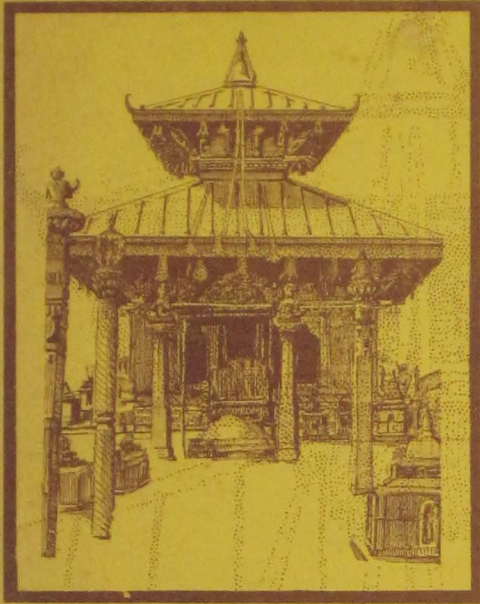


EXPLORING MYSTERIOUS KATHMANDU



KATHARINE HOAG

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.....enjoy the life and customs of the people, learn some of their legends and beliefs, and visit outstanding ancient and modern works of art.

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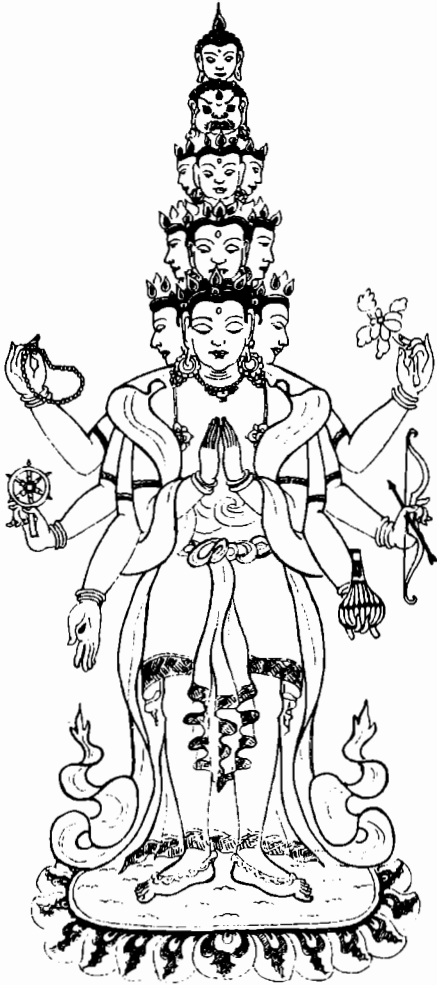


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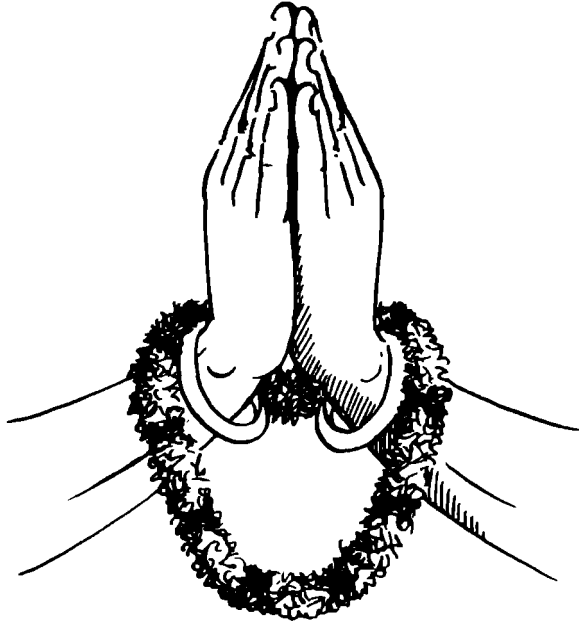
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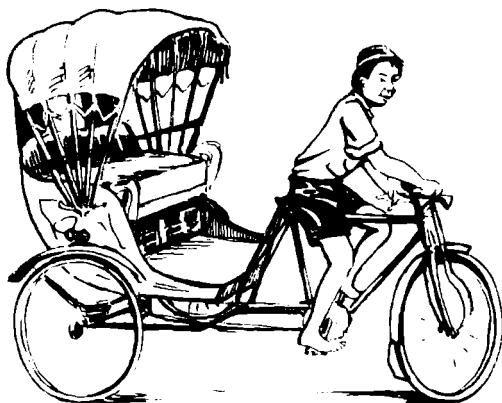
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These Charming People



Kathmandu amazes and entertains those who take the trouble to explore it. Surrounded by green hills and terraces with the snow capped Himalayas in the distance, this capital city of Nepal presents the visitor with a whole new world of sights and sounds.

Before we start our explorations let us become acquainted with some general facts about the people and the city which will add to your pleasure and understanding.

The people will interest you at once because of their great physical variety and their clothing. Their ancestors came from Tibet, India, Mongolia and other neighboring areas to settle in Nepal. Today, hundreds, or even thousands, of years later, they dress in their different distinctive styles and follow inherited customs, modified only somewhat by the passing years. They are very closely tied even now to their ethnic clans as well as to the nation as a whole.

Religion plays a weighty part in their lives. Both Hinduism and Buddhism flourish in Tantric form, but they intermingle to such an extent that they tend to be a unifying force. Religious rites and beliefs extend into every act of the people's daily lives. Their social life centers around their temples which are not treated as remote, hallowed places like churches, but as places to worship in, to live in, to laugh and to play in. Their many gods and goddesses do not stand apart from them but accompany them and enter into their every deed and thought. These deities are almost human in their actions and reactions, though infinitely more powerful than any mere person. If you once really grasp this fundamental difference between their religion and ours, much that baffles the newcomer becomes clear.

At festival time, visitors from other parts of the country pour into the city which expands far beyond its usual 250,000 inhabitants. Some have walked for weeks to fulfill a life-long dream of worshiping at some particular temple or joining in a special event.

These are friendly people. They like to have you admire their temples and treasures and they enjoy showing you how they perform their daily tasks. Of course, they resent condescension or condemnation just as much as we do, especially since it is usually based on lack of knowledge or misunderstanding. A little obvious admiration, friendliness, interest, and humor always

produce an answering spark. Many speak some English and all are gifted at sign language. Since they really wish to communicate with you, understanding becomes only a minor problem.

In the narrow streets, taxis, motorbikes, rickshaws and bicycles may crowd the pedestrian but, in spite of appearances, over ninety percent of Nepalis walk to reach their destinations. If you want the rich rewards that come from a close contact with the people, you also should do some walking. Fortunately, in the most congested parts of the city, motorized vehicles are now prohibited and walking is a pleasure.

Pedicabs, called rickshaws, those tricycle conveyances with a seat for you behind and a peddling man in front, can go everywhere. If you hire one try to get a driver who speaks some English. As a group, they speak very little. Bargain strenuously before getting in. Cut his original price down to a third if you can. Remember five rupees (fifty cents) is a day's wage. At the end of the trip, however, if he has been satisfactory, add a little extra to the agreed on price. If he has been very satisfactory tie him to you with rupees. He will become "your rickshaw" driver and this can be a real convenience. Two normal-sized Westerners cannot fit comfortably into one "rickshaw". A word of warning to the women: wear slacks or else a skirt loose enough to allow you to take the very high step necessary to get into the rickshaw.

Before we start our sightseeing, let us consider the serious poverty in this charming land. The people seem so happy, active and alert that we must constantly remind ourselves that Nepal is one of the poorest countries in the world. Lack of money accounts for much of the dirt in the streets and the deterioration of the beautiful buildings. Poverty explains the absence of running water and plumbing in the houses and also the children's runny noses and skin ailments. Nepal manufactures almost nothing and, therefore, hotels must import most of their equipment and it must be the cheapest that they can find since there is a severe lack of foreign exchange. This explains many deficiencies. Most of the services in hotels are performed by people who never went to school but who have taught themselves to speak and write English. In childhood, the chances are that they never saw a bathroom, a modern kitchen, or our type of furniture. Their customs and habits at home differed utterly from those of any tourist. Considering all this, they do amazingly well and our admiration should grow along with our understanding.

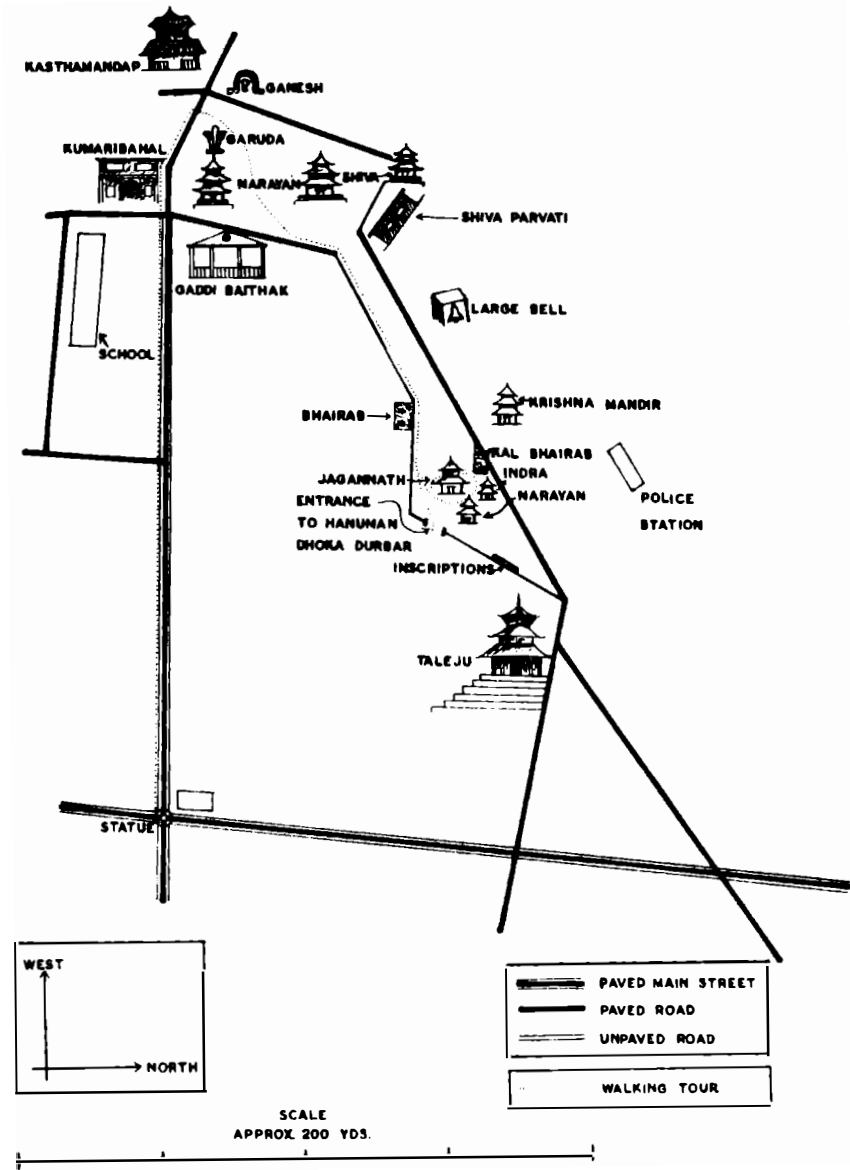
Most of our explorations will start from the same place, the Durbar Square of Hanuman Dhoka. Ask for Han-u-man Doo-ka. Each of our trips takes about a half day, more or less, depending on your interests. You have some remarkable experiences ahead of you so now let's begin.



The Hanuman Dhoka Area



CHAPTER TWO



The colorful old temples, former palace, congested vegetable market and fascinating curio stalls of the Hanuman Dhoka area form the stage for this half day's exploration. Our tour covers a small physical space but a big scope of interest.

Because most Nepalis call the whole area at the end of New Road Hanuman Dhoka, ask for it by that name. Taxis may drive to the end of New Road and sometimes into the square itself. Actually, this section consists of two parts, the Durbar Square and the fenced in Hanuman Dhoka. In the unfenced Durbar Square find a very large white building called Gaddi Baithak, with Grecian columns. Go to the front of this building. It faces the pagodas. We will start our explorations from its unimpressive entrance. This doorway stands directly under a single carved wood window which is below a triple window.

Be sure to find the right starting place. The large Grecian columns distinguish the building from the other white ones in the square and the front entrance faces the pagodas. It has no protective lions and the large gate next to it is often closed with a metal grille.

Standing with your back to this doorway, a number of temples and pagodas confront you. Men hurry past carrying fruit and vegetables in baskets either held on their backs by head bands or suspended on each end of a pole swung across one shoulder. The ones with the poles belong to the most ancient ethnic group in the valley, the Newars. Their ancestors supposedly came from central Asia thousands of years ago and, to this day, unlike other Nepalis, they carry their goods in the Chinese manner.

The noise of bargaining shoppers, ringing bicycle bells, and honking rickshaws adds to the general colorful confusion. Take a few minutes to adjust to these sights and sounds and then step forward a few paces and look to your left. At a short distance, another white building with many ornately carved and painted windows stands at right angles to you. This is the Kumari Bahal, the temple of the Living Goddess. Walk to this temple. Two painted lions flank the doorway and carved peacocks adorn some windows. Excellent as these exterior carvings are, the interior ones surpass them.

Duck you head and enter through the low door. Exquisite wood carvings decorate all four sides of the small central courtyard. It would be fun to know the names of the gods and goddesses found

here and on many other buildings. Unfortunately, even scholars can recognize only a few of them. Therefore, we must leave them, for the most part, unnamed members of the Nepalese pantheon of hundreds of thousands of divine beings.

If the Living Goddess appears, she will do so in the courtyard window on the third floor opposite the entrance or the second or third floor window above the entrance. To photograph her inside her temple is sacrilegious and prohibited. However, one can buy postcards of her. Once inside cover your camera. A small donation to the temple may be offered. You could be rewarded with a glimpse of the Living Goddess. If she is not present you may take photographs of all that marvelous wood carving.

The Living Goddess is always chosen from the Sakya clan of gold and silver smiths. According to legend, way back in the eighth century a king of Nepal exiled a young girl of the Sakya clan because she claimed to be an incarnation of the powerful goddess, Kumari. At once his queen, the Rani, was seized by a fit and became deranged. Feeling that this proved he had in truth, exiled Kumari, he brought the girl back and installed her in a temple. Another king built this present temple in about 1760. They say that the kings of the Malla dynasty used to consult her when they needed advice on difficult state problems.

She never leaves her temple except on a few special occasions, most importantly, during the Indra Jatra festival in the Nepali month of Bhadra (August-September). At this time, on three separate days, men pull her through the city seated in a traditional chariot of wood faced with gilded plaques and bedecked with flowers. Two boys representing the gods Ganesh and Bhairab accompany her in their chariots. The King of Nepal, who is believed to be an incarnation of the great Hindu God Vishnu, ceremonially offers her his good wishes during the festival and she puts a red tike on his forehead.

All of her life as Kumari, she is cut off from the public and protected from injury since she loses her sanctity with any appearance of blood. This, of course, means that at puberty she returns to a secular life and the powers of Kumari pass to the next chosen goddess. However, although she retires as a rich woman, free to lead a normal life and even to marry, few men have the courage to marry an ex-goddess and face the bad luck and early death which invariably result and, therefore, she is forever set somewhat apart.

To choose a new goddess, priests place little girls of the Sakya clan who have appropriate qualifications in the main hall

of this Kumari temple. Masked as demons, men leap out, shriek, and threaten the children. The girl who remains calm through this ordeal is clearly the goddess since she knows that her power can overcome any demon.

As you leave the home of the Living Goddess, you see the temple of Narayan on your immediate left. This three storeyed pagoda, built about 1670, rises from a five tiered plinth.

One of the most venerated Hindu gods is Vishnu, usually called Narayan in Nepal. The greatest gods manifest themselves in many different forms, both peaceful and terrible, and every form has a different name. Each of these great gods is closely associated with his own "vehicle", an attendant creature who serves him with deep devotion. In the case of Narayan (Vishnu) this attendant is a man-bird called Garuda. Go to the far side of this Narayan temple and you will find an excellent stone statue, dating from 1690, of Garuda kneeling in worship of his divine master.

The vegetable and fruit markets surround you here amidst great noise and commotion. Curio dealers spread their wares out on the plinths of the pagodas in this area. These are good places to pick up little treasures. In spite of their high pressure salesmanship, take your time and look carefully. Similar as the displays are, each man has a few unique things for sale. Escaping Tibetans could bring with them only what they could carry. Real Tibetan antiques, except in rare cases, were snapped up long ago. Therefore, take the "Tibetan antique" pitch with a big grain of salt. Nearby Patan city runs a thriving industry turning out Tibetan antiques for tourists. However, Tibetans now living in Nepal make some delightful articles. Really fine Nepalese modern pieces compare favorably with art objects made any place in the world and, in time, will certainly increase in value. Unfortunately, most of the things for sale are hurriedly made and badly finished in order to make them look like antiques. Hunt around and then buy something because you like it, not because it might be old. Always bargain. Nepalis love to bargain and feel cheated if a sale is too easy. Offer about half of the requested price and work up from there. Bargaining should be fun for both parties. A little light hearted humor adds to the pleasure. A word of warning. The museum must issue a pass before any Nepalese or Tibetan antique or an outstanding modern work leaves the country. Don't turn up at the airport with a real Nepalese antique unless you have a pass. It will be confiscated.

Notice the women's clothing. Rich women of Indian ancestry often wear the sari. Others usually wrap a length of cloth around themselves to form a skirt and wear a separate blouse. Then a

piece of narrower material is wrapped around and around their waists to form a bulky sash. Into this they stuff whatever they want to carry, money, lemons or any other small purchases. This practice makes a woman look pregnant whether she is or not. The pink and gray shawl which many women wear must be the original thermal blanket. Made with one layer of cotton cloth quilted to two layers of netting, it is surprisingly warm.

Now stand with your back to the back of the Garuda statue and look across the road and slightly to the left. You will see a large, square, rather open wooden building with a pair of lions of blackish stone at its entrance. This is the Kasthamandap.

According to legend, a heavenly tree took human form and descended to Kantipur, as Kathmandu was then called, to watch the Machendranath chariot festival. The worshiping mortals captured him and made him promise to give a ransom for his release of a sal tree from which a dharamsala, or resthouse, could be made. He more than fulfilled his promise by giving a very large tree indeed. From this single tree the Kasthamandap was built about a thousand years ago. The word means "square house made of wood." The name, Kathmandu, is believed to be a corruption of Kasthamandap. Unfortunately for the generous tree-man, the inauguration of this temple was to take place on the day when the price of salt equaled that of mustard oil, but that day has never come, therefore, he still remains a partial prisoner.

When you examine the building closely, you will notice little carved figures around the first floor cornice which illustrate two of the great Hindu epics.

Stroll around this area and notice the rearing bronze lions and the amazing wood carvings above the shop stalls of the dilapidated buildings.

Now, go back to the great Garuda statue. With it on your right, you will be facing a three storey temple to Shiva on its nine step plinth. Due to its great height it dominates the Durbar square. Walk forward and around to the front of this temple which is to your right.

The pagoda style may have originated in Nepal and from there spread to China, Korea, and Japan. When the Nepalese princess, Bhrikuti, married the powerful Srong-tsan-Sgam-Po of Tibet in 630 she took to his country the Buddhist religion and, probably, also the pagoda style of architecture.

