PREFACE

This is the first of a three-volume work on the arts of Nepal and is concerned exclusively with sculpture. The second part, which will follow soon, will be devoted to painting; the third part to architecture. In selecting my material I have limited myself to the valley of the Bagmati, the cradle of Nepali culture, and of which I have a first hand knowledge. Moreover, the materials excavated in recent years in the Nepali Terai are not yet easily accessible to scholars outside the Department of Archaeology at Kathmandu.

When I began the study of Nepali art in 1959, less than a dozen articles of any significance had been written about the subject. Most of these articles either asserted that the sculptural tradition in Nepal was not very old, or they stressed the strong influence exerted by Pala sculpture on that of Nepal. My initial visit to the country in 1959 had already convinced me that both assertions were untrue, and subsequent discoveries make the Nepali sculptural tradition at least as old as the third century A.D. A wider interest in the arts of Nepal has developed since 1964 when the Asia Society in New York organized an exhibition and Dr. Stella Kramrisch published her catalogue, The Art of Nepal. Since then a number of publications and articles have appeared, but because of the inherent conservatism of the Nepali tradition, dating of sculpture, particularly of bronzes, still encourage wild speculations. In the present work I have carefully attempted to establish a firm chronological framework, and the method may profitably be applied to the study of Indian sculpture, where also a similar speculative trend prevails.

This book has grown out of my Ph.D. thesis on the Sculpture and Painting of Nepal, submitted to the University of Cambridge in 1965, while I was a graduate student at Corpus Christi College. I wish to record my profound sense of gratitude to my supervisor at Cambridge, Dr. F. R. Allchin, who has contributed more than any other teacher in broadening my intellectual horizon. I wish also to mention my indebtedness to Prof. (Dr.) J. E. van Lohuizen-de Leeu of the University of Amsterdam, who has always taken a keen and personal interest in my work. In addition she has very kindly read through the entire manuscript and I have profited immensely from her many suggestions. Porter A. McCray, Director of the JDR 3rd Fund and his assistant Mrs. Elizabeth Glaeser have remained a constant source of encouragement for my work on Nepali art, and to them and to the trustees of the Fund, I remain
grateful for two grants that enabled me to see the American collections in 1964 and undertake a field trip to Nepal in 1966. I should also like to record my indebtedness, which will be apparent throughout the book, to the works of two eminent art-historians, E. H. Gombrich and Kenneth Clark. I had the good fortune to discuss certain aspects of my thesis with Prof. Gombrich while he delivered the Slade lectures at Cambridge in 1962-63. Those lectures on Leonardo da Vinci were an unforgettable experience, while Lord Clark's exhilarating book, The Nude, has influenced my own thinking and writing profoundly.

In Nepal, my thanks are due primarily to the family of my friend, Raj. K. Simha, whose home in Kathmandu has always been like a second home to me. Among others who have helped me on my many trips to Nepal, I should especially like to mention J. B. Bista, Prashiddha Rana, Siva Rana, and Gautamvajra Vajracharyya, a brilliant young scholar, whose works in Pûrûmû are invaluable sources of Nepali history. A very special word of thanks is due to Dr. Mary Slusser, who has been engaged in research in Nepali culture for the last five years. I cannot adequately express my appreciation for her generosity in sharing her materials with me, which I have specifically indicated in the text, and for providing me ungrudgingly with excellent photographs.

It remains for me to thank Mrs. Doris Bryant and my two colleagues, Mrs. Marilyn Wyman and Miss Rochelle Yeker, for diligently preparing the typescript of the entire manuscript with great care. Without their sympathy and patience, this work may still have remained unpublished.

A final word about the system of diacritical marks followed in this book. No marks of any kind have been applied to place names, either Indian or Nepali, that are in current usage. Names such as Sarnath, Bhadgaon, Pashupatinath or Svayambhunath (the last two when used as place names as distinct from deities they represent) have not therefore been unnecessarily burdened with accent marks.

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