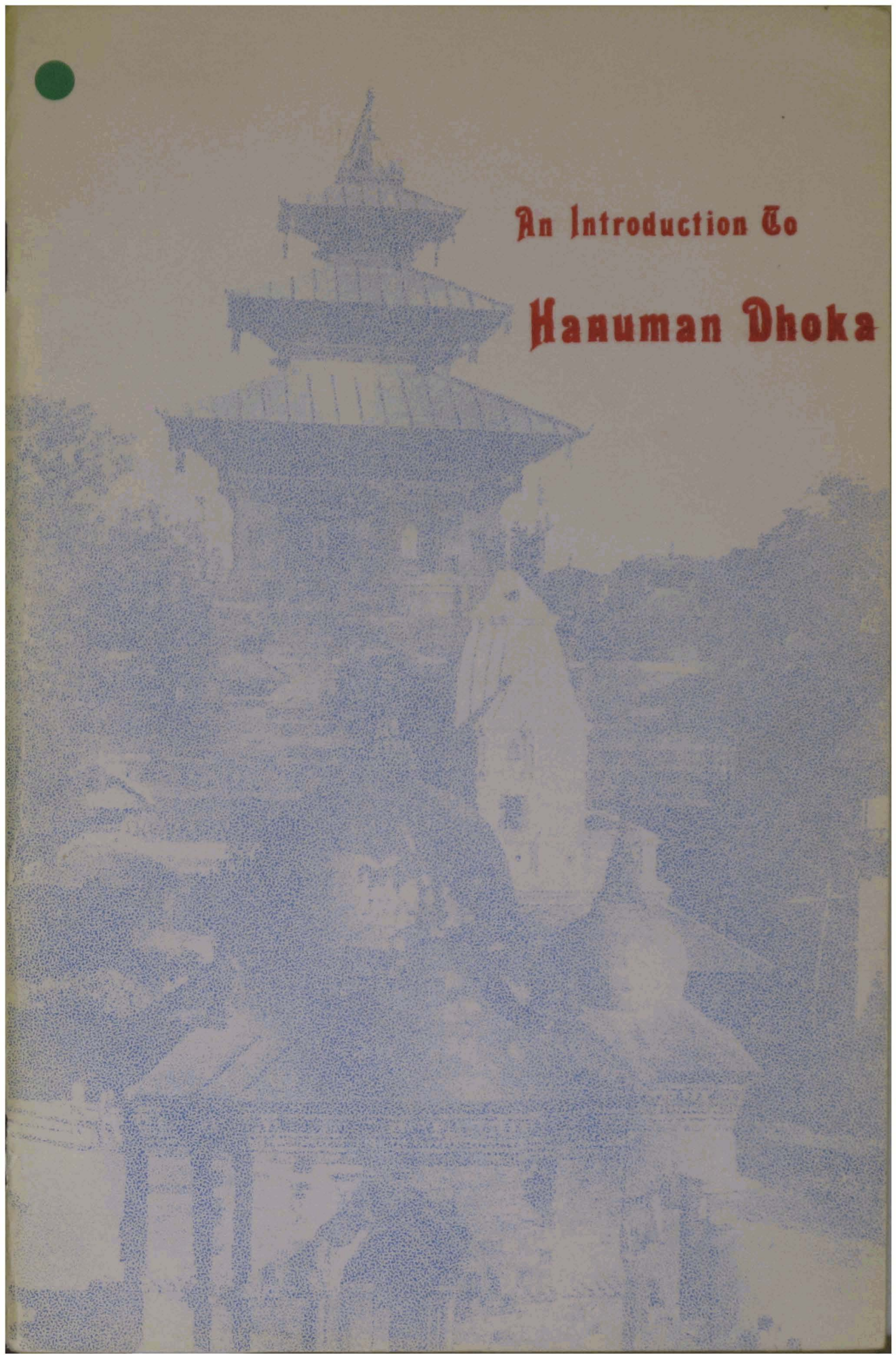


An Introduction To

Hanuman Dhoka



An Introduction To
The Hanuman Dhoka



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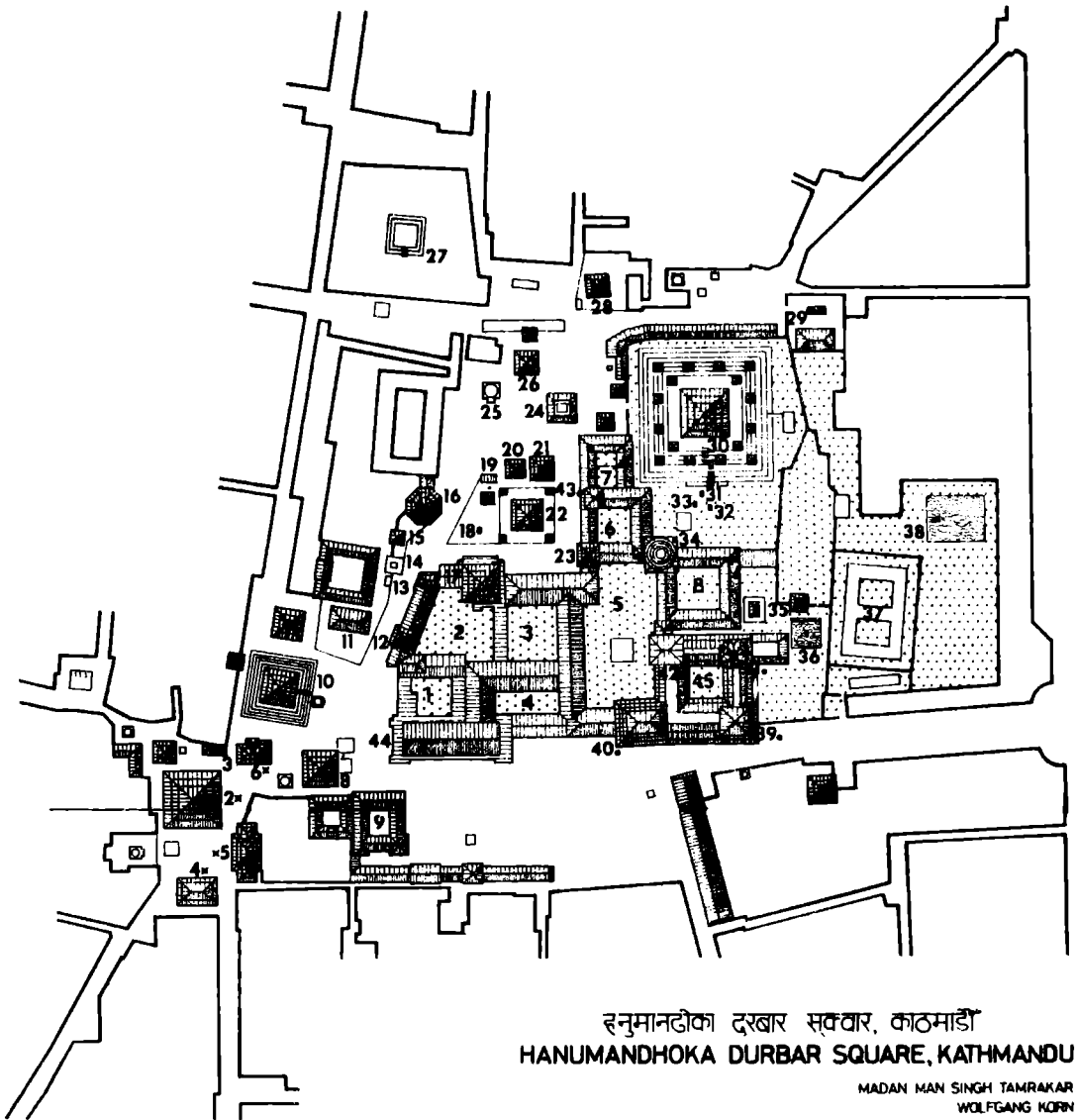
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Preliminary ceremonies
 Purnvapa → god of success
 → Ambika (symbol of power)
 Aindra Vinayak shanti → idra (highest heavenly)

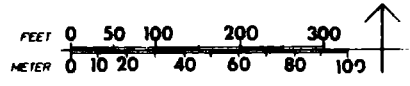
Womps ceremony 4 days long
 Laabte day: special ablution chamber
 Seated upon the Bhadrasana
 for application of holy clays, followed
 by ritual bath with ghee
 milk
~~but~~
 curd
 honey
 + prescribed holy waters



हनुमानढोका दरबार स्क्वयर, काठमाडौं
 HANUMANDHOKA DURBAR SQUARE, KATHMANDU

MADAN MAN SINGH TAMRAKAR
 WOLFGANG KORN

LEGEND	
आवडीय घर	Building
मन्दिर	Temple
कुर्जा	Observatory
ऐतिहासिक क्षेत्र	Historic space
सडक	Public inn



Institute of Nepal and Asian Studies
Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur
Kathmandu Nepal

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BY

LUDWIG F. STILLER, S.J.

BASED ON THE NEPALI TEXT

OF

GAUTAM VAJRAVAJRACHARYA

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Preface

The Institute takes this occasion to respectfully offer Their Majesties King Birendra and Queen Aishwarya of Nepal a hearty felicitation on this historic occasion. His Majesty King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev's auspicious coronation is being observed as a symbol of national unification throughout the country, a celebration in which the Institute joins all too happily and willingly. As His Majesty's illustrious predecessor King Prithivinarayan Shah brought about political unification, so may His Majesty King Birendra succeed in further integrating Nepal through regional development and through the new educational system that he envisioned and has now been launched in the country.

The Institute of Nepal and Asian Studies decided only a few months ago to study the Hanuman Dhoka palace. No historical studies had been made heretofore concentrating solely on the old palace squares of the Kathmandu valley. At the completion of the project, it is clear that such studies are absolutely necessary for a better understanding of Nepalese history. The Layaku(s), as these old palaces are called in Newari, have played a central role not only in political life but also in the cultural and artistic life of the people of Nepal. The political decisions taken within the walls of these palaces have had a wider impact, setting trends in Nepalese social and cultural patterns. Similarly, the traditions and beliefs of the diverse peoples in the outlying regions have converged again at this central point, where they have been captured in the various artistic and cultural symbols used in these palaces. Further, old palace sites in the Kathmandu valley reveal an unbroken history of

building and occupation ever since they were first constructed. They were not abandoned even when a change took place in the ruling dynasty. These palaces can be peeled like an onion, as it were, layerwise, for studying the past of Nepal, making them thus veritable museums of the country's artistic heritage. The fact that the auspicious coronation of His Majesty King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev is taking place within the Hanuman Dhoka palace is itself a proof of historical continuity from the Licchavi period to the present day.

The present booklet has been made in an abridged form, leaving out many details which would only have interested specialists of Nepalese history. It aims to provide a helpful pocket-guide to visitors to Nepal on their rambles along the walls of this historic old palace. The experience to be gained by each individual from examining these old buildings will be varying and entirely personal. The book merely seeks to tell in brief the manner in which the charm of the old palace is to be discovered, giving only the barest historical notes. The Nepali version of the text, which is also the original version and is being published shortly, treats the subject much more exhaustively.

The English text of this booklet, written by Dr. Ludwig Stiller, S. J. is based on the Nepali original by Mr. Gautam Vajra Vajracharya, who was also responsible for completing the study-project. I would like to offer to both of them my sincere thanks for accomplishing this excellent work. There are other persons who have assisted the Institute in completing this project on time. I am particularly grateful to Mr. Peter John Sanday and Mr. W. Korn of the HMG - UNESCO Hanuman Dhoka Conservation Project who provided us with the drawings, maps and pictures of Hanuman Dhoka. Last but not least, the book would not have seen the light of day with-

out the interest and invaluable help in various ways of Prof. N. P. Shrestha, Private Secretary to His Majesty, to whom my sincere gratitude is expressed.

