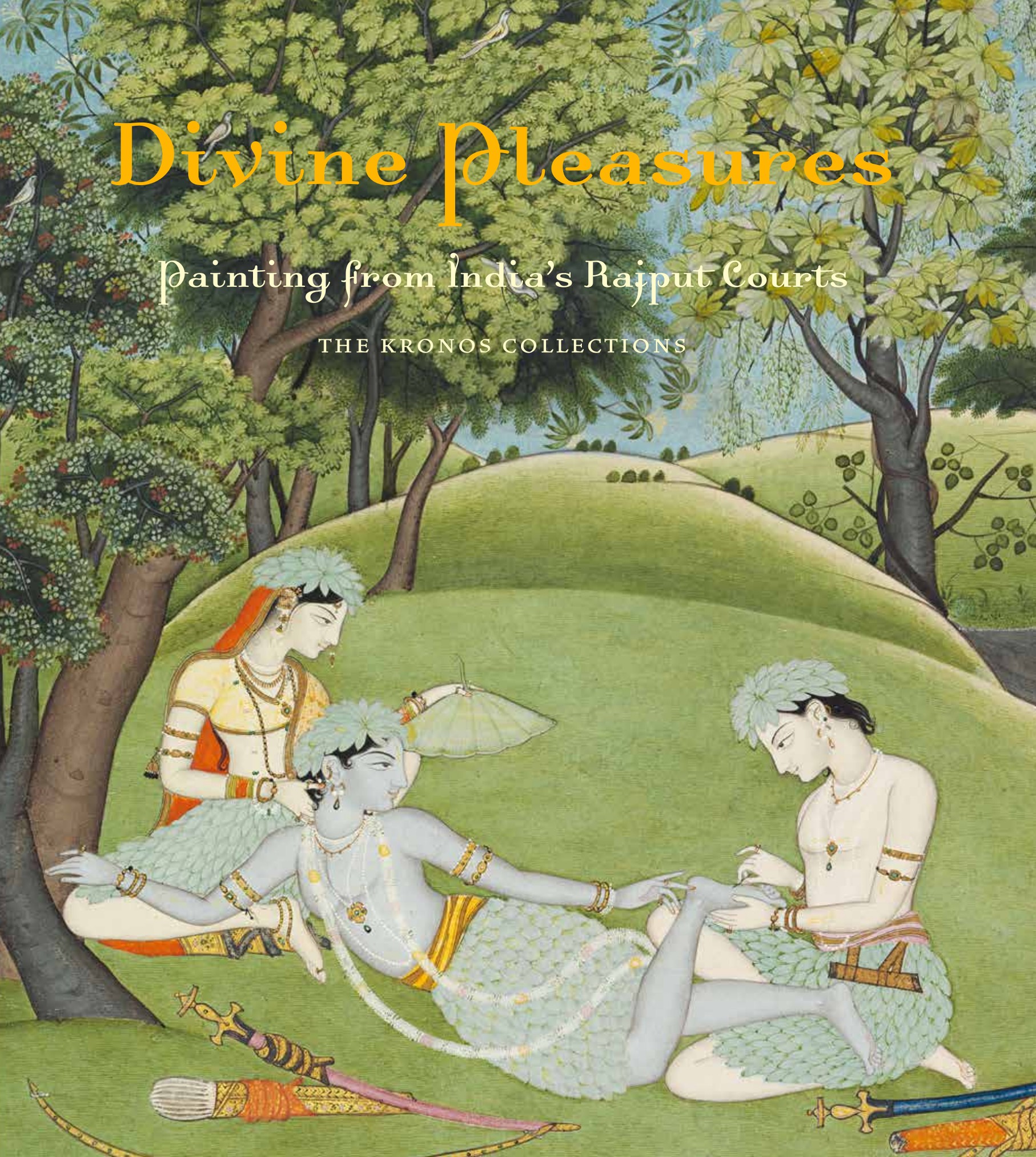
Divine Pleasures

Painting from India's Rajput Courts

THE KRONOS COLLECTIONS



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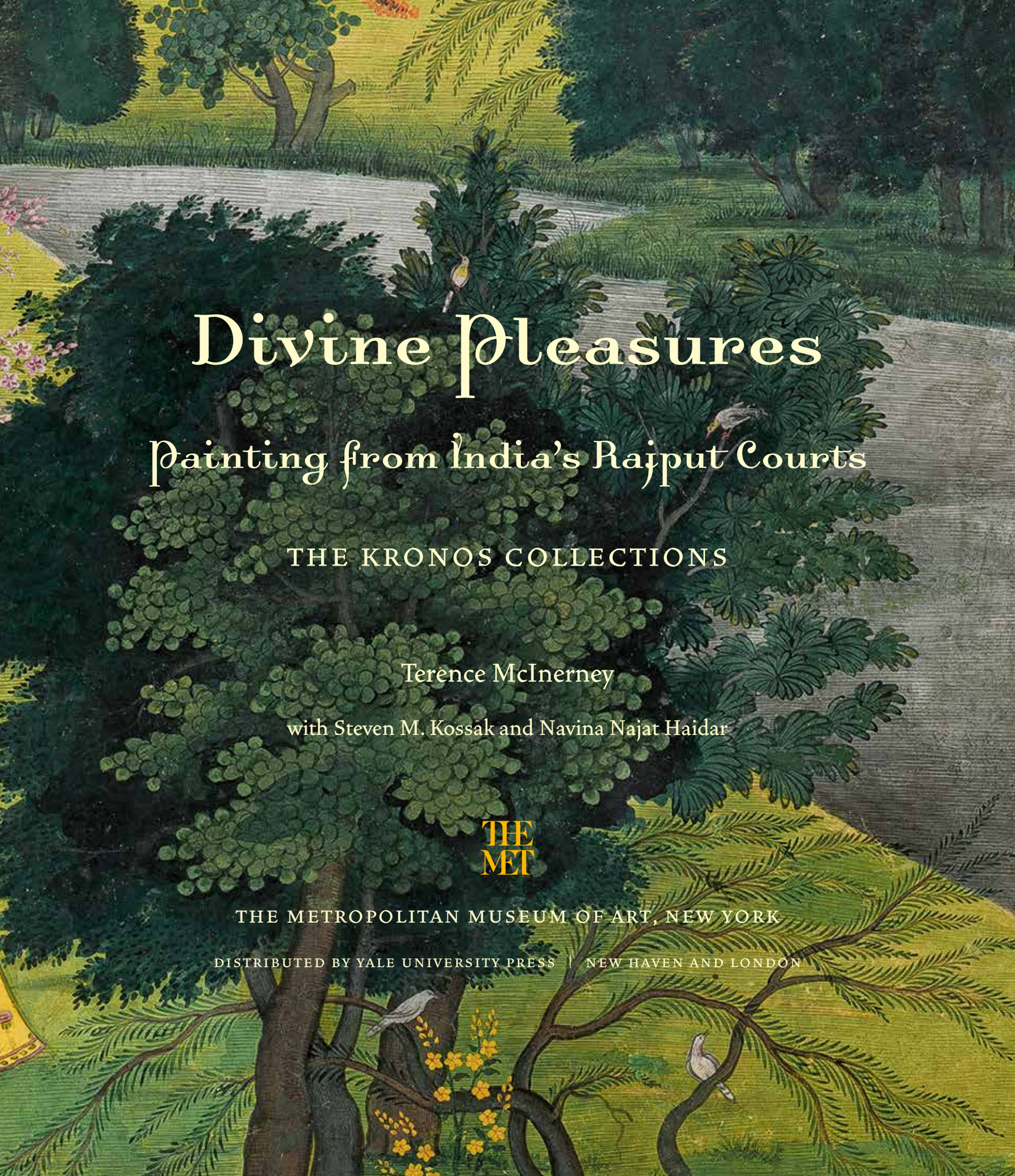

Divine Pleasures

Painting from India's Rajput Courts

THE KRONOS COLLECTIONS

Terence McInerney

with Steven M. Kossak and Navina Najat Haidar

THE MET

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Endpapers: Krishna Swallows the Forest Fire, early 18th century (cat. 51, detail)
Frontispiece: Radha with Her Confidante, Pining for Krishna, ca. 1775–80 (cat. 80, detail)

Other illustrations: page vi, Madhava Ragaputra(?): A Nobleman Dancing to the Music of Two Ladies, ca. 1680–90 (cat. 43, detail); page viii, The Sage Durvasa Helps the Gopis Quiet the Yamuna River, ca. 1580 (cat. 5, detail); page 1, Ladies on a Terrace, dated 1675 (cat. 22, detail); page 2, Rao Raja Bishen Singh of Uniara, ca. 1780 (cat. 34, detail); page 16, Todi Ragini: A Lady with a Vina Attracts Two Deers, ca. 1700 (cat. 16, detail); page 30, attributed to Payag, The Goddess Bhairavi Devi with Shiva, ca. 1630–35 (fig. 26, detail); page 38, Krishna Battles Indra in Transporting the Parijata Tree from Indra's Heaven, ca. 1720 (cat. 52, detail); pages 50–51, Bakasura, the Crane Demon, Disgorges Krishna, ca. 1690 (cat. 25, detail); pages 122–23, A Nobleman and His Devoted Wife Seated in the Forest; Two Female Musicians Attend, ca. 1685 (cat. 39, detail); pages 194–95, Krishna Frolics with the Gopis (Milkmaids), ca. 1775–80 (cat. 83, detail); pages 246–47, Damayanti, Lost in Her Thoughts While Everyone Else Sleeps, ca. 1780–1800 (cat. 94, detail)

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Contents

Director's Foreword

TO APPRECIATE Indian paintings and manuscripts, one must love their elemental qualities — blazing color, burnished gold leaf, darkly inked lines — as well as learn the profound philosophy and mythology that is their wellspring. The gods, demons, lovers, fantastical creatures, and mystical symbols, painted in a remarkable variety of styles, are largely born from India's ancient texts, stories, poems, and songs. Their evolution can be seen in early and medieval Hindu sculpture and carvings found within temples and cave reliefs as well as in frescoes. Suffused with the powerful imagery of the myths of the past, Indian painting expressed a new way of seeking the divine through *bhakti*, or personal devotion.

Steven M. Kossak's promised gift from his family's Kronos Collections is a selection of nearly one hundred distinguished works from the Rajasthani and Pahari courts of northern India. These vivid and inspired images—dating from the sixteenth to the early nineteenth century and representing almost all major artistic centers—reflect a confluence of artistic and literary talent, spiritual devotion, and royal taste. Chosen for their visual splendor and historical importance, the paintings reveal Kossak's lifetime engagement with and understanding of Indian art, literature, and philosophy. Eventually, these fine works will join others in the Museum's collection, many of which were chosen by Kossak during his tenure as a curator at The Met. Their addition transforms the Museum's holdings of Rajput painting, placing them on a par with its premier collection of Mughal painting.

I wish to thank Steven M. Kossak, the driving force behind this extraordinary collection and gift. His long relationship with the Museum has spanned the roles of curator and benefactor, and to him the institution owes a great debt of gratitude. I also thank his mother, Evelyn Kranes Kossak, and his brother, Jeffrey Kossak, for their joint support as a family. I am grateful as well to Terence McInerney, primary author of this splendid publication, who has brought to light the meaning and importance of these rich works, and Navina Najat Haidar, Curator in the Department of Islamic Art, for organizing the beautiful exhibition of the Kronos Collections. Finally, we extend our appreciation to The Peter Jay Sharp Foundation for its support of this exceptional catalogue.

THOMAS P. CAMPBELL
Director, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Acknowledgments

WITH *Divine Pleasures: Painting from India's Rajput Courts — The Kronos Collections*, we are delighted to share a distinguished selection of works from one of the finest holdings of Indian art.

We are especially grateful to Thomas P. Campbell, Director of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, for his support of this project. We also thank Jennifer Russell, former Associate Director for Exhibitions, and Sheila Canby, Patti Cadby Birch Curator in Charge of the Department of Islamic Art, for their guidance.

Steven M. Kossak particularly thanks Alka Bagri, Jerrilynn Dodds, Daniel Ehnbom, Catherine Glynn, B. N. Goswamy, Pratapaditya Pal, Geeta Patel, Rashmi Poddar, and Vijay Sharma for their insights on the works featured in the exhibition and catalogue. Cynthia Hazen Polsky, Trustee Emerita, is also thanked for her special support of Indian painting at the Museum. We are also grateful to Richard Cohen of the Department of Middle Eastern and South Asian Languages and Cultures, University of Virginia, for translating many of the inscriptions on the paintings.

We likewise extend our gratitude to the Publications and Editorial Department for the production of this volume. Special thanks go to catalogue editors Margaret Donovan and Frances Malcolm, as well as others on their team, including Assistant Managing Editor Anne Rebecca Blood, Production Manager Sally VanDevanter, mapmaker Anandaroop Roy, and designer Susan Marsh for the book's production and design. Mark Polizzotti, Publisher and Editor in Chief, and his colleagues Peter Antony, Gwen Roginsky, and Michael Sittenfeld are also gratefully acknowledged.

In the Department of Islamic Art, we are indebted to Julia Cohen, Annick Des Roches, Courtney A. Stewart, and Jean F. Tibbetts as well as the other colleagues with whom there has been much helpful interaction.

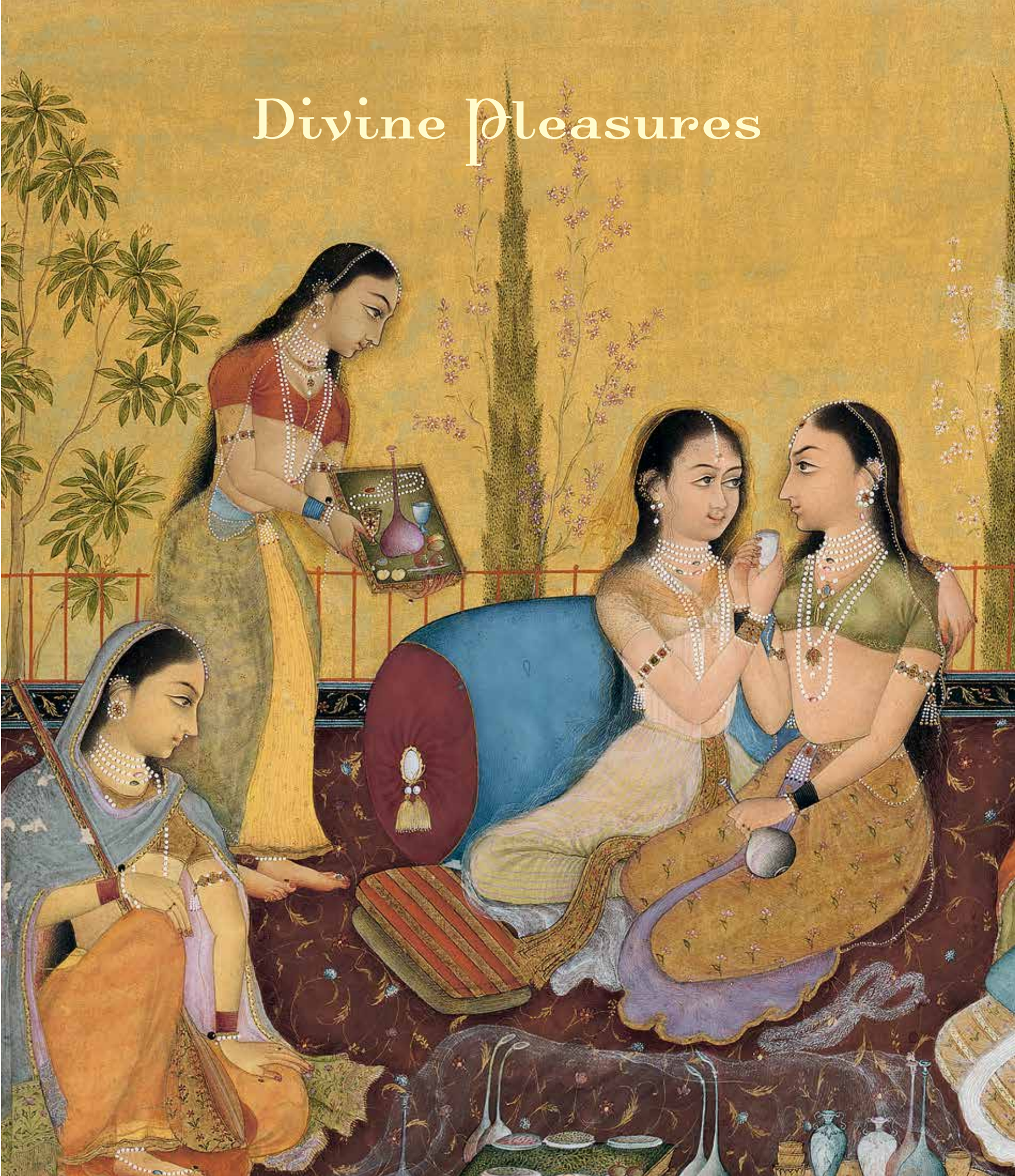
Daniel Kershaw created the wonderful design for the exhibition, along with Clint Ross Coller, Richard Lichte, Emile Molin, and Constance Norkin. Yana van Dyke and Martin Bansbach in the Department of Paper Conservation are thanked for the careful conservation and preparation work on the collections. We would like to express particular appreciation for Nadine M. Orenstein, Drue Heinz Curator in Charge, and David del Gaizo of the Department of Drawings and Prints. The following colleagues are also acknowledged for their contributions: Linda Sylling and Martha Deese in Exhibitions; Aileen Chuk, Chief Registrar; and Sharon H. Cott, Senior Vice President, Secretary, and General Counsel.

Finally, the generosity of The Peter Jay Sharp Foundation was essential in producing this beautiful publication.

NAVINA NAJAT HAIDAR
Curator, Department of Islamic Art

Rajasthan and the Punjab Hills, ca. 1600–1800

Divine Pleasures



Collecting Pleasures

STEVEN M. KOSSAK

THE INDIAN PAINTINGS in The Kronos Collections were chiefly created for an aristocratic audience who sought to kindle *rasa,* the emotional flavor or taste evoked by an aesthetic experience, often explored in the context of Hinduism. A work of art was meant to enliven the soul as well as delight the eye. Its success depended not only on the artist's use of color, line, space, and design but also on the sophistication of the viewer, both as a *rasika* (intuitive viewer) and as a *rasajna* (analytical knower). The collections reflect an intuitively developed focus on Rajput court paintings (from Rajasthan and the Punjab Hills), specifically those that depict Hindu mythological (*Bhagavata Purana* [The Ancient Story of God], *Ramayana* [The Adventures of Rama]), devotional (*Gita Govinda* [Song of the Cowherds]), quasi-religious (*Rasamanjari* [Bouquet of Delights], *Rasikapriya* [Lover's Breviary]), and traditional subjects (*Ragamala* [Garland of Melodies]) rather than records of history, natural history, or court life, themes pursued in India by the Mughals and emulated at many of the Rajasthani courts from the late seventeenth century on. Aesthetic quality was always paramount for me: even the finest sets have pages that are clearly standouts, and even premier artists create works that are widely considered exceptional within their oeuvres. It is these that I sought.

Collecting, initially of coins, stamps, butterflies, and rocks, has been an avocation of mine since childhood. By my late teens it became more aesthetically driven, and I began to accumulate old master and modern lithographs and etchings, from Rembrandt van Rijn to Henri Matisse. I also painted and played the cello, pursuits that I continued at college and which led to degrees in fine arts and professional training as a musician. Training as a painter and printmaker, with the aid of professors (many of whom were esteemed artists), led me to study, analyze, and emulate the way in which artists created images through the use of color, line, form, space, and light and the way in which these tools could be manipulated to guide the viewer's experience of a work of art.

Although I grew up outside Boston, where I was a frequent visitor to the Museum of Fine Arts with its impressive collection of Indian art, it was as an undergraduate at Yale that I first became aware of Indian painting, via a survey course using Sherman Lee's *History of Far Eastern Art*. I periodically dropped into Doris Wiener's gallery on Madison Avenue, which was around the corner from Robert Schoelkopf's gallery (from which I purchased works by Eugène Atget, Gaston Lachaise, and William Bailey), but I did not

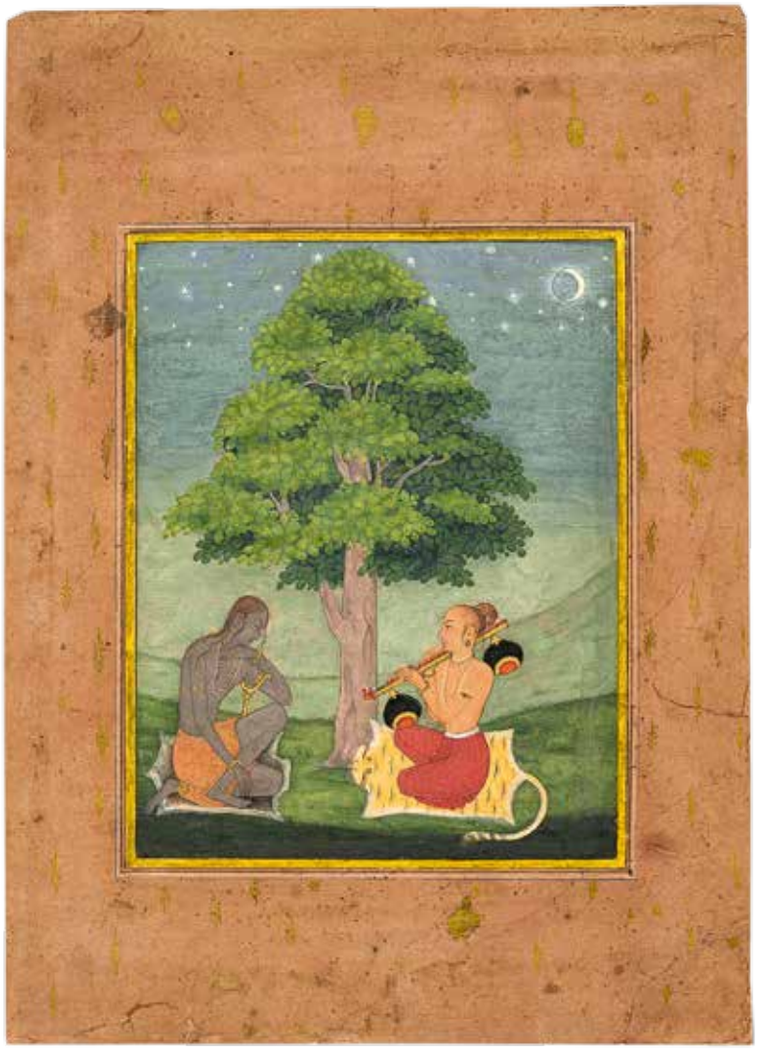


FIG. 1. *Kedar Ragini*. India, Rajasthan, Bikaner, ca. 1690–95

begin to acquire Indian art at that time. It was only in the late 1970s, after I had moved to New York, that a friend of my family introduced me to Wendy Findlay, who had recently begun plumbing the depths of the Indian painting world and building a fine collection (see fig. 1). It was through Wendy that I met many of the dealers and curators in the field and began to purchase my first Indian paintings.

I had been living with works of art since college, and it had become an intensely satisfying and nurturing experience. Daily contact with a work confirms what delights the eye and moves the soul. By the time I moved to New York, my hunger for aesthetic experience went beyond just two-dimensional works, and I also began to acquire Indian, Himalayan, and Southeast Asian sculpture. Martin Lerner, the curator of Indian and Southeast Asian art at the Metropolitan Museum from 1972 to 2004, was an amiable connoisseur whose comprehensive knowledge of the marketplace proved invaluable to me. His appreciation of African art, also a concurrent interest of mine, led to my first acquisitions in that field, which continues as one of my main collecting passions. In both fields, abstraction is more dominant than naturalism (mimesis), but African art seeks to engender primal forces while Indian art explores the sensual to kindle the divine. This early phase of my collecting culminated in "The Flame and the Lotus: Indian and Southeast Asian Art from The Kronos Collections," an exhibition held at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1984–85 (fig. 2).

Even during those early years, my art collecting was somewhat eclectic: I bought what appealed to me viscerally without any ambition to form a synoptic collection in one area. I remember running into Edwin Binney III, the great collector of Indian paintings (whose encyclopedic collection is housed at the San Diego Museum of Art) in the lobby of the Asia Society on Park Avenue in the mid-1980s. He said he could not begin to understand my eclectic collecting activities, which to him seemed without focus. His goal as a collector had been to document an example of every school of Indian painting from every decade, a worthy endeavor. But I wished instead to gather works that I found moving and delightful, the pursuit not of a historian but a *rasika*! At the same time, I had begun to understand what made these paintings so visually and emotionally arresting for me. In this way, I began to become not simply a collector of Indian painting but a connoisseur of it.

Of course, the nature of the marketplace was also a factor in the apparent chaos of my activities. Binney had started collecting in the 1950s, when Indian painting was much less appreciated and understood than in the 1980s, and he had been able to buy pictures

FIG. 2. *Standing Yakshi*, India, Mathura, Kushan period, A.D. 2nd–3rd century. This work was featured in the 1984–85 exhibition "The Flame and the Lotus: Indian and Southeast Asian Art from The Kronos Collections" at The Metropolitan Museum of Art

on a regular basis with the help of William Archer, the Keeper of the Indian Section of the Victoria and Albert Museum. Little scrutiny was given to acquiring paintings that were not much esteemed. By the time I began, it was not possible to buy as freely. The "Emergency" called by Indira Gandhi in 1973 led to many collections of Indian paintings being registered by the Indian government (to avoid the flight of monies) and made it more difficult for Indian collectors to sell their holdings. In any case, certain schools of painting, works by specific artists, or paintings from known manuscripts were extremely hard to acquire. Thus, when I was offered five paintings in 1982 from the collection of Douglas Barrett (the former Keeper of the British Museum's Indian holdings) by my friend Anthony Gardner of Spink and Son Ltd., London, I was thrilled to be able to acquire three rare masterworks: a great page from the sixteenth-century "Isarda" manuscript (which even at that time seemed impossible to acquire), a marvelous late Kangra page, and a superb Mankot picture (cats. 4, 63, 93), the likes of which I have not been offered in all the intervening years.

Around this time, I was also able to participate with a group of dealers in the acquisition of a group of about two hundred paintings from a private collection in Switzerland. My participation, which enabled the deal, was rewarded with an initial first painting of my choice, the Manaku *Hide-and-Seek* (cat. 76). The remaining paintings were split into trios of like quality for which I was given the first choice in each round. This allowed me to pick what I felt to be the most telling painting in each group. Subsequently, I realized I had not always made the right choice, but I tried to make up for some of my mistakes by buying or trading back pictures from the other participants. I ended up with an extraordinary group of some two dozen core pictures that lifted the quality and scope of my collection into a new realm. Other pictures from my tranche, works that I would not have bought independently, I used over the years as trades to acquire other paintings I found more satisfying. My own collection had been strong in pictures from the Punjab Hills. The collection I had just acquired was equally focused on that area and added significantly to my holdings pages from the "Tehri Garhwal" *Gita Govinda* and the "Kangra Bihari" *Sat Sai* as well as a group of Early Pahari works that substantially complemented my small but fine lot.

In the mid-1980s I went to Columbia to pursue graduate work in art history, initially in African art and then in Indian art. It was around this time that Samuel Eilenberg approached me to help arrange for the donation of his collection of Indian and Southeast Asian sculpture to the Metropolitan. The Museum had as yet no galleries devoted to Indian and Southeast Asian art, and I was able to join the staff as a lowly research assistant to aid curator Martin Lerner in preparing for the design and installation of the

FIG. 3. *Goddess with Weapons in Her Hair*. North India, possibly Pataliputra, Bihar, 2nd–1st century B.C. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Samuel Eilenberg Collection, Gift of Samuel Eilenberg, in honor of Steven Kossak, 1987

galleries as well as in cataloguing the completed Eilenberg gift of more than four hundred works (fig. 3).[1]

In the late 1980s I was visited by Edith and Stuart Cary Welch, the latter then the chairman of the Metropolitan's Department of Islamic Art. One of the most influential connoisseurs and enthusiasts of Indian painting, Cary was scouting material for his upcoming "INDIA!" exhibition. Counseled to show him a limited number of pictures, I prepared a stack of about a dozen, with the best at the bottom. Cary expressed great enthusiasm for the works and made a number of generous comments until he reached the last picture, the Manaku *Hide-and-Seek*. He looked at it carefully, put it down, crossed his arms, and said nothing! Later he wrote to me and said of the stack, "I am impressed — perhaps awed . . . and, of course, jealous!" Although he borrowed several Indian paintings from me for the exhibition, the Manaku was not among them.

By the time the Museum's galleries were completed, in 1994, I had risen in the ranks to associate curator and was put in charge of later Indian art (Hindu, Jain, and Sikh art — Mughal and Deccani art was held by the Department of Islamic Art) and Himalayan art. One of my briefs was to build up the Museum's collection of Indian painting, an area that had been somewhat neglected in favor of the earlier classical sculpture traditions. I was thrilled! I began acquiring paintings in earnest (see fig. 4). In 1996 we were able to purchase a group of paintings from Terence McInerney (then a dealer). Two of the finest, a Kota colored drawing of a hunting scene and a Kishangarh double portrait by Dalchand, were purchased by Museum Trustee Cynthia Hazen Polsky and made promised gifts. At that time, Indian paintings rarely reached a price high enough to bring before the Acquisitions Committee, and purchases therefore had to be largely made with outside funds: a gift of funds from my friends Cynthia and Leon Polsky allowed the acquisition of eighteen paintings over the next dozen years for the Museum, and contributions from The Friends of Asian Art were used to purchase some others (see fig. 5). The Museum's needs came first, and there were many paintings that I put up for acquisition that I personally coveted. Occasionally, I would discuss a possible costly acquisition directly with Director Philippe de Montebello, who would decide if the Museum was willing to go after it. Sometimes, I would end up acquiring for my collection something he was unwilling to fund. On other occasions, dealers offered me works personally, as they were not willing to wait the time necessary for the Museum to arrange to buy them, and I acquired them with the idea of eventually donating them to the Met. I cannot claim that my collecting was greatly influenced by a consideration of how it would interphase with the Metropolitan's collection until recently, when I began to purchase works with that larger consequence in mind.

FIG. 4. *King Dasaratha and His Royal Retinue Proceed to Rama's Wedding*. India, Punjab Hills, Jammu, ca. 1690–1700

In 2005 I was made curator. Collecting Indian painting continued to be severely restrained by the marketplace. There were more than two dozen principalities with significant schools of painting that would ideally be represented in the Museum's collection by one or more pictures; most of these had painting traditions that flourished for a relatively brief period. However, paintings from some schools seldom appeared in the market. Equally, there were not sufficient numbers of private collections outside India to provide a robust source of paintings in the marketplace. A fairly constant stream of good-quality pictures did come through the major auction houses every year, but only occasionally were they paintings of the highest quality, the ones to which I was instinctually drawn. Quality in each school and for each artist within a school requires a somewhat unique formulation (think Italian Renaissance works, where there is such extraordinary variation even within single traditions as well as within an oeuvre). In the end, the ambition of each artistic venture had to be assessed in terms of its visual power and its emotional resonance. It was also important to understand both the gaps and the strengths in the Museum's collection and to add to it only when an especially fine work presented itself.

FIG. 5. *A Lady Playing the Tanpura*. India, Rajasthan, Kishangarh, ca. 1735

CONNOISSEURSHIP IMPLIES a profound knowledge within a given oeuvre that allows a deeply considered opinion. Familiarity with the published corpus and with many unpublished works is surely an important tool in allowing a work of art to be contextualized and judged. But, in the end, it is the way the visual triggers a deeper, more human personal response that is the touchstone of my collecting. In Indian philosophy, works of art are made to stimulate *rasa*. As is typical of Indian thought, these experiences are parsed and enumerated so that they encompass the scope of human feelings. The experience of the viewer is paramount in Indian aesthetics. In the West, we have paid too little attention to this aspect of artistic creations: their seemingly magical ability to transmit human experience, not only to the audience for whom they were made but also, equally, over intervening centuries or millennia. I initially look for that "juiciness" of aesthetic experience and then scan the work to see if the details consistently buttress those feelings. Often, a work that can seem initially engaging is less so on closer scrutiny, when the details, as the eye explores them, fail to engage equally.

Of course, one can speak of artistic skill and finish in an Indian painting, and that is certainly one of my concerns, but those qualities vary considerably in relation to the overall aims of each style and artist. My preference is for the two extremes of Indian pictorial solutions: works that spring from the pre-Mughal, indigenous Early Rajput style and those Rajput works most inspired by Mughal prototypes. To me, the Early Pahari pictorial traditions, from about the 1660s through the 1740s, are informed by the former, while the Rajasthani Bikaner tradition is an expression of the latter. That is why I so highly favored these two schools in my collecting.

Through a series of fortuitous circumstances over the last thirty-five years, I have been able to acquire a significant holding of paintings from the roughly hundred-year florescence of the Pahari tradition. A conscious decision was never taken to focus there, but those have been the works that most appealed to me. At the same time, I could not resist other Rajput paintings that seemed to me to be particularly fine examples. In part, this reflects my preference for works from Hindu rather than Muslim courts, which is based not on an affinity for one religion or the other but on the aesthetic decisions

FIG. 6. *Panchama Ragini*. India, Rajasthan, Bikaner, ca. 1640

that unfolded from their worldviews: myth rather than history was more engaging to me. These decisions were manifest in an artistic vocabulary that sought to capture the essential spirit of the transcendent and fantastic through a heightened visual experience: of necessity, the outcome was parallel to rather than illustrative of everyday visual experience. Thus, even portraiture in the Punjab Hills was treated in a more iconic, less naturalistic fashion than in Rajasthan and appealed more to me.

Traditionally, Indian artists mainly worked in bas-relief, which would have been painted: recent temples in India are often colored, and the effect may strike Westerners as jarring. During the earlier medieval period, color seems to have been used as well to differentiate the proliferation of deities in the more complicated esoteric Buddhist and Hindu pantheons. The limited palette of red, yellow, blue, green, black, and white seen in early Rajput portable paintings is identical to that employed by these earlier traditions in palm-leaf manuscripts (Hindu and Buddhist), Jain manuscripts on paper or cloth, and *pata* (portable paintings) and in early Nepalese and Tibetan paintings that were informed by Indian traditions. The early Rajput Indian painting tradition, like the sculptural one, also favored a similar shallow space as well as standardized conventions for figures and the portrayal of nature.

By the seventeenth century, as Rajasthan and the Punjab Hills continued under Mughal sway, painters at some of the courts politically close to the imperial center adopted, to various and different degrees, stylistic and thematic elements from the imperial painting style. A focus on princely pursuits and more naturalistic descriptions of nature were primary: with them came more plastic forms, deeper space, nuanced colors (rather than primaries and standardized secondary tints), and a closer rendering of the particularities of nature (see fig. 6). Equally, those courts that were more isolated geographically and/or politically from imperial influence tended to maintain earlier, traditional modes of representation. The pre-Mughal Indian penchant for shallow space, a limited palette, undifferentiated sheets of color, and patterning seems to have been hard overall for Indian artists to totally abandon, even when Mughal influence was great, and an almost cultural predilection for these qualities reasserts itself time and again in paintings from both Rajasthan and the Punjab Hills. There is a constant tension between these two poles of aesthetic representation in much of Indian court painting, and the artist's ability to reconcile these contradictory approaches is one of the continuing issues of Indian painting.

My collection is richest in painting from the Punjab Hills, the mostly small principalities that were located in the foothills of the Himalayas below Kashmir. Their history can be roughly split into two phases, the first from about 1660 to the 1740s and the second from the 1740s to 1800. The earlier one begins with Basohli paintings, and it

is interesting that when they were first discussed in the painting literature, they were thought to be a continuation of the pre-Mughal, early Rajput tradition and thus to date much earlier than they are now known to be.[2] The only survival of that early style in the Punjab Hills is a sixteenth-century manuscript of the *Devi Mahatmya* (Glory of the Goddess), now in the Himachal State Museum, Shimla.[3] But subsequent Basohli paintings, from a century later, do seem — with their juxtaposed planes of bright colors, shallow space, large-scale figures, and extraordinary decorative invention — to be more closely allied in spirit to such early works. They are anachronistic to the prevailing late seventeenth-century styles of Rajasthan, which had become, even when they grew out of earlier styles, often pallid in comparison. It is likely that the isolated principalities of the Punjab Hills were culturally predisposed to the earlier modalities of pictorial expression. The rise of painting in the Punjab Hills in such a glaringly archaistic Indian style during the reign of the emperor Aurangzeb (reigned 1658–1707) is unlikely to have been coincidental. We know that some of the Hill rajas were openly hostile to what was portrayed as the emperor's religious intolerance.[4] This brilliant school of painting emerges as a beacon of traditional Indian aesthetics.

The second phase of Pahari painting grows out of the more naturalistic tendencies surrounding Nainsukh and later Manaku, two great painters who were brothers, and was continued by their six sons. One of the great mysteries of the second generation of this family of painters is what, if any, role Nainsukh (whose name means "pleasure to the eye" or "pleasurable to gaze on") played in the creation of several of the important manuscripts that punctuate this phase. Nainsukh has been so demonstrably tied to his patron, Balwant Singh (a majority of the painter's works chronicle him), that it is hard to know what works can be attributed to his later career: Balwant Singh died in 1763, and Nainsukh survived him by fifteen years.[5] B. N. Goswamy and Eberhard Fischer have ascribed the drawings for the "Tehri Garhwal" *Gita Govinda* (cats. 77–85) to him, but it is unknown whether he contributed paintings to it or to any of the other large commissions given to his sons and nephews before his death in 1778.[6] In some instances, the paintings in sets are clearly the work of one hand or another. In others, there is more variability, and it is hard to know whether a particularly fine work is just a superior example or perhaps the contribution of a different painter — perhaps even Nainsukh. Whatever Nainsukh's role, the extraordinary qualities of many of these works make this an unprecedented florescence, in which several members of a second generation of artists continue and expand the legacy of their fathers or uncles at an elevated level.

It is also important to understand the rarity of these Pahari works. Most of the small, geographically remote principalities for which they were produced did not survive past the early nineteenth century. For example, the Basohli rajas ceased to rule by that time, and their princely holdings must slowly have been dispersed: the great early "Basohli" *Rasamanjari* series ended up in the hands of a family of physicians to the Basohli royal family, and the majority of these works were given to a local museum. These Pahari principalities had been subjugated by the Mughals in the early seventeenth century, their firstborn princes forced to grow up among members of the Mughal court and their succession necessarily approved by the emperor. Unlike the grander of the Rajasthani courts, these were too insignificant to merit imperial matrimonial ties or

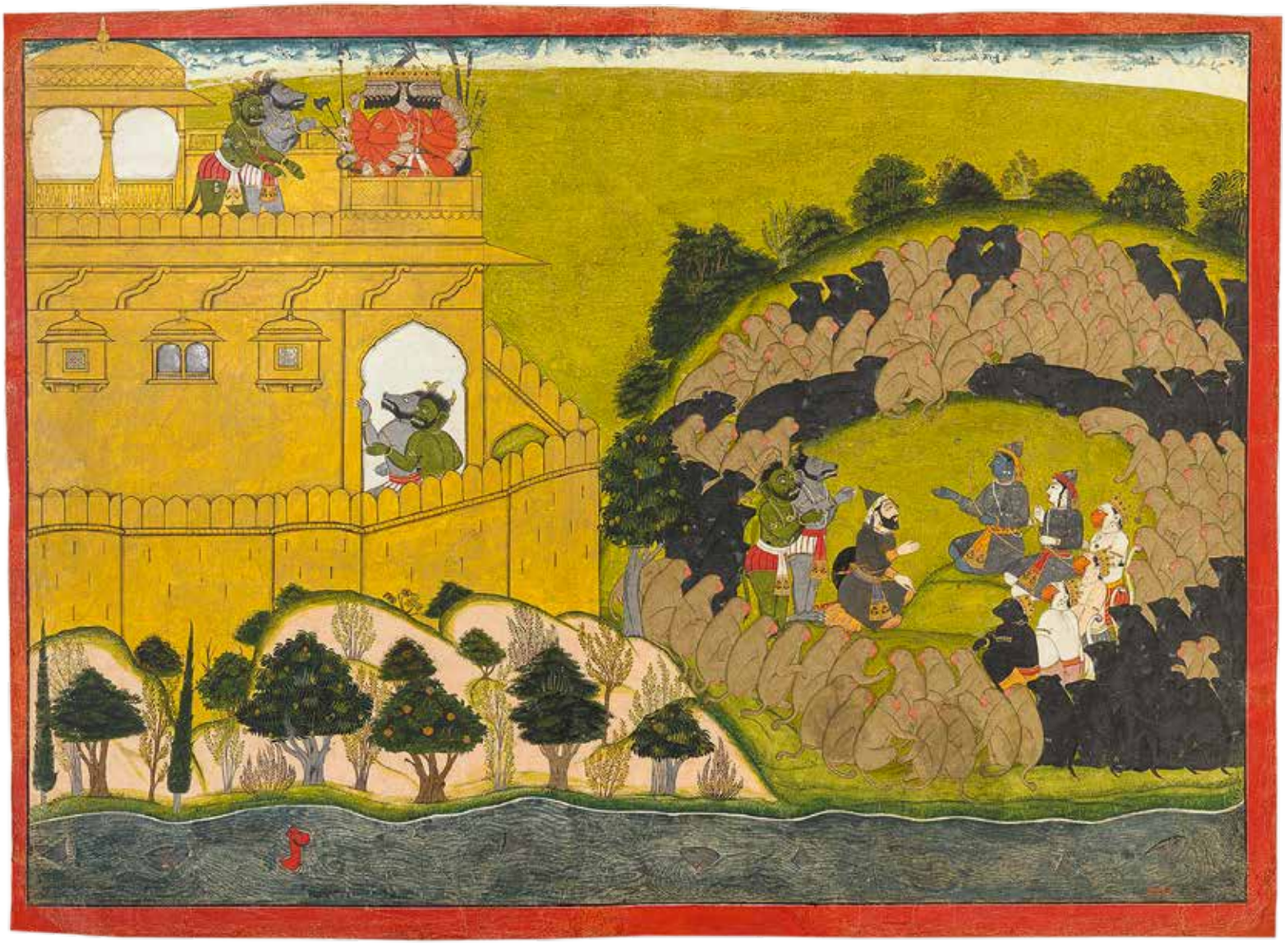


FIG. 7. *Rama, Surrounded by the Armies of the Great Bear and Monkey Clans, Pardons Two Demon Spies*. Attributed to Manaku of Guler. India, Punjab Hills, Guler, ca. 1725–30

for the most part to allow their princes to serve as military commanders in the Mughal armies (Nurpur being an exception).[7]

Along with their courts and forts, few of the Pahari painting collections survived intact into modern times. In comparison, most of the Rajasthani courts associated with painting traditions still flourish, many with inventory records and some, like Jaipur and Kishangarh, with painting collections largely intact. Because few of the Pahari kingdoms, and therefore few records associated with them, survive, the history of painting in the Punjab Hills has been erected on slim foundations. Only a small number of paintings or sets are dated, and provenance, dating, and authorship have slowly been posited by scholars over the last century. In some instances, controversy still surrounds the oeuvres of certain artists. It is amazing how ill equipped we are to understand the trajectories of artistic creation in Indian painting, especially when artists changed patrons.

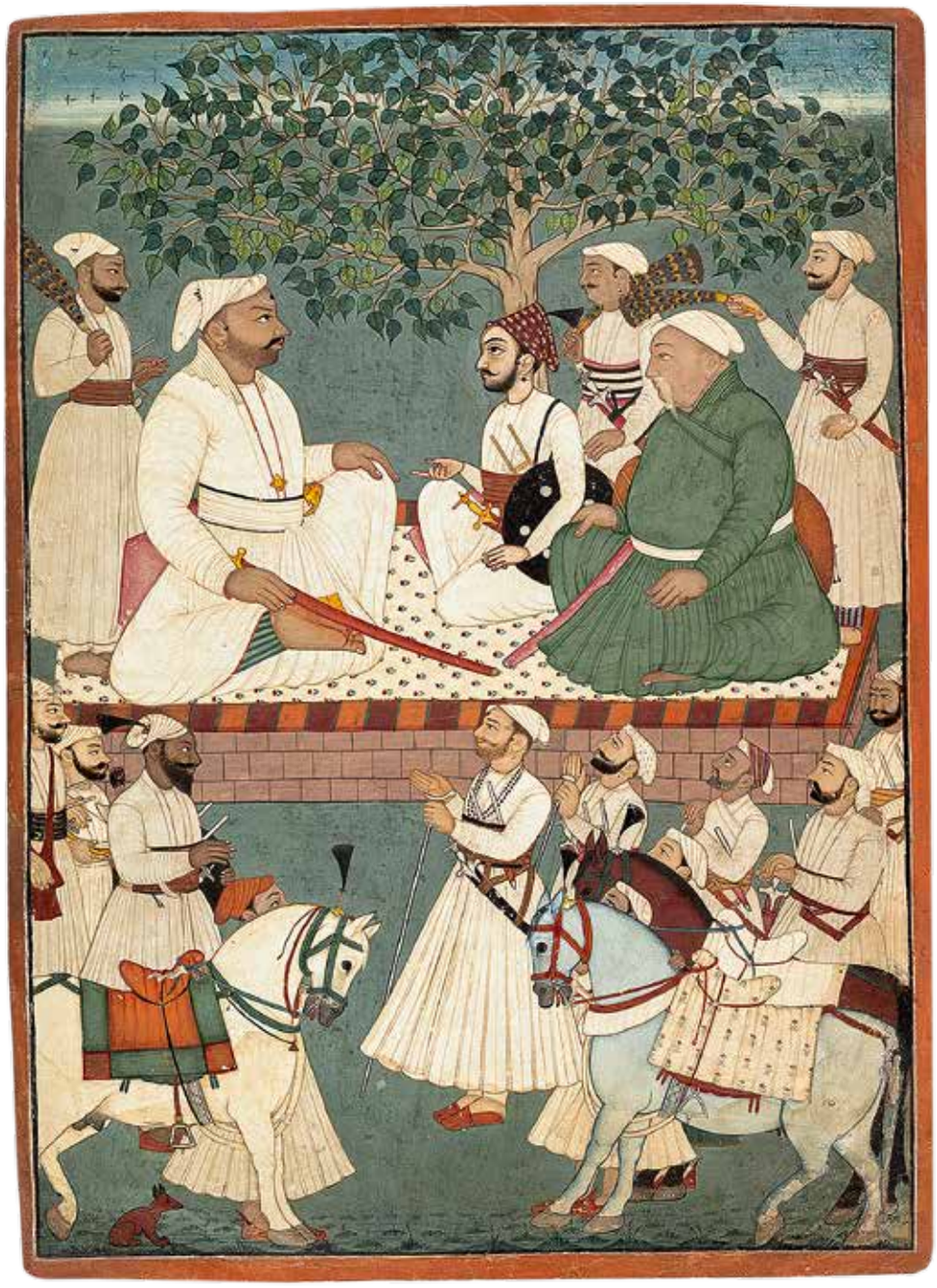


FIG. 8. *Maharaja Sidh Sen Receiving an Embassy.* Painted by the Master at the Court of Mandi. India, Punjab Hills, Mandi, ca. 1700–1710

The extraordinary changes that can be documented in the rare instances where signed works survive for such artists (for example, in the case of Bhavanidas, who worked for the Mughal and Kishangarh courts sequentially) show how the style of an artist could alter drastically, presumably to please a new patron. Equally, the relationship between drawings and finished works, for example, those attributable to Manaku (see fig. 7 and cats. 67–70 and 76), poses interesting questions about the different purposes of a preliminary drawing and a finished work.

FIG. 9. *Raja Balwant Singh of Jasrota Does Homage to Krishna and Radha*. Attributed to Nainsukh of Guler. India, Jasrota, Himachal Pradesh, ca. 1745–50

The Later Pahari traditions constitute an extraordinary moment in Indian art history. It is not simply a melding of Mughal style with Pahari traditions. Pahari painters, chiefly the second generation who were the sons of Nainsukh and Manaku, found a way to harness "Mughal" naturalism (explored throughout his career by Nainsukh and in the late work of Manaku) and to put it to the service of traditional Hindu mythological or literary texts. Mughal naturalism records moments of time. Later Pahari painting largely subverts this, fusing the illusion of particularity (naturalism) with idealized figures of heroes and heroines. Thus, when we look at pages from the "Tehri Garhwal" *Gita Govinda,* Radha and the *gopis* (milkmaids) are a single idealized female type, and the landscape is not an ordinary one but the forest of Brindaban, where Krishna chose to be incarnate and where nature is the mirror of the human soul seeking union with the divine.

Throughout the history of Pahari art (with the notable exception of Nainsukh's work for Balwant Singh), religious themes predominate in a way that they do not in Rajasthani art of the same period. The savoring of Hindu mythology and the literature surrounding it seems to be central to the royal delectation of Pahari painting: works commemorating temporal themes are unusual (paintings from the court of Mandi, with its long, close ties to the Mughals, are somewhat an exception), and even portraiture is largely codified and becomes almost iconic (see fig. 8 and cats. 40 and 55). The great "Tantric Devi" series (see cats. 37 and 38) may have been made as a devotional, meditational aide-mémoire to help a prince manifest the multiple aspects of the Great Goddess to himself (such devotional tools were frequently used in earlier Buddhist and Hindu rituals). Thus, the portraits showing rulers in obeisance concretely manifesting the deities they are devoted to are perhaps concrete examples of such desires (see fig. 9 and cats. 57 and 74). This is a recurrent theme in Pahari painting but rarer in Rajasthani paintings. It again seems to indicate the central role that religious belief played in the lives of Pahari rulers and the way religion was even the main focus of the private courtly delectation of visual images. This is not to say that the Rajasthani courts were less religious, but their painters did spend most of their time portraying courtly pursuits (hunts, festivals, including religious ones, and scenes of daily life).

Despite their immediate appeal, a full appreciation of many of these images requires a multivalent analysis. The Jaipur dancer (cat. 35) is a good example. A beautiful, sumptuously adorned woman crowned with a richly festooned turban, her glowing, translucent skin a contrast to the opaque colors of her green garment and the blue-gray background,

FIG. 10. *Head of a Woman Dressed as Krishna*. Attributed to Sahib Ram. India, Rajasthan, Jaipur, ca. 1800

is caught in the midst of a performance. Who is she? Her pose and turban closely mirror those seen in a drawing by the late eighteenth-century Jaipur artist Sahib Ram in the Metropolitan Museum's collection (fig. 10). That work seems to have been used in the preparation of a mural in the Jaipur palace showing Krishna and Radha, flanked by *gopi*s, dancing. In the mural the crowned figure is Krishna, while in the drawing a bustline seems to indicate a woman masquerading as Krishna. In my painting, a female dancer is clearly dressed up as the god. But such play was part of the story of KrishnaRadha, in which devotion could lead to role reversals that facilitated the incorporation of the other. That Krishna is evoked in my painting is clearly indicated by the storm-gray color of the background, his skin color, the green of his robe (a sometime attribute of the god as well as the color associated with the *rasa* of love), and perhaps even by the mirror in the background, which hints at Krishna's ability to multiply himself so that he could be available to all who wished to experience his divine play (see cat. 66). So, is this a dancer, portraying Radha, dressed as Krishna? The painting certainly seems to set in motion a series of possibilities kindled by its rich and illusive imagery.

Thus, in some ways, it is hard for most secular Westerners to fully partake of the world that these paintings explore, which in India is still infused with the daily rhythms of the Hindu gods, their festivals, and the personal quest for salvation. New York is a religiously diverse, mainly secular society. We have largely lost contact with the way in which a religious calendar, in sync with the seasons, can be an integral part of daily life, or a god the object of perpetual worship. The *Gita Govinda* is still performed in song and dance for the god Krishna each night at his temple in Puri (Orissa), as it was intended to be by its author eight hundred years ago. It is my hope that here, eight thousand miles away, these Indian paintings will nevertheless still speak clearly to us with an easily intuited joy that will enliven our souls and beckon us to enter into their universe.

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1. The exhibition, held at the Metropolitan in 1991–92, was entitled "The Lotus Transcendent: Indian and Southeast Asian Art from the Samuel Eilenberg Collection," as was its accompanying catalogue
2. Randhawa and Bhambri 1981, pp. 11–12.
3. Goswamy and Fischer 1992, pp. 16–27.
4. Much has been made of the exaggeration of Aurangzeb's anti-Hindu stance (see, for example, Chandra 1989). The response of the Pahari princes to him can be seen in two separate incidents. First, when a group of Hill rajas (from Jammu, Basohli, Chamba, and Guler) united to forcibly expel the Mughal viceroy from the Hills in the last quarter of the seventeenth century (Hutchison and Vogel 1933, pp. 308–9, 538), and second, in 1678, when Aurangzeb issued an order to demolish all Hindu temples in the Hill States, the raja of Chamba, Chatar Singh, countered by putting golden pinnacles on each of the main temples in his state (ibid., p. 308). It is unlikely that the emperor actually issued the order, but the raja's political stance is clear defiance against the "intolerant" Mughal overlord who had demolished some temples to make way for mosques.
5. Goswamy and Fischer 1992, pp. 269–70.
6. Ibid., p. 272.
7. See Hutchison and Vogel 1933, pp. 228, 232, and passim.

Mughal Court Painting and the Origins of Rajput Court Painting

TERENCE McINERNEY

LIKE SO MANY THINGS one admires in present-day India, the court painting tradition we honor here was the creation of the Mughal emperor Akbar (reigned 1556–1605), a man of lofty historical importance. Its dates coincide essentially with those of the Mughal Empire (1526–1858), which Akbar did much to establish on a firm footing. After the demise of Akbar's empire, Rajput court painting experienced a period of sad decline.

Of course Akbar was not himself a Rajput but a Muslim of Central Asian ancestry, the scion of Timur on his father's side and Genghis Khan on his mother's. Even so, the painting tradition he sponsored had a profound impact on all of his subjects, including the Rajput, or Hindu, rulers from his smaller dependencies in Rajasthan and the Punjab Hills. The tradition of court painting created by these subservient yet princely patrons back home was in direct response to the tradition Akbar had established at the empire's center. It took a long time for these new, provincial court painters to develop local schools that were not merely inept imitations of their imperial models. Yet, in the fullness of time, they achieved this difficult feat, producing the broad array of allied court styles, all reflecting Mughal influence to a greater or lesser degree, that we call Rajput court painting.

In establishing the administration of his Mughal empire, Akbar was wise enough to leave in place the rulers and kingdoms on the periphery of his new realm or in the areas that were difficult to reach. The hereditary rulers of the smaller Hindu kingdoms of Rajasthan, protected by blazing deserts and tortuous mountain chains, and the Punjab Hills, very far from the Mughal capitals at Delhi, Agra, and Lahore, were left to enjoy their old prerogatives. But in line with Mughal policy, these former rajas (kings) ruled their territories only on behalf of the Mughal emperor, who was their titular overlord. A ruler's right to reign was legitimized by a ceremony held by the Mughal emperor (the placing of the *tilak*, or vermilion circle, on the raja's forehead). In the same ceremony the Mughal emperor conveyed to the Rajput ruler his ancestral lands (*watan*) as non-transferable territory. (By the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when the Mughal Empire had greatly weakened, this legitimization of a ruler's eldest son and the transfer of ancestral lands to him had become more or less pro forma.)

It was also agreed that each ruler's eldest son was to be raised at the Mughal court. In this way Mughal aristocratic culture, with its opulent ceremonies, codified etiquette, sophisticated music and poetry, and exquisite paintings and objects, infiltrated into the more homespun yet traditional courts throughout the empire. In becoming familiar with the glamorous and trendsetting activities of the Mughal court and feeling themselves to be in no way inferior to the Mughals, these court-trained young Rajput princes could see that sponsoring an accomplished atelier of painters, illuminators, and calligraphers was one of the attributes of a great king, regardless of his religion. As a result, when a young Rajput prince came of age, he established for his own greater glory an atelier of court painters in his own provincial palace.

Mughal service was never incompatible with the ethos of these Rajput warriors. "In accepting Akbar's service Rajput [rulers] thereby accepted him as a Muslim Rajput who possessed far greater power and sovereignty than even the greatest of Rajput masters. The bardic traditions from [the sixteenth century] often 'equate [Akbar] with Ram, the pre-eminent . . . cultural hero of the Hindu Rajput.'"[1]

The aristocratic, intimate nature of Rajput court painting is a result not only of its patronage but also of its subject matter and intimate, one-on-one focus. Like reading a book or a letter, enjoying Rajput court paintings was a private, not a public, occupation. Small in size, they were held in the hands, their fine surface detail examined at close range, one painting at a time.

Executed on several laminations of paper, these works were painted in a kind of opaque watercolor (comprising vegetable and mineral pigments), using a small, soft brush, over a carefully prepared underdrawing and ground. The resulting picture was framed with borders chosen to harmonize with other pictures in its series or bundle; inscribed on its border, reverse side, or attached flyleaf; and then carefully burnished with an agate or some other smooth stone. The paintings' small size, intimate format, and method of production were the same as those of Mughal works.

Indian Court Painting during the Reign of Akbar (1556–1605)

THE STYLISTIC AMALGAM that would characterize Mughal court painting — the distant inspiration for Rajput court painting — did not develop overnight. One of Akbar's first great projects, from about 1557 to 1572, involved the creation of 1,400 paintings (in fourteen volumes) illustrating the *Hamzanama* (The Story of Hamza), one of the oldest and most popular romances of the Persian world.[2] There are five paintings from this very large project in the Metropolitan Museum, as well as a fragment of a sixth. *Assad Ibn Kariba Launches a Night Attack on the Camp of Malik Iraj* (fig. 11) and *Umar Walks around the Fulad Castle, Meets a Foot Soldier, and Kicks Him to the Ground* (fig. 12) are typical of the series at large.

The compositions of these two works, like those of all early Mughal paintings, are packed with the flattened shapes and patterned surfaces of their Persian models. Yet the figures and many of the objects they touch are roundly shaded, creating a physical density that is seen not in Persian but in Indian painting. The colors also incorporate the hot reds

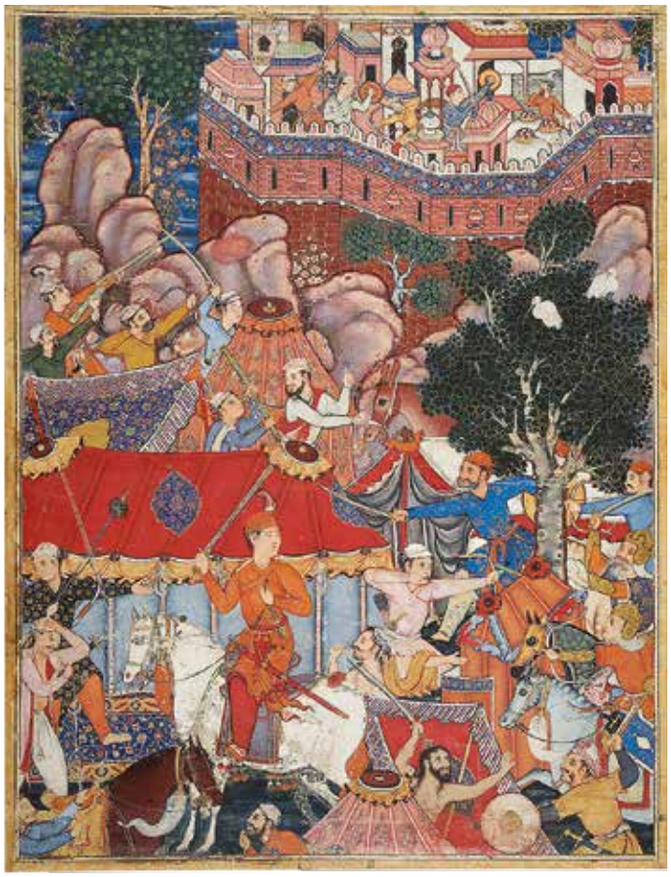

FIG. 11. *Assad Ibn Kariba Launches a Night Attack on the Camp of Malik Iraj*. India, Mughal, ca. 1564–69

FIG. 12. *Umar Walks around the Fulad Castle, Meets a Foot Soldier, and Kicks Him to the Ground*. India, Mughal, ca. 1570

and yellows of the Hindu tradition; the heavy-limbed female figures that appear in other paintings from the same manuscript also derive from Hindu art.

In the later paintings from the *Hamzanama*, particularly those finished about 1570 (see fig. 12), one sees further developments: figures with facial expressions indicating an inner life, bodies striking animated poses or seen from behind, and the suggestion of deep vistas in the surrounding space.[3] By this time the future direction of Mughal court painting had been set.

Umar Walks around the Fulad Castle, one of these later paintings, has an emotional power and untamed dynamism that depart from its more refined Persian antecedents. In painting this work and others like it, it was as if Akbar's painters, who by the end of his reign numbered more than one hundred artists (almost equally Hindus and Muslims), had learned for the first time to empathize with Umar and the other characters they depicted and to imagine how these characters might have felt. And, more important, Akbar had encouraged his artists to convey these emotions to the viewer.

Direct, uninhibited emotion is arguably the one characteristic that distinguishes Indian court painting from works in other, cognate traditions, yet this quality is almost never discussed. This emotional directness really applies to all Indian miniature paintings, whether Mughal or Rajput, courtly or not; in these works the feelings implicit in the drawing and color are there for all to see.

FIG. 13. *Hamid Bhakari Punished by Akbar*. Attributed to Manohar. India, Mughal, MS dated 1597

FIG. 14. *A Muslim Pilgrim Learns a Lesson in Piety from a Brahmin*. Attributed to Basawan. India, Mughal, MS dated 1597–98

A fine example of mature Akbari painting is the Metropolitan Museum's *Hamid Bhakari Punished by Akbar* of 1597 (fig. 13), attributable to the artist Manohar. In this illustration from the official history of his reign, the emperor is depicted riding a horse during the final moments of an imperial hunt that had taken place more than thirty years earlier. In a subsidiary yet emotionally engaging detail in the foreground of the picture, Akbar's disgraced courtier, Hamid Bhakari, is paraded as he sits backward astride a donkey with his head shaven in penance.

In somewhat later paintings in the Rajput tradition, this Akbari combination of several different narrative threads in one composition was almost never used. Rajput court painters might use sequential narrative (see cat. 13), but they illustrated only one story at a time.

By the end of Akbar's reign in 1605, inward-looking figures and tiered landscapes with distant atmospheric effects had become typical of almost all of the paintings that were made for him at this time. These late Akbari characteristics can be seen in an illustration from a *Khamsa* (Collected Verses) of Amir Khusrau Dihlavi of 1597–98 in the Metropolitan Museum (fig. 14). In this painting, *A Muslim Pilgrim Learns a Lesson in Piety from a Brahmin*, attributable to Basawan, the titular figure witnesses a Hindu devotee proceeding prostrate on the ground to a distant Shiva temple. As the two men meet on the road, the expressions on their faces are a marvel of understated emotion. Their equally blind nonattachment to the external world is gently mocked by the idyllic landscape, of Flemish inspiration, that surrounds them.

This level of pictorial sophistication did not yet exist in court painting in the Rajput lands; indeed, for most of the sixteenth century, Rajput court painting hardly existed at all. It took some time for Akbar's Rajput nobles to acquire a taste for painting and to establish court ateliers with experienced gilders, calligraphers, and other artisans in their own courts. Of course there was painting activity in Rajasthan and the Punjab Hills at this time, but it was probably not localized in the Rajput courts.[4] Non-Mughal Indian painting remained a serious, religious art whose patronage was probably located in Hindu temples or scriptoria.

It would appear that Rajput princes were not the patrons of the misleadingly labeled Early Rajput style (see cats. 1–5). Its patrons were presumably wealthy, noncourtly members of various Hindu religious communities, who presented works illustrated in this style (such as the "Palam" *Bhagavata Purana* [The Ancient Story of God]) to religious institutions as a conspicuous expression of their piety.[5] The Early Rajput style reached

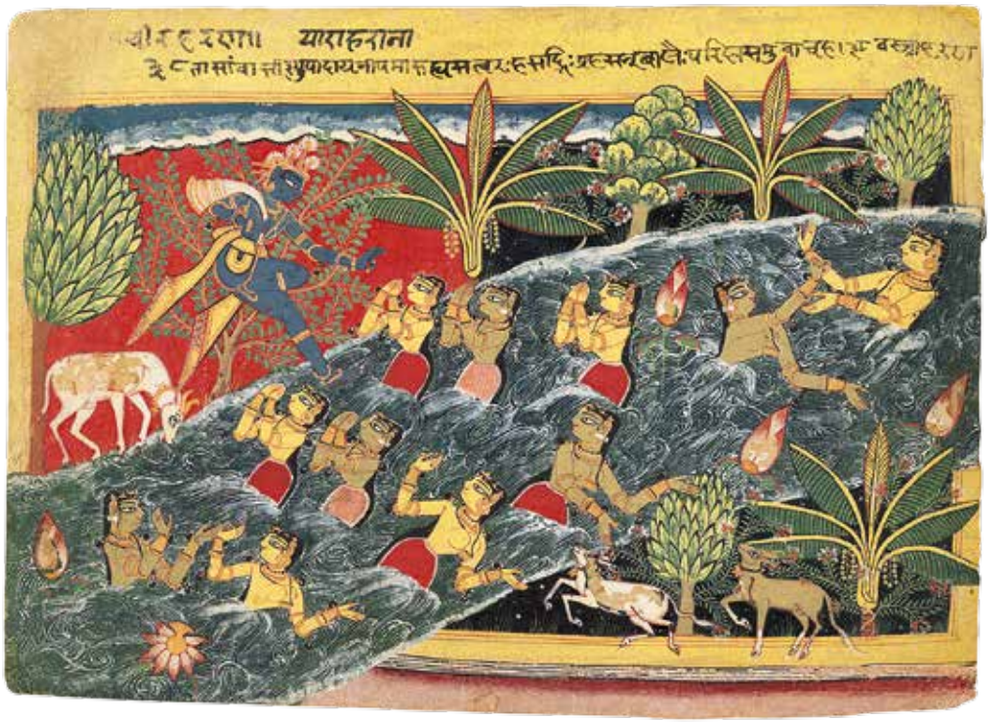

FIG. 15. *The Gopis Plead with Krishna to Return Their Clothing*. India, Delhi-Agra region, ca. 1560–65

its culmination in paintings from the "Isarda" *Bhagavata Purana* of about 1560–65. A very fine painting from this series (fig. 15) in the Museum's collection illustrates the *gopi*s (milkmaids) pleading with Krishna for the return of their clothes. (The same subject is illustrated in a painting in the Kronos Collections; see cat. 36.) The flattened river in which the half-dressed *gopi*s are positioned flows across the entire page, producing a vivid yet nonliteral spatial division that the Mughals would never have tolerated. (Another excellent painting from the same series is also in the Kronos Collections; see cat. 4.)

