still innocently irrigate their vegetable crops with these waters, as they have always done.

Nowadays the Nepalese no longer build their beautiful ochre-red houses, let alone their five-storeyed pagodas, out of brick, wood and packed earth. For now that cement is available, building is done in the “modern” style. Thus bunkerlike structures of bare grey cement – hideously ugly monstrosities – are eating their way into green rice fields everywhere.

Nowadays sprightly Nepalese children no longer play all over the streets of Kathmandu, as they did a few years ago. They have been swept away by the careering armada of Japanese Toyotas wildly horning their way by the thousands through the narrow lanes.

Nowadays, finally, even the golden images of the gods no longer smile down from the temple walls. Everywhere there are gaping holes where they have been pried loose and stolen.

The profaneness of our times has come to Nepal, and the country is today paying dearly, with the destruction of its old culture, for having opened itself up to the world so wide and so hospitably.

Mahabuddha stupa, Kathmandu, l. and Krishna temple, Patan, r., behind power lines.
CHAPTER 4
THE GREAT PLUNDERING

The price Nepal is paying consists, among other things, in the fact that within the past forty years more than half of the works of art that it has created in two thousand years of cultural history have been stolen and taken out of the country.

Nepal annually loses incalculable treasures, probably never to be seen again. At the same time as the flood of Western consumer goods sweeps over it, and plastic and corrugated iron inundate it, what is unique to it, and irreplaceable, is being taken away: the masterpieces of its old art – an exchange of goods such as occurred during the highwater mark of colonialism, invariably recalling the trade in glass beads in the Africa of earlier times.

For years bands of thieves have been at work systematically plundering the art of the Kathmandu Valley. That forces in possession of great expertise are behind it all can been seen from the fact that it is always the oldest, loveliest and most significant images that are taken. Orders have evidently been placed to have specific pieces of art stolen, given that particular works of art have been the repeated targets of theft. Upon the second and third unsuccessful attempt a fourth and fifth will follow, for as long as is needed to secure the object.¹

The plundering goes on from day to day, with ever increasing intensity. Since the beginning of the 1980s it has assumed particularly frightful proportions. Today no shrine, no matter how important, is secure from thieves. Of the hundreds of temples in the Kathmandu Valley, not one single one (!) exists that does not bear the clear marks of theft.

The Kathmandu Valley, which a few years ago was the world’s most beautiful open-air museum, a work of art in itself, and which UNESCO placed on the World Heritage List, has since become a supermarket, as it were, for old works of art, a self-service shop for the international art theft network and those it serves.

A rich field to mine amid practically ideal working conditions can be found here. For nowhere else in the world is there likely to be such a great “mass of serviceable art” of such age and such high quality within such a narrow setting.

What’s more, a large portion of these works of art, many hundreds of statues of gods, has – or up to their theft had – never been documented, captured on film or described in writing.

And finally, this art is not protected. Traditionally, the Nepalese have never locked up the precious images of their gods behind bars; the aura of sacredness at their sites had always been security enough for them.

¹ As in the case of the Eknukha Shivalingam at Pashupatinath (6th century, pl. 9; three attempts); the Sarasvati in Bhimsenthان (three attempts); the Lokeshvara statue at Gahiti in Patan (pl. 179; five attempts); the Sarasvati in Harigaon (pl. 173; three attempts).
The aura of the sacred offers no protection, however, against greed that no longer recognizes the sacred. Thus what once was the particular charm of Nepalese works of art – that they were placed in an open setting and accessible to one and all – has now become their doom.

And thus they are recklessly “made off with.” And as the collections of museums in the West go on filling up, Nepal is being bled white. One after the other the gods are leaving the country; soon all the gods will have left it.

The following pictorial documentation provides a few examples of this flood of thefts; the reports of *The Rising Nepal* of 28 January 1981 and 27 April 1984 list several dozen stolen works of art, though lists and tabulations of this kind capture only a minimal portion of what actually has been stolen.

Gone are the statues of Shiva-Kamdeva, the god of love, from the Mrigasthali forest, and many of the masterful tantric stone sculptures of the royal bathing pond in the palace of Patan. Gone is the 1,600-year-old Buddha statue of Dhoka Tol, Kathmandu, as well as the famed Buddha image of Chabahil. Gone is the image of the sun god that for 1,200 years stood in a small temple in the fields of Kopugaon (pls. 25, 67). In the village of Tokha, the village elders offered in vain a reward of 2,000 rupees for the return of the stolen statue of the goddess Chandeshvari Bhagvati. Also stolen were the beautiful marble head of the goddess Parvati from Gauri Ghat on the sacred Bagmati River, the golden Buddha statue from Imbahil in Patan, and the 600-year-old wooden sculptures of the heavenly nymphs at Itum Bahal (pl. 77), in which latter case, as increasingly at temples, entire temple struts were torn out of the walls...

One could go on for pages listing the priceless art that has been stolen in Nepal in the last decades.

This endemic thievery has created huge gaps in Nepal’s cultural landscape. Nepal’s art, the wealth of which once seemed to be boundless, is now on the verge of becoming extinct in its own cradle.

This is no exaggeration, given the fact that entire art genres, such as bronzes, have almost disappeared from Nepal, and entire regions – namely, the villages of the Kathmandu Valley, including such famous places as Lele, Pharping, Sankhu and Hadigaon – have been emptied of their art.

How this happened in the case of the bronzes can be forcefully demonstrated by taking the toranas of the Taleju-Bhavani temple in the royal palace of Patan as an example (cf. the before-after photos, pls. 83/84).

Experts agree that Nepalese bronzes, masterworks of the Newar art of casting, and famed throughout the world, can no longer be studied in Nepal itself; this can only be done by visiting museums in other countries.\(^5\)

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2 The report is reproduced in the Appendix.
4 *The Rising Nepal* of 26 October 1983.
5 Thus B. L. ARAN, “The Art of Nepal”, p. 209, writes: “Ironically, of this art, for which Nepal is best known abroad, there are hardly any old, valuable examples left in Nepal herself. Almost all old, good Nepali bronzes have been taken out of the country and are found now in European, American and Indian museums and private collections.”
By now books are being published by the dozen in which, with titles like “Art of Nepal”, the works of art presented come exclusively from collections of Western museums, and none from Nepal itself. This, too, indicates sufficiently where Nepal’s art ends up after having been stolen from its original location.

The portable-sized and easily transportable bronzes having by now almost disappeared from Nepal, thieves are now concentrating on the equally valuable but less manageable stone sculptures. Just how efficient operations have become is shown by the fact that thieves think nothing of making off with such images as that of the Buddhist deity of compassion, Lokeshvara, on the monastery hill of Swayambhunath, which was “so heavy that four men could not lift it.”

The height of all brazenness up to now has probably been the attempt on the night of 8 April 1985, when thieves went about their business with a crane, to steal from its pillar on the palace square in Bhaktapur one of Nepal’s most famous images, the gilt statue of King Bhupatindra Malla (pl. 21), a work of art that is reproduced in virtually every book on Nepal, in every travel guide and in every tourist brochure.

This time, however, they were not successful. Even though it was nighttime, half the city turned out to stop the theft of their king’s image. Thus the Bhaktapur image was saved.

Still, the question arises who in heaven’s name would commission such a world-famous work of art to be stolen? And if he got his hands on it, what would he do with it?

Further questions remain to be answered: What are the Nepalese doing to prevent the sell-out of their culture, and to save at least what is still left in their country? One has the impression that they are standing by helplessly while their culture is being plundered.

There is, to be sure, a law stipulating that no work of art more than one hundred years old may be taken out of the country. That’s what is written on paper; the reality of the situation makes a mockery of the law.

Nepalese have been waiting in vain for effective countermeasures by the state, even though it is normally the duty of the government to protect the nation’s art treasures. Thus it is up to the affected persons themselves, the faithful, the priests, the temple watchmen, to provide assistance on their own, to the extent that they can.

This is the reason why the gods are now being placed for the first time in Nepal behind grating. For the most part, however, it is of no use to forge iron rods around the statues. The thieves are fitted out well and are almost always able to breach such simple security measures. The sad example of the statue of the sun god of Sougal Tol, Patan, dating to the year 1083, demonstrates this quite clearly (cf. the before-after photos, pls. 23, 24).

There is the additional factor that people are now frightened. They no longer dare go out of their houses when they hear loud noises in the night at the temple across the way. For they know by now that the thieves have knives and do not hesitate to use

7. Cf. the report in the Newari newspaper Enap of 10 April 1985, reproduced in the Appendix.
8. Cf. the pictorial documentation, pls. 163 ff.
them. The art theft trade is too lucrative to allow for scruples. At Swayambhunath one priest has already paid with his life an attempt to place himself protectively in front of the statues of his gods.

... Who are the thieves?

No one knows. It may be assumed that the actual thefts are carried out by bands of Nepalese or Indians. But who is behind them? Who organizes the operations and pockets the profit? No one knows for sure.

Rumours are rife, however, that high-placed persons are involved from the Nepalese side, too. It could hardly be otherwise. For how could such a huge quantity of stolen art, including statues that weigh tons, pass undetected through all airport and border checks?

This does not mean, however, that the West is only the purchaser and not also the procurer. As an example may be cited the case of the Polish diplomat who, having been expelled from Indonesia for such activities, came to Nepal and immediately founded a Polish-Nepalese Friendship Society, whose main activity in following years consisted in conveying art stolen in the Kathmandu Valley safely to Warsaw.
CHAPTER 5

THE THREATENED WORLD OF NEPAL'S GODS
- HINDU DEITIES -

The lover of Asian art who comes to Nepal to view such art where it is being created will find here something that the richest Western museum cannot offer: He will experience art in its natural setting, worshipped in ritual and part of the interaction between man and architecture; he will experience it in its living function as an intermediary between gods and men.

The art of Nepal is an illustrative act of religion. It portrays not humans but gods — above all the mighty Hindu gods:

1. SHIVA

Shiva, “Mahadev,” is the all-powerful terminator and transformer of every form of life. In his main temple, Pashupatinath, along the Bagmati River, he is worshipped as the protector of the whole country.

He is often depicted in human semblance and, on many occasions, in his creative form, with an erect phallus (cf. the lovely statue from the Mrigasthali forest, since stolen, pl. 41), either alone or with his consort Uma (also called Parvati or Gauri).

Among the finest works of art in the Valley are the stone Uma-Maheshvara steles depicting Shiva and Uma in fond companionship at their residence atop Mount Kailash. They have almost all been stolen (cf. the examples at Masan Ghat, Bhaktapur, pl. 53, and the Kumbheshvar temple, pls. 29/30). One knowledgeable person wrote in 1963 that these statues are “found in hundreds spread over the entire length and breadth of the Valley,” 1 but today there are at most two dozen. The few remaining Uma-Maheshvara statues (for example, pl. 51) are in great danger.

Shiva’s creative power is stressed above all in the abstract representation of him as a lingam. The lingam, a phallic symbol, is a short stone pillar rounded at the top. It is set within a flattened bowl or plate, the yoni, a symbol of the female sexual organ. The lingam in the yoni is an ancient fertility symbol of the Indian cultural world, having perhaps arisen within the archaic cults of the early period, possibly when the Great Mothers still held sway over the world. Thousands of lingams exist all over India, and all over Nepal as well.

Particularly beautiful are the lingams that show Shiva’s face on all four sides (the chaturmukha = “four-faced” lingams; cf. the lingams from the temple courtyards of Pashupatinath, pls. 37, 62).

1 Krishna DEVA in “Images of Nepal”, p. 35: a superb photo documentation that, even though first published in 1984, had already been compiled in 1963, a fact that makes it particularly valuable today.
9, 10. DESTROYED in attempted theft. The famous Ekmukha Shivalingam of Pashupatinath, dating to the 6th century, was destroyed by cutting off the nose during an unsuccessful theft attempt in 1987.
Even the central cult image in the inner sanctum of the Pashupatinath temple is such a four-faced lingam. Whereas this statue is probably safe from theft for all time, the same can unfortunately not be said of the other four-faced lingams in the Kathmandu Valley. They are preferred objects of theft (as the many examples in the photo documentation clearly show: pls. 37/38, 39/40, 57-60, 61, 62, 63).

The lingam that by common consent was Nepal’s most beautiful bears the god’s face on only one side: the Ekmukha Lingam from the 6th century that looks down from the raised terrace above the east bank of the Bagmati River onto the temple complex of Pashupatinath opposite (pl. 9).

This statue, representative of the noblest and most consummate art of the Gupta period, has survived several attempts of theft up to now. During one, in the winter of 1984/85, the stone yoni in which it stood was reduced to fragments. The statue was later placed on a concrete socle that is as massive as it is hideous (pl. 131).

Again the question must be asked who commissioned such a renowned work of art to be stolen, one known to every student of the subject, and reproduced in many books. And what did that person propose to do with it? Lock it up in a safe or depository and then, when no one was looking, take a stolen peek at it? What a perverse fate for the image of a god that has been worshipped now for more than one thousand five hundred years! Now this masterpiece has lost its beauty and dignity forever. For when the latest attempted theft failed (the burglars tried to saw the god’s face off the pillar with a stone saw!), the enraged thieves cut off the image’s nose with the blow of a hammer (cf. pl. 10).

2. Narayana

Hardly any less frequent in the Kathmandu Valley than the statues of Shiva are those of Vishnu, the great protector and saviour of mankind. The cult of Narayana, as he is called in Nepal, also goes back to olden times. Some of the finest statues of him date to the early, “classical” era of Nepalese art, to the Licchavi period spanning the 3rd to 9th centuries.

North of Bhaktapur stands what is probably the oldest Vishnu shrine in the country: the temple of Changu Narayana. In the courtyard of this temple may still be found today a number of stone sculptures that, famed far beyond Nepal’s borders, are among the most masterful statues that Nepal has ever created.

They show Narayana as a mighty ruler riding on his mount, the divine bird Garuda, as a man-lion in his incarnation Narasimha, as Trivikrama (“he who bestrides the world in three steps”) and as the Lord of the Universe (Vishvarupa).

For those familiar with the theft of art in Nepal it is a source of wonder that these masterworks have up to now not been stolen. In my opinion this can only be due to one reason: not to the one policeman who has been going about his lonely rounds in Changu Narayana ever since thefts began to occur there frequently, but rather to the fact that Changu Narayana is one of the very few sacred sites of the Kathmandu Valley about whose art much has been written and published (with photos) by scholars of

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2 For example, B. ARAN, pl. 10; BANGDEL, pl. 92; DEVA, pl. 53A; RAY, pl. 44; SINGH, p. 175.
11. STOLEN: This beautiful sculpture of the god Vishnu was stolen in January 1985 from Kotsu Tol in Pharping Village. h.: 1.00 m. 17th century. Cf. below pls. 47 ff.
Photo: 8.5.84.
Nepal, India and the West.

It is only in this manner that these masterpieces became known of and renowned abroad – and this, I would say, protects them to a certain extent from thieves, who might otherwise be expected to strike at any time.

Opinions diverge on the matter. I shall return to the question in the epilogue “Endangered Art” (pp. 165 ff.).

Much more frequent than the early masterworks in the style of Changu Narayana are the statues of Vishnu that have been preserved from the later, the Malla period, the next period of flowering of Newar artistry (13th-17th centuries).

Narayana is portrayed in a wide range of forms during this period. Statues of him are frequently found in niches above enclosed pools of water and in the walls of public fountains and washing sites, the dharas (New.: hiti). The protective god purifies and sacralizes the water, the source of all life. In this function, he is often associated with the Nagas, the serpent rulers and protectors of underground riches and treasures. They protectively encircle the god with a many-headed aureole of serpent bodies.

Among Narayana’s many forms, one stands out as being the “classical” one for the Kathmandu Valley. The god stands erect, with four arms that contain the attributes of his power: mace, flaming discus, conch and lotus flower; he is accompanied to his right by Lakshmi, his consort, to his left by Garuda, the bird-man that is his mount.

A sublimely beautiful statue which shows Narayana with Lakshmi and Garuda – and which I regard as being very much at risk by reason of its beauty and its isolated location – is situated in an open field north of the village of Sankhu (pl. 55). A recent visit to the site revealed that the main statue is still in place, but that the two images of the goddesses to his left and right have been stolen.

The massive theft of art objects is now causing large gaps among the statues of Narayana. Among the most painful losses are the stolen images from Bhim Dhara in Bhaktapur (pl. 56) and Kumbheshvar Dhara in Patan (pl. 33), the previously mentioned Lakshmi/Narayana statue from Bhaktapur (pl. 2), as well as the Vishnu statues from Kotsu Tol, Pharping (pls. 11, 47 ff.) and Panchdeval Chowk, Pashupatinath (pl. 70).

3. HARI-HARA

A noteworthy feature peculiar to the statuary art of Nepal are the so-called Hari-Hara images, sculptures in which the two major Hindu gods Shiva and Vishnu are united into a single figure.

In the traditionally tolerant religious atmosphere of Nepal, where war has never been waged towards confessional ends, Hinduism and Buddhism have developed alongside each other in peace for over two thousand years, and attempts have even been made to join the two main strands of Hinduism, Shaivism and Vaishnavism. The Shiva-Vishnu statues are an expression of this tendency.

One splendid work of this type was stolen several years ago from Lele, a village on the southern border of the Kathmandu Valley. Lele once was home to a number of the loveliest and oldest statues of gods in Nepal, including an Uma-Maheshvara statue that is said to have been the most beautiful of its kind in the Valley, in the forest shrine
12. THREATENED: Hari-Hara, a sculpture which unites the great Hindu deities Shiva (right half, with trident, flaming halo and a garland of human heads, and his mount, the bull Nandi) and Vishnu (left half, with conch shell, floral halo and flower garland, and his mount, Garuda). The gods are accompanied by their consorts, Parvati/Durga and Lakshmi with lion and tortoise as their respective mounts. h.: 1.18 m; w.: 0.75 m. This magnificent image was stolen from Lele village, but it was recovered and is now in the police station at Hanuman Dhoka, Kathmandu. Cf. below pl. 158. Photo: 3.4.85.
of Tileshvar. Lele, like most of the villages of the Kathmandu Valley, had all of its treasures stolen in the 1970s. There is nothing left in the way of art to see; only piles of rubble.

