



# Smithsonian

*National Museum of Natural History*

## Guide to the Todd Lewis films of Asan Tol, 1987

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Human Studies Film Archives
<b>Title:</b>	Todd Lewis films of Asan Tol
<b>Date:</b>	1987
<b>Identifier:</b>	HSFA.1989.05
<b>Creator:</b>	Lewis, Todd, 1952-
<b>Extent:</b>	9 Videocassettes (VHS) (15 hours 30 minutes; color sound) 17 Videocassettes (U-matic) (sound annotations)
<b>Language:</b>	Undetermined .

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Received from Todd Lewis in 1989.

### Provenance

Previously titled "Asan Tol Project 1987."

### Processing Information

Titles are supplied by the archivist for untitled films.

### Preferred Citation

Todd Lewis films of Asan Tol, Human Studies Film Archives, Smithsonian Institution

### Restrictions

The collection is open for research. Please contact the archives for information on availability of access copies of audiovisual recordings. Original audiovisual material in the Human Studies Film Archives may not be played.

### Conditions Governing Use

Contact the repository for terms of use.

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## Scope and Contents

Full video record is a documentation project shot in a neighborhood (tol) of Kathmandu which derives its distinctive identity from its importance in the religious geography of the Kathmandu Valley. Shots document a "day in the life" of Asan Tol, a central marketplace bazaar intersected by six streets/lanes including sequenced views over twelve hour period of changing street traffic, vendors and merchants, ritual interactions between passersby and sacred cows which graze in the urban ecology, circumambulations of pedestrians around the Temple of Annapurna as they pass through the marketplace and offer ritual devotions; shots of festival processions as they pass through the square; ritual activity in the distinctive Newar courtyards known as "bahas" which are both residential and ritual spaces; religious observances in the Dagu baha--Buddhist offerings at ground level shrines (stupas, chaitryas) and at the kwapadyah (shrine/temple);

shots in Asan Tol of religious festivals which transform the square into a theatrical space; Buddhist celebration of Pancadana (Feast day of the 5 gifts) during which voluntary associations give offerings to the Vajracarya (elite caste Buddhists); scenes of the Desan Festival during which blood sacrifices are made before the Temples of Annapurna; pilgrimages to Svayambu, an important Buddhist shrine, by musical groups known as bajams during the Buddhist month of Gulam (August); scenes in outlying rice paddy's in the Kathmandu valley--rice planting and cultivation; performance of the Mahakali dance in the Dagu baha (courtyard).

Supplementary material: sound recordings, annotations (recorded narratives)

Legacy keywords: Ritual offerings puja ; Bazaar markets ; Festivals religious Pachare Kathmandu ; Animal sacrifice Hinduism Kathmandu ; Markets Asan Tol Kathmandu ; Temples Annapurna Newar Buddhism ; Dance in festivals Pachare Kathmandu ; Drumming in festivals Pachare Kathmandu ; Shrines mobile Ratha Kathmandu ; Religion ritual devotion Bodhisattva Kathmandu ; Adornment for religious devotion tika Kathmandu ; Music musical groups bajans Kathmandu ; Shrines stupas chitya bahas Kathmandu ; Vendors Street sellers ; Houses courtyards bahas ; Rice planting cultivation of Kathmandu valley ; Alcohol as palliative to work ; Work groups women rice planting ; Tools hand hoe kodari ; Icons Buddah ; Celebrations Pancadana ; Architecture religious Buddhism Hinduism Kathmandu ; Ritual drama Mahakali dance Kathmandu ; Masks used in ritual drama Mahakali dance ; Language and culture

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## Local Numbers

HSFA 1989.5.1

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## Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

Newar (Nepalese people)

Types of Materials:

Video recordings

Places:

Nepal  
South Asia

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## Container Listing

Asan Tol Project, 1987

Video recordings (color sound)

Notes: Full video record is a documentation project of a day in the life of Asan Tol, a central marketplace/bazaar in Kathmandu which is important both as a hub for economic transactions and a focal point in the religious geography of the Kathmandu Valley. Shots taken on the hour throughout the day showing the changing patterns of street traffic in the bazaar, interaction of pedestrians and "day sellers" (vendors), the perambulations of cows "grazing" in the urban ecology and devotional touching of the cows by Hindu passerbys; circumambulations of people making devotions as the Buddhist temple of Annapurna; rickshaw drivers making their way through the square; bearers carrying various loads.