When you stand with the steep steps of the Shiva temple on your left, you will face the Shiva-Parvati temple. Like the

Kumari temple, it represents a semi-domestic style. From the center window of the carved red second floor balcony, Shiva and Parvati lean out and gaze at the teeming life of the square below. After Shiva, one of the greatest Hindu gods, married Parvati, The Daughter of the Mountains, they came to live in the Himalayas. Many Nepalis consider him the patron god of the country

Before leaving this part of the Durbar square, take a last look around you at the other minor temples and at the big white building where we started our sightseeing, the Gaddi Baithak. It is a former palace built by one of the Ranas in 1908 after a visit to the British Isles. The Rana Prime Ministers ruled Nepal with a stern hand for a hundred years, up to 1951. During that time the general populace was not allowed to travel outside the country, but the Ranas themselves made many journeys, especially to Victoria's England. When they returned, they built themselves and their families great palaces in various European styles of architecture, using the people's labor and money. Since the revolution in 1951 which deposed the Ranas and restored the royal family to power, these buildings, which are scattered all over Kathmandu, have been taken over for government offices, hospitals, hotels and many other uses.

Go down the street to the right of the Shiva-Parvati temple and look up at the lovely carving on the building on your right. This is part of the old palace. The present day roads, new Police building, and the fence around Hanuman Dhoka have changed the appearance of this area completely even in the last twenty years, making it almost impossible to imagine what it looked like in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries at the height of its importance.

The large bell, located high above you on the left may signal the presence of a deity in the immediate neighborhood, or it may sound a warning, or announce a curfew. Its ringing sound also may carry the prayers of devotees to the gods. These large bells command great respect whereas any passing child may ring a small bell.

The Krishna Mandir, on the same side of the street, is one of the few octagonal temples in Nepal. Krishna is the playful, boyish, dearly-loved hero incarnation of Vishnu.

Before you come to the Krishna Mandir the road widens slightly and you see to your right the entrance to the famous Hanuman Dhoka. As you turn to go in, you pass on your right a very large, wooden lattice screen which hides an enormous bronze head of Bhairab, one of the fierce manifestations of Shiva. Peer through the lattice to get some slight idea of this extraordinary

image. The screen is removed only once a year, during the Indra Jatra festival. At that time, a tank behind the flower bedecked head is filled with holy rice beer which flows out through a tube inserted in Bhairab's fierce mouth. Crowds of men, mostly young, vie with each other to drink from this stream.

A bronze statue of King Pratap Malla with his family rests on a very high pillar on the left near the entrance of Hanuman Dhoka. He ascended the throne in 1623 and built many of these temples.

The 17th century two storey Jagannath temple stands next to this statue. Gods and goddesses with crowns, garlands, and jewelry form the beautifully carved and painted wooden struts which support the roofs of this pagoda. In a small square below each divinity, little erotic figures of people and of animals perform the sex act in many different ways. Such erotic scenes decorate many temples but they are most easily studied here.

Some say that they protect the temple from being struck by lightning since lightning is a virgin and when she sees the carvings embarrassment overwhelms her and she runs hastily away without resting on the building. Others say that these erotic scenes give the devout an opportunity to test their concentration, and still others believe that they exist to attract people to the temples and thus expose them to worship.

Although these explanations run the gamut from visual sex education to oneness with god, perhaps they should be based on the philosophy of Buddhism and Hinduism in their Tantric form. To over-simplify, the doctrine of ecstatic union teaches that a god can use his tremendous potentials only when his female partner activates him. Therefore, temple wood carvings, paintings, bronzes and even some of the more esoteric religious practices celebrate this union. Curio dealers sell many such representations, since the Nepalis by now have learned that these scenes hold a non-religious charm for tourists who buy them in quantities.

Next to and behind the Jagannath, the three storey Narayan Mandir stands on a three tiered plinth. Since both Hindus and Buddhists customarily walk clockwise around their shrines during devotion, this temple provides a circumambulatory gallery.

Of course all the shrines and temples must be repaired from time to time. The bricks, tiles and even the carvings must be replaced. Usually the restoration reproduces the original in every detail. Near the Narayan Mandir stands a small temple which is a horrible example of what can happen when renovation changes the original form. A white Indian style tower rests on top of a pagoda roof. This ruins both.

On the white wall of the palace, an inscription in six languages, Nepali, French, English, Arabic, Persian, and Kashmiri, protected by a fence faces Narayan Mandir. Evidently, even in the 17th century there was some contact with Europeans. Turn around and walk on the tiny path between Jagannath on your left and Narayan Mandir on your right and you will come to the little Indra Mandir. Sometimes people climb up onto the open balcony which forms the second floor. This breaks the rule that a mere mortal should never stand above an enshrined god.

Walking forward and bearing slightly right with the Indra Mandir on your right you will reach an extraordinarily fierce statue of Kal Bhairab next to the road.

Bhairab, one of the many manifestations of the great god, Shiva, assumes 64 different forms all of them terrific. Below his staring eyes fangs protrude from his large mouth. Garlands of skulls hang from his neck and skulls decorate his crown. In his many hands he holds various symbolic objects: a sword and trident to destroy tyrants; a severed hand to show the fate of hands that commit crimes; three decapitated heads to illustrate the fate of heads lacking good thoughts. He tramples on human ignorance. In his lower right hand, he holds a bowl into which supplicants place offerings hoping to placate him so that he will not punish them, or hoping to please him so that he will use his great power in their behalf. If you stand nearby for a few minutes, you will almost certainly see someone making an offering to him.

After going down the road a few steps turn and look above Hanuman Dhoka. The elegant and dignified Taleju temple stands on a very high plinth above and behind the other temples. In the 14th century a Malla king brought the goddess Taleju Bhawani to Nepal and enshrined her as the dynasty's family diety. A 16th century descendant rebuilt the shrine into the present temple. A secret form of worship takes place here. Only certain priests and the king may enter the temple except during one period of the Durga Puja festival when devout Hindus are admitted. Non-Hindus may never enter.

According to legend, Prithvi Narayan Shah, the founder of the present Shah dynasty, after conquering the Mallas, offered a human sacrifice at Taleju to celebrate his victory. At once the irate goddess of the temple appeared before him and expressed keen disapproval of this type of offering. Thereafter, this practice was largely discontinued.

Another event took place at the Taleju in the late 18th century. One of the Shah kings, deranged by the suicide of his queen who had been disfigured by small-pox, removed the statue of the

Taleju goddess and smashed it to pieces. He then seized many of the valley's sacred images and forced his soldiers to reduce them to rubble by artillery fire. After this sacrilegious act he was forced to abdicate.

Notice the gilding on the Taleju temple which replaces the bright colors usually found on Nepalese temples, and the large bronze faces of the deity which look out of the central windows of the second and third floors. An elaborate gilded pinnacle with a gold umbrella above it caps the roof. Such pinnacles crown most temple roofs. An umbrella is a most auspicious symbol whether made of gold, cloth or paper. It protects a deity in procession including the Living Goddess on her rare appearances or a bride and groom. It brings happiness and good luck.

Now walk back to the inscription on the palace wall. Beyond it on the right a strange red figure sits under a canopy on a high stone base next to the palace entrance. This is the dearly-loved monkey god, Hanuman, after whom the square takes its name. His devoted followers have worshiped him with oils, red powder and flowers for three hundred years until his features have become completely indistinguishable. Hanuman, in the great Hindu religious epic of the Ramayana, helped the god, Rama, to rescue his kidnapped wife, Sita. Because of the brave and unselfish way in which he did this he stands for the admired qualities of loyalty, courage, and disinterested love.

Two painted stone lions with riders guard a doorway to the old palace. All-seeing eyes and painted purna kalasas, holy water jars, which have much the same connotation as our cornucopias ornament the sides of the door frame and seven minor gods the top. Paintings like these often decorate a door. However, the little figures in the recessed area above the gods are almost unique, Excepting the many armed god in the center, they represent a type of folk art seldom seen.

Pay the nominal charge and go in. On the left at the entrance you will see an excellent black stone image of Narashimha, the man-lion incarnation of Vishnu, disemboweling a demon who had posed as a god.

A long audience porch stands next to Narashimha's statue. Behind its pillow throne hang pictures of the Shah dynasty kings which are fun to study. From 1846 to 1951 these kings did not rule since that was the period of the Rana dictatorship which began with the Kot massacre. The Kot massacre of 1846 changed the course of Nepalese history for one hundred years. The ambitious younger queen of Rajendra Bikram Shah wished to gain the crown for her own little son, and permanent legal regency for herself. The

crown prince, Surendra, her step-son, appears to have been subnormal. The king was a vacillating, weak man without many followers. She, on the other hand, had built a strong political party around herself.

To further his own ends, Jung Bahadur, a brilliant, gifted, but ruthlessly ambitious nephew of the Prime Minister, joined causes with the queen. At her request, he killed the Prime Minister, his uncle, who, she thought, was becoming a possible threat to her power. By doing this job for her Jung Bahadur became her trusted confidant although, in fact, he was using her in his own drive for power.

General Gagan Singh, the queen's lover, became the next stepping-stone toward Jung Bahadur's ultimate success. Knowing that the king was jealous of Gagan Singh, to whom the queen was passionately attached, Jung Bahadur had him killed. The queen was beside herself with sorrow and anger and immediately suspected the king. She called Jung Bahadur, her trusted counselor, to her and asked him what to do. The wily man advised her to summon all the courtiers and ranking officers to the Kot. Unsuspecting and unarmed, they assembled, knowing nothing of Gagan Singh's murder. Jung Bahadur, however, hid his own armed soldiers round about.

The queen revealed the murder of her lover to the assemblage and announced her determination to punish those involved. Incited by Jung Bahadur, her rage mounted and she ordered certain nobles killed. Passions rose and in the melee which followed Jung Bahadur's armed soldiers according to legend killed over a hundred nobles and officers and blood ran out under the door of the Kot.

As a result of this massacre and another one a month later, Jung Bahadur gained complete power and became Prime Minister and commander-in-chief. The queen, still apparently not realizing the part he had played, asked him to murder her two step-sons so that her son would become heir-apparent. He seized this opportunity to expose her part, but not his, in the past events and to exile her to Banaras in India. The king soon followed her.

Thus, to greatly over-simplify, began the hundred years of absolute Rana rule. The rulers proclaimed themselves Maharajahs and hereditary Prime Ministers of Nepal. At birth, mere infants received the title of General and the family as a whole took on the trappings of royalty. The labor, land and treasure of the Nepalese people were exploited for the sole benefit of the Ranas. At this time they built the great palaces, like Gaddi Baithak in the Durbar Square, which dot the city. However, the Shah dynasty continued to exist as puppets and virtual prisoners in the palace. The king had always been considered an incarnation of Vishnu so

the Ranas proclaimed that he was too holy to attend to mundane matters and they allowed him to appear only at religious functions. A revolt in 1951 restored the King to power.

The very large palace area contains many temples and courts but visitors are allowed only in the one where you now stand.

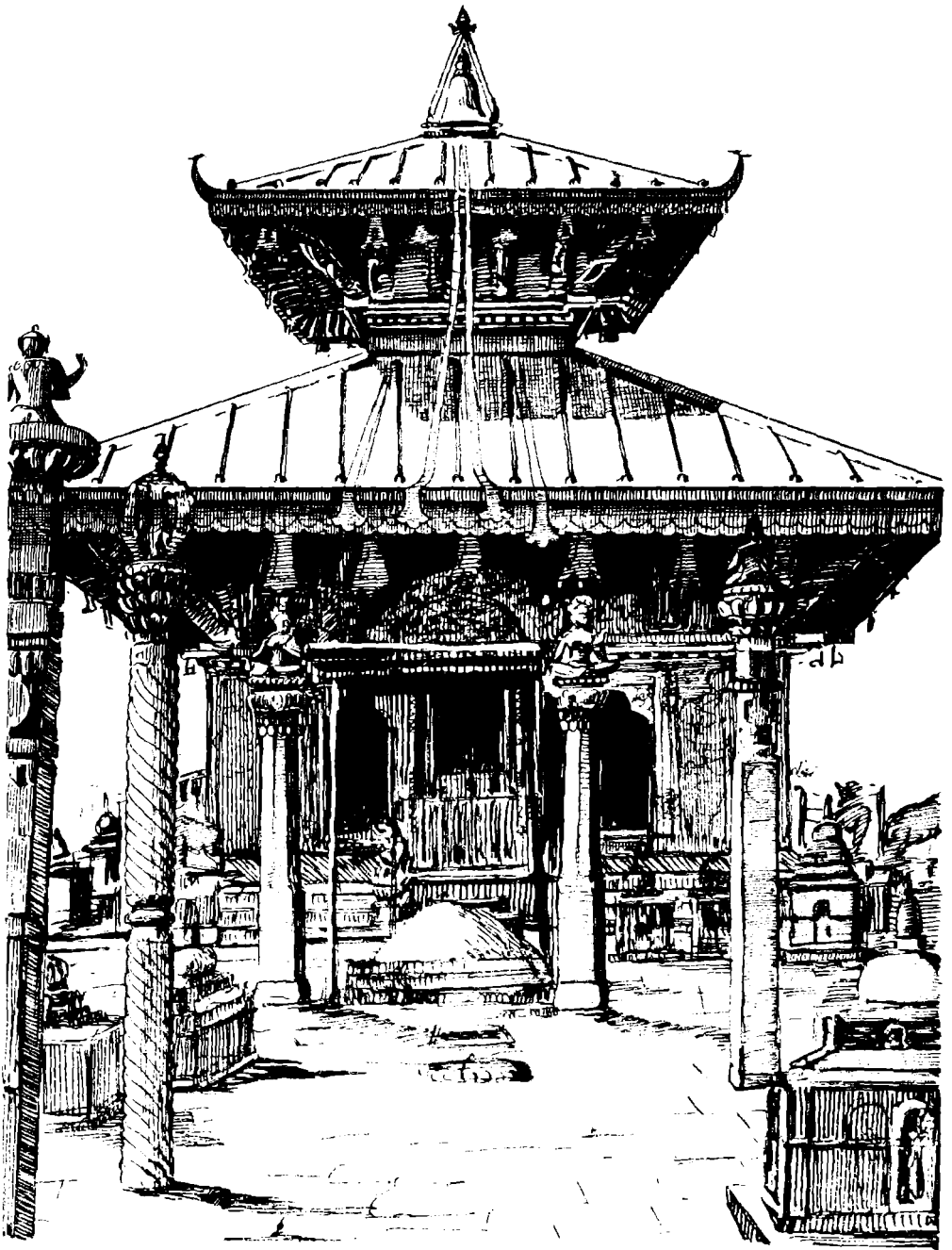
Part of the coronation ritual still takes place on the raised stone platform in this courtyard. As you see, some temples stand right on top of the palace buildings. In two of these the practice of worshiping 330,000,000 divinities simultaneously still takes place. The unique round temple which dominates the roof of one corner faces the same palace court as Taleju. Notice, also, the differently shaped towers which form part of the roof of the palace. They were constructed in the 1770s by four once independent kingdoms to signify their unification under one Nepalese rule.

The Nepalese government and U.N.E.S.C.O. renovated much of the old palace which was built about 1650. If entrance is allowed, by all means let one of the provided guides take you inside. Narrow stairways climb steeply from storey to storey past dark rooms which stimulate the imagination, until finally you reach the towers with their jewel-like wood carvings. A superb view of the whole of Kathmandu, Taleju temple and the Himalayas rewards the exercise. Perhaps the ground-floor door to New Road will be open. If so, leave by it and look back at the superlative carving on the outside of the old palace.

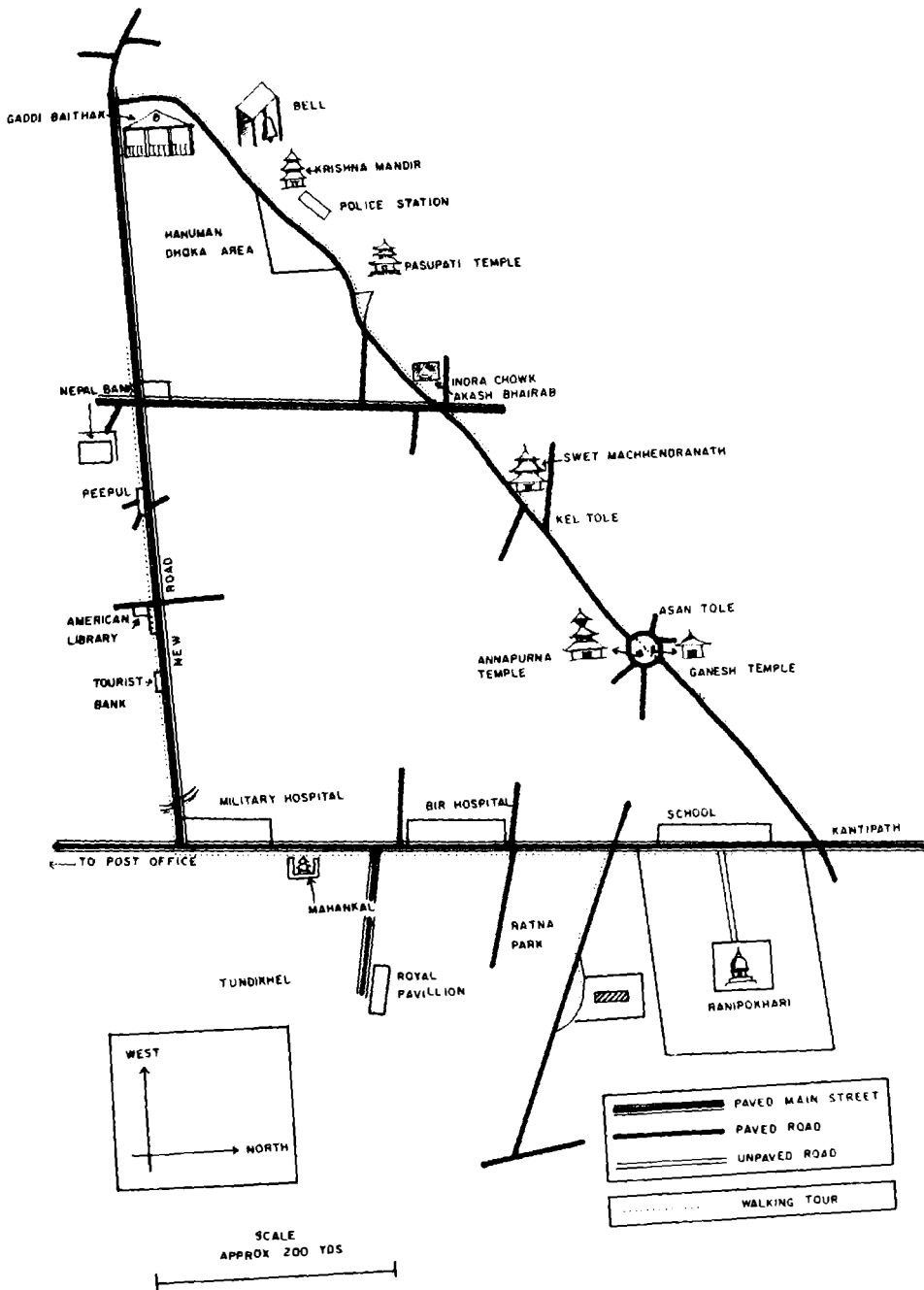
We have now come to the end of this half day's sightseeing. If you are hungry, walk to the statue in the middle of New Road. If you turn left into the cross street you come at once to the Other Room of the blue Crystal Hotel which serves very good food.

