

Summary

In this chapter, the writer Vikram Seth describes his visit to Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal. He visited two temples there - one was the Pashupatinath temple which is a pilgrimage for the Hindus and the other was the Baudhnath temple which is a holy place for the Buddhists.

At the Pashupatinath temple, entry was restricted to Hindus. There was a lot of chaos with priests, tourists, pilgrims and animals flocking the place. The holy river Bagmati which flows near the temple was being polluted by washerwomen who were washing clothes in it, children who were bathing in it and residents who were throwing dry, withered flowers in it. Small shrines protruded on to the stone platform and it was said that when the platform would emerge completely, then the goddess would emerge out of it and end the Kaliyug. The scene at the Baudhnath temple was opposite to that at the Pashupatinath temple. It was a huge white coloured dome surrounded by an outer road. The place was quiet and calm. There was a Tibetan market outside the temple where Tibetan refugees were selling bags, garments and jewellery.

Kathmandu has a variety of things to offer. It has religious sanctity, it is a business hub and a tourist destination. There are shops selling postcards, antiques, chocolates, imported cosmetics, camera film rolls and utensils. A variety of sounds could be heard in the streets. The music blaring out of the radios, honking of the car horns, ringing of the bicycle bells, moo sounds of the cows as they obstructed the motorcycles passing by and the screaming vendors selling their wares. Vikram ate a marzipan bar, a corn on the cob roasted on charcoal fire and garnished with lemon juice, salt and chili powder and drank coca cola to digest it. He bought some love story comics and a Reader's Digest too.

On his way back to Delhi, he considered going by an adventurous route. It would be a bus or train journey till Patna, then a boat ride up the Ganga river till Allahabad. It would be followed by a boat journey on the Yamuna river to Delhi. As he was tired, he chucked the idea and took a direct flight from Kathmandu to New Delhi the next day.

Outside his hotel, he saw a flute seller. He held a pole out of which many flutes popped out like the thorns on a porcupine's body. The man stood quietly and would take out a different flute, play it for a couple of minutes and replace it with another one. Once in a while he would sell one of them mindlessly. He played the flute meditatively. He was unlike other hawkers who screamed to sell their wares. The writer got attracted to the music of the flute. Flutes are played in many regions of the world and they vary in appearance, names and the music that they produce. The sound of a flute resembles human voice as it is played by exhaling the breath and its music also pauses when a person inhales a breath.

Question and Answers

Answer these questions in one or two words or in short phrases.

1. Name the two temples the author visited in Kathmandu.

A. The author visited the pashupatinath and the Baudhnath temples in Kathmandu.

2. The writer says, "All this I wash down with Coca Cola." What does 'all this' refer to?

A. 'All this' refers to all the food items - the marzipan bar and the corn on the cob that he ate.

3. What does Vikram Seth compare to the quills of a porcupine?

A. Vikram Seth compares the flutes protruding out of the flute - seller's pole to the quills of a porcupine.

4. Name five kinds of flutes.

A. Five kinds of flutes are the reed neh, the recorder, the Japanese shakuhachi, the deep bansuri of Hindustani classical music and the clear or breathy flutes of South America.

Answer each question in a short paragraph.

1. What difference does the author note between the flute seller and the other hawkers?

A. The author noticed that the flute seller was calm and quiet. He did not scream to sell his wares like other hawkers did.

2. What is the belief at Pashupatinath about the end of Kaliyug?

A. The belief at the Pashupatinath temple about the end of Kaliyug is that when the small shrine will protrude completely, then the goddess will emerge out of it. The goddess will bring an end to the evil period of Kaliyug.

3. The author has drawn powerful images and pictures. Pick out three examples each of

(i) the atmosphere of 'febrile confusion' outside the temple of Pashupatinath (for example: some people trying to get the priest's attention are elbowed aside...)

(ii) the things he sees

(iii) the sounds he hears

A. (i) the atmosphere of 'febrile confusion' outside the temple of Pashupatinath (for example: some people trying to get the priest's attention are elbowed aside...)

a) There are so many worshippers that some people trying to get the priest's attention are elbowed aside by others

b) By the main gate, a party of saffron-clad Westerners struggle for permission to enter.

c) A fight breaks out between two monkeys.

(ii) the things he sees

a) fruit sellers

b) flute sellers

c) hawkers of postcards

(iii) the sounds he hears

a) Film songs blare out from the radios

b) car horns sound

c) vendors shout out their wares.

Answer the following questions in not more than 100–150 words each.