P. R. Sharma.

Kathmandu! The coronation of His Majesty King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev! And the place of coronation, the Hanuman Dhoka palace in old Kathmandu.

For the visitor to Kathmandu, whether a first-time visitor or an old friend of Nepal, there is nothing that can quite compare with the visual impact of the Hanuman Dhoka palace and the temples in the palace area. It is age; it is timelessness. It is that special blend of artistic skill and reverence that bares the soul of a nation in a cultural profusion that is rich beyond measure.

These few pages of notes are meant to help you enjoy your visit to Nepal more completely by explaining a few of the highlights of the old palace. For the most part they are only hints towards an appreciation of the buildings themselves. They contain a little history, some lore, and a general introduction to the temples that surround the palace as well as the main courtyards of the Hanuman Dhoka palace itself.

As you may already have noticed, we Nepalis have a way of identifying places by giving them the name of the nearest important landmark. One such landmark is the image of Hanuman that stands at the main gate of the old palace. We identify many places by reference to this image of Hanuman. For instance, the gate next to Hanuman is the Hanuman Dhoka (dhoka = gate or door). In the same spirit, everything inside that gate is called Hanuman Dhoka, and, of course, anything in the immediate vicinity outside that gate is also Hanuman Dhoka. This doesn't confuse us, but it may confuse

you, so in these pages we will refer to the palace as the Hanuman Dhoka Durbar and the places in its immediate vicinity, but outside the Durbar, as the Hanuman Dhoka area. The combination of the two we will call the Hanuman Dhoka complex. But if your guide refers to Hanuman Dhoka, just remember that he may be referring to the Durbar, the main gate of the Durbar, or even the temples around the Durbar.

Temples we will often refer to as mandir or deval when we are using the proper name of the temple. Both of these Nepali words mean temple, but for the sake of euphony and also to help you identify things correctly or ask your guide about them more intelligently, we would like to keep the proper Nepali term.

When you meet names like Trailokya Mohan Mandir and Maju Deval in these pages, just remember that mandir and deval are Nepali words for temple. You will have no trouble understanding. Besides, you'll like the sound better, and you'll already know some Nepali, too.

One of the first things to note about the Hanuman Dhoka complex is the fact that the architecture, the decorations, and the size of the buildings in the complex are all intimately one with the realities of life in the hills. The materials used and the way they were used is totally in keeping with the life style of the society that evolved in these hills in response to the limitations that geography and economics imposed on it. There is nothing pretentious or grandiose about either the complex itself or the buildings that comprise it. In a word, they fit. They belong to the hills of Nepal as the hills of Nepal seem to belong to them. Yet within this narrow sphere, limited by what the economy could afford, what nature provided, and what society would accept, Nepali crafts-

men turned their skills towards the most beautiful works that they knew how to produce. The result is the harmony we see today. Despite the fact that the major buildings in the complex were built over a two hundred year period, the ability of each succeeding generation of local craftsmen to use their traditional crafts within the limits imposed on them by nature, economics, and society and, within those limits, to produce quality work has blended the disparate buildings, regardless of their respective ages, into one. Here we have a graphic portrayal of a primary principle of good architecture, that a building must not only be beautiful in itself, it must also be true to itself and to its surroundings. And being true it takes on the timeless quality of true excellence. In your wanderings through the Hanuman Dhoka complex you will unfailingly see the few instances where this simple principle was ignored in some of the later buildings, and you can judge the results for yourself.

Another aspect of the complex that should be noted is the relatively small area in which the buildings are situated. We must remember that the city of Kathmandu was once a walled town and that the Hanuman Dhoka complex lay near the western extremity of it. It is doubtful if the area was quite as crowded as it is today, but we must still bear in mind that there was no room for long vistas or spacious plazas. Space was at a premium. And we are fortunate that it was. A great part of the charm of Hanuman Dhoka Durbar and the Hanuman Dhoka area is the sensation of being in another world, complete in itself, a sensation which would largely have been lost had the buildings been widely spaced or scattered.

Unfortunately, age, earthquakes, and modernization attempts have laid a heavy hand on the buildings of the

complex. In places you will see the effects of each of these on the buildings. What will not be so apparent is the way existing buildings were adapted in the past to serve changing needs. This is especially true in the Hanuman Dhoka Durbar itself. In some instances the change is abrupt and is immediately evident, but in most instances only a close inspection of the wood carvings, the quality or style of the brick work, or the span of the beams within a building will betray a different hand and a different age. This, too, has given us an unexpected richness. By making use of the old in building the new, rather than destroying the old to make room for the new, Nepalis of yesterday have preserved for us today the varying styles of architecture and craftsmanship that were favoured in ages past. In places where the marriage of old and new has failed, we can see the failure and recognize it for what it was. But in the many instances where the merger of old and new was successful, we see a real sensitivity to artistic lines and architectural dynamics. As a bonus we have a living museum of Nepali architecture that has delighted scholars from every land.

In places, of course, age and earthquakes have taken their toll. The 1934 earthquake was especially severe, and many of the temples we see today have been reconstructed. As far as possible the original materials were used and the original design was followed. Despite this attempt at fidelity, as you will undoubtedly see, the mark of earthquakes has not been entirely removed. In the Durbar itself age has weakened some of the taller buildings. At present His Majesty's Government and UNESCO are engaged in restoring some sections of the buildings surrounding Basantapur Chowk. The restoration of Basantapur Durbar has been largely completed.

This work of restoration has been the happy product of modern technology and ancient, but still remembered, Nepali crafts. The high degree of dedication shown by the UNESCO team, the excellent quality of the Nepali workmanship, and the faithfulness of the restoration are deeply appreciated by Nepalis and friends of Nepal everywhere. Abundant thanks are due to those who have worked so painstakingly to preserve for the future what Nepalis of the past have so lavishly handed down to us.

The Map

For your convenience a map of the Hanuman Dhoka Complex has been included with these notes. It has been cross numbered with the directory of the temples provided at the end of the notes. You will find it useful for sightseeing, or just for reading through these pages. It helps greatly to orient yourself when you try to imagine the scenes described here. Even more important, if you take the time to see some of the temples, and you surely should, it will be an excellent reference tool for you. Almost all of the temples indicated on the map have been described in these notes, at least briefly. In addition, all of the areas in the Hanumnn Dhoka Durbar that are open for visitors have been given as careful a treatment as space will permit. The notes and the map together should prove helpful. Unfortunately, not everything can be covered in these short notes, as you will understand. But at least we can make a beginning.

The Hanuman Dhoka Area

As you enter the Hanuman Dhoka area, surely the first thought that will strike you will be the rich profusion of the temples. They seem to be everywhere and to be of all

sizes and dimensions. When you feel this, it is time to stop. Let the impression deepen. Forget the profusion and just let the eye accustom itself to the total scene. Consider the whole complex as a unit first, and let your eye rove over the scene, moving from Nepali roof and pinnacle to Nepali roof and pinnacle, until your mind accepts the uniqueness of this new world you are entering. Here one people cried out to God in many voices and in many styles, but the cry was one and the desire to express it in woodwork and brick and stone was one. Temple roofs, like folded hands, lift the eye up and up until the roof merges with the blue sky and the infinity beyond. As your gaze drifts from temple to temple the same story is repeated again and again of men working with the elements of earth to reach the longed-for and promised release of heaven above.

When you are comfortable with this new world, it is time to move on. Individual temples can be considered in greater detail. It matters little whether you begin with one of the great ones or one of the smaller ones. Each of them will repay your study. Each temple has its own motif that can be traced from the torana or tympanum above the doorway, through the carved ornamentation of the window frames, roof struts, and cornices to the pinnacle on top. To distinguish clearly between the symbols and types of ornamentation preferred by Vaishnavites or Shaivites or even the Shakta cult requires a very rich background in Hindu iconography, but even for the beginner there is ample reward in beginning the study of any temple with the realization that it all has meaning. It is not just so much ginger bread and bric-a-brac. There is a theme in each that unites the many carvings into a unit. A good guide will be of immense help to you in explaining the symbolism and meaning

of the carvings you encounter at any one temple.

An interesting aspect of this theme that runs through the architectural design and ornamentation is the interweaving of one or more subordinate themes in one design. There are certain temples where there is a very distinct overlay of the Shakta cult. Overlay is really an inadequate word for the idea that this accommodation in design is expressing, although at first it does seem to state the case fairly well. We must recall that in Nepal there has traditionally been great religious harmony. The boundary lines between one expression of faith and another have never been rigidly drawn. And this is what the temple carvings are revealing. It is not the case of a later hand slapping its own brand on the temple, but of several hands together shaping a temple that is mutually acceptable and expressive.

A word should be said here about the windows that you will see both in the temples and later in the Hanuman Dhoka Durbar itself. These deserve special notice, since it is here that the craftsman has exercised the most consummate skill. There are three elements in a window that require study: the lintels, the window frames, and the intricate screens that cover many of the windows. The lintels and the window frames almost defy description. Scholars, in their attempts, quite regularly fall back on jargon and ultimately resort to illustrations to try to convey some idea of the beauty their jargon is meant to convey. In simple fact, there is no way to describe these, because the richness of the carving and the immense variety of it cannot be put into words without at the same time destroying the simplicity of the window itself. The best procedure is to take the time to study one or two windows in detail. The flow of movement, the grace of lines, and the interweaving of solemn religious concepts

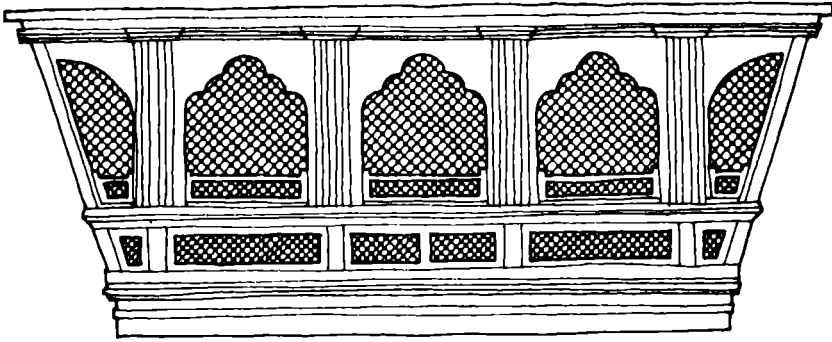
with the most human and simple scenes presents a fetching glimpse into the mind of the Nepali artisan. Where else could you find mingled with griffins and dragons breathing fire and terror a tiny scene of a man being shaved by his barber? Or an elfin figure bent double under the labour of supporting the combined weight of the figures above him.

But the pride of the windows is often in the window screens. These are ingeniously made of tightly interlocking parts, so carefully carved and so completely molded to one another, that when the whole grille is assembled it is one tightly knit unit even before it is set in a frame.

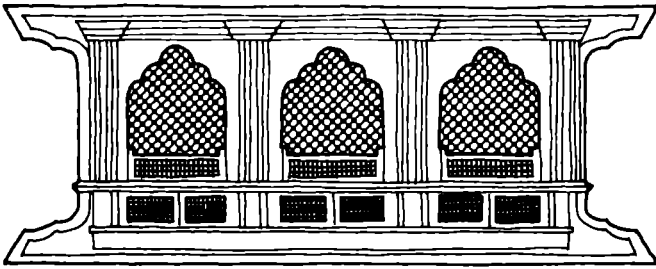
The structure of the screen, however, is only the beginning. The carving on the screens and the elaborate designs worked into them set them apart as being among the truly great achievements of Nepali craftsmanship. The variety of such window screens is almost infinite, and each is a work of art in its own right. Seen in their proper settings, they truly amaze the viewer, and, with the pleasure they evoke, there is the constant wonder at the qualities of mind and heart that prompted men to such genius in the filling of a simple window frame.

