

Bhaktapur (11/4/2007 to 11/6/2006)

Bhaktapur is a beautifully preserved old city outside of Kathmandu. Many people visit Bhaktapur as a day trip from Kathmandu, but I had heard it was nicer to stay overnight there, so I switched buses in Kathmandu and move right on to Bhaktapur. Coming all the way from Gorkha, I fortuitously arrived after dark when all the tourist ticket booths were closed. Ordinarily, as a foreigner, I would have had to pay \$10 to get into the old section of the city, but I was able to walk right in. I'm not a big fan of double pricing, and have no moral issues in avoiding it if I can, especially when I found out that Chinese tourists get in for a little less than a buck. Anyone from China that is traveling in Nepal I'm sure has a lot more money than me, because in my experience most Chinese don't travel cheap. In another anomaly I actually scored a great deal on a hotel room through a tout, which almost never happens. I usually avoid touts like the plague but as it was dark and I didn't know where the bus had dropped me off, I went along with the guy. After almost walking out to find another place, I got a room with an attached hot shower and bathroom (typical in the west but a luxury for me here) for about \$5 (a bit more than I typically like to pay for a room) in a beautiful old building with views over the Tachupal Tole, one of Bhaktapur's old squares. The only drawback was the 6 foot ceilings, a minor inconvenience for someone who is 6 foot 3 inches. I enjoyed Bhaktapur quite a bit. It was a wonderfully photogenic place, and unlike other preserved towns it felt like a real city and not something out of a theme park. There were businesses in the old part of town that catered to locals as well as the standard tourist shops and in the morning before the Kathmandu day trippers arrive and evenings after they leave, there were surprisingly few tourists around.

The afternoon of my second day in Bhaktapur I took a bus outside of town to the Temple of Changu Narayan and walked back through the rice fields and villages. It was a pleasant outing, but this presented somewhat of a problem since I arrived back when the ticket takers were out in full force. Having made it this far without paying the fee, I was not eager to shell out \$10 now, for my last night in town. I decided to sit down and wait out the ticket taker. As I sat, I talked to a couple Nepalis and then ran it another guy I had talked to before and we went to a local restaurant and passed the rest of the time over a glass of rice "beer." A beverage only described as beer because it has less alcohol than the rice wine, but which has no semblance to the taste of beer whatsoever. After my drink, the ticket taker had closed up shop and I returned to my "plush" room in Bhaktapur.



Selling vegetables in Tachupal Tole, Bhaktapur.



**View from my hotel room
over Tachupal Tole,
Bhaktapur.**



Tachupal Tole, Bhaktapur.



Man resting, Bhaktapur.



Nepali men hanging out in Bhaktapur.



Selling vegetables in Taumadhi Tole, Bhaktapur.



Woman tossing rice in Durbar Square, Bhaktapur.



Detail of the Golden Gate, Durbar Square, Bhaktapur.



Golden Gate, Durbar Square, Bhaktapur.



Detail of the Golden Gate, Durbar Square, Bhaktapur.



**Puppets for sale in
Tachupal Tole, Bhaktapur.**



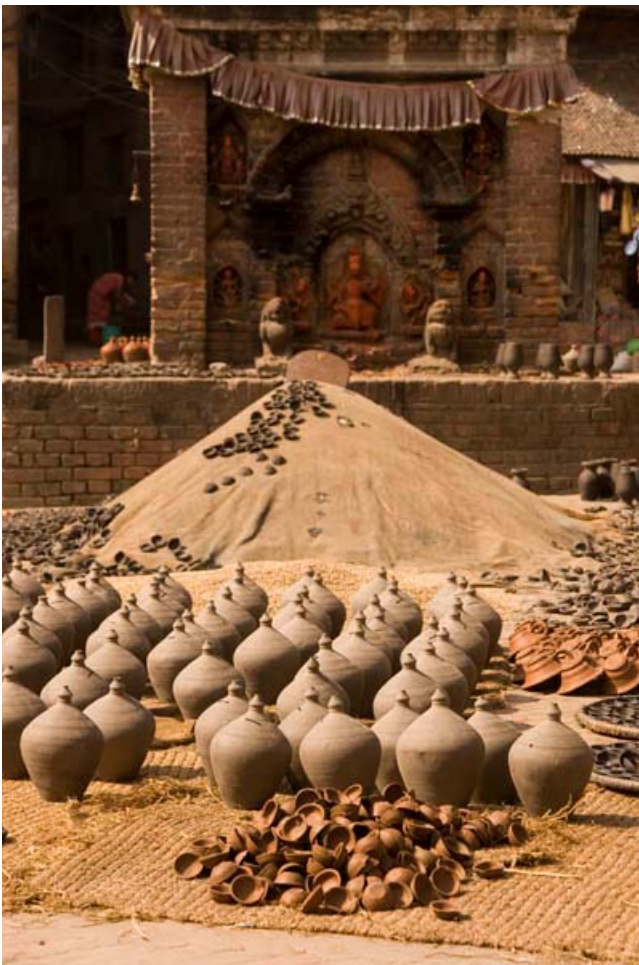
Drying rice, Bhaktapur.



