

# **LORE AND LEGEND OF NEPAL**

**KESAR LALL**

**398.295496**

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# LORE AND LEGEND OF NEPAL

Cover : “Manjusri drew his scimitar and cut a passage through the hill and the water gushed out.”

*The Legend of the Valley.*


# **LORE AND LEGEND OF NEPAL**

**KESAR LALL**

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PUBLISHED BY  
JAGAT LALL,  
10|477, KEL TOLE, KATHMANDU, NEPAL

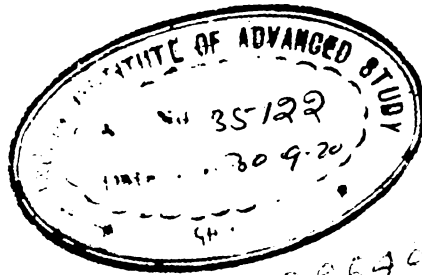
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 Library IAS, Shimla



00035122

First Edition : November, 1961



398.295496  
KASL

PRINTED IN INDIA  
SUBODH SINDHU PRESS  
CIVIL LINES, NAGPUR.

## PREFACE

Under the shadow of the great Himalayas the Nepalese dwelt in their valleys and hills, cut off from the rest of the world for many, many years. Until recently, Nepal was often described as a "hermit" among nations. Little was known about the country and her people.

Times have, however, changed. An increasing number of people from many lands are now coming to Nepal to meet the friendly Nepalese and to learn about their culture. They come to look at the highest mountain range on earth. The Nepalese too are now travelling about the world.

I have brought together in this volume some of the folk tales current in and around Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal. As folklore, they are tales of beliefs, superstitions, follies, fears, hopes and distresses of the people who inhabit these parts. Some of the tales are highly imaginative and are, in fact, the basis of the customs of today. But, as I have noted, times have changed and some of these tales are being forgotten. It makes their recording even more important and interesting.

If this book of folk tales will help in making the reader understand better and appreciate more fully the friendly people of this Himalayan country, then the efforts I have made in writing this book will not have been in vain.

To all the people who have helped me with this book by telling the stories, by encouraging me in the task and otherwise, I am grateful. I especially wish to express my thanks and appreciation to Mr. Amar 'Kalakar' for his illustrations that bring life to the tales.

K. L.

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“At midnight the giant woke up prepared to murder the whole family.”

# The Housewife And The Giant

A farmer once decided to go to the mountains and cut reeds.

Arriving at the mountain, the farmer had no sooner set to work than he heard someone call:

*“If fine reeds ye need,  
Come hither, come hither, come hither.”*

The man stopped his work and listened. Surely he must be imagining things, thought he. But he heard it again, hoarse and loud:

*“If fine reeds ye need,  
Come hither, come hither, come hither.”*

Who could that be? Curiosity drove the farmer towards the direction from whence the call came. As he climbed higher up the mountain, the farmer found that the reeds were indeed finer and taller than they were on the lower slope.

*“Come hither, come hither, come hither,”* the voice called again and again; and then, before the man knew where he was, a giant appeared out of the bush and pounced upon him.

Now, it was this giant who had played the trick upon the farmer; and having killed and eaten him, he thought of going to the man's house and eating his family as well. So, as soon as the sun went behind the mountains, the giant dragged himself out of his cave and made his way to the farmer's house.

Having arrived at the farmhouse, the giant knocked at the door, and, trying to pass himself for the husbandman, he called out, “Wife, wife, open the door. But mind ye, bring no light. My eyes are sore and I can't stand the light.”

When the door was opened and the giant had climbed up the stair to a room, he said to the farmer's wife, “Listen, wife, I am dying of hunger. Let me have my dinner and will you, for once, feed me everything you have?”

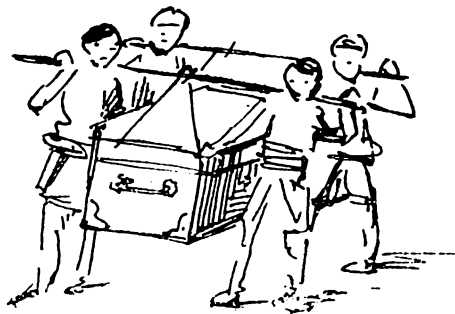
Thinking that it was her own good man, the housewife brought him all the rice she had cooked for herself and the children, all the potatoes, mutton and wine in the house. All of this the giant despatched in short order. Then he fell soundly asleep and snored so loudly that the woman woke up.

The woman took a lamp and went to look at her man. Instead of the farmer, she saw a giant sprawled on the floor. Any other woman would have lost her wits at the sight, but this good housewife ran upstairs and brought a sack of peas and let them run in all directions until the entire floor was covered with peas. Then she quietly removed the stairs leading to the ground floor, and waited to see the result.

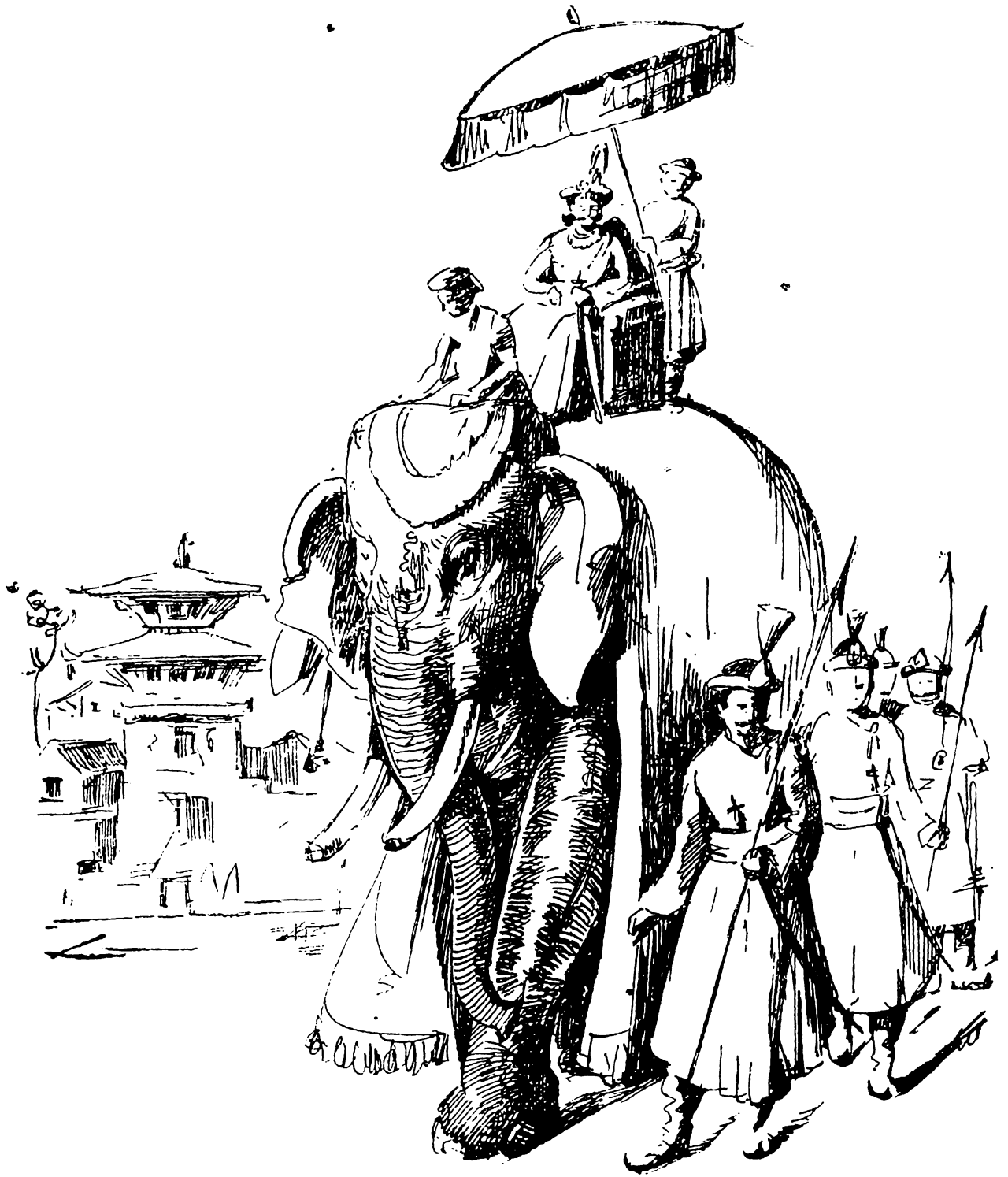
At midnight the giant woke up prepared to murder the whole family. He got up and took a step but he slipped on the peas and fell heavily. He got up and fell down again, and as he struggled in the dark to stand on his feet, he fell down through the opening for the stair in the floor. He landed on his head which killed him outright.

The giant was dead but it was no easy thing to carry his body away from the house. So, the woman packed the body in an old wooden box, and made it a point of calling on her children loudly to keep a watch over the box and the door closed.

Soon some thieves passing through the village noticed how careful the housewife was to keep her door closed; and, so, one night they came to her house and found the heavy wooden box. They lost no time in carrying it away. As soon as the thieves came to the woods, they stopped and opened the box, and what a sight awaited them!







..The king came riding by on his elephant . . . ."

# The Sparrow's Lost Pea

Having found a pea for her breakfast, a sparrow flew to a stream to wash her face before eating it. The sparrow deposited the pea carefully on the wooden bridge; but, upon her return, after cleansing herself, she found that the pea was gone.

While she was wondering how to recover it, a carpenter came along with a saw in his hand. To him the sparrow appealed for help, and she said, "Mr. Carpenter, would you please find the pea I have lost in this bridge?"

But the carpenter only laughed in her face. "Who will listen to you, Sparrow?" said he and went on his way.

Not long afterward, a soldier marched along the bridge. The sparrow stopped him and said, "Won't you punish the carpenter who just passed? He refused to help a starving lady." The soldier, however, was no better mannered. He said, "Who would heed a sparrow?" and went away.

By and by an officer of the army came riding by and the sparrow thought she must speak to this fine fellow, and so she said to him, "Captain, won't you arrest the soldier who passed just now? He wouldn't help a poor sparrow get her breakfast." The captain was no better than the soldier and the sparrow's words went unheeded.

Before long the sparrow saw the minister approaching the bridge, and to him, she said, "Please stay to help a poor creature, Sir. The captain who went over the bridge just now would not hear my appeal. He surely deserves to be hanged. You would hang him, wouldn't you?"

The minister laughed aloud and went on his way without a word.

Just as the hungry sparrow was beginning to feel very discouraged, the king came riding by on his elephant, and she rejoiced to think that she could now appeal to the highest person in the land.