Three types of screens should be pointed out as of special interest. There is the unadorned screen, the ankhi jhyal, whose beauty lies in the basic pattern of the cross pieces. Next, there is the ga jhyal, a grille on which a medallion of a deity has been superimposed. Lastly, there is the figured screen, in which an intricate subject such as the peacock is worked into the design. It would be an unpardonable offense to superb craftsmanship to reduce a peacock window to a category even in short notes such as these. The imagination and delicacy of concept and the

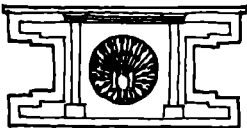
WINDOW TYPES



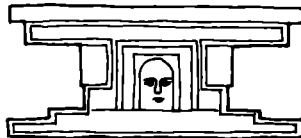
Gaa Jhyal



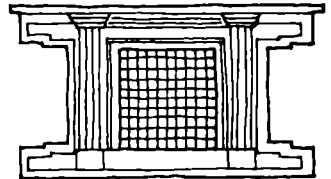
San Jhyal



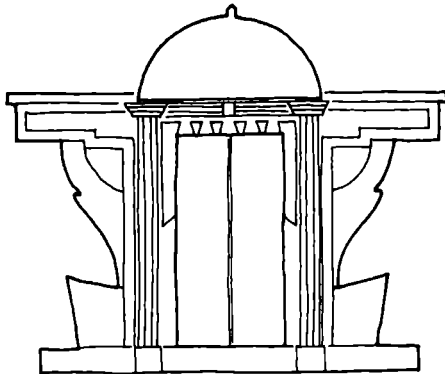
Peacock



Ankhi Jhyal



Ga Jhyal



Temple door with Torana

ingenious use of the grille to bring out the peacock motif put these windows quite apart from even the best of the ankhi jhyals and ga jhyals. Fortunately we have very good examples of each of these three types in the Hanuman Dhoka complex, and you can judge their merits for yourself.

Windows are mounted singly or in groups; in flush mountings or in balconied mountings. A group window mounted flush with the walls of a temple or home is called a san jhyal. When the group is balconied, almost like a bay window, it is called a gaa jhyal (not to be confused with ga jhyal). Both of these groupings give greater scope for the craftsman than the simple ankhi jhyal. But even in the isolated ankhi jhyal the craftsmanship is unique.

At times we find these different types of windows combined on successive storeys of a building, one above another, in one complex unit. In the Nasal Chowk, for instance, along the eastern wall, there is an open verandah on the ground floor, surmounted by a beautiful san jhyal, above which is a fine gaa jhyal. The combination is natural and pleasing, and the total effect of so much excellent woodwork is enhanced by the positioning of the several styles in one unit.

The weathering of the wood should not mislead you. The carvings are well worth close examination. A series of screens in the Basantapur Chowk, for instance, includes large, chain-linked patterns intermingled with linked squares. In each of the openings in the screens there perched a tiny, skilfully carved bird, many of which are still to be seen today. Weathering notwithstanding, the effect of this is heartwarmingly beautiful and draws the mind to the times past when the royal family used these courtyards and found

their pleasures there.

One aspect of the temple carvings that disturbs some visitors to Nepal, and never fails to evoke numerous questions, is the erotic carving found on some of the temples. This is tantric in origin, and, though many suggested reasons are offered for it, few of them are altogether satisfying. The most commonly offered explanation is that the goddess of lightning is considered a virgin goddess, and the belief is that such carvings will frighten her away and thereby protect the temple from lightning. It is an answer, but perhaps not the whole answer. It may be better to assume that the carvings have their own special religious meaning and are not so much to be taken literally as they are to be understood as a kind of coded expression of some of the deeper tantric mysteries, known only to initiates. The significance of the carvings is thus determined by the observer. A man of the world is satisfied with what he sees. The initiate has no eyes for the obvious meaning of the carvings but sees in them a deeper truth.

Before moving on to an examination of the Hanuman Dhoka Durbar itself, one general note should be added about the temples in the Hanuman Dhoka area. The temples, of course, are given individual treatment in the directory at the end of these notes, where they are cross-referenced with the map. You will find that we have very little information on some of the temples. Research is still going on, but there are still large areas of ignorance in this regard. Even the better known temples leave many questions unanswered. Chronology is sometimes a useful tool for sightseeing. We have included in the notes as much of such data as we have. But if you want a quick rule of thumb for assigning dates to the temples, begin

at the northern end of the Hanuman Dhoka complex. As you look into the complex you have the small temple of Mahendreshwar on your right and the large, dominating temple of Taleju on your left. Both of these date from about the time of Shakespeare's birth. From that point until you emerge from the complex on the eastern side, the temples are in rough chronological order, with Kumari Chowk being the last built. There are a few Shah period temples along the route that do not fit this general pattern, but as a rule of thumb it is useful: older temples to the north, more recent temples to the south and east, with the oldest being just over four hundred years old.

The Hanuman Dhoka Durbar

There is no building in the present Hanuman Dhoka complex that dates back to a period before the Malla period (1200-1769 A.D.). However, there is every indication that the present site of the Hanuman Dhoka Durbar, or a site very near it, was used even during the Licchavi period, which is the oldest period of Nepalese history for which we have documentary evidence. Recent researches have fairly clearly established this fact. If this is so, then when we stand at the entrance to the Durbar we are standing on a very historic spot indeed.

The Hanuman Dhoka Durbar as it stands today is not a single building at all. It is actually an extensive series of buildings built around central courtyards. The courtyards within the Durbar number ten, all of them bearing witness to distinct periods in Nepal's history. We shall be concerned in these notes only with four of these ten courtyards, or chowks, though occasional reference will be made to one or other of the remaining six.



The Hanuman Dhoka Durbar seen from the northwest.

We have already mentioned that Kathmandu was at one time a walled city. Apparently this was a rather late development. The first mention we have of fortifying the major cities in the valley dates from Yaksha Malla's time in the latter half of the fifteenth century. This seems reasonable enough, since it was in the mid-fourteenth century that the invasion of Shams ud-din Ilyas wrought such havoc on the temples and shrines of the Valley. Whether in consequence of this invasion or not, all of the three Malla Durbars (Kathmandu, Patan, and Bhaktapur) were built as much for defense as they were for convenience. They were built around the four sides of a central chowk, with a small main entrance, and with the various interior rooms of each wing so opening off one another that entrance could easily be limited to only a few persons at a time.

The original Malla Durbar in Kathmandu included only two such chowks, Mohan Chowk, which was the area reserved for the king and his family, and another courtyard that was simply known as the Chowk. Mohan Chowk still exists. The 'Chowk' has apparently given way to later modifications of the Durbar.

The large towers at the corners of the chowks may originally have been intended as a defensive feature, but there is no indication in the towers as we find them today to indicate that these towers ever had that purpose. In fact, they are towers in name more than reality. In several cases they are actually roof-top temples, and in others they seem to have been pleasant rooms high above the city where a cooling breeze in the summer or the warming sun in the winter could add their touch of graciousness to royal living.

Hanuman

Map Reference No. 23

Standing to the left of the main entrance to the Hanuman Dhoka Durbar is an image of Hanuman, who is always shown in the appearance of a monkey. Hanuman was a great patron of the Malla kings. They claimed descent from Ram Chandra, whose devotion to Hanuman was legendary. The Mallas placed an image of Hanuman at their Durbar gates to protect the Durbar and to bring them victory in war. Hanuman was on the Malla flags. His name occurs in the official titles used by the Malla kings. The image of Hanuman here is of stone, but each year the stone is coated with a layer of red pigment made by mixing mustard oil and vermillion powder. Over the years these repeated layers of pigment have distorted the face of the image almost beyond recognition. This image is always clothed in red, and is honoured by the golden umbrella placed over its head. This particular image, as the small one of Hanuman just beyond it, was erected in 1672 by King Pratap Malla.

The Golden Door

To the right of Hanuman is the golden main door of the Hanuman Dhoka Durbar. It is guarded by a pair of stone lions. Shiva sits on the lion on the right, and Shakti sits on the lioness to the left. These custodians of the door undoubtedly date from Malla times. The golden door itself, however, is of a later period. The inscription above the door states clearly that it was erected in 1810 during the reign of King Girbana Yuddha Bikram Shah. Such an extravagance at that particular period of Nepal's history must surely have a story to explain it, and the story is found there in the inscription. Hundreds of outdated copper-plate inscriptions were gathered and sold, the return from which bought the

gold that was then pounded into sheets and molded to the posts and panels of the door. During the Malla period all important documents and major land grants were recorded on thin sheets of copper. Such royal grants of land, however, were traditionally valid only during the lifetime of the ruler who made them unless renewed by his successor. With the advent of the Shah kings and the subsequent scrutiny of all land grants there was a major reassignment of land, thus rendering the original copper-plate inscriptions worthless. Historians lament the loss of these valuable historical records, but there was probably no more effective way to terminate a defunct claim than to melt down the title grant itself.

Above the golden door, in a niche formed by a large window opening, there are three interesting images. The central piece is Krishna Biswarupa. The manifold arms, the skulls, and the terror the image strives to induce are all indicative of a strong tantric influence. The image portrays a scene in the Mahabharat in which Krishna tries to explain to Arjun the extent and meaning of the whole world in his own body. This challenging theme is one that has been frequently explored by Hindu artists, and there are several distinct interpretations of it in Nepal.

To the left of the Biswarupa is a group of three figures. The central figure is clearly Krishna, and very likely the other two are meant to represent his two favourite gopinis, Rukmini and Satya Bhama. The group on the right of the Biswarupa is comprised of two seated figures. One of these figures, wearing royal robes and royal insignia, is playing the vina. Seated near him in an attentive attitude is a woman, well dressed, heavily ornamented, and undoubtedly a queen. The countenance on the king resembles very closely

the features found on known images of King Pratap Mal apparently this image, too, is one Pratap Malla set himself. If so, then the whole triptych of Krishna gopinis, Krishna Biswarupa, and the king and queen date from Pratap Malla's time (1641-74). Both the group to the left and the one to the right are of wood, painted in lively colours. Both groups are popular folk art with very little overlay of religious symbolism.

Nasal Chowk

Map Reference No. 5

Passing through the Golden Door we enter Nasal Chowk, the largest of the ten courtyards now found in Hanuman Dhoka Durbar. Nasal Chowk is frequently mentioned in the historical literature dealing with the Malla period as well as in the documents of the Shah kings of Nepal. Many of the buildings that at the present surround this courtyard date from the Shah period, but a fair proportion of them date from an earlier period. Most of the art objects and images found in Nasal Chowk date from the Malla period.

On the eastern side of Nasal Chowk there is a small shrine to the Dancing Shiva (Nasaleshwar) from which the courtyard gets its name. During the Malla period Nasal Chowk served, among other purposes, as a sort of royal theatre, and dances to be performed for the Durbar were practised and presented here. Nasal Chowk was also regularly used for meetings between the king and his people. Here the king met those who came to him with petitions, and, in times of distress, received the condolences and support of his subjects.

During the Shah period Nasal Chowk has assumed an even greater importance than it did during Malla times. The

Malla practice of conducting the coronation rites inside Mul Chowk was set aside during the Shah period, and the coronation of the kings of Nepal has traditionally been held here in the much larger and more public Nasal Chowk. This practice has been continued, even though the kings of Nepal have lived for more than fifty years in more modern accommodations in another part of the city.