The flattened spaces, monochrome backgrounds, and limited palette seen here, as well as the animated figures with their large eyes, curvaceous bodies, and richly patterned textiles, had a considerable influence on the formation of Mughal court painting and of later Rajput court painting. This noncourtly style also served as an idealized model for painting resistant to Mughal culture, as practiced in Mewar in the seventeenth century (see cat. 13) and in the Punjab Hills in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries (see cats. 37–70).

The earliest Rajput court painting is undoubtedly what is now called Sub-Imperial Mughal painting. There are four examples of this style in the Kronos Collections (cats. 7–10), all from the "Berlin" *Ragamala* (Garland of Melodies) of 1605–6. The heyday of this style lasted from about 1580–90 to about 1620–30. It married works from the noncourtly, pre-Mughal, Early Rajput style (see cats. 1–5) to works painted in Akbar's emerging Mughal court style. Although Rajput court painting eventually eliminated this "sub-imperial" influence, many fine works were produced in this important yet anachronistic manner before Rajput court painting reached its maturity about 1660.

At this same time, in the newly established ateliers of Mughal-resistant Rajput kingdoms — for example, in the workshop set up in the traditional and very conservative

court of Mewar — Rajput court painters were coming to terms with Mughal court painting in other ways. Using the Early Rajput style as their model, Mewar court painters incorporated certain Mughal innovations into their work, yet they remained true to the brilliantly colored tradition of strip illustration that they considered to be authentically Indian. Typical of this phase of Rajasthani court painting is the work of the Mewar master Sahibdin (active 1628–55). A very fine painting attributed to Sahibdin is included in the Kronos Collections (cat. 13).

Concurrently, Rajasthani painters in peripheral ateliers in Mughal-friendly courts were also grappling with imperial court painting in other ways. In the kingdom of Bikaner, for example, court painters attempted to incorporate the Mughal emphasis on deep space, modeled figures, and naturalistic settings in their often "primitive" illustrations of the Hindu classics (see cats. 11 and 12). The emotional intensity and narrative directness were already there, thanks to the so-called Early Rajput style in which Bikaner painters had been trained. (They also incorporated some of the hoary conventions of this style, including its use of a single block of undivided color as a background "curtain.") The curious paintings that resulted are certainly not Mughal; indeed, they have an uncouth power and a direct approach that their more polished Mughal prototypes often lack. Yet court painters were only two generations removed from the fully absorbed imperial style that the artist Ruknuddin (see cats. 22–24) and his progeny established as an independent school of Rajput court painting in the late seventeenth century. Along with paintings executed in the Sub-Imperial style, these early seventeenth-century works from Bikaner probably represent a very early form of Rajput court painting.

Indian Court Painting during the Seventeenth Century

AKBAR'S SUCCESSOR, the Mughal emperor Jahangir (reigned 1605–27), dispensed with the deep landscapes and crowded compositions that were typical of Mughal court painting during the previous reign. (Yet the deep landscape format continued to influence later Rajput art; see cat. 26, for example.) Jahangir preferred stand-alone pictures that reflected his personal interests: portraits of important individuals, naturalistic studies of birds and animals, and depictions of court events in which he played an active role. Jahangiri painting has an up-close, intimate focus; the backgrounds are mostly a uniform color, with a convincing suggestion of depth in the modeling of the figures and their shallow settings.

Manohar's *Jahangir and His Vizier, I'timad al-Daula* (fig. 16) of about 1615, a folio from the Kevorkian Album, now in the Metropolitan Museum, is a good example of Jahangiri style. In this painting, the monochrome green background is virtually empty, focusing attention on the two figures. Jahangir said of his vizier (prime minister) and father-in-law, I'timad al-Daula (Reliance of the State), "[I]nwardly he burned with the fires of loneliness."[6] Beneath the stately deportment, the troubled inner life of the two men becomes readily apparent in the unsparing delineation of their faces.

Although lacking this psychological complexity, the same painterly objectivity and refinement of line and color evident in almost all the paintings Jahangir commissioned also characterize Mansur's majestic *Red-Headed Vulture and Long-Billed Vulture* (fig. 17),

FIG. 16. *Jahangir and His Vizier, I'timad al-Daula*. Painted by Manohar. India, Mughal, ca. 1615

FIG. 17. *Red-Headed Vulture and Long-Billed Vulture*. Painted by Mansur. India, Mughal, ca. 1615–20

another folio from the Kevorkian Album. The naturalism evident in this remarkable work is probably atypical of Indian painting as a whole, and it certainly had very little influence on Rajput court painting, which blazed a trail in a different direction. But the solid backgrounds and intimate focus had a profound impact on painting beyond the imperial court (see cat. 18, for example).

Mughal court painting during the reign of Jahangir's son, Shah Jahan (reigned 1628–58), concentrated on portraiture (see fig. 18) and depictions of historical or court events mentioned in the *Padshahnama*, the official illustrated history of the emperor's reign (see fig. 19). The settings in which the action takes place are artificial yet convincing arrangements of a type that was formulated during the previous reign. The broad foreground is flat and continuous with the picture plane, yet the narrow background along the top recedes in staggered layers that suggest a deeper focus.

Real portraiture was a novelty in India. Earlier Indian portraits did not attempt to capture a person's likeness, but concentrated instead on presenting recognizable

FIG. 18. *Shah Jahan Riding a Stallion.* Painted by Payag. India, Mughal, ca. 1628

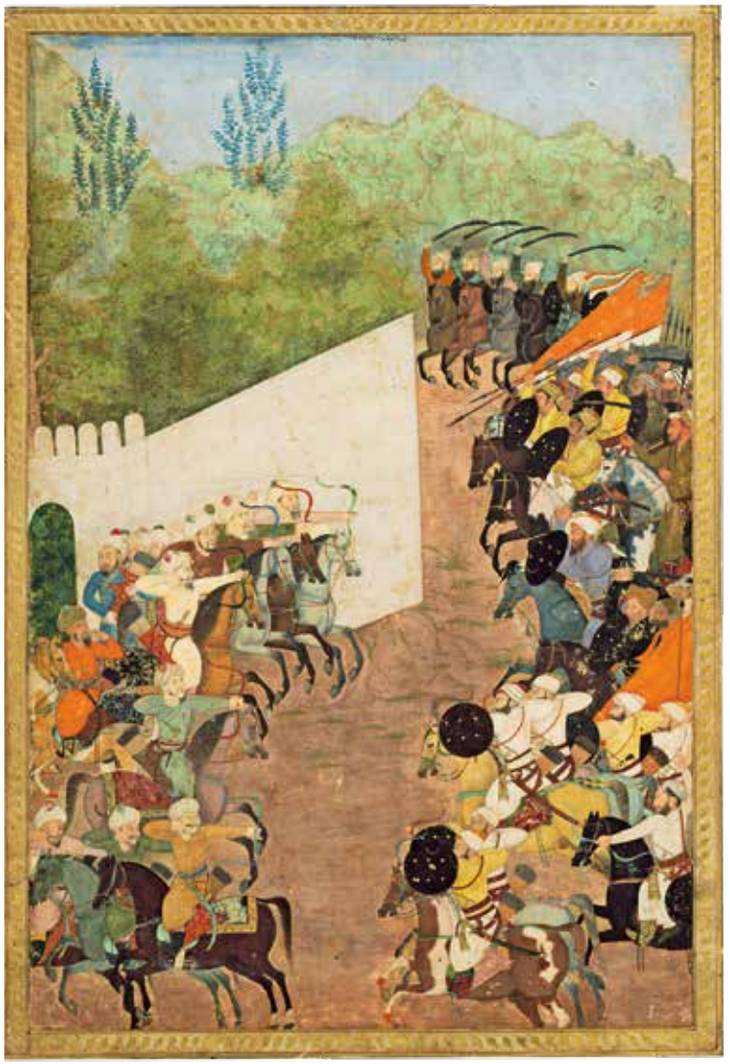

FIG. 19. *The Battle of Shahbarghan*. Painted by Hunhar. India, Mughal, ca. 1648

symbols of the subject's rank in society. Starting with Akbar and gaining in number during the reigns of his successors, the new Mughal innovation of portraits with actual likenesses became immensely popular, especially among the emperor's Rajput noblemen. These men had a good reason to commission such portraits of their courtiers (see cat. 44), associates (see cat. 56), or enemies (see cat. 34): having real portraits of actual people helped in making appointments and deliberating state policy.

Very soon, however, this new kind of portrait was subverted for political reasons. An excellent example of what ultimately became the official state portraiture is Payag's *Shah Jahan Riding a Stallion* of about 1628 (fig. 18), now in the Metropolitan Museum. In this peerless equestrian portrait, "every jewel, sash end, and whisker are as perfect as [Shah Jahan's] smile."[7] (Note the emperor's gold halo, a symbol of imperial power borrowed from European art.) Unlike Jahangir, the punctilious Shah Jahan urged his court painters to keep a safe distance. All signs of human weakness, of aging or anxiety, or of less-than-courtly deportment were assiduously eliminated from his portraits. What remains is an "immaculate, unapproachable symbol of empire personified."[8]

Consequently, the Rajput court painter had two quite different Mughal portrait models to study. He could consult either portraits with the soulful complexity of the Jahangir period or those with the ice-cold perfection of the Shah Jahan period. As pragmatists, Rajput court painters would alternate over time between the two extremes. An excellent example of a Rajput state portrait dating from about 1675 is illustrated in catalogue number 40. A more moody character study of a Rajput ruler dating from about 1730 is illustrated in catalogue number 56.

The first phase of Mughal painting, and of Mughal influence on Rajput court painting, came to an end early in the reign of Shah Jahan's successor, the emperor Aurangzeb (reigned 1658–1707). As a good religious fundamentalist, Aurangzeb disbanded his imperial painting studio about 1666 (strict Muslims of conservative persuasion abhor the pictorial arts), and all of the talented artists he inherited were left to fend for themselves. With this single hammer blow, Aurangzeb terminated more than one hundred years of state sponsorship of Mughal court painting.

Eventually Mughal court painting was reestablished by Aurangzeb's successors in the early eighteenth century (see fig. 20), and it continued as a creative beacon for all of India until the last days of the weakening Mughal Empire, which would end in 1858. Yet it never again enjoyed the preeminent influence it once had. It became just another school of court painting — no more influential than court painting from Mewar or Bikaner, for example.

FIG. 20. *The Emperor Aurangzeb Carried on a Palanquin*. Painted by Bhavanidas. India, Mughal, ca. 1700–1715

However, Aurangzeb's loss was really a Rajput gain. The flight of imperial artists from the center to the periphery of Aurangzeb's empire, a rekindled interest in their Hindu heritage on the part of Rajput patrons, and a pool of very talented artists in the Rajput lands resulted in a combustion of painting activity in Rajasthan and the Punjab Hills. Starting about 1660, Rajput court painting entered its golden age. Having absorbed sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Mughal influence, painting at the Rajasthani courts of Kota, Jodhpur (Marwar), and Bikaner attained a new maturity, resulting in works of unparalleled splendor and originality. (Meanwhile, extreme Mughal influence had been apparent in the small Rajasthani kingdom of Kishangarh since its inception in the early seventeenth century.)

This historic transformation had already occurred in the small Rajasthani kingdom of Bundi, the earliest progenitor of classic Rajput court painting. After about 1600, in wall paintings at the Bundi palace (the painted decoration of the Badal Mahal) and in series reflecting Rajput, not Mughal, interests, Bundi court painters blended the bright colors and flattened surfaces of the indigenous tradition with the suggestion of ample space and calligraphic line of the imperial tradition to produce something new: the first fully fledged Rajput court painting the world had seen.

Beginning in about 1710, court painting even in the conservative kingdom of Mewar (and that of neighboring Jaipur, which also supported a large court atelier) changed direction, becoming increasingly secular and naturalistic. This "Mughalized," later phase of Mewar painting is well represented by the Museum's *Maharana Ari Singh with His Courtiers Being Entertained at the Jagniwas Water Palace* of 1767, by Bhima, Kesu Ram, Bhopa, and Nathu (fig. 28). The saturated colors, multiple perspectives, and doll-like figures in this work derive from an earlier Rajasthani tradition, but the highly detailed architectural setting, receding space, and everyday subject matter are Mughal adaptations.

A nearly contemporary painting from neighboring Jaipur (fig. 29) depicts the god Krishna holding a gray dropcloth (symbolic of the legendary Mount Govardhan) to protect the *gopi*s from the all-consuming rain. While the subject is of course Hindu, the almost obsessively elaborated landscape background is indebted to Mughal art.

This same creeping acculturation, the transmission of Mughal style and technique from the center to the periphery, also occurred in the Punjab Hills, where the Early Pahari style had previously reigned supreme (see cats. 37–70). It is not clear why this fiercely dramatic style took fire around the year 1660, but from the kingdom of Basohli, its

probable homeland, it spread outward to include the entire region in its distinctive grip. Like the seventeenth-century court painting cultivated at Mewar and other conservative kingdoms in Rajasthan, the Early Pahari style was a pioneering form of early Rajput court painting, little affected by Mughal aesthetics. "Foreign," Mughal additions were not incorporated into Pahari painting until some sixty years later.

The local style of painting in the Punjab Hills before Mughal aesthetics and technique had been fully absorbed is illustrated by a dramatic folio (fig. 27) from an important *Rasamanjari* (Bouquet of Delights) series in the Metropolitan Museum. This painting has the monochrome background, narrow strip of overarching sky, abstracted figures, bright colors, and toylike props that are the essential hallmarks of the Early Pahari style. There are many first-rate examples of this style in the Kronos Collections (cats. 37–70); indeed, the collections' rich representation of these Pahari paintings is possibly their greatest distinction.

Early Pahari features mostly disappear from Later Pahari painting (cats. 71–95), probably owing to the pervasive influence of the great Pahari artist Nainsukh (active ca. 1735–68). Working with his family, Nainsukh, and later his descendants, opened their parochial courts to a larger world. They applied the lessons they had learned from Mughal innovations in spatial representation, composition, and coloring to the exquisite series they were making at that time illustrating Hindu classics such as the *Bhagavata Purana* (The Ancient Story of God) and the *Ramayana* (The Adventures of Rama). The Kronos Collections include nine brilliant examples from the workshop's important series of about 1775 illustrating Jayadeva's *Gita Govinda* (Song of the Cowherds) (cats. 77–85).

This same "Mughalized" later phase of Pahari painting is illustrated by another work in the Museum (fig. 30), *Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana at the Hermitage of Bharadvaja*, a folio from the "Bharany" *Ramayana* series of about 1780. Note the pastel colors and the spacious landscape format, all greatly indebted to Mughal art. (For another painting from this same series in the Kronos Collections, see cat. 87.)

The Rajput court paintings catalogued here can be divided into three less than distinct yet quite separate phases: the pre-Akbari, or pre-Mughal, paintings executed in the misleadingly labeled Early Rajput style (cats. 1–5); the Mughal-dependent paintings of the middle years, dating from about 1580 to 1630 (cats. 7–10); and the "mature" paintings of about 1660 and later, whether Mughal-resistant (cats. 13, 37–70) or Mughal-friendly (cats. 71–95).

In addition to representing the full sweep of Pahari painting from about 1660 to the early nineteenth century, the Kronos Collections have at least one example from every important center of Rajasthani court painting. They cover only the partial history of an individual Rajasthani school in the case of Bikaner, whose court painting is represented by fine examples ranging in date from the early seventeenth century to the eighteenth (cats. 11–12, 20–27). The most primitive type of Bikaner court painting appears in two powerful yet rather awkward illustrations from the *Bhagavata Purana* (see cats. 11 and 12). The "mature," late seventeenth-century phase of painting at Bikaner is exemplified by the work of the influential artist Ruknuddin (active ca. 1650–ca. 1697), chief of the atelier, who combined a Mughal emphasis on fine drawing and surface detail

with a Rajasthani desire for simplified form and clarity of composition (cats. 22–24). Ruknuddin's insistence on immaculate execution is also apparent in a wonderful late seventeenth-century illustration from the *Bhagavata Purana* (cat. 25), as well as in a work from the later, quieter phase of Bikaner painting (cat. 26).

It is not easy to date the various schools of Rajput court painting. Each school or tradition followed its own path, making it difficult to generalize about the appearance of a Rajput court painting at any moment in time. The Mughal connection is often important; along with figure and facial styles, it is often among the only useful tools for dating individual works of art. Even so, the general progression is clear. Rajput court painting was an aristocratic art, reflecting the interests of the raja and courtiers who patronized it. In about 1600, it developed either in rather awkward imitation of or in violent opposition to Mughal court painting. Later, it blended with Mughal court painting to become Indian, plain and simple. After its complicated origins, Rajput court painting went on to become one of the chief glories of Indian art.

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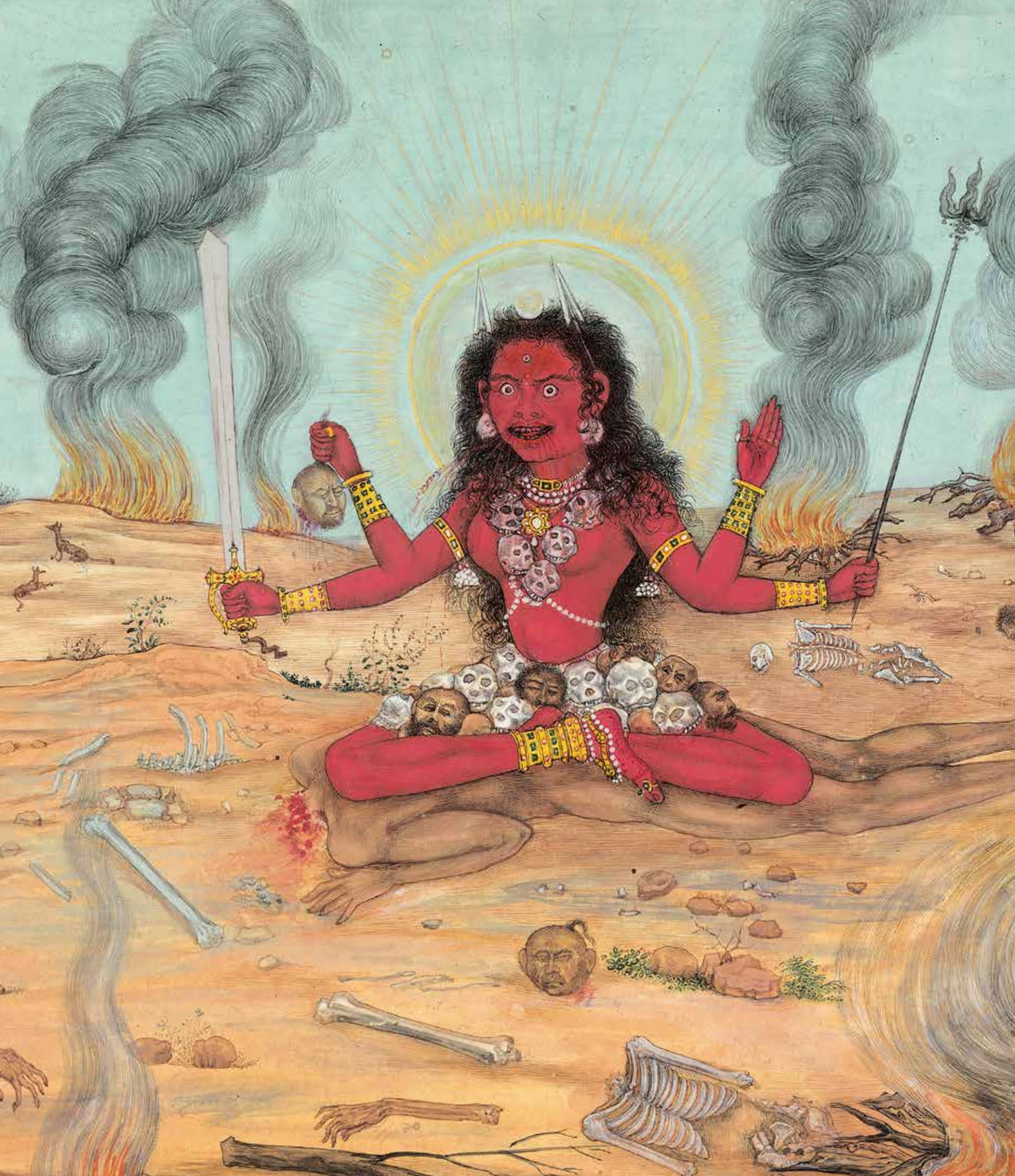
1. Richards 1993, p. 23.
2. Seyller 2002, p. 12.
3. Ibid., p. 47.
4. One of the principal monuments of this nonroyal painting activity in the Punjab Hills is the famous illustrated *Devi Mahatmya* manuscript of 1552, now in the Himachal State Museum, Shimla. See Goswamy and Fischer 1992, pp. 22–27.
5. Seyller 1999, p. 16.
6. Welch et al. 1987, p. 111.
7. Ibid., p. 202.
8. Ibid.



Hindu Epic and Myth in Mughal Painting

NAVINA NAJAT HAIDAR

The complex set of religious traditions that we today call Hinduism comprises many epic, devotional, and philosophical texts as well as a rich corpus of mythological stories that evolved over millennia in the Indian subcontinent. These both unify and diversify Hinduism, as gods assume multiple incarnations and their worship intersects with mythology. The Mughals, a dynasty of Central Asian Muslims who established rule in the Indian subcontinent in 1526, encountered this mosaic of traditions in many forms when they first arrived. How they initially perceived Hinduism and responded to it is partly indicated by the extraordinary phenomenon of the translation and illustration of epic and mythological texts at the Mughal court. These endeavors gave rise to some of the greatest achievements of Mughal painting and also initiated many of the styles and subjects that developed later in Rajput and Pahari court painting. Simply put, Mughal patronage was a vital key to the development of Hindu subject matter in Indian court painting.

At his capital city Fatehpur Sikri, the third Mughal emperor, Akbar (reigned 1556–1605), created a Bureau of Records and Translation that was in operation by 1574. One goal of this *maktab khana* was to translate important texts, including major Hindu epics, into Persian, the literary and administrative language of the court, and to illustrate them in the royal workshops.[1] Thus, court scholars collaborated with learned Hindus over a period of several years as Sanskrit texts were reborn in Persian. In 1584 the *Mahabharata* (The Great Epic of the Bharatas) emerged as the *Razmnama* (Book of Wars), lavishly illustrated in four volumes, now in the Jaipur royal collection; this manuscript became a model for later copies.[2] The translation of the *Ramayana* (The Adventures of Rama) immediately followed, with four illustrated copies made — three for various members of the Mughal royal family and one (known as the "Burnt-Edge" series) attributed to a Rajput ally. The earliest of the *Ramayana* manuscripts also remains in Jaipur and, together with the *Razmnama*, awaits full scholarly inspection.[3]

The pages that are known from these two pioneering works reveal their ambition. A double-page folio of the Jaipur *Razmnama* depicting the story of the hero Abhimanyu, trapped within an impenetrable army formation, envisages the scene as a grid of mounted warriors resembling a kind of cosmic mandala.[4] The Jaipur *Ramayana* creates similarly vivid and original compositions in its 176 folios, which established iconographic and

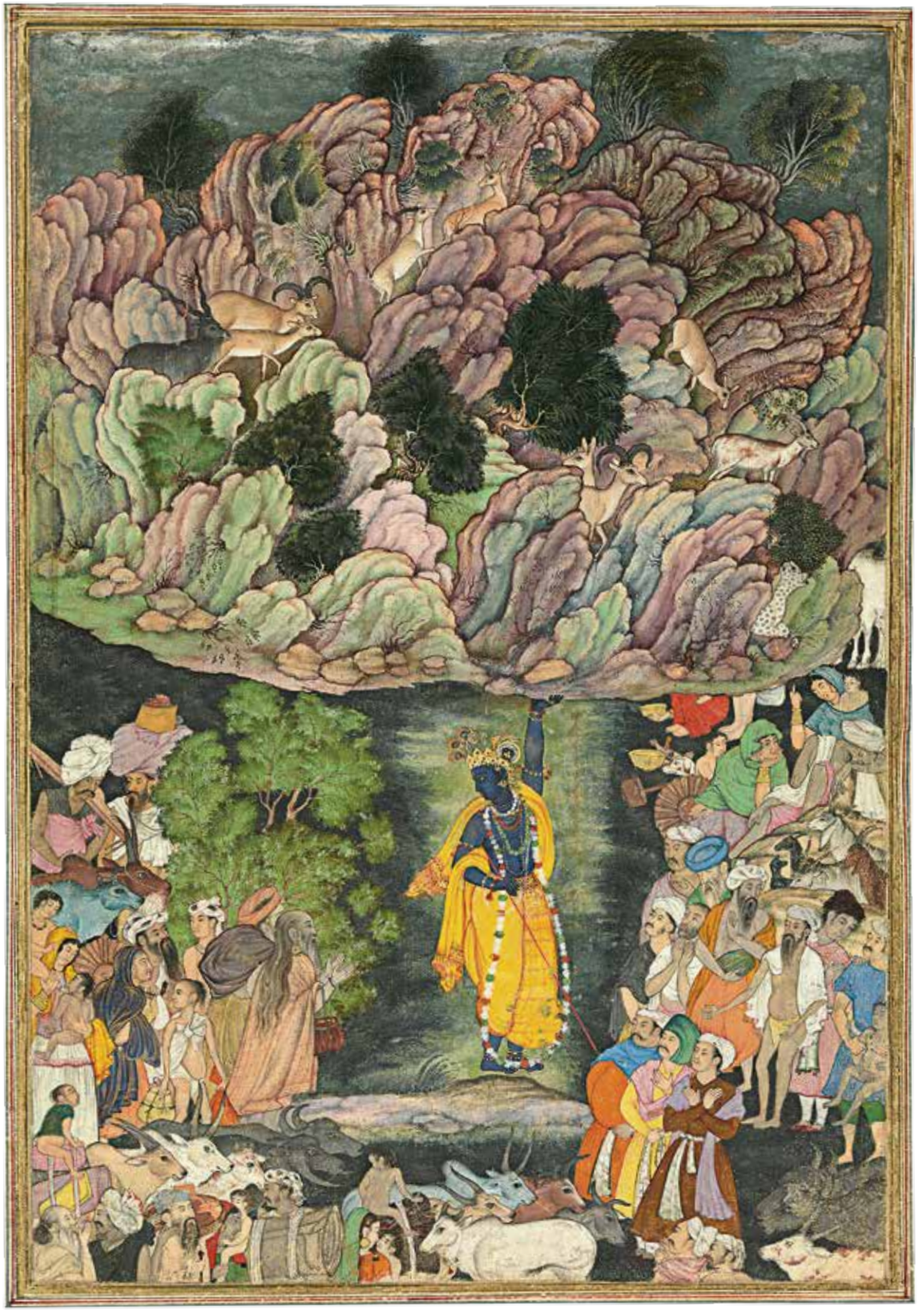


FIG. 21. *Krishna Holds Up Mount Govardhan to Shelter the Villagers of Braj.* India, Mughal, ca. 1590–95

FIG. 22. Detail of fig. 21

stylistic formulas for the *Ramayana*s that followed.[5] By the end of Akbar's rule, the Sanskrit texts translated included the *Harivamsa* (Genealogy of Vishnu), the *Sanghasan Battisi* (Account of the Life of Raja Bikramjit of Malwa), the *Jog Vashisht* (Story of Rama and the Yoga Teaching of the Sage Vashisht), and the *Nal Daman* (Story of the Lovers Nala and Damayanti), which became a popularly illustrated text later at the Punjab courts (cats. 94, 95).[6]

The translation of the *Harivamsa*, an extension of the Mughal *Mahabharata* or *Razmnama*, was ongoing until 1586. Twenty-eight painted folios from the manuscript are known, four of which are in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum.[7] One masterful composition depicts Krishna lifting Mount Govardhan to protect the villagers of Braj from the wrath of Indra (fig. 21). Krishna's figure, executed in the naturalistic Mughal style, reflects his attributes of blue skin, peacock crown, and *vanamala* (garland of wildflowers). The mountain appears as a mass of stylized rocks filled with plants, birds, and animals. Clustered below are the villagers of Braj, along with a trio of Mughal courtiers. Among the old men, sadhus, young boys, and women, one female figure at the upper right wears her veil in a European manner. Of equal interest are the animal figures, which are painted with great individualization.[8] Later Indian painting and temple sculpture tend to show Krishna using his little finger to lift the mountain, but here he performs the miraculous act with the flat of his palm. This small but significant detail indicates that the artist was in harmony with the earliest iconographic treatment of this subject, such as in the seventh-century relief carvings at Mahabalipuram.[9] Another indication of the astuteness of this master is the subtle reddening of the corners of Krishna's eyes, which relates to the style of similarly colored inlaid enameled eyes in icons and deities (fig. 22).[10]

Folios from the so-called Burnt-Edge *Ramayana*, four of which are now in the Metropolitan's collection, are evidence of the patronage of Hindu epics by other courtiers in the circle of the Mughal emperor. This manuscript series is the only one among the Akbar-period *Ramayana* manuscripts to have Sanskrit text on the back. Based on its provenance history and some later sketches on certain folios, Terence McInerney has suggested that it might have been made for the important nobleman Raja Bir Singh Deo Bundela of Orchha (d. 1627).[11] The paintings show an innovative marriage of elements that are drawn from Persian and Mughal styles and combine formal and informal features. For example, a folio depicting the death of Rama's father, King Dasaratha, shows robust, oversize Persianate-Chinese tinted clouds floating in golden skies, their boldness contrasting with a delicate scene below of the king and his grieving widows (fig. 23).

Another Mughal patron of illustrated epics was 'Abd al-Rahim ibn Muhammad *Khan-i Khanan* (1556–1626), army commander to Akbar and then Jahangir, for whom a copy of the *Razmnama* was made in 1616–17.[12] Five folios from an original sixty-eight are in the Metropolitan's collection. Many of them are the work of the artist Fazl, including an episode depicting the Pandavas' submission to the warrior Asvatthama (fig. 24).[13] Although others of 'Abd al-Rahim's status possessed fine libraries, he was one of the few nobles who commissioned books, and six manuscripts are known to have come from his workshop of twenty artists. Among the other Hindu texts illustrated for him may have been a manuscript of the eleventh-century *Kathasaritsagara* (Ocean of Stories) of

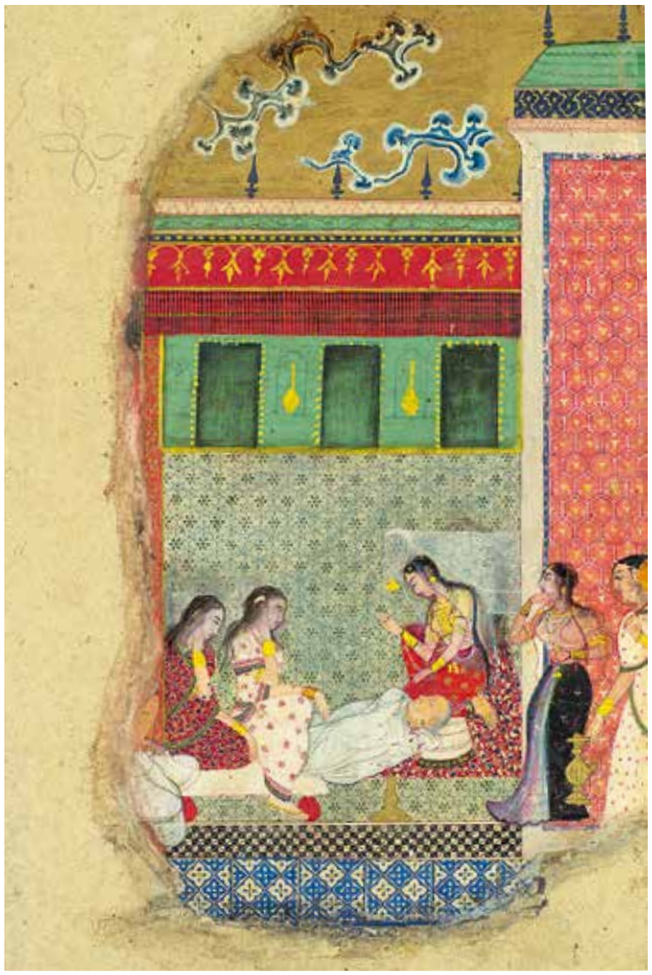


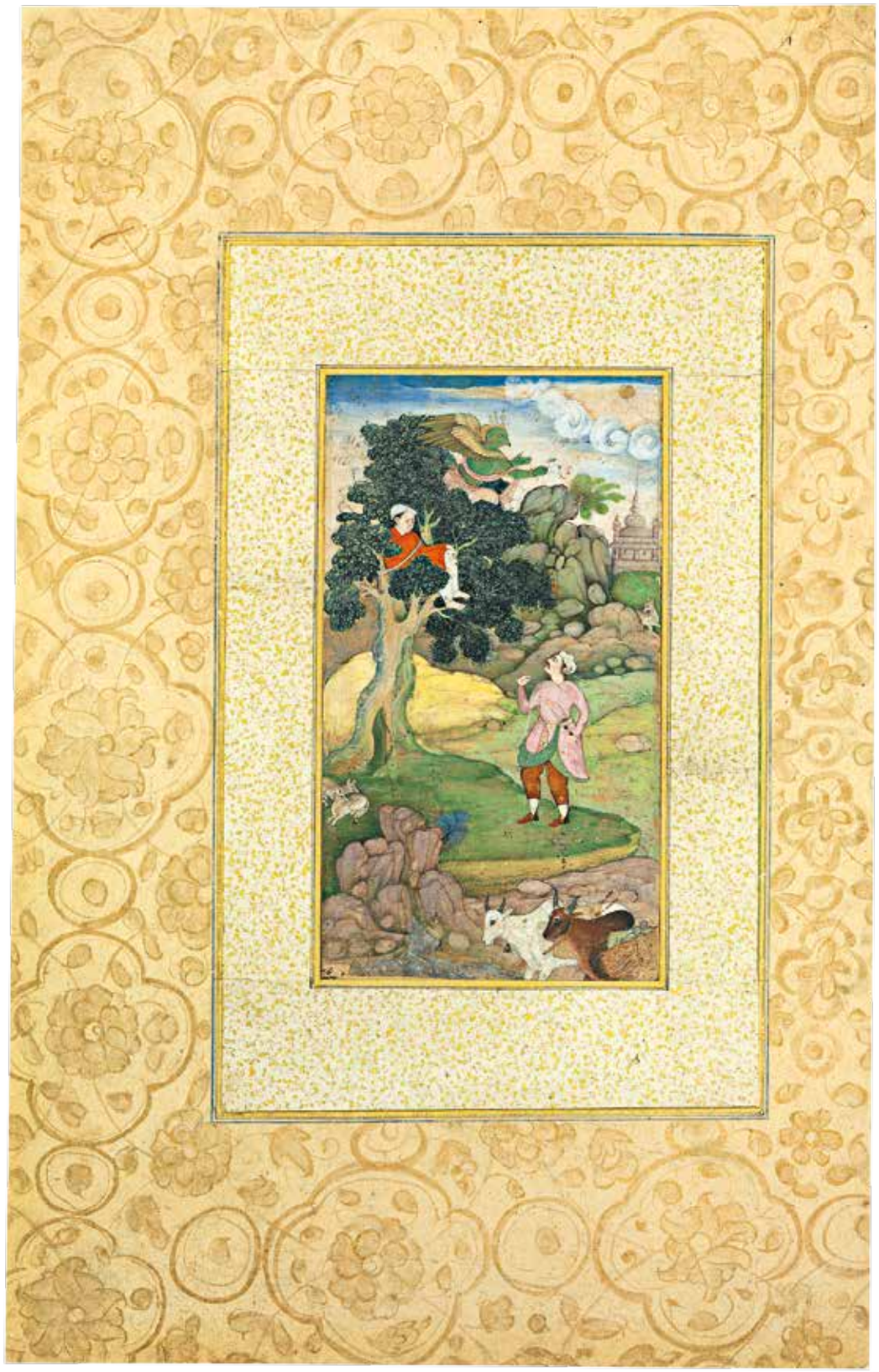
FIG. 23. *The Death of King Dasaratha, the Father of Rama.* India, Mughal, ca. 1605

FIG. 24. *Asvatthama Fires the Narayana Weapon (Cosmic Fire) at the Pandavas*. Painted by Fazl. India, Mughal, ca. 1616–17

Somnath. In the Metropolitan's collection is a small, delicate page from this dispersed work depicting an unidentified tale in which Garuda, Vishnu's bird-mount, appears in the foliage of a tree above the other figures (fig. 25).

For the artists at the Mughal court (which included Muslim, Hindu, and women painters, and European artists and craftsmen), illustrating Hindu manuscripts must have posed a special challenge because this was a type of imagery almost entirely new to the world of painting. There is no surviving evidence, for instance, that the *Ramayana* was illustrated in manuscript form before the sixteenth century, and many of these subjects were therefore innovations of the Mughal period. The artists' sources must have included textual descriptions, oral traditions, musical compositions, sculptural deities, and temple carvings — all vehicles of the complex iconography of the Hindu pantheon. There may also have been some indirect reliance on the iconographic or narrative conventions of early Rajput painting, such as the mid-fifteenth-century *Balagopalasthuti* (Stories of the Young Krishna)[14] and the illustrated *Bhagavata Purana* (The Ancient Story of God) of about 1525–35 attributed to Palam (cats. 1, 2). Although the painting styles are extremely different, some of the stories are the same.

FIG 25. Illustrated folio from a *Kathasaritsagara* (Ocean of Stories). India, Mughal, ca. 1590



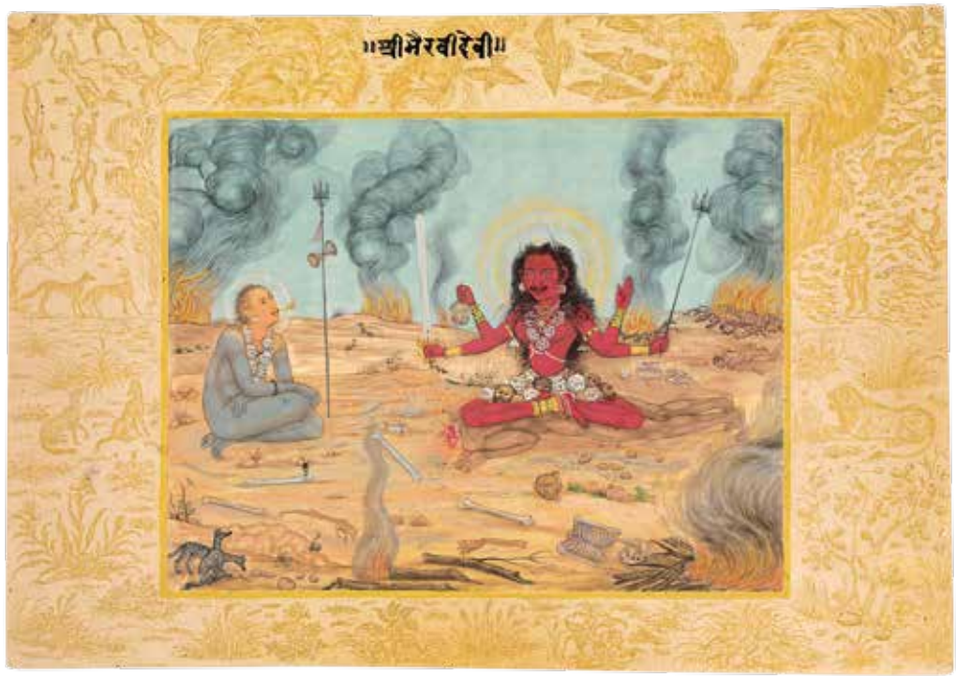


FIG. 26. *The Goddess Bhairavi Devi with Shiva*. Attributed to Payag. India, Mughal, ca. 1630–35

Mughal painting's engagement with Hinduism took on new forms under Jahangir (reigned 1605–27) and Shah Jahan (reigned 1628–58), Akbar's successors. Albums featuring individual compositions now mirrored the illustrated manuscripts of the previous tradition. Like his great-grandfather Babur, Jahangir recorded his visits to holy men and ascetics, including yogis, and some of these figures were described in his memoirs and captured in his albums.[15] It was during Shah Jahan's reign, however, that one of the greatest Hindu paintings was made at the Mughal court. The subject of this album page, attributed to the painter Payag in about 1630, is the fearsome Devi Bhairavi (fig. 26). She is shown here in a cremation ground, with Shiva appearing as an ash-covered devotee. Seven funeral pyres burn around, jackals edge close, and the ground is filled with human bones and corpses. The devotee expels a fiery breath, possibly to indicate a mantra, while the red-skinned goddess — seated on a headless corpse, bearing weapons, wearing skulls and varieties of Mughal-style jewelry — spews blood. Close study of the painting, remarkable for its conceptual depth and iconographic sophistication, has revealed that Payag relied in part on seventeenth-century European images of the Crucifixion for both the scattered bones in the landscape and the naturalistic modeling of the figures.[16] The image of the Devi herself may have evolved from a Mughal illustrated *Devi Mahatmya* (Glory of the Goddess) series of the Akbar period, although the rich detail of the iconography here is unprecedented.[17] This painting was possibly made for Shah Jahan as a gift for the Hindu ruler of Mewar, to which collection it later went and where it received its visible *devanagari* inscriptions.[18] In a similar instance, Shah Jahan is said to have presented an image of the deity Shri Kalyan Rai of the Vallabhacharya sect painted by the artist Hunhar as a gift to the ruler of another Rajput kingdom, Kishangarh.[19]

By the time Aurangzeb (reigned 1658–1707), the last of the so-called Great Mughals, ascended the throne, new styles of painting had begun to flower at many

regional and provincial courts of India, and they continued blossoming through the course of the eighteenth century. Rajput and Pahari rulers became active sponsors of illustrated religious texts, which usually took the form of loose-bound series. They also patronized other subjects such as portraits, floral studies, and genre scenes. Much of the material from the Kronos Collections comes from this fertile period, when artists and patrons traveled across different centers and the dialogue between the Mughal idiom and regional and provincial courts resulted in a delightful variety of painting styles. The mythical stories illustrated in the Rajput and Pahari worlds often show iconographic and stylistic hints of their Mughal past and their ongoing exchanges with the Mughal school. Horned and fanged demons resemble the *div*s of Persian literature (see cat. 58), Hindu princes wear Mughal costume (see cat. 43), and even the esoteric goddess of the *Devi* series wears a scarf adorned with Mughal-style flowering plants (see cat. 37). These touches remind us of the major developments at the Mughal court that gave impetus to the illustration of India's myths and epics and to the ongoing exchanges. Their legacy lives on and grows ever stronger in the luminous paintings of the Kronos Collections.

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1. For an overview of the activities of the bureau, see Brand and Lowry 1985, pp. 67–70; see also Beach 2012, p. 20.
2. Beach 2012, p. 68.
3. For literature on the subject, see Das in Skelton et al., eds. 1986; and Das 2005. See also Das 1983; Das 1998; Das 2004; Hendley 1884; Rice 2010; Seyller 1985; and Truschke 2011.
4. Das 1998, pp. 62–63, fig. 9.
5. Seyller 1999, pp. 323–27, lists all the folios of the Jaipur *Ramayana*.
6. Brand and Lowry 1985, p. 67.
7. Beach 2012, pp. 68–75.
8. Ibid. p. 72, attributes the painting to Sur Das.
9. For an eighteenth-century Kishangarh painting of the same subject, see Ehnbom 1985, pp. 158–59, no. 73. For the treatment of the same subject in early relief carving, see the Krishna Cave Temple, Mahabalipuram, Tamil Nadu.
10. I have discussed this in detail in Haidar 1995, pp. 34–35.
11. This idea was first suggested by Terence McInerney. For more on this series, see John Seyller in Mason 2001, pp. 62–63, no. 16; and Navina Haidar in Topsfield, ed. 2004, pp. 356–67, nos. 157–62.
12. Seyller 1999 outlines the patronage of Khan-i Khanan; page 35 points out that the "Chunar" *Ragamala* (Garland of Melodies) and "Cleveland" *Tutinama* (Tales of a Parrot) are related manuscripts of the period.
13. The accession numbers are 55.121.33, 55.121.32, 55.121.34, 55.121.30, and 55.121.31
14. Banerjee 1981 discusses the *Balagopalasthuti* of about 1450.
15. Losty 1982, p. 79, fig. 63.
16. For a fuller discussion of this painting and its sources, see Navina Haidar in Diamond 2013, pp. 196–97, no. 16.
17. Goswamy 2004.
18. Welch 1995.
19. This legend is discussed in Haidar 1995, p. 34, and is also mentioned in Dickinson and Khandalavala [1959], p. 6.

The Kronos Collections and Rajput Court Painting

TERENCE McINERNEY

THE KRONOS COLLECTIONS of Indian court paintings are perhaps the finest gathering of this material in private hands. The collections are large, numbering more than one hundred items. Unlike some other private collections that attempt to survey this vast material in toto, the Kronos Collections concentrate on Rajput court painting and include excellent examples of its two main branches. About one-third of the collections (cats. 1–35) consists of paintings from Rajputana. Another third is devoted to early (ca. 1660–1740) paintings from the distant Punjab Hills, that other fertile homeland of the Rajput tradition (cats. 36–70). The final third comprises later (ca. 1740–1800) paintings from the Punjab Hills, which look quite different (cats. 71–95). In representing the full sweep of Pahari (Of the Hills) paintings, the Kronos Collections are probably unparalleled in America.

In wanting to assemble a comprehensive grouping of Indian court painting in the Rajput tradition, Steven M. Kossak, the Kronos Collections' principal benefactor, had a special advantage. As an art historian and longtime curator in the Department of Asian Art at the Metropolitan Museum, Kossak was intimately familiar with this material, and he selected only the best. He was also aware of the superb collection of Mughal painting in the Metropolitan Museum and the somewhat less fine collection of Rajput painting and wanted to balance and enrich the Museum's representation of Indian painting overall. With the promised gift of the Kronos Collections and their comprehensive assemblage of Rajput court painting, the Museum will take its place as a major repository and study center for this important yet neglected art form.

Rajput Court Painting

BUT WHAT IS RAJPUT PAINTING, and why is it important? Along with Mughal painting, why did it become one of the two great traditions of Indian court painting? What are its principal subjects, and how are they different from Mughal subjects?

Broadly speaking, Rajput court painting and Mughal court painting make up the two parallel traditions of Indian court painting. Indian painting, as we understand

it today, and Indian court painting are virtually synonymous terms, as patronage of Indian painting came from the king and his elite associates. Bazaar-level Indian painting, which is much less sophisticated, will not be discussed here.

Rajput court painting developed at the Hindu courts in the Punjab Hills and Rajputana, the peripheral areas of the Indian empire, in response to the Mughal court painting that was being produced at its center. Initially, Mughal court painting was an enthusiasm of Akbar, the Mughal emperor, alone. During the late sixteenth century and the reigns of Akbar's successors in the seventeenth century, however, its influence spread to the entire court. It was soon patronized by many of the Mughal grandees, several of whom maintained their own ateliers in the capital or in outlying areas.[1] Likewise, Rajput court painting was originally of interest only to a local Rajput ruler (a raja, rana, or rao). But later on it became popular with the elite of the ruler's entire clan and eventually with many of the raja's *thakur*s, or barons, who maintained their own, smaller courts and lived on their own, smaller properties (*thikana*s).[2]

It has been said that Mughal court painting is devoted to hard facts and eyewitness reportage. Its principal subjects are portraits of human beings and their animals, evocative harem scenes, and minute depictions of court life as seen through the eyes of the emperor. Its numerous books, mainly dating from the sixteenth century, are in the upright, or codex, format, illustrating the various histories that culminated in the triumph of Islamic rule in India.[3]

Rajput court painting, on the other hand, embodies ancient Indic principles of aesthetics (*rasa* theory, for example) but also embodies the Hindu religion, with its numerous colorful stories and epic tales, in paint. It is romantic, aristocratic, often naive, and devoted to the imagination and to metaphor: "Flowers were never merely flowers nor clouds clouds. . . . The mingling of clouds, rain and lightning symbolized the embrace of lovers, and commonplace objects such as dishes, vases, ewers and lamps were brought into subtle conjunction to hint at 'the right true end of love.'"[4] Unlike Mughal books, Rajput books are in the *pothi*, or loose folio, format, and most Rajput court paintings are sequential illustrations to an extended series. Rajput court paintings were rarely made for inclusion in stand-alone albums.

Color is probably the easiest way to identify paintings in the Rajput tradition. Rajput court painters, for the most part, employed the bright reds and yellows of the native tradition, and the borders of their paintings are often wide bands of undivided color (usually lacquer red). The Mughals abhorred this Rajput use of bright color. Mughal color sensibility tended toward the monochrome, or to variations of black, white, and gray, or to cool or pastel colors. The borders of Mughal paintings are usually arabesque designs in muted colors.

The Rajput court artist was also more abstract in his drawing and more fanciful in his arrangement of forms. He disliked the third dimension, preferring two-dimensional figures and flattened grounds. His sensibility was close to that of the European modernists, who would "rediscover" Rajput painting in the early twentieth century.

The overriding subject of Rajput court painting is devoted to *sringara*, the representation of love in both its carnal and divine aspects. This focus on love resulted in pictures of beautiful women engaged in humdrum activities (see cat. 88) or sets of paintings

depicting the Eight *Nayikas* (Eight Lovers), a traditionally Indian categorization of the different female temperaments and responses to love (see cats. 39 and 88). Illustrations to the *Rasikapriya* (Lover's Breviary), a sixteenth-century Hindi poem (see cats. 13, 15, and 23); the *Gita Govinda* (Song of the Cowherds), a Sanskrit poem of ca. 1200 by Jayadeva (see cats. 77–85); the *Rasamanjari* (Bouquet of Delights), a long Sanskrit poem by Bhanu Datta (cat. 53); and the *Sat Sai* (Seven Hundred Verses), a long Hindi poem by Bihari categorizing the behavior of lovers (see cats. 89–91), are really variations on the same, often heartbreaking theme, as are the numerous ballads and romances that Rajput patrons also loved to commission (see cats. 94 and 95).

When pushed to the extreme, this Rajput interest in *sringara* resulted in sets of erotic paintings (not represented in the Kronos Collections), pictures of nude or half-nude women bathing (see cat. 64), or suggestive harem pictures of women chatting or relaxing (see cat. 22). Even sets ostensibly illustrating activities taking place during the twelve months of the year (a *Baramasa*, or Months of the Year series,[5] for example) are really about the waxing and waning of love (see cat. 26).

This Rajput desire to give and receive love was reinforced by the type of Hinduism the ruler and his people chose to practice. During the period under discussion, the Rajput Hindus were ardent Vaishnavas (worshipers of Vishnu). Their special devotion was focused on the god Krishna, Vishnu's eighth earthly incarnation, and his beloved consort (usually called Radha, but also Rukmini or Satyabhama). Krishna's life story and amorous adventures are recounted in the lengthy Sanskrit epic the *Bhagavata Purana* (The Ancient Story of God); the numerous stories of Krishna's rambunctious youth are presented in the tenth book of this epic. As Vaishnavas, the Rajputs were also devoted to Rama, Vishnu's seventh earthly incarnation. Rama's life story is recounted in Valmiki's colossal epic, the *Ramayana* (The Adventures of Rama). The greater part of Valmiki's twenty-four thousand Sanskrit *shloka*s (verses) is devoted to Rama's campaign to recapture the abducted Sita from the clutches of the demon king Ravana.[6]

Because the Rajput aristocrats were fervent Vaishnavas, one of the first acts of a Rajput ruler was to commission, as an act of piety, illustrated copies of the *Bhagavata Purana* or the *Ramayana*, the holy texts of his religion. The resulting illustrated series were often very large, comprising several hundred folios. Many of these elaborate series with their colorful stories, created by artists who were emotionally involved in them, are among the most glorious works of Indian painting (see cats. 1, 2, 4, 5, 11, 12, 25, 41, 42, 51, 57–62, 67–70, and 87). The same Rajput ruler would also commission series of the ten, often iconic, earthly incarnations of the great god Vishnu (*Das Avatara* [Vishnu's Ten Incarnations]; see cats. 20 and 21), or paintings of Vishnu's actions during his previous incarnations (see cats. 49 and 50).

This emphasis on the activities of Vishnu, Krishna, and Rama was undoubtedly a product of the *bhakti* movement, which had engulfed most of the Hindus of India during the period when the paintings in the Kronos Collections were made. *Bhakti* is personal devotion and total love for God (or for Krishna and Rama, his earthly incarnations). Bypassing the hieratic formalism of earlier traditions of Hinduism, the *bhakti* movement became popular in the twelfth century and reached its height of influence during the sixteenth century and later under the tutelage of various Vaishnava saints, such as Chaitanya

(1486–1534; see cat. 31) and Vallabhacharya (1481–1533), and their followers. It is probably no coincidence that Indian painting attained a defining moment at the same time that the *bhakti* movement was most influential, several decades before the creation of Mughal court painting.

As champions of Hindu high culture and steadfast guardians of its traditions, the Rajput kings also insisted that their paintings should reflect traditional Indian *rasa* (sap) theory.[7] This theory dictated that a work of art should express one of the nine traditional sentiments — *sringara* (love), *vira* (heroism), *adbuta* (the marvelous), and so on. If the subject of a painting was love, then all of its secondary elements should reinforce this theme as well. The Mughal interest in everyday life, in the actuality and appropriateness of secondary details regardless of subject, was sedulously avoided.

The Rajput aristocrats were also patrons and connoisseurs of Indian classical music. *Ragamala* (Garland of Melodies) paintings, the visual facilitators of Indian classical music, are perhaps the most common and popular kind of Rajput painting (see cats. 6–10, 14, 16, 17, 24, 33, 43, and 45–48). Of complex iconography, *Ragamala* paintings are based on an ancient Indian classification system for music. Each subject is associated with its own poem and pictorialized according to a predetermined yet loosely defined formula. *Ragamala* subjects often overlapped with paintings devoted to the theme of love, as the central characters in a *Ragamala* painting were frequently two lovers, and the male character was often given the features of the patron who had commissioned the set (see cats. 45 and 46). With these facts in mind, one begins to understand why *Ragamala* paintings became so popular.

Like the Mughals after them, the Rajputs were originally interlopers in India. Descendants of Central Asian tribes, these great latter-day patrons invaded India about the sixth century A.D., intermarried with local Brahmins, converted to Hinduism, and entered the exclusive Indian social order as high-standing members of the warrior (*kshatriya*) caste. By the ninth or tenth century A.D., their dynasties ruled much of northern India. Defeated in the eleventh and twelfth centuries by invading Muslims from Afghanistan and the Turkic lands in Central Asia, the surviving Rajput clans resettled in the less welcoming regions of India, where, protected by deserts or high mountain passes, they reestablished their feudal courts. This historical background explains why, by the time of the Mughals, the ruling houses of Rajasthan and the Punjab Hills were headed by a Rajput ruler who was the proud descendant of a much more powerful, earlier king and the head of a lineage-obsessed clan.

INDIAN ART, as the physical expression of Indian high culture, has always tended toward the monumental, or definitive, statement. Whether in philosophy, religion, or art, Indians are born classifiers and theorists, wishing to atomize all experience in order to fabricate an overriding reality or universal truth.

During the medieval period, Indian art attained its highest expression in the Indian temple, in which sculpture, painting (now lost), and architecture all combined for the greater glory of God. Built in a form imitating the universal mountain and enshrining a cult image at its core, the perfected Indian temple was largely the creation of Rajput patrons, who ruled much of northern India at the time of its greatest florescence.

But with the Muslim invasions of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and the demise of the Rajput kingdoms, a new India was born. The great age of the Hindu temples was finished. What replaced them as a vital expression of native devotion was not just more Hindu temples (the builders of these edifices soldiered on, usually making copies of earlier examples), but series of paintings illustrating devotional texts (such as the *Bhagavata Purana,* the *Ramayana,* and the *Gita Govinda*) commissioned by the new Rajput kings. When taken as a whole, these Rajput series had all the monumentality the Indian temple once had, but a complete series was modest in size and easy enough to conceal. These extended, religious series are perhaps the greatest contribution of Rajput court painting to world art.

Today it is difficult to reconstruct the outlines of these series, as they have been mostly dispersed and their individual folios scattered to the wind. Yet they once existed as unified works in hundreds of pages. Under the supervision of a master artist or patron, these series waxed or waned in accordance with the text they illustrated, unfolding slowly in time, like a musical composition. They had pictorial high points and carefully planned low points. If only they could be reconstructed today, we might realize how the overall architecture of a series was a monumental work of art in itself.

The Study of Indian Court Painting

THE STUDY OF RAJPUT COURT PAINTING is fairly recent, as the subject was first brought to light only as a result of Ananda Coomaraswamy's great work, *Rajput Painting*, of 1916.[8] (This study gained momentum with the breakup of the numerous princely collections, the principal repositories of Rajput painting, beginning in the late 1940s.) Yet Coomaraswamy's vision of a pure Rajput world apart was clearly a product of the contentious polemics of his day. He sought, often successfully, to define the Rajput tradition as the polar opposite of the Mughal tradition. According to Coomaraswamy's romantic notions, the Rajput court tradition was timeless and nameless, an aristocratic folk art, with roots in an authentically Indian reality. The Mughal court tradition, on the other hand, was compromised by foreign accretions and was "inauthentic" at best.

In recent times, scholars have begun to examine the ways in which these two separate traditions are similar, whether in the size of the works, the techniques used, or the role of aristocratic patronage, not to mention the more vexing similarities of subject and style. One of the greatest Indian paintings that is neither Mughal nor Rajput is the superb study of the Hindu goddess Bhairavi, attributable to Payag, now in The Metropolitan Museum of Art (fig. 26). Although the style of this painting is Mughal, the subject, of course, is Rajput. The scene is set in the burning grounds of a cemetery, a desolate, bone-strewn field depicted with all of the wide-angled specificity that only Mughal painting could achieve. But the central figure is the grotesquely fanged red figure of Bhairavi, the beloved Hindu goddess, who is seated on a corpse at the center of the composition. (Despite the gruesome subject matter, the work is really about human transcendence.) One of Bhairavi's ash-covered devotees (the conjurer of this vision?) is seated beside her. After inspecting this cross-cultural essay in paint, one might easily ask whether this work is Mughal or Rajput.

Clearly, the court painting the Rajputs patronized is unthinkable without the example of Mughal court painting. From the Mughals the Rajput court artists, of whatever religion, learned to incorporate modeling in light and shadow and the suggestion of spatial recession — elements derived from the natural world. Drawing from the same source, they also enlarged the repertoire of traditional Rajput subjects to include Mughal subjects like portraiture, depictions of animals, and illustrations of daily life in both the court and the women's quarters of the palace. Nonetheless, Rajput court artists were far from slavish imitators of the Mughals. Their art was open to the imagination and to a wild freedom of invention that Mughal painting rarely attained.

The late seventeenth century, as well as the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, witnessed a partial fusion of these two previously quite separate court traditions. Rajput court painting began to depict quotidian subjects based on daily reportage. Mughal court painting began to include *Ragamala* series and pictures describing the various permutations of love. Rajput court painting began to suggest volumetric space and the third dimension, while Mughal court painting began to incorporate the hot colors and flattened perspective of the native tradition. Both in subject and style, Indian painting finally became *desi* (local): neither Rajput nor Mughal, but Indian above all.

The Market for Indian Art

WHEN THE KRONOS COLLECTIONS were largely formed, during the years 1975–2000, the market for Indian painting was mostly controlled in New York by Doris Wiener, a woman of great skill and insight, and in London by the enterprising firm of Spink and Son Ltd., with numerous talented yet less skillful rivals nipping at their heels in both places. The stakes at this time were not very high, as Indian paintings cost very little in relative terms ($10,000 was considered a very high price), and few people wanted them.

During this time, a major shift in the market witnessed a gradual rise in prices as well as the relocation of the principal market from London to New York. In these years, the London dealers, including Arthur Tooth & Sons Ltd., P. & D. Colnaghi & Co. Ltd., and Spink and Son Ltd., made periodic selling trips to New York. Local dealers such as William K. Wolff, Ramesh Kapoor, Subhash Kapoor, and Navin Kumar also began to sell Indian paintings or opened galleries to give Mrs. Wiener a run for her money. Indian dealers (Chhote Lal Bharany, Kalesan Natesan, and others) opened New York offices or branch galleries, and New York auction companies — particularly Parke-Bernet and later Sotheby's — began a series of highly successful auction sales. For collecting Indian paintings, the period of 1975 to 2000 was a golden age, and New York was its center.

This period also witnessed the dawning of a new respect for Indian painting, which previously had been denigrated as an art form of very modest attainment. According to this outmoded yet influential pre-1975 view, the only Indian art worth collecting and exhibiting in museums was early Indian sculpture. Painting and the other arts that flourished after the year 1200 (earlier Indian painting having not survived) were thought to be corrupt and non-Indian, even though these later arts were produced in India as well. This began to change, however, with the scholarship and promotion instituted by universities and American and European museums (by Pratapaditya Pal

FIG. 27. *Shiva and Parvati Playing Chaupar* (*Parcheesi*). Painting by Devidasa. India, Punjab Hills, Basohli, dated 1694–95

in Los Angeles, Milo Cleveland Beach in Williamstown and Washington, D.C., Pramod Chandra in Chicago and Cambridge, Massachusetts, Stuart Cary Welch, also in Cambridge and in New York, W. G. Archer and Robert Skelton in London, and Eberhard Fischer in Zurich), not to mention what was happening in India.

The postwar shift in the market reflected a larger change in the global art market, which has always followed the movement of power and money — in this case, a movement governed by the ups and downs of the sovereign dollar. In the years 1975–2000 dealers from throughout the world either came to New York or lured New York and American collectors to their premises back home. One of the lures was Indian painting, a relatively new enthusiasm for art collectors in New York and North America.

Collecting Indian paintings had already been initiated in the 1950s by those two influential pioneers, Stuart Cary Welch (1928–2008) and Edwin Binney III (1925–1986).[9] These two men and their friends had made owning Indian paintings reasonably fashionable. Yet they were largely London-based. Binney depended on the advice of the English collector, scholar, and museum curator W. G. Archer (1907–1979), while Welch, who had spent a great deal of time with the scholars in London, took no one's advice but his own.

A taste for Rajput court painting, the second great tradition of Indian painting and the focus of the present volume, had to await the great shift in taste that occurred in

FIG. 28. *Maharana Ari Singh with His Courtiers Being Entertained at the Jagniwas Water Palace.* Painted by Bhima, Kesu Ram, Bhopa, and Nathu. India, Rajasthan, Mewar, dated 1767

the early years of the last century. The triumph of modernism freed our eyes to see the great merit in the non-Western, more abstract and "primitive" traditions of world art. Up until that time, no one would have given Rajput court painting a second look. Consequently, most of it still resided, overlooked and neglected, in the aristocratic courts where it was first made.

