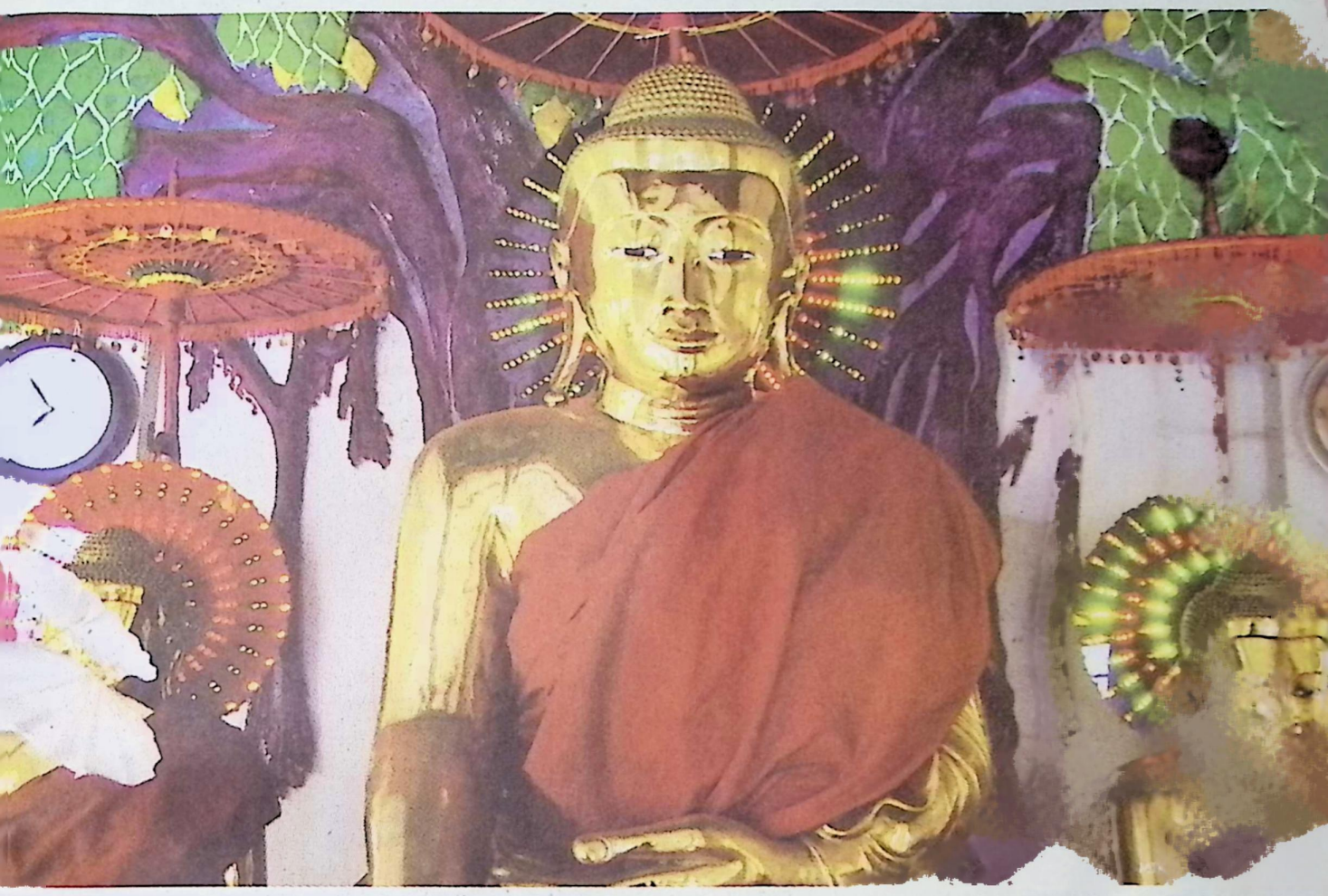


solitude, which might seem like a foreign concept to a Bangladeshi, have always been an integral part of my travel experience. This is a kind of moment where you feel like you have the whole place to yourself and you sense your freedom of the mind, body and soul. These moments are hard, but not impossible, to find.

In a city like Dhaka, there are even fewer moments where you can hide away in the maelstrom. It is honestly one of the hardest things that people who come from a privacy-orientated culture to come to grips with. And this is doubly worse if you're a female.

"You are going to be stared at, probably more than the men in your group," said Nicole, when pondering how she would advise others about the constant attention. "If you were with a big group of women you might attract crowds. But if you dress a bit conservatively and maybe buy a few local items to mix your wardrobe up, so that if you blend in a bit, and make an effort to fit their cultural standards, a little bit, then nobody will give you any problems.

"I don't know what it would be like to travel as a single female in this country," she added. "We did meet up with one girl who was volunteering out here and she seems quite happy to jump on the back of a motorbike or jump on the top of a bus and she's having no trouble. From the outside it looks like this country could be very difficult for a single female traveller, but I think once you're inside it and you kind of see the few things that you have to do to fit in, it's not very difficult at all. You're quite safe. There's no issue with women feeling insecure here."

The travel journalists have now returned home, and our journey in Bangladesh is now complete. As the time for publication comes nearer, I anticipate many episodes of trying to explain this little country to the rest of the world, a task I very much look forward to, on behalf of Bangladeshis and for all those simple kindnesses I have experienced here. For this, we offer our thanks -- or that gracious wag of the head that says volumes without speaking.

Mikey Leung *is a travel writer.*

You can learn more about Bradt's guidebook project by visiting http://www.joybangla.info, or e-mail joybangla.info@gmail.com for more information.