The Hari-Hara statue of Lele, however, has survived, since in its case the police found the stolen article and have it in their safekeeping. For many years now it has been standing watch at the entrance to the police station on Hanuman Dhoka Square in Kathmandu (pls. 12, 158), somewhat out of place but probably secure.

The statue represents Shiva and Vishnu united, with the different characters of the two deities brought out through many details – for instance, the chain of skulls on Shiva’s half, and the garland of flowers on Vishnu’s. To their sides are their respective consorts, the goddesses Parvati and Lakshmi. Each deity is recognizable from his or her mount: lion (Durga/Parvati), bull (Shiva), Garuda (Vishnu) and tortoise (Lakshmi).

The powerfully beautiful statue provides an idea of the splendid art that has been destroyed or stolen in Lele alone.

This sculpture, like others reproduced in this book, and like so many works of Nepalese art, has never before found its way into print, that is, described and photographed for the reading public.

It may serve, then, as an example of what a wealth of unknown treasures Nepal’s art would have held in store for scholars and connoisseurs had not such treasures all fallen prey to Western cravings and been cast to all the winds.

If the statue from Lele still survives, the same can unfortunately not be said of a similar and far more well-known statue. The Hari-Hara statue from the sacred springs of Balaju, a work of art dating to the 9th century that likewise represented the united deities together with their wives, was broken to pieces in the autumn of 1984 during an attempted theft and destroyed forever (cf. the before-after photos, pls. 31/32).

4. Devi: The Great Goddess

Those devoted to the Great Goddess can meet her with a thousand different faces in the art of the Kathmandu Valley. She has a thousand names and a thousand forms; her true form is not easy to grasp.

Guhyeshvari, the “mistress of secrets,” is also Gauri, is Uma, Sati and Parvati; she is Annapurna and Baglamukhi, Taleju, Bhagvati and Kumari, is Chamunda, Durga and Kali.

But behind all the names and forms is veiled the enigmatic face of the One: the Great Goddess who gives and takes all life.

“They are all One.” That’s what a sadhu in Pashupatinath told me.

The goddess in all of her aspects and temperaments attends upon the life of the Nepalese. As Sarasvati, she provides knowledge and wisdom; as Lakshmi, health and wealth; as Hariti, she protects children from disease; as Baglamukhi, she wards off death by poison.

She is Ratri, who spreads out her dark cloak as goddess of the night, and she is Usha, the goddess of the dawn’s red, exactly the same as the rosy-fingered Eos of ancient Greece, to whose world of gods Nepal still stands in a much closer relationship
13. THREATENED: The impressive image of the goddess Durga slaying the buffalo demon, from Kotsu Tol, Pharping. 14th century, h: 0.94 m. It has been endangered ever since the fine image of Vishnu (pl. 11) was stolen in the nearby vicinity. Photo: 26.10.63.
than to the modern world.

They are all One – the benevolent goddesses and the mild ones, the endowers of wealth and blessings and the mighty mistresses of life and death, whether Durga or Kali, the goddess of time and death.

The Guhyeshvari temple is located on the banks of the Bagmati River where once the yoni of the goddess fell to earth – in the immediate vicinity of the large Shiva temple of Pashupatinath. It is as sacred as the latter, as forbidden to every outsider, and even fuller of mystery. For here is the centre of female power, the original destructive and creative power of the Great Goddess.

Her power in Nepal is without question on a par with that of Shiva or Vishnu. Those who doubt this know nothing of the Dasain festival in honour of Durga – Nepal's greatest festival second to none – or of Diwali, the beautiful festival of lights in honour of Lakshmi.

They should once watch the crowds of pilgrims panting their way up the steep hill to the temple of the occult goddess Vajrayogini near Sankhu, or the dance of the Nine Durgas in Bhaktapur. Or they should be in attendance when the sadhus of Pashupatinath perform their daily celebration in the evening at the small Kali shrine right next to the cremation sites; they should hear the wild beat of the drum when the pyres flare directly in front of their eyes. Then they will taste the power of the Great Goddess.

The image of Durga in human form, Kumari, the living goddess, is what protects the Nepalese and annually endows their king with renewed sovereignty.

The goddess still has great power in Nepal. Her worshippers are numerous, and a large number of works of art have paid tribute to her in both her benevolent and terrifying aspects.

4.1 Above all there is Durga, the Great One, who, with many weapons in her many hands, kills the buffalo demon that lays waste to the world. In this form, as Taleju, she protected the palaces of the Malla kings in the medieval period. Mysterious and inaccessible, the Taleju temple towers as the highest structure over the temple pinnacles of the old royal palace of Kathmandu.

Durga as Bhagvati is the popular goddess of Nepalese folk belief. Her act of leading the godly to victory over the forces of evil is celebrated by the Nepalese every year with great zeal during the Dasain festival. Hundreds of buffaloes are ritually slaughtered on this occasion in honour of Durga.

The power of the goddess and her rootedness in popular belief do not prevent her images from being stolen. One of the most horrifying examples of the recklessness with which art thieves go about their work is the previously mentioned theft of the gilt Durga statuettes from the torana of the Taleju-Bhavani temple in the royal palace of Patan. The torana was stripped bare in the 1970s. Twelve precious bronzes from the 16th century have been stolen from this source alone (cf. the before-after photos, pls. 83/84).

A number of less recent books show this torana while it was still at the height of its splendour.3 Today the many visitors that daily wander through the

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3 One example is the reproduction in DEVA, pl. 138 B.
courtyards of the royal palace gaze with astonishment at the plate with the many holes in it, nothing concerning which is written in their travel guides. Likewise in the 1970s, the small gilt bronze of the eighteen-armed Durga shown in the act of slaying the buffalo demon was stolen from the royal bathing pond in Sundari Chowk, the neighbouring palace courtyard (pl. 107). Of the remaining Durga images in the Valley, one particularly beautiful and little-known one may be singled out: the Durga from Kotsu Tol in Pharping (pl. 13). I regard this statue as being at risk, ever since the fine Vishnu statue (pl. 11) was stolen in the nearby vicinity in January 1985.

4.2 Kali ("the Black One") exercises control as the goddess of death over the forces of destruction. In order to summon such power, a potent sacrifice is required: a blood sacrifice. Animals – buffaloes and cocks and goats – are thus offered to her at the Kali shrines in the Valley, particularly on Tuesdays and Saturdays (which are ruled by the malefic planetary gods Mars and Saturn respectively). The goddess is always sacrificed to with male, never female, animals. Far more potent than such animal sacrifices is another sacrifice, the most costly of all, and one practically forcing the goddess to yield her power: the sacrifice of humans.

Of the many tourists who daily squeeze their way onto the southern bridge over the Bagmati at Pashupatinath in order to photograph cremations at Arya Ghat from close up (which the Nepalese suffer with admirable aplomb), probably none suspects that the small temple right next to them, innocently identified as the Parvati temple in guidebooks, in reality is an old Kali temple, where annually, on the full-moon day of Baisakh (April/May), so I was told, the two neighbouring villages of Deopatan and Jayabhagreshvari used to bring a human sacrifice, a young man, to the goddess, "until the kings outlawed it."

The sacrifice was brought from within the community. It went around turn by turn, affecting one and all. Every family eventually had to bring the sacrifice to their goddess on behalf of the community, be it presently or in five or ten years' time.

But these are cults that go back not only to another time but also to another country, to a darker India. They are, in fact, not native to Nepal and, like suttee, have never gained popularity here.

4.3 Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and good fortune, is very popular in Nepal – she who loves and wishes well of everyone. One does well to worship her! The lovely festival of lights, Diwali, the last great festival in the Nepalese annual cycle before the cold winter sets in, is celebrated in her honour. In spite of her popularity, statues of Lakshmi are not that frequent in the Valley. This is because Lakshmi is a house deity. Her image is to be found

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4 See the description in DEVA, p. 43.
5 I do not know whether this is only so in Nepal, or whether in all cultures that make use of blood sacrifices only male victims are offered. What did Abraham sacrifice in the Bible?
not in the temples but on house altars, together with those of Narayana and Ganesha.
Nothing shows Nepal's vibrancy of faith more clearly than the fact that every house in the country without exception contains a house altar within its walls. Whether an expensively furnished chapel or merely the colourful reproduction of a god in the niche of a clay wall – in front of each of these thousands of images lights are lit daily, in the morning and in the evening, and flowers and sticks of fragrant incense are offered to the gods. The latter are respectfully greeted with bowed head during the daily offering, with folded hands lifted to the forehead.
Of the images of Lakshmi that can be found in the open, two may be mentioned here: One is the small statue at Pashupatinath (pl. 170), which is worshipped by many persons as Lakshmi, and by others as Parvati or as Sarasvati. She is in the end simply Devi: the Goddess.
Even though this work of art has already been publicized, it is nevertheless at risk, in my opinion, due to its age (9th century) and due to its radiant beauty.
The other image, though, is scarcely known. It presents Lakshmi in a very old form, one rarely found in Nepal: Gaja-Lakshmi, accompanied by elephants that shower water upon the goddess from raised trunks (pl. 181). Only one other such image is known of in the whole of the Kathmandu Valley. It goes back 1,800 years, whereas the work of art presented here is likely to be only some 400 years old.
The latter is hidden away in an old and nowadays completely run-down fountain site in Bhaktapur. Ever since the beautiful statue of the goddess Bhrikuti, shown bearing two lotus flowers, was stolen right next to it (pl. 72), I have been expecting the theft of the Gaja-Lakshmi statue to occur at any time.

4.4 Sarasvati, the goddess of wisdom and the protectress of the arts, is among the gods who are worshipped not only by Hindus but also by Buddhists. Her images are not terrifying like those of the grim Kali, but of an appealing girlish charm, which the Newar artists of the Kathmandu Valley (truly rich in examples of girlish charm) have always understood how to represent in a masterful way (cf. pls. 5, 173, 183).
She sits smiling on a swan or a lotus throne, with one foot freely pendent, and the other bent underneath her; in her lap she holds the vina (a lute).
It is a fact I find remarkable, and a sign of an old, mature culture, that in Nepal the realm of knowledge and wisdom should be assigned to the female, not to the male.
In our world view we know this only from the early classical cultures, from the period when Pallas Athena and the Hagia Sophia were still worshipped,
after which time Western knowledge degenerated to the point that the female sex was assumed to suffer from a biologically conditioned intellectual inferiority.

Nepal, like many old cultures of Asia, saw, and still sees, things differently. Although the goddess of wisdom has always enjoyed great respect in Nepal, and at one time many of her images adorned the Valley, such images have today become rare. Their beauty proved to be their undoing. Perhaps it is not accidental that nowadays the goddess that personifies wisdom should be leaving the country along with the arts that she once protected. That she is not leaving of her own accord is made clear from the previously described desecration of the Sarasvati statue in Pharping (cf. pls. 5, 6).

4.5 No account of Nepal’s gods would be complete without mentioning Kumari, the living goddess.

Here again, we are dealing with something that is only to be found in Nepal: Female temple servants, vestal virgins whose lives were dedicated to the gods – such an institution was known in ancient Rome, and it existed in Grecian as well as in Indian, and probably in sundry other cultures. But that a living virgin should be raised to the status of a goddess and worshipped as such is, I believe, something unique to Nepal.

The girl that is chosen to become Kumari must be without bodily defect, and of exquisite beauty. But that alone is not enough. She is also subjected to special rites to test her psychological suitability as a goddess. These rites are secret. Buffaloes, it is rumoured, are gorily slaughtered in front of her. Kumari must not bat an eyelash. The girl who passes the tests is solemnly introduced into her temple lodgings on Hanuman Gate Square in Kathmandu.

There the faithful go to worship in her presence, to bring offerings to her and to be blessed by the living goddess, the image of Durga in human form. Whoever has the good luck to attend the spectacular Kumari procession during the Indra Jatra festival will witness an event catapulting him back centuries, to the period of old and distant cultures, here resurrected before his very eyes.

The ever increasing excitement of the large throngs of people who have assembled at dusk on the steps of the temples surrounding the old royal palace of Kathmandu announces that the huge temple chariot of Kumari comes around the corner, drawn by sixty men tugging at ropes as thick as their arms. Everyone presses back to avoid being too dangerously close to the enormous wooden wheel disks. And in the glow of the burning torches that illuminate the advancing darkness, all eyes are fixed upon the goddess. She sits enthroned high above the throng, her face unmoved and unstirred beneath the heavy golden crown, her third eye, the eye of divine wisdom, painted in red and gold on her forehead. Everyone greets her reverently, with folded hands raised to foreheads, as the divine image passes by and then disappears into the darkness of the night. Thus the gods are still alive in Nepal, in the middle of the people.
Kumari’s period of office in the temple on Hanuman Gate Square ends with her first menstruation. Afterwards the girl returns to her family; the money and gifts that the faithful have offered to her remain in her possession. And even though she might be expected to make a good match for someone, all the more so for being a girl of choice beauty, she usually remains unmarried. For the people believe that the man who deflowers Kumari will die an early death. The royal Kumari of Kathmandu is not the only one in the Valley. The cities of Patan and Bhaktapur, along with a number of villages and castes, all have their own Kumari, whom they worship with various rites. Images of Kumari, like those of Lakshmi, are not that frequent in the Valley. I am sure that several significant statues of the goddess may be found in the Kumari courtyards of the three old royal palaces. But this is only speculation. For the mysteries that surround the cult of this esoteric goddess are strictly guarded, and the Kumari courtyards will forever be closed to me, a non-Hindu.

Thus the outsider must content himself with residual Kumari images, such as the one on the south wall of the Maiti Devi temple in Kathmandu, which is, exceptionally, open to everyone (pl. 185). I fear for the safety of this image, one of the last of its kind, after almost all the bronzes in Nepal have by now been stolen. But perhaps the respect that Nepalese pay to this goddess may for once prove to be an effective protection.

5. Surya, the Sun God

Surya, the sun god, is among the oldest gods worshipped in the Kathmandu Valley. His images show him in his chariot – drawn by seven winged horses and steered by the charioteer Aruna – in the company of Usha and Pratyusha, the deities of the dawn, who put to flight the powers of darkness with arrows they aim downwards from their chariot.

Other statues represent him as the chief of the Navagraha, the nine gods of the planets. The days of the week are named in Nepal after these planet deities. Their images adorn the walls of temples, and they have been worshipped for ages to ward off disease and misfortune, and to preserve health and well-being.

The symbols of Surya on all his images are the two lotus flowers at the height of bloom that he holds in his hands. In this he appears similar to Chandra, the god of the moon. The latter’s chariot, however, is drawn not by steeds but by swans (pls. 15, 180).

The statues of Surya and Chandra have not been spared the fate of the other images of Nepal’s gods: they are becoming increasingly rare, and are being increasingly
14. THREATENED ART:
Surya, the sun god, bearing two lotus flowers, on his celestial chariot, which is drawn by seven winged horses. Bhimsen Dhara, Kathmandu. Photo: 25.4.84.

15. THREATENED ART:
The images of Chandra, the moon god, are quite similar to those of Surya, but Chandra’s chariot is drawn by swans instead of horses. This small stone sculpture comes from the Bhagvati temple of Nala. Photo: 1.5.86.
stolen.

Their likenesses, for instance, are today no longer reflected in the still waters of the forest shrine of Shekha Narayana. Both statues were stolen – first that of the sun god (pl. 68), and then that of the moon god opposite him (pl. 119). Stolen, too, is the Surya statue of Sougal Tol in Patan, which was almost a thousand years old. The iron rods which were used to protect it were unable to keep it from being stolen (cf. “before-after” photos, pls. 23/24).

There was a still older statue of the sun god, for which no pains should have been spared to keep it in Nepal, but which likewise was stolen. The stone sculpture (pl. 67) stood in a secluded small temple near the village of Kopugaon in the southern part of the Kathmandu Valley. This image, which dates to the 9th century, is above all significant because the high boots Surya is wearing clearly indicate that the original Persian features of the sun cult were carried over to the Nepalese context. The beauty of the statue lies in the harmonious blend of the old Persian with the Indian style of the late Gupta period, in which the attire closely contours the body.

The joy at having discovered this unique work, which hitherto was totally unknown, was not fated to last long. Two years later the image was stolen (cf. “before-after” photos, pls. 25/26). In what museum, or what private collection, has this work of art, without question part of Nepal’s cultural heritage, ended up?

6. GANESHA

Our survey of some of Nepal's Hindu deities will end with surely the most popular among them, namely Ganesha, the elephant-headed god, the son of Shiva and Parvati.

No one has ever counted the temples and shrines that are dedicated to him. In Kathmandu alone they may number well over a hundred. Each city quarter has its larger and many other small Ganesha shrines; one may be found on practically every corner. His picture adorns thousands of house altars. Ganesha is ever present in the religious life of the Nepalese. He is, in spite of his martial appearance, a kindly deity, whose support is indispensable for day-to-day life. He is the god of domestic contentment and success in all affairs of business and profession, for he has the special power to remove all obstacles that stand in the way of some goal.

Thus it is not surprising that the Nepalese should queue up in front of the Ganesha shrines with their offerings every morning to seek his help for the day.

And here, after all the accounts of theft, there is for once something pleasant to report: Ganesha statues are hardly ever stolen. There are, to be sure, exceptions. The thefts of the Ganesha sculptures from Chochhen Tol (cf. pl. 78) and from the torana of the Chuma Ganesha temple in Bhaktapur are examples. By and large, however, it can be said that Ganesha statues are fairly safe.

What is the likely reason for this?

9 The image of the sun god at Shekha Narayana is one of the few pieces that have recently been recovered by police and reinstalled at their original setting. In October 1996, however, it was found stolen again.
The reason, in my opinion, is obvious. The statues of a paunchy, elephant-headed god (cf. pl. 16) are not in demand in the Western art market. They do not conform to Western aesthetic tastes; they are not something one would put in one's living room.