Many of the small kingdoms in the Punjab Hills, where approximately two-thirds of the Kronos pictures were made, did not survive the nineteenth century.[10] Therefore these ancestral Pahari collections, along with other low-cost, virtually worthless family

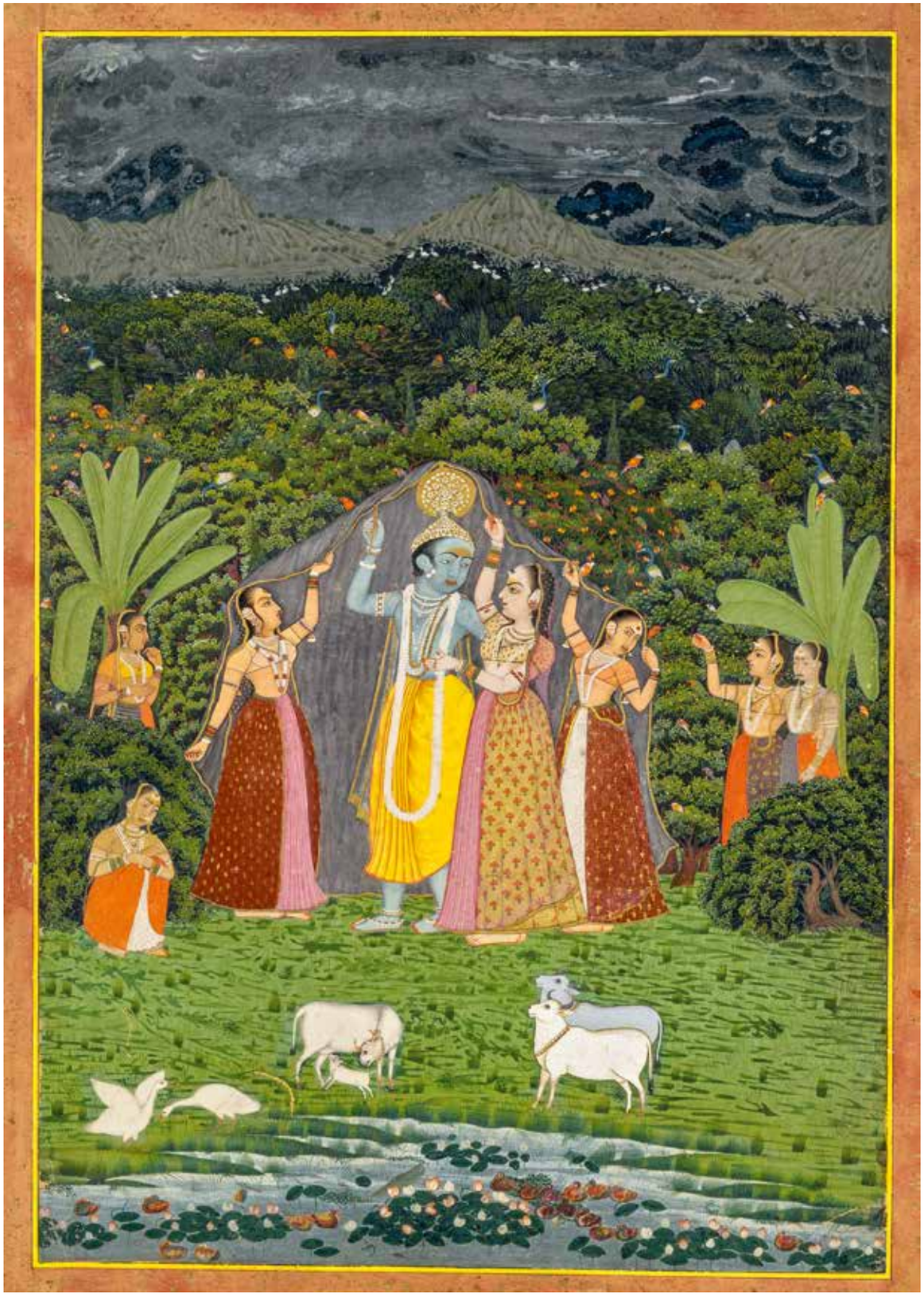

FIG. 29. *Krishna and the Gopis Take Shelter from the Rain*. India, Rajasthan, Jaipur, ca. 1760

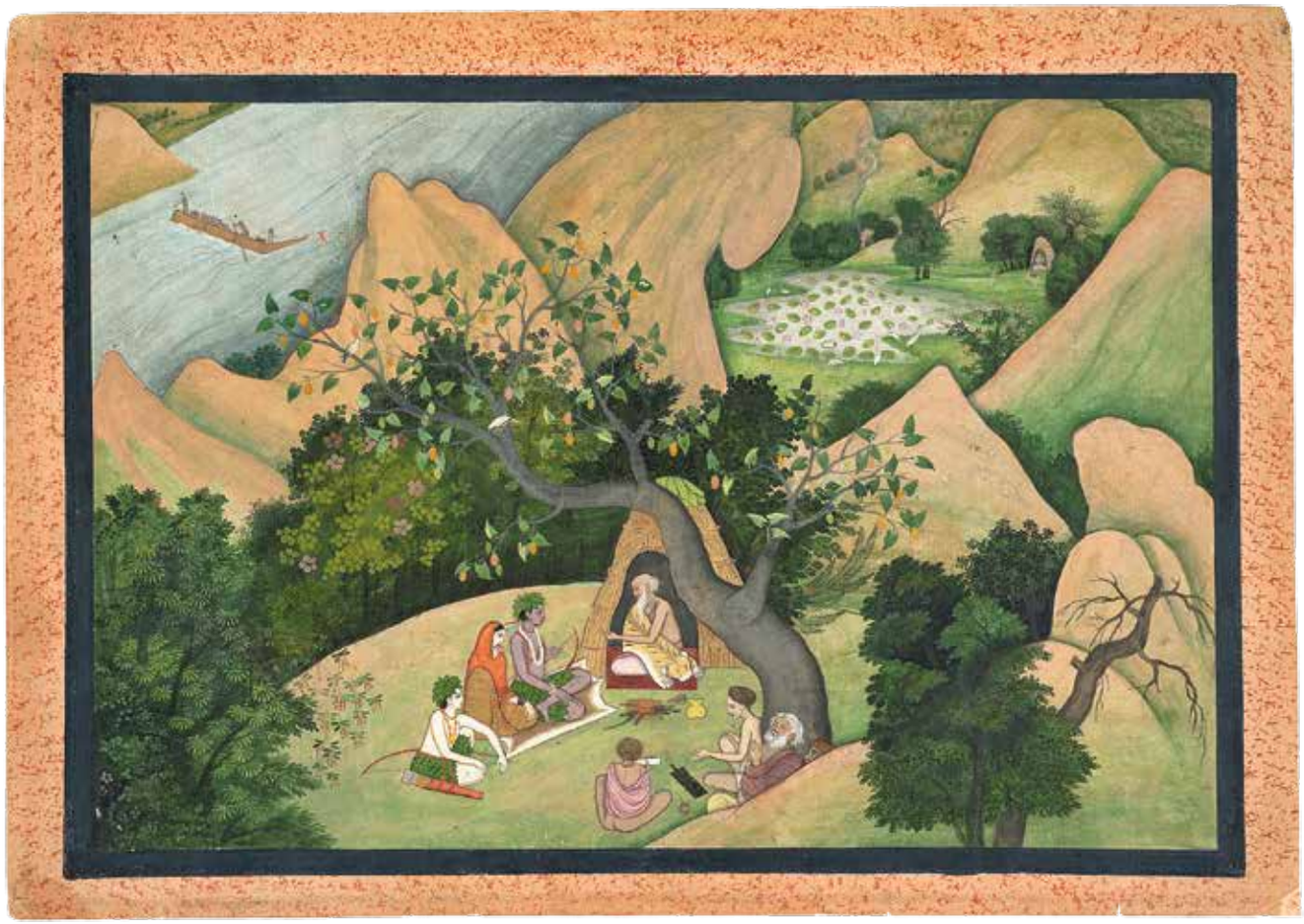

FIG. 30. *Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana at the Hermitage of Bharadvaja*. India, Punjab Hills, Kangra, ca. 1780

items, were sold off in the first half of the last century, hardly enriching their owners yet supplying whatever modest market for Pahari pictures existed at that time. From the collecting center for these pictures in Lahore in the Punjab Plains, this material gravitated to the larger cities in India and from there to modest establishments in the West. There were no effective export restrictions at that time.

However, the haughty princes of Rajasthan, in that other great center of Rajput court painting, were much richer than their Pahari cousins. Consequently these princes, their palaces, and their feudal courts remained largely intact until the present day (although Indira Gandhi eliminated princely privy purses in 1971 and later banned all aristocratic titles). They would never consider selling (publicly) their art collections; they cared little for these collections, but selling anything was beneath their dignity.

All this changed after World War II, specifically in 1947 with the birth and independence of the Republic of India. This momentous event coincided with the triumph of modernism; and with that shift in taste, Rajput court painting became desirable in India and the West for the first time. Thus began the great sell-off of the ancestral Rajasthani collections. (With the scholarly access to the previously off-limits Rajasthani collections, knowledge of Rajput court painting also greatly increased.) This movement of artworks

was unintentionally aided by the Indian government, which by 1972 sought to stanch the flight of capital by requiring that all artworks in private hands be registered with the authorities. Prior to the registration deadline, a vast amount of material owned by private individuals who feared the worst left the country. Previously, the major Indian museums had benefited from the great sell-off of private treasure, but then so had museums and collections in the West.

By 1975 the great sell-off had largely finished, and everything was in place for the golden age in New York (see fig. 25). Indian paintings that had once belonged to ancestral collections in India, Britain, or the Continent; the recycled treasures of pioneering collectors in the 1950s; and the old stock of modest dealers from the 1920s were brought to the New York market for sale or return. The vast array of material that was offered in those years hardly exists at present. Even with endless money, it is doubtful whether one could duplicate the holdings of the Kronos Collections today.

The taste for Indian painting on the part of today's collectors in India and the West is most assuredly for Rajput court paintings of the type collected by Kossak (see fig. 24). This taste accords well with the current sympathy for modernism and for "primitive" art in all its forms. The Kronos Collections are probably a perfect expression of the time and place in which it was formed. Yet, in the end, one is left with the paintings themselves. One forgets how they were acquired or what they cost. The history of art collecting, changing taste, and the market is interesting but of secondary importance. What is really important is the fact that the Kronos pictures will someday join and strengthen the collection of a great museum. In this way these paintings will become a pleasure for all to enjoy.

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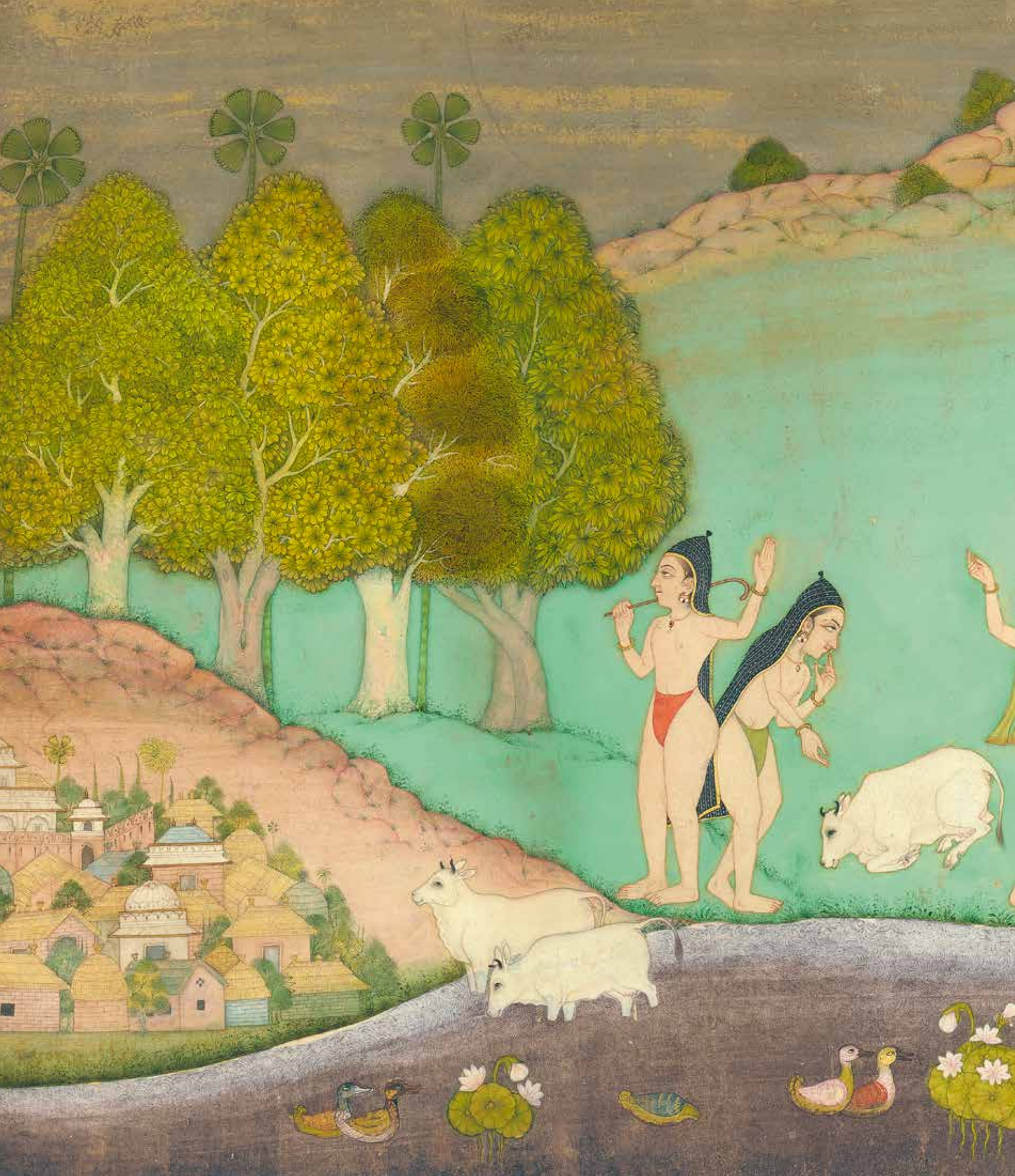
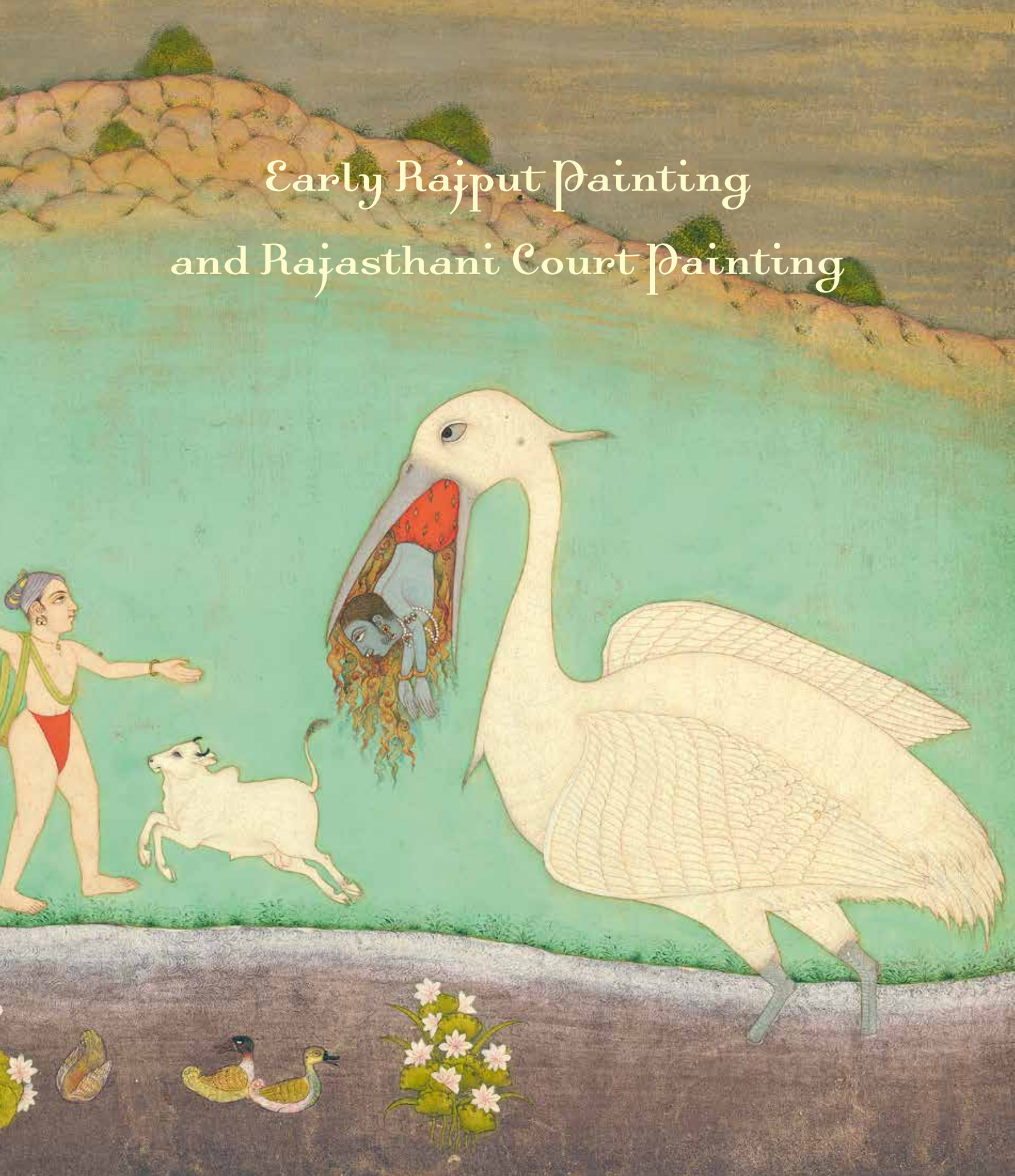
1. One of the greatest of these patrons was 'Abd al-Rahim, the *Khankhanan*, or commander in chief, of the Mughal armies. See Seyller 1999.
2. For discussion of Rajput painting, see Coomaraswamy 1916; Pal 1978; Cimino 1985; Beach 1992; and Ahluwalia 2008.
3. For Indian book painting, see Losty 1982.
4. Archer [1957], p. 13.
5. For *Baramasa* painting, see Dwivedi 1980.
6. For *Ramayana* painting, see Britschgi and Fischer 2008.
7. For *rasa* theory, see Goswamy 1986.
8. Coomaraswamy 1916.
9. For the Stuart Cary Welch collection, see *Rajasthani Miniatures* 1997; Welch and Masteller 2004; Sotheby's, London 2011a; and Sotheby's, London 2011b. For the Edwin Binney III collection, see Archer and Binney [1968]; Hurel and Okada 2002; and Goswamy and Smith 2005.
10. Steven M. Kossak's essay in this volume, "Collecting Pleasures," p. 10.



Early Rajput Painting and Rajasthani Court Painting



From the "Palam" *Bhagavata Purana* (cats. 1, 2)

1

Four Gods and the Earth Cow Pray for the Assistance of Vishnu

Illustrated folio (no. 2) from the dispersed "Palam" or "Scotch-Tape" *Bhagavata Purana* (The Ancient Story of God)
North India, probably Delhi-Agra region, ca. 1520–30

Opaque watercolor on paper; narrow yellow and pink border with black and red rules (on lower margin); otherwise plain paper borders (trimmed); page 6¾ x 9 in. (17.1 x 22.9 cm)

INSCRIBED on the front border in black ink written in *devanagari* script, in lower left: "2 / Sa Mitharam"; also inscribed in yellow paint with a number of inscriptions identifying some of the figures. Inscribed on the reverse in black ink with fourteen lines of Sanskrit text written in *devanagari* script (for an English translation, see Vyasa 1970, vol. 2, pp. 2–3)

PUBLISHED: Hutchins 1980, p. 20; Lerner 1984, no. 56

THE FOUR GODS standing at attention at the center of the picture (from left to right, Brahma, Shiva, Indra, and Kubera) are accompanied by Mother Earth, who has assumed the shape of a slender cow. In order to combat the forces of evil plaguing Mother Earth, they have all traveled to the shore of the Ocean of Milk (visible at the left) to gain the intercession of Vishnu, the supreme god, who can be imagined at the center of the Ocean of Milk, asleep in eternal bliss atop Ananta, his cosmic serpent. In the following illustrated folios, Vishnu answers their prayers and becomes manifest on earth in the form of Krishna, his eighth incarnation. All the beloved stories of Krishna's youth, the major subject of the present volume, will unfold from here.

The great series to which this painting once belonged is often called the "Palam" *Bhagavata Purana* (after a suburb of Delhi where it was once thought to have been painted) or the "Scotch-Tape" *Bhagavata Purana* (after the cellophane tape used by a "benevolent" earlier owner to reinforce the fraying edges of the folios). Like most Indian series dealing with this ever-popular material, the "Palam" *Bhagavata Purana* illustrated only book 10 of the *Bhagavata Purana*, which deals with the various deeds of Krishna's childhood. The earliest surviving pictorialization of this material, the series may have comprised as many as three hundred illustrated folios, but only about two hundred appear to have survived.[1] Each folio is composed of two sheets of paper glued together, with a picture on one side and its erudite Sanskrit text on the other. Most of the illustrations are inscribed with one of four names, Sa Nana, Sa Mitharam, Hira Bai, or Bagha, which probably identify previous owners rather than artists.[2]

Two major and at least eight junior artists[3] appear to have been involved in the production of the "Palam" *Bhagavata Purana*. The present picture was painted by the individual whom Daniel Ehnbom identified as Painter A, the main artist of the series. Like many of his colleagues and assistants, Painter A had a real flair for the dramatic, but his works also display an unexpected tightness of structure, narrative neatness, and formal control. As Ehnbom remarks, his "figures are slightly attenuated and elegantly adorned. They are gracefully arranged, no two quite alike. Their languid, quiet sense of animation wells from within. The rhythms are soft and relaxed. Painter A's brushwork is controlled and clear, bold without being blunt. His line is assured, seldom nervous or uncertain."[4] The stately array of figures here, the conventional, rather squat figures and wide-eyed faces, the flattened red background space highlighting the figures, the wavy white clouds dividing the black and blue portions of the sky, and the decorative conventions delineating the Ocean of Milk and the single tree are also seen in other paintings from the same series.[5]

This pivotal series is one of the most historically important in Indian art. Many elements of later Rajput painting are thought to derive from the misleadingly labeled Early Rajput style, which paintings from the "Palam" *Bhagavata Purana* exemplify to an iconic degree. (For another painting from this series, see cat. 2.)

1. Ehnbom in Beach, Fischer, and Goswamy, eds., vol. 1, 2011, p. 79.
2. Topsfield 2001, p. 47n87.
3. Ehnbom in Beach, Fischer, and Goswamy, eds., vol. 1, 2011, pp. 80–84.
4. Ibid., p. 81.
5. For other paintings from the series, see ibid.; and Kossak 1997, nos. 2–4. See also Guy and Britschgi 2011, pp. 38–39.

2

In Attacking Naraka's Fortress at Progjyotishpur, Vishnu Slays the Demon General Mura

Illustrated folio from the dispersed "Palam" or "Scotch-Tape" *Bhagavata Purana* (The Ancient Story of God)
North India, probably Delhi-Agra region, ca. 1520–30

Opaque watercolor on paper; narrow red and yellow border (trimmed); page 6 15/16 x 8 15/16 in. (17.7 x 22.8 cm)

INSCRIBED on the front in black ink written in *devanagari* script: one line (effaced) and the word *har*(?). Inscribed on the reverse in black ink with several lines of Sanskrit text written in *devanagari* script

EX COLL.: Claus Virch

PUBLISHED: Sotheby's, New York 2015, no. 1111

AT THE RIGHT, the demon king Naraka sits with his knees bound in meditation in a red chamber in his yellow palace. Previously Naraka had angered Krishna by stealing divine treasure and abducting the daughters of countless sages and princes. Therefore our hero — depicted here in his true, or cosmic, form as Vishnu — decides to take action. Accompanied by his consort Satyabhama (or Lakshmi) and held aloft by his vehicle, the great sun-bird Garuda, he has attacked Naraka in his carefully defended mountain citadel. Vishnu/Krishna has just cut off the five heads of Naraka's demon general, the fearsome Mura,[1] and Naraka's own bloody end will soon follow.

The scalloped shapes in this dramatic depiction represent the hilly fortifications of Naraka's mountainous citadel. This picture can be assigned to the artist that Daniel Ehnbom calls Painter H.[2] This painting is from the same "Palam" or "Scotch-Tape" *Bhagavata Purana* series as catalogue number 1.

1. The two immediately preceding paintings in this series are in the San Diego Museum of Art (ex coll. Edwin Binney III) and the Asia Society Museum, New York. See Goswamy and Smith 2005, no. 11; and the Asia Society (1979.055).
2. Ehnbom in Beach, Fischer, and Goswamy, eds., vol. 1, 2011, p. 79.

3

Battle Scene

North India, probably Delhi-Agra region, ca. 1520–30

Opaque watercolor on paper; no border; page 6¾ x 9 in. (17.1 x 22.9 cm)

NOT INSCRIBED

PUBLISHED: Lerner 1984, no. 57; and Welch 1985, no. 225d

MOUNTED ON ELEPHANTS and horses and wearing the *kulahdar* turban (a moundlike cap encircled by a length of cloth) fashionable in the early sixteenth century, the men in this painting make joyous war upon one another. This vigorous battle scene, with its "crescendo of energy, animated gestures, and vivid thumbnail characterizations,"[1] is actually the lower right quarter of a much larger picture depicting the same battle in greater detail. (The actual event was either a real battle or a mythological one taken from traditional Hindu literature.) When the Kronos picture is arranged in the proper sequence with the three other fragments from the same work,[2] the result makes for a very grand composition that suggests the now-lost wall painting on which all four pictures must surely depend.

At one time the original large battle scene was folded in four; as time passed and it was opened and closed, the sheet came apart along its folds. Thus, in earlier years, the four parts were viewed as separate entities, which were incorporated much later into the group of pictures known as the "Palam" *Bhagavata Purana* of about 1520–30 (see cats. 1 and 2). Daniel Ehnbom was the first to recognize that the four battle scenes belonged not to that series but to a unique work almost four times the size of any single "Palam" illustration. Both productions were probably made in the same sophisticated workshop, however, and both are considered key monuments of the highly influential Early Rajput style.

The misleadingly labeled Early Rajput style is often called the *Chaurapanchasika* style, in honor of the famous series of about 1550 or earlier illustrating the twelfth-century text of the same name by Bilhana. Representing a complete break with an earlier tradition of medieval painting in India (the so-called Western Indian style), this new mode is infinitely more dynamic and emotionally charged. Yet like the earlier style, it employed only a very limited number of formal elements: a restricted palette (red, yellow, and green being the principal colors); stocky, wide-eyed figure types; shallow space; bifurcated architecture; and solid backgrounds whose various colors differentiated separate incidents in the narrative. The invariably religious or traditional Hindu content of the Early Rajput style, admixed with later Mughal influence, was to become the basis for all later Rajput court painting.[3]

1. Welch 1985, p. 340.
2. The other fragments are in the private collection of J. P. Goenka; the Jagdish and Kamla Mittal Museum of Indian Art, Hyderabad; and in the former private collection of Stuart Cary Welch. See ibid., pp. 337–39.
3. For illustrations of the Early Rajput style, see Khandalavala and Chandra 1969, figs. 178–202. For an exhaustive discussion of this new style, see ibid., pp. 57–109.

4

Blindman's Bluff: The Demon Pralamba Carries Balarama on His Shoulder

Illustrated folio from the dispersed "Isarda" *Bhagavata Purana* (The Ancient Story of God)
North India, probably Delhi-Agra region, ca. 1560–65

Opaque watercolor on paper; yellow and pink border with variously colored rules; page 7⅝ x 10⅜ in. (19.4 x 26.4 cm)

INSCRIBED on the front in black ink in Sanskrit written in *devanagari* script: "The destruction of Pralamba, the demon / 27"; also inscribed on the front in black ink in Sanskrit written in *devanagari* script (missing a few characters on left side): verse 30 from the 18th chapter of book 10 of the *Bhagavata Purana,* "On finding the demon Pralamba slain by the powerful Balarama, all the cow-herds were astonished and they exclaimed 'well-done,' 'well-done'"

EX COLL.: Douglas Barrett

PUBLISHED: Lerner 1984, no. 58

IN THE FORESTS OF BRINDABAN, the youthful, white-skinned Balarama, Krishna's older brother, is playing with a group of *gopa*s (cowherds) in a version of "blindman's bluff" in which the loser is required to carry the winner on his back.[1] They are joined by the demon Pralamba, disguised in the garb of a cowherd, although he can do little to conceal his spotted pink skin or ungainly size. Having lost the game to Balarama, Pralamba decides to carry Balarama away. Initially Krishna's brother is afraid, but he soon remembers his divine nature and crushes the demon's head. Thus the message is reinforced that evil has no effect on Krishna or on those close to him.

The important series to which this painting once belonged — the "Isarda" *Bhagavata Purana* — marks a stylistic advance on the earlier "Palam" *Bhagavata Purana* series of about 1520–30 (see cats. 1 and 2). It features more elegant and elongated figures, more decorative accoutrements, and many delightful compositional effects. The textiles, especially the *patka*s (striped cummerbunds), are rendered sharply and confidently as well. The air is altogether fresher in this later series, which "is more mature in its finishing, its refined colors and expressive and vigorous drawing. Besides [the series] has marked lyrical charm, poetic imagery and care-free rhythmic vitality."[2]

In the "Isarda" *Bhagavata Purana* the men do not wear the *kulahdar* turban or the *chakdar jama* (four-pointed coat), as in catalogue number 3, but rather a small turban tied closely to the head (*atpati*) and dhotis (loincloths). Otherwise their ornaments follow the designs commonly seen in the Early Rajput style. The background colors, reflecting the pre-Mughal, Hindu tradition, are similarly restricted: only red, yellow, blue, and green are generally used. Nevertheless, thanks to Mughal influence, the series represents a stylistic advance. In this picture, for example, modeling through color can be seen on Pralamba's legs and on the leaves of the tree at the far right.[3] In addition, the grouping of the figures is clearer and the use of space more sophisticated than in earlier, non-Mughal pictures.

The series takes its name from the *thikana* (barony) of Isarda, south of Jaipur, where it was originally found, although it is not thought to have been painted there.[4] The large-size folios from the "Isarda" set were hard to acquire, as fewer than thirty appear to have survived.[5]

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1. Lerner 1984, p. 148.
2. Khandalavala and Mittal 1974, p. 30.
3. Lerner 1984, p. 150.
4. For the "Isarda" *Bhagavata Purana*, see also Guy and Britschgi 2011, pp. 40–41; and Leach 1986, pp. 29–30, no. 9.
5. For another depiction of the same subject, from the so-called "Mody" *Bhagavata Purana*, probably painted in the kingdom of Kangra about 1790, see Archer [1957], pl. 5.

5

The Sage Durvasa Helps the Gopis Quiet the Yamuna River

Illustrated folio from the dispersed "Parimoo" *Bhagavata Purana* (The Ancient Story of God)
North India, probably Delhi-Agra region, ca. 1580

Opaque watercolor on paper; yellow and red borders (frayed); page 7⅜ x 9¾ in. (18.7 x 24.8 cm)

INSCRIBED on the front along the top border in black ink in rustic Sanskrit written in *devanagari* script: "51 / Durvasa, the irascible [sage], in the forest"

EX COLL.: Sviatoslav Roerich

UNPUBLISHED

IN THIS INCIDENT from the popular Krishna legends, Radha, the god's beloved, and three of her milkmaid attendants (*gopis*) have approached the hermitage of the great sage Durvasa. The women wish to join Krishna for a picnic on the opposite bank of the Yamuna River, but the river goddess Yamuna opposes what she assumes will be a licentious gathering and has caused the river to rise to an impassable height. Radha and the *gopis* are therefore entreating Durvasa, whom they are plying with delicious food, to use his influence with Yamuna to overcome the river barrier.[1]

Of the five works in the Early Rajput style in the Kronos Collections (cats. 1–5), this painting of about 1580 is the latest in date and the most indebted to Mughal painting,[2] as evidenced by the treatment of the splashing water and the naturalistic, direct emotions and gestures.

During the time most of the paintings in this volume were produced, the Mughals — Muslims originally from Central Asia — controlled much of India. Mughal influence is apparent in the roughly thirteen other paintings from the "Parimoo" series that have survived.[3] It was crucial not only to the various figure types depicted in the series — the men wearing the smaller, more closely wrapped *atpati* turban rather than the *kulahdar* type — but also to the depiction of landscape and the configuration of the bulbous, multicolored rocks. Since these features were popularized in the Mughal emperor Akbar's influential *Hamzanama* (The Story of Hamza) project of about 1557–72, a monumental undertaking involving the oversize illustration of fourteen volumes of text, it is presumed that the "Parimoo" series was completed after the *Hamzanama* project was finished in 1572.[4]

This series is named for Ratan Parimoo, the scholar who first brought it to the attention of the academic world.[5] To the best of my knowledge, the Kronos work is the only picture from the series to exist in the West.

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1. I am indebted to Gita Patel and Saachi Sood for this information.
2. Parimoo 1974, p. 10.
3. Ibid., p. 13.
4. For the *Hamzanama*, see Seyller 2002.
5. Parimoo 1974.


५१
॥ दुर्वासाऋषिवर्णन ॥

6

Deshakar Ragini: A Prince Looking in a Mirror Tying His Turban

Painted by the artist Nasiruddin (active ca. 1585–1609)
Illustrated folio from the dispersed "Chawand" *Ragamala* (Garland of Melodies)
Rajasthan, kingdom of Mewar, series dated 1605

Opaque watercolor on paper (faded and water-damaged); yellow border with black and red inner rules; painting 6 5/16 x 5 3/4 in. (16 x 14.6 cm), page 8 x 5 15/16 in. (20.3 x 15.1 cm)

INSCRIBED on the front in black ink written in *devanagari* script: "Desakāra's confidante helps tie the *sarpech*; another young woman stands nearby; a bird there (in a cage) sings"; and a label in black written in *devanagari* script: "*desakararagini*"

PUBLISHED: Spink and Son, London [1976], no. 3

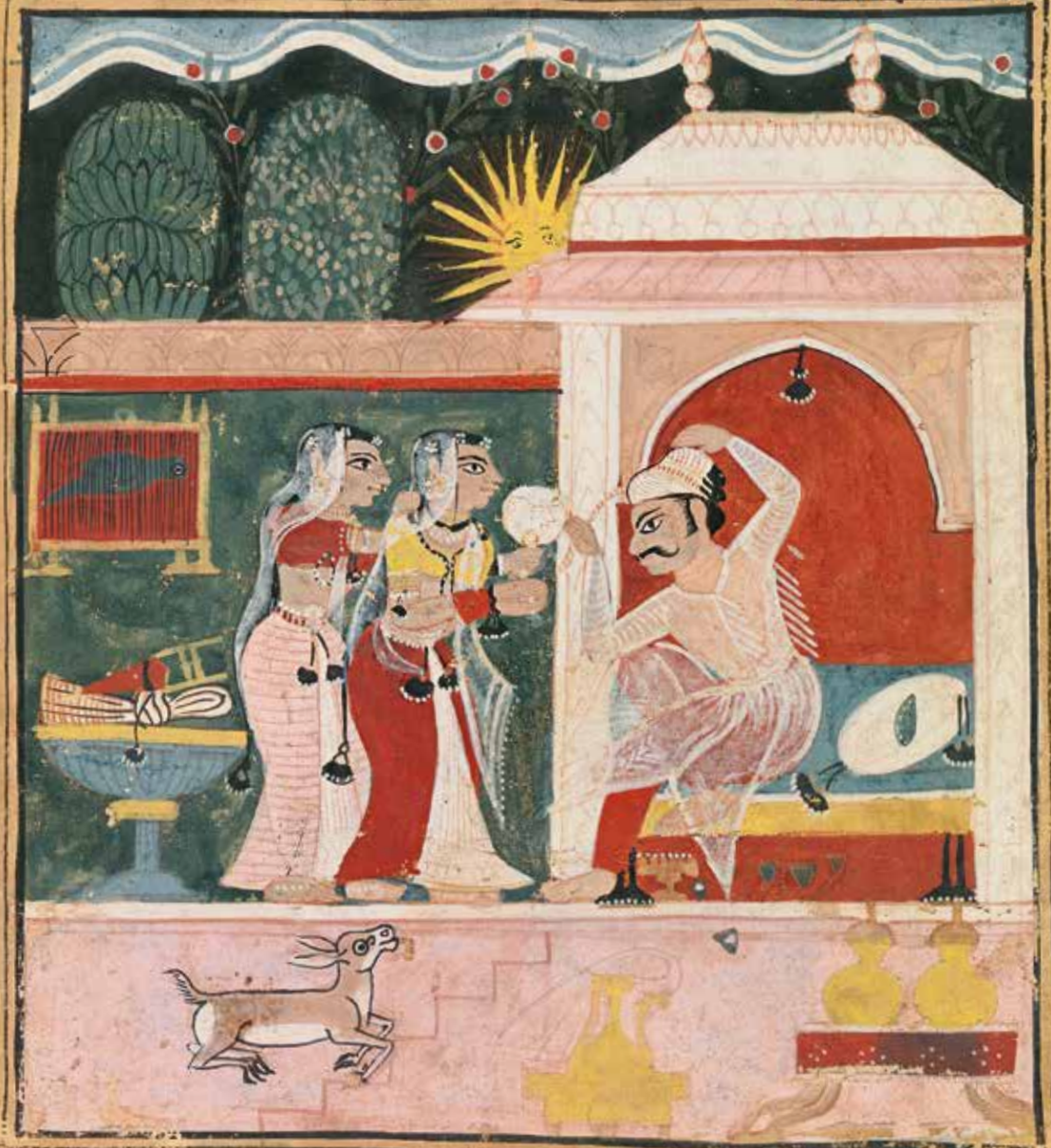
SEATED ON A BED in an open chamber decorated with a small table and a caged bird, a prince is attended by two handmaidens. He gazes into an oval mirror held by one maid, as he ties several strands of his *atpati* turban. The prince's starched, white muslin *chakdar jama* (four-pointed coat) is the very height of aristocratic fashion.

The "Chawand" *Ragamala* series, to which this painting once belonged, is named for the hill-surrounded village in southern Mewar where it was originally made and where the native rulers of Mewar in Rajasthan retreated to make their ineffective last stand against the invading Mughals. (For *Ragamala* painting, see cat. 7.) About twenty-seven illustrated folios from this famous series have survived,[1] all of which were previously in the collection of Gopi Krishna Kanoria of Calcutta. Widely dispersed in the 1950s and 1960s, they are now found in collections throughout the world. The forty-second and final painting in the series bears a colophon date of 1605 and the artist's name, Nasiruddin. The paintings in the series are thought to be both a "final expression of the Early Rajput style [*sic*]" (see cats. 1–5) and the forerunner of new developments in Rajasthani painting.[2]

Although the artist Nasiruddin was not a very refined stylist, his rhythmical drawing, powerful compositions, and bold color combinations have an assured strength and charm. In the words of Andrew Topsfield, "[H]e shows a forthright, even summary command of a familiar received style; many of the same conventions would reappear, under greater Mughal influence, in manuscript painting at Udaipur a generation later."[3]

1. Topsfield 2001, p. 21. For a list of the dispersed illustrated folios from the "Chawand" *Ragamala* series, see ibid., p. 45n1.
2. Ibid., p. 44. For later Mewar painting, see cat. 28.
3. Ibid., p. 21. For Nasiruddin, see also Guy and Britschgi 2011, pp. 98–100.

॥ देसकारकरता अति बंधनहि स्थिरपेचा अपारमणी किरु
धति।व सतद्धिक्रेस्च ॥१



From the "Berlin" *Ragamala* (cats. 7–10)

7

Dakshina Gujari Ragini: A Lady with a Vina Reclining in the Forest, Waiting for Her Lover

Illustrated folio (no. 26) from the dispersed "Berlin" *Ragamala* (Garland of Melodies)
North India, Sub-Imperial Mughal style, ca. 1605–6

Opaque watercolor on paper; wide yellow border (repaired) with variously colored inner rules; painting 6½ x 4½ in. (16.5 x 11.4 cm), page 8 5/16 x 6¼ in. (21.2 x 15.9 cm)

INSCRIBED on the front in black ink with two lines in Sanskrit written in *devanagari* script: "Dakshina Gujjari is a lady of dark complexion, with beautiful locks, who has gone to a couch of soft, sprouting shoots of sandal trees, who is bringing about the [right] division of the interval of the notes from her lute"; also inscribed on the front in black ink with a short note in Hindi written in *devanagari* script: "Dakshina Guj[ja]ri 26"; as well as various doodles. Inscribed on the reverse with the numbers "503/2B" and the Indic number "13"

PUBLISHED: Lerner 1984, no. 59a

Dakshina Gujari Ragini, one of the principal modes or melodies of Indian classical music, is here personified as a lady in the forest holding a *vina*, a stringed musical instrument with a double gourd for a sounding box.[1] Charged with sexual energy, the woman is waiting for her absent lover, symbolized by the large, dark bird nestling in one of the trees. The pairs of birds flying overhead signify reunited lovers.

Ragamala theory, an essential component of Indian high culture, is a complicated subject, "further complicated by disagreements among the scholars and contemporary practitioners of the arts."[2] In a *Ragamala* series of paintings, the thirty-six or more principal melodies of Indian classical music were classified and given names. Each melody or note cluster was based on a progression of five to seven notes, and each was associated with a particular musical scale (scales very different from those of Western music). These melodies or note clusters became the subjects of extended musical improvisations. They were grouped into six "families," each headed by a male *raga* and including five or six *ragini* wives, resulting in a group of thirty-six or forty-two principal melodies or note clusters.[3] Each *raga* or *ragini* also became associated with a particular season or time of day and eventually could be performed only during a specified hour and season. Furthermore, each *raga* or *ragini* was matched to a poem with a concrete subject, written on the border or the reverse of the folio and illustrated with a picture that depicted its subject in great, often fanciful detail. Whether or not one could actually discern a different mood with every *Ragamala* theme that was performed is an open question.

From the late sixteenth through the early nineteenth century, *Ragamala* series organized along these complicated lines were made for the princes of India, the major patrons of Indian classical music, as well as for those with sufficient wealth or cultural aspirations to afford a series of their own. In turning the illustrated folios of a *Ragamala* series, viewers could read the poem, look at the picture, and hear the music in their head. Together with portraits, scenes from the principal Hindu religious texts, and depictions of Muslim literary tales and dynastic histories, *Ragamala* illustrations became a preferred subject of Indian painting.

This picture and the following three (cats. 8, 9, 10) are from a well-known dispersed series called the "Berlin" *Ragamala* series because four of its other paintings are in the Museum für Asiatische Kunst, Berlin.[4] One of these paintings is dated Samvat 1662 (A.D. 1605–6).[5]

1. Glynn, Skelton, and Dallapiccola 2011, p. 13.
2. See Ebeling [1973], p. 254, figs. 234, 235.
3. For another classification of *raga*s, used in the Punjab Hills, see cat. 46.
4. Waldschmidt and Waldschmidt 1967–75, vol. 2, pp. 427–31.
5. Ibid., p. 427.

॥ग्रणामाश्चुकेशरीमलयद्रुमाणांमृद्वंत्रसत्यंत्रवतल्यतानां।श्रुतिस्व
राणांदधतीविनागंतंवीमुखादक्षिणगुंजरीयं॥श्रदक्षिणगुंजरी॥

दक्षीनगु
ची२६

From the "Berlin" *Ragamala* (cats. 7–10)

8

Ramkali Ragini: A Lady Turns Away from Her Kneeling Lover

Illustrated folio from the dispersed "Berlin" *Ragamala* (Garland of Melodies)
North India, Sub-Imperial Mughal style, ca. 1605–6

Opaque watercolor on paper; wide yellow border with variously colored inner rules; painting 6½ x 4¾ in. (16.5 x 12.1 cm), page 8¼ x 6 9/16 in. (20.9 x 16.6 cm)

INSCRIBED on the front in black ink with two lines in Sanskrit written in *devanagari* script: "Rāmakalī is represented as a [lady] who is shining like gold, with brilliant jewelery, wearing a dark blue shawl [*sic*] on her body, inspired by haughtiness, though the lover has fallen down at her feet"

UNPUBLISHED

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Steven Kossak, The Kronos Collections, 1981 (1981.460.3)

IN THIS PICTURE, the melody *Ramkali Ragini* is personified as a tangled dispute between two lovers. The man, kneeling on the ground, is imploring his beloved, but the lady is turning away from him, in either anger or disgust. The confrontation takes place in a walled courtyard, with a pavilion open to an empty bedchamber nearby.

Like catalogue numbers 7, 9, and 10, this picture is from a well-known dispersed *Ragamala* series called the "Berlin" *Ragamala*, because four other paintings from the series are now in the Museum für Asiatische Kunst, Berlin.[1] One of the paintings in Berlin is dated Samvat 1662, or A.D. 1605–6.[2]

Once the rajas of India decided to become art patrons, Rajput court painting was born. In emulation of their powerful overlord, the Mughal emperor Akbar (reigned 1556–1605), these Rajput patrons had already established local painting ateliers back home, composed of ad hoc artists trained either in the so-called Early Rajput style or a provincial, less than accomplished, Mughal style. Yet the diffusion of sophisticated Mughal court painting to these Rajput courts on the periphery did not happen overnight. Probably the earliest form of Rajput court painting is called Popular Mughal, or Sub-Imperial Mughal, as exemplified by the style of this painting and the three others from the "Berlin" *Ragamala* reproduced in this catalogue.[3] (For additional discussion of Sub-Imperial painting, see cat. 10.)

1. Waldschmidt and Waldschmidt 1967–75, vol. 2, pp. 427–31.
2. Ibid., p. 427.
3. For other paintings from the same series, see Ehnbom 1985, no. 16.

॥ग्रथ्यर्णवेतासासुरत्नभूषणाश्लेषानिर्वोलंघनघावदंती॥कांतेपदो
पांतमधश्रितेपिमानोन्नतारामकलीप्रदिष्टा॥१॥रामकलीरागिणी

From the "Berlin" *Ragamala* (cats. 7–10)

9

Desvarati Ragini: A Kneeling Lady Gazes at an Unoccupied Bed in an Open Pavilion

Illustrated folio (no. 24) from the dispersed "Berlin" *Ragamala* (Garland of Melodies)
North India, Sub-Imperial Mughal style, ca. 1605–6

Opaque watercolor on paper; wide yellow border with variously colored inner rules; painting 6⅞ x 4⅝ in. (17.5 x 11.7 cm), page 8⅝ x 6 in. (21.9 x 15.2 cm)

INSCRIBED on the front in black ink with two lines in Sanskrit written in *devanagari* script: "The fair complected one, silent and idle, her sleepy eyes moving to and fro, distressed and indefatigable [waiting for] intercourse during the night may be [understood] as *Deśavarādī*. 24. *Deśīrāgiṇī*"; also inscribed on the front in black ink: "*desaka* 24." Inscribed on the reverse with the number "828" and the notation "7.12.63 / MOSX"

PUBLISHED: Lerner 1984, no. 59b

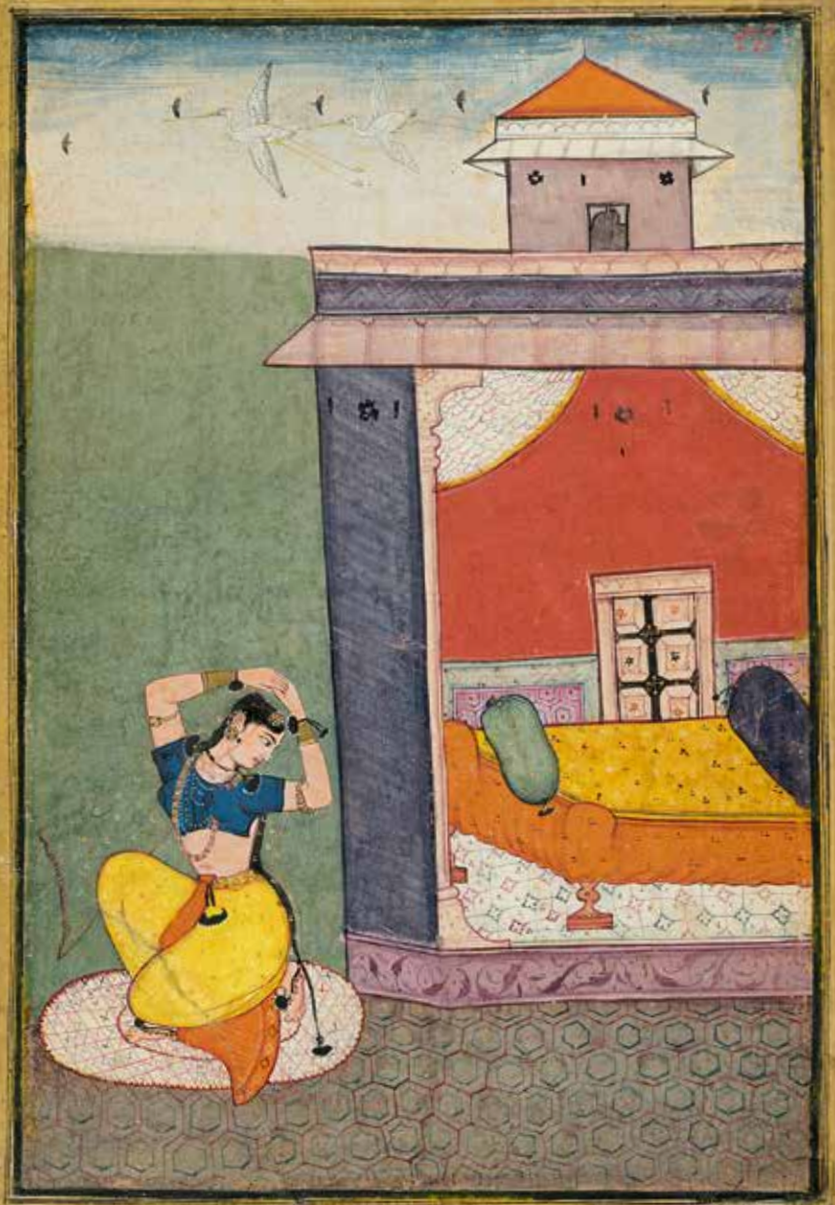
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Steven Kossak, The Kronos Collections, 1987 (1987.417.2)

ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL melodies or modes of Indian classical music, *Desvarati Ragini* is personified here as a lady gazing sadly at the empty bed in the open pavilion nearby as she thinks of her absent lover.[1]

The solid red background of the chamber (symbolizing the lovers' intense passion); the solid green of the middle ground; the extreme emotion, symbolized by the lady's contorted body; and the "peekaboo" architecture of the open pavilion recall features of the *Chaurapanchasika* series of some fifty years earlier. The persistence of these features demonstrates the importance of the so-called Early Rajput style to later Rajput and Rajput-inspired Mughal painting.

1. See Ebeling [1973], pp. 87, 171, figs. 89, 210, 218; and Lerner 1984, p. 155.

॥ आलस्यमोनमुद्रा निद्रासंपूर्णमाननयनासो। निसिसुरतश्रम-
खिन्नादशावराडीनवेणीरी॥२४॥ ॥दशीरागिणी॥ ॥ ॥



देश
२५

10

Kedari Ragini: A Sage Seated before a Hut Listening to a Musician

Illustrated folio (no. 3_[?]) from the dispersed "Berlin" *Ragamala* (Garland of Melodies)
North India, Sub-Imperial Mughal style, ca. 1605–6

Opaque watercolor on paper; wide yellow border with variously colored inner rules; painting 6 15/16 x 4 3/4 in. (17.6 x 12.2 cm), page 8 5/16 x 6 in. (21.1 x 15.2 cm)

INSCRIBED on the border with two lines of Sanskrit text written in *devanagari* script: "Kedāra Rāga is [a man] of dark complexion, young and handsome in all his limbs, who is pained by the separation from his beloved one [and] has besmeared his body with grey ashes"; also inscribed on the border with a short note in Hindi written in *devanagari* script and a cutoff number containing a "3"

UNPUBLISHED

LIKE CATALOGUE NUMBERS 7, 8, and 9, this picture is from a well-known dispersed *Ragamala* series called the "Berlin" *Ragamala*, because four other paintings from the series are now in the Museum für Asiatische Kunst, Berlin.[1] One of the paintings in Berlin is dated Samvat 1662, or A.D. 1605–6.[2]

This work is painted in the Sub-Imperial Mughal, or so-called Popular Mughal, style, which is probably one of the earliest styles of Rajput court painting. The Sub-Imperial style marries the earlier, yet misleadingly labeled Early Rajput style, a religious art, with the emerging and very influential Mughal court painting, a courtly art. Paintings executed in this Sub-Imperial style, like the four works from the "Berlin" *Ragamala* reproduced in this volume, have acquired Sanskrit texts in their upper borders but lack the dense modeling and painterly application of pigment that are such notable features of Mughal court painting during this period. The figures also have the basic facial features and costumes of Mughal painting, but their settings are much flatter and are often framed by a large rectangle of bright red color. (This was an outdated convention of the so-called Early Rajput style.)

Other "primitive" examples of what is probably the earliest kind of Rajput court painting are represented by catalogue numbers 11 and 12. Rajput court painting would eventually blend the indigenous and nonindigenous elements of Indian painting to rival, and in some ways surpass, Mughal painting. But this historical process would require another fifty years.

1. For additional discussion of Sub-Imperial painting, see Waldschmidt and Waldschmidt 1967–75, vol. 2, pp. 427–31; and cat. 11.
2. Ibid., p. 427.

॥प्रियाविरहसंतप्तान्नसितोध्वजसन्निभः॥केदारराग:स्यामायं
युवासर्वांगसुंदर:॥३५॥ ॥केदारोरागिणी॥

From the "Early Bikaner" *Bhagavata Purana* (cats. 11, 12)

11

The Great Festivity (Maha Utsav): Six Figures Celebrate with Music and Dance

Illustrated folio from the dispersed "Early Bikaner" *Bhagavata Purana* (The Ancient Story of God)
Rajasthan, probably kingdom of Bikaner, ca. 1610 or earlier

Opaque watercolor on paper; wide brown paper border with black and white inner rules; painting 6¾ x 9¾ in. (17.1 x 24.8 cm), page 9⅝ x 11¾ in. (24.4 x 29.8 cm)

INSCRIBED on the reverse with the numbers "270/8" and the Indic number "18"; also inscribed with three short inscriptions written in *devanagari* script; notated with an effaced Bikaner royal collections stamp in purple ink and a partially visible modern label in English

UNPUBLISHED

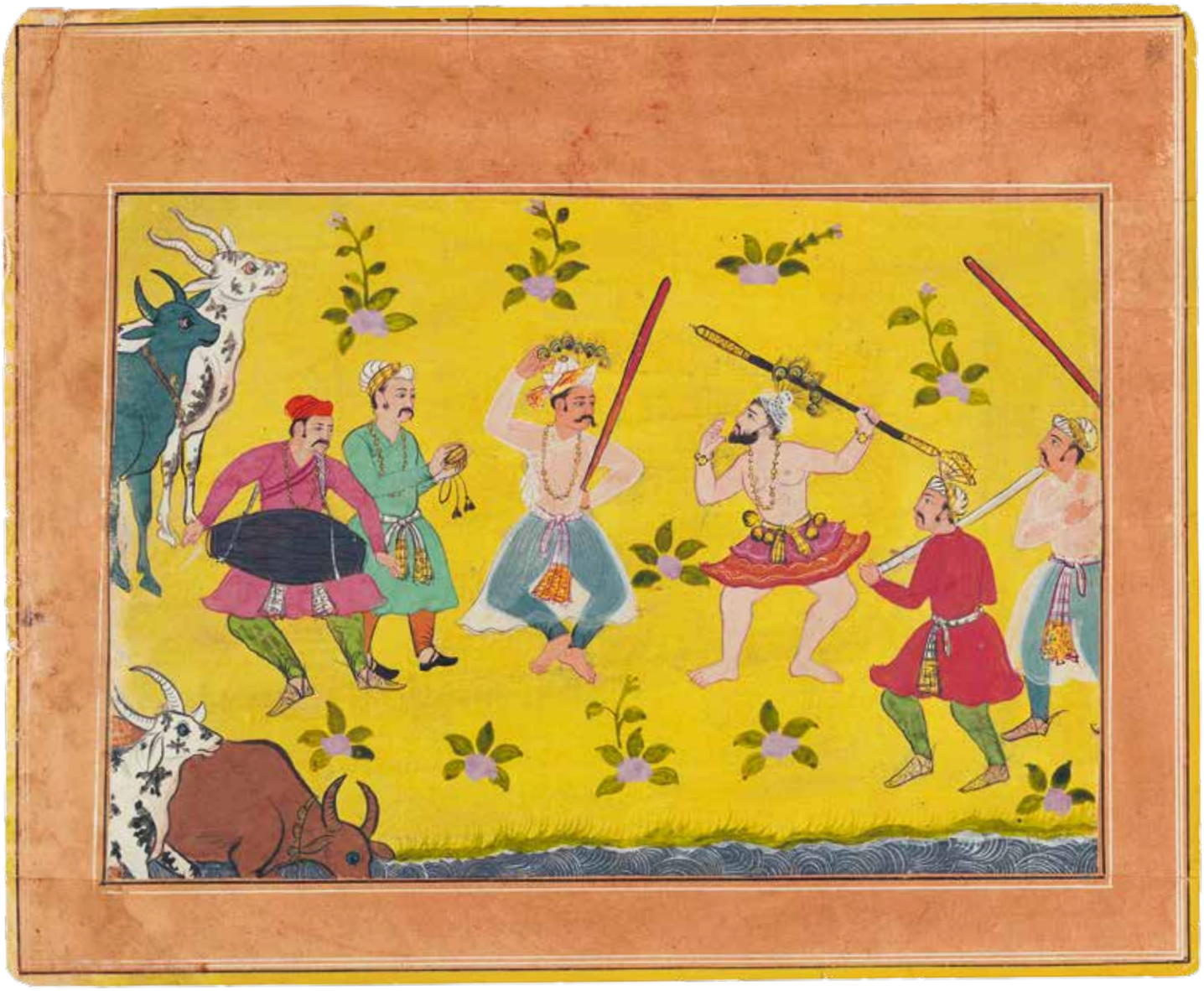
AT THE CENTER, a male figure of some importance, wearing a peacock feather turban and wielding a sword, dances with a half-naked swami who brandishes a censer and wears a skirt, a belt of bells, and a peacock-feather headdress. Also taking part in the general hilarity are two musicians and two soldiers. Are they all besotted with drink? Four horned cattle complete the scene, which takes place by the shore of a lake or river. The specific incident depicted has not been identified.

The series to which this and the following work (cat. 12) once belonged is thought to represent the earliest-known court painting from Bikaner, an important kingdom in northwest Rajasthan. The series was probably made for Raja Rai Singh (reigned 1571–1611), the greatest ruler of Bikaner. It was originally in the Bikaner royal collection,[1] and other paintings from the group have the same brownish paper borders (otherwise unusual) that are characteristic of works from that source.

By the late sixteenth century, Rai Singh had become an important courtier and general for his Mughal overlords. Because of him, the "unstable, poor and unimportant desert kingdom became a power within the Mughal Empire, and wealth, luxuries, art and culture streamed into the desert, as the price paid for the blood of the Rathor [Bikaner] soldiers, who fought the wars of the Grand Mughals."[2] At the imperial court, Rai Singh must have become aware that sponsoring court painting, especially the production of the new, genuine portrait types and the depiction of lavish Hindu texts, was one of the primary attributes of a great king. He therefore created in Bikaner a similar court workshop, yet employing local artists, to make works reflecting his own religious sensibility and his kingdom's greater glory. Therefore, this *Bhagavata Purana* series was probably one of Rai Singh's first major productions. It would have been made for him by the hereditary Muslim converts (called Utsa artists), originally from Multan, whom he brought to Bikaner to become his first court painters.[3] They would have used as their model the then-fashionable Sub-Imperial Mughal style (see cats. 7–10), a Mughalized variant of the so-called Early Rajput style (see cats. 1–5).

Eventually, Rai Singh's example would have been copied by the other princes of Rajasthan, as well as by those of the Punjab Hills. These princes used whatever resources, including trained artists and craftsmen, that were available in their local communities.

1. Goetz 1950, pp. 99–100. For other paintings from the same large series, see Mason 2001, no. 18; Pal 1978, nos. 4a, 4b; and Ehnbom 1985, nos. 17, 18.
2. Goetz 1950, pp. 40–41.
3. For the hereditary Utsa court painters of Bikaner, see Krishna in Topsfield, ed. 2000. See also Davis 2008.



From the "Early Bikaner" *Bhagavata Purana* (cats. 11, 12)

12

Two Warriors Engage in a Sword Fight While Four Attendants Watch

Illustrated folio from the dispersed "Early Bikaner" *Bhagavata Purana* (The Ancient Story of God)
Rajasthan, probably kingdom of Bikaner, ca. 1610 or earlier

Opaque watercolor on paper; wide brown paper border with variously colored inner rules and black and white outer rules; painting 6⅝ x 9¾ in. (16.8 x 24.8 cm), page 9⅞16 x 11¾ in. (24 x 29.8 cm)

INSCRIBED on the reverse with the number "611" in blue pencil and two inscriptions in black ink written in *devanagari* script, one of which reads: "The immortal [Balarama] slays Rukmin"; notated with the effaced rubber stamp of the Bikaner royal collection in purple ink

UNPUBLISHED

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Steven Kossak, The Kronos Collections, 1978 (1978.535)

OF THE TWO MEN fighting with swords at the center of the composition, the one dressed in an orange *jama* (coat) is about to deliver the coup de grace. His opponent, dressed in blue, has fallen exhausted to the ground, having dropped his sword and shield. To highlight this action, the scene is set against a dramatic rectangle of yellow. The two combatants are watched by four attendants, one of whom lurches forward in amazement. The specific incident from the *Bhagavata Purana* illustrated here has not yet been identified.

In style, this painting and the previous work (cat. 11) actually represent late extensions of the so-called Early Rajput style (see cats. 1–5). The wavy line of clouds in the sky, the simplified background, and the yellow rectangle are well-known elements of that style. Only the more spacious arrangement of the figures and the lightened palette are markedly different from the earlier works.

The Kronos Collections are particularly rich in material from Bikaner (see cats. 11, 12, and 20–27). They contain examples (cats. 22–24) by Bikaner's greatest painter, the master artist Ruknuddin (active ca. 1650–ca. 1697), and range in date from the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century (cats. 11, 12) through the eighteenth century (cat. 26).

The Mughal-Bikaner connection lasted as long as the Mughal Empire, that is, until 1858. After the reign of Rai Singh, Bikaner painting in the seventeenth century became increasingly Mughalized,[1] probably thanks to the Mughal-trained artists whom his successors invited to settle in their capital and join the Utsa painters (see cat. 11) who had already settled there.[2] These later court painters were not slavish followers of their Mughal overlords, however, for their works were highly distinctive, combining Mughal refinement with Rajasthani naïveté and earthiness.

1. For this second, increasingly Mughalized phase of Bikaner painting, see cat. 24. See also Goetz 1950, colorpl. VII.
2. Khandalavala, Chandra, and Chandra 1960, pp. 18–19.

13

The Manifest Deceived Heroine

Attributed to the artist Sahibdin (active 1628–55)
Illustrated folio from a dispersed *Rasikapriya* (Lover's Breviary) by Keshava Das
Rajasthan, kingdom of Mewar, ca. 1640

Opaque watercolor and gold on paper; narrow red border with wide yellow inner border marginated with black rules; yellow text panel; painting 11 3/16 x 6 7/8 in. (28.4 x 17.5 cm), page 13 3/16 x 8 9/16 in. (33.5 x 21.7 cm)

INSCRIBED on the front in black ink on the yellow text panel with four lines of Hindi, or Braj Bhasha, text written in *devanagari* script: the 24th poem in the 7th chapter of the text (for an English translation, see Dehejia, H. 2013, pp. 81–82); also notated with a short label in black ink on the red upper border in Rajasthani written in *devanagari* script. Inscribed on the reverse in pencil in English: "VMA England 2-2-54" and the number "287"; also inscribed in black ink in English: "Sed.C"; also inscribed with one line in black ink written in *devanagari* script: "number 58 volume 85 *samvat* 1751 [A.D. 1694] Asu [perhaps a name] caretaker" and the Indic number "112"; also inscribed with a short notation in black ink

UNPUBLISHED

THE DIVIDED PICTURE SURFACE accommodates three scenes depicted in continuous narrative. Radha, Krishna's beloved, who appears in each with her confidante (*sakhi*), is visibly upset that Krishna has failed to arrive at their tryst. In the upper panel on the right, she is picking a yellowish white *champa* flower (the same color as her skin) from a tree. In a later incident, not shown here, Radha draws on the surface of the flower a picture of Rahu, the mythological figure who swallows the moon, suggesting that Radha, having been "swallowed" by her absent lover, feels a bit like the moon herself. The upper panel on the left shows her seated on an unused bed (a *baithak*, or platform, in the text). In the lower panel Radha and her confidante visit the place where the tryst was to occur, and she pleads with her *sakhi* not to tell anyone that she has been deceived by Krishna. That these scenes take place at night is indicated by the crescent moon in the blue sky.

Using continuous, or sequential, narrative to depict a long story from a Hindu epic or complicated love poem is one of the ancient devices of Indian art. In a single frame the same figure will appear many times to indicate that sequential scenes from the same narrative are being shown. This type of narration is somewhat akin to that found in the Western art of the comic strip. But in India there are no conversational bubbles: as in Indian classical dance, speech is conveyed by the hand gesture, or the mudra, that each figure employs. And the subject matter is described in the text written in the panel at the top of the page.

