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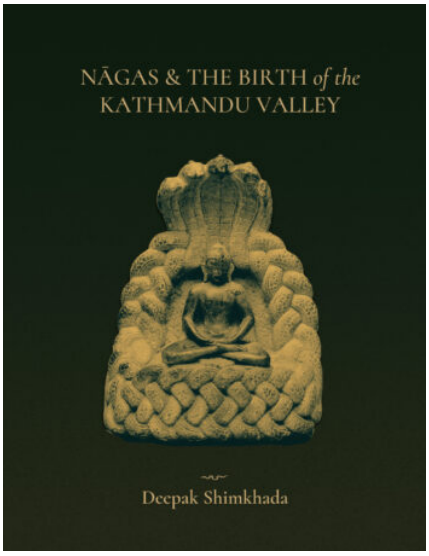
Nagas and the Birth of the Kathmandu Valley



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About the Book

In this groundbreaking work, Dr. Deepak Shimkhada unravels the enduring presence of the N?gas—serpent guardians, water spirits, and symbols of power—whose stories have shaped the cultural and ecological imagination of the Kathmandu Valley for millennia. Drawing on decades of expertise in South Asian art, religion, and history, Dr. Shimkhada brings together Buddhist and Hindu traditions to illuminate the Valley's unique synthesis of myth and landscape. From stone spouts and palace courtyards to sacred lakes such as Taudaha, he traces how the figure of the N?ga permeates architecture, ritual practice, artistic expression, and the collective memory of a civilization that grew from water, soil, and story.

With an eye trained equally on aesthetics and meaning, the book travels between archaeological detail, mythological narrative, and ecological insight. It reveals how serpents in the Kathmandu Valley are not mere decorative motifs but dynamic agents—guardians of rain, fertility, prosperity, and cosmic thresholds. Whether examining the K?liya Daman sculpture of Hanuman ?hok?, the serpentine forms of dhunge dhar?s, or the legends of Karkotaka at Taudaha Lake, Dr. Shimkhada shows how N?ga lore continues to animate contemporary life just as it did in ancient times. Elegantly written and richly illustrated, this book is as much a feast for the intellect as it is for the eyes—an essential companion for anyone interested in Himalayan culture, South Asian art, and the living mythology of the Kathmandu Valley.

About the Author

Dr. Deepak Shimkhada is an internationally acclaimed scholar, art historian, author, and educator whose work bridges the worlds of art, religion, mythology, and cultural history. Over a distinguished academic career in California, he inspired generations of students through his teaching and research on the civilizations of South Asia. He is the author and editor of numerous books and

scholarly publications, and the founding president of the Himalayan Arts Council and the Indic Foundation. Frequently sought as an expert for international television documentaries, including The UnXplained, Ancient Aliens, BBC's Natural History, and 72 Dangerous Animals: Asia, Dr. Shimkhada is widely recognized for making the rich artistic and spiritual heritage of the Himalayas accessible to a global audience. His previous book*, Gods in Captivity: The Journey of Buddha and Shiva in the City of Angels*, received critical acclaim for its compelling exploration of art, identity, and cultural heritage.

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