My assumption is bolstered by the fact that the statues of two other deities are likewise hardly ever stolen. These are, first, the monkey god Hanuman, the military leader of the Ramayana epic; and, secondly, Bhairav, the wrathful manifestation of Shiva, statues of whom – potbellied, garlanded with a chain of skulls, his teeth flashing (cf. pl. 17) – are not likely to be any more appealing to Western tastes.

In the West, the statues of Nepal's gods are constantly judged according to aesthetic criteria – age, beauty and artistic mastery – and a monetary value is assigned on this basis. But in all of this there is one thing missing, the decisive factor, of ideal import, which for the Nepalese is in itself the value of such images: the fact that they represent a concrete basis for visualizing the good or evil superhuman powers that rule over their lives. Since the West no longer knows the gods, it has no idea of this

16, 17. Few are the gods whose images are rarely stolen. Among them are Ganesha (left) and Bhairav (right), the wrathful manifestation of Lord Shiva. The reason seems to be that statues of a potbellied, elephant-headed god or of a ferocious deity garlanded with human heads apparently do not conform to the aesthetic taste of Western art markets.

18. ENDANGERED: Many old images of the Buddha have been stolen from Nepal, the country of his birth. This statue from Pashupatinath, sunk deeply into the ground on the bank of the sacred river Bagmati, dates to the 9th century. In recent years it has survived several attempts of theft. Height (above the ground) 1.12 m.
Photo: 31.12.83.
CHAPTER 6

THE THREATENED WORLD OF NEPAL'S GODS – BUDDHAS AND BODHISATTVA
I. The Buddha

Nepal is the country in which two and a half thousand years ago the Buddha, the Enlightened One, was born. To be sure, at the time the present state of Nepal did not yet exist; it was created only two hundred years ago by the conquest of the Gurkhas. But in the south of the territory of present-day Nepal there lies Lumbini, the birthplace of Gautama Siddhartha of the Shakya clan – the man whose teaching would leave its impression on all of Asia. Today this teaching is in the process of gaining a foothold in the countries of the West and thereby changing them profoundly.

Buddhism was a prominent component of Nepalese culture from the beginning. And in contrast to India, the country of its initial diffusion, where it was wiped out by the invasion of Islam, it has remained alive in Nepal down through the millennia and up to the present day.

As in all the countries of Asia that it affected, so in Nepal, too, the serene teaching proved to be fertile soil for the flourishing of the arts. Everywhere in the Kathmandu Valley, particularly in Swayambhunath, the great stupa of Newar Buddhists, and in Bodnath, the centre of Tibetan Buddhism, in the old city of Patan (whose many old monasteries makes it the most “Buddhist” of the three cities of the Kathmandu Valley), and even at such preeminently Hindu sites as the great Shiva shrine of Pashupatinath – everywhere we find the images of the Enlightened One, along with the manifold symbolic representations that are intended to bring out his deep teaching in bold form.

Let us begin with the Buddha Shakyamuni himself, the “wise one from the clan of the Shakyas.” A few images of him have been preserved even from early centuries. The oldest of them, the statue in Chabahil, dating to the 5th century, has been stolen, and the one next in chronological order, a statue of the standing Buddha in Bangemudha, in Kathmandu, is today secured against theft by heavy iron clamps (pls. 164, 165).

Perhaps the most beautiful of these early Buddha images, however, can be admired today, as it has been for over one thousand years, out in an open setting. This is the statue of the standing Buddha at Arya Ghat in Pashupatinath - an exceedingly fine work in the style of the late Gupta period (pl. 18).

It is remarkable, and a vivid example of the tolerance that has been a constant mark of Nepal’s religions, that this old statue of the Buddha has for so many hundreds of years stood on a spot dedicated since time untold to the cult of Shiva.

Other early Buddha images of like beauty may above all be found in Swayambhunath. In a later period, such statues often adorned the toranas above the temple entrances in the inner courtyards of Buddhist monasteries; there the Buddha is usually no longer depicted in a standing but in a lotus position and accompanied by his favourite disciples.

It goes without saying that the theft of art has not spared the Buddhist shrines any more than it has those of the Hindus. Practically all of the more than one hundred monasteries in Patan have had all their treasures stolen.

One exception is the Hiranyavarna Mahavihar in Patan, introduced to tourists as the “Golden Temple.” This monastery is a shrine truly worth visiting - the only one to
have so carefully secured its treasures that theft has been unable to make inroads in it.\(^1\)

An abundance of medieval Nepalese art can still be viewed there, including many noteworthy metal statues and what is probably the loveliest and perhaps most valuable torana in the entire Kathmandu Valley. This torana is made of pure silver and masterfully portrays the Buddha and his disciples surrounded by the Dhyanibuddhas (pl. 92).

### 2. The Five Dhyanibuddhas

The Buddha himself did not teach belief in God or gods. “Be a light unto yourself, be a refuge unto yourself and seek no others.”

The pious disciples, however, were not to be hindered in according divine status to the master shortly after his death. And in Nepal, where the teaching had close contacts with Hinduism and underwent a strong Tantric influence, we can see in later centuries the development of a genuine Buddhist pantheon with hundreds of deities.

Even in the earlier period, in the first centuries of the Christian era, the image of the founder of the Buddhist religion retreated into the background, making way for manifold abstractly symbolic conceptions of the Buddha. The Buddha himself was regarded as only one of an endless series of Enlightened Ones who appear at different periods to proclaim the teaching.

Thus the notion of the Buddhas of the three ages arose. Dipankara, the “Bringer of Light,” was the predecessor of Shakyamuni, the Buddha of our age, who will be followed in turn by Maitreya, the “Great Loving One.” All three enjoy great veneration in Nepal.

More significant for the art of Nepal, however, was another of these conceptions of the Buddha: the five “Dhyani”-(meditation)-Buddhas.

These Buddhas represent the four cardinal directions and the zenith. Thus the all-pervasiveness of the Enlightened Ones extends not only throughout time but also throughout space.

The Dhyanibuddhas have been recurrently depicted in the art of Nepal down through the centuries. Even today images of them are painted over the entrance to Buddhist households. They are most frequently found on the four sides of chaityas, stone votive stupas that dot the Valley by the hundreds, having been set up by the faithful over a period of many centuries.

One comes across the Dhyanibuddhas wherever one goes in the Kathmandu Valley:

AKSHOBHYA reigns over the east. His throne animal is the elephant, his symbol the vajra, the diamond sceptre. He displays the gesture of earth-touching. His colour (on paintings and thangkas) is blue.

RATNASAMBHAVA is the Buddha of the south. His throne animal is the horse, his gesture that of wish-granting; his symbol is the jewel (ratna). His colour is yellow, like that of the sun at midday.

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1 In the autumn of 1994, however, even from this place the first precious images were stolen, after the thieves had managed to climb over the roofs at night.
19. AMOGHASIDDHI (l.) Dhyani Buddha of the north, in Nepal always depicted under a many-headed serpent hood, displays the gesture of protection (abhaya-mudra), while AMITABHA (r.), Dhyani Buddha of the west, holds his hands in dhyani-mudra, the gesture of meditation. Detail of a chaitya from Itum Bahal, Kathmandu. Photo: 18.2.85.
AMITABHA is the western Dhyanibuddha (cf. pl. 174). His throne animal is the peacock; he displays the dhyani-mudra, the gesture of meditation. His symbol is the padma, the lotus. His colour is the red of the setting sun.

AMOGHASIDDHI is the Buddha of the north. He is always depicted in Nepal seated under a many-headed serpent hood. His colour is green, his throne animal is the bird-man Garuda. His symbol is the double-vajra, and he displays the abhaya-mudra, the gesture of fearlessness and protection.

In the middle, finally, is enthroned VAIROCHANA, the Buddha of the centre. He is not shown on chaityas, being present only symbolically. We do find him, however, on wall paintings or thangkas, there depicted with four heads, like the Hindu Brahma, as the ruler over the four cardinal directions. His throne animal is the lion, his symbol the chakra, the eight-spoked Wheel of the Teaching. He holds his hands in the gesture of proclaiming the teaching (dharmachakra-mudra). His colour is white, like the undispersed sunlight from which all other colours emerge.

The representations of the five Dhyanibuddhas are deeply symbolic, far more so than appearance would suggest. Each of them figuratively personifies a different component of the comprehensive enlightened consciousness of a Buddha – a consciousness that is so encompassing in its wisdom that we would have no notion of it were it not brought within our conceptual reach by being divided up into its components parts, each of which is represented by one of the Dhyanibuddhas.2

The chaityas with images of the Dhyanibuddhas are likely to adorn the Kathmandu Valley for many years to come. Solidly constructed, these stone monuments have up to now proved to be heavy and massive enough to avoid succumbing to theft. The figures of the Buddha may here and there have been broken from the surface of the votive stupas, but the existence of the chaityas themselves has remained largely unthreatened.

3. THE BODHISATTVA LOKESVARA

Nepal, like the whole of the Himalaya, and like Tibet, China, Japan and Korea, is among the countries of Northern, or Mahayana, Buddhism. The division of Buddhism into a northern and a southern (Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam) branch goes back to the first century of the Christian era.

During that period the Bodhisattva ideal, the hallmark of Northern Buddhism, arose.

Whereas in the southern schools liberation from world and rebirth was the goal of one’s faith, the north understood the Buddha’s teaching in a more comprehensive sense: Not only the individual should be freed, but all living beings should enjoy liberation from a base existence, and all should be led to the goal – to perfection and to enlightenment.

The ideal of this teaching was the Bodhisattva (“bodhi”-enlightenment, “sattva”-being): an enlightened being for whom his own deliverance is only a preliminary goal, a

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2 The deeply symbolic meaning of the five Dhyanibuddhas has probably never been explained in such crystal-clear language as was done by Lama Anagarika GOVINDA in his book "Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism".
first stage to becoming actively involved in helping the world, until such time as the last living being attains his rightful spiritual place, perfection and enlightenment.

Nepal regards the Bodhisattva Lokeshvara as the embodiment of this truly universal ideal. In ancient India, he was called Avalokiteshvara, "the lord of the kindly lowered gaze." In Tibet, whose protector he is, his name is Chenrezi. The Dalai Lama is revered as his earthly incarnation. In Nepal, he became the great Buddhist god of grace, the Bodhisattva of compassion, who takes pity on all. To him, here as in Tibet, is consecrated the most famous of all mantras, the OM MANI PADME HUM, the words with which he is invoked hundreds of thousands of times throughout the Himalayas every day.

His early images in Nepal are of classical beauty. As an example may be mentioned the famous Lokeshvara statue at Katesimbu in Kathmandu. The god of grace stands atop its lotus socle, fixed in a stately tribhanga ("three bends") posture. The smiling countenance with its downwardly cast glance radiates a feeling of loving attention from within a state of meditative trance. Although, mirabile dictu, this image has escaped theft so far, its beauty can no longer be admired. To safeguard it against theft, it has been put in a glass cage and behind heavy iron bars, so that now it is hardly visible at all.

A whole series of such early statues may be found in the Kathmandu Valley. All are in danger. The Lokeshvara statue of Pachali Ghat on the Bagmati River has been stolen, the theft of the statue at Swayambhunath has already been mentioned, and the Lokeshvara image at Gahiti in Patan is today, following five unsuccessful attempted thefts, mantled in a thick layer of cement (pl. 179).

The cult of Lokeshvara has remained popular in Nepal up to the present; a wide variety of forms have arisen. The paintings at the temple of the White Macchendranath in Kathmandu show Lokeshvara in 108 forms. This temple, a much visited one in the heart of the old city, once displayed splendid sculptures on the toranas that adorned its walls. Art theft has in the meanwhile taken its toll:

The southern torana was stolen in its entirety, figures were removed whole from the northern and western toranas (pls. 101, 102), and only three gilt bronzes are left on the toranas on the front side of the building in the east to provide an idea of what masterful art has been robbed (pls. 88, 89). The priests had in the end no other recourse but to set the entire temple behind iron bars. Nothing more remains of its beauty.

A further statue of Lokeshvara was stolen from the courtyard of this temple in the summer of 1984. It stood on a pillar rising high over the courtyard, but that was not security enough (pls. 64 ff.). The large metal statue from the 18th century depicted the deity in a beautiful and uncommon form: as Lokeshvara Simhanada, "Lokeshvara of the lion's roar." In this form he is worshipped as the great redeemer. He is sitting on a roaring lion and holds a combined lotus and sword in his left hand, and in his right a trident around which a serpent is coiled (pl. 66).

In the case of this theft, incidentally, the police surprised the perpetrators in the act, one of whom they were able to capture. The latter admitted that the gang had been

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3 See the photos of the Kathesimbu Lokeshvara in DEVA, pls. 98, 99.
4 The stolen torana and the sculptures have since been replaced by imitations.
5 Cf. the description of this statue by DEVA, p. 77.
promised 5,000 rupees (approximately $100) for their labours. The police have not revealed, however, who made that promise.

The statue was secured, and has since been returned to the priests. Nowadays it can be seen again, safeguarded at its site behind heavy iron belts and bars.

4. THE BODHISATTVA MANJUSHRI

Loving compassion such as embodied in Lokeshvara is only one of the qualities whose perfection in the end leads to enlightenment. The other one, just as important, is that of right knowledge, wisdom. For ignorance, incorrect knowledge or nonrecognition of the truth is, according to Buddhist teaching, the cause of all suffering. Knowledge must replace ignorance if the goal, enlightenment, is to be attained.

This aspect of Buddhist teaching is embodied in Manjushri, the Bodhisattva of wisdom. His symbols are the book, which he holds in his left hand, and the flaming sword, which rends the cloud of ignorance.

Images of him may not be as widespread as those of the popular Lokeshvara; still, in no Buddhist shrine are they missing.

A particularly fine representation shows him, in Tantric form with many arms, as Maha-Manjushri, in the centre of the eastern and western toranas of the small Ajima temple on the monastery hill of Swayambhunath (pl. 93). This small temple attracts many visitors, since Ajima (Hariti) resides there, the goddess who protects children from disease, particularly from smallpox. With its exquisitely beautiful works in metal that adorn its walls on all four sides, and particularly the masterful sculptures on its toranas, this temple is a veritable jewel of Nepalese art.

Today not much remains of its beauty. Not that its treasures have been stolen. But in order to keep them from being so, the toranas in the spring of 1987 were put behind iron bars of such sheer ugliness that the days of the temple’s beauty are gone (pl. 166/167).

It can thus be chalked up to the effects of art theft that today Nepalese art, even where it has not been stolen, is losing its sheen.

5. TARA, THE PROTECTRESS

Tara ("the star") is the female counterpart of the Bodhisattva Lokeshvara, and possibly even more popular and worshipped. The madonna of Buddhism is the kindly protectress and saviouress, who takes pity on all who are burdened by anxiety and need. There is no Buddhist household but has an image of her. In Nepal she is worshipped in many forms, of which the White and Green Taras are the best known.

As in the case of Sarasvati, Newar artists seized the opportunity provided by the image of a loving goddess of compassion to demonstrate their mastery in depicting female beauty. They created statues of Tara that are among the most lovely works of Nepalese art. It is no wonder that they can hardly be found any more in the Kathmandu Valley.
Whoever makes the trip to Nala, a small village east of the Kathmandu Valley, to see the 9th-century statue of Tara in front of the Bhagvati temple there – famed because it depicted female beauty to perfection, will be disappointed. The stone sculpture is today no longer in its original location. It has not been stolen, but moved inside the temple for fear of thieves (a fear all too justified) and is no longer shown to anyone.

A highpoint of Newar bronze casting was the life-size pair of Taras at Swayambhunath, opposite the west chapel of the great stupa (cover photo and pl. 184).

The beauty of these statues, the quality that gave them their unique radiance, lay in the fusion of female grace and sensual bodily form with meditative contemplation, the smiling faces directed towards the faithful onlooker, to whom the goddesses promised protection and solace with refuge-granting and wish-fulfilling gestures.

After one of the lotus flowers the goddess was holding was broken from her hand and made off with, radical measures were resorted to. The statues were placed behind heavy iron bars.

In this case too, therefore, nothing of the beauty of these famous images, which at one time enchanted many a visitor to Nepal, can be viewed today.

20. An ancient Buddhist chaitya, its socle secured with iron rods against theft. Thamel, Kathmandu.
SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

When, during a trip through the United States a number of years ago, the former chancellor of the Royal Nepal Academy, Professor Lain S. Bangdel, one of Nepal’s leading artists and art historians, and the author of the standard work “The Ancient Sculptures of Nepal”, pointed out to the directors of large museums for Asian art that items in their collections had not long before stood in the temples of his homeland, the reaction was always the same: an embarrassed shrug of the shoulders and the remark, “Prove it!”

Such proof, if asked for, can be furnished. The photos of the book are the first probative demonstration; others will follow.

The question, though, is whether the problem that has been outlined in this report is in fact merely one of provability, or whether it is not rather a matter of a much-needed fundamental change of attitude.

For over a hundred years now we Westerners have been engaged - sometimes with force, sometimes with superior purchasing power - in plundering the art treasures in the countries of the Third World. This is often done with such a sense of naturalness that we think it could not be otherwise.

One simple consideration shows that this is not so:

We ourselves preserve the heritage of our own past, keeping watch over our own culture’s works of art with all due loving attention. If someone laid hands on these treasures – say, the Mona Lisa in the Louvre – the act would obviously evoke a sense of outrage. The perpetrator would soon have Interpol on his trail.

Should we not concede to other peoples the same right we take for granted for ourselves, that of reverently preserving the artifacts of one’s own culture?

We may rest assured that the Nepalese are as much attached to the images of their gods as we are to our old masters.

Who can then with clear conscience place in his dwelling an old statue of a god from a foreign culture in the knowledge or supposition that it was stolen from a temple where it had been the object of veneration for centuries, from generation to generation down to the day it was looted? Can anyone delight in the beauty of a work of art that has come into his possession through theft, robbery or perhaps even homicide? Even if we ourselves did not commit such acts, do we not share the guilt for the sorrow caused those whose gods have been taken away from them?

