

- Kathmandu Summary

Kathmandu Summary

The chapter "Kathmandu" by Vikram Seth is a vivid description of two famous religious sites in Kathmandu city: the Pashupatinath Temple and the Boudhnath Stupa. The author narrates his observations and experiences at these places, highlighting the cultural and religious atmosphere.

At the Pashupatinath Temple, the entrance is marked with a sign stating "Entrance for the Hindus only." The temple grounds are crowded and chaotic, with people pushing to reach the Lord. Various animals roam freely, and monkeys are seen fighting. A group of Westerners claiming to be Hindus tries to enter but is denied by the policeman. The holy Bagmati river flows beside the temple, where washerwomen work on its banks. A small shrine partially submerged in the river is believed to hold a goddess who will one day emerge, ending the current era of 'Kalyug'.

In contrast, the Boudhnath Stupa exudes a sense of stillness and calm. A road encircles the temple, with small shops run by Tibetan immigrants lining its outer edge. The area is quiet and peaceful.

The city of Kathmandu itself is bustling and crowded, with streets filled with fruit sellers, flute sellers, hawkers of postcards, and shops selling western cosmetics, film rolls, and chocolates. The author enjoys wandering through these streets but eventually feels homesick and decides to return home. Near his hotel, a flute seller's carefree style captures his attention, reminding him of the universal nature of music and humanity.

Key Words

- **Proclaims:** Announces or declares something publicly or officially.
- **Utter:** Complete or absolute.
- **Immersed:** Submerged or covered by a liquid.
- **Stillness:** A state of calm and quietness.
- **Hawkers:** People who sell goods by shouting their wares in public places.
- **Indulges:** Allows oneself to enjoy something, often excessively or without restraint.
- **Universal:** Present or existing everywhere; shared by all people.

Practice Set

Level 1 – Easy

- Where is the Pashupatinath Temple located?
- What flows beside the Pashupatinath Temple?
- What is the sign at the entrance of the Pashupatinath Temple?

Level 2 – Moderate

- Describe the atmosphere at the Boudhnath Stupa.
- Why does the author feel homesick in Kathmandu?
- Explain the significance of the small shrine in the Bagmati river.

Level 3 – Challenging

- Analyze the contrast between the Pashupatinath Temple and the Boudhnath Stupa as described by the author.
- Discuss the universal nature of the flute as portrayed in the chapter.
- How does the author use the setting of Kathmandu to reflect cultural diversity?

Answer Key

Level 1 – Easy

- The Pashupatinath Temple is located in Kathmandu city.
- The holy Bagmati river flows beside the Pashupatinath Temple.
- The sign at the entrance says "Entrance for the Hindus only."

Level 2 – Moderate

- The Boudhnath Stupa has a calm and still atmosphere, with a road around it and small shops of Tibetan immigrants on its outer edge. It is peaceful and quiet.
- The author feels homesick after wandering through the busy streets and decides to return home.
- The small shrine in the Bagmati river is half submerged and believed to hold a goddess who will emerge one day, ending the era of 'Kalyug'.

Level 3 – Challenging

- The Pashupatinath Temple is crowded, chaotic, and full of activity, while the Boudhnath Stupa is peaceful and still, showing two different aspects of religious life in Kathmandu.
- The flute is described as a universal instrument found in many cultures, symbolizing the commonality of mankind through music.
- The setting of Kathmandu with its temples, busy streets, and diverse people reflects the rich cultural diversity and religious harmony of the city.

Quick Reference

- **Pashupatinath Temple:** Hindu temple with restricted entry, crowded and lively.
- **Boudhnath Stupa:** Buddhist shrine, calm and peaceful.
- **Bagmati River:** Flows beside Pashupatinath, site of a submerged shrine.
- **Flute:** Symbolizes universal music and human connection.

Glossary

- **Proclaims:** Announces officially.
- **Utter:** Complete.
- **Immersed:** Submerged in liquid.
- **Stillness:** Calmness.
- **Hawkers:** Street sellers.
- **Indulges:** Enjoys freely.
- **Universal:** Common to all.

Prepzy