The courtyard is rectangular, with a north-south orientation, and our entrance is near the northern end of the courtyard. Immediately to our left is the open audience chamber of the Malla kings, with the old Malla throne still occupying a position of prominence. At the far end, rising a full nine storeys, is the Basantapur Durbar, built by Prithvinarayan Shah of Gorkha, who conquered the Valley in 1769 and then went on to add other territories to the south and east to his dominions. This was the movement that culminated in the unification of Nepal and gave modern Nepal its present geographic dimensions. It is rather symbolic that these two dynasties, the Mallas and the Shahs, should face each other across this courtyard. It is fitting, also, that the coronation of Shah kings should take place here.

As we look around Nasal Chowk we see many points of interest that deserve a word or two of comment. It is perhaps easiest for us to begin with the things we find at ground level and then move upwards to the buildings themselves.

If we begin our tour from the entranceway, we find immediately to our left a small, carved wooden door. This door, which is a beautiful example of Malla period wood carving, bears the images of four different gods on its panels. Small though it is, it once served as the main entrance to the private quarters of the Malla kings. It is

flanked left and right by images of Jaya and Bijaya, who were invoked for success in whatever ventures took the members of the royal family out-of-doors.

Just beyond this door there is a large and rather striking image of Narsingh. The image is of stone, with ornaments of silver and gold. The image was erected by King Pratap Malla in 1673 to appease Narsingh, whom Pratap feared he had offended when he danced in public costumed as Narsingh. The full story of the king's misadventure and his efforts to atone is told by the inscription on the pedestal of the image. In addition to this image, a temple called Kabindrapur in the Hanuman Dhoka area was erected as part of the same act of atonement.

Beyond the image of Narsingh we come to the Gaddi Baitak (also called the Sisa Baithak) of the Malla kings, the audience chamber. It is a long, spacious, verandah-like room, open to the south. The throne is still kept here, and it still plays a role in the religious functions associated with the Hanuman Dhoka Durbar. Buddhists of the priestly caste are expected to make a ceremonial offering of pan and supari nuts to this throne before entering upon their priestly duties. The throne itself is a plain but spacious seat with rolled cushion arm rests and back rest. It is covered with the plainest white cotton cloth. On the wall behind the throne are pictures of the Shah kings of Nepal and a picture of Crown Prince Trailokya, who died before he could ascend the throne.

Moving on around the Nasal Chowk, we come upon the small temple of the Dancing Shiva about midway along the eastern wall of the courtyard. As we have seen, it is from this temple that the courtyard gets its name. The Malla days saw

dancers come to this shrine to pray before presenting a performance. Nowadays it is the musicians who come. When a village musician decides to train a few disciples in his art, he brings them here at the beginning of the training programme, and they serenade the Dancing Shiva in supplication for his blessing on their effort.

A little farther on we come upon a golden image set up on the open verandah of the eastern wall of Nasal Chowk. This is the image of Maha Vishnu that was removed from its own temple after the earthquake in 1934 had seriously damaged the temple. It was put here for safekeeping and has remained here ever since.

Almost in the exact centre of the courtyard there is a simple, low platform. It is on this platform that all eyes will be fastened at the time of the coronation. Here it is, on this simple platform, that the royal throne will be placed, and to this platform His Majesty King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev will ascend to receive the congratulations of his guests and the homage of his subjects. Traditions connected with this platform go back hundreds of years. It is true that it was given its present shape as late as 1826, when Sisamahal Durbar was built and Nasal Chowk was paved with flagstones. But the platform dates from long before that period. One solid piece of evidence for this is the fact that during the Indra Jatra festival in September each year the image of Indra is brought from its place in the Degutaleju Mandir and placed here, on this platform. It was, in fact, during the festival of Indra Jatra that Prithvinarayan Shah the Great entered Kathmandu in September 1768 and took his place on the throne of Kathmandu.

As we have said this is a fitting place for the corona-

tion ceremony. Not only is the platform of the coronation situated in full view of the Sisa Baithak with its traditional throne of the former kings of Nepal, but it is also overshadowed and protected by the Durbar built by Prithvinarayan Shah, the father of modern Nepal. Even the courtyard itself, with all its art work, its exquisite woodwork and carvings--the fruit of the labours of countless generations of Nepali artisans--all of this tradition and beauty finds its focus in the throne, so that the throne forms a symbolic link between old and new, uniting Nepalis of past and present, humble working men and the great, into one people with one tradition.

Before we leave the Nasal Chowk, a moment's pause to consider the two towers that rise above the old Malla quarters on the northeast and northwest corners is well worth our while. On the northwest corner is a small temple known as the Agam Chen. The Agam Chen houses the traditional family shrine of the former Malla Kings. Entrance to the Agam Chen was always restricted to the members of the Malla royal family. Except for necessary repairs from time to time, no one may now enter it, and its sanctity remains inviolate even though the Malla kings themselves have ceased to rule in Kathmandu for several hundred years. Directly across the rooftop from the Agam Chen, on the northwest, is the round, five-roofed temple of the Panch Mukhi Hanuman, Hanuman of the five faces. This temple apparently dates from about the year 1655, though there is no inscription to give us an accurate date. The worship of Hanuman is offered here daily according to secret rites, and none but the priests who serve the temple may witness them or enter the temple.

To the north of Nasal Chowk lies Mohan Chowk, the residence of the Malla kings of Kathmandu. It was built in 1649 by King Pratap Malla (1641-74) and later repaired and 'modernized' during the reign of King Rajendra Bikram Shah in 1822. During the Malla period this courtyard with its buildings was reserved for the king, and no one, not even members of the royal family, was permitted inside unless it pleased the king to have them there. It was here that kings from other hill states were entertained when they visited Kathmandu as guests of the Malla kings, and it was here also that intransigent members of the royal family were imprisoned when their activities threatened the peaceful possession of the throne. So linked was this section of the Durbar with the ruling family during the Malla period that tradition refused to accept as eligible for the throne any prince not born here. The fact that he was born outside of Mohan Chowk caused Jaya Prakash Malla, the last Malla king of Kathmandu, great difficulties during the course of his reign, even though he was the legitimate heir to the throne.

One of the central features of Mohan Chowk is the Sun Dhara, the golden water spout. Bringing water from Buddha Nilkuntha, north of the city, to the Durbar was a major project in seventeenth century Nepal, with many a nice point of engineering. But it was accomplished, and Pratap Malla celebrated the event by erecting this fabulous setting for the spout from which poured cool, clear water.

The Sun Dhara is about twelve feet below ground level, and one descends to it. The spout itself is a sculptor's dream of birds and beasts crowded together in a rumble, tumble, joyous rush to the water, which splashes endlessly down into

the pool below. Bhagirath, the mythical king who brought the Ganges to earth, sits nearby, embracing his knees and contemplating the ripples that dance across the surface of the pond, a reminder in stone of the wonder of water. The walls around the Sun Dhara are lined with images of gods and goddesses--thirty-six of them at one time--all beautiful works of art. Looking around us we feel that Pratap has most extravagantly expressed his gratitude for water and all that it means. But there is more to this scene than gratitude. For here each morning the king of Kathmandu performed his ritual bathing ceremonies and then ascended to the large stone throne above the Sun Dhara to complete his morning devotions. The Sun Dhara was almost a shrine for him, and all of these deities had their place in it to stimulate the heart of the king and lift his thoughts to the larger destiny of his people. Near at hand was Pratap Malla's version of a globe, unrecognizable as such to us today, but very real to him in his effort to understand the world around him. Directly opposite the king as he prayed, above the Sun Dhara, was a small temple in stone, about five feet high, in the Shikar style. The Sun Dhara and all the art that surrounds it is today a beautiful reminder of days long past, and there is a nostalgic air about it that is heightened by the quiet aging of the sculptures.

As we look around us from our point of vantage at the Sun Dhara, we see that Mohan Chowk is built in the chokwath style, a square quadrangle with towers at the corners. The quadrangle itself is three storeys high, with a magnificent san jhyal on the eastern wall, and open verandahs on the ground floor on the north, south, and east.

Along the walls of the verandahs on the ground floor are



A carving in the Mohan Chowk courtyard, depicting a scene from the life of Krishna

many scenes from the life of Krishna artfully worked out in wood. In these young Krishna defends himself against the various demons who had been sent against him when he was in Gokul on the banks of the Yamuna. The whole series is a very artistic portrayal of the conquest of good over evil and a daily reminder to the kings who walked these verandahs of the moral obligations of their position.

Along the western wing of the quadrangle there is no verandah. An interesting image of Ashtamatrika stands there, better known locally as Mohan Kali. This representation is unique. There is no other such image in the Valley dating from Malla times. Pratap Malla placed it here in an unusual departure from the Malla habit of conformity. His reason, so it is said, was a dream he had in which Ashtamatrika appeared to him and requested that he erect an image to her.

The wall behind this image was once beautifully adorned with murals. Here and there a flash of still fresh colour gives us a hint of the beauty that was once there. But the moisture and the sun have worked their will on these murals for over three hundred years. The colours have faded. The surface of the wall has powdered. And little is left of their former beauty.

The verandah on the ground floor of the northern wing of this quadrangle was of greatest importance in Malla times. When it was clear that the king was nearing the end of his life, he was moved to this verandah, where he was placed under the golden canopy we still see today. On this canopy, worked out in golden figures, were the images of the gods and goddesses with whom he had lived and who ruled his life, a last reminder of his own dependence and his mortality. Along the wall of this verandah is a lengthy inscription of



Krishna subduing Kaliya serpent in the Sundar Chowk courtyard behind Mohan Chowk. 6th Century A.D.

Pratap Malla, setting out the arrangements made to finance the worship of these deities. And above this inscription there are two rows of images affixed to the wall. The images in the upper row show us the ten avataras of Vishnu and various scenes of Krishna at play, all perfectly in keeping with the religious tone of Mohan Chowk. But the images of the lower row come as a total surprise to us! Here we find no reminder of the solemnity of death nor any of the scenes so traditional in the rest of the Durbar. Here we find the most casual, everyday scenes. A child playing in a tree, a young girl sitting in a garden with a small dog in her lap, men working. Here someone is weighing out fruit; there the same young girl with a six or seven year old child in her arms. In a few scenes a figure that appears to be Pratap Malla is seen with this young girl. All of this is extremely surprising, because secular scenes in Malla period art are just not supposed to be found, they are that rare. But what is far more surprising is that, except for Pratap Malla (if indeed it is he), who wears the royal robes of the Malla period, the principal figures in these scenes are in western clothes. Who are these people? How did their images come to be placed here? Is the telescope the small boy holds in his hand in one scene the same telescope that the Jesuit Fathers d'Orville and Greuber gave to Pratap Malla when they passed through Kathmandu on their way from Lhasa to Calcutta in the mid-seventeenth century? We have no idea. We know of no Europeans of this description who visited Kathmandu at that time. The images are there. All else is a complete mystery. But surely these images commemorate one of the earliest contacts between Kathmandu and the west, and they raise some fascinating historical questions.