This sparkling painting is actually one folio from a much larger series illustrating a famous Hindi, or Braj Bhasha, text, the *Rasikapriya* (1591) of Keshava Das (see also cat. 23). Originally from a chapter discussing the eight types of *nayika*s, or heroines, this folio illustrates the emotional turmoil that ensues when a heroine has been deceived by her lover.[1] Jeremiah P. Losty has attributed all the paintings in this series to the very influential Mewar artist Sahibdin.[2]

1. I am grateful to Richard Cohen for this information.
2. Losty 2008, p. 10. For other works from the same series, see ibid.; Anand 1973, p. 123; Mehta and Chandra 1962, pl. 4; and Goetz 1950, pl. IX. For Sahibdin, see Topsfield in Beach, Fischer, and Goswamy, eds., vol. 1, 2011; and Guy and Britschgi 2011, pp. 101–2.

॥ देषत उदधजात देषी देषि नीजगात चपक के पात कछु ची ध्यो हैवनाथ कैः सकल
सुधगेढारि दुति कुमारी फुल माल तोरि मारि वीरावग राइकैः लै लै देही सास
तजीवी वधवीलास आस के सादास हाउदाचली अकुलाइकैं सइ कैसे केत सु
नो कान्हजी सुवालउनो मो कुकरजारइ नाउनाइष पाइकैः ॥॥

14

Dipak Raga: A Prince with a Flame in His Turban Embraces His Consort

Illustrated folio from a dispersed *Ragamala* (Garland of Melodies)
Central India, probably kingdom of Raghugarh, ca. 1640

Opaque watercolor and gold on paper; red border with black inner rules; yellow text panel; painting 9¾ x 7⅞ in. (24.8 x 20 cm), page 11⅝ x 9⅜ in. (28.7 x 23.3 cm)

INSCRIBED on the front in black ink in the yellow text panel with three lines of text in Sanskrit written in *devanagari* script: "*Dīpaka Rāga* is described. 19. Dīpa[ka][Rāga], happy in the darkness of the dwelling after the lamp had been extinguished for the purpose of union with his young wife, made her ashamed by the [unforeseen light of] the lamps in the shape of [radiant] jewels in his crest." Inscribed on the reverse in black ink in Persian script: "*dipak rag . . .* "; notated with a stamp in purple and blue ink: "No. 75 / Deepak Ragni / signed: [unreadable]"

UNPUBLISHED

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of John and Evelyn Kossak, The Kronos Collections, 1982 (1982.462.4)

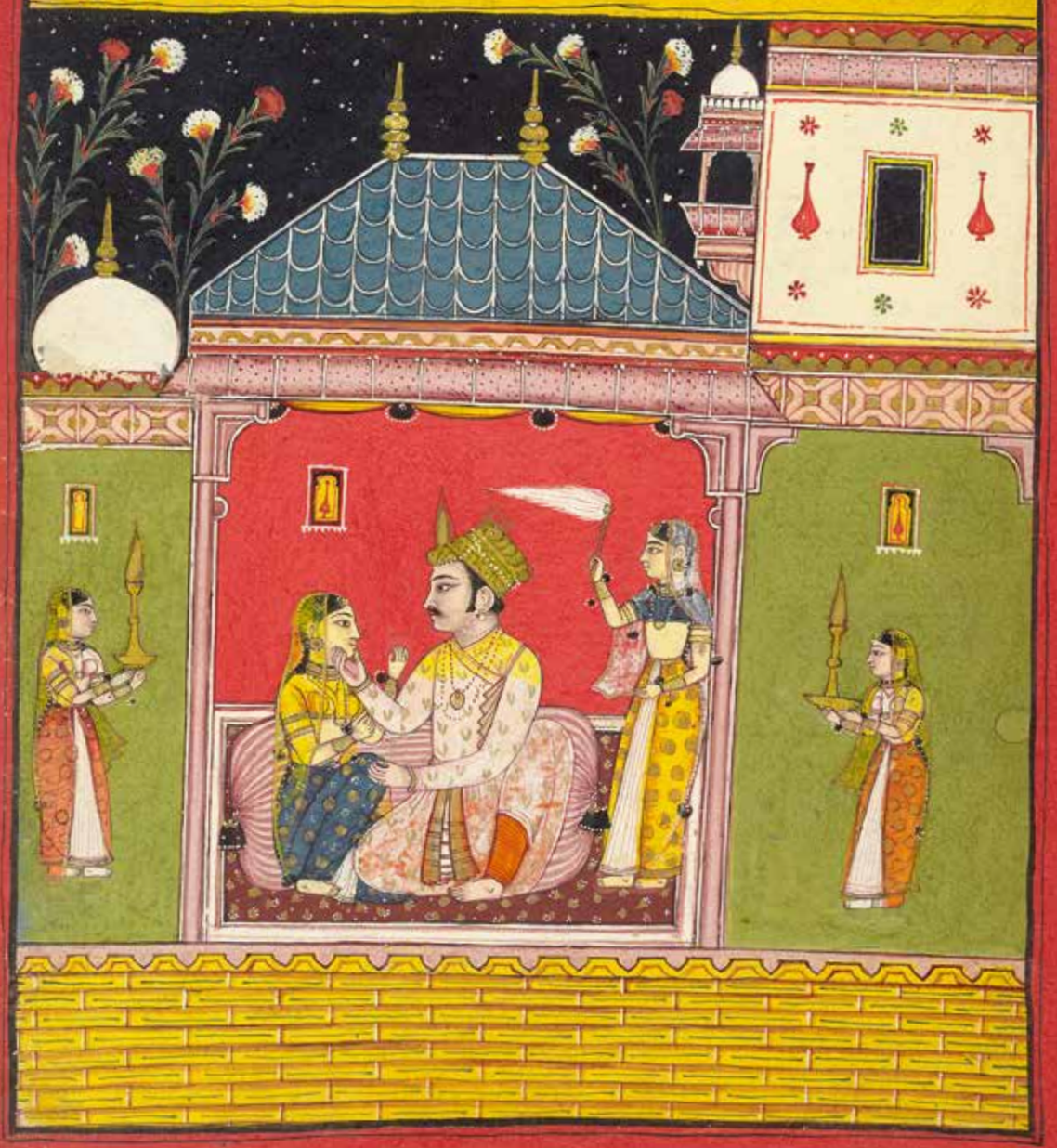
IN *Dipak Raga*, the prince is associated with a lamp (*dip*) or flames, so the prince seated with his consort here in an interior room of his palace has a flame issuing from his turban. The royal couple is attended by a handmaiden waving a *chauri* (fly whisk), an emblem of royalty, while two handmaidens holding oil lamps — another allusion to *Dipak Raga* — stand at attention in adjoining chambers. This *raga* is to be performed at midday, in the summer.

This folio from a *Ragamala* series looks much like a Mewar picture of approximately the same date. The great palace painting workshop and royal library sponsored by the rulers of the kingdom of Mewar in their capital at Udaipur obviously had a great influence on developments elsewhere in Rajasthan, as the ranas of Mewar were considered to be the grandest of the Rajputs, and their art was the most influential among the Rajasthani schools. However, this is not a Mewar picture. What we are seeing in the simple, geometric composition (itself a derivation from Central Indian painting), the predominant red, yellow, and olive green palette, and the naive, doll-like figures is merely the influence of Mewar painting, as codified by the great Mewar artist Sahibdin (active 1628–55) (see cat. 13).[1] This work's smaller figures, with their distinctive facial and figural conventions, and the wall of heavily outlined bricks would never appear in a Mewar painting of this date.

The series to which this folio once belonged and a closely related *Rasikapriya* (Lover's Breviary) series of approximately the same date[2] were obviously made in the same palace workshop. Various individual paintings from both sets display Central Indian affinities (gold-outlined foliage, black skies, and tufted planes of color) as well as Mewar affinities. Therefore, our best guess is that the series to which this folio once belonged was made in a painting workshop attached to the palace in Raghugarh, a small yet important kingdom ruled by the recognized Rajput head of the Khichi Chauhans, descendants of the last (late twelfth-century) Hindu king of Delhi. While technically not a part of Rajasthan, Raghugarh is situated in northwestern Madhya Pradesh, or Central India, adjacent to the south-eastern region of Rajasthan and the kingdom of Mewar.

1. For Sahibdin, see Guy and Britschgi 2011, pp. 101–2; and Topsfield 2001, pp. 55–78, 89–96.
2. For other illustrated folios from the same *Ragamala* series, see *Indian Miniature Paintings* 1970, no. 46; Pal 1978, no. 8; and Sotheby's, London 1992, no. 31. For the *Rasikapriya* series, see Khandalavala, Chandra, and Chandra 1960, no. 106; Spink and Son, London 1982, nos. 6, 102, 103; Pal 1978, no. 15; Sotheby's, London 1992, no. 35; Poster 1994, no. 123; and Tandan [1982], fig. 40a.

दीपकः रागः कथितः॥१९॥ ॥स्तनेनस्तीयेम हतीप्रियासाः॥दीपेनलीन
॥सुनगीतवेत्ता॥तस्यासिरोरूपणरत्नदीपैः लज्जागतऊत्रजगाददीपः॥१९
॥दिपकरागे॥पुरीष॥



15

Her Maid Talks to Radha

Illustrated folio (no. 113) from the sixth chapter of the *Rasikapriya* (Lover's Breviary) by Keshava Das
Central India, region of Malwa, ca. 1660

Opaque watercolor on paper; narrow pink border with rectangular yellow panels at top and bottom; painting 9⅞ x 8⅜ in. (25.1 x 21.3 cm), page 10¼ x 8⅞ in. (26 x 22.5 cm)

INSCRIBED on the front in the yellow text panel at the top with the Indic number "113." Inscribed on the reverse (colored yellow) with five lines of Hindi text written in *devanagari* script (for an English translation, see Keśavadāsa [1972], p. 101)

UNPUBLISHED

THE EARLY seventeenth-century, Mughal-style palaces at Orchha and Datia represent the arrival of imperial influence in that part of Central India. This area, like Rajasthan and the Punjab Hills, was governed by hereditary Rajput rulers on behalf of the Mughals, but it was culturally distinct from both Rajasthan and the Punjab Hills. Central Indian painting from this period is generally called Malwa painting, to signify a flattened, highly colorful, and geometric style; it is exemplified by the appearance of this fine picture illustrating a scene from the *Rasikapriya* (Lover's Breviary), a long poem in Hindi composed by Keshava Das for the ruler of Orchha, an important kingdom in Central India.[1] These paintings were probably made in a number of minor kingdoms throughout the Malwa region of Central India, a wealthy and fertile part of modern-day Madhya Pradesh.

In the lower register of this picture, a confidante (*sakhi*) is having a conversation with the disconsolate Radha, who wears a handsome striped skirt and is seated on a white platform. The empty bedroom at the right is furnished with a bed, an unused bolster, and a horse-headed clothes hook draped with the discarded clothing of Radha's absent lover, Krishna. The complicated structures on the roof recall both the imperial architecture of the Mughals and the casual, aristocratic lifestyle introduced by them. These structures, which included ornamental towers, staircases, open platforms for lounging, and closed and open pavilions (*chhatris*), were meant almost solely for the pursuit of pleasure. The artist has used the forms here as a foundation for his syncopated arrangement of brightly colored geometric shapes, the building blocks of his composition. The black sky only accentuates the brilliance of the colors (for another painting featuring a black sky, see cat. 14).

1. For other paintings from the same *Rasikapriya* series, see Falk, Smart, and Skelton 1978, no. 83; Sotheby's, London 1977, lot 47; and Mason 2001, no. 22.

From a *Ragamala* series (cats. 16, 17)

16

Todi Ragini: A Lady with a Vina Attracts Two Deers

Illustrated folio from a dispersed *Ragamala* (Garland of Melodies)
Deccan, probably Aurangabad, ca. 1700

Opaque watercolor on paper; narrow red border with variously colored inner rules; painting 9 15/16 x 6 5/8 in. (25.2 x 16.8 cm), page 10 1/4 x 7 in. (26 x 17.8 cm)

NOT INSCRIBED

UNPUBLISHED

ONE OF THE most perplexing blanks in the history of Indian painting is what happened to painting in the Deccan, a prime artistic center in the south-central region of the country, between the downfall of the Islamic sultanates in 1686 and 1687 and the reemergence of a revived Deccani kingdom, with its capital initially at Aurangabad and later at Hyderabad, after the year 1763. The mixed Mughal-Deccani art produced in the region between the years 1687 and 1763, the year that Hyderabad became the capital and a major center of court painting, is among the most spectacular painting ever made in India, but very little is known about it.

After the final conquest of the Islamic sultanates in 1686 and 1687, the former kingdoms of Bijapur and Golconda were, naturally, ruled by the Mughals from their viceregal capital of Aurangabad, a city of gardens and palaces, merchants and bustling trade. Between 1636, the year that Aurangabad became the capital of the Mughal viceroyalty, and before 1763, the year when Hyderabad became the capital of the revived Deccani kingdom, Aurangabad was one of the preeminent cities in the region. (After 1763, it then began to suffer a long decline, becoming the sleepy little place that it is today.) In fact, during the late seventeenth century, when Emperor Aurangzeb resided there, Aurangabad became the effective capital of the vast Mughal Empire. After 1723, when Nizam-ul-Mulk, Asaf Jah I (1671–1748), a breakaway Mughal general, became the first monarch of the Asaf Jahi dynasty of the Deccan, he ruled this newly minted domain (the former Mughal viceroyalty of the Deccan) from Aurangabad, not Hyderabad. As all of the Deccani grandees had flocked to Aurangabad to be close to Asaf Jah I, the dispenser of all patronage, Hyderabad, the former capital of the kingdom of Golconda, became a virtual ghost town.[1] It was not revived as a great metropolis, and a major center of patronage, until about 1750, when the later Asaf Jahi monarchs moved there, building palaces and establishing in the revived city a Hyderabadi school of court painting. It became the capital of the Asaf Jahi domain (called the Kingdom of Hyderabad) in the year 1763.

Sadly, Nizam-ul-Mulk was not a patron of painting. But some of the Mughal and Rajasthani noblemen and generals, along with various members of the former Deccani elite, did become patrons during Asaf Jah's time, and Aurangabad, not Hyderabad, became their center, as it serviced the needs of this newly emerging class of leaders. In the course of time, an Aurangabadi school of painting came into existence. This school flourished between the years 1636 and 1763, or during the period before Hyderabad replaced Aurangabad as the major center of patronage in the region.

Although this Aurangabadi school of painting has been vaguely intimated in the literature, it has never been seriously studied or properly detailed.[2] We believe the present painting is an excellent example, from about 1700, of the Aurangabadi school. Together with catalogue number 17, it once formed part of an extensive *Ragamala* series. Five other paintings, in the former collection of Motichand Khajanchi, belonged to the same set.[3]

1. Eyewitness report from Mubariz Khan, the Mughal governor, ca. 1723 (Bawa and Mohiuddin 1963, p. vi).
2. For an overview of Deccani painting, see Haidar and Sardar 2015. For a rudimentary account of early Aurangabadi painting, see Doshi 1972.
3. Khandalavala, Chandra, and Chandra 1960, nos. 159a–159e, colorpl. G.

From a *Ragamala* series (cats. 16, 17)

17

Kakubha Ragini: A Lady Holding Flower Garlands Attracts Two Peacocks

Illustrated folio from a dispersed *Ragamala* (Garland of Melodies)
Deccan, probably Aurangabad, ca. 1700

Opaque watercolor on paper; narrow red border; painting 9 15/16 x 9 9/16 in. (25.2 x 24.3 cm), page 10 1/4 x 7 in. (26 x 17.8 cm)

NOT INSCRIBED

UNPUBLISHED

A STATUESQUE BEAUTY, flanked by two peacocks, stands in a pool at the center of the composition. The lady's tall figure, stately deportment, and fair skin are characteristic of Mughal art. But the landscape, palette, and row of tiny flowers along the lower border are seen in Rajasthani art, as are the small lollipop trees with their clusters of concentric, individuated leaves (see also cat. 25). Yet the white, bifurcated sky with its curious, amoebalike clouds are purely Deccani. All these diverse elements have been combined here to make an image of restrained yet graceful power.

This very fine painting belongs to the same *Ragamala* series as catalogue number 16. The two paintings were probably made in Aurangabad for a Mughal or Deccani officer of state.

18

Horse and Groom

Rajasthan, probably kingdom of Bundi, ca. 1650

Opaque watercolor on paper; red border with black inner rules; painting 6 3/16 x 9 in. (15.7 x 22.8 cm), page 6 3/4 x 9 9/16 in. (17.1 x 24.2 cm)

INSCRIBED on reverse in black ink (smudged) with two illegible lines written in *devanagari* script

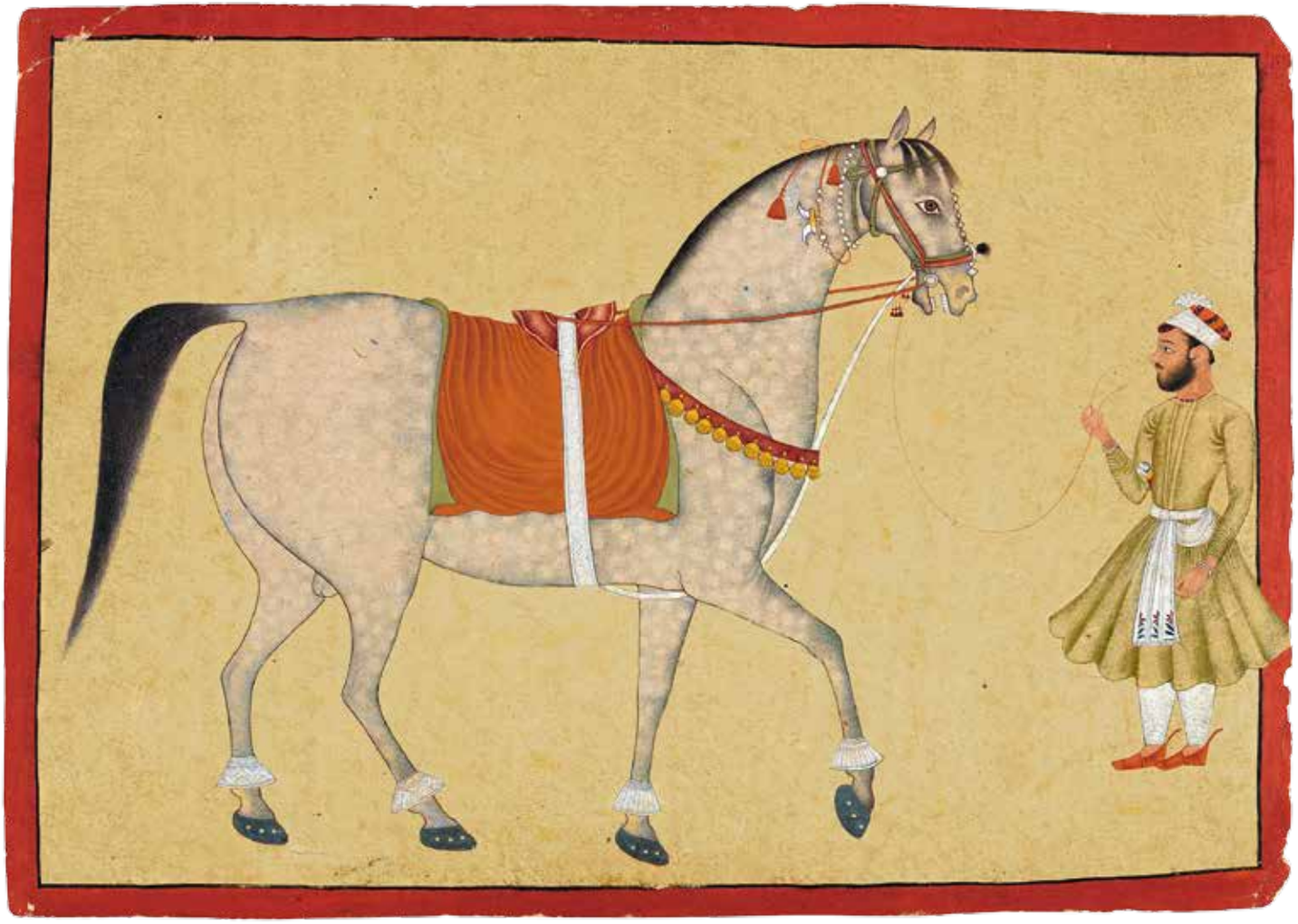
EX COLL.: John Bachofen von Echt

PUBLISHED: Sotheby's, London 1992, no. 34; Kossak 1997, no. 17

HUNTING, the favorite entertainment of members of the Indian princely class, was closely allied to warfare and the other "manly" arts, in which the ruler and his nobles were carefully trained. It was only natural that later in life these same men would become obsessed with their favorite animals, commissioning images of their horses, elephants, or dogs or even entire series depicting all the animals the ruler possessed, just as they commissioned portraits of their preferred confidants or series portraying all the courtiers attached to the ruler's throne.

This painting depicts a dappled horse owned by one of the Rajasthani princes, probably the ruler of Bundi, to judge by the style of painting in which the rather insignificant groom is painted. The horse wears a good-quality harness and jeweled trappings, and his fetlocks are protected with collar guards. He is obviously a beast of some importance.[1]

1. For a related eighteenth-century Mughal painting in the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, see Heeramaneck 1984, pl. 223.



19

Krishna and Radha

Rajasthan, probably kingdom of Bundi, 17th century

Opaque watercolor and gold on paper (bottom edge restored); wide red modern border with black and white inner rules; painting 6½ x 4¼ in. (16.5 x 10.8 cm), page 8⅜ x 6⅜ in. (21.3 x 16.2 cm)

NOT INSCRIBED

PUBLISHED: Lerner 1984, no. 68

THE GOD KRISHNA is seated with Radha, his beloved, on a low-slung golden throne furnished with a striped bolster and covered with lotus petals. In a tender gesture, he holds Radha's head as she gazes demurely downward. To honor the Divine Couple, a row of blossoming flowers in vases is arrayed beneath their throne.

Krishna's lotus crown, the bright primary colors, and the rather squarish faces of the two figures recall comparable elements in seventeenth-century court painting from the kingdom of Bundi, particularly in the early seventeenth-century frescoes decorating the Badal Mahal section of the Bundi palace.[1]

1. For the frescoes, see Seth 2003, pp. 118–24. See also Beach in Beach, Fischer, and Goswamy, eds., vol. 1, 2011; and Beach 2008. For Bundi painting, see a forthcoming study by Milo Cleveland Beach.

From a *Vishnu Avatara* series (cats. 20, 21)

20

Rama and Sita Enthroned

Illustrated folio from a dispersed *Vishnu Avatara*
(The Incarnations of Vishnu)
Rajasthan, kingdom of Bikaner, ca. 1650

Opaque watercolor and gold on paper; wide modern paper border; painting 10¼ x 7⁷⁄₁₆ in. (26 x 18.9 cm), page 10¹⁵⁄₁₆ x 8 in. (27.8 x 20.3 cm)

INSCRIBED on the front in red and black ink in the yellow text panel with three lines of Sanskrit written in *devanagari* script: "The Illustrious One, appearing as a blue cloud, lotus-eyed, bearing a bow and arrow, like a bolt of lightning, [his] body decorated with radiant ornaments, wife, Janaki on his left side, before [him] Hanumān with cupped hands, displayed behind are his brothers, like a lion, whose lineage has subdued demons, he is King Rāghava, the Great Soul." Inscribed on the reverse in red and black ink with five lines of Braj Bhasha written in *devanagari* script describing the scene

PUBLISHED: McInerney 1982, no. 21

RAMA, SEVENTH INCARNATION of Vishnu and personification of righteousness and virtue, is seated with his wife, Sita, on a golden throne (*gaddi*) in a palace throne room. He is attended by his three brothers: Lakshmana, holding a fly whisk (*chauri*); Bharata, holding a sheathed sword; and Shatrughna, holding a gold box. The monkey aide Hanuman, who had assisted Rama in killing the demon Ravana and recovering Sita, is standing before the divine couple in an attitude of reverence (*namaskara mudra*).

In composition, this painting is even closer to Mughal scenes of formal court receptions (durbars) than is catalogue number 23. The arrangements of the textiles and the architectural elements are particularly evocative of a Mughal source. Yet in this painting, in a highly original transmutation, Rama (a *chakravartin*, or universal monarch, an ancient Indic distinction for a truly great king) has become a Mughal lord, and Hanuman has become his prime minister, or wazir (vizier). This painting represents a high-water mark of Mughal influence on the Bikaner school in the mid-seventeenth century.

Along with catalogue number 21, the present picture comes from the same important, yet now-dispersed series illustrating the various *avatara*s, or earthly incarnations, of the great god Vishnu.[1]

1. For other paintings from the same series, see Christie's, London 2013, nos. 198–200; Pal 2004, no. 74; Pal, Markel, and Leoshko 1993, no. 2; and Bubbar 2014, no. 4.


श्लोकः॥ श्रीमान्नीलांबुदाभः सरसिजनयनः काकुकाकुत्थभद्रः सद्बाहुश्चापधारी
रमणीजानकीवामभागः॥ यस्याग्रे नाति वृद्धांजलिरपि हनुमान् स्तोत्रमाते
सिंहसंमत्तजितदनुजकुलाद्यवेद्यो रामभद्रात्मा॥

From a *Vishnu Avatara* series (cats. 20, 21)

21

Varaha, the Boar Incarnation of Vishnu, Saves the Earth

Illustrated folio from a dispersed *Vishnu Avatara*
(The Incarnations of Vishnu)
Rajasthan, kingdom of Bikaner, ca. 1650

Opaque watercolor and gold on paper; wide modern border; painting 10⅛ x 7⅛ in. (25.7 x 18.1 cm), page 12 x 9⅛ in. (30.5 x 23 cm)

INSCRIBED on the front in black and red ink in the yellow text panel with two lines of Sanskrit written in *devanagari* script: "The celebrated one, manifest as the Boar [Avatāra of Vishnu], Lord and Lion of the Earth, Foremost Slayer of [the Demon] Hiranyāksha, who raised the earth on the tips of his tusks, which had been submerged in the waters of the ocean, [and] reached up to Hell." Inscribed on the reverse in black and red ink with five lines of Braj Bhasha written in *devanagari* script describing the scene

UNPUBLISHED

JUST AS INDIVIDUAL PICTURES and complete series devoted to Krishna became popular in Indian painting, reflecting a widespread religious devotion to the Blue-Skinned Lord, so did individual pictures and complete series devoted to Rama, another of the deeply venerated earthly incarnations of Vishnu, the Supreme God (according to the worshipers of Vishnu, known as Vaishnavas). Because Vishnu was the progenitor of Krishna and Rama, series depicting Vishnu's Ten Incarnations (*Das Avatara*) were often appended to those illustrating the adventures of Krishna or Rama — the *Bhagavata Purana* (The Ancient Story of God), the *Ramayana* (The Adventures of Rama), or the *Gita Govinda* (Song of the Cowherds). The present illustrated folio, as well as catalogue number 20, derives from such a *Vishnu Avatara* series, made for the ruler of Bikaner or a member of his court.

Vishnu appears at the center of the composition in the guise he assumed in his third appearance on earth: the Boar Incarnation, or *Varaha Avatara*.[1] He has the head of a crowned boar and supports the diminutive figure of Priya, the earth, on his upraised tusks. His four arms hold a mace, a discus, a lotus flower, and a conch shell, the god's four principal attributes. As in all his earthly incarnations, Vishnu is blue in color and wears yellow, untailored garments, just as Rama is blue in color and wears yellow, untailored garments in catalogue number 20. Varaha treads on the dead body of an ugly, horned demon wearing the pelt of a tiger. Previously this same demon, Hiranyaksha, had threatened the defenseless Priya with total extinction. (For another depiction of *Varaha Avatara*, see cat. 78.)

The figure of Varaha is placed like a giant icon against the backdrop of the Cosmic Ocean, a flat expanse of tarnished silver decorated with lotus flowers and lotus leaves. Two water nymphs have bobbed to the surface of the ocean to render homage to Vishnu, the Great God.

1. For a Mewar depiction of Varaha from about 1655, see Topsfield 2001, fig. 49.


॥श्लोक॥ जलधिजलनिमग्नोत्पाल्यपातालमूलद्दशनशिखयासोभिदिनीमुद्दधार॥
॥अधितकतुवराहोसोहिरण्याक्षहंतामतनमवतुपृथ्वीसिंहमुर्वीश्वरंड॥

22

Ladies on a Terrace

Painted by the artist Ruknuddin (active ca. 1650–ca. 1697)
Rajasthan, kingdom of Bikaner, dated 1675

Opaque watercolor, black ink, and gold on paper; wide light brown border with variously colored inner rules; painting 7⅝ x 5⅝ in. (19.4 x 13.5 cm), page 10⅜ x 7⅜ in. (26.8 x 19.2 cm)

INSCRIBED on the reverse in black ink in Rajasthani written in *devanagari* script: *Rukaṃdīṃ kara*(?) *māro kām saṃ 1732 aṃ 32* ("1" Ruknuddin this is the work of my hand Samvat 1732 [A.D. 1675] page 32); also inscribed on the border of the reverse in black ink in Rajasthani written in *devanagari* script [in a later hand?]: two lines describing the painting and ending with the name "Nathuram"; also inscribed with the numbers "29" in black pencil, "58" in red pencil, and the Indic number "L35" in black ink; notated with two effaced stamps, one from the Bikaner royal collection in purple ink, the other in black ink of unknown provenance; and a doodle

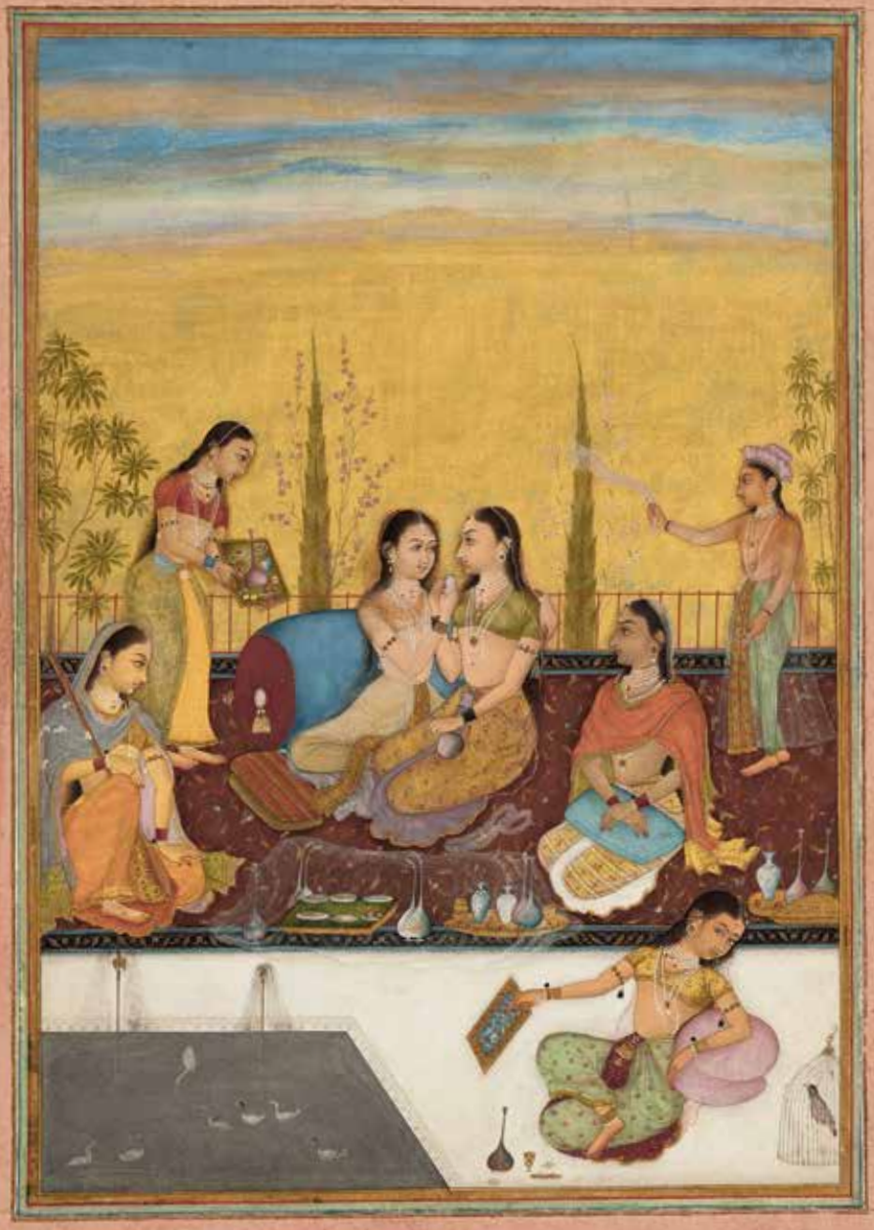
PUBLISHED: Kossak 1997, no. 32; Guy and Britschgi 2011, no. 53

UNDER A BALMY LIGHT reflected by a golden sky, seven ladies appear within a garden beside a pool in the women's section (zenana) of a royal palace. The two at the center, either a royal woman and her servant or two royal women, sit close together and share a glass of wine as well as an intimate embrace. Attending them are a seated musician with the Indian stringed instrument known as a *vina* and three servant girls holding, respectively, a blue pillow, a tray containing a small wine bottle, cups, and assorted jewelry, and a fluttering scarf, an emblem of royalty. At some distance from the central group, another resident of the zenana, grasping a small mirror and resting on a pillow, is about to play with her caged bird. Aside from the porcelain faces, Steven Kossak remarks on the "jewel-like color, refined drawing, extraordinary detail, superb finish and poetic mood [that] mark [this work] as one of the finest paintings by Ruknuddin, Bikaner's premier artist during the late seventeenth century."[1]

The screened nature of women's life in a royal palace, and particularly whatever transpired in the zenana, was fertile ground for the suggestible male imagination of the period. From the mid-seventeenth century on, harem scenes, with overtones of lurid sexuality, became extremely popular in Indian painting. The sensuous "world apart" depicted in these pictures was only partly based on fact. In premodern India, high-born Hindu women and Muslim women of almost any status lived, traveled, and relaxed in their own carefully guarded quarters, to which only a husband, father, brother, or son was allowed admittance. While this artificial separation usually resulted in a female society of rigid conventionality, it also resulted on occasion in the kind of nontraditional relationships depicted here.[2]

This picture displays figure painting of a very high order. In the calm majesty of the ladies' deportment and the tight interlocking of the figures in space, it recalls the formal audience scenes (durbars) characteristic of Mughal painting during the time of Shah Jahan (reigned 1628–58). But the mood here is much more festive. A closely related painting, signed by Ruknuddin and dated 1666, is in the Bikaner royal collection.[3]

1. Kossak 1997, p. 64.
2. For the sociology of the harem, see Booth, ed. 2010.
3. Goetz 1950, fig. 83; Randhawa and Galbraith 1968, pl. 19; and Chaitanya 1982, no. 56. For other versions of the same subject, see Hurel and Okada 2002, no. 29; and Daljeet 2002, p. 70.



23

The Heroine Shows Her Anger

Painted by the artists Ruknuddin (active ca. 1650–ca. 1697) and Isa
Illustrated folio from a dispersed *Rasikapriya* (Lover's Breviary) by Keshava Das
Rajasthan, kingdom of Bikaner, dated 1686 (Samvat 1743)

Opaque watercolor and gold on paper; wide red border with gold and variously colored inner rules; yellow and variously colored outer rules; painting 7½ x 5⅛ in. (19.1 x 13 cm), page 10 9/16 x 7½ in. (26.8 x 19.1 cm)

INSCRIBED on the reverse in black ink in Rajasthani written in *devanagari* script: "Volume 3, *Rasikapriya* of Ruknuddin / Sam[vat] 1743 [A.D. 1686], son Isa (*po isa*) page 2 volume 3 (*am 2 jam 3*)"; and in a bolder hand: "The anger sentiment of Radha," followed by a line of text (for an English translation, see Keśavadāsa [1972], p. 226); also written in black ink at the extreme right: *"pra. 14"* (chapter 14)

UNPUBLISHED

KRISHNA AND a *nayika* (heroine) face Radha, Krishna's beloved, who sits on a platform and rests against a bolster. In poem 22 of Keshava Das's text (chapter 14),[1] Radha's figure and movement are likened to the thin waist of a lion, the soft eyes of an antelope, and the dignified gait of an elephant. These three animals are arrayed on the left of the picture; the parrot, cuckoo, and wagtail hiding in the trees in the background are also mentioned in the text, yet they are not specific to Radha's physique. A cook in the foreground prepares a meal for the three humans (or for the animals, who watch him attentively). This scene is meant to illustrate the violence, or anger, of Radha, yet Radha and everything else in the work seem peaceful indeed!

This stately, limpid painting comes from a large dispersed series of more than two hundred folios that illustrated Keshava Das's famous Hindi, or Braj Bhasha, book-length poem, the *Rasikapriya* of 1591, which analyzes lovers in terms of incidents in the love affair of Radha and Krishna. The first thirteen of its sixteen chapters describe various aspects, conditions, and possibilities of love. The fourteenth deals with the other classical emotions, or *rasa*s (saps) including joy, compassion, anger, fear, amazement, and tranquility.

According to its inscription, this painting is the joint work of the great Bikaner artist Ruknuddin (see cats. 22 and 24) and his somewhat less talented son or brother, both of whom were named Isa. Naval Krishna, the foremost authority on the Bikaner atelier, notes that at the time of Ruknuddin, the court workshop was divided into various studios, or *mandi*s, under the direction of a master. This master artist would have supervised his less gifted pupils, all of whom attempted to mimic his style.[2] In a system largely organized along Mughal lines, the Bikaner rulers established a court workshop employing an "assembly line" production, involving the joint work of two or more artists: a senior painter devising the overall composition and executing some of its more important sections; a junior one completing the rest of the master design; and a third often adding specialized touches such as portraits. Different sections of a large series were assigned to different masters.

Therefore, following Naval Krishna, one can say the present work would have been assigned to Ruknuddin, supervising his talented pupil Isa. Steven Kossak believes that Ruknuddin designed the overall composition and painted most of the human and animal figures, while Isa completed the background and most of the rest. Ruknuddin's painting would have been only one component, albeit a delightful one, in the much larger section of a very large series.

1. For an English translation of the short poem, see Keśavadāsa [1972], p. 226.
2. Krishna 1985; and Krishna in Goswamy, ed. 1995.

24

Gujari Ragini: A Lady with a Vina Seated on a Bed of Lotus Flowers

Painted by the artist Ruknuddin (active ca. 1650–ca. 1697)
Illustrated folio (no. 26) from a dispersed *Ragamala* (Garland of Melodies)
Rajasthan, kingdom of Bikaner, dated 1664 (Samvat 1721)

Opaque watercolor and gold on paper; wide brown paper border decorated with widely spaced leaves painted in gold and with variously colored outer and inner rules; painting 6 x 4⅝ in. (15.2 x 11.7 cm), page 10⅜ x 7⅛ in. (26.4 x 18.1 cm)

INSCRIBED on the reverse in black ink in Rajasthani written in *devanagari* script: "*Gurjari ragini* no. 26, work of Ruknuddin. no. 1"; also inscribed on the reverse in faded, bluish ink in Rajasthani: "*Gujari Ragini* #26, *Samvat* 1721 [A.D. 1664]"; also notated with a stamp in blue ink: "Collection of the Maharaja of Bikaner, signed Khet Singh and dated 1964, inventory no. 3997"; also inscribed with the number "3997" in blue pencil, another number in black ink, and the English phrase in black ink "Sed.L"

PUBLISHED: Sotheby's, London 1986, no. 135; Losty 2014, no. 13

A LADY WITH A *vina* (an Indian stringed instrument) sits on a bed of lotuses on a bucolic hillside awaiting her absent lover. She is pointing at a black bird (a symbol of her absent lover?) that perches on a branch of the mango tree in front of her (for another illustration of this *ragini*, see cat. 7). In reference to the unhappily separated human lovers, a peacock spreads his magnificent tail feathers to attract a smaller peahen, approaching from the shallow stream in the foreground. The faint, cursory details of a distant town and trees emerge from the misty background.[1]

This picture and catalogue numbers 22 and 23 were painted by Ruknuddin, probably the most accomplished of the Bikaner artists and undoubtedly the greatest of the local Utsa painters (see cat. 11).[2] Ruknuddin must have learned his craft from 'Ali Riza, a Delhi artist who had been persuaded by Raja Karan Singh (reigned 1631–69) to resettle with other Mughal-trained painters in Bikaner in the mid-seventeenth century. As a result of 'Ali Riza's influence on Ruknuddin and other artists at the court, Bikaner painting became increasingly Mughalized. Its colors lightened, and Bikaner painters learned to place greater emphasis on linear refinement, miniaturistic detail, and high finish — qualities that the local rulers had learned to admire at the Mughal court. As Ruknuddin excelled in all of these Mughalizing tendencies, his talent was soon recognized by Raja Karan Singh, and in 1669 he became the head of the ruler's painting workshop, then totaling about a dozen artists. He retained this preeminent position until 1697, the probable year of his death.

Ruknuddin's patrons, Rajas Karan Singh and Anup Singh (reigned 1669–98), spent most of their time in the Deccan, far from Rajasthan, fighting the Mughals' wars of expansion. That Ruknuddin joined Anup Singh there is attested by inscriptions on two of his works.[3] Contact with Deccani painting only increased Ruknuddin's respect for the refinements of Muslim court painting, as practiced both in Delhi at the Mughal court and in the Deccan at the Bijapur and Golconda courts.[4] These refinements were the very same that he had inculcated into the work of the hereditary Utsa artists employed back home at the Bikaner court.

1. For five other paintings from the same *Ragamala* series, see Sotheby's, London 1986, nos. 132–34, 136, 137. At least three additional paintings from the series are known, one of which is in the collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art (see this volume, p. 4, fig. 1). For the others, see Goswamy 1999, nos. 113, 114.
2. For Ruknuddin, see Guy and Britschgi 2011, pp. 114–16.
3. Desai, V. 1985, p. 32.
4. For the influence of Deccani painting on Bikaner painting, see Glynn in Topsfield, ed. 2000.

25

Bakasura, the Crane Demon, Disgorges Krishna

Illustrated folio from a dispersed *Bhagavata Purana*
(The Ancient Story of God)
Rajasthan, kingdom of Bikaner, ca. 1690

Opaque watercolor and gold on paper; wide light brown border (defective) with black and gold inner rules; black and gold outer rules; painting 8¾ x 12 in. (22.2 x 30.5 cm), page 11⅛ x 14⅞ in. (28.3 x 37.8 cm)

INSCRIBED on the front in the upper border with two short words in the Marwari dialect of Rajasthani written in *devanagari* script: "episode 18" and an undecipherable number in the upper left corner. Inscribed on the reverse with two lines of text in the Marwari dialect of Rajasthani and a third line in Marwari supplying a missing phrase belonging to the two-line text; also inscribed with two Indic numbers, the one written in red crayon ("73"), the other written in black ink ("18"); notated with the effaced, inked stamp in purple ink of the Bikaner royal collection

PUBLISHED: Lerner 1984, no. 67

SHORTLY AFTER KRISHNA and the *gopa*s (cowherds) had moved to Brindaban, they brought their cows to a pond, depicted here with flowering lotus plants and paired ducks. Also shown in the figural lineup are two *gopa*s, with blue woolen coverings on their heads, and Krishna's older brother, Balarama, who raises his arm in astonishment at what he is seeing. A monstrous demon, who had earlier assumed the form of the colossal crane Bakasura, had swallowed Krishna, yet the Divine One "emitted so much heat that he burned the insides of Baka[sura], who was then forced to disgorge him." This is the astonishing incident depicted here; later on, in the same book 10 of the *Bhagavata Purana*, "Krishna will seize the demon-bird by the two halves of his long bill and tear him apart."[1]

This picture comes from a large series that once comprised as many as one hundred paintings, which are now widely scattered in public and private collections in India and the West.[2] Although the series appears to have been made over a period of about fifty years or more, only the small number of paintings dating from the late seventeenth century, about fifteen in all, including the present work, are highly valued. Scholars have praised these paintings for their "meticulous precision of line, very fine detailing, and a high level of sophistication in the treatment of pictorial elements,"[3] and have criticized the later works from the series for their "naivete of composition and pettiness of figure-drawing, covered however with innumerable details and elaborate ornament in many colors and gold."[4]

Like all Bikaner paintings of the period, this work is greatly indebted to Mughal painting. The important figures of the narrative are arranged in a single line at the center of the picture, as are the five characters in the "Palam" *Bhagavata Purana* painting of about 1520–30 (cat. 1), which is probably from Rajasthan. However, the background color is a Mughal apple green, not an Early Rajput red. The meticulous drawing, miniaturistic detail, and high finish are also Mughal-inspired features. But the childlike simplicity and wide-eyed sense of wonder that create such a powerful mood are purely Rajasthani.

1. Lerner 1984, p. 176.
2. For discussion of this series, see Goetz 1950, pp. 112–13.
3. Lerner 1984, p. 176.
4. Goetz 1950, pp. 112–13.

26

A Month of Heat

Attributed to the painter Ustad Murad
Illustrated folio from a dispersed *Baramasa* (Months of the Year)
Rajasthan, kingdom of Bikaner, ca. 1725

Brush drawing, and opaque watercolor and gold on paper (unfinished); narrow borders (unpainted); painting 10¾ x 6 13/16 in. (27.3 x 17.3 cm), page 11 5/16 x 7¼ in. (28.7 x 18.4 cm)

INSCRIBED in black ink on front upper border

UNPUBLISHED

A PRINCE with the features of Maharaja Zorawar Singh of Bikaner (reigned 1736–45) approaches an empty palace. At the entryway, he is greeted by a lady standing before a room furnished with a bed and two caged birds (visual references to the couple's intended lovemaking). In the far distance is a small knot of people, comprising five ladies on foot, two gentlemen on horseback, and two men waving flags. At the very top of the painting, a herdsman tends his small flock. The reduced yet eloquent palette suggests the approach of twilight during one of the hotter months of the Indian summer.

This delightful painting once belonged to a *Baramasa* series, the Indian counterpart to the medieval European book of hours, which was often illustrated with scenes depicting the principal activities of each month (the most famous example is, of course, the *Très Riches Heures* of Jean, duc de Berry). The activities depicted in the *Baramasa* series, whether agricultural, festal, or erotic, followed the accepted conventions of the Indian calendar, as filtered through the local sensibility of each area's rulers.[1]

The present picture is unfinished. The garden indicated in the lower section has only been sketched in, and the figure of the lady given merely an initial layer of paint. Even so, enough exists to allow an attribution to Ustad Murad, perhaps the finest of the many eighteenth-century Bikaner court painters.[2]

1. For other paintings from the same series, see Welch and Beach 1965, no. 30; and Sotheby's, London 2011b, no. 17.
2. For Ustad Murad, see Losty 2010, no. 35.


वैशाख

27

Inhabited Arabesque

Rajasthan, kingdom of Bikaner, early 18th century

Brush drawing in black ink heightened with white and touches of color; plain paper border with black inner rules; drawing 4¾ x 6½ in. (12.1 x 16.5 cm), page 7¾ x 8 15/16 in. (19.7 x 22.7 cm)

NOT INSCRIBED

UNPUBLISHED

THE INDIAN COURT ARTIST, like the royal artist in premodern Europe, had multiple responsibilities. Consulted with respect to almost anything requiring an opinion on a visual matter, he provided designs for temporary festivities as well as permanent undertakings (the decoration of royal palaces and princely libraries, for example) in addition to his basic responsibility, which was to provide paintings or illustrations for manuscripts or series destined for the royal library.

This wonderful, complicated design might have been the model for the decoration of a palace wall or corridor, for a piece of carved furniture, for a painted box or lacquered chest, or for almost anything that was destined for royal use. The design would have been executed in paint, stucco, or some other material by a craftsman trained to follow the master artist's every inflection. And the present sheet is the obvious work of an artist, not a craftsman: it has the suavity of touch, wealth of invention, and knowledge of tradition that only an artist dwelling in a studio aware of tradition could provide.

Set among scrolling lines, two elephant heads with faces and trunks deeply intertwined collide and interlock at the center. Along the more distant sections of the vines and to the right and left, the heads of lions and makaras (Ganges crocodiles) disgorge the bodies of the mythical Chinese beasts known as *qilin*s. The vines themselves issue from masks decorated with the foliated faces of women (probably *peris*, or angels) situated on the right and left borders. Executed in brush and black ink, heightened with touches of white and color, the drawing could have been repeated or expanded to fill a surface of almost any size.

This composition ultimately derives from fifteenth- or sixteenth-century Persian art, as filtered by the decorative programs of the Mughals. By the eighteenth century, an intricate design such as this probably required a paper pattern drawn by a master painter, as the craftsman for whom it was made was not likely to be sufficiently competent to execute it. Earlier works of the same type were also almost certainly made, yet most of them have not survived.

Indian designers of art objects, and the works for which their drawings were made, are an important yet virtually unstudied aspect of Indian art.[1]

1. For one of the few articles on the subject, see Mittal in Skelton et al., eds. 1986.

28

Maharana Amar Singh II of Mewar Smoking a Huqqa

Attributed to the artist known as the Stipple Master
(active 1692–1715)
Rajasthan, kingdom of Mewar, ca. 1715

Brush drawing in black ink, and opaque watercolor and gold on paper; red border with black and yellow inner rules; drawing 9½ x 7⅛ in. (24.1 x 18.1 cm), page 10¾ x 8⅜16 in. (27.3 x 20.8 cm)

INSCRIBED on the reverse in black ink in Rajasthani written in *devanagari* script: "Supreme king of kings the Honorable Amar Singh"

UNPUBLISHED

THE UNKNOWN ARTIST called the Stipple Master and his major patron, Maharana Amar Singh II (reigned 1698–1710), were largely responsible for the sea change in style and subject matter that transformed Mewar painting around the year 1710.[1] Under increasing Mughal influence, the subject matter of Mewar painting shifted from illustrations of traditional Hindu material (see cats. 13 and 15) to depictions of the ruler's daily life at the Udaipur court, whether in formal or informal situations. During the eighteenth century, Mewar paintings also increased in physical size, and their style evolved as well. Over time they became increasingly naturalistic, moving from what was essentially a flattened, seventeenth-century extension of the misleadingly labeled Early Rajput style (see cats. 1–5) to a more nuanced, eighteenth-century way of depicting the world, which incorporated shading, volume, and the third dimension (fig. 28). Yet the bright colors and simplified forms of the earlier works remained constant. (For a later Mewar painting in the Kronos Collections, see cat. 32.)

The fine portrait illustrated here marks only the beginning of this stylistic development. It depicts Maharana Amar Singh II seated on a palace terrace and using a gold and enameled *huqqa* (water pipe), planted on a golden *takht* (low table) placed in front of him. If a bit infirm (note the back support), the maharana appears content and well adjusted.

This tinted drawing can be attributed to the Stipple Master because it displays all the hallmarks by which that artist is known. Primary among these is the "painted drawing" technique, a difficult-to-categorize Indian technique that combines the methods of a miniature painting in gouache and a drawing in brush and ink, yet always leaves the underlying background uncolored. This attractive technique was used in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Mughal and Deccani art, and later in Rajput art, in various places at various times. It is closely related to, but not the same as, the exclusively Mughal technique of *nim qalam*.[2] The gold highlights and extensive use of shading to suggest volume and mass are also characteristic of the Stipple Master, while the simple format and intimate scale recall features in his more complicated portraits of the same ruler.[3]

1. For this change, see Topsfield 2001, pp. 109–40.
2. For the Stipple Master, see Glynn in Beach, Fischer, and Goswamy, eds., vol. 2, 2011; Guy and Britschgi 2011, pp. 131–34; and Topsfield 2001, pp. 123–37. Glynn's use of the word "grisaille" (graylike), following Topsfield, is a bit misleading.
3. Glynn in Beach, Fischer, and Goswamy, eds., vol. 2, 2011, figs. 7, 8.

29

Krishna and the Gopas Enter the Forest

Rajasthan, kingdom of Kota, ca. 1720

Opaque watercolor and gold on paper; red border with black-lined gold inner rule; painting 10½ x 7¾ in. (26.7 x 19.7 cm), page 12⅝ x 9⅜ in. (32.1 x 23.8 cm)

INSCRIBED on the reverse in black ink in Hindi written in *devanagari* script: "Number 12, a painting: Thakurj [Krishna] playing hide-and-seek along with the cowherds in the Brindavan [forest]"

UNPUBLISHED

THE YOUNG KRISHNA, the blue-skinned, nimbused figure playing a flute at the center right, enters a dense grove of trees outlined in gold and teeming with paired peacocks and aquatic birds. Accompanying him are his playmates, the *gopa*s (cowherds), wearing short trousers, and youthful members of the royal court. The youngsters are intending to play hide-and-seek in the forest. All of the elements of this picture are painted on a silver ground. The dense, lush foliation and rough paint texture are characteristic of Kota paintings of this date.

Milo Cleveland Beach and Stuart Cary Welch are the leading experts on the history of court painting from this kingdom, which was a very important center of production.[1] Yet these two experts seriously disagree about the identity of Kota's major artists and the stylistic development of the school. Welch would probably attribute the present painting of about 1720 (note the bump on Krishna's forehead, a signifier of date) to the artist he calls the Kota Master, whereas Beach might attribute the same picture to the artist he calls Painter C.

The medium-size former kingdom of Kota (about 115 miles from north to south and about 110 miles at its greatest width) in the southeast of Rajasthan is for the most part covered with stunted trees and a thick undergrowth of vegetation, as seen in this painting. The territory also contains a number of extensive game preserves and several tracts of cultivated land.

Court art at Kota enjoyed two periods of trailblazing originality. In the second half of the seventeenth century, Kota became famous for pictures of animal combats and wild animal hunts. Later, during the reign of the moody, idiosyncratic Maharao Ram Singh II (1827–66), Kota painting reached a peak of originality, producing works of unusual psychological complexity.

This fine painting dates from the quieter eighteenth century, a time when the local rulers commissioned the usual Rajput subjects, derived from the Krishna legends, as here, or *Ragamala* paintings (see cat. 33), as well as Mughal-influenced, courtly hunt scenes. Yet Kota paintings, whether made in the early eighteenth century and characterized by tactile roughness or made in the late eighteenth century and characterized by "white style" slickness, maintained their distinction, whatever their style, during this entire period.

1. For Beach's major studies of Kota painting, see Beach 1974; Beach in Beach, Fischer, and Goswamy, eds., vol. 1, 2011; and Beach in Beach, Fischer, and Goswamy, eds., vol. 2, 2011. For Welch's major studies of Kota painting, see Welch, ed. 1997; Welch 1973; Welch 1976; and Welch and Masteller 2004.

30

The Gundalao Lake

Attributed to the artist Nihal Chand (active ca. 1725–82)
Rajasthan, former kingdom of Kishangarh, ca. 1740

Opaque watercolor, gold and silver (now oxidized) on paper; narrow green border decorated with gold (late 19th century?); painting 9 7/16 x 11 7/16 in. (23.9 x 29 cm), page 10 1/16 x 13 3/4 in. (25.6 x 34.9 cm)

NOT INSCRIBED

PUBLISHED: Lerner 1984, no. 69; Haidar in Beach, Fischer, and Goswamy, eds., vol. 2, 2011, p. 599

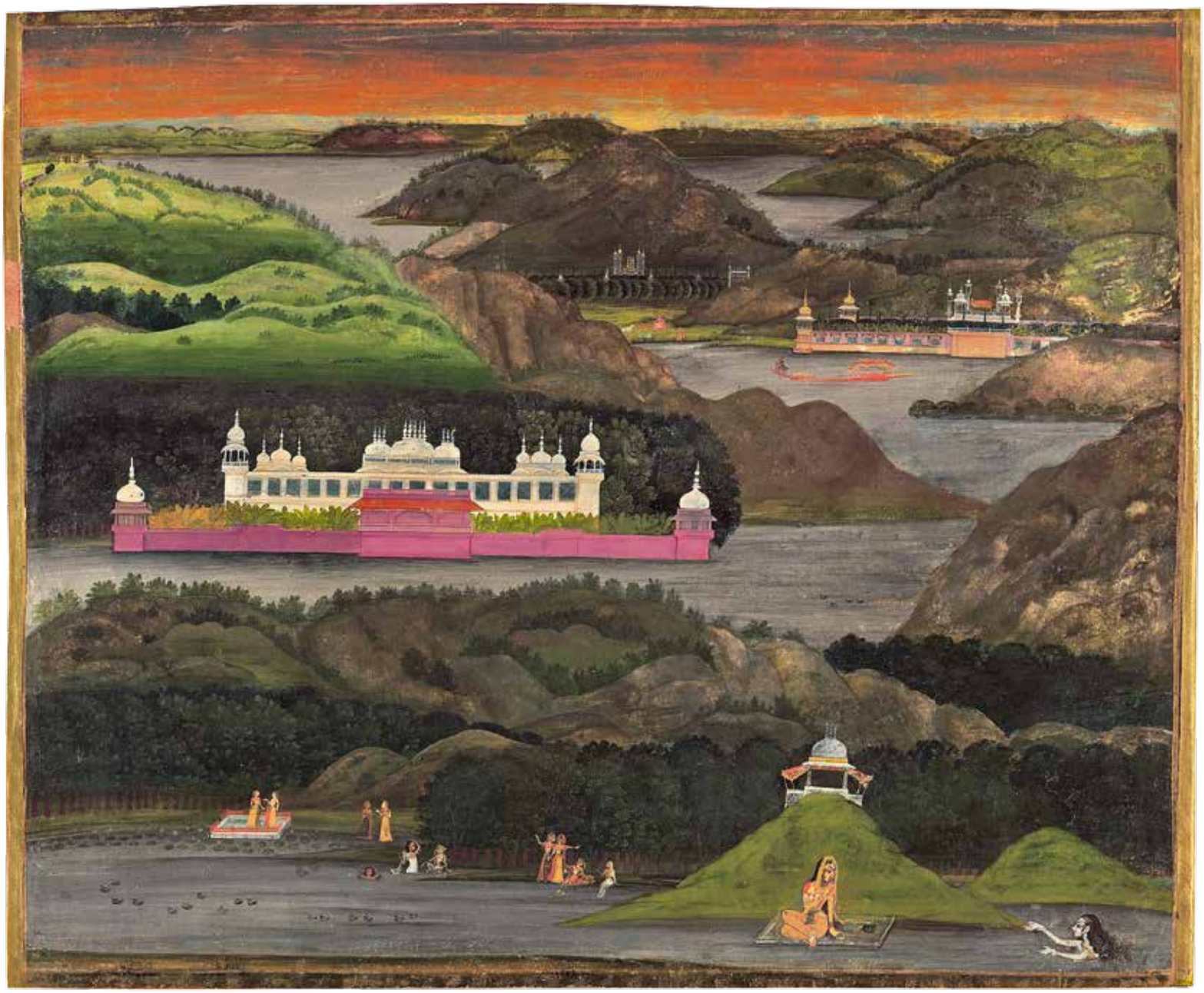
OF ALL THE FORMER KINGDOMS of Rajasthan, each ruled by a hereditary Hindu raja (king) on behalf of the Mughals and later the British, Kishangarh was the smallest — a mere 858 square miles. The kingdom, located in the center of Rajasthan, consisted of two narrow strips of land: a hilly northern tract and a flat southern tract, with the capital city (also called Kishangarh) and the Gundalao Lake in the northern area. Yet if the kingdom was insignificant in size, it was a major power in terms of painting — the home of several of India's finest painters and a very influential school of court painting.

From the days of Maharaja Kishan Singh (reigned 1605–15), the state was ruled by a lineage of kings who remained close to the Mughal imperial family, and this connection is visible in the court painting they sponsored, which is really a Mughal variant of the Rajasthani idiom. The present picture can be attributed to the Delhi-trained artist Nihal Chand, the greatest of the Kishangarh painters. This painter specialized in moody, deeply receding landscapes as well as depictions of the love affair of Radha and Krishna, with the Divine Couple positioned, as here, beneath spectacularly romantic sunset skies.

The painting is composed, in the characteristic Nihal Chand manner, of alternating water and hills rising to a fiery sunset. The white structure in the center is probably Mokham Vilas, a popular garden and pleasure palace that was accessible by boat only when the Gundalao Lake was full during the rainy months. The building in the background is probably the Phool Mahal (Flower Palace), the principal residence of the Kishangarh ruling family. In the foreground, tiny figures depict one episode in the passionate love affair of the Divine Couple: Krishna, the blue figure with long, flowing tresses, is swimming toward Radha, who waits for him, resting on a carpet on the Gundalao shore.

It is possible that the original page has been cut in half because its lower portion had become damaged. The small figures in the foreground may have been added later, perhaps in the nineteenth century, to make a viable composition. If this supposition is correct, the present work is the upper half, containing the landscape background, of an originally much larger composition. The complete painting would have looked a bit like Nihal Chand's famous *Boat of Love*, now in the National Museum, New Delhi.[1] In the Kronos picture, there would have been much larger figures in the now-missing middle ground and the original foreground, with Krishna and Radha appearing in those places once again as the central characters. When reunited, the Kronos picture and its missing lower half would have made a very ambitious composition, perhaps even one of Nihal Chand's greatest masterpieces.

1. Dickinson and Khandalavala [1959], pl. IX.



31

Chaitanya Dances in Ecstasy

Rajasthan, former kingdom of Kishangarh, ca. 1750 or later

Opaque watercolor on paper; no border (or border trimmed); black inner rule; page 9⅜ x 10¹⁵⁄₁₆ in. (23.8 x 27.8 cm)

INSCRIBED on the surface of the painting in Rajasthani written in *devanagari* script, identifying certain figures: Sri Mahaprabhuji [Chaitanya], Sivananda, Sri[?] Rupa Gusain, _____, Murari Guptaji, Haridas Thakur, Mukunda, Srinivasa, Nityanandaprabhu and _____ pandit

UNPUBLISHED

CHAITANYA WAS an early sixteenth-century Indian saint from Bengal. He is venerated by followers of the Gaudiya sect of Vaishnavism, who revere him as an East Indian incarnation of the god Krishna and thus an earthly representative of the god Vishnu. In the words of Stuart Cary Welch, "[Chaitanya] was one of the holy men who developed the practice of bhakti, personal devotion to God of so emotional a character as to be akin to conjugal love."[1] (For the influence of the *bhakti* movement on Rajput court painting, see "The Kronos Collections and Rajput Court Painting," an introductory essay by Terence McInerney, in the present volume.)

In this thinly painted work, Chaitanya is dancing in a puddle of his own tears. He is the focus of a circle of eight ecstatic devotees, of differing generations, who have joined his thumping dance. This circle includes a number of his followers who later became either *bhakti* saints or theologians. These saints were responsible for systematizing and popularizing Chaitanya's Vishnu-centric message throughout India; their names are neatly inscribed in Rajasthani on the surface of the picture.

A brush drawing of the same subject in the National Museum, New Delhi,[2] was the obvious model for this work. Inasmuch as the former court of Kishangarh was a major center for the worship of Krishna (or of Chaitanya, his incarnation), it is not surprising this picture was made there.

1. Welch 1976, p. 122.
2. Ibid., no. 69.

32

Training a Horse

Rajasthan, kingdom of Mewar, ca. 1765

Opaque watercolor and gold on paper; red border with black inner rules; painting 7⅞ x 15⅝ in. (20 x 39.9 cm), page 9⅛ x 15⅝ in. (23 x 38.8 cm)

INSCRIBED on the front along the top border in black ink in Hindi written in *devanagari* script

UNPUBLISHED

TWO GROOMS are training a prized horse from the royal stable. The chestnut stallion is wearing a gold saddlecloth embroidered with scrolling arabesque, a harness, and rich trappings worked in gold and embroidered ribbon. The shuffling groom at the rear holds a knotted whip and a wood noisemaker, while his companion runs alongside the horse, with its harness and saddlecloth in his assured grip. The scene takes place out-of-doors against an expanse of green grass, indicated by three wide bands of color that progress to a narrow strip of blue sky at the top of the composition.

The artist has reduced this scene of equestrian training to its essential elements. As a result, his painting can be seen as an arrangement of three distinctly articulated shapes floating against a sea of green. The manipulation and placement of formal elements such as these are among the principal features that raise Indian painting to a high level of seriousness as an art form.

Native rulers were extremely fond of their prized horses, which were often imported from districts in faraway Iran, Turkestan, and Iraq, the source of the best equines on the Indian subcontinent. (For another portrait of a royal horse, see cat. 18.)

33

Chandravimba Ragaputra: Enthroned Krishna, Attended by a Maid, Beckons a Heron

Illustrated folio from the dispersed "Boston" *Ragamala* (Garland of Melodies)
Rajasthan, kingdom of Kota, ca. 1775

Opaque watercolor and gold on paper; wide paper border, speckled with silver (now oxidized), and black inner rules; painting 7⅜ x 4 15/16 in. (18.7 x 12.5 cm), page 13⅝ x 9 9/16 in. (34.6 x 24.2 cm)

INSCRIBED on the front in black ink with a one-line identifying label in Rajasthani written in *devanagari* script: "Chandrabimba raga, son of Hindola raga, the second last watch of the night, a beautiful occasion." Notated on the reverse with the effaced, inked stamp of the Bundi royal collection

UNPUBLISHED

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of John and Evelyn Kossak, The Kronos Collections, 1978 (1978.534.2)

IT IS THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT. Krishna, holding a *sarod* (an Indian stringed instrument with a single gourd for a sounding box), sits on a lotus-decorated throne in a high-walled palace courtyard. He is attended by a female servant (Radha?) holding a *chauri*, or fly whisk, as he beckons to two nearby birds. Despite the brilliance of the moon, stars can be seen in the night sky.