Let it be stressed once again that in Nepal a vanished culture is not being plundered, such as occurred during the period of colonialism to the art treasures of ancient Egypt and Greece. Rather, a thriving culture is being robbed, and being deprived, as it were, of life and limb.

Is there any reason to be a party to this? Given all the sad experiences we have had,
should we be contributing to the process of extinguishing one more culture whose distinct nature we find fascinating? The cultures of the world are many in number and striking in their diversity; any one of them can learn much from the others. Are all these treasures to be lost?

"You're on the wrong track," I hear someone saying. "We're not robbing; we're only protecting. We must take away their art, because they themselves don't take care of it, and we can look after it much better!"

This argument, so frequently heard from the mouths of Westerners, leaves a bad aftertaste, however, once one has experienced in person how it is put into practice, and once one has seen with what brutal unconcern Nepal's old art is currently being plundered.

Was it out of a sense of concern that the Sarasvati of Pharping was beheaded (pls. 5/6), that the thousand-year-old Shiva-Vishnu statue in Balaju was shattered (pls. 31/32), and that the 1,500-year-old image of Shiva has been destroyed in Pashupatinath (pls. 9/10)?

The argument that this is all being done out of concern for the preservation of foreign works of art is untenable from the start.

For in the first place, the statues that have stood at their sacred sites in Nepal for centuries, and often for more than a thousand years, would surely survive the next five hundred years were they not stolen by us out of "a sense of concern".

Secondly, what idea of lawfulness is displayed by such an attitude? Try taking away the auto of your neighbour, who has let it run down, by using the argument, "I'll wash it much more often than you," and he'll give you a quick lesson in ownership rights.

One should not attempt to cloak in threadbare arguments what simply cannot be justified: that rich countries are robbing the poor ones of their art treasures by resorting to common theft. Whether this is being done out of a sense of concern or of greed, the result is still the same.

It is of course true that many temples and shrines in the Kathmandu Valley are decaying because Nepal does not have the means to protect and preserve them. Help might be offered in ways, however, other than through stealing their works of art.

It is also true that many Nepalese today, having become completely intoxicated by the massive influx of Western life styles, which they are hypnotized by, are already so alienated from their own culture that the theft of the statues of their gods is of little concern to them, if they notice it at all. The zeal, this the term that must be used, with which they destroy and allow to be destroyed their unique jewel, the Kathmandu Valley, is an all too clear signal.

Nepal is currently in one of the most critical phases of its history. Still deeply rooted in the past, and at the same time profoundly affected by the encroaching modern age, it has been wobbling around in a culture shock ever since its first encounter with the West. It is all too typical for such a period of sudden change in all aspects of life that many Nepalese today no longer know, and have not yet relearned, how to value the worth of their own culture and tradition.

But does that give us the right to exploit the situation to rob Nepal of its cultural heritage?

In the not too distant future, richer in experiences that may be as painful or
worse yet than that of having to deal with the plunder of its works of art, Nepal itself will have to attempt to find its way back to itself, and to return to its own roots.

In the meantime we who have brought change to the country have the responsibility to see to it that it is not left from one end to the other with temples emptied by theft and bereft of all its gods, in the midst of a completely devastated cultural landscape.

We shall have to do some radical rethinking.

If we don't, if we fail to check our greed and to respect the culture of others, we shall be guilty in this case, as in others, of the decline of a culture that truly is worthy of a further lease on life.

If things don't change, one can foresee a time, within a few years, when Nepal, "the land of the gods," will be emptied to the point where nothing remains. There will then no longer exist Nepalese art in the land of its origin.

At that time will come true what the Nepalese journalist Kunda Dixit has written: that in the year 2000, when all the gods have left Nepal, a Nepalese who wants to perform his daily worship in front of the sacred images will have to make a pilgrimage to America in order to find them there in some museum.

Then he may light his oil lamp, adorn the statues with flowers and kindle his incense sticks - the museum administration permitting.
21. The image of King Bhupatindra Malla on its pillar overlooking the Bhaktapur palace square, photographed after the thwarted attempt to steal it in April 1985. Will this statue of the king, who was himself a great patron of the arts and builder of magnificent pagodas, soon be looking down on an art landscape that has totally been stripped bare? If things do not change, by the year 2000 Nepal, the “country of the gods”, will have lost all its sacred images; Nepalese art will no longer exist in the land of its birth.

Photo: 8.6.85
PART TWO:
PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION
PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION

The photographic documentation which follows records some 160 further cases of art theft in the Kathmandu Valley, the majority of which occurred during the period from 1981 to 1988.

In chapter eight, consisting of the “before-after” photos, the original setting of twelve art objects before and after theft is represented.

In chapter nine, “Stolen Images, 1981-1993”, some additional stolen works of art are depicted.

Chapter ten, “Theft from Toranas”, describes the particular damage that has been done to the toranas, the beautiful ornate boards above the entrances of Nepalese temples.

In chapter eleven, “Traces of the Thieves”, which follows, I have tried to document in detail the activities of the looters and their effects upon the art landscape of the Kathmandu Valley.

Chapter twelve shows the “Gods behind Bars” – how the communities have tried to protect their deities.

In the epilogue “Endangered Art”, finally, there are represented the photos of several works of art which have not (yet) been stolen but which, for various reasons (for instance, repeated attempts of theft), I believe to be threatened. Their future fate will have to be closely observed.

22. Documentating the theft of a Narayana statue from the Wakhabati Narayana temple, Bhaktapur (cf. pls. 43, 44).
CHAPTER 8

BEFORE–AFTER : TWELVE EXAMPLES
23. Statue of the sun god Surya, dated to the year 1083 A.D., in Sougal Tol, Patan. To protect it against theft, the image was fixed to its socle with iron bands. Photo: 7.1.84.

24. But usually protective devices like this prove no obstacle for the thieves, as documented by the photo, which shows the pedestal stripped down to nothing. Theft on May 16, 1985. Photo: 29.6.85.
25. One of the oldest statues of the sun god in Nepal, this statue dates to the 9th century. The image stood in a small shrine in the fields near the village of Kopugaon (cf. text, p. 55). h.: 0.39 m. Photo: 8.2.81.

26. The wall, shattered and empty, was all that remained after the image it housed was stolen. In what museum or in what private collection did this work of art end up? Photo: 4.4.83.
27. Image of the deity Kumar, one of the two sons of Lord Shiva, in front of a temple wall in Pharping village. h.: 0.85 m. Photo: 17.3.83.

28. After its theft, only the empty pedestal and the empty halo remained. This statue, however, has since been recovered. Photo: 8.5.87.
29. This Uma-Maheshvara image from the courtyard of the Kumbheshvar temple in Patan depicts Shiva, his consort and his entourage; it is almost one thousand years old (10th century). h.: 0.77 m; w.: 0.55 m. Cf. also below pl. 54. Photo: 1.1.84.

30. In October 1985, this work was added to the list of stolen objects. Photo: 1.4.86. Cf. text, p. 41.
31. In its central figure this image depicts the united divinities Shiva (left half, with trident) and Vishnu (right half, with flaming disc) in the company of their respective consorts, Parvati (l.) and Lakshmi (r.). The sculpture stood near the sacred fountains of Balaju. 9th century. h.: 0.70 m; w.: 0.50 m. Photo: 15.4.84.

32. In November 1984, during a thwarted attempt of theft, looters broke the image into pieces and thus destroyed a work of art that had existed for more than one thousand years. Only the severed feet of Parvati remained on their lotus base. Cf. text, p. 47. Photo: 26.12.84.
33. The smiling deity in the centre is Vishnu, in the company of his consort Lakshmi (l.) and of Garuda, (r.), his mount. This statue was in the southern wall of the Kumbheshvar well in Patan. The image dated to the 14th century. h.: approx. 0.60 m; w.: approx. 0.50 m. Photo: 21.1. 84.

34. After the theft, in January 1985, only a heap of rubble remained. Photo: 1.5.85. Cf. text, p. 45.
35. For almost 1500 years this statue of the god Vishnu stood in the courtyard of the Bhubaneshvar temple in Deopatan. 5th century. h.: 0.45 m. Photo: 31.12.83.

36. The ancient image was stolen in February 1986. Photo: 1.4.86.

38. The lingam was stolen in the first days of February 1985. For details of the stolen piece, see below pls. 57-60. Photo: 14.2.85.
Theft of a Shivalingam, at Raj Ghat on the southern bank of the Bagmati River. Photo above: 10.10.83, photo below: 22.5.85. The lingam with yoni was stolen first, in 1984. Somewhat later the same fate befell the bull Nandi kneeling in front of it. Only the serpent remained.
41, 42. Theft of a Shiva Kamdeva statue on Mrigasthali Hill, Pashupatinath. h.: 0.60 m; w.: 0.30 m. Photo above: 2.5.84; photo below: 23.10.84. Theft sometime in the interval.
This stone sculpture of Narayana (Vishnu) with Lakshmi and Sarasvati, above the spout in the Wakhabati Narayana temple courtyard, Bhaktapur, was stolen in 1985. h.: 0.30 m; w.: 0.23 m. Photo above: 5.10.84; photo below: 2.12.85. Cf. pl. 22.
Theft of a Narayana (Vishnu) statue in the courtyard of a private house at Kwa Bahal in Jyatha Tol, Kathmandu. h.: 0.50 m.; w.: 0.25 m. This object was found stolen in November 1986. Photo above: 12.4.84; photo below: 28.11.86.
CHAPTER 9

STOLEN IMAGES, 1981-1993
The Narayana statue from Kotsu Tol in Pharping village was a beautiful example of the ornate style of the late Malla period. In January 1985, it was broken out of its double pedestal (clearly recognizable on the preceding photo and the photo below) and made off with. White stone; h.: 1.00 m; 17th century.


ENDANGERED are the Uma-Maheshvara images, which are among the most beautiful works of medieval Nepalese art. They depict Shiva and his consort Parvati (Uma) in loving union on the sacred mountain Kailash. The celestial couple is accompanied by guardian deities, attendants and by Shiva's mount, the bull Nandi. Below them the heavenly musicians, the Ganas, are dancing.

The picture above shows one of the very few images of its kind which has not yet been stolen – perhaps because it is printed on a postcard available in Kathmandu.

Kumbhesvar Dhara, Patan. 9th century. h.: 0.79 m; w.: 0.53 m. Photo: 8.4.83. See text p. 41.
52. The three Uma-Maheshvara images whose photos are published here have all been stolen during the last years. See text, p. 41. Above: Uma-Maheshvara (detail) from Nasamana Tol, Bhaktapur. 11th century (?) h.: 0.76 m, w.: 0.59 m. Stolen 23.4.1984. See pls. 122, 123. Photo: 11.11.1981.


54. Opposite page, below: Uma-Maheshvara (detail) from the Kumbhesvar temple courtyard, Patan. 10th century. h.: 0.77 m; w.: 0.55 m. Stolen October 1985. Cf. above, pls. 29, 30. Photo: 2.6.1985.
55. ENDANGERED: An image of the god Vishnu, standing freely in the open field north of Sankhu village. The accompanying statues of the two female deities have been stolen recently. Cf. text, p. 45. 17th century. h.: 1.18 m. Photo: 10.11.86.
57, 58, 59, 60. STOLEN: The four faces of the Chaturmukha lingam which was broken out of its pedestal in Deopatan (see "before-after" photos, pls. 37 and 38 above). 10th/11th century. The object was stolen in February 1985. Photos: 28.3.83.
63. STOLEN: Chaturmukha Shivalingam, Raj Ghat, Kathmandu, 18th century(?).
Stolen in 1984. Photo: 10.10.83.
The bronze statue of Lokeshvara Simhanada (pl. 66) was stolen in March 1985 from the top of its pillar in the courtyard of the White Machhendranath temple, Jana Bahal, Kathmandu.

64. Photo above (19.1.84): The statue is still visible on its pillar, to the right.
65. Photo below (22.2.87): Today it is gone.
66. STOLEN: Lokeshvara Simhanada ("Lokeshvara of the lion’s roar"), a bronze statue on top of a column in the courtyard of the temple of the White Machhendranath, Jana Bahal, Kathmandu. 18th century. Theft on 14.3.85. Photo 27.7.82. Cf. text, p. 62. In the mid-nineties, the statue, which had been recovered, was reinstalled at its site. It is now secured with iron rods.
STOLEN: Ancient statue of the sun god Surya with attendants, in a small field shrine near the village of Kopugaon. 9th century. h.: 0.39 m. It was stolen in February 1983. (See the "before-after" photos above, pls. 25/26). Cf. text, p. 55. Photo: 8.2. 1981.
68. STOLEN AND RECOVERED AND STOLEN AGAIN: Image of Surya, the sun god, from the sacred fountains of Shekha Narayana, where it stood for centuries half submerged in the water, before it was stolen in the early 1980's. This statue, however, has been recovered by the police and reinstalled at its site. 14th century. Photo: 20.1.81. Cf. text, pp. 53f.
In October 1996, it was found stolen again!
STOLEN: This small image of Shiva in his generative aspect (Shiva Kamdeva) stood at Arya Ghat, Pashupatinath. Photo: 26.10.83. Stolen in the mid-1980's. Cf. pls. 134/135 below.
70. STOLEN: Vishnu image from Panchdeval Chowk, Pashupatinath. 17th century. h.: 0.93 m. Stolen in 1985. Photo: 23.10.84.
71. STOLEN: Sculpture of a devotee beneath a water spout, Tekatso Tol, Bhaktapur. h.: 0.54 m; w.: 0.29 m. Theft in 1985. Photo: August 1982. Cf. below, pl. 126.

72. STOLEN: Statue of a standing goddess with lotus flowers, in Buri-Buri-Hiti, Tholachhe Tol, Bhaktapur. 14th century. h.: 0.63 m; w.: 0.36 m. Stolen in the summer of 1984. Photo: 20.3.84.
73. **STOLEN:** An ancient and rare relief of Parashurama, one of the avatars of Vishnu, with his battle axe. 11th century. h.: 0.58 m; w.: 0.43 m. Pasupatinath. Theft in 1985. Photo: 3.5.84.

74. **STOLEN:** Relief of Rama, another avatar of Vishnu, accompanied by Sita and Lakshman, in Pasupatinath. 11th century. h.: 0.38 m; w.: 0.37 m. Stolen in 1985. Photo: 3.5.84.
Looters do not even shrink from stealing the heavy brass or stone lions which pairwise guard temple entrances.

75. THREATENED: A guardian lion near the Dattatreya temple in Bhaktapur. Photo: 5.10.84.

76. STOLEN: This fabulous creature of great beauty, a winged lion with an eagle’s head, was stolen from the eastern gate of the Changu Narayana temple. Photo in August 1982.
77. STOLEN: A beautiful wood-carved Salabhanjika, a forest nymph, standing on a bearded dwarf on a temple strut in Itum Bahaal, Kathmandu. The object was stolen together with three similar struts in 1984/85. The temple roof, which was supported by these struts, has meanwhile collapsed. The sculpture dates to the 14th century and was therefore among the oldest remaining wood-carved works of art in Nepal.

Photo: 15.10.83. Cf. text, p. 38
78. STOLEN: Statue of Ganesha, the elephant-headed god, son of Shiva. Stolen in February, 1988, from Chhochen Tol, Bhaktapur. h.: 0.83m; w.: 0.60 m. Photo: 19.3.1984.
The decorative boards above the temple entrances, richly ornamented with images of divinities, are among the most distinguished and beautiful works of medieval Nepalese art.

The silver torana of the Hiranyavarna monastery in Patan depicts the Buddha accompanied by disciples, and surrounded by the Dhyanibuddhas. Photo: 21.2.85.

It is the toranas from which the magnificent Nepalese bronzes and wood-carved statues found in Western museums and collections largely derive. Such art objects are still being pried from them.
TORANAS are a typical and splendid feature of Nepalese art which in this form is not found in any other country. A torana is an ornate board, approximately semicircular in form, which is attached above the entrance of a temple, indicating to visitors, even before they enter, which deity the temple is dedicated to.

In its classical form (see pl. 79, opposite) a torana consists of two parts: an inner half circle and an outer one above it, repeating the same form in a larger diameter. The entire space is decorated with sculptures or reliefs of gods and goddesses, and of heavenly and mythical beings of all kinds, the space in between the images being filled with floral designs in a variety of shapes.

In the centre of the torana, and prominent too because of its size, there is always an image of the main deity to whom the temple is dedicated. Often it is the central image in a triadic composition, the other two being deities of his retinue.

In the outer half circle appear further divinities and mythical animals: the pair of makara monsters in the lower left and right corners, and above the entire composition the divine bird Garuda, symbol of the sun and the sky, grasping Nag and Nagini, the king and queen of the serpents, which symbolize the earth and the element of water. On some toranas, instead of Garuda, the Kirtimukha, the “face of glory”, is found.

Within this fixed frame for the outer form, which only a few toranas do not adhere to (as an example, see pl. 80, opposite), the artistic mastery of the Newar craftsmen and artisans finds space to unfold. The material used is either metal (gilt copper, brass or silver) or wood. A few toranas in the Kathmandu Valley (for instance, those of the Mahabuddha temple in Patan) are made of terra cotta.

Toranas that are both beautiful and intact, such as those shown here, nowadays have become a rarity in the Kathmandu Valley. Because of the often masterly images which grace them, they have become prime targets of looters, as the following part of the documentation will demonstrate.