Basantapur Chowk

Map Reference 45

At the southeast corner of the Nasal Chowk there is an exit through which we pass into Basantapur Chowk and the early residence of the Shah kings in Kathmandu. During the time of Prithvinarayan Shah himself the Shah kings moved from the old quarters formerly occupied by the Malla kings into this section of the Durbar. It was refurnished and greatly enlarged, and Prithvinarayan Shah built the nine storey Durbar that is immediately connected to it. The woodcarvings in the central courtyard of the Basantapur Chowk are especially well worth considering, but the whole building, along with the nine-storey Durbar, is perhaps equally important for the historic value it has to all Nepalis. So much of the history of Nepal as we know it today depended on decisions made in these rooms. It was here that military plans were made that led to the unification of dozens of petty hill states into a united Nepal. And it was here that Prithvinarayan Shah himself lived and worked in the few years between his final conquest of Kathmandu Valley in 1769 and his last illness in December 1774, when he moved to his Durbar at Nuwakot, a few miles north of the Valley, where he died in January 1775.

The architectural history of Basantapur Chowk is far from an easy matter. The current restoration work has revealed clear indications that not all parts of this building are of equal age. Some sections, in fact, seem to go back to a period well before the construction of this quadrangle was popularly supposed to have taken place. Converging on these findings were researches conducted over the past four years into historical documents and records dealing with the Basantapur Chowk. But first let us orient

ourselves.

The nine-storey Durbar of Prithvinarayan Shah, called the Basantapur Tower, or the Basantapur Durbar, is on the southwest of the quadrangle (No. 40 on the map). The tower on the southeast corner is known as the Bilas Mandir or the Lalitpur Tower (39). Laxmi Bilas, or the Bhaktapur Tower, is on the northeast corner (41). And the Bangla Tower, or Kirtipur Tower, is on the northwest (42). The names Kirtipur, Bhaktapur, and Lalitpur are the current popular names for these towers, but the more historic names are Bangla, Laxmi Bilas, and Bilas Mandir.

The inscription found on both the Nasal Chowk side of Basantapur Durbar and the street side of the Durbar indicate quite clearly that Prithvinarayan Shah himself had this building erected. There seems to be no reason to question this either from historical records or from the architecture itself. These inscriptions make no reference to the other towers of the quadrangle. One of the more reliable chronicles, the Bhasha Vamsavali, adds the information that while Prithvinarayan Shah built the Basantapur Durbar, the remaining portions were built during the reign of his son Pratap Singh Shah. Current historical opinion is that Prithvinarayan Shah built Basantapur Durbar and probably Bilas Mandir, the two towers on the south, and that Pratap Singh Shah built the two towers on the north, Bangla and Laxmi Bilas.

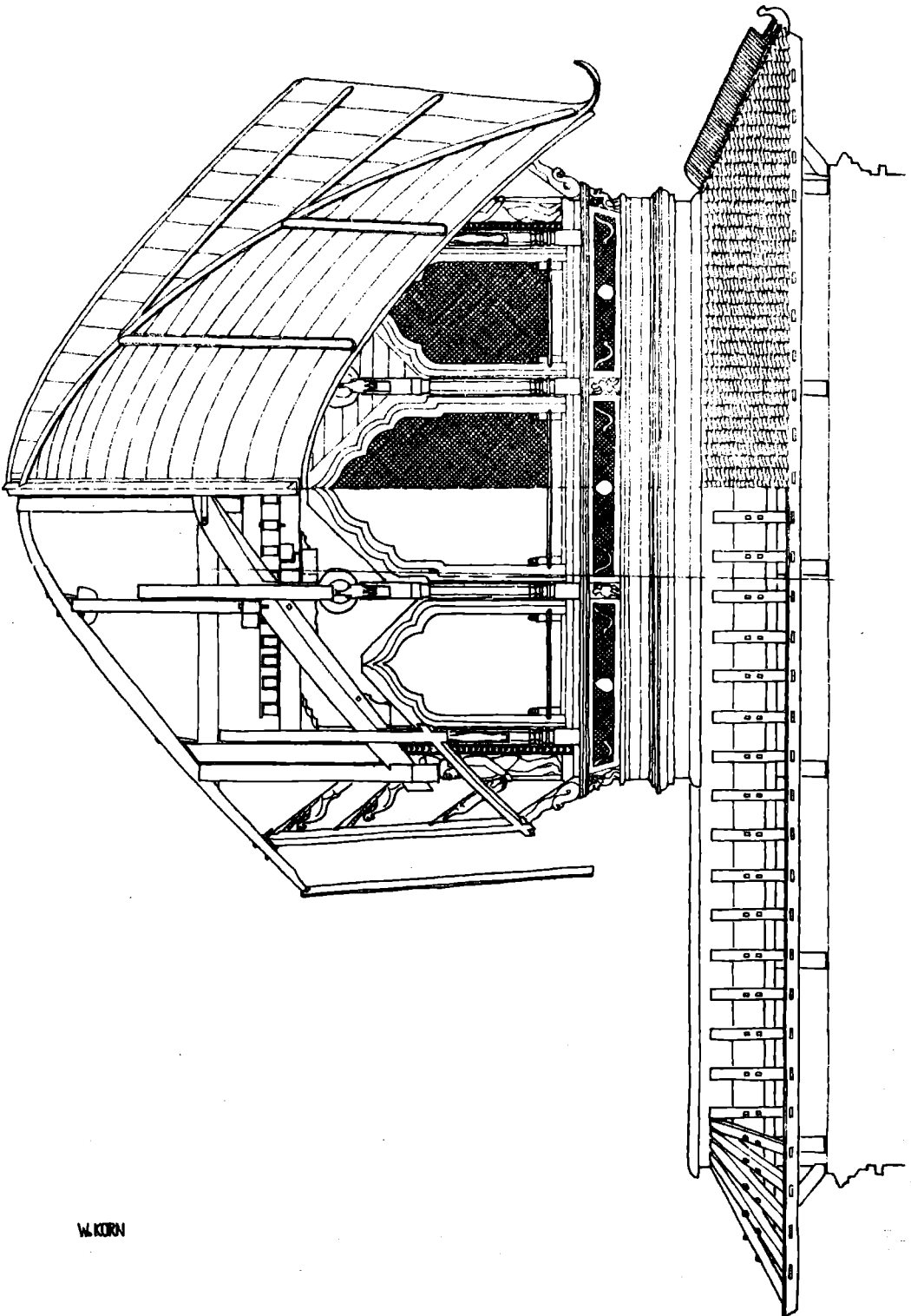
At this stage it is still far too early to make definitive statements about the age of these buildings, but both history and architecture agree that this set of buildings deserves very serious study. It seems quite probable that we have here not one building but three. There is clearly the Basantapur Durbar built by Prithvinarayan Shah.

There is probably also a much older building dating from Malla times forming the lower three storeys of the Basantapur Chowk. Then there is a later addition of the fourth storey plus the three towers. Whatever the final conclusions, everything points to the fact that this is a very exciting building.

The wood carvings in this section of the Durbar match any that may be found anywhere both for their intricacy of design, skill of execution, and sheer profusion. The windows, including the impressively worked out gaa jhyals of the upper floors and the multi-bayed san jhyals are especially deserving of attention, as is the carved wooden entablature that separates the first and second storeys. Here hundreds of tiny, individually carved peacocks sit, each in its own niche, in an unbroken band around the whole courtyard. But by far the most appealing are the screens in the windows of the courtyard. The variety and delicacy of the carving simply has to be seen to be believed. Not a nail, not a screw, not a drop of glue violates the purity of the workmanship. Each piece, no matter how delicate, is carefully fitted to its neighbour in an interlocking design that is surpassingly graceful, light, and beautiful. It is clear that no expense was spared, and that the skill of the carvers was exerted to the utmost to make this courtyard something very special in a city that was already known for the beauty of its wood work.

Rising high above Basantapur Chowk are the four towers we have already mentioned briefly. Bilas Mandir on the southeast corner of the quadrangle rises two storeys above the roofs of the quadrangle. The view from the windows of this tower is marvellous, and when lavish gardens were laid

The roof of Bangla Tower, showing intricacy of construction.



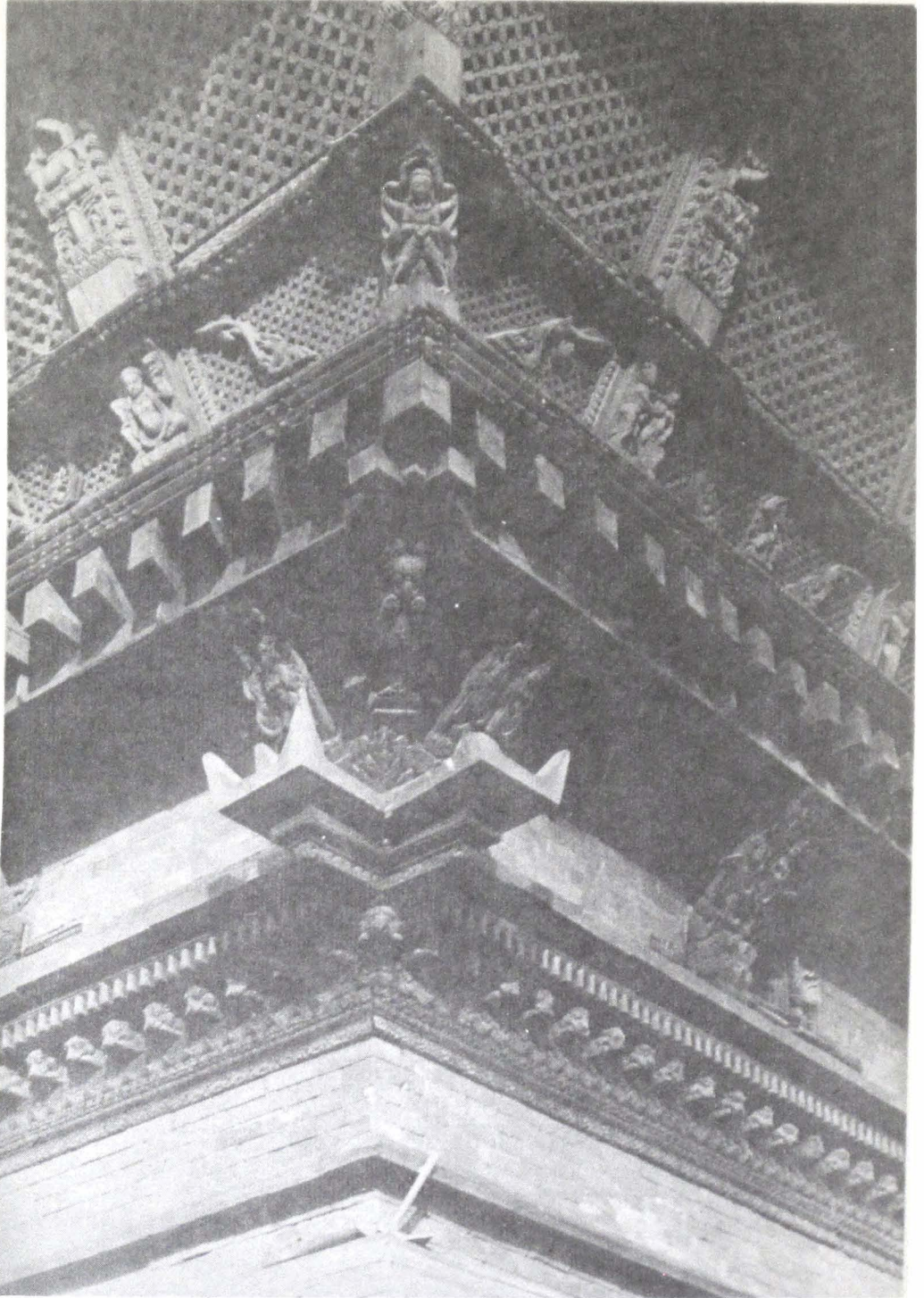
out directly below, as once they were, its charm must have lay in the view of these gardens from a place high enough to provide perspective and to gather in the slightest breeze on a summer's day.

