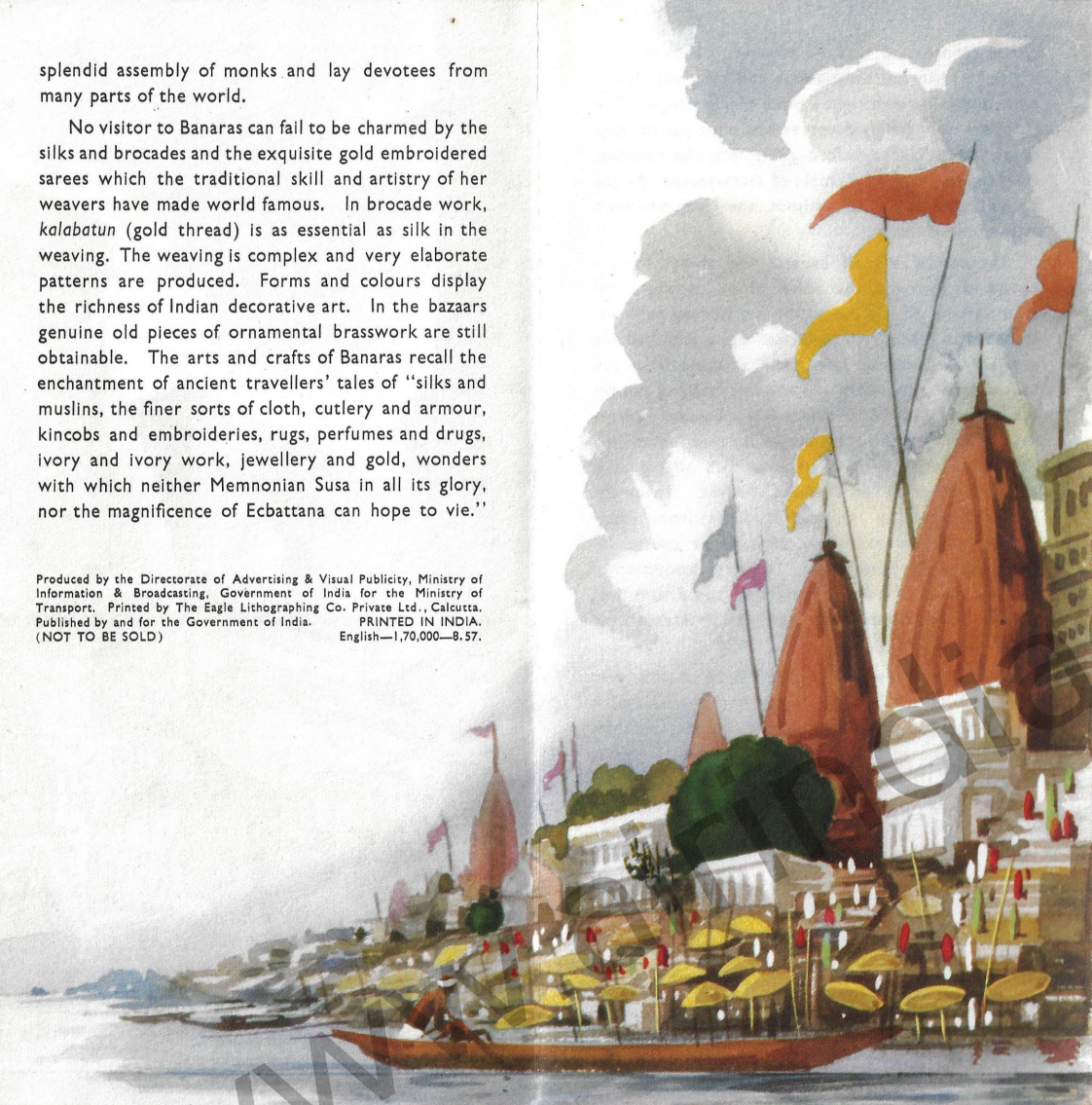


splendid assembly of monks and lay devotees from many parts of the world.

No visitor to Banaras can fail to be charmed by the silks and brocades and the exquisite gold embroidered sarees which the traditional skill and artistry of her weavers have made world famous. In brocade work, *kalabatun* (gold thread) is as essential as silk in the weaving. The weaving is complex and very elaborate patterns are produced. Forms and colours display the richness of Indian decorative art. In the bazaars genuine old pieces of ornamental brasswork are still obtainable. The arts and crafts of Banaras recall the enchantment of ancient travellers' tales of "silks and muslins, the finer sorts of cloth, cutlery and armour, kincobs and embroideries, rugs, perfumes and drugs, ivory and ivory work, jewellery and gold, wonders with which neither Memnonian Susa in all its glory, nor the magnificence of Ecbattana can hope to vie."