Our next exploration also starts at Gaddi Baithak and takes a half day. We will visit the bazaars and three very important "sights" and enjoy some legends.

The Bazaars



CHAPTER THREE



The bazaars of Kathmandu present a fascinating panorama of Nepalese life. The stores have no front wall but open directly onto the street so that the pedestrian becomes involved with the merchandise and the vendor in a delightfully intimate fashion.

We will spend this half day primarily in the bazaars and the interesting squares of the business area of the city. Two highly revered temples, a small lake, one of the largest parade grounds in the world, and a number of eerie legends fall within our exploration. Our route covers a fairly large area, perhaps two or three miles. Cars may not drive on the first third of it. This part you should certainly do on foot, if possible, otherwise you will miss much of the interest of the shops and the life around them. Since you can hire a "rickshaw" any place along the route, walk until you tire and then ride. Of course, walking the whole distance produces the richest experience.

In Hanuman Dhoka find Gaddi Baithak as described in the Hanuman Dhoka tour. Turn right and walk along the street which passes some of the sights previously seen, the big bell and drums and the eight sided Krishna Mandir, all on your left, and on your right the fence around Hanuman Dhoka, the fierce Kal Bhairab statue and a small shrine to the elephant headed god, Ganesh.

The large police building fills the area across the street followed by the small, much used cement Pashupati temple where the street swings right. Next, you pass some cloth shops and Tibetan rug shops and soon the street widens into a triangle. Here you can buy film in the Raj photo shop. They will develop and print your black and whites over night. There are many camera shops on New Road. No place develops color film satisfactorily. Don't mail them. The mails from this part of the world are uncertain. So long as you protect them from heat you can keep them with you for a number of months, if you avoid airport x-rays.

Continue down the road, noticing the great variety of merchandise. As recently as five years ago scarcely half of the things you see for sale today existed in Nepal. What amazing people to be able to adapt themselves so rapidly to this strange new world of foreign tourists and unfamiliar objects!

As you walk forward you come to shoe shops first, but if you have worn out your shoes wait to replace them until you reach the Bata shop on New Road.

The stalls selling, among other things, tin, stainless steel, stationery and block prints yield to a long row of colorful cloth

shops. Most of the gay material in these stores comes from India or, sometimes, from Japan. British woollens are found on New Road.

Once more the street widens into a square, Indra Chawk. At once on your left a domestic style temple faced with red, green and white tiles catches your attention. Wonderful bronze creatures, half horse, half lion rear up from the second floor. This Akash Bhairab temple contains a gigantic head of the fierce god on the upper floor. Very few people may enter, certainly not foreigners.

Fine fruit stands border the square and, with good luck, you may find the flute man here with his flute tree. These make pleasing, light presents to take home. Don't blow the flutes yourself. Get the flute man to blow them as you hunt for one with a good tone. You don't know who played a tune on it last and T.B. is common in this country. When you have picked out your flute sterilize it before using it. Be sure to bargain.

Take the farthest right road and walking forward, you come to a place where, in the morning, they sell garlands of flowers. The Nepalis are the original flower children. As you have probably noticed, women wear flowers in their hair and men also tuck a flower behind an ear or on top of the head. During worship, the devotee offers flowers and food at the shrine or places a garland around the god's neck. People offer garlands to honor respected persons, or animals or even cars and bicycles.

Vendors pile blankets and shawls on the pagoda steps. They make an excellent buy. Instead of trying to cope with the salesmen, always surrounded by bargaining Nepali customers, walk counter-clockwise a quarter of the way around the pagoda and you will see Tibetan rugs hanging out of a second storey window. Climb the steep stairs and shop in peace. Undyed wool which comes in brown, tan, and off-white makes the softest pashmina shawls. Dying seems to stiffen them very slightly. This store also carries the popular, good looking Tibetan jackets, rugs and shoulder bags. Bargain a little. They won't come down much. Hunt also in the nearby shops across the square.

As you go on down the street you come to some good brass shops where you can purchase the pretty water jars and trays which the Nepalis use every day. Keep looking up at the second floor windows. You may see something for sale that justifies the steep climb.

Again the road broadens into a square. This is Kel Tole. At the left, a small Buddha on a high stone pillar faces two metal lions which guard the entrance to the enclosed courtyard of one of

Nepal's most ornate and venerated temples, the Sheweta Machendranath, Temple of the White Machendra. Both Buddhists and Hindus worship here. Machendra takes two forms, one red and this white one. His history goes back in time to myth. At first only a minor divinity, over the years he developed into a powerful god, considered by Buddhists a form of Avalokitesvara, the Bodhisattva who takes care of us during this present epoch when no mortal Buddha exists on earth to help us. The Hindus worship him as a form of Shiva who can bring rain.

At the entrance of this temple a resting porch forms a vestibule for the courtyard. Here in the evenings, about nine o'clock musicians play holy melodies on interesting Nepalese instruments which produce sounds quite different from ours. If possible, come to one of these concerts. You will forever remember the experience.

Many small statues, shrines, and Buddhist chaityas litter the courtyard. Notice especially two graceful bronze figures of the goddess Tara which sit on top of high stone pillars and, also an utterly incongruous buxom Grecian female standing on the paving. Machendra rests on the high stone platform on the left during the holy bathing ceremony which takes place on one festival. Lions and banners protect the shrine in which the white ornately dressed god rests.

Gilding and embossed metal adorn a large part of the front of the temple and many large metal banners ornament the eaves of the gleaming roofs. Decorative gilt birds perch on the corners. From the roof pinnacle three flat gilded sashes descend to a point just below the lowest roof and above the entrance to the shrine. These handsome sashes, called Dhvaja, hang from the pinnacles of a number of temples. They form a pathway down which a god may descend toward earth if his personal intervention has been won by the devotions of some deserving individual.

Small paintings of the 108 different forms of Avalokiteshvara found above the colored border of the white tiled sides and back of the pagoda form an interesting collection.

Ordinary dwellings surround the courtyard of this ornate temple. Children play hopscotch, shout and laugh and their elders wash clothes and beat grain in the court while devout worshipers make offerings to powerful Machendra.

Outside, once more, in Kel Tole a man may sit under a black umbrella selling bright plastic bangles and the long red or black wool cords which women braid into their hair for decoration.

As you continue walking, some Nepal cap houses stand next to each other on your right. Most Nepalese men wear these gay distinctive caps. They make unusual small gifts. Be sure to buy the largest size. Our heads seem to be a lot bigger than the average Nepali's.

Further down the road, in cool weather, you see great piles of comforters for sale. Nepalese houses have no heat; so from November to March they grow increasingly chilly. Fortunately the sun shines almost steadily during this period and so in daytime everyone moves outdoors to perform their various tasks in its warmth, but at night they need protection against the cold.

After passing many stalls selling a great variety of goods you observe a beautifully carved, dilapidated wooden porch, projecting slightly into the street. Men sell onions and potatoes from this exquisite work of art.

Beyond stalls selling nails, cosmetics, clothes, tools and baskets, the road widens again and we enter Asan Tole, one of the oldest and busiest centers of Kathmandu. The congestion is unbelievable. Honking "rickshaws", men pushing great loads on flat carts, bicycles, bread carts and people form a seething mass which cows and bulls nudge not too gently out of the way while they munch on vegetables stolen from vendors' baskets. Cheer up, it used to be even worse when taxis were allowed, also.

Men bargain for rice and grain in front of the small three storey Annapurna pagoda. This ancient little temple with its three gilt copper roofs has stood in this location for centuries. Its enshrined image is not the goddess herself but a purna kalasa, an auspicious jar, which is most unusual.

Not far from this temple, a small stone relief of a fish lies in a shallow carved container embedded right in the surface of the square. In all the confusion you probably cannot find it. This does not matter. It has no great artistic merit, but it interests us because of a legend connected with it and because people worship it and ask its aid to cure some diseases, especially vertigo.

According to the legend, an eminent astrologer of Kathmandu named Barami wished to cast a perfectly accurate horoscope for his first-born son. This could only be calculated if the father knew the exact moment of the baby's birth. In order to learn this, he hung a bell near the midwife and told her to ring it the moment the baby was born. When the bell rang, he cast the horoscope which revealed to his chagrin that the child was not his own. Overcome, Barami left his wife, his home and Kathmandu.

The baby boy, named Dak, became a famous astrologer like his father. When the great Indian emperor, Ashoka, wished to learn the most auspicious day to start a long pilgrimage, he called together all the most famous astrologers of that day, including both Barami and Dak, who, of course, did not know each other, and commanded them all to foretell the favorable day. With lightening speed Dak announced the date and after a time the others grudgingly agreed. Barami, greatly impressed by Dak's brilliance, asked to become his pupil.

The son and father, young teacher and old pupil, still unaware of their relationship, joined the emperor in his travels. When they arrived in Kathmandu, Dak decided to give his pupil a test. He asked three questions: on which date would the next auspicious day fall; what would drop from the sky; where would it land? Barami rapidly calculated and replied that the auspicious day would fall on the full moon of Chaitra at twelve minutes past twelve and that a fish would drop from the sky onto Asan Tole twelve arms' lengths from the Annapurna temple. Dak told Barami that there was an error in his calculation. The fish would fall closer to the temple than Barami had predicted. Barami, unconvinced, waited with Dak in Asan Tole. On the specified date and time the fish fell on the spot that Dak had foretold. Barami could not understand where he had made his miscalculation until Dak explained that he had failed to take the wind into account.

Barami suddenly realized that perhaps long ago he had made a similar type of error when he cast his baby son's horoscope. Now he remembered he had not taken into account the time it took for the sound of the bell's ring to travel from the midwife to his study. He recalculated the horoscope and found that the baby really belonged to him. At once he returned to his wife. He found Dak with her and learned to his joy that his brilliant teacher was his own son. The story, however, does not end there.

A son must revere his father and a pupil must revere his teacher. This presented a problem. They called in the family priest to help them solve this question. Oddly enough, everyone considered the philosophical puzzle resolved when the priest said that together they should erect a suitable monument to commemorate the remarkable circumstance of a father becoming his son's pupil. Together Dak and Barami placed a carved stone fish at the exact spot where the miraculous one had landed, and there it has rested ever since.

As you stand in Asan Tole with the Ganesh shrine on your left and a corner of the Annapurna temple on your right you see that the road ahead of you forks. Choose the left fork, not the left turn.

After passing metal and fertilizer stalls you come to a number of Tibetan shops with their typical dresses hanging in the entrance. These dresses make becoming informal evening clothes for Western women. Some stores also sell turquoise and rock coral jewelry. Tibetan men usually wear one large turquoise earring and the women a necklace of turquoise and coral with a decorated silver box containing a prayer attached to it. Though expensive, this jewelry costs much less here than it would in other countries. In a Nepali shop you would offer half the asking price and start bargaining from there. This is not true for a Tibetan shop. They may come down a few rupees but probably not many.

Soon you come to an area where men repair and rent out bicycles. If you rent one be sure to test the brakes and steering carefully since tourists abuse them badly. The good International Bookstore stands in this area and nearby "rickshaws" wait for patronage.

You have now reached a large cross street, Kantipath. Turn right onto it and, when you can, cross it. You will be in front of the Rani Pokhari, the Queen's pond.

Only ghosts and restless spirits enjoy this lovely sacred pond which mirrors a temple in its motionless waters. The Nepalis shun it.

Construction of this Pokhari started in 1664. The smaller city of that period did not include this land. The pond, originally much larger, lay just outside the city's eastern gates in open farm land. The children's cemetery which played a spooky part in future events occupied an area next to it.

To this day mystery surrounds the name Rani Pokhari and the statue of an elephant which stands on its south shore.

Now called the Rani Pokhari, the Queen's pond, the stone inscriptions which once stood at the little lake's corners mention nothing about a queen. According to them, Pratap Malla ordered the Pokhari built and later dedicated it in 1670 to Shiva, Parvati and Brahma in honor of his three sons. He also built an artificial island and on it placed a traditional pagoda style temple. He then ordered that holy water collected from fifty-one different sacred pilgrimage sites in Nepal and India should be poured into the pond. Pratap, who was a poet as well as an artist, considered the whole place so beautiful that Vishnu and all the gods would hasten to reside there.

The stone inscriptions further declare that to bathe in its sacred waters assured superlative blessings. On the other hand, horrible punishments would descend on anyone who defaced the in-

inscriptions or committed suicide in the pond. In spite of this, more suicides have taken place here than in all Kathmandu.

Clearly the inscriptions do not explain the name. Most Nepalis think the elephant statue does. Three figures ride on the back of this large stone elephant and with his trunk he grips a strange fourth figure who desperately struggles for life. Any Nepali will tell you that a queen and her two sons are the figures on the elephant's back and therefore the name Queen's Pokhari comes from this statue. However, the inscription on the sculpture says that the riders are the king, not the queen, and two sons. Confusion continues.

History records that King Pratap Malla, who did so much for Kathmandu, had some serious weaknesses of character. He was very eccentric and a great philanderer. As so often happened in Nepal, one of his queens wielded the real power. As the king grew older his eccentricities increased until finally his religious teachers, perhaps instigated by the queen, induced him to stop ruling the land in order to devote himself completely to religion and poetry. Although he agreed to this, he retained the titles and trappings of a king. He ordered that his minor sons should rule in turn, a year at a time. The turn of Chakravartendra the youngest son, came around in 1669. As usual, at the time of a coronation, commemorative coins were struck in his name. However, all records agree that the prince died on his coronation day. A frightened elephant trampled him to death during a procession. The people believed that this was due to an inauspicious combination of emblems on the coins. This would explain the struggling figure in the stone elephants' trunk except that the inscription names Chakravartendra as one of the riders.

On the inscription of 1670 no mention is made of Chakravartendra's recent death and he receives the full royal titles of a living monarch although all records agree that he had died. Possibly, the queen, his mother, the real ruler, stricken by grief suppressed all public recognition of her son's death. She certainly would not endanger another son by having him succeed at such an obviously inauspicious time.

Since Pratap had withdrawn from the world, it may have been the queen who ordered the Pokhari changed into a memorial for her dead son. Since it would not be fitting to have her name appear on the inscription, it did not. However, the public would have known that she was responsible and for that reason they may have called it the Queen's Pokhari.

In spite of its great sanctity, through the years people continued to fear the place. Trials by immersion took place in

the pond which added to its frightening reputation although in these trials no one drowned. To settle a serious dispute between two people, the name of each was written on pieces of paper and tied to the top of two reeds which stood upright in the Pokhari. Two men completely uninvolved in the dispute waded into the pond. Each immersed himself beside one of the reeds, not knowing the name tied to it. The first man to surface instantly destroyed the paper beside him without reading it. The last man to rise took his paper in a procession to Hanuman Dhoka where officials opened it and read out the name of the man who then won the case.

A gruesome legend adds to the apprehension connected with the Pokhari and to the questions about the statue. King Pratap daily worshipped at the island temple and bathed in the sacred waters. Soon he noticed a flirtatious beauty who also bathed there each day. True to his reputation, a continuing romance followed. Later, the lovely woman bore him a son. The day after the birth, she arrived at the Pokhari as usual, carrying the baby and before the king's horrified eyes she strangled it. Love is indeed blind. For the first time in all these months, the king suddenly noticed that the beauty's feet were on backwards, a sure sign of a witch. This made him shake with fright. So that the witch would not suspect his discovery he told her he shook with sorrow at the strangling of their son. As soon as possible he left. Back at the palace he made a clean breast of the whole affair to a Tantric priest and asked his advice. The priest produced a cotton thread, said some spells over it, and told the king to go back to the Pokhari next day and behave as usual but to secretly tie the thread to the witch's clothes. The king carried out these instructions. The day after that, the priest went with him to the pond and through magic they followed the thread to the children's cemetery where they found it tied to a shinbone. They burned the bone to ashes and the witch never appeared again.

However, a new problem arose. The continuing unpopularity of the Pokhari bothered the king and so he consulted the priest again. Through magic, he found out that the strangled baby had become a particularly troublesome ghost which scared people. By powerful spells the priest put life into a stone elephant and he also forced the baby ghost to appear in the form of a bundle of rags. The elephant seized the bundle in his trunk and at once the priest turned them both to stone. Whether the legend developed in order to explain the statue or the statue gave birth to the legend no one will ever know. Only one thing is certain. The strange figure of the baby ghost in the stone elephant's trunk sports a full grown mustache. Ah well....

Ghosts and witches continued to scare people away from the Rani Pokhari. Even in the late 19th century no one approached it after dark and people still do not use it.

The pagoda temple in the lake decayed with time and lack of care. Jung Bahadur had it replaced by a shrine in the Mogul style which the Ranas greatly favored and he built a high brick wall around the whole place. Juddha Shamsheer, the ruling Rana of 1932-1945 replaced the wall with the present high iron fence.

On one day in the year during the Diwali festival the gate is opened and people are allowed to enter and walk across the causeway to the temple. The shrine contains a simple Shiva Lingam. Terracotta figures, probably from earlier days, lie scattered about. Recently, during Diwali which is a festival of lights, electric bulbs outlined its domed roof and made lovely reflections in the pond. However, its unpopularity continues and the enigma of its name and of the elephant statue remains unsolved.

When you reach the first street on your left, you must make a choice. If you want to examine the stone elephant make a short round trip down this side road. Otherwise continue along the broad Kantipath. About half way down the side street you come to the Optic House on the left. Enter and walk toward the back of the building. Go up the stairs to the Park Restaurant and then up the next flight to the roof. From there you have a fine view of the elephant with its three riders and one drawf-like struggling figure. When you look across the Rani Pokhari you see a long white building across the street on your left which is the oldest school in Nepal.

Under the Rana rule education was reserved for the favoured elite; even the Royal Family could not receive formal instruction. There are now many educational institutions in Kathmandu. Recently education has been made free for children upto class three. The government has also put education of every type under one ministry and, to help unify the country, all classes must be taught in Nepali rather than in the local language or English.

Buses stop near here and cause great traffic congestion. Carefully cross the street and look at Ratna Park, named in honor of Queen Ratna, wife of the late King Mahendra and step mother of the present king, His Majesty King Birendra.

Retrace your steps to the wide Kantipath which you turned off of to make this detour. Turn left and continue down it. For a long distance you walk beside the Tundikhel, one of the largest parade grounds in the world. A few statues of important Ranas stand here and there and a bandstand, a grandstand and a crossroad now break its full sweep which used to include Ratna Park, also.

From the grandstand, the king and other important people review processions and watch ceremonies. Gurkha soldiers sometimes exhibit amazing feats of precision timing here.

Prithvi Narayan Shah who defeated the Mallas and founded the present dynasty was himself a Gurkha. Therefore the present Shah dynasty stems from the Gurkha clan, although by now heavily intermixed by marriage with the Ranas. Although Nepal has always been an independent country, the Ranas formed a close association with the British in whose army the Gurkha soldiers fought as mercenaries. They gained world wide acclaim for their bravery and loyalty. During both world wars they won more Victoria Crosses for bravery than any other group. Their pensions from Great Britain are an important source of foreign exchange for Nepal.

