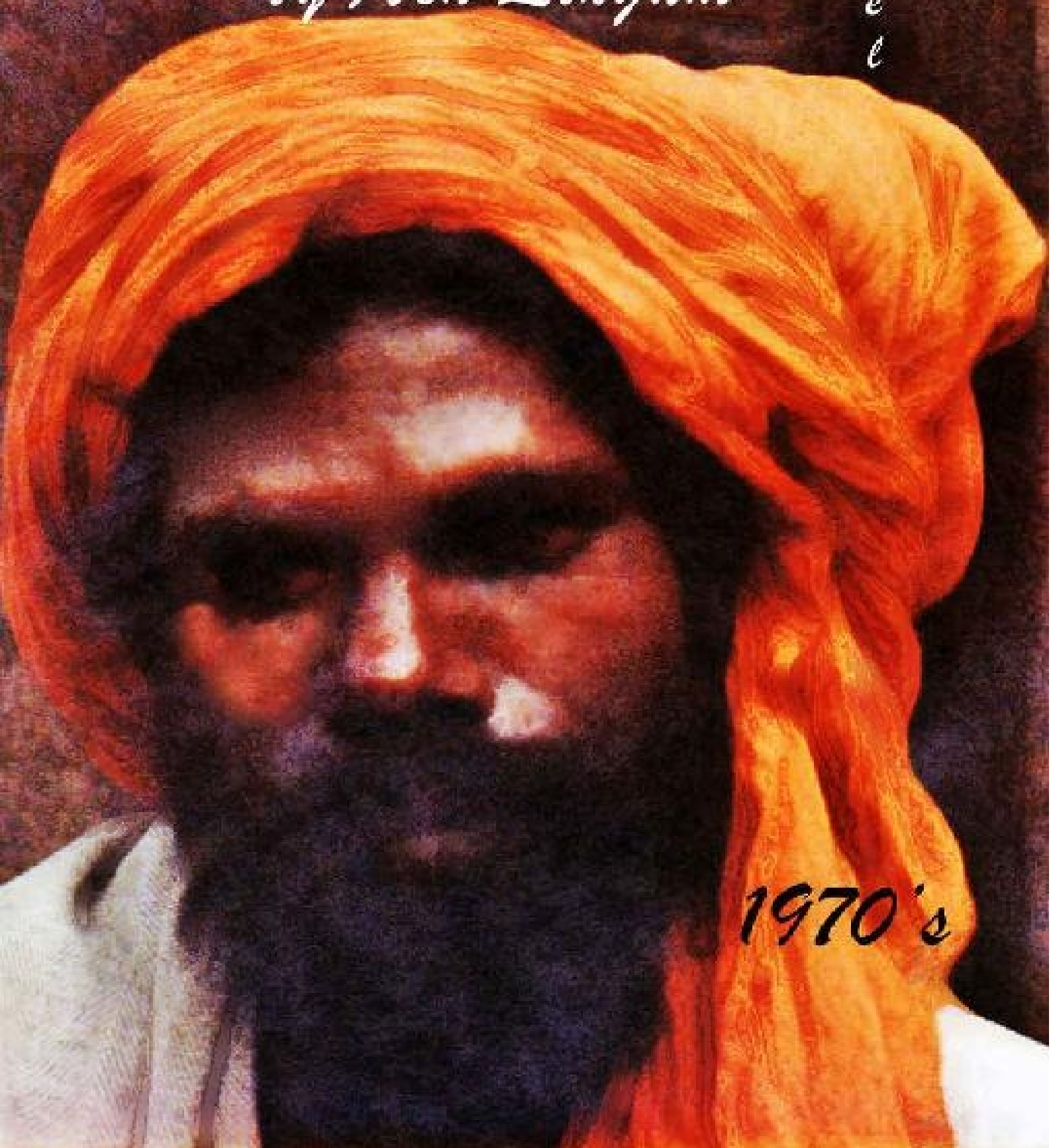


THE TRAIL TO KATHMANDU

by Ash Lingam

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1970's

The Trail to Kathmandu
(1970s)

by Ash Lingam

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The Trail to Kathmandu (1970's)

A Novel

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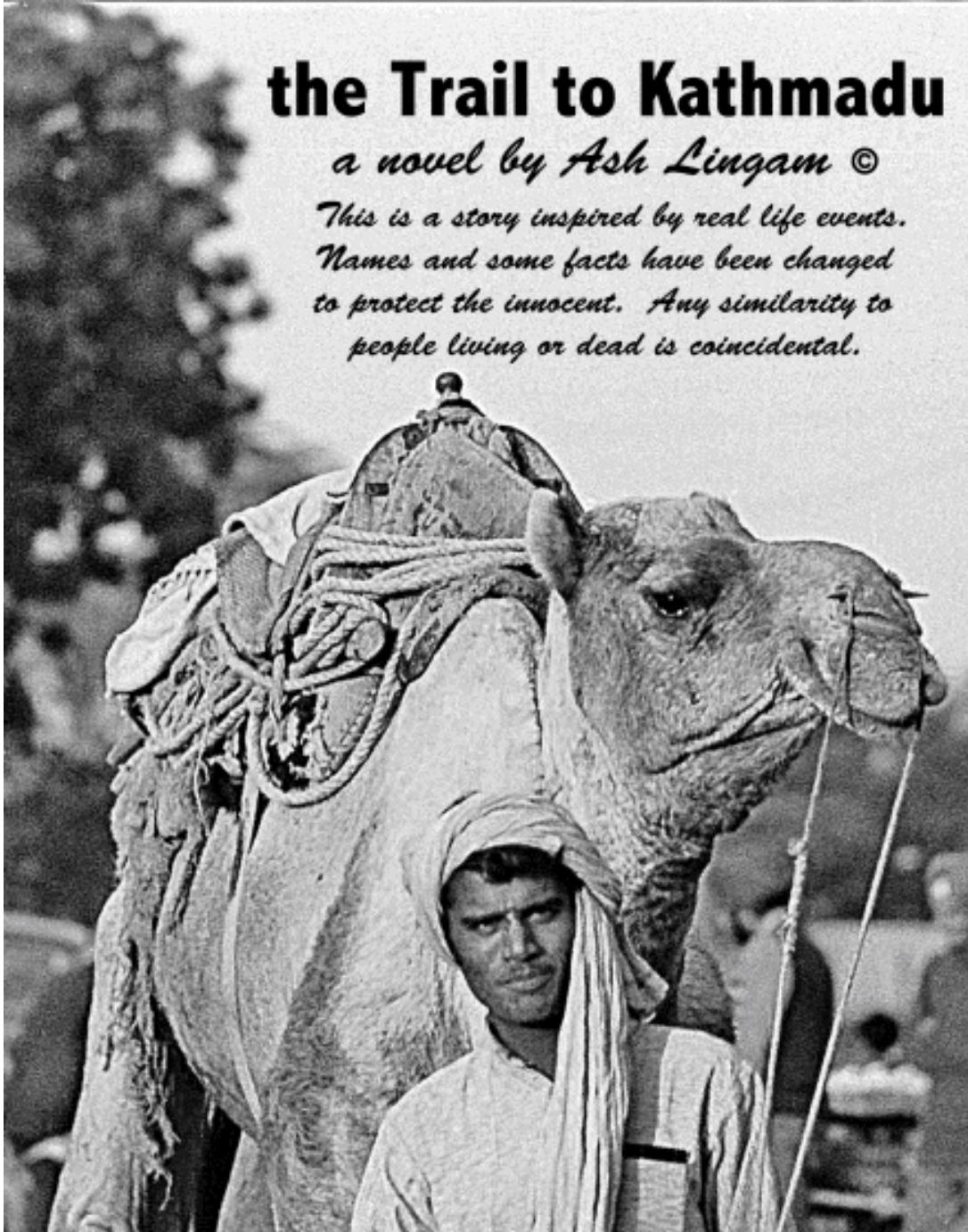
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the Trail to Kathmadu

a novel by Ash Lingam ©

*This is a story inspired by real life events.
Names and some facts have been changed
to protect the innocent. Any similarity to
people living or dead is coincidental.*



Camel in New Delhi

Thanks to my family for their support.

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Forward

This is a history of the life a Hippy in the 1970s. In the midst of the Hippy Movement. A young man, embarking on a four-year journey to the ends of the Earth, testing his limitations in every way possible way.

Escaping modern society, becoming a Hippy in a Middle-Class World and completely Dropping Out. We follow him as he travels some 13,000 miles overland in those four years and the countries in which he visited and lived. In such exotic destinations as Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, India, and Nepal.

Above all, it is about how one's life can be moved from one path to another due to the influences of our environment and moments of opportunity in one's life.

This book takes us on journeys and to places that can no longer be visited, no longer exist or have been changed by the influences of war and politics. There was a small window in time that permitted such travels.

It begins at a point when International borders were unclear, laws were lax, and one could survive in ways that today are neither acceptable nor possible. For this young man, it was a chance to look for the unknown and the unexplained in the most profound corners of Asia.

The Author

Chapter 1: Hippy Traveler

The strangely clad, long-haired young man had just boarded the international commercial flight. It flew out of Miami, Florida and started the long haul to the capital of India, New Delhi. How did he get to this point in his young life, where he was ready to leave everything behind and move on to faraway lands? Places he had only read about up to now? Who knows? He had read several books on Eastern cultures, and there were a few that motivated him, to the point of joining this small group of people, who challenged a modern social life that their parents and peers expected them to take.

The flight seemed to take forever. From Miami to New York, and then boarding Indian Air Lines for his first glimpse of the Indian culture. His immediate agenda was to visit the religious event, Kumbh Mela,* and get high with the Sadhus.* Other than that, he had few plans and even less money. It would appear he was not fully aware of what he was getting into.

As it was just turning dusk, the 747 was making its approach to the New Delhi airport. There was a low cloud of smoke covering the entire city from the millions of fires coming from the population's dwellings. It was creating a strange reflection of light above the mass of buildings while nearing the capital's airport, to land on the tarmac with a hard jolt, as if making a statement of his arrival.

What he remembered about those first moments in the Indian capital, was an intense, close heat and a pungent odor he had never experienced. A mixture of incense, wood and dung fires came from each home across the city night. After passing through customs and exiting onto the street, he encountered the overwhelming masses of people that were everywhere one looked.

It gave the man some second thoughts about such an adventure, although no going back now. It may have been better if he had gone with a friend, but he knew no one who had his desires for this particular adventure. The young man was destined to spend the next couple of years traveling alone or moving along these established trails, with people from all walks of life who he would meet along his journey.

This Levi clad hippy traveled by backpack, as was the standard method of the hippy movement. Half of his belongings consisted of books on Hinduism, Buddhism, and yoga. His travel guide was a book written by a social dropout named Richard Alpert, who later changed his name to Baba Ram Dass.

He and Timothy Leary, both psychology professors at Berkley and Harvard universities, were expelled for experimenting with LSD on humans. This book was a philosophical guide for many in the Indian part of the hippy trail. He not so much told you where to go, but what to look to achieve. More of a collection of unusual thoughts that only a person from that time will understand.

The objective was to 'Be here now' as Richard explained it. Not here yesterday, not here tomorrow, just be here now in the moment. Perhaps to enhance your capacity to absorb new ideas and the beliefs from other cultures through the consumption psychoactive herbs and drugs.

One of his stories told were of a Tibetan Monk. The Monk was on the ground when a tiger appeared, and he had to quickly climb a vine that grew up to the top of a cliff to save himself. When he arrived halfway to the top, another tiger appeared above him and he had to stop his climb.

Then the monk noticed right where he had stopped climbing the vine, was a little crop of strawberries. He picked one after another savoring each, as they were the best he could remember ever having eaten. Oblivious to the danger below and above him as he was living in that precise moment. Not past, nor future, only the present.

At the airport, the arriving passengers were overwhelmed with locals trying to get them into their rickshaws, Taxis and motor rickshaws to transport them to some hotels. Usually recommended by each one of these transport Wallas to assure their commission.

We must remember at this date in time, Google and the Internet did not yet exist, so the only manner to struggle to find your way around was talking to other travelers who were already on the trail. The young man met a girl in the airport who was from the US as well and suggested a room a government official rented on the side to earn some black-market dollars. So, for the first night, he stayed there. In the morning, realizing this was not the path he wanted to start on, he went straight off to the middle of the city, as the government official's room was too posh and expensive.

He had already parted with the American girl, because she was looking for a different India than he imagined. His second attempt at securing a place to sleep once again resulted in an error. It had seemed cheap to the green American with dollars, although somewhat crudely furnished.

After the first night, the manager took him aside and very politely explained to him that, "This hotel is not for hippy types, Sahib. We suggest you go to the guest house of Mrs. Marwah's, on 31 Hanuman Road behind Mohan Sing Palace." All the time, wobbling his head sideways, as Indians do in affirmation.

Off he went to Mrs. Marwah's guesthouse. A local stop for hippy travelers, arriving on the overland trail, inbound flights like his or people returning from such exotic places as Bombay, Goa, and Kathmandu.

Mrs. Marwah's guest house consisted of one large tent with Indian beds called palangs*. On the interior of this tent, it was full of Indian beds made of wood and rope, with just enough room to move between each row of cots to get to your designated sleeping spot. The persons who considered themselves hippies, in general, had very little or no money. Resulting in this being the most economical way to travel. It cost less than two dollars per day for the group dormitory, which consisted of a bed to pass the night on, along with the use of the guesthouse services if they, in fact, could be called that.

Often inexperienced Europeans and Americans made the mistake of taking traveler's checks on their travels, as they must be cashed in a bank for a low exchange rate. The more experienced journeyers held their small fortunes in US dollars or German marks, both being easy to exchange on the black market and easier to hide for safe keeping on one's person, than a voluminous stack of Rupees.

The first night was magical as everyone was from some different location on the planet. The majority, already having spent time in Asia. This discovery was a fountain of valuable information for the young traveler. Especially with him being a new arrival to the Far East.

Some journeyers following the path of Eastern Philosophy and others looking for places to score cheap hashish or grass. Many of them, looking for ways to take some of their illegal contraband back to their western homes to sell. That in exchange for more money to come back to Asia and continue their travel adventures. He heard no one comment that they did not intend to return or to stay as long as they possibly could. No matter what they had to do to accomplish their desire. To this handful of hippies, there was no better adventure on the planet.

At this point, many westerners considered smoking hash or grass an acceptable manner to get high, and to be a dealer of these relatively illegal substances, to be pretty cool. There were still not many narks* around, and if you had the long hair and followed the dress code, you were a person to be trusted. Not being worried about their fellow hippies turning them in for planning to smuggle hash back to Europe or America. Due to this confidence, people in the hostel talked openly about their plans and experiences.

Young Marley personally had two objectives. One was to score some hash and pass the nights away in the hippy smoke circles across India. The other was to get

information on how to travel near the borders of Northern India. First, he wanted to travel to Shimla and then onto Rishikesh by way of Hardwar and the Ganges River.

Marley had read the Beatles had been in Rishikesh in 1968 and seemed to have liked some of what he heard, although he did not plan to go to Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's Ashram as the Beatles did. It was far too commercial an Ashram for what Marley was seeking. Instead he was looking for a more simplistic place to work on his yoga and inner self.

The second goal was to visit the Hindu religious Kumbh Mela*. His questions in these late-night smoking circles were along those lines, as well as how to survive several months on only a few hundred dollars, which was what he had at that time. What places were dangerous for the police or were bad areas to hang out in locally and what means were best for in-country travel?

As soon as the sun went down and the smell of incense, dung* and wood fires started all across the city, the hippy smoke circle travel stories would begin in earnest. On the back patio at Mrs. Marwah's, there was a rectangular table, lit up with several candles and all the hippies sat around the table in chairs making chillums* and relating their adventures.

Rather than talk, this newcomer to the secret sect of Asian hippies just sat and listened to the dialogue. He still had nothing to offer to these veterans, them having traveled to the farthest corners of this part of the world. At least that is how he saw it at that point in time.

Chillums are Indian pipes to smoke with a mixture of hashish and tobacco or hashish and Cannabis, which would be passed around the table like an American Indian peace pipe, creating a type of bonding and lubricant to get the stories flowing. Among cries of Boom Shiva, Boom Shanker, Hari Hari Ganga, as each chillum was lit and passed among the Freaks on the dark patio of the hostel.

Of course, many of the stories were embellished with exaggeration and imagination. Although on the whole, these tales held much truth, as in these distant parts of the world reality was plenty adventurous and there was hardly any need to invent exploits.

Marley did appreciate the way, everyone shared their joints and chillums with all the new-found friends at the smoke table, as he had not yet had the opportunity to procure his own stash of hash and grass. Marley remembered back how stoned he got that first night.

It was just as well he had little to offer in as far as adventures, as at this point Marley was high beyond communicating. He remembered sitting for hours and finally feeling his way to the empty bed in the tent.

Some nights someone in the hippy smoke circle would have a battery-operated cassette player with the hippies' movement music playing all night long. Bob Dylan, Janis Joplin, The Doors, Pink Floyd, and the Rolling Stones, among many others.

At these times the music was also a significant influence, as many of the songs had either a political message or were made to listen to when high on psychoactive substances or perhaps both. Dylan, Joplin and the Doors gave them mystical or political messages and groups like Pink Floyd, Hendrix and Santana to listen to when they were high or tripping. Some nights they would mix in some LSD with the hashish smoked in the smoke circle to change the feeling of their environment.

In New Delhi, one had to work on living in the cheapest way possible. Marley and his new-found friends often ate in the Indian Tea House. Long gone now but remembered by all of those that traveled the trail back in the day, thinking back on all the times, Marley had French toast in the Indian Tea House, with hundreds upon hundreds of Indians. It was two rupees per plate of two pieces of French toast and a glass of chai.

Back then you could not smoke dope on the street unless you were very discrete, but it was not too much of a problem if you smoked in the designated areas like the smoke

circles or one's hotel room or hostel compound. Usually, a freak had to get well out of line to have many problems with smoking a little hashish, although it was possible in the Indian capital.

At the smoke circles, everybody would have stashes of all varieties of hash and grass. New Delhi was a place to connect with other travelers. Everybody came from someplace different. A type of meeting point so with them came stashes from all over as well. A type of smoker's delicatessen and a catalyst to promote the storytelling throughout the night.

Nearly everybody who traveled spoke at least some English, be it proper English from the UK to the local pigeon English used by many of the Indian nationals and Europeans coming from non-English speaking countries. English still being one of the official languages in India, making travel and reading signs a simple task compared to other Asian destinations.

In India, there are over 150 dialects spoken throughout the country, although the main languages were Urdu, Hindi, and English.

Lunch often consisted of a bowl of white rice, which Marley would cover with free sugar to give it some taste and energy. He and his traveling companions always seemed to find enough money to eat and get high.

Marley was learning to live on the cheap, quick. Mrs. Marwah's also had three double rooms, for a few more Rupees a day and an apartment, that was permanently rented to a European character called Roman. Nobody knew for sure what nationality he was, as he was a sort of mysterious figure. Seeming to change his nationality, language, and accent as he did his clothing, somewhat like a chameleon.

Even though it was said he changed his passport frequently, everybody knew him as Roman. His exclusive downtown New Delhi digs had a bedroom and private bathroom with a private European style shower and was on the first floor with its own patio. It was like a downtown New Delhi penthouse from their perspective.

Roman was like the James Bond of New Delhi. He ran with beautiful Indian women at the exclusive hotel clubs in uptown New Delhi. He had an unusual accent with a unique charisma about him that made you like him automatically.

Above all, he seemed enigmatic, like somebody you would see in a movie. Everybody Marley asked about Roman gave him a different story. Roman spoke so many languages no one knew what his native tongue was.

He was always clean and impeccable in his dress. Not like most hippies of the era. He ran with the jet set of New Delhi where he acquired his influential contacts with politicians, police officials and the vast New Delhi and Old Delhi underworld crime scene.

But he still had his hand in many business deals arranged by the local New Delhi hippies. Where there was money to be made, Roman was there and willing.

Now he was not exactly a hippy, but more of a businessman hipster. Passports, hashish, how to get out of jail, contacts to go to forbidden areas where the vast hashish production were. Where to buy visas or whatever that could be provided by the Delhi underworld, although his reach went as far as the borders of Pakistan and Afghanistan and on to Europe.

He always dressed in a sports coat with dress slacks and only took taxis. Even though he ran with the New Delhi high class, he also mingled with all the foreigners and if you needed a contact, and it was juicy enough financially, he was the man to see. He could arrange just about anything for a profit.

Marley liked New Delhi as the first contact in India, but first, he wished to keep moving toward his planned objectives, which was the Hindu festival, Kumbha Mela. Hence being as ignorant and green as he was on Asian traveling, off he started on his way north to Shimla, on foot. Walking alongside the rickshaws, camels, elephants,

beggars, bicycles, and millions of people. He even started walking barefoot for the first days following Richard Alpert's steps from a few years earlier.

At night Marley slept wherever there was a space on a sidewalk. Every night there were hundreds of people sleeping on the sidewalks and balconies. Pretty much everywhere one looked, assuming that many of the Indians slept outside because of the heat. Then there were some individuals, which never stopped. There was always a taxi driving by, beeping his horn unceasingly for no apparent reason, even late at night when there was little or no traffic.

He headed north at a snail's pace. At the same time, walking being the best way to get a first glance at the India he had read about. Very up close and mixing with the Indian population.

After walking for several days, Marley realized if he wanted to get to his destination he would have to get to Panipat station and catch the train. Managing to wave down a public bus, which was full inside and even had a dozen or so locals sitting on the roof of the bus. The vehicle itself was quite weathered apparently barely held together as it stormed down the narrow Indian roads of the 1970s.

Miraculously a seat appeared for Marley next to a lovely Hindu lady. Everybody was commenting on how dangerously the bus driver was driving. For an Indian to indicate someone's driving was out of control, judging from what he had seen thus far meant things were well out of order. It was a good drive to Panipat, and the bus was moving at a neck-breaking speed.

Then the Hindu woman next to Marley said, "We are going to be in an accident shortly."

The Indian lady did not say this fearfully, but as though it were just an observation the passengers made in our imminent future. Are we going to have an accident? She had stated it in such a manner that she already considered it a fact, as though she had already seen it in her mind. Marley just thought she must be a little crazy. Then minutes later the bus lurched hard to the left as the passengers were thrown from their seats and just avoided turning over the bus.

The results of the accident were that the bus ran over a poor village woman, who was crossing the road without looking. Unfortunately, women were known to wander into the middle of the road for no apparent reason in India back in the seventies, being the case with this innocent village lady.

The driver managed to stop the bus and Marley pushed his way out as quickly as he could. The woman lay on the ground and had her arm severed, and nobody was doing anything to save her life. The young American took off his belt to wrap it around the village woman's bleeding stump of an arm to slow the loss of blood. As he looked around for help from the bus driver, he observed that he was running for his life up the hill and about then here came the village elders all yelling, excited and aggressive. At that point, the occupants of the public transport bus realized the village people were coming for the bus passengers.

Marley quickly had a look, up on top of the bus where the luggage was stored and yelled to one of the passengers, still on the top of the bus.

"Hey, throw my backpack down jeldi!" he shouted nearly in a panic.

The Indian on top of the bus answered, "Han Ji, Sahib."

Then he threw Marley's backpack to the ground, where it was quickly retrieved.

The Hindu woman said, "They are calling the bus driver a demon. There will be violence if we stay!"

A woman died due to them, and Marley did not even get the name of the village in which it happened. Though, he now would never forget the episode.

North, he ran with the part of the passengers that did not run south, as the angry and violent village people divided the group in two. Here, once again, he found myself walking through India, but at least he now had another dozen people with him, also heading for Panipat. Everyone excited over the event they had just experienced.

The woman from the bus said, "Don't worry, the trains are much safer and very comfortable, Mr. Marley."

They continued to speak very rapidly amongst themselves in Hindi. Just by their voices, Marley could tell this had been a close call for one and all.

When they arrived at a big train station, our newbie American traveler was not ready for the masses of people, nor did he know how to go about getting a ticket. Not remembering exactly how, but somehow managing to purchase his ongoing ticket and boarding the correct train. Not a small miracle. Especially being surrounded by a hundred times more people than he was accustomed. His mind having difficulty grasping the idea of being in such a dense population closed in such proximity.

An experienced hippy train traveler knows to go directly and lay down on one of the overhead luggage racks. Something he had heard in the hippy smoke circles in New Delhi. A great place to have some space to one's self and allowing the possibility of sleep, if you can stand the train swaying from one side to the other as it rambled down the rail lines that crisscrossed the Indian continent.

It is that or to be squashed in between a half dozen impoverished Indian locals if not standing the entire bus trip. The best places to ride were in the baggage rack or on top of the train itself, providing there is good weather.

Remember, this is the early 1970s in central India and the train system was old and weathered. The beautiful thing about most Indian people was they were very open to conversation with the few foreigners traveling across their country in search of adventure. Everybody wanted to know from where you came from. That was way back when people from other countries still liked Americans.

The train finally arrived at the station where Marley would make his final trajectory to Shimla. Leaving from a train station which Marley believed to be the station of Chandigarh. Not a very long distance from Marley's destination, so he changed to this ancient coal-burning steam engine. It was like a miniature train with open sides of the wooden cars, painted grass green, but made it a great breather after what seemed like a hundred hours on the baggage rack in the previous train. The view of the mountains was like you were in another world.

Once again, the constant inquiries, "From what country are you? What do you do? Why did you come to India?"

Everywhere Marley was he was bombarded with questions. At times it was overwhelming. In India, many people speak English from the era of the British Empire, and everyone was eager to know anything new or to learn about life beyond the Indian border.

The ride in this ancient train lasted about eight hours long. A luxury after riding the overloaded passenger trains that roared across the country.

Often many of the passengers would walk alongside this train as it climbed the mountains at a snail's pace. A good leg stretcher and a chance to confabulate with different passengers, other than the ones he sat by.

This miniature train from the British past arrived in Shimla, India at night, so off Marley went in search of a cheap hotel. This was another one of these spots no one he met had been to, and it turned out there was a good reason why.

It was illegal to be in Shimla as a foreigner without a special visa, due to the proximity to China and there was a curfew after 9:00 PM. Of course, Marley had no way of knowing this. Nobody said anything about restrictions when he acquired his visa or passage on the trains.

When he boarded the train, there was no information nor when he had made his travel plans and purchased the ticket.

Marley went to three cheap hotels and each time he was told they were full. It seems they were not even interested in his business. Or perhaps they were leery of admitting an obvious hippy into their hotel during the curfew restrictions. Of course, Marley was an American with a backpack and long hair, although finally at the fourth hotel, the owner took him aside.

He explained to Marley all about the city of Shimla and its exclusivity at the time. It appeared many politicians had their homes there. With it being close to China it was a sensitive area and therefore restricted for foreigners to travel freely to and from the city.

He told Marley not to worry about tonight, as he would assist him in keeping out of sight of the police. This was a big relief for Marley as he was beginning to become concerned about an imminent arrest for curfew offenses.

He said, "Sahib you needed a special visa stamped in your passport to visit Shimla, though not to worry Mr. Marley. Go to my friend's restaurant some blocks from here and stay there until 9:00, after the police have made their rounds, then I will be able to accommodate you, although for one night only. It would be best if you leave Simla on the next train."

"Thank you so much, Sir. If it were not for you I would be sleeping in the local jail tonight," Marley Willow said.

Not something Marley wanted to do, as everyone had heard horror stories of Indian jails. This city was the British Government summer seat. Always maintaining a fresh and crisp temperature during the hot New Delhi summer months, bringing Indians from New Delhi for a relief from the intense summers of the Indian capital.

The restaurant was easy to find. It was a cheap local place for middle cast families. He had left his backpack at the hotel, so all he carried was the military type shoulder bag, which was pretty much a standard for a newbie hippy back then.

A place where you carried your mixing bowl, lighter, chillum and any valuable trinkets you may have picked up along the way. Your hash and marijuana, and last but not least, your passport and money. Your passport was the most valuable document you possessed. American passports brought exorbitant prices on the black market back then, so he had to keep his with him at all times.

After the meal, it was late, and Marley was tired from all the traveling by train. He left the restaurant and headed back to the hotel, knowing now the police were out looking for anyone illegally moving about the dark shadows of the city after curfew.

When he arrived at the hotel, the owner asked to hold his passport, which was their way to guarantee payment. Just then Marley realized he had committed the worst blunder a traveler can! He had walked away and left his bag on the bench of the restaurant, as though he had never traveled in his life. Before going to India, Marley had already spent two years in the jungles of South America. So, he had no excuse for acting so inept when traveling to a new country.

Suddenly, after curfew, he found himself running through the dark alleys of Shimla, hiding in the shadows, to get back to the restaurant without being seen by the police. Trying to stay in the dark gloom as much as possible. Hoping that possibly no one had found his shoulder bag yet and it would not be gone forever. One of the poorest countries in the world and Marley had left all his valuables in a restaurant.

When he finally made his way back to the restaurant, it was closed. What else could go wrong, besides getting arrested? He once again made his way back in the dark to ask the hotel owner for help, although he was now sure he would never see his bag and documents again. Even in the hippy hostels, you slept with your bag under you to keep it safe, and Marley's had been left in clear view on a wooden bench. He arrived back to the hotel and told the owner what had happened. The hotel owner said not to worry as

he knew the proprietor of the restaurant, and they would carefully go to his house and wake him up. And then they would check to see if he had found the bag before he had closed for the evening.

When they arrived at the restaurant, the hotel owner rung the bell of the upstairs apartment where the proprietor lived. Just the sound made Marley nervous as the ringing bell seemed to penetrate the quiet of the Simla night.

When they got to the restaurant, the hotel owner asked him if he had found any left items in the restaurant that evening. He assured his late-night guests that he had not seen anything at the end of the evening shift, but the man opened the restaurant anyway and they checked where Marley had left it in the booth in a corner under a window, where he had dinner.

Marley could not believe his eyes. It was right where he had forgotten it, and nothing was missing. He was beside himself with relief. I can assure you that this is no small miracle in India. Just the thought of being stranded so far out in the mountains of India without a passport or money was unimaginable for the young greenhorn American traveler.

They carefully made their way back to the hotel and the owner allowed Marley to sleep in the hall floor, as long as he promised to leave before daylight.

He was out of that hotel by five in the morning, heading back to that little train that would again connect him with the central railroad networks and bus stations and to the safety of the masses.

Moving on, heading for Hardwar and the Ganges river where the Kumbh Mela was being held, and then on to Rishikesh, where he had planned to stay an undetermined amount of time practicing yoga and visiting the local Yogis.* Marley figured he would know where he was going when he got there.

Though up to this point his travels had been pointless. He thought he was on the path to inner peace.

At the time he felt this was what his journey was all about, but as he traveled through these four years, he would see more of how he was changed from his encounters, adventures and simple economic needs. Eventually finding out that we are in fact products of our experiences and environments.

Lucky for Marley there were some brief moments of total inner peace, but it is something that had escaped him right up to the last time he was seen. Being the most challenging objective in one's life. But in this part of his adventure, he did indeed get a glimpse of what he searched for, albeit brief.

Marley Willow did believe in reincarnation, but one of two kinds. The one that we go through during our individual lives. During his lifetime he felt as though he had lived several reincarnations already. That type of rebirth was one he was sure about and the other one, as claimed by the Hindus, not so much so and he was not a person to take such things at face value. He sought out proof of the existence of such phenomena.

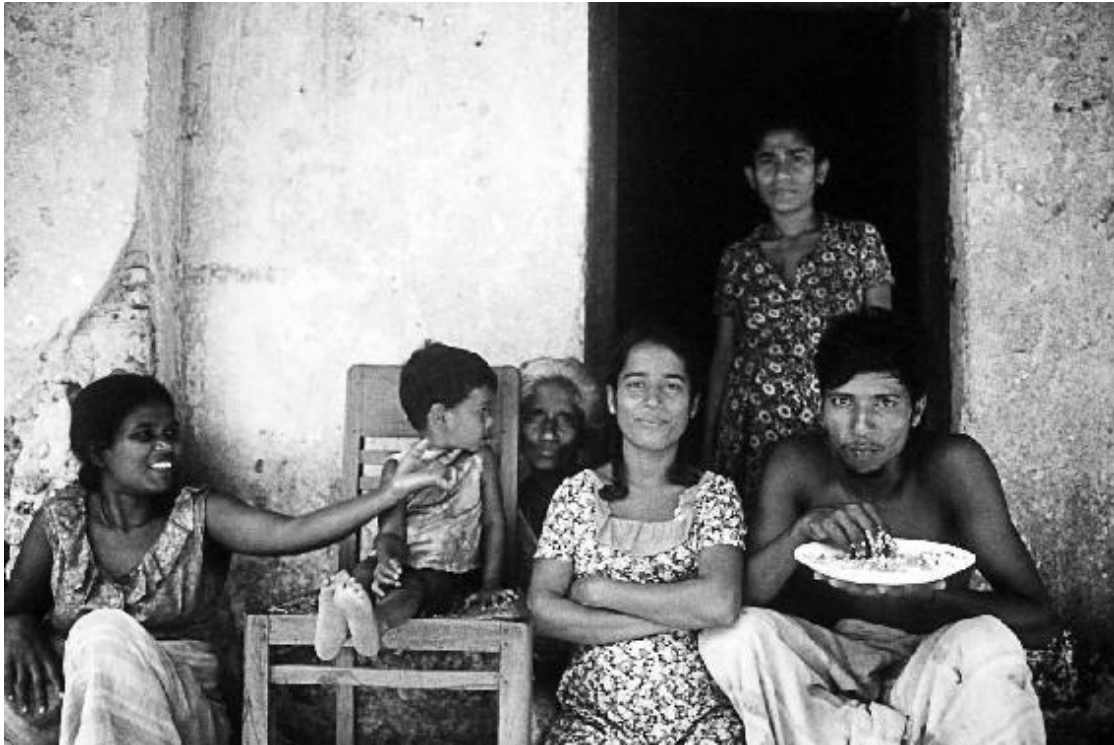
The Hindu and Buddhist reincarnation are that which is conceived of our other lives in other times. That is something Marley had read about but had not yet been able to fully understand or accept as a fact, although Marley was determined to find out if such a state of mind actually existed.

At least that is what Marley Willow thought he was doing, only to find out later he had little control over what would happen to him in these next few years. He was actually just as though he were flowing along with the wind. If it blew south, it seemed he went south along with it. Like a tumbleweed, Marley pretty much went in any direction the wind blew him.

Even at the beginning of his travels before India and Nepal, when Marley was still in South America, he found no matter what type of adventure he was organizing or planning, shit happens. Constant twists and turns in our lives caused by exterior

influences or mistakes committed in his plans to seek out the unknown. One supposed people of a more socially conformed lifestyle had fewer influences that could get in the way of their plans, but then again you never know what tomorrow brings, no matter who you are, where you live or what you do.

When we are young, we bend with the wind readily and are much more playable. We are open to change, be it in our ideas or plans to follow some



South Indian Family



Nepalese Barber



Statue of Buddha Sri Lanka



Wedding Horse in New Delhi



Ox Carts in South India



Hippies in Anjuna Beach, Goa

lifestyle or other. This was when Marley was most playable. His early twenties. A time when we are all open to change and have a thirst for knowledge. Our thoughts still not set in our minds with no particular beliefs until proven to be real or not. On their adventures across the unknown geography of Asia or of the ancient cultures and religions from these culturally rich countries. A time set aside by some small numbers of travelers during the hippy era. Ready to blindly indulge in the unknown of the Far East, to challenge their own beliefs with the new and unrecognizable.

Chapter 2: The Kumbh Mela

Marley couldn't remember all the details of getting to the Hindu festival, except all the stops they made for the police to check vaccination documents. By then he was traveling by local buses, which believe it or not was more of an ordeal than the national trains. There was cholera with this crowd of millions, and the officials were doing the best they could, to try to control it, turning back any persons without their vaccination stamp on their health certificate.

Keep in mind he was finally telling this story, of a part of his life, after over 40 years. So, some details will be missing, but the crucial moments of adventure were there in his memory to be drawn out, one at a time.

Remembering when he got off the bus at Hardwar there were what seemed to be several million-people heading for the Ganges River to wash, resulting in the cleansing of their Karma and souls. On the path to the river, which was walking only, there was an array of Yogis, Gurus, Sadhus, Fakirs, and Babas. Unbeknown to Marley, nearly thirty million Hindus were converging on Hardwar during that month of festivities. He arrived the first day of the religious festival.

These religious men who lined the paths to the river had walked from all parts of India, just to attend this spiritual event held once every twelve years. Some traveled for months and existed only on the offerings the population gave them on their arduous religious trek on foot, some coming from as far as the southernmost regions of the country.

One Baba had never cut nor combed his hair his entire life. It was all bunched up on top of his head. Many of the holy men had hair dozens of feet long. They wrapped it around their head. In most cases, they wore nothing more than a loincloth, regardless of the weather.

One fakir was digging a hole in the soft dirt to bury his entire body except for one of his hands. He claimed he could mentally control his heartbeat and breathing until it slowed down enough that he could breathe through the pores in his hand. Marley Willow had no idea how he did it, but it appeared that the Yogi did just that. Sophistry? He could not say how it was done, having no logical explication.

A few hippies were attending the Kumbh Mela sprinkled in the masses, as it was quite a sight. Everyone was looking for a small space in the shallow river, where they could cover themselves with water to be blessed.

Marley didn't wash in the river because it was polluted, and he still didn't know what he was doing there. So, he spent a couple of days smoking hashish with the holy men and checking out the people and the festival. Here he played the part of an observer. Soaking it all in as everything here was new and strange to him.

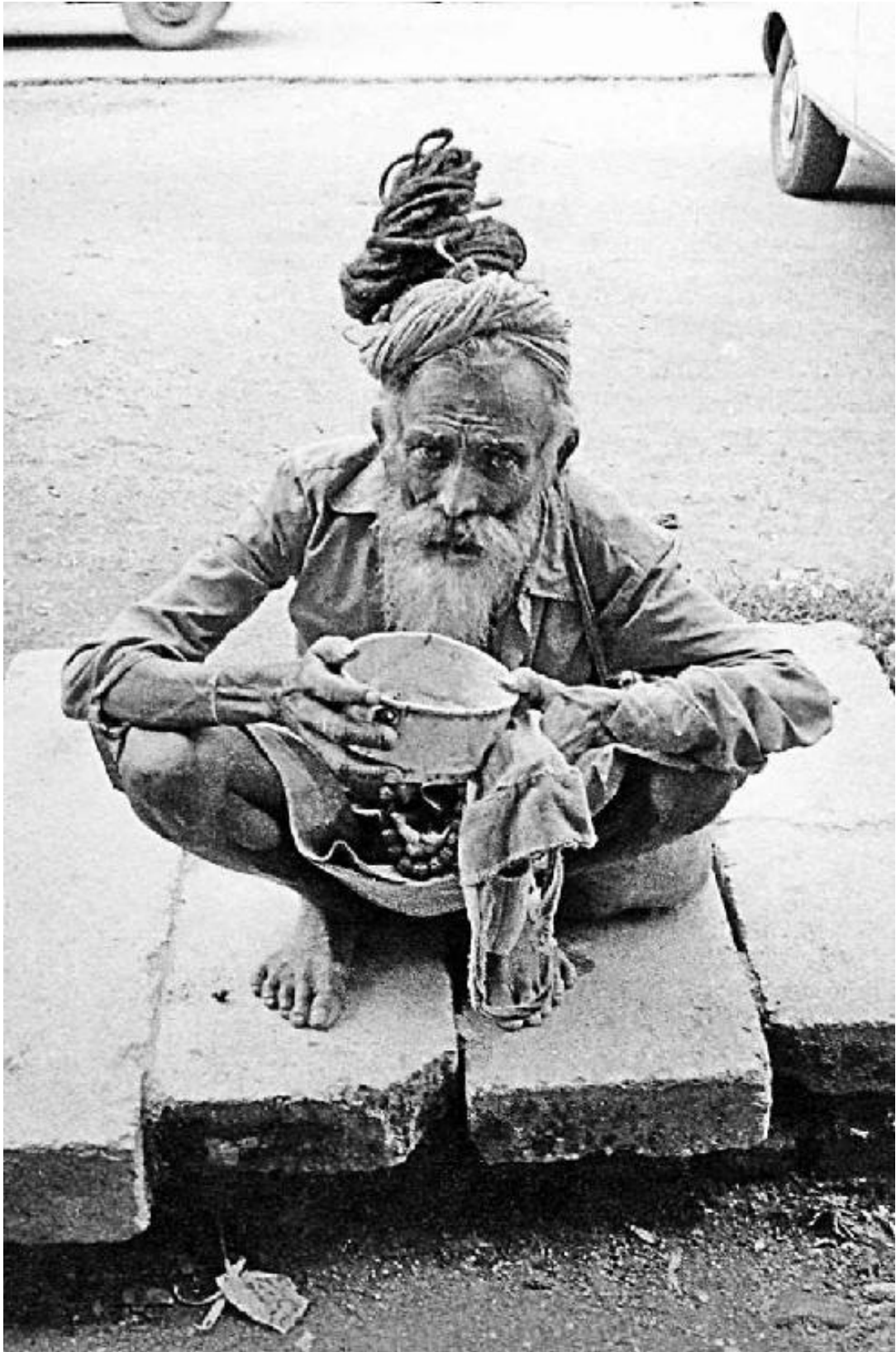
One of the favorite donations to the Sadhus and Yogis was something to smoke. Mostly hashish. Especially those, who were devotees of Lord Shiva. He loaded chillums, an Indian pipe that looked like a ceramic cone with a hole in the bottom and a small rock inside, which you grasped with two hands. Even as it was passed in between the Yogis, no one's lips ever touched the pipe. With each chillum, the Sadhus chanted, "Bom Shanker," to Shiva Shanker. "Bom Shiva, Bom Shanker, Hari Hari Ganga."

This was Marley's first taste of what he thought he was seeking. A religion which worshiped, one of the gods by smoking hashish. He considered that this was the real deal for a hippy. How naive Marley was back then. The only part of this culture he even knew about at that point was the hash smoking, and he was already somewhat of an expert in that department. Although Marley had no idea of what the Kumbh Mela was all about, now being entirely consumed with his surroundings, never having seen anything even close to this very Holy Hindu Festival.

The masses of people were overwhelming. It was very confusing for a very stoned hippy to find his way around. And now where to sleep? That is even a better question. The only place to sleep here is where you drop. No hotel vacancies and as far as he



Shiva Temple Central India



Sadhu in India

could see everybody either came and went or slept wherever they could, as usual even with the masses of population pressing in. Everybody was friendly and just as curious as they always were, asking what Marley was doing at a Hindu Kumbh Mela? A question he asked himself at times, his culture shock now at a maximum.

Days of watching fakirs do the impossible. Cobra snake charmers, rope tricks where the rope rose from the basket on its own. All the many strange things the Sadhus did to show their devotion to Shiva. Or in some cases, to trick the spectators to give them money for their exhibitions, defying the forces of gravity or nature. Always keeping in mind he was as stoned as one could be, sitting days on end with Sadhus, smoking vast amounts of hash. Thus, one could be deceived a bit easier, although it gave him a real starting point of living in India and Asia in general.

There were no more thoughts on his mind about going back to the western world, because his choice of a real world was where he was right then. Marley would return to New Delhi and figure out how to make a living, so he could spend a few years exploring the local cultures and the local hippy communities of which he would soon become a member.

Chapter 3: In Search of Myself

Now Marley Willow was off to Rishikesh, where the Beatles had visited. He was not interested in the wealthy yogis like Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, driving a Rolls Royce and living in luxury. Marley's interests were in the simpler spiritual men who also populated the area, but without the flash and the fame and attachment to possessions. Rishikesh was to be the primary source of his spiritual education in India.

When Marley arrived, he started looking for an ashram* where I could stay. The simpler ashrams did not charge to stay there, but you were expected to give some small donation upon your departure. It was a place where you could calm your mind and possibly find out something about yourself. He was trying to keep an open mind about everything. Mostly studying what other cultures do, trying to take a little bit from each village and each Baba.

Marley Willow found an ashram down on the river to the left side of most of the other spiritual retreats. It was at the end of the trail. It was small, and they had a room for him to study and work on finding himself.

The monk who showed him the room said, "Be careful going further down the riverbank because there is a cobra nest there. They are big, and if you get bitten you will probably die."

Now Marley had to go down, just to see if he could safely check it out, though not so close he made the mistake of stepping on one. Hundreds of people died each year from cobra bites in India. The cobras are all over the countryside, and they were indeed huge. Some of them extending the entire width of the paved road.

Every day Marley had lunch in an open roof restaurant for Indian locals. It was simple and cheap. He would order his portion of plain white rice and repeat the ritual, of covering his rice with sugar to element himself a bit better along with whatever fruit was in season. Getting by as cheap as possible, and it was fine with him. Although Marley did occasionally desire the French toast he had eaten so many days in the Indian Tea House.

For this time Marley Willow intended to focus his mind on having a look at himself. A morning chai garam* and a visit to one of the gurus who lived close to the Ashram. He was called the Orange Baba. The first time Marley met with this unusual man, he showed him an orange, and he called it God. Then he ate the orange and said God had just eaten God. Trying to show Marley that all things are the same. A simple but clear message.

As they got to know each other, he told Marley he had a test for him. The Baba said to him if he wanted to calm his mind from thought and reach a state of meditation, he should go ten days without speaking. He told Marley, "We must calm our minds to meditate, so you must stop talking. Try it and see if you can."

Now, this sounds easy, right? Plus, why would a hippy listen to a Yogi who says, "To stop talking"? If a man Marley's age was willing to take on such an adventure, why not try anything. At any rate, he followed his instruction having already practiced Yoga since he was back in the US and had worked on meditating without much success, although Marley Willow was willing to try anything to reach the profound meditation about which he had read.

It sounds easy, but it was hard from the first day. Until you try to stop talking you do not realize how much we actually do talk. Words just slipped out as though his mind was rebelling. Eventually, over the course of the first day, he said over a dozen words. The need to speak seemed to have a life of its own.

The second day Marley talked less, but that is when he realized the number of thoughts that continuously ran through his mind. Your brain seems bombarded with

thoughts when you stop talking. He wondered to himself how he hadn't noticed this before, but as the days passed, he could finally stop talking and little by little his mind slowed down as well. Then his meditation did get much more profound.

At times he could then meditate and forget he was trying to meditate. Though it does not sound like much, it was a breakthrough for this young man. To forget he was even there. Those were his first real moments of meditation, even though they lasted for short periods of time.

Being able to control the mind, breathing, and lack of contact with his physical environment. Like the Orange Baba told him when he had eaten the orange. We are all part of one, as science has proven. Just molecules interpreted in different ways by each individual's brain. When you are in deep meditation, you are kind of like one with everything around you. First, the sounds disappear, after which one stops feeling the breeze blowing against their skin. Finally, you reach a deep place inside yourself, and total calm comes to you. It gave Marley a peek at what his mind desired.

After a few weeks of Orange Baba's instruction, Marley wanted to cross the river and visit the gurus and yogis who lived in the caves in the mountains. His friend Orange Baba arranged for one of his disciples to take the young hippy into the mountains, to meet some of the real ascetics.

While they crossed the river in the small boat, Marley put his hands in the water, and the fish nibbled at his fingers. Orange Baba's friend and now Marley's guide, told him no one fished in the river and on the other side of the river no one had scooters, bikes, nor did they ride animals. It was a special place for those of the Hindu religion where all animals were equal. It was a sacred place for the Yogis to meditate.

As they climbed up and down the trails and paths, they saw some other Hippies with whom they exchanged some information. That is when he heard about the Yogini* who lived in a cave, with a wolf as her only company.

This Yogini was not an Indian. Surprisingly enough she came from Switzerland but had been there in her cave for many years. Marley had been told she was not very friendly, though he had heard that about many of the yogis who lived in the caves. Of course, all these spiritual beings didn't need were a bunch of stoned out hippies, disrupting their lives and meditation. Though Marley still being too uneducated to be aware of this, he told his guide he would like to visit her.

Off they went in search of the Yogini's* cave. When they finally found it, it was like something out of a Stephen King novel. There were two separate entrances to the dark cave. Both with gated doors made of bars. When the two men arrived, the wolf went out the gate furthest from the strangers. The wolf did not look friendly, but the Yogini asked Marley a few questions and then invited him into her cave. Seeming to think her reputation of not being friendly was due to hippies traveling in groups and he was alone as his guide stayed back. In the end, she said she enjoyed occasionally practicing her English so such a visit was welcome.

Marley Willow never got her Christian name. She had adopted a Sanskrit name from the Hindu religion and no longer had any use for the name her parents had given her. To his surprise, she told him she was once a Catholic Nun until she had traveled to this part of the world, where she had reached her enlightened state and had decided to abandon everything. To live there in her cave and continue her spiritual studies in solitude.

She had all kinds of trinkets hanging from the walls and ceiling of the cave, giving the appearance that she has been here for quite some number of years.

"I am working on my yoga and meditation to reach some state of consciousness, even be it partial," Marley explained. "Just a glimpse may satisfy my doubts."

She told him, "I have nothing to teach you to reach your path."

She instead sent him to a very well-known Yogi further up on the mountain. After

sharing a chai and leaving her a few rupees, off he went with his guide. Yet deeper into the forest to look for the great Yogi she had referred him to.

When they arrived at the famous yogi's cave, he had his hair unwrapped from his head. It must have been over twenty feet long in Rasta type locks. It looked like he had just covered himself in ashes and was having a couple of Sadhus helping him re-wrap his hair around his head into what was called a Jata*.

Upon his arrival, there was a group of three hippies and some Hindus already waiting to talk to the mysterious man. They were the hippies Marley had met earlier who had directed him to the Yogini's cave, so Marley waited patiently, to speak to this extraordinary man of the Hindu culture. Exactly what would he ask this man? He had not a clue.

While he waited, he realized his mind had gone blank and he felt foolish asking this spiritual leader of the Hindus about his path in life. It just sounded too petty, even somewhat corny. The three New York hippies, two guys, and one girl were all over him with questions. Honestly, the Yogi did not seem to pay much attention, but at the same time, he appeared to be aware of everything important around him. They offered him some Rupees* and he gestured for them to leave the money on the rock beside him. Then they were politely told to go.

The next people waiting in line were a poor Hindu family. Marley didn't know what they had said to him, but at the end of their conversation, he gestured that they take the money left by the hippies before them. Marley asked his guide what was happening, and he said that this was a Yogi and Guru to many and that he never touches money, as it would make him impure. That was why he had them leave the money on the rock, rather than keep the money like most the Yogis would.

To be honest, this very tall, longhaired, wild looking Yogi frightened the young hippy quite a bit. He was intimidating even in his silence, and now it was Marley's turn to talk to him. He got up and moved over to where the Yogi was sitting. Marley had not said a word yet, and he started talking to his guide and Hindi translator. When the guide told him what he said it made Marley's mind reel and he got dizzy. His entire world came to a halt. He had just told Marley Willow exactly what he was thinking. To have someone being able to get into his mind like that was such a shock that it made his head spin. He was speechless and had yet to say a word to the Yogi.

Who knows? Marley said he remembered the moment perfectly even after forty years. No, it was not the hash, as most of the Yogis he met in the forest did not approve of smoking. So, for that time, he had abstained from his usual hashish chillums. At any rate for him, it was as real as anything that had ever happened to him, even today.

He then told the guide to leave, and Marley could sit on a rock on the other side of his cave. By this time, he was in such a state of shock he did what he was told, even though he was somewhat



India Snake Charmer

frightened now, having no idea what this Yogi had in mind for him. He went and sat down where he told him to, as he dared not open his mouth.

Later that night the Yogi asked him what he had in his backpack. The guide had since been sent away as well, and one of his devotees also spoke English and did the translating. Marley showed him the books and the few other belongings he had, but the Yogi was only interested in the books, which he kept.

Marley was not going to tell this Yogi no, no matter what. Then the fakir put the books on the fire that burned endlessly in the middle of the cave. He just said that they made good heat and Marley did not need them anymore. As usual, he once again left him speechless.

Marley didn't remember how many days he stayed there in the cave as at that point he was just focusing on one day at a time, and not giving his future any thought at all. Days and dates were of little importance. He slept on the ground in his sleeping bag during the night, while the Yogi stayed in the Lotus position all night meditating by the never-ending fire, with a blanket over his head and body.

During the day he just sat there, practicing his yoga, meditating and watched the people come and go. Leaving the Yogi food and money or taking food or money for their needs. Marley was staying in the shadow of the corner of the cave, so most visitors did not even notice his presence. His mind and body being so far from his home in Florida, there is no way to describe the culture shock he suffered. If he had not been young and had such a pliable mind, it is doubtful he would have stayed more than the first night.

One day his guide showed up again totally unannounced, and he told him the Yogi said it was time for Marley to go back across the river.

He also told him the Yogi said to tell Willow, "You will return one day, but it is not your time yet."

Up to the last day his friends talked to Marley Willow, he still didn't know what that Yogi meant. But, as at this point in his adventure he was looking for some peace of mind via eastern philosophy, he supposed this was his closest point in being aware, and at peace with himself as he had ever been during his life of sixty some years here on Earth.

Down the mountain, they went. Marley stopped back in the cave to see the Catholic Nun changed to Yogini. She enjoyed speaking English, so she seemed to welcome his return visit. When he told her, he was moving on with his journey and what the Yogi had said to him, she calmly gave him her opinion of life.

"Don't force the understanding," she said to Marley. "It will come in time on its own. Only you will know what the Yogi meant when the moment comes."

