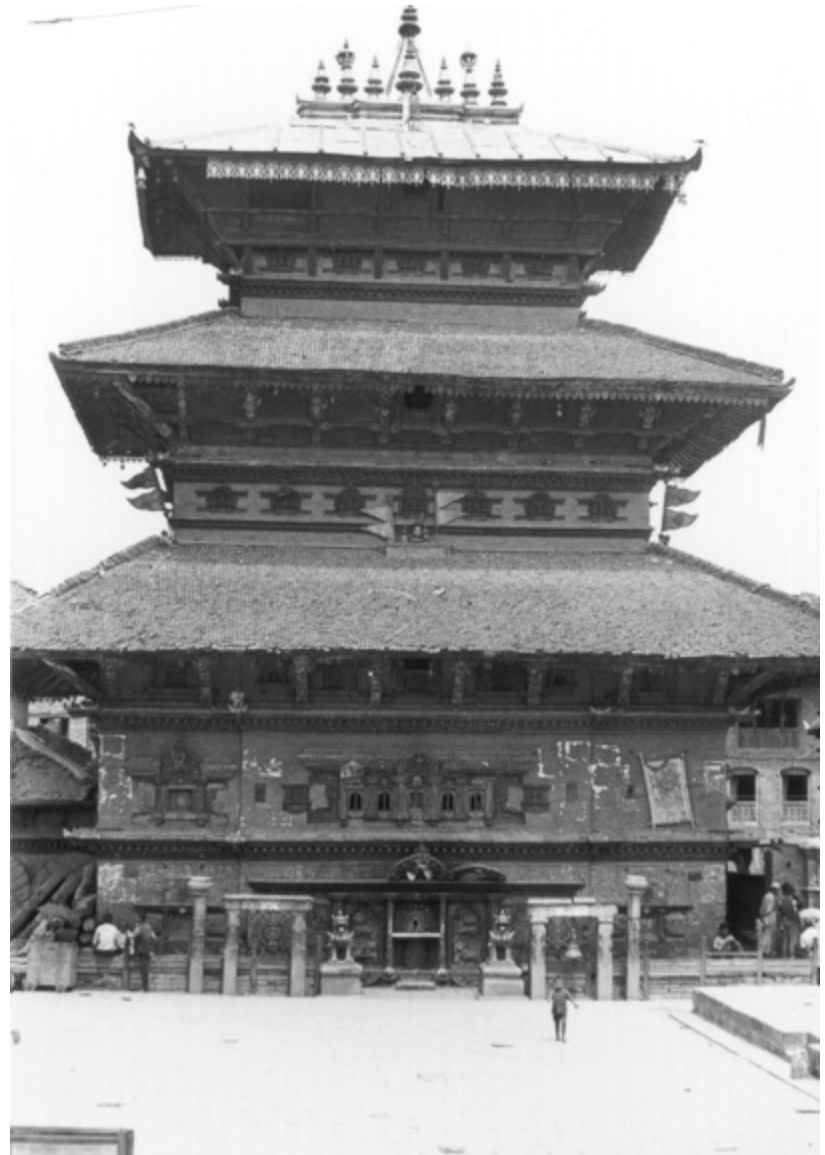
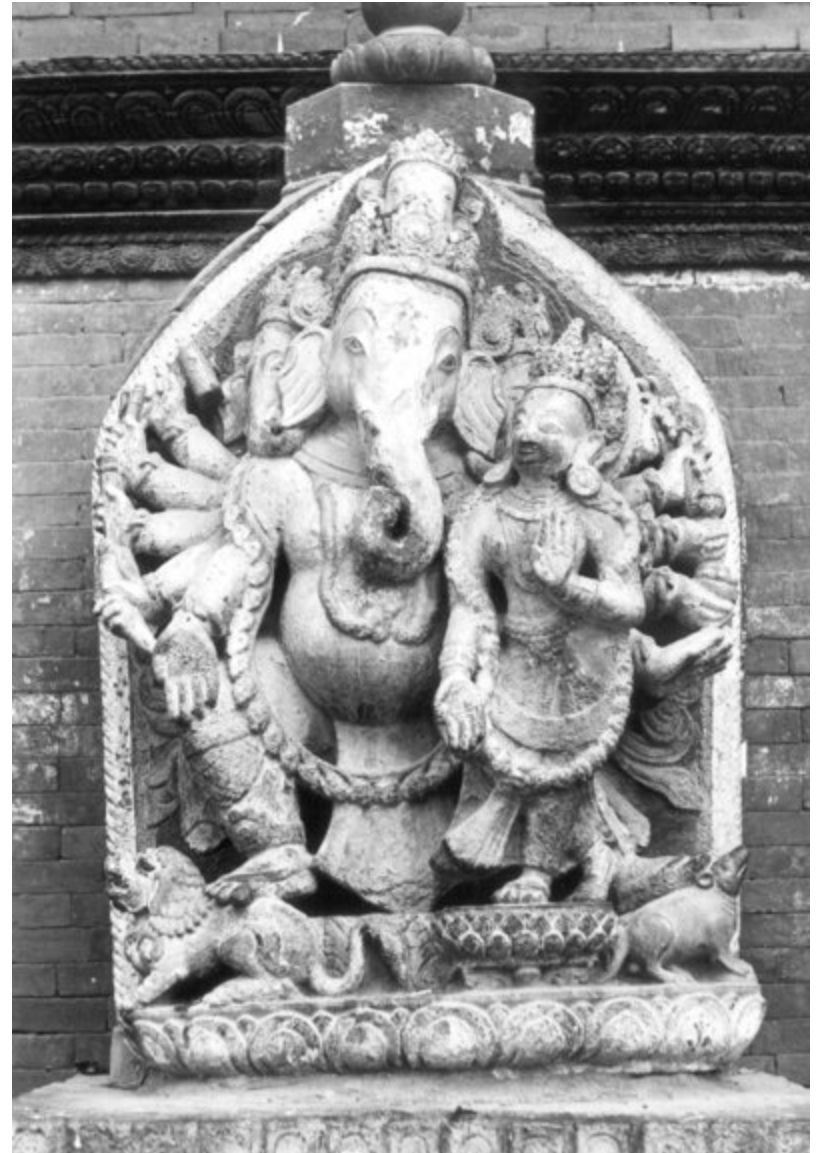