“Majesty, I crave your pardon,” said the sparrow. “I have lost a pea, my breakfast, in this bridge. But none of the men, high or low, helped me to get it back. Majesty, I beg that justice be done.”

The king, high on his elephant, did not even hear what the sparrow said.

The sparrow was now really disappointed and she did not know what to do next. But then she spied an ant crossing the bridge and she turned to this tiny creature for help. “Ant, ant” she said, “You must go and make the elephant throw down the king who would not see that justice is done in his land. If you won’t help me, I will pick at you.”

The ant begged her to spare his life and promised to help. Off he ran after the elephant and, overtaking him, climbed up to his ear and shouted, “Elephant, tell the king to help that sparrow. If you won’t tell him, I’ll enter your ear and make you miserable. And if the king will not help the sparrow, you must throw him down.”

Thus threatened, the elephant said to the king, “Your Majesty, I pray you to help that sparrow. If she does not get her breakfast, I will have to throw you down.”

The king, who had turned a deaf ear to the sparrow’s appeal, now heard the elephant’s threat. He at once summoned the minister and threatened to dismiss him if he did not take action against the officer who did not redress a wrong done on the public highway.

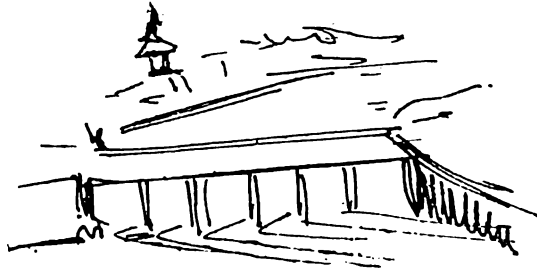
The minister called the captain, and demanded to know why he had neglected his duty to the public. Unless it was amended immediately, the captain could say goodbye to his fine uniform.



The officer begged pardon of the minister, and he lost no time in having the soldier brought before him. He then thundered at the soldier that unless he recovered the sparrow's breakfast he would be finished.

The soldier found the carpenter and threatened to throw him in jail unless he returned at once to the bridge and recovered the sparrow's lost pea.

The man hastened to the bridge and recovered the pea. The little sparrow had a very fine breakfast that morning.



# The Four

## Travellers

Once there were four friends who made up their minds to travel together and seek their fortune in the wide world. The men followed different trades — one was a carpenter, another a painter, the third one was a blacksmith, and the fourth a barber.

The travellers had not gone a great distance from the city when they heard the wailing of pipes and before long they overtook a funeral procession. The travellers went up to the musicians and said to them, "Friends, what is it you are doing? Don't you know that the king has forbidden the blowing of pipes in a funeral procession?"

The men were frightened and threw down their pipes. The procession moved on without music, and as soon as it was out of sight, the travellers possessed themselves of the pipes.

Soon the men met a peasant coming along the road with a bundle of ropes. They stopped this man and said to him, "Brother, what is it you are doing? The king has said that there shall be no more ropes sold in the market, and you dare disobey the king. Alas, you will find yourself in a jail before the day is out."

The poor man was frightened, and leaving his ropes on the spot, he hurried back to his village. The men then picked up the ropes themselves and continued on their journey.

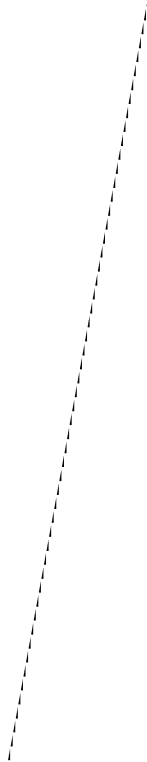
Loaded with their booty, the travellers arrived at a hamlet where they found some women beating paddy to make a kind of rice good for eating without boiling. To these women, the travellers now said, "Sisters, what is it you are doing? The king has said that rice shall no more be beaten flat and yet you are doing it openly."

When the women heard the king's name mentioned, they were alarmed and made a hasty retreat to their houses. As soon as the women were gone, the travellers picked up the pounding-log and the winnowing-tray and everything else that the women had left. Then they resumed their journey.



“The last of the giants was able to look through one of the windows.”

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The four travellers next met an old farmer carrying bowls of curd to the market. To this old farmer the men said, "Uncle, what is it you are doing? Haven't you heard the king's order that curd shall no more be sold in the market? They will seize you in the first town you enter."

Needless to say, the old man took to his heels, leaving his load of curd. The rogues lost no time in picking up the curd.

Highly pleased with all the things they had collected, the travellers went on and on until they came to a big, white building where they found a giant sound asleep.

The men now put their heads together and thought of a plan to turn the big fellow out of his house. The painter took out his brush and paint-pots and drew on the wall at the foot of the bed, a likeness of a giant much bigger and fiercer than the one who was asleep. The blacksmith drove nails all over the wall while the barber quietly worked on the sleeping giant himself. He shaved his head, pared his nails and coloured his toes and heels red so that they looked like a woman's.

Then the men got into a box which the carpenter had made, and they waited to see the result.

When the giant awoke he was not a little surprised to find himself face to face with a fierce-looking giant. And when he found himself shaved, his nails pared and his toes and heels coloured, he was furious with the giant on the wall, whom he suspected of having played the trick on him, and he began to kick and hit at the wall.

The nails driven on the wall soon made his hands and feet bleed. Yet the giant on the wall offered no resistance and he still grinned. At this the giant was suddenly seized with fear and he ran down and out of the house.

The travellers were looking all the while through peep holes in the box, and they enjoyed seeing the giant run away in a panic; but when, in a little while, they saw him return with several other giants to the house the men became quiet and thought anew of a plan to meet the situation.

The giants stopped outside the house and called out, "Who is in the house?"

To this question, the men replied in a loud voice, "The uncle of you all."

The giants called out again, "Let's see how thick is the uncle's arm."

The men sent the pounding-log, which they had taken from the women, rolling down the stairs. On seeing the big log, the giants concluded that if such was the size of his arm, the uncle must be quite strong. But they called out again, "Let's see how large is the uncle's face."

The men threw down the big round winnowing-tray. \

This really frightened some of the giants. But one of them shouted, "Let's see how long is the uncle's hair."

The men flung down a coil of rope.

That's a fine long hair, thought the giants. Then one of them asked to see the uncle spit.

The men threw down a bowl of curd at once. Now the giants were really frightened. They dared not call out any more, but thought of a plan to look at the uncle.

One of the giants stood upon the wall around a well. Then another giant climbed upon his shoulders, and thus, with one fellow balanced upon another, the last of the giants was able to look through one of the windows.

Just at that moment, the men put the pipes to their mouths and blew so suddenly and so loudly that the giants were startled, and one and all they toppled into the well.

The men now hastened out to fill in the well with rocks; and, thus having killed the giants, they lived in the house happily ever after.







“... fed the girls.”



# The Fox-Goat

There once lived a goatherd whose wife died soon after she had borne him a daughter. The man married again and before long the new wife had a daughter of her own; and then the woman was unkind to her step-daughter whom she scornfully called Maincha. She was jealous of the girl and hated her. She sent her to the hills every morning with the goats. On her return, after a hard, long day in the hills, Maincha was kept busy with all the chores in the kitchen until the poor creature was half dead. However, in spite of all her ill treatment, Maincha grew lovelier with each passing day so that the step-mother could hardly bear to see her. One day she called her own daughter and asked her to follow Maincha to the hills and spy upon her.

The next morning as Maincha was preparing to drive out the goats her step-sister came and asked to be taken out too.

“Nay,” said Maincha, “I dare not take you. Mother will not allow.”

But the young one begged so hard and long that Maincha took her along.

Maincha drove the herd to the hills. While the goats were feeding, one of them, who was called a fox-goat (why she was ever called a fox as well no one pretends to know) went behind a rock. There she produced steaming hot rice, warm milk, tasty meat and all the good things you can think of from the tip of her horn and fed the girls. Thus had the goat fed Maincha since the step-mother first made her take the flock to the hills. Maincha told her step-sister to keep it a secret but the little girl took tiny bits of the things she ate under her finger nails. Returning home in the evening, she told her mother how the fox-goat had fed Maincha and showed her the food hidden under her nails.

The daughter's tale made the woman's heart burn and she announced that she would kill the fox-goat that very evening for dinner. When Maincha learned that her good friend the goat was going to be killed, she burst into tears but she could not prevent the cruel woman from killing her. The good goat

also learned of her fate and was very sad. As a parting advice, she told Maincha not to eat of her meat but, she added, if she was called upon to clear away the bones after the family had dined, she was to do that gladly.

The goat was killed. At dinner time the cruel woman called Maincha to come for a piece of goat-meat. And Maincha said, "No, I am sick to my stomach and I would not eat."

After dinner, the girl was called again — this time to clear away the bones. With tears in her eyes, Maincha collected all the bones, but as she stepped out of the house to bury them in the garden she saw a giant and a giantess walking down the road.

The girl was frightened and she climbed a large fig tree that grew nearby. But the giant had seen her and in an instant he stood beneath the tree and called, "Here, my good girl, won't you drop us some figs?"

Maincha told the giant to hold up his hands if he wanted figs.

But the giant said, "Oh, don't waste the nice fruit. Couldn't you come down a little and put them in my hands?"

No sooner was the girl within his reach, than the giant made her a prisoner and carried her to the mountains. There in their cave, the giantess took the girl to the kitchen and bade her make *mari* (Nepalese griddle cake) while she and her husband went to the river to clean their teeth.

Maincha kneaded the flour and kindled the fire. As soon as she had cooked one *mari* a mouse appeared and, to her great amusement, it said, "one *mari* for one word of advice."

"What a clever little thing," the girl said to herself and gave the *mari* to the mouse.

The mouse soon ate it and said again, "Two *mari* for two words of advice."

The girl threw two more *mari* to the mouse, but as soon as it had eaten, it called out, "Three *mari* for three words of advice."

The poor little mouse had not perhaps eaten for a whole week, thought the girl; and she gave it three *mari*. Then it said, "I am sorry for you, young maid. The folks who

brought you here are very bad. You must get away from here as fast as you can. But before you go, I will show you where they keep their things so that you can take something home.”

The mouse led her deep into the cave, where the floor was all littered with gold and diamonds and pearls. The girl filled a bag with the precious stones and ran out with it.

It was quite late at night when she arrived home, breathless and tired. She knocked at the door and she called, but it was not until she had cried, “I cannot hold the bag any longer,” that her step-mother came and let her in.

When the woman saw what Maincha had brought in the bag she made a great show of pleasure and she begged to know where all the riches came from. The girl told her how a giant and his wife took her to their cave and how a mouse showed her their treasure. Upon hearing this, the stepmother decided to send her own daughter to visit the giant’s cave.