Marley followed the path back down to the river where he hitched a ride on the next small launch that crossed the Ganges back to Rishikesh. He again stopped in to have some rice and sugar at the restaurant near the Ashram.

He stayed another night in the Ashram and then, after leaving a donation of some Rupees, he began the long trek by bus and train back to New Delhi. Marley believed with the trip to Shimla, the Kumbh Mela in Hardwar and his time spent in Rishikesh and the forest, he must have been gone from city life for about three months or so.

You will notice that throughout his memoirs, time and dates are not Marley's strong point. At that point in his life, he gave little notice of time or dates. He had more critical issues on which to focus. To a point, he was this way even to the end, but he did have an excellent memory for what he did and the adventures he had experienced.

Chapter 4: The Four Books

Now when Marley Willow arrived back at Mrs. Murwah's guesthouse in New Delhi, he was looked at differently. Now he was no longer a green Asian overland hippy traveler. He was now an experienced adventurer with his own stories to tell and suggestions on travel.

His first night back at the hippy smoke circle was all his, as he told of his adventures in Rishikesh and beyond. Who knows how much they each believed of the stories the hippies told these hot New Delhi nights. Marley took in the stories and the travel tips with interest, as he believed the other hippies there did the same with his.

Now the only problem was Marley was running low on money, so he had to rectify that situation. Marley went to a tourist shop, which sold hardback tourist books and bought four. Then off to the office supplies store to buy white glue, razor blades, plastic wrap, cardboard and whatever else he was going to need for his money-making project.

When he got back to the guest house, he had the letter he needed from his friend Marcus, from New York City, confirming that he was more than willing to have Marley mail him four books with hashish hidden in them.

They paid top dollar in New York for good hash, and they would split the money after costs, so Marley began to dismount the bookbinding and take apart the covers. He cut a rectangle about an inch from the edge of each book, so he had a space to place a pressed slab of hash in the middle to replace the cardboard that Marley had removed.

Marley Willow had bought some excellent resin hash from Kullu Manali, in the Northern mountains of India, that was rubbed by hand and then pressed by hand and was easier to flatten out than standard pollen hash. After a few days of working in his small private room at the guesthouse, he had completed his first four books filled with hash. He had upgraded from the group room, so he could work in secret. It had cost Marley Willow a couple more Rupees a day, at that point somewhat of a luxury for the young American hippy.

He never remembered exactly how much hash he managed to get into the books, but it was quite a bit. Marley took them to the post office to mail them via book-post to New York. Much to his surprise, they arrived there within two weeks. There was a special delivery service for books, and as he learned in the early 1970s there were no official customs for book post in the US, so they had just started a small contraband network that allowed Marley to survive for a long time without breaking the law in any significant way.

Occasionally some of the books disappeared somewhere. Marley didn't know whether it was just the distance and the odds that some things get lost over thousands of miles in transport, or that one or more of the Indian postal men were hip to the trick and kept the hash to resell and save the money for themselves. But about ninety percent of the time it worked.

Marley was stoked, and his friend in Manhattan could never get enough. He said it was the best hash they had ever smoked, and it provided Marley Willow with a money transfer every couple of months, so he was cash-flush most of the time. It was so cheap to live in the Far East that \$1,000 went a very long way.

Marley's hash supplier in New Delhi was the first Muslim man he had ever met. He was a small man who worked in a tourist carpet shop but was crafty at selling hash on the side. After his first successful book shipment, he took Marley to his home for dinner.

He told Marley, "It will be my honor for you to come and eat with me in my home, Mr. Willow."

"Great," Marley replied. "I'm looking forward to it." Not knowing what to expect,

with the man living deep in the maze of houses in ancient Old Delhi.

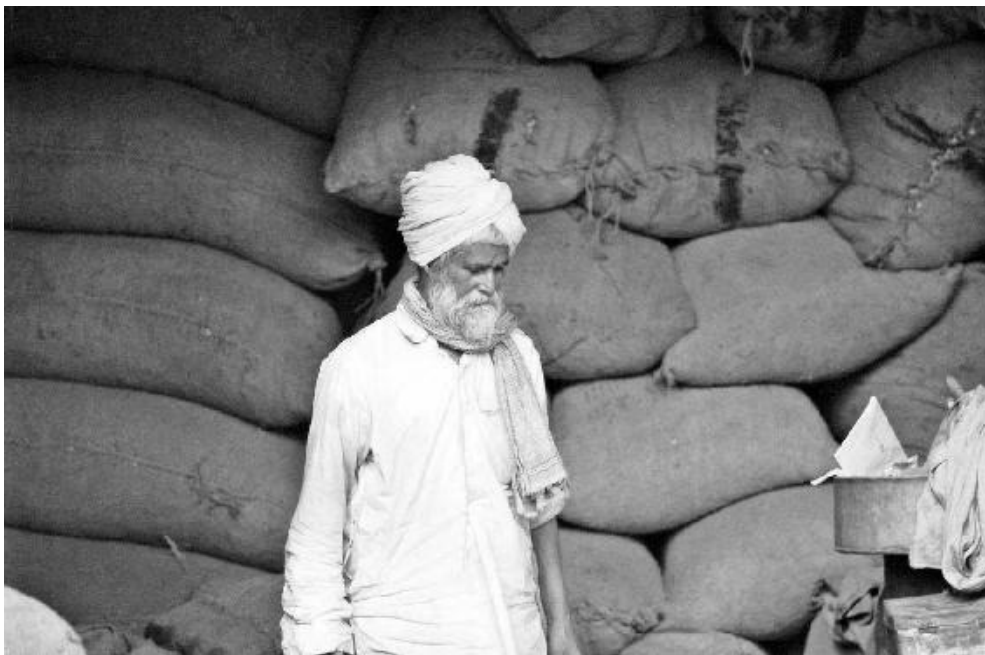
"The lamb is fantastic, Abdul. Did you make it yourself"? Marley asked.

"Oh no! I don't cook," the Mussulmen replied. "My wife takes care of the work at home. I bring home the money."

Marley had noticed his wife did not join them, but rather ate out in the back where they had some chickens and a cow. Not intending to offend, Marley never asked why, but later learned this was their custom and was to be respected. Marley and his hashish supplier remained friends and business partners for entire four years he was to spend in Asia. Marley Willow made it a point not to judge anyone's religious beliefs or customs. Who was he to judge any man at this point in his life? He could not even figure out what he himself believed or where he was going.

Now he supposed it was the real deal in as far as "hippies living in the Far East." He had walked the paths, stayed in Ashrams, traveled on foot, traveled by bus, traveled by train and learned how to make some money, so he did not have to go back to the United States. Marley just stayed in New Delhi and kept his room at the guesthouse. He was now living as a local, exploring every aspect of Old and New Delhi.

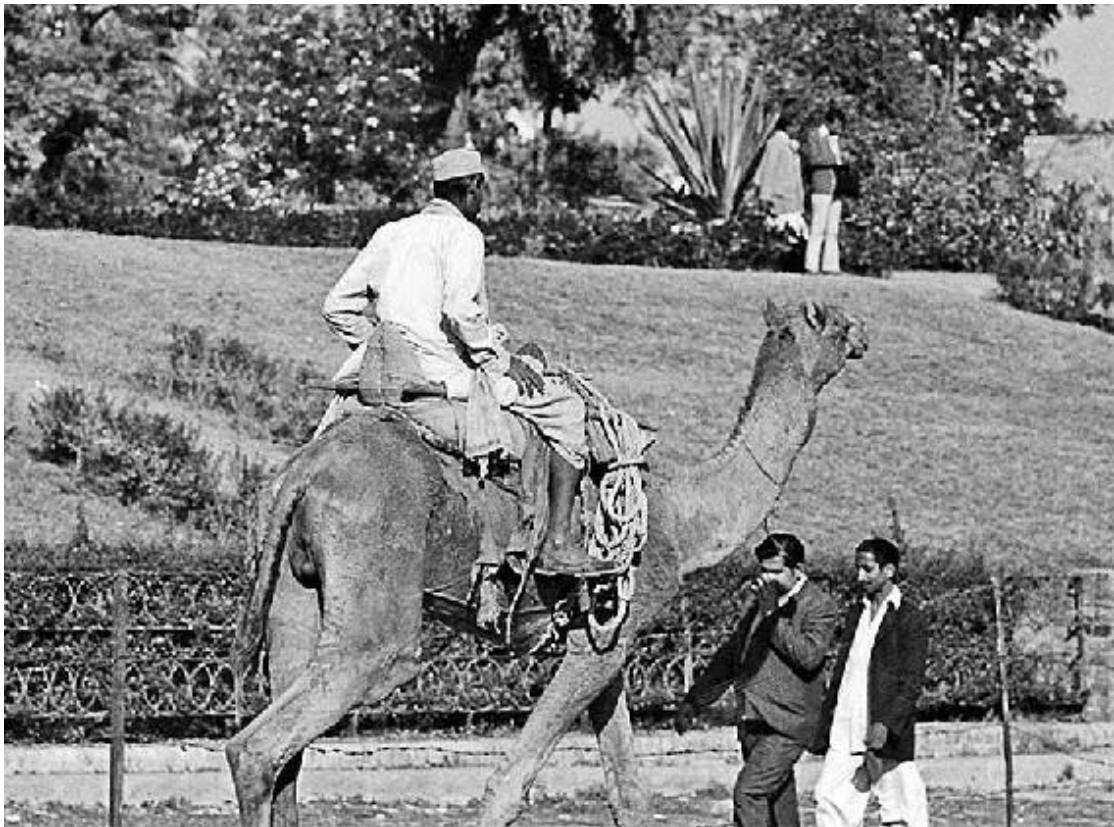
Marley even crudely decorated his room with embroidered hangings of Ganesh and Buddha and had Mrs. Murwah give him a better palang, which is an Indian bed made of a wood frame and rope rather than a box springs like back home.



Grain Merchant in Old Delhi



Young Man Learning to Handle Cobras



Agra



Pashpatinath & Bagmati River

He scrounged up a thin mattress filled with straw and bought a funky pillow and had made his home for his time here in New Delhi. Making his abode a little cozier.

Chapter 5: Hanging out in New Delhi

There was never a lack of entertainment. During the day Marley explored Old Delhi and New Delhi and made a few short trips down to Agra to see the Taj Majal with the full moon. The journeys to Agra were usually with a few hippy friends from the guesthouse. The Taj Majal in Persian means Crown of the Palaces. Built of ivory white marble, the mausoleum is on the south bank of the Yuma River.

The Mughal Emperor, Shah Jahan, ordered it made in 1632. It was to be the resting place of his favorite wife, Mumtaz Mahal. The tomb is on a forty-two-acre plot of land. It took some 20,000 workers to build the mausoleum. It is considered to be the Jewel of the Muslim art in India. It is often called the Rabindranath Tagore or "the tear-drop on the cheek of time." It was a built-in memory of the Shah's favorite wife who died giving birth to her 14th child.

If you see the Taj Mahal on a night with the full moon and clear sky, you will never forget the experience.

There was a constant flow of hippies who came and went to the guesthouse. The smoke circle was full every night with candles, smoke, and tales of adventures on the hippy trail.

Roman and Marley were the only regulars at Mrs. Murwah's. So even though Roman was the foreign king of New Delhi, the two became friends, and he informed Marley of what to do and not do. Among other things when it was time to hide the hash stash. The laws were lax on hash in India and it was legal for religious purposes, but one could still get in trouble with the local New Delhi police if they gave you a surprise visit.

Although it turned out that surprises were hard to achieve by the local police. Mrs. Murwah had her contacts who told her if they were to be visited by the local authorities, and she, in turn, informed Roman and Roman advised Marley. Marley Willow then notified the rest of the guests at the guesthouse, so no one ever got into trouble at Mrs. Murwah's, at least while Roman and Marley were there.

Marley Willow made friends with a guy who was half German and half American. He showed him all the ropes of living in the underworld of Old Delhi and New Delhi. The darkest corners and alleys where the hardcore lived. Mostly drug addicts and shady locals. After some time, Marley found his friend was a junkie himself. He kept it pretty well together, so Marley choose to ignore it. Who better to guide him to the deepest and darkest corners of the ancient city, then a man who lives in the shadows of life? Streets with women in cages, slaves to the men who owned the houses of prostitution. Europeans, who will never clean up enough to make it back to their homes, destined to a lonely death in the shadows of the underworld of Old Delhi.

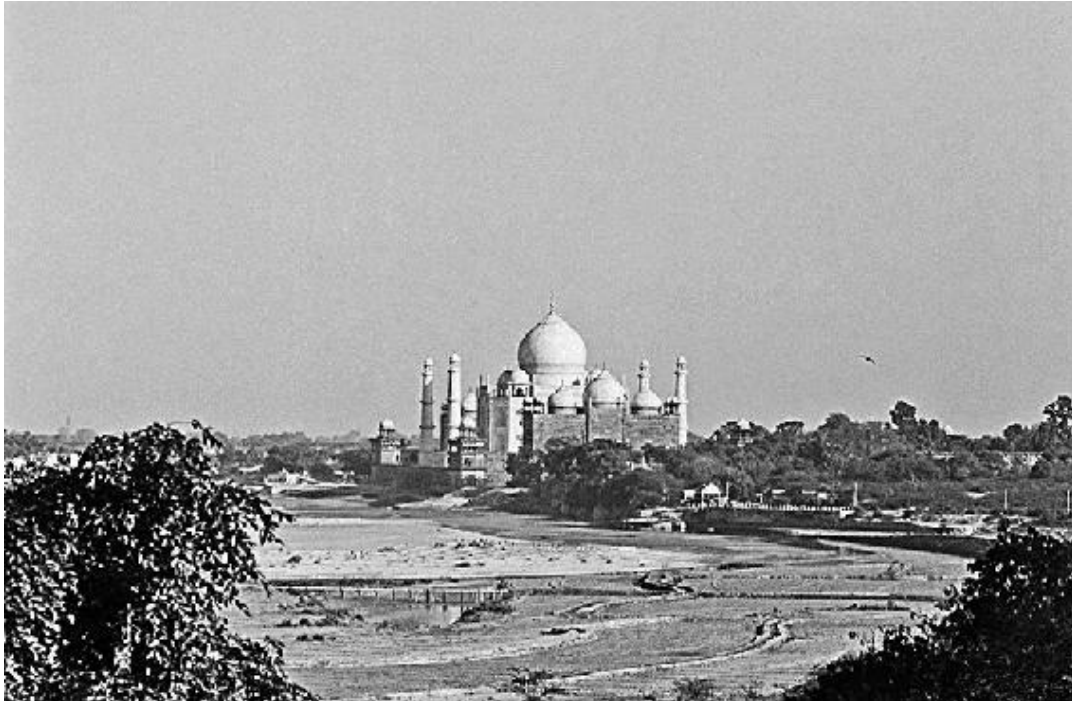
Marley usually steered clear of heroin junkies as at some point in the relationship they typically rob you. Lucky for him Stephan was always honest with Marley, but he also gave him a look at the real heavies who would not survive the adventure. Far too gone on the smack to ever return to their countries or a healthy life.

With Marley's taste for adventure, he let him take him to the opium parlors and the places where the dredges of society hung out, in the old part of the city. Stephen taught him words like "chello" which means go away and "jeldi" which means faster in Hindi. Stephen lived in the very cheap hotels. The walls were made of canvas, although they did have a latch on the door if you had a padlock handy.

Marley only visited his hotel on a couple of occasions' as he did not like the environment. Mrs. Murwah's was just right for the young American freak. An authentic hippy guesthouse with an apparent lack of junkies, except an occasional straggler. The junkies mostly keeping to their own circles.

They only had one Indian WC, and they showered outside on the patio wearing

shorts. On your first trip to the toilet you think, "Can I do this, really"? The toilet is no more than a hole in the floor of the WC. The hippies called them "squatters." For the real hardcore travelers, there was a water tap along with a small brass pot to clean their hand. The custom was to use only your left hand because your right hand was for eating. Although there was also a garbage bin for those foreigners who still used toilet paper, which most Indian locals found to be repulsive and disgusting.



The Taj Mahal

An old friend of Marley's had bought an early 1940s Norton that would run most of the time, so he got to take the girls from the hostel on trips around New Delhi, the Royal Palace, and Old Delhi. Although it often overheated and stopped running, that was the way things were in India.

The good side was that a hippy with an old cool motorcycle in the Far East could sometimes score with those girls. Last I talked to Marley, he believed the Norton was still sitting there in New Delhi, in the old shed Donald found it in, after thirty years of its being built. Now being some 70 years ago.

Marley Willow learned that three Rupee motor rickshaw rides were actually two Rupee rides. Which ones were for tourists and which ones were for the locals? His German friend showed him the best place to eat on Connaught Circus, in the center of New Delhi. They made his favorite, Chicken Vindaloo, which is the best Indian dish Marley had ever tasted. Nice and spicy!

To top it off, they had air conditioning and ice cream sundaes. It was expensive, given the prices of things back then. That was not where they usually ate but was a great treat once a week or so. By then Marley had even learned to speak a little bit of Hindi so he could make necessary conversation. Also, though living in a vast city has its entertainment, Marley was now getting itchy to check out somewhere new. He knew that Mrs. Murwah would always have a room for him as she had kind of adopted Marley like she had Roman. Roman had lived there for years. She called the two foreign men her boys.

After spending time in any one spot, one starts to have daily places they visit. This was the same for Marley when he lived in New Delhi. He would wake up in the morning and have a tea and a couple of pieces of toast with butter and marmalade. That was as close to the west as the Indian hippies could afford.

Then go down to the Indian Tea House parking to see if any new hippy buses had come in late, to check out prices and see if they were going to Katmandu, Goa or Kabul and on to Europe. Then probably have another chai garum. The locals told Marley that hot tea was good to help you acclimate to the tropical climate. Go by the yogurt man to take one home and eat later. The yogurt came in a takeaway, earthenware container. They made the best yogurt the young man had ever tasted.

Then to the main hangout. Mohansingh Palace, which was not a palace at all. It was a type of vertical funky shopping center with several small dirty shops on each floor. First stop, the juice shop for a mango juice. Talk to any of the hippies hanging out, as there always were some. Then up to the next floor to buy fruits like melon and walnuts for his lunch. Marley liked to cut a melon in half, clean them and fill the center with yogurt and nuts, mango and orange slices.

After Monhansingh's, off to the post office to see if there was any mail. A real hit and miss of communicating with anybody. Afterwards, heading back to the guesthouse to smoke some more hash and make lunch. Afternoons were hot and sticky, so an afternoon nap would be in order. Then wake up and find a place at the smoke circle table and settle down to smoke and exchange adventures with the other hippies. When they were not on the road, they were telling stories about traveling.

One of their companions at Mrs. Murwah's was what Marley called "Granddaddy." It was a huge old rat that crossed the patio the same time, every evening just around dusk. He was too big for any of them to go fuck with. So, since the giant old rat was just crossing the patio, they figured it better to name him. It made him seem less offensive, so he was called Granddaddy. He was part of the patio scene for as long as Marley visited there.

Note that in India there are lots of rats and some are even sacred. There are even rat temples. Lord Shiva rode a huge rat. It is something to which you become accustomed. Marley just made sure he never had any in his room when he went to sleep at night, and that was that. Other than their monster pet, they never saw any other rats at Mrs. Murwah's. Maybe Granddaddy ran any intruders off. That rat never even glanced at them. It was like he owned the guesthouse and the hippies weren't even there.

They say a rat's life is about two years long, so Marley wondered how old Granddaddy was? He was sure that that old rat was around for more time than that. Just the fact that he was as big as a small dog or an enormous cat made him seem ancient. Marley guessed in the right environment you get used to anything. He was sure if he saw such a rat in a hotel in Florida it would be a significant issue, but in India in the early 1970s, they were just part of everyday life.

Most of the guests were actually more concerned with the mosquitoes. Lucky for Marley they had never bothered him too much, but he knew that most of the other guests at Mrs. Murwah's got bitten regularly.

Many had to use mosquito nets to sleep at night and in India if you scratched a mosquito bite till it bled, chances were you would get a severe infection, and infections were hard to get rid of in that environment. Back then India was not at all clean by American or European standards. That is why most of the Americans suffered what was commonly called the "Delhi Belly." Americans came from such a sterile environment that the change was a shock to their immune systems. Marley noticed that Europeans did not suffer nearly as much as



Back of Mohansing Palace in New Delhi

Americans and Canadians as the North Americans had cleaner sources of water than most countries.

Mrs. Murwah's was very clean by Indian standards. There was a work staff continually cleaning up the patio, and the hostel area and the mess made at the smoke tables every evening. They provided tea and toast service all day long. Good for the munchies. Marley always said he guessed it should be called a three-star hippy guesthouse.

Chapter 6: The Road to Kathmandu

There was a bus going to Kathmandu, in the Indian Tea House parking and some of the people at the smoke circle that night talked about going. Marley told me he couldn't remember how much they charged for the trip, though he assumed somewhere between fifty and one hundred U.S. dollars. The trail was a long, slow and dangerous 700 miles of Indian plains and mountain roads, although the reward was Kathmandu. There were a couple of hippies at Mrs. Murwah's who had already been to Nepal.

They said, "It is even better than India, Brother. Fewer people, cheaper and everybody is happy and friendly. And you can smoke wherever you want. You'll freak out man!"

A Hippy Heaven, so to speak. Marley figured it was on his places to see list anyway, so why not go up for a visit now during the summer.

The next morning, he went to the big old English passenger bus parked in the plaza and met George and June. They were from the US as well. Like all hippies, they talked about where they had been, and they sold Marley on the trip to Kathmandu. They would all leave the next day. Marley headed back home, packed his things in his old backpack, and told Mrs. Murwah he was moving on, for now. He wanted to go to Nepal to see the mountains, visit the Buddhist monasteries and smoke hash from the Himalayas.

At last, he told her, "I'll be back and don't worry. I'll stay out of trouble. Tell Roman where I went when he comes back."

Then off Marley Willow walked down from thirty-one Hanuman Road to the Circus and on to where the Indian Tea House park-up was.

Even though there were scheduled departure times, with the hippy buses it was just show up and smoke Indian beedies while you wait. *Bangalore Ganesh Beedies was the favorite smoke of most hippies. More like a little cigar with a red string tied around the loose-leaf tobacco, costing pennies per pack. George, June, and Enrique were there just hanging out waiting for the group to gather, board the bus and get on their way to Nepal.

Marley walked right up and said, "Hey guys. We ready to do this? I've been in Delhi for too long and am ready for some adventure."

George answered, "If things run as usual I can guarantee you more adventure than you expect. Through India, it will be sweltering hot, and then we must tackle the Raj Path. It is a long curvy trail, just barely a road, often with width for only one vehicle."

He smiled good-naturedly at the thought of the adventure before us. You could see that adventure was his passion.

While traveling by bus, Marley quickly learned if you want to secure a good seat, you came early to lay claim to your spot. At the end of the day, it is just as well sitting and waiting an hour or so more. Nobody knew how long it would take to get to Kathmandu at any rate. Some of the buses were quite good. Lots of them were Mercedes and English Dinosaurs, although quite vintage and usually, someone on-board was a crafty mechanic. Otherwise, it could be a disaster. The road was barely passable, but it was the most direct route.

Marley picked a seat near the front, across from the driver. He was lucky as the bus was not completely full, so Marley got the whole seat. That meant he could sleep and had a pretty good view through the front windscreen. The driver had told him the day before that usually the crazier passengers stayed more towards the back of the bus. George, the driver, seemed pretty cool and had already lived a year or so in Kathmandu. In short order they became friends.

The bus was a Bedford dinosaur, but George claimed to be an excellent mechanic. Something he would have to prove later. Marley sat quietly and watched the hippy

passengers climb up onto the bus. One of the first travelers was a big red-haired guy named Red. He sat in the seat directly behind Marley Willow.

We had our usual load of English, Swedish, Italian and German travelers. A woman with more tattoos than anyone had ever seen. She had her entire face covered in tribal tattoos. That was just about as freaky as you could be. Another couple had just come up from Goa. Then George, June his wife, and Enrique, the helper on the bus.

Many hippies moved north in the summer and south in the winter, following the weather, to the wildest party spot in Asia, Goa. They merely followed the sun. There must have been twenty-five passengers or so. Along with the strangest guy, that was riding his bicycle around the world. He was from Dusseldorf, Germany.

He had already done Europe, North and South America, many Pacific islands and had just crossed India. Rather than ride his bike up the Raj Path, he decided to hitch a ride on their bus, and when he left Nepal, he would do so via Pokhara with a downhill ride. George and Enrique put the bike on the roof of the bus, tied it down, and German Rolf got a seat and off they went.

George told Rolf, "I promise I won't tell anybody Heir Rolf" meaning him skipping the ride up the steep Raj Path on his bicycle. George just laughed.

While driving through the Indian planes, they would often keep the windows of the buses closed to prevent all the dust from entering. It was that, or leave everything open, including the door. It was hard to say which was better.

The adventurers had a typical trip through Lucknow, Gorakhpur, and on to Barganj at the border with India and Nepal. Once they passed the Indian border, due to George having had plenty of Playboy magazines to pass around, they did not give them any problems with the customs and a quick pass into Nepal. George and his wife spoke good Nepalese. The customs on the Nepali side was pretty much a joke, and they were now in the Terai, the home of the Bengal Tiger and the Nepalese rhinoceros.

They drove on and until, they suddenly got a glimpse of the Nepali foothills and terraced slopes. No more Hindi here, so Marley, would have to work on learning a bit of Nepalese. It was correct about them being a happy culture. Obvious to one and all.

Every person one met said Namaste and smiled and laughed. The hippies slowly began to leave behind the overwhelming heat of the Indian planes, and the odors changed. It's funny how Marley related to how each country had a particular smell of the environment. Nepal had a fresher scent due to the clean cold winds that came off the mountains and the rain, before you reached the cities anyway.

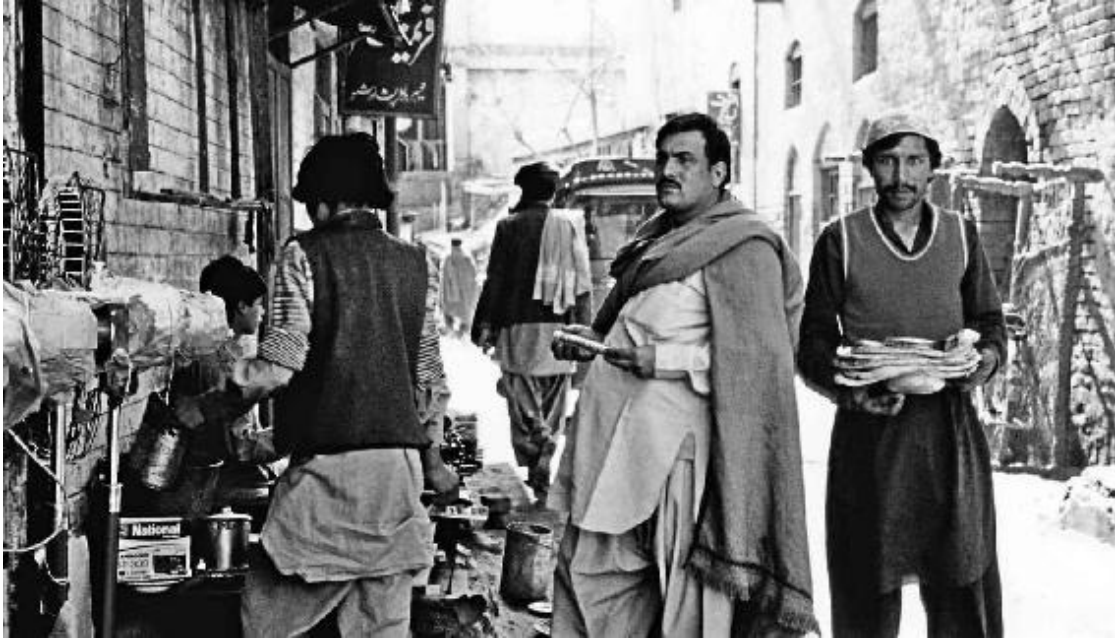
As they neared the famous mountain road, known as the Raj Path, along came the curves and the nerves. George, the bus driver, had to drive at a turtle's pace. This road being the most dangerous stretch of road from Amsterdam to Kathmandu.

A twisting, turning narrow slice of road carved out of the foothills of the Himalayas. More than one vehicle could not pass at a time. In India and Nepal, there are general preferences of who yields for whom. Size decides that. Tata trucks got the general right of way. Then buses, cars and down. A man on foot had to watch his ass.

As usual, everybody was smoking chillums of hash. Now there was no more worry about the police as the hash and grass were legal to smoke in Nepal. Everybody, but their German long-distance biker, fired up, including the bus driver, wife, and their friend.

Marley asked George, "Why are you just making the round trip from Kathmandu to Delhi and back and not carrying on to Afghanistan?"

"This just a warm-up trip man," George replied. "To see if the bus is good enough to make it to Europe and back. I don't know when I'll go, but it is a trip I must make. Kathmandu, Amsterdam, and return to Kathmandu. That will be some amazing trip."



Outdoor Snack bar Pakistan



A Nepalese Child on the Way up the Raj Path

He told Willow he was a mechanic from California. He worked mostly on motorcycles but claimed he could fix just about anything mechanical.

"Do you know what the name for a mechanic is in Nepal?" George asked him.

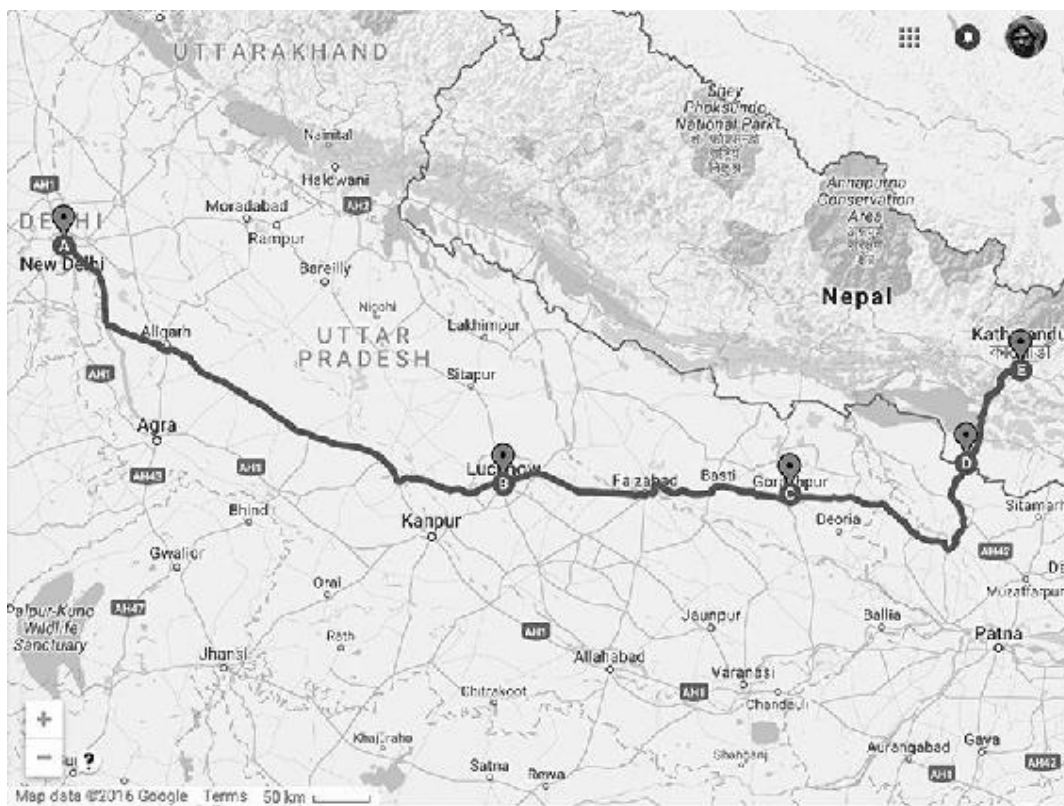
"I have no idea, George. How do they say, mechanic?" Marley replied.

"Mystery," he answered. "Isn't that crazy man? Well, I am a pretty fucking good mystery so don't worry about a thing. Anything that breaks, I'll fix it."

George had bought the bus from some hippies who had made it across the 3,728-mile overland trail from Europe but didn't have any more juice to make the return trip. Or they decided to stay and use the money from the bus sale to live in Nepal for a year or so.

When you wanted to sell your car, van or bus, George was the man. None of the hippies understood the proper Nepali way to sell such a vehicle. First, it would be best if you spoke Nepalese, which George did. Then you went to the grandfather to ask permission to talk to his son about the sale.

Sometimes it stopped there, or he may have a son himself, so George would work his way down the ladder to respect each of the family members till he got to the member who was to make the purchase



New Delhi to Kathmandu

One had to buy the bus as cheap as possible from the hippy who had it for sale, to make sure there was some profit there. Then bargain with the buyer until you came to a good solution for all parties.

The buses were bearing German export license plates and an export document, which was like a passport for your bus that allowed you to remove the vehicle from Europe and eventually get it to Nepal to sell. Or any other country that permits such sales for that matter.

In India, the sale of these foreign buses was strictly forbidden, although that was where the big money was. The Indian law only allowed Indian produced buses, trucks, and cars a permanent pass on their roads except for some second world war Jeeps or old three-wheel Harley Davidsons, which were converted into small public transport for

two or three people. It was amazing that these Harleys still ran. You could see many of them parked all around the Indian Tea House back in the day.

In Nepal, with a good connection in the traffic police department, you could arrange to change the paperwork and acquire a Nepalese registration and license plate. If you did not have these connections and you didn't find another hippy ready to drive the bus, truck or car back to Europe, you had to sell and generally to George or a local Nepalese if you could work it out.

Marley said he didn't think the bus he went to Nepal on had any contraband on it, but who knows. Marley still didn't know George well enough at the time to ask, and he probably would not answer anyway. Those were things that bus owners didn't tell passengers nor newly made friends. At that point, Marley believed that George and June just did it for the fun of it, to actually be part of the hippy trail. George had motor oil in his blood.

George and June both took turns driving. Enrique helped out with the other chores that were needed. He said that he lived with George and June in a house in Kathmandu. He came from the US originally but had spent a lot of time with the Spanish hippies in Ibiza, Spain. Marley could only suppose his original name was Eric. He apparently had a close call with the Spanish authorities that were a bit tougher than much of Europe, and he had to change residence somewhat in a rush and came eastward with the hippy movement.

Usually when driving on a very narrow broken and often unpaved road up the passes to the Himalayas, with your bus driver stoned on hash, at the least you would worry. But this group of hippies' feelings was pretty much whatever happened, happened.

Even later when Marley found out that the primary driver, George, had epilepsy, he took it in stride. This just meant that the second driver, his wife June, would have to keep an eye on him in case he had an attack while driving. Since he said he didn't have them often, young Marley did not think much about it. Though that was something he did not share with the other passengers, upon George's request. Marley said he had no idea why George told him that those first days.

Then there was the woman, with her whole body full of tattoos. Even her entire face was covered with tribal-like tattoos, but she was very quiet and kept to herself. She was almost hostile. Marley, being of a talkative nature, tried to converse with her, but she was not at all receptive though Marley was sure she had some wild stories to tell.

The big red haired American guy and Marley made friends quickly. Red had stayed the night before they left at Mrs. Murwah's, so they had a little bond already. He was heading for Nepal, to check out the Buddhist monasteries in Swayambhu and Boudhanath. Boudhanath Stupa was a Tibetan refugee-camp and Swayambhu, another Stupa, and monastery, on the outskirts of Katmandu on opposite sides of the valley.

You must keep in mind that in Nepal they mix the Hindu and Buddhist religions. Buddha was born in Nepal and died in India. Both these Stupas were very special to the locals.

The German biker was full of stories from all over. Rolf would arrive in each country he visited and crisscross all the major roads, and he had the name of each country he crossed, painted in white on his black bicycle. He told Marley he had to fabricate all his spare parts as at some point or another every single piece of the bicycle had worn out. He was in the third year of his journey, with little idea of when it would be completed.

Now this guy was not a hippy by any means. He was just a straight adventurer just like all the others on the bus, but without the interest in the hash, grass or the eastern philosophy, though he was indeed a freak. There was a cute hippy girl from Australia on the bus too, but she seemed to be halfway flipped out. Marley sort of stayed clear of her, at least for the moment.

One often ran into individuals who had taken too much dope and were not quite all there. They lived in their own world, really did not bother anyone and were rarely

violent. Most were flipped out from taking too much LSD, some from overeating hash. Hash is much stronger if you cook it down to butter and make cookies or cake with it.

The main problem here is it's difficult to measure the amount of hash butter. Typically, the cookies come out very strong and most of the Asian hippies, including Marley, having had their bad experiences. If the hash doses are correct for each cookie, it is a great feeling. If not, it is like taking a fist full of sleeping pills where you could hardly move.

The hippies turned up with all kinds of drugs on the bus trip. Everybody had a stash. Those passengers who did not smoke tobacco used marijuana to mix with the hash to make their chillums and joints. There was also speed, downers, LSD, magic mushrooms, and the like. Most of the European hippies were pretty hardcore.

In some parts of the Raj Path road, there was barely enough space for the bus to pass, with steep drops, hundreds of feet down. When they encountered a truck or a large local Nepalese vehicle coming in the opposite direction one of them had to back up until they reached a stretch of road wide enough for both vehicles.

On some corners, the pass was so hairy that they had to see-saw backward and forward to get the big long bus around the corner. These tense moments were highlighted with all the hash and grass they were consuming.

At one point, about halfway up the Raj Path, the bus bottomed out very hard on a rock that had fallen from the mountain and was in the middle of the road. Shortly after, the oil pressure gauge dropped like a stone in a pond. George made it to the next wide spot in the pass to stop and check out the damage. Enrique and Marley jumped out and gave him a hand and June kept the passengers calm.

George got the oil pan off and said, "We have a fucking long crack in the carter pan, man. It is something that I am going to have to fix if we want to carry on to Kathmandu. And all the motor oil has leaked out the crack."

George had already spent some time in Nepal and knew that parts were hard to come by, even in the major cities, so in his experiences he had learned some local tricks. The temporary fix on their bus oil pan was made of a mixture of strands of hemp rope mixed with hand soap and pushed into the crack to fill it up and seal it temporarily.

"I hope we make it to Katmandu before the patch falls out or I'll have to hitch a ride to the Kathmandu to fix it," George stated.

One can see there are no real timetables when a busload of hippies gets this far from the western world. You get there when you get there. You just have to take it easy and flow with whatever happens.

Now the problem was that they didn't have any oil to put in the motor. So, their worldwide German bicyclist volunteered to ride up the mountain road until he found some small chai shop or gasoline shack to purchase enough motor oil to get them to their destination.

"I will be back before we know it, Ya, Ya," Rolf said, wearing his lederhosen and all. What a circus of people was on that bus.

It took Rolf about three hours to ride to buy the motor oil and ride back on his German bicycle. In the meantime, the three young men put the oil pan back on the motor, and when he arrived, they filled the engine with oil. Then carefully moved forward on their way, making sure not to bottom out with the bus again.

As luck would have it, they made it. The whole bunch of hippies pulled into Durbar Square, a couple of days after they left New Delhi. Parking the fifty-passenger bus in a line of several vehicles for sale by arriving hippies. Mercedes Benz cars, Land Rover 4X4s, the occasional VW bus and a couple of the big hippy over-land buses too. It was like a used vehicle lot at the very end of the road.

"I know of a cheap hotel you can go to, Marley," Enrique suggested. "It's just on the

edge of town. It is called the Match Box Hotel. I stayed there when I first came to Kathmandu."

At fifty cents a day, what can you expect? The hotel name was a direct and clear indication of how big the rooms were, but it was just a place to sleep as Marley spent all his time exploring the city. All the passengers on the bus exchanged contacts, and they went their way. Mr. Marley checked into the Match Box and headed straight for Freak Street to score some Nepali hand pressed hash and wander around the town as though he was living a dream.

Much to his disappointment, it was not as potent as the hash he was buying in New Delhi. After pursuing the issue further, he found some sweet Pakistani pollen pressed hashish that was more than adequate. You could buy in the street shops or in the chai or juice shops by merely asking. Marley also purchased some marijuana, but it was not very good although a sound mixer for a person that does not smoke tobacco, like himself, though he did eventually take up the habit of smoking beadies.

Freak Street was just that. Hippies were everywhere. There must have been a dozen souvenir shops. George and June had a wood block silk-screen shop at the bottom of the street and seemed to do fine. An American couple had an art and jewelry gallery below their shop on the first floor. Shop and house rent was very cheap for the foreigners.

The majority of the hippy tourist concentrated on Freak Street. The locals frequented the print shop or the jewelry shop in the afternoons, though they did not participate in the day-to-day craziness that occurred at the top of Freak Street. Marley being a new arrival, he dove straight into the mélange of insanity on the world famous Freak Street.

Freak Street was unusual as the juice and chai shops catered to the stoned customers. A hippy could get any juice they could imagine, things like French toast, oatmeal, rice pudding, cakes, pies and



George, Marley and Enrique in Arriving in Kathmandu

brownies. Both types. The Nepalese people who worked on Freak Street were called, the Freak Street Hipsters. There was a cheaper part of town for poorer hippies called Pig Street, but Freak Street and Durbar Square was the happening place to hang out.

With several hippy hotels right there in the mist of all this chaos. It was sex, drugs and rock and roll, and none of the paranoia of the police breaking down your door for smoking a joint. It was a real paradise for the hippies in the 1970s. As mentioned

before, that was where the hippy buses also parked to advertise that they were going back to New Delhi or if their car or bus was, in fact for sale. Everywhere you looked were temples. Like it had been for centuries. It was like living in the 16th century.

Chapter 7: Kathmandu Valley

Everyone was amicable. All you had to do was make a goofy face at any Nepalese, and they would laugh. The Nepali word for Problem was "Problem." Until the presence of the British Empire, the word did not exist. Sacred cows walked around anywhere they wished. Marley's first day he spent most of his time walking around the center of town, getting his bearings on where everything was. What was very present was the feeling that there was no danger of any type. Maybe a rickshaw driver or taxi driver would charge someone too much, but no big deal. A safe environment, which was an uncommon thing for an American to experience.

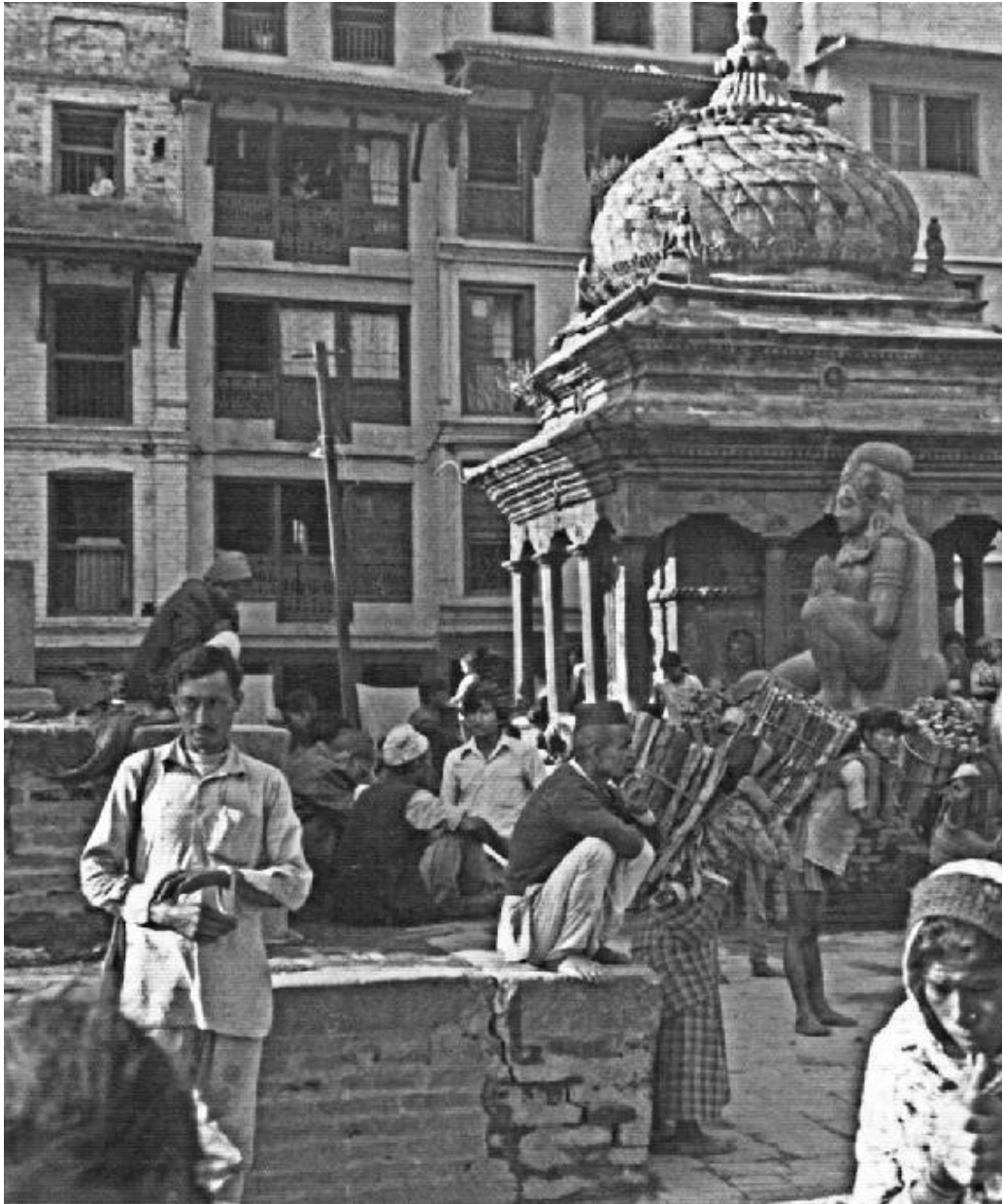
Young Marley didn't last long in the Match Box Hotel. Not a very entertaining environment compared to downtown. So, after a couple of days, he moved into one of the hotels on Freak Street. That was where the core of the mayhem was. That was the epicenter of the scene and where one might get lucky and meet a girl or find some new hash or hear a fresh story of some adventure or other.

Marley also started hanging out at Georges Silk Paper Print-Shop. He was drawn to the local community, interested in how one can live there and survive. Slowly he got to know a few of the permanent locals that lived there. Their favorite time was in the afternoons when everything started to wind down. Antonio was a Spanish jeweler who was one of the town's most well-known characters. He made anything you wanted and was a high-quality jeweler, who had studied the craft for years in India.

Dana, Carpet Carl, Ira Cohen, Petra, Mike, Melanie and many more individuals who somehow lived in a pretty much-closed country. Where technically visas for tourists did not exist. There were about 100 foreigners who had the contact to get ninety-day visa extensions for a hundred dollars per person. They came by way of a friend of many, who was a high-ranking officer in the Nepalese military and he took care of his friends and made a good living doing so.

When it was time for Marley's first visa to be renewed, he joined the group of foreigners living in the Kingdom of Nepal. Marley even got a Nepalese driver's license. He said he couldn't remember how much he'd paid, but it was cheap and in the future, he would use this Nepalese driver's license, written only in Nepalese, to drive some ten thousand miles across part of the world.

There were not many Americans in the group of foreigners that lived permanently in Nepal, so the Americans seemed to gravitate to one another. Marley became terrific friends with George and June and eventually rented



Durbar Square, Kathmandu

his own house. It was a small house on the outskirts of town, so he now needed a motorcycle. Most of the motorbikes in Katmandu, at the time, were made in Russia.

There was a small model 125cc motorbike that was called the Russian Rabbit, and there was a bigger 250cc Russian bike called the Planeta. It turned out that the Nepalese employee in George's silk print shop had a 250cc Russian Planeta, that he had just bought. He had an accident with the motorcycle and killed a young child, and he assumed the motorbike was cursed and he wanted to get rid of it as soon as he could.

Marley felt bad for him, but he initially didn't find anything wrong with the motorcycle, so he bought it. He found it kind of neat for an American driving a Russian motorcycle around Nepal during the Cold War. The motorcycle was like new though the design was kind of funky. Retro looking even then.

In the end, this was indeed a mysterious motorcycle. It ran flawlessly for a few weeks and then it just refused to run. George was an excellent mechanic, but he could

not find out what was wrong with it, although he did get it down to being something electric.

There was a Nepali 'mystery' or mechanic for foreigners, which was a specialist in Russian motorcycles. So eventually they took it there. The bike looked perfect, but when it decided to stop working, it just stopped with no rhyme or reason. A couple of days later Marley was told that his motorcycle was fixed. That he could swing by and pick it up. George gave him a ride on the back of his BMW to pick up the Russian bike. Marley did not like being stranded without his wheels

When the mechanic gave it back to him, it had the gas tank covered in chicken blood and feathers. The mechanic had sacrificed a chicken to chase away the evil demon in the motorcycle. As you might expect, Marley wasn't too happy about this repair job, but the truth is the motorcycle ran flawlessly for a few months after that. Only in Nepal did such things occur, but as the environment was so peculiar, the hippy residents just took these things in stride.

The only problem apart from the electrics was when Marley would go for a ride in the country, and a water buffalo heard the loud popping sound of the exhaust pipes of the Russian motorcycle. The Buffaloes went crazy and tried to attack the bike. Marley would have to try to drive by with the motor at idle and then when he got close enough, go as fast as he could to get by the buffalo. This happened to him weekly. The water buffalo in Nepal are enormous. Luckily Marley always managed to outrun them, but every time he passed they would try to attack the bike. Marley and whoever else that was on it with him. It was pretty scary. These beasts in Nepal were very aggressive.

After a couple more months the motorcycle started acting up again and ran one day and another not. So, Marley and George took it back to the Nepalese "Mystery" and asked him to fix it again.

"You must sell this motorcycle, Mr. Marley. That demon that killed the boy will not go away," he said as he refused to work on the Russian Planeta motorcycle anymore. It had the evil eye.

After being informed that it would not be possible to exorcise the demon permanently our young hippy friend started looking for another motorcycle to buy, and somebody to purchase his dodgy cursed 250cc Russian motorcycle. Preferably quickly before it required another chicken sacrifice to keep it running. Only in Nepal could such things be considered common on a daily basis. While living in Nepal, nothing surprised a person.

The foreign community just thought, "Don't focus on it. Just move with the current. No matter how weird it seems, just take it in."

They were living in another world, and it was fun. Now Marley Willow had to find some foreigner that did not believe in curses and the evil eye. No Nepalese will touch this motorcycle now.



Temple in Kathmandu

Chapter 8: BMWanda Motorcycle

George appeared at Marley's house one day, knocking on the door like crazy. Marley thought, either something has gone wrong or George needs his help. That or George had some new idea about an adventure to tell Marley all about.

"Hey Man," George exclaimed all excited. "There is a French couple that's just arrived overland on a Honda 500 four cylinder. It has an electric starter, and it is sweet. You want to ride over and see it?"

It was probably the first one ever seen in Asia and Marley was in the market for a motorcycle. Not just another one of those Russian bikes that sounded like a popcorn machine when they ran. He was looking for a large cylinder bike. Perhaps a BMW or a Harley.

"Hell yeah, man," Marley replied. "What color is it?"

"It's black, dude," George answered. "Your favorite color?"

"Well let's fucking go!" the young American hippie said, now excited too.

To understand what these people were all like back then, look up the Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers comics. George and Marley were pretty much like those characters. Two, very spaced out hippies, who were trying to do business in Kathmandu. George and Marley went to the French couple and asked if the Honda motorcycle was still for sale. This was the coolest motorcycle in Kathmandu along with George's BMW.

The owner's French wife said that there was no way that they were going to ride that motorcycle all the way back to Paris, but they wanted more money than Marley could afford to pay. They asked the French couple if they could ride it around for the day to make sure it ran well and as George was known as the guy to sell your vehicle to, they trusted the two Freak Brothers with their motorcycle for the day.

It was great! Super-fast, and an electric starter that freaked all the Nepalese out. They kept saying "Eslef estart! Eslef estart!" It was the perfect bike for Kathmandu. The two hippies rode around on the two motorcycles all day. Nightfall came, and George and Marley were still playing around with the motorcycle, which young Marley really wanted by then, but the engine mysteriously stopped. George quickly figured out that it was the reserve valve on the gas tank that needed to be opened. Neither man had remembered to put gas in the motorcycle the whole day. Now George didn't know which way the reserve valve should be turned to open.

"Don't worry," George said. "I got it, man. I've got a lighter right here."

Before Marley could stop George, he lit up the lighter to illuminate the valve. They were both close to the bike looking at the gas valve. There just happened to be a small little leak in the gas tank valve and as they both saw the drop of gas form on the bottom of the valve the two freaks looked at each other and said, "Oh Fuck!"

Just an instant after they glanced at each other, the motorcycle tank blew up like a bomb. It even burned off part of George's colossal beard off. Last time anyone saw Marley Willow he said that he still couldn't believe that George thought to use a lighter to see if the gas tank valve was on or off. Just in off chance there is a drop or two of gasoline leaking from the valve. They were just too spaced out to remember shit like that. Man, what a flash that was. Right in front of George's store on Freak Street too. The flame from the gasoline shot up about twenty feet in the air. The whole street saw it. What a rush!