Soon the sidewalk comes to a temporary end at the Mahakala temple which stands above the street level next to the Tundikhel. The devastating earthquake of 1934 leveled most of this area. When rebuilt, shops were installed on the street floor under the temple. At the top of the double stairway serpents form an entering arch. Although of little artistic worth in its present form the three tiered pagoda contains a venerated image. Resthouses surround the court and one further flight of steps leads to their roof from which you have a splendid view of the Tundikhel and any event taking place on it.

The decoration of the pagoda suffers somewhat from its unfortunate past. However, the graceful lamp railing, large banners and mirrors in their silver frames are impressive. These mirrors, found on most temples, have no religious meaning but help worshipers to apply their tika marks in the middle of their foreheads. These holy red spots which most women and many men wear have a religious, not a caste significance.

The extraordinary figure of Mahakala, The Great Black One, stands five feet tall and wears a high headdress. Although the darkness of the shrine makes it difficult, when worshipers have left try to see him. He presents a remarkable appearance with pop-eyes and ferocious mien. He holds a silver cleaver in one hand and a scepter of skulls in the other. Coiled skulls form his necklace. Both Hindus and Buddhists worship him. Hindus consider him in the first rank of the gods, often as a form of Shiva. The Buddhists believe him a mighty Bodhisattva, Defender of the Doctrine, Protector of the Mandala, Lord of Riches.

Under the temple to the right, the Educational Bookstore sells paperbacks in English. Across the street many little shrines once part of the Mahakala temple clog the sidewalk and the buildings of the Bir hospital fill a large area. You can arrange to visit it, if you wish.

When you reach a big entering street on your right, turn into it. This is New Road.

If you kept on walking on Kantipath you would come to the post office. If you must mail something important take it to the post office yourself and watch them cancel the stamp. This at least insures that it leaves Nepal safely. It does not guarantee safe arrival at its destination.

We have turned into New Road so called because it was built after the 1934 earthquake. A white arch with strange painted figures soon spans the road. At once you see a number of good curio and jewelry stores. Topaz is a good buy in Nepal. Two reputable pharmacies face each other across the street. They will give you advice for small ailments. For any real sickness go by taxi to Shanta Bhawan Hospital at the edge of town.

As you continue you pass liquor stores. The local Kukri rum is good. At the Jawalakhel Distillery shop you can buy other satisfactory alcoholic beverages. All imported liquors are very expensive. Nepalis drink rakshi which is a government monopoly, except for the home brew black market variety.

Further down New Road on the left side you come to the tourist bank, a real convenience for travelers. You can easily cash travelers checks or transact other financial business here. It remains open seven days a week, and even on holidays. Unfortunately, you may miss it. A small gray and white building with Greek columns on the second floor, it stands near to Gupta Sweets and across the street from a wide short side road which parked cars often clog.

A half block further at the corner on the left you reach the American Library and Cultural Center where you can read old newspapers and magazines. The entrance is on the cross street.

If you need shoes try Bata across New Road from the library.

Continue down New Road. Kolay Biscuits and Sweets sells good canned foods and powdered coffee as well as biscuits. It also carries Newsweek and Time. They seldom bargain. On the right side of the street tiny shops sell watches and usually do a good watch repair job.

Soon you come to a large tree on the left set back in a small square. Since this is the type of tree under which Buddha attained enlightenment, a peepul tree, many Buddhist chaityas, small solid shrines stand under the tree. Local newspapers cover the raised resting place which surrounds the tree and a loud speaker blares out advertisements for the Red Cross lottery. The cloth stores beside this square sell British suiting.

Further along, the blue Crystal Hotel stands at one corner of the circle at the statue. In shops on the street it faces, Shukrapath, you can buy good cloth. The tailor shops on this street, like Fitwell, will do a fair job of lining your Tibetan jacket if it tends to shed or even making a pair of slacks. Just make sure that they understand what you want and settle on the price before they do the work. The electric shops along this road will do small repair jobs as well as sell appliances.

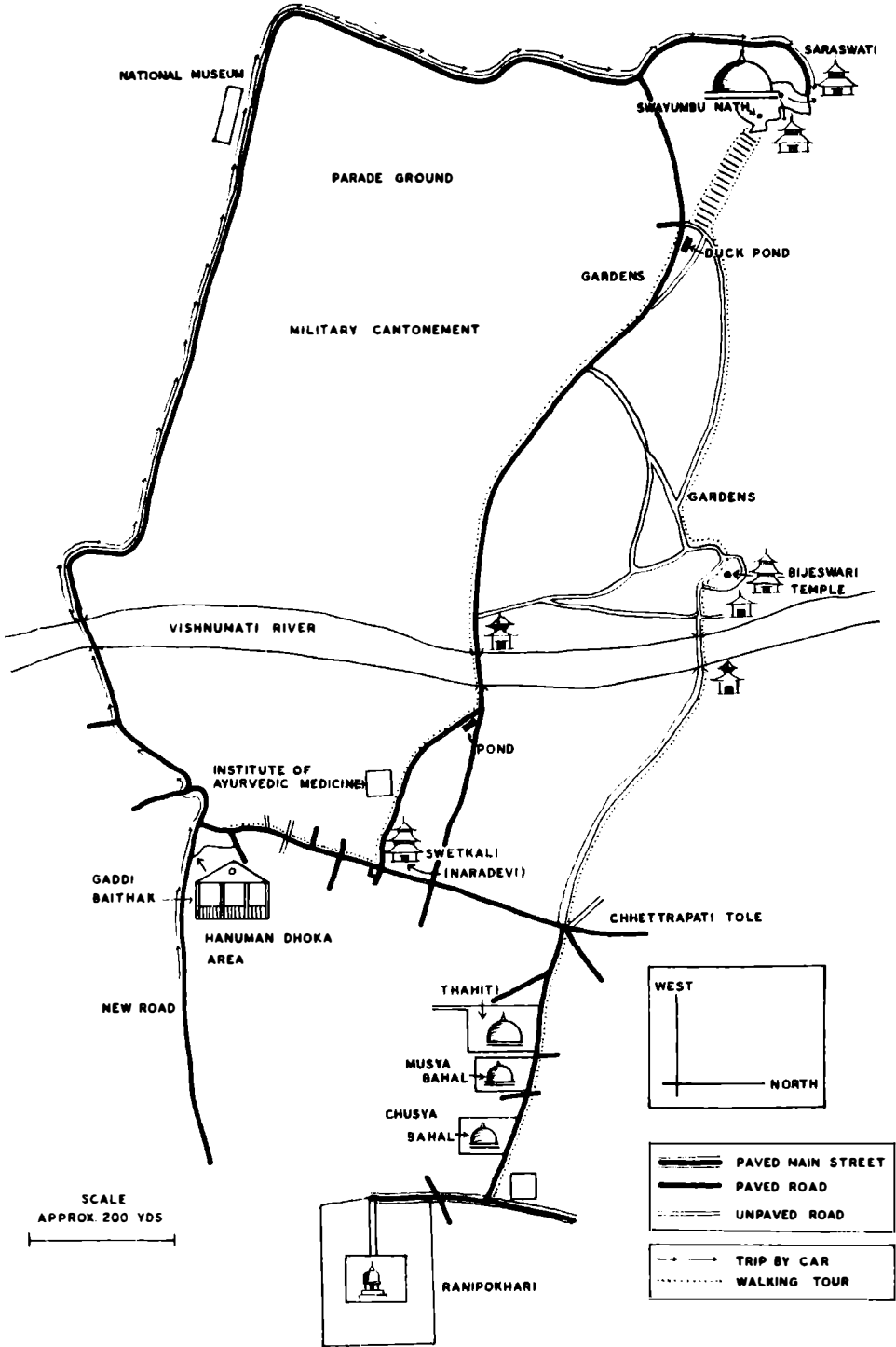
If you continue down New Road instead of turning right you soon reach the side of the old palace. Notice its exquisite carving. You have now returned to Hanuman Dhoka where your tour started.

Next time, we will go to Swyambunath at the edge of the city. From the top of a hill this ancient stupa observes the whole valley with its all-seeing painted eyes.

Swyambunath



CHAPTER FOUR



The golden spires of the ancient stupa of Swyambunath gleam from a hilltop above the western limits of Kathmandu. The history of this stupa stretches back in myth and legend to the days when a lake covered the whole valley. The all-seeing eyes gazing out from under the stupa's ceremonial umbrella have protected and disciplined the Nepalis for many hundreds of years.

This tour can take as much time and energy as you care to give it. You should probably plan to spend a long half day on it, since there is no restaurant nearby. The monks at the stupa of Swyambunath chant and hold a service about four p.m. You might prefer to arrive earlier and then listen to them just before you start home. The walk back will probably take you a little less than an hour. You must take into account the time of sunset, since you cannot hope to pick up a taxi on the route home and there are many interesting things to see.

If you include a visit to the very interesting National Museum, which opens and closes at different times depending on the season, you probably should take a taxi one way. Unfortunately the long route to the museum and from there to Swyambunath lacks interest, therefore we will not go that way on foot. Since you seldom can find a free taxi or "rickshaw" at either the museum or the stupa, if you wish to walk one way only, you have no choice but to do so on the way home. Keep your taxi at the museum and dismiss him at Swyambunath.

Consider, however, that although walking down 365 steps may win you great merit toward a future incarnation, it can also give you very sore knees. If you decide to ride both directions be sure to keep your taxi.

If you go by bicycle, you should hire a little boy to guard it at both these places, or else some other weary tourist may make off with it. A "rickshaw" is not useful for this trip since it cannot carry you up the steep hill on which the stupa stands.

The walk home takes you through an area where Tibetans prepare the wool for rugs and weave them. You will see people working in the vegetable gardens which supply the city. Burning ghats and laundries by the river will interest you. You will have an opportunity to witness many of the Nepalis' daily tasks and to view a demon's temple.

By taxi, you arrive at the back and slightly below the great stupa. You cannot see it. It stands on the hill above you on the right as you ascend the cement stairs from the parking place. As

you turn right at the stair top, two paths lead upwards. The right fork gives you a good view of the temple as soon as you reach the top. The more interesting left one ascends by a stairway which comes out at the side of a building. Turn right and left to reach the stairs in front of this building. A large, strange painted Buddha will observe you. Since Tibetans and Nepalis are Tantric Buddhists some monks marry and live with their families in the buildings you now pass. A jumbled mass of small stupas spread out before you and beyond them towers the huge Swyambunath. Find your way to the long steep front stairway and join the walking tour on page 33.

Now let us go back to the round trip walking tour which covers about five miles, an ascent and descent of 365 steps, and does not include a visit to the National Museum.

Start at the large rose and white Nook Hotel on Kantipath a short distance north of the Rani Pokhari, with your back to the entrance turn right and then take a little road to the right that goes beside this hotel. Soon after it passes the Narayan Furniture Works it makes a right and left jog around Chusya Bahal, an old monastery with a beautifully carved doorway. Although the road deteriorates, go straight. A little further along Musya Bahal also has a fine door. Our next tour discusses these places in more detail. Soon you take a slight left jog to enter the north side of Thahiti Tole, a large, busy square with a 15th century stupa in the center. Do not walk around the stupa. Turn right and keep the north side of the square on your immediate right. Walk as nearly straight as possible. Unfortunately, the dirt road you want has no name. It runs west. You will have no trouble if you keep close to the north side of the square. Shortly, you pass a little pagoda on the left and a shrine on the right. Continue forward to Chettrapati Tole which surrounds a roofed, circular platform. A number of roads enter Chettrapati square. Swing left at the platform. You do not want the first road on your left which is large and paved, but you do want the next one. It almost runs into the paved street. Immediately you see the glistening Swyambunath stupa on a hill some distance ahead of you. If in doubt ask for Swi-am-bu-not.

As you go farther you walk beside fields and gardens. At the bridge over the Vishnumati river you pass a temple and see some round cremation platforms. At the other end of the bridge immediately after you pass some white shrines, the road forks left and right. Between these roads, near the right fork climb up some steps made of natural rocks. When you reach two shrines, one of them to elephant headed Ganesh, the steps turn right and then left. When the steps stop follow the path beside a big brick building which shortly joins a brick paved walk. Later, keep right at a

fork. This walk with its fine views of Swyambunath takes you right to the foot of that temple's stairs. As you climb the 365 steps to the temple you pass many interesting stones, statues and little stupas which we will examine on the way down. The devout gain much merit by climbing these steps.

The top of the hill has been flattened to form a large platform which surrounds the great Swyambunath, a stupa highly revered by all Buddhists.

Those who did not walk will join the tour here.

A large golden thunderbolt, called a vajra dominates the top of the stairs. It lies on a drum shaped stone base decorated with animals in low relief, which represent the symbols of the cycles of the Nepali and Tibetan calendars.

When placed on altars, a bell usually accompanies the vajra. The bell represents female wisdom and the thunderbolt male force. One cannot function without the other. Buddha once produced a miracle involving a vajra. A mighty god standing near him broke a vajra into pieces. One bit hit Buddha on his foot and blood gushed from the wound. A disciple then declared that if in truth Buddha cherished his enemies as fondly in his heart as he did his friends he had an opportunity now to prove it by ordering the stream of blood to stop. At once the flow halted.

The great stupa dominates all else on the platform. Stupas exist all over the Buddhist world; those of one country differing somewhat from those in another. All are solid and preserve some religious relic buried within them. Some Nepalis think that the great white hemisphere represents a mound of rice. The all-seeing eyes on each side of the golden cube above the dome protect the virtuous and also keep vigilant watch so that no evil escapes detection. The question mark below the eyes is a Vedic sign for the number one and signifies that virtue is the one and only path to the "ocean of happiness." Above the gleaming cube a spire with thirteen tapering sections represents the thirteen heavens and the umbrella above protects all those below it.

Around the base of the hemisphere an iron railing holds countless prayer wheels each embossed on the outside with the signs for Om Mani Padmi Hum, the most frequently chanted mantra. Each contains a prayer inside it. Worshipers circumambulate the stupa in a clockwise direction spinning the prayer-wheels as they walk which causes the prayers to rise to heaven. Likewise, the ropes of flags descending from the pinnacle have prayers on them, which the blowing wind wafts up to heaven.

Elaborate small shrines built onto the stupa contain statues of the five Dhyani Buddhas and a few Bodhisattvas. A little information about these Buddhas will add to your pleasure as you walk around the city, since they decorate many small stupas. According to Tantric Buddhism, the self-generated, primordial Adi Buddha through wisdom and meditation originated the five Dhyani Buddhas. Each of these Buddhas always faces in his own direction, has his own unvarying color, sits with his hands held in one particular position, represents his own specific qualities and is accompanied by his own animal. Let's see if we can find them.

Aksobhya faces east; one hand hangs down palm turned in touching the earth and his animals are elephants. At Swyambunath these animal attendants occupy niches below the shrines.

Vairocana is in the center and therefore seldom seen. When shown he often faces south-east. He holds his hands up to his chest and makes two circles with his fingers. Lions accompany him.

Ratnasambhava faces south. He gives gifts with the out-turned palm of his pendant hand. His vahanas are horses.

Amitaba faces west. His hands rest palms up in his lap in meditation, and peacocks accompany him. He is the Dhyani Buddha of our aeon.

Amoghasiddhi faces north. He raises his right hand to his shoulder palm out in a protective gesture. A garuda accompanies him.

All over Nepal little stupas with the Dhyani Buddhas on them can act as compasses if you know which hand gesture goes with which direction.

Each Dhyani Buddha has a Shakti or inspiring female companion and each generates a spiritual son or Bodhisattva, who wears princely clothes and jewels, assumes many different names and forms both kindly and fierce, and often bears a likeness of his spiritual father on the center point of his five pointed crown.

Amitaba, our Dhyani Buddha, caused a brilliant golden ray of light to appear from his head and within this radiance originated Avalokitesvara, our Bodhisattva, who is also revered as Manjusri of whom you will hear again when you learn of Swamhu's miraculous origin. Like all Bodhisattvas, Avalokitesvara actually created the universe of his aeon, our aeon, and produced the living mortal Buddha of that period, in our case Gautama Buddha.

To return to our sight-seeing, Pratap Malla built the two whitewashed temple towers northeast and southeast of the main stupa to gain merit for himself and one of his wives. He also placed the stone lions at the top of the stairs.

In Nepal we constantly find Buddhism and Hinduism mixed together. In fact Hindus worship Buddha as the ninth incarnation of Vishnu. Here in this very holy Buddhist area, a Hindu pagoda stands close to the stupa on the northwest side. It is a temple to the goddess of smallpox who also produces fertility. You are almost sure to see someone making a puja to her, offering her flowers and food. Examine the exquisite metal work on this temple.

Graceful statues of gods and goddesses sit near the stupa on top of high pillars near the smallpox temple. The goddess Tara dresses like a Bodhisattva and makes the gesture of charity. Born from a tear shed by Avalokitesvara, like him, she symbolizes compassion, although she can assume terrifying forms also. The two wives of the great Tibetan Srong-tsan-Sgam-Po brought Buddhism to Tibet and were deified as the White and Green Taras. The White Tara is the Dhyani Buddha Vairocana's female companion or shakti and the Green, Amoghasiddhi's.

Further along, many small stupas or chaityas cluster together and behind them attached to a wall stands a painted statue which appears to be a Buddha but really represents a man of the perfect era who will live for 7,000 years.

As you continue around the stupa you reach a monastery which contains a twenty foot high gilded figure of Avalokitesvara. Oil lamps eternally burn beside it. You may enter and if no service is in progress walk around and look at the little statues and paintings. The bundles on the shelves wrapped in orange colored cloth are treasured books. About four o'clock monks take their places on benches in a room behind the shrine. They punctuate their chanting with blasts on both long and short horns, drum beats and the clash of cymbals. The monks in their wine colored robes, the huge golden statue the flickering oil lamps and the chanting produce an impressive experience.

As you look over the edge of Swyambunath's platform, the oval Kathmandu Valley stretches before you with a military cantonment in the foreground and the city behind it. Beyond the city you can see another large stupa, the one at Bodhnath. Tibetan homes and shops surround it, and the Chinie Lama, who is the head of all Buddhists of one sect in Nepal, lives there also. It is well worth a visit if you have time.

A lake once filled this valley. That is a geological fact. According to legend, a miraculous event took place in this lake. The Adi Buddha, the self-generated god, caused a lotus to rise in the lake and then manifested himself in the form of a flame on top of the flower. Manjusri, who at that time was a great Chinese sage and saint, heard of this marvellous event and decided to make a pilgrimage to behold and to worship the primordial Buddha. A great company of people including the king, Dharmakara, joined him. When they arrived in Nepal they found that the holy flame stood so far out in the water that they could not reach it. After worshipping at a distance, Manjusri walked all around the shore, but found no approach to the holy object. Finally, at the lower southern mountains he raised his sword and with a mighty blow split the hills apart. The water of the lake poured out through the great gash and left a beautiful and fertile valley. The lotus and the holy flame now stood on a steep hill which Manjusri and his followers climbed in order to adore the Adi Buddha. The word Swyambu means self generated. Later Manjusri and the others returned to China except Dharmakara, who remained behind to rule the people of the new land. In time Manjusri became a powerful and venerated god, considered a form of Avalokitesvara. As you would expect, he carries a sword. He also carries a book, which often rests on a lotus and signifies wisdom.

If you have time some day take a taxi the six miles out to Chobar to see Manjusri's gorge through which the valley rivers still drain. It is a beautiful area and an impressive sword cut.