As soon as it was dark the following day, the woman took her daughter to the garden and left her perched upon a branch of the fig tree. Before long the giant and his wife came along and hauled the girl to their cave where she was told to make mari while they went to clean their teeth in the river.

Soon the mouse came out of its hole and said, “One mari for one word of advice.” But the girl took a firebrand and drove it away.

The giant and his wife came back and asked the girl to serve them their dinner in their bed. Then they made the girl lie down between them in their bed. However, no sooner had the girl closed her eyes than the giant took hold of her and cut a big piece of flesh off her body and put it in his mouth. The girl cried out in pain and the giantess made her turn towards her and said, “Come over to me, my poor girl. That grandpa of yours is no good. He pinched you, did he?”

The next instant the giantess took her knife and cut at the girl.

“Ah, the grandma is worse than me,” said the giant when the girl shrieked with pain and he made her turn to his side.

Before long the girl was dead and when nothing but a skeleton was left of her, the giant threw the remains out of the cave down the mountain side.

The following morning the goatherd's wife sat out in the sun with a comb working on her hair, expecting her daughter to return with a fortune in gold and precious stones, when a crow came flying and cried,

*"Mother's hair is not done,  
Of daughter left is but a bone."*

The woman was angry at the loud noise the crow was making, so she picked up a rock and threw it at the crow, but it only flew to the top of the house and cried again,

*"Mother's hair is not done,  
Of daughter left is but a bone."*

The woman was suddenly afraid. She hurried to look for her daughter, but what should she find but a heap of bones lying at the foot of the mountain.



# The Legend Of The Valley

Once upon a time there was a lake called the "Serpent's Lake," for Karkotak, the king serpents, dwelt in it. It was a big, beautiful lake surrounded by lofty mountains. All water plants except the lotus grew in it, and one day Vipaswi Buddha came and threw a root of the lotus into the water.

"When this root shall produce a flower," declared the Buddha, "then 'Shoyambhu,' the Self-Existent-One, shall be revealed here in the form of a flame. Then the water in this lake shall go and there shall be a valley wherein shall flourish many towns and villages."



"The Bodhisatwo then told his followers to settle down in the newly-formed valley."

Years passed.

Lotus leaves were seen floating upon the water. And then the predicted flower bloomed in all its heavenly beauty, with a flame of five colours playing upon it.

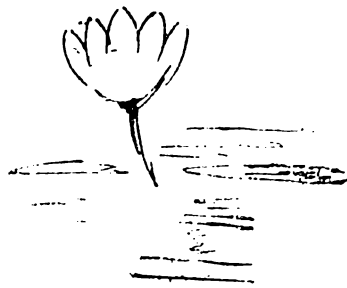
Knowing that the "Self-Existent-One" had been revealed in the lake, another Buddha, the Sikhi, made a pilgrimage to it with a large number of his followers. He went round the "Serpent's Lake" thrice and sat down to meditate at the top of a mountain; then he called his disciples together and told them of the glorious future of the holy lake. He also informed them that it was time for him to leave the world, and, amidst the lamentation of the men, the Sikhi Buddha plunged into the lake and was absorbed in the spirit of the "Self-Existent-One."

Another long period elapsed and the Visambhu Buddha arrived at the lake. Like his predecessors, he was accompanied by numerous followers to the "Self-Existent-one," and then he declared to his retinue, "The Bodhisatwo shall duly arrive here and let the water out of the lake." With that, the Buddha departed.

About this time in north China, the Bodhisatwo Manjusri was meditating upon world events. When he knew that the "Self-Existent-One" had been revealed in the "Serpent's Lake," he called his followers, among whom was a person of high rank named Dharmakar, and he set out, accompanied by them, for the holy lake.

Arriving at the lake, Manjusri went around it until he came to a low hill in the south. Then he drew his scimitar and cut a passage through the hill and the water gushed out.

The Bodhisatwo then told his followers to settle down in the newly-formed valley, and he departed, leaving Dharmakar to become Nepal's first ruler.



# The Legend Of Boudha

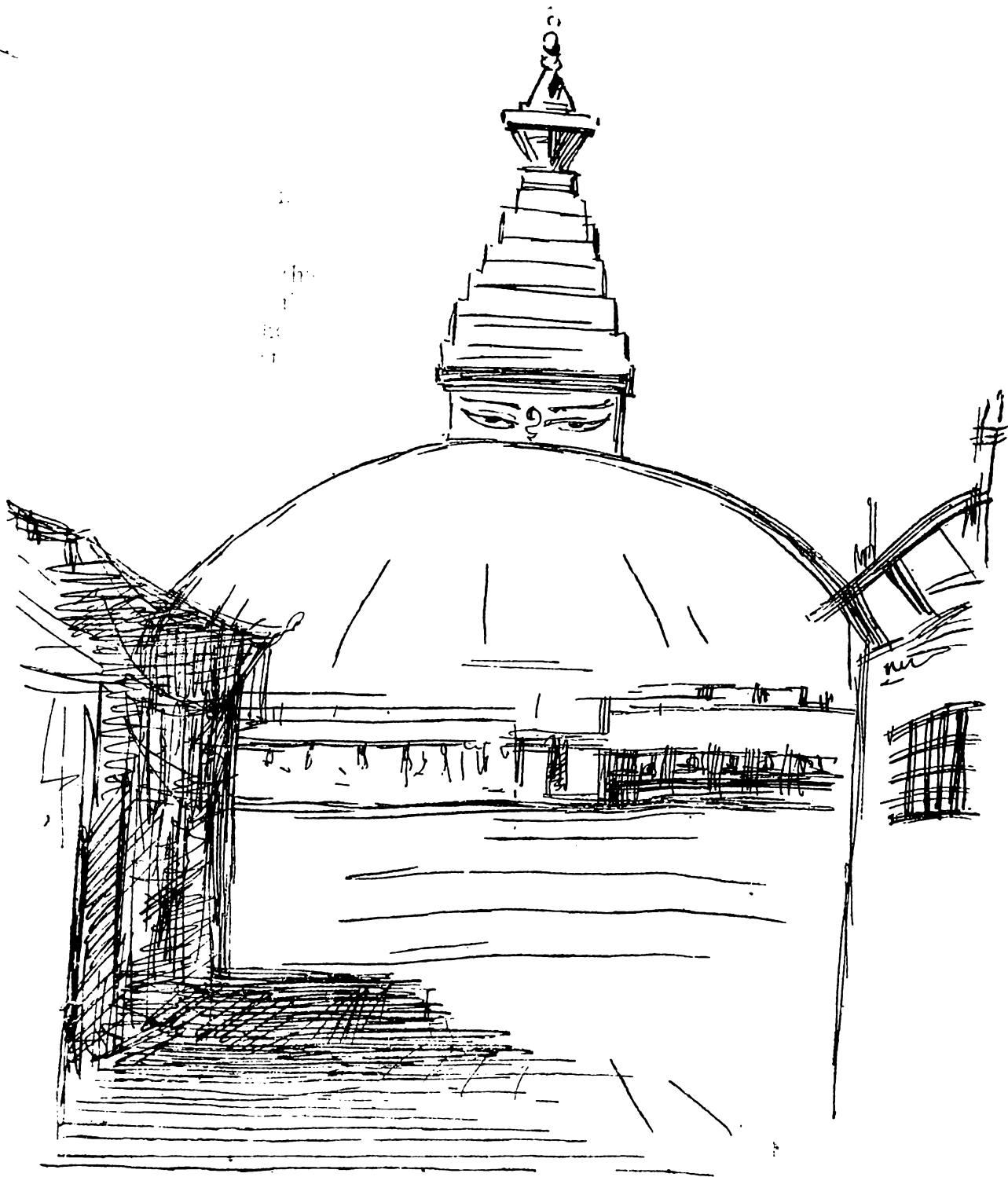
A certain king had an aqueduct built and three fanciful dragon-shaped spouts were made for the water to flow out. However, for some mysterious reason, the water would not flow out of the aqueduct. The king was sad at the failure of his plan. After consulting his council, he concluded that unless a rare, highly gifted person gave his life for it, no water would flow from the aqueduct.

One day the king ordered his men to find him and asked him to give up his life for the construction of the aqueduct. The following morning, the king told him that he would reward him with a large sum of money and a high position, and he was to take out his sword and cut the man's head off.

The prince made nothing of the strange order. However, a king's word must be obeyed. The next morning he went and no sooner had he reached the aqueduct than the water gushed out of the three dragon-shaped spouts. He saw that it was none other than the king's son who had slain him. Disgusted, he cut off the dragon's head and the water stopped flowing.

The king was very angry and ordered his men to kill the prince. However, the prince had already fled to a distant land. The king's men searched for him but could not find him. The prince lived happily ever after in the distant land.

The king was very angry and ordered his men to kill the prince. However, the prince had already fled to a distant land. The king's men searched for him but could not find him. The prince lived happily ever after in the distant land.



“The big temple was at last completed.”



# The Legend Of Boudha

A certain king had an aqueduct built and three fanciful, dragon-headed spouts were made for the water to flow out. However, for some mysterious reason, the water would not flow out of the aqueduct. The king was sad at the failure of his plan. After giving it much thought, he concluded that unless a rare, highly gifted person gave his life for it, no water would flow from the aqueduct.

So, one day the king called his son to him and asked him to go to the site of construction early the following morning. There, he was told, he would see a man lying down covered with a white sheet, and he was to take out his sword and, without ever uttering a word, cut the man's head off.

The young prince made nothing of the strange commission assigned him. However, a king's word must be obeyed, and so the following morning he went, and no sooner had he accomplished the deed than the water gushed out of the three spouts. But then, to his horror, he saw that it was none other than his own father the king whom he had slain. Disgusted at the murder, one of the spouts turned back its dragon's head immediately.

Stricken with grief, the prince repaired to the temple of the goddess Bajrajogini in the mountains. There he spent his time in prayers and penance until the goddess spoke to him and told him to build a temple to the Buddha in order to expiate the sin of patricide. The site for the temple was indicated to the prince by a crane sent by Bajrajogini. The prince thereupon resolved to build the biggest Buddhist temple in the country.

However, no sooner had the prince embarked upon the building of the temple than a drought set in which continued for twelve long years. During these years the country was as dry as a desert. In order to obtain water to build the temple, the workers had to spread sheets of cloth across the fields during the night. The next morning they gathered the sheets, wet with dew, and squeezed them.