81. The thieves either steal the toranas whole, or else they break single sculptures out of them, as shown here:
Above: The torana of the Bhairav temple at Machhendra Bahal in Bungamati village. Five out of eight bronzes have been stolen. Photo: 10.1.85.
82. Below: The central torana on the front wall of the Bhairav temple in Taumadhi Tol, Bhaktapur. Three of its bronzes were stolen. Photo: 30.4.86.
One of the most odious cases of art theft in Nepal up to now was the plundering of the torana of the Taleju Bhavani temple in the royal palace of Patan. Twelve precious bronzes of the goddess Durga and her retinue, dating to the 16th century, were stolen from this site alone, and the torana was stripped bare. Later these bronzes were put up for sale by an auction house in Stuttgart, Germany. Cf. text, p. 38. Photo above (Elfriede Moeller): undated. Photo below: 9.2.84
85. Of the tri-partite torana of the Hadigaon Ganesha temple, the entire left torana was stolen in the mid-eighties. Photo: 4.10.87.
86, 87. More and more toranas are being stolen whole from temples, as, for example, the one in the courtyard of Chaturbrahma Mahavihar, Bhaktapur (above, with an eleven-headed Lokeshvara, photo: 4.4.83), stolen in 1987, and the torana of Mimnath temple, Patan (below, with dancing Shiva, photo: 28.10.83), stolen in 1986.
88, 89. Two phases of theft at the temple of the White Machhendranath in Kathmandu. Above: The central bronze of Lokeshvara, secured with iron bars against theft, is still in place.

Below: From this torana, however, the central figure has already been stolen. (Above: the torana to the right of the eastern wall; below: the torana to the left of the eastern wall.) Photos: 19.1.84.
90. (Above): The torana of the Wakhabati Narayana temple, Bhaktapur, where the man-bird Garuda has been stolen, depriving Lord Vishnu of his mount. Photo: 8.11.86. In November 1996, the Vishnu statue was found stolen as well.

91. (Below): The northern torana of Changu Narayana temple, whose dancing maidens have been stolen from both sides of Krishna, the deity playing the flute. Photo: 10.4.85.
92. The silver Buddha-torana of the Hiranyavarna monastery, Patan.

IN DANGER: Beautiful statues of Nepalese toranas like these are much sought after by Western art collectors. As a result, there are hardly any of these “bronzes” left in their homeland.

93. The central image in the torana of the Ajima temple, Swayambhunath, is Vajrasattva. Today, the statue is behind bars; cf. pls. 172/173.

94. The mystic goddess Vajrayogini in the centre of the main torana of the Vajrayogini temple in Sankhu.
95, 96. How thieves operate: From this torana at Ilanani Bahal in Patan, the central statue of the Buddha was stolen first. Later the disciples to the left and right of their master shared his fate. Photo above: 4.2.85, photo below: 25.1.87.

100. Below: Theft of three wooden sculptures from the torana above the entrance to Chaturbrahma Mahavihar, Bhaktapur. The torana frame was stolen somewhat later. Photo: 8.6.1985.
101, 102. The western (above) and northern (below) toranas on the temple of the White Machhendranath at Jana Bahal in Kathmandu, each displaying the results of the theft of three gilt bronzes of the Bodhisattva Lokeshvara and accompanying deities. (The southern torana of this temple was completely stolen.) Cf. text, p. 62. Photos: 19.1.84
CHAPTER 11

TRACES OF THE THIEVES
No less than seven cases of art theft are depicted here on a single photo: Lord Narayana and the goddess Lakshmi seated on the heavenly bird Garuda adorn the brass fountain of the royal bath in the palace of Patan. They date to the middle of the 17th century. Gone are four stone sculptures, formerly in the niches to the left and right of the divine couple; gone is the brass makara monster, which once shaped the head of the spout; gone, finally, are the images on top of the small pillars to the left and right, which frame the entire composition (only two are visible here). All thefts occurred before 1963.
ENDANGERED ART: The royal bath in the Patan palace is adorned with magnificent stone sculptures dating to the 17th century, including the images of the dancing Shiva Nataraja (above) and of the goddess Durga slaying the buffalo demon (below). These masterpieces of medieval stone carving are very much in danger. Of the 88 sculptures, 18 already have been stolen.
The distinguishing marks of theft are the holes that are left behind...

106. To the left and right of the central statue (a tantric Shiva Nataraja, united with Durga), twelve stone sculptures have been stolen from the western wall of the royal bath at Sundari Chowk in the Patan palace complex. Mid 17th century. Thefts before 1963. Photo: 22.1.87.
The theft of a gilt bronze of an 18-armed Durga from its miniature shrine in the eastern wall of the royal bath at Sundari Chowk in the palace complex of Patan. Mid 17th century. Photo: 22.1.87.

109. PREPARING THEFT: At first, single stones are broken out of the walls into which the images are set ........
A bearded dwarf, bent under the weight, supports the stone spout of the Sundhara fountain at Jayabageshvari temple. Published by RAY, pl. 54, and described by her as "one of the finest pieces of sculpture Nepali art has to offer" (p. 38). Below the dwarf are visible the gaps left by the first bricks that were removed. Photo: 14.2.85.
110. Preparations for the theft of a Shiva Kamdeva statue at Hanuman Dhoka Square, Kathmandu. The stones have been broken out of the pedestal.
Photo: 5.5.85.
111, 112. In March 1984 the torana of the Ganesha temple in Tekatso Tol, Bhaktapur, was plundered: the images of the deities Kumar, Ganesha and Kumari were stolen. Only the severed feet of the goddess Kumari remain. Photos: 23.4.84.
Only holes remain where the sacred images stood by the hundreds.

113. Theft of 7 statues from a temple wall in Tyagal Tol, Patan. Photo: 28.1.87
114. Theft of 3 statues from Chandeshvari temple, Pim Bahal, Patan. Photo: 7.2.84
The theft of a statue of the Buddha from a small shrine at the Shantipur temple, Svayambhunath. Photo before (above): 20.1.84; photo after (below): 3.2.87.
117. The protective stone umbrella is typical of Shiva Kamdeva statues, which depict the god in his generative aspect (cf. pls. 4, 41, 69 and 175).
Here the stone sculpture of Shiva has been stolen. Sights like this can be encountered everywhere in the valley. This theft occurred at Shekha Narayana. Photo: 5.5.85
After a theft only the pedestals, broken and empty, indicate that once they supported sacred images. The theft of the Narayana statue in Kotsu Tol, Pharping (above) (cf. pls. 11 and 50), and of the image of the moon god, Chandra, in the sacred pool of the forest sanctuary of Shekha Narayana (below). Photo above: 9.2.85; photo below: 5.5.85.
120. In these small niches in the courtyard of the Chamundrayani temple, Patan, were set two of the avatars of the god Vishnu: Rama, with bow and arrow (above), and Narasimha, the lion-man (below). Rama remains, but Narasimha has been

121. The theft of an unknown stone sculpture, very likely of the Buddha, from its lotus frame on the outer wall of Pichhe Bahal, Wotu Tol, Kathmandu. Photo: 15.4.84.
122. Only holes remain. The theft of the Uma-Maheshvara image of Nasamana Tol, Bhaktapur, took place in the night of April 23, 1984. Photo: 23.4.84.

123. The stolen piece of art showed Shiva with his consort Uma on the holy mountain Kailash (cf. pls. 51-54). h.: 0.76 m; w.: 0.59 m. Photo: 19.3.84.
124. Already two of seven sculptures have been stolen from this frieze, which is located along the southern wall of a small Narayana shrine in Chakrabahil, Patan. Photo: 9.2.84.

125. The theft of two Shivalingams from Tileshvar Mahadev, Lele village. The yonis were left behind empty. Photo: 21.10.84.
126. Art thieves set their sights high:

From the Vatsala Devi temple on the palace square in Bhaktapur, not only the stone statues in the niches of the small turrets are being stolen piece by piece ... (Photo: 20.5.85)
... but even the first heavy stone sculpture has already disappeared from the high spire of the main shikara tower. In the foreground the gilt statue of King Bhupatindra Malla is kneeling on a pillar high above Bhaktapur's Durbar Square. This famous image had a narrow escape when thieves tried to steal it with a crane car from atop its pillar in the night of April 8, 1985. (Cf. pl. 21, text, p. 39).

Photo: 8.6.85
128. Theft of a devotee’s image beneath a tap in Tekatso Tol, Bhaktapur. The statue stolen here is shown on pl. 71. Photo: 1.12.85.

129. Theft of a bronze of the goddess Kumari, from Tekatso Ganesha temple, Bhaktapur. Stolen in February 1984. Photo: 23.4.84.
130. The mount of Lord Shiva is the bull Nandi. He always kneels in a devotional pose in front of his master’s temples and images. Here, however, on Mrigasthali Hill at Pashupatinath, he faces a void, the statue of Shiva having been stolen from its niche.
Photo: 8.1.85.
131. The famous Ekmukha Shivalingam of Pashupatinath, dating to the 6th century, after the third attempt to steal it, in the winter of 1984/85. The yoni was shattered into pieces, and the image later set on a new pedestal of concrete, as ugly as it is solid. Since then the image has been destroyed; cf. pl. 10.

Photo: 17.2.85.
132. A row of eight Shivalingams (one is stolen) at Ram Mandir, Pashupatinath, photographed on February 14, 1985.

133. The same locality, photographed on March 18, 1986: Three more lingams have been stolen.

135. The same locality photographed on April 1, 1986. All sculptures and one linga have been stolen.
Today there is not one of the hundreds of temples in the Kathmandu Valley that does not show traces of theft.

136, 137. Theft of five small brass sculptures from the western wall of the Minnath temple, Patan. Photos: 26.12.84.
The western door of the Charnarayana temple, Durbar Square, Patan: To the left, the ornamentation of the door is still intact...
... while to the right, the upper quarter circle of wood carving has been stolen.

Photos: 20.3.86.
The southern door of the Krishna temple in Svatha Tol, Patan. To the left of the door, the quarter circle and the sculpture in the rhomboid frame have been stolen.
... whereas to the right, the wood-carved ornamentation of the door is still intact.
Photos: 1.4.86.
The wood-carved roof struts are being stolen from more and more temples.

142. The northern wall of the Bhagvati temple, Harigaon. Both struts are still in place (even if the torana has been stolen).
143. The southern wall of the Bhagvati temple, Harigaon. Here the right-hand strut has been stolen.
Photos: 14.2.85.
The result is that more and more roofs are collapsing.

144. The Narayana temple, Kulimha Tol, Patan, in decay, after the struts of both floors were stolen. Photo: 3.6.85.
The theft of entire temple struts is a rather new phenomenon. It has increased, however, in recent years. Apparently some art connoisseurs believe it to be stylish to have their living rooms decorated with “original Nepalese temple struts”.

145-148. Theft from the Jyotilingeshvar temple in Sankhu village. Photos 22.4.86: Both struts of the eastern wall (left) as well as those of the southern wall (right) are still in place.

The same location photographed on 11.11.1986: From both walls in the meantime one strut has been stolen (to the left, the one of god Kumar; to the right, the one of Bhairav, cf. pl. 153).
149-151. The iron rods around these precious old wood carvings, struts of an ancient pilgrim’s rest house in Tyagal Tol, Patan, offer scarcely any protection against theft. These struts are more than 500 years old. They depict Salabhanjikas, tree nymphs, an age-old motif of Indian art which, up to now, lives on in Nepal.

152-154. Usually precautions like those illustrated here do not work. These three wood-carved struts were stolen from the Jyotilingeshvar temple, Sankhu, during 1986. Cf. pls. opposite. In which museum or private collection can the striking scene of an adulterer caught in the act (pl. 153) be found today?
Photos: 29.1.85 (pl. 153); 22.4.86 (pls. 152, 154)
Even the bronze bells in the temple courtyards are no longer safe. One after the other is vanishing.

155. A bronze bell in front of a Shiva shrine near the Gorakhnath temple on Mrigasthali Hill, Pashupatinath. Photo: 8.3.86.

156. Theft of a bronze bell at a Shiva shrine near the Gorakhnath temple, on Mrigasthali Hill. Photo: 8.3.86.
AWAITING AN UNCERTAIN FATE

Quite a few stolen works of art are said to have ended up in the local police department. What is done to them there remains unknown.

157. The photo shows four stolen images of Shiva Kamdeva that are being kept at the police station at Hanuman Dhoka, Kathmandu. Photo: 20.1.87.
158. Stolen images at the police station at Hanuman Dhoka, Kathmandu. In the centre: The magnificent sculpture of the united divinities Shiva and Vishnu with their consorts (cf. pl. 12), which was stolen from the village of Lele and recovered by the police. Photo: 20.1.87.
BEHEADING is a favourite sport of the looters.

160. Here the image of one of the devotees who are kneeling in front of the Kumbheshvar temple in Patan has been beheaded. Photo: 1.4.86.
Sometimes attempts are made to undo the results of decapitation by putting a new head on the torso. The result is usually grisly, since it makes a difference whether the face of a god is carefully chiselled out of stone, as in olden times, or roughly moulded in concrete, as is done nowadays.

The example shown above is the image of the goddess Tara (or Sarasvati), dating to the 10th century, in Maru Tol, Kathmandu. Her head having been cut off and stolen, a modern monstrosity was turned out and used to restore the body of classical beauty to wholeness. This has not, however, affected the veneration the statue has always enjoyed. Photo: 22.2.87.

Things can be worse, though ... An old image with a new look, in Wotu Tol, Kathmandu.
Photo: 4.12.86
163. A gilt bronze of Lokeshvara, secured with iron rods against theft. Jana Bahal, Kathmandu (cf. pl. 88). Photo: 19.1.84.
Since ancient times the sacred images of Nepal's deities have always been placed in an open setting accessible to everyone. This art was never secured, the aura of sanctity surrounding it being protection enough. In the present age, which has largely forgotten the meaning of sacredness, this is no longer true. Now that organized art theft is raging throughout the Kathmandu Valley, and sacred images are stolen virtually by the hundreds, one can observe more and more frequently that the Nepalese, for the first time in their history, are putting their gods behind iron bars. Thus the splendour of Nepalese art is being extinguished even when the images have not yet been stolen.

164-165. One of the oldest images of the Buddha that has survived in Nepal is the statue in Bangemudha, Kathmandu. It dates to the 6th century. Whereas throughout the centuries it always stood freely out in the open (see photo left, 13.2.85), today it clearly displays marks of the new times (photo right, 16.2.87).
166. The gilt toranas of the Ajima temple, Swayambhunath, are masterpieces of Nepalese art. Here the eastern torana: the central image is that of Vajrasattva. Photo: 14.1.84.

167. Ever since the autumn of 1986, however, when the torana was put behind bars to ward off thieves, its beauty has been lost. Photo: 3.2.87.
168. The Uma-Maheshvara relief in the eastern wall of Chyasol Dhara in Patan is a beautiful and endangered work of art. Cf. below, pl. 186. Photo: 1.4.86.

169. This image was put behind bars, too, in the winter of 1986/87. Today Nepal's unique open art landscape has disappeared. Photo: 22.1.87.
EPISODE:  
ENDANGERED ART

I have given long thought to whether or not I should publish in this book, whose subject is art theft, photos of works of art which have not yet been stolen. The longer I pondered, the more I became convinced that I should.

Thus the section that follows contains a number of photos, most of them not published before, of pieces of Nepalese art which until now have withstood the great flood of plundering and are still in the country. For various reasons – be it previous attempted theft, or their beauty, old age, undamaged condition or isolated location – I believe all of them to be in imminent danger of being stolen.

The following enumeration might possibly be looked upon as a prospectus for future international art theft. I publish these photos, however, with the purpose of safeguarding these images against just such theft. It is precisely because these works of art are still unknown to the outside world and the general public that the work of looters is so greatly facilitated. Therefore the covering veil has to be torn down from Nepal's sacred art.

All the pieces published here are now on record: their measurements have been taken, their precise location is known, and they are regularly visited. Thus it would not be wise to purchase them should any of them actually turn up for sale in the western art market.

Moreover, with the help of this report, I hope to win friends and supporters who understand why this book has been written, and who will help Nepal in its attempt to safeguard its cultural heritage.