We know that Swyambu's history stretches back into antiquity. According to legend when the great Indian emperor, Ashoka, a Buddhist convert, visited Nepal in 250 B.C. he ordered that this stupa should be enlarged. Therefore, the site may have been holy for over two thousand years.

Here and there around the stupa court little shops sell jewelry and curios. Since tourists flock here, as indeed they should, prices start high but a little serious bargaining will sometimes produce a good buy.

Be sure to watch the antics of the monkeys as they jump in and out of the shrines and slide down the steep center railings of the stairway. They are holy and therefore protected, but most Nepalis rightly fear their scratching, grabbing dirty claws.

Many different buildings and shrines cover the hill behind Swyambunath. One important shrine contains a statue which is now considered an image of Sarasvati the goddess of learning. At the time of a certain festival, a great crush of students flocks here to worship her and beg her favor during their final examinations.

Start your walk home by descending the 365 steps in front of Swyambunath. You pass stone figures of lions, elephants, horses, peacocks and Garudas. These, as you now know, are the vehicles of the Dhyani Buddhas.

Stone figures and shrines accompany you down the steps. After passing three large painted Buddhas you see a red cement frame containing a carved scene of the birth of Buddha. His mother stands holding a tree branch as she did when giving birth and the baby at once miraculously takes seven steps.

In the middle of the main stairway near the big Buddhas a stone represents a king of the snakes who had decided to leave Nepal, but Manjusri, after he let the water out of the lake requested him to stay and protect the hill, which he agreed to do. Lower down Ganesh and Kumara riding their vehicles stand guard on the right and left.

The large stone Buddhas here and further up may represent important personages who became Buddhas after performing difficult rituals at Swyambunath.

Buddha's revered footprints, sometimes considered Manjusri's, on a flat stone stand near the walk at the bottom of the steps.

At the foot of the stairs do not take the road straight ahead but turn right and after about sixty steps, left so that you keep the duck pond on your left and go east toward the city.

As you continue you will see the active home life of the people of this section. On your right you pass vegetable gardens which help to supply the city. In some places the rich top soil goes down twenty-five feet. Men sometimes dig down a few feet to soil that has never been used and scatter that soil on top of their fields as fertilizer.

Another shrine to Ganesh, the elephant-headed god, reminds us how frequently we have seen him. Many different stories tell how Ganesh got his elephant head. According to one of them Parvati got tired of having Shiva always barge in on her when she was bathing. One day she decided to take a bath while he was away but since she was afraid that he would come back while she was in the tub she took the dew of her body, soap, and dust and from them she formed a handsome young man, a son for herself and Shiva. She placed him outside the bathroom door with orders not to let Shiva in if he came home. Sure enough Shiva did return and became furious when he saw the handsome young man at the bathroom door, not realizing that this was a new son of his. He called his servants to attack him but the young man so coura-

geously defended the door that they could not remove him. Shiva then called Maya, the goddess of illusion, to help. For a moment the beauty of the goddess distracted the young man and in that moment his head was severed from his body. Parvati made the most awful fuss and became quite hysterical, accusing Shiva of wantonly killing their son. To appease her Shiva promised to bring back the very first head he saw which turned out to be that of an elephant. He put it on the young man's body where it grew and became undoubtedly the most successful transplant ever made. Not only has Ganesh lived for hundreds of years but he became Shiva and Parvati's dearly loved son and an object of great worship for the Nepalis who built him innumerable shrines.

As you walk along you pass other shrines and a few stores and reach an area where vegetable gardens occupy the land on both sides of the road. The Nepalis do not usually use a plow but use a short handled curved iron implement which they swing up shoulder high and then with a sweep of arms and bending back strike into the earth turning over one single clod. Each clod in a field has been dug by a man bending double. After the clods dry, men and women beat them to powder with wooden mallets. In the valley they often plant three times a year, which represents a tremendous amount of labor.

Soon you see Tibetans working on wool, which they weave into unique rugs. You may see some of these rugs hanging out of the windows. You can buy carpets, as they are always called, in this area, either from private weavers or in one of the two carpet shops. At the Refugee Center and at the Carpet Factory at the edge of nearby Patan town in the section called Jawalakhel they also weave and sell rugs, and those outlets will ship them home for you; but some people feel that the weavers on this road do better work for less money. You must bargain here. At Jawalakhel the prices are fixed.

There used to be a lot of trade between Nepal and Tibet, but after the Chinese invasion it practically ceased. However, trade with China is now growing. Although many Nepalis have Tibetan ancestry most of these rug weavers escaped recently from the Chinese and have built a new life in Nepal.

When you cross the bridge over the Vishnumati river notice the burning ghats, flat stone structures protruding into the water. Cremations take place on them. Any Nepali fervently wishes to die beside a holy river, to be cremated there, and to have his ashes cast into the water, since this washes all his sins away and guarantees a happier future life.

The Shiva temple of Pashupatinath, a few miles east of Kathmandu is the holiest Hindu place in Nepal. Cremation of royalty takes place there and others greatly wish to die and be cremated there. Although non-Hindus may not enter the great temple a good view of it and of the activity around the river can be had from the hill opposite it. By taxi, a visit to this temple can be combined with one to the Bodhnath stupa.

Back to our walk, after passing by the fascinating suburban life cross the bridge and when you reach a fork take the right hand road past two small muddy overgrown ponds on your left. Soon you will see clothes hanging out to dry, since this is a laundry section. You must have noticed that the Nepalese men when wearing native dress, have trousers which, although tight in the leg, are very full in the seat to allow them to comfortably squat on their heels when they want to sit down. When put out to dry you see that the two legs of the pants are separated from each other by almost a yard of material.

When you reach the University Institute of Ayurvedic Medicine look into the lovely courtyard. In this area keep your eyes open for carving on door frames and windows.

The elaborate three storey Shveta Kali pagoda, also called Naradevi stands at street level on your left at the intersection of your road with a cross street which you will later turn into.

Let us examine Shveta Kali. According to tradition, way back in ancient times a Licchavi king under instructions from a goddess founded the city of Kantipur, now called Kathmandu, and by Tantric rites forced the goddess Kali, a terrifying form of Parvati, to protect the city. He installed her in this temple. Later Amar Malla, a king of the Malla dynasty which lasted from about 1200 to 1768 A.D., made a decree that the goddess and her attendants should hold a sacred dancing ceremony here once every twelve years and he endowed the temple with lands to meet its expenses. A dance platform occupies part of the road across the intersection catty-corner from the temple and dances still take place there.

The powerful and dreaded Kali protected the temple so well during the 1934 earthquake that it survived without injury. Certainly, at sometime, however, rebuilding took place, since ceramic tiles, a relatively recent innovation, now cover a large part of the three storeys. Probably the metal decorations date from an earlier period, the embossed metal edging of the gilt copper roofs, the birds and banners at the corners and the three dhvajjas or gilt sashes hanging down from the lovely pinnacle. This is a temple to a terrifying goddess and demons ornament the struts and the torana over the door and animal sacrifices are

often offered her. Even the white guardian lions with their red manes produce a sinister atmosphere.

At this temple corner we leave the road from Swyambunath and turn right into the cross street. Keep looking up at the windows. The artistic Newars carved many beautiful ones in this section, as they did all over the valley and Kathmandu, including a unique one at the corner of a long building on the left just before you reach a pagoda. Several identically carved window jambs like little columns recede until they reach the grille, giving a feeling of great depth.

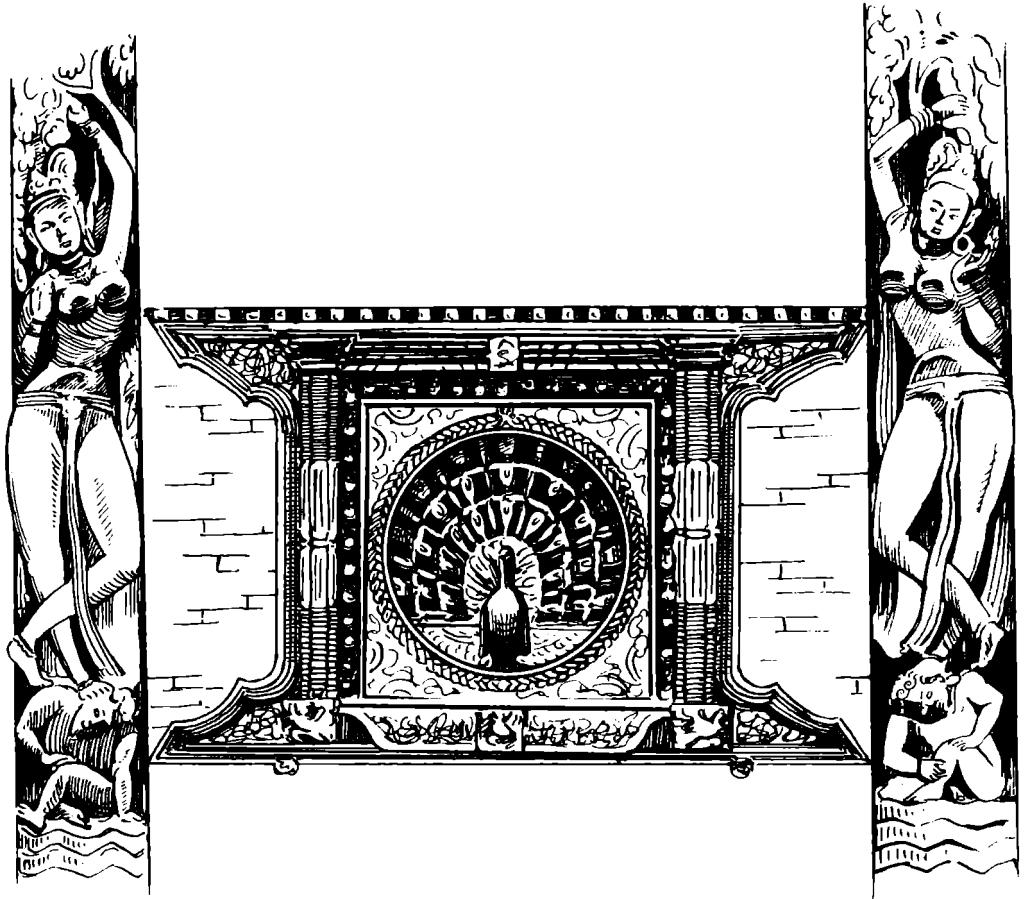
Pass the pagoda which you now know must be a Shiva temple because Nandi the bull, Shiva's vehicle, gazes into it from the outside.

On the left you find a musical instrument store where they make and sell carved violins and drums. A little further along on the right they also make drums. With good luck you will see them at work. The tuning of the drums is especially fascinating.

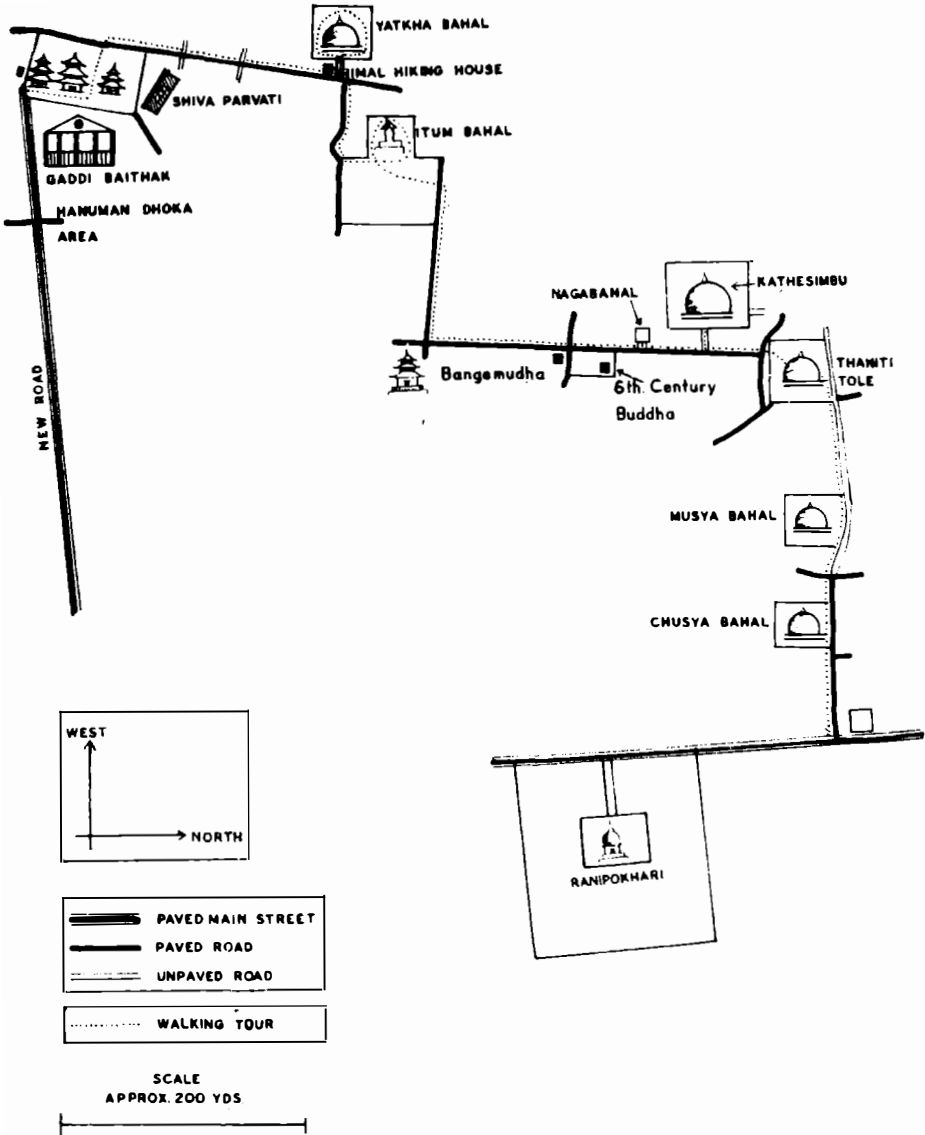
After passing shops and vegetable stands, a small road enters on the left. We continue down the main road but we will not study the sights from this point to Hanuman Dhoka where our tour ends since we will cover them in our next tour.

The following trip takes us into the byways and courtyards of old Kathmandu, an area almost free of tourists. We will see the Nepalis at work and at play and we will visit ancient buildings and hear a strange tale of cannibalism.

The Old City



CHAPTER FIVE



In the ancient section of Kathmandu which lies north of Hanuman Dhoka, Nepali residents work and play among some of their oldest and most exquisite works of art. Few foreigners see this fascinating area, one of the most interesting parts of the city.

This half day trip covers about a mile and a half on flat though somewhat rough roads. Choose a work day, if possible, not a Saturday, the Nepalis' Sunday, when shops close and people rest. (On Saturday, take the tour that follows this one.) Although most of the description given here deals with works of art, much of the interest of this trip lies in viewing the daily life of the people which everywhere surrounds you and which words cannot adequately convey.

You can take this tour by "rickshaw" or even by taxi, but you will find yourself constantly climbing in and out of your vehicle as you visit the different sights. The walk is not an arduous one, and you will enter into the life of the people more fully on foot.

Due to past earthquakes, political upheavals, decay, and modifying repairs, no unaltered Nepalese architectural work exists with a date earlier than the 15th century. You will see, however, on this trip a few stone sculptures from the 7th and 8th centuries the oldest surviving monasteries and lovely wood-carving, both ancient and more recent.

Start with your back to the door of Gaddi Baithak as described in the Hanuman Dhoka chapter. Pick your way straight forward toward the pagodas so that the high Shiva temple on its nine step plinth is on your left. A big brick building soon blocks your way. A sign on it says, "Specialists for Repairing and Typewriters and Context Calculator." Turn right into the road that enters here.

Do notice the signs on the stores in the city. Until twenty years ago, for a hundred years, the Rana rulers allowed the general populace no education. Now the children pour into the government schools, and many older Nepalis have not only taught themselves to read and write their own language but English as well. Recently some are teaching themselves Japanese. We must admire their intelligence and perseverance even when the end product sometimes amuses us. Could we do as well in a foreign language?

After you turn right into the road that enters the square here, you pass a post card shop and druggist on your left and a

good paint store on the right. You are now going along the road toward Nara Devi which you used in the opposite direction at the end of the last tour. As the street grows slightly smaller notice the beautifully carved windows on the oldest houses.

When you reach the gateway in the whitewashed wall on your right, look in but do not enter or take pictures. Many people consider this the site of the Kot massacre which you read about in the Hanuman Dhoka section. The whole area has changed so much in the last hundred years that there seems to be disagreement about the exact location of the massacre. At present, part of the army lives here. During the Dasain festival countless sacrifices of goats and buffalo take place in this square. Worshipers humanely execute them with a single stroke of a very sharp sword.

Soon you reach a place on the left where men chop wood in front of a small unimportant pagoda. Rather delightful demons decorate its pillars.

The road widens slightly to accommodate a shrine sunk into its surface which contains as the deity an uncut stone. A natural object becomes holy for many reasons, sometimes because it vaguely resembles a god, sometimes because of some event connected with it or sometimes for some inherent quality. On the other hand, a much venerated statue may become so worn over the centuries through constant worship that it loses its distinguishing features and looks like an uncarved stone. All along your route as you pass tailors and tea shops, the active children play hop-scotch, marbles and cards while the older women go about their domestic tasks. Very soon, on a decaying, highly carved brick building on your right notice an embossed metal doorway with a demon as its central figure.

At once opposite a carved balcony on your right and near the Himal Hiking House you enter the courtyard of Yatika Bahal on your left. Beyond the stupa which occupies the center of the court stands an old Buddhist building with a grilled balcony projecting from the third floor. Four superb ancient struts dating from the 14th century decorate this balcony. Some gifted artist of those days carved a lovely dryad on each strut. With rounded breasts and curving hips scantily clad in diaphanous clothing they gracefully loll below the overhanging branches of some magical tree. In the present mundane world a line of drying clothes frequently stretches between these charming forms. Old struts like these are rare. Today we will see all of them that remain in Kathmandu. After enjoying their remarkable beauty go out into the street again and turn left.

Almost at once a narrow road with a water pump on the right corner leads off on your right. Turn into it. The clang of metal workers at their labor accompanies you past their dark workshops and past a number of stores including a meat store.

The Nepalis love meat but most of them can seldom afford it. In fact, protein deficiency produces the reddish tinge of some people's hair. Goat, buffalo and chicken supply most of the meat no matter what fancy name it may masquerade under on a menu. Law prohibits the slaughter of cattle.

A big white European style building on the left stands opposite a brick building which still shows remnants of stucco floral decoration from its palmier days and a shrine with roses on its tiles. Further along a series of painted Hindu gods progress across the top of a doorway. The road passes more shops, food stores and metal workers. These are the men who repair metal parts. We will see the artists in silver at work later.

When the road widens slightly and swings a little left turn at once left. A low wide doorway faces you and on your left three small shrines contain a figure of Ganesh, a stone, and Narasimha ripping out a demon's entrails. Duck your head and go through the doorway. It leads into a large rectangular court filled with people and chaityas. Walk along the left side. Look at the carving over one door but pass on until you reach another carved entrance guarded by two lions. This is the entrance to Itum Bahal. Before going in study the excellent torana over the door which probably dates from the 16th century. It illustrates an episode in the life of Gautama Buddha.