Legacy Keywords: Ritual devotions Temple of Annapurna ; Bazaar markets ; Streets social interaction in Kathmandu ; Transportation rickshaws peddie cabs ; Markets Asan Tol Kathmandu ; Temples Annapurna Newar Buddhism ; Cattle cows devotional behaviors towards ; Flowers vendors of Kathmandu ; Shrines mobile Ratha Kathmandu ; Religion ritual devotion Bodhisattva Kathmandu ; Crowds bazaars social interaction Kathmandu ; Architecture religious Buddhism Hinduism Kathmandu ; Ecology urban interaction within Kathmandu ; Language and culture

Video camera: Brian Hollander

Local Numbers: HSFA 1989.5.1 - 1a

Asan Tol Project, 1987

Video recordings (color sound)

Notes: Full video record is a documentation project of a day in the life of Asan Tol, a central marketplace/bazaar in Kathmandu. This video cassette records part of the Pachare Festival and accompanying devotions to the three goddesses Bhadrakali, Wotuagina, and Kangesvari. During this annual festival troupes of devotees (identified by red, yellow, and blue hats), transform the bazaar into a kind of religious theatre. Devotees enter the square carrying palequins of their goddess and then circumambulate the square. Shots of the dancers and drummer of Bhudrakali and Wotuagina already in place with large heavy umbrellas being twirled above the respective palequins. Offerings of food and flowers from shopkeepers are showered onto the palequins; Indian vendors attempting to make their way through the crowd are stripped of their loads of food which are then showered onto the palequins as offerings (such antisocial behavior suggests the liminality of the occasion); shots showing the entry of the palequin of Kangesvari which enters the square and circumambulates the palequins of the two other goddesses; the passing of torches by from one palequin to another according to a specific ritual protocol; the

rapid exit of the devotees and the palequins with an equally sudden transformation of Asan Tol back to a marketplace.

Legacy Keywords: Festivals Panchare Kathmandu (Nepal) ; Bazaar markets ; Streets social interaction in Kathmandu ; Cosmology ritual festival ; Markets Asan Tol Kathmandu ; Dance drumming Pachare Festival Kathmandu ; Ritual devotions puja offerings festival ; Flowers as ritual offerings festival ; Liminality festivals behavior assoc/w ; Umbrellas as ritual objects Pachare Festival Kathmandu ; Crowds bazaars social interaction Kathmandu ; Language and culture

Video camera: Brian Hollander

Local Numbers: HSFA 1989.5.1 - 1b

#### Asan Tol Project, 1987

Video recordings (color sound)

Notes: Full video record is a documentation project of a day in the life of Asan Tol, a central marketplace/bazaar in Kathmandu which is important both as a hub for economic transactions and a focal point in the religious geography of the Kathmandu Valley. Shots taken on the hour throughout the day showing the changing patterns of street traffic in the bazaar, interaction of pedestrians and "day sellers" (vendors), the perambulations of cows "grazing" in the urban ecology and devotional touching of the cows by Hindu passerbys; circumambulations of people making devotions as the Buddhist temple of Annapurna; rickshaw drivers making their way through the square; bearers carrying various loads; combination of roof top and street level shots; scenes during the latter part of the day into the night.

Legacy Keywords: Ritual devotions Temple of Annapurna ; Bazaar markets ; Streets social interaction in Kathmandu ; Transportation rickshaws peddie cabs ; Markets Asan Tol Kathmandu ; Temples Annapurna Newar Buddhism ; Cattle cows devotional behaviors towards ; Flowers vendors of Kathmandu ; Shrines mobile Ratha Kathmandu ; Religion ritual devotion Bodhisattva Kathmandu ; Crowds bazaars social interaction Kathmandu ; Architecture religious Buddhism Hinduism Kathmandu ; Ecology urban interaction within Kathmandu ; Language and culture

Video camera: Brian Hollander

Local Numbers: HSFA 1989.5.1 - 2a

#### Asan Tol Project, 1987

Video recordings (color sound)

Notes: Full video record is documentation project of a day in the life of Asan Tol, a central marketplace/bazaar in Kathmandu which is important both as a hub for economic transactions and a focal point in the religious geography of the Kathmandu Valley. Shots taken on the hour throughout the day showing the changing patterns of street traffic in the bazaar, interaction of pedestrians and "day sellers" (vendors), the perambulations of cows "grazing" in the urban ecology and devotional touching

of the cows by Hindu passerbys; circumambulations of people making devotions as the Buddhist temple of Annapurna; rickshaw drivers making their way through the square; bearers carrying various loads; combination of roof top and street level shots; scenes during the latter part of the day into the night.