Luckily, they managed to put the fire out, and all the fire did was melt the gas tank and gas lines of the bike. The gas tank was now the size of a Coca-Cola can. When Marley and George went to find the French couple, they were really angry with both and with reason. Marley, of course, had to buy the motorcycle now for sure, but he did

get it for a better price like he wanted. What were they all to do? They couldn't take it back that way nor sell it. It was a shame that George and Marley were goofy enough to burn the tank up, but it was an accident. In the end, it had worked out great for the Kathmandu hippies. Marley couldn't say much for the French man and his wife, except sorry about that one. Karma will probably come back later and bite him in the ass.

Marley Willow was now the proud new owner of the fastest motorcycle in Nepal. Up till that point George's BMW 500 twin was the quickest bike. Pretty much everyone else had Russian motorbikes. Like Antonio rode his Russian Rabbit. The only problem was that the Honda four-cylinder, was missing a gas tank and all the rubber tubes to the carburetors were melted together.

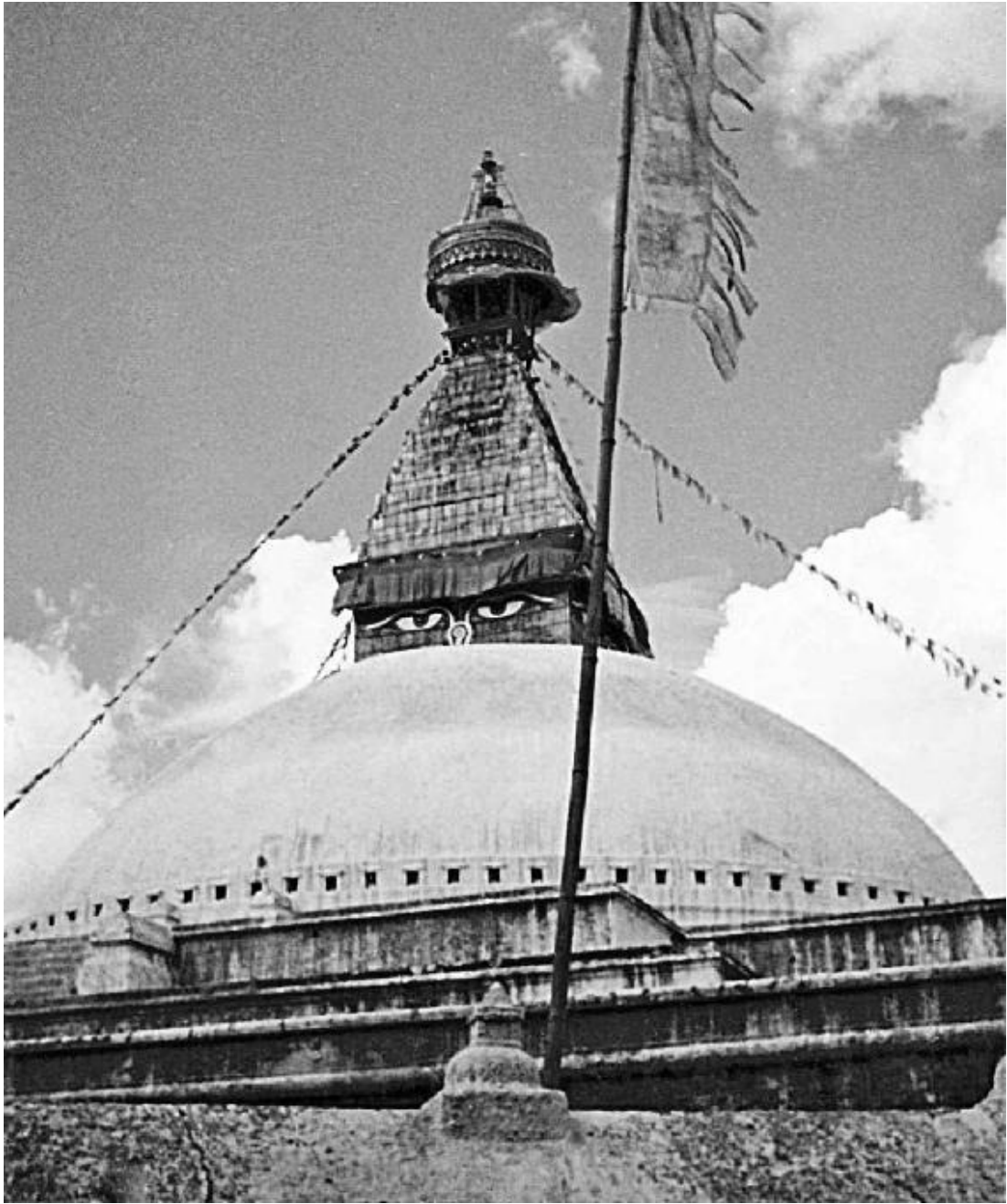
Lucky for him, his buddy George found an old BMW inside a dilapidated garage that was trashed from an accident, but it still had the gas tank in good shape. It also had Nepalese papers, so they put it together and invented the first BMWanda. He loved that bike. Complete with Nepalese documents and license plate. Stamped and approved by the local traffic police chief.

Looking back, George and Marley were both lucky there was not more gasoline in the tank of that French guy's bike. They both could have been severely burned. That is the state in which they wandered around their newly adopted country, but nobody cared. The Nepalese liked the hippy tourists back in the 1970s. No matter how goofy they acted. At the time Marley just thought that the Nepalese believed that this is how the rest of the world was. That way it was all, OK.

George and Marley would often take motorcycle rides into the Nepali countryside to see if there was another adventure waiting. One of the best places that George showed him was near Dakshinkali, at a place called Chobar Gorge where a Guru lived on the way, with whom Marley became close friends.

Below the temple, climbing down the walls of the gorge, George showed him a cave. It was so small they had to crawl way down inside it, but at the bottom was a more substantial part of the cave where it opened with a little pond in the middle. You could see where Yogis and followers left rice and flowers for the Hindu gods, mostly Kali. The water was crystal clear, with candles illuminating the passage and the pond. One of the neatest places Marley Willow have ever seen. What vibrations. Totally quiet, except the trickle of water. Now Marley had a new spot to practice meditation, a fantastic place of peace and solitude.

The Guru who lived there in a small room of an old building, carved out of the back of a small cave and built up with bricks and doors so he could close at night, was the coolest. He had made himself a nice room covered with pictures of Ganesh, Vishnu, and Shiva. Marley and he smoked on many days for



Boudhanath Stupa Nepal



Swayambhu Temple Kathmandu

hours discussing their worlds. He had been a wealthy man with many children and grandchildren, but he renounced all he had to become a Yogi and later became a Guru to many. Marley visited him for the nearly four years that he would be in Nepal. They talked about materialism, Hinduism, reincarnation, the western world and the cold,

which neither of them liked at all. Other than the hash and grass, Marley would share with him, he loved it when he brought him a new blanket, sweater or jacket. Many days, Marley would bring some dahl bat, which was rice and lentils and they would have their meal together.

Chapter 9: The Stupas

Marley Willow would go downtown Kathmandu every day about lunchtime, on his motorcycle to eat something and maybe have a juice with some chillums on Freak Street or Durbar Square. Hanging out and talking with the locals, freaks, and friends, and now with the new motorcycle, it was effortless for the young hippy to pick up girls. One of his favorite pastimes.

Over the years, Marley lived in various houses in Nepal. His family home in Baliyu. Back when he lived with George, then the house in Swayambhu. Right next to the temple, during his last year or so Nepal.

There were a couple of other houses too, but his favorite was always the house by the Swayambhu temple. Marley said that he thought they were there about a year and a half. It belonged to one of his buddies that went back to the states for a supposed few months, which, turned out to be more than a year. Marley cared for this friend's house and belongings, and he let him use it as Marley's own. They were right up beside the Temple.

The only issue with the house in Swayambhu were the monkeys. The Stupa was also called the Monkey Temple. Lord Hanuman was the protector of these animals, and they were aggressive as Hell. They had steel chicken wire on all the cabinets where they kept the food, as the monkeys would come in the windows of the kitchen and steal anything they could get.

If you were carrying a bag while climbing the stairs of knowledge, up to the Stupa, they would steal it from you before you knew it. If you fought them they would bite the shit out of you but living there, right by the temple was an awesome experience.

Among the other places, Marley loved to visit was Boudhanath Stupa where the Tibetans lived. The Tibetans lived their own lifestyle. Different from the Nepalese, although they all did live happily together. Their local food was fairly basic in general. Rice and lentils and Tibetans used Yak butter on everything. It is very high in fat, which helps with the cold.

At the time Marley Willow lived in Kathmandu, the reincarnated Rimpoche resided in Boudhanath. He was one of the highest holy men in Tibetan Buddhism after the Dali Lama, who was in Lasa, India protected by the government there, from the Chinese. All the Tibetans said he could do things like levitate. It was an honor for the country to have Rimpoche reside there. All the Tibetans talked about him.

Many Tibetans were expelled or escaped from Tibet as the Chinese continued to take more control of their land, which they claimed as China. In the process of their attempt to remove religion from the Tibetan culture, more and more Tibetans moved to places like India, and Nepal.

Being only a few hours from the Tibetan border Kodari, there were many Tibetans that lived in Kathmandu and the surrounding areas. Tibetans, unlike the small Nepalese, are more prominent people and many of the men are quite large. Mountain men of sorts.

About seven miles on the northeastern outskirts of Kathmandu is where the Boudhanath Stupa is located. A great white dome with the eyes of Buddha on the top much like Swayambhu, where Marley lived on the other side of the Kathmandu Valley.

All around the temple are prayer wheels or "Mani Wheels." Whenever Marley and his friends were there, they walked around the temple turning each of the prayer wheels on which is normally written "Om Mani Padme Hum" from Sanskrit.

At the core of each prayer is the wheel is a "Life Tree" with hundreds or even thousands of mantras written and wrapped around the tree. When you turn the wheel,

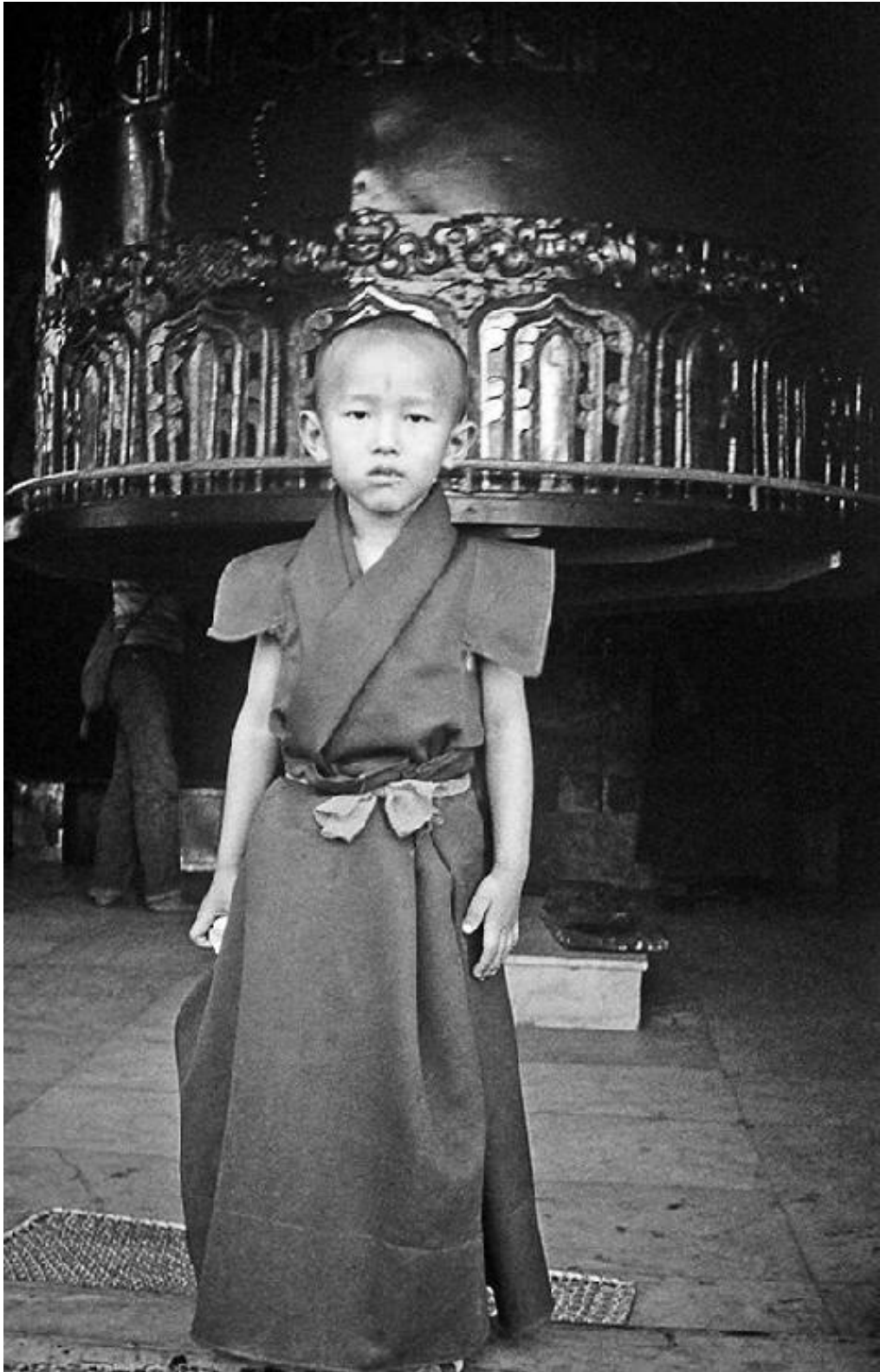
you are praying turning the "Darma," which describes the way Buddha taught. Inside the temples, you will find colossal prayer wheels that might have hundreds of thousands, if not millions of prayers inscribed inside.

The idea of turning the wheel is to accumulate wisdom (Good Karma) and expulse the negative (Bad Karma). The prayer wheel or Mani is always spun clockwise in the same direction the prayers are written.

The Stupa is said to hold the remains of Kassapa Buddha. Kassapa is the twenty-seventh of the twenty-nine named Buddhas, the sixth of the Seven Buddhas of Antiquity, and the third of the five Buddhas of the present. The hippies would often go to Boudhanath to meet with their Tibetan friends and discuss how they all lived. One of the Tibetan friends would feed the Brahma Bulls every day.

Marley Willow's Tibetan was nonexistent, though his Nepalese was getting better, although not yet great by any means. More of a mix of the two languages, Hindi and Nepalese, but many people in Kathmandu spoke English. Or at least some pigeon English.

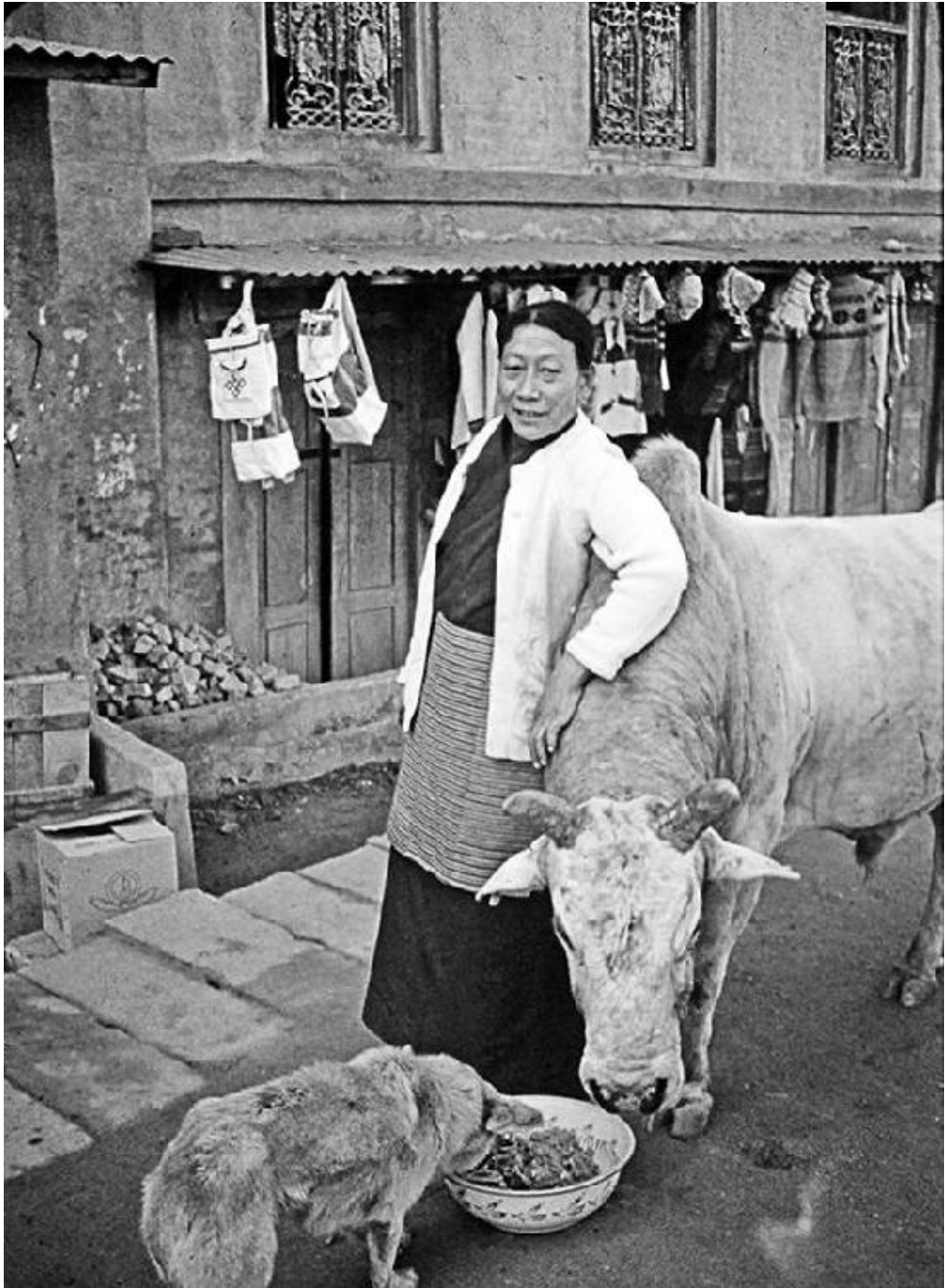
Marley said all the Tibetans he met were religious, so they would all tell him about Buddha. One of his friends was another crazy hippy that lived in a small house in Boudhanath. He came to Kathmandu in a big empty Mercedes fifty-two passenger bus and stayed there happy as he could be. He drove this great big bus around town like it was his car.



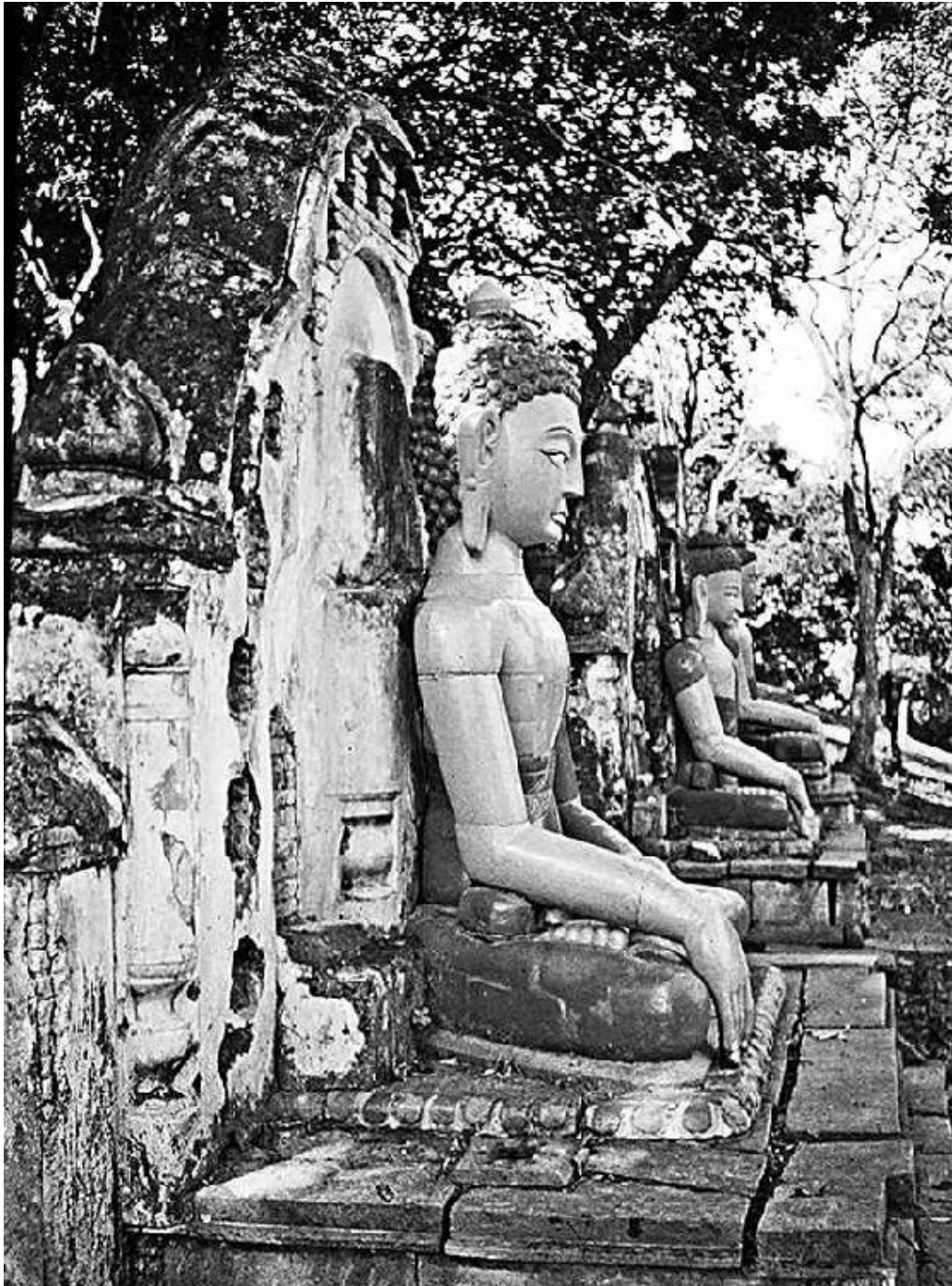
Child Tibetan Monk & Large Mani Wheel



Small Tibetan Mani Wheel



Tibetan & Brahma Bull



Buddha at Steps to Knowledge

On the top of the bus, he had a Train Horn. Marley lived on the other side of Kathmandu Valley, and he could hear his horn when he was leaving his house in Boudhanath. It was huge. He appeared one day and stayed many months in the Kathmandu Valley.

He got along with everybody. George and Marley tried to buy that horn from him I don't know how many times. It was too cool. They could just imagine a Hippy Bus with a train horn on the top. But there was no way he would part with it.

The two businessmen hippies also tried to buy his bus, but he didn't want to part

with that either. He never spoke about nor looked for passengers and never talked about his plans. Not even to the longtime locals. No one had any idea of what he was up to. Maybe he was just some crazy who liked to drive his big bus around. Then one day he was gone. No one ever saw or heard from him again. Disappearing into the void that seemed to consume so many back then.

Chapter 10: Expatriate Residents

At that time, Kathmandu had a great variety of foreigners living there. Some very secretly, maybe hiding out in the furthest corners of the world. Nepal's spiritual aspects were for others and some for a combination of reasons much like Marley Willow. A mixture of interests in living in a place as exotic as this, although for Marley, he added the desire for adventure. As always, a person's environment gives way to change, as all your exterior influences move your direction. We, in general, are products of our environments.

Antonio lived in the middle of town. He spoke both Nepalese and Hindi. Originally from Spain but had lived a long time in the East. He was a remarkable jeweler and dressed the part. He even styled his mustache after Salvador Dali, for that artistic touch. He was always busy with unique special-order jewelry. The foreign community had money for the most part as they had found or invented some way or another to make a living in this far corner of the world.

He was also the local cocaine dealer, for the Kathmandu elite part of our community. At the time when Marley first met Antonio the only cocaine that was available in Nepal was pharmaceutical, which he already supplied. During the 70s and 80s cocaine was the rich man's drug and still did not have the bad reputation that it has today. After the development of crack and the crime that cocaine brought with it in later years that opinion changed, although in Kathmandu it was just another drug and was not thought to be nocuous.

Antonio rode around on his Russian Rabbit motorcycle like a bee going from flower to flower. He lived with his live-in maid, a Nepalese woman, but was always with a new girlfriend. Normally blonds. He considered himself the Don Juan of Kathmandu, and Marley supposed he was in a way. Always dressed well like Roman in New Delhi. White shirt, pressed pants and fancy Italian shoes. He stood out especially in a place like Kathmandu where poverty or hippies was the norm.

The only drugs the locals looked down on were the opiates morphine, and heroin. As these two drugs were so addictive and destructive to the user, most of the local residents kept their lives separate from these two, although the occasional opium pipe was not considered to be too bad as long as one did not get addicted.

The ones that became junkies were soon isolated from the main group of locals, as junkies eventually run out of money, and then they started to steal from their friends and family.



Old Tibetan Woman

Another known foreigner was Carpet Carl. He had married a Tibetan woman years

before Marley's arrival and had a Tibetan handmade carpet factory and made elaborate Tibetan tents to sell back in California. He lived with his wife and half of her relatives in a house in Boudhanath.

Later on, after Marley had been in Nepal for a couple of years, Carl started a food import company that brought special foreign foods from Thailand. Frozen shrimp, American sodas, potato chips, candy bars, and the clever American made an excellent little business of that as well. Plus, it made life more comfortable for those living in Nepal. Small luxuries for the foreign residents.

In Nepal, if you were not prepared to live on Dal Bat, which was rice with lentils, you ate chicken. Fried chicken, boiled chicken, chicken curry, chicken with rice, chicken tacos and chicken just about any way you can imagine. Marley did emphasize that fact that he did get tired of chicken.

Cows and Brahma Bulls being sacred animals, chicken was the only meat available other than goat. That and the few items the Chai Shops on Freak Street offered to lure in the hippies.

On the more mysterious side of Kathmandu lived Ira Cohen and Petra Vogt. Ira was a famous poet and photographer from New York City who died in 2011. He hung out with the likes of Jimmy Hendrix and Allen Ginsberg and Petra his girlfriend, at the time was said to be a witch.

She came from the Living Theater in New York City and certainly dressed the part of black witchcraft. In Nepal back in those times, if someone local said that a particular person was a witch, the foreign locals pretty much believed it.

For the Nepalese population shamans and witch doctors were an item in their everyday life. It was like the temple. You had to pray, and you had to honor the shaman. That was why there was such an empty American hospital in Kathmandu.

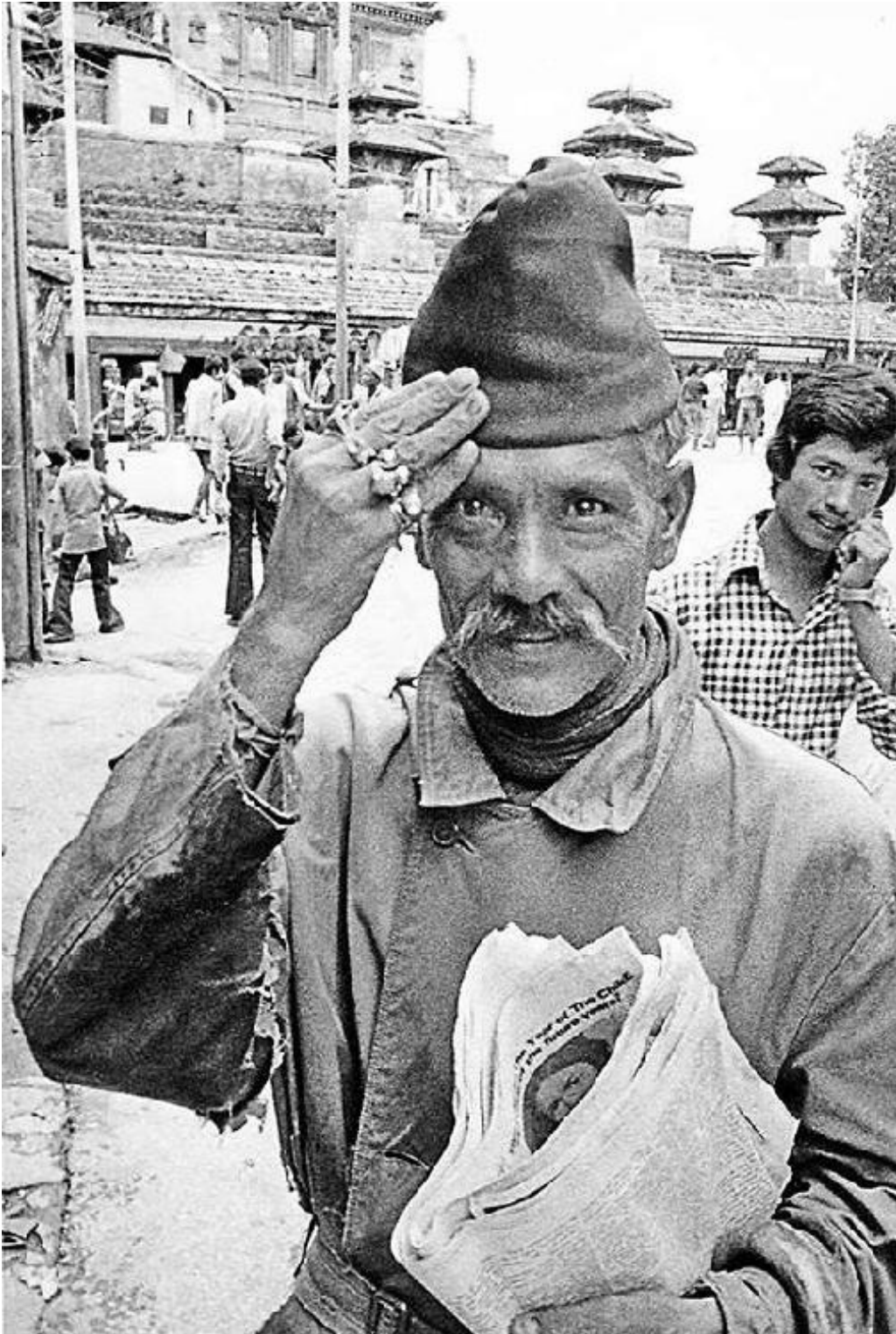
If the Nepalese locals were seen going to the foreign-staffed hospital, the local shaman would put a curse on them or at least threaten to do so. Of course, a modern hospital is a serious threat to a shaman. Before the hospital, the shamans were the only source available in Nepal to cure anything and everything that required a doctor. Them and a local herbal doctor who was actually extremely skilled. The combined effort usually provided the concoction of herbal medicine to cure what ails you.

Even if you did have to go to the hospital, they very often lacked things like penicillin. Three of Marley's friends got into a car accident and were cut up quite seriously. They went to the local hospital but in the end, had to be flown to Thailand to be treated, due to the lack of proper medication in Kathmandu.

In general, if you were injured, or were seriously sick, you would catch a flight to Bangkok where the medical aid was cheap and as good as in the US. The trip was three hours, and there was a special service for foreigners who had to be flown to a hospital in Thailand, as it was not an uncommon thing. Especially with the hippy tourists who regularly got out of control and would occasionally harm themselves in one way or another.

At any rate, during the time Marley lived in Kathmandu, Ira Cohen and Dana Young made a very interesting book of poems and drawings. It was called *Opium Bimetals*. The poems and the illustrations gave you a window into the opium smoke that dances in the mind while under its influence. The cover was printed on silk paper, and the inside pages were made of rice paper. They made 350 limited editions, signed and numbered copies, and Marley Willow still had his copy that was given to him by Dana.

Somehow Maria, Marley's wife, had saved it all these forty years, and now they were checking it out. The drawings still have a weird effect. They reminded one of the dancing shadows that flash across the wall in a candlelit room. The dark place under the bed when you were a child. Or the almost invisible eyes that look at you from a dark closet.



Global Emperor

There was also a few very rich smugglers and dealers who had homes in Nepal but worked in the underworld of Bangkok, Thailand. Some of these were professionals on large scales. Many left over from the Vietnam War, like Marley's buddy Tommy. When

Tommy came to Kathmandu, he always stayed with his old friend, Marley. He had been a news reporter during the war who went against the government by reporting widespread drug smuggling implicating the US military. They terminated his career, and he ended up having to stay in Thailand for the rest of his life.

Poor Tommy had seen too much and partied too hard. Finally, he ended his own life in Bangkok some thirty years ago. When he was around, he was the life of the party and the kindest man you would ever meet. Marley and Tommy stayed close friends throughout the rest of his life.

There were few rules for the locals in Kathmandu, back then. One naturally always respected the Royal Family of Nepal. It was a non-violent environment, so it was taboo to be physically aggressive. The most dangerous and questionable business that some of the foreign locals worked in was the smuggling of religious artifacts.

Marley related he could only remember knowing three guys who made this their living. Even they did not get into trouble, as they had connections they paid off to move their artwork back to the US or London, by way of various routes. Although this was a perilous business, the guys that dealt in religious art were doing hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of business or maybe even millions. Who knows? If you got caught in the airport with religious antiques, you went to a Nepalese prison, for a long time and probably rightly so. At least from point of view now in the twenty-first century. Then again, as you read here in Marley Willow's memoirs, what was acceptable back then is hardly what is acceptable today.

Chapter 11: High Vibrations

Marley's favorite place in Kathmandu was Pashupatinath Temple, now nearly two thousand years old. It is on the Baghmati River and is the place where bodies are cremated, and then the ashes washed into the river. Also, being the location of the Shivaratri festival. This is the festival of Shiva. The festival happens once a year, but all year round there are resident Sadhus on both sides of the river.

A Sadhu is a holy man from the Hindu religion who worships Shiva, the third god of the Trilogy of the Hindu's. He was said to have had adoration for the leaves of the marijuana plant, so part of the Sadhu's religion is to consume marijuana and hash to reach deeper states of meditation.

Occasionally a Sadhu, at the temple and river were of the Agori sect. Of all of the Sadhus sects, this was the most radical sect. They claim they walk with the ghosts of the dead, having a life dedicated to yoga and meditation. They cover their bodies with the ashes of the cremations.

They drank and ate from human skulls and traveled carrying a trident and their skull. Each had to find their life skull from a dead body before initiation. They also had to find their own Agori Guru. This sect is often outcast with many of the Hindu people, due to fear.

Marley loved to frequent Pashupatinath at night and sit with the more traditional Sadhus to smoke and talk of their way of life. As long as Marley came with some good hash and some grass he was always welcome. After a while, they even got accustomed to him hanging around at nightfall until late into the night. To them, Marley Willow was just another Shiva worshiper.

Marley did admit that until he became accustomed to it, it was a spooky place at night, and when bodies were being cremated, more so. You can tell who is a Sadhu by the thick long matted hair wrapped on the top of their heads called Jata. Frequently very long hair, at times twenty feet or so, and the clouds of blue smoke from their chillums.

Marley said he would always remember his first Shivaratri festival at Pashupati. He was already a regular with the Sadhus at the temples for some time by then, so he was eventually granted entrance to particular places. This night he was invited to sit on the Sadhu Throne over the Baghmati River. The holy men, Sadhus and Marley smoked hash and called out to Shiva the entire night long. This festival is held in the first two months of the year as a sign of the end of winter.

Most Sadhus were family men, some with wealth and they dropped out from work, family and material things. Even a small number of Sadhus can also start their life as a Sadhu at a younger age, although it's unusual. With the festival came a young Sadhu about Marley's age. He and Marley were the only young participants there. They could not understand a word each other said but they seemed to get by well enough with sign language. It made the best Shivaratri Marley Willow ever attended. The young Sadhu got him access to the most select groups of Yogis that Marley would never have had access to otherwise.

There must have been thirty of them on Shiva's Throne that night. Occasionally a hippy would find their way to where all the holiest Sadhus were, but they were not allowed up on the throne and had to sit down on the ground if they wanted to stay, or they were simply sent away.

Marley said his chant that night was, "He Puram Parmatma, Pavan han jivatma, Visnu banain darmatma, Hum sub terriatma. Alek, Bombole." He said that they smoked chillum after chillum. And the other Sadhus called out "Bom Shiva, Bom Shanker, Hari Hari Ganga."

Marley didn't feel strange covering his body with ashes and chanting out in the night

with his friends. It seemed to come to him naturally. Like maybe he did this before, somewhere, sometime. The young Sadhu and Marley Willow passed the entire night there.

The festival went on for three days, and there is a week where you see Sadhus walking into Kathmandu from all over India to celebrate this night of celebrations. Back then the Nepalese government donated 100 kilos of marijuana to the Sadhus for the Shivaratri festival.

Marley said that today it is tolerated that the holy men smoke on this night, but for the rest of the year, marijuana is now illegal. After the festival the Sadhus disappeared like their chillum smoke, to walk back to where ever they came from. Leaving Marley once again, in the presence of the resident Sadhus.

They continued to visit the Pashupati temple during the entire year. Being as it was a temple devoted to Shiva, this is where they would often smoke their evening chillums. Walking through the temples at night gave off an extraordinary feeling. The alleys and streets of the temple area were lit with wooden torches perched on the walls of the Holy buildings. The flame's shadows dancing across the temple's walls and the faces of the Sadhus sitting in the dark corners.

There were three places that Marley had visited in when he was in India and Nepal that physically gave him some special feelings or brief glimpses of enlightenment. One was Pashupatinath in Katmandu, another was the cave and his Baba friend at Chobar Gorge outside Katmandu. The other was in the mountain caves and Yogis on the other side of the river from Rishikesh, in India.



Shiva's Throne at Pashpatinath



Sadhu at Pashpatinath Temple Entrance



Pashpatinath Temple in Kathmandu



Orange Baba Bob

These places are burnt into Marley's memory. Each location held some profound effect on him while he was living there in Asia, over forty years ago. In Marley Willow's entire life, only these three places had this effect on him.

Chapter 12: Night Life & Parties

The long-term locals in Katmandu, meaning those few foreigners who lived there year in and year out, generally numbering about 100, typically did not mix too much with the numbers of hippy tourists. Many just not to be bothered with making friendships that last a week or so. Others because they did not trust anybody they didn't know and a few just because they kept isolated from even the locally living hippies, freaks and business persons.

George and Marley stayed pretty much in the mix of things. That was because, if you are looking to buy and sell cars, trucks or buses that have come overland, you have to keep your finger on the pulse of things to make sure you get a shot at the best deal. Marley was following George's footsteps in buying and selling vehicles, but initially kept his down to just motorcycles and cars. George and Marley hung out mostly on Freak Street and Durbar Square right in the center of it all.

The vast majority of the rest of the long-term residents kept to the local click. Most of the foreigners pretty much all got along most of the time, which is saying a lot when you consider how much drug abuse was going on with the locals. Different cultures and languages all thrown together by one or another's fate. So as Carpet Carl had made it possible for the foreign resident locals to get Western food from Bangkok. Another American named Marvin organized a small movie theater in his house. He was married to a Nepalese woman for many years.

You have to remember it was strictly forbidden to poses televisions in Nepal due to the close proximity of both China and India. So, Marvin smuggled in a big screen projector and the first movie cassette player anyone living here in Nepal had ever seen. The cassettes were like three times the size of a standard VHS movie cassette from a few years later. Each cartridge could only hold one hour of the movie.

At some point in the film, he would have a pause and changed the cassettes to watch the rest of the movie. No one could believe how popular this little slice of the West was for the local residents. Some of them had not seen a TV in over three years or maybe even more.

The evening performances were on Wednesdays and Fridays, Friday being the Nepali weekly holiday. Marley claimed that most of the foreigners from town went to watch them. He charged each viewer a couple of bucks per person, but it was well worth it. They made it home for a short time as best they could in every way. With popcorn and sodas. It was a treat for all.

The resident locals even had a discothèque. The city was full of old and crumbling, royal palaces, and sometimes you could find a section of the building intact with the royal decoration and all. Swedish Sven and a couple of others opened the exclusive disco club called the "Foot Tapper." It was a relatively corny name, but for the resident locals then, it was very "Far Out," indeed. Their very own place to party at night. Hash, speed, and coke along with a full bar. One just had to be known to get into the front door. That is if they ever found the building in a city of a million people.

The bar only got one significant surprise visit, and that was one of the King's sons, a Prince of Nepal. He liked to hang out with resident foreigners, perhaps meet a blond-haired girl or just have a drink without having the whole town knowing it. It worked out for them all. With the Prince approving the Foot Tapper by his visits, they could do just about anything we wanted to do, except commit violent acts. Violence was not seen in Nepal. Not in any form Marley ever witnessed.

The Foot Tapper had a crowd most nights. If you were still out at 08:00 PM, where were you going to go if not to your own disco? Sit at the bar or smoke your Bong. They had great times in their private club. Marley claimed that he was not much of a dancer, but with all the speed and hash, everyone all went for it. Now how can a community of multinational hippies and freaks live like this anywhere else in the world?

First, you had to get past those vast royal palace doors, to this wing of the old palace. If the person who opened the small window on the entrance door did not recognize you, you had little chance of crossing that threshold.

Marley told of having seen hippy newbies staying a couple of months in the country to do a deal, or whatever and they tell him how they heard of such a club in the city. Marley would just say, "Oh right man, a secret disco right here in the city. You tripping or what?" Nobody found out about it from him.

Also, it was used as a place to meet with another hippy or freak who had some illicit business to do or looking for a special deal or product. Whether someone was looking for pure Afghani hash or an individual to make them some object to hide the hashish in. Or to locally sell whatever it is they had brought with them from the West. Marley claimed he had no idea how long the Foot Tapper was there, but it was there for the duration of his stay in Katmandu over forty years ago.

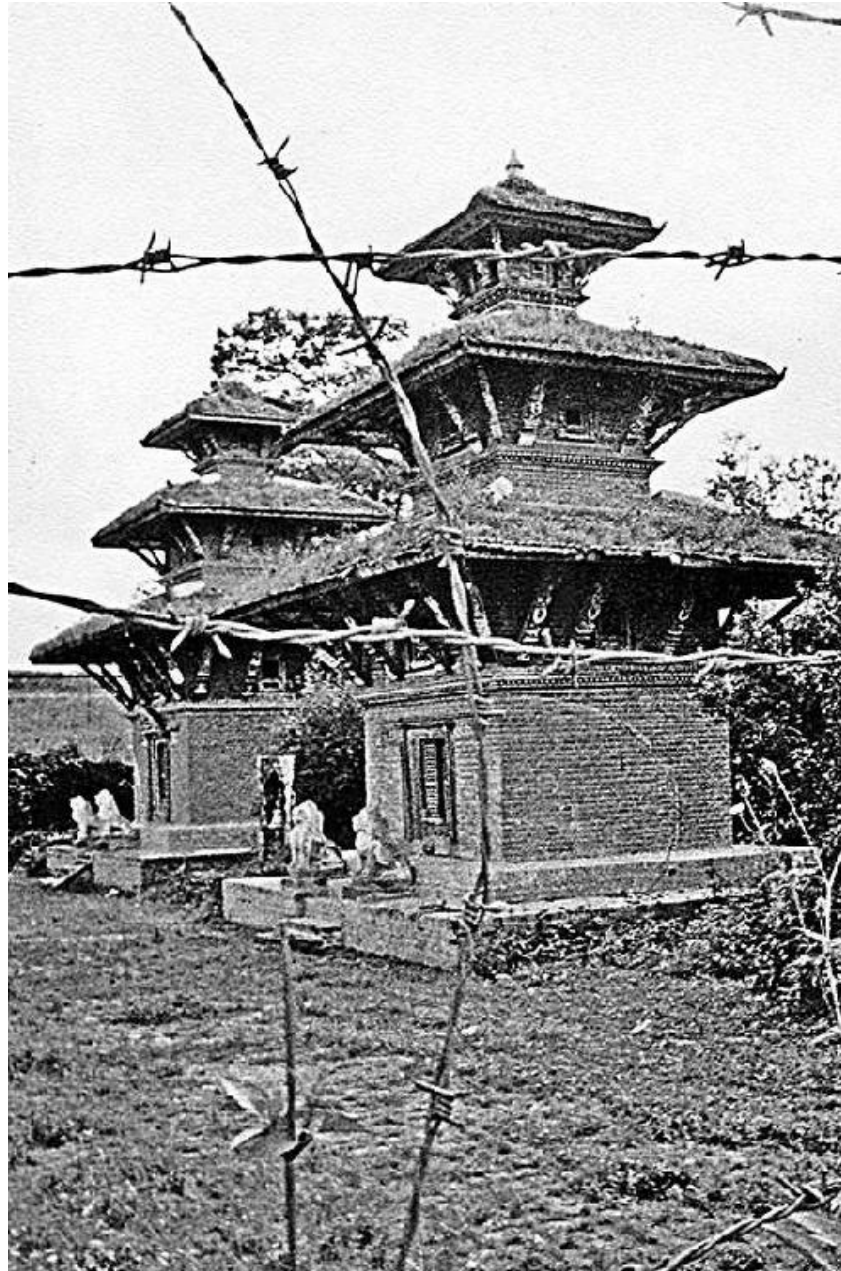
Things seemed to be getting better in town. Lots of rich American and European tourist stayed in the hotels on Kings Way and the old Crystal Hotel, which was on New Road. It had a beautiful terrace on the roof which was very popular with the local residents. Now the government was pushing the building logistics for many high-end tourists and with them came a couple of good restaurants.

First, it was the South Indian restaurant. Then, right next door they opened a Japanese restaurant. Right on King's Way. Sounds crazy for those times but everyone loved it. The Japanese chef was fantastic, and the owner did an excellent job with the products he could find locally, which were not much.

This also gave everyone notice. Their perfect world would not last forever. The wealthy tourists would begin to outnumber the hippies. Then the Western laws would come and change their way of life, but Marley still tried to remember how he wanted to try to live his life. "Be Here Now." If he could just achieve that, Marley knew he would find the inner peace he sought after. It would not matter where he lived.

No past, as the past is gone and no longer exists. No future. As who knows what will come next or if they will even be alive. The "now, that's all." That was what Marley Willow had briefly experienced in Rishikesh sometime before.

That was the best Marley Willow have ever felt in his life, although he was afraid that at this point some aspects of their Kathmandu life was making him forget his objectives.



City of Temples

Chapter 13: Danish Hans

To Marley Willow, this was one of the wildest characters he would ever meet. Danish Hans had been in Nepal for decades. He built a three-story house on a hill on the edge of Kathmandu. Nobody knew how he had arranged to purchase some property in Nepal back then, but he did it. He also built a government-backed carpentry factory behind his house, and this was used to give the Nepalese new skills like making furniture or houses. A carpentry shop where the locals of Kathmandu learned carpentry skills from an expert.

It was unbelievable how much there was going on behind the scenes of this supposedly innocuous wood factory. Mostly Danish smoke and as Denmark was rich and liberal even back then, there was a significant market for hash. Hashish and marijuana was semi legal in Copenhagen. Not quite legal but tolerated as it was in Holland. Hans did not ignore this opportunity.

The first day Marley was invited to Danish Hans's house, the hippy owner took him to the third floor to show him he had marijuana plants so tall, that he could reach his arms out the third-floor window and rub hash right from the room in the house. Hans was an excellent carver and craftsman and an even better marijuana cultivator.

The Government subsidized all the furniture that was made in Nepal and then exported to Denmark. Once there, the hashish was removed, and they would complete the repair of the furniture and sell it on the Copenhagen market for great prices. Both products brought very lucrative prices, according to the Danish friend of Marley Willow.

Marley's details were sketchy on exactly when or how Danish Hans's brother died around that time. He was walking around, allegedly drunk in Colombo, on the island of Sri Lanka. He fell off the seawall, which was a wave breaker and he drowned.

That was an enormous loss for Danish Hans. Now, Hans could always do more drugs than anyone else, but after the drowning of his brother he seemed to start to binge smoke, binge drink, binge coke and smoke opium. But somehow, he still kept his act more or less together. He was a respected member of the Nepalese community. Both by the foreigners and the Nepalese.

Hans and Marley became quite close over the years. Even with him being one of the crazier Kathmandu residents. He as well had that charisma to which most people were automatically drawn. He was also an incredible artist carving sculptures from Turkish meerschaum and wood, selling to the local freaks and hippies.

He wore a Tibetan necklace with a gold charm of Buddha, which he claimed, "made him invisible." He said that when he drove over borders or flew to different destinations worldwide, he never worried. That sounded pretty crazy, but he claimed to always carry a stash when he traveled, which was extensive, and he never went to jail. Marley said that most foreigners living in Nepal for extensive periods of time often lost sight of the rules on spirits and Western realities. Living so far from any normal Western environment left the visitors with minds open to all sorts of beliefs and customs.

Peter was known to smoke opium sometimes. It was something that Marley always wanted to try, at least just once. But it was a complicated process with the proper pipe and preparation. Marley had no such skills, so Peter offered to let him try his pipe one day.

Marley said it was like floating and dreaming, but with your eyes closed and being aware of your surroundings. That was when he understood the paintings that Dana had drawn in Ira Coan's book. "The Opium Bimetals." Dana's sketches were these opium dreams. He captured what you felt in drawings. As far as Ira's poetry, Marley claimed that at the time it was a little over his head.

Peter decorated his house himself. It was full of Tibetan and Nepalese antiques.

Much of the furniture was things he made in his own carpentry factory. No doubt about it, the man was an artist at carving and carpentry.

Chapter 14: Used Car Salesmen

One day Marley was also looking around for cars to buy on Durbar Square. When he found a red Mercedes Benz loaded with all the extras. It would have sold in a day if it had not had a gasoline motor, but Marley knew that red was the favorite color of the Tibetan Lamas. At the time in Nepal gasoline cost about six dollars fifty cents American a gallon but, against the advice of George, Marley bought it anyway. All on his own as George said he was not interested in business with vehicles with gasoline motors.

Marley said he took the fancy red Mercedes to Carpet Carl, who was the best contact to the head Tibetan Lamas and between the two of them, they sold the Mercedes to one of the chief Lamas at Boudhanath. The Lama loved it, and as he only used it to drive short distances, the gasoline issue was not a problem. Plus, he was a Lama. It was a Mercedes and was red, which added to his status and image. Carl and Marley split the considerable profits. Little by little Marley Willow was working out small deals with many of the Kathmandu, foreign locals and had established a good reputation.

The next thing he bought was a Harley Davidson Sporty. He had planned to replace his Honda with this bike, but Marley paid too much for it to keep it. So, he sold it for a small profit. He said his BMWanda was much faster anyway and he had become attached to the only motorcycle in Nepal with an electric starter. Just push the button.

Another vehicle Marley helped George move was a massive German, Mann truck. A crazy German truck driver drove it to Kathmandu, dreaming of making loads of money, and he was sent to George. This was a unique item as it was so fucking big. The two freak brothers thought it would be an easy sell, although it turned out that nobody in Nepal was familiar with German Mann trucks. The German guy kept saying, "Mann Zer Gut, Zer Gut." And the two American used car salesmen kept telling him, "Mann Truck Nicht So Gut. Mercedes, das ist gut. Nur Wenig Deutsche Mark fur Mann Truck." There are no significant bucks for the Mann truck.

Finally, George and Marley did acquire the truck for an excellent price. To the dismay of the very square German owner, for considerably less money than he had expected. But he would never be able to sell it as a Mann truck in Nepal. George and Marley came up with the idea of making a few changes on this baby. The valve covers on the Mann motor were precisely the same size as a Mercedes, so they changed the valve covers to Mercedes valve covers, removed the Mann Logo plaque on the front of the truck and traded it for a Mercedes plaque. They then changed the steering wheel. Then fixed the Nepali papers, so it said it was a Mercedes. Their intention was not going to rip off any of their clients, as they knew Mann trucks are high quality German motors. But they weren't going to lose such a sale over the brand name. This truck was worth a lot of money.

Now the two American freaks had lots of interest in the truck, so they took it to the Birgunj, in southern Nepal. Only to find out when the vehicle when fully loaded, it was so fucking heavy that there was not a bridge in the country that could carry the weight. In the end, they found a construction company that had a big project going on and the loads they needed to move had no bridges in between. They bought it at an excellent price. In Nepal, the foreign residents had to be inventive to survive.

By now you must be asking, how did George have the contact to make up Nepali vehicle papers for all these motorcycles, cars, buses and trucks? Sometime before this, George found an old red Norton Motorcycle in a garage in the outskirts of Kathmandu and bought it cheap.

He fixed it up like new and gave it to the chief of the traffic police in Kathmandu as a present. He said to the Chief, "Motorcycle Backsheesh* for you Chief Ji." From that time on anything George wanted he got. Maybe a little money was exchanged from time to time, but laws were lax then and Nepal was indeed in need of good heavy

vehicles like the truck and the fifty some passenger buses.

This is where Marley's driver license eventually came from and his papers and license plate for the BMWanda motorcycle he rode. If a person wanted to survive and possibly even prosper in Asia, they had to be bright, and they had to have good contacts with the local officials.

One of the funniest things George, Enrique and Marley ever did was test a unique all-terrain tractor for the American Embassy and Peace Corp. Marley always claimed that he still couldn't believe that they had hired some whacked-out hippies to try to break this vehicle. It was a massive All-Terrain Vehicle. The wheels were equal to Marley's height, which was well over six feet.