This is a large (by Nepali standards) pagoda in the Kathmandu Valley, either in the town of Patan or in Bhaktapur. It's nearly been 20 years since I was there, but my guess is that it's in Bhaktapur. Pagodas are designed to have an odd number of roofs, at least in Nepal. There is a reason for this, which I can't remember. Many Nepalis claim that the pagoda architecture originated in Nepal, but I have heard that assertion contested.



This is a statue in the Kathmandu Valley of the elephant-headed Hindu god Ganesh, also known as Ganapati. In traditional Hindu and Buddhist iconography, the consort of the deity is always on the deity's left. Ganesh's vehicle, a mouse, is under his right foot. This form of Ganesh is tantric. Tantric forms usually display multiple arms (Ganesh normally has two) and will show the deity and his consort as a couple (*mithuna*).



Another statue in Kathmandu, evidently made of brass or bronze. It appears to be of the goddess Saraswati, a patron (matron?) of knowledge (a kind of Hindu equivalent of the Greek Athena). My guess is based on the peacock on which she stands, which is the vehicle of Saraswati.



The Krishna Temple in Patan (a town in the Kathmandu Valley). It has the distinction of being the largest stone temple in Nepal.





Purna was with me in the Kathmandu Valley in the summer of 1982. He is seen here, just outside the Krishna Temple, if I remember correctly.



“Kathmandu” is derived from Sanskritic roots meaning “wooden temples.” The wooden carvings of the temples in Kathmandu, such as what is shown here, are ornate and fantastic. I believe that this is Krishna dancing on the hood of a poisonous snake, which (according to legend) haunted his childhood home.

A pillar supporting the roof of a wooden pagoda; a photo taken with a telescopic lens. I cannot identify the deity. Some kind of grotesque sacrifice is shown below, apparently of a human. Hindus and Buddhists have never sacrificed humans, of course. It is possibly intended to depict a scene in hell, similar to the grotesque carvings depicting hell that one may see in medieval European cathedrals. This photo was taken in Kathmandu.



Another carved pagoda support, very likely from the same pagoda as in the previous photograph, or in any case, from a pagoda very close by. It depicts Vamana, or Baman, the dwarf incarnation of Vishnu. His right foot rests near a demon he is in the process of vanquishing. With his left foot, he steps towards the moon in one bound. The winged figure in the lower right is Vishnu's vehicle, the man-bird named Garuda. (Vishnu was originally a sky god, like Zeus, or Jupiter, and like them was associated with an eagle or fire-bird.) Vishnu appeared as a dwarf before the demon, and the demon granted Vishnu all the space he could span in three steps. As the dwarf stepped, he expanded to cosmic proportions. His first step reached the moon; his second, the edge of the universe; his third landed on the demon's head, extinguishing his life.



A wooden pagoda pillar showing
Ganesh.



This is probably the Hindu goddess Lakshmi. My guess is based on the fact that this goddess wears a long necklace and holds a lotus flower, which are typical accoutrements of Lakshmi. An erotic scene is shown below. Many Hindu temples will show the most graphic scenes of sexuality quite openly. This is usually explained as representing the *lila* of the deities (i.e, their play, sport or drama, which in its largest sense embraces the entire spectrum of phenomenal existence). Despite this frank and public depiction of sexuality, Hindu society is much more demure than contemporary western society, an irony which many westerners find quite astonishing..



Another carved pillar, the subject of which I can't identify.



A statue of Garuda on a pedestal, facing in prayer towards an image of Vishnu within a temple. Garuda, as mentioned previously, is the vehicle of Vishnu. This picture was taken in Patan, a town in the Kathmandu Valley.



A typical street scene in a Nepali town, this being in Patan, in the Kathmandu Valley. The large stone Krishna Temple is on the left, and the statue of Garuda shown in the previous slide is shown in the foreground.. Note the cattle in the street. They have the right-of-way, being sacred animals. Nepal is the only officially Hindu nation in the world. The cow is protected by law, and is the national animal. This is one market where American fast food will never make any headway.





A telescopic photo of the top of Swayambhunath, a Buddhist shrine in the Kathmandu Valley. (I believe I sent a copy of this slide to you already, but it's worth repeating!)



Swayambhunath is on top of a hill in the western Kathmandu Valley, as I recall. Note the wires; Kathmandu is, or at least was, one of the few areas in Nepal with electricity.



A monkey at Swayambhunath. Wild monkeys are often found in Hindu and Buddhist temples, and are considered sacred.

The stairway to Swayambhunath;
a pilgrim's route.

