

*Karachi, India*

10-8-44. Picture (3-10-8-44) of cobra and trainer. APO 883. One of the several performers of this city. Was surprised not to find more of this type of intertainment such as the alleged rope trick, suspended animation, etc but other than a few cobra trainers found little magic except the card trick employed by the clever merchants to lure the curious minds of the Indians. This fellow in the picture approached me AND asked three rupees to witness his snake charming. I paid him one rupee according to policy. I was interested more in the equipment than the snake proper which included a bag of miscellaneous property and a reed woven basket covered with a colorful piece of cloth. The flute like instrument was carried in his hand. He commenced his program with all the mystic formality by first carefully exposing the basket and then, after partially removing the cover spoke a work in Hindimstani, following with a gently expiration of the breath. The basket cover was then removed and placed on the ground with the basket now superimposed upon the lid to give it an added pedestal like display. As the snake slowly raised its head the training attracted its attention with the flute. There is no question that this flute had a definite charm for this reptile, as it governed its every movement. As the trainer slowly swung the flute from side to side the snake obeyed in perfect synchrony. All this time the neck flaps were expanded. For the picture he held the flute straight forward which checked the movement of the cobra thus allowing for the immobility demonstrated. After the performance was over the snake was taken from the box and draped around its trainers neck. At the moment the music stopped the neck flaps collapsed. The final act was to place the snake back into the basket and, as in the first act, he blew gently into the basket and offered another unintelligible Indian word. One of the most amazing thing about this performance was the large crowd of Indians that collected around the snake charmer soon after the music started.