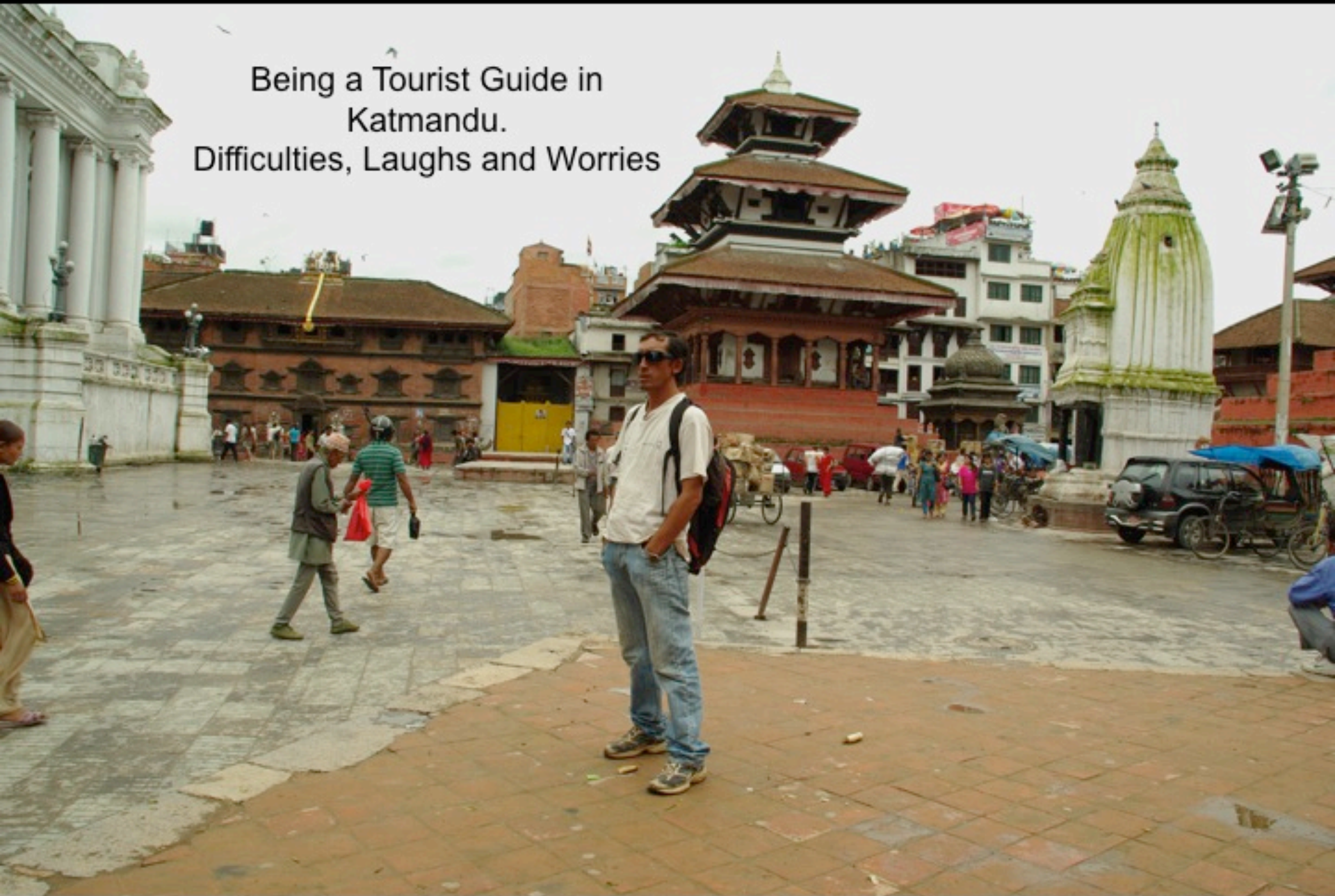


Being a Tourist Guide in
Katmandu.
Difficulties, Laughs and Worries





The day of our guide, named Ram Silwal starts in his house in Godavari,
A Village approximately 15 Km from Kathmandu.



Ram has been a guide all his life.

First starting as a guide for an agency and later becoming a freelance guide. The main reason for this is that the price the tourists pay to an agency is way too high compared to the salary of the guide.



Like many Nepalis living in rural areas Ram is also a farmer. Together with his brothers he owns several rice fields close to his house.



Besides planting and harvesting the rice, one of the main tasks is checking the water levels regulated by the irrigation system shown above



Sadly, the fields do not yield enough rice for his family to last an entire year...



Renting the land to others is also a possibility. this fellow farmer would like to rent a part of Ram's land to grow vegetables. A more labor intensive but higher earnings crop.





Back home it is time to take care of the goats and the consumption of another cup of tea.







Dal Bhaat, an essential part of Nepali life is consumed twice a day as a late breakfast and for dinner.



The bus ride to Katmandu takes approximately 45 minutes.





After arriving at the Kathmandu Durbar Square work starts.



Sadly, tourism in and around the Monsoon season is not booming in Nepal, a lot of time is therefore spent waiting.



Next to the Durbar Square there are a lot of beautiful things he would be able to show the travelers.



Offerings close to the square on Tuesday,
(Day of Ganesh, the son of Shiva)





The Patan Durbar Square.



Religious ceremonies close to this Durbar.



The Golden Temple,
(Patan)



Swayambhunath
(Monkey Temple)



The temple complex and cremation sites at Pashupatinath



A long trek or short hike outside of the city



Accompanied by local food and drinks



Sadly there are too many guides, too few tourists and thus often a low success rate







Next to the low tourist/guide ratio many tourists do not hire a guide because they feel their guidebook is sufficient. The reason why this Hanuman (Monkey God) statue is blindfolded is not described in the Lonely Planet though.



Despite this knowledge Ram goes home without having made any money, and actually having lost money on the trip and lunch.



Back home some local alcohol (Rawksy),
cigarettes and friends help ease the pain.



At the end of the day there has to be money to buy food and other necessities though.



Next to this the tuition for his children has to be paid. Pravat (15) is doing well in his hotel management course. If financially his father does not manage to provide him with the funds needed for studying though, he might be yet another of many young Nepalis dropping out of school due to financial



Until now however, Ram has managed to keep his son in school and face the situation with a laugh
As for worrying he has adopted the philosophy used by many Nepalis:

“We cannot predict the future, we should do our best to improve it, but worrying will not solve anything.”

Dear Ram,
Thank you for your support



Robbert Bosscher