It was to be used to transport hydroelectric generators to the Nepalese mountain villages. So, the Peace Corp and American Embassy wanted to make sure that it could handle the rough terrain. The three freak brothers took it out on the riverbed and went for it. After a few chillums, George was flying up and down the hills and through the river, having a gas. He was yelling, "Yi Ha, Yi Ha." They took turns to see who could break it. That was supposedly what they were paying them for, so they did their best. Well at the end of the day, old Marley Willow had the great honor to be the one of them to break the tractor. Needless to say, they all three had a blast.

They were not really happy at the Peace Corp, although they did appreciate that the three Americans proved that this ATV did not do what it was supposed to do. Finally, with some modifications they got it in order and started providing hydroelectric power to remote villages in the mountains of Nepal. They said that each water turbine would produce electricity for 50 light bulbs. This changed the way many Nepalese lived, and all three were happy to have been a part of it.

One of George's favorite hobbies was to dig around in old garages and warehouses and ruins of royal palaces, in search of rare motorcycles. In the 40s and 50s the King of Nepal liked to collect motorbikes and cars, so some treasures were hiding around.

One was a 1940 Triumph 500 (497cc OHV) single cylinder. This motorcycle was in great shape. George just had to take it apart and clean it all up and sell it. Both George and Marley had loads of fun testing this old vintage, but very powerful motorcycle. Roaring up and down New Road in the center of town.

His most significant find was an Ariel Square Four, which was four-cylinder motorcycle from the mid-1950s. For a production motorcycle, it was the fastest of its time. He found the handlebars sticking up out of a pile of chicken shit. When he uncovered it, he could not believe what he had found. It was one of the world's rarest motorcycles that existed.

Mike, another one of Kathmandu's foreign mechanics and close friend of Marley's was from the London, England. He found a 1940s Norton with a sidecar. The bike was blood red and had been the property of one of the Kings. This was Mike's pride and joy. He got it for like \$350 even with it being in mint condition.

Mike was a total madman from Great Britain's capital, who lived with the daughter of a senator from the west coast in the United States. Nobody ever saw the connection between the couple. She was so straight and he so wild. They were together in Nepal for a couple of years. There never seems to be a lack of women interested in the bad boy or wild child.

Mike's girlfriend lived from a trust fund set up for her and her brother by her father. She preferred to live in Nepal, when she could live anywhere in the world that she desired. Her hobby was buying and selling Afghan Kilims. That and living in Kathmandu.

Unfortunately, at the time her brother was not so fastidious and a hard worker. One day when he was hard up for some quick money he sold Marley Willow his 1955 Gibson small box guitar for \$100. Marley drug that guitar around with him for the next 40 years until the neck broke. A real gem worth at the time about ten times what he had

paid. Mike and Marley started to hang out together his last year in Nepal, but as he was another crazy party man, he was not the best influence on our hippy friend.

It was Mike who Marley hung out with whenever the urge hit him to party hard. No one could stay standing longer than Mike. When Marley partied with him things often got out of control as the Englishman had no limits, especially when it came to drinking spirits.

Years later, when he joined Marley in South America, he was said to have drunk a whole bottle of Johnny Walker Black Label whiskey in twenty-two minutes on a dare. That would have killed the average person. He got drunker than anyone had ever seen the man before, but he survived it.

In the end, George, Mike and Marley were the "American Pickers in Asia," of just about anything you could imagine. There were all kinds of treasures to find in these places like India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. No matter where these men traveled, they looked for things to buy and sell.



Bicycle Repair Man in Old Delhi



Nepalese Woman

Chapter 15: Trip to Pokhara

Young Marley Willow had been in Kathmandu and back and forth to New Delhi for over a year now. His book post scam was still working to provide a constant income. He decided it was time for him to go to the lake. No business to be done there, so he intended to just take a break from the Kathmandu routines.

One day Willow woke up and just hopped on his BMWanda and took off from Kathmandu on a few hours ride to a small paradise called Pokhara. It was time to chill out for a few days from the busy life in Kathmandu and the constant parties every night. Little by little, as you get to know the whole foreign population, something is going on every night. It was considered almost offensive not to go and participate in whatever was going on.

Marley said that arriving at Pokhara the first time is a fantastic experience. A small town on a beautiful lake with the snow-capped peaks of Machupuchuri pushing its way up to the sky. Machupuchuri means Fish Tail. These ice-covered peaks seemed so close that one imagined that they could reach out and touch them.

Now was a time to take himself back to his hippy origins, as he was getting a bit off track with all the business moves they were making in Kathmandu to make a living. Marley geared it down and went back to the old hippy mode. While there he met two guys in particular that stuck in his mind all these years.

Our old friend frequented the chai shops for the usual traveling hippy dinner of oatmeal and tea and talked a bit to the freaks that where there at the time. He met one guy who Willow claimed was somehow considered to be the maximum freak. The tall, blond longhaired man had said to have walked to Nepal from Sweden on foot. And Marley said that he looked it. He told him that he slept outside under the stars every night. He was neither a beggar nor a bum. Merely some guy who must have had some financial income that allowed him to walk the planet as free as a bird.

Much like the German guy Rolf, who was riding around the world on his bicycle. Remember, he saved the day on the bus trip to Katmandu by riding up the Raj Path to get some oil. Not only around the world but crisscrossing every major road. Why did he spend several years doing that? Marley said he supposed that each person had their own answers. This was their form of education. Education brought on by their curiosity for the unknown.

It was he who pointed out to Marley Willow that the moon was visible every day and not only nights. If you look east to west sometime during the day, the moon will appear. That night they got high and chilled out by the lake looking up at the Nepali sky and told stories around a small fire right there by the water.

A German guy who was there also hung with the two men. The veteran travelers could pick out the green travelers and the veterans alike, so they knew with whom to talk or not. Greenhorns had little to offer in as far as hints or information on ways to travel and would be gone in a day or two, so they didn't bother with the short-term travelers. Marley believed that the newbies were apprehensive to approach them, as they were far too freaky looking by their fresh from Europe, Australia or North American standards.

Rolf, the German guy's story, was that he bought his postal van in England. It was one of those big old box vans that had the sliding front doors like the delivery trucks. Well, he said that he had to make enough money to drive to Nepal, so first, he went to Morocco. Marley said he went to Marrakesh to score his hash and then pressed it into the wood of the dinner table and bed of his van. He then drove back to Europe, where he sold the lot to a dealer in Amsterdam.

Then the German hippy Rolf, took that cash to get across Europe and Asia and on to Nepal. Now he was just about out of money again and was looking to sell his van.

Marley offered to sell it for him in Kathmandu if he wanted, but by then he was broke and put it up for sale right here in Pokhara. It only took him a couple of days to get rid of it. Marley supposed it must have been hard for him to part with that old van, as it had been his home for so many months and thousands of miles and experiences.

Marley said he remembered the first night like it was yesterday. After Rolf sold the van he got really weird. He had been living in this van for over 5,000 miles. The first night he rented a cheap room where Marley was staying. His hotel had a place to keep his Honda motorcycle safe, so it was a good deal for Willow

Marley said he saw Rolf the next morning, and he told him he left the hotel in the middle of the night, so he could sleep below the stars. He said that for him the hotel was not the way to travel. A real hippy had to rough it. Marley reckoned that at that point he was not a real hippy and more of a Freak. But a Katmandu freak at least and although in the past he had done the same in as far as living a hippy's life, at that point he didn't fancy sleeping on the ground when he had a cozy warm hotel to go to. He was changing with his environment and experiences already and hardly realized it.

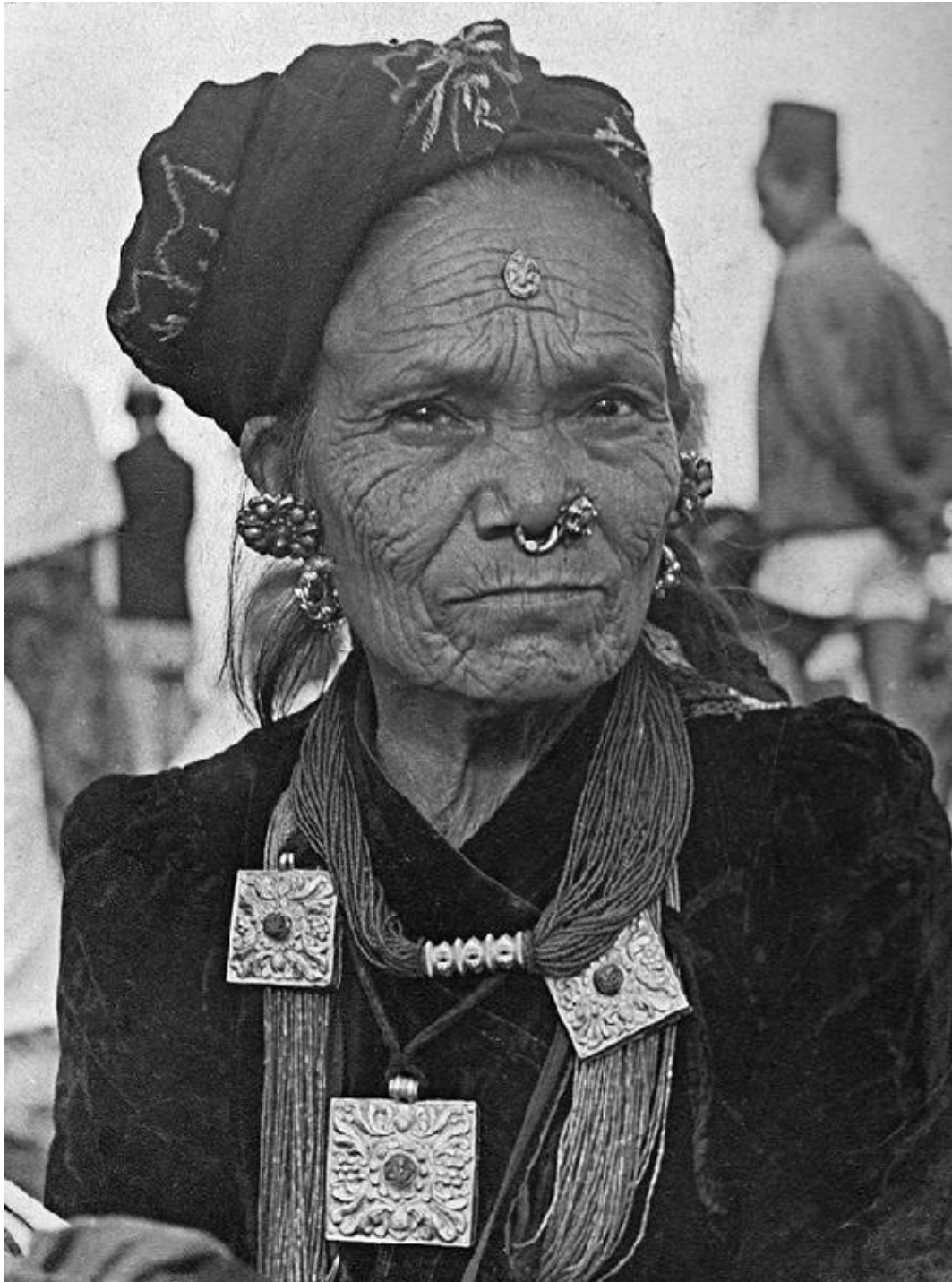
In the mornings, if the sky was clear, a person could sit for hours and look at the natural wonder of Machupuchuri. It was surrealistic. A colossal snow-covered mountain Peak shooting up into the sky. Or chill and trek around the lake and follow the lower paths of the trekkers and mountain climbers, enjoying the clean air and crisp, clear atmosphere. A much healthier environment than in Kathmandu but way back then there was little do in this small lakeside town once the sun set on the mountains.

Rolf decided to hang around in Pokhara for a while, so Marley stayed with his new friend a few days more. Back then they spent a lot of time discussing each of their personal philosophical views on life, death, reincarnation, Hinduism and Buddhism. Pretty much anything except politics and what they intended to watch on television that night.

All three men continuing with our studies through travel and conversation with people from different lands. No, their education did not come from universities like from which Marley had dropped out. They were studying cultures and people from a more anthropological aspect. Marley claimed to have learned more in his ten years of traveling than some people that spent as many years in college. Sadly, their education of life and cultures gave no diplomas, nor rewards other than personal gratification. But back then that seemed to suffice.



Young Nepalese Woman



Wealthy Nepalese Woman

Chapter 16: Return to New Delhi

Marley had a pleasant ride back to Katmandu on his motorcycle. When he got back, he saw that it was time for him to return to New Delhi to send out some more books and earn some much needed money.

This time he flew back with Nepalese Airlines. He said that back then the flight was about \$150 round trip. When Marley arrived at Mrs. Murwah's, she told him, "Roman has been gone for some months now, and you know how I worry about you boys. If you want to stay in his apartment, I am sure it will be fine with Roman, but tell me if you hear anything about from him."

The New Delhi penthouse! It had a nice little private patio, private shower, with a regular WC and a balcony right over the hippy patio, so Marley Willow was ready for whatever New Delhi had in store for him. He calculated it would take him a maximum of three weeks to prepare books for the next few months, to go out through the post office, a couple at a time.

There was the usual crowd hanging out at the guesthouse. Along with Marley's old buddy Rob and a couple of others that were fixed New Delhi residents. He went to visit his Muslim hashish connection to order the hash he needed for his next project. Now he was sending Pakistani hashish from near the Afghan border so, although it was dark green pollen hash it was softer to work with and already came in flat slabs. Plus, it was a better-quality hash bringing superior prices. The closer one gets to Afghanistan, the better the quality gets.

Marley started working on his books again and hanging out at night in the smoke circle to check out the news and the stories. New Delhi was not as isolated as Kathmandu. You could procure a week old English newspaper or a Time Magazine from the west. Mrs. Murwah had a TV in Hindi, so if something big happened, she would tell Marley Willow all about it.

Marley also heard some stories about his buddy Roman. He took off from New Delhi to Europe a couple of months before Marley's return, as Mrs. Murwah had said. His buddies claimed that he sent nine tourists mules, each with two suitcases. They had hash built into the frames of the suitcases. Roman had rented the entire guesthouse and had it set up as hashish suitcase factory on the back patio. No one knew how he got Mrs. Murwah to agree to that one. It was probably just a question of how much money was involved for her to turn a blind eye to what was going on in her guest house..

They said his runners were each working on the project of fabricating the hash filled suitcases, so it only took them a few days. How much fit into those suitcases, no one could really say. But, Marley imagined a couple of kilos each at the very least. They said he also left with two suitcases himself, wearing the usual suit and tie. Roman's buddies told Marley they were all going to different destinations in Europe. That means 20 suitcases, so one must assume that he was moving at least forty or fifty kilos. What a crazy bastard. At that time his friends could only wonder if he made it. It seemed pretty much of a cowboy maneuver to all of them. Of course, no one mentioned it to Mr. Murwah. Plus, she already knew much more than most of them.

Such scandalizing suitcase factories had been heard of, in the open like that, but only down in the state of Goa. Goa, India was pretty much a freak and hippy pirate state at that time. The police were 100% corrupt and everybody there was scamming. Or that is what was said by one and all back in the day.

He had still not made the journey to Bombay and on down to the old, Portuguese state. Goa even had its own Black Beard pirate type individual named, El Alejandro. He was a mad Spanish guy that would get angry with someone and chase some poor hippy around his beachfront porch with a machete. He tried to control what went in and out of Goa. Kind of like Roman's actions in New Delhi but with less finesse. Marley met him a couple of times, but he never encountered any problems with the wild Spaniard.

Perhaps it was his friendship with Roman, who every bent character in India knew in the early nineteen seventies. Or Marley's close ties with the Spanish population in India and Goa.

During Marley's visit to Delhi a very posh, blond and sinuous English girl came to the smoke circle one night, and she and our American friend hit it off right away. So he showed her around New Delhi on the old Norton motorcycle, which to Marley's surprise was still running. Now he parked it on the patio at the guesthouse for easy access.

The English girl, Victoria, started staying over at Marley's apartment in the guest house so he had to move his little book factory to his Muslim friend's house. Always keep everything strictly on a "need to know" basis.

The middle-aged hashish and carpet salesman was happy to have such a longstanding client become even closer to him. So, Marley taught him to make the books which in the future he would just order, pay for the hash, the labor, and the postal charges and he would mail them for him. That meant Marley could keep on doing business with his buddy Markus in New York City without even going to New Delhi.

Marley Willow hung out with Victoria for several weeks, him enjoying showing her around the places he had already discovered. Enjoying the hippy's way of free sex, drugs and rock and roll. They went on a romantic excursion down to Agra to see the Taj Mahal with the full moon. The Taj Majal is a mausoleum, which shines in the light of the full moon.

Marley and Victoria wandered around the Taj all night long and then headed back to New Delhi. They had such a good time Marley finally invited Victoria to fly back with him to Kathmandu. His intentions were only a couple of weeks visit. Little did Marley know what a monumental mistake he had just made.

After the hair-raising experience of landing in Katmandu airport on the Nepalese Airlines jet, they arrived back to Nepal and got a taxi to Marley's new house. Everything was just great. Back in Nepal with a beautiful, intelligent and curvaceous blond British woman. They certainly were having fun. Smoking pot and hash and seeing the city, riding around on my motorcycle through the Nepalese countryside.

Suddenly, one night she woke up totally flipped out, telling him how black horses and black riders were coming for them and freaking Marley out in general with the things she said and the obvious distressed psychological state that she was in. That night the two did not sleep at all. The next day she was getting worse.

Marley said he didn't think that the hash and pot were making her weird because back in New Delhi she was okay with the smoking, but he stopped the consumption of all drugs then and there. He actually felt the problem was that Nepal is so much more primitive and the vibrations are powerful. Perhaps such an intense culture shock and environment caused something to make her break and freak out entirely.

Until she finally told Marley she had schizophrenia. He actually had no idea what to do or how to take care of her. What the fuck was a schizophrenic doing traveling in Asia, to the Far East and taking drugs no less.

All the Asian travelers had seen people freak out on LSD, but not for days on end. She was this way for three days until Marley decided that he could not deal with it anymore. She had not slept for seventy-two hours. She needed professional help, and there was none in Nepal.

Marley Willow finally took her to the British Embassy, and they knew of her family, as they were very wealthy and influential in London. The embassy eventually agreed to take charge and repatriate the mentally challenged woman to the United Kingdom.

They had an embassy nurse assist her right then. Marley felt terrible for her and the situation, but he also felt that he had no choice in the matter as she was in urgent need of medical attention and medication. Marley said he could easily see her hurting herself or even him in her wild mental bouts during those long nights.



Baba in New Delhi

The Kathmandu hippy lifestyle was not what she needed by any means. Running all day with weird hippies, living in one of the most remote areas on the planet in 1974. It was hard to cope with the culture shock for the most ordinary hippy, not along a woman already diagnosed as a person with schizophrenia.

When he went back home, his house didn't seem the same. It was just creepy somehow, as though a crime had been committed there. When a person lives a long time in such an environment as Kathmandu, they start to believe in the evil eye, bad Karma, and most anything else one could not explain, as do all the Nepalese. Now his house was giving him the heebie-jeebies.

So right then he decided to move out of the house. George and June had already asked if Marley wanted to move in with them to split their rent. George and Marley Willow were working together half of the time at any rate, so he gathered his carpets and meek positions and moved his belongings to his friend's place. Having few possessions, everything fit in his room at George and June's house. It was Enrique's old room.

It was great because their housekeeper Ratna, had learned to make a dozen western dishes, so they ate much better than average considering where they lived. Better than Marley was used to eating on Freak Street. A substantial breakfast every morning with hot chicory coffee or chai. In the end, Marley was living better than ever.

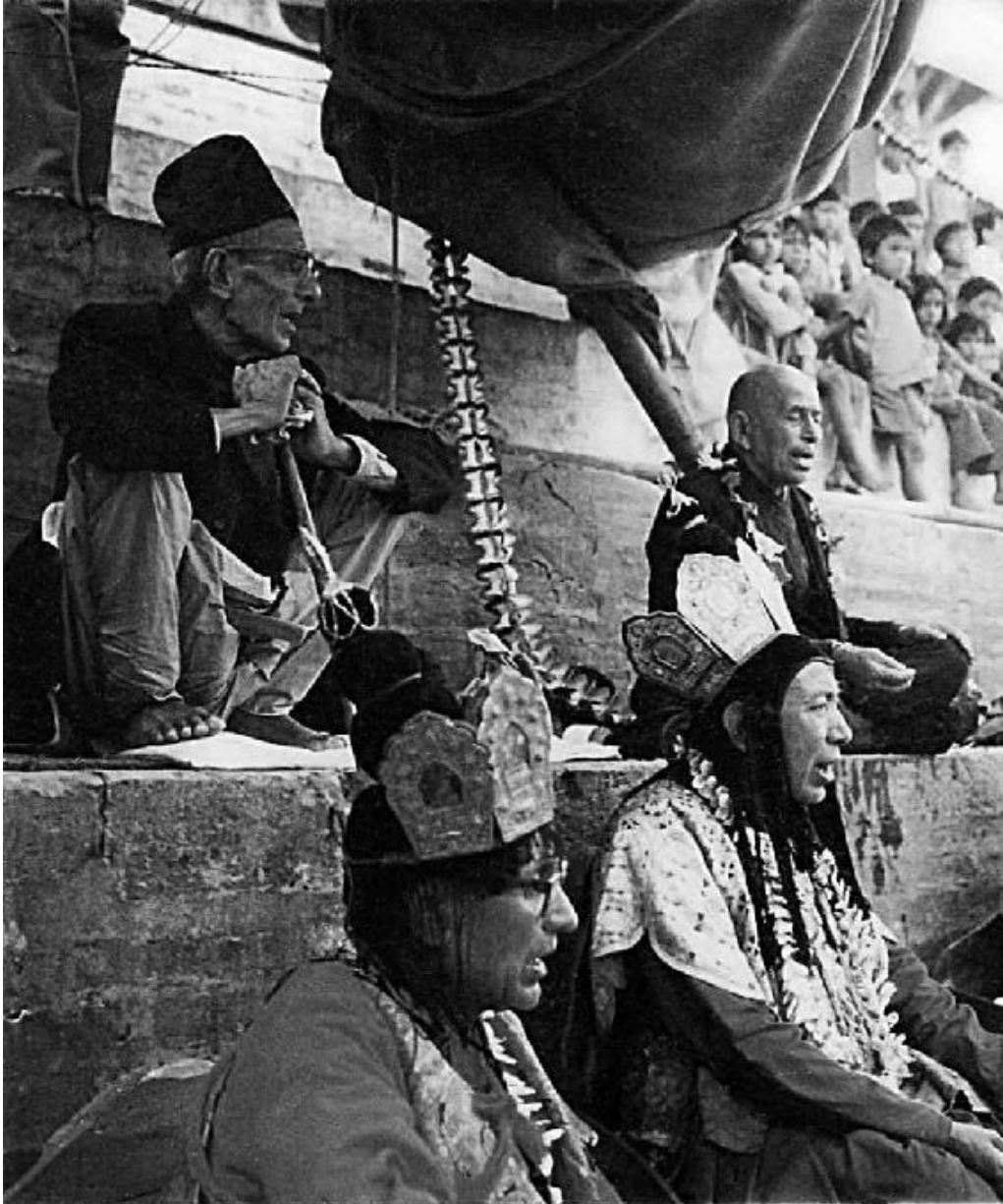
One day he took a good dose of LSD while in Kathmandu and walked around the city for like eight or ten hours. He said it was like he was living in a place that existed a thousand years ago. This acid trip was the weirdest trip he had ever had. For Marley, Kathmandu on LSD was like a time machine. It seemed like one was at the end of the Earth in some distant time. You had to just take it in, because if you focused too hard on it, your mind could go too far and possibly pass over the edge as did the mind of Victoria.

Enrique, who worked with George on the bus trip Kathmandu - New Delhi - Kathmandu, and Marley had become good buddies after the journey up the Raj Path. He had been living in June's and George's house until he met a Nepalese girl that he fell in love with. The problem with such a situation at the time was that, it was considered to not be at all cool for a foreign hippy to marry a local Nepali girl. That was from the foreign hippy community's perspective.

Not because they were racist. The hippy community living in Nepal were as non-racist as one can get. It was simply the fact that the odds are that he will go back to Europe and get into trouble, go back to Europe and decide not to return to Nepal or he gets put in jail because he was carrying



Luxmi in Kathmandu



Puja in Kathmandu

some illicit substance back to the West to make some money. Something that was common in such an environment. Nepal, at that time was at the end of the world. Once you leave, it is often difficult to arrange one's life so as to return to such a distant and isolated land.

The Nepali custom was that the Nepalese and the foreigners should not mix, especially the women. After his disappearance his wife was to live on her own as no Nepali man would go with her after marrying a westerner.

All she could do is wait to see if he returned. When Enrique did disappear several months after his wedding, no one ever found out what happened to him. It was rumored that he had planned to make a trip to Europe with some hash to acquire funds for his new family life. Up till the time Marley Willow left Nepal for good, he still had not shown up. It was as though he was swallowed up by the void of humanity as many others had and would in the years to come.

If he had settled down and worked out some job in Nepal like George and Marley had, he would have possibly still be there today with his wife. It worked for some. Carpet Carl was married to his Tibetan wife for years before Marley met him and still after he left. Marley had heard that he eventually moved back to America to live. With his wife's Tibetan parents and all, but he made as good living in Nepal as any permanent foreign resident there.

Marvin, the movie guy, also made a good life in Nepal with his Nepalese wife and two kids. Nobody really judged anyone else. They just looked out for the local Nepalese girls, just as much as they looked out for each other. If the young Nepalese women were not married, they are probably only seventeen or eighteen years old, and their dream was to marry a foreigner. In this case, it was best to marry a straight foreigner and not a hippy as they were so nomadic and led a wild, erratic life with little in as far as plans for the future.

For a while, there was a Nepalese girl Marley Willow had a crush on. She worked part-time in George's silk paper print shop. Her name was Luxmi and was eighteen. June noticed that Marley was spending so much time hanging around to talk to Luxmi.

"You know you can't do this, right Marley?" she advised him, "You know you it won't work out."

She had a talk with him about the situation, and our friend could not deny what they said, and he left the girl alone. The foreign community had to take the lives of the local Nepalese more seriously than their own. But fair enough. The hippy code was not to bestow ill will on others.

Marley still hung around the print shop but not so much during Luxmi's work shift, and he stopped flirting with her. It was clear it was not going to go beyond that. Especially with Marley's tendency to go on every exciting adventure that was proposed to him. His lifestyle was the exact profile that would not have much chance of things working out if he should marry a Nepalese woman.

At least Enrique and his Nepalese bride had not had any children. That would have made it much more difficult for his wife and her family who were already terribly impoverished. As it was, things were bad enough for her, to lose her husband and financial stability for her and her entire family. Then to be outcast, in as far as finding another Nepalese husband.



Traffic Jam in Old Delhi

Chapter 17: 8,000 Miles to Go

George had just acquired an incredibly beautiful white Mercedes fifty-four passenger bus in great condition and relatively low millage for being at such a great distance from where it was manufactured.

George said to his sidekick, "Marley, why don't you and I take this cool bus to Amsterdam man? Then on our way back bring another bus and all the parts and motors we can buy. All the way from Kathmandu to Amsterdam, and back again. The mother of overland round trips."

"That sounds insane man," Marley replied. "Way out there, man!"

"Oh, so you're going to chicken out on me huh?" George said prodding the young American on.

"You mother fucker," he replied. "You are going to talk me into doing this, aren't you?"

"Oh Yeah!" George yelled. "We're going, oh Yeah, Oh Yeah"! And Marley said that he started strutting around like a rooster and cackling and crowing.

They started to organize a five-thousand-mile trip with George's new bus and then they intended to return to Nepal with two buses and as many bus and truck parts as they could stash on board both vehicles. Right? That means no drugs other than their own personal stashes of hash and speed. In all, 10,000 miles of some of the most difficult roads in the world. Quite a hefty chunk to bite off.

The speed supply was intended for driving long periods of time without stopping. These two adventurous hippies were shooting to make the trip in record time. They would be the exception to the rule in this case. More than 50% of the buses that made the overland trip and returned, did so with hashish hidden in the bus.

George and Marley needed to figure what the market necessities were for Nepal and New Delhi and what they could take to Europe to cover the costs of the trip and the second bus. From Marley's contacts that he had gotten through Roman, he knew some Sheikh Indians in New Delhi that would pay substantial amounts of money for old 190 car Mercedes Motors.

You have to keep in mind that although most of the vehicles in India were of national production, they were exact copies of English or German vehicles. So, all the TATA trucks had loads of parts, which fit Mercedes. Also, the case with the Ambassador Indian made cars, but the real money was in the Mercedes parts. They were considered a far better product to replace a TATA part, as they were made of superior quality steel. No one could deny the quality of craftsmanship of German products in the nineteen-seventies. All over Asia, there was a market for motors and parts, but none like that of India.

What broke most in Nepal because of the bad roads? Springs and shocks. What would diesel motors be adaptable to an Indian car? Mercedes 190 motors. A perfect business opportunity. These buses were not even in use in Germany anymore. Headlights, universal joints, drive shafts, oil pans, injectors for the diesel motors, cylinder sleeves, suspension springs and rings for worn engines. The list goes on and on.

They were also working on trying to figure out what is valuable in Nepal, India, and Afghanistan when going toward the West. The only thing that they came up with was hash, although they had agreed that they would not take any drugs. You can still make money without the risk of doing jail time.

The passengers would pay for the fuel and leave a bit of profit providing the entrepreneurs got good bus loads both ways. A Nepalese merchant paid them

handsomely to take a bunch of ball bearings to India for him. One of the craziest things they transported on this bus was two-thousand Chairman "Mao Tse-Tung's Little Red Books." A Dutchman that was all wrapped up in Chinese politics had brought them to the soon to be overland bus drivers. Not their thing, but the man from Holland had paid them well.

When asked what happens if they get confiscated while entering some point of Europe, the Dutchman just said if they got seized, that is how it goes. He is doing his part for the movement. It's funny how some hippies we're kind of pro Mao, back then. And Nepal was a monarchy. Now in China, Mao politics are history and looked down on and Nepal is, at times Maoist. Amazing how the world changes in just a few years.

They were often surprised how their own lives changed and sometimes took offense to the bad twists and turns they go through. A person has to look at the world, or in other words the big picture, and they will see so many twists, turns and bad things that have happened worldwide just in their lifetimes. Why do people as humans expect anything other than what is thrown at them throughout their lives? Expecting perfection in their own personal lives was foolish.

At any rate, not trying to get off the story. The two hippy bus drivers packed the two-thousand Little Red Books on Mao communism in brown paper and put them behind the driver's seat. Sort of like "In blind-sight."

How many people are ever going to know what they are? Marley called one of his American buddies Mickey and asked him if he wanted to come along on the way back from Europe and help him out. He promised him it would be the trip of a lifetime.

At the time, to make an international call in Nepal was a serious endeavor. It took about 48 hours, if it worked at all. You would have to place the initial call first thing in the morning along with a substantial amount of paperwork. Then they would tell you to wait. The first time that Marley went through the process he didn't know the practiced procedure and spent over 40 hours waiting for his call. Later the local foreign residents figured out how it worked.

Once you applied for the phone call, you just went home because there was no chance that they will call on you the first day. On the second you camped out in the communications building. Probably the whole day long, although 8 out of 10 times it worked. Bad connection and very expensive but if you needed to call, that was the only source a foreign traveler had of communicating to the outside world other than a letter that may well take a month to arrive, if it indeed arrived at all. There was only one phone center in the entire city and it just had a mere two telephones in all.

As the two freak brothers prepared for the trip, they removed several seats from the back of the bus and built a platform made of plywood. This way they would have a place for both drivers who would work in turns. And for their hippy passengers to sleep on. They used the space under it to stash all of their own personal belongings that they would each need along the way, resulting in fewer stops on the road. The two had planned to save time anywhere they could.

Now they were just about ready to go, so George and Marley parked the bus on Durbar Square in the middle of Katmandu. This was where all the hippy buses parked along with the cars and vans for sale. They put up a sign in the bus windscreen that stated in ten days' time that bus would be traveling to New Delhi, Lahore, Kabul, Tehran, Istanbul, Athens and finally Amsterdam. Marley and George started taking turns waiting on the bus to sign passengers up for the trip.

There was a price where they could travel to all of the above destinations, the costliest being all the way to Dam Rack in Amsterdam, Holland. I think the whole trip was two hundred fifty dollars per passenger. From Kabul to Istanbul was a hundred dollars, for example. They planned to drop off and pick up passengers at each of the destinations, staying some days in each spot to be able to book enough passengers to replace the ones they lost, to make it worth their while. That and to give the two drivers some rest between bouts of long hours of driving.

Little by little, they began filling the bus. Cash up front only! Hippies had a habit to disappear if they weren't tied down to something. The slightest breeze and a hippy will be blown off into a different direction. After the rear seat removals, the bus still held about forty-four passengers, although they did not expect to ever fill the bus in Kathmandu. They knew that on their New Delhi stop they would finish filling the bus with people, as it was the cheapest way home for many and a major destination hub for the overland hippy trail. For some of the travelers who had not come to Nepal and India overland, it would be their first experience traveling the old silk trade routes that have been used for thousands of years.

None of the drivers or passengers made the minimal effort to change their dress code, nor did anyone wearing beards shave them. These hardcore Asian travelers would only go so far you know. Plus, as they weren't taking anything illegal with them other than their own small hash stash, the level of paranoia with the customs was minimal.

George packed a bunch of amphetamines. He liked to take speed while he drove. Marley planned to stick close to his friend on his shifts driving, as he didn't know how all that speed was going to affect George's epileptic attacks. Marley had yet to see one, but his wife June told him what to do in the case one occurred. This issue was their secret. It would have worried the passengers too much even though one could see how it would today be considered to be extremely irresponsible. Back then they rarely thought that far down the road.

Now they were to be adventurers on the old silk routes traveling halfway around the world in the early nineteen seventies. They did not let the worries of whatever negative events might happen to enter into their thoughts, such was the level of adventure they were embarking on.

Marley and George put together a good stash of various types of hash, papers, tobacco, and grass. No chillums or pipes as they wished to use disposable paraphernalia only. The two freak brothers thought maybe a hundred grams should get them there and back. At least they hoped so, but they never gave any particular attention as to how much they actually smoked, on any given day so Marley said he could not be sure. He figured more would do better than less.

Marley wrapped up the stash in packages that could be pulled from a bit at a time, so they limited their exposure and risk. The stash for their own consumption was packed and hidden behind the radio component under the dash. Deep in the electrical network of cables, even deeper in bowels of the Mercedes electrical system. Then finally White Bus was ready to go.

George was busy storing the extra bus parts they might need during the ten-thousand-mile trip. Springs, an extra oil pan, and tools of every sort. Along with additional jacks and planks for when they get stuck in mud or sand. With those needs, they also packed a stack of Playboy magazines, European candy and cigarettes to give to the customs officers as they passed on through Asia. Used to grease the palms of the police officers that they would have to deal with during this arduous voyage.

The most prominent prize for a customs man in Asia was a Playboy magazine. Wanted by all but forbidden by Indira Gandhi, prime minister of India at the time. They were illegal in most of the other Asian countries too but were an excellent good-will currency with the police and border customs.

George and Marley both had their Nepalese driver's licenses, and they had gone to the local "Triple AAA" in Kathmandu and acquired International driver's licenses as well. They both had long ago lost their American drivers licenses, or they had long expired. Neither man really remembered.

According to their Nepalese driver's licenses, they were licensed to drive the biggest buses and trucks made in Europe. At this time Marley still was a cherry driver. Although he had driven just about every type of vehicle on the road. Including big trucks and buses, Marley Willow had never driven a passenger bus, especially while high and with a coach full of hippies.

Lucky, he had thought back through his travels and remembered the reason people were turned back on the borders of India. It was their vaccination papers not being in order. On this bus trip, Dr. Rocky Rococo would be aboard, to vaccinate any passengers who had forgotten their inoculation books or were missing a stamp for a disease. Marley had ordered his own rubber vaccination stamp, with Doctor Rococo's name, and used it whenever necessary, throughout his travels.

Back then, in order to leave the US to go to India, everyone had to have malaria meds, vaccinations against cholera, yellow fever and who knows what else. Marley Willow made sure their passengers were vaccinated for any disease existing. Or it at least appeared so. A couple of years before this he himself had almost gotten pulled off a bus over a vaccination card. That was back when he went to the Kumbh Mela festival, during his first months traveling in India.

The truth was this was all a game for all the hippies involved back then. Outsmart the other guy and live as you wished. Going on adventures that very few people would even consider venturing on once, not alone doing such things over and over again. Adventure junkies are what I suppose these hippies may have been called now. It seemed that they loved any new projects, although they were also satisfied when they ended, too. Such endeavors taking an important physical toll for travels of this magnitude.



Patan, Nepal

Before too long they would once again be itching to organize some other trip to go on. What did the future have in store for them? No one knew for sure, but one would imagine lots of adventure. This is when things started getting interesting. The next morning, they were all to head for Amsterdam, Holland, over four-thousand miles away. No big deal, right? Then they needed to get back home again, all overland. With weathered, vintage vehicles and some forty-five passengers on each bus.

Marley said that while looking back, the only thing the two adventurers forgot to bring was a map. They never thought or even mentioned needing a map the whole time they were getting the bus ready to go. Once again being typical of the freak brothers in

action.

Chapter 18: Round Trip - Day One

They got off to a mellow start. They topped up the diesel oil and returned to the plaza and waited while the hippies, little by little started showing up and grabbing the best seat they could claim. Pretty soon, before it started getting hot, they were on their way. Marley said if his memory serves him well, there had been about twenty-five hippies on the bus plus George and Marley. Not a bad count for the nearly the end of the world.

They figured they would try to make the first half of the trip as fast as was possible. If they drove in three eight-hour shifts for a couple of days at a time, they would cut lots of time off the trip. Plus, they had planned it, so they would bypass the hotter places like Lahore, Pakistan. Places that were not as much fun to explore and the heat was the most oppressive. Then they could stop at the interesting places where they could take time to rest up and have a little fun and explore. Or even go picking through the old garages and junkyards across Asia.

George and Marley always had the preference. They rarely voted on the bus. It was George and Marley who were going to go where and when they wanted. Or as fast or slow as they wanted throughout the trip. In the future, this would give these two characters some problems.

If they decided they didn't stop that night, there was no stop. If they wanted to take a small detour to check out something particular, they often did so without even mentioning it to the passengers. They merely went when and where they wanted. This was about business too, although their primary interest was exploring, adventures and having fun.

They would just go, and when they arrived there, they told the passengers where they were. Most of the times the passengers agreed that they had indeed made the best choice. Occasionally they got some protests, but not too often.

So, they pulled out of their hometown of Kathmandu. For Marley for the last two years and George about double that. What are the odds these two who had burned the motorcycle up on Freak Street would complete their entire journey? Who the fuck knows? Off they went without a second thought.

It was a beautiful day for a trip on the Raj Path. They got a good start, so if things ran smoothly, they should make it down to the bottom of this sinuous stretch of road before dark. Marley had driven it at night on a motorcycle, and it was very sketchy. But not this day. It was on a Friday, the Nepalese day of the week when everyone takes off and goes to the temples for their Pujas, meaning they would not have much traffic.

The passengers turned out to be all quite cool. No bad vibrations from any of them. Everyone was smoking joints and telling stories or asking things about New Delhi. Too bad there were not any tourist brochures for the hippies.

They existed, but in another world. That was in the world of the rich tourists in the five-star hotels, who saw only what the Nepalese government wanted them to see. If the two entrepreneurs would have had a small pamphlet that told everybody where to go on the hippy trail, it would have been great. Surprisingly none of them thought up such a moneymaking opportunity. Every overland traveler would use one. They could have been sold right from the bus as they stopped in the capital cities along the route.

Well, Marley, of course, pushed the passengers to stay at Mr. Murwah's, once they hit New Delhi, India. All along the hippy trail, there are places that the bus drivers pushed, and in return they got free lodgings and sometimes free food as well. Mrs. Murwah being a friend and all, it was only natural that the passengers were sent to her hostel.

Sending them to their hotel contacts also assured the bus drivers of first, knowing where they were if they needed to contact them and second, they could keep them out

of trouble. Often if one bus member got into trouble, it could get complicated for everyone. Always having to be sorted out by the bus drivers. An extreme is in Iran. If they caught you with narcotics, like heroin or morphine on the border, they took you aside and shot you on the spot. Extreme but true back in the day.

When the hippies crossed these countries in the nineteen seventies, there were police. Good police and bad police. Then you had the military and the contras. You also had the everyday bad guys. Usually, nothing happened, but they had heard stories of Muslims beheading a group of tourists on the far eastern part of Turkey that very year.

There was some very wild country in some spots. This bus full of hippies were coming from the friendliest, safest place on the planet. And as they went backward towards civilization again, things got more and more dangerous, the closer you got to Eastern Europe and Western civilization.

There was always a nervous tension driving down the Raj Path. You were torn between the natural fear of the narrow road in poor repair, and the hundreds of feet drop to the bottom of the valley, and the incredible terraced mountains all around you. But they had a perfect day's drive.

It was not at all unusual to find a rockslide covering the road or due to rain part of the road was washed away and fallen into the vast valley. When that happens, they had to wait for the men, and not bulldozers, to come and clean the road of rock falls or rebuild part of the path. It was a three hundred sixty-five day a year job and all by hand. With picks and shovels, one stone at a time.

They did indeed have a brilliant day as they say in Nepal, "Eck Dum Derry Ram Ro Cha." Along with the light traffic they quickly crossed the Nepali planes towards the border at Bajargang.

Just before the border they pulled over for a chai and to check the passenger's vaccination documents. Doctor Rococo stamped everybody's health books where needed so they would not be turned back at the Indian border. The Indians being very strict on vaccinations stamps in their inoculation books.

The bus and passengers passed the border and drove on hard, pushing the limits, and the trip to New Delhi went fast. Making as few stops as possible as they had seen this stretch of Indian many times and wanted to get to New Delhi, fill the bus the rest of the way up and move on to the next leg of the journey.

In no time they pulled up in the spot designated for the hippy buses, right in front of the India Tea House in the town center. For Marley Willow, it was kind of like arriving back to his second home. Especially on the short trek to thirty-one Hanuman Road and into Mrs. Murwah's place. They had filled her guesthouse up with the hippy overland bus passengers.

When they pulled up to the bus stop, they noticed that there was already another bus parked there, as it was becoming more and more popular for business-minded individuals to strike out on the long trek across all of Asia. And eventually on to different parts of India and Nepal.

This bus was heading for where they had just come from, Kathmandu. So, George and Marley told them they would stop by tomorrow to talk with them about the current conditions on the overland cross and to give them any helpful information about Kathmandu, if they had not been that far yet.

The hash and grass smoke circle at the guest house was big that night, as they all sat till late in the evening exchanging stories and adventures and chillums on the patio of the guesthouse. They had invited the English bus drivers to come and smoke with them, but they said they were busy, so they all agreed to meet in the morning at the buses.

After the smoke circle, George and Marley tossed a coin to see who would be the one

to go back and stand night guard. Marley lost, but no worries. The bed they had prepared in the back of the freak bus had a nice foam mattress, so it was much more comfortable than the Indian palangs in the guesthouse. Plus, Marley was at last all alone, free of the passenger's questions. Ready for a deep sleep on the White Bus.

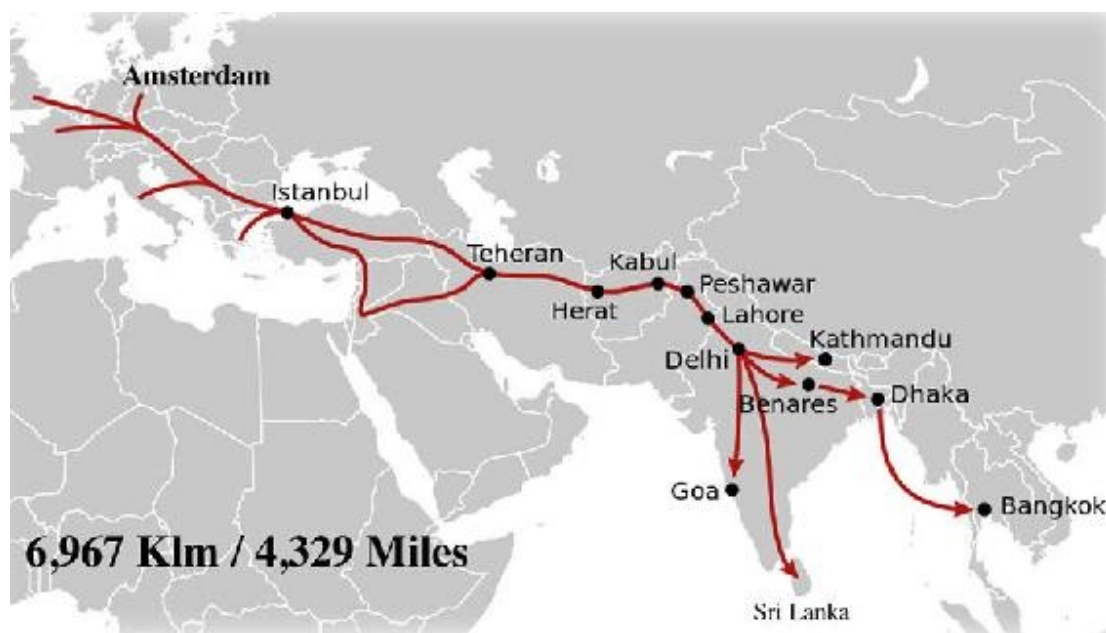
The passengers had a never-ending list of questions. How long will it take to get to Europe? How long before we arrive in Kabul? How long will we wait here in New Delhi? When will we reach in Istanbul?

"Don't worry," Marley Willow would assure them. "We'll wake you up when we get there."

In the morning they all met with the other British bus owners. They had taken over two months to make the cross to Delhi. After a couple of breakdowns on the way and having to wait for local mechanics to repair their bus. They informed Marley and George that the borders to the west were all open at the moment, although there is some political activity on the border with Afghanistan and Iran.

That has been that way ever since the Iranian population had started to rebel against the American backed Shaw of Iran. But no significant problems could be for seen for their trip west.

They also warned George and Marley that there was diesel oil rationing in Eastern Turkey, so they would be wise to buy extra fuel cans just in case. The two new overland bus drivers went out and bought six extra World War II jerry cans to store in the baggage compartments, so they could carry extra gas-oil for when they reach Eastern Turkey. The most dangerous stretch of the trip overland to Europe.



The Overland Trail

Eastern Turkey was a very wild place with little law, and they said the roads that existed then, were built by the Germans in the Second World War. A bus or truck driver wanted to cross Eastern Turkey as fast as possible to avoid conflicts with the locals. The road often did not let you go over 20 or 30 miles per hour due to the disrepair. At these speeds, it was a three-day trip if you did not stop and drove straight through. That was twenty-four hours a day.

Marley and George, in turn, told the Brits that the Raj Path, at least days before, was

in as good a condition as it gets. The two American freaks gave the Brits some tips on how to navigate this dangerous mountain road. Also giving them some contacts in Kathmandu on where to go and who to see if they decided that they did not want to make the trip back and sell their bus. June was still in Katmandu.

Meanwhile, George and Marley went on the hunt to all the car and truck repair shops they could find and used some of Marley's old contacts he had been given earlier, by his old friend Roman the New Delhi Playboy.

Looking for what they needed which supplied any additional profits to their trip. The big item was the Mercedes Benz motors. The interested buyers said that they would pay the two Americans between fifteen hundred and two thousand dollars per engine. The only problem was that these motors were on the list of items forbidden to import into India. That being because it meant they would sell less nationally made copies of the same engine. George and Marley figured they would be able to come up with some idea before they returned to New Delhi. There was too much potential profit in these motors for them not to figure out a way around the legal restrictions. The Mercedes motors would be their most profitable items. Even more than the sale of the buses.

Another item that Marley already knew was very valuable and small, were typewriters. In India at the time, to own a portable typewriter indicated that you had a profession. All government documents required that they be typed, so outside each government building you would see lines of people waiting for the Typewriter Walla to type up their documents to be submitted.

You could buy them in Europe wholesale for just under fifty dollars and sell them in India for up to three hundred bucks. Remember that this is even before the IBM auto correction electric typewriter. The most basic typewriters back in the day along with its travel case. They could bring ten per bus, claiming they belonged to the passengers.

They also took down lists of things the resident friends wanted them to bring back to Kathmandu. Levis, which weren't available in India or Nepal, was a big thing at the time. Now George and Marley figured they had enough orders to fill both buses they were planning to return with.

Along with the sale of the buses, if they made it back with both vehicles and everything in them, they would stand to make a small fortune. Not as much as these guys who were taking hash on their buses to Europe, but George and Marley didn't take the enormous risks that the other cowboy bus drivers took. Without the dangers, they still stood to make serious profits. And without breaking any major laws.



George & the White Bus in Kabul

It was now well over 40° Celsius (104°F) in New Delhi. New Delhi is either too hot in the summer or too cold in the winter. It does not snow or anything, but the temperature does get down to seven or eight degrees Celsius (46°F) at times during the winter months. To keep a little cooler and as they traveled in small groups, they often rode the old three-wheel Harley Davidson Taxis with carts built on the back, to make them usable as transport vehicles. They were left over from World War II. It was amazing that they still ran.

Now George had written down a list that entirely covered both sides of a piece of yellow notepad paper. Marley had said that he worried George would lose it, as he was a bit spaced out. Marley claimed he remembered that list was written in red ink and that it was very poorly organized. He just hoped they could decipher it when they got to Germany. George was brilliant, although so much of a hippy he often spaced things out. Now they were ready to go as soon as they had a good group of passengers.

The passengers they picked up in New Delhi were not as cool as the lot they picked up in Kathmandu. There was one French passenger Marley assumed was potential trouble. He was a smart ass, as many French hippies were when talking to Americans back then and he also had the signs of a junkie.

Often French hippies thought that they were the only real hippies, although no one had any idea why. The French passenger paid his two hundred fifty dollars to Amsterdam, and as they were after as much profit on this trip as possible they let him ride



along. But they both agreed they would have to keep an eye on him. Part of the crowd looked under-nourished, and some were probably sick, so that would mean extra pit-stops, which were not wanted on this marathon trip.

Many of the travelers suffered from a bad stomach because of the water. No matter what one did, it was going to get you at one time or another. Some of them learned to live with it, like Marley, and some got over it. Then again others either had to go back to Europe or die from it.

Amebic dysentery. It seemed that no matter what you did you would get it at the worst possible moments. The first sign is when you burp, and it tastes like rotten eggs. Kind of like a fart but from your mouth and then liquids start to flow from every orifice. Marley drank bottled water, filtered water, boiled water, and took every other precaution possible. But it inevitably got him by way of vegetables or something. Flagel was the only thing that worked in as far as killing this resistant bacterium.

It is an antibiotic so potent that it killed all the bacteria in your body. Good and bad, so when you took it you had to eat a lot yogurt to help replace the good bacteria in your digestive system. Marley traveled with several boxes of Flagel for the trip. A supply big enough for him and anyone else who came down with the egg burps. Needless to say, Marley Willow was skinny his entire time in Asia.

When they left New Delhi, they asked if anybody on the bus wanted to stop in Lahore, Pakistan. Many of them had been there and did not want to linger in that oppressive heat and dust bowl.

With the roads often dirt and everything so dry and with so much traffic you could barely breathe there, especially when it was nearing one hundred ten degrees Fahrenheit in temperature.

They decided they would go up to Amritsar, to stop by and see the Golden Temple "Hormandir Sahib." The overland bus went by way of Paniput, Ambala and on to Amritsar to stop for a break. The temple is called the Golden Temple. It is the holiest place for Sikhism.