Nepal has many friends, all over the world ...
170. ENDANGERED: Statue of the goddess Lakshmi (or Parvati). Arya Ghat, Pashupatinath. 9th century. h.: 0.64 m. Cf. text, p. 51. Photo: November, 1982
171. THREATENED: The pairs of lovers on the struts of the Indreshvar Mahadev temple in Panauti, their gestures revealing a subtle eroticism, are ancient masterpieces of the Newar art of wood carving. They date to the 14th century. Photo: 5.4.83.
172. THREATENED: The beautiful sculptures of lovers on the Indreshvar Mahadev temple were in danger of being stolen after the temple fell into disrepair. Since, however, restoration of the temple has been completed recently, its splendid wood carvings may be safer in the future. Photo: 5.4.83.
173. IN DANGER: The beautiful statue of Sarasvati, the goddess of wisdom, from Hadigaon village. Until now three attempts of theft have occurred. h. (with flaming halo): 1.13 m; (without): 0.96 m. Photo: 15.1.87.
ENDANGERED: Amitabha, the Dhyanibuddha of the west. Stone sculpture from a chaitya in Jana Bahal, Kathmandu. Cf. text, p. 61. Photo: 27.7.82.
175. THREATENED: Statue of Shiva Kamdeva, showing the god in his creative aspect (cf. pls. 4, 41, 69). Vermilion powder ("sindur") is strewed over images of deities as a token of veneration. This image is from the Jagat Narayana temple in Patan; it dates to the 19th century. h.: 0.77 m; w.: 0.47 m. Photo: 2.6.85.
THREATENED: The Chaturmukha ("four-faced") lingam shows the face of Shiva on the four sides of the lingam pillar, the symbol of the deity’s creative power. Many such lingams have been stolen (cf. pls. 37/38, 39/40, 57-63), and this piece, which dates to the 11th century, is very much in danger of being so. Panchdeval Chowk, Pashupatinath. Photo: 7.12.85.
177. THREATENED: “Shri Dharati Mataya”: The Great Mother gives birth to her children. Image in the courtyard of the Bagh Bhairav temple in Kirtipur. 19/20th century. l: 0.67 m; w.: 0.48 m (with frame) Photo: May 1982.
178. THREATENED: This unusual painting decorates the shrine of the goddess Chinnamasta near Patan’s Durbar Square. It shows a witch (“bokshi”, to the left of the picture), recognizable, as every Nepalese knows, by the flame coming out of her forefinger. She has successfully taught witchcraft to her daughter, for the latter has managed to transform her husband into a he-goat. Now he is, willingly and naked, being taken to the temple to be ritually sacrificed. Photo: April 1983.
179. THREATENED: This statue of Lokeshvara, the Buddhist deity of compassion, in Gahiti, Patan, has survived five attempts of theft and is now encrusted by a thick layer of concrete. Cf. text, p. 62. h.: 1.30 m; w.: 0.49 m. Photo: 1.5.85.
176 / THE GODS ARE LEAVING THE COUNTRY

180. THREATENED: Image of the moon god Chandra, his celestial chariot being drawn by swans, in Thalachhe Tol, Bhaktapur. h.: 0.46 m; w.: 0.33 m. Cf. text, pp. 53f. Photo: August 1982.
181. THREATENED: A rare image of Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and beauty: Gaja-Lakshmi is seated on a lotus throne, and four elephants are spraying her with water from jars held in their trunks. At Buri-Buri-Hiti, in Tholachhe Tol, Bhaktapur. 17th century. h.: 0.48 m; w.: 0.40 m. Cf. text, p. 51. Photo: 20.3.84.
182. THREATENED: The smiling deity is Vishnu, the protector of all life. He is seated on his mount, the sun-eagle Garuda. At Buri-Buri-Hiti, Tholachhe Tol, Bhaktapur (next to Gaja-Lakshmi, pl. 181). Ca. 13th/14th century. h. (of statue only): 0.48 m; w. (including halo): 0.48 m. Photo: 20.3.84.
This image of Sarasvati is found in Jyatha Tol, Kathmandu. The beautiful statues of the goddess of wisdom and the patroness of the arts (cf. pls. 5, 173) have become favourite targets of looters. This image has therefore been set behind bars. Cf. text, pp. 51 f. Photo: 12.4.84.
THREATENED: This expressive sculpture of the Buddhist goddess Tara is one of a life-sized pair at Swayambhunath. The goddess, absorbed in meditation, holds her hand in vitarka-mudra, the gesture of the convincing argument. Much of the beauty of this masterpiece, however, is lost nowadays, as the image, in imminent danger of being stolen, has recently been set behind heavy iron bars. Cf. text, p. 64. Photo: 25.12.84.
185. THREATENED: This small statue of the goddess Kumari riding on a peacock can be found in the southern wall of the Maiti Devi temple in Kathmandu. Given that almost all good old bronzes have been stolen from Nepal, this image is very much endangered. Cf. text, p. 53.

h.: approx. 0.30 m; w.: 0.22 m. Photo: 13.3.83.
186. THREATENED: The celestial couple Shiva and Parvati in loving union at their home, the sacred mountain Kailash. Cf. text, p. 30. This ancient sculpture from the Chyasol Dhara in Patan dates to the 12th century. After several attempts of theft, it is nowadays protected by iron bars (cf. pls. 168, 169). h.: 0.77 m; w.: 0.77 m. Photo: 8.1.84.
CONCLUSION¹

“All the stolen images published in this book are religious objects. For generations and centuries they have been worshipped and venerated by the people of Nepal. For them, the sacred icons are live symbols of gods and goddesses whom they worship and pray to daily with deep faith and devotion. The devotees offer them flowers, vermilion, honey, milk, butter, grains, sweets and water as though they were alive and not mere pieces of art to be admired. They go to their gods and goddesses both in happiness and sorrow to offer prayers. They celebrate and worship their deities on different occasions with great pomp and festivity. When the devotees and people of the country are deprived of their gods their hearts bleed.

The stealing of such religious images is an atrocity, a serious crime which the civilized world should take steps to stop. Let us hope that some day these stolen sculptures will be returned to their respective temples and shrines.”

¹ This text is an excerpt from Lain S. BANGDEL’S book “Stolen Images of Nepal” (p. 319), which is quoted here with the kind permission of the author.
APPENDICES

- Index
- Kathmandu Valley Map
- Bibliography
- Autobiographic Note
INDEX

A
abhaya mudra  gesture of protection, mudra of → Amoghasiddhi, the → Dhyanibuddha of the north, and of many Hindu deities, e.g. → Shiva.
pp. 31, 60, 61.

ajima (New.)  "grandmother", see → Hariti.

Ajima temple  Buddhist shrine at → Swayambhunath.
pp. 63, 118, 163.

Akshobhya  → Dhyanibuddha of the east.
p. 59.

America  p. 67.

Amitabha  → Dhyanibuddha of the west.
pp. 60, 61, 170.
Pls. 19, 174.

Amoghasiddhi  → Dhyanibuddha of the north.
pp. 60, 61. Pl. 19.

Annapurna  "she who bestows in abundance", one of the many forms of → Devi, the magna mater, the Great Goddess.
p. 47.

Art Gallery, Bhaktapur  p. 15.

Aruna  charioteer of the sun god → Surya's celestial chariot.
p. 53.

Arya Ghat  the cremation place at → Pashupatinath, at the banks of the sacred river → Bagmati.
pp. 50, 58, 102, 144, 166.

Avalokiteshvara  "the lord of the kindly lowered gaze", → Bodhisattva of compassion. See also: → Lokeshvara, → Chenrezi.
p. 62.

avatar  one of ten different forms in which Lord → Vishnu manifests himself. They are: (1) Matsya (fish); (2) Kurma (tortoise); (3) Varaha (boar); (4) Narasimha (half-man/half-lion); (5) Vamana (dwarf); (6) Parashurama (Rama with the axe); (7) Rama; (8) Krishna; (9) Buddha; (10) Kalki.
pp. 43, 73, 105, 117, 135.

B
Bagmati  sacred river flowing through the → Pashupatinath temple area, main river of the Kathmandu Valley.
pp. 25, 38, 41, 43, 49, 50, 56, 62, 80, 96.

Baglamukhi  female Hindu deity, one of the many aspects of → Devi.
p. 47.

bahal (New.)  Newar-Buddhist monastery.
pp. 16, 38, 60, 83, 111, 117, 119, 131, 135.

bahini (Nep.)  younger sister.
p. 35.

Baisakh  a month in the Nepalese lunar calendar, (2nd half of April, 1st half of May).
p. 50
Balaju

sacred fountains to the north-west of Kathmandu.
pp. 47, 66, 76.

Bangemudha
(Bangemura)

ward in Kathmandu.
pp. 58, 162.

"before-after"
documentation

photographing a location from the same distance and angle before and after the theft of sacred images.
pp. 14, 70, 71-83.

beheading ...

(... of sacred images)

favourite sport of art looters.
pp. 25, 27, 157ff.
Pls.: 1, 6, 159, 160, 161, 162.

Bagh Bhairav temple

→ Bhairav temple in Kirtipur.
pp. 16, 163.

Bhagvati

one of the many forms of the great Hindu goddess → Durga.
pp. 47, 49, 64.

Bhagvati temple

in the village of Hadigaon.
p. 150.

Bhagvati temple

in the village of Nala.
p. 54.

bhai (Nep.)
younger brother.
p. 35.

Bhairav

wrathful form of → Shiva.
pp. 31, 56, 112, 152.

Bhairav temple

in the village of → Bungamati.
p. 112.

Bhairav temple

in Taumadhi Tol, Bhaktapur.
p. 112.

Bhaktapur, Bhadgaon

one of the three ancient royal cities of the Kathmandu Valley (with → Patan and → Kathmandu).
p. 21 etc. (numerous mentions).

Bhimsen

local deity of the Kathmandu Valley, worshipped by merchants and traders as the protector of wealth and prosperity.
p. 120.

Bhimsen Dhara

public fountain and washing place at Dattatreya, eastern Bhaktapur.
pp. 45, 93.

Bhimsen Dhara

public fountain and washing place at Bhimsenthan, Kathmandu.
p. 54.

Bhimsen temple

in Patan, at Mangal Bazar, the palace square.
p. 120.

Bhrikuti

Buddhist female deity, a form of → Tara.
p. 51.

Bhubaneshvar temple

at Deopatan, near → Pashupatinath.
pp. 78, 157.

Bhupatindra Malla

King of Bhaktapur (1696-1722). Builder of the magnificent Nyatapola pagoda.
pp. 39, 68.
Pls.: 21, 127.
bhumsparsa- mudra  gesture of touching the earth (calling the earth goddess as witness). → Mudra of → Akshobhya, Buddha of the east, and of → Shakyamuni Buddha in the moment of attaining enlightenment.
p. 59.

Bhutan  Buddhist kingdom in the eastern Himalayas.
p. 30.

bokshi (Nep.)  a witch.
p. 174.
Pl.: 178.

Brahma  the creator, Hindu deity, in Nepal of lesser popularity.
pp. 25, 61.

bronzes  → Newar craftsmen from ancient times have been masters of the art of casting bronze sculptures of the numerous deities of the Hindu and the Buddhist pantheon. Different metallic alloys are used, the bronzes are frequently gilt. Almost all good bronzes have been stolen from Nepal.

bronze bells, theft of…  p. 154.
Pl.: 156.

Bodhisattva  (bodhi/"enlightenment" – sattva/"being") : An enlightened being with Buddhaliike qualities, the much revered ideal of → Mahayana Buddhism. The most important Bodhisattvas of Nepal and Tibet are → Lokeshvara, → Manjushri and Vajrapani, representing the aspects of compassion, wisdom and spiritual power respectively.
pp. 57, 61, 62, 63.

Bodnath, Bouddha  Ancient huge → stupa to the north-east of Kathmandu, for centuries a famous place of pilgrimage for the entire Buddhist Himalaya and, in particular, for Tibet. Centre of Tibetan Buddhism and of the Tibetan refugee community in Nepal. Many important Tibetan lama-teachers live in Bodnath’s dozens of monasteries surrounding the great stupa; due to their teachings, in recent years Bodnath has become an important centre for spreading the Buddhist doctrine to the West.
pp. 30, 58.

Buddha  the Enlightened One. Born in Nepal, in Lumbini, in 563 B.C. See also → Gautama Siddhartha, → Shakyamuni.
pp. 1, 30, 32, 38, 56, 57, 58 ff., 109, 118, 119, 132, 135, 162.
Pis.: 1, 18, 92, 115, 164, 165.

Buddha Jayanti  The day of the Buddha’s birth, on the full moon of May, celebrated yearly with great pomp in Nepal.
p. 30.

Buddhism  with → Hinduism, one of the two great religions of Nepal. In Nepal, the two religions have always lived peacefully side by side, influencing each other to such a degree that there arose a composite folk religion, containing elements of both. Many temples in Nepal are venerated by Hindus and Buddhists alike; many sacred images show marks of both religions.
pp. 29, 30, 45.

Buddhist monasteries, shrines and sites of the Kathmandu Valley  Ajima (→ Hariti) temple, Svayambhunath.
pp. 63, 118, 163.
Bodnath stupa.
pp. 30, 58.
Bala
Chachbai Bahal, Kathmandu.
p. 111.
Chatturbhrama Mahavihar, Bhaktapur.
pp. 115, 121.
Chusya Bahal, Kathmandu.
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Hiranyavarna Mahavihar, Patan.
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Jana Bahal (temple of the White → Machhendranath), Kathmandu.
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Svayambhunath, stupa and monasteries.
Vajrayogini temple, Sankhu.
p. 118.
Vidyeshvari Vihar, Kathmandu.
p. 31.

Bungamati village south of Patan.
p. 112.

Buri-Buri-Hiti (New.) public fountain and washing place, Bhaktapur.
pp. 104, 177, 178.

Burma p. 61.

Cambodia p. 61.
district of Kathmandu, with an important Buddhist → stupa, the Charumati stupa.
pp. 38, 58.

Buddhist monastery in eastern Kathmandu.
p. 111.
chaitya  small votive → stupa, built of stone, depicting on its four sides the Buddhas of the four quarters, and found by the hundreds throughout the Kathmandu Valley.
pp. 59, 60, 61, 170.
Pls.: 19, 20, 174.

chakra  the wheel; in its Buddhist form, it is the "Wheel of the Law", the eight-spoked wheel that symbolizes the eightfold path to enlightenment, as taught by the → Buddha. It is also the attribute of → Vairochana, the → Dhyani-buddha of the centre. Cf. p. 61.
In Hinduism, the chakra is carried by → Vishnu as one of his attributes in the form of a → flaming discus.
pp. 21, 45, 76.

Chakrabahil  ward in Patan.
p. 137.

Chamunda  terrifying form of → Kali, the Hindu goddess of death, depicted standing on a corpse.
p. 47.

Chamundrayani temple  temple in Patan, dedicated to → Chamunda.
p. 135.

Chandeshvari  a form of the Hindu goddess → Durga.
p. 38.

Chandeshvari temple  temple in Patan, dedicated to → Durga.
p. 131.

Chandra  the moon god,
pp. 53, 54, 134, 176.
Pls.: 15, 180.

Changu Narayana  the most ancient and important → Vishnu temple in the Kathmandu Valley,
built in 464 A.D. by King Manadeva. Some of the best stone sculptures of Nepal, mainly from the → Lichhavi period, depicting Vishnu in many forms, can be found in the courtyard of Changu Narayana.
pp. 43, 44.

Charnarayana temple  dedicated to Vishnu, on the palace square of Patan.
pp. 146, 147.

Chatturbrahma Mahavihar  Buddhist monastery in Bhaktapur.
pp. 115, 121.

Chaturmukha Shivalingam  → lingam with the four faces of → Shiva looking into the four directions.
pp. 41, 42, 79, 94-97, 172.
Pls.: 37 / 38; 39 / 40; 57-63; 176.

Chenrezi  the name under which → Avalokiteshvara (Lokeshvara), the → Bodhisattva of compassion, is venerated by the Tibetans.
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China  pp. 30, 31.

Chinnamasta  local form of the goddess → Kali.
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Chinnamasta shrine  in Patan, near the palace square.
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Chachbai Bahal, Kathmandu.
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Chatturbrahma Mahavihar, Bhaktapur.
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Bungamati

village south of Patan.
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Buri-Buri-Hiti (New.)

public fountain and washing place, Bhaktapur.
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Burma

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C

Cambodia

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Chabahil
district of Kathmandu, with an important Buddhist → stupa, the Charumati stupa.
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Buddhist monastery in eastern Kathmandu.
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  Pls.: 19, 20, 174.

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Chakrabahil  ward in Patan.
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  pp. 41, 42, 79, 94-97, 172.
  Pls.: 37/38; 39/40; 57-63; 176.

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China  pp. 30, 31.

Chinnamasta  local form of the goddess → Kali.
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Chinnamasta shrine  in Patan, near the palace square.
  p. 174.
Chobhar sacred gorges, of the Bagmati River, through which all the waters of the Kathmandu Valley drain towards the south, with an important Ganesha temple.

pp. 34, 35.

Today totally desecrated by the German-built cement factory.

p. 34.

Pl.: 8.

Chochhen Tol ward in Bhaktapur.

pp. 55, 120.

Chuma Ganesha temple Ganesha temple in Bhaktapur.

pp. 55, 120.

Chusya Bahal Buddhist monastery in Jyatha Tol, Kathmandu, whose torana was stolen in 1993.

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Chyasol Dhara public fountain and washing place in eastern Patan, with many beautiful stone sculptures.

pp. 51, 164, 182.

conch shell one of the attributes of Vishnu.

pp. 21, 45.

D
daju (Nep.) elder brother.

p. 35.

Dakshinamurti Tol ward in Deopatan, near Pashupatinath.

p. 79.

Dalai Lama spiritual and temporal ruler of Tibet, incarnation of the Avalokiteshvara. At present in exile in Dharamsala, India.

p. 62.

Dattatreya district in eastern Bhaktapur.

p. 93

Dattatreya temple important temple in eastern Bhaktapur, dedicated to Vishnu.

pp. 93, 106.

Dasain the greatest religious festival of Nepal, in October, in honour of the goddess Durga.

p. 49.

Deopatan ancient village in the immediate vicinity of Pashupatinath.


destruction, of the Kathmandu valley pp. 35, 36, 66.

development aid, to Nepal pp. 34, 35.

Pl.: 8.

Devi “the goddess”: short designation for the Great Goddess, the divine female, in all her different forms, appearances and manifestations.

pp. 47, 51.

dhara (Nep.) hiti (New.) public fountain and washing site, hundreds of which are scattered throughout the cities and villages of the Kathmandu Valley.

pp. 45, 51, 54, 93, 104, 164, 182.
**dharmachakra-mudra** gesture of proclaiming the Buddhist teaching, → mudra of the → DhyaniBuddha → Vairochana.

p. 61.

**Dhoka Tol** ward in Kathmandu.

p. 38.

**DhyaniBuddhas** the five Buddhas of the four quarters and the centre (zenith), much revered in Nepal and often depicted: in mandalas, at the stone → chaityas and above the entrances of houses. They are: Akshobhya (east), Ratnasambhava (south), Amitabha (west), Amoghasiddhi (north) and Vairochana (centre).

pp. 59, 60, 61, 109, 170.

Pls.: 19, 174.

**dhyani-mudra** gesture of meditation, → mudra of → Amitabha, Buddha of the west.

p. 60.

didi (Nep.) elder sister.

p. 35.

**Dipankara** “The Bringer of Light”, Buddha of the preceding age, predecessor of → Shakyamuni, the Buddha of the present age.

p. 59.

**Diwali** the festival of lights, in late autumn, in honour of → Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth.

pp. 49, 50.

**durbar square, palace square:** In each of the three royal cities of the Kathmandu Valley (Kathmandu, Patan, Bhaktapur), which were, in medieval times, the capitals of individual kingdoms, there is a beautiful durbar square, dotted with temples and pagodas, opposite the former royal palaces.


**Durga** “the inaccessible”, powerful Hindu goddess, much venerated in Nepal in a multitude of forms and manifestations, among them → Bhagvati, → Taleju and → Kumari.

pp. 46-50, 113, 125, 126, 127.

Pls.: 13, 83, 105, 107.