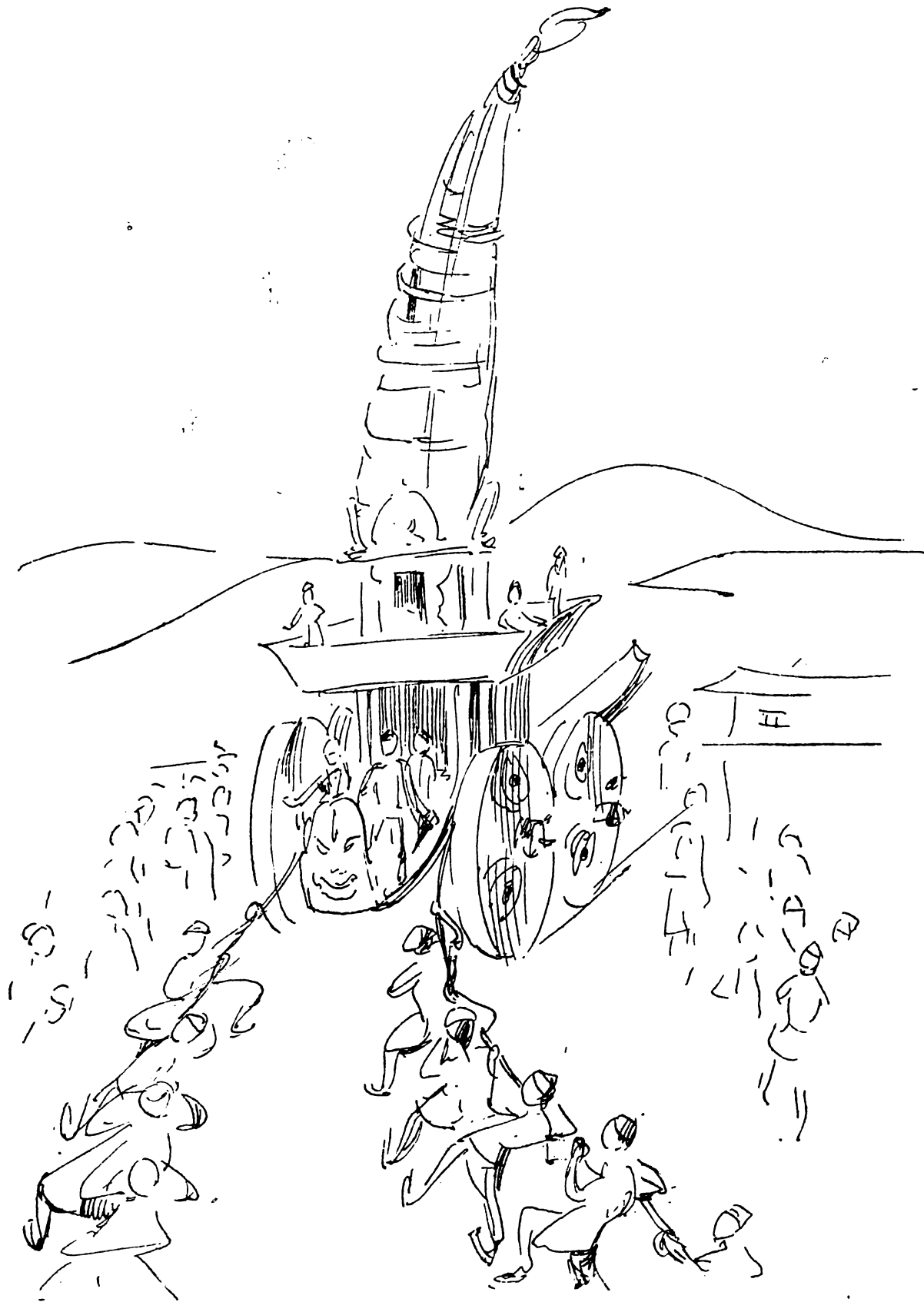
The worst, however, came when one day the workers returned to the site of construction to find that the structure, so laboriously built, had been demolished. They built it again, only to find everything wrecked during the following night. The men, thereupon, set a vigil in the night and discovered that it was a local god who had come in the form of a boar and done the mischief.

The men chased it all over the fields, and to the furthest end of the Valley, so that it dared not come again to destroy the temple.

It was a very slow process, but the young prince persevered in his task and over a number of years the work progressed bit by bit. The big temple was at last completed and on account of the drops of dew so laboriously gathered to build it, it was called *Khasti*, which meant dew drops. By and by the fame of the temple spread far and wide; and people from even beyond the Himalayas, from places as far away as Mongolia, came to visit the Temple of Dew Drops. This temple is also popularly known, after the Buddha, as Baudha.







“This idol was then carried in a huge, 60-foot high car.”

## The Story Of Karunamaya

“None,” said Bandhudatta the Buddhist priest to his wife one evening, “but the great Karunamaya, the God of Mercy, can help us now.”

“Why does not somebody then go to fetch the god?” asked the wife.

“Ah, that is easier said than done,” said the husband. “Karunamaya dwells in a distant mountain and none other than a king may go to fetch him. But we have a foolish young man for our king. The old king, Narendra Deva, is living in a temple. The son and father do not agree each other. There is not much hope.”

For twelve long years it had not rained. The people in the Valley of Nepal had propitiated the serpents, they had prayed at the temples, they had done all they knew. But still there was no rain, and their distress was beyond description.

Now, Bandhudatta was the king’s own priest. He was much respected in the country for his learning. However, having become old, he was living in retirement in a temple.

It so happened that Bara Deva, the king, was visiting Bandhudatta’s temple and he overheard the conversation between the aged couple. He thought that there was truth in the old man’s words, and the following morning he sent for the priest and the former king, his father, Narendra Deva.

After a long discussion the three men decided that two of them, Narendra Deva and Bandhudatta, should go themselves to the land of demons and bring Karunamaya to Nepal.

One auspicious morning, accompanied by the old king, Narendra Deva, and a farmer of Patan carrying presents for the gods and demons, Bandhudatta set out for the land of demons. The priest also summoned the serpent Karkotaka from the Taudah Lake and carried him in a piece of bamboo. This serpent proved very useful. Whenever they came to a river,

the priest released the serpent and it took the men safely across the water.

After a long and difficult journey, the men arrived in the land of demons, where they found Karunamaya staying with his mother, who was also a demon. The mother at once knew why the men had come and she was afraid lest her son should go away with them. So she kept an eye on her son and never let him stray out of her sight. When she slept, she lay right across the door so that her son could not get out of the room.

In the meantime, Bandhudatta conducted a religious ceremony to summon Karunamaya, who could not but heed it. He found his mother asleep across the door; so one by one he removed the hairs on his mother's head out of his way, for it was a great sin to tread upon or pass over the person of one's parent. But he did overlook one single hair and consequently he was afflicted with leprosy.

Once out of the dwelling-place, Karunamaya turned himself into a large black bee and made straight for the place where the men were encamped. While the priest conducted the ceremony, a *kalas* (a metal utensil) was kept ready to receive Karunamaya. The bee entered the *kalas* but the king, who was supposed to secure the god by closing the lid onto the *kalas*, had closed his eyes and was fast asleep. The bee came out of the *kalas* and entered it again but still the old man slept on.

Time was running short. The priest, in exasperation, kicked at the king, whereupon he opened his eyes and, seeing the bee in the *kalas*, hastily closed the lid on it.

Thus far, the men had been successful. But when the demon mother discovered that her son had gone, she called together all the demons of the land and led them to attack the men. The priest on the other hand called upon the gods for aid, and thus he was able to ward off the demons. However, as the men were preparing to leave the camp, the mother appeared and asked them the route by which they intended to travel.

Bandhudatta replied that they could travel by any one of the numerous routes. The mother then gave a bag of deodar seeds to the priest and asked him to scatter the seeds as he went along the trail. He agreed to do so but on condition that her son should return only as far as the deodar trees grew, to which the mother assented.

The priest at once dried most of the seeds so as to make them useless, and as he went along, he scattered them.

When the men arrived at Kotwal Daha, a lake into which the rivers of the Valley were drained, Bandhudatta called for a halt. He then arranged a great festival to which all the gods were invited. When it was done and the journey resumed, the kalas containing Karunamaya was carried by the gods themselves. It was a wonderful procession. While the powerful beings, the Bhairabas, carried the kalas, Brahma, the chief of the gods, swept the ground. Indra, the king of the gods, held a parasol over Karunamaya. Kubera, the richest among the gods, scattered riches along the road. Agni, the fire god, held a torch and Bayu, the wind, held a flag aloft. These heavenly beings were visible only to the good priest Bandhudatta. To the common people, they appeared merely as birds and beasts. Bandhudatta now scattered the remaining good deodar seeds that the demon mother had given him.

As they were travelling along, one of the Bhairabas suddenly said "*bu.*" Bandhudatta at once guessed the significance of this. He told the king that they must consider the place as the birth-place of the god Karunamaya, for "*bu*" meant birth. It was then suggested that they should build a temple at the place and keep the kalas there. A temple was accordingly built, a priest was sent for from Kathmandu and he was given charge of the temple and the kalas.

The men then continued on their journey and as they went along they talked among themselves as to where Karunamaya should be formally installed. The king wanted it at Bhaktapur; the farmer, who had carried the kalas, argued that Patan was the town where they ought to install the god; and Bandhudatta, belonging to Kathmandu, of course, insisted that they must install the god in his own town. Disputing among themselves, the three men arrived at a place called Igatyaga at Patan where they found a crowd of people. They decided to ask the people to make the decision for them.

They accordingly sought out the oldest man in the crowd, and with a book up on his head, the man was asked to give an impartial decision. The old man, however, reflected: "Both the king and the priest have become old and they live in temples in isolated places. I must therefore decide in favour of Patan where King Bara Deva has come to reside. Besides, it is my own town. I shall die for the wrong I shall be doing to these good men, but let me die if I must."

Thus resolved, the old man caused seven rice pounding blocks to be piled one upon another. He then mounted to the top and gave his verdict, "Here at Patan, where all the gods reside, Karunamaya must be installed."

No sooner had he said this than the wooden blocks, with the old man atop them, sank into the earth.

The question of where to install the god Karunamaya having been settled, Bandhudatta went to an old Buddhist temple at Patan. He took possession of a part of it and built another temple. Then he brought earth from the sacred hill of Mhaipi in Kathmandu and made an idol. Then, with a large number of men he went to the temple where the kalas had been left, and with due ceremonies he transferred the spirit of the god Karunamaya into the idol. This idol was then carried in a huge, 60-foot high car to Patan and installed in the newly-built temple.

With the entry of the god into Patan droughts were no longer known; and Karunamaya has since been regarded as the guardian diety of the Valley of Nepal.

Note: Karunamaya, the God of Mercy, is also popularly known as Bunga Deo and Machhendra Nath.





