





FRANCESCA GALLOWAY

INDIAN PAINTINGS 1450 -1850

Catalogue by JP Losty

11th June - 20th July 2018

It is our great pleasure to introduce this group, rich in early Mughal and pre-Mughal paintings, many of which come from an important private collection. Among this group are three folios from the first illustrated Baburnama (cat. 5 – 7) (also known as the V&A Baburnama), an extraordinary memoir detailing the nomadic life of the Central Asian prince Babur, displaced from his home and in search of a kingdom fit for his Timurid ancestry – an ambition realised at last with his conquest of Delhi and founding of the Mughal empire. This particular copy was an important event in itself, commissioned by Babur's grandson Akbar and translated into Persian for the first time in the 1580s. In a sense this was a political act, an illustrated manuscript to enact the transformation of his grandfather, a man who went from being a youth exiled in poverty to the creator of an empire, into a legend of history.

Two miniatures are examples of rare pre-Mughal painting: one (cat. 2) is the work of the compelling master artist of the 'Jainesque' Sultanate Shahnama. Trained in the native Indian tradition yet illustrating an Islamic epic, the artist's style is daring, innovative and confident.

'A Princess is attended by her Women' (cat. 8, c. 1620-30) offers an insight into the languor and luxury of the life of Mughal women at court. The image, infused with the heat and longing of summer, shows the eponymous princess gazing distractedly into the distance, while she is offered no less than fruit, a portrait of her absent lover, a foot massage, music, a hookah and a peacock!

Cat. 9 is a masterfully detailed and enchanting miniature, illustrating the Muslim festival of Shab-i-Barat, the night of deliverance from sins on which one's fate

in the coming year is to be decided by God. It is perhaps telling that so much of the energy of the Mughal art of this period (the mid-18th century), when the empire is beginning to decentralize and to decline politically and economically, can be seen to go into the lavish detailing of courtly celebration. This is reflected here in the sumptuous display of conspicuous wealth, with intricately illustrated fireworks and hanging lakeside lanterns, a gaudy elephant-shaped candelabra and attending musicians, in a scene full of opulent costumes, jewels and sweetmeats.

There are several fine and characterful Pahari paintings. Cat. 20 sees Raja Mahendra Pal of Basohli setting out for an expedition with his man ladies. In a dynamic and bold composition, they are seated (unusually for Pahari painting) on several large elephants, striding purposefully through the verdant landscape, perhaps en route to a beauty spot for an extravagant picnic.

Amongst the Pahari paintings, the divine and domestic charmingly intermingle in cats. 21 & 22. The latter depicts Siva, eyes closed and hair on end in the midst of a passion, whilst Parvati attempts to soothe him with music; in the former, Radha is poised to deliver a botanical blow to her lover Krishna with no less than a lotus stem.

I would like to thank the specialists we work with who are instrumental to our business, Gino Franchi, Mary Galloway, Will Kwiatowski, JP Losty, Helen Loveday.

Francesca Galloway

1.

A prince watches a man being tortured

Illustration from an unknown text, perhaps an *Iskandarnama*
Sultanate India, second half of the 15th century
Opaque pigments and gold on paper
Folio 33.2 x 23 cm; painting 22.2 x 14.9 cm

This painting, which has been cut from its manuscript and laid down on an album page so that any text is no longer visible, is thought to be from an *Iskandarnama*, the last of the five poems making up Nizami's *Khamsa*, illustrating Iskandar's sojourn in India, but the precise episode is unidentified. It shows a gruesome scene as a prince on horseback along with his retainers come to look at a nearly naked ascetic, apparently Hindu, suspended by his ankles upside down from a gibbet perched on the roof of a building. Five men on the roof have clearly done the deed, while a sixth empties a pot apparently of liquid over the side of the house onto a man below who is using a pick to break up the stone pavement, thereby revealing body parts – five heads and an arm. The way the figures are drawn and their clothes and turban show that the page comes from the group of the earliest known Sultanate paintings from India from the second half of the 15th century, exemplified in particular by the widely dispersed *Khamsa* of Amir Khusrau with several pages in the Freer Gallery, Washington DC. It is particularly close to the group of seven paintings in the Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi, from a *Shahnama* or perhaps an *Iskandarnama* (Brac de la Perriere 2008, pl. 4) in the way the men are drawn – heads shield-shape, with long almond eyes and pupils all at the broad end, small turbans perched on top of the head, ankle-length jamas with a simple knotted girdle, etc. Similar too are the clouds depicted as curtain swags and the horses with their long bi-coloured heads and tall pointed ears. This particular group of Sultanate manuscripts is of archaic appearance and thought stylistically dependent to a large extent on earlier Iranian and perhaps even Mamluk models from the 14th century.