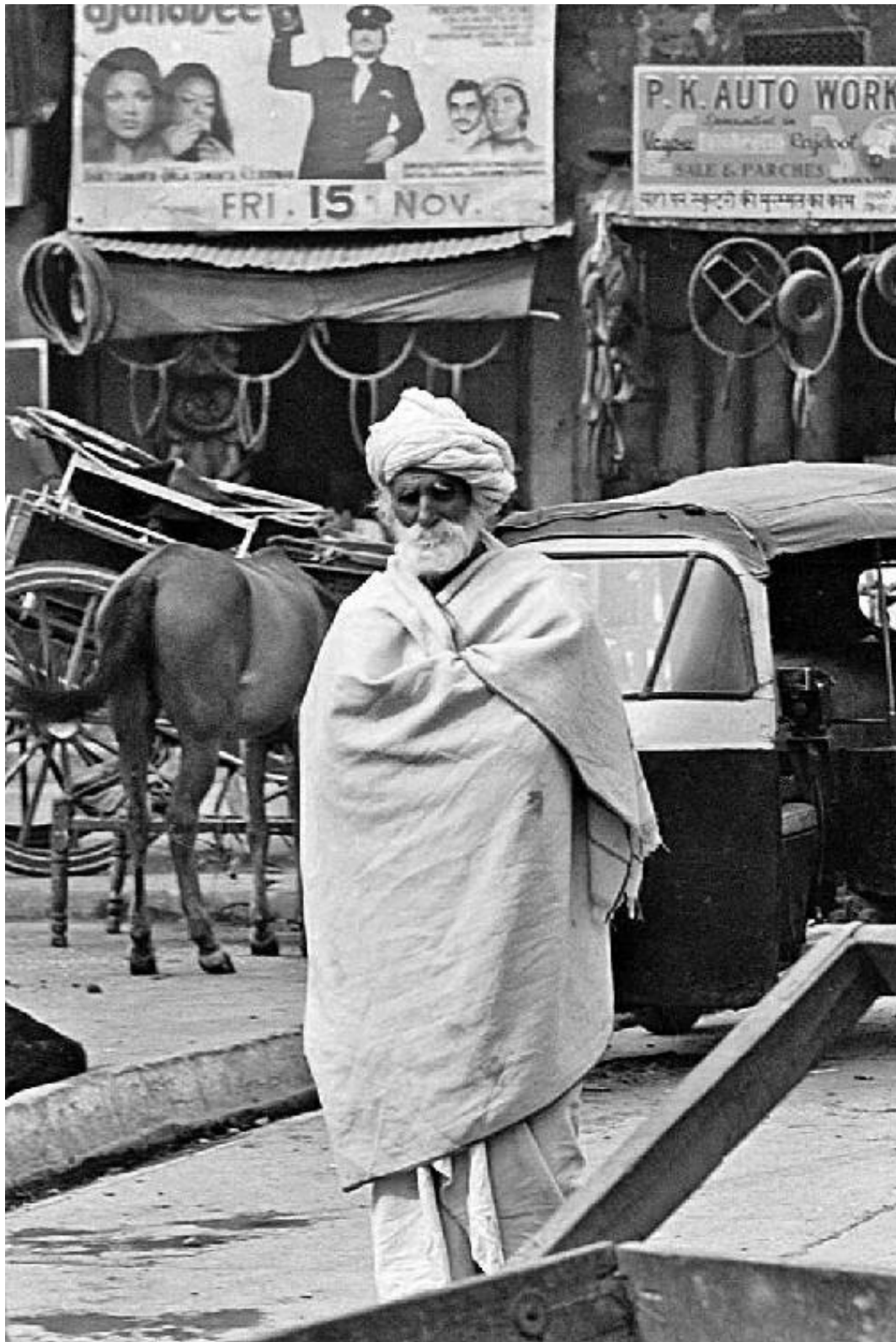
The original construction of this Golden Temple was to build a place of worship for men and women from all religions. It had an incredible lake in the center. As night fell they prepared to pass the night on the bus, each of the hippies fighting for a place on the bed in the back and the remainder sleeping however they could in their seats or on

the floor.

George and Marley told anyone who wanted to go to a hotel they could, but now they were nearing Pakistan so the chance of the bus being robbed increased and a one-night guard might not be sufficient to outwit the local thieves. So George and Marley were not moving from the bus.

Plus, they informed everyone that as soon as the first bus driver wakes up, they would be getting on their way to hit the border at Wagah, so everybody decided to sleep on the bus that night. Lahore was their next big city, where they planned to drive straight through. After that, they had to reach Rawalpindi to Peshawar near the Pakistani-Afghani border. Then the famous, Khyber Pass. The most ancient pass in the world along the Silk Road.

Remember, for Marley and George only in their 20s, all this was incredible. The way a person looks at things at that age is different than how a man would look at them today after forty years. Marley was in awe most of the time. Most people find that as they get older, instead believing most anything they become more skeptical. When they were in the



Indian Man in Old Delhi

middle of Lahore, everything was brown. Covered in a power dry brown dust and dirt. It got in their clothes, their throats and just about everywhere imaginably. While they drove through Lahore, the drivers and passengers kept the bus windows and door

closed, or they would never be able to get the dust out of the bus.

They had to make a food and WC stop, so the busload of hippies stopped somewhere in the city of Lahore along the way. Marley was so dry that he drank from a local water pitcher. He certainly knew better, but he felt he had to have something immediately to remedy his dry throat, and they had no bottled water for sale. Between the joints, the speed and the hot, dry, dusty road his mouth was parched as dry as a desert. The water tasted like shit, and Marley paid for it in short order.

It was not an hour or so till he began having egg burps and got a high fever and diarrhea. He had known better too, so he made the rest of his trip through Pakistan in poor shape. Although with his super active Flagel antibiotics, he was doing his part after some hours.

Marley was miserable for a couple of days. During his prolonged stay in Asia, he got the Delhi Belly about every two or three months. He did everything he could to make sure what he drank and ate was ameba free, but it always got him in the end. Sickness was an issue for each of those



Indian Peanut Man



Fishing Village Sri Lanka

travelers in Nepal and India. If they got a mosquito bite and scratched it, one could be sure that it would infect, and the infections were difficult to cure due to the bacteria impacted area in which they were living and traveling. Delhi Belly, infections, foot fungus, and sunburns all being small things in the west, but all serious issues in India.

Chapter 19: Khyber Pass

When you get to the Khyber Pass border, in the Hindu Kush, your bus will be stopped and may be searched. It is a twenty-eight-mile long stretch, which at some point is as narrow as two hundred meters. The pass itself is about ten miles from Peshawar. The other side of the pass is Torkham, Afghanistan. Both sides were leery of each other and the tribesmen. The moment the Pakistanis opened the barricade at the Khyber Pass border, and you drive through, you could almost taste the tension in the harsh environment.

The Pakistanis said it is their land. Sometimes Marley had heard Afghanis say it was theirs. On the maps, it was shown to be Pakistan, although the Clansmen that live in the Pass, the Mullagoris to the North and the Alfridis to the South and the city, say it was theirs. Actually, at the times our bus full of hippies passed, they were told the Pakistani government paid a fee to the clansmen for free passage through the pass for cargo trucks, buses and cars, so it belonged to the Pashtun Clans.

This free pass only applied to daytime movement. The military police that stopped our travelers at the border told them not to go off of the main road and to arrive at the other side before dark, or they will not be responsible for anything that might happen to the hippy tourists.

Think about where this is for just a moment. Alexander the Great invaded the Khyber Pass on elephants. Genghis Kahn invaded the Pass as well. The British Empire was stopped at the Khyber Pass. What history. This was one of the oldest passes of the Silk Road in the world.

This place was the closest thing there was to a Pirate Island. A true fact, indeed. The road gets as high as 3,300 feet at one point of the pass. When you hit the Alfridis village, everything was for sale. Guns, rockets, hand grenades, anti-aircraft guns, mountains of hash, and pharmaceutical drugs.

Cheap and ready to go. It is said that back then they even bought and sold slaves at the Khyber Pass. The kidnapping was one of their specialties. It was also reported, that they had their own arms factories that produced weapons like AK-47s. They were called Khyber Pass Copies.

Everybody was trying to sell you something or steal something from you during your exchange. Some of the hippies on the bus bought pharmaceutical cocaine straight from the local pharmacy. No prescription needed here.

At one point George and Marley were taken aside by two tribesmen, and they told them, "See that mountain of hash stored under that tarp? We can put one thousand kilos of hash in your bus in just a few hours, and you will make a fortune in Europe. It is all very safe, don't worry." Yeah right, don't worry.

The two veteran drivers warned all of their passengers about thieves and to avoid buying quantities of hashish, as there could be a check on the other side of the Khyber Pass border. They had to leave well before nightfall because they closed the border, as it is too dangerous to travel the pass road at night.

Marley said he remembered when arriving at the other side of the pass the police did not pay much attention to them, so they thought great. No worries. Time to light up and smoke some hash. They were now in Afghanistan!

Being this stoned, they had to concentrate hard to remember to drive on the right side of the road rather than the left side, as they had done in Pakistan, India, Nepal, and Bangladesh. It is always a hassle to keep it clear in one's mind until you find another vehicle coming directly at you on the same side of the road that you're on. Then you remember quickly. Note that these two men had been driving on the left side of the road for a couple of years now and they were more forgetful due to the consumption of

large quantities of hash. Keeping their travels engaging all of the time.

The inside of the bus was so thick with smoke, Marley could not see the passengers in the back. Even with the windows and the door open the smoke was so thick that you could cut it with a knife. That is what happens when 30 some hippies light-up at the same time, in a confined space.

Then about 10 miles down the road they saw some Afghani military soldiers with a machine gun set up in the middle of the road pointing right at them.

"Oh Fuck! What are we going to do now?" Marley asked his traveling partner George.

"Close all the windows, quick," Marley yelled at his busload of hippies. "We don't want the smell to get out of the bus!"

George stopped the bus well short of the soldiers, and the two drivers jumped off far enough away from the military police so they could not smell the hash. If they boarded the bus, the hippies were going to have some problems to take care of. George and Marley hurried over to the soldiers with big smiles on their faces, while wondering how red their eyes were and if they smelled of hashish.

Exploding with nervous tension, they talked to these Afghans like they were Generals. They gave them cigarettes and sweets. At the same time, they were both aware of how fucked up they were themselves.

"Are we making any sense to these guys?" they asked themselves? "We certainly hoped so!"

With the two drivers going to the soldiers like they were doing and cordially talking to the military men and being as friendly as could be, they waved them on through the blockade without inspecting the bus. Man, was that a close call! If they got caught with hashish by the police, you can work it out on the spot with some dollars. But with the military, you never know. It depends if an officer is present or not.

Back on board their crazy magic mystery bus, once again they all lit up. Believing there couldn't be two of these stops, so they began to cruise through the mountains of the Afghan Hindu Kush, heading towards the ancient city Kabul. Sometimes they would see the black nomad tents in the distance. Or caravans, of dozens upon dozens of camels, carrying cargo on the old trails to Kabul. How anyone could survive in these harsh and unfriendly environments was hard to conceive?

These were countries that had changed relatively little in the last few hundred years. These westerners were the scouting parties of the underbelly of the Far East, so to speak. Traveling these uncharted roads, only known to the locals that continue to carry on with the local traditions. At this time not being entirely affected by the white Europeans crossing their borders and homeland to explore. The only real tourists having visited these far parts of the Asian Continent were the five-star hotel tourists who only



Hindu Baba in Kathmandu

saw what they were intended to see. Theater exhibitions of Nepalese, Pakistan or Afghan dances. Marley said there was even a belly dance show in one of the hotels in Kathmandu. The belly dancer was even from America. Which was not Nepalese at all, but that just goes to show you that up till then the tourists only saw what the Ministries of Tourism wanted them to see. Not the real Nepal, India or Afghanistan.

Chapter 20: Kabul a Haze of Smoke

Finally, the weary bus drivers pulled into Kabul, to the bus park up on Chicken Street. There was another bus there, but it was heading east so no worries. Marley and George figured they should be able to pick up two or three passengers there, or even more, if they are lucky.

They went to a hotel where they trusted the owners and who had a compound to lock the bus in at night. Then the two drivers would hang around the bus on Chicken Street most of the day, to not miss any westbound hippies. They kept themselves amused talking to the hippies, the other bus drivers, and Afghans while drinking tea. The sign in the window of the white bus stated their destinations.

TEHRAN - ISTANBUL - ATHENS - AMSTERDAM

Everything was free for George and Marley Willow at the hotel, and the hotel workers began to make sure that each of the passengers off the bus got a chance to smoke the most potent hash they had ever smoked. Some of them were not ready for it, especially the young Austrian guys. George noted that the French junkie disappeared as soon as they had arrived in Kabul.

These young Austrians were so stoned, that they were walking around in a trance. Happy travelers. Eating and hanging out. Making visits to places they were told about. The main street for the Hippy Tribe was Chicken Street, where the overland buses parked during the daytime.

George and Marley figured there would be no way to get all these stoned out hippies ready to go on the next leg of the trip too soon. So, when they put the sign up on the bus, it informed everyone they could find, that the whole bunch would be leaving at 11:00 AM, four days from that day. They then wandered to go off to get some first-class food on Chicken Street and out for an afternoon stroll in the ancient city of Kabul.

While in the capital of Afghanistan they had scored some hash that had the texture of butter. You could stretch it like putty. It was incomparable in quality. Only George and Marley scored this hash. They kept all they bought for their own stash. Not for non-resident freaks. Since the Afghani hash the passengers scored was still the best hash they had ever had, none of them complained about the bus drivers having something better yet.

The most famous hash was said to come from the Afghani and Russian border, on the Russian side. It is supposed to be white, but in all of Marley's travels he only heard about it. He had never personally seen this mystery hashish.

This soft Afghani butter hash was the best he had seen in all his years of travel and was always found in minimal quantities of fifty or a hundred grams at most. It was said to be hand-pressed in the high mountain region where it was frigidly cold.

Pollen hash is made differently than the resin hash made in Nepal. In Nepal, it is hand rubbed from the live plants and scraped off your hands. The pollen hashish is collected, by cutting the plants, drying them and shaking it, so the pollen falls off and then it's collected, and hand pressed. In the olden times, the Afghani royalty had their subjects run through the grass fields with coats on and only the pollen that stuck to the coats was used for the royalty's hash. Or so the smoke circle tales said.

At any rate, this is the home of the best hash Marley had ever smoked. That included North Indian, Nepalese, Pakistani, Moroccan or Lebanese. The very best!

This new stash would now replace the original stash Marley had hidden behind the radio components under the dash, for their own personal use during the overland trip.

They just sold the Nepalese hash they had bought for a low price and decided to travel with the best. They stored the new hashish in the bus while it was in the

compound for the night, so nobody would see what they were doing. No worries.

The fourth day, when everybody was supposed to show up at the bus to leave, only a half a dozen people showed, so the boys had to wait another day.

Now it was clear they were going to have to round up their "stoned out" herd themselves, to be able to leave the next day. If not, their hippy passengers were not going to arrive for the next day's departure time either.



Afghan Men in Kabul

The following day the two over-landers managed to get everybody together. In the group, there were quite a few passengers heading to Amsterdam and one girl that only wanted to go as far as Istanbul, Turkey. She was a Spanish girl. Her name was Maria. Marley Willow and her, hit it off straight away. Marley didn't know what it was that sparked off this relationship but supposed it was just natural chemistry.

She was more of a hippy's hippy, with Afghani clothing, long jet-black hair and was barefoot. A hippy like Marley had been couple of years before when he arrived in India. The only problem was that her English was very limited, and Marley's Spanish had come from what he learned in Florida working construction and a short time that he had spent in South America, sometime before his Indian adventure. But the two seemed to work around it.

She sat in the first seat on the passenger side of the bus. The French guy who Marley and George suspected to be a smack addict sat at the very back. On the right, in the middle, there were a couple of Brits who were dodgy for sure. Fifty percent of the crowd were iffy individuals. In other words, holding some stash. But that is how things were on the over-land trails back then.

Also, the three Austrian boys, who barely seemed to be 18. They were on a road trip before college, so they were green as hell but funny. In general, everyone was getting

along and having fun.

George and Marley found it funny that Maria could out smoke them both. She had gone from Spain to Goa, India in a VW van with her Spanish ex-husband, Pedro. But the two had broken up about a month or so before she stepped onto Marley's bus. She was a veteran traveler.

The next leg of the trip was down across the Afghani desert to Kandahar and then up to Marley's favorite city in Afghanistan, Herat. It is curious how back then as soon as one stepped over the Afghani - Iranian border the world changed. They seemed to move forward about three centuries.

Both drivers loved the Afghani side but were not so keen on the Iranian side. Their notorious customs were also something they dreaded.

On the way to Kandahar, in the south of Afghanistan, the bus drivers drove nearly straight through. They had one pit stop in Kandahar City. Food, tea, boiled eggs, and Nan bread or whatever they had for sale. Marley said he never knew why, but he did not feel as relaxed in this town, as he did in Kabul or Herat. The people of Kandahar seemed less friendly to the hippies than they did in the other cities. At least that was how he felt. Others liked Kandahar more than Herat. Marley supposed it is up to one's individual taste.

Marley Willow was driving the night shift, and it was very late at night. Perhaps three or so in the morning. George had their only watch, and he was sitting on the seat closest to the front door, with his boots kicked up on the bench across the aisle and head resting on the bus window, sound asleep.

The two drivers eventually got to a point where they could nearly fall asleep standing up. Marley didn't want to wake him up, as the time did not matter that much to him. Hell, if Marley didn't need a map why would he need a watch?

They were somewhere between Kandahar and Herat. He figured he'd stop the bus for a break, in the early hours of the morning. There was no traffic at all apart from their hippy bus full of sleeping passengers. One could hear the odd snore, especially from George. His long beard was rising and falling with each breath he drew.

Marley put the engine brake on and started to slow the big fifty-four passenger bus down, downshifting as he turned the colossal steering wheel off the road coming to as soft a stop as possible. Hopefully not waking up any of the passengers. This was his time alone or a time when George and he would take time out from the crowd to sit in the desert in the middle of the night with a sky full of stars.

Marley was just pulling over to the side of the road, claiming he remember Pink Floyd was playing on the bus cassette player. The song was the "The Dark Side of the Moon."

Arriving at a full stop, Marley opened the front door, stepped out and then opened the first baggage compartment where they had their small gas stove. It is nearly impossible to scrounge up enough sticks to make a fire way out there in the desert, so he quietly started to heat up the coffee pot to make some fresh Java. Just then he heard George move down the steps of the Mercedes bus and onto the desert sand.

"This is one of the moments I most enjoy on these night drives, man," Marley said. "These few minutes of quiet, just sitting here in these endless deserts with millions of stars in the sky. It really is far out."

George busied himself with making up a joint of hash and grass, to smoke as they waited for the coffee to heat up.

They made up two cups of coffee and sat cross-legged in the sand enjoying their hot drink, staring off at the sky, and the horizon as the very first lights of dawn appeared on the edge of the planet. The sun came up very early and was a sight to be seen, fire red and blazing. Then very much to their surprise just a short while later the sun came up

again and made another spectacular sunrise even more beautiful than the first.

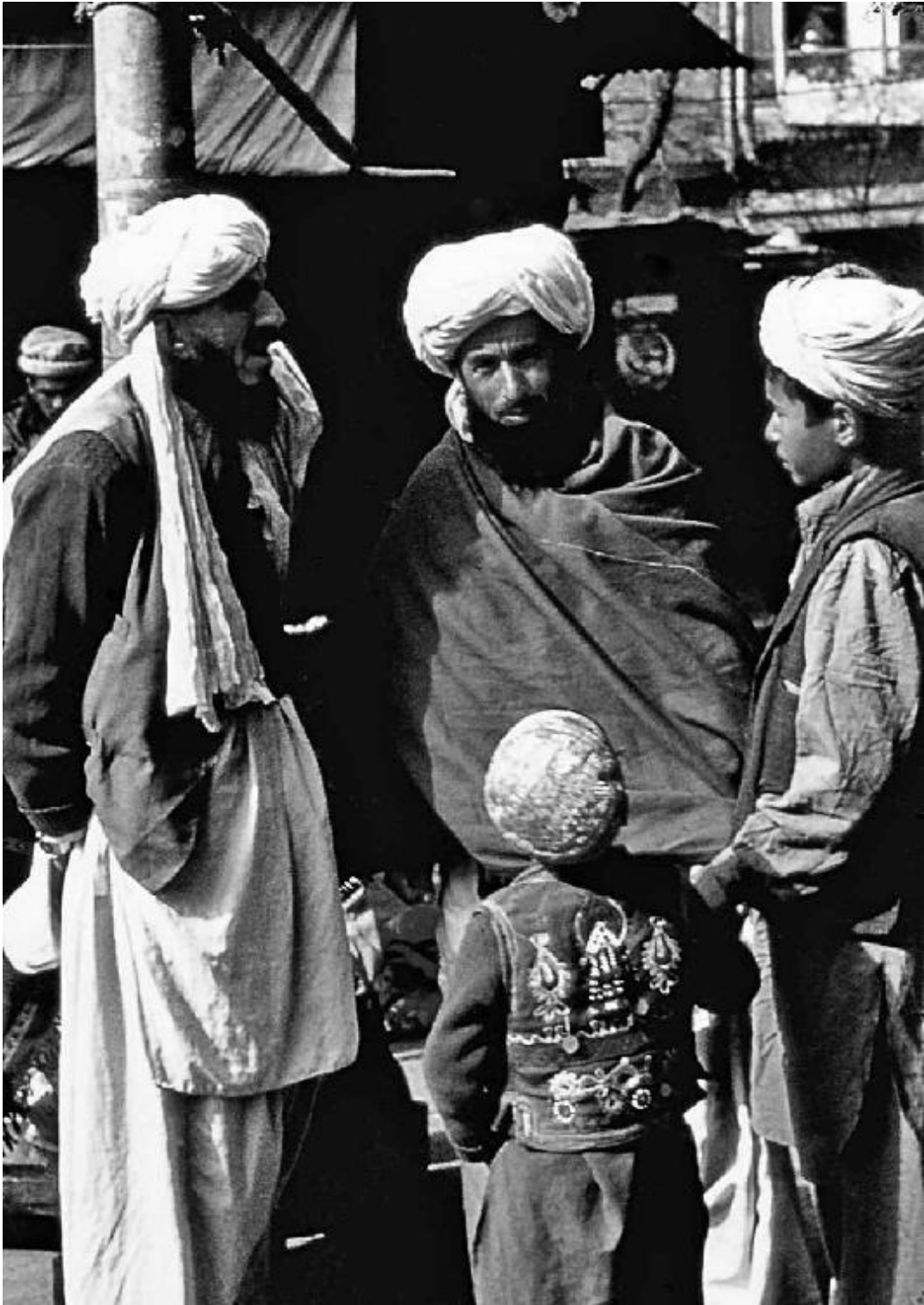
"Wow man," George exclaimed, "What was in that joint? Did we just see two sunrises or what



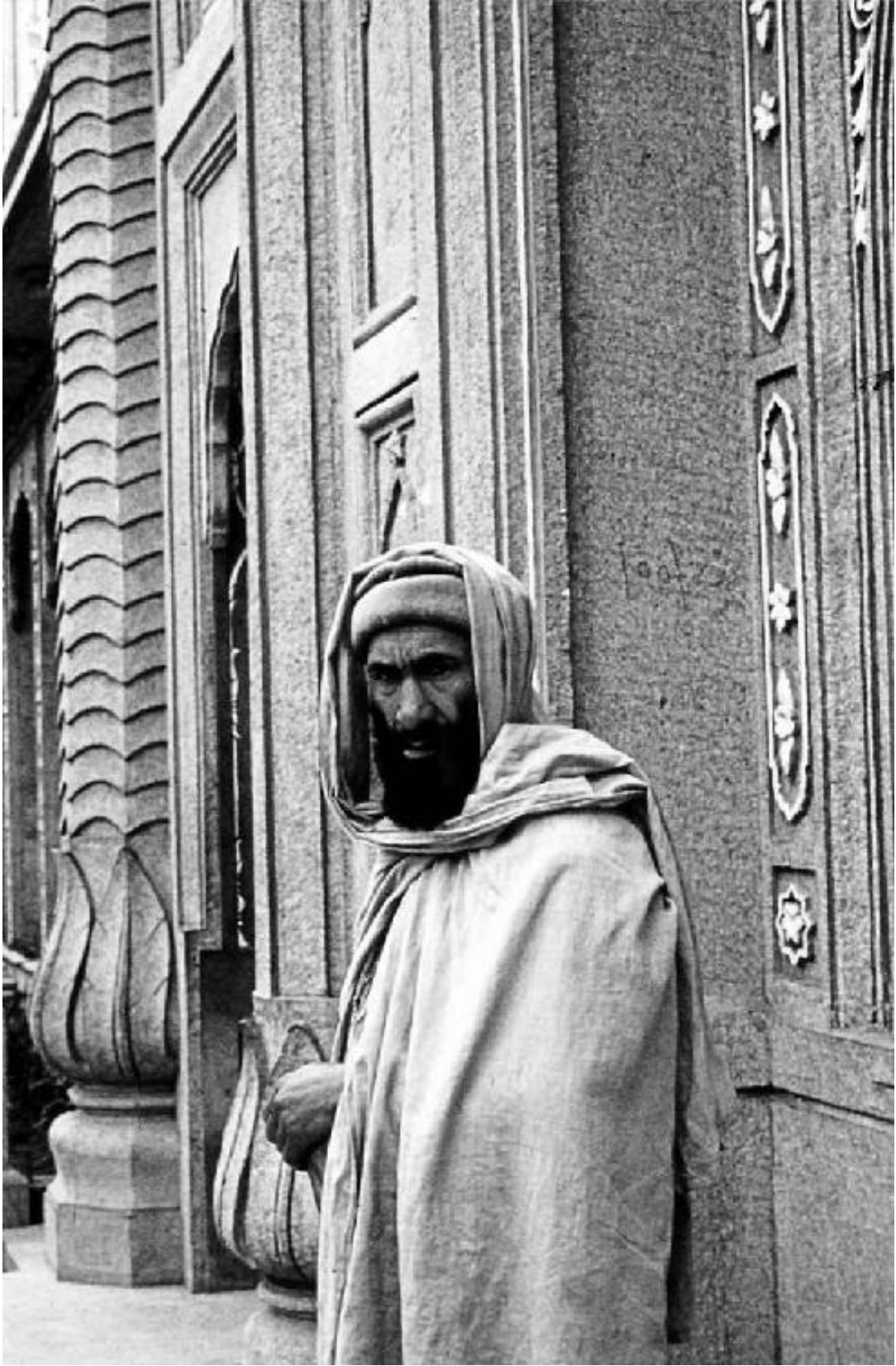
Afghans Smoking Hash



Tribal Men in Pakistan



Tribal Family



The Pakistani

Marley"? he asked. "That is one of the wildest things I have ever seen, brother!"

"It makes me wonder where we really are, here in the middle of Asia in our own little piece of the desert," Marley replied.

It was like some kind of illusion. They both had heard of false sunrises but had never personally seen one. It made the surroundings seem more surrealistic than usual, and that was going some.

Between the music, the smoke, and the sunrises, George and Marley were hypnotized by the beauty of their surroundings. It was one of the most beautiful events of nature they had ever seen, with just a whisper of wind over the dunes.

You could see the light clouds of sand, shift across the face of the big dunes making them come alive with color and movement. The sand was traveling from one fold to the next as if by magic.

They often liked to stop at night while everyone was asleep and make themselves a tea, coffee, and smoke. It's just that this time it was extra special, but now they were hearing people yawn and rumble about inside the bus. Time to get back on board and moving, before everybody wants to take a break. Not long till the next chai shop stop, anyway.

Maria told Marley that she had traveled a great deal. First, from Spain to Morocco and back. Then from Spain to Goa, all in an old VW van and then back to Kabul. Now she had decided to head back to Spain as she had split up with her husband and she didn't want to live in Kabul any longer. She would ride with the bus until Istanbul, Turkey where she planned to catch the local boat that ran the Mediterranean Sea coastline and back to her native city Barcelona in Spain.

"Where are you and George planning on going to?" she asked.

"George and I are headed for Kathmandu," Marley informed her.

"But how is that when you are heading west?" she asked incredulously.

"We are taking the long scenic route," Marley replied laughing.

They headed on up to Herat for a rest and before they get close to their next stop, Tehran. Iran had great roads, but Eastern Turkey's highways were in such a poor state you had to drive dead-slow. Now they headed to park the bus, in the Herat Hotel compound and were ready to spend some time having fun. Driving such long hours was hard work. It could be anywhere from two to four months driving the whole round trip. Depending on your luck with the bus and the locals.

The hotel had quite a few rooms, so everyone from the bus fit in the same hotel, and the drivers got them a special price. They were going to get a rest before heading for the tough stretch. The initial plan was that they would stop for two days. One day for George and Marley to rest and another day to check out the bus to make sure they were not looking at a breakdown when they were crossing Eastern Turkey.

On this break, Maria and Marley Willow hooked up and stayed together in the hotel. Not knowing this would be the beginning of a long relationship. They smoked, played and checked out the town together. They had already started to bond and just relaxed in general in Herat. Marley said that he didn't know what it was about Herat, but it was his favorite city in Afghanistan and on the overland trail.

When they finally did get everybody together on the third day, they were refreshed, organized and ready for some hard-core traveling, and long hours of driving.

Chapter 21: The Land of Farsi-Iran

Like Marley had mentioned before, the roads in Iran were as good as or better than all of Asia so that they should make reasonable time. Several miles before the Iranian border they stopped the bus and told everyone to get out. The two bus drivers gave the passengers the lecture on what they do to drug smugglers on this border. If one was caught with hashish, it could be severe. Hit and miss, although if they find you with powder, it was sure trouble. Cocaine, heroin or morphine meant that a traveler could be taken aside and shot on the spot. 1970s Iranian law! No Shit! Plus, it could be bad for all of the bus passengers, especially the drivers.

The two guys who had bought the bottle of pharmaceutical cocaine, from the Khyber Pass invited the whole bus to the rest of the bottle, so it was used up before they hit the border. Marley said he figured that many of the passengers had hash, but he told them to keep it tight and don't get caught with anything as there at that border in particular, George and Marley could not help them were they to get into trouble.

As they pulled into the Afghani - Iranian border, on the Iranian side, the Iranian border customs had glass cases with samples of all the ways people tried to smuggle drugs into their country. Some hidden in gas bottles, rubber tires, suitcases, car seats, toothpaste tubes, etc.

With the green tourist, it worked. One could see it in their faces, but the weathered travelers, like Maria, just took it in stride. The Iranian customs officers climbed onto the bus and had a serious look around. They took two passengers off the bus to check them out, but they appeared clean, and then they waved the busload of hippies on their way through the check post.

With a sigh of relief, George and Marley moved the bus forward on towards Tehran. They then told the passengers to be discreet when they smoked from that point on. They had left Cowboy Country in the Wild East and were currently nearing civilization.

Every once in a while, during their crossing of the vast desert, they would stop the bus for the passengers to relieve themselves. Ladies would go first. They would open the baggage doors, which pulled up along the side of the bus so that the girls could be as discrete as possible and have a pee, and the guys from up in the coach could not see them.

This does sounds funky, but what is one to do in the middle of a dessert with a dozen women on the bus? This was the only solution. If you wanted to pee badly enough, you would do whatever you have to do, and hippies were not too finicky in general back then.

Then when it was the guy's turn, it was a question of heading for the ditch and turn their backs to the bus. When everybody got back on the bus, the French guy asked for Marley and George to wait a minute because he had to get something from his luggage.

"Sure, no worries," George informed the hippy without giving it a second thought.

He went out and opened the baggage door, blocking our sight as to what he was doing. Though now he was taking far too long, so Marley went out to see what the holdup was.

In short, he caught this guy shooting up heroin right there in the middle of the road in Iran, with the syringe still in his arm. He was putting their entire group of passengers at risk. If he got caught, they all may well end up in an Iranian prison.

Marley did what he had to do, although some of the passengers thought it very rash. He took the French hippy's backpack and bag away from him and placed them inside, in the front of the bus, right by the driver's seat. The two bus drivers sat him on the front bench-seat and took him to the very next village on the road. George and Marley

gave him his bag back and returned half the money he had paid them for the trip to Holland. Then Marley told him to leave the bus. He exclaimed that they were in the middle of nowhere.

Marley just said, "Tough shit, man. You should have thought of that when you smuggled your heroin stash over the Iranian border in our bus. Now you can travel by public transport when the next local bus passes by this village."

Marley got back on the bus. Sat down in the driver's seat and left him in the little village in the desert. Then some of the passengers told him that it was not cool what they had done. The two drivers told them that it was easy to catch a public bus in Iran and as George and he were responsible for the bus and its passengers, and that is how things were.

They had no intention of taking the same risk at the Turkish border and especially on the European borders with a junkie. Who knew how much heroin he had with him? He could easily have had a significant enough amount to have George and Marley arrested as well. If he wanted to smuggle smack, he is going to have to find someone other than Marley and George to drive him. When they started this trip, they had agreed there would be no drug smuggling.

At this point, Marley realized that he was changing with these couple of years in Asia. The idea of a world of peace was all relative to what environment one is in and what responsibilities a man has. Now at this time, Marley figured he was not a hippy anymore. He was a freak business guy who grasped unique opportunities in which to make a living. Don't misunderstand his thoughts. George and Marley were never aggressive, but sometimes the work came with the responsibility of taking some forty passengers across two continents. That is if you want them to make it and keep all your people out of jail.

Maria, as in her eyes the true hippy way was the only way, was pissed off as hell with Marley and George both. But Marley just commented that the same thing would happen to any other passenger who pulls that stunt. They are not going to risk going to jail for anybody.

The other passengers probably thought they had the bus full of hash and that was why the two drivers were so strict. When in actuality they were just looking out for everyone's safety. George was in total agreement with Marley. Hard drugs were not part of this trip.

They drove on until they hit Tehran and made their way to the plaza where the hippy buses parked to collect passengers. There was an upstairs hotel that had been recommended to them by the British hippy bus drivers they had met way back in New Delhi. It was just above the bus parking and it was fine.

Tehran, at that time, was under the rule of the Shah who was backed by the United States Government. Although the most modern and advanced country in that part of the world, it was still a sharp culture shock for some. The local Iranian men kept insisting that the two hippy bus drivers sell them the three young Austrian guys on the bus, and they were afraid that they might kidnap them during the layover. Due to this fear, Marley and George kept stuck to them like glue the whole time they were in Tehran.

They had pretty much a full bus of passengers, and as nobody was scheduled to get off the bus in Tehran, they planned to leave early the next morning. This time everybody was there ready to move on. Marley and George walked the Austrian college boys to the bus personally. They were apprehensive that they might try to steal them before they could leave. The locals were all over them.

Marley had heard stories about this kind of thing in Iran and Eastern Turkey, so George and he took it seriously. There were often moments that most of the passengers underestimated their role and responsibility of being in charge of the safety of over forty wild hippies in even more primitive countries.

After a nice night in a good hotel in Tehran Maria, George and Marley were ready to go. The other passengers too, so they were off to an early start. Now they headed west bordering the Caspian Sea, to Zanjan and Tabriz, which was close to the Turkish border. Always making great time as the quality of the roads was exceptional.

George and Marley used to freak our passengers out by changing drivers while going over sixty miles per hour down the Asian highways. The new driver would come up along the actual driver from the left side, when the one driving slipped off the seat to the right, making sure he did not hit the gearshift. The new driver slipped into his place grabbing the steering wheel while stepping on the gas. During the night, if one of the drivers had to pee and they were doing an all-night run, we would take turns, taking a leak out the open door of a speeding bus. Whatever it took to save time.

They were cruising along just fine when Maria noticed that she had left her passport and papers back in Zanjan when they had stopped the bus for a break. She forgot her bag in the restroom. This meant going back about four hours, but Marley felt for anybody in that situation, as he had been in the same position himself in Shimla, India a couple of years earlier.

Personally, Marley said that they had little hope that it was still there by then. She had left it in a kind of a public truck stop women's restroom hanging on a hook beside the sink.

They turned the fifty-four-passenger bus around, after a few complaints from some of the passengers, as it was a several hour trip back to the truck stop and return. Upon their arrival to the spot where her bag was left, they found it exactly where they said it was, with everything in it. A small miracle in itself.

Much like Marley Willow two years before, she was also lucky, and once again they started moving west over ground they had just covered, but as the general distances were so vast, it was not much of a setback. Maybe eight or nine hours in all.

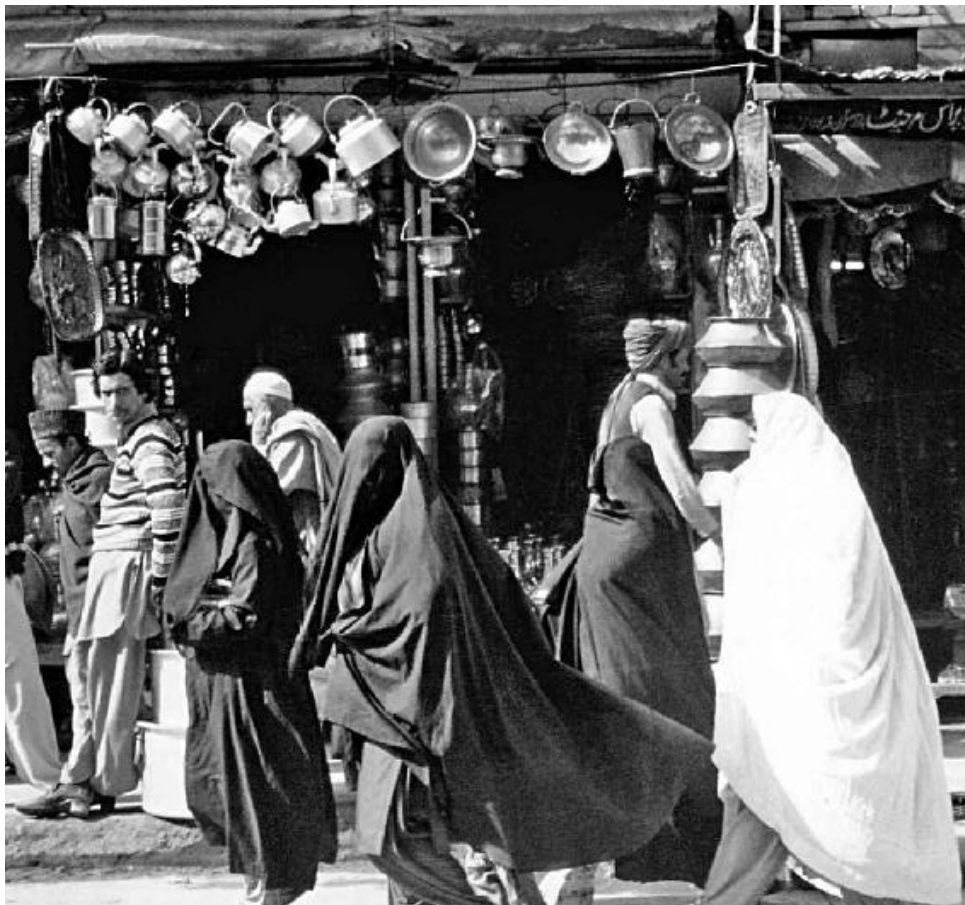
Now Marley grabbed the wheel so that George could rest up before they started the three days it took to cross Turkey. They would be moving twenty-four hours a day as no place in Eastern Turkey was considered safe enough to stop and sleep.

Remember this is in the early to mid-nineteen-seventies. There was little law in much of the countryside that they crossed. One had to be aware at all times of all the possible dangers they could encounter.

The rest of the drive to the Turkish border went smoothly and uneventful. Passing the Iranian countryside farms equipped with the most modern equipment. The Shah of Iran attempting to move the country into the twentieth century.



Women Selling Bracelets



Women in Chadors



The Knife Salesman

Chapter 22: On the Way to Europe

There were no more surprises on the Iranian trail and in no time, they were at Barzargam, on the Turkish border. Soon as the bus crossed over, they had to reduce their speed from sixty or seventy miles per hour to twenty or thirty miles per hour. The roads were full of huge potholes and bumps so if you went too fast the springs of the bus would break.

This bus still had to cross Europe and back to Kathmandu again, along with a second bus. The road was in such disrepair that all the vehicles had to crawl along like snails. Every once in a while, they saw abandoned cars, coaches, and trucks alongside the road. These vehicles had died in the crossing of Eastern Turkey, burned and rusted out with broken axles or chassis.

Occasionally they would see young men walking along the side of the road with bullet belts crisscrossed on their chests carrying AK-47 assault rifles. These boys looked to be only fifteen or sixteen years old. Just kids, but dangerous all the same.

They remembered they had stopped the bus in a big Turkish truck stop. They fueled up, and then everybody went inside the restaurant, and had lunch. Everyone ordered from the large menus of assorted Turkish dishes. The meals were quite good, but when the hippy bus passengers asked for the bill, they charged them double the price that was indicated on the menus.

When they complained, the Turks became aggressive and claimed they didn't even have a menu and if the bunch of hippies did not pay they would call the police. All of the foreigners knew there was little they could do, so they paid the bill and cursed these Turks. Not all the country was like that, but the general deal was the police could be more dangerous than the locals, so they paid and got the hell out of that little town and kept pushing on to Istanbul.

The magic mystery bus passed Erzurum, Sivas and on to Ankara, the capital of Turkey. From there on west, they had good European roads as Ankara is well connected with Istanbul, the seat of the ancient Ottoman Empire. It seemed that in no time they were passing over the bridge and under the Gateway to the European Continent. The straits, which bridges the Sea of Marmara and the Black Sea and right into the ancient city of Istanbul.

George and Marley parked the bus on the square where the hippy buses waited. Maria and Marley said a sad Adios, as she went off to locate her boat back to Barcelona. She gave Marley Willow an address in Spain to send a message to, so he could contact her. Then Marley and George went to the Pudding Shop to get something to eat. All overland travelers knew the Pudding Shop during the Hippy Trail period. A place to meet up with friends, ask for information and leave or collect messages from fellow travelers. Although it was also full of heavy mafia type Turks, so you had to mind your manners.

George and Marley sat down at a nice big and empty table and were immediately told to move the fuck off, as this was their boss' table. Marley was tired and cranky from the long voyage from Asia and started to retort something back in the form of a complaint. But when he saw the guy show them his knife in his belt, the conversation was over. The two hippies went over and took a small table and carried on as if nothing had happened. When traveling in these lands, one must forget their pride. The deal is about survival and not about ego.

They planned to stay in Istanbul a few days as they had lost a few passengers at this stop. But to their surprise they quickly picked up the missing passengers on their way to Amsterdam and left in a couple of days rather than more. Their next stop was the city of Athens, Greece.

Like everywhere they went, there was a square in the center of Athens for hippy

buses to park to drop off and pick up passengers. Lots of hippies just used the overland hippy buses or Magic Buses to make their way around Europe in the cheapest way. In Athens, they had to be careful as the Greek police were hard on hashish possession, as were many countries in Europe. Even in small quantities like our two characters travelled with.

George and Marley moved into an old five-story hotel as did part of their crew of passengers. They asked for a room on the top floor, so they had easy access to the roof. That was where they would have their smoke for the night. They could see if anybody sketchy came in the hotel and would have time to throw their stash of hashish away.

George and Marley stood there smoking and watching the street several stories below them.

"Hey Marley," George commented. "There is a fire truck down there man. Far out."

"Oh yeah man," I replied. "Cool and look there is another one up there, man."

They looked down the street to the left and no fire. Then they looked to the right and no fire. Then George and Marley looked down and discovered that it was their hotel that was on fire.

"Let's get the hell out of here quick. We got to grab our stuff first!" George shouted.

They ran down to the room, grabbed their valuables, bus keys and documents. Then they made it down the steps of the hotel as fast as they could and out into the street of the ancient city. Most of the bus passengers were there already. Along with Andrew, a huge English guy they had picked up in Istanbul.

It turned out Andrew had gotten veruy drunk and fell asleep with a cigarette lit and his room caught on fire. The hotel was partially gutted, and the police arrested their passenger Andrew, for a couple of hours till they saw it was just an accident. Lucky for him they did not find the hash he had hidden in his tubes of toothpaste, hair cream, and hand cream. He had confided in the bus drivers with his secret after the fire.

Finally, the motley lot were ready for the last run at Amsterdam. They planned to drive through Yugoslavia, Austria, Germany, and on to Amsterdam, Holland.

They finally did have some customs problems as soon as they hit the German border. The German customs found the Little Red Books by Mao, that the Dutch guy had asked the boys to take to Amsterdam. It was a funny thing how those packages wrapped in brown paper right behind the driver seat were never noticed. Not one other customs officers gave them a second glance all the way across Asia and part of Europe. But the German customs went directly for them. Both Marley and George had nearly forgotten that they even had them.

Both hippies tried to argue with them, but it was not going to happen. They were not going to permit any communist literature into West Germany. Having found this, they brought the border customs drug dog in. After sniffing the entire bus, the drug dog was only interested in one seat. It was where the two young, sketchy English passengers sat.

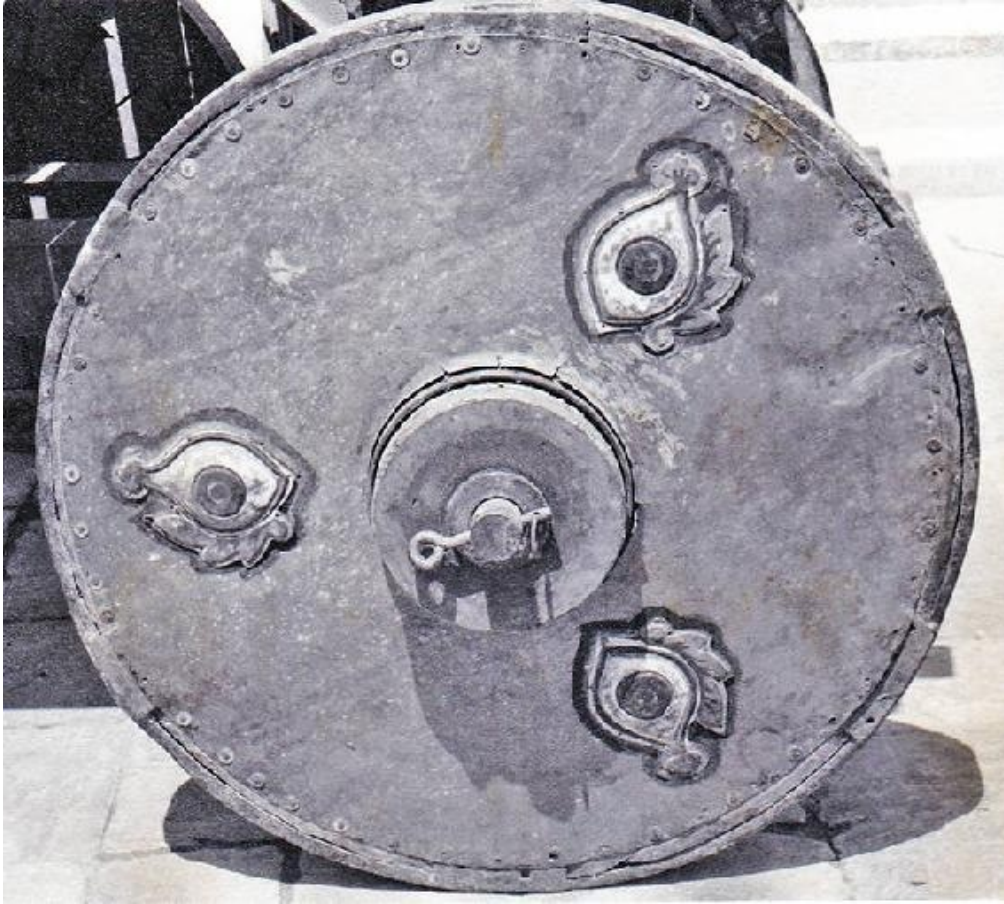
They turned out to be great guys but were apparently carrying their hash somewhere the German police could not find. The search went on for quite some time, but the German customs officers finally gave up, and onward the bus went heading towards the Dutch border knowing that as soon as they get into Holland, they could relax again. It was the most tolerant country in Europe in regard to hash and grass consumption and tolerance of hippies in general. The largest hippy population in Europe lived in Amsterdam.

That was back in the day of the White Bikes. There were white bikes scattered across Amsterdam for anybody to use. If you saw one parked, you took it to your destination and parked it where you ended your journey. Eventually, the next person who needed it would take the bike you left. Like a cost-free communal bike system, which was cool. Any white bike you found was accessible for free use.

As soon as they hit the Dutch border all of them who had a hash or grass stash, lit up. Probably eighty percent of the passengers were smoking. This was their first paranoia free smoke since they had left Herat, Afghanistan. The Dutch countryside



Indian Women of Burden



Wooden Wheel

was passing them by as they drove towards the famous city of canals and cannabis, Amsterdam.

Even back then in the nineteen-seventies, it was legal to smoke in Amsterdam. If you smoked on the street in front of the police, they would give you a dirty look, but Marley nor George had never been stopped. The town was full of "Tea Shops" where alcohol was not available, but you could purchase a variety of hashish and marijuana to smoke while you enjoyed your tea, coffee or favorite fruit shake.

Whatever it was that you desired or needed you could find in Amsterdam, an ancient European city with a liberal history, where the most exotic desires are satisfied.

Chapter 23: Summer in Europe

When they had arrived, they pulled into Dam Square in the middle of the city. There were a couple of buses with their signs up stating where they planned to go and when they were leaving and how much they were going to charge. A little nicer bus might be a bit more expensive. In general, all the coaches that came from England or Germany were older, so they were affordable.

The European laws, and specifically German laws did not allow public transport vehicles on the road once it was past a specific age or had too many miles on it. They had to pass the German vehicle inspection. These vehicles that had been used for public transport were legal to export to countries without such laws. In other words, you didn't see old cars, buses or trucks in Germany unless they have a license plate from another country or were leaving the country for export. This, for George and Marley, was a valuable issue.

As soon as they stopped the bus, the passengers all grabbed their stuff and gave them a goodbye and good luck. Soon the bus was empty except George and Marley. R&R time! They had made a record run of twenty-two days from Katmandu to Amsterdam. No one had never heard of anyone doing it faster with a busload of hippies in the nineteen seventies. But then again, their communications came from other travelers and stories told in the smoke circles. At least it was a record, to their knowledge. Not having the network of communication facilities that are available in today's modern world.

Now they were in Holland, the European hippy capital. George and Marley rolled up a joint for the walk and headed for the Bull Dog Coffee Shop. With a stop for some raw "Herring Rollmops" and chips with mayonnaise on the canals, on the way. The Bull Dog was packed with people who looked just like George and Marley. Maybe not as funky as them at this particular moment as they had just crossed Asia, but they finally felt at home.

The two partied in Amsterdam for a few days. Had an excellent rest at a friend's small hotel by the canals, called Willies. Comfortable modern rooms, low price and never any problems with smoke or whatever else your choice was. This is the town of choice, that's for sure. Grass, hash and magic mushrooms.

They both just wanted to unwind enough days to get the past month out of their minds, to clear their heads and get set for the next weeks working in the junkyards in Germany. Marley also had to get to the bank in Amsterdam where he had a transfer from New York waiting for him which would finance expenses, another bus and parts purchases.

One morning George knocked on Marley's hotel room door waking him up from a deep Dutch sleep.

"The weather is good man, so we better boogie to Germany before it changes, and it gets cold," he said. "We don't want to be pulling bus springs and motors with cold hands."

He was right. Even though it was June, there was no guarantee that it won't change to cold weather in that part of Europe. It is not uncommon for Germany not have much of any summer at all.

Then there they were, just George and Marley in Colon. Back in Germany, on their way to check out some junkyards, when the German traffic police stopped them right in the middle of the city. The first thing they did was to check their Nepalese driver's license. To their surprise, they accepted them as legitimate enough. Then they told the two hippies to pull over into an empty supermarket parking lot. It was Sunday, so not much of anyone was around. The police officers were formal and polite, but they did tell them they had to wait there, as they had the drug dogs on the way.

They must have thought they had caught the mother lode of hashish being delivered to their conservative city. Two hippies alone with an old empty, fifty-four passenger Mercedes Benz bus in central Germany. With their passports full of stamps from Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, and Nepal. How could they be more suspicious than that?

They had to wait about twenty minutes for the drug dogs to show. George and Marley were worried as they still had what was left of their own personal stash of hash stuck up under the dash behind the radio component. It was the Afghani hash, so its smell when opened, was pungent. To a drug-dog, it must reek of hashish.

George and Marley were sweating bullets and were just deciding to try to run or not, when the Police dogs arrived. There were two dogs with the officers, one German shepherd, and another little Beagle. These guys were serious about finding a big stash of hash, so at this point the jig was up. Marley and George's little personal stash was not what they were looking for, but instead it was a measly fifty grams. None the less, illegal enough in conservative Colon, Germany.

"It is what it is, brother" Marley said to George. "We will just have to man up to whatever happens."

The German shepherd sniffed the outside of the bus including the baggage compartments, and the little Beagle smelled the inside of the bus. The K-9 officer even picked up the small dog to sniff around the overhead luggage rack and the roof. When they finished, they told the two worried hippies were good to go. It really was like an old Cheech and Chong movie.

To this day Marley said he didn't understand how both dogs missed their hash stash. It was still about 50 grams in size, so it should have been detected. They just guessed they were having good Karma that day and left it at that. Either that or the dogs were trained to sniff out a different type of hashish, perhaps Moroccan. But who knows or will ever know? At any rate, once again, they were both lucky.

They continued with their search for the right place to buy a bus and motor parts. Although before they left, they had asked the officers if they would give them a written document stating that they had been thoroughly checked for drugs and none were found.

The German cop replied, "No way. With such a document you could load this bus full of drugs and go anywhere you want in Germany. That would be crazy."

The junkyard they were looking for was near Siegen, Germany. The owner was a big fat German guy about sixty years old. He was dressed in a very expensive suit and if he had to go more than fifty feet, he drove his Mercedes at full speed. He was a bit of an asshole with the hippies, although that was to be expected. But foremost he was a businessman, and they planned to buy a shit load of parts along with a bus. He decided to let them camp-out in their bus right there at the junkyard. That way they had time to remove the bus springs they were looking for and get the Mercedes 190 motors ready for transport. Also, to look around for anything they could remove and sell in Katmandu or India for a profit.

To top it all off, as they were camping in the junkyard with no shower. So they were covered from head to toe with oil and grease after about fourteen days working in that place. It was much funkier than the crossing of Asia. By then they both looked very suspicious to the straight German neighbors, while hanging out there so long.

After deciding on buying the Blue Mercedes bus which was in the best shape for two thousand two hundred dollars they were just about ready to go. Although there was an older and much classier Mercedes bus in his warehouse, they could not get the German junkyard owner down on the price. He wanted three thousand dollars. It was vintage and in perfect condition and very, very cool in a retro sort of way.