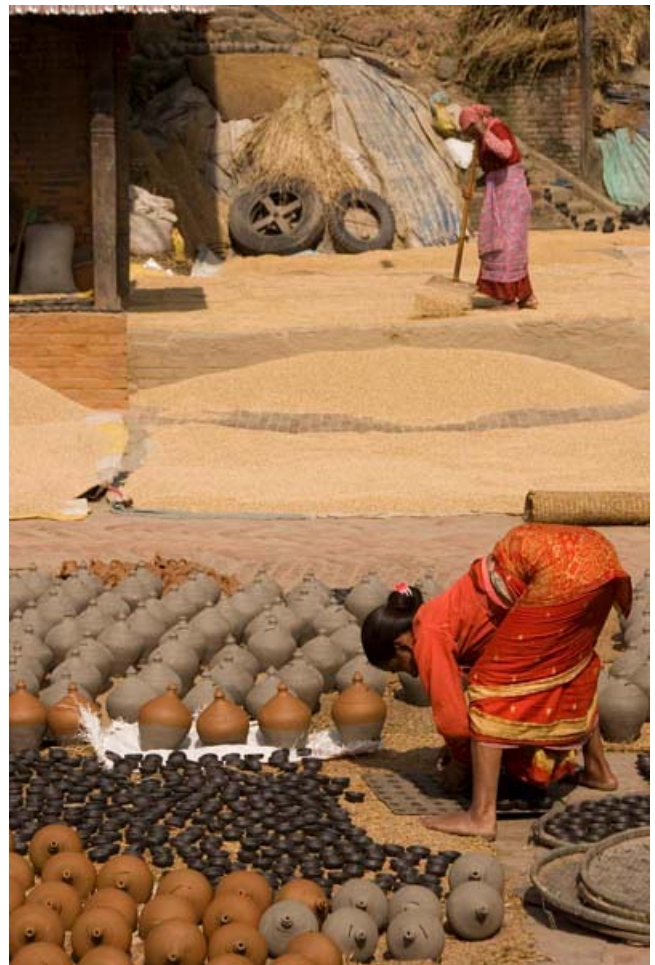
Young girl, Bhaktapur.



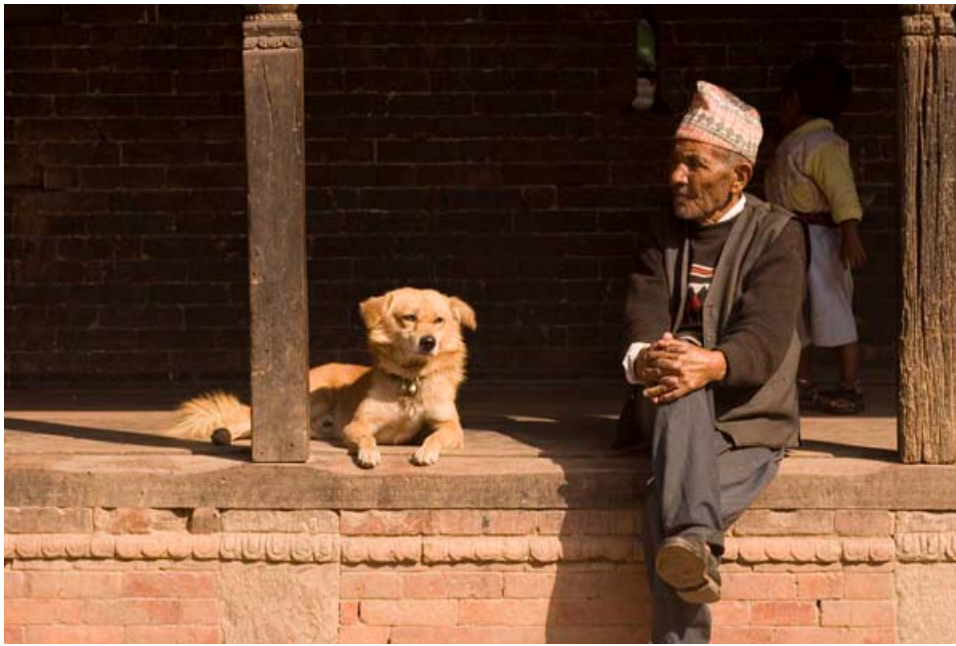
Drying pots, Potter's Square, Bhaktapur.