Provenance

George P. Bickford
Sotheby's New York, 20-21 September 1985, Lot 47

Published

Czuma, S., *Indian Art from George P. Bickford Collection*, Cleveland, 1975, No. 43 (there dated c. 1500)
Haase, C.P., Kröger, J., Lienert, U. *Oriental Splendour*, Hamburg 1993, No.181 (there dated 'first half of the 15th century')

Exhibited

Orientalische Pracht, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg 1993

Discussed

E. Brac de la Perriere, *L'Art du Livre dans l'Inde des Sultanats*, Paris, 2008, pp. 62-68



Battle between the Iranians and the Turanians Folio from the 'Jainsesque' *Shahnama*

Sultanate India, c. 1450

Opaque pigments and gold on paper

Folio 31.8 x 25.6 cm; painting 13.7 x 20.5 cm

Inscribed in red in Persian on the lower, left-hand margin: *amadan-i human bi-didan-i sipah-i iran* ('Human comes to look at the Iranian army')



The manuscript of the Persian epic *Shahnama* from which this page comes first appeared on the market in the 1980s with about 350 folios and 66 miniatures (published Goswamy 1988). The text is written in four ruled columns per side, with occasional head-pieces, with miniatures occupying horizontal compartments across the lines of text as in 14th century Persian *Shahnama* manuscripts. The text was incomplete, extending only up to the time of Gushtasp. The manuscript was dispersed in 1989, at which time the Rietberg Museum acquired 20 painted folios as well as a folio with late 17th century seal impressions, while other various museums and private collectors acquired individual painted folios. Four more are in the Museum für Asiatische Kunst, Berlin; two are in the Musée Guimet, Paris; two in the David Collection, Copenhagen; one in the Freer and Sackler Gallery, Washington DC; one in the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco (Masselos et al. 1997, no. 165); and one in the Bellak collection in Philadelphia (Mason 2001, no. 6).

The importance of the manuscript rests in its unique treatment of a Persian classic text illustrated by an artist steeped in the Jain and Hindu Western Indian traditions, used for illustrating Jain texts such as the *Kalpāsutra* and the *Kalakacarya Katha* in particular. In the latter, the Jain monk hero has to deal with the Sahis or Scythian invaders of India, for whom a particular iconography was devised. Jain figures are normally in three-quarter profile with projecting further eye, and the men are minimally clad apart from monks, but Sahis are shown almost full face without the projecting eye and with bearded spade-like heads, particular crowns and turbans, and a Persian type of costume of a long, split-sided gown

and a cloud-collar. This is the type of figure found throughout this *Shahnama* manuscript for the great kings and princes of the epic. Other figures at court wear *jamās* tied to the left. Lesser warriors depicted in the battle scenes wearing chainmail suits are not so obviously from the same tradition, but for the faces confined within their helmets. In some miniatures in the manuscript the artists forgets for a moment in what tradition he is painting and gives one character a projecting eye, a feature found in some other Sultanate manuscripts of the period. The depiction of rocks, trees and other items conform to this same tradition of being modelled on their treatment in the same Jain manuscripts. Throughout the paintings the artist has given free rein to his brilliant colours and fantastic details of textiles whether as part of garments or horse caparisons. The colours glow against the soft red background. Although obviously not a court production, the whole manuscript reveals a spirit of freshness and vitality as the artist innovates to bring life to this to him alien cultural tradition. This particular Sultanate style begins with him and its only real successor are the Chandayan and Hamzanama manuscripts now in Berlin from the third quarter of the 15th century.