Buddha, while still a Bodhisattva had tried by various means to obtain enlightenment but he met with no success. Finally he sat down under the Tree of Wisdom, a peepul tree, and declared that no matter what happened he would not rise from that spot until he attained understanding. Mara, the evil one, sent his army of demons to disturb the holy meditations, but they could neither distract nor inspire fear in the future Buddha. Mara then sent his beautiful daughters, who tried through the sixty-four magic methods of desire, music and dance to distract him but he did not even notice them. With his right hand Buddha touched the earth and called upon it to witness that he had not been seduced from his purpose. After continuing his meditations throughout three watches of the night he attained enlightenment.

In this beautiful torana, the serene Buddha sits in the center with his right hand calling the earth to witness his constancy while a writhing mass of demons, both vile and glamorous, try in every possible way to distract him. At the top of the

carving, a peaceful separate scene shows Buddha preaching to a group of rapt devotees.

Go through the doorway below this torana into Itum Bahal, which still retains the characteristic plan of an ancient monastery, four wings surrounding a sunken paved courtyard. That it existed before 1382 we know because a record of a gift to it bears that date, but repairs and changes have taken place over the years.

From the inside you see above the entrance some struts, three of which equal the charm of those at Yatika Bahal and probably date from the same period. One stands on the far left and two on the immediate right above you as you face the doorway. Like those of Yatika Bahal, on these struts tender feminine nymphs with elongated bodies and curving limbs stand on little hunched dwarfs while tree branches curve overhead. The fluid lines of these dryads contrast sharply with the stiff figures on the struts next to them which must be later replacements.

A small temple occupies the center of the court and beyond it two lively lions guard the shrine.

Notice the four metal plaques on the second floor of the right wing. They illustrate a legend connected with the monastery's Sanskrit name which translates as, "The Great Monastery Built by Keshchandra of the Pigeons."

Prince Keshchandra gambled away his fortune and finally had only some moldy rice left to eat. He spread it out to dry and fell asleep beside it. Some pigeons ate the rice, but because of celestial pity left droppings of gold behind them. When Keshchandra awoke, he looked in amazement at this golden treasure, but found when he collected it that he could not carry such a weight home. At that moment the ogre, Guru Mapa, arrived shouting about what a fine lunch the gambler would make for him. Though terrified, Keshchandra kept his wits about him and managed to convince the demon not to eat him, since after the meal was over he would just grow hungry again. If, however, he helped to carry home the gold, the prince would then be rich and would provide him with a feast of buffalo and rice every day. The ogre agreed except that he insisted that the menu should also include all bad children. As time passed, Guru Mapa's definition of a bad child expanded to cover all children. By the time Keshchandra became king, the populace was in an uproar over the loss of their young. Keshchandra cried, "enough" and banished Guru Mapa to the large parade ground called the Tundikhel. However, to keep up a semblance of his original promise, the king pledged a feast to the ogre once a year. The men of Itum Bahal still fulfill this promise. Once a year on a certain night in February they carry a

feast of buffalo and rice to Guru Mapa on the Tundikhel. Nepali parents still use Guru Mapa as a bogeyman to frighten their children into good behavior.

The first metal plaque on the wall shows Guru Mapa eating a child. On the next two plaques two children looking too good to be true stiffly stand, presumably waiting to be consumed. On the last plaque Guru Mapa enjoys a feast of buffalo on the Tundikhel. A fierce wooden mask of this demon rests in a corner of the balcony.

With a last look at those lovely struts and at the torana over the outside door leave Itum Bahal. Turn left and walk all the way to the far end of the huge square. Investigate the chaityas as you go and watch the people performing their many varied tasks. A short alley leads you out to a street where you turn right.

We have reached the section where artists make and sell silver jewelry in their dark little workshops. Do stop and watch them at work.

Just before the street temporarily widens, a small pagoda on the left would pass unnoticed except that above the first roof plaster heads of proud lions look much more British than Nepali.

A delicately carved window on the other side of the street reminds us to keep looking up at the third floor since many beautiful woodcarvings decorate the old houses in this area. Most of them date from the 17th and 18th centuries. In our admiration for the intricate floral and geometrical designs and the many deities, birds and animals which ornament the window frames, we tend to overlook the grilles which often protect the openings. They were not fashioned from one piece of wood but with incredible exactness the Newars carved separate strips of wood so that they would interlock and form a continuing design without the use of nails.

As you continue, in a tiny square full of pagodas and chaityas you may see dung which has been formed into flat round pancakes drying on a temple or house wall. People burn it for fuel. Fuel is becoming a real problem. As the forest recedes under the woodsman's axe wood becomes more and more expensive. Kerosene, all of it imported from India, is often unobtainable and has skyrocketed in price. There is no coal and, of course, electric appliances are way beyond the reach of most Nepalis' pocketbooks and so they must use whatever they can find to burn.

When you reach the first cross street at a temple with a pagoda base and Mogul top turn left into it. You pass shops and tea houses. The large metal pots usually contain yogurt, a favorite Nepali food. Along here more men work with silver. These Newar artists still preserve their old techniques and turn out many intricate and appealing objects.

Whether in the city or the country, people live on the dryer upper floors of their houses and work or keep their animals on the street floor which tends to be damp, or downright wet in the rainy season, from June to October.

You soon reach another large square, just before entering it notice on your right at shoulder level the shrine to the toothache god. A tiny three inch golden deity sits embedded among nails and spikes on a great twisted lump of wood. If your tooth aches and you pound a nail into this wood the god will cure you. Bangemudha, the name of this square, means "twisted wood." Do not turn here continue walking north.

In the square tailors use foot or hand driven sewing machines, men rest on their heavy push carts and others bargain and talk around a small pagoda. This Narayan temple has six struts which, though not quite as old as the others we have seen, almost equal them in excellence. Like the others, these represent graceful dryads protected by tree branches who stand on grotesque hunched little figures. These nymphs wear many jewels and very scanty clothing. Unfortunately, the harsh colors with which they have been painted spoil them slightly.

Keep on walking north on the road beside the square. You pass a number of carved stone shrines, including one of Sarasvati, the goddess of learning and the creative arts, playing on her lute. When you reach the far side, the north side, of the square turn right and walk beside the houses for about twelve steps. In the ground at the doorway of the Bangemudha Wood Store, you will find one of Nepal's oldest statues, a two foot high stone Buddha probably carved in the 6th century. After more than a thousand years the worshiping hands of devotees have worn his features smooth. A bit of drying laundry often covers him. Inquire if you cannot find him.

Go back to the road which now leaves the square. Almost at once lurid signs advertise gorgeous sets of false teeth which rest in the store windows waiting for purchasers. Actually the toothache god takes good care of the Nepalis. Most of them have excellent teeth although with the advent of more sweets some of them now have trouble.

At once you come to a brick lined inset on the right side of the road. First, you see a head of Ganesh and then a lovely small

9th century stone relief of Shiva and Parvati enthroned on Mt. Kailasa with Nandi the bull, and other celestial beings in the background. A beautiful carved balcony stands almost opposite.

Walk on and notice a stone water trough on the left decorated with a carved sage and two small broken lions, followed soon by a small chaitya on the right.

When nearby on your left, you come to a doorway with lion guards beside it and a carved torana above, enter the Naghahbahal for a moment. Some mural paintings decorate this temple. The impressive banners on each side of the shrine have the customary double pointed shape which the Nepalese flag copies.

After leaving that temple, on the left you see a passage guarded on each side by two high rose colored pillars each topped by a lion holding a banner. Turn in and walk to the Sighahbahal courtyard. Once again the rich life of the Nepalese surrounds you.

Also named Katesimbhu, which means the Swyambunath of Kathmandu, the whole area supposedly represents a small version of that great temple complex. You would probably never guess this if you were not told. The 16th century central stupa has a very different shape and the chaityas and statues do not look at all similar. However, a pagoda to the smallpox goddess does stand near the stupa. This may have been a holy Buddhist site as far back as Licchavi times. It still contains some very ancient inscriptions and statues.

To find one outstanding statue go forward to the thunderbolt on the far side of a bust on a high pillar. With it on your right and the stupa on your left walk straight forward. You will face an 8th century statue of Avalokitesvara standing among the other chaityas and statues. As usual he lowers his eyes to gaze compassionately downward to the earth. The center of his crown bears the image of his spiritual father, Amitabha, and he holds a lotus in his left hand. Although the lower section of the statue, especially the devotees at his feet, appears either badly worn or incomplete the whole figure radiates an ancient charm.

Walk around and investigate the various other statues and watch the very lively children who climb on the stupa and play games amongst the antiquities.

As you leave the courtyard and turn left at the road, notice the shrine to Ganesh. This god whom we have seen so often represents bravery, shrewdness, and jolliness. He also has the

power to remove obstacles which block the fulfillment of his votaries' wishes. His many lovable qualities include an excessive fondness for food. Many stories testify to this.

One day after he had stuffed himself completely full of sacrificial cakes, Ganesh mounted his vehicle, the rat, for a ride. A large snake wiggled in front of the rat and startled him so severely that he threw his rider. When Ganesh hit the ground his distended belly burst and out rolled all those cakes. Greatly distressed when he saw what had happened, he scrambled after the cakes and crammed every single one of them back in his belly. To keep them from bursting out again through the split that still remained he seized the offending snake and tied it around himself, and that is why some images show him with a snake around his middle.

Continuing in your previous direction you pass silver artists, food stores and people repairing all sort of things until the street enters a large square, Thahiti Tole. Around the stupa in the center of this square men bargain for chickens in latticed wicker baskets, shoemakers work and peanut vendors sell their popular wares. An inscription on a stone which leans against it says that the stupa was erected in 1432 and renovated in 1524. According to legend the stupa stands over a fountain which miraculously poured out gold instead of water.

If you walked out to Swyambunath, the rest of this trip will be familiar, but the interesting places which you passed right by on that walk we will now look at more closely.

Walk diagonally across the square to the northeast corner which means that you walk half way around the stupa, and turn into a dirty little alley on the right not the street straight ahead. It does not stay this rough long and perhaps it will be paved by the time you take this trip. You pass three storey brick dwellings which may have corn or herbs hanging from the eaves to dry. Right in the road, people wash their clothes, spread grain out to dry or winnow it or pound it into flour while children play around them.

On your right two lions guard the entrance to Musya Bahal, one of the oldest monasteries in Nepal. Look at the torana over the door and step inside for a moment and then walk on to Chusya Eahal which is in better repair and just as old. Before you reach it you may see potters sitting on the ground whirling their wheels and producing scores of little clay dishes, a fascinating occupation to watch.

Soon after you cross a little road you come to Chusya Bahal. Notice the beautiful torana over the door. The large demon head

named Kirtimukha at the top of the torana which you have often seen on statues and carvings teaches the hideousness of clinging to life.

Some notable struts both inside and outside represent Hindu and Buddhist Tantric deities.

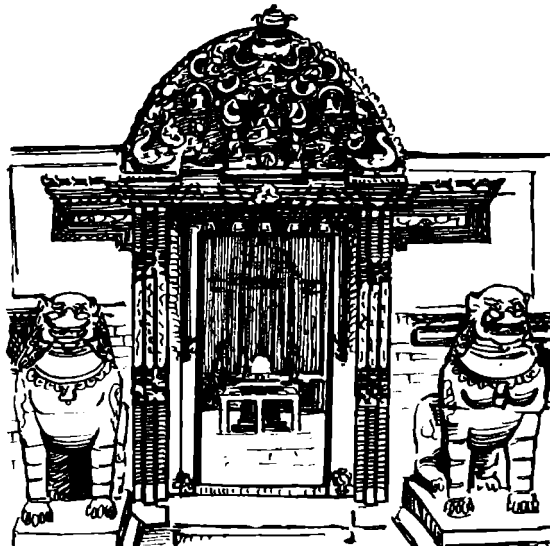
The torana over the shrine bears the date 1673. Of course, since the Nepali calendar differs from ours all the dates given here have been changed over to our system. Do not miss the carved window over the inside entrance.

Both Musya Bahal and Chusya Bahal follow the usual plan of old Buddhist monasteries, four wings surrounding a sunken court which contains a revered stupa or chaitya. These two very ancient ones in Chusya Bahal date from the 13th or 14th centuries, but have been somewhat changed over the years.

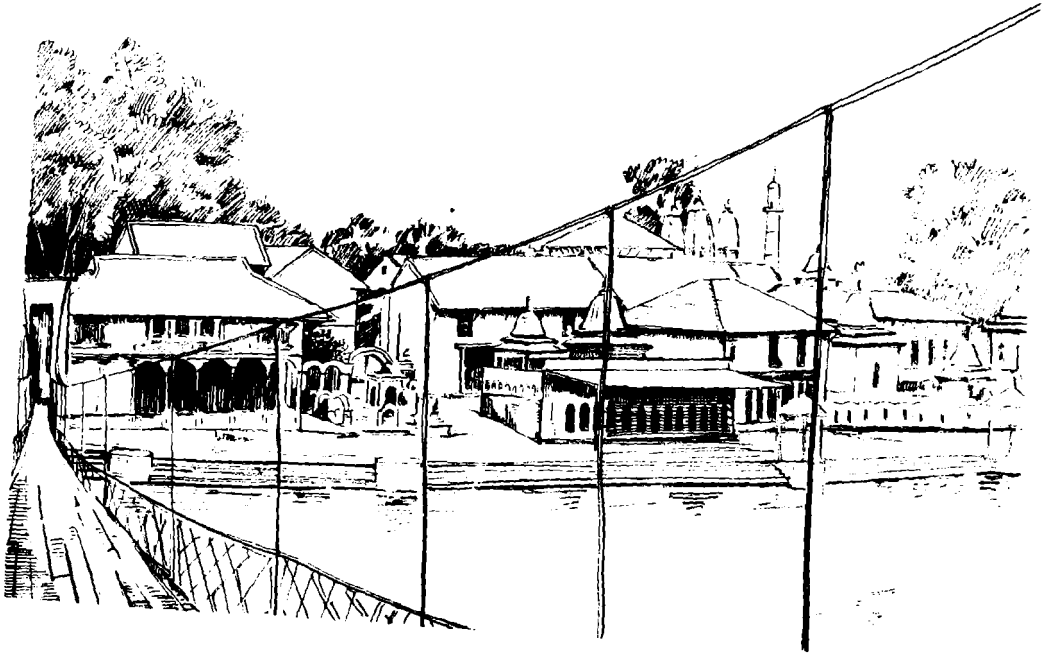
When you leave turn right and take the road which jogs right around the monastery's corner and then left. After passing car repair areas and a furniture workshop you reach the Nook Hotel where the tour stops.

If you are tired or hungry go in for a snack or a good meal. This is one of the few restaurants where you can drink the water with perfect confidence that it has been boiled and filtered.

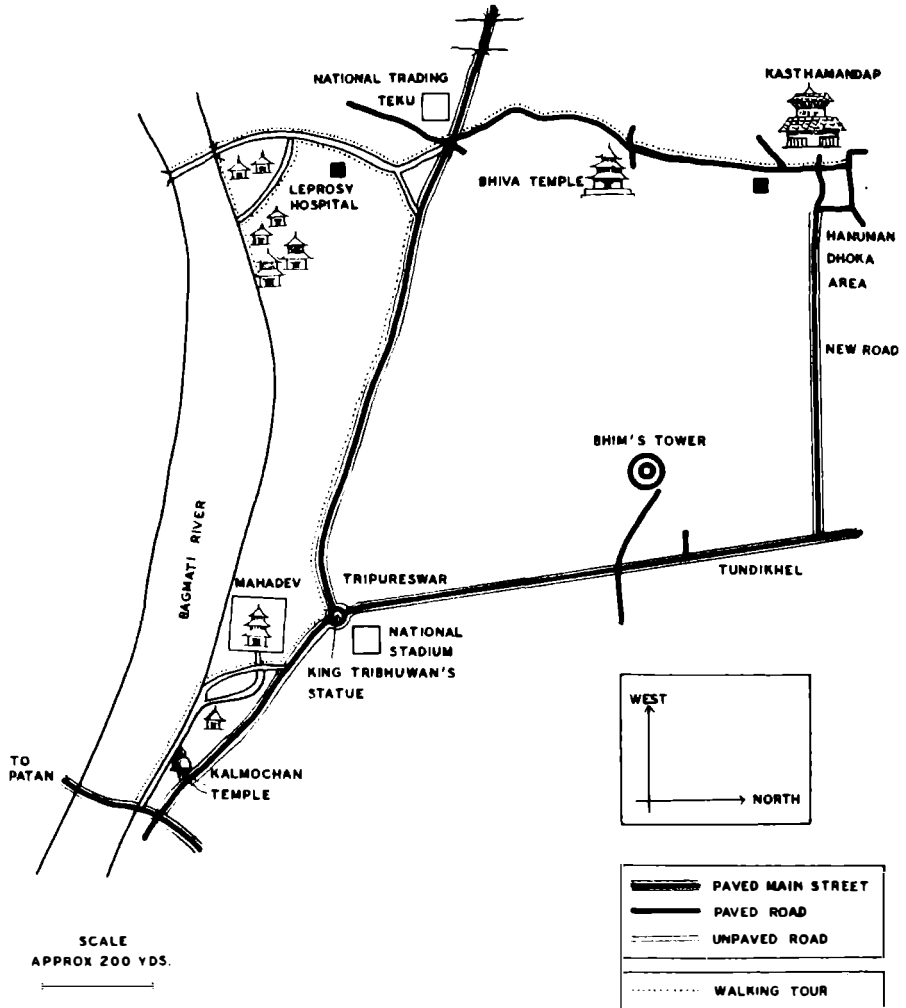
Our next tour goes to the holy Bagmati river where worshipers take ritual baths especially on Saturday mornings. Temples old and new and stone gods and goddesses crowd the whole area.



The Holy Bagmati River



CHAPTER SIX



A profusion of stone deities forms a fascinating background for the ritual baths and colorful worship which take place on the shores of the holy Bagmati river at the southern edge of Kathmandu.

Although Nepalis worship their gods every day, they rest from their labors on Saturday and have time then for special rites. Therefore the Bagmati river on that day provides an unusually absorbing spectacle, especially in the morning. On any day, however, a visit amply rewards the effort.

This tour covers about a mile and a half. However, if you take a taxi to the National Trading Co. on Kalamati and join the trip there you walk only about half a mile, but for that last section walk you must since no vehicles can drive beside the river. No tourists visit this delightful area.

Start with your back to the door of Gaddi Baithak as described in the Hanuman Dhoka section. Walk forward diagonally to the left so that the high Shiva temple on its nine step plinth is on your right and the Narayan temple on your left. Swing left around the Narayan temple and you will see the great stone Garuda statue. With your back to its back walk forward and turning left enter a square. Across the square you see two roads entering on the left. Choose the farthest left one. This puts the rearing gilt bronze lions on the second floor of a corner building on your right.

As you walk along this road you soon come to the Swiss Restaurant on your left where they serve good food. After going past a variety of little stores you reach a pagoda on the left set back from the road slightly. On the porch beside it, men play music and sing sometimes in the evening.

As you continue, you pass a small tile shrine and a decaying pagoda and much fine wood carving as well as shoemakers' stalls, cloth stores and vegetable stands.