Legacy Keywords: Ritual devotions Temple of Annapurna ; Bazaar markets ; Streets social interaction in Kathmandu ; Transportation rickshaws peddie cabs ; Markets Asan Tol Kathmandu ; Temples Annapurna Newar Buddhism ; Cattle cows devotional behaviors towards ; Flowers vendors of Kathmandu ; Shrines mobile Ratha Kathmandu ; Religion ritual devotion Bodhisattva Kathmandu ; Crowds bazaars social interaction Kathmandu ; Architecture religious Buddhism Hinduism Kathmandu ; Ecology urban interaction within Kathmandu ; Language and culture

Video camera: Brian Hollander

Local Numbers: HSFA 1989.5.1 - 2b

#### Asan Tol Project, 1987

Video recordings (color sound)

Notes: Full video record is a documentation project of a religious and ceremonial life in Asan Tol, a central bazaar in Kathmandu which is important both as a hub for economic transactions and a focal point in the religious geography of the Kathmandu Valley. Shots depict activities around the diety/Bodhisattva Karunamya, one of the central figures in the popular Buddhism of the Mahayana tradition. The diety is carried on a ratha (ritual conveyance/palequin) through the central markets of Kathmandu where devotees make devotions; forms of devotionism depicted include a host of offerings intended to please the "senses" of the diety; the lighting of 108 wick lamps; offering puja plates and coins; drum and horn music played by groups known as bajans; chanting and reading from the sutras of the Buddhist tradition; adornment with tika (dot on forehead). Many of the sequences illustrate the interbraiding between religious and economic spheres such as the tika dealers adorning the heads of devotees of the ratha and its attendants taking puja and returning prasad.

Legacy Keywords: Ritual devotions bodhisattva ; Bazaars ritual theatre ; Religion Buddhism Mahayana traditions ; Ritual structures ratha palequins ; Markets Asan Tol Kathmandu ; Temples Annapurna Newar Buddhism ; Ritual devotions offerings puja ; Flowers vendors of Kathmandu ; Shrines mobile Ratha Kathmandu ; Priests puja Karunamya ; Crowds bazaars social interaction Kathmandu ; Music devotional bajans ; Musical instruments drums horns bajans ; Chants devotionism Buddhism ; Language and culture

Video camera: Brian Hollander

Local Numbers: HSFA 1989.5.1 - 3a

#### Asan Tol Project, 1987

Video recordings (color sound)

Notes: Full video record is a documentation project of a day in the life of Asan Tol, a central marketplace/bazaar in Kathmandu which is important both as a hub for economic transactions and a focal point in the religious geography of the Kathmandu Valley. Shots taken on the hour beginning at 6:00am (continues sequences from 89.5.1 -1a and 2a); features interaction of pedestrians and "day sellers" (vendors), the perambulations of cows "grazing" in the urban ecology and devotional touching of the cows by Hindu passerbys; circumambulations of people making devotions as the Buddhist temple of Annapurna; rickshaw drivers making their way through the square; bearers carrying various loads; combination of roof top and street level shots; scenes during the latter part of the day into the night.

Legacy Keywords: Ritual devotions Temple of Annapurna ; Bazaar markets ; Streets social interaction in Kathmandu ; Transportation rickshaws peddie cabs ; Markets Asan Tol Kathmandu ; Temples Annapurna Newar Buddhism ; Cattle cows devotional behaviors towards ; Flowers vendors of Kathmandu ; Shrines mobile Ratha Kathmandu ; Religion ritual devotion Bodhisattva Kathmandu ; Crowds bazaars social interaction Kathmandu ; Architecture religious Buddhism Hinduism Kathmandu ; Ecology urban interaction within Kathmandu ; Language and culture

Video camera: Brian Hollander

Local Numbers: HSFA 1989.5.1 - 3b

Asan Tol Project, 1987

Video recordings (color sound)

Notes: Full video record is a documentation project. This video cassette documents ritual activities in a Newari courtyard (Duga baha) typical of the residential spaces adjacent to Asan Tol. Shots depict a preparatory activities for and ceremony held to commemorate the birth, death, and enlightenment of Buddah. Women washing votive shrines (stupas and chityas) in the courtyard; ritual cycle of puja being offered at shrines; puja at the Kwapadyah shrine of the baha; Vudracharia priest making offerings at shrine in the baha; shots of the baha being decorated--residents carrying out plants which are placed around the shrines; chanting of mantras by priest.