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Man and dog resting in Bhaktapur.



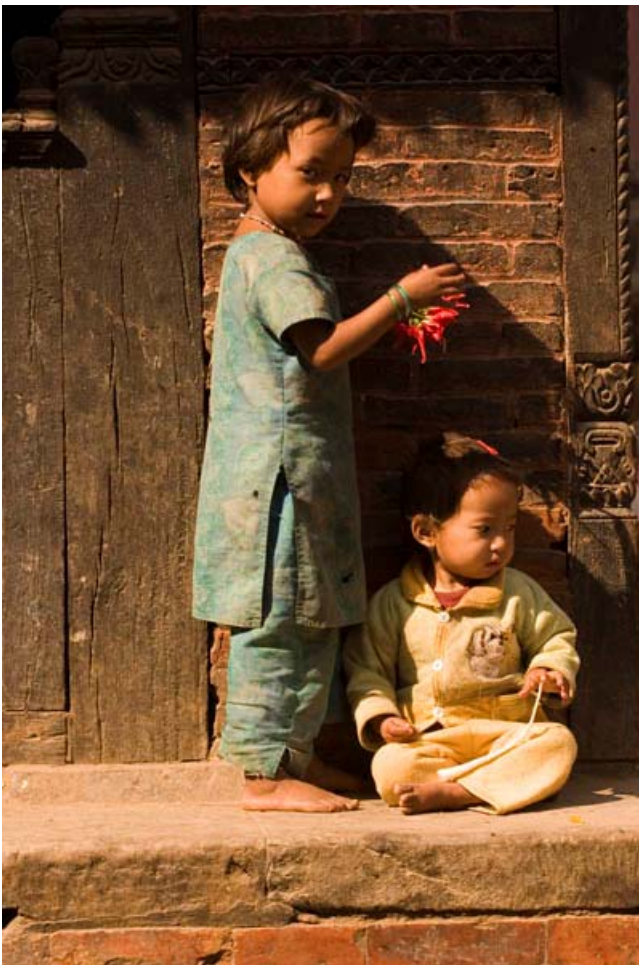
Bhaktapur.



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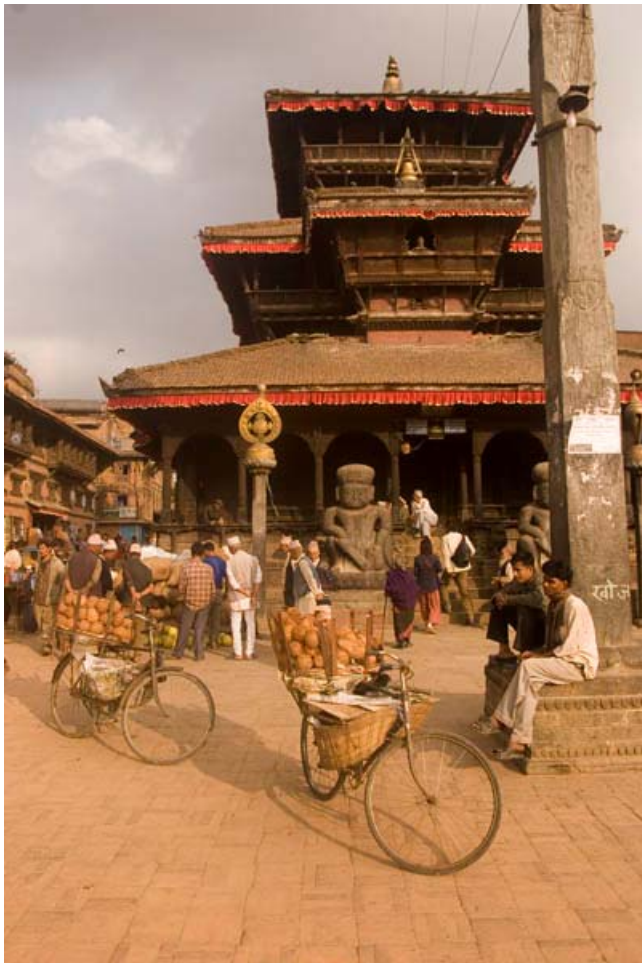
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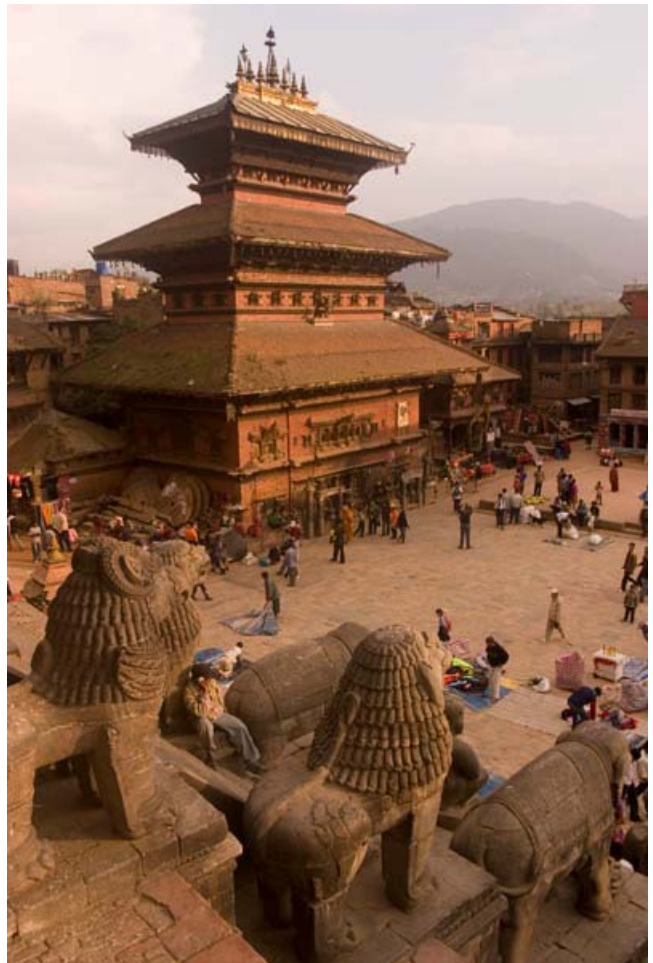
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Bhaktapur.