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BANARAS

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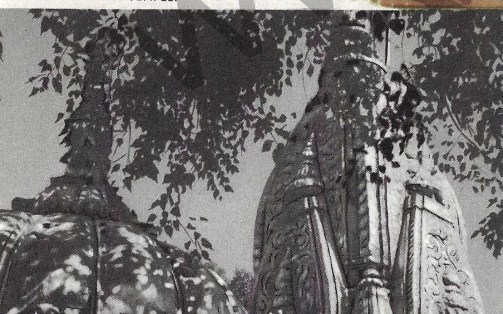
INDIA



Banaras



VISHWANATH TEMPLE.



BANARAS (Varanasi)

Picturesquely situated on the left bank of the sacred river Ganga, Banaras is reputed to be the oldest city in India. Living repository of the Hindu faith, this ancient city attracts every year millions of pilgrims from every part of India. Banaras's vivid colour is derived from her bathing ghats and water festivals. To most of her citizens the river is the chief source of religious inspiration, spiritual solace and recreation. Banaras is of importance not only to Hindus but the Buddhists as well, for it was at Sarnath, only a few miles away, that the Buddha preached his first sermon.

With a recorded history dating back to earliest times Banaras rides the river like a giant tortoise. People from every part of India have throughout the centuries sought sanctuary in her bosom and left the impress of their learning and faith. No city of the East weaves the fascination and the mysticism of the past so intimately as Banaras whose presiding deity is Shiva, the most venerated god of the Hindu pantheon.

The river front as well as the narrow twisting streets of Banaras present a microcosm of India's vast humanity. Sadhus and mendicants, merchants and pilgrims, pundits and priests, artists and craftsmen plying their trade in the crowded bazaars and pavements—all are steeped in the embracing fervour of this ancient religious capital of India. In no other city is there so strange a feeling of another time and age, an atmosphere at once sacred and secular.

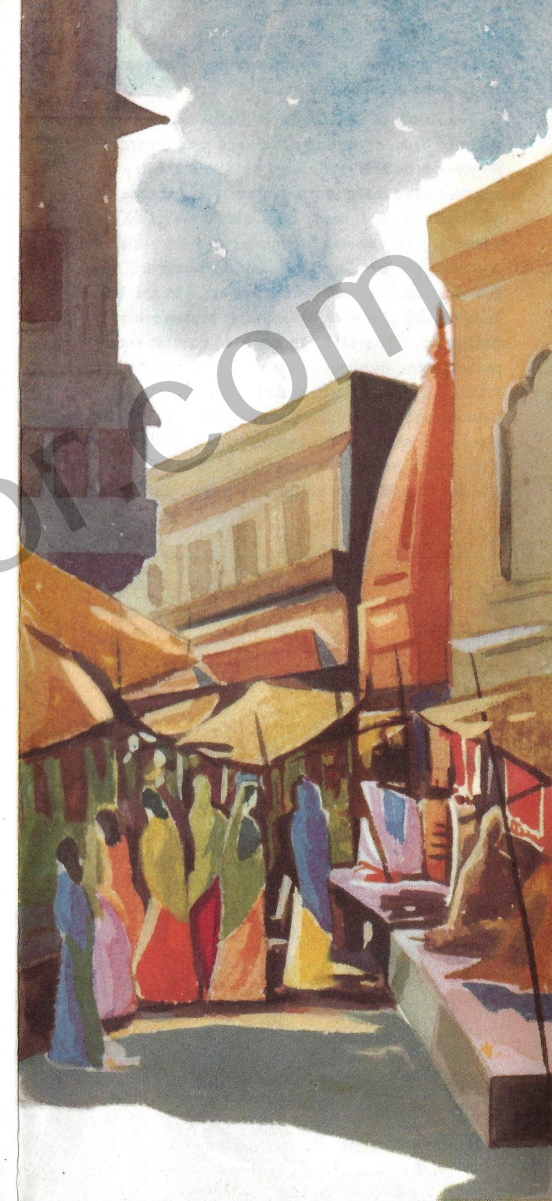
To get a complete picture of what this ancient city stands for, to know something of her hold on the millions of devotees who throng her sacred shrines, one must go round the Panchkosi—the pilgrim's way which winds 36 miles around the city. The whole route is dotted with temples and shrines and each has its prescribed rituals and ceremonial observances. Nor can the visitor miss the panoramic view of the ghats which may be obtained by taking a boat ride downstream along the crescent-shaped bend of the river from the Asi Ghat in the south, to Panchganga and as far as the Malaviya Bridge where the railway crosses to the Kashi station.