**E**

Egypt p. 65

Ekmukha Shivalingam → lingam sculpted with the face of → Shiva on one side.

pp. 37, 42, 43, 142.

Pls.: 9, 10, 131.

elephant throne animal of → Akshobhya, Buddha of the east. In Hinduism, mount of the god Indra.

p. 59.

*Enap* Newar-language daily. p. 39. See also “Press reports”.

Eos Greek goddess of the dawn’s red.

p. 47.

**F**

flaming discus main attribute and weapon of → Vishnu.

pp. 21, 45, 76.
flaming sword  
“the sword of wisdom that cuts through the clouds of ignorance”, main attribute of → Manjushri, → Bodhisattva of wisdom.  
p. 63

G

Gahiti  
ward in Patan.  
pp. 37, 62, 175.

Gaja-Lakshmi  
specific form of the goddess → Lakshmi, in which she is shown sitting on a lotus, while elephants, from vessels in their raised trunks, pour sacred water over her.  
pp. 51, 177, 178.  
Pl.: 181.

Ganesh, Ganesha  
elephant-headed god, son of → Shiva and → Parvati, remover of obstacles, bestower of success for every undertaking. Very popular in Nepal.  
pp. 51, 55f., 120, 121, 130.  
Pl. 16.

Ganga  
the Ganges, the sacred river of India, rising in the Western Himalayas and flowing into the Bay of Bengal; the same river deified and venerated as a goddess.  
p. 31.  
Pl. 7.

Garuda  
The mythical sun-eagle of ancient Persian origin. In Hinduism, the mount of god → Visnu. In Nepal mainly depicted in half-human/half-birdlike form. Found regularly shown at the top of → toranas, clutching → Nag and Nagini, king and queen of the serpents, in its claws.  
pp. 43, 45-47, 77, 93, 110, 117, 124, 178.  
Pls.: 33, 56, 79, 81-84, 86-90, 98-100, 103, 112, 182.  
In Nepalese Buddhism, Garuda is the throne animal of → Amoghasiddhi, Buddha of the north, cf. p. 61.

Gauri  
one of the many forms of the wife of → Shiva, also called → Parvati or → Uma or → Sati.  
pp. 41, 47.

Gauri Ghat  
sacred spot on the → Bagmati River, in the vicinity of → Pashupatinath.  
p. 38.

Gautama Siddhartha  
of the → Shakya clan: the man of princely descent who was to become the → Buddha, the Enlightened One.  
pp. 32, 58.

German-built cement factory  
located at the → Chobhar gorge of the → Bagmati River, one of the biggest polluters of the Kathmandu Valley.  
p. 34.  
Pl.: 8.

Germany  
pp. 34, 35, 36.

ghat (Nep.)  
the series of steps leading down to a river, a sacred spot or a cremation place.  
pp. 38, 50, 57, 58, 62, 80, 91, 97, 102, 144, 166.

Gorakhnath temple  
at → Pashupatinath, in the → Mrigasthali forest.  
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Gorkhapatra  
a Nepali-language daily.  
p. 38.
Greece

Guhyeshvari

Guhyeshvari temple

Gupta period

Gurkha (Gorkha)

Gurkhas (Gorkhas)

H

Hadigaon (Harigaon)

Hadigaon Ganesha temple

Hanuman

Hanuman Dhoka

Hari-Hara

Hariti

Himalaya

Hinduism

pp. 30, 49, 65.

“The Mistress of Secrets” – one of the many aspects of → Devi, the Great Goddess.

pp. 47, 49.

Whereas in the → Pashupatinath temple it is the male creative power, personified in → Shiva, that is venerated, the Guhyeshvari temple nearby, on the opposite bank of the → Bagmati river is dedicated to the cult of the Great Goddess and the worship of the female cosmic power.

pp. 47, 49.

The age of the imperial Gupta dynasty ruling in India (4th to 7th centuries A.D.) is commonly looked upon as the climax – the classical period – of Indian art, during which outstanding masterpieces of sculpture (Hindu and Buddhist) were created.

pp. 43, 55, 58.

Himalayan township some 100 km west of Kathmandu, whose rulers, the Shah dynasty, succeeded, in the 18th century, in uniting the scattered Himalayan chieftdoms and kingdoms, thus creating the modern state of Nepal.

p. 58.

The inhabitants of the mountainous areas around → Gurkha, well known for their martial capacities.

p. 58.

Newar settlement at the north-eastern outskirts of Kathmandu, with ancient archaeological sites.

pp. 37, 38, 114, 150, 169.

→ Ganesha temple between Hadigaon and Bishalnagar, Kathmandu.

p. 114.

the monkey-god and warrior-king of the great Indian epos, the → Ramayana.

p. 56.

“Hanuman Gate”, the square in front of the old royal palace in Kathmandu, named after the huge image of Hanuman that stands at the palace entrance.

pp. 46, 47, 52, 53, 129, 155, 156.

syncretistic form and composite image of the two great Hindu gods: the right half depicts Shiva (“Hara”), the left half Vishnu (“Hari”).

pp. 45-47, 66.

Pls.: 12, 31, 158.

Buddhist female deity, protectress of children (also called Ajima, “grandmother” (New)).

pp. 47, 63.

The loftiest mountain range of the world dividing the plains of India and the Tibetan high plateau. Nepal, with eight of the highest peaks of the world and almost entirely mountainous, is the heart and core of the Himalaya.

pp. 29, 30, 33.

with → Buddhism, one of the two great religions of Nepal. In the south of Nepal, Hinduism is more common whereas in the North, in the high mountain ranges, Buddhism prevails. In the Kathmandu Valley, both religions have been living peacefully together for more than 2000 years, and the valley is dotted with monasteries and temples of both Buddhism and Hinduism.

pp. 29, 30, 41ff., 45.
Hindu temples in the Kathmandu valley

Bagh Bhairav temple, Kirtipur.
pp. 16, 173.

Bhagvati temple, Hadigaon.
p. 150.

Bhagvati temple, Nala.
p. 54.

Bhairav temple, Bhaktapur.
p. 112

Bhairav temple, Bungamati.
p. 112

Bhimsen temple, Patan.
p. 120.

Bhubaneshvar temple, Deopatan.
pp. 78, 157.

Chamundrayani temple, Patan.
p. 135.

Chandesvari temple, Patan.
p. 131.

Changu Narayana temple.
pp. 43, 45, 106, 117.

Charnarayana temple, Patan.
pp. 146, 147.

Chinnamasta shrine, Patan.
p. 174.

Chuma Ganesha temple, Bhaktapur.
pp. 55, 120.

Dattatreya temple, Bhaktapur.
pp. 93, 106.

Ganesha temple, Hadigaon.
p. 114.

Ganesha temple, Tekatso Tol, Bhaktapur.
pp. 121, 130, 140.

Gorakhnath temple, Mrigasthali.
p. 154.

Guhyeshvari temple, near Pashupatinath.
p. 49.

Indreshvar Mahadev temple, Panauti.
pp. 167, 168.

Jagat Narayana temple, Patan.
p. 171.

Jayabagheshvari temple, near Pashupatinath.
p. 128.

Jyotilingeshwar temple, Sankhu.
pp. 16, 152, 153.

Krishna temple, Svatha Tol, Patan.
pp. 36, 148.

Kumbheshwar temple, Patan.
pp. 41, 75, 90, 158.

Maiti Devi temple, Kathmandu.
pp. 53, 181.

Mimnath temple, Patan.
pp. 115, 145.

Narayana temple, Kulimha Tol, Patan.
p. 151.

Nitinath shrine, Nasamana Tol, Bhaktapur.
p. 128.

Pashupatinath temple.
pp. 24f., 30, 37, 41-43, 45, 47, 49, 50, 51, 56, 58, 66, 81, 96, 102, f., 105, 141-144, 166.
Rama temple, at Pashupatinath. p. 143.
Tileshvar Mahadev temple, Lele. pp. 47, 137.
Wakhabati Narayana temple, Bhaktapur. pp. 70, 82, 117.

Hiranya-varna Mahavihar the most splendid Buddhist monastery of Patan. pp. 58, 109, 118, cf. Pl. 92

hiti (New.) public fountain and washing site. See also dhara. pp. 104, 177, 178.

horse the throne animal of → Ratnasambhava, Buddha of the south. p. 59.
The sun god Surya, too, has as his mount either a horse, or else he is depicted in his celestial chariot drawn by 7 (or 11) winged horses. cf. p. 54. Pl. 14.

I
Ilanani Bahal Buddhist monastery in Patan. p. 119.

illuminated manuscripts p. 16

Imbahul ward and Buddhist monastery in Patan. p. 38.

Indra Jatra important Nepalese festival in September, during which the living goddess → Kumari is paraded through the streets of Kathmandu in a huge wooden temple chariot. p. 52.


international art theft pp. 14, 15, 21, 37 ff., 66, 165.

Islam p. 58.
J
Japan pp. 16, 61.
Jana Bahal temple Buddhist temple in Kathmandu, dedicated to Lokeshvara in his form as the White – Machhendranath.
Jayabagheshvari village in the vicinity of Pashupatinath.
p. 50.
Jayabagheshvari temple temple near Pashupatinath.
p. 128.
Jyatha Tol ward in Kathmandu.
pp. 83, 179.
Jyotilingeshvar temple temple in Sankhu, dedicated to Shiva.
pp. 16, 152, 153.

K
Kailas, Kailash sacred mountain of the Hindus and the Buddhists, in the trans-Himalayan range, in south-western Tibet.
For the Hindus, Mount Kailash is the sacred abode of Lord – Shiva.
pp. 41, 89, 136, 182.
Kali “the Black One”, Hindu goddess of time and death, commanding the powers of destruction. Venerated in many forms, among them – Chamunda and → Chinnamasta.
pp. 47, 49, 50, 51.
Kamal Pokhari small pond in – Pharping village.
pp. 25, 26.
Kamdeva “God of Love”, see → Shiva Kamdeva.
Kathesimbhurward in Kathmandu, with a → stupa and Buddhist monasteries.
p. 62.
Kathmandu one of the three ancient royal cities of the Kathmandu Valley, capital of Nepal, seat of the king of Nepal.
Once one of the most charming cities of Asia, due to uncontrolled “development” in the last decade it has now become a pity to behold, a ravished love.
p. 13 etc. (numerous mentions).
Kathmandu Valley called “Nepal” by the mountain tribes of the Himalayas, this fertile valley, about 30 x 35 km in size, located at an altitude of 1400 m, surrounded on all sides by high mountains, has since ancient times been the political, economic and cultural centre of Nepal. It is the centre of Nepalese art which here reached its acme. All works of art described and depicted in the present book originated in the Valley.
pp. 13, 15, 16 etc. (numerous mentions).
Kirtipur → Newar settlement to the south-west of Kathmandu.
pp. 16, 173.
Kirtimukha “the Face of Glory “, mythical monster devouring itself, often depicted on → toranas.
p. 110.
Pls.: 91, 95, 96.
Kopugaon small settlement near – Pharping.
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>p. 61.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kotsu Tol ward</td>
<td>in Pharping.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krishna</td>
<td>popular Hindu deity, often depicted playing the flute, dancing with the Gopi maidens; the eighth avatar of Lord Vishnu.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>p. 117.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Pls.: 91, back cover.</td>
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<td>pp. 36, 148.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kulimha Tol ward</td>
<td>in Patan.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p. 151.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumar</td>
<td>Hindu deity, son of Shiva and Parvati. Also called Skanda or Karttikeya, the god of war. His mount is the peacock.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>pp. 74, 120, 130, 152.</td>
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<td>Pls.: 27, 145.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumari</td>
<td>As a manifestation of Durga, she is one of the many forms of Devi, the Great Goddess. In Nepal, she is venerated as the “living goddess” in the form of a virgin girl.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pp. 52 f. 120, 130, 140, 181.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Pl. 185.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumbheshvar Dhara</td>
<td>public fountain and washing place in front of the Kumbheshvar temple, Patan, with many ancient stone sculptures set into its walls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pp. 45, 47, 89.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumbheshvar temple</td>
<td>temple in Patan, dedicated to Shiva, one of the two five-storeyed pagodas in the Kathmandu Valley (the other being the Nyatpola pagoda in Bhaktapur).</td>
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<td>pp. 41, 75, 90, 159.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kunda Dixit</td>
<td>Nepalese journalist and writer.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>p. 67.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwa Bahal</td>
<td>Buddhist monastery in Kathmandu.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>p. 83.</td>
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<td>L</td>
<td>p. 67.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lagan Tol ward</td>
<td>ward in eastern Kathmandu.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>p. 111.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakshman</td>
<td>brother of Rama.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pp. 105.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pl.: 74.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakshmi</td>
<td>wife of god Vishnu, and the goddess of wealth, beauty and good fortune.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>pp. 21, 45-47, 50-53, 76, 77, 82, 93, 124, 177.</td>
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<td>Pls.: 103, 170, 181.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>See also: Gaja-Lakshmi, Diwali.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lakshmi-Narayana</td>
<td>composite image consisting of a male half (Vishnu) and a female half (Lakshmi).</td>
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<td>pp. 14, 22, 23, 45.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Pl.: 2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lele</td>
<td>village in the south of the Kathmandu Valley.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>pp. 38, 45-47, 137, 156.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lichhavi period 3rd-9th century. In this age, under the rule of the Lichhavi kings, Nepal had close cultural contacts with the Gupta dynasty of North India. The Lichhavi period is considered to be "the golden age" of Nepalese art. Masterly works of art were created, of which some outstanding stone sculptures have remained -now among the finest Asian art. They can be found, in particular, at the Vishnu sanctuary of Changu Narayana.

lion the vahana, the mount of the goddess Durga. Throne animal of the Buddha Vairochana. The Bodhisattva Lokeshvara Simhanada is also seated on a lion (cf. Pl. 66).

lion, guardian In Nepal, the entrances to temples and monasteries usually are guarded by a pair of male and female guardian lions, made of brass or stone.

lion, winged p. 106. Pl. 75.

lingam see Shivalingam.

"living goddess" The goddess Kumari, venerated in Nepal in the form of a living young girl.

Lokeshvara also called Avalokiteshvara (Tib. Chenrezi), personification of the Buddhist principle of compassion; the most important and popular Bodhisattva of the Buddhist Himalaya. The famous mantra OM MANI PADME HUM is dedicated to him.

Lokeshvara Simhanada "Lokeshvara of the lion's voice". In this specific form he is worshipped as the great redeemer.

Lumbini the place in southern Nepal, close to the Indian border, where Gautama Siddhartha, the Buddha, was born in 563 B.C.

M

mace one of the weapons and attributes of Vishnu.

Machhendra Bahal temple of the Red Machhendranath, in Bungamati village.

Machhendranath specific form of the Bodhisattva Lokeshvara, found only in the Kathmandu valley. A highly venerated deity of the Newar community, he manifests Buddhist as well as Hindu characteristics and is worshipped by Hindus and Buddhists alike. As "Lord of Rain" he is of great importance to the Newar farmers of the Valley, as he has say over the timely arrival of the monsoon rains indispensable for the annual rice planting. Two forms exist: the Red Machhendranath of Bungamati and Patan, and the White Machhendranath of Kathmandu, the latter residing in the Jana Bahal temple. Annually, with the beginning of the monsoon rains in mid-June, both deities are paraded in enormous temple chariots, for weeks on end, through the streets and quarters of Patan and Kathmandu.
Mahabuddha stupa | stupa in Kathmandu.  
---|---
Mahabuddha temple | Buddhist temple decorated with terra-cotta tiles and sculptures, in Patan.  
---|---
Mahadev | “the Great God” – this is how the Nepalese call → Shiva, the powerful Hindu god.  
---|---
Mahayana Buddhism | “the Buddhism of the Great Vehicle”, or Northern Buddhism, whose hallmark is the → Bodhisattva ideal. Nepal and Tibet, like the entire Himalayas, are countries of strong Mahayana influence.  
---|---
Maiti Devi temple | temple in Kathmandu, dedicated to the Great Goddess.  
---|---
Maitreyya | “the Great Loving One”— the Buddha who will appear in the future age.  
---|---
makara | mythic water animal of ancient Indian tradition, composed of different animals such as the fish, the crocodile and the elephant. It is depicted regularly on → toranas and often found ornamenting fountain-heads. It is also the mount of the river goddess Ganga. Cf. Pl. 7.  
---|---
Malla period | A.D. 1200-1767. After the → Lichhavi period, the second great period of flowering of → Newar artistry. Under the patronage of the art-loving kings of the Malla dynasty, who ruled the three kingdoms of Bhaktapur, Patan and Kathmandu, the beautiful medieval cities of the Kathmandu Valley were created, with palaces and palace squares, with hundreds of temples and monasteries and thousands of sacred images.  
---|---
Mangal Bazar | the area around the royal palace in Patan.  
---|---
Manjushri | the → Bodhisattva of wisdom.  
---|---
Maru Tol | ward in Kathmandu.  
---|---
Masan Ghat | sacred spot on the Hanumante River in Bhaktapur.  
---|---
Minnath (Minnath) temple | temple in Patan.  
---|---
Mrigasthali | sacred forested hill at → Pashupatinath, overlooking the eastern banks of the → Bagmati River.  
---|---
mudra | stereotyped gesture of deep symbolic significance depicted in Hindu as well as in Buddhist sacred images. Some mudras are: abhaya (fearlessness, protection); bhumisparsa (earth-touching); dharmanachakra (teaching, preaching); dhyana (meditation); varada (boon-giving, wish-fulfilling); vitarka (argumentation).  
---|---
N

Nag, Nagini  king and queen of the Nagas, the snake folk, revered in Nepal as semi-deities, guardians of subterranean treasures, lords and rulers over the waters. They are often depicted in composite form, the face and upper body in human, the lower body in snakelike form.

pp. 45, 110.

Pis. 79-84, 86-90, 98-100, 112.

Nala  \( \rightarrow \) Newar settlement to the east of the Kathmandu Valley, near Banepa.

pp. 54, 64.