Soon, you reach a very high Shiva pagoda on a seven step plinth at the small Jaisi Dewal crossroads. During the Indra Jatra festival the Living Goddess' chariot pauses here while dances take place on the stone platform on your road opposite one corner of the temple. Nearby stands a tall rough stone lingam. Childless women pray to this symbol of Shiva's virility.

Continue down the road with the pagoda on your left. Along here you may see people making the ceremonial umbrellas which play an important part in most Nepali ceremonies.

Pass some stone lions on the right and a shrine on the left. At the waterpump the road swings right and later left and right again. You now walk toward the southern hills. Soon you come to a wide paved street with a traffic light. The National Trading Company which sells all sorts of imported goods stands directly across the street from you.

The rope-way which carries freight over the southern mountains, starts about seven minutes walked down the side road next to the National Trading Co. Chandra Shamsher, the relatively progressive and imaginative Rana who ruled from 1901 to 1929, and his brother Juddha Shamsher after him, brought many improvements to the country, including a little electricity, a few telephones, some public drinking water taps, the Tri-Chandra college, the abolition of slavery, many suspension bridges, and the rope-way. Unfortunately, the Ranas who succeeded them did not continue their innovations. Years later the United States helped to build an improved rope-way which carries freight over the southern mountains more cheaply and more efficiently than trucks can.

At the Traffic light cross the big paved road and turn left. This puts the big street on your left. Walk for a short distance to the first road which enters on the right, not counting the one right beside the Trading Co. It is often clogged with trucks collecting wood. Turn right onto this little dirt road. It passes the leprosy hospital on your left and becomes paved with stones. When the road branches take the right branch. This leads you to a suspension bridge over the Bagmati river.

Go out onto the footbridge about half way and look back at this area. You see the round cremation ghats and the steps beside the river and behind them many chaityas, lingams and statues in front of temple roofs. Much further back in the distance a tall tower which you have probably noticed before looks like a minaret. It stands near the post office. Named Dharahara, people call it Bhim's tower because Bhimsen Thapa built it in 1832, as a signal tower. Even now a bugle call from there would signify some very remarkable event. It fell during the 1934 earthquake and Juddha Shamsher, the Prime Minister, rebuilt it.

The great Bhimsen Thapa held the position of Prime Minister before the Rana era for thirty-four years under three kings from 1804 to 1837. He built many pagodas, and the gold and silver doors of Pashupatinath and, to honor a dead queen, this one hundred and sixty-four foot high tower. As you already learned he also instituted many needed reforms but finally the jealousy of other officials forced him from power. Imprisoned, he ultimately killed himself preferring death to dishonor.

Now return to the beginning of the bridge. Go down the stairs on the left to the shore. Walk under the bridge and beside the river. Soon you reach an area filled with stone carving, some set in the brick wall and some free-standing. Dating mostly from the 19th and 20 centuries, they make a fascinating display. You will find some familiar figures among them, Sarasvati with her lute, Narasimha disembowelling the demon, Ganesh with his elephant head, Shiva and Parvati and many others. They dot the river bank all the way from the confluence of the Vishnumati and the Bagmati to the Patan bridge, but this area contains the richest collection. Notice the arch behind the statues, you will go through it when you start home.

Most of the chaityas on the shore have the Dhyani Buddhas carved on them. By referring to page 34 you can have fun working out the directions of the compass from their positions and their attendant animals.

Among the Buddhist chaityas you find a multitude of Hindu deities including the lingam, which represents Shiva. Usually a simple, upright, cylindrical stone shaft symbolic of the male energy of Shiva, you also find it carved with the different faces of this powerful god.

The birth of the lingam is an interesting story told, no doubt, by Shiva's disciples to show his superiority over the other two great gods of the Hindu triumvirate, Brahma and Vishnu (Narayan).

Once Vishnu and Brahma were arguing fiercely with each other when suddenly before them appeared a glorious shining lingam, a fiery pillar without beginning or end. Filled with awe, the two gods stopped their argument and gazed in wonder at this gleaming marvel. They decided that they should find its source. Vishnu turned himself into a boar and for a thousand years plunged downward but found no end to the lingam. Brahma became a swan and soared upwards for a thousand years but he also found no source. The two gods returned amazed and while they looked on in awe Shiva materialized out of the flaming pillar. Overwhelmed, Vishnu and Brahma bowed down before him in recognition of his superiority. Some statues show Shiva materializing in the lingam. The round base, with a sort of handle, through which the lingam often protrudes, called a yoni, represents the female principal and demonstrates the vital need for both male and female force.

Walk along with the river on your right. A colorful assemblage of men and women take ritual baths in the holy water, wash their clothes and their vegetables and perform various rites at

chosen shrines and temples. Because its waters eventually flow into the Ganges, the Bagmati and its tributaries form part of that holy river with the same power to wash away sins.

Shiva performed a self-sacrificing deed in order to bring the Ganges safely to the earth. Since the river goddess, Ganga, Parvati's sister, was married to all the gods she flowed only in heaven. The gods decided that the earth needed her holy water, but they knew that its great quantity and weight would both flood and crush the world. After much frustrating consideration on their part, Shiva, the strongest of the gods, offered to catch Ganga as she fell. He caught her tremendous weight in his matted hair and for a thousand years allowed her gradually to drop to the earth and thus made sure that only good followed her descent.

In the background, you soon see three towers of a brick temple surrounded by low buildings. Go up the broad cement steps which lead to its entrance. When you enter its courtyard you know at once that this is a temple to Shiva because Nandi, the bull, Shiva's vehicle, gazes worshipfully at it. Notice the intricate brick work around the temple's base. Nearby, stands Shiva's large trident, here made of bronze but usually golden because of the material used in its miraculous formation.

Surya, the sun god, whom you will see later lying on his back in a shady square, had marital problems. His wife, after bearing him three children found she could no longer stand his brilliance. Unbeknownst to him she ran away leaving her servant to take her place. Surya did not happen to notice the substitution for some years, but when he finally did, he searched high and low for his real wife and eventually found her. After some time he was able to persuade her to return with him to their home. His father-in-law, fearful that the wife might again find the god unbearably dazzling, took Surya and ground him upon a stone, which removed one eighth of his brilliance. From the golden dust thus formed, he forged Shiva's trident and two other miraculous articles.

Go out to the river again and, looking left, at some distance you will see a large red figure of Hanuman, the monkey god, under a canopy. His statue often stands near water to commemorate his help to Ram in crossing the sea to Sri Lanka to rescue Sita as told in the great Hindu epic the Ramayana.

At one time it was possible to walk beside the river to the Tripureshwar and Kalamochen temples, but now the way is badly broken and very filthy so retrace your steps to the area of the many statues and go through the arch behind them which you noticed earlier. The stone paved walk passes some pretty little houses. This is holy ground. People live rent free in these houses in

return for their upkeep. Soon you enter a shady, dark and mysterious square.

A small shrine to Bhairab, the most terrifying form of Shiva, stands in a paved pit below a branching tree. Undoubtedly on a Saturday you will see people trying to appease this vengeful god with offerings of food and flowers. Close by, a gilt statue of another god lies on its back. This figure, reputed to be Surya, the sun god, is seldom found in Nepal standing alone. However, window carvings often represent him. As you have already learned he played an essential part in the production of Shiva's trident.

Leave by the path, diagonally left, which passes between two guardian lions. Soon the road you followed to the bridge joins it. Pass the Leprosy Hospital again, but at the fork take the way on the right. You come out onto the large street that you were on earlier.

If you are tired you can go home from here. If not, turn right and walk about fifteen minutes past modern points of interest to the Tripureshwar and Kalamochen Temples.

Proceeding with the road on your left after about five minutes you pass the Summer Institute of Linguistics, followed by the Embassy of the German Democratic Republic, the Central Veterinary Hospital across the street, the Nepal Red Cross in its shady grounds, and then you come to a traffic circle containing a statue of King Tribhuvan who helped to free Nepal from the Rana dictatorship, as you will learn on your next walk.

The National Stadium soars into the sky beyond the King's statue which the trolley-bus to Bhaktapur circles. The Nepal Eye Hospital is on your right as you walk behind the figure. Keep on going in the same direction and you will soon reach an old little building with carved wooden arches painted grey and filled in with bricks which stands on the corner of a small dirt road.

Turn right onto this road past a water pump, and after a short distance you reach, on the right the entrance to the Tripureshwar temple, also called Mahadeva. Duck your head and enter the courtyard.

Built in the 19th century by his wife to honor Jung Bahadur, the founder of Rana rule, this three storey pagoda seems plain compared to others we have seen. It lacks some of the ornaments we expect, and the struts although lovely are unusually narrow. Birds and banners decorate the corners of the two gilt upper roofs. Some children play here, and a few women gossip as they sit on the porch; but not many worshipers come to this pagoda. We now go to a temple which possibly has a gruesome history.

Leave as you entered and turning right on the dirt road, go a very short distance to another small road which enters on your left. Turn onto it. A bridge crosses the black, dirty little Tukucha Khola stream. The confluence of this stream and the Bagmati river formed a sacred site for pilgrimages long before the present Kalamochen temple existed. Kal in Nepali means both black and death; so the temple may have received its name from the color of the stream or from the thought of death.

Opposite a Mogul type shrine go through the entrance doorway and the large white Kalamochen temple rises before you. Built in 1874 by Jung Bahadur it shows the influence of the Moghul architectural style which the Ranas so greatly admired, mixed with Nepali decorations. The four great golden creatures which rear up from the corners of the roof catch your eye at once. They formerly stood on a Vishnu temple on the Tundhikhel. Although all these magnificent beasts have lion bodies, their heads differ from each other in various ways.

Go to the opposite side of the court where two statues face the temple. The golden man on top of a very high pillar may represent Jung Bahadur or possibly King Rajendra Vira Vikram Shah, the King whose power Jung usurped. The disagreement stems from the statue's stiff folk art style, which prevents it from looking like either one. The inscription on the pillar below extols the many accomplishments of Jung Bahadur and does not mention the king. These memorial pillars, starting with Ashoka's in 250 B.C. at Buddha's birthplace in south Nepal and continuing up to this one, always praise the noble builder in hyperbolic terms.

Rumor has it that Jung Bahadur built this temple to appease his conscience and placed it over the mass grave of those nobles killed in the Kot massacre. Needless to say, the inscription does not mention this. However, the Nepalis avoid this temple. Only those priests required to perform a daily service here use the place for worship. At certain set times, however, destitute people crowd the courtyard to receive charity under a bequest of Jung Bahadur.

In front of the pillar stands a large bronze Garuda, Vishnu's (Narayan's) vehicle. This statue, the inner shrine figures and the decorations mark this as a temple to Narayan, but in spite of this many Nepalis consider it a temple to Shiva as the god of destruction.

The excellent statue of Garuda shows many snakes crawling over him. According to legend a powerful sage before leaving his two wives asked what kind of offspring they desired. One requested a thousand sons and the other wanted two very powerful

sons. Later, both wives give birth to eggs. After many centuries a thousand little serpents hatched from the eggs of one wife. The other eager mother broke open one of her two eggs and out came a half formed creature who cursed her and forced the serpents to enslave her. After centuries more the second egg hatched and Garuda was born. To release his mother from slavery, he fought and conquered the serpents and became their enemy through eternity. However, he accidentally gave them immortality. (They sluff off their skins but do not die.) Once when Garuda as a messenger for the gods was transporting the ambrosia of endless life he spilled a few drops on the blades of some sharp edged grass. The snakes quickly licked it up and therefore they never die, but the sharp grass slit their tongues.

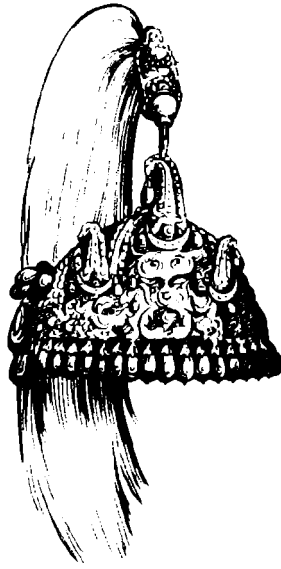
Rest houses surround the courtyard on three sides, but next to the street a solid wall without any gate either protects the temple from intrusion or protects passing pedestrians from uneasy ghosts.

Our sight-seeing ends here. Leave the courtyard the way you entered it, cross the stream and turn right on the dirt road. Pass the Tripureshvar temple and continue to the wide paved street where you can find a taxi.

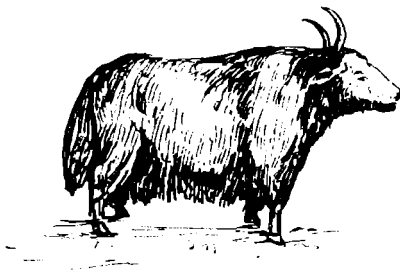
Next time we follow broad almost empty streets to see an extraordinary library, the present palace, a large hotel and other points of interest. A weird tale and some exciting history will enrich our knowledge.



A King.

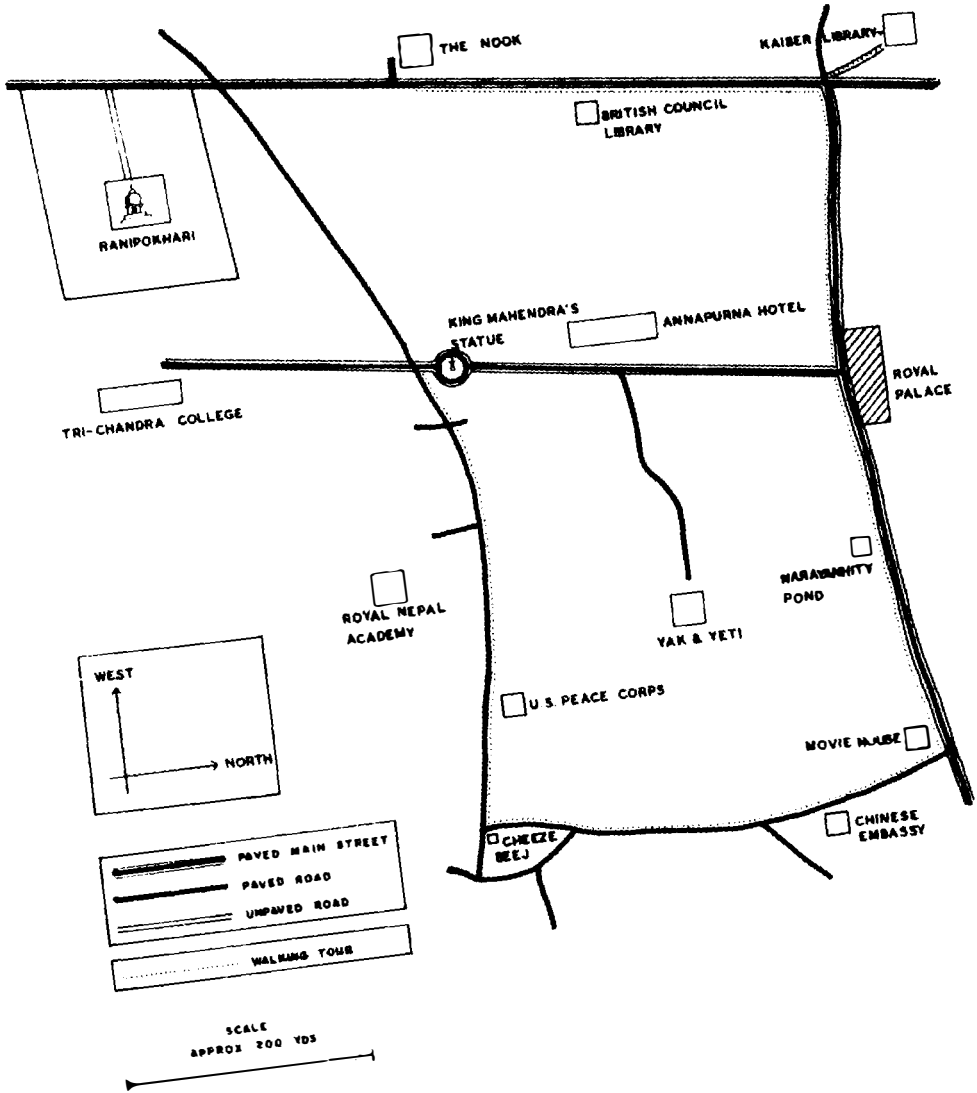


a Scholar



and a Dancer

CHAPTER SEVEN



The fantastic histories of a rebellious king, a versatile Russian refugee, and a brilliant scholar form the background for an interesting visit to an uncrowded area of Kathmandu.

This tour covers about two miles. You will go inside of only one building, a great library, but since it contains photographs, paintings and mementoes as well as books your personal interests will determine the amount of time you will need. You can go on foot or by any other means.

We start at the rose and white Nook Hotel on Kantipath a short distance north of the Rani Pokhari. Stand with your back to this hotel, cross the street, and turn left so that you walk north along this big street.

A little way down this road opposite the British Council and Library you see a very large white building, with small Moghal style turrets, set far back in spacious grounds. Once the palace of a Rana general, for many years it housed the famous Royal Hotel and its even more famous proprietor whose remarkable history played a part in the development of modern Nepal.

Boris Lissanevitch spent his childhood in the Ukrainian city of Odessa in the U.S.S.R. The son of a successful horsebreeder, at fifteen he was wounded fighting for the Tzar during the Russian Revolution. Later the Red Army occupied the city and his family had to move from their estate to the home of a relative who was a ballet mistress and teacher at the Odessa Opera House. Boris, in danger because of his military record, procured through her a certificate stating that he belonged to the ballet troupe. He worked with the troupe and became an excellent dancer. Severe famine swept through the country and Boris decided to escape. In 1923 he landed a contract to dance in Paris and received a permit to leave Russia for a limited time. When he overstayed his permit he became stateless and eventually this caused him to settle in Asia.

For the next five years he danced in Europe with the celebrated Diaghilev troupe and made friends with the famous musicians, artists and authors of that time.

When Diaghilev died, Boris handled his own contracts. After much acclaim in Europe, he and his first wife, a ballerina, received an invitation to take their act to the Far East. Success followed success throughout India, the Far East and Southeast Asia.

In Laos he went on his first big game hunt and this became a lifelong passion. He counted many very rich sportsmen among his friends but finally expensive hunting safaris left him penniless. He would have returned to dance in Europe but once more he would have been in a part of the world where statelessness produced endless complications and so he and his wife went back to Calcutta where they had friends and were well known.

The British and European business magnates in Calcutta at that time made up a horse-racing, drinking, very wealthy social set which controlled the city's many exclusive clubs. Not one single Indian was allowed to join any of them. Never at a loss for unusual ideas, Boris decided to found an exclusive mixed Indian and English club. Always popular with everyone, his millionaire Indian friends and some of the English social set backed the idea and the 300 Club immediately became a success.

Boris had two especially close friends, the Maharaja of Cooch Behar and General Mahabir Shamsheer Jung Bahadur Rana. This Nepalese, starting with a considerable fortune, made such good investments and became so rich that he was able to finance the uprising against the Rana rulers, his cousins.

It may surprise you that a Rana backed the uprising. The ruling Ranas always felt that their absolute power could be threatened by anyone in their large clan who disagreed with their type of government and they, therefore, frequently exiled family members to India. Also, gifted, discontented Ranas who saw no real future for themselves in Nepal often went into voluntary exile. In this way quite a large group of intelligent, ambitious, and energetic family members settled in India. This conflict within the family played a decisive part in overthrowing the Rana autocracy in Nepal.