The Banaras Ghats present a spectacle of unforgettable beauty with a perfect skyline pierced by

spires, pinnacles, domes and minarets. Each of them is rich in historical associations and religious significance and in its own right a place of pilgrimage. The ghats are thronged by devotees who must pay homage to the holy Ganga before going into the temples, specially the Golden Temple of Vishwanath. At the time of solar and lunar eclipses, the ghats present a memorable scene.

The sacred city of Banaras has always been a centre of learning, the home of philosophers and grammarians. It was here that the Buddha held discourse with Vedic metaphysicians and established the new way. Centuries later Shankar came from the south reviving the glory of Sanskrit learning and re-established Hindu faith. And it was at Banaras again at the beginning of the present century that the foundation of a modern university was laid aiming at a synthesis of Indian and Western thought. Today the Banaras university attracts students from every corner of India and from abroad for courses in science and the humanities. The large collection of all the schools of Indian paintings in the Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras university, is of great interest to the connoisseurs of art.

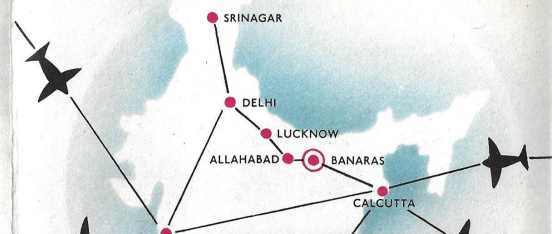
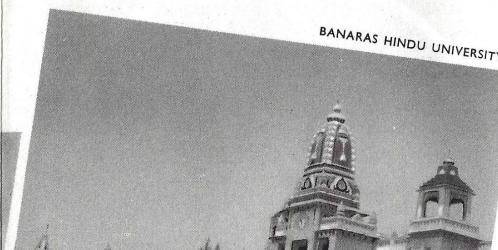
Only five miles away from Banaras and two furlongs from the Sarnath railway station, lies Sarnath where the Lord Buddha first made his doctrines known to the world. Today the ruins of Buddhist Sarnath afford only a glimpse of the magnificent monastery of the Turning of the Wheel of Law described by the Chinese pilgrims Fa-hian and Hiuen Tsang. The Dhamek Stupa stands 150 feet high and recent excavations have laid bare remnants of the innumerable temples and stupas which surrounded it. A little further to the north rises the broken stump of the Asoka Pillar on which stood the lion capital, now India's national emblem. The Lion Capital is installed in the Sarnath Museum which houses Buddhist sculptures and antiques recovered from the site. Amidst the ruins of the past in the Deer Park, Mariga Dava, the Mahabodhi Society has erected the Mulagandhakuti Vihara, a modern temple, enshrining several sacred Buddhist relics discovered at Taxila. On the walls are paintings by a Japanese artist depicting scenes from the life of the Master. The anniversary of the Vihara which falls on the full moon day of November and is celebrated by a