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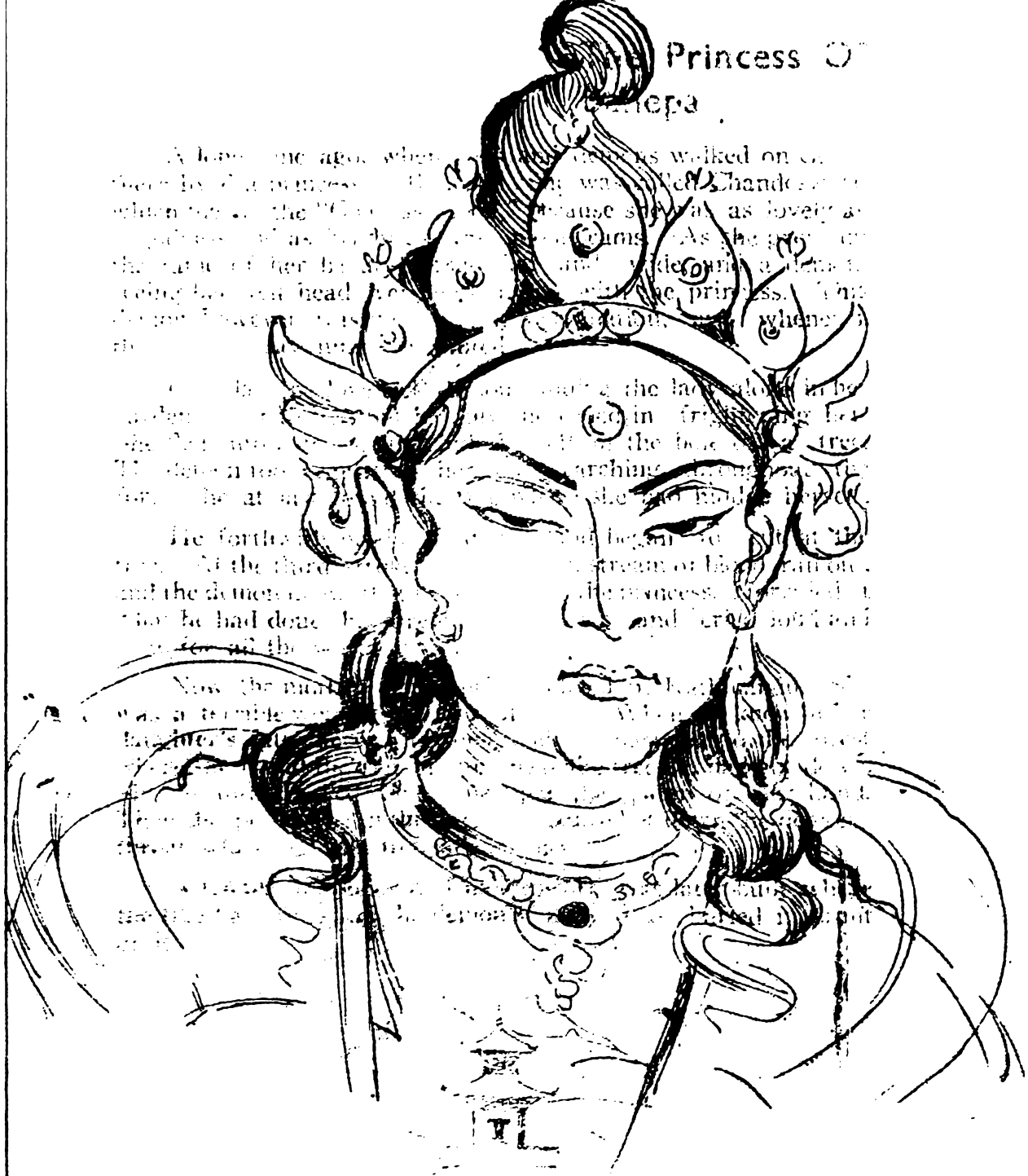
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"As lovely as a Goddess and bright as the Moonbeams."



“As lovely as a Goddess and bright as the Moonbeams.”

# The Princess Of Banepa

A long time ago, when gods and demons walked on earth, there lived a princess at Banepa. She was called Chandeswari, which meant the "Goddess Moon," because she was as lovely as a goddess and as bright as the moonbeams. As she grew up the fame of her beauty spread far and wide, and a demon, seeing her, fell head-over-heels in love with the princess. This demon, however, was ugly beyond imagination, and whenever the princess saw him, she fainted.

One day the love-sick demon, finding the lady alone in her garden, went to her, but he only succeeded in frightening her. She fled into a forest and hid herself in the bole of a tree. The demon too went after her and, searching throughout the forest, he at last found the tree where she had hidden herself.

He forthwith produced an axe and began to cut at the tree. At the third stroke of his axe, a stream of blood ran out, and the demon knew that he had killed the princess. Horrified at what he had done, he threw himself down and cried loud and long for all the world to hear.

Now, the mother of the princess lived in Kathmandu. She was a terrible woman, an eater of men. When she knew of her daughter's fate she was furious, and she hastened to the forest where she found the demon lying near the tree he had cut down. She instantly brewed some wine upon the palm of her hand. Then she put poison in the wine and poured it down the demon's throat which put him to death at once.

A temple in honour of Chandeswari was later built where the tree had stood and the demon's body was buried in front of it.



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# The Repentant Serpent

“I am tired of staying in this hole,” said the serpent to his wife, who was also a serpent. “Today I must go and see the car festival of Bunga Deo.”

As he took leave of his wife, the serpent warned her, “Do not tell anybody where I have gone.” He had reasons to keep his movements secret, for he was deeply in debt and he did not want to meet his creditors in the street.

But no sooner had he gone than a creditor knocked at the door. The she-serpent, fool that she was, was soon telling the man where her husband had gone. “You will find him at the top of the temple of Buddha watching the car festival,” she told him.

“But how can I find him in that vast crowd?” asked the man.

“Easily,” she said, “He is dressed all in white.”

The man hurried to the place and surprised the serpent. He held him, “It was your own wife who directed me here.”

“The faithless creature who cannot keep a secret!” the serpent muttered to himself, and then he told the man that he could do whatever he liked with him, since the payment of his debt was out of question.

“In that case,” announced the man, “I’ll offer you as a present to Bunga Deo himself.” With that he took the serpent to Bunga Deo and made an offering of him.

The wife, learning of her husband’s fate, went to him with tears in her eyes. She regretted her foolishness and begged him to forgive her. But the serpent told her in anger to come and see him only once in twelve years.

The serpent remained with Bunga Deo and he went where-soever the god was taken. When the car of Bunga Deo is drawn once in twelve years across the Nakhu River, where the she-serpent lived, the couple meet for a brief moment.

Sometimes at midnight, the people living in the villages near the Nakhu River, it is said, hear the she-serpent crying, bewailing her fate.



# A Tale About Bunga Deo

There was once a severe drought in the southern part of the Valley and there was no describing the distress of the people. The earth was parched and the rivers were but dry belts of sand even though it was time to plant rice.

Then Bunga Deo, the God of Mercy, was filled with compassion and he resolved to go to the aid of the people. So he disguised himself as a peasant and went to the farmers and encouraged them to plant rice even though there was no water in their fields. Many people listened to him and soon they were at work in the fields. But an old farmer would not listen. "How can any rice grow without water?" he argued.

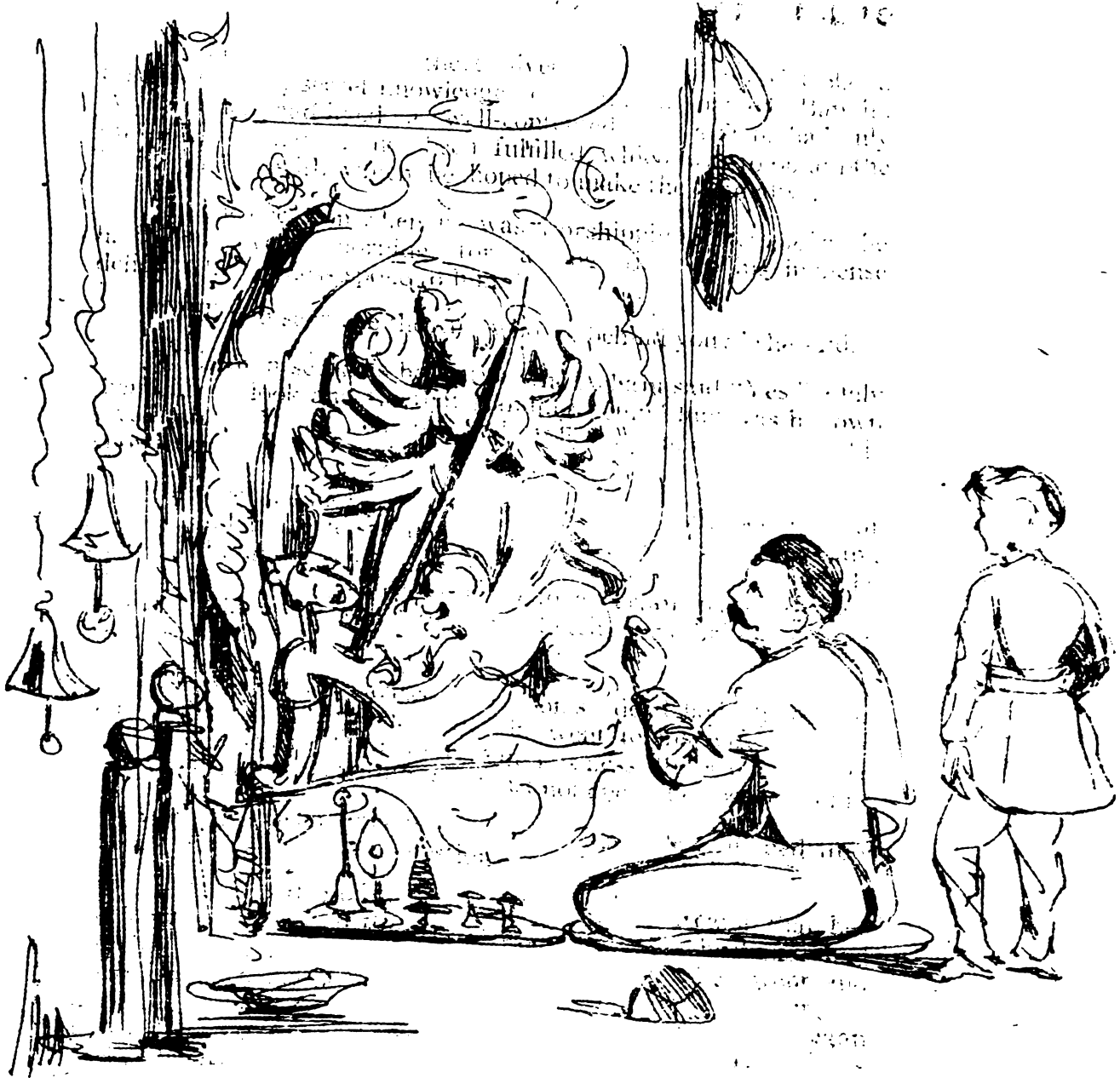
"You must try," said the peasant. "Don't despair."