The large set from which this painting came is called the "Boston" *Ragamala* series for the thirteen paintings from the same group now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.[1] Originally comprising more than eighty-four illustrated folios, the set was formerly in the collection of Thakur Akshan Singh of Dilwara, in the Ajmer district of Rajasthan.[2] Works from this unusually large *Ragamala* series are painted in the so-called white style, which is characteristic of painting at the Kota court in the last third of the eighteenth century.[3] The palette of these pictures, tending to pastels and white, their smoothly modeled execution, and their exacting detail are very distinctive. These pictures have often been confused with eighteenth-century court paintings from neighboring Bundi. Yet the surfaces of the latter are much rougher, and their colors much warmer. At one time, it was said that a folio from the "Boston" *Ragamala* series had an inscription stating that the set was painted at Bundi in 1738 by the artist Mia Sekh Fulla. The single folio has never been located, however, and this information is almost certainly not to be trusted.

The Boston series is one of the very few Rajasthani *Ragamala* sets that are organized according to the Kshemenkara system of classification (see cat. 46).[4]

1. See Pal 1967.
2. Ebeling [1973], pp. 192–93.
3. For this style of Kota painting, see Beach 1974, pp. 38–39.
4. For another very large *Ragamala* series from Bundi, see Ebeling [1973], pp. 217–20.

हाडीलकोपुत्रचंद्रैकवापाद्वलीदोहीघडीरातसुगव

34

Rao Raja Bishen Singh of Uniara

Rajasthan, kingdom of Uniara, ca. 1780

Opaque watercolor on paper; red border; painting 10½ x 6⁵⁄₁₆ in. (26.7 x 16 cm), page 13 x 8¹⁵⁄₁₆ in. (33 x 22.8 cm)

INSCRIBED on the front on the border in black ink in Rajasthani written in *devanagari* script: "Maharaj Sri Rao Rajaji Bishen Singhji." Inscribed on the reverse in English: "Rao Raja Bishen Singhji of Uniara"; also inscribed with four short notations and the stamp in purple ink "Kumar Sangram Singh of Nawalgarh, Painting. . . ."

EX COLL.: Kumar Sangram Singh of Nawalgarh

PUBLISHED: Beach 1974, fig. 52

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of John and Evelyn Kossak, The Kronos Collections, 1982 (1982.462.5)

RAO RAJA BISHEN SINGH (reigned 1777–93) of Uniara stands here holding the conventional emblems of royal character: the small flower held to his nose, symbolizing the rao raja's refinement and love for the arts, and the straight sword, signifying his prowess in battle and his skill in political affairs. His long white coat (*jama*) swaying in the breeze, he strides forward over a textured expanse of grass planted with flowers and fruit plants, all growing beneath a cloudy monsoon sky. The exquisite interplay of the four white doves in the upper right corner enlivens this otherwise very conventional official portrait.

Uniara was a small kingdom politically and culturally allied to Jaipur, a much larger Rajasthani state, lying to the northeast. The Uniara rulers were members of the Naruka clan of Rajputs, a lesser branch of the Kacchawaha clan, to which the Rajput rulers of Jaipur belonged.[1]

1. Beach 1974, p. 23.

35

An Idealized Beauty, Holding Musical Clappers and Cymbals

Rajasthan, kingdom of Jaipur, ca. 1760–1800

Opaque watercolor, gold and silver (now oxidized) on paper; mounted on album page with wide, cream-colored borders decorated with red flower buds, with blue and red inner rules (imperfect) decorated with gold; painting 19 13/16 x 13 9/16 in. (50.3 x 34.4 cm), album page 27 13/16 x 21 9/16 in. (70.6 x 54.7 cm), original mount 24 9/16 x 15 5/8 in. (62.3 x 39.7 cm)

NOT INSCRIBED

PUBLISHED: Aitken in Beach, Fischer, and Goswamy, eds., vol. 2, 2011, p. 636

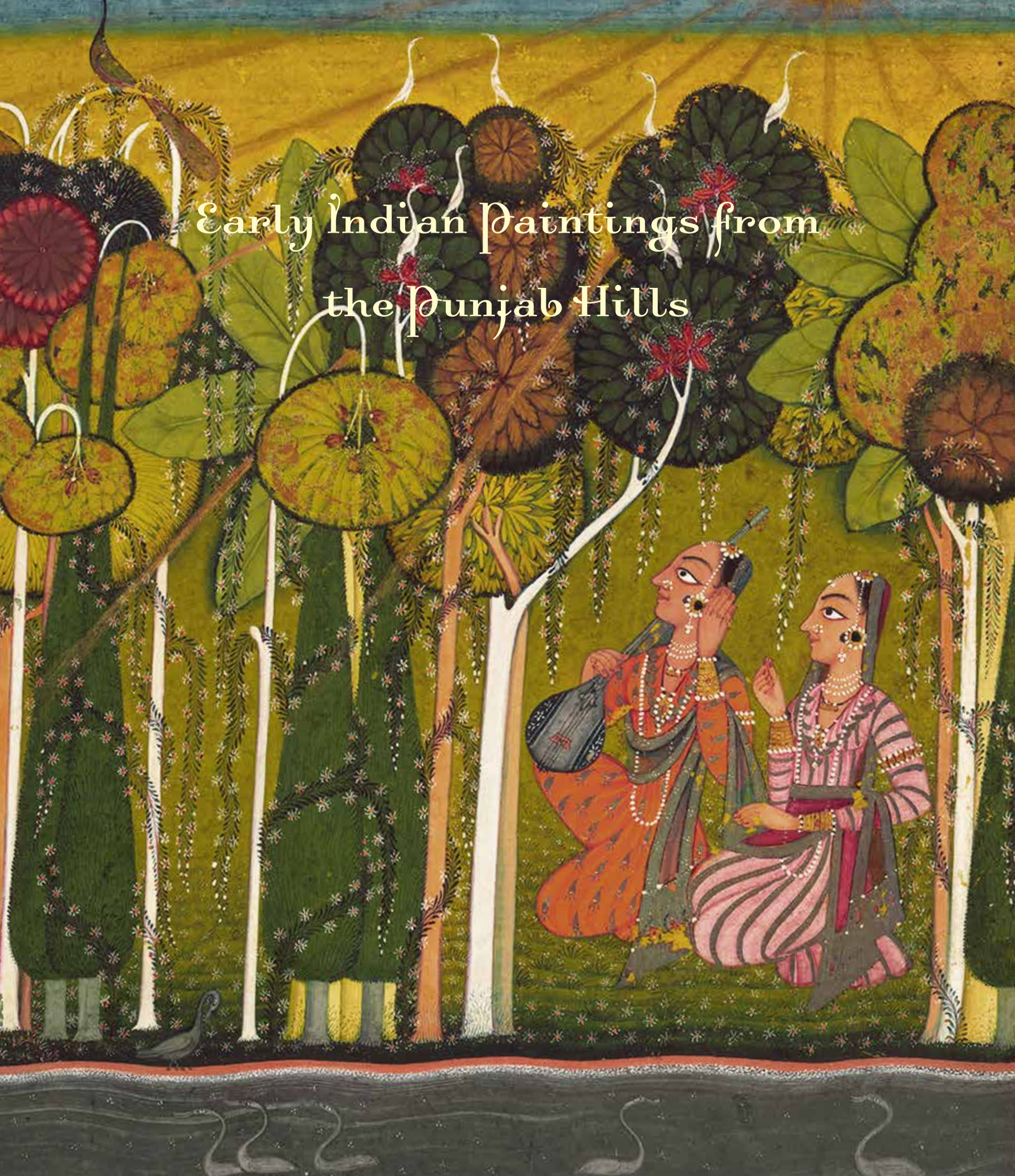
ALONG WITH MEWAR, Bikaner, and Jodhpur (Marwar), the former kingdom of Jaipur was one of the four principal states of Rajasthan. Lying in the northeast of Rajasthan, its territory is for the most part level and open, although its surface is crossed by ranges of hills and isolated peaks, and by sandy desert tracts (Shekhawati) to the north. Although wealthy Jaipur sponsored a school of court painting (in imitation of the Mughals, with whom the royal family intermarried) from the earliest days, painting did not really come into its own there until the reign of Maharaja Jai Singh II (1699–1743), a "renaissance man" who was largely responsible for the present city of Jaipur, which he laid out and built in 1728.

In this painting a *nayika* (idealized beauty) with arms akimbo stands in a window topped by a furled curtain. Gazing at her reflection in a mirror, she wears a long open coat that reveals her full breasts, an elaborate turban, and a lavish array of jewelry made from emeralds, rubies, and pearls. The woman may be intended as a stand-in for Krishna or Radha (the couple are a well-known duality), or she may be merely showing her devotion to Krishna by standing against a dark color associated with him and wearing a turban also related to him.

Like many pictures from the erstwhile Jaipur royal collection, this painting was mounted in an album with richly decorated borders that imitated Mughal examples. Another idealized beauty, encased in identical borders, would have appeared on the facing page of the original album, yet in mirror reverse. The reverse of each painting would have contained a calligraphy or European engraving, mounted in a border of a completely different design. (The present folio has been split, and its reverse side is therefore now blank.) Like many albums of this period, the original one to which this handsome painting belonged was in large format; its leaves would have been opened while the viewer was comfortably seated on the floor.

The head of the Jaipur royal painting atelier at the end of the eighteenth century was Sahib Ram (active 1740–ca. 1810), an important and original artist who was also the obvious inspiration for this picture. It has Sahib Ram's whistle-clean line and coloristic richness, yet lacks his quirky, individual touches.[1] The lady's turban and details of her dress are identical to those in a tinted drawing in The Metropolitan Museum of Art indisputably by Sahib Ram.[2] Even so, this work was probably painted by one of Sahib Ram's close associates, perhaps the very talented artist Ramji.[3]

1. For Sahib Ram and the painters of his entourage, see Aitken in Beach, Fischer, and Goswamy, eds., vol. 2, 2011.
2. Ibid., p. 629, fig. 2.
3. For a related picture, in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, probably painted by Sahib Ram, see Cimino 1985, no. 53.



Early Indian Paintings from the Punjab Hills

36

Krishna Steals the Clothing of the Gopis

Attributed to the artist known as the Early Master at the Court of Mandi
Probably an illustrated folio from a dispersed *Bhagavata Purana* (The Ancient Story of God)
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Mandi, ca. 1640

Opaque watercolor and gold on paper; red border with white and black inner rules; painting 11⅞ x 8 in. (30.2 x 20.3 cm), page 13⅜ x 9⅞ in. (34 x 24 cm)

NOT INSCRIBED

EX COLL.: Sviatoslav Roerich, Terence McInerney, Howard Hodgkin

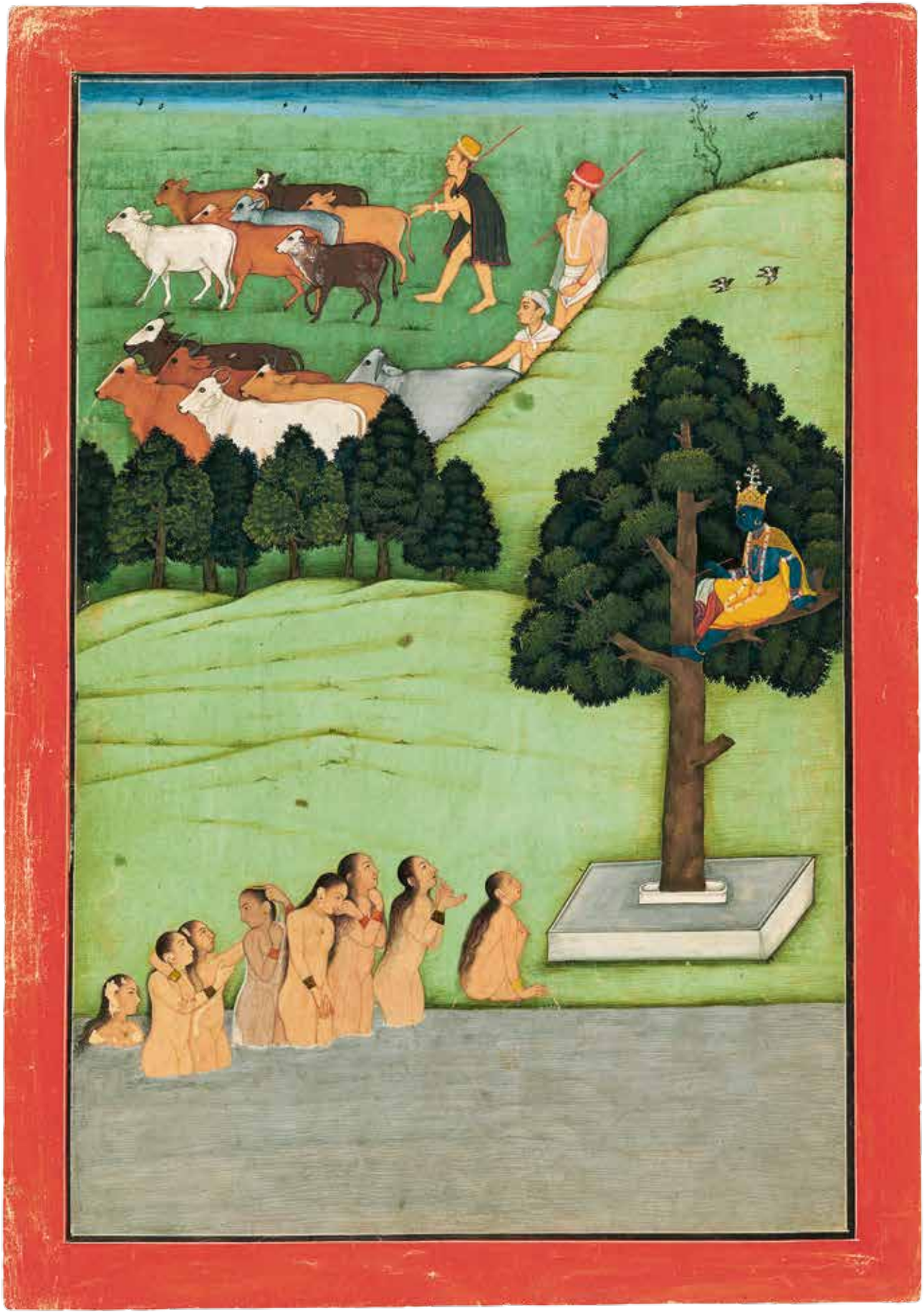
PUBLISHED: Kramrisch 1986, no. 113; Glynn in Beach, Fischer, and Goswamy, eds., vol. 1, 2011, p. 413; Guy and Britschgi 2011, p. 107

THIS SCENE FROM the *Bhagavata Purana* takes place on an empty, grassy hillock on the banks of the Kalindi River. After worshiping the goddess one morning, the *gopi*s (milkmaids) undress, leaving their clothes on the shore as they bathe naked in the river. Happening by, the mischievous god Krishna gathers up their clothes and takes them with him as he climbs a nearby *kadamba* tree. He calls to the girls to retrieve their clothes, but they remain in the water. According to the story, "When [Krishna] warns that he will not return their clothes unless they come for them, the *gopi*s come out of the water, shivering with cold. [Krishna] pities them and returns their clothes. The cowherdesses are not angry; rather, they are delighted because they enjoy the company of their beloved. He has stolen their hearts. After they put on their clothes [Krishna] asks them to go back home and says they will enjoy the following night with him."[1]

This succinctly organized painting, once termed an "allegory of the soul's relation to God,"[2] has all the stylistic hallmarks of the great unknown artist whom Catherine Glynn calls the Early Master at the Court of Mandi. These hallmarks include a lime green background with a high horizon line populated with small figures; trees with exposed trunks and branches; and small-headed female figures, often defined by stippling and shading, with refined facial features.[3]

The *gopi*s shiver in the foreground here, while Krishna ogles them from his perch. However their discarded clothing, which is required by the narrative, is nowhere to be seen. In the background, the *gopi*s' friends, the feckless *gopa*s (cowherds), with their well-behaved cows, are walking through the highly naturalistic, Mughal-inspired landscape. Inhabiting their background space like so many sleepwalkers, they seem oblivious to what is happening in the foreground. With its stripped-down appearance and haunting narrative, this painting has the same feeling of suspended movement that characterizes a not-to-be-forgotten dream.[4]

1. *Bhagavata Purana*, 0.22.138, as quoted in Kramrisch 1986, p. 183.
2. Kramrisch 1986, p. 183.
3. For discussion of the work and career of this artist, see Glynn in Beach, Fischer, and Goswamy, eds., vol. 1, 2011; Glynn 1983; and Guy and Britschgi 2011, p. 106.
4. Originally, this painting probably belonged to the same *Bhagavata Purana* series as the picture published in Glynn in Beach, Fischer, and Goswamy, eds., vol. 1, 2011, p. 414; and Guy and Britschgi 2011, no. 52. For another depiction of this same subject, from the so-called "Mody" *Bhagavata Purana*, thought to have been painted in the kingdom of Kangra about 1790, see Archer [1957], pl. 11.



From a "Tantric Devi" series (cats. 37, 38)

37

The Devi, in the Form of Bhadrakali, Adored by the Gods

Attributed to the artist known as the Master of the Early *Rasamanjari* (active ca. 1660–80)
Illustrated folio (no. 69) from a dispersed "Tantric Devi" series
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Basohli, ca. 1660–70

Opaque watercolor, gold, silver, and beetle-wing cases on paper; wide red border with white, black, and silver inner rules; painting 7 x 6 9/16 in. (17.8 x 16.7 cm), page 8 1/2 x 8 1/8 in. (21.6 x 20.6 cm)

INSCRIBED on the front along the border in black ink written in *takri* script with the number "69" and identifying labels of the people portrayed, as well as various inscriptions on the swords. Inscribed on the reverse in black ink in Sanskrit: a poem in praise of the Devi (for an English translation, see Dehejia, V. 1999, p. 272)

PUBLISHED: Lerner 1984, no. 61a; Kossak 1997, no. 38; Dehejia, V. 1999, no. 41

STANDING ON A GOLDEN *chauki* (low table or platform), Bhadrakali, the Blessed Dark One, presides at the center of this painting. Bhadrakali is a form of the Devi, or the Great Goddess, whom many in India revere as the supreme deity. This painting once belonged to the important "Tantric Devi" series (see also cat. 38), which originally comprised some seventy paintings or more depicting the various forms or incarnations of the Great Goddess. The series was made for one of her devotees, probably the ruling monarch or a member of his family from Basohli, a small yet extremely important kingdom in the Punjab Hills.

Bhadrakali has the ritual marks, third eye, and crescent moon associated with the god Shiva, her consort and male energy. (Three of the surviving thirty-five paintings from the "Tantric Devi" series depict Bhairavi, a ferocious incarnation of Shiva, and one of the Great Goddess's consorts.) She is accompanied at the left by three forms of the goddess Kali (so identified by the short Hindi labels written in the border), wearing leopard skins and holding two swords, a trident, a severed head, and two skull-cups filled with blood or wine. At the right is the Afro-bedecked Bhima, the consort of a terrifying incarnation of Shiva; standing next to her is the fire-encircled figure of Vahni-priya, the beloved of Agni, the god of fire. And kneeling in the foreground are two diminutive, snake-garlanded minions of Shiva, offering libations to Bhadrakali and dropping flowers on her feet. All these attending deities jostle for space around the margins, creating a dense, overlapping mass of figures barely contained by the wide border encircling them.

This picture has more figures than any other in the series, but the meaning of its astonishing assemblage is intentionally obscure. Since the deities embody metaphysical abstractions, the thread connecting one figure to the next is often a tangled knot that can be unraveled only with the meditational insight of the trained *tantrika* (tantric practitioner). Like the equally short poem (*sloka*) written in Sanskrit on the reverse side of each painting, the figures are the equivalent of *sandhya bhasha*, a secret language known only to the initiated devotee. Therefore this work is not just a painting but also a focus for abstruse meditational practices. The convoluted, highly intellectual system that it embodies represents a higher form of the tantric, or nonmainstream, Devi worship that was swept away in the Punjab Hills by the Krishna-focused, devotional frenzy of the late seventeenth through nineteenth centuries.

B. N. Goswamy and Eberhard Fischer suggest that the Master of the Early *Rasamanjari*, to whom this work is attributed, was actually Kripal "of Nurpur" on the basis of a colophon on the reverse of the last folio from a later *Rasamanjari* series of 1694–95 (Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi) painted in Basohli by Devidasa, known to be the son of a certain Kripal.[1] As this later series was clearly based on the earlier one, Goswamy and Fischer believe the influential master of the earlier series must be Kripal, the father of Devidasa. The earlier Basohli *Rasamanjari* series and this "Tantric Devi" series of about 1660–70 were undoubtedly painted by the same artist. Yet Goswamy and Fischer cannot say whether this artist, or whether Kripal or his ancestors, originally from Nurpur just across the Ravi River, had resettled at some point in neighboring Basohli. Therefore, their desire to discount decades of criticism and labeling practice, and to reassign this series and the formulation of the Early Pahari style not to Basohli but to neighboring Nurpur on the basis of one tangential, later inscription, is interesting yet speculative. Similarly, their desire to identify the Master of the Early *Rasamanjari,* the artist of this painting, with Kripal is plausible yet not established beyond doubt.

1. Goswamy and Fischer 1992, p. 30. See also ibid., p. 60.

From a "Tantric Devi" series (cats. 37, 38)

38

The Devi, in the Form of Bhadrakali, Standing on the Corpse of a Giant Brahmin

Attributed to the artist known as the Master of the Early *Rasamanjari* (active ca. 1660–80)
Illustrated folio (no. 70) from a dispersed "Tantric Devi" series
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Basohli, ca. 1660–70

Opaque watercolor, gold, silver, and beetle-wing cases on paper; wide red border (mostly restored) with white, black, and silver inner rules; painting 7⅛ x 6¾ in. (18.1 x 17.1 cm), page 8 x 8 in. (20.3 x 20.3 cm)

INSCRIBED on the front along the red border written in *takri* script with the name "Bhadrakali" and the number "70." Inscribed on the reverse in black ink in Sanskrit written in *devanagari* script: a poem in praise of the Devi (for an English translation, see Dehejia, V. 1999, p. 273)

PUBLISHED: Lerner 1984, no. 61b; Dehejia, V. 1999, no. 42

STYLISTICALLY, the important series from which this painting and the preceding work (cat. 37) came, a dispersed "Tantric Devi," represents the earliest-known painting from Basohli and therefore from the entire Punjab Hills, an area of fundamental importance in the history of Indian painting. In the words of F. S. Aijazzudin, "like some introductory libation" early Basohli painting begins with this series.[1] Approximately half the paintings from the original series have survived. Those thirty-five folios are now widely dispersed,[2] and it is assumed that the remaining pages either are lost or have not survived.

The series is devoted to depictions of the various forms or incarnations of the Devi, the Great Goddess, the great energy or life force from whom all of the lesser, male gods (such as Shiva, Vishnu, and Brahma) are manifest. Consequently, the Great Goddess presides at the center of each picture, in any one of her many forms — as Bhagavati, Bhuvaneshvari, Indrakshi, Siddha Lakshmi, or Varahi. In this painting, and in catalogue number 37, she is Bhadrakali, the Blessed Dark One. The Devi may be accompanied by retainers and attending deities (as in cat. 37), or she may stand or sit on the corpse of a dead Brahmin. Otherwise, there are very few "props" to distract one's attention from her figure: only a narrow strip of sky along the top of the painting or a narrow strip of sky and water along the bottom. The Devi stands against a plain, colored background that may be brown, as here, mustard yellow (see cat. 37), dark green, light green, or light yellow, and is always coordinated with the rather wide red or orange borders. This modular format, with its repeated framing device and tight adhesion of the flattened figures to the shallow ground, results in a series of almost incantatory power.

Bhadrakali stands here on the giant corpse of a naked Brahmin.[3] This inert figure, symbolizing the spirit of the dead (*preta*), associates the goddess with the cremation ground, her favorite haunt and the location for some of her most extreme rites. Bhadrakali's protruding fangs and third eye are additional tantric, or nonconventional, attributes.

B. N. Goswamy and Eberhard Fischer were the first to recognize that the artist of the Early *Rasamanjari* series and the artist of the "Tantric Devi" series were the same man.[4] To the same highly inventive artist one can attribute the work formerly in the Archer collection, now on loan to the Museum Rietberg, Zurich.[5]

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1. Aijazuddin 1977, p. 3.
2. Each of the surviving paintings has a number on the front border as well as on the reverse. For discussion of the "Tantric Devi" series, see McInerney in Dehejia, V. 1999. See also Archer 1973, vol. 1, pp. 33–34; and Goswamy and Fischer in Beach, Fischer, and Goswamy, eds., vol. 2, 2011b.
3. Kramrisch 1981, pp. 216–17; and Archer 1973, vol. 1, p. 34, vol. 2, p. 16.
4. Goswamy and Fischer 1992, pp. 30, 35.
5. Archer 1976, no. 5.


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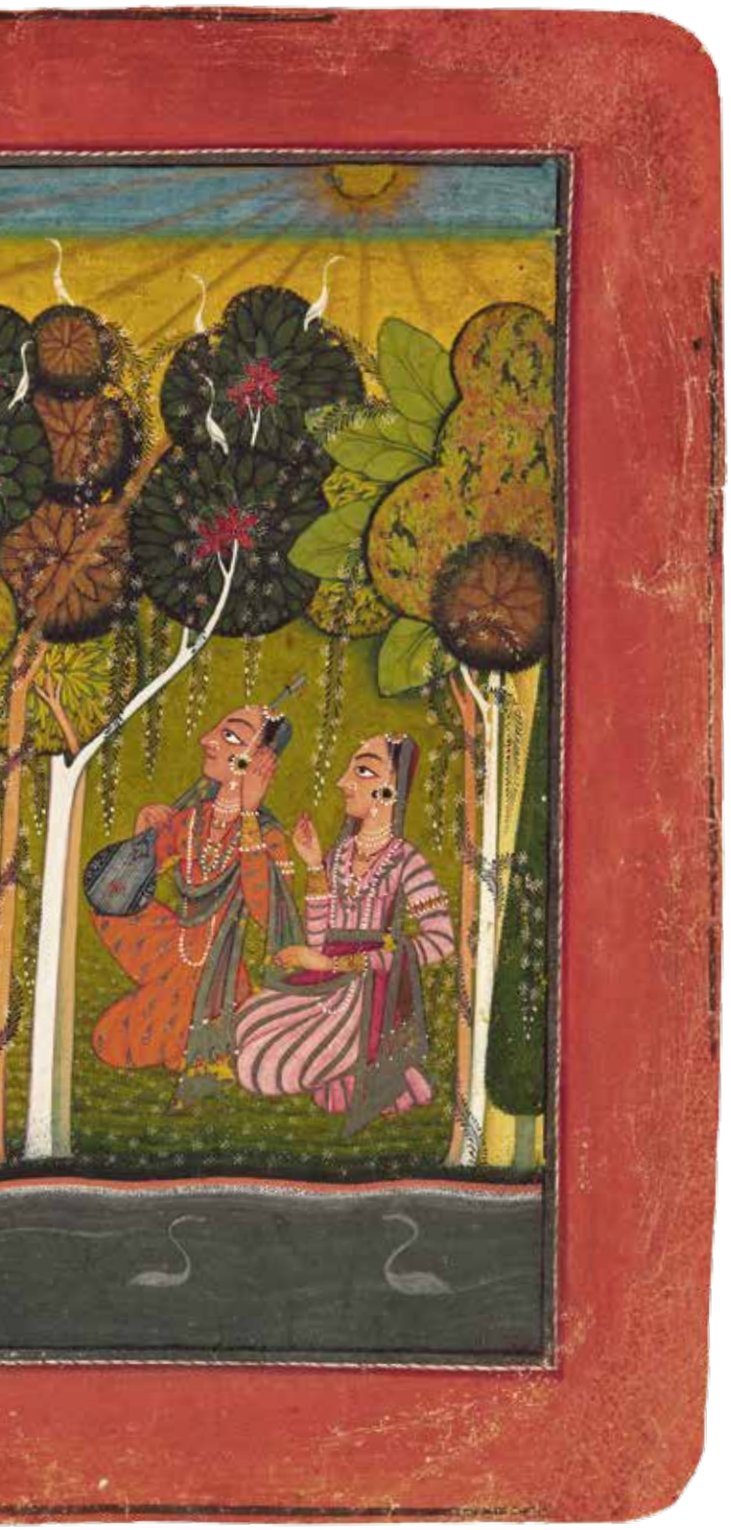


39

A Nobleman and His Devoted Wife Seated in the Forest; Two Female Musicians Attend

Illustrated folio probably from an unidentified *nayaka-nayika* (hero-heroine) series
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Basohli, ca. 1685

Opaque watercolor, gold, and applied beetle-wing cases on paper; wide red border with black, silver (now tarnished), and striated white inner rules; black outer rule (missing right corner of folio replaced); painting 6 11/16 x 11 in. (17 x 27.9 cm), page 8½ x 12¾ in. (21.6 x 32.4 cm)

NOT INSCRIBED

EX COLL.: Roy Thomson, First Baron Thomson of Fleet

UNPUBLISHED

A RICHLY DRESSED NOBLEMAN and his devoted wife sit in a forest clearing among densely packed trees adorned with flowering creepers and paired birds. This glamorous painting probably comes from a series depicting a poetic catalogue of lovers in various amorous states and situations. These so-called *nayaka-nayika* subjects are among the most popular in Rajput court painting. Devoted to an overview of love, in all its great variety, a complete *nayaka-nayika* series encompasses the emotional, and often conflicting, situations that plague lovers. In many of these paintings the woman, or *nayika*, is depicted as the loser, although no single sex can really be said to triumph in the tortured games that the lovers play. The work illustrated here may depict the *svakiya nayika*, the lady who loves her husband and none other.

As W. G. Archer notes, paintings from this set are so close in style and general treatment to those from the great *Rasamanjari* (Bouquet of Delights) series from Basohli of about 1660–70 that they are frequently mistaken for them.[1] But, tellingly, the present picture, from a somewhat later series, lacks titles or verses from Bhanu Datta's text. In addition, its iconography is a blend of elements from the *nayaka-nayika* and *Ragamala* lore of lowland India, unlike the iconography that characterizes the somewhat earlier Basohli *Rasamanjari* paintings.[2]

1. Archer 1973, vol. 1, p. 40.
2. Ibid. For three other paintings from the same series, see ibid., vol. 1, p. 40, nos. 5 (i–iii), vol. 2, pl. 24.

40

A Seated Nobleman, Possibly Raja Kirpal Pal of Basohli, Smoking a Huqqa

Attributed to the artist known as the Early Bahu Master (active 1675–90)
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Jammu (Bahu), ca. 1675

Opaque watercolor on paper; red border with black and white inner rules; painting 6⅝ x 11⅛ in. (16.8 x 28.2 cm), page 7⅝ x 11¾ in. (19.4 x 29.8 cm)

NOT INSCRIBED

PUBLISHED: Pal 2015, p. 97, fig. 6.4

THE RULER HERE sits on a dark blue floral carpet that is placed on a larger, patterned rug. He holds a long, curving sword and carries a push dagger (*katar*) in his loosely tied cummerbund (*patka*). His long-sleeved coat (*jama*) is decorated with flowers, while a feather and a spray of sweet-smelling leaves are tucked into his tie-dyed turban. In an arrangement characteristic of formal portraits, the ruler rests against a bolster and smokes a water pipe (*huqqa*) held by a servant or close relative. Another servant, strangely elongated, stands behind the ruler waving a fly whisk (*chauri*), an emblem denoting royal status. When combined with the juxtaposition of intense, pulsating colors, this pictorial extension into the otherwise inviolate border animates a rather static composition, resulting in a work of quiet intensity.

Portraits from the Punjab Hills dating from this period are rare. The simplified format is Mughal or imperial in origin, yet the hot colors and emphatic, abstracted drawing with its expressive flourishes are defiantly Pahari. The central figure in this painting bears a strong resemblance to Raja Kirpal Pal of Basohli (reigned ca. 1678–93). The features are the same, although in the twelve other extant portraits of the raja,[1] his long mustache is dressed differently (it is bushy and turns downward) and he wears the distinctive Basohli quatrefoil medallion. Unlike these other portraits, which depict the raja as being rather fat, this work shows him as rather muscular and slim. Here he also wears his waxed mustache in a jaunty, upright curve. Given these differences, perhaps the present portrait depicts Kirpal Pal at an early age, when he was merely a prince and not yet a raja.

This work shows the Early Bahu Master's indebtedness to painting from Basohli, where the Early Pahari style was first formulated (see cats. 37 and 38).[2] The presumed subject of this portrait, a prince of Basohli, a state adjoining Jammu, where the Early Bahu Master lived, was the first great patron of this style.

1. For these portraits, see Seyller and Mittal 2014, no. 5, p. 25n4. The identification of the present sitter with Kirpal Pal, the future raj of Basohli, was suggested by Steven Kossak.
2. For the Early Bahu Master, see Kossak in Beach, Fischer, and Goswamy, eds., vol. 2, 2011.

41

Rama Commands Lakshmana to Take Sita Away

Attributed to the artist known as the Early Bahu Master (active 1675–90)
Illustrated folio from the dispersed "Shangri" *Ramayana* (The Adventures of Rama) (Style I)
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Jammu (Bahu), ca. 1675–90

Opaque watercolor, silver (now tarnished), and gold on paper; red border with black and white inner rules; painting 6⅜ x 10⅛ in. (16.2 x 25.7 cm), page 8½ x 11⅞ in. (21.6 x 30.2 cm)

NOT INSCRIBED

EX COLL.: Sviatoslav Roerich, Howard Hodgkin

PUBLISHED: McInerney 1982, no. 32; Kossak 2014, fig. 2; Pal 2015, p. 109, fig. 6.25

ALONG WITH catalogue numbers 42 and 58 through 61, this painting comes from one of the most famous, and puzzling, series of Indian paintings, the "Shangri" *Ramayana*, which John Seyller and Jagdish Mittal call one of the high points of painting in the Punjab Hills.[1]

A gatekeeper, leaning on a staff in a niched entryway, guards access to Rama's palace, which has been configured as a riotous assemblage of domes, pillars, finials, and rectangles, all brilliantly colored and patterned. Rama, the seventh incarnation of Vishnu, and his brother Lakshmana stand at the center of the composition. Lakshmana is about to take Sita, Rama's wife, to safekeeping. He does not understand why Rama must honor their father's promise to Kaikeyi, the father's wife and the boys' evil foster mother, when her demands for Rama's banishment are so clearly unfair. Placing his hand on the hilt of his sword, Lakshmana indicates that he is ready to defy Kaikeyi in order to uphold his brother's right to remain in Ayodhya and to succeed to the throne.[2]

The name of the masterly artist who painted this picture is unknown, although he has been dubbed the Early Bahu Master, or the First Bahu Master (see also cat. 40).[3] The approximately twenty-four paintings by him from the present series, as well as a portrait in Seattle and catalogue number 40, account for the majority of his works.[4] Clearly influenced by the anonymous Basohli artist who has been named Master of the Early *Rasamanjari* (see cats. 37 and 38), this Jammu (Bahu) artist shares with his Basohli "cousin" a similar visual grandeur, employing mostly warm, intense colors, extravagantly patterned surfaces, and squat, lightly shaded figures with intense, staring eyes.[5]

1. Seyller and Mittal 2014, p. 29. For discussion of the series, see cat. 42.
2. I am indebted to Alka Bagri for the identification of this scene.
3. For discussion of this artist, see Kossak in Beach, Fischer, and Goswamy, eds., vol. 2, 2011.
4. For a list of the paintings from the present series by the Early Bahu Master, as well as his other work, see ibid., pp. 492–93.
5. For discussion of the "Shangri" *Ramayana*, see Archer 1973, vol. 1, pp. 325–29.

42

Rama Interviews Sita in a Palace Interior

Illustrated folio from the dispersed "Shangri" *Ramayana*
(The Adventures of Rama) (Style II)
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Jammu (Bahu), ca. 1690–1710

Opaque watercolor, gold, and silver (now tarnished) on paper (unfinished); plain paper border without inner rules; painting 7 7/16 x 11 7/16 in. (19 x 29 cm), page 8 3/4 x 12 1/2 in. (22.2 x 31.8 cm)

INSCRIBED on the front along the border in black ink written in *takri* script with the number "28"; also inscribed with the number "17" and the word "Ayodhya" in pencil written in *takri* script; also in pencil written in *takri* script: "Sita stands in front of Rama with folded hands . . . obeying orders"

UNPUBLISHED

ATTENDED BY TWO MAIDS holding a handkerchief and an umbrella (symbols of royalty), Rama tells his wife, Sita, that King Dasaratha has ordered them to fast.[1] A gatekeeper in the lower left watches over her horses and chariot. The incident this unfinished folio would have depicted is found in book 2 (*Ayodhya Kanda*) of the *Ramayana*.

This painting and catalogue numbers 41 and 58 through 61 come from one of the most famous, and puzzling, series of Indian paintings, the "Shangri" *Ramayana*, a series originally comprising about 270 folios. Until about 1960 it belonged to Raja Raghbir Singh of the "Shangri" branch of the Kulu royal family, but after that date it was widely dispersed. About 60 percent of its paintings are at present in the National Museum, New Delhi, while the remaining works are now in public and private collections worldwide.

W. G. Archer was the first to describe the series in toto.[2] His extremely perceptive analysis, dividing it into four parts on the basis of style and date, established classifications that still hold. Yet his belief that the complete series was painted in the former kingdom of Kulu is no longer supported. B. N. Goswamy and Eberhard Fischer have demonstrated that the earlier parts of the series (those works painted in Archer's Styles I, II, and III) were probably made in Jammu state, a kingdom one hundred miles to the northwest of Kulu.[3] At that time, Jammu was divided in half, and the patrons of the "Shangri" *Ramayana* ruled from the area called Bahu (named for the fort situated across the river from the city of Jammu). Therefore the series as it exists today should really be called the "Bahu" *Ramayana* and not the "Shangri" *Ramayana*.

The Early Bahu Master, or the First Bahu Master (see cat. 41), was the author of the roughly twenty-four late seventeenth-century folios from this series that are painted in Style I; his influence on later generations, and particularly on those artists imitating him in works painted in Styles II and III, was profound. It is thus generally believed that the illustrated folios from the series painted in Styles II and III were also produced at Jammu (Bahu) later in the seventeenth century or early in the eighteenth century, using the Early Bahu Master (active 1675–90) as a reference point.

The illustrated folios painted in Style IV — the largest component of the series — are, however, radically different (see cat. 61). Their pale yellow backgrounds, sparse, undramatic compositions, and "weird predilection for disjointed forms"[4] display the influence of the painting workshops established at the nearby Bilaspur or Mandi courts. It is thought that the works painted in Archer's Styles I, II, and III were given to the ruler or family of some other place (perhaps Kulu, Mandi, or Bilaspur), and the series was later completed there between the years 1710 and 1740. Or perhaps the series was completed at Jammu during the same time — having been painted by immigrant artists from Bilaspur or Mandi — and later given to the royal family of Kulu. The place of production, particularly of its final portion, and the specific circumstances that gave rise to this important series remain puzzling today.

Unfortunately a numerical breakdown of the approximately 270 folios is not known, although it is certainly safe to say that works painted in Style IV predominate in the series as a whole. The few works painted in Style I (cat. 41) are much rarer.

1. I am indebted to Alka Bagri for this information.
2. Archer 1973, vol. 1, p. 326.
3. Goswamy and Fischer 1992, pp. 76–81.
4. Archer 1973, vol. 1, p. 329.

43

Madhava Ragaputra(?): A Nobleman Dancing to the Music of Two Ladies

Illustrated folio from a dispersed *Ragamala* (Garland of Melodies)
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Kahlur (Bilaspur), ca. 1680–90

Opaque watercolor on paper; wide yellow border with black inner rules; painting 8⅛ x 5½ in. (20.6 x 14 cm), page 10¼ x 7⅝ in. (26 x 19.4 cm)

INSCRIBED on the reverse with two lines in Panjabi written in *takri* script: "Raga Madhava / 23" as well as the number "23" written above; notated with two stamps with European figures in black ink

EX COLL.: Douglas Barrett

PUBLISHED: Lerner 1984, no. 62

AN ELEGANT NOBLEMAN, wearing a Mughal-style costume, scarf, and turban, dances to music provided by two women, also in Mughal-style garb, who play the stringed instrument known as a *sarod* and a drum. The three figures perform beside a "lollipop" tree, the type of tree usually depicted in seventeenth-century Pahari paintings, on a grassy knoll beneath a narrow strip of blue and white sky. The background is dark green, the same color used in all *Ragamala* paintings from the same *Raga Bhairava* family.[1]

This handsome painting is probably from the same dispersed *Ragamala* series as the three Kahlur *Ragamala* paintings of approximately the same date and style formerly in the collection of Edwin Binney III and now in the San Diego Museum of Art.[2] The borders are the same, although the dimensions differ somewhat. The present painting is not labeled on the front or back, but Martin Lerner has identified the subject as *Madhava Ragaputra*, a member of the *Raga Bhairava* family. Another candidate is *Brahmarananda Ragaputra*, although Lerner deems this identification less likely.[3] Just as *ragini*s are considered the wives of *raga*s, so *ragaputra*s are considered the sons of *raga*s. (For additional information about the ancient yet difficult *Ragamala* classification of Indian classical music and painting, see cat. 7.)

The series from which this painting came was made in the kingdom of Kahlur (often called Bilaspur after its capital city), which was founded only in 1654. From that time until about 1780, Kahlur flourished. With a surfeit of money, the ruling princes must have patronized imported musicians, singers, and dancing girls for their courtly entertainment. This spate of expensive musical patronage would help to explain the large number of *Ragamala* series produced in Kahlur during the same years.[4]

1. Waldschmidt and Waldschmidt 1967–75, vol. 1, p. 149.
2. Archer 1973, vol. 1, nos. 8i–8iii. For four other paintings from the same series, see Heeramaneck 1984, p. 97.
3. Lerner 1984, p. 164.
4. Archer 1973, vol. 1, p. 226.

44

A Seated Nobleman

Punjab Hills, kingdom of Mankot, ca. 1690–1700

Opaque watercolor on paper; red border with black inner rules; painting 7 15/16 x 5 5/8 in. (20.2 x 14.3 cm), page 9 5/16 x 6 3/4 in. (23.7 x 17.1 cm)

NOT INSCRIBED

UNPUBLISHED

THIS BEARDED NOBLEMAN sits on a striped, flat-weave carpet, or dhurrie, and wears a turban with a feathered aigrette. Equipped with a curving sword and a push dagger (*katar*) secured at his midriff, he also wears a striped cummerbund (*patka*) and a long, patterned coat (*jama*), all fashionable accessories denoting the subject's high status. His jewelry is not ornate, however. He is probably a prince or an important courtier: the feather worn in his turban is an aristocratic distinction.

The warm *peori* yellow of the flat background, the isolated figure, and the simple format relate this work to the string of "intensely realized" portraits of royal and everyday personalities that B. N. Goswamy and Eberhard Fischer believe were made by a family of artists attached to the court of Mankot in the kingdom of the same name.[1] For a related portrait in the Kronos Collections painted by the greatest of these artists, the Master at the Court of Mankot, see catalogue number 56.

1. See Goswamy and Fischer in Beach, Fischer, and Goswamy, eds., vol. 2, 2011d.

From a *Ragamala* series (cats. 45–48)

45

Megha Raga: Two Soldiers Seated on a Carpet Holding Swords Balanced on Their Shoulders

Illustrated folio from a dispersed *Ragamala* (Garland of Melodies)
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Chamba, ca. 1690–1700

Opaque watercolor on paper heightened with gold; red border with black and white inner rules; painting 7¼ x 4⁹⁄₁₆ in. (18.4 x 11.6 cm), page 8½ x 6ⁱ⁄₁₆ in. (21.6 x 15.4 cm)

INSCRIBED on the reverse with three short lines written in *devanagari*, *takri*, and *takri/sharada* script: "*rag*[*a*] *megh*[*a*]"; also inscribed in pencil with the Indic number "50" and the numbers "50" and "11099"; also notated with a rubber stamp in purple ink enclosing the Indic number "2479"

UNPUBLISHED

TWO SOLDIERS armed with swords resting on their shoulders and shields held from the back are seated on a floral carpet against a solid brown background with lighter dots (depicting falling rain?) beneath a narrow strip of cloudy sky. That the larger figure is the more important of the two is indicated by his size and expensive jewelry. This figure's handsome features resemble in a general way those of Raja Udai Singh of Chamba (reigned 1690–1720), the probable patron of the entire series from which this painting came.[1] Making the patron the "hero" of a given series is a rather commonplace practice in Indian painting.

This painting and catalogue numbers 46–48 come from a dispersed album that once belonged to the royal family of Mandi, another kingdom in the Punjab Hills.[2] Most of the subjects in this album illustrated typically Hindu or Rajput subjects, including the various incarnations of Vishnu and other deities, or, as here, the Pahari classification of *Ragamala*s, or musical modes, the building blocks of Indian classical music (for *Ragamala* painting, see cat. 7). But as Catherine Glynn has demonstrated, the series was not painted in Mandi, or nearby Bilaspur, as had once been thought, but in neighboring Chamba, in the years around 1690–1700. Glynn notes that paintings from this series "are particularly noteworthy for a highly sophisticated color sense, simplicity of composition, excellent technical quality, and the use of elaborate detailing and decorative patterning in a sparse but very effective manner."[3]

This painting is inscribed "*rag*[*a*] *megh*[*a*]," and in Sanskrit *megha* means rain cloud. However, this title appears to have very little relevance to the subject depicted here.[4]

1. For discussion of Raja Udai Singh, see Archer 1973, vol. 1, p. 65.
2. For three published illustrations from the same series, see Glynn, Skelton, and Dallapiccola 2011, nos. 7–9.
3. Glynn 2011, p. 34.
4. For Pahari *Ragamala* painting, see Tandan 1983 and Randhawa 1971.

From a *Ragamala* series (cats. 45–48)

46

Madhava Ragaputra, Son of Bhairava Raga: A Young Prince Seated on a Throne, Gazing in a Mirror

Illustrated folio from a dispersed *Ragamala* (Garland of Melodies)
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Chamba, ca. 1690–1700

Opaque watercolor on paper heightened with gold (some modest flaking); red border with black and white inner rules; painting 7¼ x 4 11/16 in. (18.4 x 11.9 cm), page 8½ x 6⅛ in. (21.6 x 15.6 cm)

INSCRIBED on the reverse with three short lines written in *devanagari*, *takri*, and *takri/sharada* script: "Raga Madhava Son of Bhero"; also inscribed in pencil with the numbers "11167" and "87" and in black ink with the Indic number "87"; notated with a rubber stamp in purple ink enclosing the Indic number "2513"

UNPUBLISHED

A YOUNG PRINCE, wearing a garland of flowers and a scarf wrapped around his uplifted knees as a meditation belt, sits on a low, plainly decorated throne. He rests against a bolster, with one hand raised to his face in a gesture of astonishment and the other holding a small, round mirror that reflects his handsome features. Dressed in red, the color of passion, he is attended by a standing maid holding two signifying emblems: the royal fly whisk, or *chauri*, and a neatly folded handkerchief. This unusual scene of self-examination and formal enthronement takes place in a forest clearing edged by a circle of trees that shelter an assortment of twittering birds.

The iconography follows the Kshemenkara system of classification of *Ragamala* paintings, which required some eighty-four illustrations in a series and was widely used in the Punjab Hills. In the lowlands of India, *Ragamala* series were also very popular but were organized according to the so-called Painter's or Hanuman's system of classification, requiring either thirty-six or forty-two *Ragamala* illustrations in a series (see cats. 7–10). Why Kshemenkara's more detailed system became so popular in the Punjab Hills is at present unknown.

The iconography required to illustrate this *ragaputra* — Madhava, the son of Bhairava Raga — focuses on the young man's good looks. Wearing beautiful garments and exquisite jewelry, Madhava is more handsome than Kamadeva, the god of love. Like all *Ragamala* subjects classified according to Kshemenkara's system, the pictorial subject depicted here can change from series to series. As an image to enjoy, the actual subject depicted in any *Ragamala* folio, regardless of system, is more important than the often quite different poem with which one associates it. For three other paintings from the same series, see catalogue numbers 45, 47, and 48.[1]

1. See also Glynn, Skelton, and Dallapiccola 2011, nos. 7–9, for three published illustrations from the same series. For *Ragamala* painting, see cat. 7.

From a *Ragamala* series (cats. 45–48)

47

Ragini Virati, Wife of Shri Raga: An Enthroned Lady Caressing a White Water Buffalo

Illustrated folio from a dispersed *Ragamala* (Garland of Melodies)
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Chamba, ca. 1690–1700

Opaque watercolor and gold on paper; red border with white and black inner rules; painting 7¼ x 4 11/16 in. (18.4 x 12 cm), page 8½ x 6 3/16 in. (21.6 x 15.7 cm)

INSCRIBED on the reverse with three short lines written in *devanagari, takri,* and *takri/sharada* script: "Ragini Vairani or Vairati, the Honorable Raga of Bharya"; also inscribed in pencil with the number "48" and in black ink with the Indic number "48"; notated with a rubber stamp in purple ink enclosing the Indic number "2474"

UNPUBLISHED

A SEATED, enthroned princess resting against a bolster strokes the head of a white water buffalo. She is attended by a maid waving a fly whisk, or *chauri*. In the foreground, the tree entangled in climbing creepers becomes a symbolic allusion to the princess's separated lover and their fraught relationship. This scene of gentle melancholy unfolds in front of an olive green background, beneath a narrow strip of inky sky. For other paintings from the same fine *Ragamala* series, see catalogue numbers 45, 46, and 48.[1]

1. See also Glynn, Skelton, and Dallapiccola 2011, nos. 7–9, for three published illustrations from the same series. For *Ragamala* painting, see cats. 7 and 46.

From a *Ragamala* series (cats. 45–48)

48

Ragini Sindhuri, Wife of Hindol Raga: A Lady Seated beside a Lotus Pond in Which Her Two Naked Confidantes Are Swimming

Illustrated folio from a dispersed *Ragamala* (Garland of Melodies)
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Chamba, ca. 1690–1700

Opaque watercolor and gold on paper; red border with black and white inner rules; painting 7⅜ x 4¹¹⁄₁₆ in. (18.7 x 11.9 cm), page 8½ x 6⅛ in. (21.6 x 15.6 cm)

INSCRIBED on the reverse with three short lines written in *devanagari*, *takri*, and *takri/sharada* script: "Ragini Sindhuri"; also inscribed in pencil with the numbers "65" and "11082" and in black ink with the Indic number "65"; notated with a rubber stamp in purple ink enclosing the Indic number 2491

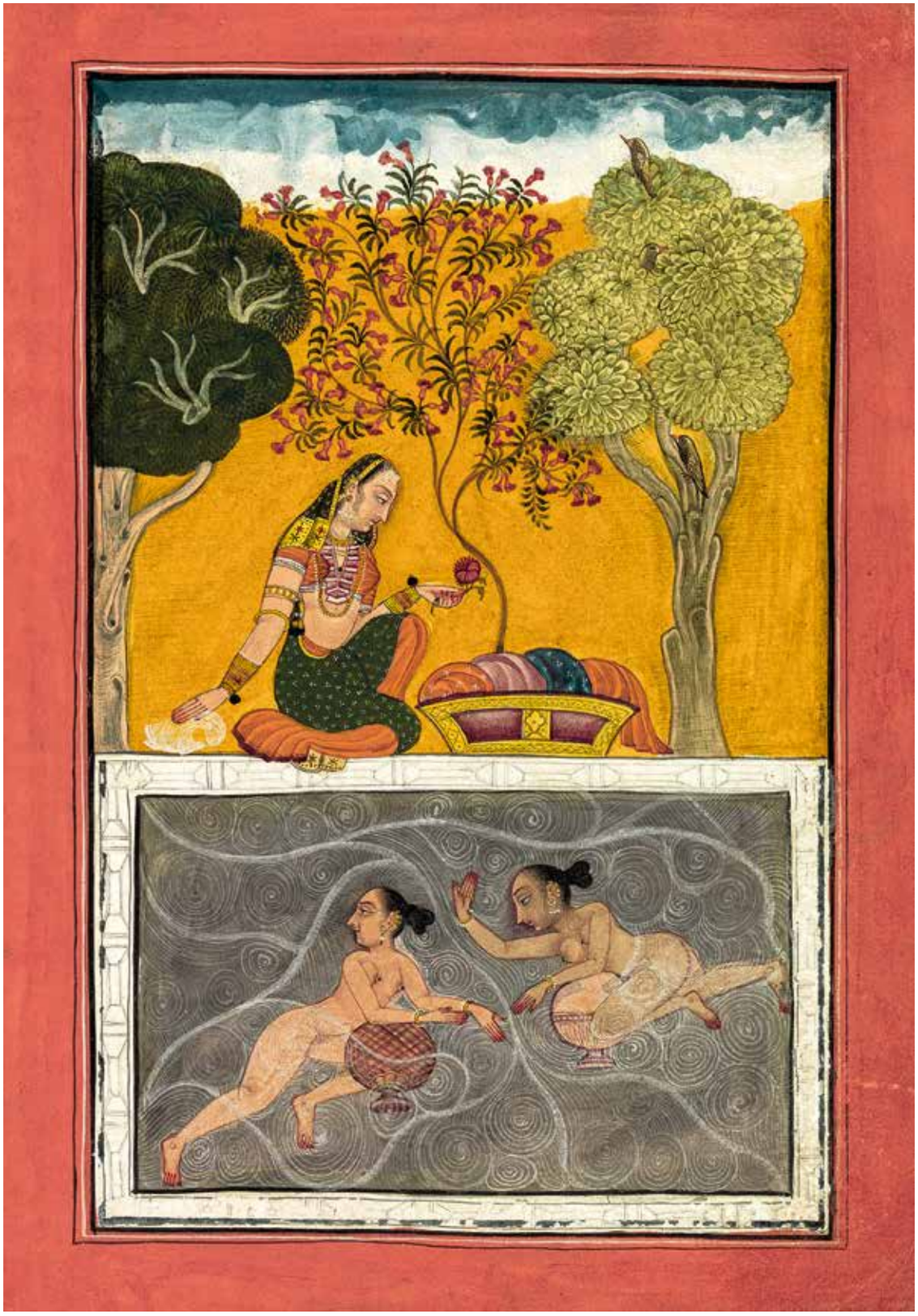
UNPUBLISHED

TWO LADIES, using empty earthen vessels as flotation pillows (an ancient Indian practice), are frolicking in a lotus pool filled to the brim with swirling water. Their discarded clothing overflows a basket perched on the perimeter of the pool. Seated beside the basket, a pensive princess leans on a diaphanous handkerchief while examining a lonely, plucked flower, symbolic of her absent lover. Three sinuous trees, etched against a deep yellow background, fill the extremely shallow foreground space.

Like many other subjects of *Ragamala* painting, the subject of this picture can vary from series to series. (A given *raga* is not necessarily represented by a male figure, nor a *ragini* by a female one.) The composition must be read in its entirety. The dramatic situation, or import, of a picture, whatever it might be, is all-important. It will express the underlying sentiment and mood of the music, yet not necessarily the specific and highly detailed subject matter of the accompanying poem, which is secondary to its meaning. The melody with which this *ragini* is associated is meant to evoke the music popular with the inhabitants of Sindh.[1]

For three other paintings from the same fine series, see catalogue numbers 45–47.[2]

1. Tandan 1983, p. 45.
2. See also Glynn, Skelton, and Dallapiccola 2011, nos. 7–9, for three published illustrations from the same series. For *Ragamala* painting, see cats. 7 and 46.



From a *Vishnu Avatara* series (cats. 49, 50)

49

Matsya, the Fish Incarnation of Vishnu, Slays the Conch Demon

Illustrated folio from a dispersed *Vishnu Avatara*
(The Incarnations of Vishnu)
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Basohli, ca. 1700

Opaque watercolor, gold, and applied beetle-wing cases (for jewelry) on paper; wide orange-red border (modern) with black and white inner rules (mostly flaked); painting 6¼ x 7⅛ in. (15.9 x 18.1 cm), page 7 15/16 x 8 15/16 in. (20.1 x 22.7 cm)

NOT INSCRIBED

PUBLISHED: Lerner 1984, no. 63a

MATSYA, THE FISH *avatara* (incarnation) of Vishnu, is usually considered the first of the great god's earthly rebirths. In this incarnation he took the form of a huge fish to save mankind from the Great Deluge and to recover the ancient Vedas, the rather abstruse yet beautiful texts that are the cornerstone of the Hindu religion. These texts had been stolen from heaven by a demon and buried beneath the primordial ocean.

In this painting Vishnu emerges from the fish to tear open the demon-thief's stomach, thereby releasing four diminutive crowned figures, each holding a manuscript symbolizing the *Veda*s under his arm.[1] This action takes place in a body of water that Martin Lerner has described as "a great expanse of transparent fabric," decorated with a triangular three-dot motif, "of the sort often worn by Indian women as an overgarment."[2]

Three stylized trees, of a type seen in seventeenth-century Basohli painting, appear against a chocolate-colored background on the far shore. The conventional blue and white sky also appears in many other Early Pahari paintings.

For another painting from this same series, see catalogue number 50. For two other paintings from a *Vishnu Avatara* series, see catalogue numbers 20 and 21.

1. Lerner 1984, p. 166.
2. Ibid.

From a *Vishnu Avatara* series (cats. 49, 50)

50

Rama with the Ax (Parashurama) Slays the Many-Armed King Karthavirya

Illustrated folio from a dispersed *Vishnu Avatara*
(The Incarnations of Vishnu)
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Basohli, ca. 1700

Opaque watercolor, gold, and applied beetle-wing cases (for jewelry) on paper; wide orange-red border (modern) with black and white inner rules (mostly flaked); painting 6¼ x 7⅛ in. (15.9 x 18.1 cm), page 7 13/16 x 8 13/16 in. (19.9 x 22.4 cm)

NOT INSCRIBED

PUBLISHED: Lerner 1984, no. 63b

IN THIS PAINTING Rama with the Ax (Parashurama), the sixth *avatara* or earthly incarnation of Vishnu, is shown killing the thousand-armed King Karthavirya. This evil king had visited the hermitage of the sage Jamadagni while the holy man was away from his home. Welcomed by Renuka, the sage's wife, Karthavirya repaid her hospitality by stealing the wish-fulfilling cow Surabhi. Martin Lerner summarizes the rest of the story: "Parashurama [who had been born as the son of Jamadagni and Renuka] then killed Karthavirya, setting off a chain of events that led to the sage's being killed by the sons of Karthavirya and Parashurama's ultimately destroying the whole race of the evil king in revenge."[1]

The present painting combines at least two different events. On the right, Parashurama, brandishing the large ax (*parashu*) given to him by Shiva, has taken Karthavirya by the hair. The king's arms, each holding a different weapon, are arrayed in a dense circle (Vishnu, in the form of Parashurama, has already hacked off some of them). Later in the story, the great god will deliver his final coup de grace. At the lower left, Renuka cradles her dead husband in her lap, while Surabhi runs away in panic in the upper left corner.

Arranged against a chocolate-brown background, the narrative has been stripped to its essential elements. The resulting figures, made emphatic by their summary treatment, are handled more like religious icons than characters in an unfolding story.

For another painting from the same series, see catalogue number 49. For two other works from a *Vishnu Avatara* series, see catalogue numbers 20 and 21.

1. Lerner 1984, p. 168.

51

Krishna Swallows the Forest Fire

Attributed to the Master at the Court of Mankot
(active ca. 1690–1730)
Illustrated folio from the dispersed "Upright" *Bhagavata Purana* (The Ancient Story of God)
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Mankot, early 18th century

Opaque watercolor, gold, and silver (now tarnished) on paper; wide red border with white and black inner rules; painting 9 x 6 3/16 in. (22.9 x 15.7 cm), page 11 1/8 x 8 5/16 in. (28.3 x 21.1 cm)

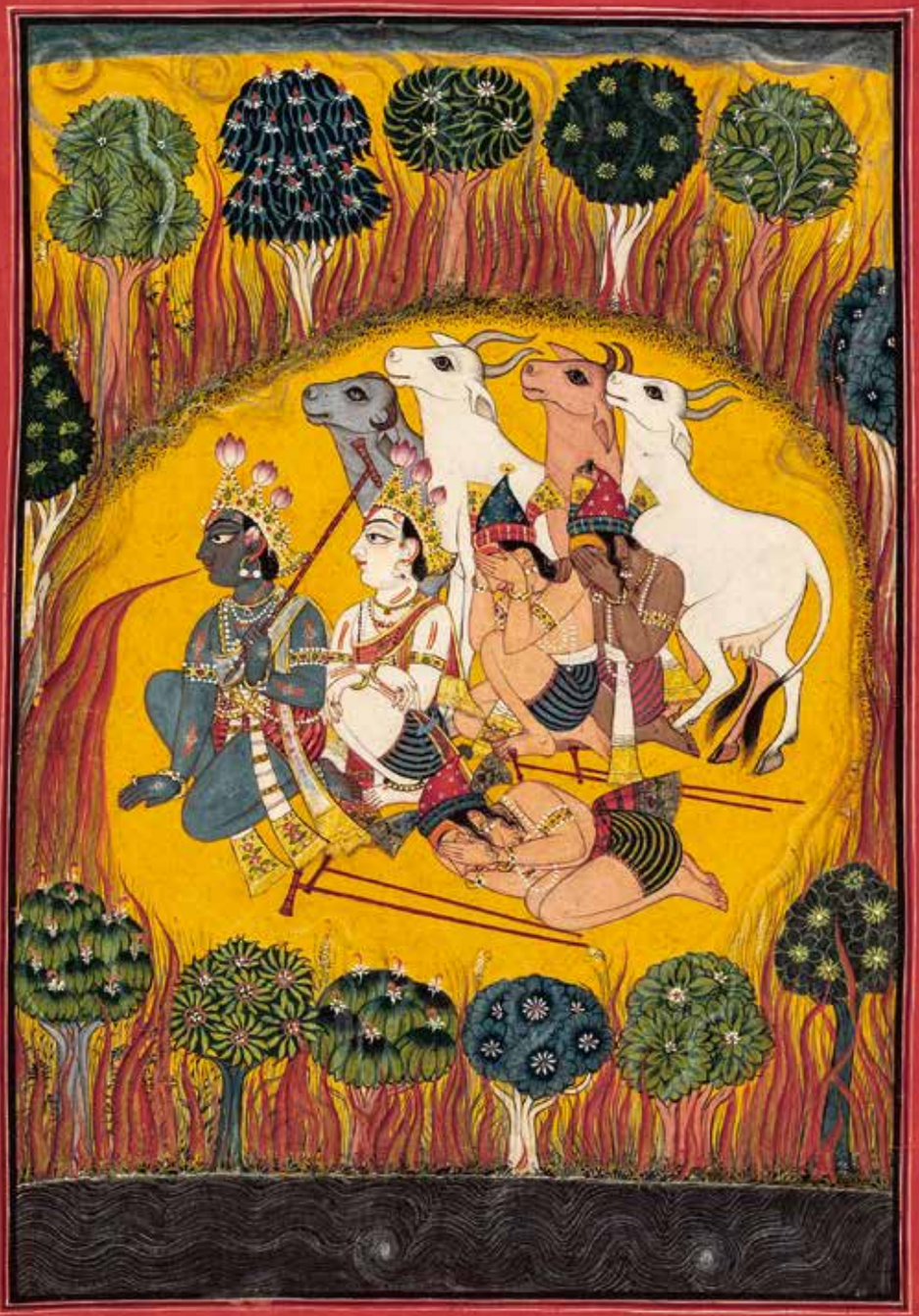
INSCRIBED on the front along the top border in Panjabi written in *takri* script: "Controlling by inhaling the shaft of forest fire"

PUBLISHED: Randhawa 1959, pl. 8

DURING HIS INFANCY and childhood, Krishna was raised in the house of Nanda, the headman of Gokul. Even though young, he killed the many evil demons who were sent to destroy him during this time. Krishna was not just preoccupied with evil demons during his childhood, but he was also alert to other dangers, as seen from the incident depicted in this superb picture. One day the young Krishna was grazing his cows in the forest with his brother Balarama and the other *gopa*s (cowherds). Earlier the fire god Agni had become angry with Krishna, because Agni, a more ancient god, was no longer receiving the respect he thought he deserved. He therefore sent an enormous fire to consume Krishna and his friends as they cavorted in the forest. As the fire closed in, Krishna asked the *gopa*s to close their eyes and then, in the "twinkling of an eye," drank up the fire. Agni was bested, and the danger to Krishna and his friends averted.