**Dattatreya Temple, Tachupal Tole,
Bhaktapur.**



**Bhairabnath Temple, Taumadhi Tole,
Bhaktapur.**



Changu Narayan



Bhaktapur



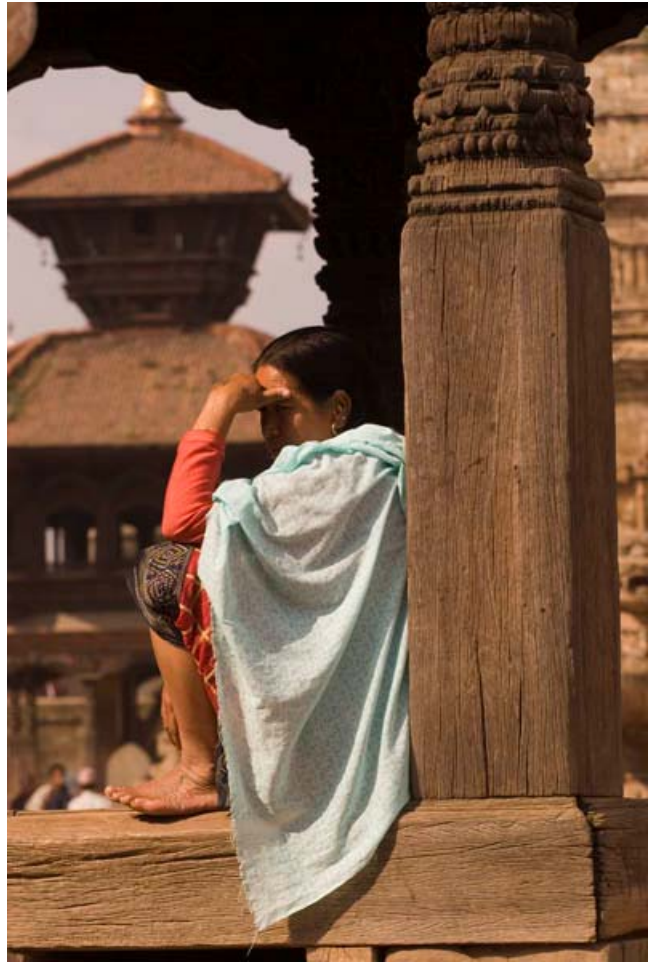
Bhaktapur



Changu Narayan



Sculpture on a water spout in Bhaktapur



Woman resting in Durbar Square, Bhaktapur



Changu Narayan



Wood carving with garlands on a temple in Bhaktapur



Bhaktapur



Many of the temples in the Kathmandu valley have erotic scenes carved on the struts holding up the roof. Here the woman is “multitasking” as she washes her hair, Pashupatinath Temple, Bhaktapur.



The imagery is not limited to humans, in this case a couple of mating elephants in a position you are unlikely to see in the wild, Bhaktapur.