"It is no use," the old man shook his head.

A few weeks later, to the surprise of everybody, the fields of those who had listened to the peasant began to look green. Oh, how distressed was the stubborn, old man who had not wanted to try! By and by, the rice plants grew tall and fine and full of milk. The people then knew that it was none other than Bunga Deo himself who had come to speak to them.

In the fields around the neighbouring town of Kathmandu, however, there was no harvest that year although the paddy stalks grew as tall as the farmers themselves. They were but straw with not a single grain of rice. Since then, the people of Kathmandu, too, put faith in Bunga Deo and hold him in great respect.





...worshiping in a temple...



“ . . . worshipping in a temple . . . ”



# The Water of Life

In the good old days there lived in the town of Gola a master of the secret knowledge of Tantra, named Bandhu Achaju. He had lived a well-contented life and he had only one ambition that had not been fulfilled, which was to obtain the 'water of life' with which he hoped to make the dead alive.

On one occasion when he was worshipping in temple, as he had done every morning for a long time, to his immense delight, the goddess spoke to him.

"Will you sacrifice the one who is behind you?" she said.

Without a second's hesitation, the Achaju said "Yes." Only then did he look and see that standing behind him was his own seven-year-old son. The boy had followed him without his knowledge.

However, he had given his word, and the man took hold of his son and made a sacrifice of him to the goddess then and there. The goddess was pleased at the man's devotion and she said to him, "Now, if you will go to a certain place, you will find a bottle of the 'water of life'. Fetch it and bring your son back to life."

Bandhu Achaju carried his son's dead body home and kept it locked in a room. Then he went to his wife and told her that he must go on an urgent business and would return in a week's time; meantime, she must not open the locked room.

With this brief explanation, the Achaju left immediately lest his wife should ask questions.

On the fourth night, the Achaju's wife dreamt that her son had been dead all these days and that her husband had lost his sense. The woman was alarmed. She went and opened the room—notwithstanding her husband's warning—and found the dead body of her son. Immediately she began to wail, bemoaning the death of her only son and the madness of her husband. She did not know what to do but she sent word to her relatives and to her own parents' home in Kathmandu.

All the relatives gathered at once, according to the custom, on hearing of the death. But there ensued a lengthy discussion among the people from Kathmandu and those of Gola about the disposal of the dead body. The latter believed in the Achaju and wanted to await his return, but the relatives from Kathmandu objected to keeping the dead body any longer, and since the woman also thought this, their argument prevailed. The dead body was therefore taken to the river and cremated.

In the meantime, Bandhu Achaju, returning home with the 'water of life,' fell to talking with a couple of men whom he met on the way. These men told him the news that Bandhu Achaju of Gola town was reported to have gone mad at the death of his son; how, leaving the dead body locked up in his room, he had disappeared and how, on the fifth day, his relatives had come and cremated the remains.

The Achaju was distressed at what he heard. Since the remains of his son had been burnt, even the 'water of life' could not bring him back to life. He felt himself betrayed by his wife. Suddenly he lost all interest in life and had no desire to return home. He dug a hole on the roadside and buried the bottle containing the 'water of life.' Then, using his knowledge of *Tantra*, he vanished into the air.

When the good people of Gola knew all that had come to pass, they were very angry with the men of Kathmandu who were responsible for the incident's taking the unexpected turn. To keep the memory of this event fresh, the citizens of Gola instituted the custom of staging a mock funeral once a year, which is continued to this day.







“There was a giant in Mt. Jamacho.”

# The Giant of Jamacho

A long time ago there was a giant in Mt. Jamacho who often stole into the town of Gola and carried off children to his mountain fastness where he ate them up. As a result of this, the townsmen of Gola were seized with terror and it was some time before they mustered courage to fight the giant.

One evening a great number of the townsmen, making themselves invisible with the aid of a priest, awaited the giant at the gate. When he strode into the town as usual, the men fell upon the giant and belaboured him with their clubs.

Finding himself overcome, the giant at once assumed a human form and escaped to Kathmandu. When the men found themselves outwitted, they went to Kathmandu and enquired at every house whether their enemy was hiding there. The citizens of Kathmandu, however, either did not know about the giant, or did not want to speak against him, for they remained silent.

Angry with the citizens of Kathmandu and fooled by the giant, the townsmen of Gola went to Mt. Jamacho and there they seized the giant's children, of whom there were twenty-seven. The children were brought to the town and were cruelly slain, and their dead bodies were paraded through the streets on the end of forks.

To this day the event is remembered by the townsmen of Gola. Annually a parade takes place in which children are carried through the streets on the end of forks and in which the citizens of Kathmandu are also severely reprimanded for their indifference long ago.



# The Merchant Of Kathmandu

In the good old days, there lived in Kathmandu a merchant named Sinha Saratha Bahu. He was a great traveller, and to this day the citizens of Kathmandu annually celebrate his return from his memorable travels in Tibet, which, in those days, was inhabited by demons and ogres.

Once this merchant took five hundred assistants with him on a mission to Tibet. The men finally arrived at a town where they found a beautiful golden temple to the Buddha, and the merchant, wishing to spend some time there, asked his men to find quarters at the town.

The men accordingly found a place to stay and no sooner had they made themselves comfortable, than a great many beautiful women arrived at the town. Needless to say, these women captured at the heart of every one of the Nepalese. Each man took a mistress and before long all of them forgot their business and their homes.

One evening while the merchant was engaged in prayer, Karunamaya, the god of mercy, appeared before him and told him to look at his bed. A hideous, sabre-toothed creature lay fast asleep. The god then informed him that all the other women looked like this creature, and they were only biding their time to devour the men.

Horrified to hear it, Bahu implored Karunamaya for deliverance from the clutches of the terrible creatures.

The god then directed the merchant to go to the river the following day. There, he was told, a big, white horse would wait for him and his men to carry them to their country. But, he was warned, no man should look behind once he was mounted; and if his men doubted his word, the merchant was to take them to a certain place to remove their doubts.



“The horse then stretched his legs and bore aloft the men . . . .”



THE GREAT PYRAMIDS OF GIZA



The following morning Sinha Saratha Bahu took his men aside and told them of what he had seen and heard. None of his men, however, would listen to him when he told them that if they wanted to save themselves they must start at once for their own country. He then told them to follow him to the place indicated to him by Karunamaya. At this spot there was a mountain of human skeletons which terrified the men beyond words so that, without further persuasion, they followed the merchant to the river to look for the promised horse.

Sure enough, the men found a big, snow-white horse sporting all by himself on the bank of the river. The men now knew that the horse was none other than Karunamaya himself come to rescue them. They paid their obeisance to the horse and soon they were mounted upon him. The horse then stretched his legs and bore aloft the men as if he had wings and raced across the river and over the mountains.

Before they had gone far, the men heard the cries of their mistresses who had come flying through the air after the horse. Despite the warning given them by Karunamaya, the men looked behind and one by one they fell off the horse into the hands of the women and were devoured, each by his own mistress. When the horse arrived in Kathmandu, Sinha Saratha Bahu rode alone upon his back.

The ogress whom the merchant had kept as his mistress soon appeared in the town and begged him to let her remain in his house. But when Bahu took no notice of her, she went to the king and complained to him.

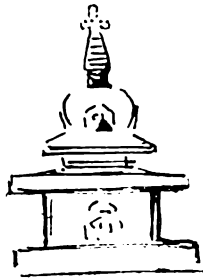
The king sent for the merchant and asked him if he had neglected the woman. No one would believe the merchant when he told the king who the woman was, and how his men had fared at the hands of her sisters, and how, thanks to Karunamaya, he had made his escape. In the end the king allowed the woman to stay under his own roof.

Not long after this, the ogress went away one dark night and returned with her sisters. In the course of the night,

these unearthly creatures ate everyone in the palace, including the king.

When on the following morning, Sinha Saratha Bahu learned what had happened, he went at once to the palace. With a prayer to Karunamaya, he brandished his sword and drove all the women away.

Then, the king having been killed, Sinha Saratha Bahu made himself king, and he ruled the country wisely and justly for a long time.





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... they were wonderfully treated. They were

He stopped them and asked, "Brothers, you are from Bhatgaon, aren't you?"



He stopped them and asked, "Brothers, you are from Bhatgaon, aren't you?"

# The Story Of A New Year

In the year 880 A.D. a new era was introduced in Nepal. The Valley was at that time divided between two Malla brothers. Jaya Deva was King of Kathmandu and Ananda of Bhatgaon. The latter had a court astrologer, Siddiwanta, famed for his great learning. One day the astrologer told King Ananda Malla that if the sand from the stream at Lakhu Tirtha in Kathmandu was obtained at an early hour on a certain day, it would turn into gold. This was found out after Siddhiwanta had spent a considerable time studying his book of astrology.

Believing in his astrologer, King Ananda Malla one night despatched four strong men to fetch the sand from Kathmandu. The men filled their baskets with sand at the right hour and returned. But as they were passing through the streets of Kathmandu they met a man who looked at them with astonishment. This man, Shankhadhar by name, a trader, was curious to see men from Bhatgaon walking away with loads of sand. He stopped them and asked, "Brothers, you are from Bhatgaon, aren't you?"

"Yes," one of the men replied.

"But why have you come so far? Surely you have sand in Bhatgaon."

"That is true," said the man, "But it is the King's wish that we come here."

The trader was intrigued. "I see," said he. "But you must be tired, after walking all the way to Kathmandu. Won't you stop for a rest before you walk back to Bhatgaon with these heavy baskets of sand? Perhaps a little drink will do you good."

The men looked at one another but they followed the trader to his house where they were wonderfully treated. They were

given wine to drink, they were fed with nice things and they had plenty of time to rest their weary limbs. And then, when the men were ready to leave, Shankhadhar said: "Maybe you folks can do me a favour. I am in need of some sand myself. What about your leaving the sand to me?"

Before the men had time to speak, Shankhadhar emptied their baskets of sand and told them: "You can pick up some more. There is plenty of it around Kathmandu."

Before the week was out, Shankhadhar was rewarded for his curiosity. He woke up one fine morning to find that the sand turned into gold. Then and there he made a solemn promise to redeem all debts in the country and to ask the King to begin a new era.

Shankhadhar, now an extremely rich citizen, went to King Jaya Deva Malla and reported to him his good fortune and begged that he be allowed to pay all the debts so that the country could begin a new era.