Shackles

Laxmi Bilas Tower on the northeast also rises two storeys above the general level of the quadrangle. It, too, looked out over the gardens, but surely its special attraction lay in its unobstructed view of the great temple of Taleju that lies directly to the north. It also commanded a view of Mul Chowk directly below.

The Bangla Tower has its own special fascination. The copper roof of this tower is of most unusual design and complexity and is unparalleled in Nepalese architecture. Where the inspiration for its design was derived is as unknown as the names of the artisans who contrived it, but it does provide a perfect counterpoint to the towers that lay beyond it. Matching Bilas Mandir and Laxmi Bilas Tower in height, the Bangla Tower offers a clear view into the courtyard of Nasal Chowk and across the roofs to Degutaleju Mandir and Jagannath Mandir in the Hanuman Dhoka area.

In height and dramatic position the other towers pale to insignificance in comparison with the Basantapur Tower, which rises a full five storeys above the general level of buildings in the whole Durbar. It is a mark of pride today that Prithvinarayan Shah saw fit to build his Durbar in Kathmandu in Nepali style, thus not only showing his appreciation for the merits of the traditional architecture of the Valley but also establishing a firm precedent that was to remain until the middle of the nineteenth century, when experiments in imported architectural styles (as typified by the Rana period building on the west of Nasal Chowk)



Wood-carving extravaganza on the Basantapur Durbar corner.

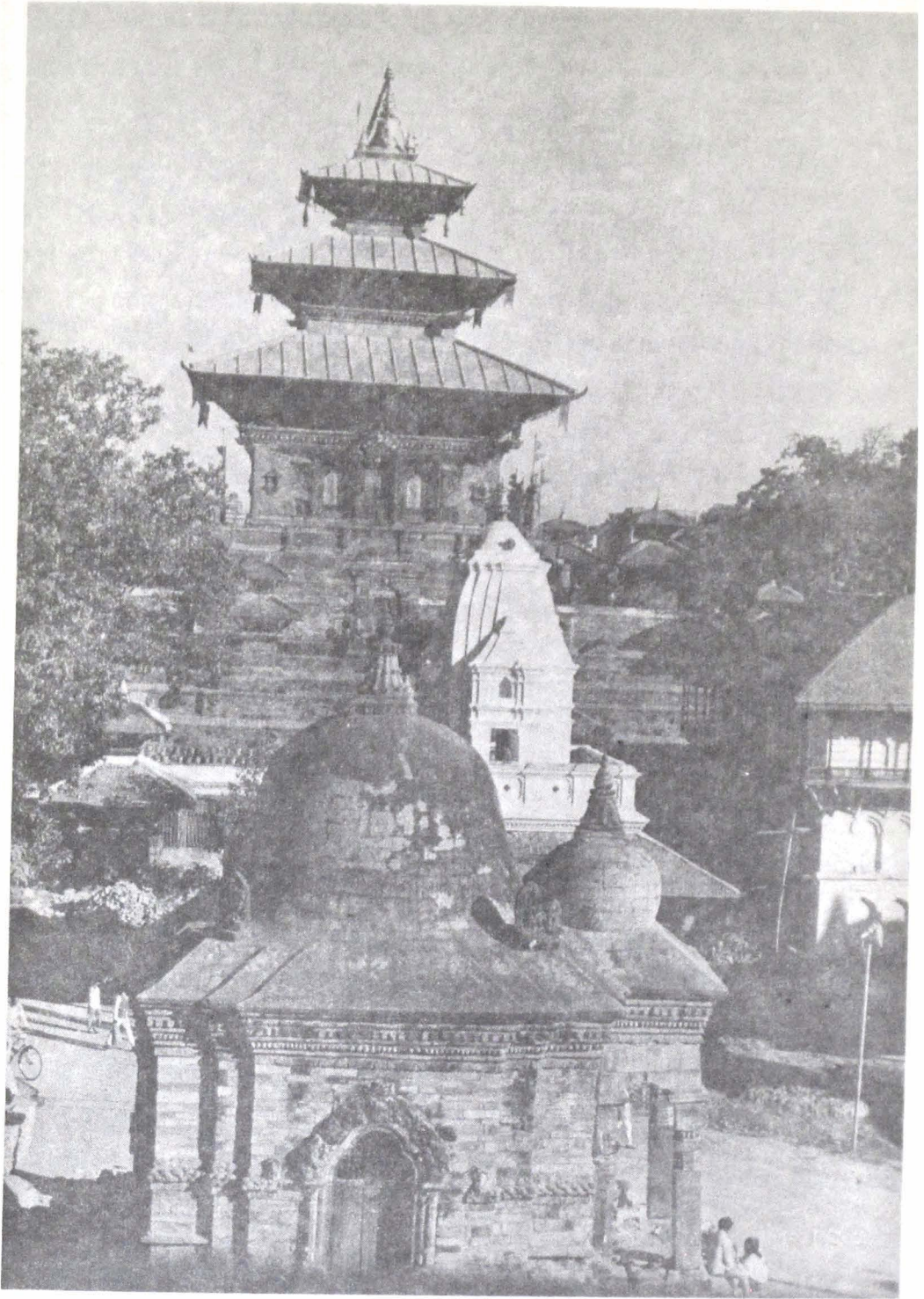
began to make their appearance in the Valley.

Despite its size, the Basantapur Durbar is simpler in concept than many of the Malla period buildings, as would befit a king who was primarily concerned with the logistics and strategy involved in the unification of Nepal. Yet we should not be deceived by this apparent simplicity. The Basantapur Durbar deserves all the time we can spare to study it. It is a work of art in its own right, and there is hardly a spot in Kathmandu that can compare with the upper terrace of the Basantapur Chowk for observing finely carved roof struts, excellent windows, and the poetry of roof rising upon roof. There the angles are right, the sky is right, and we are near enough to study the workmanship at our leisure. High up on the tower the wind catches the rows of wind-bells hanging there, and the music of their soft tinkling floats down to us on the breeze to add to our sensation of being in another age, in another era, in another world.

Taleju Mandir

Map Reference No. 30

The next section of the Hanuman Dhoka Durbar we will consider on this brief tour is the Taleju Mandir. Built in 1564 by Mahendra Malla, this is the most famous of the three Taleju Mandirs built by the Malla kings. The worship of Taleju Devi came to Kathmandu Valley with the refugees from Simraungarh in the Nepal Tarai, and Taleju Devi became the tutelary deity of the Malla kings at the time of Jaya Sthiti Malla's (1382-95) assumption of power. When the Valley was divided into several kingdoms some time after 1482, the various branches of the Malla family built their own shrines to Taleju near their Durbars. Taleju Mandir is situated in Trisul Chowk, which is an appendage of Hanuman



The Taleju Temple

Dhoka Durbar, but entrance to the temple can also be made from the street by way of the Singh Dhoka (the Lion Gate).

The temple stands over 120 feet high, resting on a twelve-stage plinth. Its three roofs soar above the rest of the Hanuman Dhoka complex, and, until very recent times, it was considered very inauspicious to build a house higher than this temple.

Ascending the steps of the Taleju Mandir, we find that at the level of the eighth stage of the plinth the step broadens out into a spacious platform, on which a wall is mounted, barring further progress. On the platform just outside this wall there are twelve small temples, each complete in miniature, with a double roof and all the appurtenances of a temple built in Nepali style. The same theme is repeated inside the wall, where there are four more such temples, one in each of the four corners of the platform. Each of these temples houses an image of a deity, and each has as its spire one of the symbols of the attributes of Taleju Devi. The wall is pierced on all four sides of the temple by spacious and beautiful gates, through which we pass on our climb up towards the temple. As we approach the temple on the south side, where the main door is found, we pass between large stone images of men and beasts, each a powerful protector of the temple itself. At the top, on the final stage of the plinth, we see a large, finely wrought bell on either side of the main door of the temple, one erected by Pratap Malla in 1654 and one by Bhaskar Malla in 1714. They are rung only when worship is offered to Taleju Devi.

The temple is of impressive size, and everything about it, doors, windows, and roof struts, is proportionately

large. The main door on the south and the torana above it are gilt. The windows and the toranas above them are all elaborately carved. The imagery throughout is redolent of the Shakta cult, and there are very few erotic carvings. Everything about the temple seems to emphasize its ritual remoteness (the walls, the guardians, the closed doors), and this remoteness is underscored by the screened balcony that divides the lower of the three stages of the temple, which the average devotee may enter only once a year at the time of the Dasain festival.

The roofs above all three stages are of gilt copper, edged with rows of wind-bells. The corners of the first and second roof are decorated with metal banners embossed with the images of various gods and goddesses. And specially designed kalasas hang suspended from the corners of the upper roof. The top-most roof is ornamented with golden spires in the four corners and a large and impressive spire at the peak of the roof.

Taleju Mandir is undoubtedly a temple of isolated but majestic splendour, a Nepali temple on a grand scale. Perhaps the most important thing we can say about the Taleju Mandir is that the design has succeeded. Despite its great size and rich decoration, the total impact is pleasing, and, when seen from the Laxmi Bilas Tower in the Basantapur Chowk, the overall impression is one of carefully controlled proportions and high visual appeal.

Mul Chowk

Map Reference No. 8

So much of the art work that we have seen in our visit to Hanuman Dhoka has been religious in form or religious in inspiration that it may seem superfluous to have a courtyard that is almost entirely dedicated to religious functions.

But there is such a courtyard in Hanuman Dhoka Durbar, and it is called, appropriately enough, Mul Chowk, the principal courtyard.

The Mul Chowk was the scene of almost all the truly important functions of the Malla period. Religious rites of all descriptions, royal weddings, the investiture of the crown prince and the chief minister of the state, as well as the coronation of the king himself took place here.

According to the Bhasha Vamsavali, the Mul Chowk was built by Mahendra Malla in 1564 while he was building the great Taleju Mandir, but it was not until sixty years later, in 1627, that we find the first literary description of it. In 1709 Bhaskar Malla rebuilt the Mul Chowk and gave it approximately its present appearance.

The Mul Chowk is shaped very much like a vihara, a square courtyard surrounded by a two-storey quadrangle of buildings. The southern wing of the quadrangle is by far the most important, housing, as it does, a second and smaller, but nonetheless beautiful, temple of Taleju. On the ground floor of the other three wings of the quadrangle there are large, open verandahs. In the centre of the courtyard there is a low post set in the ground, where animals are sacrificed to the Devi at the Dasain and Chait Dasain festivals.

Mul Chowk is almost totally given over to Taleju Devi. Her mark is everywhere, from the roof struts to the inscriptions, the carvings, and, of course, her temple. Each roof strut around the courtyard presents a scene based on the stories of the Chandi in which the Devi is depicted in the act of destroying some demon. Below the level of the roof struts these exploits are further described in inscriptions. Magnificent san jhyals set off the eastern, western, and

northern wings of the quadrangle, and fine ankhi jhyals on either side of the san jhyals add balance and proportion and a sense of completeness to these walls. By far the most impressive of these san jhyals is the one on the northern side, which directly faces the small Taleju mandir in this courtyard. Here the special symbolism of the Shakta cult has been used to enhance the beauty of the window and to serve as a suitable counterpoise to the rich decorations of the Taleju mandir it faces across the courtyard.

This small Taleju mandir is the special resting place of the image of Taleju Devi when it is removed from the great Taleju mandir during the Dasain festival. At this time animal sacrifices are offered by the score in the courtyard before this small temple, and the Devi is worshipped within its sanctuary according to secret rites.