Legacy Keywords: Ritual devotions Buddhism ; Religion Buddhism ; Houses residences Kathmandu ; Ritual structures shrines altars Buddhism ; Ceremony Buddah Kathmandu ; Shrines stupas chityas Buddhism ; Purifications shrines washing of ; Flowers as puja Kathmandu ; Priests Vudracharia Buddhism ; Chants mantras ; Architecture religious tympanums Kathmandu ; Carvings ritual tympanum Kathmandu ; Offerings ritual Buddhism ; Language and culture

Video camera: Brian Hollander

Local Numbers: HSFA 1989.5.1 - 4a



Asan Tol Project, 1987

Video recordings (color sound)

Notes: Full video record is a documentation project of daily activities in Asan Tol, a central marketplace/bazaar in Kathmandu which is important both as a hub for economic transactions and a focal point in the religious geography of the Kathmandu Valley. Sequences include street level shots of itinerant fruit sellers who ply their trade on the streets of Kathmandu; flower sellers making garlands and selling flowers next to the Temple of Annapurna in Asan Tol; scenes in a Newar courtyard (baha) with shots of votive shrines; ritual offerings of puja during a Theravada Buddhist ceremony; various scenes of the urban ecology around Asan Tol; shots of rice paddys being worked in the countryside around Kathmandu near the village of Toka; women planting rice, men hoeing and plowing; and local temples.

Legacy Keywords: Vendors markets Kathmandu ; Bazaar markets ; Streets social interaction in Kathmandu ; Temples Kathmandu ; Markets Asan Tol Kathmandu ; Temples Annapurna Newar Buddhism ; Shrines Buddhist stupas chityas ; Flowers vendors of Kathmandu ; Shops Kathmandu ; Religion ritual offerings Kathmandu ; Agriculture rice cultivation Kathmandu Valley ; Architecture religious Buddhism Hinduism Kathmandu ; Division of labor by sex rice cultivation Kathmandu Valley ; Alcohol as palliative to work Kathmandu ; Disease elephantiasis Kathmandu Valley ; Work groups rice cultivation Kathmandu Valley ; Tools hand hoe kodari Kathmandu Valley ; Language and culture

Video camera: Brian Hollander

Local Numbers: HSFA 1989.5.1 - 4b

Asan Tol Project, 1987

Video recordings (color sound)

Notes: Full video record is a documentation project including scenes of the celebration of Paunchadon in Kathmandu (the Buddhist feast day of the "Five Gifts" when voluntary associations (gouti) give offerings to the Vajracarya (Newar Buddhist elites). Shots of ritual offerings of food being given in ceremonial fashion at courtyard shrines, in homes, and on the streets. Shots of a Newar courtyard (baha) where puja offerings are made before the images of a Bodhisattva. Interior of a merchants house where an image of the Buddah is kept and prestations of food given to the Vajracarya.

Legacy Keywords: Ritual Paunchadon Pancadana Kathmandu (Nepal) ; Caste groups ritual relations between Kathmandu ; Altars ritual offerings Paunchadon Kathmandu ; Food as ritual offering ; Statues Buddhist ; Shrines Buddhist ; Priests Paunchadon Kathmandu ; Ritual offerings puja ; Language and culture

Video camera: Brian Hollander

Local Numbers: HSFA 1989.5.1 - 5a

Asan Tol Project, 1987

Video recordings (color sound)

Notes: Full video record is a documentation project which includes several Newar courtyards in the surrounds of Asan Tol, Kathmandu, showing their architecture and votive shrines. Shots of the Hindu Temple to Vishnu in the Asan Tol square; interior of shots inside a Newar shop in Asan Tol during a monsoon rain shower; street vendors selling locally made soda; yogurt sellers.

Legacy Keywords: Architecture bahas shrines Kathmandu (Nepal); Shrines Buddah of the four Directions chityas; Statues religious Buddhism; Vendors street sellers Kathmandu; Shops Kathmandu; Food street vendors Kathmandu; Markets Kathmandu; Language and culture

Video camera: Brian Hollander

Local Numbers: HSFA 1989.5.1 - 5b

Asan Tol Project, 1987

Video recordings (color sound)

Notes: Full video record of a documentation project includes scenes of a walking tour of Pashupatinath in Kathmandu conducted by Todd Lewis: various temples of Pashupatinath and with Lewis explaining their significance to Hindu pilgrims who come into the Kathmandu valley; saddhus and mendicants; scenes of funeral pyres and cremations along the river.