The King thought it was an excellent idea. He forthwith despatched messengers to make it known that the King should be informed of all debts so that they could be paid off and a new era begun.

On the same day in Bhatgaon, King Ananda Malla went hopefully to look at the sand brought to him from Kathmandu. When he found the sand had not changed at all, he went to Siddhiwanta and told him that he was wrong.

The astrologer was cut to the quick to hear the King's words. In his failure, he was speechless, while the King, sadly disappointed in his astrologer, asked mockingly. "Siddhiwanta, do you want me to keep the sand any longer, or do you want to keep it yourself?" With these words, he returned to the palace.

In a fit of despair, Siddhiwanta took out his book of astrology and set fire to it, but as he did so, he fell down and fainted. The King, however, hurried back in no time and Siddhiwanta's wife told him what happened. The King asked

for a joss-stick which he burned and held close to Siddhiwanta's nose. This revived him, and then the King told him, "You are not entirely wrong. When I had the baskets emptied, there was a little gold at the bottom of each basket. You are right, after all. Something must have gone wrong somewhere."

"The men who went for the sand must be questioned," suggested the astrologer.

Just at that moment a messenger brought a letter to King Ananda Malla from Kathmandu. It was from his brother King Jaya Deva, and it disclosed how Shankhadhar, a citizen of Kathmandu, was visited by some heavenly beings who left him a huge quantity of gold. Now, the letter stated, this good man desired to redeem all debts in the country and start a new era, to which King Jaya Deva agreed with pleasure. It was therefore desired that King Ananda Malla inform his brother of the quantity of gold that must be sent to Bhatgaon to redeem the debts in his kingdom.



# The King And The Kichkinni

When Prince Chakravartendra died within twenty-four hours of his being made King of Kathmandu, his inconsolable mother, Bhuban Laxmi, promised herself that she would build a public tank in the memory of her son. The death of the prince, who was placed upon the throne by his dotting father Pratap Malla, was ascribed to an unfortunate mistake in designing the coin which had been minted on the day he was made king.

After five years of hard work, the Queen's public tank was completed in the year 1670. Queen Laxmi consecrated it by pouring into it water brought from all holy rivers and it was declared a holy tank.

King Pratap Malla himself made it a habit of going to the tank every morning for his bath. One day the King, noticed, bathing near him, a beautiful young woman. The next day, too, she was there; and thenceforth, whenever the King arrived, the woman also made her appearance. Before long, the King fell head-over-heels in love with this young woman.

One morning, nearly a year later, when the King arrived for his usual bath, he saw that the woman had given birth to a baby. She held it before his eyes and then, to his alarm, she killed it. Disgusted with her cruelty, the King, in anger, scrutinized the woman, and suddenly he was filled with a terror that he had not known before, he found himself looking at a pair of feet that turned backwards. She was no human being, this woman. She was a *kichkinni*, a very bad spirit. The thought that he had consorted with a spirit alarmed the King and he returned to the palace very upset. He now knew why he had been ailing and losing weight.

King Pratap Malla sent for a Buddhist priest to whom he told his experience. The priest suggested that when the King went for his bath the next time, he should take a ball of thread and, without the woman knowing it, tie the thread to her clothes.





“One day the King noticed bathing near him a beautiful young woman.”

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The following day, the King took the thread with him and he succeeded in attaching it to the woman's clothes without her knowledge. Later in the morning, the King returned to his bathing place accompanied by the priest. He traced the thread to a hole in a corner of the tank where it was found tied to a human bone.

The King ordered the bone to be reduced to ashes and a Buddhist service for the head performed. This done, the King never saw the woman again and he regained his health.

Years passed. Jagajaya Malla had succeeded Pratap Malla. And once again the tank was haunted by a spirit and people scarcely dared to go there for their bath. The king called a priest to look into the matter, and it was found to be the restless spirit of the baby, whom the *kichkini* had given birth to and put to death, that had been doing the mischief. The King therefore had the priest perform a service for the dead. He further had an elephant made of stone, and the spirit of the dead was trapped by the priest in a stone ball, held by the elephant's trunk.

No spirit had haunted the public tank since then, and the stone elephant with the statues of King Pratap Malla, his Queen Bhuban Laxmi and son Chakravartendra stands to this day at the tank, which, because it was built by the Queen, is called Rani Pokhari.



# How The Dancer Lost His Head

In the village of Jala there is an old temple. The dancers of this temple used to go to the neighbouring towns and villages and give performances. This, however, did not make them popular with the other people in the Valley of Kathmandu. Wherever the Jalamis went, they were looked upon with suspicion and fear, for it was said that a human sacrifice was often made at the temple in their village, and the dance was led by a person without his head . . .

One day when the temple dancers were looking for a victim to sacrifice at their temple, they espied a farmer working all alone in a field not far from their own village. As the man was wide awake, the Jalamis could do him no harm, and so they returned the next day, but the farmer was not caught unawares. When he saw the men looking at him, his suspicion was aroused. He therefore hit upon a plan to get rid of them.

The following evening the farmer gathered a heap of thorny bush and covered it with a sheet of white cloth so that it looked like a man stretched at full length and asleep. He then hid himself and awaited the arrival of the Jalamis.

They were not long in coming, and thinking that at last they had caught the farmer sleeping they rushed in and fell upon the heap of thorns. The chief of the Jalamis, who had led the attack, cried out in pain as he was pressed against the thorns by his comrades who fell on top of him. But his cry was mistaken by the fellows for that of the farmer and one of them drew out his knife and severed his leader's head.

It did not take the Jalamis long to detect the mistake, but it was too late to do anything about it . . .





“The dancer danced without his head.”



The Eid festival, Kashmir, India.

# The Man Who Became A Serpent

Near the town of Bhatgaon there is a reservoir which at one time was a source of terror to all the people of the area, for there dwelt in it a crafty water serpent. It tricked people into the water and killed them. One sometimes saw an object of gold floating in the water, but woe to him who took to the water to grasp the gold, for he never would tread on dry land again.

One day there came to Bhatgaon a medicant accompanied by a man from the neighbouring town of Them. When they arrived at the reservoir, the medicant told his companion that he would like to go and meet the serpent. He asked the man to watch and if blood came to the surface, he would know that the serpent had been killed. But, if, instead of blood, he saw milk, he would know that the mendicant had been vanquished.

With these words, the mendicant gave the man a handful of rice which was to be thrown at him, if he returned alive from the water. The next minute he changed himself into a serpent and plunged into the reservoir.

Soon there were sounds of a mighty struggle going on deep down the water, and the man from Them, seeing blood colour the water, was pleased. But when a huge serpent crawled out, the man lost his wits and away he ran screaming at the top of his voice. In his terror he forgot the instruction to throw the rice in his hand at the serpent.

The serpent, who was none other than the mendicant, went after the man imploring him to throw the rice at him. But it only frightened the man more and made him run faster.

When the serpent saw that it was no use running after the foolish man, he was sad at his fate, not to be able ever

to regain his human form. But what could he do? He returned to the reservoir, to be confined in it forever.

For shame, and for fear that the serpent might revenge himself, no one from the town of Themis dares approach the reservoir to this day.









“He helped the young man to carry the gold . . . .”

Keshachandra had a bad habit. He gambled. When he was a young man he played heavily and lost everything that he possessed but his house. Having become penniless, he went to live with his only relative, a married sister. However, inveterate gambler that he was, before long he took the very plates from which he ate his meals to the gambling den and lost them in a vain bid to turn the tide of his fortune. This practice, no doubt, annoyed his sister much. One day, vexed beyond measure she gave him his rice upon the bare ground.

The young man was shocked at the treatment meted out to him by his sister and he was very ashamed of himself. He took the rice in a piece of cloth and went to Shoyambhu Hill, where he spread out the rice upon a rock to dry it. In his hunger, Keshachandra was filled with remorse and he wept and wept until he curled himself up and fell asleep.

When he woke up he was dismayed for the rice had been eaten by a flock of pigeons. He was hungrier and sadder than ever and he cried loud and long until he was weary and he closed his eyes once more.

Keshachandra did not sleep long. He woke up most surprised to find the rock covered with gold and the pigeons gone. The pigeons, having eaten the young man's rice, had been filled with pity when they heard him cry over his loss, and so they left him the gold to pay for his rice.

The gold filled the young man with gladness and he forgot his hunger. He gathered the gold in a piece of cloth, but he found it too heavy for him to carry.

It was then that he heard a voice from the bush, "Ha, here is my lunch." Looking about him, Keshachandra saw an ogre striding towards him. He was terrified, but he did not lose his wits. He addressed himself to the man-eater, "If you eat me now, you will be hungry again pretty soon. But, if you will listen to what I plan to do, you won't eat me and you will never go hungry again. See, I am a rich man now. Every day I will feed you a whole buffalo and half a bushel of rice."

The ogre thought it was a nice idea. He liked it. So he helped the young man to carry the gold to his house where life was comfortable for him again.

The ogre, too, had an easy life. He stayed with the young man, who fed him, as he had promised, with one buffalo and a huge quantity of rice every day. He had not a care in the world. But before long the ogre took a fancy to the children of the locality and very soon the neighbours began to lose their children.

Guru Mappa, for that was the name by which the ogre came to be known, came to be suspected by the people and he became an object of fear. Women screamed and fainted when they saw the ogre in the streets and parents no longer sent their children out of their houses. At last, the people could stand it no longer and one day they ran down Guru Mappa in Keshachandra's house. They wanted to put an end to the ogre at once but he begged them hard and long to spare him. He promised that never again would he venture into the streets but spend the rest of his days at Tudikhel.

The good citizens saw no harm in this and they told Guru Mappa that if he kept his word, they, in their turn, would feed him a buffalo and half a bushel of rice once a year.

The citizens of Kathmandu have kept their promise to Guru Mappa to this day.







“He stood upon it and crossed the Brahmaputra.”

# The Adventures Of Surat Bajra

Surat Bajra was a Buddhist priest. He went, one time, to Lhasa in Tibet, and one day when he was having tea with a great lama of that city, he silently emptied his cup on the floor. He refilled the cup and again threw away the tea. Surprised, the lama asked the reason for his strange behaviour.

Stranger still was the explanation of Surat Bajra. He told the lama that his house in Nepal had caught fire and was burning at that moment and so he was extinguishing the fire.

Lest it should hurt his guest's feeling, the lama said nothing but he had misgivings in his mind and he made a note of the day and time. As soon as his guest was gone, the lama despatched a messenger post haste to Nepal to find out the truth of Surat Bajra's statement.