This starkly dramatic, upright painting is based on a horizontal composition of the same subject in a series thought to have been painted in Mankot about 1700.[1] Only twenty-six illustrated folios from this somewhat earlier series, all now in the Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh, have survived. They are probably the supreme achievement of the Master at the Court of Mankot. The later upright compositions by this artist, the greatest of which like the present work are painted with "flamboyance and self-assurance," make some compositional adjustments necessitated by the different format,[2] but otherwise they are much the same. (For another painting by the Master at the Court of Mankot in the Kronos Collections, see cat. 56.) A riveting Basohli painting of the same subject was formerly in the collection of Karl Khandalavala.[3]

1. For discussion of this series, see Archer 1973, vol. 1, p. 378.
2. Goswamy and Fischer in Beach, Fischer, and Goswamy, eds., vol. 2, 2011d, p. 506. For discussion of the Master at the Court of Mankot, see ibid. For three illustrated folios from the same upright series, see ibid., figs. 3–5.
3. See Khandalavala 1958, pl. M.



52

Krishna Battles Indra in Transporting the Parijata Tree from Indra's Heaven

Illustrated folio from the dispersed "Upright" *Bhagavata Purana* (The Ancient Story of God)
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Basohli, ca. 1720

Opaque watercolor on paper; wide yellow border with black and white inner rules; painting 9 1/16 x 6 5/16 in. (23 x 16 cm), page 11 3/16 x 8 1/2 in. (28.4 x 21.6 cm)

EX COLL.: Raja Dhruv Dev Chand of Lambagraon

NOT INSCRIBED

PUBLISHED: Randhawa 1959, pl. 15

A MAGICAL TREE sprouting numerous clusters of fragrant fruit, known as the *parijata*, was planted by Indra, lord of the heavens and the Thousand-Eyed One, in his garden in heaven. Narada, the troublemaking sage and patron of music, had stolen a flower from the tree and had given it to Krishna, wanting to see which of his two wives this handsome incarnation of Vishnu preferred. As Krishna gave the flower to Rukmini, Narada, wearing a sorrowful look, went to Krishna's other wife, Satyabhama, to rouse her jealousy. The sage advised Satyabhama to ask for the entire *parijata* tree. If the tree were uprooted from Indra's garden, it could be planted in such a way that its base and trunk would lie within Satyabhama's garden, while its leaves would overhang Rukmini's, thus satisfying both women. Of course this sensible compromise would not please Indra, who would lose a wonderful tree. But if Krishna finally decided to uproot the *parijata* (and he has done so here), Indra would have to deal with him, and Krishna was the stronger of the two.

In this striking painting, Vishnu (in the form of Krishna) and his lovely consort Lakshmi are riding on their mount, the parrotlike bird Garuda, warding off Indra's pointless attack. Seated behind the Divine Couple is the troublemaker Narada, holding a stringed instrument (a *vina*) and sheltering the uprooted *parijata* tree. This clash of celestial deities unfolds against a brown background, above a lotus-clogged body of water, and beneath a cloudy sky. Indra's white elephant, Garuda's foot, the *parijata* tree, and Narada's various implements extend into the yellow border, as if to demonstrate that this already dynamic composition were bursting at its seams.

53

A Lady (Nayika) Bathing, Attended by Her Confidante

Attributed to the artist Golu (active early 18th century)
Illustrated folio from the dispersed "Nurpur" *Rasamanjari* (Bouquet of Delights)
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Nurpur, ca. 1700–1710

Opaque watercolor and gold on paper (minor restoration to upper left); red border with black and white inner rules; painting 6½ x 10⅝ in. (16.5 x 27.1 cm), page 8³⁄₁₆ x 12½ in. (20.8 x 31.8 cm)

INSCRIBED on the reverse with a short identification in Hindi written in *takri* script: "*mugdhataṃ jovanaṃ . . .*" (the immature youth . . .); also inscribed in pencil with the numbers "2/7" and in blue ink with the number "11" and the note "Hegap/con/11 — 28 x 18 cms"

UNPUBLISHED

ANYONE INTERESTED IN the depiction and function of limitless space in a flat picture will delight in Indian painting, as the impulse to describe such spaces is one of its principal features. A vast expanse of green fills the background of this painting, which ostensibly depicts a *nayika*, one of the embodied personifications of love play. In a rigidly frontal composition, the *nayika* stands beside a lotus-filled expanse of water and is attended by her *sakhi*, or confidante, who holds her discarded clothing. The gentle curve of the water's edge reinforces the lazy rhythms of the *nayika*'s beautiful body. Still wet from her bath, she appears at the center of the painting as if she has been conjured from the infinite green background. Like a godly manifestation (*dhyana*), she has become a focus for our delectation as well as for our meditation.

*Nayika*s were generally divided into categories according to their age, experience, status, or situation in love. This painting probably illustrates *Ajnata Yauvan-Mugdha*, the inexperienced *nayika* unaware of her youth and beauty. According to the Sanskrit poem describing this lady, "The Nayika with moonlike face stands drying herself beside the pool. Her full-blown eyes look like lotuses in the reflection, and thinking perhaps the flowers have stuck to her ears, she moves her hand to brush them away. Next her eyes drift to the downy hair on her person which she mistakes for algae and tries to wipe off. Her hips feel heavy, and in virginal innocence she asks her companion again and again, 'Can it be that I am tired?'"[1]

The *Rasamanjari* by Bhanu Datta, which this painting illustrates, is a fifteenth-century Sanskrit poem about love in 138 verses. It occupies a preeminent place in what is often called Shringara literature, or love poetry. The love themes famously described in the sixteenth-century *Rasikapriya* (Lover's Breviary; see cat. 23) and other later texts in Hindi, or Braj Bhasha, were earlier treated in the *Rasamanjari* for the first time in Indian literature.[2]

The series to which this painting once belonged is called the "Nurpur" *Rasamanjari* after the court and kingdom in the Punjab Hills where it was made in about 1700–1710, probably for Raja Dayadhata (reigned ca. 1700–1735).[3] The same ruler plays the role of the hero (*nayaka*) in the series as a whole. Golu, the artist responsible for this series along with his workshop, was the son and grandson of the Basohli artists (originally from neighboring Nurpur) Devidasa and Kripal (see cats. 37 and 38).

1. Randhawa and Bambri 1981, p. 13. For a Basohli illustration of the same subject, see ibid.
2. Ibid., p. 1.
3. For other paintings from the same series, see Sotheby's, New York 2015, no. 1166; and Leach 1986, pp. 311–12, no. 136. For a closely related painting of dubious authenticity, see Desai, K., and Pal 2004, no. 95.

54

A Lady on a Terrace Smoking a Huqqa

Punjab Hills, kingdom of Jammu, ca. 1690–1720

Opaque watercolor on paper; red border with black and white inner rules; painting 5 9/16 x 6 7/16 in. (14.1 x 16.4 cm), page 7 5/16 x 8 1/4 in. (18.6 x 21 cm)

NOT INSCRIBED

EX COLL.: Mildred and W. G. Archer

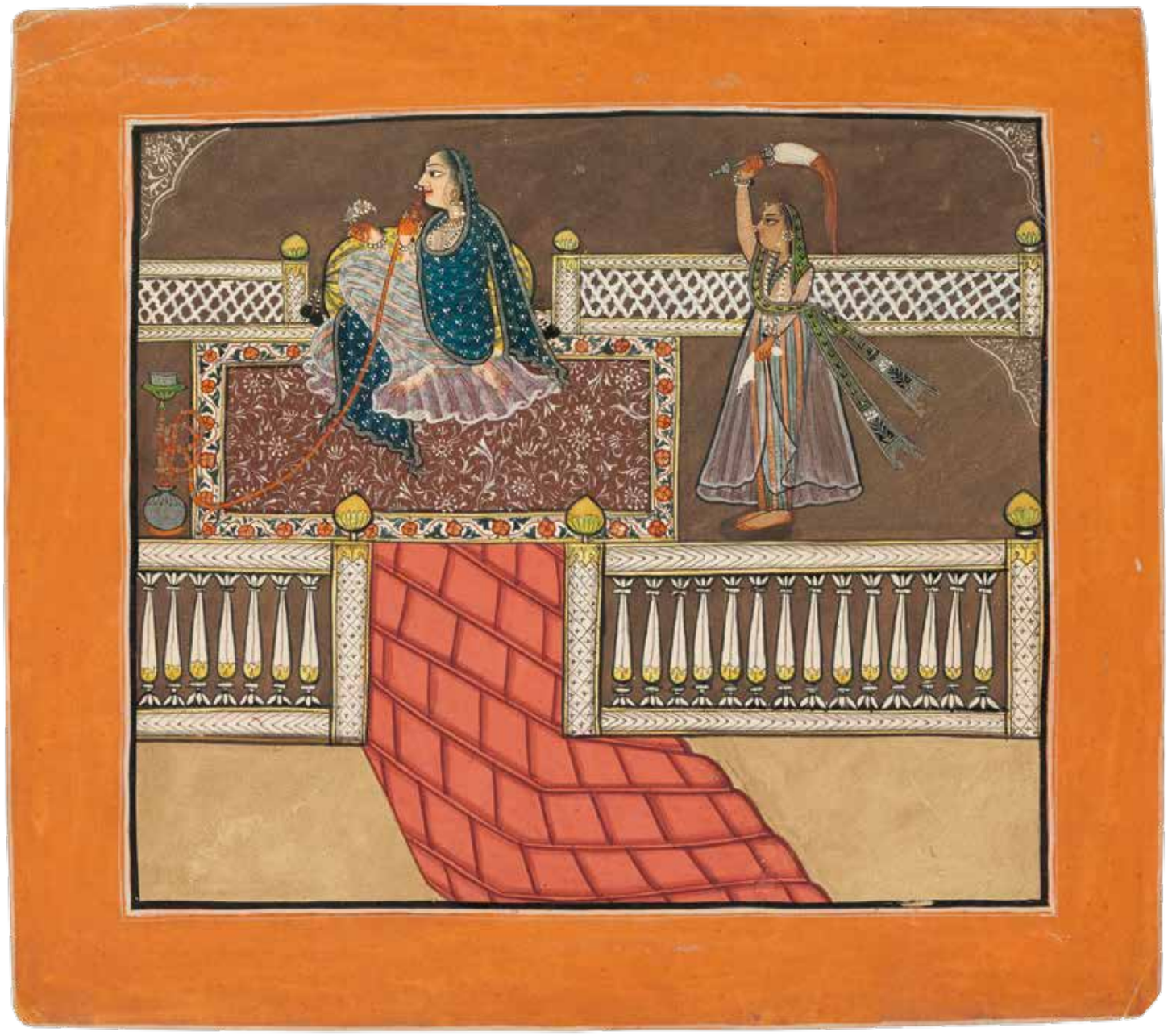
UNPUBLISHED

ON A ROOFTOP IN WINTER, a lady smokes a *huqqa* (water pipe) with fierce determination, her attention fixed on some pressing future stratagem. She is attended by a maid holding a fly whisk, or *chauri*. The perspective is unusual, particularly the uneven treatment of the marble balustrade and the delineation of the rooftop tiles, which unfurl like a carpet runner leading from the outside of the enclosed space to the area occupied by the seated lady. (For Jammu painting, see also cat. 55.)

As most of the patrons of Rajput court painting were men, it is generally assumed their art reflects an exclusively male perspective on the various diversions and topics of life. While it is true that most of India's Rajput rulers were men, one should never forget that these same men spent much of their time in their harems in the company of royal women. As their mothers, wives, daughters, or concubines often had large private fortunes of their own, these women were certainly in a position to patronize painting if they wished, and they did so on occasion.

Sadly, we know little about the way in which Rajput court paintings were enjoyed. Were they viewed at all-male drinking parties in the men's section of the royal palace? As a daily entertainment for the ruler and his ladies in the women's section of the royal palace? As an aid to devotion in proximity to the royal chapel? Were they viewed in all of these places, or in none of them?

As the macho ethos that permeates most Rajput court painting is there for all to see, perhaps the values these pictures enshrine were shared by Rajput women as well as Rajput men. Surely the heavy-jawed women depicted in this picture were nobody's fools: they obviously knew how to take care of themselves.



55

Portrait of a Hill Raja, Probably Maharaja Hamir Chand of Kangra

Punjab Hills, kingdom of Jammu, early 18th century

Opaque watercolor on paper; blue border with white outer rules and white, black, and blue inner rules; painting 6 1/16 x 9 7/16 in. (15.5 x 24 cm), page 8 x 11 1/4 in. (20.3 x 28.6 cm)

FORMERLY INSCRIBED on the front along the top border (now missing) in white paint and black ink written in *takri* script; the reverse not inscribed

UNPUBLISHED

THE PLAINLY DRESSED, aging prince, probably Maharaja Hamir Chand of Kangra (reigned 1700–1747), sits on a striped, flat-weave rug, or dhurrie. He rests his infirm knees on two pink pillows. Consistent with the simple, horizontal composition that governs the iconography of most "state" portraits (see also cat. 40), the seated maharaja faces a young man holding a handkerchief and the royal sword bag. Behind the maharaja, another young man, likewise dressed in white, holds the royal fly whisk, or *chauri*. One end of the fly whisk and a part of the sword bag extend into the border, electrifying this otherwise rather static composition. The vivid orange of the backdrop is nicely judged to harmonize with the powder-blue border.

A powerful tinted drawing in the Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh (on transfer from the Lahore Museum), depicts the same man.[1] He is portrayed in profile at about the same age, with the same hooked nose and graying beard. The inscription in *devanagari* characters on the Chandigarh drawing — "sri maharaja sri hambir chand katoch"[2] — provides a secure identification for the present portrait. (Katoch is the clan name of the Kangra rulers.) Maharaja Hamir Chand of Kangra appears to have done very little during his long reign; perhaps he was preoccupied with family matters. A youthful portrait of him was formerly in the collection of Mildred and W. G. Archer.[3]

The princes of India often commissioned depictions of their forebears and would also commission or purchase depictions of the rulers of neighboring or paramount states. This genealogical taste helps to explain the large number of royal portraits that have survived from the sixteenth through the nineteenth century.

1. I am grateful to Vijay Sharma for providing a picture of this drawing and suggesting the identification.
2. Archer 1973, vol. 1, p. 248.
3. Ibid.

56

Gosain Hari Ramji

Attributed to the Master at the Court of Mankot
(active ca. 1690–1730)
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Mankot, ca. 1730

Opaque watercolor and gold on paper; wide red border with black and white inner rules; painting 8 3/16 x 5 5/16 in. (20.7 x 13.6 cm), page 10 1/8 x 6 13/16 in. (25.7 x 17.4 cm)

INSCRIBED on the front in white ink written in *takri* script: "Shri Gosain Hari Ramji"

EX COLL.: John Kasmin; Roy Thomson, First Baron of Fleet

PUBLISHED: Galloway 2000, no. 37; Sotheby's, London 2014, no. 313

IN THIS STRIKING PORTRAIT, Hari Ramji sits on a pink carpet and rests against a dark green, striped bolster. He holds a less bulky red bolster under his left arm and leans on a small pillow covered with the same fabric found on the larger bolster. Clutching a white handkerchief in his right hand, he wears a tight red cap tied with a white-and-gold scarf and decorated with a jaunty peacock feather.

Shri Gosain (Priest) Hari Ramji, a remarkable man credited with several miracles, was the head of the Vaishnava establishment (*math*) at Pindori, in the Gurdaspur district of the Punjab, from about 1676 until his death in 1718.[1] Founded in the late sixteenth century, Hari Ram's establishment was extremely influential throughout the Punjab Hills. His tenure there was not, however, altogether free of controversy: on one occasion, he was almost beaten to death.[2] But Hari Ram looks very content and authoritative in this closely observed and highly detailed posthumous portrait. Note the barely visible wrinkles around his eyes, his incipient paunch, and the tamed bristles of his magnificent beard.

In its solid, *peori* yellow background, strong outlines, careful placement of elements, and coloristic intensity, this work recalls others painted by the artist whom B. N. Goswamy and Eberhard Fischer have called the Master at the Court of Mankot.[3] (For an earlier portrait by another Mankot artist who was probably employed in the Master's workshop, see cat. 44. For another painting by the Master himself, see cat. 51.)

1. Galloway 2000, p. 82.
2. Ibid.
3. For discussion of this artist, see Goswamy and Fischer in Beach, Fischer, and Goswamy, eds., vol. 2, 2011d; and Goswamy and Fischer 1992, pp. 96–125. For two closely related portraits, see Goswamy and Fischer 1992, nos. 38, 39.

57

Raja Sidh Sen Pays Homage to Savari Durga

Attributed to the artist known as the Master at the Court of Mandi (active ca. 1690–1730)
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Mandi, ca. 1730

Opaque watercolor and gold on paper; narrow red border (modern) with white and black inner rules; painting 11⅛ x 7⅜ in. (28.3 x 18.7 cm), page 12 1/16 x 8 5/16 in. (30.6 x 21.1 cm)

INSCRIBED on the reverse in black ink with the Indic number "58"(?) and a short note in black ink in Panjabi written in *takri* script: "Sri Raja Sidh Sen"

UNPUBLISHED

SAVARI DURGA is the form of the Great Goddess worshiped by the Savaris, a rustic community of tribals living in the Punjab Hills.[1] In this painting Savari Durga stands beneath a skinny tree capped with yellow blossoms. She has dark purple skin and four arms that hold a bow, a freshly severed skull-cup, an arrow, and a ram's horn raised to her mouth, as if to announce the arrival here of Raja Sidh Sen and his party. Savari Durga wears a peacock-feather skirt and a three-part gold crown secured by a white scarf. Adorned with a necklace of human heads and a belt of human hands, this horrific, esoteric goddess is accompanied by two jackals, the habitual denizens of her cremation grounds. In the upper right corner, four multicolored carrion birds take flight beneath a narrow strip of azure sky.

Savari Durga faces Raja Sidh Sen of Mandi (reigned 1684–1727), one of the most distinctive and original kings to rule in the Punjab Hills. The raja's religious devotions were said to have given him the ability to levitate, and he reportedly flew from Mandi to the source of the Ganges to perform his daily ablutions.[2] In this picture the tall, physically imposing raja, wearing wood ritual sandals, stands before Savari Durga in respectful homage, with his two hands clasped in devotion. He is accompanied by a shorter female attendant holding a peacock-feather *morchal*, an emblem of royalty, and a bow and arrow. Both the raja and his attendant display on their foreheads painted, horizontal marks honoring the great god Shiva, the consort of Savari Durga.

Sidh Sen's adherence to esoteric ritual practices and his belief that he communicated with Shiva and the other gods almost as a daily event provided the basis for a fairly large number of paintings in which he appears as a central character in the company of the gods.[3] Whether he worshiped Savari Durga for religious or practical reasons is perhaps unanswerable.

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1. I am indebted to Pratapaditya Pal and Edward Wilkinson for their assistance in preparing this entry.
2. Seyller and Mittal 2014, p. 91.
3. For a closely related painting of Sidh Sen with Shiva and a female goddess, see ibid., no. 30.

58

Angada, Prince of the Monkeys, Destroys Ravana's Palace and Steals His Crown

Illustrated folio from the dispersed "Shangri" *Ramayana* (The Adventures of Rama) (Style III)
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Jammu (Bahu), ca. 1700–1730

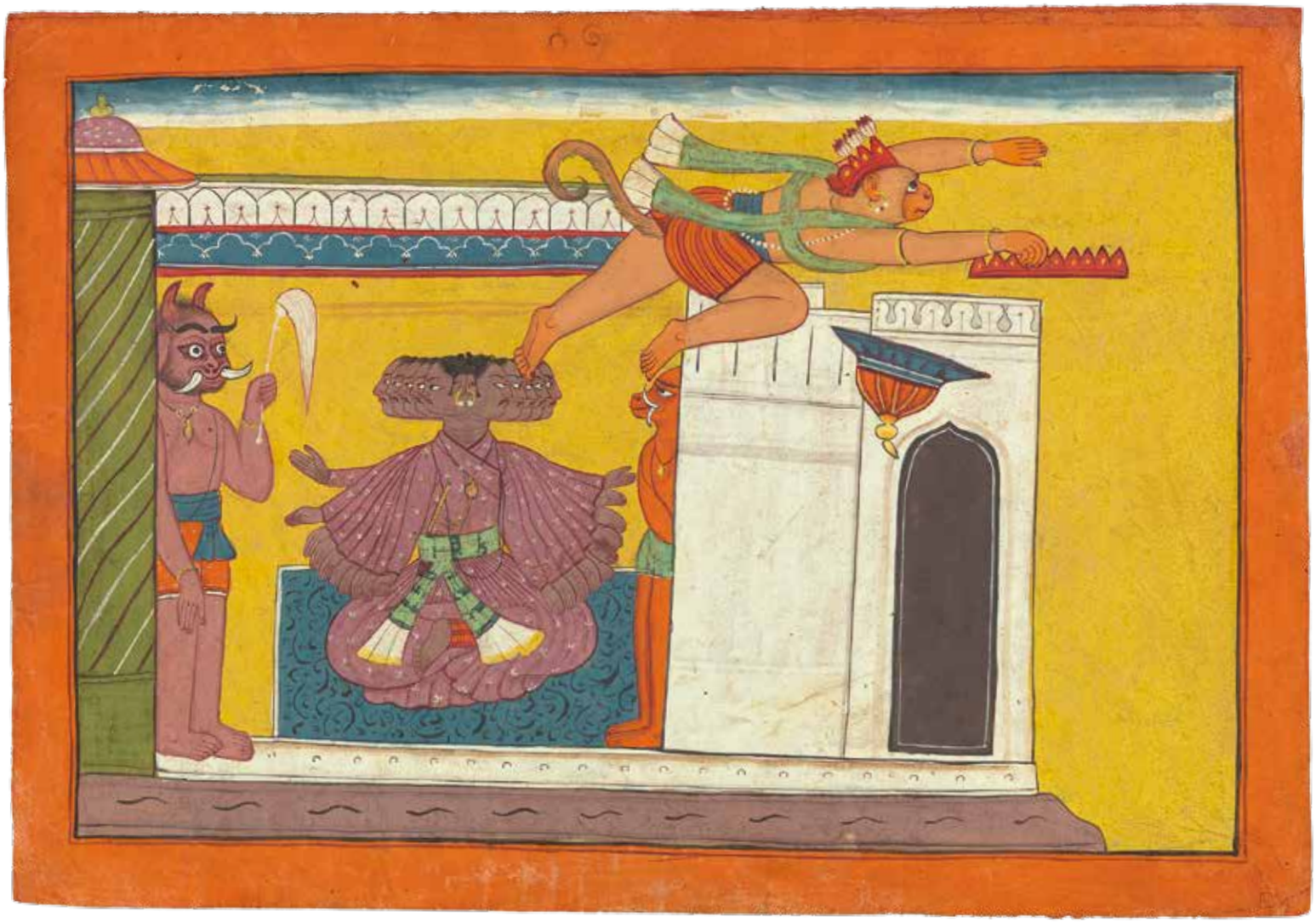
Opaque watercolor on paper; red border with black inner rules; painting 7 3/16 x 10 15/16 in. (18.2 x 27.8 cm), page 8 3/4 x 13 3/4 in. (22.2 x 35 cm)

INSCRIBED on the reverse in black ink written in *devanagari* script: "21 / Lanka"

UNPUBLISHED

IN THIS LIVELY ILLUSTRATION of an incident described in book 5 (the *Lanka* or *Sundara kanda*) of the *Ramayana*, the ten-headed Ravana, king of the demons and Rama's implacable foe, sits in his palace on the island of Lanka (modern-day Sri Lanka), guarded by two demon servants. (For five other illustrated folios from the "Shangri" *Ramayana*," see cats. 41, 42, and 59–61.) Angada, prince of the monkeys and Rama's ally, had earlier flown to Lanka to spy on Ravana's armies. Having nearly accomplished his mission, Angada allowed himself to be captured, for there were other things he needed to know and other things he wanted to do. In captivity, leaping on the roof of Ravana's palace, a roof as "high as a mountain," he destroyed it as if by lightning; the text notes that Angada then "proclaimed [Rama's] name and with a triumphant roar rose into the air. To the exceeding terror of the [demons] and the great delight of the [monkeys]," he alighted in the midst of the monkey tribe to report to Rama, safely encamped with his armies on the adjoining mainland, all that he had seen in Ravana's island stronghold.[1] The artist of this painting has added one further delightful yet superfluous touch to the narrative: in leaping upward, Angada has taken hold of Ravana's ten-part crown.

1. Vālmīki 1962–70, vol. 3, p. 101.



59

Sugriva, King of the Monkeys, Leads Krishna, His Brother Lakshmana, and Their Army through the Forest

Illustrated folio from the dispersed "Shangri" *Ramayana*
(The Adventures of Rama) (Style III)
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Jammu (Bahu), ca. 1700–1730

Opaque watercolor on paper, mounted on a sheet of modern paper; red border with black inner rules; painting 7 1/16 x 12 3/8 in. (17.9 x 31.4 cm), page 8 1/2 x 13 13/16 in. (21.6 x 35.1 cm)

NOT INSCRIBED

UNPUBLISHED

THIS ILLUSTRATED FOLIO from the "Shangri" *Ramayana* series is painted in W. G. Archer's Style III, a style of "lush exuberance" (see also cats. 58 and 60), blending Styles I (cat. 41) and IV (cat. 61), although "in somewhat coarsened form."[1] Notable are the "rioting abandon" with which the trees are depicted, the brilliant colors, and the dense yet summary forms, all of which derive from the Style I illustrations of the Early Bahu Master. According to Archer, these Style III illustrations are chiefly concerned with monkey scenes and with the "bold gusto" of the jungle environment.[2]

The illustrated folios painted in Style III are perhaps the most narratively effective in the entire series. Background accoutrements are reduced to a bare minimum, the figures are lithe and fast-moving, and the narrative action is always clear. These Style III illustrations pack quite a narrative punch.[3]

1. Archer 1973, vol. 1, p. 328.
2. Ibid., p. 326.
3. For other illustrations to the *Ramayana*, see Britschgi and Fischer 2008; and Jain-Neubauer 1981. For a late sixteenth-century Mughal illustrated manuscript of the *Ramayana*, see Beach 1983. For a Mewar illustrated series dating from the 1640s and now in the British Library, London, see Losty 2008.

60

Mourning the Assumed Deaths of Rama and Lakshmana

Illustrated folio from the dispersed "Shangri" *Ramayana* (The Adventures of Rama) (Style III)
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Jammu (Bahu), ca. 1700–1730

Opaque watercolor on paper, mounted on a sheet of modern paper; red border with black inner rules; painting 7 3/16 x 11 3/8 in. (18.3 x 28.9 cm), page 8 5/16 x 12 7/16 in. (21.1 x 31.6 cm)

INSCRIBED on the front along the upper border written in *takri* script with the number "2." Inscribed on the reverse with the Indic number "47" and the word "Lanka" written in *devanagari* script

PUBLISHED: Sotheby's, London 1988, no. 69

IN THEIR LONG CAMPAIGN against Ravana, king of the demons, Rama and his brother Lakshmana were struck unconscious by arrows fired from the heavens by the king's son Indrajit, who had rendered himself invisible thanks to a boon from the gods. In this stately painting from the "Shangri" *Ramayana*, Rama (with blue skin) and Lakshmana are mourned by their monkey and human allies. Shown in the group of mourners is Ravana's younger brother and Rama's steadfast ally, Bibishana, the future king of Lanka. In consolation Bibishana places one hand on the shoulder of Rama's friend Sugriva, king of the monkeys, and tries to wipe away his tears. The holy brothers are not dead, however: they are recumbent only because they have been momentarily stunned. They will shortly regain consciousness and jump to their feet to ultimately triumph in their epic struggle to recapture Rama's wife, Sita, and to overcome the demon king's forces.

In a later vignette, on the left, Bibishana and his chariot depart from a palace gateway, a building depicted in the colorful yet abbreviated manner that is distinctive of works from this important series. After his hasty departure, Bibishana will attempt to rally more troops to assist in the notionally dead Rama's epic struggle against Ravana.

For other illustrated folios from the "Shangri" *Ramayana*, see catalogue numbers 41, 42, 58, 59, and 61.

61

Indra Offers Sita a Plate of Payas, a Heavenly Sweet

Illustrated folio from the dispersed "Shangri" *Ramayana* (The Adventures of Rama) (Style IV)
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Jammu (Bahu), ca. 1710–40

Opaque watercolor and gold on paper; red border with black inner rules (lower left corner defective); painting 7 1/16 x 11 1/16 in. (17.9 x 28 cm), page 8 3/16 x 12 1/8 in. (20.8 x 30.9 cm)

INSCRIBED on the front around the red border in black ink in Panjabi written in *takri* script: "Seeing Sita hungry, Brahma tells Indra she is starving to death, requesting him to take some divine food to Sita so that she will never feel hungry or thirsty again . . . Indra approaches Sita with the divine food, bringing the dark-skinned goddess of sleep . . . demons gathering . . . then Indra comes to Sita, bringing divine food."[1] Inscribed on the reverse in black ink with eight lines of Panjabi text written in *takri* script and two numbers

UNPUBLISHED

SITA, WIFE OF RAMA, had been abducted by Ravana, king of the demons, and imprisoned in Ravana's walled garden, where she was guarded by female demons and ogres of every description. The king had desired the ever-faithful Sita to marry him, but she refused. To demonstrate her resolve, she also refused all the food and drink offered to her. Shortly afterward, Brahmadev, another important deity, told Indra, lord of the heavens, that as it was going to take Rama a long time to free Sita, and that as Sita in the meantime would not eat any food, Indra must travel to Ravana's capital city on Lanka to give her *payas*, a heavenly sweet. If she ate Indra's *payas*, she would not die.

In this painting, Indra offers Sita a plate of *payas*, which she will shortly consume. Indra is accompanied by Nidra, the goddess of sleep, who has been very useful: the four demons guarding Sita have all fallen asleep thanks to Nidra's intervention. The background features a number of scraggly trees of differing kinds, denoting Ravana's garden, a fabulous retreat on the demon king's island stronghold.

This painting, as well as catalogue numbers 41, 42, and 58–60, once belonged to the "Shangri" *Ramayana* series. (For discussion of the complete series, see cat. 42.) It is the only work from the series in the Kronos Collections painted in W. G. Archer's Style IV. Another picture from the same series (Benkaim Collection) is painted in Style IV and also has a lengthy inscription written in *takri* script in the red border.[2]

1. Translation by Vijay Sharma.
2. See Cummins, ed. 2011, no. 80.

62

Rama, Lakshmana, Hanuman, and Sugriva Mourn the Death of Bali

Illustrated folio from the dispersed "Mankot" *Ramayana* (The Adventures of Rama)
Punjab Hills, probably kingdom of Mankot or Nurpur, ca. 1725–50

Opaque watercolor and gold on paper; red border with black inner rules; painting 6⅝ x 10⅜ in. (16.8 x 26.8 cm), page 8⅛ x 12¼ in. (20.5 x 31.1 cm)

INSCRIBED on the reverse in black and red ink with eleven lines of Sanskrit text written in *devanagari* script (for an English translation, which as written does not completely conform with the critical edition, see Goldman, ed. 1994, pp. 100–102); also inscribed in black ink with the Indic number "27"

UNPUBLISHED

IN BOOK 4 of the *Ramayana*, Sugriva, the deposed king of the monkeys, enlists the aid of Rama and Rama's brother Lakshmana to regain his kingdom from his own older brother, Bali, the former monarch of the same territory. Sugriva makes a binding agreement with the divine brothers: he will help in their efforts to free Sita from Ravana if they will assist him in recovering the forested and mountainous land of the monkeys (called Kishkindha).

Rama, Lakshmana, Sugriva, and Hanuman, the semi-divine monkey assistant at the rear, stand here over the dead body of Bali. After a climactic battle, Rama had finally shot Bali with his arrow, which "resembl[ed] the sun shorn of its rays."[1] With Rama's bloody arrow piercing his chest, he is mourned by his wife, Tara, and three of her ladies, all of whom have unbound their hair. This knot of figures is grouped at the base of the Kishkindha Mountain. Bali's son Angada stands at the entrance of a cave in the mountain, while a tree at its summit bends, as if in grief, toward the mourning ladies.[2]

This fine painting derives from a very large series (the exact number of folios is unknown) illustrating the great Indian epic the *Ramayana*, written by Valmiki in probably the fourth century B.C.[3] The Sanskrit text, running to twenty-four thousand stanzas divided into seven books, recounts the adventures of Rama, seventh incarnation of the great god Vishnu. Deprived of his kingdom, Rama is banished to the forest wilderness, where Sita is abducted by the all-powerful, ten-headed king of the demons, Ravana. The *Ramayana* describes Rama's action-packed adventures in rescuing Sita while combating the ever-vigilant forces of evil, represented by Ravana. (For other illustrations to the *Ramayana*, see cats. 41, 42, 58–61, and 87.)

No one is certain where in the Punjab Hills, or for whom, the "Mankot" *Ramayana*, an important yet widely scattered series, was made. All its known paintings appear to illustrate incidents described in book 4 (*Kishkindha Kanda*) of the *Ramayana*, in which Rama and Lakshmana's exploits in Kishkindha, the land located in the south center of an imagined India, are described. Over the last forty years, various distinguished scholars have examined the facial types, landscape conventions, and color combinations characteristic of the series. Some, including W. G. Archer and Pratapaditya Pal, believe these pictures were painted in Mankot; others, like Eberhard Fischer, have suggested Guler, while most recently the kingdom of Nurpur, following B. N. Goswamy, has been proposed.[4]

1. Goldman, ed. 1994, pp. 100–102.
2. For illustrations from the same series of the two incidents that directly follow this one, see Mason 2001, no. 31; and Goswamy 1999, no. 178.
3. For discussion of this series and a citation of other paintings from it, see Poster 1994, no. 241.
4. Seyller and Mittal 2014, no. 10.

63

The Absent Lovers: Five Ladies on the Terrace of a Palace

Punjab Hills, probably kingdom of Mankot, ca. 1740

Opaque watercolor on paper; border missing;
painting 7⅝ x 7⅞ in. (19.4 x 18.9 cm)

NOT INSCRIBED

EX COLL.: Douglas Barrett

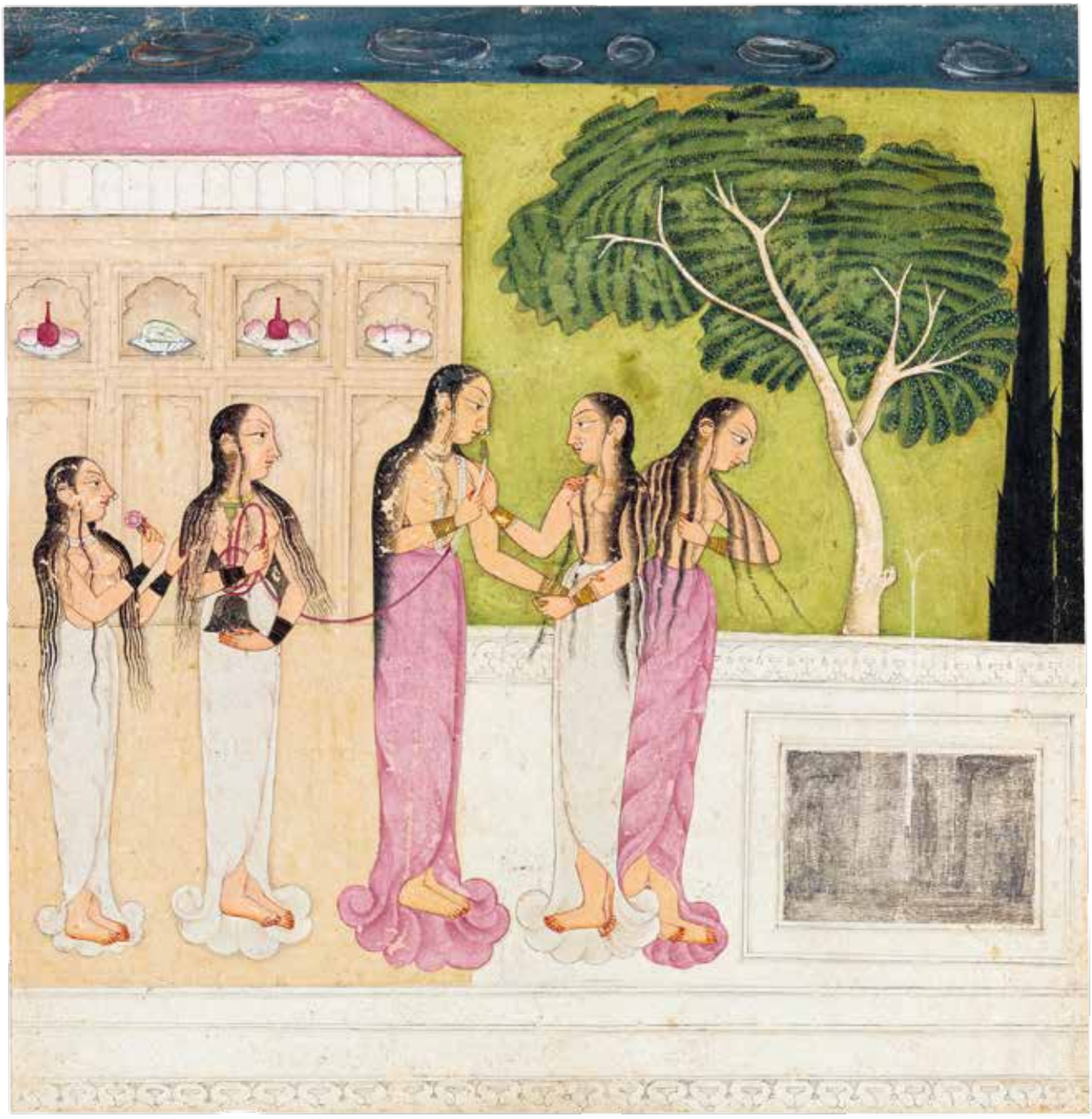
PUBLISHED: Lerner 1984, no. 64

THE THREE SERVING MAIDS dressed in long white skirts offer a flower, a *huqqa* (water pipe) bowl, and a comforting hand to their two mistresses, who wear long pink skirts. All five have just come from the bath and are naked to the waist, their hair still very wet. The women dressed in pink gaze at the small pool at the lower right with its single jet of splashing water, which probably alludes to the ladies' absent lover or lovers. This scene of unrequited passion unfolds on the terrace of an elegant palace complex.

This rather charming painting depicts a popular subject — the steadfast yet passionate lady longing for her absent lover. While typically Pahari in style and format, it nevertheless reflects the outside influence of contemporaneous Mughal, or imperial, painting. Note the reduced, almost all-white palette, for example, and the careful delineation of the palace architecture. By the time this picture was painted, the Mughal Empire was in political decline, but it still remained influential in matters of culture.

The turbulent folds of the ladies' garments and their flattened, marcelled hair recall features of a Mankot painting of a bathing lady that W. G. Archer dates to about 1730.[1]

1. Archer 1973, vol. 1, p. 379, no. 37, vol. 2, pl. 296.



64

A Lady Dressing

Attributed to the Master of the Swirling Skies (active second quarter of the 18th century)
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Jammu, ca. 1720–50

Opaque watercolor and silver (now tarnished) on paper; modern border; narrow black inner rules; painting 6 13/16 x 5½ in. (17.3 x 14 cm)

INSCRIBED on the reverse in black ink in Panjabi written in *takri* script: "the immature youth . . ."

EX COLL.: Douglas Barrett

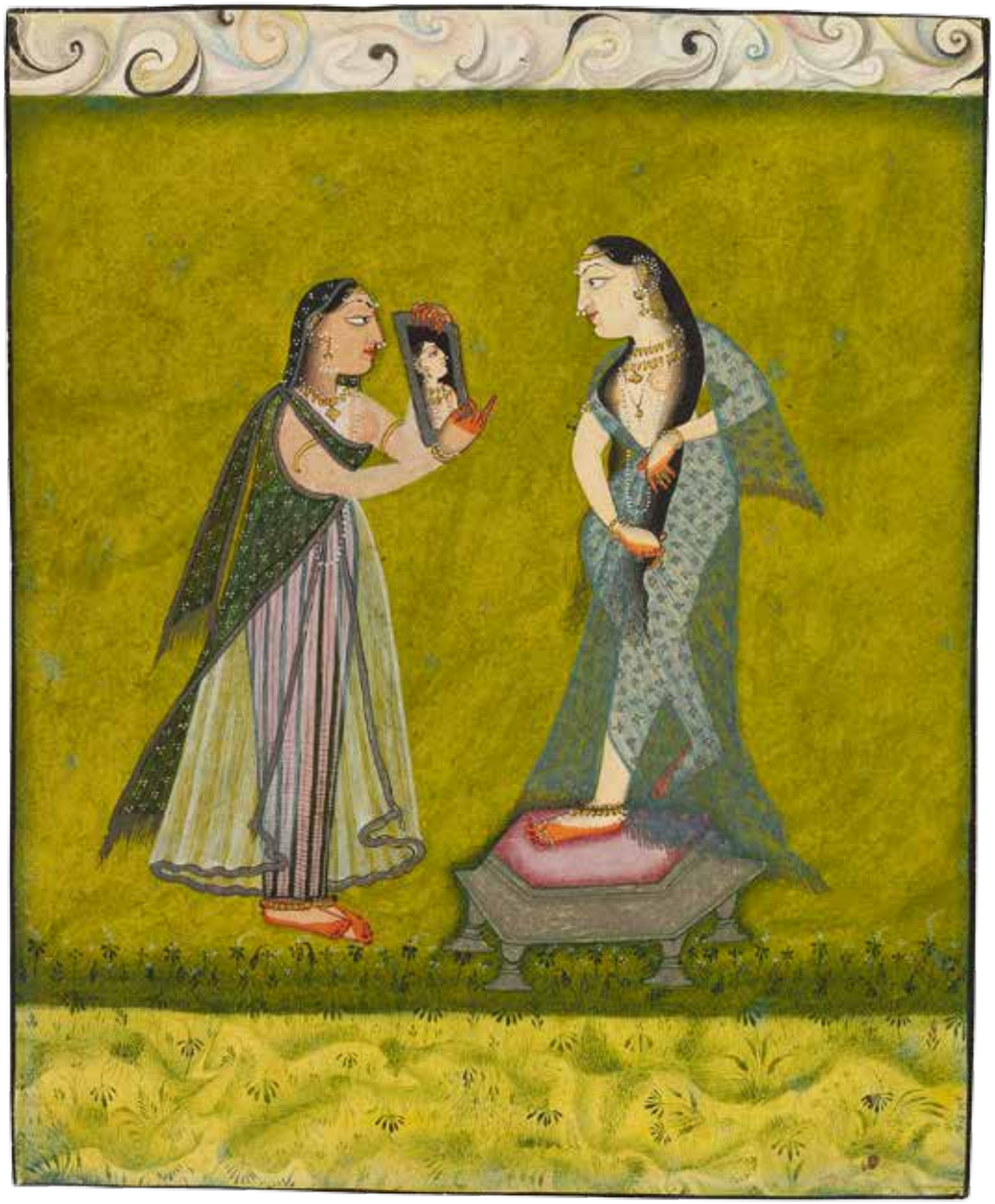
PUBLISHED: Kossak 2014, fig. 5

AFTER HER BATH, a lady stands on a low table or platform (*takht*) as she gazes into a small mirror held by her maid. The partially unclad lady will finish her toilet momentarily, but for the time being we are free to look at her. With her heavy chin, thick face, small breasts, and ample thighs, she is a virtual compendium of early eighteenth-century Jammu notions of feminine beauty. As a very conventional person, this lady would never think of removing her impressive display of filigree jewelry, for it highlights her voluptuous form.

The agitated sky, represented by black, gray, and yellow swirls on a white ground, and the foreground grass, represented by undulating vegetative strips and small plants picked out in black, are stylistic characteristics of the important artist that Steven Kossak has called the Master of the Swirling Skies (see also cat. 65).[1] Kossak ascribed more than a dozen paintings to this artist, who seems to have been active at Jammu during the second quarter of the eighteenth century. The face and figure style preferred by the Master of the Swirling Skies indicates that he was influenced by his possible relation, the Early Bahu Master (see cats. 40 and 41), who was active in the same region some forty years earlier.

This painting is notable for its restricted palette, dominated by muddy green, black, and silver, and its erotic subject matter. As Kossak notes, "Depictions of women at their toilet, often attended by a maid, are an important genre for this artist."[2]

1. For discussion of this artist, see Kossak 2014.
2. Ibid., p. 16. See also Cummins 2004.



65

Krishna and the Gopas Huddle in the Rain

Attributed to the artist known as the Master of the Swirling Skies (active second quarter of the 18th century)
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Jammu, ca. 1725–50

Opaque watercolor and silver (now tarnished) on paper; modern border; painting 8⅜ x 5⅞ in. (21.3 x 14.9 cm)

NOT INSCRIBED

EX COLL.: Walter N. Koelz

PUBLISHED: Christie's, New York 1990, no. 79; Kossak 2014, fig. 13

IN THIS MASTERFUL, densely packed composition, Krishna, his cowherd friends (*gopa*s), and their cattle huddle together beside a lotus-filled pool in a forest in Braj. Beneath a cloudy, swirling sky, several of the *gopa*s have donned hooded jackets as a protection against the heavy rain, while Krishna has taken shelter under a leafy umbrella. The rain had been sent by Indra, king of the gods and lord of the heavens. Since Krishna had previously persuaded the *gopa*s to worship Krishna himself and not Indra, this somewhat less powerful god sent the rains and gale-force winds to Braj in retaliation. Shortly after the scene depicted here, Krishna will lift nearby Mount Govardhan (represented metaphorically by the large rock on which he sits) with his little finger, and the *gopa*s, acclaiming Krishna's superior power, will take shelter beneath the upraised mountain.

The strip of cloudy sky, gnarled tree, dark colors, and heavy faces and figures are all hallmarks of the accomplished artist Steven Kossak has called the Master of the Swirling Skies (see also cat. 64).[1] With regard to this picture, Kossak notes that "the overall tone . . . with its dark green background and grey-black foreground and sky is sombre, with warm tones restricted to the bright red of Krishna's dhoti and small touches of yellow."[2] A closely related painting in the Sidhu Collection, Seattle, was probably based on the present work.[3]

1. For discussion of this artist, see Kossak 2014.
2. Ibid., p. 22.
3. Ibid., fig. 12; Ehnbom 1985, no. 93.

66

Rasalila: Krishna Dances with the Gopis

Punjab Hills, kingdom of Basohli, ca. 1750

Opaque watercolor and gold on paper; wide red border with white, silver, and black inner rules; painting 9⅛ x 7½ in. (23.2 x 19.1 cm), page 11³⁄₁₆ x 8½ in. (28.4 x 21.6 cm)

NOT INSCRIBED

PUBLISHED: Randhawa 1956, pl. 11; Khandalavala 1958, Study Supplement: no. 45; Banerjee 1981, pp. 36–37

KRISHNA PLAYS THE FLUTE at the center of a circle of dancers composed of seven *gopi*s (milkmaids) and seven figures of Krishna. The god has magically multiplied himself so that each *gopi* believes he is dancing with her alone. Demigod musicians in the four corners provide music for this "feast of love," while five gods, acknowledging Krishna's preeminence, hover in the sky above. From left to right, these deities are the moon god Chandra, driving a chariot drawn by two antelopes; Indra, god of the heavens, mounted on a white elephant; the four-headed Brahma, riding on a goose; the cobra-decorated Shiva, mounted on a bull; and the sun god Surya, driving a chariot drawn by two horses. The gods are casting tiny white flowers to the ground below in homage to Krishna and his circle of dancers. The flowers, executed in small drops of impasto paint, decorate both the heavenly and earthly portions of the picture.

As is often the case in Early Pahari painting, the composition spills into the wide, burnished borders to the right and left, as if the rectangular orientation of the page could not accommodate the thrusting, circular imperative of the composition. The great circle of dancers at the center of the picture is repeated by the stunted circle of trees at the top center and by the open lotus flowers and rounded buds and leaves in the lower panel of water. One can almost hear the insistent drumbeat of the musicians and the pulsing rhythm of the dancers.

There is another version of this subject, depicted in horizontal format and catalogued as from Mankot, about 1750–60.[1]

1. Archer 1973, vol. 1, p. 380, no. 42.

67

The Nightmare Dream of a King: The Fearsome Aftermath of the Battle of Kurukshetra

Attributed to the artist Manaku (ca. 1700–ca. 1760)
Illustrated folio from the dispersed, unfinished "Small Guler" *Bhagavata Purana* (The Ancient Story of God)
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Guler, ca. 1740

Opaque watercolor, gold, and silver on paper; red border with black and white inner rules; painting 6 15/16 x 11 3/16 in. (17.6 x 28.4 cm), page 8 9/16 x 12 3/4 in. (21.7 x 32.4 cm)

INSCRIBED on the reverse in black and red ink with three lines of Sanskrit text written in *devanagari* script

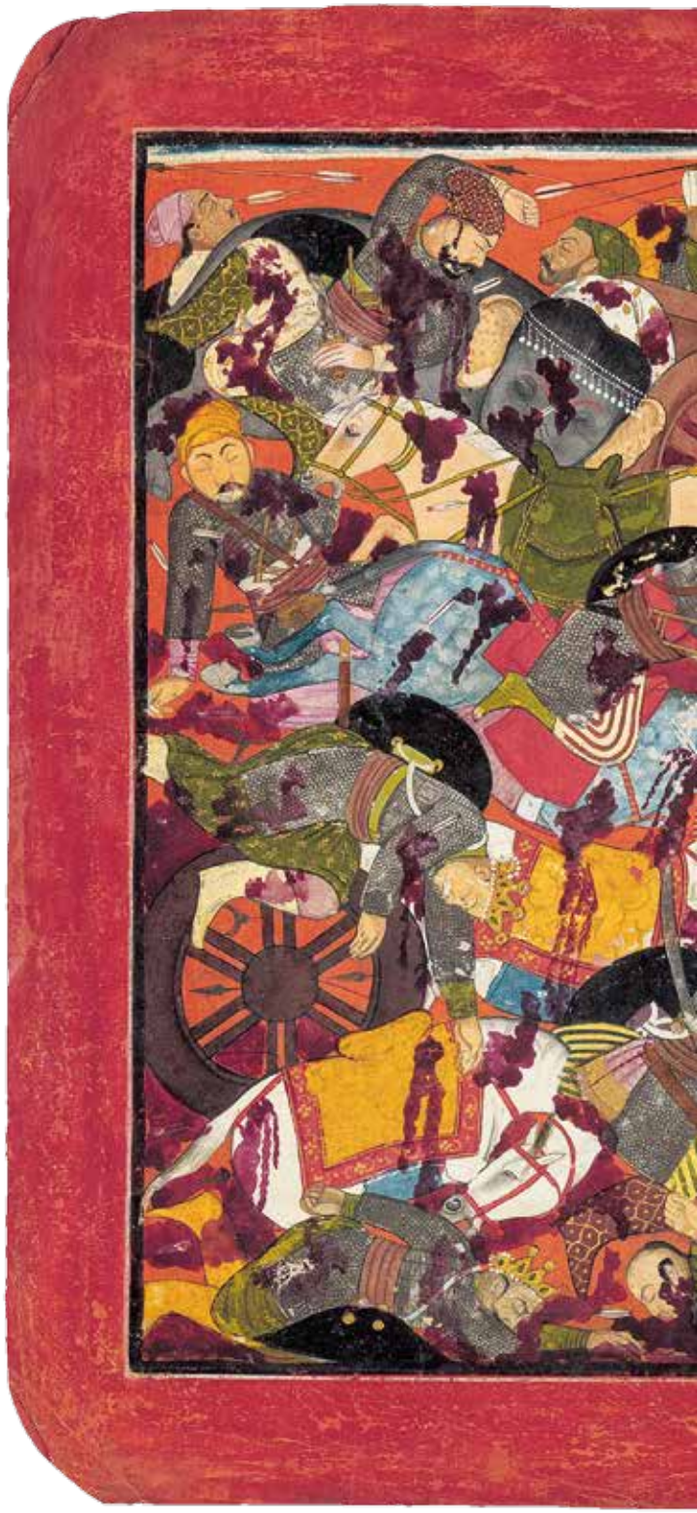
EX COLL.: Terence McInerney

PUBLISHED: Goswamy and Fischer in Beach, Fischer, and Goswamy, eds., vol. 2, 2011c, p. 653

THIS PAINTING ILLUSTRATES a scene described in book 1 of the *Bhagavata Purana*. After the fearsome battle at Kurukshetra, which concluded the war between the Pandavas and the Kauravas, the victorious Pandava king Yudhisthira cries out, "Shame on me. I have caused to be slain young boys, Brahmanas, kinsmen, friends, uncles, brothers and the preceptors. My horrible and despicable sin on account of this will not be fully expatiated even after suffering ten thousand years of hell-fire."[1]

The tangle of victims — the dead and wounded horses, elephants, chariots, and soldiers, some dressed in chain mail and others in striped coats, all besmirched with splashes of blood and arrayed beneath a shower of flying arrows — fills the entire foreground of this harrowing depiction of the aftermath of Yudhisthira's battle. The tapestry weave of figures and animals in the foreground unfolds against a solid orange background, below a narrow strip of white and blue sky. The shallow space, brightly colored background, and flattened figures with their sinuous yet firm outlines are characteristic of the earlier works of the master artist Manaku.

For discussion of the artist, see catalogue number 76. For preparatory works by this artist from the same important series as the present work, see catalogue numbers 68–70.



1. Vyasa 1970, vol. 1, p. 33.

68

Gajendra and Hayagriva Pay Homage to Vishnu

Attributed to the artist Manaku (ca. 1700–ca. 1760)
Illustrated folio from the dispersed, unfinished "Small Guler" *Bhagavata Purana* (The Ancient Story of God)
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Guler, ca. 1740

Drawing in brush and black ink on paper; drawing 7 3/16 x 11 5/16 in. (18.2 x 28.8 cm), page 8 11/16 x 12 7/16 in. (22 x 31.6 cm)

INSCRIBED on the front along the top border in black ink in Panjabi with a one-line caption written in *takri* script and the number "38"(?)

UNPUBLISHED

IN THIS STATELY DRAWING, the elephant king Gajendra, the horse-headed god Hayagriva, and Garuda, the parrotlike bird who is the vehicle of the Lord, pay homage on the banks of the Ganges River to the great god Vishnu, identified by the attributes in his four hands: a lotus flower, a mace, a discus, and a conch shell. Previously, Vishnu had intervened to save Gajendra's life and had also aided Hayagriva, protector of the Vedas (the holy texts of Hinduism). The elephant king and Hayagriva are here thanking Vishnu, while Hayagriva appears again, proceeding through the sky in his celestial chariot, in the upper right corner.

Although the elephant's body is beautifully modeled along its contours, the three-dimensional shading does not interfere with the essentially two-dimensional nature of Manaku's shallow conception. The artist's singular outlines are so carefully modulated, however, that his figures appear to be fully described. (For the artist Manaku, see also cats. 67 and 76.)

This drawing was a preparatory study for Manaku's "Small Guler" *Bhagavata Purana,* an enormous series (numbering several hundred folios) that was never completed. Catalogue number 67 is a finished work from the series, and the drawings illustrated in catalogue numbers 69 and 70 are two additional preparatory studies for the same series.

In its rounded, internal modeling, this drawing anticipates the later turn in Manaku's career, when under the influence of his younger brother Nainsukh, he started to make more naturalistic paintings (see cat. 76).

69

The Great Battle between the Gods and Demons

Attributed to the artist Manaku (ca. 1700–ca. 1760)
Illustrated folio from the dispersed, unfinished "Small Guler" *Bhagavata Purana* (The Ancient Story of God)
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Guler, ca. 1740

Drawing in brush and black ink on paper; drawing 7 3/16 x 11 5/16 in. (18.2 x 28.8 cm), page 8 11/16 x 12 3/16 in. (22 x 31 cm)

INSCRIBED on the front above the top border in black ink in Panjabi written in *takri* script: "The gods killed the demons in large numbers, but they rose to life again in the great battle between the gods and demons";[1] also inscribed with the Indic number "98"

UNPUBLISHED

MANAKU'S "SMALL GULER" *Bhagavata Purana* was a massive project; as planned, it was to comprise hundreds of folios. But this ambitious project was never completed. The early parts of the text were fully painted (see cat. 67). About fifty of these fully painted works appear to have survived, the largest number in the Lahore Museum and the Rajasthan Oriental Research Institute in Udaipur. But the later parts of the text exist only in the form of preparatory drawings, three of which are included here (in addition to this work, see also cats. 68 and 70). About an equal number of these preparatory drawings appear to have survived, although a precise inventory has never been made. Folios from what remained of the original yet unfinished series began to be dispersed as early as 1933.[2]

The tapestry weave, or tangle, of bodies compressed in the foreground is akin to Manaku's finished work from the same series (cat. 67), as well as a preparatory drawing depicting yet another battle described in the same text (cat. 70). This pictorial flatness is characteristic of Manaku's highly conservative identity as an artist.[3]

1. English translation by B. N. Goswamy (personal communication with Steven Kossak, 2015).
2. Goswamy and Fischer in Beach, Fischer, and Goswamy, eds., vol. 2, 2011c, p. 651.
3. For the "Small Guler" *Bhagavata Purana*, see ibid., p. 643, nos. 5, 5a–h.

70

The Gods Are Ousted by an Army of Demons

Attributed to the artist Manaku (ca. 1700–ca. 1760)
Illustrated folio from the dispersed, unfinished "Small Guler" *Bhagavata Purana* (The Ancient Story of God)
Panjab Hills, kingdom of Guler, ca. 1740

Drawing in brush and black ink on paper; drawing 7⅛ x 11⅛ in. (18.1 x 28.3 cm), page 8 11/16 x 12 7/16 in. (22 x 31.7 cm)

INSCRIBED on the front above the top border in black ink in Panjabi written in *takri* script: "... went to; mounted the celestial vehicle and went to the land of the *gandharvas*";[1] also inscribed with the Indic number "93"

UNPUBLISHED

THE GODS are not having a good day. They are being driven out of the city of Tripura by an army of demons. This battle scene probably depicts an incident described in book 8 of the *Bhagavata Purana*.[2] Vishnu, mounted on Garuda, and Ganesha, mounted on a rat, his form of transport, appear in the lower left corner of the drawing. With its tangle of figures compressed in the foreground, this composition is similar in its overall configuration to Manaku's other battle scenes (see cats. 67 and 69) from the same series.

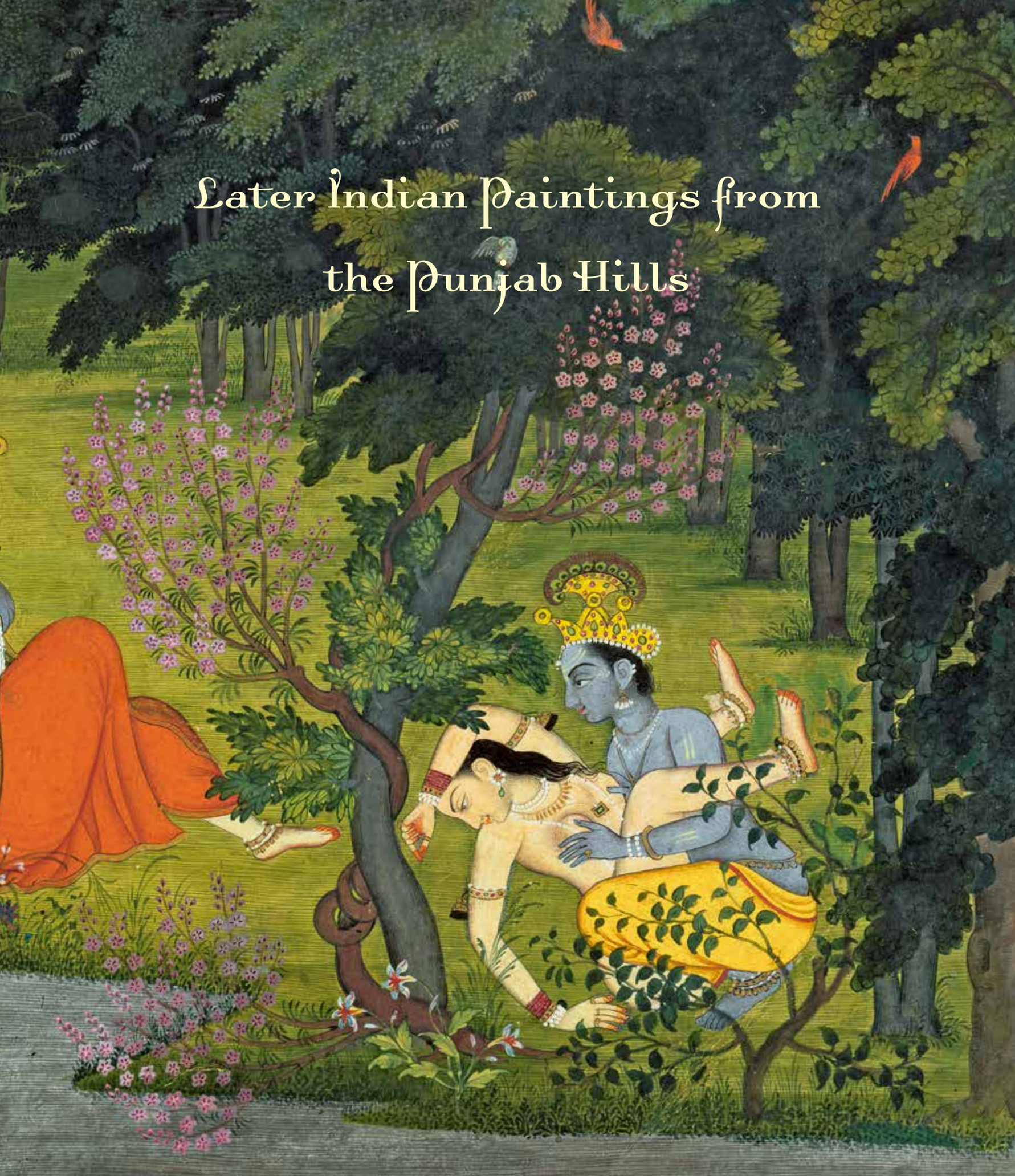
This drawing reveals Manaku's propulsive, cursive technique as a draftsman. Given his basically conservative attitude to picture-making, he concentrates on defining outlines alone. There is rarely any shading or internal modeling in his drawings. (The work illustrated in catalogue number 68 is a rare exception. Note the elephant's carefully modeled body.) But his line, as it thickens and thins, is so nuanced that it seems to create fully rounded objects in space. In making this drawing and the previous one, he used at least two brushes: a thinner brush loaded with grayish ink, and a thicker brush loaded with black ink for accents or the occasional correction. He worked very fast, yet there was very little underdrawing to guide his hand. Given these facts, it is amazing that he managed to cover the entire surface of his complicated designs with such casual authority.

In the words of Eberhard Fischer and B. N. Goswamy, "These drawings are neither first drafts to be worked upon and turned into paintings nor made after finished paintings to be kept as *aides-mémoires* in the family; they are works in their own right, a continuation of paintings in the series.... It is just possible that for him [Manaku] the making of drawings was a mind-cleansing ritual, or an exercise in keeping his hand in trim as the years went by."[3]

Two other drawings from the "Small Guler" *Bhagavata Purana* were published in *Masters of Indian Painting*.[4] The Philadelphia Museum of Art also has two more drawings from the series.[5]

1. English translation by B. N. Goswamy (personal communication with Steven Kossak, 2015).
2. Email from B. N. Goswamy to Steven M. Kossak, August 29, 2015.
3. Goswamy and Fischer in Beach, Fischer, and Goswamy, eds., vol. 2, 2011c, p. 653.
4. Ibid., pp. 655–56, figs. 11, 11a.
5. See Cameron 2015, pls. 1, 49, nos. 47, 48.

Later Indian Paintings from the Punjab Hills



71

Balwant Singh

Attributed to the artist Nainsukh (active ca. 1735–68)
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Jammu or Jasrota, ca. 1745

Opaque watercolor and gold on paper; oval pink border with broad, dark blue inner rule; painting 4⅜ x 2 15/16 in. (11.1 x 7.5 cm), page 5 x 3 11/16 in. (12.7 x 9.3 cm)

NOT INSCRIBED

UNPUBLISHED

IN THE SECOND QUARTER of the eighteenth century, painting from the Punjab Hills underwent a profound shift that witnessed the demise of the Early Pahari style (cats. 37–70) and the simultaneous birth of a new style of painting that was much more naturalistic, as well as more in tune with Mughal painting and with court painting in the rest of India. This Later Pahari style was characterized by cool colors and fine drawing, rounded, three-dimensional forms, and deep, continuous space, often unfolding within a landscape setting. The formative center for the Early Pahari style was the small yet important kingdom of Basohli, while that for the Later Pahari style (cats. 71–95) was the much larger and more important kingdom of Kangra, about one hundred miles to the southeast of Basohli.

B. N. Goswamy and Eberhard Fischer trace this profound change to various factors, among them the work of the artist Pandit Seu (ca. 1680–ca. 1740), a shadowy figure to say the least. We prefer to credit the work to one of Pandit Seu's two sons, the masterly Pahari painter Nainsukh (active ca. 1735–68). Nainsukh was undeniably the painter of the present portrait of Balwant Singh (1724–1763), his inspired, aristocratic patron.