The temple of Taleju is on the south side of Mul Chowk, facing north. To the right and left of its golden door life-sized images of Ganga and Jamuna stand in poses of graceful service. Above the door an impressive torana, also gilt, carries in its central place of honour an image of Taleju Devi. On either side of the torana golden ankhi jhyals add to the beauty of the facade. On the roof above, a large golden spire marks the centre of the temple roof, but near this spire and slightly behind it a row of five golden spires mark the special sanctuary where the image of Taleju Devi is kept during its brief stay in Dasain and where special worship is offered.

Most visitors see the Mul Chowk from the windows of Laxmi Bilas Tower in Basantapur Chowk, which look directly down into it. This is a pity. From this angle very little of the truly worthwhile art work of the courtyard can be

seen, hidden as it is by overhanging roofs. The small Taleju mandir itself is totally hidden, since it is situated almost directly under the northern wing of the Basantapur Chowk. What can be seen is only the rather drab looking floor of the courtyard, an altogether uninspiring sight and completely misleading in the impression it presents of the beauty of the Mul Chowk and the important role it played, and still plays, in the life of Hanuman Dhoka Durbar.

Directory of Temples In the Hanuman Dhoka Area

Kumari Chowk

Map Reference No. 9

Built in 1757 by King Jaya Prakash Malla (1736-68). The style is that of the Buddhist viharas of Kathmandu Valley. The living goddess who stays here is considered an incarnation of the goddess Taleju. The Kumari Jatra, or chariot festival of the living goddess, was also instituted by Jaya Prakash Malla. The Kumari Chowk is a three-storey quadrangle lavishly decorated with fine wood carvings. Immediately above the entrance is an elaborately carved torana, or tympanum, which by custom should include an image of the principal deity enshrined within the temple. The torana here shows an image of Mahishardini Bhagavati, a goddess worshipped by the followers of the Shakta cult. Hence, though the kumari is especially venerated by Buddhists, the Shakta cult has also shown its own veneration for the kumari. There are several peacock windows here, small but quite beautiful. But it is the third storey of the building that is especially attractive with its fine gaa jhyals, in which the kumari appears from time to time in the company of her guardian priestess to see and be seen by her admirers.

Trailokya Mohan Mandir

Map Reference No. 8

Built in 1680 by Parthibendra Malla (1680-87). This temple is also called the Das Avatar Dekhaune Mandir (the temple where they show the dances of the ten incarnations). The Trailokya Mohan Mandir is built on a five-stage plinth. It has three roofs. The roof struts are carved with Vaishnavite images, and the temple itself is dedicated to Vishnu. On each of the walls, under the projecting roofs,

there are window screens with medallions attached (ga jhyals). The stone Garuda that faces the temple on the west side was erected nine years after the temple itself by Riddhi Laxmi, the mother of the then reigning king, Bhupalendra Malla (1687-1700). Nripendra Malla and Parthibendra Malla were sons of King Pratap Malla. Parthibendra Malla erected the Trailokya Mohan Mandir in memory of his elder brother Nripendra Malla, who had enjoyed a very brief reign of six years (1674-80). Parthibendra himself ruled for only seven years, and it was his widow who erected the Garuda in his memory.

Kastha Mandap

Map Reference No. 2x

Known locally as Maru Sattal, this huge, open temple has a long and checkered history. Popular legend has it that during King Laxmi Narsingh's time (1620-41) Kalpa Briksha came to see the chariot festival of Machindranath, where he was recognized by one of the priests of Machindranath. The priest seized him and refused to release him until he promised to give a tree from whose wood a rest house could be built. Kalpa Briksha so promised, and was released. Four days later a huge sal tree was delivered. With the king's permission the Kastha Mandap was built from the wood of this single tree. Hence, the name Kastha Mandap (the wooden pavilion), and also Kathmandu. The legend, however, has no foundation in fact. The city had the name Kastha Mandap five centuries before the story would have it named so, and the oldest inscription in Kastha Mandap dates from the fourteenth century, several hundred years before Laxmi Narsingh's rule in Kathmandu.

The building is very large, sixty-five feet by sixty-

five feet. A three-storey building, the Kastha Mandap has an open ground floor, and each of the three storeys is balconied, all of which underline its original purpose. It was used in the fourteenth century as a public building. Later, tantric sadhus used it for their Chakra Puja. In time, a caste of tailors, who were disciples of these sadhus, used the building. But at the time of the restoration a few years ago these were removed. The decorations and carvings added over the years have greatly enhanced the original design, bringing it closer to the appearance of a shrine, for which purpose it now serves. The central image in Kastha Mandap is of Gorakhnath. At each of the four corners Ganesh, the elephant-headed god, is found. At the present time no one knows who actually built Kastha Mandap or when it was built.

Kabindrapur

Map Reference No. 5

A three-storey temple built by King Pratap Malla (1641-74). From the street level it is very difficult to recognize this temple unless one looks up to the second and third storeys, since shopkeepers sell fruit on the ground floor. There is an image of the Dancing Shiva (Natyeshwar Shiva) on the ground floor, and many call this the Nasal Devata Mandir. Pratap Malla was a great patron of the arts and fancied himself as a literary person and one skilled in song and dance. He adopted the title Kabindra (master poet), hence the name of the temple, Kabindrapur. But, as we have mentioned elsewhere, the origin of the temple lay in Pratap Malla's fear that he had offended the god Narsingh by imitating him in a dance, and the building of this temple was part of this atonement.

Nasal Dev, which is the Newari name for the Dancing Shiva, is very popular in the Valley, and there are many shrines in his honour. They are usually very plain, often little more than a rest house, with the image set up near the rear wall. This temple is also quite simple in comparison to the other temples in the Hanuman Dhoka area. There is no circumambulatory passage, and only the front is highly decorated. However, the faded beauty of the decorations of the second and third storey clearly distinguish this as having been an important shrine. The main deities are kept on the ground floor, and there also is found Pratap Malla's inscription.

Singh Sattal

Map Reference No. 4x

This three-storey building was originally a rest house, to which an image was later added, as with Kasta Mandap. Legend has it that after Kasta Mandap was built with the wood of a single tree, the wood left over was used to erect this building. The image of Garud Narayan kept here was set in place many years after the Singh Sattal was in use. In 1863 Subba Sharma Narayan Salmi was building a new house. In digging the foundation he discovered this image, which was subsequently transferred to the Singh Sattal where it is still kept. The shops on the ground floor and the first floor are of a later period. The bronze lions at either side of the Singh Sattal are surely the source of its name, but there is no indication as to when this building was erected.

Laxmi Narayan Mandir

Map Reference No. 6x

Near the northeast corner of Kasta Mandap is a three

storey building with two roofs. It is quite apparent that originally this also was not a temple but a rest house. The name Laxmi Narayan Mandir is applied to the whole building, but in all likelihood the actual temple of Laxmi Narayan was a later addition, and from this the whole building derived its name. There is no indication in the use now made of the building that it was ever a rest house. Shop keepers and householders have taken it over entirely, and only the small extension that houses the temple itself is still a public building.

The image in the Laxmi Narayan Mandir is late, probably of the nineteenth century, as are the images of Hanuman and Mahakal found on the ground floor. There is a stone image of Vishnu upstairs, which also dates from the nineteenth century. But despite the late origin of this temple we have no idea who erected it or why it was erected.

Maju Deval

Map Reference No. 10

A three-roofed temple on a nine-stage platform, the Maju Deval was built in 1690 by Riddhi Laxmi, the mother of Bhupalendra Malla (1687-1700) and widow of Parthibendra Malla. The temple is dedicated to Shiva, and is known for the erotic carvings on the roof struts. It is a temple popular with tourists not only because of the unusual carvings but also for the magnificent view afforded by the high platform on which the temple stands. The temple houses a well-known Shiva linga.

The Maju Deval is perhaps best known for the special pinnacle that rises from the centre of the roof. The base of this pinnacle has the shape of a Buddhist stupa. This is the only example so far discovered of such a symbol of

Buddhism on the pinnacle of a Shaivite temple.

The small temple in the Shikar style at the foot of the stairs that lead up to the temple is to Kam Dev. It is normal for Shiva temples to have near them a temple or image of Kam Dev. However, at present there is no image in this temple.

Shiva-Parvati Mandir

Map Reference No. 11

The Shiva-Parvati Mandir is a great favourite of the people of the Valley. It was built by Bahadur Shah during the reign of King Rana Bahadur Shah, probably during the years of his second regency (1786-95). An inscription on the two-stage platform on which the temple rests is the oldest inscription in the Nepali language extant in Kathmandu Valley. It was written by Laxmi Narsingh (1620-41), and probably indicates this platform to have been an open stage for the public performance of dances long before the Shiva-Parvati Mandir was built here.

The temple is rectangular but built in the Nepali style. The figures of Shiva and Parvati looking out of the upper window have always captured the imagination of the people, since they look so natural and the pose is so typical of Kathmandu. The windows in this temple and the triple golden spire are of special interest.

It was Bahadur Shah who completed the unification of Nepal begun by his father, Prithvinarayan Shah the Great. Consequently this temple has a special attraction for historians who find in its informality and simple beauty an insight into the character of Bahadur Shah.

Bhagavati Mandir

Map Reference No. 12

This temple has perhaps the most fascinating history of any temple in the Hanuman Dhoka area. It is at present dedicated to the goddess Bhagavati and consequently is known also as the Kundel Chowk Bhagavati Mandir or the Nuwakot Bhagavati Mandir. Despite the fact that it is a three-storey, three-roofed temple, it is easily overlooked because it seems to sit atop a row of shops and is not often seen by passers-by. It has special importance from the fact that Prithvinarayan Shah had a great devotion to Nuwakot Bhagavati and is said to have brought her image with him when he conquered Kathmandu. After taking the city he set up the image in this temple, from which it is taken in April each year on a visit back to Nuwakot, some thirty-five miles north of Kathmandu, and returned a few days later.

But the temple itself was built long before the conquest of Kathmandu. Apparently King Jagajjaya Malla (1722-36) built it and named it Mahipatindreshwar in memory of his grandfather Mahipatindra Malla in order to underscore the legitimacy of his own claim to the throne. The image of Mahipatindra Narayan was subsequently stolen (1766), and the shrine was empty when Prithvinarayan Shah entered the city in 1768. Since Prithvinarayan had with him the image of Bhagavati, it was quite normal for him to place it in this empty sanctuary close to the Durbar.

When one steps back some distance from the temple to study it or views it from the upper stages of the Maju Deval, the Bhagavati Mandir is uncommonly attractive, an attraction that is greatly heightened by the golden roofs on the upper two storeys.

The Great Bell

Map Reference No. 13

Without the great bell erected by King Rana Bahadur Shah in 1797 the Durbar area would seem incomplete. The bells in the Patan Durbar Square and the Bhaktapur Durbar Square date from 1736. For some reason Kathmandu did not imitate this achievement immediately, though it was in that same year 1736 that Jaya Prakash Malla came to power as regent and one would think he would have welcomed this opportunity to express himself. Sixty years later King Rana Bahadur Shah supplied the deficiency, providing a bell to drive off evil spirits and the like. The bell is rung only when worship is being offered in Degutaleju.

Sweta Bhairav

Map Reference No. 17

The Sweta Bhairav is a large golden mask, fierce in appearance, and standing a full twelve feet high. It is normally screened from public view by a large wooden grille that is opened only at the time of the Indra Jatra festival in September each year. The image was erected by King Rana Bahadur Shah in 1796 for the purpose of driving off evil spirits and ghosts. Bhairav is the destructive aspect of Shiva, hence the fear inspiring eyes, the fangs, and the background of flames.