Months later the messenger returned to Lhasa and reported to the lama that Surat Bajra's house had actually caught fire on the day and at the time noted by him, but thanks to a timely rain, it was saved. The lama hardly believed the report, but he was now filled with jealousy of the knowledge and power of the Nepalese priest.

When, after some time, the lama heard that Surat Bajra was preparing to return to his own country he thought of harming him in some way. He sent word privately to Nepal, saying that Surat Bajra had died on his way home from Lhasa. The lama then ordered that no boatman should take the Nepalese priest across the Brahmaputra river.

Meanwhile, Surat Bajra took leave of his friends and left Lhasa. When he arrived at the river and found that no one would take him across it, he threw the sheet of cloth with which he had wrapped himself on the water. Then, to the amazement of all the boatmen, he stood upon it and crossed the Brahmaputra.

Frustrated to find Surat Bajra equal to the situation, the lama became very angry, and overtaking the homeward bound priest, he challenged him to a contest of knowledge. Faced

with a determined lama, Surat Bajra asked him what sort of contest he proposed. The lama replied that both of them should change themselves into sparrows and perch upon a stalk of wheat growing on the roadside. The heavier of the two, said the lama, would be declared vanquished. To this, Surat Bajra agreed.

At once both the men became sparrows and alighted in a wheat field. To his chagrin, the stalk upon which the lama was perched weighed down heavily while the other, upon which perched the Nepalese priest, was not even slightly bent. To show that his bag of sin was not as heavy as that of the lama, Surat Bajra changed himself the next moment into a pigeon. And yet the stalk of wheat did not bend under him.

At this the lama was angrier than ever and changing himself into a hawk, the enemy of all pigeons, he swooped down murderously upon Surat Bajra.

Thus attacked, the pigeon flew into a cave and regained his human shape. Meanwhile, the lama changed himself into a snake and crawled in.

Finding himself cornered, Surat Bajra invoked the goddess Guheswori for aid, and she gave him a sword with which he cut the snake to pieces.

After this, the priest took to his journey without further trouble. But on his arrival in Kathmandu, Surat Bajra learnt that he had been rumoured dead. As his family had actually gone through the ceremonies for the dead, he could not go home. So, to let his family know that he had not died, he took off his shoes and sent them home to his family. Then he went to the temple of Guheswori, and was never seen again.

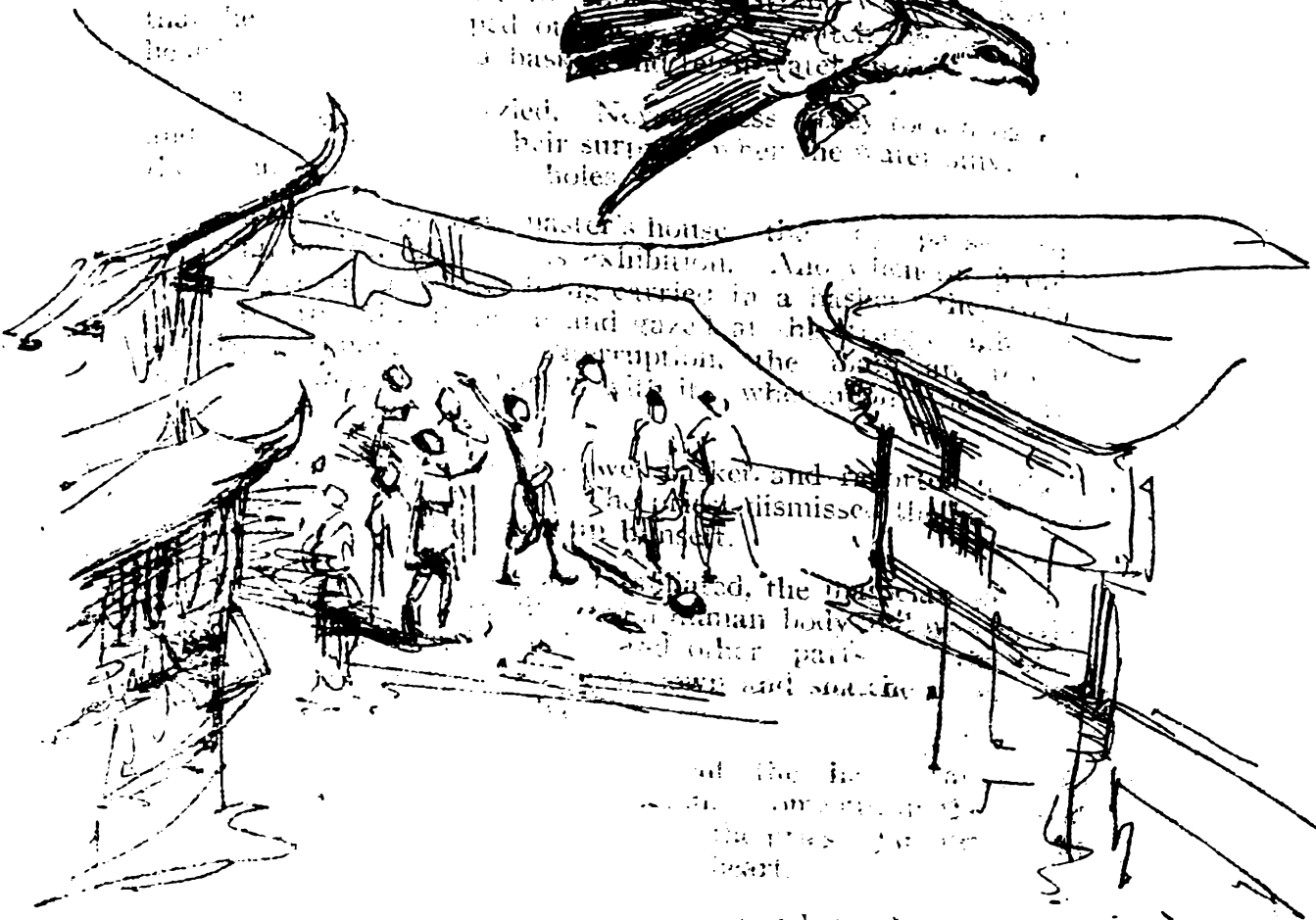
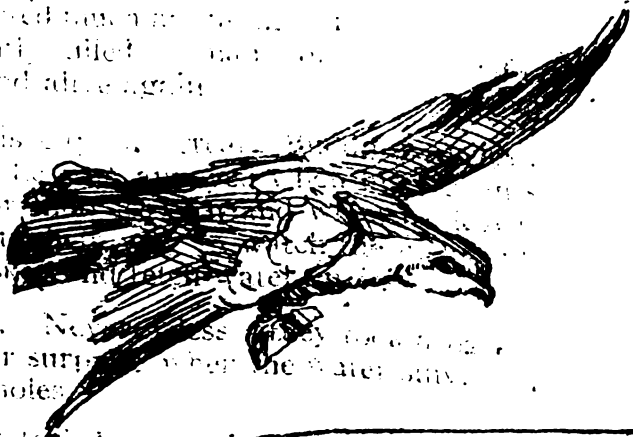




# The People and The Mountain

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“An eagle swooped down and snatched away the heart . . . .”

# The Priest And The Magician

Once there came to Kathmandu a magician from a southern country. He attracted much attention to himself by an exhibit in which he apparently killed a man, tore him apart, and then made him whole and alive again.

Now there lived in this city a great Buddhist priest, Jamuna by name. One day he was annoyed when his students arrived late at his house for their lessons, and when he learnt that the boys had stopped on their way to watch the magician, he asked them to take a basket and fetch water in it.

The boys were puzzled. Nevertheless they took a basket and went. But imagine their surprise when the water stayed in the bamboo basket, full of holes.

On the way to their master's house, the boys passed the magician holding his famous exhibition. And when the people gathered there saw water being carried in a basket, they turned away from the magician and gazed at the strange sight in wonder. Annoyed at this interruption, the magician took a small rock and hit the basket with it, whereupon the water spilled right away.

The boys returned with a wet basket and reported to their master what had happened. The priest dismissed the boys and he decided to see the magician himself.

After the boys had gone humiliated, the magician went on with his show. He had dissected a human body and was in the process of putting the heart and other parts of the body together when an eagle swooped down and snatched away the heart from the magician's hand.

The man was distressed. Without the heart, his magic would not make the man alive again. Someone in the crowd then told him that it must have been the priest, Jamuna, in the form of an eagle, that took away the heart.

The man went to the priest's house where he found the housewife in the kitchen. She sat by the stove, using her legs

as fuel to cook her rice. The magician was dumbfounded at what he saw and he wondered what the husband of this woman would not do.

The magician begged for the restoration of the heart the priest had taken away. The woman told him that she knew nothing about it, but she directed him to her husband.

The magician found the priest watching a flock of sheep. He held the branch of a tree with his toes so that the sheep might feed on the green leaves off the tree top. When the man approached Jamuna and humbly asked for the heart, the priest said to him, "If you will hold the branch awhile, I shall fetch the heart from my house."

However, no sooner had the priest let go his hold on the tree than away went the branch, with the magician holding on to it, high up in the air, to the great amusement of some people who were working in the fields nearby.

Jamuna then took the man with him to his house and restored the heart to him.

The magician at once packed up his things and left, promising to himself never to venture to visit Kathmandu again.



## A Good Turn Remembered

“My time has come,” said a woman to her husband when she felt within her the pangs of childbirth. “I want a drop of wine to drink.”

But they were very poor folks. There was not a single penny left in the house. “You must wait,” said the man. He took an axe and went to the mountains where he lopped the branches off a tree. Then he hurried back to town with the wood and sold it for a little money.

People were playing the game of chance in the streets and our poor man was tempted into joining one. How miserable he felt when what little money he had from the sale of the wood was gone within a few minutes.

Vexed beyond measure, the man arrived at his home only to find that his wife had fallen into a swoon. Seeing her thus, he was driven to despair and he took a knife and went to a nearby copse with the thought of putting an end to his life.

Just as he was going to kill himself, a robber, Saincha, by name, arrived and stopped him in his desperate attempts. When he heard the poor man’s story, Saincha was filled with pity and he told him to wait until he returned.

It did not take long for the robber to steal a bag of gold from a merchant’s house. He returned to the man and gave him the gold.

Overjoyed at the unexpected turn of events, the poor man thanked Saincha profusely and returned to his home where his wife had meantime given birth to a son. With his gold, the man was now able to take good care of his wife. Soon she regained her health, and they lived happily together.

Before long, the man became a trader and in no time he was a rich man. Grateful to Saincha, the robber, the man purchased a large tract of land near the village of Tokha to support a trust, which he established for the purpose of performing an annual religious service in memory of his benefactor.

It is said that the annual ceremony for Saincha is still performed by the descendants of the man to whom he had done a good turn.