W. G. Archer, Karl Khandalavala, and B. N. Goswamy have argued in great detail about the identification and lineage of Balwant Singh. Archer and Khandalavala believe he was a prince of the kingdom of Jammu, while Goswamy believes he was a prince of the kingdom of neighboring Jasrota.[1] (As Balwant Singh's birth year and death year were inscribed on paintings that were indisputably made for him, his life dates are not in question.) As a mere relation, Balwant Singh may have been politically insignificant, yet as a patron of painting (and probably music and dance), he was truly world-class. During the middle years of Nainsukh's career, the artist worked for Balwant Singh almost exclusively, producing more than fifty drawings, tinted drawings, and fully colored paintings showing his patron in both formal and decidedly informal situations.[2] These works have a surface brilliance, a human intimacy, and a psychological complexity that are indisputably rare.

In this fine work, Balwant Singh is depicted in a half-length portrait within a Mughal-format oval frame. The prince holds a narcissus flower of the paperwhite type, with multiple flower heads (denoting his cultural refinement), and the tail end of a *huqqa* (water pipe). Resting against a bolster, he wears a fancy turban decorated with a fine, jeweled *sarpech* (turban ornament), a curling feather-plume, and a flower garland around his neck. His padded Mughal-style coat (*jama*) is tied on the left in the non-Muslim way. He has a trimmed beard and displays an alert, intelligent expression.

A closely related brush drawing, by Nainsukh, heightened with white of approximately the same date also depicts Balwant Singh in half-length within an oval frame, yet in mirror reverse. This drawing, formerly in the collection of W. G. Archer, is now on permanent loan to the Museum Rietberg, Zurich.[3]

1. Goswamy 1997, pp. 259–84.
2. For discussion of the life and career of Nainsukh, see ibid.
3. Ibid., no. 34.

72

A Standing Lady

Attributed to the artist Nainsukh (active ca. 1735–68)
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Jammu or Jasrota, ca. 1745

Opaque watercolor on paper; dark blue border with superscription in white; painting 7⅛ x 4⅛ in. (18.1 x 10.5 cm), page 8⅜ x 5⅞₁₆ in. (21.3 x 13.8 cm)

INSCRIBED on the reverse with an illegible signature, the date "2/11/51," and the measurements "8.5 x 5.7"; notated with two faded collector's stamps in purple ink

UNPUBLISHED

THE LADY IS WEARING a long, gownlike dress (*peshwaj*) decorated with stylized flower blossoms and a transparent gray scarf (*odhani*) on her head and around her shoulders. Women traditionally wore the refined and elegant *peshwaj* on the occasion of household religious festivals.[1]

The plain setting, unadorned background, supple outline, and distinctive face are all hallmarks of the celebrated Pahari artist Nainsukh, to whom we attribute the present work. Nainsukh's easygoing, Mughal-derived, naturalistic style had a great influence on the later work of his elder brother Manaku (see cats. 68–70 and 76) and even on the later work of his own father, the artist Pandit Seu.[2] Indeed, Nainsukh's lyrical style, gift of precise observation, and charismatic personality profoundly affected painting throughout the Punjab Hills, inaugurating the Later Pahari style, which he was the first to systemize and promulgate (see also cat. 71).

Through the agency of Nainsukh's four artist sons (Kama, Gaudhu, Nikka, and Ranjha), his two artist nephews (Fattu and Kushala), and their children, a younger generation of painters, radiating from the family enclave in Guler to resettle in a number of kingdoms throughout the Punjab Hills, including Kangra,[3] popularized Nainsukh's style. They imitated and amplified its qualities to such an extent that it became by the late eighteenth century the "official" style of painting in the region. These numerous late eighteenth-century Pahari works are often called "Kangra paintings." Today the paintings produced by this talented "first, second, and third generation after Nainsukh" are possibly the most widely acclaimed works of any school of Indian painting. They have an undeniable sweetness and naturalism that people love.

1. Goswamy 1993, p. 391.
2. Goswamy and Fischer 1992, pp. 212–37.
3. The classic text charting Nainsukh's influence and the "Johnny Appleseed" effect of the travels of his family members is Goswamy 1968.

73

A Lady on a Swing

Punjab Hills, kingdom of Guler, ca. 1750–75

Opaque watercolor and gold on paper; pink, gold-flecked outer border with dark blue inner border and white and black inner rules; painting 7⅛ x 5 in. (18.1 x 12.7 cm), page 8½ x 6⅜ in. (21.6 x 16 cm)

NOT INSCRIBED

UNPUBLISHED

A LADY STANDS on a swing suspended from the limb of a flowering tree during the monsoon season. Since the arrival of the yearly rain is a joyful time in India, playing with a swing to circulate air is a seasonally appropriate activity. In this delightful picture, the well-born, comely lady is attended by two maids and a female singer who is performing with open arms. The handmaidens hold a gold, jewel-encrusted *pandan* (a box containing *pan*, a lime paste, areca nut, tobacco, and betel leaf concoction, with matching tray) and a *huqqa* (water pipe), all of which the lady will later use in her rain-soaked, alfresco entertainment. The sky in the background is heavy with threatening clouds.[1]

The lady has henna-decorated palms and wears a long pink dress (*peshwaj*) and red scarf that float in the breeze behind her. She has a vigorous, youthful body, a pretty face, long black hair, and very fair skin. Both she and her look-alike maids are not real creatures of flesh and blood but rather embodiments of a certain ideal of feminine beauty. This gracious physical type was first developed by the famous Pahari artist Nainsukh (active ca. 1735–68) in the second quarter of the eighteenth century. Wishing to portray the ideal woman, this painter regarded every well-born woman as ideal. M. S. Randhawa said of these ladies that they "languish with grief yet even at moments of despair their innate breeding precludes recourse to rough or brusque gestures. [Their] faces are noble and serene, [their] figures tall and graceful, [their] stances exquisite and poised. . . . Every woman is a princess imbued with idyllic grace."[2]

Through the agency of Nainsukh's four artist sons and two artist nephews, this female type resurfaced throughout the Punjab Hills later in the century, replacing a rougher earlier type, to become the omnipresent image of the Pahari woman, as portrayed in later painting from the Punjab Hills. (For the artist Nainsukh, see cats. 71 and 72.)

1. For another painting of the same subject, see Randhawa 1962, pl. xv; Archer 1960, pl. 92; and Archer 1973, vol. 2, pl. 215, no. 40. According to Archer, "swinging was symbolic of rapturous love-making while clouds brooding in the sky had similar significance" (Archer 1960, pl. 92).
2. Randhawa 1963, p. 18.

74

An Aristocratic Nobleman, Probably a Reigning King, Pays Homage to the Divine Family (Shiva, Parvati, and Nandi the Bull)

Punjab Hills, kingdom of Guler, ca. 1750–75

Opaque watercolor and gold on paper; dark blue outer border with red inner border and black inner rules; painting 9 9/16 x 6 3/8 in. (24.3 x 16.2 cm), page 11 13/16 x 8 5/16 in. (29.9 x 21.2 cm)

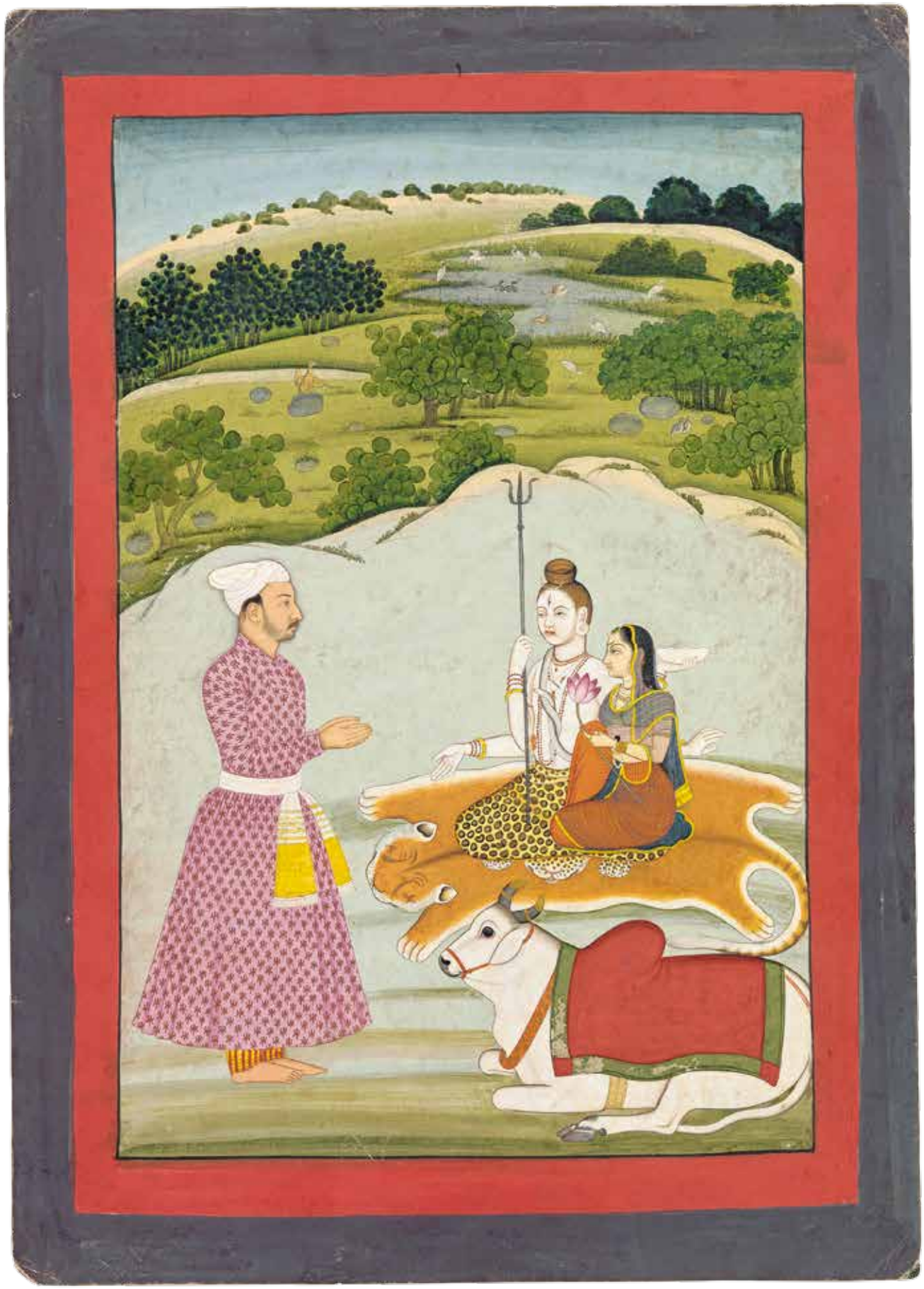
INSCRIBED on the reverse in black ink with two hastily written and unreadable lines in *devanagari* script; also inscribed in black ink with the Indic number "23," the Arabic number "32" or "33," and a doodle

UNPUBLISHED

A PAHARI GRANDEE stands respectfully with hands folded in homage before an image of Shiva, either real or summoned through meditation. The great, four-armed god holds a trident and skull-cup, wears his long hair gathered in a topknot, and sports a leopard-skin skirt wrapped around his loins. He sits on a tiger-skin rug with his consort, the goddess Parvati; both are accompanied by their mount, Nandi the bull. The grandee in the foreground of this curiously domestic picture wears a violet Mughal-style coat (*jama*), white turban, white and gold *patka* (cummerbund), and striped trousers (*paijama*). His feet are unshod, as they should be in the presence of the Divine Family.

This very handsome work was probably painted by one of the artists in the first generation after Nainsukh (see cats. 71 and 72). The naturalistic landscape background depicting the gently rolling topography of the Kangra Valley is a telltale indication of Nainsukh's influence, and the picture may in fact be one of the artist's poorly understood later works.[1]

1. For comparison, see, for example, Goswamy 1997, nos. 89, 90. See also Archer 1973, vol. 2, pl. 104, no. 25; Archer 1976, no. 22; and Fischer 2005, no. 19.



75

Queen Choladevi before the Sage Angiras

Illustrated folio from a dispersed *Vrataraja* (King of the Rites)
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Guler, ca. 1790

Opaque watercolor on paper; pink-flecked outer border and dark blue inner border; painting 6⅝ x 9¾ in. (16.8 x 24.8 cm), page 8¼ x 11½ in. (21 x 29.2 cm)

INSCRIBED on the reverse with the word *"Mahalakshmi"* and lines of text, probably from a compendium called the *Vrataraja*

PUBLISHED: Dehejia, V. 1999, no. 47

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Steven Kossak, The Kronos Collections, 1979 (1979.514)

WEARING A BLUE *odhani* demurely framing her shoulders, the sow-faced Queen Choladevi appears before the ancient sage Angiras, who sits on a platform beside his retreat in the forest wilderness. Earlier, Choladevi had insulted the great goddess Lakshmi, appearing at her mansion disguised as an old woman. Taking umbrage, Lakshmi cursed Choladevi and decreed that she was to be afflicted forevermore with the face of a sow. Following this heavenly rebuke, the queen fled to the forest to learn from Angiras the *vrata*, or rite, that she had to perform in order to placate Lakshmi and return to her human condition. Angiras told Choladevi to draw upon a white cloth an eight-petaled lotus with each petal containing an image of one of the Mothers (acolytes of Lakshmi). At the center of the lotus, she was to draw and then meditate upon an image of the four-armed goddess "wearing beautiful garments, adorned with rich ornaments, and attended by a pair of elephants."[1] After performing these rites, the queen succeeded in placating Lakshmi and soon thereafter regained her human appearance.

In this painting from the Devi, or Great Goddess, legends, Queen Choladevi and Angiras appear at the center of a rolling landscape containing clusters of trees and pink-tinged hills that evoke the countryside of the Kangra Valley (see cat. 84). The sage Angiras, the possessor of important yet esoteric knowledge, holds an unopened manuscript in one hand and gestures with the other.

The text that this painting helps to illustrate is obscure. It is probably a compendium entitled *Vrataraja* compiled in the eighteenth century by a certain Vishvanatha in the town of Kalyana, near Mumbai.[2]

1. Dehejia, V. 1999, p. 288.
2. Ibid.

76

Hide-and-Seek: Krishna Playing a Game with the Gopas (Cowherds)

Ascribed to the artist Manaku (ca. 1700–ca. 1760)
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Guler, ca. 1750–55

Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper; narrow dark blue border (probably trimmed); painting 9⅝ x 6¾ in. (24.4 x 17.1 cm)

INSCRIBED on the reverse in black ink in Hindi written in *devanagari* script: "*manak ki likhi*" (painted by Manak)

PUBLISHED: Mehta 1926, pl. 21; Khandalavala 1958, no. 241; Archer 1973, vol. 1, p. 293, no. 34, vol. 2, pl. 209; Goswamy and Fischer 1992, no. 111; Kossak 1997, no. 60; Craven 1998, p. 52; Goswamy and Fischer in Beach, Fischer, and Goswamy, eds., vol. 2, 2011c, p. 652; Guy and Britschgi 2011, no. 81

THIS WORK, one of the finest and most famous Indian paintings in the Kronos Collections, is among the few stand-alone works in America ascribed to the illustrious artist Manaku, who never signed any of his pictures. Born in the small Pahari kingdom of Guler around the year 1700, Manaku lived and worked there until about 1760, the presumed year of his death. He was the son of Pandit Seu, another important Pahari artist, and the older brother of Nainsukh (see cats. 71 and 72), through whose influence the later style of all paintings in the Punjab Hills was completely transformed.

In keeping with his talent, Manaku was given the major responsibility for producing a number of the most important series ever attempted in Indian painting. By about 1725, he was entrusted with the greatly enlarged and refigured Siege of Lanka portion of his father's *Ramayana* (The Adventures of Rama) series. What has survived from this segment comprises about eight finished and four half-finished pictures, along with approximately twenty-eight preparatory drawings.[1] By about 1730, Manaku was given another celebrated series: a *Gita Govinda* (Song of the Cowherds) comprising about 150 folios.[2] And around 1740, he was commissioned to create the series known as the "Small Guler" *Bhagavata Purana* (The Ancient Story of God),[3] which contained hundreds of folios, including completely finished pictures (see cat. 67) as well as preparatory drawings (see cats. 68–70). The paintings in all these series were produced in Manaku's characteristically conservative and majestic manner, with strong background colors, narrow strips of sky along the top and water along the bottom, and simplified, rather flattened figures, landscape elements, and architecture contained within a horizontal frame.

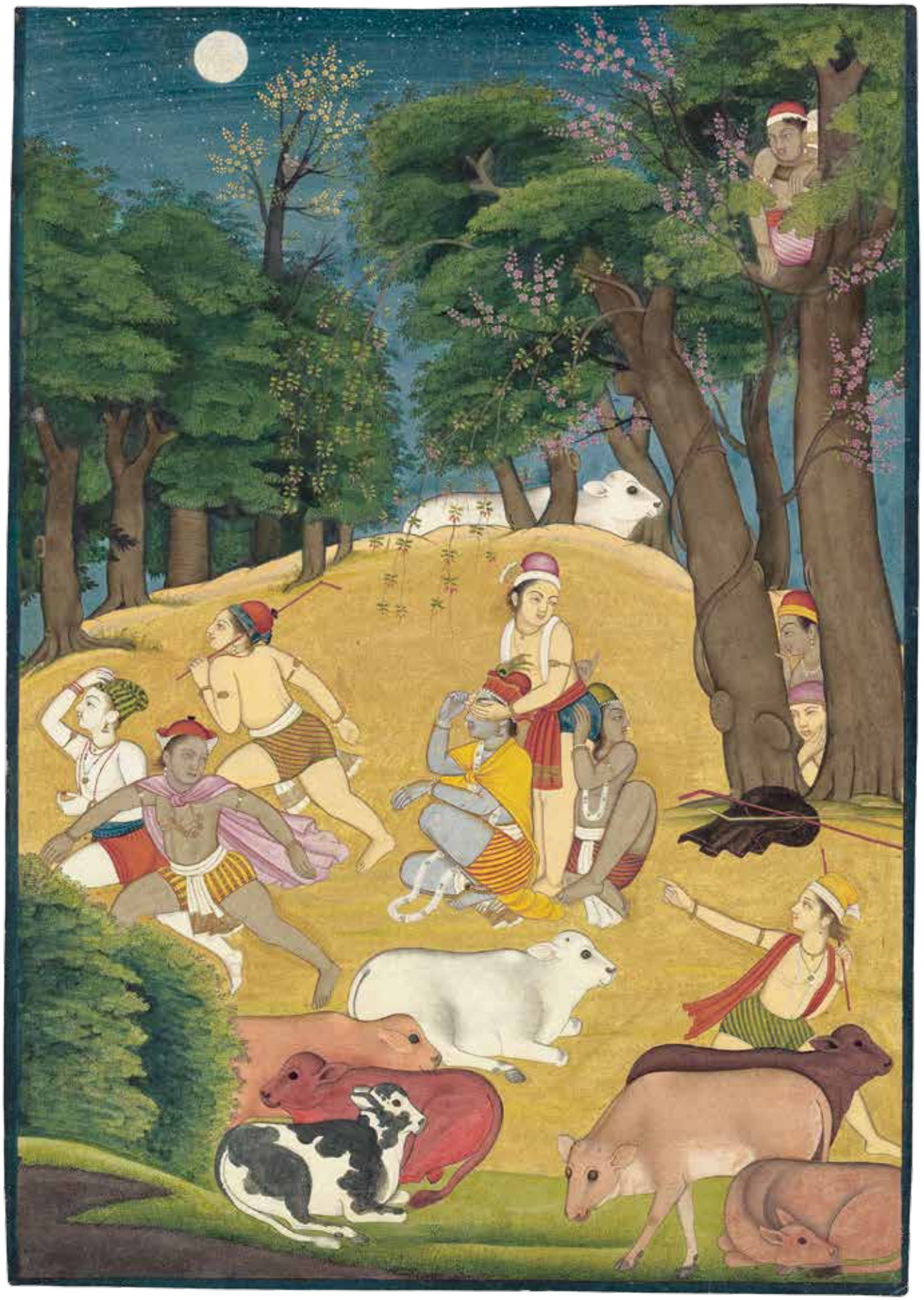
Nevertheless, Manaku did on occasion, as here, paint individual, or album, pictures that were never intended to belong to a series. The present picture of about 1750–55 also indicates the direction of the artist's later style, which, under the influence of Nainsukh, became increasingly naturalistic.

In this picture the seated cows in the foreground are beautifully arranged, and the nighttime sky, translucent leaves and blossoms, and gentle moonlight gilding the hillside are all marvels of observation.[4] But in the more important midsection, the friezelike interplay of figures negates the sense of a continuous outdoor space that the up-to-the-minute Manaku has labored hard to realize; the artist's native, conservative bent has come to the fore. In the end, it is the interplay of Krishna and the *gopa*s that is all-important. Everything else is illusory: the natural world is subsidiary to Krishna's game and to the moral lesson it teaches.

W. G. Archer, in an opinion that was perhaps a bit out-of-date, believes this painting was made in the kingdom of Kangra about 1780 and dismisses the inscription on its reverse ("painted by Manak") as a late addition.[5]

For a painting and three drawings now firmly attributed to Manaku, see catalogue numbers 67–70.

1. Goswamy and Fischer in Beach, Fischer, and Goswamy, eds., vol. 2, 2011c, p. 642.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p. 643.
4. Kossak 1997, p. 100.
5. Archer 1973, vol. 1, p. 293.



From the "Tehri Garhwal" *Gita Govinda* (cats. 77–85)

77

Indra Worships the Elephant-Headed God Ganesha, Seated on a Throne

Illustrated folio from the dispersed "Second" or "Tehri Garhwal" *Gita Govinda* (Song of the Cowherds)
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Kangra or Guler, ca. 1775–80

Opaque watercolor, gold, and silver (now tarnished) on paper; red border decorated with gold arabesque, with black inner rules; painting 5 15/16 x 9 15/16 in. (15 x 25.2 cm), page 6 13/16 x 10 15/16 in. (17.4 x 27.8 cm)

INSCRIBED on the reverse in black ink in Sanskrit with a one-line invocation to Ganesha (missing the second line): "Glory to the foremost chief of the gods . . ." and a two-line summary of the Sanskrit text in Panjabi, all three lines written in *devanagari* script

UNPUBLISHED

IN HINDUISM the elephant-headed god Ganesha is the deity of luck and good fortune. As the Lord of Obstacles, he is commonly invoked at the outset of any venture or journey, for his benign intervention ensures a favorable outcome to whatever goal or destination is desired. Similarly, images of Ganesha, depicted here smelling sweet as the nectar of the *mandara* (coral) tree, often appear as the opening folio of an extensive series. As the god is particularly interested in literary and educational activities, manuscripts and printed books often begin with the auspicious formula *Shri Ganeshaya Namah* (Reverence to Lord Ganesha) as well.[1]

The color of the border around this handsome opening image sets it apart from other paintings in the same series: it is red, rather than the more common dark blue (see also cat. 79), since the image is the opening folio. The crowned figure kneeling in front of Ganesha is Indra, lord of the heavens and chief of the demigods, whose skin is covered with a pretty pattern of open eyes. In sequential folios, the remaining sheets in this series will unfold from here, once this opening page has been examined and then turned.

There are nine paintings in the Kronos Collections from the famous series to which the present painting once belonged: the so-called "Second" or "Tehri Garhwal" *Gita Govinda* of about 1775–80 (see also cats. 78–85). This collection of paintings originally comprised about 151 illustrated folios,[2] more than 135 of which were extant when it was first "discovered" by N. C. Mehta in 1926.[3] Since Mehta's day, paintings from the set have been widely scattered in museum and private collections throughout the world.

Paintings from this lyrical, highly valued series have attracted attention and disagreement in equal part. W. G. Archer and M. S. Randhawa believe the series was painted in Kangra in about 1780 on the occasion of the marriage of its youthful patron, Maharaja Sansar Chand (reigned 1775–1823) of Kangra.[4] Songs from the *Gita Govinda*, written to celebrate the legendary lovers Radha and Krishna, are traditionally sung at Indian weddings, and thus a series illustrating the work was an appropriate gift on such occasions. B. N. Goswamy and Eberhard Fischer, on the other hand, believe the series was painted in neighboring Guler in about 1775, possibly after being commissioned by Maharaja Amrit Pal (reigned 1757–76) of Basohli or his Kangra-born wife.[5]

Whatever the case, no one disputes the quality of the individual paintings in the series or the visible compositional and stylistic influence of the masterly painter Nainsukh (see cats. 71 and 72).

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1. Basham 1959, p. 315. For other frontispieces to narrative series depicting the adoration of Ganesha, see Pal 2004, no. 12; Leach 1995, vol. 2, no. 11.56; Goetz 1958, no. 416; Pal and Seid 2002, no. 1; and Coomaraswamy 1923–30, pl. LXXXIV.
2. For discussion of the complete series, see Archer 1973, vol. 1, pp. 291–93; Goswamy and Fischer in Beach, Fischer, and Goswamy, eds., vol. 2, 2011a, pp. 689, 699–702; and Randhawa 1963.
3. Mehta 1926, pls. 23, 24. Mehta thought the series was made in Garhwal, because it was found in the collection of the maharaja of Tehri Garhwal — a notion that is dismissed nowadays.
4. Archer 1973, vol. 1, p. 292.
5. Goswamy and Fischer in Beach, Fischer, and Goswamy, eds., vol. 2, 2011d, p. 689.

From the "Tehri Garhwal" *Gita Govinda* (cats. 77–85)

78

Varaha: The Boar Incarnation of Vishnu

Illustrated folio from the dispersed "Second" or "Tehri Garhwal" *Gita Govinda* (Song of the Cowherds)
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Kangra or Guler, ca. 1775–80

Opaque watercolor and gold on paper; dark blue inner border and narrow red outer border, with black inner rules; painting 6 x 9⅞ in. (15.2 x 25.1 cm), page 6¾ x 10½ in. (17.1 x 26.7 cm)

INSCRIBED on the reverse in black ink with five lines of Sanskrit text written in *devanagari* script (*Gita Govinda*, part 1, stanza 7; for an English translation, see Miller, ed. and trans. 1977, p. 70); also inscribed in black ink with a two-line summary of the Sanskrit text in the Pahari dialect of Panjabi written in *devanagari* script; also inscribed in black ink with various short notations written in *devanagari* script

UNPUBLISHED

THE OPENING FOLIO of the important series to which this painting once belonged (see also cats. 77 and 79–85) featured an image of Ganesha (cat. 77), followed by catalogue number 79 and a number of folios depicting the *avatara*s, or earthly incarnations, of the great god Vishnu, as here. The lengthy *Gita Govinda* text, which these paintings initiate, is devoted to the loves of Krishna, the eighth earthly incarnation of Vishnu.

In Hinduism it is believed that Vishnu had appeared on the earth in a variety of forms, each time as a savior of humankind or as a destroyer of some evil. These incarnations are known as *avatara*s, or descents.[1] The present painting, illustrating Varaha the Boar, the god's third incarnation, was one of possibly ten illustrated folios in the original series depicting all the *avatara*s. Vishnu assumed the Varaha form to combat the demon Hiranyaksha, shown here dead and lying on his back beneath the primal waters. After the defeat of this demon, who had been tormenting Priya, goddess of the earth, Varaha lifted on his upraised tusk the earth itself, depicted here as a sort of flattened pancake. Vishnu also carries a jewel-encrusted mace, a white conch shell, and a lotus flower. Only his crowned head and shoulders are visible above the intricate rhythms of the swirling water. (For other paintings illustrating incarnations of Vishnu, including an image of Varaha the Boar, see cats. 20, 21, 49, and 50.)

Most of the 151 preparatory drawings for this series, known as the "Second" or "Tehri Garhwal" *Gita Govinda*, are in the collection of the National Museum, New Delhi, but a sizable group is also widely scattered in museum and private collections throughout the world. These sanguine and black-ink drawings have the same dimensions as the painted folios and the same ratio of the border area to the image area. Like the finished works from the series, they also have full texts of *Gita Govinda* verses inscribed on the reverse, with a shorter gloss written in the Pahari dialect of Panjabi.[2]

It is now more or less accepted that Nainsukh was the author of these 151 extremely rudimentary drawings, which indicate as a kind of guide the general alignment of the various subjects he wished to highlight. In designing these works, Nainsukh was greatly influenced by the compositions of an earlier series: the "First" *Gita Govinda*, executed by his older brother Manaku in 1730. (For Manaku, see cats. 67–70 and 76.) However, Nainsukh wished to update Manaku's compositions, which by then had become rather old-fashioned, to his own lush, naturalistic style. But as Nainsukh died in 1778, we do not know whether he ever worked on the present series (as opposed to the drawings), whether its color scheme and superb finish were his, or whether these qualities of the paintings were Nainsukh-inspired products lovingly executed by close followers. (W. G. Archer believes the series was painted by Kushala, Nainsukh's nephew, working with Gaudhu, Nainsukh's son.)[3] Be that as it may, these paintings are considered by many to be the most refined works ever made in the Punjab Hills.[4]

1. Walker 1983, vol. 2, p. 575.
2. For a description of this series of drawings, see Goswamy and Fischer in Beach, Fischer, and Goswamy, eds., vol. 2, 2011a, p. 689.
3. Archer 1973, vol. 1, pp. 292–93.
4. Goswamy and Fischer in Beach, Fischer, and Goswamy, eds., vol. 2, 2011e, p. 682.

From the "Tehri Garhwal" *Gita Govinda* (cats. 77–85)

79

The Lovers Radha and Krishna in a Palm Grove

Illustrated folio from the dispersed "Second" or "Tehri Garhwal" *Gita Govinda* (Song of the Cowherds)
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Kangra or Guler, ca. 1775–80

Opaque watercolor and gold on paper; red border decorated with gold arabesque, with black inner rules; painting 6 x 9⅞ in. (15.2 x 25.1 cm), page 7 1/16 x 11 in. (17.9 x 27.9 cm)

INSCRIBED on the reverse in black ink with eleven lines of Sanskrit text written in *devanagari* script (*Gita Govinda*, part 1, stanzas 1–4; for an English translation, see Miller, ed. and trans. 1977, p. 69);[1] also inscribed in black ink with a two-line summary of the text in the Pahari dialect of Panjabi written in *devanagari* script

PUBLISHED: Randhawa 1963, front cover and pl. 1; Welch 1985, pp. 403, 405, no. 275; Goswamy and Fischer 1992, no. 130; Goswamy and Fischer in Beach, Fischer, and Goswamy, eds., vol. 2, 2011a, p. 699, fig. 4; Mohanty 2013, p. 36; Goswamy 2014, pp. 468–71

THIS EXQUISITE PAINTING was one of the opening miniatures, after catalogue number 77, of the famous series known as the "Second" or "Tehri Garhwal" *Gita Govinda* (see also cats. 78 and 80–85). For that reason, and because the present painting is mostly dark, its border is bright red as opposed to dark blue, the color of the surrounding border on most of the other folios from the series. Of this scene, Stuart Cary Welch remarks, "Nanda, the cowherd who was Krishna's adoptive father, has urged Radha to accompany Krishna home because he is afraid of the darkness. Graceful as dancers, the divine lovers stop to embrace on the banks of the Yamuna River, while around them, in a series of arboreal *pas de deux*, pairs of trees reenact the stages of their developing attraction for each other."[2] On the farther shore of the river, a number of rounded hills are visible beneath a star-filled sky. With its glamorous interpretation of the forest in spring, this painting establishes the rustic setting in which other paintings from the romantically charged *Gita Govinda* series will unfold.

Hand and body gestures, as well as eye movements, are perhaps more important in India than anywhere else in the world. This method of nonverbal communication was codified there at a very early date, as hand gestures, or mudras, of the gods were developed to communicate with the devotee. Later on, hand and body gestures, along with eye movements, became very important in understanding the meaning of classical dance and drama. And they also became very important in painting. Here, "Krishna throws his left arm around Radha's shoulder and gently reaches out for her breasts with his right hand. Radha makes futile gestures, restraining his left hand, and pointing with her own right hand to the path they must take according to Nanda's orders. But there is no conviction in her resistance, for she turns back and gazes lovingly into Krishna's eyes, standing like an elegant dancer, her left leg lightly crossed against the right, the toes touching the earth."[3]

Another depiction of the same subject comes from nearby Garhwal and dates to about 1790 or later.[4]

1. In this transcription, stanzas 3 and 4 are reversed; for textual evidence of the reversal, see Miller, ed. and trans. 1977, p. 139.
2. Welch 1985, p. 403.
3. Goswamy and Fischer 1992, p. 320.
4. See Archer [1957], pl. 20.

80

Radha with Her Confidante, Pining for Krishna

Illustrated folio from the dispersed "Second" or "Tehri Garhwal" *Gita Govinda* (Song of the Cowherds)
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Kangra or Guler, ca. 1775–80

Opaque watercolor and gold on paper; dark blue inner border and red outer border; painting 6 x 9 15/16 in. (15.2 x 25.2 cm), page 6 7/8 x 10 5/8 in. (17.5 x 27 cm)

INSCRIBED on the reverse in black ink with four lines of Sanskrit text written in *devanagari* script (*Gita Govinda*, part 1, stanza 26; for an English translation, see Miller, ed. and trans. 1977, p. 74); also inscribed in black ink with a two-line summary of the text in the Pahari dialect of Panjabi written in *devanagari* script; also inscribed, in green ink, with an initialed signature and, in black ink, with the Indic number "20" shown twice

PUBLISHED: Archer 1973, vol. 1, p. 292, fig. 33(iv), vol. 2, p. 207, fig. 33(iv); Kossak 1997, p. 105, no. 64

THE NARRATIVE OF the *Gita Govinda*, a prime document of medieval and contemporary Vishnu worship, is not easy to relate, as the poem does not recount a proper story. Rather, the text describes the various stages in the love affair of Radha, personification of devotion and loyalty, and Krishna, the eighth incarnation of Vishnu.

In Jayadeva's long poem, the Divine Couple meets (cat. 79), makes love (cat. 81), and separates (cat. 80). As a result of this separation, Radha is made profoundly unhappy (cat. 84). Yet Krishna does not care: he takes up with the obliging *gopis* (milkmaids) (cats. 82, 83). Ultimately Krishna realizes his folly and asks for Radha's forgiveness. After she forgives him, the two lovers reunite and make love, ending Jayadeva's text on a happy note (cat. 85).

In this fine painting, the bereft Radha, leaning on a tree, discusses the absent Krishna with her *sakhi*, or confidante. "The god of love increased her ordeal, / Tormenting her with fevered thoughts, / And her friend sang to heighten the mood."[1]

For other paintings from the same series, see catalogue numbers 77–79 and 81–85.

1. Miller, ed. and trans. 1977, p. 74.

From the "Tehri Garhwal" *Gita Govinda* (cats. 77–85)

81

Vishnu, or Krishna and Lakshmi, or Sri (Radha), Make Love in a Bower

Illustrated folio from the dispersed and "Second" or "Tehri Garhwal" *Gita Govinda* (Song of the Cowherds)
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Kangra or Guler, ca. 1775–80

Opaque watercolor and gold on paper; dark blue inner border with pink-flecked outer border (trimmed); painting 6⅛ x 9¹⁵⁄₁₆ in. (15.6 x 25.2 cm), page 7 x 10¾ in. (17.8 x 27.3 cm)

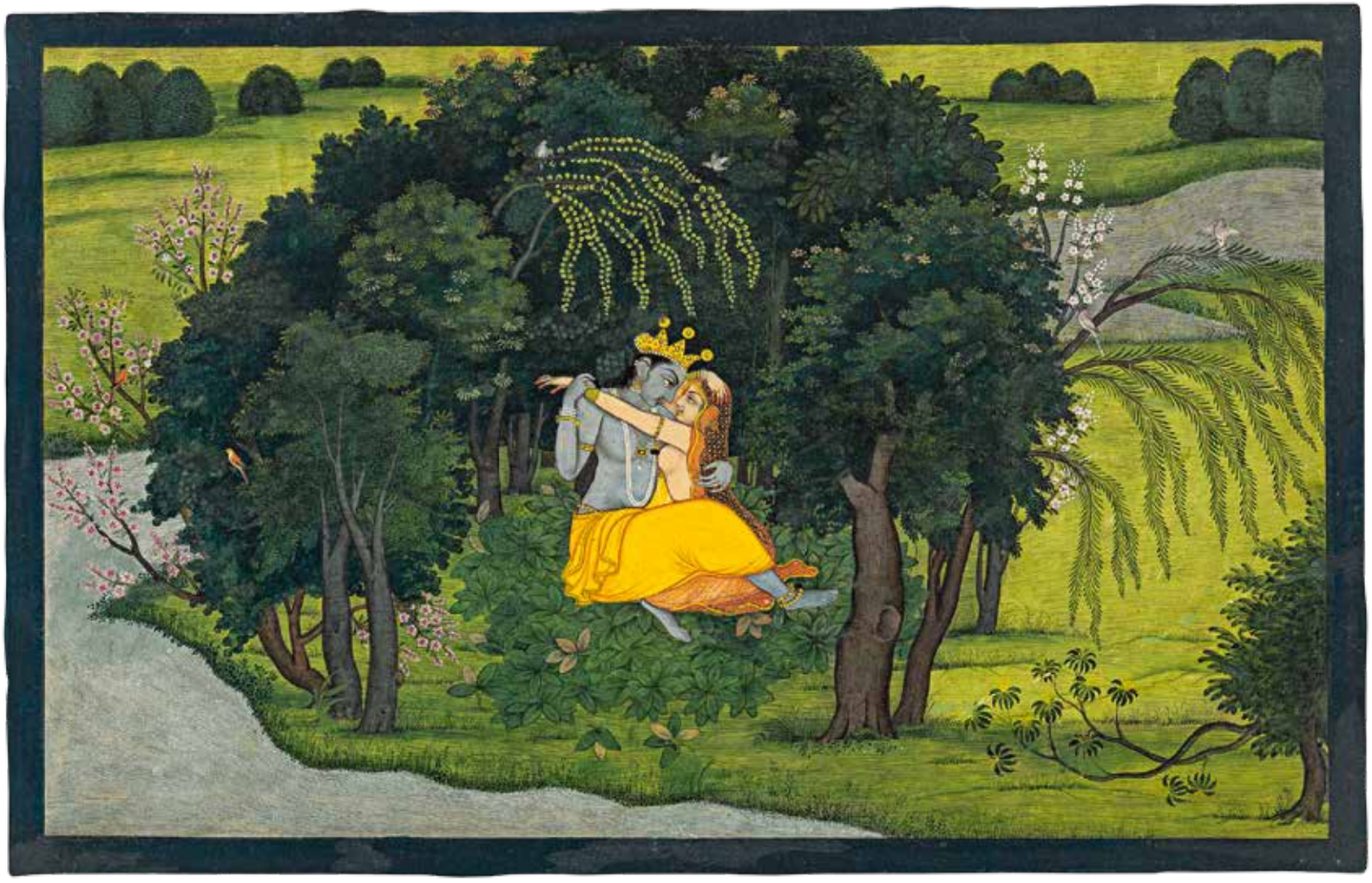
INSCRIBED on the reverse in black ink with five lines of Sanskrit text written in *devanagari* script (*Gita Govinda*, part 1, stanza 25; for an English translation, see Miller, ed. and trans. 1977, p. 73); also inscribed in black ink with a two-line summary of the text in the Pahari dialect of Panjabi written in *devanagari* script

PUBLISHED: Menzies 2006, pp. 52–53, no. 29

ON THE SECLUDED BANKS of the Yamuna River, the lovers Vishnu (Krishna) and his consort Lakshmi, or Sri (Radha), are encased in a bower and seated on a bed of fragrant leaves. Their lovemaking has only just begun, as the two figures are still mostly clothed. The down-thrusting vine above their heads expresses Vishnu's (Krishna's) yearning for Lakshmi (Radha). The two trees just to the right of the bower symbolize the lovers' differing attitudes as this hesitant amorous event unfolds. It is spring. The trees have just begun to flower.

Eroticism was frankly expressed in medieval Indian art, as in the temple sculpture at Khajuraho and Konarak, for instance. Yet this deep vein of imagery went underground in later Indian art. The erotic paintings contained in the "Second" or "Tehri Garhwal" *Gita Govinda* (see also cats. 77–80 and 82–85) are a rare exception, perhaps because they illustrated Jayadeva's late twelfth-century text, a monument of medieval Indian culture, not a contemporary work. According to some, Jayadeva's poem has no mystical significance whatsoever, as the ancient Hindus were quite uninhibited and frank in accepting the truth that is flesh.[1] According to others, the poem describes what the eighteenth-century Kangra or Guler paintings surely express: the soul's longing for the divine. In this later interpretation, the *gopi*s (milkmaids) represent the delights of the illusory world, and Lakshmi, and later Radha, a symbol of goodness, represents human transcendence. In transcendent union with the Divine, the self is forgotten, dissolving in supreme ecstasy.

1. Randhawa 1963, p. 52.



82

Krishna and the Gopis on the Bank of the Yamuna River

Illustrated folio from the dispersed "Second" or "Tehri Garhwal" *Gita Govinda* (Song of the Cowherds)
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Kangra or Guler, ca. 1775–80

Opaque watercolor and gold on paper; dark blue border with red inner rules; painting 6⅜ x 10⅛ in. (16.2 x 25.7 cm), page 6¾ x 10½ in. (17.1 x 26.7 cm)

INSCRIBED on the reverse in black ink with four lines of Sanskrit text written in *devanagari* script (*Gita Govinda*, part 1, stanza 46; for an English translation, see Miller, ed. and trans. 1977, p. 77); also inscribed in black ink with a three-line summary of the text in the Pahari dialect of Panjabi written in *devanagari* script

UNPUBLISHED

KRISHNA STANDS at the center of the composition intertwined with nine adoring *gopi*s (milkmaids). Six of the besotted women cling to whatever parts of Krishna's youthful body they can reach, while three others surround a nearby tree trunk, waiting for their moment to enter this turbulent "feast of love." The beautifully arranged, syncopated rhythms of the *gopi*s' linked bodies echo the dips and twists of the delightful Kangra Valley, where this scene is set.

Maharaja Sansar Chand (reigned 1775–1823) of Kangra was the probable patron of the celebrated series to which this painting and eight others in the Kronos Collections once belonged (see also cats. 77–81 and 83–85). An ardent Vaishnava (worshiper of Vishnu and his many incarnations, including Krishna) and lover and patron of painting, Sansar Chand also commissioned, later in his reign, several magnificent related series: more than one hundred paintings illustrating the exploits of the young Krishna (the "Mody" *Bhagavata Purana* [The Ancient Story of God]); about one hundred paintings illustrating the *Ramayana* (The Adventures of Rama) (see cat. 87); about forty paintings illustrating verses from the *Sat Sai* (Seven Hundred Verses) of Bihari (see cats. 89–91); illustrations of the story of Nala and Damayanti (see cat. 94); a *Ragamala* (Garland of Melodies) of about eighty paintings; a *Baramasa* (Months of the Year) illustrating the months of the year; and many other works.[1] In short, the maharaja commissioned the classic series that any self-respecting Hindu prince must have had in his library, as well as a number of lavish sets illustrating the exploits of his great heroes, the Vaishnava gods Krishna and Rama.

To accomplish this task and to enlarge the rather spotty court atelier he must have inherited, Sansar Chand imported a large group of talented artists from the neighboring kingdom of Guler, including a number of Nainsukh's sons and relations. (For Nainsukh, see cats. 71 and 72.) Indeed, during the Sansar Chand period, it is very difficult to distinguish Kangra and Guler painting. For all intents, in style they might as well be the same thing.

Maharaja Sansar Chand was probably the greatest political and military ruler from the Punjab Hills. During the height of his power, his Kangra "empire" controlled most of the region. Sansar Chand's period of grandeur lasted until about 1806, when invading Gurkhas from Nepal put an end to his dreams of dominance. The maharaja lost most of his empire to them and later to the invading Sikhs, yet soldiered on in what remained of his kingdom, commissioning paintings, until his death in 1823.

W. G. Archer believes the present series was made in about 1780 to celebrate Sansar Chand's first wedding, in about 1781,[2] when he would have been sixteen years old.

1. Archer 1973, vol. 1, pp. 291–97.
2. Ibid., pp. 292–93.

83

Krishna Frolics with the Gopis (Milkmaids)

lllustrated folio from the dispersed "Second" or "Tehri Garhwal" *Gita Govinda* (Song of the Cowherds)
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Kangra or Guler, ca. 1775–80

Opaque watercolor and gold on paper; dark blue inner border with narrow, pink-flecked outer border; painting 6 3/16 x 10 1/16 in. (15.7 x 25.6 cm), page 7 x 10 7/8 in. (17.8 x 27.6 cm)

INSCRIBED on the reverse in black ink with seven lines of Sanskrit text written in *devanagari* script (*Gita Govinda*, part 1, stanza 44; for an English translation, see Miller, ed. and trans. 1977, p. 77); also inscribed in black ink with a two-line summary of the text in the Pahari dialect of Panjabi written in *devanagari* script; also inscribed on a label in black ink in Hindi, "Part One . . ." and the Arabic number "33"

UNPUBLISHED

THE COMELY *gopi*S (milkmaids) are absolutely mad for Krishna. In his text, Jayadeva, the late twelfth-century author of the *Gita Govinda*, describes their erotic games and Krishna's ardent response in unabashed yet poetic songs and couplets: "He hugs one, he kisses another, he caresses another dark beauty. He stares at one's suggestive smiles, he mimics a willful girl."[1] Later commentators and *bhakti* devotees, shocked by the frank physicality that Jayadeva seemed to endorse, preferred to understand Krishna's love-sport as a metaphor describing the soul's longing for union with the divine (see also cat. 81). The ladies could also be seen as *nayikas*, or traditional female types.[2] In effect, the action that Krishna and the *gopi*s were performing becomes a kind of philosophical abstraction.

In this ethereal yet characteristic rendition, Krishna is involved with four separate *gopi*s in a forest clearing on the banks of the Yamuna River. It is understood that the narrative depicted here is sequential (for sequential narrative, see cat. 13). One might be grateful to know that these four separate and very athletic incidents did not happen all at the same time.[3]

For eight other paintings from the same series, see cats. 77–82, 84, and 85.

1. Miller, ed. and trans. 1977, p. 77.
2. Rashmi Poddar believes that the *gopi*s in the foreground represent three types of idealized women, or *nayika*s: the *mughdha* (innocent or bashful) *nayika* on the left, the *madhya* (experienced) *nayika* in the center, and the *plagalbha* (aggressive) *nayika* on the right (oral communication to Steven M. Kossak).
3. For a Basohli series dating from about 1730 illustrating the *Gita Govinda,* see Sinha 1958; for three eighteenth-century Mewar series illustrating the *Gita Govinda,* see Vatsyayan 1987. For a seventeenth-century series of drawings illustrating the *Gita Govinda,* see Vatsyayan 1981.

84

The Sorrow of Radha

Illustrated folio from the dispersed "Second" or "Tehri Garhwal" *Gita Govinda* (Song of the Cowherds)
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Kangra or Guler, ca. 1775–80

Opaque watercolor and gold on paper; dark blue inner border with pink-flecked outer border (trimmed); painting 5⅞ x 9⅞ in. (14.9 x 25.1 cm), page 6 11/16 x 10 11/16 in. (17 x 27.2 cm)

INSCRIBED on the reverse in black ink with three lines of Sanskrit text written in *devanagari* script (*Gita Govinda*, part 4, stanza 2; for an English translation, see Miller, ed. and trans. 1977, p. 141); also inscribed in black ink with a two-line summary of the text in the Pahari dialect of Panjabi written in *devanagari* script; also inscribed with various short notes and numbers written in pencil and a very short note written in green ink

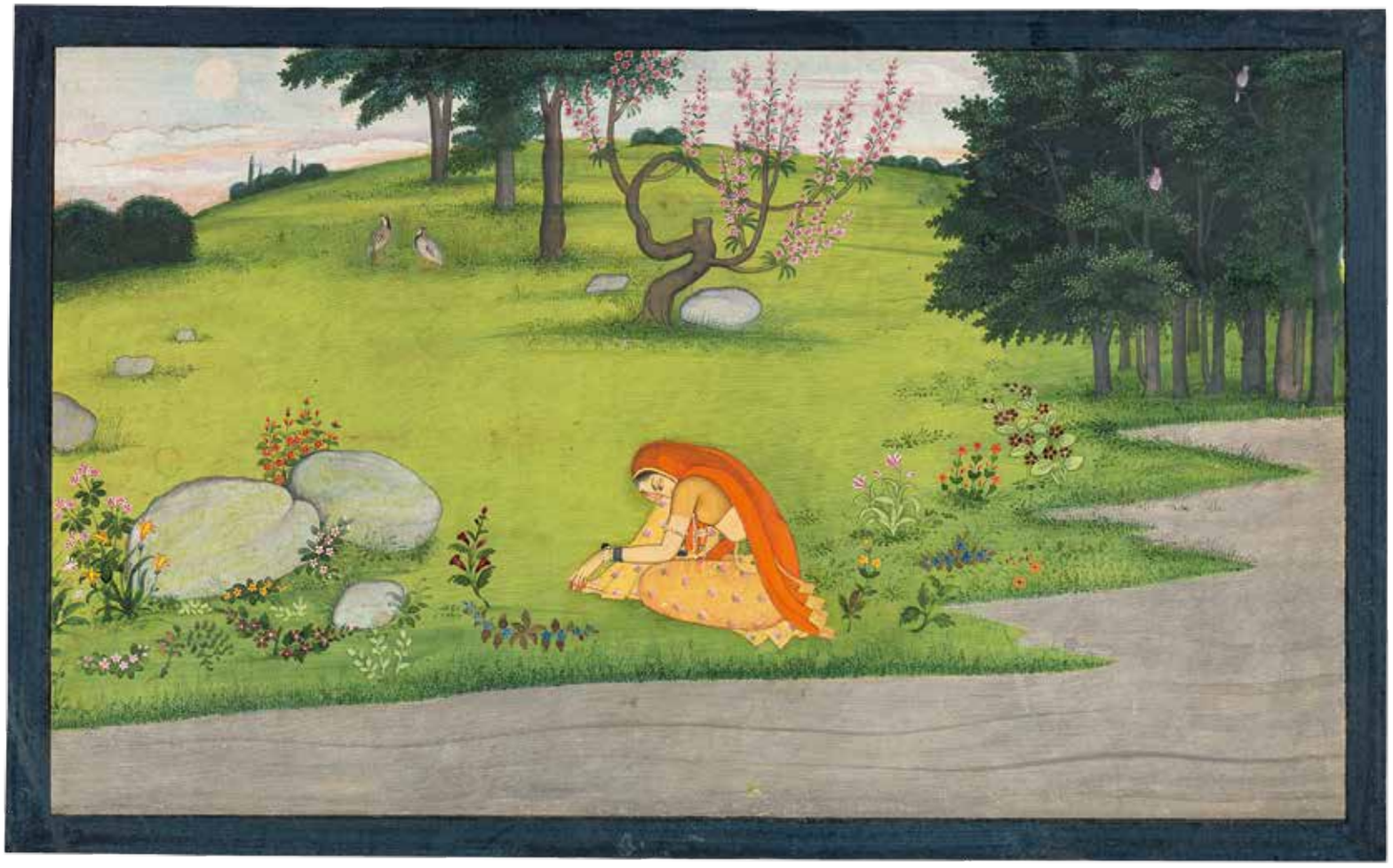
PUBLISHED: Randhawa 1963, pl. X

JAYADEVA'S LANDSCAPE in the *Gita Govinda* is probably that of Orissa and West Bengal, which he knew very well.[1] He describes mango trees clasped by *madhavi* and *atimukta* creepers. He mentions how the fragrant flowers of the *ketaki* (a common plant in Orissa) kindle every heart and perfume the woods. He compares Radha's breast with the fruit of the *tala* tree (also common in Orissa). The *kesara*, *vakula*, *kadamba*, *madhuka*, *asoka*, and *tamala* — all plants widely found in the villages of Orissa — are also cited, as is the seascape at Puri, the great Vaishnava pilgrimage center there.

The place portrayed in the "Second" or "Tehri Garhwal" *Gita Govinda* (see also cats. 77–83 and 85) is, however, the delightful Kangra Valley, centered on the Beas River, in the foothills of the Himalayas, where the series was probably painted in about 1775–80. The countryside and buildings are reminiscent of those in the area around Tira-Sujanpur, where Maharaja Sansar Chand (reigned 1775–1823), the probable patron of the series, resided, and the countryside along the banks of the Beas River, which the maharaja also controlled.[2]

What is remarkable in this series is the way the landscape — a medley of lush vegetation and rounded hills — becomes an actual dramatic persona in the narrative. In this heartbreaking picture, for example, the forlorn Radha grieves for her absent lover on the banks of the Beas (which symbolizes the Yamuna River in the text). Radha's bent form is echoed by the arrangement of the boulders portrayed at the left. The depiction of the landscape background is equally descriptive. The empty field and spare trees express Radha's inner sorrow, which is bottomless. In other, happier paintings from the same series, the landscape is more buoyantly alive.

1. Randhawa 1963, p. 53.
2. Ibid., p. 60.



85

The Poet and Author Jayadeva Visualizes Radha and Krishna

Illustrated folio from the dispersed "Second" or "Tehri Garhwal" *Gita Govinda* (Song of the Cowherds)
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Kangra or Guler, ca. 1775–80

Opaque watercolor and gold on paper; dark blue inner border with pink-flecked outer border (trimmed); painting 5¾ x 9¾ in. (14.6 x 24.8 cm), page 6⅞ x 10⅝ in. (17.5 x 27 cm)

INSCRIBED on the reverse in black ink with four lines of Sanskrit text written in *devanagari* script (*Gita Govinda*, part 12, stanzas 22 and 21, order reversed; for an English translation, see Miller, ed. and trans. 1977, p. 125)

PUBLISHED: Goswamy and Fischer 1992, no. 131; Masselos, Menzies, and Pal 1997, no. 41c; *Love in Asian Art and Culture* 1998, p. 80

THIS SERENE PAINTING is the last folio in the magnificent "Second" or "Tehri Garhwal" *Gita Govinda*, just as catalogue numbers 77 and 78 were among the first (for other paintings from the same series, see cats. 79–84). It depicts the vision of Jayadeva, author of the long poem the series illustrates.

The painting has a "cool, slightly distant air," with none of the lush foliage that fills other works from the set. "There are no beds of fragrant leaves here, no creepers lovingly clinging to tree trunks, no birds that sing in unison with the lovers; even the river Yamuna makes no appearance."[1] The figure of the singer-devotee Jayadeva, holding a gold-decorated *vina* (a stringed instrument) and wearing a simple white dhoti and a string of beads, stands to the left. Through his meditation, the poet has summoned a vision of Radha and Krishna, the main subjects of the many ecstatic verses and songs he had composed for the *Gita Govinda*. The intertwined Divine Couple stands beneath the branches of a magnificent, spreading tree, their figures highlighted by a plain green swath of greenery that seems to glow from within. Apart from some additional grass along the lower border, the rest of the composition is empty.

Jayadeva, the wandering poet-saint of East India, was the court poet of Lakshmanasena, the last Hindu king of Bengal. His greatest work, the *Gita Govinda*, was written in the late twelfth century A.D. as a paean to the great god Vishnu and to his eighth earthly incarnation, the lusty god Krishna. Called a woodland epic, as well as a lyrical, dramatic poem, the *Gita Govinda* is still sung every day at the temple of Jagannatha (a form of Krishna), which is located at Puri, a famous pilgrimage site in Orissa. Jayadeva's text is divided into twelve cantos or parts. It has about three hundred *sloka*s (verses comprising two lines of sixteen Sanskrit syllables each) and twenty-four songs. Prefixed to each song is the manner, and the name of the mode, in which it is to be sung (for *Ragamala* musical classification, see cat. 7). Each of the constituent songs is interspersed with recitative portions in the metrical formats of *kavya* (ornamental Sanskrit verse).[2] Despite all the Sanskritic complexity, Jayadeva's ardent, devotional text is still alive today.[3]

1. Goswamy and Fischer 1992, p. 322.
2. Miller, ed. and trans. 1977, p. 9.
3. For the "Second" or "Tehri Garhwal" *Gita Govinda,* see Randhawa 1963; Archer 1973, vol. 1, pp. 291–93; and Goswamy and Fischer in Beach, Fischer, and Goswamy, eds., vol. 2, 2011a, p. 689.

86

Krishna Steals the Buttermilk

Punjab Hills, kingdom of Kangra or Guler, ca. 1780

Opaque watercolor and gold on paper; red border with black inner rules; painting 6⅞ x 10⅝ in. (17.5 x 26.2 cm), page 7³⁄₁₆ x 10¾ in. (18.3 x 27.3 cm)

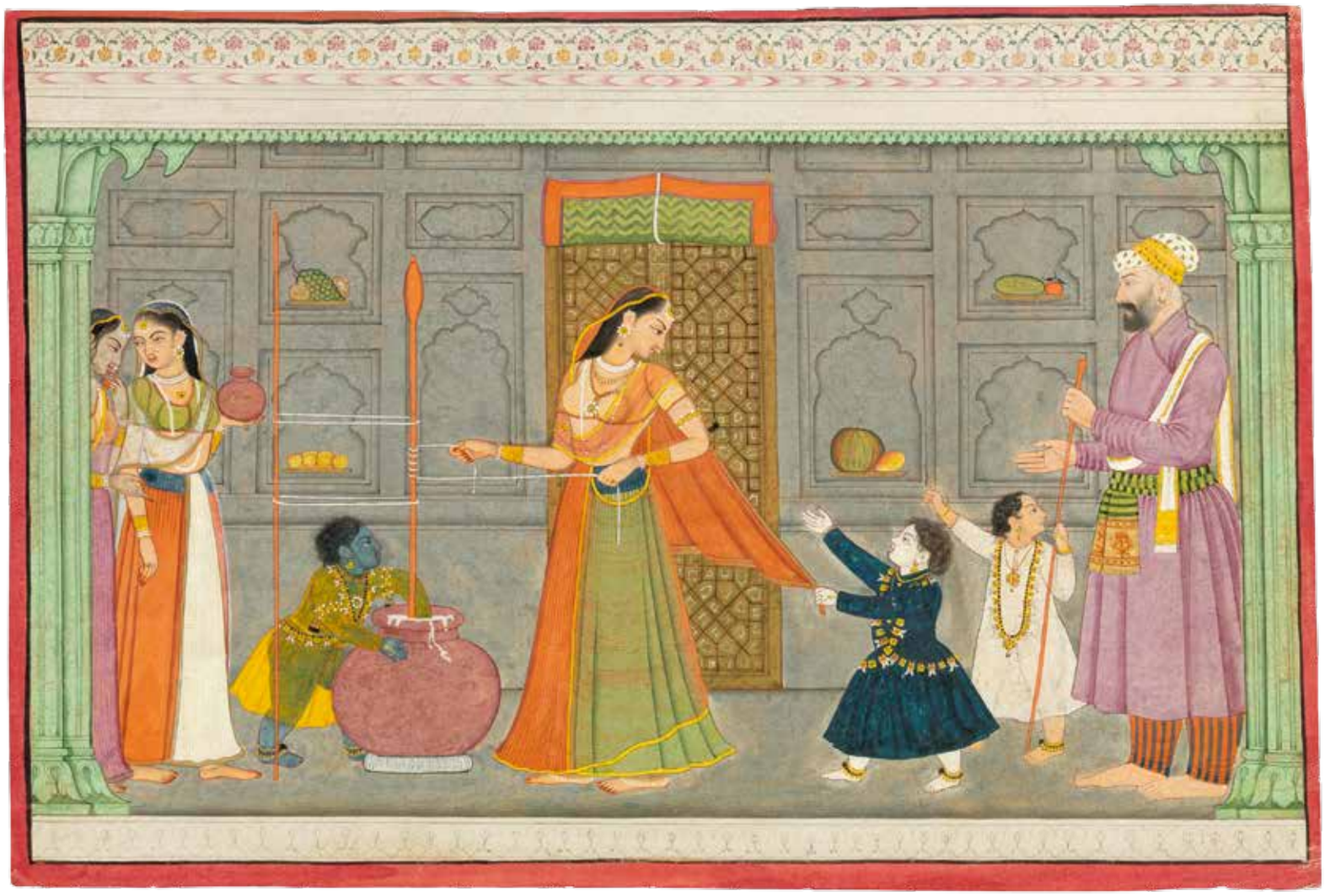
NOT INSCRIBED

PUBLISHED: Kossak 1997, no. 59; Cummins, ed. 2011, no. 95

BECAUSE VASUDEVA, Krishna's natural father, wished to save the infant god from evil demons, he delivered him to a village in Braj, the rural area outside Mathura. There Krishna grew up with his older brother, Balarama, in the house of his foster father, the cowherd (*gopa*) Nanda, and his wife, the milkmaid (*gopi*) Yashoda. Yet the two mischievous brothers began to get into trouble in Nanda and Yashoda's house almost from the start.

In this stately painting, the brothers, a cowherd friend, Nanda, Yashoda, and two maids are arrayed in the narrow foreground space like figures on a proscenium stage. The brothers are working together in pursuit of their favorite treat: freshly churned butter and curds. White-skinned Balarama tugs at Yashoda's veil (*odhani*), distracting her, while blue-skinned Krishna reaches into her churn, as their friend clutches Nanda's staff and points to Yashoda. On the left, the other milkmaids whisper together, the one bringing a pot of cream for the churn, the second raising her finger in an attitude of astonishment at the scene.[1] As one scholar has noted, "The painting offers an interesting illustration of a simple churning mechanism, one probably used by many households in rural India. The churning staff is rotated by pulling a string wrapped around it, while it is held upright by an additional string holding it to a post set in the ground next to the butter jar. The setting, with its finely carved columns, walls set with niches, wood screen door, and decorative frieze, is remarkably palatial for a cowherd's house."[2]

1. For a later yet nearly identical painting, see Skelton 1961, no. 85.
2. Cummins, ed. 2011, p. 184.



87

Rama and Lakshmana Enter the City of Mithila to Perform in an Archery Contest

Illustrated folio from the dispersed "Bharany" *Ramayana* (The Adventures of Rama)
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Kangra, ca. 1780

Opaque watercolor and gold on paper; dark blue inner border and pink-flecked outer border; painting 8¼ x 12 5/16 in. (21 x 31.2 cm), page 9⅝ x 14 in. (24.4 x 35.6 cm)

NOT INSCRIBED

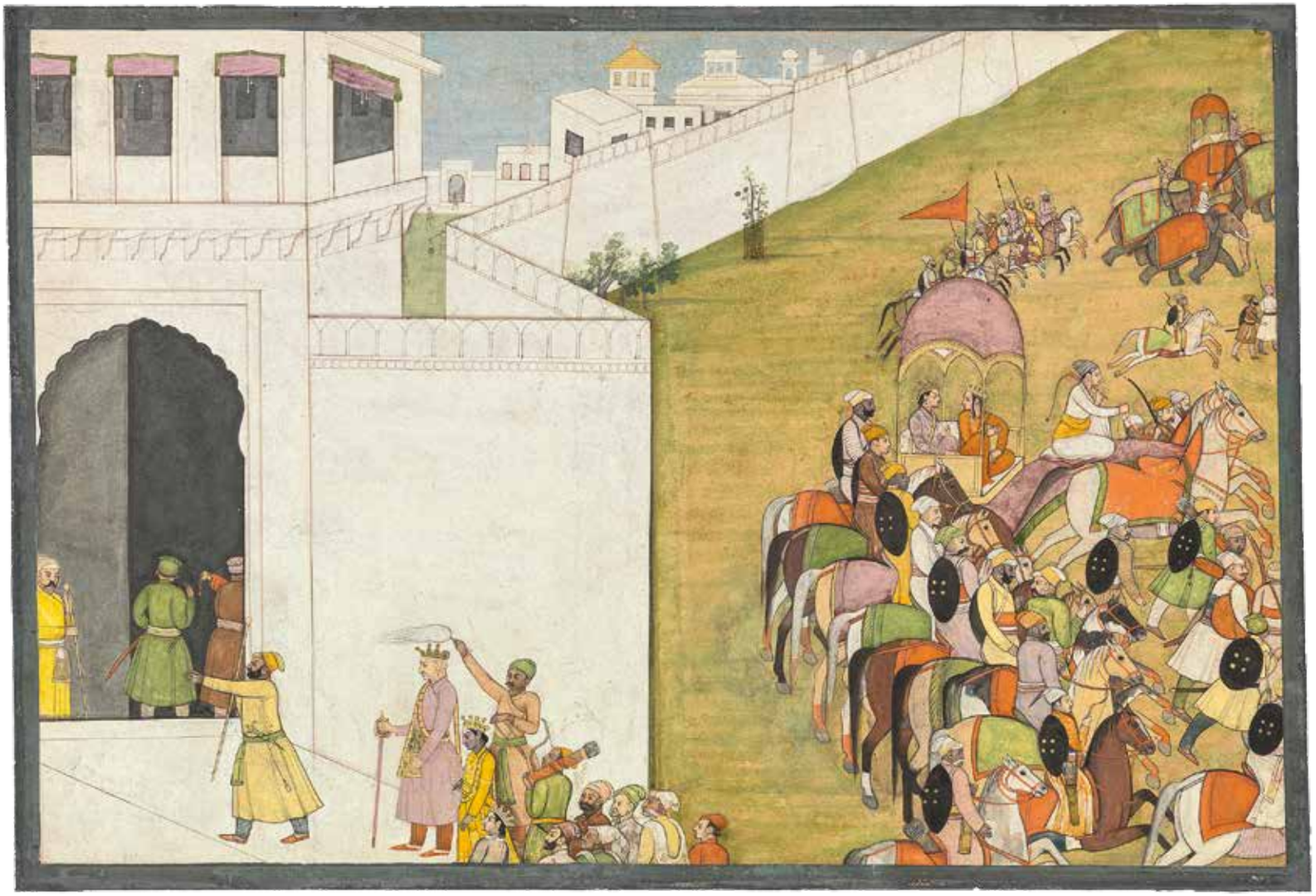
PUBLISHED: Sotheby's, London 1973, no. 344; Christie's, London 2014, no. 126

LED BY A STEWARD holding a long staff, Rama and his brother Lakshmana are following the crowned sage Viswamithra, formerly a king, into the walled city of Mithila for an archery contest in which they will take part. During the contest, Rama will bend Vishnu's bow and win the beautiful Sita for his wife. On the right, the two brothers, seated in a cart after Rama's victory, are leaving the city in the company of an enormous retinue of followers.[1]

The series of more than one hundred illustrated folios to which this very fine painting once belonged[2] illustrated the first three books of Valmiki's *Ramayana*, an epic poem in Sanskrit from about the fourth century B.C. that describes the exploits of Rama in quest of Sita, who was abducted by Ravana, demon king of Ceylon (see also cats. 41, 42, and 58–62). Called the "Bharany" *Ramayana* (after the New Delhi art dealer and collector who once possessed it), the now widely dispersed series was probably commissioned by Maharaja Sansar Chand (reigned 1775–1823) of Kangra (see cat. 82) during the opening years of his reign. Paintings from the "Bharany" *Ramayana* depict the earthly adventures of the seventh incarnation of the Great God Vishnu, the god Rama. For their delicacy of line and color and sensitivity to nature and human emotion, the illustrated folios from this great series probably represent a high point in the painting of India, not just of painting in the Punjab Hills.