1. Compare and contrast the atmosphere in and around the Baudhnath shrine with the Pashupatinath temple.

A. The atmosphere at the Baudhnath temple is calm and quiet. The temple has a huge white dome with an outer ring road. The place is relaxing as there are no noises or crowds around.

On the contrary, the atmosphere at the Pashupatinath temple is chaotic. There is a lot of confusion and noise as tourists, pilgrims, priests and animals roam around. As entry is restricted to Hindus only, foreigners dressed as sadhus can be seen arguing with the guards to gain entry. A rush of people can be seen elbowing each other to gain entry. One can see monkeys fighting and climbing on the shivling in the temple. There is a lot of activity going on near the holy river Bagmati that flows near the temple.

2. How does the author describe Kathmandu's busiest streets?

A. Kathmandu's busiest streets are lined with shops and stalls selling different things. There are small temples having deities adorned with flowers. The vendors scream to attract buyers. There are shops selling various things, namely, chocolates, camera film rolls, imported cosmetics, postcards, utensils and antiques. There are hawkers selling fruits, flutes, postcards for the tourists.

3. "To hear any flute is to be drawn into the commonality of all mankind." Why does the author say this?

A. The author says this because the sound produced by the flute is the closest to human voice. It is an extension of human voice as it is produced by exhaling into it.

Grammar Exercises

Match the phrasal verbs in Column A with their meanings in Column B.

A	B
(i) break out	(a) to come apart due to force
(ii) break off	(b) end a relationship
(iii) break down	(c) break and enter illegally; unlawful trespassing

(iv) break away (from someone)	(d) of start suddenly, (usually a fight a war or a disease)
(v) break up	(e) to escape from someone's grip
(vi) break into	(f) stop working

A.

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Use the suffixes -ion or -tion to form nouns from the following verbs. Make the necessary changes in the spellings of the words.

Example: proclaim – proclamation

cremate	cremation	act	action	exhaust	exhaustion
invent	invention	tempt	temptation	immigrate	immigration
direct	direction	meditate	meditation	imagine	imagination
dislocate	dislocation	associate	association	dedicate	dedication

Now fill in the blanks with suitable words from the ones that you have formed.

- (i) Mass literacy was possible only after the _____ of the printing machine.
- (ii) Ramesh is unable to tackle the situation as he lacks _____.
- (iii) I could not resist the _____ to open the letter.
- (iv) Hardwork and _____ are the main keys to success.
- (v) The children were almost fainting with _____ after being made to stand in the sun.

A.

- (i) Mass literacy was possible only after the invention of the printing machine.
- (ii) Ramesh is unable to tackle the situation as he lacks action.
- (iii) I could not resist the temptation to open the letter.
- (iv) Hardwork and dedication are the main keys to success.
- (v) The children were almost fainting with exhaustion after being made to stand in the sun.

Use capital letters, full stops, question marks, commas and inverted commas wherever necessary in the following paragraph.

an arrogant lion was wandering through the jungle one day he asked the tiger who is stronger than you you O lion replied the tiger who is more fierce than a leopard asked the lion you sir replied the leopard he marched up to an elephant and asked the same question the elephant picked him up in his trunk swung him in the air and threw him down look said the lion there is no need to get mad just because you don't know the answer

A.

An arrogant lion was wandering through the jungle. One day, he asked the tiger, "who is stronger than you?". "You, O Lion!," replied the tiger. "Who is more fierce than a leopard," asked the lion. "You, sir," replied the leopard. He marched up to an elephant and asked the same question. The elephant picked him up in his trunk, swung him in the air and threw him down. "Look," said the lion, "there is no need to get mad just because you don't know the answer."

Fill in the blanks with the correct form of the verb in brackets.

- (i) The heart is a pump that _____ (send) the blood circulating through our body. The pumping action _____ (take place) when the left ventricle of the heart _____ (contract). This _____ (force) the blood out into the arteries, which _____ (expand) to receive the oncoming blood.
- (ii) The African lungfish can live without water for up to four years. During a drought it _____ (dig) a pit and _____ (enclose) itself in a capsule of slime

and earth, leaving a tiny opening for air. The capsule _____ (dry) and _____ (harden), but when rain _____ (come), the mud _____ (dissolve) and the lungfish _____ (swim) away.

(iii) MAHESH : We have to organise a class party for our teacher.
_____ (Do) anyone play an instrument?

VIPUL : Rohit _____ (play) the flute.

MAHESH : _____ (Do) he also act?

VIPUL : No, he _____ (compose) music.

MAHESH : That's wonderful!

A.

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