Legacy Keywords: Temples Hindu Pashupatinath; Ritual objects shops Pashupatinath; Shrines Buddhist Hindu Kathmandu Valley; Mortuary practices Hindu Kathmandu Valley; Cosmology dance drama Hinduism; Cremation Hindu Kathmandu Valley; Priests saddhus Kathmandu; Ritual Hindu priests Kathmandu; Language and culture

Video camera: Brian Hollander

Local Numbers: HSFA 1989.5.1 - 6a/b

Asan Tol Project, 1987

Video recordings (color sound)

Notes: Full video record is a documentation project which includes scenes of a performance of the Mahakali Pyekhan during the full moon of Bhadra by a travelling troupe from Bhaktapur. The performance was enacted in the Dagu baha courtyard near Asan Tol. The dance presents figures from the Hindu pantheon centering around Kali and her retainers. Performers include hairy creatures that resemble bears (khya), skeletons (kava:n), attendants of the devis (betalas). Dance performance concluded with the troupe performing a pradaksina of the stupas in the courtyard.

Legacy Keywords: Dance ceremony Mahakali Pyekhan; Houses courtyards Dagu baha Kathmandu; Shrines Buddhism stupas; Masks Mahakali Pyekhan; Cosmology dance drama

Hinduism ; Music dance drama mythology ; Musical instruments drums Mahakali Pyekhan ; Theatre dance drama ; Language and culture

Video camera: Brian Hollander

Local Numbers: HSFA 1989.5.1 - 7a/b

Asan Tol Project, 1987

Video recordings (color sound)

Notes: Full video record is a documentation project which includes scenes of activities during the Mahvani or Desan Festival in Kathmandu when all dieties that receive blood sacrifices are given offerings. Shots of ducks being sacrificed before the Temple of Annapuran in Asan Tol; the sacrifice of water buffaloes and goats by members of the military in a central square reflecting the mythological victory of Durga over the buffalo demon; the fierce image of Shiva outside the Kathmandu palace.

Legacy Keywords: Shrines Temple of Annapurna Kathmandu (Nepal) ; Animal sacrifice Desan festival Buddhism ; Statues Buddhism Shiva ; Religion Buddhism animal sacrifice ; Military ceremonies Buddhism ; Festivals animal sacrifice mythology ; Language and culture

Video camera: Brian Hollander

Local Numbers: HSFA 1989.5.1 - 8

Asan Tol Project, 1987

Video recordings (color sound)

Notes: Full video record is a documentation project which includes scenes of events during the Festival of Indra Jatra (the Kumari Jatra). Shots of crowds in the streets around the mobile palequin-like shrines (ratha); masked performers; festivities in the steets; pulling the ratha along the narrow streets.

Legacy Keywords: Shrines ratha ; Music drums ; Festivals Indra Jatra Kathmandu ; Religion festivals Indra Jatra ; Masks dancers Indra Jatra Kathmandu ; Ritual objects rathas Kathmandu ; Language and culture

Video camera: Brian Hollander

Local Numbers: HSFA 1989.5.1 - 9

Asan Tol Project, 1987

Video recordings (color sound)

Notes: Full video record is a documentation projects which includes scenes of events during the Buddhist month of Gulam in the surrounds of Svayambu, an important Buddhist pilgrimage site in the Kathmandu Valley. Shots of musical troupes (bajams) making their way along the roads to the hilltop shrine; panorama of the shrine; walls lined with Tibetan prayer wheels; clusters of votive shrines (stupas) at entrance to the hilltop; men and women bathing in the river, morning ablutions and purifications.

Legacy Keywords: Shrines Buddhist Svayambu ; Music drums bajams Svayambu ; Musical instruments drums worship Svayambu ; Religion worship music Svayambu ; Purification washing Buddhism Kathmandu Valley ; Ritual objects shrines stupas Svayambu ; Pilgrimages Buddhism Gulam Svayambu ; Architecture religious Buddhist Hindu Svayambu ; Language and culture

Video camera: Brian Hollander

Local Numbers: HSFA 1989.5.1 - 10