

Kathmandu

by Vikram Seth

Focus Spot

Key Points:

- The writer Vikram Seth wrote about his experience of hitchhiking from China to India via Tibet and Nepal in his travelogue titled 'Heaven Lake'.
- The chapter 'Kathmandu' is an excerpt from the travelogue written. It depicts Seth's description of the two famous temples of Kathmandu: Pashupatinath and Baudhnath Shrine.
- Vikram Seth visit Pashupatinath temple and finds that only Hindus are allowed for 'darshan'. He notices an ambiance of feverish disorder in and around the temple due to the crowd of priests, hawkers, devotees, tourists, cows, monkeys, pigeons and dogs that roam through the temple grounds.
- The author witnesses the people performing different rituals on the holy bank of Bagmati River.
- He then visits the Baudhnath Shrine which seems to him as the Haven of Quietness. There is complete silence and calm and tranquil atmosphere.
- Tibetan immigrants were selling felt bags, silver jewellery antiques etc on the pavement of the roads.
- The author notes that Kathmandu is more religious, vivid and mercenary city.
- It is the noisiest and busiest city because of thousands of tourists visiting, vendors shouting, playing of film songs, honking horns of the vehicles.
- He enjoys his stay in Kathmandu by visiting Pashupatinath and Baudhnath shrine and by roaming around in the busy market eating corn –on the cob, reading comics and reader's digest.
- Vikram is enchanted by the melodious songs played by the flute seller. He finds the way of selling his flute to be very different from other hawkers.
- The author becomes tired and feels home sick and decides to stop hitchhiking further and to return home by air.