Well, George still wanted to remove more springs, as there was a two-hundred-dollar profit for each spring that made it back to Kathmandu. They were both working on the suspension of yet another bus when they found themselves surrounded by "German

Terrorist Police." They scared the shit out of the two hippies and were really rough and aggressive. It turned out that Marley Willow happened to look very much like a notorious German terrorist from the Badder Meinhof, Siegfried Haag. An infamous German terrorist group from the nineteen seventies. Haag was their legal man.

Marley was totally freaked out. These guys were convinced he was this notoriously dangerous terrorist. They were talking to George, who for some reason thought this was all very funny.

"Hey good going Siegfried," George said in the middle of the ruckus.

Marley didn't think that this was the time for jokes, but George spoke German and was making a game of it. When they finally figured out they were just two American hippies buying old bus parts, they let them go. Though the officer showed Marley the picture of Siegfried Haag and they did look very much alike.

They settled up with the wealthy German junkyard owner and asked to be able to use his office bathroom. Marley ruined their towels by using them to wash and rub the grease off his hands and face.

George came out of the bathroom moving fast.

"Let's go, man," he whispered. "Let's get moving fast because I just wiped my ass on the German's good towels."

No worries for Marley as he was already loaded and starting his new bus up to get the hell out of Dodge. George always figured it was the German junkyard owner who had called the terrorist police.

Marley planned to take some of the speed stash because he was going to be doing some heavy driving. George and Marley had made a plan. George would go to Amsterdam to pick up passengers. Plus, his wife was expected to land in Amsterdam from Kathmandu in a couple of days. Marley would go directly to Athens, Greece to pick up his passengers and they were to meet in Athens to make the trip to Kathmandu together. Backing each other up along the way.

Marley decided that he was going to drive straight through to Athens, Greece, on his own. No matter what it took for him to get away from Germany, as he was now freaked out with the whole country. The border inspection and confiscation of the red books, Colon and now the terrorist police. Too many bad vibes for a hippy used to living in a paradise like Kathmandu, Nepal.

Marley took some pills from George's speed stash and headed for Austria. He had all his papers in order to export the bus from Germany, and he was now heading home with only some four thousand miles to go. Everything went fine until he hit the mountains of Yugoslavia. Marley Willow got totally lost in the mountains for hours and hours on end. He couldn't read half the road signs and spoke no Slavic, and of course, he had no map. Who the fuck makes a trip of over eight thousand miles with no map?

Marley drove around those mountains all night long, popping a speed pill every few hours. He finally found his way out of the hills, but he had been driving forever. When he eventually hit the Greek border he drove straight through to Athens, though he must have looked weird. One hippy was driving an empty, fifty-two passenger bus and with eyes as big as coffee saucers.

In the end, it took him sixty-two hours, without sleep, to arrive in the old city of Athens.

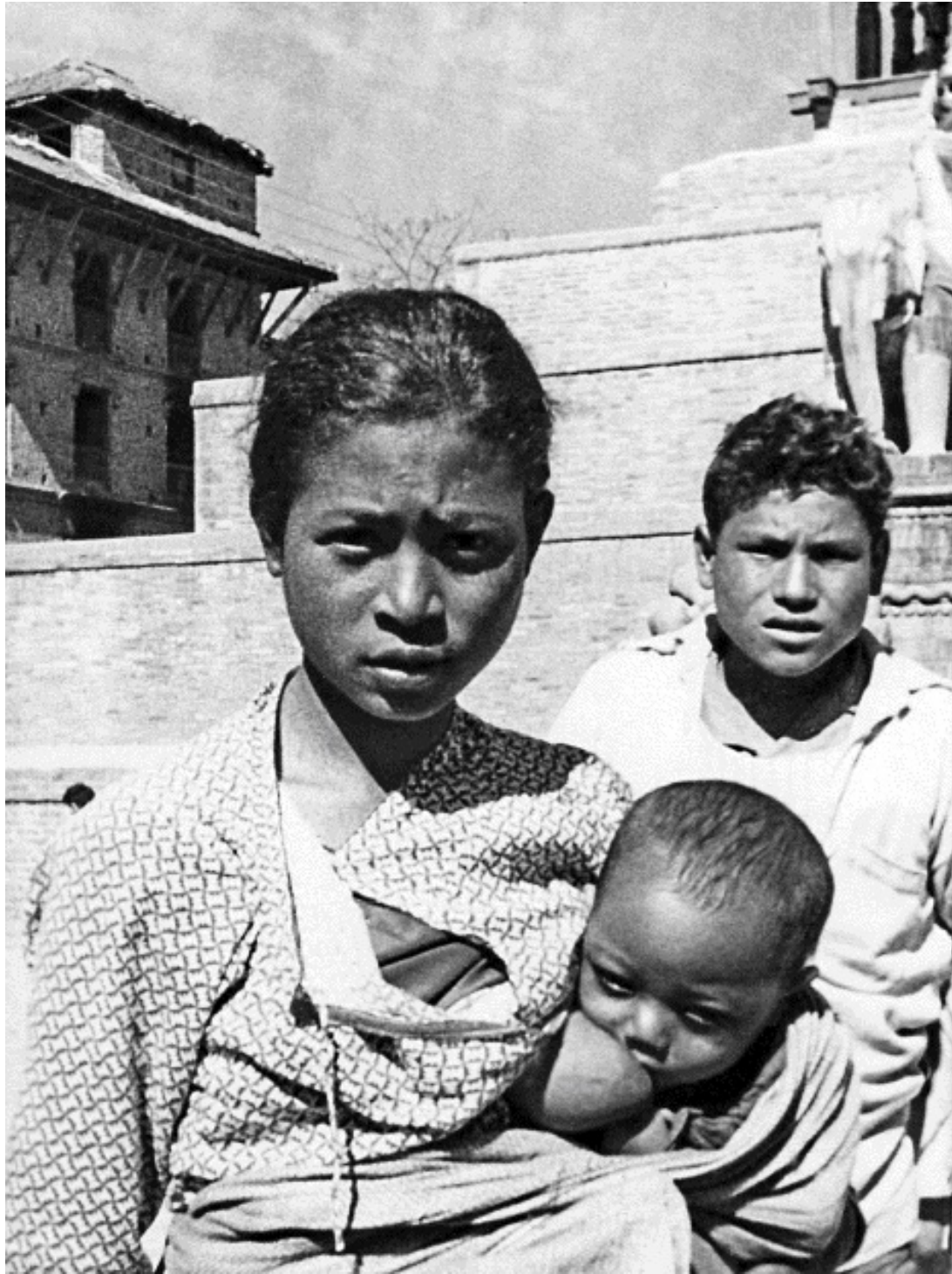


The Blue Bus

Marley parked the bus somewhere, although he had no idea where at the time and figured that he would find the hippy bus parking spot in the morning. At that moment he could only think of sleep, so Marley locked up the bus and crashed on the platform bed he and George had built in the back of the bus, just like in the White Bus. This was the Blue Bus. When Marley came to, about noon the next day, he opened my eyes, and saw that he had blindly parked right in the plaza of the hippy buses. He didn't have to move his bus one foot. Crazy! Right?

Marley had been thinking about Maria, and her giving him her address in Spain and all. He realized that he missed her, so he thought, why not find out if she wants to go along with him to Nepal on the overland bus. He would send her a telegram and see if she wanted to come to Athens and join him on his trip back to Kathmandu. He expected her to jump at the opportunity, but one never knows. Marley figured he would contact her and find out.

Marley sent the telegram and waited for Maria to answer and for George and June to join him from Amsterdam as they had agreed. Marley put up his travel sign in Athens, with the dates and the intended destinations and kicked back and filled up on great Greek food. Now to wait to see who shows up. Hippy types started making reservations straight away, so there was no lack of passengers, one of the primary concerns from the beginning. But back then, there seemed to be no lack of hippies traveling both East and West. The overland bus drivers had the buses pretty much full both ways.



Young Nepalese Family in Kathmandu

Chapter 24: Maria

Marley was slowly filling the bus up with passengers that wanted to go to Asia, but still no sign of George. He didn't want to leave without him, as he was the mechanic if anything went seriously wrong with the bus, but Marley was going to have to honor the departure date regardless. As always, it is what it is, and they will do what they have to do.

"Hold Fast Marley," the twenty-four-year-old hippy told himself.

Maria showed up a couple of days before they were to leave. They had time to see the ruins above Athens and have a fun night in a decent hotel. Also, an American friend of Marley's flew over from the States as he offered him the adventure of a lifetime. Mickey could not resist.

Maria and Marley walked up the broken ruins of Acropolis which was an ancient fort (citadel) composed of several buildings, the main building being, Parthenon. Acropolis means "Highest Point" in Greek. From the Acropolis you could see across the city of Athens which itself is over 3,400 years old. They played and soaked in the sun and the culture, as they were now just two days from their scheduled departure and return to Asia.

This time the group was a bit different. That is one of the great things about the hippy bus. Each time you book new passengers you have a mix of nationalities and cultures. There were a few Swedish passengers. They wanted Marley to give them a detailed agenda of when they were to arrive where, as they had a touristic schedule to follow. Marley just shrugged his shoulders and told them that beyond Istanbul, you never know where you will end up or when. The further East one goes, the less civilized it gets. They just shrugged their shoulders in turn and signed up.

There were two Australian guys who seemed like they were going to be excellent additions to the group's entertainment. Then there was a mixture of hippies from different parts of Europe. It was unusual to find Americans making the overland trip due to the distance, but they got a couple of Yanks boarded as well and one Iranian guy who was a very nice guy. It was unusual to see an Iranian Hippy, but he came from a well-off family in Tehran and had studied in London, and was influenced by the Hippy Movement in the U.K.

Marley still had not heard any news from George or June, his wife who should be with him now. So he started out with his new load of hippies and a bus full of bus parts and motors along with his Spanish girlfriend, Maria. Plus Mickey, who was to be his backup driver and they were off to Istanbul, Turkey via Thessaloniki, Greece.

Now Marley was not in a hurry at all and stopped wherever the group wanted to. Maria and Marley were having a good time, and he had George somewhere behind him. He didn't want to stretch out too far in front of him so that he could catch up with them along the Overland Trail. The bus was running great so far, and they were heading home. Marley was now looking forward to returning to Kathmandu.

Now the effect is the opposite. They are going from the modern world moving backward in the time machine. With every country they passed, now things will take them back a century or so. From modern Greece to Istanbul, is the first step back in time, both cities being great ancient civilizations. They once again arrived in Istanbul without incident, so they parked up, in the plaza Sultanahmet where the hippy buses waited to sign on their new passengers. This time there were more buses that were going to different places. To Amsterdam, London and east on to India and Nepal.

The Sultanahmet square was a great hangout, a small park with grass and trees. With lots of French hippies asking us for money. Marley talked of one incident where he had a full unopened bottle of soda to take to the bus, and he walked by one French Hippy who told me he wanted some.

"Sorry brother. It is for my buddies back on the bus," Marley informed the Frenchman.

But the French hippie cussed him up one side and down the other because he would not open the bottle of soda to give him what he wanted.

Many of the French hippies had a poor attitude towards hippies from other nationalities. Maybe Marley and George's karma for burning up the French couple's motorcycle in Kathmandu. Or for leaving the French junkie in the desert village, but like Marley always said, "It is what it is."

Mickey, Maria and Marley stayed on the bus now, as they had to guard more against thieves there in the big city of Istanbul. They now had a lot of valuable goods on board, but there was plenty to do hanging out around the bus. Marley made the rounds talking to all the other bus drivers and giving and receiving information on where they each had been and where they were going.

Marley also asked at every bus if anyone had run into George or June in the White Bus, but they had not been sighted. By now he was getting a little worried but figured if he had to go it alone, that is what he will do. "No Worries, Mate" as the Aussies, told him. Everything will be fine.

They went to the ancient market known as the Gran Bazaar or Kapalicarsi. It is the oldest covered bazaar in the world. It has over 61 streets and around 4,000 shops. It was the first shopping mall that ever existed.

Looking back, Marley said that later he realized how weak a link they had in as far as communications at that time. Especially as they moved further eastward. If they would have had cell phones with WhatsApp or Facebook, they would have communicated every move they made and published the same to anyone who might be interested.

Leaving them to rely on word of mouth exclusively or at best a message left in the Pudding Shop in Istanbul or some other method, making everything much more of a challenge.

When you had a problem or were in danger, you had to work it out yourself right then and there. No choice. Today they would have a network of communications, and everyone you know would be aware of every incident they experienced.

Marley told me he wished he could have written this book in Nepal, but he was at the same time apprehensive about revisiting the new Nepal of today, before he got the old Nepal and the former India down on paper. So, none of the changes in the last forty years seeped into his story. Thus, contaminating what they experienced in these travels in the nineteen seventies.

The day before they were scheduled to leave, George finally arrived in Istanbul in the White Bus. Marley was sitting on the front bumper of the Blue



New Delhi Woman Selling Embroideries

when George just walked up and said, "What's up man?"

Well at this point, for Marley, late was much better than never. Everything was good with them except George didn't have his bus as full of hippy passengers as he wanted. So, they agreed that Marley would leave the next day for Eastern Turkey as scheduled, and George would stay a couple of days in Istanbul to pick up some more passengers.

If everything went as planned, they would meet up again in Tehran and move on together to Afghanistan. That is where the fun and adventure begins on their return voyage.

Chapter 25: Heading East

The next day the Blue Bus and its motley crew took off for the distant lands of Eastern Asia. Back to the peaceful grounds where they lived in altered states of consciousness. With them moving east, Marley could feel the western ways start to peel away.

They had some problems in purchasing diesel oil in the Eastern parts of Turkey, but by buying a bit at a high price and using the extra fuel cans they had stored under the bus, they made it fine. Good thing, as stealing fuel in these parts can mean a bullet. Most Eastern Turks carried guns. They were now back in the lawless lands, navigating the terrible roads of the east of the country. They plotted on at fifteen or twenty miles per hour. Any faster and it felt like the bus was going to come apart, as the road was in such bad repair.

They finally made it to the Iranian border with no problems at all. It looked like smooth sailing from there with good roads to Afghanistan, and then they would head back in time. Shedding away centuries.

Marley Willow was just cruising along the road that crossed the Turkestan desert in Western Iran, enjoying the drive. The weather was clear, warm and bright. Everything was running smoothly, driving on great paved Iranian roads. Marley loved his big white steering wheel of the blue bus, sitting up high with a great view of the country they were crossing. When the young bus driver looked out the left side mirror, his heart almost stopped. He saw the left axle had come loose, and the tire was about three feet on the outside of the bus body, and the tire was on fire! He quickly made what would be considered an incredibly fast emergency stop.

They jumped out and used the fire extinguisher to put the fire out. It is a good thing that the axle came out as it had or the bus itself would have caught on fire. In this model of Mercedes buses, lots of the undercarriage was made up of plywood. If the tire hadn't come out as far as it did, they would have lost the entire coach to the fire. Maybe bad Karma for the breakdown, or perhaps good Karma because the bus didn't burn. A glass half full or half empty, your choice.

Now Marley needed George badly, but he knew he was at least four days behind him and his passengers, so he had to figure out something quick. They jacked the bus up and took the burned tire off and pulled the axle out to see what could be done. But the axle was snapped in two. He figured that considering where they were, the best thing would be to hitchhike to Tehran. It was just a few hours away, where they could locate a truck with a welding kit, then turn around and come back and weld it back together.

He planned to leave Mickey in charge of the passengers. Mickey was super green, but he was the official co-driver so he had some authority. At that point Marley had no choice. Maria would go along with him as they all agreed it would be easier to hitchhike as a couple.

Now it was getting late, and with the arrival of dusk, in this lawless territory, it is better to be in a group at night. Hitchhiking at night would be dodgy, and no mechanics would go way out in the desert in the dark at any rate. They all had a smoke, digested what was going on and figured, "It is what it is." Just another twist and turn in the path of their adventure. They will work it out somehow like they always do.

It was late, dark and chilly out when the first group of military stormed aboard the Blue Bus. They asked what the bunch of hippies were doing out there in the middle of the desert, so late at night. They explained their situation and the soldiers told the foreigners to watch out for groups of tribal men. They could be armed and dangerous. Great news! Then they stormed off, just as fast as they appeared on the blue bus, in the middle of the Turkestan desert at about two in the morning.

After a while, they all settled down some and were wondering what the hell was going to happen next? When this time the Tribal men rushed aboard the bus to ask them what

we were doing there. There were not as many of the tribal men as there were soldiers but the hippies were still way outnumbered. These guys all carried AK-47 assault weapons. But like the military, first, they asked the passengers a bunch of questions. Then they rushed back off the bus. No one else visited the bus that night, but nobody on the bus got any more sleep either. That was for certain.

First thing in the morning Maria and Marley struck out hitchhiking to Tehran. Straight away, a Mercedes Benz picked the couple up. When they got to Tehran, they quickly located a garage. Marley talked to a mechanic who was willing to go, but they had to wait until the next day. Now, this information Marley and Maria had no way of getting back to the Blue Bus.

But he finally made a deal with the mechanic to come out on his own to where they had broken down the next day, and they will see what they can do. Marley didn't want to leave the bus passengers, and Mickey too long in the desert alone, as anything could go wrong out there.

First, they bought whatever they could in as far as provisions for their passengers. They still had to eat and drink, so Marley and Maria left the store well loaded down.

Back out to the highway, they went to hitchhike again, returning to where they came from, along with their bags of food and water. Lucky for them it was so easy to hitch a ride in Iran in those days. Everybody had a million questions, but they all were very friendly, at least during the day. They slowly made their way back to the broken-down bus. Amazingly Marley's old buddy Mickey had the bus fixed and was getting ready to take it to Tehran to find them, just as they arrived with the food.

He said that an old Iranian mechanic came up and offered to repair it on the spot. It was a broken axle, so they said that they would weld it all together. They welded it straight to the differential. The old guy said it wouldn't break anymore and in the time it took the couple to hitchhike to Tehran and back, they had the bus already fixed. While Maria and Marley were running around in circles. His co-driver was no longer a greenhorn traveler.

So, Marley figured, first things first. They got some blankets out from the bus and put them in the shade, and they had a picnic with all the provisions that they had brought for their group to pass another day in the desert. It gave them all a strange feeling. Warm and in the daylight having a picnic in a seemingly safe place, where the night before they were not sure if we would survive or not.

After their picnic, off East they went again. Heading for Tehran. Now they were with Motaz, their hippy Iranian friend and passenger, who invited Maria and Marley to stay at his family apartment in Tehran. They parked the bus in the same spot as last time. Right in front of the hotel their guests would stay in, and they wandered off with Motaz. Mickey got a hotel room with the passengers. It turns out that Motaz came from a very good family in downtown Tehran, in the best of neighborhoods. They treated Maria and Marley like they were exceptional friends. They offered them to stay the night in his family's apartment, and they happily agreed. A cool situation as they could live a little in an Iranian home situation. Marley had never had an Iranian friend, and Motaz was a great guy.

After a fantastic Persian dinner, Motaz showed them where the guest room was. Maria and Marley left the windows open that night, as Motaz's house was on the fifth floor of the building and it was hot. But in the middle of the night, Maria woke up and screamed, as a guy was standing on their bed.

It turned out a thief saw them arrive with Motaz and waited till dark then scaled up the wall of the apartment complex. He then went in their window to rob them. Lucky for Maria's scream, they woke up, and the thief fled without getting any of their things. Motaz was mortified. They were guests in his home, and they were nearly assaulted. They did not sleep for the rest of that night either.

Early the next morning they were off to check on the bus, Mickey, and the passengers. Mickey was starting to freak out a bit by now. Marley thought that perhaps

the adventure he had invited him on was a bit more than he could take. He was doing a great job. They were just talking to him to calm him down when George finally turned up with the White Bus. Marley told George the whole story, and he thought it was funny as hell. They had crossed from Istanbul to Tehran without incident.

"Well," Marley said, "We were all in one piece, we didn't get anybody killed by the Tribal Men, and the bus was running fine again, thanks to Mickey."

Now they planned to leave the next day in tandem for the rest of the trip, back to their home in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Motaz offered Maria and Marley to stay in his home again, but they politely declined. They both stayed with their group in the hotel for the last night in Tehran. A good night's sleep and off they all went. The White Bus was leading and the Blue Bus following. George and June were taking this as a vacation. For them, everything was running smooth, and although they all were making miserable time on the trip, George and June wanted to explore.

"Hey man. Let's take a little detour till we hit the Caspian Sea and have a swim," George suggested.

"Why not?" Marley answered.

So, although they should not have done so, they asked the passengers if they wanted to go for a swim in the Caspian Sea. The vote was against the bus drivers, but George insisted that they go anyway.

"This is our caravan, and we should make the best of it and do what we want," George told Marley. "Plus, nobody but us knows where the hell we are anyway."

Actually, they were not even exactly sure where they were, as they had no map. So now they drove north. No one but Mickey and the bus drivers knew that they were taking a detour of a hundred miles to have a swim. Mickey was not a happy camper at this point. He was getting pissed off at Marley for being too carefree with the whole trip.

"You have to chill Mickey" Marley Willow told his old friend. "You're going to have a heart attack. We just want to have some fun on the way home. Absorb it and enjoy. Don't fight it, man."

Home was still about over two thousand miles away, but for them, it actually seemed close now.

They were driving north on hard sand roads when all of a sudden George's bus, in front of Marley's, started to sink into the sand and very fast. Marley could see the wheels sink into the sand up to the chassis. George had hit something like an air pocket, which it turns out is common on this road. Now they had to tell the passengers that they had headed north anyway and had fucked up. Second breakdown. This one was more complicated. If they allowed the bus to sink too deep into the sand, they could lose the vehicle. The bus was already dropped low enough that they could not open the cargo doors where the passenger's baggage was. Marley and George could just visualize it disappearing up to the windows. George was freaking out.

"We are not going to lose this bus," George exclaimed in a crazy voice. "It's not an option man."

Marley stopped trying to ignore the complaints of the hippies on the bus and went over to confront them with the situation.

"I'm sorry," he told them. "But we had told everybody we had no schedule from the start and it is what it is, so let's make the best of it folks."

Marley pulled the Blue Bus up under a tree. One of the only trees he could see.

"Relax and have a pipe," Marley told the passengers. "We'll fix this. This is adventure

time everybody."

A little crowd control was necessary, as there were nearly seventy hippies in total now. Marley went over to see how bad things were. The bus was slowly sinking into the desert sand all the way up the bus body. George and Marley got out all the jacks and put them under the bus to try to jack it up, but the jacks just sank in the sand.

Now they looked around for some wood, and oddly enough they found some pieces of tree stumps cut up in trunks of wood about two feet thick and four wide. Someone had left them under the tree. They dug out a space under the chassis, so they could fit the tree stumps under the bus. They then sat the jack on the stump and tried to jack the bus up, but one tree stump after another just sunk under the bus. They used all three stumps and nothing. They had now disappeared into the sand along with the jack.

At this point, they asked the whole group of passengers from both buses to help them push the white bus out of the soft sand. But the white the bus did not budge an inch. George was starting to weird out.

"I'm not leaving without the White Bus, man," he repeated.

Marley had never seen him so freaked out, as he was always as steady as a stone. Eventually, they had a hike up to the top of a vast dune and saw a farmhouse not too far away, and they started walking to ask for help.

In the end they were lucky to find the farm owner had a big tractor and he came over and checked out the bus. Eventually he hooked the tractor to the back of the bus and with the tractor and all of the passengers pushing they managed to get the bus out of the sand and back on the hard dirt road. Marley did not dare to use the Blue Bus to pull the White Bus out because of the newly welded axel. It would never have resisted the stress.

Now there was no question about it. They were not going for a swim in the Caspian Sea. They thanked and paid the farmer for saving their bus and headed back towards the Iranian highway.

Now all they wanted to do was get to Afghanistan at this point. The passengers were not at all happy, but two friends knew once they got them to Herat, they will look back and just consider all this another adventure in the crossing of the vast lands of Asia.

"Herat, Afghanistan and Afghani hash to the rescue again," Marley told Maria.

They usually had some passenger problems by the time they arrived in Afghanistan, but they were always solved in a couple of hours with some local hash. That night around the Smoke Circle the past events would go from disasters to adventures.

Now all the passengers were tired, hot and dirty but once they showered and put on clean clothes and the hotel staff had time to get to each room to sell them some Afghani hash, they will be clean, refreshed and very stoned.

Then all the near disasters will become victorious adventures and moments that they will remember for the rest of their lives. The adventures will eventually take on a life of their own and will take slightly different forms from the storytellers as each of their experiences were things seen from a unique point of view. Some were traveling as solitary passengers, George, June and Marley as drivers, and some traveling with friends in groups. As diverse a crowd of people as you would ever see.

There were also all different categories of hippies or freaks. Some were trying to look the part standing out as newbies. Others were weathered so you could tell that they had been on the trail for some time. With the occasional curious pot smoking tourist seeking to explore the unknown.



Shoe Shiner in Kabul, Afghanistan

Chapter 26: Back on Asian Ground

When they pulled into Herat, it was like they had landed in another world a few centuries back in time. They wasted no time and went right into their usual hotel compound, and everybody got off the buses and got rooms. Within an hour everybody was super stoned on the tremendous Afghani hash and were all talking about their adventures near the Caspian Sea and Turkestan desert. George, June, Mickey, Maria and Marley all kicked back for a few days' rest.

Everything had worked out, and they were back on track, so it was time to mellow out. The two Aussies on the blue bus helped to cheer everybody up. One played piano and sang. In the Herat hotel, he found an old piano, which Bruce played and sang along to. They were great additions to the group. No matter what was going on, these two Australians were having a good time and at the same time, entertained the others. It was all an adventure for them. This feeling was contagious with the other passengers, and soon they were all joking about the White Bus sinking in the Caspian Sea and the Blue Bus catching on fire in the desert.

Now they began to feel like they were back on their turf. The land they knew how to deal with. After a few hours, most of our passengers did not even remember the bad parts of the trip or even where their hotel was for that matter.

Marley said that if his memory served him right, they slept for a full two days. Maria and Marley had not rested well for a long time before they hit Herat. Now they smoked and hung around town for the day, eating the local food and just watching the town's people go about with their day. They also spent more time in their hotel room getting to know each other and bonding. It was difficult to navigate the Far Eastern roads, keep your eye on over thirty passengers you have on your bus, and get from point A to point B and still have time for romance. Although somehow, they worked it out.

That night the passengers had a big Hippy Smoke Circle going with a massive fire, as the veteran bus drivers listened to them each tell their version of their adventures, and the tradition continued. There were about 80 of them. Man has been sitting around a fire talking in groups since the beginning of time.

The day before they left for Pakistan and on to India, George and Marley spent all day working on both buses. Everything was checked before they headed for New Delhi. Oil changed, tire pressure checks, suspension check, and general clean-up of the inside of the bus, and whatever else that was needed to do. They hung around for a while on that night's Hippy Smoke Circle but warned everyone that he who is late tomorrow would stay in Herat. Marley was sure that some of them fantasized doing just that but did not like the thought of separating from the group. There are strength and security in numbers.

You would be surprised how close you become with a group of people when being together for hours, days, weeks and even months, in such close quarters. Weather, hardships and good times for months together. This large group of hippies had become like a band of gypsies, all for one and one for all.

In the morning Marley said the only ones late were Maria and him. He was not yet used to traveling with a girlfriend, and it was slowing him down some, although they were not too late. So off they went again with their hippy caravan. They pulled away from town, and in the distance, they saw a real caravan of camels on the horizon. This was the real deal again.

Now Marley had noticed that the two Australian guys were sitting in the front seat to his right and Maria was sitting behind him. As they started along across Afghanistan, they kept an eye on Marley constantly. Every time Marley took an amphetamine, they asked for one as well. This went on for about twenty hours or so.

"What's up guys?" Marley finally asked them. "Am I doing something wrong here?"

"Whacha mean mate?" they asked.

"You guys are watching me like a hawk and every time I take some speed you both do too," Marley replied.

Bruce, the piano player, said, "Well, we have seen you drive without stopping for two days at a time, so we both wanted to be awake in the case you took a nap on us, mate."

That is why they wanted the amphetamines for themselves too. So, they could grab the steering wheel if Marley passed out from lack of sleep.

Both George and Marley both got a good laugh out of that. Willow told them they should have been with him when he drove from Siegen, Germany to Athens, Greece, entirely lost. Driving for sixty-two hours straight, all by himself on the Blue Bus.

"I'm twenty-four years old man! I can do anything!" Marley said.

Now they drove down to Kandahar again and had a quick food stop and drove back up to Kabul in the Hindu Kush. They parked up back in the same hotel they had weeks ago. It was the fourth of July, and they had heard the American Embassy was giving away free food and drink and there will be a Buzkashi game. All you needed was an American passport or be with a US citizen.

Buzkashi is an ancient game played by Afghans. They are all on horseback, and there are two teams to capture the headless body of a goat. They pick it up on racing horses and attempt to get it to their side of the two-kilometer-long field. There are few rules and no referees, so it gets quite violent as they use whips and sometimes knives to play. Everything goes.

For the embassy Buzkashi game, they used polo sticks, a soccer ball and rode on the backs of rather wild donkeys. George and Marley got right into it, but kept falling off the backs of the donkeys, as they didn't like to be mounted. They all ate hamburgers, hotdogs and had plenty of beer and sodas to drink. Mickey, George, June and Marley went with their passports to get in and took Maria and some others from the group as guests. They had great fun with the embassy crowd. They were pretty cool to have them all like that, treating everybody so well.

Then back to the hotel for the nightly get together to tell stories around a fire. Tonight, the stories were of Buzkashi. The real thing and their goofy embassy game that they had that day.

Lots of jokes about George and Marley, not being able to stay on the wild donkeys longer than a couple of minutes at a time.

Buzkashi, literally meaning "Goat Grabbing," is a Persian sport known to the locals as "Kokpar Kupkari." It is an Afghani sport in which horse-



Afghan Junk Man in Kabul



Peshawar, Pakistan



Wedding Band in New Delhi India

mounted players attempt to place a goat or calf carcass in a goal. It is the national sport in Afghanistan. It is possible that the Taliban regime had banned it. Marley didn't know if it was still played today or not. Traditionally, games would last for several days. Competition was typically fierce.

Buzkashi may have begun with the nomadic Turkic-Mongol peoples between the tenth and fifteenth centuries.

Chapter 27: New Delhi

They left Kabul early and made their way through the Khyber Pass again and across Pakistan and over the Indian border, again stopping in the Golden Temple. They felt they could not deny their new passengers a look at this sight. They slept the night there and moved on in the morning. Marley couldn't remember when they finally hit New Delhi.

This city was a major stop for all buses. They would lose a few of their passengers there, but some of those who had only planned to travel to New Delhi let Marley and George talk them into going on to Kathmandu, with them. Just like Marley did some years before. The two Aussies were two of those who chose to continue on to Kathmandu.

They planned to stay seven days in New Delhi as they had work to do there. Marley had his contacts from Roman to sell the Mercedes 190 motors. All of them to one Indian Sheikh guy for one thousand eight hundred dollars each. They had paid from fifty to one hundred dollars for each motor. The springs they would take on up to Nepal along with the other car parts as they would get a better price there. The problem with the Mercedes motors was that they had registered them at the India customs and stapled a paper in Marley's passport noting that these motors were for re-export and could not be sold in India.

But the two creative hippies came up with a plan. They would buy several old, World War II Jeep engine blocks, sand off the rust and paint them black. Take the original serial numbers off of the Mercedes motors and glue them onto the old Jeep blocks and they will export those. That way they could sell the real Mercedes motors complete, to Marley's Sheikh contact just before they left. So, they spent the next day's preparing the Jeep blocks before putting them in the baggage compartments. Both characters were hoping that the paint would dry before they got to the border.

Marley of course, had taken as many of their passengers from his bus to Mrs. Murwah's as he could. It was like being at home. George, the girls, Mickey and Marley went straight to the high-class Indian restaurant and ordered a selection of Indian dishes and some ice cream sundaes to finish it off. All inside an air-conditioned restaurant! After such a trip you can't believe what a treat this was for them all, and they were just a two or three-day drive from home.

There were already some guests at Mrs. Murwah's, but they looked greener than the bus crew. That night the Hippy Smoke Circle had people standing and sitting on the ground as one story after another came out. The next one was trying to outdo the last with the way they would tell it. Everyone had forgotten the bad parts of the Blue Bus and the White Bus on the Overland Trail. It was now an adventure of a lifetime.

The only one not happy was Marley's buddy Mickey. It made him feel really bad. Perhaps Marley had gotten him into more than he could take. He was so pissed off at his old friend for getting him into this trip that he said he was flying back to the US as soon as he could get a ticket. He had no interest in going on further, to more uncivilized places like Kathmandu.

As high strung as he had gotten in the last weeks, he might freak out from culture shock after hanging out in Nepal for some time. The change even from India to Kathmandu was strong in respects to culture shock. Marley told him he was sorry he felt that way, but he just turned around and left. Marley never saw him again. It was a sad loss.

It just goes to show you that not everybody is ready or can handle such hardships in exchange for adventure. Marley Willow was sad to lose a friend over all this. He had wished he had stayed with them, but they all had their own paths to take, regardless of where they lead them. Mickey's took him back home to abandon the adventure.

Now everybody was ready to light out for Agra, India just as soon as they got rid of the Mercedes car motors. Agra is not precisely on the way, but only a short detour and everyone wanted to see the Taj Mahal. The passengers were waiting in the parking spot in the India Tea House when Marley returned from selling the motors. George and June were busy keeping everybody happy.

They loaded the bus up with real overland travelers, including their Australian buddies, plus all the rest except the Swedish tourists. They ran out of time with the extended adventure across Asia and did not have any more vacation time to carry on to Kathmandu. They bid them a warm goodbye. Maybe one day they would all see each other again in Kathmandu.

When they arrived at the Indian border, the customs checked their papers, aided by the newly painted motor blocks and the cool ink pens that George had bought in Amsterdam. You held them up one way, and you would see a curvy woman in a bathing suit, and when you turned them up the other way, their clothing fell off. That and a few Playboy magazines and the two buses full of hippies were in Nepal.

Marley didn't know who the Nepali customs officers thought they were but as they spoke to them in Nepalese, they treated them as though they must be from the embassy. That was cool, but above all it was great for them to be back in Nepal.

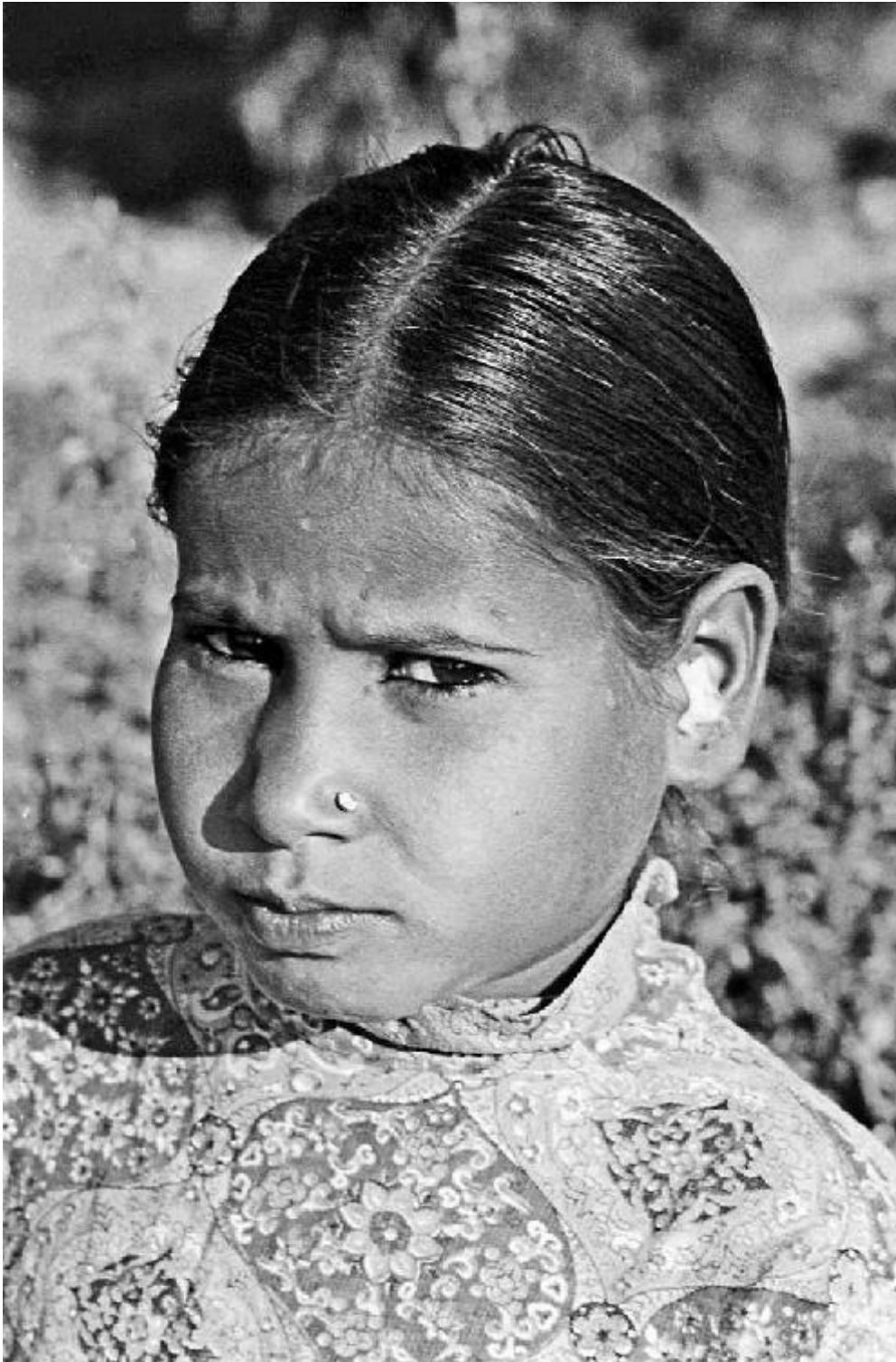
Now that they were in the Himalayas they slowed down and took in the nature. They were no longer in any hurry at all. They often stopped for yogurt and chai. Marley was still getting his stomach sorted out again.

They finally pulled into Durbar Square, right in front of Freak Street and parked the buses in the line. There must have been eight vehicles for sale, plus their two buses. Perhaps this did not sound like much, but in this part of the world, ten foreign vehicles for sale in the same place was unusual.

The environment was very relaxed, everybody friendly asking how the trip went. The first thing they all needed was a good shower. As Marley already lived with George and June, Maria headed home with them.



Temples of Kathmandu



Nepalese Child

George and Marley let the girls shower and clean up first so they could get their motorcycles running. Priority item number one. They had to jump start both motorbikes, but it felt good to get them running. They immediately took off for a spin around town.

Back home to Kathmandu. Riding their motorcycles around to clear out their heads

after a long absence. Then they really felt like they were back home.

Chapter 28: What You Gonna' Do

They went back to their routines the next day. Wanting to get back to things that they knew. They were gone for nearly four months. Double what they estimated, although, as you have read, "shit happens." Ratna washed all of their clothes. She was the housekeeper in George's house.

In Nepal most foreigners had housekeepers. Marley said they cost about twenty dollars a month. With her husband working as well they made good money for a Nepalese family. Nepalese women had hard lives. The Nepalese men made them do a lot of the heavy work.

Marley remembered one time that Maria asked their neighbor how old she was, and she was the same age as them. She looked like she was forty and they were only twenty-four. There was a tremendous need for medicine and sanitation methods in Nepal. They still lived in the 16th Century, so they once again adjusted to the environment and got on with their lives.

When Marley initially got to India, he was looking for altered states of consciousness and internal peace. Now he had become a Nepalese resident of an unofficial classification. They were growing more local than they had ever thought they would. They were an integrated part of the local economy. The local Nepalese treated them just like one of them, or it appeared so at any rate. Nepal did seem like home, but Marley still wondered how long it would be until that Nomadic bug was going to bite one of them again.

Going back to the passengers that came up the Raj Path with Marley that first time a couple of years before. He ran into the heavysset guy named Red. It was just by chance. He had his head shaved and was dressed as a Buddhist Monk.

When they saw each other they both felt the surprise. Red seemed a little self-conscious Willow said, but they started talking, and they were still the same people. He may well have been more at peace than Marley no doubt, but it was nice for him to see Red again. He was in Kathmandu to stay. Willow figured that he was probably still there.

The next day George was down at the square where the buses parked up. He was making joints, smoking beedies and bullshitting with all the other drivers. Marley, in turn, had wandered around to find out how the hash situation was. Who had what and who needed some of his hashish?

After that, Marley joined George down by the buses and was checking out the cars. There was a Volvo B20 there, a sporty, smaller vehicle. The car was like brand-new, so Marley started throwing numbers at the Swiss guy who was selling it. They could not get to an agreement. It was a gasoline motor, so he knew he could not pay too much for it. With a diesel engine, this car would have been priceless. In the end, he bought it anyway. It was too sweet to let it pass.

Marley got back to the house to pick up Maria and show her around Katmandu on his motorcycle. One of the first places that he took her was to see the Baba and the Chobar Gorge near Dakshinkali. They sat with him a couple of hours and had some chillums. He seemed to approve of the two of them.

They left him some food and a few Rupees and carried on with their ride. It was warm out, not much traffic on the roads and no helmets. Free as the wind. They were simply riding to ride now, just being there. They were truly living in the moment.

Downtown Kathmandu was always busy. Especially in the vicinity of Freak Street where business was going on at many levels. Some dealt in hash or grass. Or they might trade in gold. It was a popular but illegal activity. Gold in Hong Kong sold at fifteen or twenty percent under the Nepalese price. To import gold into Nepal was unlawful.

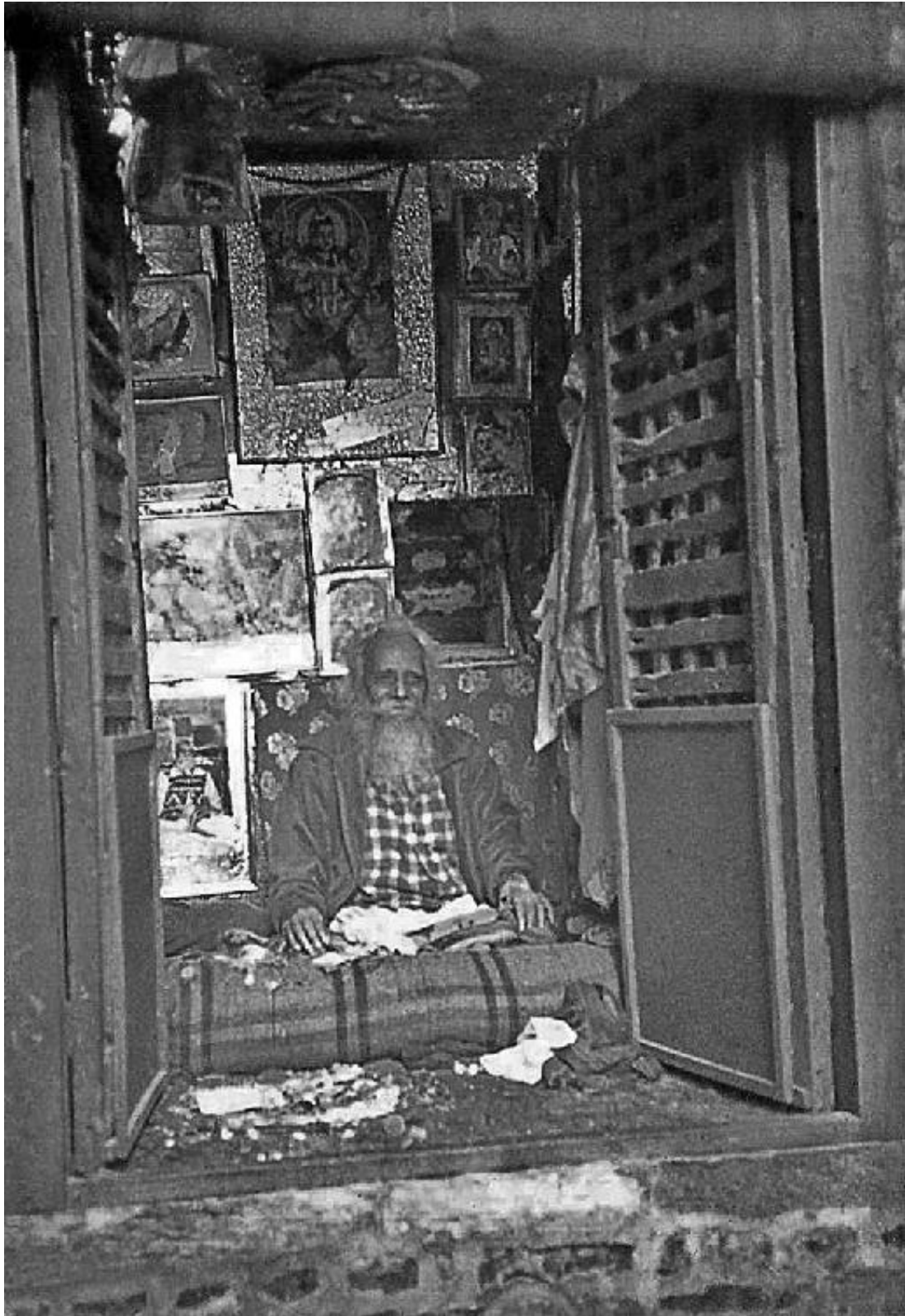
Several Freak Street hipsters used this scam. They would send four or five young Nepali guys on a flight to Hong Kong, and while they are there, they were shown an excellent time.

When they came back, they are covered in gold jewelry. Some jewelers had even developed gold that looks like crappy metal. Marley said that in the end he thought they had shut it down as it got too complicated. The government was tighter on that business than on most others.

Another scam was with the Nepalese carpet factories. Nepal, declared that they would subsidize any manufacturer of Nepalese carpets, so what do they do? Some of Marley's friends made the carpets. Then they tripled the export invoice, so the company got the subsidy from the government deposited into their bank accounts. They would export their carpets to Hong Kong and sell them at cost and made more money than ever. This business worked like a charm right through the duration of the government offer.

There was another part of the Kathmandu community and they dedicated their skills to make any article you wanted to hide cash or hash in. The low-end guys made the shaving cream cans that the bottom screwed off of and others that hid hashish in the frames of suitcases. Or the guys that just sent it bulk, paying off everybody on the way or the corrupt luggage handlers at the airport. Where there are smugglers, there are the services that go with them.

In this country hash was legal. Although, not for export. You could not expect the local customs men to kill themselves upholding this law when they may



The Baba at Chobar Gorge

well smoke themselves. As time passed, they became more and more sophisticated at their skills and imagination at hiding whatever it was you wanted to hide.

At some point, Maria and Marley decided to get a house of their own. To rent a home it cost anywhere from twenty dollars per month up to a big fancy house for hundred dollars per month. They found a house in a neighborhood called BaliJu.

It was a lovely cement house with a terrace on the roof and a yard, although it was not fenced in. Marley claimed it was about fifty dollars a month. Marley and Maria got along fine with George and June, but it was a little crowded with one bathroom and all. Plus, their new relationship was blooming.

Hence, they moved. Something that Maria and Marley would often do over the years to come. They must had been Nomads in another life or something. Maria always claimed that they had lived in over 20 different houses throughout their lives together. Their two children had the same Nomadic bug in them.

They had to furnish the house a bit more, but they had everything on the floor like a Japanese home. Low, dining room table, with pillows for chairs. Low beds. It was a comfortable way to live.

They all removed their shoes before they entered the house like in Thailand. Many Nepalese did not even own shoes. They held a housewarming party and invited all their hippy friends. They also invited Blanket Baba. The Baba adopted by the Kathmandu Hippies on Freak Street during Marley's time there.

All of the local foreigners loved Blanket Baba. He hung out on Freak Street and they took care of him. Marley said he had always thought he was a fat little Baba until they invited him to the house to be part of their housewarming party. When Baba got there, he was hot because Marley had bought an old potbellied wood stove to put in the living room to keep the house warm on the chilly Nepalese nights. He peeled off one blanket after another, like the skin of an onion, until there was just a skinny old man left standing there.

It was a beautiful home warming party. Everybody had fun including Blanket Baba. He even went home with a couple of new blankets and a sweater, which left him very happy indeed.

There was another interesting Nepalese character that lived in Katmandu. He called himself the Global Emperor. He was intelligent and educated although somewhat un-hinged. He gave away little pamphlets that stated his title. He was another one of the local entertainments for the foreign community. He hung out on Durbar square and Freak Street.

They said he was related to the royal family but got a little crazy and started walking the streets of Kathmandu, years ago, telling everyone he was the Global Emperor and reincarnation of Vishnu.

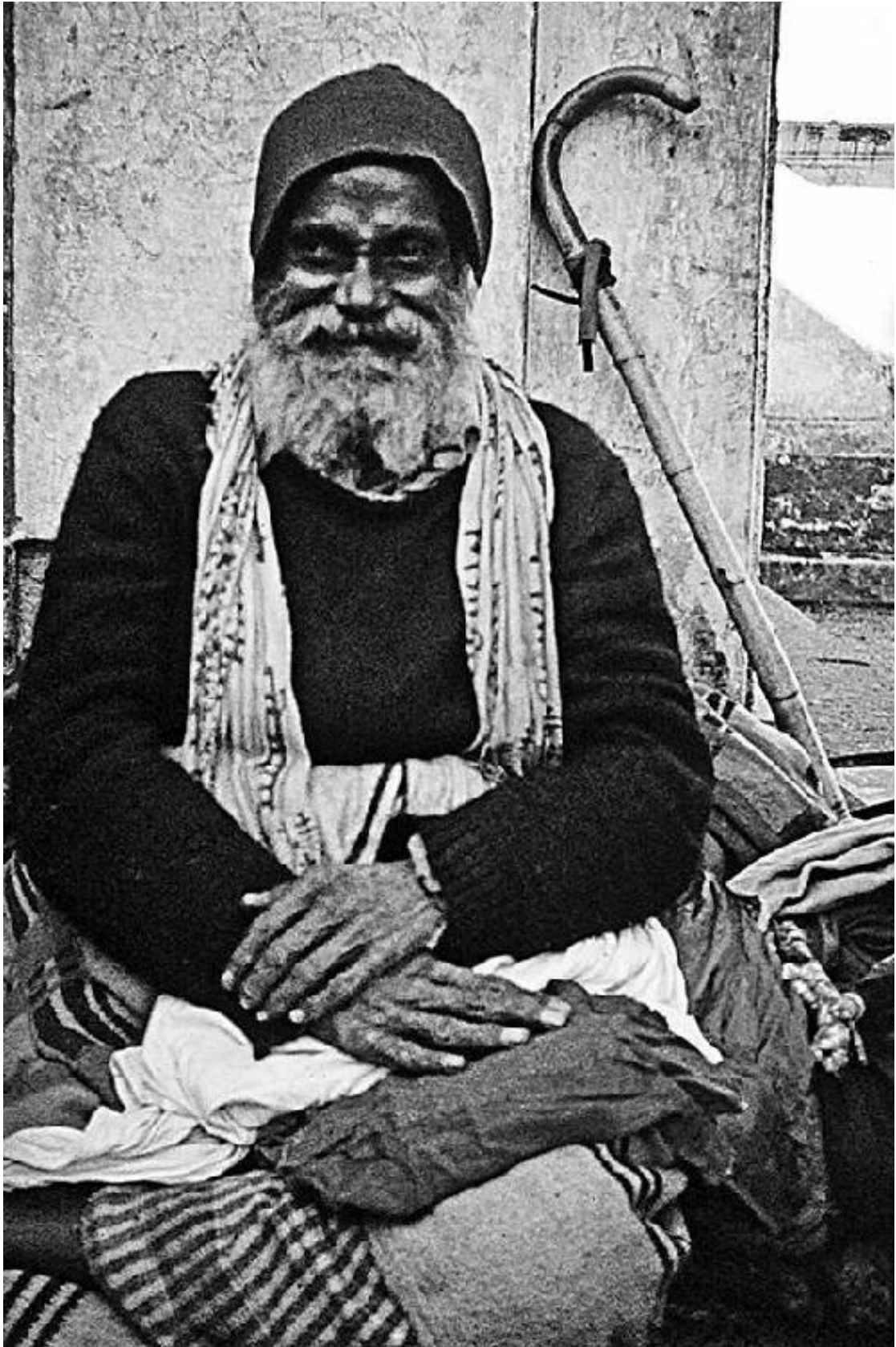
One would imagine, that part of the story, about him being from the royal family was correct, or they would not let him go around claiming to be whom he says. The King and family were pretty strict as to their role in the community, especially with the King being believed to be a god and all.

Now the Red Machindravath Chariot festival was coming. In this festival, several men push and pull a cart around that had a tower constructed on it, many stories high. It appeared fun but looked like it is a bit dangerous. The chariot tower is higher than the buildings in the center of Kathmandu themselves.

It sways one way, and another controlled by men on the ground and roofs with ropes to keep it from falling over, damaging houses in its path.

Marley was told the Nepalese believed that if the tower hit and damaged your house, you would have good luck for the year. There is more than one holiday for each day of the year in Nepal.

One of Marley's favorite foreign characters was Orange Bob. He came overland with them from Kabul and stayed in Nepal for nearly the entire time



Blanket Baba on Freak Street

Marley was there. Until one day, he disappeared into Central or South India.

He always claimed that when he was still in Canada, his home country, he weighed over four-hundred pounds. Then he went on a strict fruit diet. He only ate the fruits that were in season at that time, wherever he was. When Marley Willow met him, he weighed about one-hundred-seventy pounds.