In 1946 Boris gave up directing the 300 Club since he wanted more freedom. He made a few trips to the United States, one of them with his wife, who decided to stay there and open a ballet school. This led later to divorce and his marriage to Ingar, his present wife.

The closed, isolated kingdom of Nepal, the homeland of his close friend Mahabir Rana fascinated him. In 1938 Boris had tried to go there but he failed to get permission to enter. At the 300 Club he and some friends founded the Cathay Pacific Airlines and also Himalayan Aviation, which landed the first plane in Kathmandu. Finally, after the Rana overthrow, Boris boarded one of these planes for a short visit to Nepal. The minute he landed he fell in love with the friendly people and the beautiful countryside, and he knew that he wanted to spend his life there.

After an unsuccessful attempt to found a distillery in southern Nepal, Boris poured his energy and great organizational ability into getting the government to allow tourists to enter the country and into founding the Royal Hotel in the one time palace which you see across the street.

This palace, built in Moghul-Nepalese style, boasted marble staircases and floors, a huge ballroom and enormous bedrooms decorated with large gilt-framed portraits of the Ranas and trophies from their hunts. To this extraordinary building Boris added his own generous, friendly personality and his romantic background to fashion a most remarkable institution, although a not particularly comfortable hotel.

His Majesty's Government often made use of Boris' talents, and it put him in charge of catering for two of its most outstanding events, the coronation of King Mahendra and the visit of Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip.

The Royal Hotel and its Yak and Yeti bar remained a center for the social and tourist life in Nepal long after more convenient hotels arose. Always a home for mountain climbers, for years all the famous Himalayan expeditions started out from this hotel. The greatest mountain climbers brought back to Boris a unique collection of little rocks chipped from the tops of the world's highest peaks.

The Royal and its Yak and Yeti bar finally moved from the old Royal to other buildings which you will see at the end of today's trip.

Continue going north on Kantipath until you reach the traffic circle at the large cross-street. Down the cross-street on the left you see three small pagodas, Prithvi Narayan Shah may have built them in the 18th century. Beautifully restored in 1966, unfortunately you cannot really enjoy them because the courtyard gate remains always locked.

At this traffic circle where another big road crosses Kantipath the entrance archway of the Kaiser Library (pronounced Kaysher) occupies one corner. Do go into this amazing place, one of the greatest private libraries in Asia. At the end of a long driveway stands a large white palace which used to be the home of His Highness Field Marshal Kaiser Shamsheer Jung Bahadur Rana, a great scholar and a sophisticated gentleman. After his death government offices moved into the building, except for the nearest wing which houses his extraordinary library. Go inside and find someone to take you through it.

Kaiser Shamsheer, a small, frail man, brilliant and highly cultivated, had many interests. Rumor claims that he read all the books in his extensive library in their original languages. He had such a prodigious memory that when he quoted from a book during a conversation he could go to the proper shelf, pick out the book and at once turn to the exact page of the quotation.

He was a fine botanist, a connoisseur of beautiful women, and a great gourmet. His receptions in his magnificent ballroom were renowned for their rare European wines. The Rana regime heaped honors upon him and later he continued to receive acclaim from the Shahs after they returned to power.

You also see, besides books, paintings and photographs of an era gone by, botanical specimens and trophies from hunts.

After you return to the street, cross Kantipath and walk along the large crossstreet, keeping the very high metal fence on your left. This fence surrounds the modern Royal Palace grounds, but for some little distance you see only long low barracks. When you reach the handsome gateway and look through it the palace, Narayanhiti Durbar, stands beyond the broad driveway. The guards are nice about posing to make a foreground for a picture. The 1934 earthquake destroyed parts of the original palace and killed two of the king's sisters. The present building is comparatively new.

At the 300 Club in Calcutta in 1944 Boris met King Tribhuvan, who at that time was a virtual captive of the Ranas. The King made the trip ostensibly to consult doctors about his health. He eluded his guards long enough to meet with some of his backers. This was the first of a few such meetings which laid the groundwork for his eventual return to power.

In 1950 the Congress Party of Nepal, financed largely by Mahabir Rana, won control of the southeastern part of the country and with the blessings of Nehru, Prime Minister of India, the fighting spread in the south. In Kathmandu King Tribhuvan had not left the palace for three months, pretending to be ill. But on November 6, 1950 he requested permission from the Rana Prime Minister to go with his family on a picnic. This was granted. When they left the palace grounds the king drove one car and his son, Crown Prince Mahendra, drove another with their guards sitting beside them and the royal family behind. By prearrangement, when they were about to pass the Indian Embassy grounds its gates were flung open and in swept the cars and the gates crashed shut behind them. Thus the king and his family gained diplomatic asylum. Nehru stood firm in spite of the Rana threats that followed, and in a few days the Royal Family fled to India. They

had left behind one little three-year-old prince in the palace so that there would be someone to inherit the throne in case all of them were killed. The Ranas at once proclaimed this infant the king, but Nehru refused to recognize anyone except Tribhuvan. This political pressure combined with revolts all over Nepal forced the Ranas finally to agree to a complete change in the government and to the king's return. After a few years of upheaval the King gained control of the country. King Tribhuvan however, lived only to March of 1955. Before he died he invested his son Mahendra, who was only fourteen years younger than himself, with full royal powers. Different political factions continued to spar with each other for power but King Mahendra with courage and care got the country under enough control so that at his death the present young King Birendra, inherited a more peaceful situation.

Walk on beside the palace to some stairs which lead up through an arch in the wall to a small temple area. If you go into its courtyard you often find members of the king's guard there relaxing and playing games.

Almost directly across the street from this temple stand the Narayanhiti pond and water taps from which the palace got its name. The numerous water spouts found in the city flow continuously presumably because they reach down to the water table according to the scientific explanation. However, each has a miraculous explanation also. In this case, according to legend, in the year 1191 B.C. a raja had three golden spouts, in the usual form of water monsters, and a pond built in this place and then he produced a flow of water through yoga. During the reign of that raja's son, the virtuous Raja Vikram Keshar, the water stopped flowing. This distressed the Raja and he prayed for guidance. Astrologers told him that he should find a man perfect in all respects and use him as a human sacrifice. The troubled king, after much thought, decided to sacrifice himself. How to accomplish this presented a problem. Finally he told his son to go to the pond on a certain night and there he would find a man in a white robe lying beside the water spouts. Without disturbing him the prince should cut his head off with a single stroke of his sharp sword as an offering to the gods so that the water would flow. The prince did this without knowing that he killed his own father. At once water gushed from the taps but the golden water-monsters, shocked at this patricide, curled their snouts up over their heads in horror and so they remain to this day. In 1957 King Mahendra gave money to clean and maintain this site.

Look across the street a little further along at the wedding-cake-baroque Queen's gate on the palace grounds.

Walk on to the modern movie house and swing right with the road around its far side. Soon on the left you see the present Chinese Embassy. The Chinese set up their first embassy in Nepal in 646 and much cultural and business exchange has taken place ever since. Glass covered frames on the outside wall contain interesting photographs of life in present day China.

Keep walking up the road, now edged by high brick walls. Pass entering roads on the left and finally you reach a dead end or at least a place where the road turns sharply left. If you are interested in Nepalese handicrafts turn left here and look across on your left for a sign saying, "Krishna Loaf Machine Made Bread". Just before it you see a smaller sign Cheeze Beez. Go through the arch under this sign and a brick walk leads to a pretty Newar house where they sell a variety of hand made goods from all over Nepal. They also make things to order and will ship them home.

Our tour ends here. If you wish to walk home go out the gate, walk forward and turn right. You will pass the quarters of W.H.O., the U.S. Peace Corps, the Japan Overseas Cooperative Volunteers, and finally reach King Mahendra's statue on wide Darbar Marg with the palace down the street to the right.

The Royal Hotel 's Yak & Yeti bar is housed in the Yak & Yeti Hotel with it 's entrance opposite Pakistan Air- lines in the Darbar Marg.

The Abominable Snowman, the Yeti, in the high Himalayas may exists Most expeditions to find him left from the Royal Hotel and came back to it 's remarkable proprietor Boris, with their photographs, rumors and trophies.

To meet Boris, do go to his new restaurant at Baneshwar Heights, in the old airport road. The experience will well worth be the cost.

The following pages list a few more of the many worthwhile sights in Nepal.

PLACES OF INTEREST

KATHMANDU

**Singha Durbar

This huge building burned but the front wing remains. At one time one of the largest palaces in the world.

***Arniko Cultural Society folk dances

***Lama dances at the Space Theater.

Anyone visiting Nepal should see other places besides Kathmandu.

Listed below are some of the most interesting of the easily accessible spots. Since you need some kind of guidance, the stars beside the names indicate how much I, personally, like these places, 5 stars designating those most enjoyed.

PATAN=LALITPUR

3 miles Southeast of Kathmandu

*****The Durbar Square=Mangal Bazaar

One of Nepals finest architectural sites. Go inside the courtyards. Be sure to see the Kings Bath=Tulasihiti.

***Hiranya Varna Mahabihar=Kwa Bahal

Very old temple rebuilt in 19th century. (Fine curio shops nearby).

***Kumbheshvar temple

14th century.

**Mahabuddha temple

Indian style. 16th century, rebuilt after 20th century earthquake (very good curio shops nearby).

***Woodcarving shops

***Jawalakhel Tibetan Refugee Center

Interesting rug weaving. Will ship.

**Ashoka stupa

250 B.C.? Just drive past.

*Zoo

Red pandas, odd.

BHADGAON=BHAKTAPUR

Much injured by 1934 earthquake.

***Durbar Square

****Statue of King Bhupatinar Malla

On high pillar in square 18th century.

****Golden Gate

In Durbar Square.

Enter and walk around to Telaju temple. No pictures of temple allowed.

****Museums

In Durbar Square.

Excellent art collections.

****Nyatapal temple

18th century. Highest pagoda in Nepal.

*Bhairabanath=Akashabhairab

Near Nyatapal. 17th century. Rebuilt 20th century.

****Monastery of Dattatrya temple

Wonderful woodcarving inside and out.

***Pottery making section of town.

Very interesting.

THIMI

On one route to Bhadgaon

***Painting of masks. Pottery.

BODHNATH

****The Great Stupa

About one mile north of Pashupatinath. Most sacred Buddhist stupa.

**Tibetan shops

*Chabahil stupa

On road to Bodhnath.

PASHUPATINATH

Most sacred Hindu temple. Near Bodhnath.

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

** On way to Chobar gorge. Drive through.

**

CHOBAR GORGE

Beautiful countryside spoiled by new factory.

**

KIRTIPUR

Near Chobar. Medieval town, on high hill. Good view.

*

CHOBAR TOWN

Medieval town. Steep walk.

PHARPING

*****Ride to Pharping

**Vajra Yogini temple

**Dakshinkali temple

Beyond Pharping.

Sacrifices on Saturday mornings.

Very ancient site.

GODAVARI

****Ride to Godavri,

***Botanical Gardens, picnic spot.

**St. Xavier's school, Catholic.

*Marble factory.

***Drive up Pulchoki mountain

Excellent when tree rhododendrons bloom.

*

BALAJU

Water gardens near Kathmandu. Public swimming pool.

BUDHANILKANTHA

7 miles from Kathmandu.

Very ancient stone statue of Narayan.

CHANGU NARAYAN TEMPLE

North of Bhadgaon a few miles. Rough roads and then steep walk. Ancient temple.

SHANKU TEMPLE AND TOWN

Rough roads. Steep walk to temple. Interesting temple. Fascinating town.

"CHINESE ROAD"

*****Ride on "Chinese Road" to Tibetan border.

Do not take a four hour deal that whisks you up and back with only four stops. Arrange beforehand for six or seven hours stopping whenever you say. Start early. Take packed lunch and water. Pay driver's lunch.

POKHARA

Outstanding mountain scenery.

*Trip by bus.

Buy 2 seats for one person. Reserve seats take water food.

****Trip by car or mini-bus.**

Take water and food.

******Trip by air.**

Spectacular on a clear day.

TIGER TOPS

See rhinoceros, deer, etc. and often tiger and leopards.

MT. EVEREST VIEW HOTEL

Spectacular views and flight. Altitude sickness a probl

VIEWS OF THE MOUNTAINS

Kakani	18 miles from Kathmandu.
Nagarkot	9 miles from Bhadgaon.
Daman	50 miles from Kathmandu.
Dhulikhel	20 miles from Kathmandu.

Early morning they are most apt to be clear.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The author, an American from Berkeley, California, began traveling in Europe at an early age. When she was twenty she took a six month trip around the world which started her interest in the Orient. This was augmented by much reading during the years when her children were growing up and she could not travel.

She first visited Nepal in 1956 and at once fell in love with the people and the scenery. She has returned to Nepal six times in the past twenty years, on one visit spending a year as a volunteer at Shanta Bhawan Hospital.

On these visits she found that visitors sometimes left Kathmandu without any real understanding of Nepali culture and without seeing some of the most beautiful works of art because they could find no adequate guidebook.

Finally, she decided to write the book herself. By following the book tourists can enjoy a little, the life and customs of the people, learn some of their legends and beliefs, and visit outstanding ancient and modern works of art.

* * * * *

* Artwork - K. Karmacharya.*

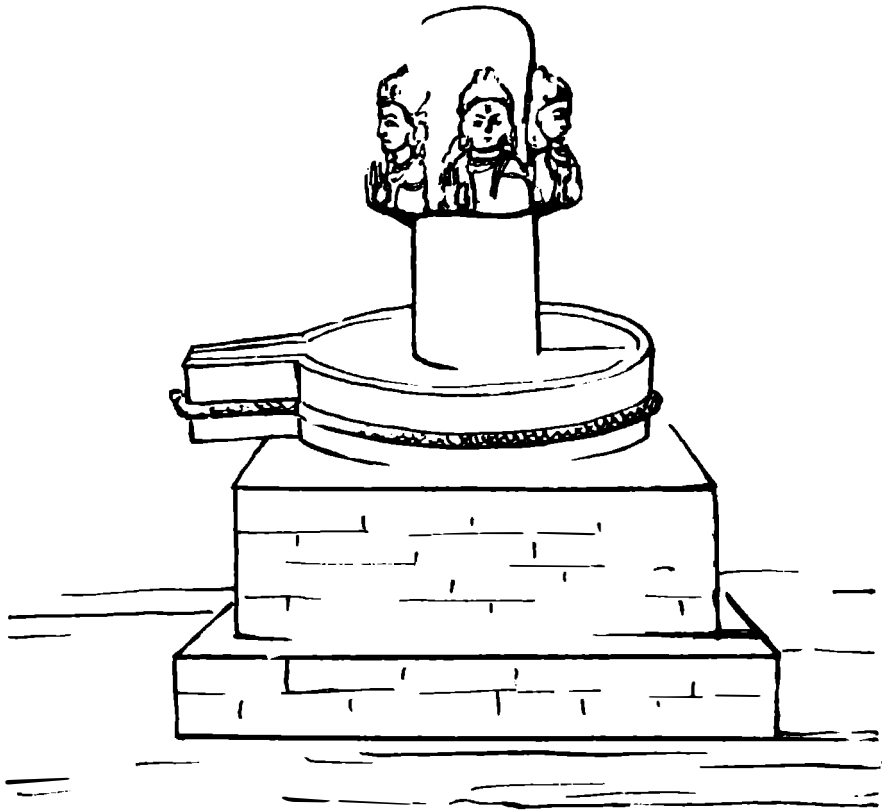
Maps - M. P. Shrestha.



Ganesh



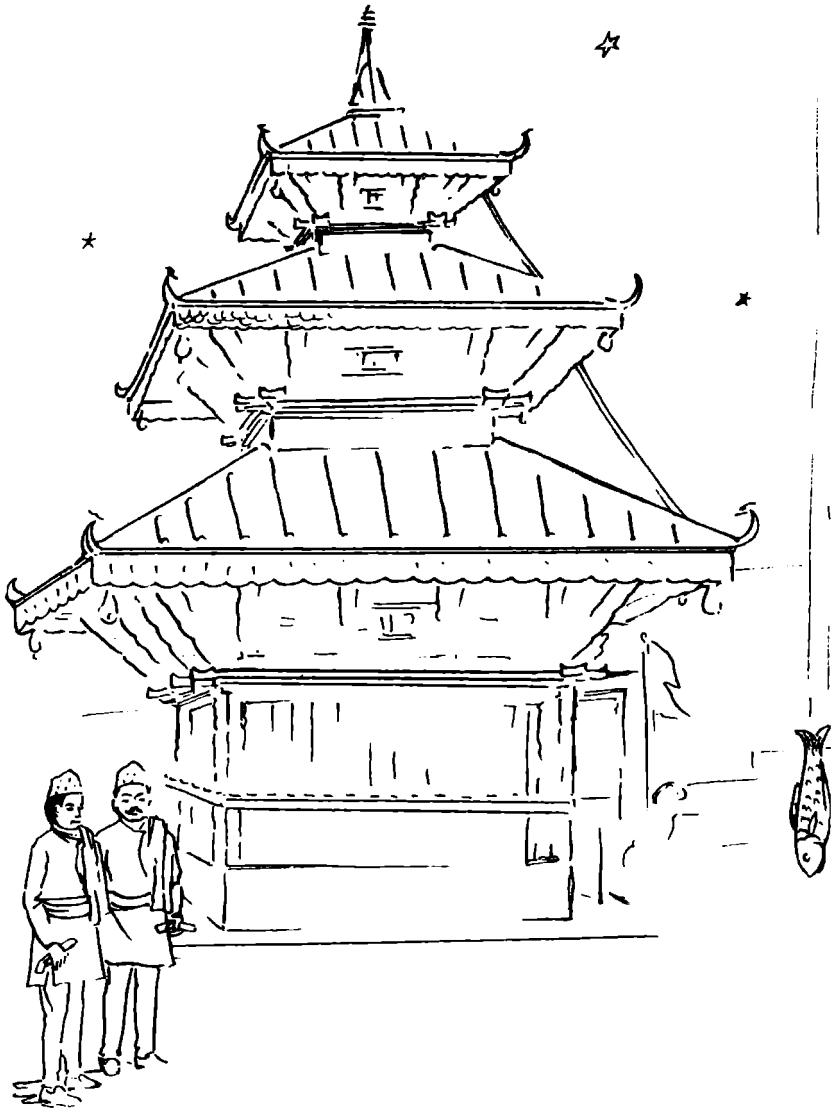
Kumari



Shivalinga

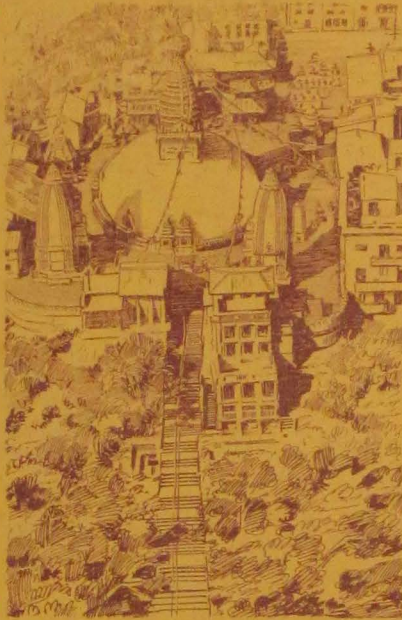


Sheweta Machendranath



The legend of Barami & Dak

अवलोक



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