The Stone Vishnu Mandir

Map Reference No. 14

This small stone temple of Vishnu has suffered much from encroachment from neighbouring garden walls and general neglect. Up to the present we have found no historical record whatsoever concerning this temple, and we know little more about it than what we see. Location, size, and style seem to conspire to relegate this temple to the sidelines.

It has also suffered severe earthquake damage in the past. Photos taken before the earthquake of 1934, however, show this to have been quite a beautiful temple, and there has been some effort recently to restore at least some of its former beauty.

Saraswati Mandir

Map Reference No. 15

This small temple is another victim of the 1934 earthquake. At the present it is only some twenty-two feet high. Before the earthquake it was more than double this. We can only conclude that when the temple was reconstructed it was substantially changed in shape and appearance. No records dealing with the origin of this temple have so far been discovered. The Saraswati Mandir has also suffered from encroachment and general neglect, although it does attain some prominence during the annual Indra Jatra festival, when large floral displays of wax flowers adorn it, from which it derives its popular name, the temple of the wax flowers.

Krishna Mandir

Map Reference No. 16

This octagonal temple was built in 1648 by Pratap Malla. In 1637, when his rival Siddhi Narsingh of Patan dedicated the great Krishna Mandir of Patan, Pratap Malla who was then crown prince of Kathmandu took advantage of the situation to attack Patan. His efforts were largely futile, and Pratap gained a great deal of criticism for his attack at such a holy time. In order to regain some of his lost prestige he built this temple in memory of two of his queens, Rupamati, a princess of Bihar, and Rajamati, a princess of Karnatika, both of whom died very young. Inside the temple there are images of Krishna, Rukmini, and Satya Bhama. An inscription

there in Newari and Sanskrit tells us that the likenesses on the images are actually the likenesses of Pratap and his two queens. Interestingly enough, in the Newari version of the inscription Pratap does not admit to having put his own features on the image of Krishna. The practice of putting the features of a loved one on an image of a god or goddess was not unknown in Nepal before this time, but it was rare. A Lichhavi period image of Vishnu at Pasupati bears the likeness of Vishnu Gupta, and an image of Rishi Kesh at Bhaktapur erected by Yaksha Malla in 1467 bears the features of his son Rajamalla, who died young.

The temple itself has been daubed over with red paint, even to the inscriptions, but despite this act of misplaced enthusiasm, there are still many points about this temple to recommend it. It is a three-storey temple, with the roof struts adapted to fit the eight-sided structure. The top roof is of gilt copper, while the two lower roofs are of tile.

The Great Drums

Map Reference No. 16

These two huge drums were made during the reign of Girbana Yuddha Bikram Shah (1799-1816) and are played only during the worship of Degutaleju. An inscription on copper-plate in the keeping of the one who plays the drums specifies that a buffalo and a goat must be sacrificed for them twice a year. These drums were made in imitation of the great drums of Bhaktapur, one of which was made in 1692 by Jitamitra Malla, and the other by his grandson Ranjit Malla in 1727. The Bhaktapur drums were dedicated to Taleju Bhavani.

Jagannath Mandir

Map Reference No. 22

Extant historical evidence indicates that this temple was built about the year 1563 by Mahendra Malla, the first of the great builders in Kathmandu. Although the Deva Malla Chronicle states that Pratap Malla (1641-74) built this temple and set up the image of Jagannath found inside the temple near the eastern door, this is clearly incorrect, since an inscription inside the temple near this image dates from the time of Pratap Malla's father and the year 1632. In the inner recess of the temple sanctuary there is an image of the Chaturmurti Vishnu, which bears a date corresponding to 1563. The accompanying inscription states that Mahendra Malla erected the image. This inscription is in Sanskrit and is the oldest Malla inscription yet found in the Hanuman Dhoka complex. Apparently the image was set up in the same year the temple was built.

The Jagannath Mandir rests on three broad platforms, or plinths. On the western side of the lower level, the plinth is joined to a platform on which rests a pillar dating from Pratap Malla's time. On the eastern side of the temple is a long inscription, also of Pratap Malla, in which he extols his guardian deity Taleju Bhavani. The temple itself has two roofs. On all four sides of the temple there are groups of three doors, only the centre of which can be opened. The central door carries the signs of Mahadev: three eyes and a trident. On each of the other doors are found symbols used by the Shakta cult to represent the Devi: a three-cornered hole above a purna kalasa. The temple is of double wall construction, with an inner sanctuary from which the faithful are excluded. Only the priests may enter this sanctuary. The temple struts are heavily carved, and

the temple is known for its erotic carvings.

The Pratap Dhvaja

Map Reference No. 18

Near the Jagannath Mandir and facing the Degutaleju Mandir is a high, square, stone pillar called the Pratap Dhvaja. This was erected in 1670 by Pratap Malla (1641-74). On top of the pillar there are eight images. Pratap's older sons are in the four corners. In the centre is Pratap Malla himself. To his right is Ananta Priya Devi, and to his left Prabhavati Devi, two of his wives. In the centre near Pratap is an image of his infant son. All are in a posture of respect and worship as they face the temple of Degutaleju. During the Malla period personal images of individuals, whether royal or otherwise, were never found unless in a religious context. The Pratap Dhvaja is the first such dramatic presentation of a ruler in an attitude of praise before his favourite temple. The images of Yoganarendra Malla in Patan Durbar Square and Bhupatindra Malla in Bhaktapur came much later.

Degutaleju

Map Reference No. 17

This magnificent temple was built by Shiva Singh Malla (1578-1620), though many later Malla kings of Kathmandu and Shah kings of Nepal have added greatly to its glory. The temple is about ninety-three feet high, somewhat shorter than the great temple of Taleju. Taleju and Degutaleju are different manifestations of the same goddess of the Shakta cult.

The temple differs from most Nepali temples in that the lower portions of the building are ordinary living quarters. The temple itself rises from a terrace high above

the ground and can be reached only by passing through the lower building. The temple proper is thus a three-roofed temple rising directly from a broad terrace.

Degutaleju Mandir is richly ornamented. The door facing to the north is paneled in silver (the gift of King Girbana Yuddha Bikram Shah in 1815). The roof struts bear a Shiva-Parvati motif, and rows of wind-bells have been added to the corners of the roofs. Atop the temple there are five beautiful spires, a smaller one in each corner and a large central spire at the peak of the roof.

Degutaleju Mandir is a site of special significance to large numbers of the Newar community in April and May each year when they come to offer Devali Puja here.

The Image of Kala Bhairav

Map Reference No. 19

The huge stone image of Bhairav represents Shiva in his destructive manifestation. Hence its terrifying expression and the symbols of death and destruction. It is undated, but was set in its present location by Pratap Malla (1641-74) after it was found in a field north of the city during the digging of a water conduit from Buddha Nilkuntha to the Durbar. The image is made of a single stone, though the portion on the upper right hand side was damaged and repaired by adding another stone. The sun and moon to the left and right and the heads of lions in the upper portion also seem to have been later additions. Such large images made of a single block of stone are very rare in Nepal, and this one has become one of the landmarks of Kathmandu.

Indrapur Mandir

Map Reference No. 29

This temple is undated, though it is quite possibly a construction of Pratap Malla (1641-74). It is a mystery temple in the sense that the simple construction and plain roof struts seem out of place in comparison with the elaborate footings for the columns on the ground floor. Perhaps at some stage it was reconstructed, and the original design was not faithfully followed in the reconstruction. The mystery continues inside the temple, where a Shiva Linga is found, though the temple itself is known as Indrapur. Nor is there any torana above the door to give a clue as to the identity of the deity inside. Some say that formerly the image of Indra was set atop this temple during the Indra Jatra festival in September each year, which would account for the special construction of the upper storey of this temple. But the custom, if it once existed, has long been lost.

Added mystery is found in the Garud that is partially buried in the ground on the south side of this temple below plinth level. The Garud is the vehicle of Vishnu and seems out of place here before a temple housing a Shiva Linga. From its general appearance the Garud could date from the earlier Lichhavi times, but unless some excavation is done to see if the Garud bears an inscription, this must join the other mysteries connected with this temple.

Vishnu Mandir

Map Reference No. 21

The Vishnu Mandir was already in existence in Pratap Malla's time, but we have no evidence to indicate when it may have been built. It is certainly very old. The Vishnu Mandir is a three-roofed temple rising from a four-stage

plinth. It is complete with circumambulatory passage. The roof struts are carved with deities of the Vaishnavite sect.

Inside the temple a golden image of Vishnu is enthroned. He sits in the paleti asan, and the position of his hands indicates that he was once playing a flute, though the flute he once held has long been lost.

Kakeshwar Mandir

Map Reference No. 24

Built by Queen Bhuvana Laxmi in 1681, this temple was originally known as Bhuvanlalaxmishwar. Only later was the name changed to Kakeswar, and the people began to worship Mahadev here under this title. This temple was severely damaged in the 1934 earthquake. As it now stands it is a remarkable mixture of the Shikar style and the Nepali style. The lower floor of the building is built in the Nepali style, rising from a two-stage plinth. The second storey, from the terrace upwards, is built in the Shikar style. The upper part of the building is lime-washed, and the temple itself is surmounted by a spire in the shape of a kalasa.

Maha Vishnu Mandir

Map Reference No. 26

This temple of two roofs is built on a four-stage plinth. The roof struts are quite plain, as is the door, which is very similar to the plain doors used in Nepali homes. The spire of this temple is quite extraordinary, however, a golden kalasa surmounted by a golden umbrella. In the 1934 earthquake this temple suffered severe damage, and the golden image of Maha Vishnu that had been kept here was taken to Nasal Chowk inside the Hanuman Dhoka Durbar for safe keeping. When the image was moved a golden amulet was found in it that bore on the outside the name of King Jagajjaya Malla (1722-

36). Other historical records indicate that a temple built by Jagajjaya Malla in memory of his son Rajendra Malla was located near the Kot, which seems very like the location of the present Maha Vishnu Mandir. This temple, then, must have been built by Jagajjaya Malla. The restoration work done after the earthquake was hardly in keeping with the former magnificence of the temple as shown in contemporary photographs and as is indicated by the golden spire.

Kotilingeshwar Mahadev Mandir Map Reference No. 25

According to the chronicles this temple was built by Mahendra Malla (1560-74). It rests on a three-stage plinth. This is an extremely rare example of a sixteenth century temple built in the gumbhaj style, which has been described as 'a square cell surmounted by a bulbous dome.' Also of historical interest are the images of bulls carved on the corners of the plinth. The practice of carving a figure on either side of a corner with the two resulting figures sharing a common head at the corner itself is one that goes back to Licchavi times and is rare in Malla period buildings.

Mahendreshwar Mandir Map Reference No. 28

This temple of Mahendreshwar Mahadev was built in 1561 by King Mahendra Malla (1560-74). It is usually called simply Mahendreshwar Mandir. The temple's present appearance is the result of the reconstruction in 1963.

The temple has a broad two-stage plinth. The main door of the temple opens to the south. There is a religious emblem of molded copper in the shape of a square mandala on the first stage of the plinth in front of the main door. Such emblems are customarily placed on the southern side of

temples of Shiva. The faithful, who are not permitted to enter into the temple to pay reverence to the Shiva Linga, express their devotion by reverencing this emblem. A small stone bull, Shiva's vehicle, rests before the temple, and on the northeast corner there sits an image of Kam Dev, who figures frequently in stories of Shiva's life. All the roof struts of the temple are carved with Shaivite deities. There are no erotic carvings. The spire consists of a golden drum, trident, and Kalasa, surmounted by a golden umbrella.

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