He remembered when they were in Afghanistan he only ate melons which were in season. When he arrived in Nepal, he just ate oranges, which were in season at the time. He was a very cool and interesting guy.

He eventually submerged himself entirely into the Hindu Culture. Last Marley had heard he lived under a tree beside a town that took him as their Baba. They believed that he sacrificed regular food for only fruits as a penance to Lord Shiva. Marley said he liked to think that Bob is still walking around India eating fruits and smoking hash that the Hindus give him.

The strangest thing Marley ever saw in Nepal in the three years he lived there were the Shiva devotees, the Aghori Sadhus, which he briefly mentioned earlier in this book. They lived by the Ganges River just around the cremation sites. You can tell them apart as they travel with a trident and a human Skull, often sitting on top of their head. They ate and drank from human skulls. They believed that they embraced everything taboo in the Hindu culture.

It is to show the Hindus that all things are one. Nothing is different. They smoke massive amounts of hash and drink alcohol till they are incredibly drunk. They are very radical and feared by most Hindus. Marley saw three of them at Shiva Ratri in Pashupatinath. They claimed that they see and walk with all the dead souls.

Each Aghori Sadhu has to have a Guru to follow and teach him. He must find a body in the Ganges River and take it out of the water to remove the head to make his skull. It is taboo for an ordinary Hindu to touch a dead body. They are also said to at sometimes eat human flesh from the funeral pyres.

The Aghori is an ancient cult that is often looked down on by society, but they intend to shock the people into realizing that the flower is the same as the dead. Everything is one. Needless to say, although Marley met a few of Aghori Sadhus and had a few chillums with them, he never spent serious time with them. They were beyond being weird. They usually kept entirely to themselves. Almost like the ghosts, with whom they claimed they walked.

Nepalese made sacrifices of animals on a regular basis. There the most famous place for sacrifices is Dakshinkali. Marley and his friends would go there sometimes when they went on motorcycle rides. There was a lot of blood about, but he never stayed for the sacrifices. They sacrificed chickens, goats and water buffalos. They claimed they took a buffalo's head off with one swing of their big Gurkha knives called kukris.

Marley had heard stories of human sacrifices but supposedly from many years before they arrived in Nepal. He always wondered about the secrets in Nepal that they would never find out about. What secrets were held both with the Nepalese and the Tibetan people that of which they would never hear talk?

Of course, they also had the witch doctors. The witch doctors or shamans told the Nepalese locals that if they went to the American Hospital in Katmandu, they would be cursed. Or they would threaten to curse them, so very few Nepalese ventured to the Western Hospital.

Marley took Maria to all these places, many times at night to get more of the vibration, but she put up her limits. His curiosity was so intense that it pushed him to see and experience all but the extreme, like the Aghori Sadhus. She preferred to visit the Pashupatinath temple during the day.

In a place like that at night and under the influence of hashish and marijuana things

suddenly change, and it appears that anything is possible. Pashupatinath being an eerie place where the shadows seem to come alive with nightfall. If these Babas say, they are walking with the souls of the dead you just soak it in without trying to process it mentally.

Marley Willow's favorite Nepali doctor was Doctor Mona. He was an herbal doctor and very good. His father was an herbal doctor, as was his father's father. He cured Marley of a severe case of piles with the most disgusting vile tasting medicine he had ever taken.

He said it had snakeskin in it with plants and who knows what else. The good part is that after ten days of the repugnant herbal medicine, his piles were gone and never came back again. A shame he could not cure Marley's amebic dysentery. Too much information, right?

Finally, George and Marley took both of the buses back to Southern Nepal to the Terai, the land of the Bengal Tiger and the Nepalese Rhinoceros, to meet up with their latest bus merchant. There were getting to be too many buses for sale in Kathmandu, so they went to places where there were no tourists, resulting in a better prices. The two freaks sold the White Bus straight away. It was just too clean of a bus. It took another week of hanging out in that hot plains area before they unloaded the Blue Bus for a substantial price.

George had already sold the springs, and the individual order items in Katmandu and Marley, of



Child in Kathmandu

course, had sold the Mercedes Benz 190 motors in New Delhi.

He had heard later that the New Delhi special police arrived at the garage where Marley had sold the motors, just about one hour after they pulled out of New Delhi in the bus, but he was not worried about it. Nobody knew exactly who Marley was. Some business people knew him as Dr. Rococo whenever he found it convenient.

Marley said that he didn't know how that happened, but it had to do with the doctor's vaccination stamp he had made for the trip to Europe. Who knows why that name stuck, but it was convenient to be recognized by a different name in certain circumstances while living in such distant lands.

At in any rate, they each grossed a substantial amount of dollars from the round trip to

Europe and back. Not too shabby a way to earn a living for the time, in the 1970s.

Chapter 29: Road Trip to Pokhara

One day Maria and Marley decided to take the black Volvo to Pokhara and stay a few days by the lake. He had long forgotten what it was that they were taking that day, but he seemed to remember it was magic mushrooms.

Marley remembered they were listening to a Brazilian musician called Egberto Guismonti on the car cassette player. He played a Brazilian type of Pink Floyd. Man, were they having a time of it keeping their shit together enough to drive and not flake-out somewhere besides the road. Finally, they had to turn off the music as they were tripping too hard. Both Maria and Marley were getting a little freaked out.

You have to be careful of what music you listen to when you are in such an environment because it feels like all things are possible for a moment in time. Either that or be careful of what type of psychedelics you take. Marley said that he had no idea how long they took to make the drive to Pokhara that day. They left pretty early in the morning. The trip is only one-hundred-sixty miles. Which according to the road conditions can take five hours or fifteen, but they arrived sometime in the afternoon.

The couple stayed in one of the better hotels, a special holiday after four months on the road. They stopped in the hippy Chai Shops to have some of their unique banana pancakes, which were Maria's favorites. They had already parked the car in the hotel compound and were on foot just looking at the marvels of nature of this magic little town.

It had been said that the book, "The Lord of the Rings" was written beside a spring in Pokhara that flows into underwater streams and caves. Some of the parts of the story in the book depict these very underwater springs. Marley claimed that they had actually found them. That was where he had planned to write this book eventually, but too much had changed. He always said that he hoped to see Nepal again, but he knew after forty years it would most probably be unrecognizable.

There was a road that circled the lake in Pokhara, and Maria and Marley were taking a slow stroll around the body of water. On either side of the road were stone walls about two meters tall. It was very mellow. Until they happened upon a huge water buffalo, going the in the opposite direction.

He stopped and looked at them. The huge buffalo was totally hostile. They could see it in his eyes. Maria and Marley turned to run from this wild animal, and he yelled at her to climb the rock wall and somehow Maria, who was about five-feet-four, scaled right up and over that wall. Marley scrambled up behind her.

Her fear of that animal gave her extra-human strength or something. Enough to jump a wall well over her head. Marley was six-feet-one so it was not such a feat for him. They laughed like hell after that. From relief and nerves. Man, that buffalo indeed was big and mean!

Maria still had a total hippy mentality and didn't like to be around the halfway straight people very much. She said she wanted for them to rent a house right on the lake, with no lights or water. The house she found cost twenty dollars a month.



Mount Everest in the Himalayas

Now Marley had already done that for a couple of years before meeting her, so he just could not bring himself to trade that primitive house for their home in Katmandu. Plus, Marley had no way to make a living in Pokhara. They hung out at the lake for about another week and then Maria sadly agreed to return to Kathmandu. All vacations are too short.

On the way back, they tried the mushrooms again, but this time with some music that was not as freaky, and it was a mellow one-hundred-sixty miles back home to Kathmandu. Roads in excellent condition, driving the Volvo and just enjoying the cruise through the mountains.

Chapter 30: Visits from Abroad

One day Marley got a telegram advising that his old buddy from South America was coming to visit. It was Roger, who was a total party maniac. In South America, everybody was so wild his behavior is not so notable. This old buddy of Marley's was walking trouble. They hung together for a couple of years in the States, Colombia, and Peru. Marley had no idea of what to expect from him in Nepal.

He sent his old friend a message with his address. He would magically materialize at the most unexpected moment. Sure enough a few weeks later he arrived with Judy, one of their old friends and now his new girlfriend. They were living on the north coast of Santa Marta, Colombia, as about as wild and dangerous a scene as there is on the planet. Marley was hopeful that Kathmandu would chill him out a bit. He was his buddy, so of course, he was welcome in Marley's and Maria's home.

As soon as he arrived, he wanted to party, and he had brought his own party supplies. Grass and coke direct from Bogotá, Colombia. There would be no stopping Roger until his stash ran out. Hopefully, his stash would not be too big.

The first night the two old friends hit all the party spots of Kathmandu. Roger was the life of the party. It's just with him a party is not till one or two in the morning. He has to party to dawn if not 24 hours. Judy was more or less a reasonable person. Marley figured that she liked the bad boys. Marley organized a motorcycle for them from a friend of his, and they all four made an excellent tour of all of the Kathmandu Valley on motorbike.

The problem with Roger was that he expected Marley to run at the same pace as him and his mellowed-out friend was not up to the task, especially in such a paradise as Kathmandu. Fortunately, the visit was short and without anyone getting into trouble or hurt. Marley always said he could handle Roger back in South America, but the Colombian mentality did not fit in Nepal.

Marley's favorite visitor and guest was when Xavi came to visit him from Barcelona. Maria had her own group of friends who mostly lived in Barcelona and Madrid. That included her ex-husband and his brother. Both close friends of Maria's as well as Marley's, but Xavi, one of Maria's friends from long ago, and Marley became a team. Whether it was smoking, partying, traveling or adventures. They would both do anything. Never dare them when we were together. The two young hippies were like brothers back in the days of Nepal.

Marley's oldest friend Donald came to visit him every six months or so as well. No matter where He lived in the world. He would come for a week to ten days. He said he always did that in order not to overstay his welcome, which made good sense. He would always bring some presents. He and Marley would go out in search of the strangest Tibetan or Nepali items for him to buy to take back to the US to sell in his friend's stores.

Donald and Marley had met when they were just over twenty years old in Bogotá, Colombia. The two remained friends for the next 25 years. It was Donald's Norton motorcycle that Marley used to ride when he stayed in New Delhi, India. He finally ended up marrying Judy, Roger's old girlfriend, years later.

George, June, Maria and Marley decided that they would take a motorcycle trip to the Tibetan border, Kodari. It is a seventy-mile trip one way, and at that time the roads were terrible with washed out sections and rockslides, but they found themselves cruising north anyway. About an hour after their departure they came to a significant rockslide. They had to stop the bikes and they climbed up on top of the rockslide to see how bad it was. It looked like a several days job.

George and Marley were not ready to give up on seeing the Tibetan border that day. They talked to the road workers, and finally worked out a price to fix their small

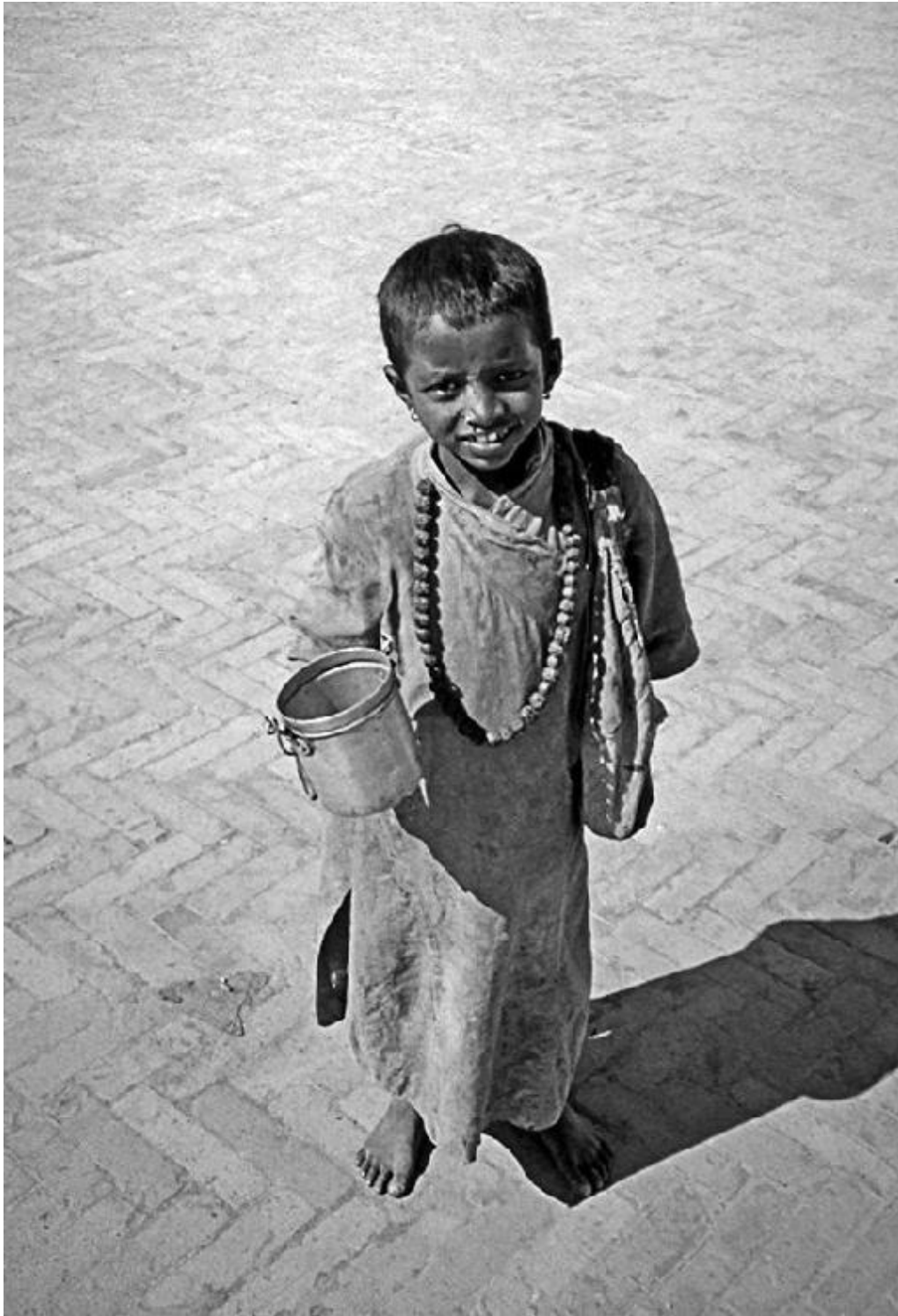
problem. For a few Nepalese Rupees they had tied ropes around two thick poles, one on the front of the bike and one on the back, then had the Nepalese road workers lift these heavy motorcycles up and carry them over the landslide. They were stoked. Nothing could stop them. They paid the workers a few rupees and headed on up to the Kodari at the Tibetan border, making the drive before the sunset.

The four of them stayed that night in a Nepalese house on the border and woke up to Tibet. They didn't try to cross the border. The Chinese were not at all friendly and wanted to get the Tibetans under control, but they could climb up on a hill and had a great view of Tibet when they woke up.

What a vast, harsh landscape. The Tibetans were used to living in these high and barren mountains; they call their home. They always talk about how they missed their country.

Later that day they headed back down the mountain towards Kathmandu. After a brief ride down, they ran into the road workers again, and they were still at it, working on cleaning up the landslide. Once again, they worked out a deal for them to carry the motorcycles back over the pile of rocks on to the south side of the road.

From the looks of things, they may have taken a week to clear the road. If it were the Raj Path, there would have been a more serious effort to clear things up, but there on the road to China there was not much traffic. The Nepalese crew was taking their time moving rock by rock.



Child Monk Kathmandu

Once they got the motorcycles back over the pile of rubble, the four of them jumped back on the bikes and headed for home and in what seemed like no time they were back in Kathmandu.

Later Marley would often take the ride to the Tibetan border Kodari. Or if he had a visitor, it was always a novelty to go to the Chinese border. It was not developed except

the work the Chinese were doing on the Tibetan side. He had heard that they were intending to build a road to Peking.

There were another three characters in Kathmandu that had a travel agency, called "Humping Yeti Travels." They took wealthy tourists to Tibet on Yaks, dressed as Tibetans and the works. All unauthorized of course. One day they too disappeared, leaving three more friends lost in the void.

Chapter 31: Visit to Spain and Peru

Maria wanted to visit her mother, near Salamanca, in Spain, so they started the slow process of deciding when to go. Getting Marley out of Kathmandu was hard. Nepal was his place where he felt safe and comfortable. At the same time, he understood that she wanted to visit her mom every year or so. Spanish families are very tight-knit compared to American families.

Also, remember you have to go to travel agency after travel agency and barter a price for a reasonably priced ticket. Usually, it was cheapest to fly to Amsterdam, but Spain was a long way from Holland, and then a flight ran about a thousand dollars, round trip. Flights back then were costly.

Sometimes Marley used a contact he had in Italy to buy Air Italia tickets from a connected type guy. He would have to make contact with their Italian friends. They would contact their man, the mysterious guy from Rome. He was a young man who had an office with a steel door and no windows in the middle of Rome. His apartment was like a bank vault.

At any rate, he would make them the tickets on an official travel agency machine. They were first class, with four stops anywhere in the world you wanted to go, and they cost \$400. The tickets were one-hundred percent legitimate, everything but his price. Since everything in Italy is bent, Marley Willow never asked too many questions. A five-thousand-dollar ticket for only four hundred dollars is questionable, but you know the rule. Never look a gift horse in the mouth.

This went on for a year or so until some of his clients got caught cashing in these expensive tickets. They were turning them in for economy priced tickets and were getting cash refunds from Air Italia. That apparently was taking it too far, and that ended the cheap flights. Today you go online and have the choice of dozens of search engines to get the best prices for tickets without worrying about the laws or where your ticket is purchased.

Donald and Marley, back when they began to travel, bought the American Airlines around the world tickets. These were right from the airlines. It was good for four stops anywhere in the world, and they were open for a year. You only had to stay in the same hemisphere and go in the same direction. They cost \$900. That was a great deal, and you got to visit anywhere you wanted.

They went around the world via Hawaii, India, London, and back to New York. The flights were only available if you flew out of New York. They were economy class tickets and not first class, but they were a great deal. Back then not so many people flew like today. So, not many good deals were available on flights.

This time they got the Air Italia cheap tickets, so they could go a few more places before they went back to India or Nepal for an affordable price. A week later Marley had stored his motorcycle and sold the Volvo for a reasonable profit. The house was packed up and ready for when they returned. Maria went a week before Marley to rent a place in the La Floresta, Barcelona, which was one of the places to go for the Spanish hippies in the 1970s. The neighborhood was just above the city of Barcelona, Spain.

Little did Marley Willow know how much this trip, would affect their lives. They were selling a little hash they had sent, and once that was done, they intended to go to meet Maria's family in a small little town on the Portuguese border. What would be considered Old Spain. La Floresta, in Barcelona, was fun. It was summertime, and Marley had met all of Maria's friends who were still in Barcelona. His favorite friend of Maria's, Xavi, was in town too. He and Marley were great mates.

It took them a month to sell the hash in small lots, which gave the best profit. They also had money left from his New York book thing and cash from the bus sales, so they were good for the money as long as they watched what they spent. Spain was expensive

compared to Asia but cheap when compared to the rest of Europe.

They all had a great time with Maria's mother and family. Maria's mom was on top of everything and was not weird with Marley, as Maria was still married to Pedro and here she comes home with an American hippy, although everything was cool with Maria's mom. They treated him like family. Maria planned to spend a month with her mom, but Marley figured he would only stay a week.

After a week Marley Willow flew to Bogotá, Colombia to visit some old buddies, including crazy Roger, for the other three weeks. When you were in Bogotá, Roger did not seem nearly as mad as in mellow Nepal. Bogota was a big city and ran pretty much 24 hours a day. Marley also had a couple there that were close friends. An American guy with a Colombian Indian wife and of course, he had all his Colombian friends. Mario, Jose, Hernando, Hector, and more.

While he was there, he stayed in the Hotel Carlos Quinto on La Avenida Septima. Marley was friends with the owner and always stayed there and Don Carlos, and he had many a conversation in the afternoons. He was initially from Spain and now that Marley had a Spanish girlfriend he wanted to know all about it. He gave him an update on his love life and what he was up to, and where he had visited in Spain.



Sunday Market Picas, Peru

Roger and Marley commenced to check out their old buddies in Bogotá, Colombian style. Back then it was a very wild city, and you had to be careful.

Most of their friends came from good families and had a general or a major in the family making them pretty much a phone call away of getting out of any trouble they might get in. Marley was a gringo in Bogotá and had to watch it.

At the time Bogotá was one of the most dangerous cities in the world. It had the highest murder rate on the planet, so there were defined parts of the city you could never visit.

In Bogotá, you are cool during the daytime, but at night you had to be more careful. Harry and his wife Carolina had Pre-Colombian art for sale in quite large amounts and had a small museum and store right there in the upper-class section city. Marley had said that if he remembered correctly, they were robbed eight times in five years in that same store. They had been robbed so many times they stored soft rope for the robbers to tie them up. That along with soft masks and gags to make the experience less uncomfortable. What a way to live.

It was a good thing Maria came down when she did. Marley was just about to run off to Roger's ranch up on the north coast of Santa Marta to play cowboys. A place called, Trinidad. Colombia was very wild in these times. Kind of like the American Wild West in the 1890s, but that made it fun for these adventurers.

Maria was coming down to see the country before they returned to Asia. She had never been in South America and since they had the extra stops on our tickets and Marley was already there, she wanted to visit. Marley did not like being so far away from Asia for very long in those days, but if Maria wanted to check out a little bit of the South American Continent, what the hell. She was halfway there already, and they had now been in Asia for years.

Finally, Maria showed up, a couple of days early even, and she gave Marley the big news. They were going to be parents. She was pregnant and would abstain from everything till the baby was born. This again shows you just how everything can change from one moment to the next, being the most significant change in their lives to date.

Now rather than going back to Kathmandu to pass the pregnancy, Maria wanted a tranquil place that had good vibrations too and not so many drugs. They decide the Urubamba Valley just over the mountains from Cuzco, Peru. Marley had friends in Cuzco, and they figured a few months or so stay in Pisac, Peru, would be a remote and quiet enough place to pass the pregnancy. And it was very close to Machu Picchu. At that time the old train took you to Aguas Calientes and on to Machu Picchu. There was a dirt road up to the ruins, and there was no other option but to climb this rather long hike on foot. There were no hotels at the ruins or tour guides back then. You could camp right there in the middle of the ruins, and nobody was around to stop you.

Now they say that it is full of tourists, hotels, guides, and restrictions. When they went there, it was just about as virgin as when it was first discovered back in 1911. The old train that ran through Aguas Calientes has been upgraded to a modern tourist train, and the small village of Aguas Calientes, which means Hot Waters, was now, far too overdeveloped due to the tourists. The hot springs the town was named after, were now entirely polluted as well. This Marley had heard recently, from his dentist who was from Cusco, just a few hours away from the ruins.

In Pisac, they rented a room that was attached to the mayor's house. It was tiny and simple, but if you wanted peace and quiet with a very mellow environment this was the place. It felt like the most peaceful place on Earth.

Close enough to Cusco to catch a bus or truck and have a good meal in one of the many restaurants that serve the tourists. In the Urubamba Valley, Pisac was a tiny village and relatively simple. The expecting couple made good friends with the mayor and his wife. The mayor's wife was also pregnant.

One of the only problems that they had was that they had to wash in fresh spring water like the locals. The water there was as clean as Marley had ever seen, but it was icy. Not his choice although they manned up to it. The view of the Urubamba Valley from their home was spectacular. Direct from the Himalayas to the Peruvian Andes.

One of the downsides was the Catholic Church in the center of the plaza of Pisac. They would ring the church bell every morning at 5:00 AM, and it was loud. Maria and Marley would never forget that bell. Dingdididong, Dingdididong, Dong Dong Dong. Over and over again for what seemed like ten minutes, although it was probably just a couple of minutes, so if your plan was sleeping in, forget about it.

Once a week Pisac had a Farmers Market in the plaza, where people came on foot from all over the valley to sell whatever they could to make a living. A quiet little village in the middle of nowhere turned into the fantastically colorful center of activity for a few hours a week.

For the rest of the week, Marley said that he doubted there was over a population of 100 people, so everybody knew everybody else. They became such good friends with their landlord that they named the Mayor's and wife's yet to be born daughter Durga, which is the mother of Indian Hinduism.

They gave Marley and Maria's son his name, which would be Maicu. It means Eagle in Quechua, the language of the Incas. Even though Maria and Marley loved the name, later in Maicu's life he told them that all the kids had made fun of him for having such a weird name. Marley figured they made him live with that one for his whole life. Their son claimed, later in life, that it was a flakey hippy name although it was a typical name in the Quechua culture and the mayor of Pisac was as far from a hippy as you could get.

They made the trips to Sagaywaman and explored all of Cusco. They went down the Urubamba Valley and checked it all out up to Machu Picchu. Marley even climbed to Huayna Picchu. Maria had to pass on that, as she was too pregnant. That is the highest peak of Machu Picchu. It was a scary climb up very steep stone steps.

They had put some metal stakes in the ground and ran a rope through them, so you had something to hold on to. This was so steep and so high, that when Marley had to go back down, it was twice as dangerous. He was glad there was not much wind that day, but the view was magnificent.

They had the company of two foreign families that lived in Pisac as well. One family were Americans that chose this quiet and natural place to raise their children. They were one hundred percent hippies, living in the Andes and another



Cholas in Picas, Peru

couple owned a bar. She was initially from Pisac, Peru and he was Austrian.

There was very little traffic though, so Marley didn't think they made much money from their bar. Although it was a place to go when there was nothing else to do but chat with the neighbors.

They would often meet up there in the afternoon to drink hot toddies. A hot wine the

Peruvians drank in the cold mountains. Just the thing to keep you warm at night and it helped fight altitude sickness.

After some very quiet months had passed, they started thinking about going back to the Far East. Maria wanted to go to Goa to have Maicu with her friends there, and Marley wanted to go back home to Kathmandu and their house.

Although they did not want to wait too long so Maria was not too pregnant to fly, but they were sure they wanted for their son to be born in India or Nepal.

They finally agreed they would go back to Kathmandu and get what they needed from their household goods and then down to Goa. They would fly to Bombay and take the boat to Goa. So now that they had a plan they could book two flights. Maria and Marley flew from Lima, Peru to Havana, Cuba, which included a small tour of the city. Onward in transit to Moscow, Russia and then finally to Bangladesh. From there, they took a propjet that flew over the mountains into the Kathmandu Valley via India. Marley said he would prefer to drive two thousand miles then take that flight again, but it worked out time wise. These flights were about forty-eight hours to Dhaka, Bangladesh. Then a flight to Kathmandu via New Delhi and they were home. Two exhausted travelers.

When they were on their last leg of the trip, they were flying through New Delhi in transit and on to Kathmandu. They had already disembarked, waited for an hour in transit as they cleaned and serviced the plane. Then they loaded them all on a shuttle bus to the aircraft. When all of a sudden, a police car came driving fast after the shuttle bus, with his lights and siren on and stopped the transit bus. Maria and Marley were wondering what is going on but with no paranoia on their part. There were now in Asia where life was easy.

The policeman boarded the bus and called out Marley Willow's name and said that he was to go with the two officers and back to the customs department in the airport. It turns out that they had removed all the baggage from the small propjet to bring his personal luggage inside the customs. They opened it up and checked everything thoroughly, although he was not concerned as he would never travel with contraband.

Then the chief of police of New Delhi arrived and started to ask him where he had the Mercedes motors hidden? Also, where was the bus he had brought with him? Marley reminded them, that he was in international transit and there apparently, was no room in his baggage for Mercedes motors, let alone a big passenger bus. All this time they were holding up an International flight.

Maria was both scared for Marley as well as embarrassed in the face of the rest of the passengers. You would have thought they had caught Che Guevara. After an hour of questions about where the motors and buses were, they finally let him go and put Marley back on the plane.

When he boarded, he did in fact get some funny looks. The fact that he was released and was back on the plane should show them that he was doing nothing illegal. It turns out that the Indians looked at unlawful import, resulting in tax evasion, as a serious crime, even more so than smuggling hashish. Especially then during an anti-corruption campaign that Indira Gandhi, the Indian Prime Minister of India, was pushing.

When Marley got back on the Shuttle Bus and then boarded the plane, it was a relief, but it taught him two things. One, he was not charged with anything and was only a suspect in the Mercedes motors at this point. That and the game was up with the Chief of Police of New Delhi and him.

While they held Marley, they also asked him lots of questions about Roman. Marley was a very lightweight and Roman was a serious heavyweight, and he did not like being questioned about him. Not that he would say anything to betray his old friend. The hippy code was to protect each other when under such circumstances.

The couple finally flew into Tribhuvan International Airport, in Kathmandu, about an hour and a half late. Marley said that the passengers on the plane gave them some

funny looks, wondering what the heck this guy's deal was. At the Kathmandu airport, they went straight through customs without stopping, as usual. Namaste.



Holy Stones at Swayambhunath Temple

Chapter 32: Favorite Place in the World

Landing in Tribhuvan Kathmandu International Airport felt great and just fifty some hours ago the hippy couple were in the Andes Mountains. What a change. Marley was very mellow upon his arrival. Moving at Pisac, Peru speed. Once he got his motorcycle cranked up again, he felt excellent. Marley had to take a ride on the bike around Kathmandu Valley, every time he returned. That was the first thing he focused on. Seeing the local people with the Nepalese wind in his face. It was nice for him to be home again, riding around the streets of Kathmandu.

Upon arriving home, they had an additional surprise waiting for them. June, George's wife was pregnant as well. Not as far along as Maria, but also pregnant. That would help Maria as she was abstaining from anything that could contaminate her body and the babies. Hash, Grass, cigarettes, alcohol, etc. It is hard to refrain, with everybody around smoking joints like was the custom in Nepal, but the two of them did it.

They all got together and discussed Maria's and Marley's plan, so George and June decided that they also wanted to go to Goa for a chill out from Kathmandu and see a place in India that they have never been before. All before she was due to have her baby too, so George and Marley decided to make it an extra special trip. They would send both of the girls down to Goa on a plane and boat, and they would ride their motorcycles to South India. Their preference was to not travel without their bikes.

They let the girls know their plan, and they did not have any problems with it, so George and Marley got started on checking out the motorcycles for the trip to South India. Remember that you can't make as good a time on a motorcycle as you can on a bus because it wears you out, and the roads back then were nothing like today's roads in India.

They checked it out as neither one of the two motorcycle enthusiasts had ever been south of Bombay. The distance was two thousand six hundred miles from Kathmandu to Anjuna Beach in Goa, India and back to Kathmandu. They would have to go down to Lucknow, then to Madhya Pradesh, Bombay (Now Mumbai) and on to Anjuna Beach in the old, Portuguese state of Goa. That was quite a distance for a motorcycle.

The two freak brothers had a couple of weeks to get it together, so no worries. Planning a new adventure is good if you have some time to think about it. Some of Marley's experiences were different. If not planned at all, they were always difficult. Like when Roger and he crossed two hundred miles of mountains, of the Sierra Nevadas in Colombia, a few years before. They could have died on that trip due to their poor planning.

The adventures planned well, usually went without a hitch. Or, at least with no more than the general problems and difficulties one runs into on the way, while living in the third world countries. The over-planned adventures would probably never happen because they were thought about too much. If you put too much thought into it you would find a reason not to go, or some other proposal would pop up, and it is put aside, maybe never to be completed.

They took the girls to the airport. Then they were going to stay on Anjuna Beach till their two partners arrived. The boys told them they would take about four or five days to get down to Goa. There was a little chance of those two arriving on time. Two freaks, riding motorcycles crossing Nepal and India from top to bottom.

It was funny back then. Someone proposed an adventure, and there they went. There was hardly a second thought about it. There were never any adventures they went on that had a serious amount of thought put into them. The ideas for travel often came randomly and the planning short and even at times no planning at all. When George proposed the bus trip to Amsterdam to Marley, he had no idea if he had been thinking about it for some time or not, but from the time George mentioned it to him,

their departure was just a matter of a couple of weeks. Not much planning for a four-month trip. Impetuous to say the least.



Indian Woman in South India

Chapter 33: To Goa on Motorcycle

The first day George kept fucking around with his carburetor of his BMW. He was a perfectionist with machines and almost to the point of OCD, so they did not leave that first day as planned. The second day he still was not happy with the way one of the carburetors was working, so he spent most of the day repairing it. Then finally when it was just getting dusk, he said, "Let's go." Remember, they had over two weeks to prepare for this trip.

Marley didn't like to drive these roads at night, but with George, it is best to go when he said he was ready. It took them all night to ride half of the Raj Path. Between the two stopping for chai, a chillum and speed, they must have stopped six or seven times. The next day they both said they would leave early, but as neither hippy had slept the night before, they once again got off to a late start due to them both oversleeping.

This time they took off about two hours before dark and just made it to the Tehri, onto the plains of Nepal, which bordered India. They were moving like snails. They had taken three days to make, a one-day trip, and they had a couple of thousand kilometers to go. Plus, it was cold driving the Raj Path at night and Marley hated the cold, being a Florida boy.

Traveling on a motorcycle through a country will always take more time. You can't go as fast on the road, and you are at the bottom of the priority lists, so they had to pull over for just about everybody, as the road was pretty much one lane, or maybe a path and a half, through most of central India.

Even the Ox Carts had priority over a motorcycle. More than once they had to run off the road or get hit head-on with a Tata truck. People are another constant danger. Lots of spaced out people there. Often women just wandered out into the middle of the road like they had no idea where they were.

While they were on the road, on motorcycles, they saw India and everything in it differently. Rather than sort of like being isolated in a cage like they are on the buses. Watching the scenery go by on a motorcycle you were accessible to the people. Right out there with everybody else.

Now all of a sudden Mark tells Marley that the timing on his motorcycle is off. He wanted to stop and check it out. His traveling companion agreed. What began as a twenty-minute stop turned into him dismounting the entire distribution system because he could not get it how he wanted it. Finally done, once again they drove off into the Indian night.

At night you had to be careful not to hit an elephant. When they walk on a paved road, they don't make a single sound. They passed them slowly so as not to scare them. Both travelers had seen even domesticated elephants get angry about nothing and they are big and can be dangerous. You don't want to hit one and piss it off.

Sometimes they slept right there beside the road in a patch of grass and took turns watching the bikes. That was when Marley realized that the elephants moved in total silence. It was spooky when several walked by at night, and you saw them but didn't hear a sound.

This whole trip ran on gasoline, oil, speed, and hash. George was away from June, so he was going for it. It does not take a rocket scientist to tell you that they were taking so long to get to Goa because they were so stoned out. More like a Cheech and Chong experience. Their attention was diverted in a different direction so quickly. At no time during their motorcycle ride to South India did they care what the fuck they were doing, except driving very slowly south. Just cruising along like Easy Rider.

Then as they were finally nearing Bombay, the engine on Marley's Honda seized up. Now, this was one of the first four-cylinder Hondas that George and Marley had ever seen. To complicate things even more, it had a split engine case. Due to the situation,

the two friends found a room they rented to take the bike apart. Then they proceeded to tear the engine down piece by piece, and there were a lot of parts. In the end master mechanic, George got it apart, and the overhead cam chain had worn out the tension bar in the bottom of the crankcase.

But, of course they had no parts. At least Marley thought they had no parts. George told him that he saw an overhead cam chain tensor on one of the big Tata truck engines. It was not the same part but could be cut and modified to work in place of the old tension device. George and Marley worked away on the cam chain tensor and put the engine back together.

You had to put the whole engine together while holding the cam chain on the top with a screwdriver, which was Marley's job, and slip the cam under the chain and in place. George's, role. Without dropping the chain or they had to tear the whole engine down again. Needless to say, that on the first attempt Marley blew it and dropped the chain.

They had to take it apart again and go through the same process but without dropping the cam chain this time. On the second attempt, they got it right and were ready to see if the part BMW, part Honda and now part Tata truck would start. It was the Franken-cycle, but when they hit the electric starter button, she cranked up and ran great. That just showed Marley how good George's skills actually were. Fixing things with truck parts like that time, with hemp rope and soap another time. He was a genius at mechanics.

did not make them look like sissies either. All on Indian made 250cc Indian Royal Enfield motorcycles. They were giving the two foreign bikers the evil eye like, "You fuckers are on our turf, and you better get the hell out of here, or we are going to kick your hippy asses."

But these two didn't have a worry in the world and were amused with these guys, just as long as their motorcycle did not stop on them, in which case they were two dead hippies much like in the end of Easy Rider. Marley was riding a new 500cc Honda four-cylinder crotch rocket, and his old biker buddy George was riding an older 500cc. BMW. But it was in perfect condition and fast, although Marley's BMWanda blew his socks off too.

George just gave all of them the finger, which based on their aggressive reaction, it appeared to be internationally understood even in Bombay in the nineteen-seventies. They roared out of there like rockets. There was no way their Royal Enfields were going to catch these two fast motorcycles. They gave chase for a bit, but it was hopeless. By then our two freak brothers were pushing a hundred miles an hour and climbing. It gave them an exhilarating feeling, leaving them in the dirt like that after flipping them the bird. George and Marley made an excellent motorcycle team.

Back in Kathmandu they had always played with the idea of making up some shirts for their own motorcycle club and intended naming it "Shiva's Slaves." It would have been a good laugh, but they never did get around to it. Funny enough, while Marley was researching while writing the notes for this book he found a Nepali motorcycle club that exists today, and it is called "Shiva's Slaves." What a coincidence.

Now they were on the last stretch of the trip. The two bikers were about to enter the state of Goa. Now the vegetation changed to a much greener landscape. Just Pune, Kolhapur, and Belagavi, then they will be in the state of Goa.



Buddha in Sri Lanka



Holy Cow in Kathmandu

It was hot and sunny when they finally arrived in Goa. It looked like it was everything they had heard about. Large amounts of green vegetation and palm trees everywhere. Great weather for riding a motorcycle around the winding roads of Goa, but it was strange to see Catholic churches as they rode across the old, Portuguese towns.

Now they were arriving at the objective of their motorcycle trip. Which was their advent to Anjuna Beach where the girls are waiting. At least they remembered where they were going and did not space out and ride to the end of the continent.

As they both were wearing their biker clothing, they both were soon melting. The first thing was to make moves to cool off and change into some funky shorts and flip-flops.

Chapter 34: Freakiest Place on Earth

Although they took well over a week to make it to Goa, the girls did not seem too upset, so all was cool. Marley's bike continued to run perfectly, and George's bike stopped giving him trouble. Now they spent time on smoking with the Hippy community and riding around on our motorcycles, hanging on the beach with the girls. Going to the Flea Market, exploring the northern part of the state of Goa and seeing if there was anything for them to pick and sell.

Goa is strange to find in the South of India. It was full of Catholic Churches and Portuguese or European houses from the period when they occupied this part of India. Goa is even the home of one of the Great Jesuit Saints. Saint Xavier and his body is there to visit in a glass case. It is like a mummy. His body has been there in the church over five-hundred-fifty years.

Maria had already rented an old Goa home from the Portuguese period. It was big two-story home, but they just used the kitchen, living room and two bedrooms. They had a classic chill-out porch as most of the Portuguese houses in the state. For \$20 a month it was a great deal.

George just ran a long extension cord from a neighbor's house to Maria and Marley's house, and they had the miracle of light. They only had one electric light bulb in the living room, so they used candles in coconut shells to move around the house at night. The name of the neighborhood was Chuar, which in Konkani meant thief. Interesting name for a neighborhood. The house was about an eight or ten-minute walk to Anjuna Beach and the Indian Ocean.

Maria was now eight months pregnant and June was about five months along, so they did not have too long to wait. Although being pregnant did not slow Maria down. When a full moon party came, she would dance till dawn, to the light of the full moon on Anjuna Beach, like hundreds of the Goa foreign resident hippies.

That is what Goa was most known for. That and the nudist beaches, but the full moon parties could be massive. Live music. Hippies everywhere, dancing wildly in the night. Marley would let Maria drag him along, but he would not last all night like her.

One evening they were invited to a party, and as it was at night they took to walking down the middle of the road to the friend's house. About two-thirds of the way to the party house was a colossal cobra that lay in the middle of the road. It was laying crossways and was not moving, but it was alive for sure. They waited for a while, but the snake did not move, and Maria and Marley were not going to play with the biggest cobra they had ever seen and try to get by him. They figured there was no way to pass safely so they turned around and headed back to the house as fast as their feet would take them.

At night you could hear the jackals ululating. There were lots of them, and they sounded very close. You could hear them making their laughing sound. One occasionally heard where a Jackal stole a baby. Who knows if it was rumor or truth, but it was odd to see so many animals with such a dense population. Apparently, there being nowhere else for them to go.

Goa is like a palm tree paradise. Warm Indian Ocean water, white sand beaches. The locals in Goa spoke their own language. Konkani and many spoke Hindi. A few still spoke Portuguese, and quite a few spoke enough English to make a living from the hippies that stayed in Goa during the winter. The names of some of the major cities are in Portuguese. The main port was Vasca de Gambas, Chorñao Island, Margao, and others. The modern houses, although constructed many years ago, were of Portuguese style, and in varied states of dilapidation. At first, it gave off an eerie feeling, as it seemed to be full of run-down ghost towns.

The entire area was set up to cater to the hippies, and there were hundreds, if not

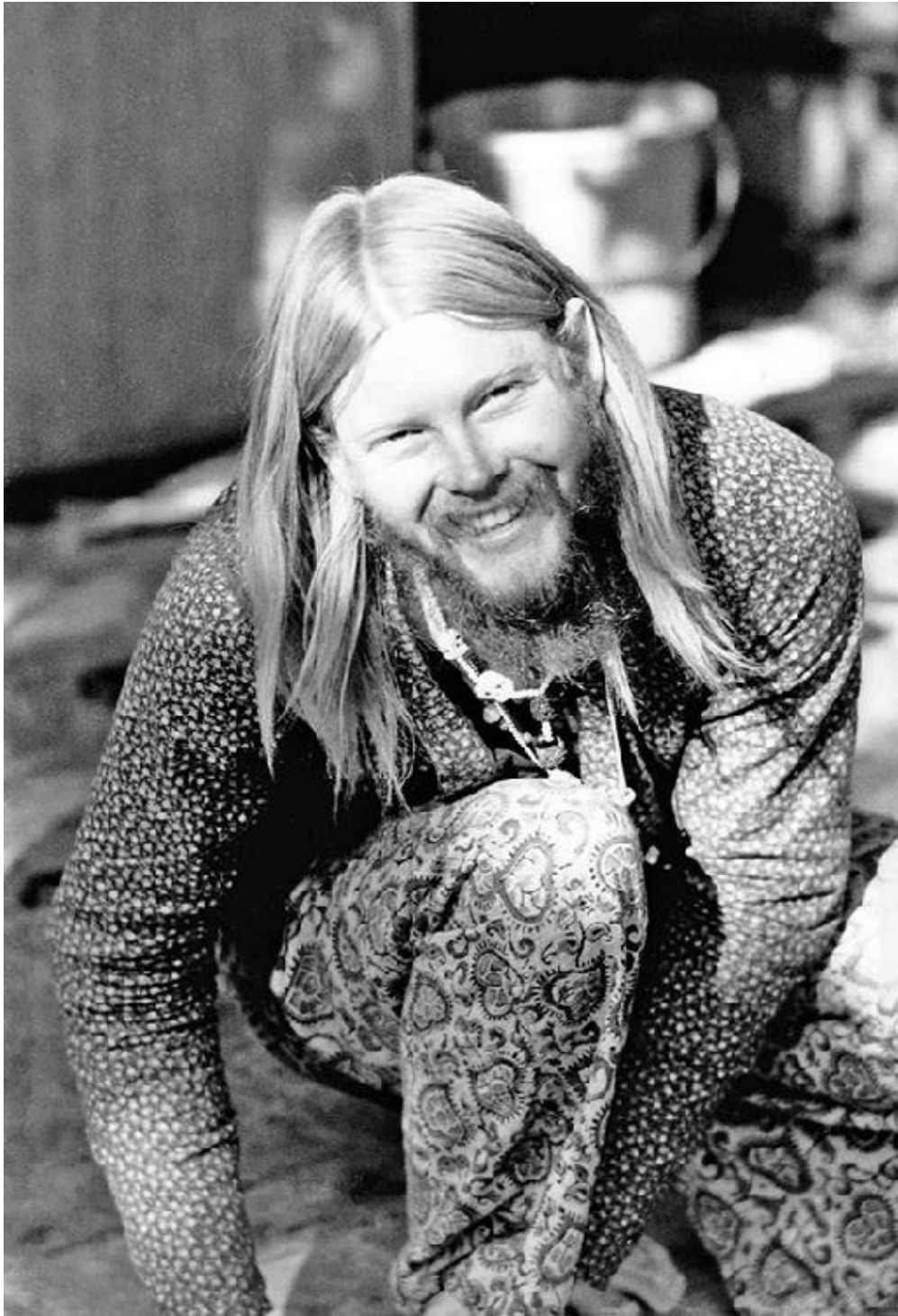
thousands of them. This is where they all spent their winter. It was the wildest and craziest place Marley had ever seen.

As far as Marley could see there was no law at all. There were makeshift restaurants all over. Some Hippies simply made little huts from palm tree leaves and lived directly on the beach free of charge. Although most rented a house, as the price was so cheap. The locals had made an effort to keep their wild hippy tourists happy.

Across the street from Marley's house was the main house for the Catalan Hippies. Catalunya is a province of Spain. There was probably a half a dozen of them living there. They were mostly people Maria had known a big part of her life. They took a while to get used to having an American in the group, but little by little they started to accept Marley as one of them.

They made bonfires nightly like the Sadhus and smoked one chillum after another till late in the night telling their stories, arguing politics and music. Which country has the best hash or the best grass and who had been there and tried it. Yelling, "Bom Shankar" with every puff of the chillum.

Of course, they had no TV's, so their entertainment was limited to that of the cavemen. Sometimes Armando, Montse's husband would



German Hippy in Goa 1970's

bring some drums, and the Catalans would clap their palms in the Spanish Flamenco style, creating their own music. They also played their battery-operated cassettes. Rock and Roll and electronic music of the 1970s. Also, Cuban, Spanish and South American music, from the local Spanish crowd. All of them sitting around the fire, even though the nights were warm. Clouds of smoke rising from the various chillums being smoked in the circle of hippies.

Armando and Montse had just had a daughter, Ruby. Armando was a super freak. His objective was to out freak any other freak. He was a wild man. Marley said that he thought he was half Cuban and half Israeli. One day he just disappeared, and no one ever saw him again. Marley said that he still wondered where he went. Or, was he just swallowed up in the void of humanity like so many others.

At any rate, Montse was up to the chore of being a single mother and did a great job. Ruby was a hippy child, like Maria's son would be. She had blond curly hair and was very intelligent.

While Marley was visiting around, he had heard that Roman lived there in Goa now. One of his friends told him where to find him, so Marley rode his motorcycle over to see him. He was happy to know that his old friend Willow was still around and prosperous. He told him all about the customs pulling him off a plane in New Delhi.

"There is bad blood between me and the chief of police of New Delhi man and they are giving my old contacts a hard time, but don't worry Marley," Roman informed him. "You're small-time, but me that's why I moved to Goa, and I'm staying here. You should do the same. We can do whatever we want down here."

"I'm just here for a few months, Roman," Marley replied. "I am going back to Katmandu. All this shit that is going on down here is too crazy. You better be careful, amigo."

Here's Roman telling Marley not to worry, but this time he was very different. He wasn't perfectly kept as he was in the old days back in New Delhi and was not taking care of himself any longer. Not the old Roman that Marley knew back in capital. He suspected that he was getting into heavier drugs now. He had stacks of fake passports and false traveler's checks beside him on a table. That is serious shit. Marley got out of there quick.

He was thinking to himself that this was not his scene and if Roman is that hot in New Delhi it would be in his best interest to keep his visits to Roman down to the absolute minimum, if at all. Funny how much things change. More of those twists and turns in the path of life.

It was March, and their baby was expected soon. They had located a clinic they thought would be good. It was in the town of Mapusa, Goa. It had a lady doctor most of the time, and she was said to have lots of experience. As soon as Maria's water broke, they knew exactly where they were going, and the small Indian clinic would be expecting their arrival. Many of the hippies had their babies at home, but Marley and Maria were not ready for that. Excessive risks.

The Goa party season was coming to an end. Once winter was over and the monsoon rains start, most of the foreign population would dwindle down to nothing but the broke hippies and junkies. Now everybody was working on projects.

One day Marley saw a group of hippies had made a suitcase factory in their side yard. Right out in the open. The poor hippies worked for a few dollars, so there was no lack of laborers. Something he had never seen in broad daylight before. Crazy man. He couldn't imagine what was happening behind closed doors.

There was a pirate type Spanish guy who seemed to have lived in Goa forever. His name was Alejandro, and he was admired and feared, as most of the Goa residents figured he was crazy. He was supposed to be a wild man and named himself King of the hill in the Anjuna Beach hippy scene.

He was said to control the local drug business. If anybody wanted to sell quantities of drugs to the local hippies, he wanted to be in the loop. Although Marley said that he met him a couple of times, he said that he never had any trouble with him. Possibly a person to avoid in most cases.

In Goa, Marley was finding out that things were much wilder than he had ever imagined. The, behind the scene, business was serious. Probably anywhere you have

thousands of hippies partying, you have to have suppliers for their needs and the numbers were serious. You had heavies trying to control the logistics, and a large number of the population were smugglers. Marley just went down there to mellow out and have a baby. He confided that he had wished he had stayed in Kathmandu, although he would imagine that Goa would be a paradise out of the hippy tourist season. It is lush with vegetation, a beautiful part of the country.

George and June had returned to Kathmandu as their break was more of a mini vacation before their baby was due. They wanted to be at home and have the baby in a Kathmandu hospital. But Maria and Marley were staying there in Goa for the birth of their child. Later he had second thoughts of what he should have done, but Maria had her heart set on having their baby in Goa, so Goa it was. They had two other friends there that had given birth to children locally, and the kids were healthy and happy.

One morning Marley Willow woke up in their Goa house. It was early, as Marley had the habit of getting up at daylight. Soon as he walked into the living room, Indian police started coming in every window and door. He said he counted twenty-two police officers. They searched the whole house and found fifty-two grams of hash. His hashish stash for personal use.

This is never considered an important amount by Indian standards, but that day the police were acting like Marley was the most wanted outlaw in town. Then the Chief of Police of New Delhi showed up. He told Marley that he had him now and here he has a measly fifty-two grams of local hash in Goa, India. Really? Nobody gets busted for such a bullshit charge there.

This man was on a revenge binge against hippies who had lived in his capital New Delhi. It turns out he had picked Marley up because he had Roman's house in Goa under surveillance when he had visited him. He knew they had both lived in Mrs. Murwah's Guest House on Hanuman Road in New Delhi. Marley just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Here with his girlfriend eight months pregnant, him getting put in an Indian jail. This was ridiculous. It turns out that they had arrested Roman at the very same time and caught him with all that shit that Marley saw in his house just days before, but they took him straight to New Delhi, the capital.

Marley figured, first he had good connections here with the police. Second, he is not the prominent figure they are making him out to be, so he should be able to pay some dollars to the local police, and it will go away.

The next morning, after his having spent the night in jail, he saw his Indian connection walking by the jail cells.

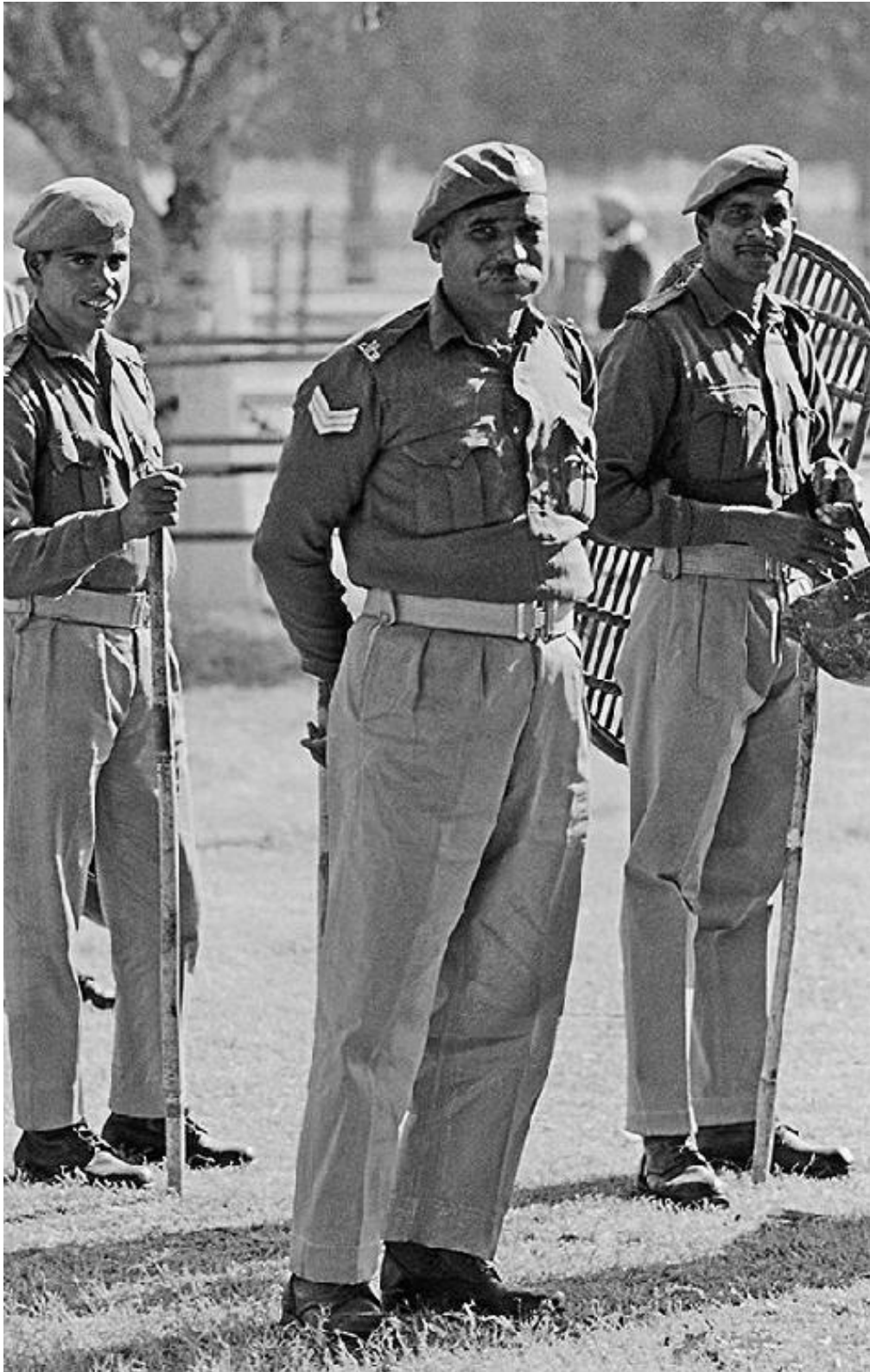
When he saw Marley, he asked him, "What are you doing in jail, Mr. Marley?"