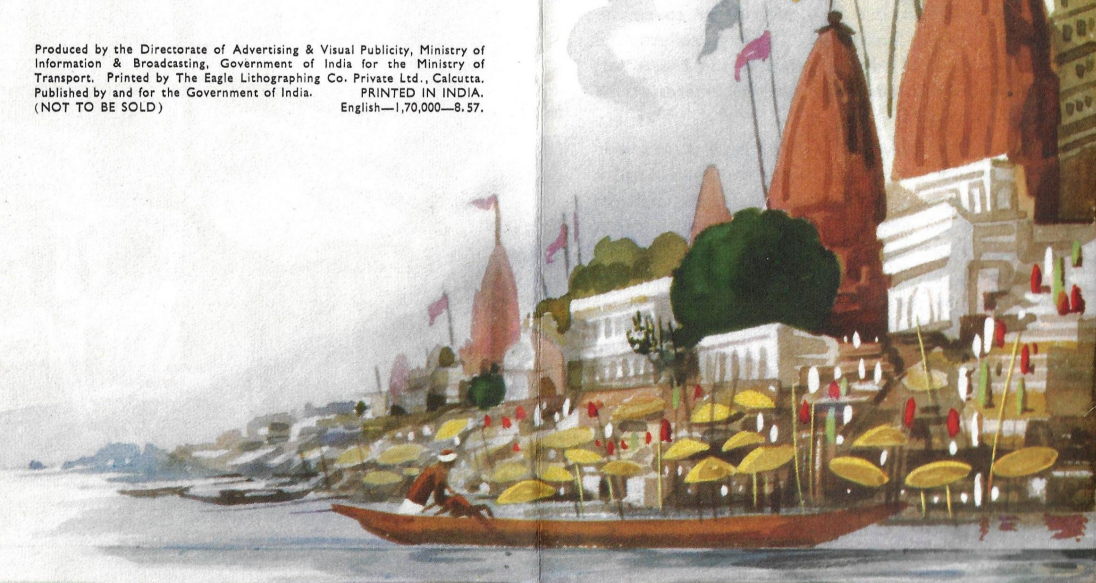


MAHABODHI SOCIETY (BANARAS)

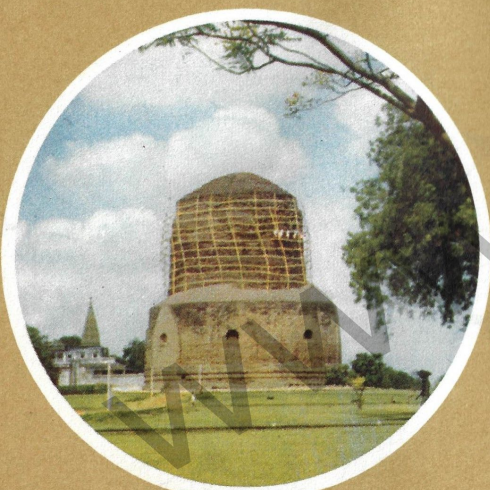


BANARAS HINDU UNIVERSITY.





INDIA



DHAMEK STUPA



MULAGANDHAKUTI VIHARA



BANARAS SAREES



"RUDRAKSH MALA" SELLER.



VISHWANATH TEMPLE.



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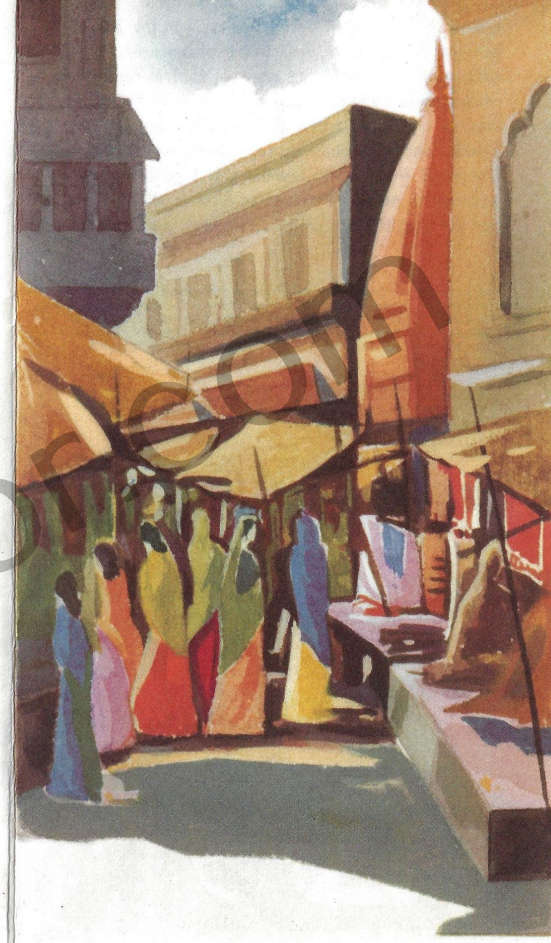
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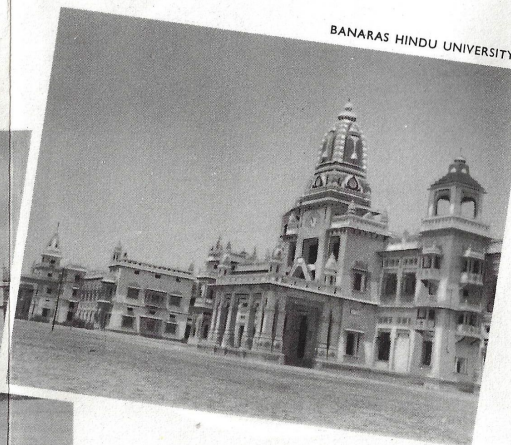
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