

# Gai Jatra:

## Gai Jatra|गाई जात्रा

Source: article in EasyNepal.com, by [Paras Ranabhat](#) on November 3, 2014.



Gai is cow and Jatra is Procession (Festival).

Gai Jatra festival, the procession of cows, generally falls in the month of Bhadra, which correspond to English calendar months of August/September.

This year Gai Jatra is on August 11, 2014. That is on Shrawan 26, 2071 BS.

The festival of cows is one of the most popular festivals in Nepal. It is said people in ancient time started worshipping Yamaraj,"the god of death" on this day.

However, the modern form of celebration of Gai Jatra came into existence in the medieval period of Nepal during the reign of Malla Kings. The present form of Gai Jatra with humorous acts, parody, comedy and was started by then King of Kathmandu Pratap Malla. He made Rani Pokhari (Pond) in the heart of Kathmandu and build a temple in the middle of the same pond.



Traditionally every family who had death in the family during the preceding year must participate in a procession through the streets of Kathmandu leading a cow.

If a cow is unavailable then a young kids dressed as cow is considered a fair substitute. However, there started tradition of leading a cow with kids in funny costumes.



Pratap Malla, lost his very young son. His wife, the queen was in great misery. The king was very disappointed to see the condition of his queen. King after millions try could not make queen smile. Pratap announced that anyone who could make the queen laugh would be rewarded adequately.

Pratap Malla asked to bring the cow procession before the sad queen. Then people tried their best with different costumes and humorous acts. The dance and procession finally gave queen smile on her face. The smile at the moment was temporary but the procession gave queen a big relief. She knew that there are several death in the city during the period and she is not alone. Death is the natural phenomenon and no one has control on it.

Hence, from the day King Pratap Malla started the tradition of cow procession with boys with different funny make ups in funny costumes. The boys even put tails and make up like monkeys and Hunuman walk though the city road to show people that the death is the truth in the life and every one has to face it one day. The Gai Jatra tradition slowly developed into doing humorous acts including jokes, satires, mockery and lampoon in the Gai Jatra days.

After the cow procession is over, in the afternoon, everyone takes part in another tradition in which the participants dress up and wear masks. There also people enjoy the moments with songs, jokes, mockery and humors until late evening.

Gai Jatra is a festival which enables people to accept the reality of death and to prepare oneself for the life after death. It heals the grief and sorrow, at least a little, when people see the cow possession and realize people die, and we are not alone in the country who lost our loved ones.

### **Modern Day Gai Jatra**

Modern day Gai Jatra added varoius flovors to the festival in consistence with traditional values, Pratap Malla had established. In the past when there was Shah's regime, people were not allowed to speak openly about the political system and the leaders there in. Gai Jatra was regarded as the day when people are

given such liberty to talk, point and satire the system, government and the leaders.

Still various comedy shows, acts and dramas are organized in different places including televisions and radios. Special edition of newspapers are also published on this day with different cartoons and comedy articles.

**Source:**

EasyNepal.Com: <http://www.easynepal.com/gai-jatra%E0%A4%97%E0%A4%BE%E0%A4%88-%E0%A4%9C%E0%A4%BE%E0%A4%A4%E0%A5%8D%E0%A4%B0%E0%A4%BE/>