

ENGLISH

KATHMANDU

~Summary~

-by Vikram Seth

Author's Visit to Pashupatinath Temple

The author arrives at Kathmandu and decides to visit the famous temple of Hindus: Pashupatinath. Only Hindus are allowed to get inside the temple. There is a great chaos in and around the temple. All sorts of people like priests, hawkers, devotees and tourists are there. Cows, monkeys, pigeons and dogs also roam around the place. Everybody wants to enter the main temple. Some Western devotees are not allowed by the guards as they are not Hindus.

Belief Regarding the End of Kaliyug

The river Bagmati flows by the side of the Pashupatinath temple. There is a small shrine on the river bank which half protrudes from the stone platform. The people believe that one day, the entire shrine will come out, then the Goddess inside it will escape and would thus bring an end to the evil period of Kaliyug.

Author's Visit to the Baudhnath Stupa

The author visits another famous holy shrine: The Baudhnath stupa which is surrounded by tranquility (peaceful atmosphere) unlike the Pashupatinath temple. There is a sense of stillness. Small shops of Tibetan immigrants (people coming from Tibet) on the outer edge sell bags, Tibetan prints and silver jewellery.

Vivid Description of Kathmandu

The author explores Kathmandu and its local markets. The city is crowded and lively. There are small shrines and deities along the narrowest and busiest streets. The streets are crowded with fruit sellers, flute sellers, hawkers, etc. People play film songs loudly on the radios, car horns play and cycle bells ring. The author enjoys a lot but plans to return to his home. He goes to a Nepal Airlines office and buys a ticket for Delhi. Then, he returns to his hotel to take some rest.

Author Sees a Flute Seller

Coming back to hotel, the author sees a flute seller. Unlike other sellers he never shouts to sell his flutes. He looks to be in love with the music of the flute. His music soothes the author's ears. It reminds him of the commonality of all mankind. The author always gets attached with the music of flute. He says that every culture has its flute as there is a deep bansuri of Hindustani classical music, clear and breathy flutes of South America, high pitched flutes of China. So, it can be said that flute is played universally.

The phrases on the bansuri affect the author deeply. He is surprised as he had not noticed such details in his earlier visits.

Conclusion of Kathmandu

The chapter – Kathmandu teaches students that we should maintain serenity and have a pure mind while visiting holy places so that we can have thoughtful ideas and act responsibly.