"That is what I was going to ask you, man," Marley replied. "How can this happen, and I don't get a warning of the raid?"

"Hold on a few minutes, and I'll get you out of here Mr. Marley," his friend answered.

After a couple more hours in this extremely funky jail, he came back and they let Marley out, but he had some bad news for him. He could not pay his way out of this because the chief of police from New Delhi was personally following what happened to those he arrested that day.

It was like he had a crusade against Hippies who had lived in New Delhi.



New Delhi Police

Marley went back to their house, and Maria told him that their landlord said they had to leave their home because she did not want evil people living in her house. They both walked across the street to Marino's house and asked him if they could stay in his

extra room for the time being. He was happy to help as he was like family, so they moved their things from their house and moved into Marino's place along with some other friends of Maria's from Spain. It wasn't bad, even though quarters were a little close, but they did all get along fine despite the situation.

Anyway, Marley got as good a lawyer as was available, and he told him that they were asking the maximum sentence for smuggling drugs. Marley told him that fifty-two grams were not even enough to sell. He agreed that it was absurd, but they would have to wait and see how it played out.

For the moment, Marley was out of jail, and it would take a long time to get to court and that he would keep him posted. The next day Marley Willow's picture was in the local newspaper along with Roman's, right there on the front page.

Now they were public enemies. Marley said he thought it was at this time the Indian police started to recognize that Goa would have to be cleaned up.

Well, it is what it is. Right now, they were comfortable in Marino's house, and soon the baby would come. Maria's water broke on March twenty-first. Marley took her to the clinic for the labor and birth, but Maria did not dilate properly. Maicu was big, so the labor went on forever. Some forty-eight hours in all. She was in labor so long that the night of the birth the Indian doctor had already gone home and would not be back until the next day. Now they were with no real doctor and no blood transfusion if needed, although they did have an old Portuguese, Jesuit Nun to help with the birth. They communicated the best they could with Marley's Spanish, which now was better, and her Portuguese. She spoke no English at all except the phrase, "Good Pain."

In the end, she showed Marley where to cut Maria, to give the baby enough room to come out and his head appeared and little by little he came out. The umbilical cord looked like a spiral with many colors. Marley cut that too, and the Nun cleaned Maria and the baby up.

This was as scary an experience Maria or Marley had ever had. It is a miracle that they both lived. Maicu was big and robust and started crying straight away, but after this, Marley promised himself that if they have any more children, he was not going to be delivering the baby with some nun in a remote part of the world. This was a one-time thing for him.

In the clinic, Maria had a big room with lots of large windows. As was the hippy custom, about a dozen of their friends came to celebrate and started lighting up the chillums in Maria's clinic room, shouting Bom Shiva and started smoking hash to celebrate Maicu's birth. There was so much chillum smoke in the room that you could barely see. Until finally the head nurse came around and threw everyone out but the father. He was born on the night before the full eclipse of the full moon in India.

For years Willow was mixed up about the night of the full eclipse and thought it was in fact on the twenty-third. It was his son who researched it years later and told him the correct date and that the eclipse of the full moon was on the twenty-fourth. Like Marley said at the beginning of this book, he has always been terrible with dates and years and considering he had not slept for almost three days during the labor. That twenty-third of March was one of the two happiest and important moments in his life.

Maria was, of course, dead tired. How she survived such a difficult birth, Marley could not say, but straight away she started giving Maicu breast milk. They had a healthy son. Marley had been up so long he went to Marino's house for a night of sleep before he went back to the clinic. Since he had to make an incision in Maria, she had some stitches to be careful with and stayed in the clinic for three days. Then Marley took her and Maicu to their room at Marino's house where they stayed while she recuperated for the next few weeks.

Xavi had arrived in Goa, and he and Marley became running buddies as usual when together. They cruised around on the motorcycle lots of days to see what treasures we could find that the Portuguese left behind. Back then Marley figured he was born a picker. Xavi was looking primarily for wine. You can't take the wine away from the

Spanish for too long before they start to react.

One day they were in this ancient store, and the Goan owner told them he might have something they would be interested in. He pulled out an old wooden box and inside it had cardboard boxes. Inside the boxes, wrapped in wax paper were grease coated gold watches from the nineteen-forties.

Seventeen jewels, solid gold from Switzerland. The leather watchbands were decomposed but the time-pieces appeared to be in perfect condition, so they bought three. When they cleaned all the grease off of them, they worked perfectly, and they sure were quality vintage. Marley gave one to Maria when he got home and Xavi and he each kept one.

They never did find any good wine. The wine they found was probably a decades old, and it was vintage all right, but not properly stored. All of the wine had gone bad and had lots of sediment floating around in each bottle. They opened a couple of the bottles anyway but just confirmed what Xavi had said. They went bad years ago.



Anjuna Flea Market in Goa, India



Charmed Cobra

Lots of mornings Xavi and Marley would go down to the small fisherman's pier and buy giant king prawns and lobster right from the fishermen. A lobster was about seventy-five cents, and they were huge, and the jumbo prawns were even cheaper.

They also bought lots of baby shark. Filleted and grilled they were great. They kept providing lots of good fish and seafood for Maria to eat. Many mornings they had lobster for breakfast. Life in paradise, at least for a spell.

Chapter 35: The Great Escape

All during this time Marley was using every contact he had to get out of trouble with the Indian police. These charges in this country were absurd, but with no apparent way out, he got together with Xavi and Maria, and they planned Marley's escape from India back to Nepal. He said that he had no intention of spending a year or more in an Indian jail for a trumped-up charge for a few grams of hash, in a country where it is so abundant and customarily tolerated. He was a victim of circumstances. There was not one hippy in Goa without more hash than they had found in their house.

First Marley Willow got a European passport saying that he was a "school teacher." It was not a great job, but the price was right, and they figured it should work for some poorly educated police officer if they got stopped on the way. Then Xavi and Marley would take off for Nepal. They would ride the Honda motorcycle to Bombay. There they would put the bike on a train all the way to Lucknow. Then on the bike again to Gorakhpur and on to the Raxaul Birganj border. This time they were not taking a pleasure ride. It was Steve McQueen time, man.

Xavi was taking a chance trying to pull this off with Marley, but he insisted. He said it would be an adventure. Sometimes Marley asked himself, just how far all these adventures are going to take them. One experience too far and into the void they would go.

Once they were in Kathmandu, if everything went well, they planned to send word to Maria, and she would fly to Kathmandu with Maicu. This was a tough time for Maria. Maicu was only five weeks old. It was quite hard for Marley too. Especially considering the consequences if he got caught on the border, but he kept thinking positive. He had crossed these borders time and time again. It's just that this time he intended to do it with no papers. The fake passport was just to have a document as they crossed the length of India. He didn't want to use it on the border because that would be very illegal indeed.

Better to get caught with no papers than a forged European passport.

Xavi and Marley took off one morning in a good mood, feeling positive. Still far from the border so they did not mentally confront what they would have to face up to soon. They arrived at the Goa state border, and it was manned by police, and the gate was down. This state border post was not manned when Marley rode down to Goa with George. Why the change, he wandered suspiciously?

They asked themselves, did someone tell them about their escape plans? They left so fast, like they did because Marley figured both of them would be in Nepal before anyone noticed they were gone. The Goa judge had Marley's passport. Where could he go, right? At any rate, after showing them his European passport and Xavi his real Spanish one, they waved them through. That was an excellent sign. They might just make it. Marley figured that all of the foreigners looked similar to them.

While they were cruising along, they saw a small lake beside the road, between Bombay and Goa. It was so hot riding the motorcycle, they stopped and had a swim. Xavi jumped straight in, clothing and all.

"Hay Xavi, what time is it?" Marley called out to Xavi.

Shit! He was wearing the gold watch they had bought together. It had stopped working immediately, and Marley laughed his ass off. How they got from point A to point B in their travels, Marley said that at times he did not have a clue.

Near the lake, they saw a half a dozen Indian men and women taking bucket after bucket of water from a water hole. Marley asked them if they could have some water, as it looked clean. They obliged them happily. When he asked them if they wanted a drink from the bucket and they told them that this water was polluted, and they don't drink it.

Marley guessed they figured that as they were foreigners, they could drink any water. Lucky for them, they didn't get sick from the water that they used to water the vegetable fields. That would have made the trip a nightmare and slowed the two down considerably.

When they got to Bombay they loaded and insured the motorcycle all the way to Lucknow. That cut their trip time down by a substantial amount. This time they were in more of a hurry than ever before. Marley wanted to get this over with. In a short time, they were back on the motorcycle again and raced on their way to the Raxaul, Birganj border with Nepal. Marley said that they stopped at a chai shop, so he could put on a clean pair of jeans, a shirt that looked a bit military and his Spanish riding boots.

Marley stopped the bike and told Xavi he would walk from there. He should wait a bit and then pass after Marley had left.

"Good luck, man," Xavi told Marley Willow.

"You too buddy. Here we go," he replied.

He slowly walked toward the border to check it out. Standing back in the shadows of a building at times to observe. Waiting for the perfect moment to make his move to cross the border.

Soon Marley saw the daily foot traffic increase, and he waited and watched a bit more. At that very moment passed a dozen Nepalese workers with baskets of wood and tools and they were crossing the border to go to work. Marley walked out of the shadows and right up behind them and just walked directly through the customs. Like he owned it.

He did not dare to glance back to see who might be looking, but as he got through to the Nepalese side, Marley walked right up to the guard at the gated barrier and saluted him. He jumped up and returned the salute, and Marley said a few words to customs officer in Nepalese telling him he was doing a good job, and he just kept on walking right past the border. Eyes forward, never turning his head with nervous curiosity. Giving them no signs of disquietude.

He really could hardly believe it. It appeared that nobody had noticed. He then headed for a pond he saw quite a ways away, but a bit off of the road. Marley figured once he got that far away he was home free. When he got there, Marley said that saw the largest vultures he had ever seen in his life. They were nearly as tall as he was as they stood around the pond, and they were looking at him like, 'that looks like dinner,' but he was not done for. Marley would survive another day. Feeling confident he arose no conjecture, he headed back for the road and waited for Xavi.

What Xavi forgot to tell Marley is that he had never ridden a large cylinder motorcycle before. Otherwise, they would have had a crash course before the border crossing. He was carrying their smoke stash and the amphetamines they used to travel nonstop, but all his papers were in order. And when he shakily arrived at the border he managed to pass and not crash the motorcycle. When Marley asked Xavi what took him so long he told him he could not find first gear. How crazy is that?

Now they were in the Tahri and figured they would get a hotel and clean up and relax as Marley had a Nepalese driver's license, which would do for him were they to ask for his papers. The two adventuresome hippies slept like the dead till the next day. Now they had the Raj Path in front of them again, but they felt like supermen at that point. Nobody could stop them.

The ride up the Raj Path went without incident. They pulled up to the house in Swayambhu. Just before they had left for Goa, as they did not know how long they would stay down there, Maria and Marley let go of the home in Bali Ju and packed up their things. Upon their return, they would move into a house in Swayambhu, which a friend of Marley's had left for them so they watched it for him until he came back to Kathmandu. The house came complete with a 250cc. Royal Enfield motorcycle in perfect shape. Couldn't beat that deal. He said he would be gone for three months. It

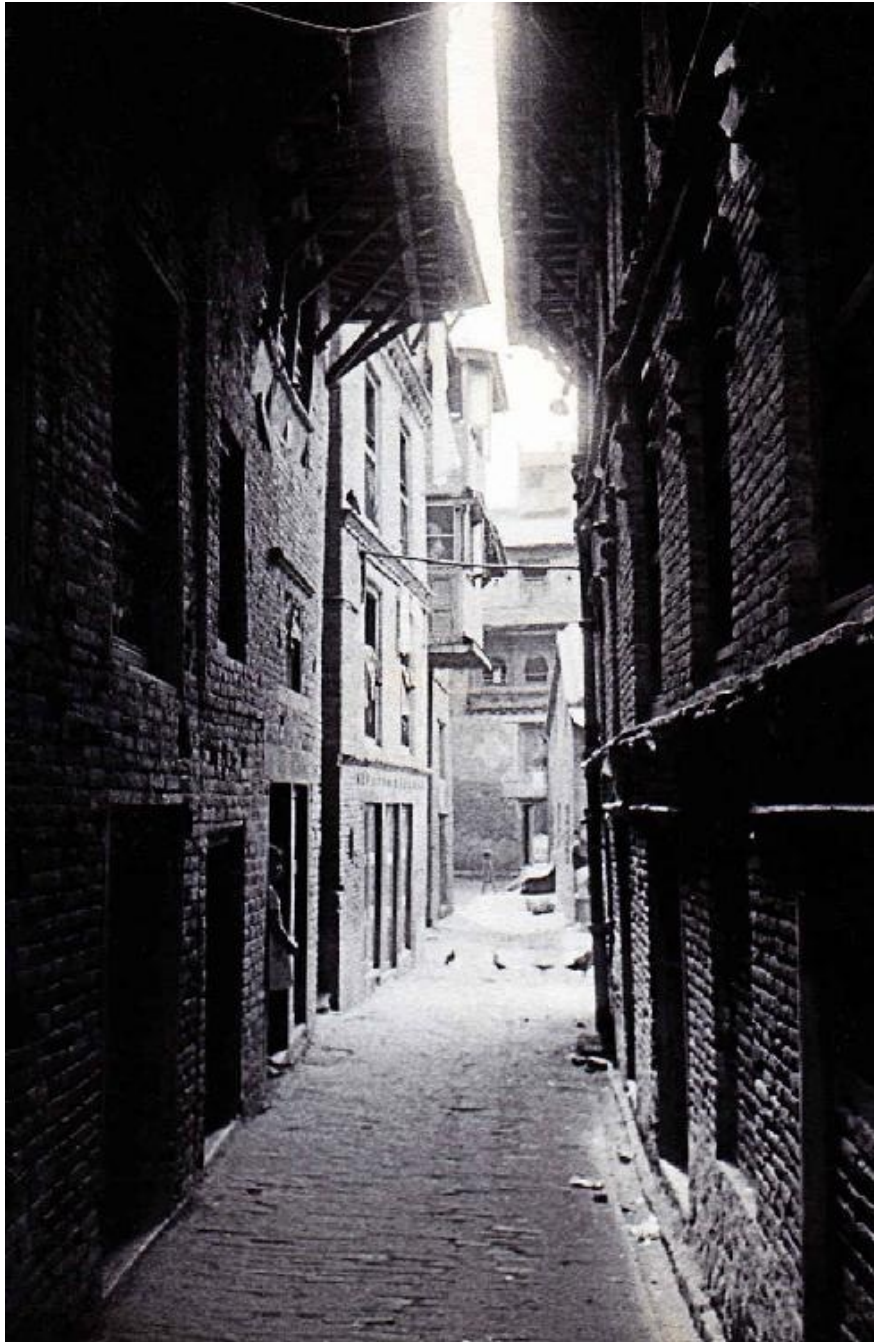
turned out he was gone for more than a year.

Marley sold his Honda with the truck part, the BMW gas tank and Nepali license plate and papers as he had just put two-thousand-six-hundred hard miles on it and he did not trust that Tata truck part long-term and he could still get a pretty penny for the bike. He sold it in a couple of days to another newbie "hope to be a Katmandu hippy-type." Marley told him to have fun with the bike man. He sure had. That night Xavi and Marley drank a bottle of some sweet liquor. Super sweet but the only thing they could find to drink. It sure did get them drunk and down off the speed, but they had super hangovers the next day. That combined with the wear and tear and nervous tension they had from the last few days left them deflated.

In a few days, Maria showed up with their son Maicu. Everybody was home, safe and sound. Maicu was healthy, and Maria was just as strong as ever. Marley just had to figure out what to do about not having a passport, but as he was now in Nepal, he was sure that he would come up with a way to work it out. Plus, there is no rush. Everybody in Katmandu knew him, and no one was going to ask for his passport, nor his visa. If they did, he would just tell them that he lost it in the last few days and had no time to go to the Embassy to request another one. They chilled out and licked their wounds after the ordeal in Goa. It was pretty much a disaster from beginning to end. Although the idea was sound at first, it just did not turn out to be their paradise to



Shiva Shanker



Streets of Kathmandu

live in with a baby. Marley was much safer in Nepal too. Mind you, this didn't change his attitude towards Indians. He still has great respect for their culture. As he had mentioned before, he felt he was a victim of unfortunate circumstances. Had he not visited Roman that day, maybe it would have all turned out differently. But for him in the end, all that counted was that all three of them were safe and that he did not get his buddy Xavi in trouble, with him on the run.

They lost Xavi to a car accident some years later. It was one of the most significant shocks in Marley's life. His car hit a tree just outside Barcelona, Spain. Marley said that he remembered the day like it was yesterday. They were in Spain when it happened. It was like losing a brother.

Chapter 36: Things are Changing

Marley went back with his motor "Mystery" buddy George, and they looked around for what they could buy or sell. It is funny how things change. At first, they made their money with the most apparent supply and demand issues, but other people catch on to whatever it is you are doing, and things have to change.

Like George and Marley selling their buses in the South of Nepal now rather than in Kathmandu, that had become overwhelmed with travelers from more companies like the "Magic Bus" booking company from Holland." With more busloads of hippies showing up every day.

Lately, the people from the US Embassy were having parties where some of the local hippies were invited, or they came to some of the local hippies' parties. They were for the most part, pretty cool and wanted to rub elbows with the expatriate locals who had lived in Nepal for years. The first party Marley went to was held in the house of the head of the department to control the growth of opium in Nepal, so George and Marley went to check it out.

They had pot and hash, although discrete, as at this time it was pretty much acceptable and legal in Nepal. Even some cocaine occasionally began to show up at their parties as they were nearing the later nineteen-seventy fashion of having coke for one's friends. Up to now, it was still pharmaceutical. They would all get to know each other a little and get high. They asked no embarrassing questions, and the local hippy residents gave up no information other than the legal business they did, like the buying and selling of cars, trucks, and buses.

George and Marley attended quite a few of these events. George was usually invited as he maintained the Land Rovers for the Peace Corp, so as his assistant Marley Willow had an excuse for being there.

He said he guessed working with George meant he was an acceptable individual. Plus, they all wanted to meet the guys who destroyed the ATV tractor that was to be used to transport the hydroelectric generators to the mountain villages. In the end, they made some valuable friends.

One of them was the official who approves the new passports in the American Embassy. They all knew Marley was American as he had been in the embassy before to renew his expired passport. This time he wanted to go there to claim that he lost his passport. A little shakier, as the mules or drug carriers would get too many stamps in their passports and claim they lost them at the embassy. Sometimes it worked and sometimes it did not. In addition to that, Marley had no idea if the American Embassy in Kathmandu knew anything about his problems in India.

As the parties continued and they all got to know each other better, and Marley felt secure enough to try and use one of his new friends from the embassy to get a new passport. Just as he had hoped, it was approved, much to the dismay of the two Nepalese assistants in the embassy. At the end of the day, he got a brand new real American passport again. He could legally travel. He just had a new ninety-day Nepali visa stamped in the fresh passport, and for only a hundred dollars, he was good to go again.

At that time there was a shortage of good Afghani hash in Nepal. Most of the more commercial Afghani hash is made on the Pakistan side of the Pakistani border, in the North of the country. It comes from the tribal areas, but it was dark green, soft, smelled good and could be delivered. Every bus that went from Nepal, India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan towards Europe got torn apart. At one border or another, if not more than one, so it was not safe going west.

But who is looking for someone taking the same cargo in the opposite direction, going eastbound? Exactly. No one. George had just bought another blue bus. They

both liked blue buses. They cleaned the bus up super good. It was already blue, so they painted an American Express sign on the side of the bus in big gold letters, so it looked like an American Express Tour Bus.

They were to pick up some passengers in Kathmandu. Then George would drive down to New Delhi and spend maybe two or three days in the city. They needed passengers but not too many, and they agreed to be picky in order not to have any more suspicious characters on the bus than necessary. The next stop would be, Kabul. George put a sign on the bus saying the bus would be leaving Kabul for India and Nepal in seven days. Marley had flown into Kabul airport a couple of days earlier to make all the arrangements and met up with George because he now could not go to India.

That night they met with Marley's Afghani friend, who was a contact he still had from Roman. It looked like he was still solid. So, they drove northeast from Kabul on up by Chitral, Marley believed. The Afghani was driving their bus, and it was night, so they didn't know what side of the border they were actually on. They had a garage all ready and waiting along with the one hundred kilos of Afghan hash. They lifted the body of the bus right off the chassis and hid the hashish in between the two. Then they fixed the body of the bus to the frame again. The two hippies paid the bill, and the Afghani drove them back to Kabul, over the dark and barren roads. The Afghani knew the routes they could travel and not be stopped by the police.

George and Marley both knew the hash was there, so they kept thinking they could smell it, although as soon they were back in Kabul, with the bus loaded and they had to hang out to get enough passengers for it to look normal on the return trip to Nepal. They sat there for five days until they had about twenty-five passengers. George dropped Marley off at the Kabul airport, and he flew back to Kathmandu.

Now, to wait to see if everything goes as planned. It would take George at least a couple of weeks to get back. When he did arrive, he swore that he had the hash smelling Afghani on the bus checking him out. Everyone had heard about this Afghan man who could smell hash just like a drug dog, but he was always on the Western border of Afghanistan. Where the loaded buses are typically caught on their way to Europe. George was just paranoid.

At any rate, nothing happened and when the bus arrived George parked it in the plaza with the rest of the buses, but with a Gurkha* guard on the bus. Lots of Gurkhas, retired from the British Military and then worked for the foreigners as security or to keep their house garden and kept an eye on things. That way they knew that the bus was safe. Nobody fucks with Gurkhas.

The next day they reversed the operation and took the bus off the chassis again with a hoist and chains. Then removed the hash from its hiding place and fixed the bus to the frame again. For them, it was not as easy or as fast as when they saw the Afghanis do it up in the Hindu Kush. They apparently had lots of practice, and our two hippy friends didn't.

They found a place to hide the Afghani hash in an old garage they used at times. Not a bad deal with the minimum amount of risk, and they made good money and smoked excellent hashish for a long time.

A few new foreign arrivals came to town. They had come with an Australian friend that already had lived in Kathmandu for some years, and had an ex-wife who still lived there. He was heavy in the hash business. This half dozen people settled in Kathmandu in a mansion. It had enough room for each one and then some, and it had a big living room with a massive fireplace where they held their nightly house parties.

Marley was not invited to their first party, nor was George. It was for the upscale locals. Just for Antonio's crowd and clients. Even though we probably made as much money as many of them, George and Marley were still grease monkeys. Hell, they were OK with that. They would rather be like one of the Nepalese. It fit their characters better than living the posh life.

Marley was having the Spanish jeweler make him a small bat ring made of silver,

with gold bats on the sides and a little emerald center stone. Not a big ring but with a lot of detail. He was also working Maria's wedding ring. It was a 100-year-old Nepalese ring in gold. It had Shiva Tridents on the sides with a crown below the sapphire stone he had Antonio put in it. The only one of its kind. She still wore it 40 years later.

Besides being a great jeweler, he knew he was the guy who buzzed around like a bee, delivering grams of pharmaceutical cocaine, he gets in India, to the Kathmandu locals with money. It was currently the thing to do, everywhere from Kathmandu to Los Angeles. Finally, Marley asked Antonio if he would be interested in having the real thing. Colombian Cocaine.

"What do I have to do to get it, Marley?" he asked. "My clients were not happy with the synthetic shit that I get from India."

"I will arrange to get it if you sell it for me," Marley replied always looking for a new business. "I have no interest in getting into the retail part of the business, and you already have the clients. Plus, here is it not illegal yet."

He offered Marley ninety dollars a gram at that time. He was selling the synthetic for seventy dollars a gram, so there were no issues with the price. It was merely that there was a significant demand and no supply whatsoever combined with the fact that it was legal.

Marley got a message out to his old buddy in Colombia, Roger. They agreed that he would pay him up front for 100 grams of ether-based Colombian coke. He would have another friend put them into a book and would send it to an address and person where it was assured the book post would not be tampered with. Marley said that he did not know if this was a great idea as he looked back. At the moment he saw nothing wrong with it, but it was something that he surely would not do in his later years in life.

At the time it was one of the four socially accepted drugs in almost all societies. Grass, Hash, Speed, and Cocaine. Pretty much an acceptable group of drugs with the elite. Then things like LSD, Magic Mushrooms, Peyote, and psychoactive natural medicines were considered dodgier. And the rest like Opium, Morphine, Heroin, were the unacceptable drugs to most of the community. These were the Kathmandu local's rules in general. Although not obeyed by all.

Back then cocaine was not illegal in Nepal, so Marley was not breaking any Nepalese law. In Colombia, everything was paid off, so there was no problem there either. He figured what the hell. It is not a vast quantity, it is easy to hide, and it is in demand by everyone where he lived and available to none. Mainly, nobody was going to get into trouble. By this time his other sources of income, like the buses, cars and motorcycles were drying up. It was a no-brainer. And Marley had to keep the cash flow going as now he had a family to think about.

Remember, back then they were not worried about damaging their minds as much as getting high to experience new forms of thought and consciousness. And at the same time to have fun. Never considering the damage that it could cause, long-term.

They waited to see how Marley's plan worked. He figured it would take two or three weeks. Depending on how long they took in Bogotá. Roger could quickly get off track and take two months rather than two weeks.

As Kathmandu life carried on, at home, Maria and Marley took on a housemaid as George and June did. Her name was Luxmi. Maicu, their son, loved her. She was a great babysitter, and she was learning how to make some western dishes from Ratna, George's housekeeper. Maicu was a mellow baby, especially considering the circumstances during and after his birth. Once he started to crawl and walk he was into everything in their house as they had everything on the floor. Everything set at floor level like a local Nepali house, but as soon as Maicu started to crawl, they had to put up high shelves to keep him out of things. He was already beginning to understand some Spanish, English and Nepalese. The first signs that the little boy would become a genius later in life.

They loved their house. Living right by the temple was cool. Great Vibrations. The only hassle they had with Maicu was at night they could not get him to go to sleep unless they took him for a ride on the motorcycle. Pretty much as soon as they were around the block, he was asleep for the night. Eventually, they just took him down to the shed where the bike was stored and sat on it with him. Started the engine and he would go to sleep. This was like every single night.

There were a few guys that had houses in Kathmandu who lived in Bangkok, Thailand. They were the heavy hitters. Moving tons of grass in Thailand, and when they wanted a break, they would come to the small mansions they had made for themselves in the Kathmandu Valley. They would take a break of a month or so in a place where they could relax and not have to look over their shoulders all the time.

Marley's buddy Tommy was one of these that lived in Thailand, but he stayed with Marley when he was in town. He would tell him crazy stories from Bangkok and the Vietnam War. He, in turn, would tell Tommy crazy stories about Nepal, India, Afghanistan and South America.

He told me that one time he and his partners made a grass deal that yielded a twenty-thousand-dollar profit. They were all celebrating and very stoned from the Thai sticks that they had just sold. Tommy said they were smoking the samples and everybody wanted to eat. They parked the car and went to the Thai floating market in Bangkok for a celebration meal. When they were done with their dinner and a bottle of Mekong whiskey they could not remember where they had parked the car. Knowing that in the car, on the backseat was the briefcase Tommy had left with the twenty thousand dollars in it. It took them until nightfall to find the vehicle. Lucky for Tommy, the cash was still there. In the nineteen-seventies, twenty grand was an enormous amount of money.

Well, there was another guy like that, although much more discrete than my friend Tommy, and a much more significant heavy hitter. Marley knew him some, as they are both Americans and he was an old friend of Tommy's, and he was already friends with George and June. He had an enormous place he had built for him years before. Marley was there a couple of times, and it even had a huge greenhouse. The kitchen was massive with all the most modern appliances. It sat there empty for a year at a time until this character from Bangkok got around to taking a break.

He had been going to the parties the embassy workers were putting on pretty much every weekend. It turned out, in the end, he was having an affair with the wife of the official in charge of the control of the opium cultivation. How crazy is that?

Marley said that he didn't think her husband ever found out, but he knew that it went on for a while. She even took a couple of trips to Thailand to meet and stay with him. She was a friend of June's. This guy was selling tons and tons of grass, and she was married to an American diplomat in charge of anti-drug cultivation for the country. It was a good thing no one ever found out. How would that go over with the embassy and the US government? Not too good Marley thought, and the husband was a very nice guy.

Eventually, this particular friend of theirs finally got caught in Thailand with a General from the army, with tons of grass by the Thai customs and there was a big write-up in the paper. Last Marley had heard he had gotten a very long sentence and was sent back to the US to do his time. It seems he had been paying everybody off for years. Things caught up with him. I think he just got too big to hide out in the population of Bangkok, which is hard to imagine.

Well, Marley's book with the cocaine in it arrived safely. He did not have to hide it, as it was not illegal in Nepal. Marley just had to keep it from the thieves. In theory, nobody should even know he was Spanish Antonio's source. Hopefully, for a while, it would stay that way. Marley thought that he had just set up a profitable system that required no work on his part at all. Also, there is no legal risk for any of them. Sweet.

After he had taken the coke out of the book and had inspected the quality, he was

ready to take it to Antonio to get to work. Back then the only way to check if the coke was not cut was to burn some on a piece of aluminum foil. If uncut, it would all melt to an amber color. If it was cut it usually showed up with some black and crusty pieces, which is the cut. That and of course try it. The coke that Roger sent must have been 95% pure, coming directly from Bogotá.

Marley got the package out that he was going to give to Antonio first. About 25 grams, just to make sure things go well and don't get out of line and he got paid. The two business men had some lines together which was what was expected of him and from his part of the stash. Just to prove that it was the real thing. It was like pieces of glass, perfectly dry. It turned out to be some very potent product.

Antonio freaked out. It was the best coke he had ever had. He wanted to get to get busy and weigh it out and get the first samples to his clients. That indicated it was time for Marley to make his departure. Antonio wanted Marley to stay with him while he weighed it out, but he passed. Marley tried to remain as discreet as possible, for as long as possible. If any of Antonio's clients showed up right then, he did not want to be around.

One day when they had nothing to do, Maria and Marley went to his Baba by the Chovar Gorge outside Katmandu. He was doing fine, and they asked him to marry them. It apparently was not anything official, but they had a son and figured some type of wedding was in order, so their Baba did a little ceremony for them.

Marley said that their Baba was an extraordinary human being. Years and years later, Maria's mother went on a tourist trip to Kathmandu and wouldn't you know it. She met their Baba somehow and came back home with a picture of him. It's the one here in the book. After like fifteen years of their departure from Asia. Strange things happen more often than you would expect. Coincidence? Destiny? Marley said that he always wondered.

He was invited to a party at Danish Hans's house. His place was prominent, and quite a few Danes were living in Kathmandu off and on. That night Hans pulled out some Colombian coke. They passed it all around. He must have passed five grams around the circle of people at the party. He asked Marley how he liked the coke. Him knowing it was from his stash, he told him it was great. What else was he going to say? They all had a great time that night. Coke, Snaps, Hash, and Grass.

It was not a week gone by when Antonio came by Marley's house to get some more of the coke. He paid him for the twenty-five grams, and Marley gave him another twenty-five grams. He told him that everybody loved it, but he had only visited half of his customers and restricted the purchase of over three grams each to give everybody a chance to have some.

He told Marley he was going to visit the new group in the mansion. Marley still had not met them. But he figured he will run into them when he ran into them. They sounded like a wild crew with lots of money. All of those that lived in the Kathmandu Valley, eventually met each other, although, there was no hurry.

George and June had a baby boy too. They named him Gary. He was big and healthy and blond like Maicu. One day Ratna took Gary and Luxmi took Maicu to have their first Nepalese Rice Puja. It was to celebrate the first day that they ate rice. They had colorful flower necklaces on, with the Puja flower marks on their foreheads. They loved it and looked great but most excited were Ratna and Luxmi. The boys were just like they were little Nepalese children with the exception of their blond hair.

In the meantime, the coke thing was going too well. Antonio was selling what Roger had sent over fast. The local foreigners and some wealthy Nepalese loved the product, and they all seemed to have loads of money to spend on it. Antonio had mentioned to Marley that some of the clients wanted more significant quantities. Although he told him he would get more, it is going to always be small time, so Marley ordered another book with one hundred grams in it and waited for the book post to arrive.

Dana, one of the American locals, was quite the artist. Strange art but captivating.

He went to Bali on a little vacation. He was riding a motorcycle in the countryside and hit a water buffalo and was killed. It was sad news.

It was normal for one of us to disappear occasionally but not usually to have confirmed deaths like this one. Dana had just finished making a book with Ira Cohen in Kathmandu. It was a book of dark poetry by Ira and darker drawings by Dana. It was called the "Opium Bimetals."

It apparently was influenced by the strange dreams that occur when one smokes opium. A few artists were living in Katmandu during Marley's stay. It was an incredible mix of nationalities and people from all walks of life.

The party scene was getting more and more intense. Maybe part of that was due to the cocaine. It is odd that today what we would consider wrong, then most everybody would think acceptable.

Back then it seemed fine, and nobody, where Marley lived, thought any less of him for what he did. People were taking lines in the restaurants because it was legal. The foot tapper was busy most nights. The new residents were having big parties all the time in their mansion.

Marley finally met their supposed leader one morning when I was Carpet Carl's. The guy's name was Bob, and he must have been about sixty years old at the time, but what a party freak! He did have a huge personality, so if nothing else he created curiosity. When Marley ran into him at Carl's house, he was wired from coke. He even jumped up on the dining room table and started dancing.

This was like eleven in the morning and him over sixty years old. He invited Marley to his house party that night. He went along with George, and it was insane. They knew most everybody there and even a couple of people from the embassy. It turns out there was seven of them, three women and four men. It was said that they were moving large quantities of hash, but who knows. One was crazier than the other. They must have been doing something right, the way they were spending money.

They had a party pretty much every night. Mostly coke heads. Although Marley was reasonably sure that they're business was hash. Bob bragged that they had so many parties they had a housekeeper that would come in at five in the morning just to clean up their party mess. She would make them breakfast and then leave. Supposedly they would eat and then start to party again. Insane.

Another fun character that lived in Kathmandu was Rhino Al. He was a South African big game hunter before he came to Kathmandu. He had a registered elephant gun. If one of the villages had a tiger or rogue elephant endangering the towns in the South of Nepal, where the large wild animals were, they would call Al to take care of the problem. Of course, hunting large game was controlled in Nepal, but at times some animals had to be put down because they had killed some village person or threatened a village. Rhino Al eventually rented the King's Park on the edge of Kathmandu. It was a pretty large Big Game Park. Right in the middle of the Kathmandu Valley. Al had just bought his first elephant too. He would take tourists to the park to see the wildlife in the forest on the elephant.

One day they were all hanging at Rhino Al's park, and he was feeding his oversized pet Nepalese Chung, which was rice-beer. That elephant got drunk and scared the hell out of them all. Marley said he thought the elephant was going to kill one of them before Al could get it back under control. He never gave the elephant Chung beer again.

He took them on a couple of elephant rides, with Al's Nepalese wife, Maria, Maico and Marley. It was fun. One day they made a picnic lunch and went to a hill with a good view of the forest, on the elephant.

Al took no drugs at all but did like his drink. The problem with Nepal, there was little good alcohol there, and the real thing was costly. It was, pay the high prices or drink "Rockshi." It was the local drink that taste like gasoline.

One other time George and Marley tried to start a business in Nepal reprocessing used motor oil. Gasoline was over six dollars a gallon and the price of oil there was very high too. If they could take the old oil and filter it out and reprocess it, they would make excellent money, and they would have a long-term business.

Somehow someone in the Royal family found out what they planned to do and would not give them the permits. Maybe members of Royal Family had the monopoly on the gasoline and oil coming into the country? Who knows? Probably something like that. Perhaps they didn't want cheap oil in their market.

That was the end of that. In small isolated countries there are always things like this happening. Perhaps they just did not want them to have that good a financial hold in Nepal.

One day it was announced in Nepal that there would be a motorcycle helmet law, where everyone riding on a motor scooter or motorcycle will be forced have to buy a helmet. One of the royal family members imported 50,000 motorcycle helmets of which each of them riding bikes, had to buy one.

The good thing was sixty days after the law was in effect the police let them ride their motorcycles again without helmets. Like the law never existed. Marley guessed the well-connected individual ran out of helmets to sell.

As all easy things must come to an end, another South African guy started bringing coke into Nepal. It was obviously going to happen, and he managed to wedge himself in between Spanish Antonio and Marley, by underpricing him, so in the end, he decided to sell what he had left and then shut down the books from Colombia.

By then most people that lived permanently in Kathmandu knew Marley was the one supplying Antonio anyway. At least the ones that were interested in the product. There were too few foreigners living in such a tight-knit community to keep secrets for very long. It was easy enough, although a bother to have people coming to their house all the time.

Marley and everybody else were getting too screwed up on the coke now. At first, it is a line with a glass of beer. Then it is a few lines, and one night you stay up for hours doing it and then it is out of control. Time to go back to the hash and leave the rest alone.

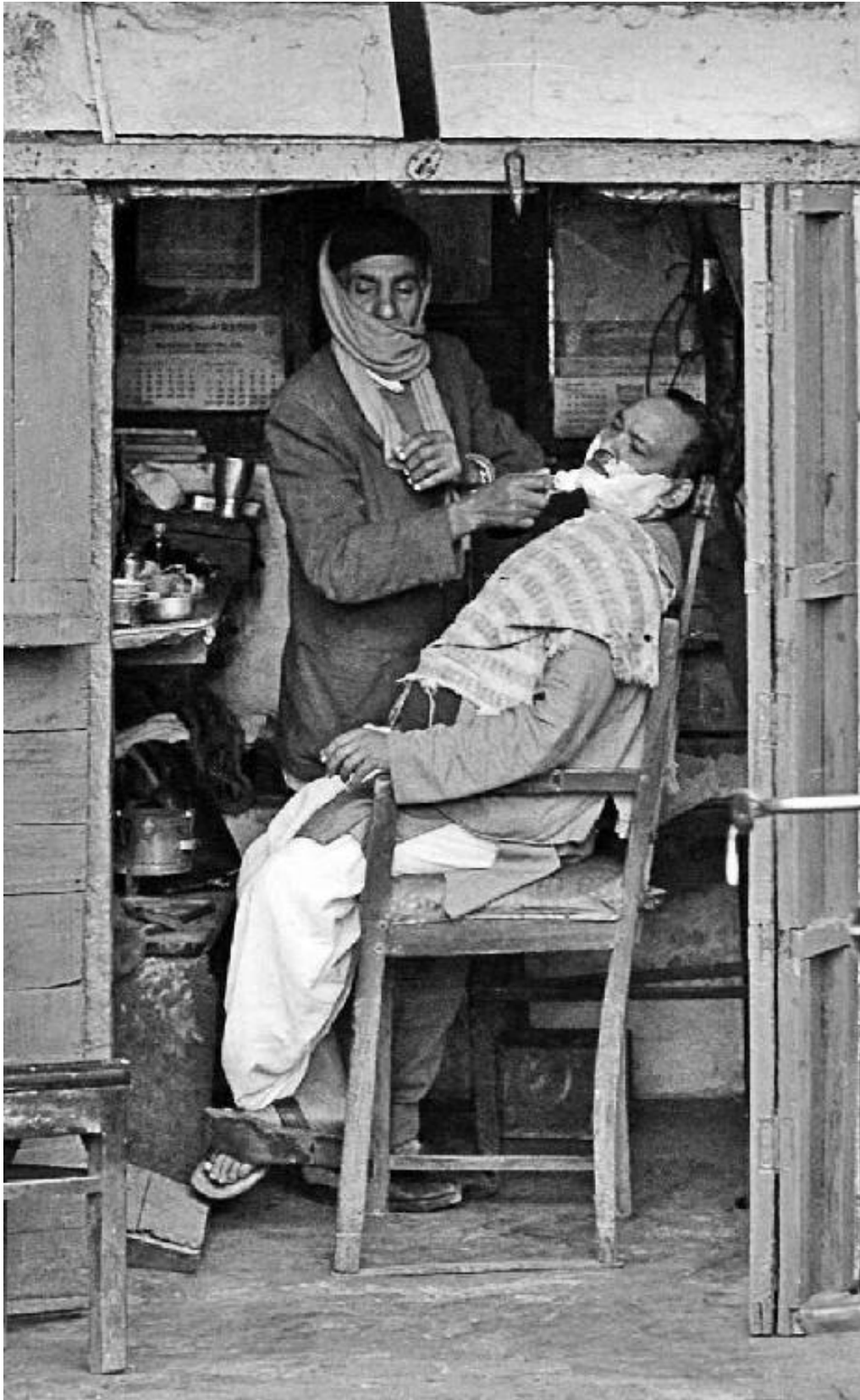
Tommy was making one of his regular visits from Thailand, and as usual, he stayed in Marley's house. He gave him a little bit of the hash he had and some of the coke he was selling. He also loaned him a spare car Marley had kicking around hoping to sell.

It was an old Citroen 2 CV. It was a little metal box of a car with front-wheel drive. They would go anywhere a jeep could go so Marley figured it was safe to loan to Tommy.

That night Marley Willow was busy with some other obligations, so Tommy went out on the town on his own. During past visits, he had shown him around and introduced him to the people to know, and to the Foot Tapper, so he was treated as a local.

Tommy arrived back at Willow's house in the morning and was he ever drunk and stoned. Man! The crew from, Bangkok were the hardest party animals.

When Marley went down to move the car, he noticed that both front tires were flat. Tommy was so drunk that he had driven the car around the entire night and without noticing that he had two flat tires.



Barber Shop in Northern India

Now the tires were now in shreds. Marley didn't know whether to get pissed off or laugh. He chose just to let it go. Shit happens. After all, they were in Katmandu, and he knew Tommy would happily pay for the damage.

When Marley told Tommy, later that day when he woke up, he could not believe it. He made it good by buying him two new tires and rims. Marley came out ahead, and George and he both had a good laugh. Marley had always trusted Tom. Although, probably not with his life.

Tommy stayed with them for a couple of weeks like he usually did. He always had to get back to Bangkok for one thing or another, but it was still great for Marley and Maria to see him and spend time with him.

They did not consider themselves dealers. They just did it where it was a semi-illegal risk, and it provided them with enough money to have a security blanket. The less coke they touch, the less they would take as well. The occasional taste is not a problem, but it is a drug that gets away from you really fast.

Back then it was an acceptable means of making an income. Due to the popularity among the rich and famous, it seemed that nearly everyone was taking cocaine. In the US they were catching politicians taking it, Police Chiefs taking it. Movie Stars were making jokes about it on television. Famous musicians were making songs about it like Eric Clapton. Thus, making it socially acceptable for those times.

Like Marley had mentioned before, it even showed up discreetly at the US Embassy parties in Kathmandu. Today Marley said he didn't consider it as an acceptable drug. Especially once it was being converted into Crack, but they are victims of their times, and in the seventies, it was an OK thing to do. It was pretty much just for the wealthy.

On the other hand, Marley still personally felt that the grass or hashish had never been a dangerous psychoactive plant. Each individual had to make this decision and control how much they used, but when you consider that pot had been used for medicinal purposes for over three-thousand-years years. As far back as the Egyptians and has only been illegal for a few years due to pressure from the US. When you look at the big picture of after 30 centuries of use, the laws seemed absurd.

Today one sees that little by little, country by country, it is being made legal again and being used as medicine for a broad spectrum of illnesses. Marley said that he himself had several friends that used it during chemotherapy treatment against cancer, and it changed their lives. And they continued to smoke, long after they were cured of cancer.

Marley Willow also kept buying and selling cars and motorcycles, which had less and less of a profit as more freaks then ever arrived with vehicles. Too much product and not enough demand.

Working out contacts with his friends and clients, but always trying to stay small time enough that no significant interest should be turned towards him and his family. They were also continually looking for a new idea or scam to help survive in a foreign country. He made the occasional trip with George to the Chinese border with a few tourists, but it was not a good means of income. In his opinion, at the time, several sources of income were always better if possible, just in case one or two of them dried up. Now he had a son to support, along with Maria.

At the moment Marley was still selling the rest of his coke in Kathmandu, as he had such a reliable source and loyal clients, although now he was getting known for what he was doing. Still being legal it did not worry him very much, but any day it was going to be made illegal. Even grass and hash would eventually become illegal in Nepal. When Marley Willow arrived in Nepal, the Government Hashish stores still existed which sold hashish openly, and they disappeared due to the pressure put on the King to at least make it more discrete. It was the Asian politicians bending under the influence of the western countries.

Chapter 37: Nomadic Bug

Marley said to be honest, being a father at 24 and living in Nepal was a difficult situation for him at times. Don't misunderstand. His son was and remained his life as did his daughter, but Maria and he were still very young. Women have so much mother instinct, which Marley believed made the change for them much more natural. Perhaps easier to become accustomed to than for a very young man of twenty-five.

A man maybe thirty years old or so would be more prepared for fatherhood, in Marley's opinion. He fought with it within himself some, as he was so young and such a rebel. If you live the life Marley lived you were considered relatively wild, by most standards. Plus, in their lifestyle, a person worked on survival. Living to survive, if something goes wrong, is much less forgiving when you are living nearly eight thousand miles from your home roots and any family.

The process of his becoming a father was a bit slower than Maria's. He still partied while she abstained. He still wanted to go on bus trips to unknown territory. Always looked for challenges, but being a father meant that most of those things were not in his family's best interest any longer.

Nepal also started to feel like a routine after a while. Marley said he guessed we get used to everything, but Maria and he began to discuss things like where Maicu should live. He was already one year old, and they knew that the local education would not do, so maybe they should start to look for someplace normal and not such a harsh environment, with such a lack of civilization.

In Nepal, the average life expectancy was about fifty years old, stretching things a bit. Although they knew it would not affect them as much as the average Nepalese, it now was something to consider. The lack of proper sewage systems in the capital along with the absence of running water in most homes was an issue. Combined with the inadequacy of the local hospital services.

These things did affect them with a son. All these things they had done without, as hippies. Although they still considered themselves to be hippies, they indeed were not as much as a hippy or freaky as they had been four years earlier. No more living from day to day. Having a son changed them in so many ways.

Maicu got pneumonia once when he was young in Kathmandu and lucky for Marley and Maria they had a friend that was a well-known surgical doctor from the States, who spent his free time with his Japanese wife in Kathmandu. They went to him, and he took care of their son, but they knew that they were always limited when you lived at the end of the world, in as far as civilization is concerned. Now they were not just responsible for themselves.

They talked about many places. Thailand? At the moment it was pretty wild as the Vietnam War had not been over that long, and the environment was still pretty crazy. Most all of Marley's friends and contacts there were sketchy with the law. Though Thai schools were more than adequate, and the Thai hospitals were very modern. Thai people are as lovely as the Nepalese, and they like Americans as well. In general, the environment was, much more civilized.

Marley also had to make sure that he could arrange some income wherever it was that they went. They had saved up enough money to make a change, but leaving Nepal was something that Marley had never considered before Maicu was born. He had the idea that he could live in Nepal forever.

Return to Spain and take up a life there? This did not sound as bad to Marley as he barely knew Spain and he liked it. But this was not something that Maria wanted to do yet. That would come some years later. They could always go to South America, which Marley already knew and could work as a translator for the Oil Companies or some other American company. By this time his Spanish was finally fluent, and it was Maria's

native language. Now Maria spoke fluent English as well. At just over one-year-old, Miacu already understood some Spanish and English, even though he was still too young to talk.

Marley was sure he was not ready to live in any of the English-speaking countries. There had to be a place where they could still explore and not be dictated entirely by society. They finally agreed on South America. It was still wild, much like Nepal was four years before, but with modern medicine and good schools, though you could still find plenty of places to have adventures.

There was very little population compared to Asian countries. Marley had already had quite a few South American adventures before Nepal, so he was comfortable with the decision. He also had quite a few friends living in South America already so settling down there wouldn't be much of a problem.

Plus, on the health aspect of it, Marley had experienced stomach problems for four years at that point, from the contaminated water in Asia and he did not know how many years he could keep taking Flagyl whenever needed.

Kathmandu was already changing with many more tourists with money. Some of the local foreign residents were even having some problems with the Nepalese authorities. Danish Hans was locked up for no apparent reason. He was in jail for almost a month before he could sort it out. Marley never asked him the details. Years later he heard Hans had passed away from too much partying. He just withered away and died there in Kathmandu.

Will also noted that in South America, he not only could get a legal job, he could also provide what his friends lacked. Good Afghani hash. Their marijuana was as cheap as a dollar or two a gram in some countries, but excellent hashish was at a premium price, as no one knew how to make it nor sold it.

Once again, they had an environment with lots of extra cash and an open market for things they don't have. Marley saw no problem making a living in any of several countries in which he had friends.

They started planning to move on to a new place in another land. They said a very sad "Adios" to Kathmandu and their friends there and caught a flight to their new home country, on another continent, eleven thousand miles away.

The End.



Nepalese Children in Nepal

On A Sad Note

About a year after their departure from Kathmandu, they got the shocking news that Marley's overland bus partner, George, had lost his life on the mountain road to Kodari, on the Tibetan border. He had started taking tourists from Kathmandu to the Tibetan border in a smaller bus, always looking for a new business.

While they were on their way to the border, the road washed away, and George's bus slipped over the edge of the road. As it sat on the edge of a drop, hundreds of feet down, he grabbed his son Gary and passed him out the window to save his life. Just as he was passing his son out the window, the bus slipped some more, and George's arm was severed. As luck would have it, everybody got off the bus before it fell off the cliff and they even got George out. All passengers were unharmed except for George.

They flagged down a car to take him to Kathmandu hospital some two hours away, but sadly George bled to death before his arrival at the hospital. It was a terrible loss for his friends in Kathmandu and all of them who had known him. What times he and Marley had on the trail to Kathmandu. They did things that will never again be possible. They always pushed the outside of the envelope on any venture they decided worthy of their effort. He was a true adventurer. Marley said he can still see him stroking his long beard and laughing. Marley said he had never met anyone else like him. **RIP.**

Index of Terms: *

Ashram: A place of religious retreat for Hindus.

Backsheesh: Tipping, [charitable giving](#), and certain forms of [political corruption](#) and [bribery](#) in the [Middle East](#) and [South Asia](#).

Beedies: Indian cigarettes wrapped in a leaf and tied with a string.

Chai: Indian Tea.

Chai Garam: Hot Indian Tea.

Charas: A psychoactive resin from the flower heads of the hemp plant.

Chello: Go away in Hindi.

Chillums: An earthenware conical shaped pipe with a rock inside to keep the tobacco from passing through. Used to smoke tobacco, marijuana and hashish.

Durbar: A central plaza in the country of Nepal.

Freak: A [freak](#) is a person with something extraordinary about his or her appearance or behavior or attitude towards society.

Ganga: Marijuana.

Gurkha: Fierce Nepali soldiers hired for decades to the English elite military.

Hippy: A person of unconventional appearance, typically having long hair and wearing beads, associated with a subculture involving a rejection of conventional values and the taking of hallucinogenic drugs.

Jeldi: Go quickly in Hindi.

Kumbh Mela: One of the biggest religious festivals in the Hindu religion, the festival, being in Hardwar, India. It is held every twelve years. Up to thirty million Hindus attend this festival over a period of a few weeks.

Mystery: The name that the Nepalese adopted for the word mechanic, as it did not exist before the presence of the British.

Palang: An Indian bed composed of a wooden frame and a rope spring.

Rupees: Indian Rupees and Nepalese Rupees were the local currency in India and Nepal.

Sadhus: Holy man, sage or ascetic.

Smack: Heroin.

Stupa: A dome shaped structure erected as a Buddhist shrine.

Yogi: Holy man who practices yoga.

Yogini: Holy woman who practices yoga.