Nandi  the bull, mount of Lord Shiva.

pp. 31, 46, 80, 89, 141.

Pis.: 12, 39, 51, 128, 134, 135.

Narasimha  “the lion-man”, fourth avatar of Vishnu.

pp. 43, 135.

Narayana  the name of Vishnu in Nepal. See Shiva.


pp. 21, 22, 33.

Nasamana Tol  ward in Bhaktapur.

pp. 14, 21, 90, 128, 136.

National Museum  in Kathmandu.

p. 15.

Navagraha  the nine planetary deities.

p. 53.

Newar  the original inhabitants of the Kathmandu Valley. Their artists and craftsmen are among the best in the world. They have created all the treasures of art and architecture which dot the Kathmandu Valley: palaces, temples, pagodas, monasteries, bronzes, paintings, thangkas, sculptures etc.

pp. 25, 31, 32, 36, 51, 58, 110.

Nine Durgas  (“Navadurga”, Nep.), nine mother goddesses of very ancient origin, particularly venerated in Bhaktapur, where they are the protective deities of the city.

p. 49.

Nitinath shrine  small temple at Nasamana Tol, Bhaktapur.

p. 128.

O

OM MANI PADME HUM  most popular of all mantras, invocation of Avalokiteshvara, the Bodhisattva of compassion, recited daily hundreds of thousands of times throughout Tibet and the entire Buddhist Himalaya.

p. 62.

openair museum  the Kathmandu Valley, with its overwhelming abundance of ancient works of art situated everywhere out in the open was a veritable “open air museum” until, in the 1960s, art theft began to loot its treasures.

pp. 15, 29, 30, 37.

P

Pachali Ghat  location on the Bagmati River, Kathmandu.

p. 62.
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<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Padmapani</td>
<td>“bearer of the lotus”, one of the many forms of → Lokeshvara. Pls.: 80, 179.</td>
<td>p. 111</td>
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<tr>
<td>pagoda</td>
<td>multitiered Hindu temple, built of wood, bricks and tiles, a significant and impressive example of medieval Nepalese architecture. The Kathmandu Valley, in particular the → durbar squares of the three royal cities, is dotted with pagodas. The tallest of them, the Nyatapola pagoda in Bhaktapur and the → Kumbheshvar pagoda in Patan, have five storeys. According to some experts, this specific architectural style originated in ancient India, where it has long since vanished, while others believe Nepal itself to be the country of origin. pp. 36, 68.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>paintings, Nepalese</td>
<td>pp. 16, 59, 61, 174. For the only example in the present book see pl. 178.</td>
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<td>Panchdeval Chowk</td>
<td>a courtyard in the → Pashupatinath temple area.</td>
<td>pp. 45, 103, 172</td>
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<td>Panauti</td>
<td>ancient → Newar city to the south-east of the Kathmandu Valley. The famous → Indreshvar Mahadev pagoda stands in Panauti.</td>
<td>p. 167</td>
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<td>Parashurama</td>
<td>“Rama with the axe”, sixth → avatar of → Vishnu.</td>
<td>p. 105</td>
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<td>Parvati</td>
<td>wife of → Shiva. Pls.: 170, 186.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pashupatinath</td>
<td>one of the most sacred temples of all Nepal (and India), dedicated to Lord → Shiva. Located to the north-east of Kathmandu, at the banks of the sacred river → Bagmati with its cremation → ghats. pp. 24, 25, 30, 37, 41, 42, 43, 45, 47, 49-51, 56, 58, 66, 81, 96, 102, 103, 105, 141-144, 166.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patan</td>
<td>together with → Kathmandu and → Bhaktapur, one of the three medieval royal cities of the Kathmandu Valley. More than one hundred → Newar Buddhist monasteries are located in Patan alone. pp. 13, 30, etc. (numerous mentions).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peacock</td>
<td>mount of the Hindu deities → Kumar and → Kumari, cf. Pl. 185. Throne animal of the Buddha of the west, → Amitabha.</td>
<td>p. 61, 181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pichhe Bahal</td>
<td>Buddhist monastery in Patan.</td>
<td>p. 131</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pim Bahal</td>
<td>Buddhist monastery in Kathmandu.</td>
<td>p. 135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pilgrimage</td>
<td>(to the sacred sites of the Kathmandu Valley). p. 30.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pratyusha</td>
<td>Hindu goddess of dawn.</td>
<td>p. 53</td>
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</table>
Rajarajeshvari temple

Raj Ghat

Rama

Rama temple

Ramayana

Rana rulers

ratna

Ratnasambhava

Ratri

Red Machhendranath

return (of stolen art to Nepal)

The Rising Nepal

Royal Nepal Academy

S

sadhu

Salabhanjika

Sankhu

Saravasti

Sati

Shaivism

thesefifth avatar of → Vishnu.

pp. 105, 135.

Pls.: 74, 120.

at Pashupatinath.

p.143.

“the story of Rama”, the great Indian epic whose subject is the abduction of → Sita, → Rama’s beautiful wife, by Ravana, the demon king of Sri Lanka, and the ensuing lengthy struggles of Rama, supported by his brother → Lakshman and the monkey-king → Hanuman, to win her back.

p. 56.

The Rana family ruled with absolute power over Nepal from 1847 to 1951.

p. 33.

jewel, symbol of → Ratnasambhava, the “jewel-born”, the Buddha of the south.

p. 59

the → DhyaniBuddha of the south.

p. 59.

the Hindu goddess of the night.

p. 47.

see → Machhendranath.

an English-language daily of Nepal.

pp. 21, 38, 39; see also “Press reports”.

p. 65.

a Hindu ascetic.

pp. 47, 49.

a tree and forest nymph, a very ancient motif of Indian and Nepalese art.

pp. 107, 153.

Pls.: 77, 149, 150, 151.

Newar settlement in the north-eastern part of the Kathmandu Valley.

pp. 16, 38, 45, 49, 92, 118, 152, 153.

the Hindu goddess of learning, wisdom and the fine arts.

pp. 13, 25, 26, 27, 37, 47, 51, 52, 63, 66, 82, 159, 169, 179.

Pls.: 5, 6, 173, 183.

one of the many names and forms of the wife of Lord → Shiva.

p. 47.

that part of → Hinduism whose followers regard → Shiva as the supreme deity.

p. 45.
Shaka
Newar family clan; family name of → Gautama Siddhartha, the → Buddha.
pp. 32, 58.

Shakyamuni
"the Wise One of the Shakya clan," epithet of the → Buddha.
p. 58.

Shantipur temple
small Buddhist shrine at → Swayambhunath.
pp. 1, 132.

Shekha Narayana,
(Sikha Narayana)
ancient forest and spring sanctuary, with several temples, dedicated to → Vishnu, sacred ponds and a Buddhist monastery; at the foot of Champadevi Mountains near → Pharpiing in the south of the Kathmandu Valley.
pp. 54, 95, 101, 133, 134.

Shiva
the most powerful and most revered male Hindu deity of Nepal; in his main temple, at → Pashupatinath, he is venerated as the patron deity and protector of the Hindu kingdom of Nepal. Worshipped in many forms and aspects as: "Mahadev" (the Great God); "Kamdeva" (the God of Love), "Shankar", ("the Giver of Joy"), "Pashupati", ("Lord of the Animals"), and many more.
Pls.: 9, 10, 51-54, 87, 104, 105, 131, 158, 186.

Shiva Kamdeva
Shiva as "God of Love", depicted in human form with erect phallus.
pp. 24, 25, 38, 129, 133, 155, 171.
Pls.: 4, 41, 69, 110, 134, 157, 175.

Shivalingam
phallic symbol of the universal creative power of Lord Shiva. The lingam is shown united with the → yoni, an abstract representation of the female organ, thus symbolizing the process of cosmic creation.
See also → Chaturmukha Shivalingam, → Ekmukha Shivalingam.
pp. 25, 41-43, 45, 79, 80, 137, 143, 144, 172.
Pls.: 9, 10, 37, 39, 57-63, 132, 133, 176.

Shiva Nataraja
Shiva as "Lord of the Dance". In his cosmic dance, Shiva creates and destroys the universe.
pp. 125, 126.
Pls.: 87, 104, 106.

Shivaratri
"the Night of Shiva", the most important festival of → Pashupatinath, in the month of → Phagun. It attracts thousands of pilgrims and Hindu ascetics from the entire Indian subcontinent.
p. 30.

Sikkim
the eastern neighbour of Nepal, formerly an independent Buddhist kingdom, since 1975 a state in India.
p. 30.

sindhur
red vermilion powder which the Nepalese strew over their sacred images as a token of veneration.
p. 171.

Sita
the wife of → Rama.
p. 105.
Pl. 74.

Sougal Tol
a ward in Patan.
pp. 39, 54, 72.

Sri Lanka
p. 61.

Stolen images of Nepal
pp. 70, 85 ff.
stolen struts  | wood-carved struts supporting the temple roofs, from where they were stolen. pp. 16, 38, 150 ff. Pls.: 77, 142, 143, 144, 145-148, 152-154.

stupa  | Buddhist religious monument, the distinctive mark of the Buddhist faith, found in almost every Asian country. Many stupas grace the Kathmandu Valley. The most important ones are the stupas of → Bodnath and of → Swayambhunath, the centres of Tibetan Buddhism and Newar Buddhism respectively. Besides these huge stupas, many smaller ones and hundreds of the small votive stupas, called → chaityas, are spread over the entire valley. pp. 30, 58, 59, 61.

sundhara  | “golden spring” – a frequent name for some of the many public washing and bathing places that dot the Kathmandu Valley. “Sundharas” are found in Kathmandu as well as in Patan and at → Jayabagesvari near Pashupatinath. p.128.

Sundhari Chowk  | the courtyard in the Patan palace which houses the royal bath, with dozens of beautiful stone sculptures. pp. 50, 124, 126, 127. Pls. 103-107.

Surya  | the sun god. pp. 39, 53-55, 72, 73, 100, 101. Pls.: 14, 23/24; 25/26; 67,68.

Svatha Tol  | ward in Patan. p. 148.

Swayambhunath  | huge → stupa, more than 2000 years old, on a hill at the western outskirts of Kathmandu. Important centre of → Newar Buddhism. pp. 1, 30, 39, 40, 58, 62-64, 118, 132, 163, 180.

swan  | the mount of the goddess → Sarasvati and of the moon god → Chandra. pp. 25, 51, 53.

T  | specific form of the Hindu goddess → Durga as the tutelary deity of the dynasty of the → Malla kings. pp. 47, 49.


Tantrism  | secret and all-pervading Indian religion of very ancient origin, preserving the pre-Aryan cults of the Great Mother; centred around the cult of shakti, the primordial female power. pp. 59, 63.

Tara  | the saviouress, → female Bodhisattva of mercy. pp. 63, 64, 159, 180. Cover photo, Pl. 184.

Taumadhi Tol  | ward in Bhaktapur. p. 112.

Tekatso Tol  | ward in Bhaktapur. pp. 104, 121, 130, 140.

Thailand  | p. 61.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thalachhe Tol</td>
<td>ward in Bhaktapur.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thangka</td>
<td>painted scroll of Tibetan or Newar origin, depicting Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, deities, saints, lamas or other personages of the vast pantheon of Mahayana Buddhism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tholachhe Tol</td>
<td>ward in Bhaktapur.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>threatened images of Nepal</td>
<td>Has always been the northern neighbour of Nepal. At present, occupied by China.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tibet</td>
<td>Tibet has always been the northern neighbour of Nepal. At present, occupied by China.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tileshvar Mahadev temple</td>
<td>Shiva temple in → Lele village.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokha</td>
<td>village in the north-western part of the Kathmandu Valley.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>torana</td>
<td>ornate board, with statues of deities, above the entrance of Nepalese temples. Pls.: 79-102, 111, 112, 166, 167.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tortoise</td>
<td>the mount of the goddess → Lakshmi (and the river goddess → Yamuna). Pls.: 31, 49, 41.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tribhanga</td>
<td>the elegant “three-bend” body posture which is so typical of Indian and Nepalese sculptures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trident</td>
<td>“trishul”, main attribute of → Shiva, pp. 46, 76. A trident with a serpent coiled around it is the attribute of → Lokeshvara Simhanada, cf. Pl. 66.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uma</td>
<td>one of the many forms of → Shiva’s wife. Pls.: 41, 89, 136.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uma-Maheshvara</td>
<td>sacred image depicting Shiva in loving union with his wife → Uma at their celestial abode, the sacred mountain → Kailash. Pls.: 29, 51, 52, 53, 54, 123, 168, 186.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>p. 37.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>pp. 16, 65.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unknown art of Nepal</td>
<td>works of Nepalese art that have never been published before. Pls. 2, 4, 5, 12, 14, 16, 17, 25, 29, 33, 37, 39, 41, 43, 45, 52, 54, 55, 56, 57-60, 63, 66, 67, 69, 70-80, 93, 94, 95, etc..., 153-158, 172, 173, 174, 175, 177, 178, 180, 182, 183, 185.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usha</td>
<td>the Hindu goddess of the dawn’s red. Pls.: 47, 53.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Vairochana

the Dhyanibuddha of the Centre.
p. 61.

Vaishnavism

that part of Hinduism whose followers regard Vishnu as the supreme deity.
p. 45.

vajra

"the diamond sceptre", symbol of all-pervading spiritual power. In Tibetan Buddhism, which is also called Vajrayana – "the vajra-vehicle", it is the main ritual instrument. Attribute of the Dhyanibuddha Akshobhya and of the primordial Buddha Vajrasattva.
pp. 59, 61.

Vajrasattva

primordial Buddha.
pp. 118, 163.
Pls.: 93, 166.

Vajrayogini

esoteric tantric-Buddhist goddess, to whom several temples on the edge of the Kathmandu Valley are dedicated.
pp. 49, 118.
Pl.: 94.

Vajrayogini temple

on a hill above Sankhu, it is the most important one of the Vajrayogini temples in the Kathmandu Valley.
p. 118.

varada-mudra

gesture of wish-fulfilling or boon-giving, mudra of Ratnasambhava, the Dhyanibuddha of the South, as well as of several Hindu deities, the goddess Lakshmi, for instance.
p. 59.

Vatsala Devi temple

temple on the palace square of Bhaktapur, dedicated to Devi, the Great Goddess.
p. 138.

Vidyeshvari Vihar

Buddhist monastery in Kathmandu, near Svayambhunath.
p. 31.

Vietnam

p. 61.

vina

the lute, the musical instrument of the goddess Sarasvati.
pp. 25, 51.
Pls. 5, 183.

Vishnu

one of the most venerated Hindu deities of Nepal, where he is called Narayana. Appears in many different forms, among them his ten avatars.
Pls.: 2, 11, 33, 35, 43, 45, 47, 50, 55, 56, 90, 103, 159, 182.

Vishvarupa

form of Vishnu, in which he is shown with many heads and arms, as the powerful lord of the universe.
p. 43.

vitarka-mudra

gesture of the convincing argument, mudra of Buddhist deities, saints and teachers.
Pl. 184.
Wakhabati Narayana temple in eastern Bhaktapur, dedicated to Vishnu. p. 117.

White Machhendranath see Machhendranath.

Wood carving besides casting bronzes and creating stone-carved sculptures of superior quality, the art of wood carving is another field in which the Newar master craftsmen have excelled. Thousands of wood-carved images of Hindu and Buddhist deities ornate the temples and monasteries of the Kathmandu Valley. The material used traditionally is the wood of the Sal tree (Shorea robusta), which can withstand the conditions of the monsoon climate for hundreds of years. pp. 15, 16, 31, 107, 109, 167.

World Heritage List many of the most important sites of the Kathmandu Valley, the stupas of Bodnath and Swayambhunath for instance, as well as the royal palaces and palace squares of Patan, Kathmandu and Bhaktapur, are included in the UNESCO list of the world’s cultural heritage. p. 37.

Wotu Tol a ward in Kathmandu. pp. 135, 159.

Y

Yamuna important river of India, flowing through the cities of Delhi and Agra, a tributary of the river Ganga; the same river deified and venerated as a river goddess. p. 31.

Pl. 7.

Yoni the female organ. pp. 41, 43, 49, 80, 137, 142.
ARAN, Lydia:

BANGDEL, Lain Singh:

DEVA, Krishna:

DETMOLD, Geoffrey & RUBEL, Mary:

GAIL, Adalbert J.:

GOVINDA, Lama Anagarika:

MACDONALD, Alexander W. & STAHL, Anne Vergati:

MAJUPURIA, T.C. & MAJUPURIA, Indra:

PAL, Pratapaditya:

RAY, Amita:

SINGH, Madanjeet:
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The author was born in 1942 in Essen, Germany. After graduating in law, he worked for ten years as a trial lawyer in Bonn until, in 1980, he left Germany to take up residence in Kathmandu, where he has been living ever since, working as a photographer, author and journalist.

His entire sympathy is devoted to the documentation and preservation of the ancient cultures of the Himalayan countries which, having been inaccessible for centuries, nowadays, under the massive influence of the modern world, are rapidly changing their appearance.

Besides travelling in Nepal, he pays regular visits to Ladakh, Tibet, Sikkim, Bhutan and other Asian countries.

Jürgen Schick is married to a Nepalese wife. They have two children, Michael Dorje and Nina Dölma.

Publications:
"Bhutan – Buddhas and Demons" (art, 12/1983)
"Nepal – A Culture Being Plundered" (art, 8/1986)
"In the Valley of the Gods" (Berge, 28/1988)
"The Gods are Leaving the Country" (GEO special 2/1988)
"The Gods are Leaving the Country" (ADEVA, Graz, 1989)
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Orchid Press, 98/13 Soi Apha Phrom, Ratchada Road, Chatuchak, Bangkok 10900, Thailand. Tel: +66 2 930 0149 Fax: +66 2 930 5646 E-mail: wop@inet.co.th European editorial office: PO Box 5259, N-0303 Oslo, Norway.

North America: 4840 Acorn Street, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3C 1L6 web: http://redfrog.noconnect.no/~wop