Paintings from the "Bharany" *Ramayana* can be divided quite naturally into two broad groups: outdoor scenes in which the ripe landscape plays an important dramatic role (see fig. 30), as in paintings from the nearly contemporary *Gita Govinda* series, and architectural scenes such as the present work. Incorporating both Indian and European conventions, the latter scenes experiment with space in a way that is almost entirely new for painting in the Punjab Hills. In this fine painting, an enormous white wall bifurcates the composition into two quite separate spatial worlds. On the left, the arrangement of the figures is very ad hoc and approximate yet spatially intelligible. On the right, the diminished size of the figures and animals in the distance, receding over a level ground, incorporates lessons poorly understood from the European "science" of one-point perspective. Yet the two quite different sides of the composition are surprisingly complementary, given the uniformly small size of the figures (a characteristic of all paintings from the series) on both sides of the divide as well as the surface logic of their juxtaposition.

1. Steven Kossak and others believe this painting depicts the return of Rama, Lakshmana, and Dasaratha to the city of Ayodhya. In the incident shown on the right, Rama's brothers, Bharata and Shatrughna, are leaving Ayodhya to stay with Bharata's maternal grandfather.
2. For the "Bharany" *Ramayana*, see Goswamy and Fischer in Beach, Fischer, and Goswamy, eds., vol. 2, 2011a, p. 690, nos. 6, 6a–6g.



88

Female Musicians on the Terrace of a Palace Courtyard

Punjab Hills, kingdom of Kangra, Guler, or Basohli, ca. 1780

Opaque watercolor, gold, and silver (now tarnished) on paper; wide, gold-flecked pink outer border and narrow blue inner border decorated with gold arabesque, with black inner rules; painting 6¾ x 4⅞16 in. (17.1 x 11.3 cm), page 10⅛16 x 7⅜ in. (25.6 x 18.7 cm)

INSCRIBED on the reverse with three short, meaningless notations

PUBLISHED: Randhawa 1962, p. 32, fig. 9

AN ATTRACTIVE LADY of some importance, seated on a floral spread and resting against a bolster, is playing a *sarod*, an Indian stringed instrument, on the harem terrace of a palatial, Mughal-style courtyard. She is accompanied by two other female musicians, a singer with gesturing hands and a drummer. The lady keeps her *huqqa* (water pipe), a plate of fruit, and a tiny silver spittoon close nearby. The courtyard centers on a pool with a fountain beneath an elegant, decorated canopy. Small birds, or ducks, approach the pool, while maidservants in the background enter the white marble *baradari* (pavilion) at the exact center of the courtyard's all-encompassing, painted wall.

This painting displays the insistent symmetry and clear division of foreground, middleground, and background space that characterize Pahari paintings produced by artists belonging to the first or second generation after Nainsukh. (For Nainsukh, see cats. 71 and 72.) These late eighteenth-century Nainsukh-derived elements serve as framing devices for the gracious, largely imagined lifestyle that these lovely paintings exhibit.

A closely related painting of about 1765–70 in the Benkaim Collection depicting Lakshmi massaging the foot of Vishnu has a lengthy inscription on its reverse saying that it was painted by Nainsukh and Majnu (presumably Nainsukh's grandson).[1] Although the ruffled edges of the dresses worn by the central ladies in both pictures are very similar, we think they were painted by different artists.

M. S. Randhawa believes the present painting depicts the *chitrini nayika*,[2] a type of *nayika*, or female beloved, who is fond of dancing, music, and poetry. Possessing a sweet-smelling breath, she also likes perfume and is excellent at "love-sport."

1. Cummins, ed. 2011, no. 18.
2. Randhawa 1962, p. 32.

From the "Kangra Bihari" *Sat Sai* (cats. 89–91)

89

Krishna and Radha Toss a Flower

Probably painted by the artist Fattu (active ca. 1770–1820)
Illustrated folio from the dispersed "Kangra Bihari" *Sat Sai* (Seven Hundred Verses)
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Kangra, ca. 1785

Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper; narrow yellow and white borders with black inner rules; dark blue spandrels decorated with gold arabesque; painting 7 7/16 x 5 1/4 in. (18.9 x 13.3 cm), page 8 1/8 x 5 15/16 in. (20.6 x 15.1 cm)

INSCRIBED on the reverse in black ink in Hindi, or Braj Bhasha, written in *devanagari* script: a two-line poem (for an English translation, see Randhawa 1966, p. 48)

PUBLISHED: Mehta 1926, pl. 20; Randhawa 1966, frontispiece; Archer 1973, vol. 1, p. 296, fig. 39(iii), vol. 2, p. 214, fig. 39(iii)

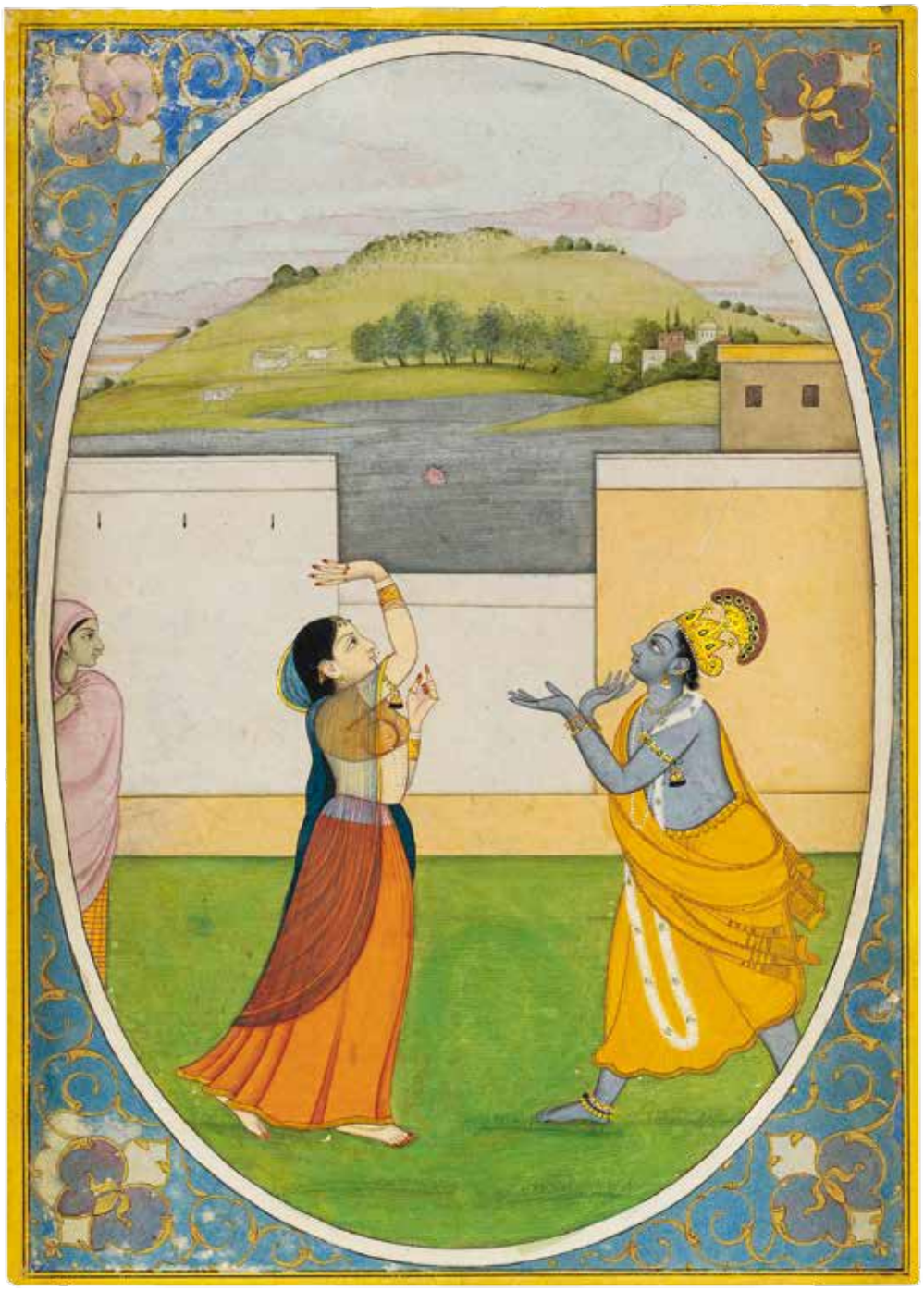
THE SERIES to which this and the following two paintings (cats. 90, 91) belong is the "Kangra Bihari" *Sat Sai*.[1] The *Sat Sai* is a collection of sensuous, word-rich poems with seven hundred verses written in Hindi by Bihari Lal Chaube (1595–1663), the court poet of Jai Singh I (reigned 1625–67) of Amber, the ruler of the former kingdom of Jaipur in Rajasthan. Bihari's work deals with the *nayaka-nayika* (hero-heroine) theme, which describes the idealized behavior of lovers and the everyday situations and predicaments of love. According to legend, Bihari wrote his text to beguile Maharaja Jai Singh into leaving the royal harem, where he had tarried for one year, leaving unfinished various pressing matters of state.

In about 1785 a beautiful series of paintings illustrating Bihari's text was made in the Punjab Hills for Maharaja Sansar Chand (reigned 1775–1823), a great patron of painting and the ruler of the former kingdom of Kangra in the Punjab Hills (see cat. 82). During the early twentieth century this series remained largely intact in the ancestral "Tehri Garhwal" collection, but in the late 1960s it was dispersed. The original, never-completed Kangra series comprised some forty paintings, but it was meant to include another twenty, their compositions now existing only as rather sketchy preparatory drawings, which were never prepared for paint or fully colored. All twenty are now in the collection of the Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi, and their incomplete state confirms that the series was never finished. M. S. Randhawa remarks, "This suggests that the artist who had taken up the project of illustrating the 700 verses of Bihari may have died." The majority of the extant paintings either have no inscriptions on their reverses or have a poem with a meaningless inscription, "the situation shown in the painting being entirely different from that described in the poem."[2]

The original artist, probably Fattu, the son of Manaku (see cats. 67–70 and 76) and the nephew of Nainsukh (see cats. 71 and 72), personified his *nayaka* (hero) and *nayika* (heroine) in the guise of Krishna and Radha. The Divine Couple argues, reconciles, makes love, and suffers the pangs of separation, their meetings depicted against the gently rolling topography and neat villages of the Kangra Valley, where Fattu came to live. Fattu's name is written on a drawing copied from a painting in the original series, and this drawing, now in the National Museum, New Delhi, is the basis for our attribution of the entire series to the artist.

Probably the most distinctive features of this series are the Mughal-style oval formats and the elaborately decorated borders with dark blue spandrels heightened with gold arabesque. (All but two of the forty finished paintings are oval in shape.)

1. Two later versions of the same *Sat Sai* text exist; see Bautze 1991, pp. 181, 184.
2. Randhawa 1966, p. 37.



90

The Villagers Play Hide-and-Seek; Krishna Discovers Radha Hidden in a Clump of Bushes

Probably painted by the artist Fattu (active ca. 1770–1820)
Illustrated folio from the dispersed "Kangra Bihari" *Sat Sai* (Seven Hundred Verses)
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Kangra, ca. 1785

Opaque watercolor, ink and gold on paper; narrow yellow and white borders with black inner rules; dark blue spandrels with gold arabesque; painting 7 7/16 x 5 1/4 in. (18.9 x 13.3 cm), page 8 1/8 x 6 in. (20.6 x 15.2 cm)

INSCRIBED on the reverse in black ink in Hindi, or Braj Bhasha, written in *devanagari* script: a three-line poem, some words of which have been effaced (for an English translation, see Randhawa 1966, p. 48); also inscribed in blue crayon with the Arabic numeral "114"

PUBLISHED: Randhawa 1966, pl. 11; Archer 1973, vol. 1, p. 296, fig. 39(ii), vol. 2, fig. 39(ii)

A TALL TREE in the center of the painting divides the composition into its two quite different narrative components. On the left the village *gopa*s (cowherds) and *gopi*s (milkmaids) play a raucous game of hide-and-seek, while their elders gossip or attend to various chores in front of their walled village in the distant background. On the right, the youthful Krishna discovers Radha hiding in a bramble of flowering bushes. In the far distance, the village herd of docile cows is returning home. It is the end of day, or the beautiful "hour of cowdust."

Paintings from the "Kangra Bihari" *Sat Sai* often incorporate more than one incident in the same work. The result was generally harmonious, as these differing incidents were all amalgamated, as here, into the same rolling landscape and within the same oval format.

Two other paintings in the Kronos Collections (cats. 89, 91) are from the "Kangra Bihari" *Sat Sai* (for discussion of the series, see cat. 89).[1]

1. For the *Sat Sai* of Bihari, see Bautze 1991, pp. 180–84, nos. 74–76. See also Randhawa 1966; and Archer 1973, vol. 1, pp. 296–97.

91

The Village Beauty

Probably painted by the artist Fattu (active ca. 1770–1820)
Illustrated folio from the dispersed "Kangra Bihari" *Sat Sai* (Seven Hundred Verses)
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Kangra, ca. 1785

Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper; narrow yellow and white borders with black inner rules; dark blue spandrels decorated with gold arabesque; painting 7⅜ x 5³⁄₁₆ in. (18.7 x 13.2 cm), page 8⅛ x 5⅞ in. (20.6 x 14.9 cm)

INSCRIBED on the reverse in black ink in Hindi, or Braj Bhasha, written in *devanagari* script: a ten-line poem (for an English translation, see Randhawa 1966, p. 70)

PUBLISHED: Mehta 1926, pl. 22; Randhawa 1966, pl. XIII; Archer 1973, vol. 1, p. 296, fig. 39(i), vol. 2, p. 214, fig. 39(i); Kossak 1997, no. 65; *Love in Asian Art and Culture* 1998, p. 87; Beach, Goswamy, and Fischer, eds., vol. 2, 2011, p. 708, fig. 20; Guy and Britschgi 2011, no. 92; Pal 2015, p. 110, fig. 6.25

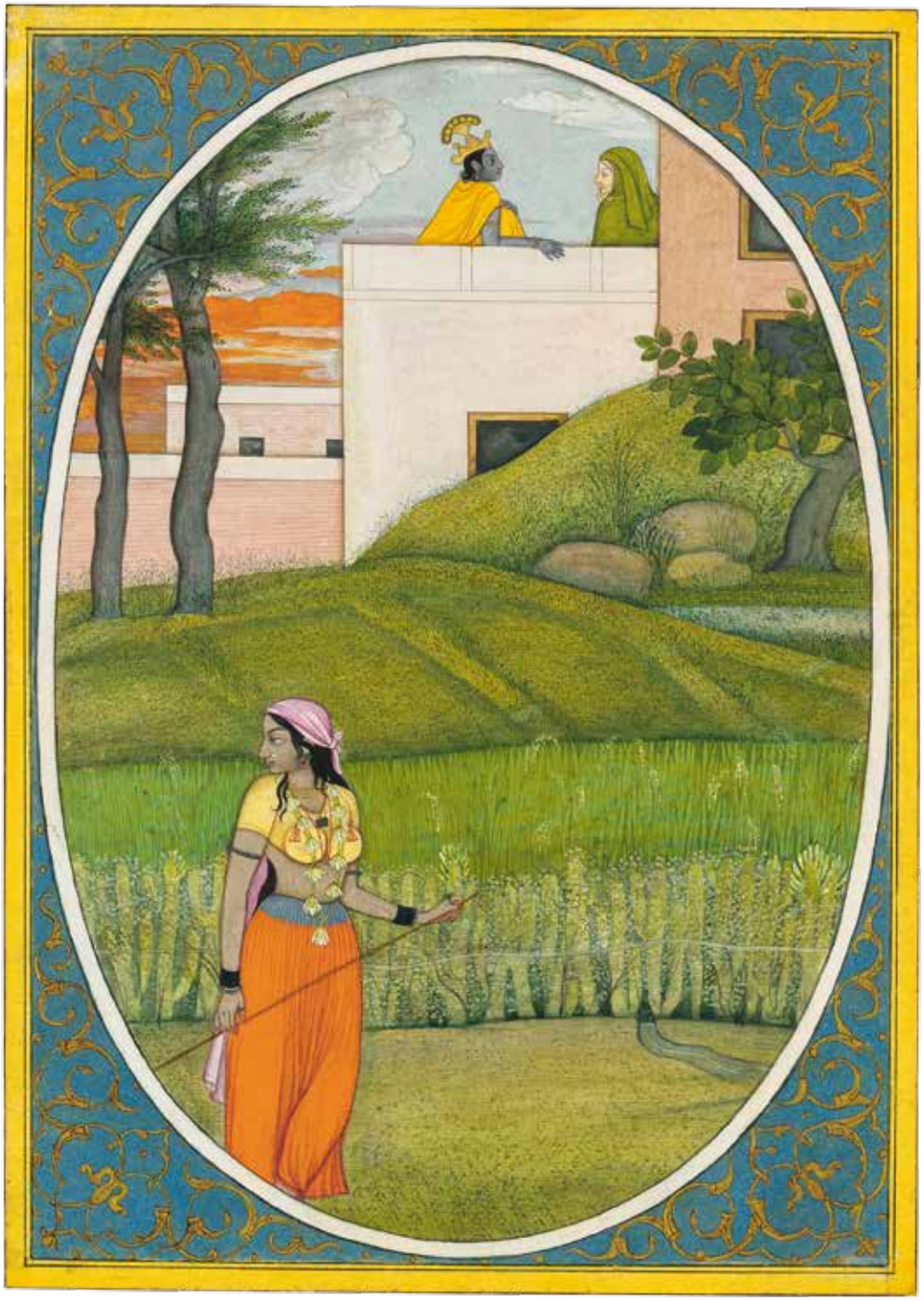
ON THE TERRACE in the background, Krishna sits with an old woman who has draped a shawl over her head to ward off the coolness of the approaching night. The woman is describing the willowy maiden — the village beauty — in the foreground and rhapsodizes about the happy appearance of the rustic maiden's "elevated bosom."[1] The maiden wears a loosely tied pink headscarf and a garland of wildflowers as she guards the village paddy field, protected by a hedge of euphorbia. An irrigation channel appears in the foreground and a pile of large boulders in the middle distance, the latter distinctive to the Kangra Valley,[2] where this painting was made. Of course, a good harvest, which Krishna's love for the beautiful guardian ensures, is essential to the well-being of the entire village community.

The rounded contours of the gently rolling landscape, the swaying tree trunks, and the lady's curvaceous figure are all amplified by the oval format of the composition. Yet all these forms have been stabilized by the hard angles of the man-made architecture; the result is a work that is classically balanced.

As one critic has noted,[3] the scarlet and yellow of the peasant girl's dress and the yellow of Krishna's clothes are synonymous with love's ardor. The two lovers might be separated by the mottled color of the paddy field, but their individual colors smolder amid the bucolic green.

Two other paintings in the Kronos Collections (cats. 89, 90) are from the same "Kangra Bihari" *Sat Sai*. For discussion of this series, see catalogue number 89.

1. Randhawa 1966, p. 70.
2. Ibid.
3. Kossak 1997, p. 106.



92

A Western Horned Pheasant

Painted by the artist Sajnu (active 1806–20)
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Mandi, dated 1810

Opaque watercolor on paper; painting 7 1/16 x 8 1/16 in. (18 x 20.5 cm)

INSCRIBED on the front in black ink written in *devanagari* script: "In A.D. 1810 [Samvat 1867], *sastra samvat* 86, on the eleventh day of *jyestha*, [this] *phulgar* was painted by Sajnu."

PUBLISHED: Spink and Son, London 1982, no. 117; Christie's, New York 2014, no. 306

THIS LIVELY PAINTING depicts the *phulgar*, or western horned pheasant (*Tragopan melanocephalus*). The bird has black-and-gray speckled plumage, a crested and wattled head, and the color orange on its face and neck feathers.

Painting at Mandi, a relatively large kingdom in the Punjab Hills, did not really get under way until the eighteenth century. It reached an apogee of creativity during the reign of Raja Isvari Sen (1788–1826), who was under the cultural sway of painting-mad Kangra and Guler, the two kingdoms that supplied a number of Isvari Sen's favorite artists. His leading court painter, Sajnu, originally from Kangra or Guler, made the present work. Like Nainsukh (see cats. 71 and 72) and the Basohli Master of the Early *Rasa-manjari* (see cats. 37 and 38) before him, Sajnu did much to transform the style of painting throughout the Punjab Hills. Early nineteenth-century Pahari painting was greatly influenced by his elaborate, decorative borders, his geometric, mannered compositions, his jagged rocks, and his spatial complexity. After Sajnu (and his near-contemporary, Phurku of Kangra), nothing in painting from the Punjab Hills would look quite the same. Probably the artist's major achievement was the creation of a set of twenty-one illustrated folios constituting a *Hamir-Hath* (Pride of Hamir) series, illustrating a ballad in Hindi, dated to the same year as the present work.[1]

This relatively simple, straightforward study from life captures Sajnu in an uncharacteristically relaxed moment.[2] The feeling of active yet suspended movement and the feathery texture and color articulation of the *phulgar* are exceptional. Sajnu probably made separate studies such as this one in order to incorporate subsidiary elements into his more complex figural compositions.

1. Archer 1973, vol. 1, pp. 360–61.
2. For fourteen other Pahari studies of birds, see Seyller and Mittal 2014, nos. 58–61.

श्रीसं१८८७ साल्सं ८८१ रे ऽपेष्ट्र ११ फुलगर लीख्या सजनु रे

93

Rama and Sita in the Forest: A Thorn Is Removed from Rama's Foot

Punjab Hills, kingdom of Kangra, ca. 1800–1810

Opaque watercolor, gold, and silver (now tarnished) on paper; dark blue inner border decorated with gold arabesque and black inner rules; pink-flecked outer border decorated with dark pink inner rules; painting 8 3/16 x 5 7/8 in. (20.8 x 14.9 cm), page 11 1/4 x 8 15/16 in. (28.6 x 22.7 cm)

INSCRIBED on the front along the outer border in pencil with the numeral "4" or "9"

EX COLL.: Douglas Barrett

PUBLISHED: Barrett and Gray 1963, p. 184; Lerner 1984, no. 65

THE SCENE ILLUSTRATED HERE takes place after Rama has been banished from court. He, his wife, Sita, and his brother Lakshmana sit on a sun-drenched hillock in a clearing in the dense wilderness. Dressed in the costume of leaves appropriate to jungle dwellers, the three figures have been hunting in the interior of the forest, as the trussed antelope at their feet indicates. Hanuman, the bulky "prime minister" of the monkey clan and Rama's eventual ally, is drinking from the stream flowing along the lower border of the picture. At the center, Sita is fanning Rama, who reclines on the ground and twists in great pain as Lakshmana attempts to remove a thorn from the sole of his foot. The gods are new to this forest world, but with Hanuman's help they will learn its ways quickly enough.

This painting is a skillful medley of circular elements: the large white stones in the foreground, the curvature of the land, the trussed antelope, and the curved swords and bows are all harmonized within a rectangular composition. The silvery green palette is unusual for a Kangra painting of this date.[1]

1. For another painting of the same subject, see Khandalavala 1958, fig. 11. A somewhat later version of this painting (ex coll.: Manak-Cole Collection) is in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, U.K. For an illustration, see Pal 2015, p. 70, fig. 4.10.

94

Damayanti, Lost in Her Thoughts While Everyone Else Sleeps

Illustrated folio from a dispersed and unidentified *Nala-Damayanti*
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Kangra, ca. 1780–1800

Opaque watercolor, gold, and silver (now tarnished) on paper; yellow border with black inner rules; painting 8 x 12 in. (20.3 x 30.5 cm), page 8¾ x 12⅝ in. (22.2 x 32.1 cm)

NOT INSCRIBED

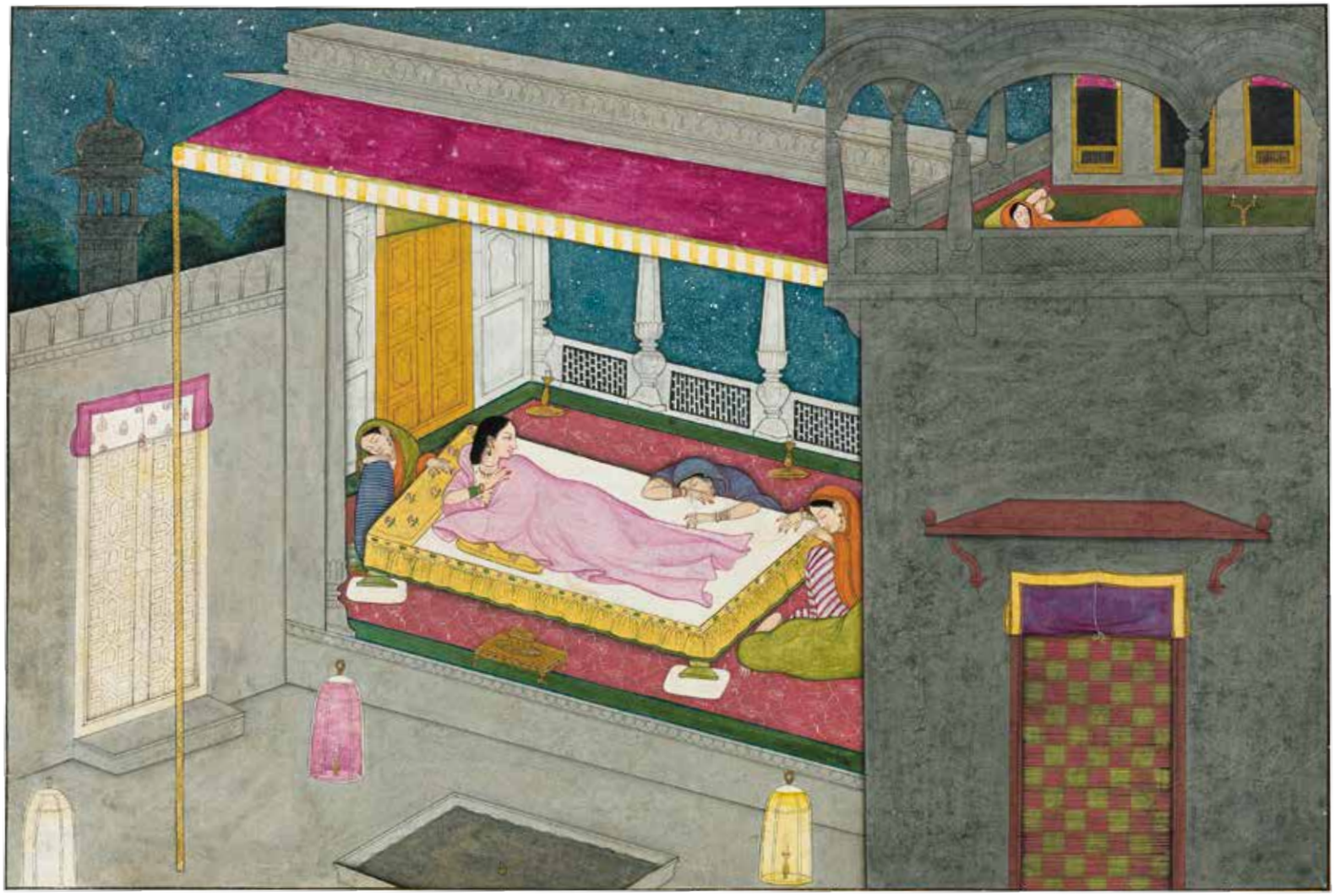
UNPUBLISHED

THE HIGH-ADVENTURE YARN involving the lovers Nala and Damayanti is one of the more popular stories derived from the cornucopia of Indian legend. Nala, king of Naishadha, and Damayanti, the beautiful daughter of the king of Vidarbha, lived together in wedded bliss for many years. But one day Nala was inhabited body and soul by an evil demon, after which the two lovers quarreled, separated, and endured many horrific adventures before Nala was finally restored to his old self and they were reunited. This turbulent adventure is recounted in the *Mahabharata* (The Great Epic of the Bharatas), the *Kathasaritsagara* (Ocean of Stories), and, most famously, in the *Naishadha Charita* (The Adventures of Nala, Raja of Naishadha) by Sriharsa, a twelfth-century epic poem in Sanskrit comprising more than twenty thousand verses.

Of course, illustrated series devoted to Sriharsa's text were also produced, most notably the celebrated but never fully completed *Nala-Damayanti* series made for Maharaja Sansar Chand (reigned 1775–1823) of Kangra in the early nineteenth century. This series originally included some 112 folios. Of these, forty-seven fully colored paintings once belonged to Maharaja Karan Singh of Jammu and Kashmir. They are now in the Amar Mahal Museum and Library, Jammu.[1] Another forty-eight works — finished, highly detailed, yet mostly uncolored underdrawings — completed the portion owned by Karan Singh and once belonged to Ananda Coomaraswamy. Twenty-nine of these underdrawings are now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.[2] Other works from the same group are scattered in museum collections throughout America, while 110 sketchy, sanguine preparatory drawings for the series now belong to the National Museum, New Delhi.

In this fine painting from a different, as yet unidentified *Nala-Damayanti* set, Damayanti is depicted reclining on her bed in a chamber on a palace rooftop. It is the middle of the night, as the star-filled sky indicates. Damayanti's maidservants have fallen asleep, and their various candles, whether freestanding or contained beneath glass covers, have sputtered and died. Yet Damayanti, who has sent messengers to Nala as well as to the gods who are pursuing her, cannot sleep. All that is left for her to do is wait anxiously for the morning, when the all-important decision about the identity of her future spouse will be made. With its disparate light sources and spatial complexity, this picture suggests the unhinged intensity of Damayanti's thoughts.[3]

1. See Goswamy 1975.
2. See Eastman 1959.
3. For another depiction of this incident, see Goswamy 1975, pl. 23.



95

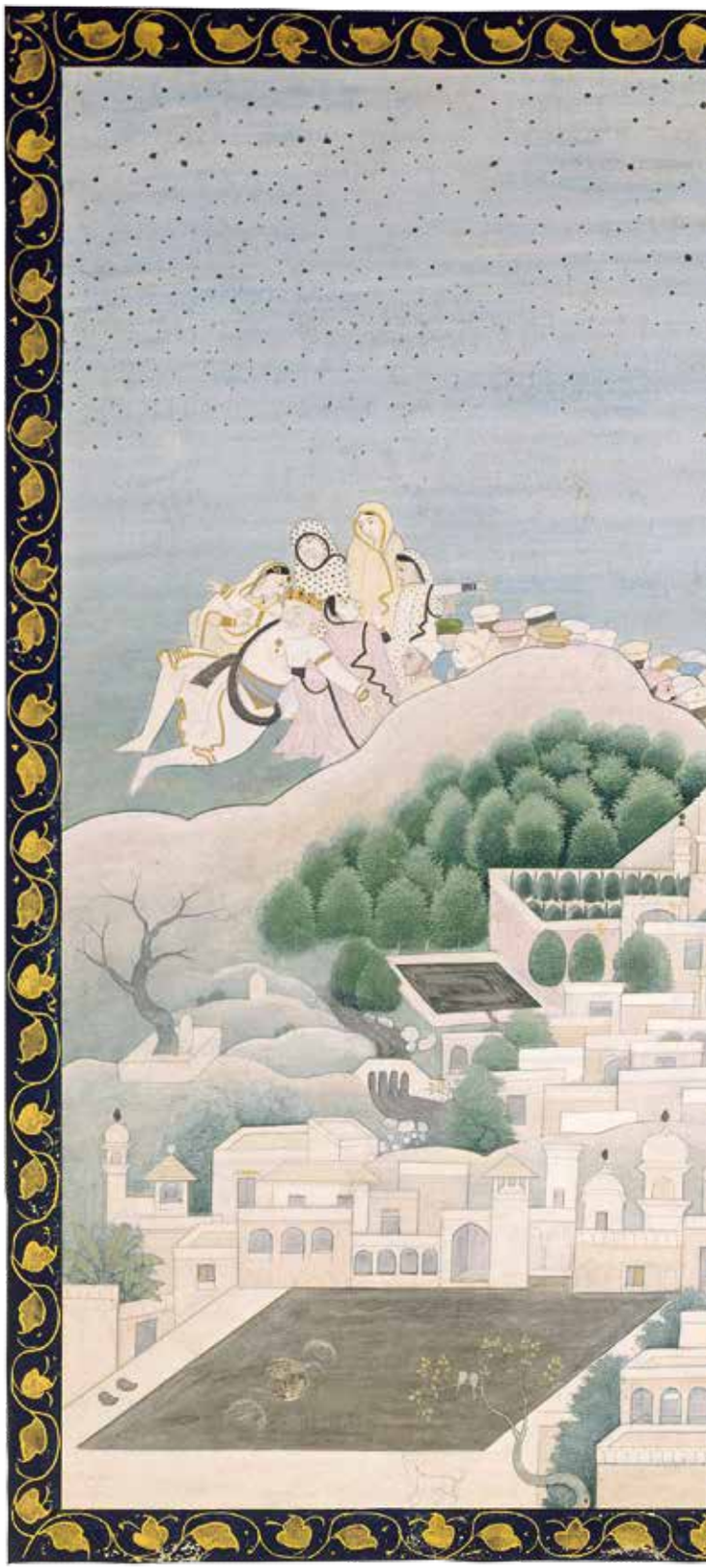
King Bhima Learns of Damayanti's Condition(?)

Illustrated folio from a dispersed *Nala-Damayanti* or another, as yet unidentified series
Punjab Hills, kingdom of Kangra, early 19th century

Opaque watercolor, gold, and silver (now tarnished) on paper; black border decorated with gold arabesque; painting 8¼ x 12 5/16 in. (21 x 31.3 cm), page 9 11/16 x 13 15/16 in. (24.7 x 35.5 cm)

INSCRIBED on the reverse

PUBLISHED: Lerner 1984, no. 66

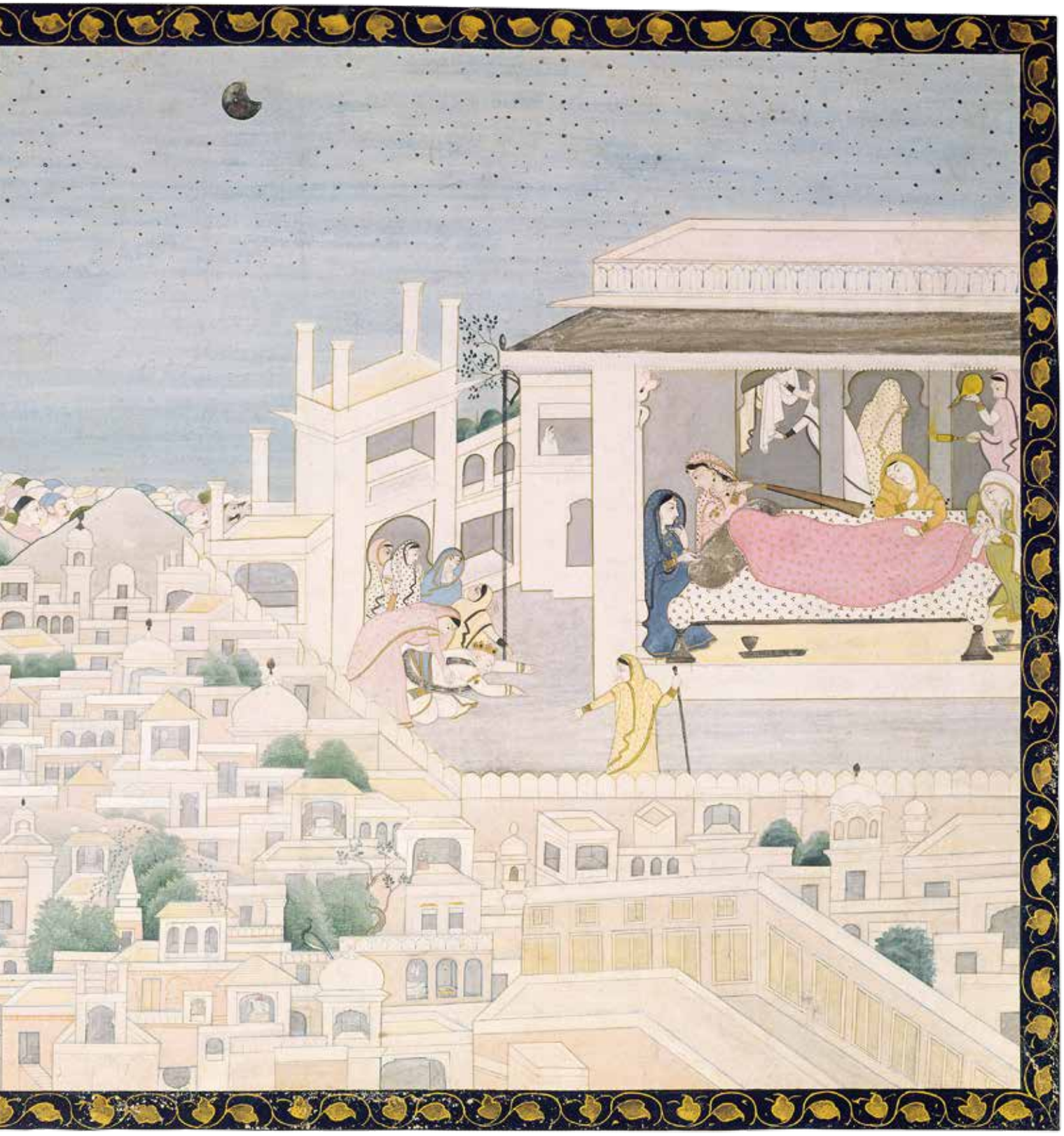


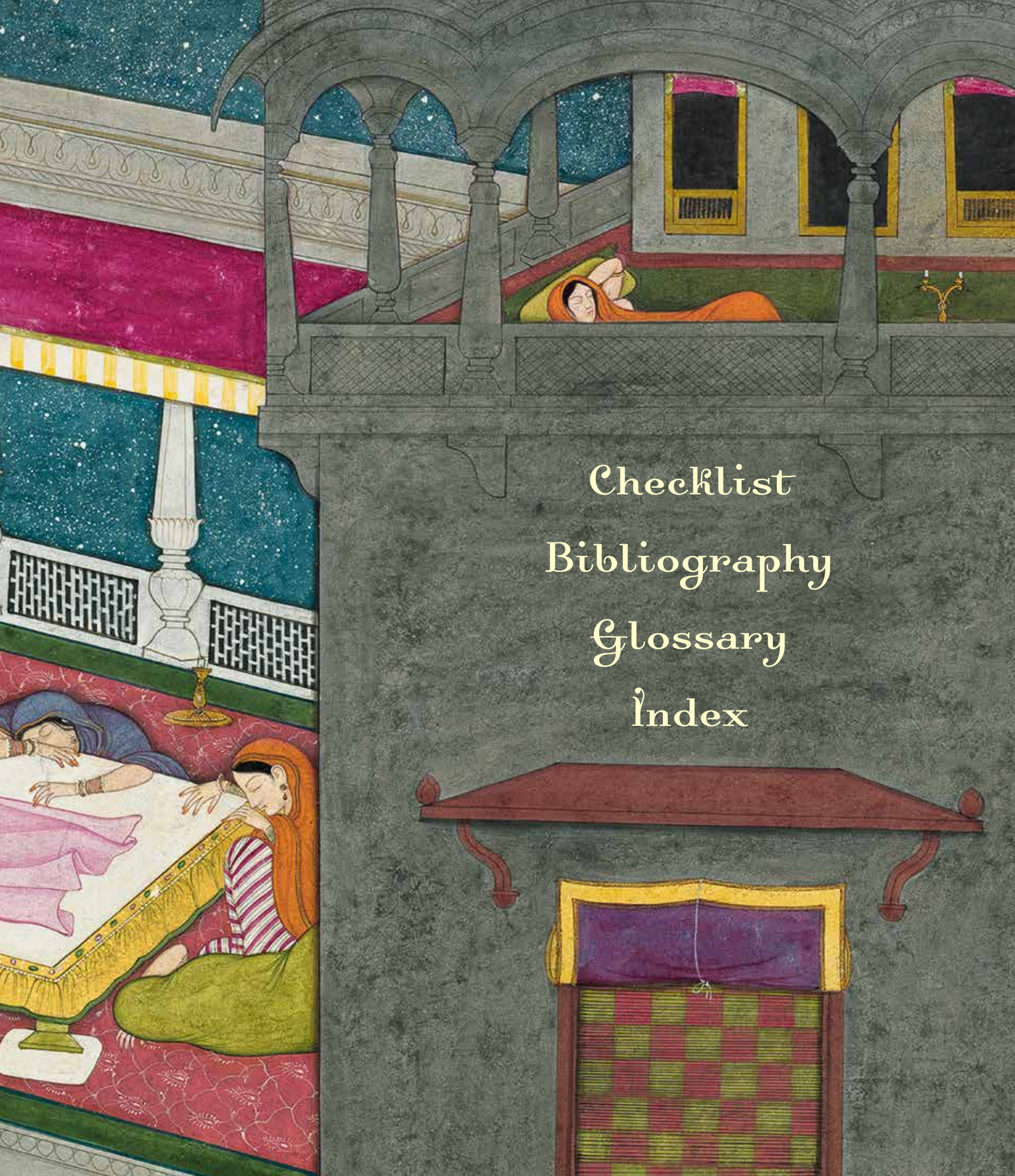
BEGINNING IN THE LATE eighteenth century, the size and pictorial content of paintings from the Punjab Hills began to expand. In this painting, the shifts in perspective, contrasts in scale, and dense configuration are characteristic of early nineteenth-century paintings, as are the pale tonality and the attenuated style of the faces and figures. (For this stylistic shift, see cat. 93.) Note the bird's-eye view of the city and the large-figured "close-up" of the interior to the right.

Martin Lerner has identified this scene as probably coming from the Nala-Damayanti story (see also cat. 94).[1] King Bhima, perhaps Damayanti's father, appears twice. In the rear of a large concourse of people in the upper left corner, he has fainted from grief; likewise burdened by grief, he is seen in the out-of-scale close-up of the women's quarters, as depicted in the palace to the right. There, the recumbent figure of the presumably dead Damayanti, cloaked from head to foot in a shroud, lies on a bed. The moon in the sky is reflected in the silvery pool at the lower left, thus uniting the two halves of this already quite dense composition.

Unfortunately, Lerner's identification is not entirely satisfying. The subject of this ambitious yet enigmatic painting remains unclear.

1. Lerner 1984, no. 66.





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COLLECTING PLEASURES

FIG. 1. *Kedar Ragini*. Folio from a *Ragamala* (Garland of Melodies) series. India, Rajasthan, Bikaner, ca. 1690–95. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper; painting 6 x 4 11/16 in. (15.2 x 11.9 cm), page 10 1/8 x 7 1/4 in. (25.7 x 18.4 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Peter Findlay, 1978 (1978.540.2)

FIG. 2. *Standing Yakshi*, India, Mathura, Kushan period, A.D. 2nd–3rd century. Mottled red sandstone, H. 32 in. (81.3 cm). Courtesy The Kronos Collections

FIG. 3. *Goddess with Weapons in Her Hair*. North India, possibly Pataliputra, Bihar, 2nd–1st century B.C. Bronze, H. 2 13/16 in. (7.1 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Samuel Eilenberg Collection, Gift of Samuel Eilenberg, in honor of Steven Kossak, 1987 (1987.142.289)

FIG. 4. *King Dasaratha and His Royal Retinue Proceed to Rama's Wedding*. India, Punjab Hills, Jammu, ca. 1690–1700. Ink and opaque watercolor on paper; painting 7 3/4 x 11 5/8 in. (19.7 x 29.5 cm), page 8 5/8 x 12 1/2 in. (21.9 x 31.8 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase, The Dillon Fund, Evelyn Kranes Kossak and Anonymous Gifts, 1994 (1994.310)

FIG. 5. *A Lady Playing the Tanpura*. India, Rajasthan, Kishangarh, ca. 1735. Ink, opaque and transparent watercolor, and gold on paper, 18 1/2 x 13 1/4 in. (47 x 33.7 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Fletcher Fund, 1996 (1996.100.1)

FIG. 6. *Panchama Ragini*. Folio from a *Ragamala* (Garland of Melodies) series. India, Rajasthan, Bikaner, ca. 1640. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper, 7 3/4 x 4 7/8 in. (19.7 x 12.4 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase, Patricia Phelps de Cisneros Gift, in honor of Mahrukh Tarapor, 1996 (1996.378)

FIG. 7. *Rama, Surrounded by the Armies of the Great Bear and Monkey Clans, Pardons Two Demon Spies*. Attributed to Manaku of Guler. Folio from a *Siege of Lanka* series. India, Punjab Hills, Guler, ca. 1725–30. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper; painting 22 1/4 x 31 1/4 in. (56.5 x 79.4 cm), page 23 1/2 x 32 3/4 in. (59.7 x 83.2 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1919 (19.24.1)

FIG. 8. *Maharaja Sidh Sen Receiving an Embassy.* Painted by the Master at the Court of Mandi. India, Punjab Hills, Mandi, ca. 1700–1710. Ink and opaque watercolor on paper, 14 9/16 x 10 5/8 in. (37 x 27 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase, Florence and Herbert Irving Gift and Rogers Fund, 1995 (1995.39)

FIG. 9. *Raja Balwant Singh of Jasrota Does Homage to Krishna and Radha*. Attributed to Nainsukh of Guler. India, Jasrota, Himachal Pradesh, ca. 1745–50. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper; overall 7 3/4 x 6 1/8 in. (19.7 x 15.6 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1994 (1994.377)

FIG. 10. *Head of a Woman Dressed as Krishna*. Attributed to Sahib Ram. India, Rajasthan, Jaipur, ca. 1800. Ink and watercolor on paper, 27 1/4 x 18 1/2 in. (69.2 x 47 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1918 (18.85.2)

MUGHAL COURT PAINTING AND THE ORIGINS OF RAJPUT COURT PAINTING

FIG. 11. *Assad Ibn Kariba Launches a Night Attack on the Camp of Malik Iraj*. Folio from a *Hamzanama* (The Story of Hamza). India, Mughal, ca. 1564–69. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on cloth, mounted on paper, 27 x 21 1/4 in. (68.6 x 54 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1918 (18.44.1)

FIG. 12. *Umar Walks around the Fulad Castle, Meets a Foot Soldier, and Kicks Him to the Ground*. Folio from a *Hamzanama* (The Story of Hamza). India, Mughal, ca. 1570. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on cloth, mounted on paper, 28 3/4 x 22 1/4 in. (73 x 56.5 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1923 (23.264.2)

FIG. 13. *Hamid Bhakari Punished by Akbar*. Attributed to Manohar. Folio from an *Akbarnama* (History of Akbar). India, Mughal, MS dated 1597. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper, 13 1/8 x 8 15/16 in. (33.3 x 22.6 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Theodore M. Davis Collection, Bequest of Theodore M. Davis, 1915 (30.95.174.8)

FIG. 14. *A Muslim Pilgrim Learns a Lesson in Piety from a Brahmin*. Attributed to Basawan. Folio from a *Khamsa* (Collected Verses) of Amir Khusrau Dihlavi. India, Mughal, MS dated 1597–98. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper, 9 7/8 x 6 1/4 in. (25.1 x 15.9 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Alexander Smith Cochran, 1913 (13.228.29)

FIG. 15. *The Gopis Plead with Krishna to Return Their Clothing*. Folio from the "Isarda" *Bhagavata Purana* (The Ancient Story of God).

India, Delhi-Agra region, ca. 1560–65. Opaque watercolor and ink on paper, 7⅜ x 10⅛ in. (18.7 x 25.7 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of The H. Rubin Foundation Inc., 1972 (1972.260)

FIG. 16. *Jahangir and His Vizier, I'timad al-Daula*. Painted by Manohar. Folio from the Kevorkian Album. India, Mughal, ca. 1615. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper; page 15 5/16 x 10 3/16 in. (39 x 25.9 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase, Rogers Fund and The Kevorkian Foundation Gift, 1955 (55.121.10.23)

FIG. 17. *Red-Headed Vulture and Long-Billed Vulture*. Painted by Mansur. Folio from the Kevorkian Album. India, Mughal, ca. 1615–20. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper; page 15⅜ x 10 1/16 in. (39.1 x 25.6 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase, Rogers Fund and The Kevorkian Foundation Gift, 1955 (55.121.10.12)

FIG. 18. *Shah Jahan Riding a Stallion.* Painted by Payag. Folio from the Kevorkian Album. India, Mughal, ca. 1628. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper; page 15 15/16 x 10⅛ in. (40.4 x 25.7 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase, Rogers Fund and The Kevorkian Foundation Gift, 1955 (55.121.10.21)

FIG. 19. *The Battle of Shahbarghan*. Painted by Hunhar. Probably made for the "Windsor Castle" *Padshahnama* (History of the Emperor). India, Mughal, ca. 1648. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper, 13⅝ x 9⅛ in. (34.6 x 23.2 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase, Bernard and Audrey Aronson Charitable Trust Gift, in memory of her beloved husband, Bernard Aronson, 1986 (1986.283)

FIG. 20. *The Emperor Aurangzeb Carried on a Palanquin*. Painted by Bhavanidas. India, Mughal, ca. 1700–1715. Opaque watercolor and gold on paper; page 22⅞ x 15⅛ in. (58.1 x 38.4 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Louis V. Bell Fund, 2003 (2003.430)

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FIG. 21. *Krishna Holds Up Mount Govardhan to Shelter the Villagers of Braj.* Folio from a *Harivamsa* (Legend of Hari [Krishna]). India, Mughal, ca. 1590–95. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper, 11⅜ x 7⅞ in. (28.9 x 20 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase, Edward C. Moore Jr. Gift, 1928 (28.63.1)

FIG. 22. Detail of fig. 21

FIG. 23. *The Death of King Dasaratha, the Father of Rama.* Folio from a *Ramayana* (The Adventures of Rama). India, Mughal, ca. 1605. Opaque watercolor and gold on paper; painting 10½ x 5 13/16 in. (26.7 cm x 14.8 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Cynthia Hazen Polsky and Leon B. Polsky Fund, 2002 (2002.506)

FIG. 24. *Asvatthama Fires the Narayana Weapon (Cosmic Fire) at the Pandavas*. Painted by Fazl. Folio from a *Razmnama* (Book of Wars). India, Mughal, ca. 1616–17. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper; page 15 1/16 x 9 7/16 in. (38.2 x 24 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1955 (55.121.31)

FIG 25. Illustrated folio from a *Kathasaritsagara* (Ocean of Stories). India, Mughal, ca. 1590. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper, 12¾ x 8⅛ in. (32.4 x 20.6 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase, Friends of Islamic Art Gifts, 2010 (2010.169)

FIG. 26. *The Goddess Bhairavi Devi with Shiva*. Attributed to Payag. India, Mughal, ca. 1630–35. Opaque watercolor and gold on paper, 7 5/16 x 10 7/16 in. (18.5 x 26.5 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase, Lila Acheson Wallace Gift, 2011 (2011.409)

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FIG. 27. *Shiva and Parvati Playing Chaupar (Parcheesi)*. Painting by Devidasa. Folio from a *Rasamanjari* (Bouquet of Delights). India, Punjab Hills, Basohli, dated 1694–95. Opaque watercolor, ink, silver, and gold on paper; painting 6½ x 10⅞ in. (16.5 x 27.6 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Dr. J. C. Burnett, 1957 (57.185.2)

FIG. 28. *Maharana Ari Singh with His Courtiers Being Entertained at the Jagniwas Water Palace.* Painted by Bhima, Kesu Ram, Bhopa, and Nathu. India, Rajasthan, Mewar, dated 1767. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper, 26⅝ x 32⅞ in. (67.6 x 83.5 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Irving, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, and Mr. and Mrs. Henry A. Grunewald Gifts, in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Gustavo Cisneros, 1994 (1994.116)

FIG. 29. *Krishna and the Gopis Take Shelter from the Rain*. India, Rajasthan, Jaipur, ca. 1760. Ink, gold, and opaque watercolor on paper, 13¾ x 9⅜ in. (34.9 x 23.8 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase, Mr. and Mrs. John Wiley and Cynthia Hazen Polsky Gifts, and Rogers Fund, 1991 (1991.94)

FIG. 30. *Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana at the Hermitage of Bharadvaja*. Folio from the "Bharany" *Ramayana* (The Adventures of Rama). India, Punjab Hills, Kangra, ca. 1780. Opaque watercolor and ink on paper; painting 8⅛ x 12⅛ in. (20.6 x 30.8 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Seymour and Rogers Funds, 1976 (1976.15)

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Glossary

Aghasura: a snake demon who swallowed Krishna and the cowherds

Angada: son of Bali, monkey king of Kishkindha, and ally of Rama

Arjuna: third of five Pandava brothers, who are the joint husbands of Draupadi; a leading figure in the *Mahabharata* epic

Astanayika: the eight *nayikas*, or types of women in love

asura: demon

avatara: incarnation of a deity

Bakasura: crane demon slain by Krishna

Balarama: seventh son of Vasudeva and Devaki and elder brother of Krishna, regarded as an incarnation of Vishnu; in Pahari painting he is normally shown with white skin and carrying a plow

Bali: monkey king who usurped the throne of his brother Sugriva and was killed by Rama

bhang: Indian hemp; cannabis

Brahma: the supreme spirit manifested as the active creator of the universe; first member of the Hindu trinity

baradari: a pavilion or open-arched summer house for use in hot weather

Baramasa (Months of the Year): a cycle of poems describing the feelings and behavior of lovers during each of the twelve months

Bhagavata Purana (The Ancient Story of God): a chronicle of Vishnu and his avatars, or incarnations; books 10 and 11 describe the life on earth of his eighth incarnation, Krishna

bhakti: personal attachment and fervent devotion to Vishnu

Bihari Lal Chaube (1595–1663): Hindi love-poet and author of the *Sat Sai*

Brahmin: a member of the priestly caste

Braj Bhasha: the language of Braj, a district in northern India containing Mathura and Brindaban

Chaurapanchasika (Fifty Stanzas of Secret Love): a poem in Sanskrit by Bilhana (active Kashmir 1100) celebrating the poet's intrigue with a king's daughter

chitrakarta (*chitera*): a painter

darbar: a court, an audience, or levee; also the executive government of a state

Dasehra: autumn festival commemorating Rama's victory over Ravana

deva: a god

Devi: the Great Goddess, wife of the god Shiva, known by a variety of names that refer to her various manifestations, or attributes

dhoti: a cloth worn round the waist and passing between the legs; a loincloth

diwan (divan, davan): a minister or chief officer of state, often with revenue or financial responsibilities

dogri: a dialect currently found chiefly in the western half of the Punjab Hills

gaddi (*gadi*): throne; a cushion on which a person sits

Ganesha: elephant-headed god and son of Shiva and Parvati; god of wisdom and remover of obstacles

Garuda: mythical king of the birds; Vishnu's mount with the head, wings, talons, and beak of an eagle and the body and limbs of a man

Gita Govinda (Song of the Cowherds): a poem in Sanskrit by Jayadeva (active Bengal 1180–1200) recounting the love of Radha and Krishna, their temporary estrangement, and their ultimate reconciliation

gopa: a cowherd

gopi: a milkmaid

Gosain: a type of religious mendicant or devotee; priest

gurmukhi: script in which the Panjabi language is normally written

guru: teacher or spiritual guide

Hamir-Hath (Pride of Hamir): a ballad in Hindi describing the siege of Raja Hamir Dev in the fort of Ranthambhor by 'Ala-ud-din Khilji and the raja's death from an arrow

Hanuman: monkey chief with supernatural powers who assisted Rama in quelling the demon Ravana

Hiranyaksha: a demon destroyed by Vishnu in his boar incarnation; twin brother of Hiranyakasipu

Holi: spring festival involving the squirting of red-colored water and the throwing of red powder

huqqa: a type of pipe in which the tobacco is smoked through water

Indra: lord of the heavens and king of the gods but inferior to Vishnu and Shiva

jagir: a form of land tenure carrying with it the right to collect revenue

jagirdar: holder of a jagir

jama: a coat of varying lengths tied in the case of Hindus on the left-hand side and in the case of Muslims on the right

Jamadagni: father of Parasurama

Janmashtami: festival celebrating the birthday of Krishna normally held in the rains at the end of August

Jarasandha: demon king of Magadha and enemy of Krishna

Jasoda (Yashoda): wife of the cowherd Nanda and foster mother of Krishna

Kaikeyi: second queen of King Dasaratha

Kali: wife of Shiva and an aspect of the Devi in her terrifying form

Kaliya: multiheaded serpent who dwelled with his serpent wives in the Yamuna River, harrying the cowherds; subdued by Krishna

Kalki: tenth and final incarnation of Vishnu, who will appear in the form of a warrior with a white horse for the destruction of the wicked at the end of the present age

Kartavirya: a many-armed tyrant, who, after receiving hospitality from the sage Jamadagni, stole the Cow of Plenty and was later killed by Vishnu in his sixth incarnation of Parasurama

Karttikeya: god of war and son of Shiva and Parvati

King Dasaratha: king of Ayodhya, father of Rama

Krishna: eighth incarnation of the God Vishnu and at times regarded as his direct manifestation

Krishna Iila: the dalliances of Krishna, particularly his amorous behavior with Radha and the milkmaids

Kumbhakarna: giant brother of Ravana

Lakshmana: brother of Rama, whom he accompanied into exile and assisted in the war against the demon king Ravana

Lakshmi: goddess of fortune and giver of wealth; consort of Vishnu

lingam: a stone phallus; the symbolic form in which Shiva is normally worshiped

Mahabharata (The Great Epic of the Bharatas): an epic poem describing the rivalry and conflicts between the sons of two brothers over the kingdom of Hastinapura; these cousins, the Pandavas and the Kauravas, finally fought in a great war in which the Kauravas were defeated

Mahant: the head of a temple or religious community

maharaja: a great raja, or king
moksha: release of living through extinction in God
Mount Govardhan: a mountain lifted by Krishna when Indra poured down rain on the cowherds of Brindaban
musavar (*musavir*): a painter
naga: a mythical semidivine being with the face of a human, the tail of a serpent, and the expanded neck of a cobra
nagari: meaning "of the city," the name of the script used in writing the Sanskrit and Hindi languages
Nala-Damayanti: an episode in the epic poem the *Mahabharata* describing the nuptials of Prince Nala and the lady Damayanti
Nanda: leading cowherd; husband of Jasoda and foster father of Krishna
Nandi: a white bull; the mount of Shiva and Parvati
Narada: the sage who dwells among the gods
Narasimha: fourth incarnation of Vishnu who appeared as half lion and half man and destroyed the impious king Hiranyakasipu
Narayan (Narain): a synonym for Vishnu
nayaka: a lover or gallant classified according to his conduct and relationship with women
nayika: a woman in love classified according to her conduct and relationship to a *nayaka*
Pahari: meaning "Of the Hills," a generic term applied in Indian painting to pictures executed in the Punjab Hills
pan: the leaf of the betel plant that is chewed with pieces of areca nut and lime paste enclosed within it
panda: a priest stationed at places of pilgrimage and employed for family ritual and worship
pandit: a scholar learned in Sanskrit; a respected Hindu with scholarly or artistic attainments; a Brahmin
Parahsurama: Rama with the Ax; sixth incarnation of Vishnu
parijata: heavenly wishing-tree snatched from Indra's heaven by Krishna and bestowed by him on his consort Satyabhama
Parvati: consort of Shiva; mother of Ganesha
patka: a cummerbund
puja: worship
purana: a type of ancient Hindu sacred text embodying early myths, legends, and history
qalam (*qalm*, *kalam*): pen or brush; hence by usage, a style or school of painting
Radha: Krishna's principal milkmaid love
Ragamala (Garland of Melodies): a cycle of poems apostrophizing the princes (*ragas*) and ladies (*raginis*) who personify the moods or characters of the various melodies on which Indian music is improvised
rai: an honorific derived from raja; title of an heir apparent, especially at Kangra
raj: principality or kingdom
raja: a ruling prince; an honorific
Rama: seventh incarnation of Vishnu and the personification of righteousness and virtue
Ramayana (The Adventures of Rama): an epic poem describing the exploits of Rama, seventh incarnation of Vishnu, in his quest to rescue his wife Sita, who is abducted by Ravana, demon king of Ceylon
rana: a title similar to raja held by certain Rajput princes in Central India and in Baghal and Kahlur (Punjab Hills)
rani: a queen; the wife of a raja; a princess
Rasamanjari (Bouquet of Delights): a poem in Sanskrit by Bhanu Datta (active fourteenth century) analyzing varieties of lover
rasika: a connoisseur of love or art
Rasikapriya (Lover's Breviary): a poem in Hindi by Keshava Das (active Orchha, Bundelkhand, Central India 1580–1600) analyzing lovers in terms of incidents involving Radha and Krishna
Ravana: demon king of Lanka in Ceylon; abductor of Sita and foe of Rama
Rukmini: princess engaged to Sisupala who is abducted by Krishna on her wedding day and becomes his principal wife
rupee: a silver coin; today's modern Indian currency
sadhu: a Hindu ascetic
sakhi: female companion; confidante
sannyasi: a Hindu who has renounced all worldly ties and possession in order to devote himself to the spiritual life
sarangi: an Indian fiddle played with a bow
sardar: chief, commonly applied to Sikhs as a term of respect
sarpech: turban ornament
sari: long piece of cloth used as a female garment either over a skirt of bodice or as a substitute for them
sarod: an Indian stringed instrument with a single gourd for a sounding box
Sat Sai (Seven Hundred Verses): a collection of seven hundred verses in Hindi by Bihari Lal Chaube celebrating the romance of Radha and Krishna
sati: the rite of widow-burning; a Hindu wife who has burned herself on her husband's pyre
Satrughna: twin brothers of Lakshmana and half-brother of Rama
Satyabhama: Krishna's third queen for whom the *parijata* tree is stolen from Indra's heaven
Savari Durga (the Inaccessible One): a stern form of the goddess Devi, wife of Shiva
Shaiva: adjective of Shiva
Shiva: procreator and destroyer; third member of the Hindu trinity, consort of Parvati
Sita: wife of Rama
sitar: a stringed instrument with a bowl like a tambura but played with a plectrum
sloka: a Sanskrit verse
Sugriva: monkey king of Kishkindha
Sursagar: a Hindi poem by Sur Das (active sixteenth century) analyzing Krishna's conduct as ideal lover
takri: a cursive alphabet used for writing dialects in the Punjab Hills
tambura: a musical instrument with a wooden bow usually made of four strings
Tara: monkey general; associate of Hanuman and Angada
tika (*tikka*): heir apparent
tilak: sectarian mark mainly applied to the forehead
Vaishnava: adherent of Vishnu; a devotee of ardent Vaishnavism, especially in its *bhakti* form
Valmiki : author of the *Ramayana*
Vamana: Brahmin dwarf, fifth incarnation of Vishnu
vasant (*basant*): spring
Vasudeva: husband of Devaki; Krishna's natural father
vina: the classical stringed instrument of Indian music, often with gourd resonators
Vishnu: loving preserver and restorer; second member in the Hindu trinity; consort of Lakshmi
Yamuna River: a river of north India sacred to the Hindus and associated with the youth of Krishna
yogi: a person who undertakes a spiritual discipline often of an ascetic nature
yogini: a female yogi
yoni: the female sex organ, normally combined with a lingam in Shiva worship
zenana (zanana): the female apartments; the women of a family

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