The text at this point is a speech that the hero Rustam delivers to the Iranian army on arriving at their camp by Mount Hamavan. Rustam had come to rescue the Iranian army after they had suffered numerous losses at the hands of an alliance of the Turanians, the Emperor of China and a feared warrior named Kamus of Kashan. For an English translation of this speech see *The Shāhnāma of Firdausī. Done into English by Arthur George Warner and Edmond Warner*, Volume III, London, 1908, pp. 172-173. In Firdawsī's narra-

tive, the Turanian champion Human, on the morning before renewed fighting, goes to spy on the Iranian army. For a translation of this episode, see *ibid.*, p. 174.

For detailed discussion of this whole Sultanate period and its manuscripts, see Khandalavala and Chandra 1969, supplemented by Losty 1982, ch. 2. Brac de la Perriere 2008 is a more up to date summary of the whole Sultanate period dealing with this *Shahnama* manuscript and other new material. The actual place of production of all these manuscripts is still a matter of scholarly debate, but Gujarat or Mandu seem the most likely for this *Shahnama* manuscript.

References

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- Firdausi, Abu al-Qasim, *The Shah Nama of Firdausi, done into English by Arthur George Warner and Edmond Warner*, K Paul Trench, Trubner Company, London, 1905-25
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- Khandalavala, K., and Chandra, M., *New Documents of Indian Painting – a Reappraisal*, Prince of Wales Museum of Western India, Bombay, 1969
- Losty, J.P., *The Art of the Book in India*, British Library, London, 1982
- Mason, D., *Intimate Worlds: Indian Paintings from the Alvin O. Bellak Collection*, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, 2001
- Masselos, J., et al., *Dancing to the Flute: Music and Dance in Indian Art*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 1997





3.

A man lying in a reverie while a woman massages his feet

Part of a painting from the *Hamzanama*

Mughal, circa 1562-77

Opaque pigments on paper

Folio 26.6 x 32 cm; painting 25.2 x 30.5 cm

The young man is lost in his dream world as he stares into the distance past a tree. He is dressed in a blue *jama* secured with an orange cummerbund while his red coat is draped over his legs. He lies in a pavilion with a gabled roof covered in carpets and with polychrome chequered tiles or perhaps hangings forming a backdrop to it. A woman crouches at his feet holding them through the coat and she too seems lost in her own world.

This part painting appeared at auction in 1975 in two separate lots and is so catalogued by John Seyller in his 2002 publication, both parts being listed among the fragments, but the two parts in fact fit together exactly and seem to have become separated at an earlier date. The chequered pattern of the backdrop and the carpet pattern on the roof continue uninterrupted across the divide.

The *Hamzanama* ('Story of Hamza'), to give it its usual abbreviated title, is a rambling series of tales dealing with the mythical adventures of Amir Hamza, the uncle of the Prophet, in mostly infidel lands, and the disparate structures in the Persian manuscript tradition reveals its oral origins. It was obviously known in India, since one of the few surviving Sultanate illustrated manuscripts from the 15th century, now in Berlin, is of this text. Its tales of adventure and derring-do obviously appealed to the young Akbar (b. 1532, reg. 1556-1605), since it was the first major manuscript produced in the early Mughal studio. We are informed from various sources that it consisted originally of 1400 paintings and was divided into fourteen (or twelve) volumes, and that it took fifteen (or more) years to complete (see Seyller et al. 2002, pp. 32-37 for the Persian sources). None of the sources gives a precise date but the general consensus had been that it was in

production from 1562 to 1577 under the charge first of Mir Sayyid 'Ali and then of 'Abd al-Samad. These were two of the Safavid artists who accompanied Humayun back to India in 1555. The discovery of what might be a date on one of the manuscript's paintings has suggested an alternative dating of 1557/8-1572/3 (Seyller 2002, pp. 38-40).

The physical appearance of the original manuscript is virtually unprecedented in Islamic painting. Its extent, however, as well as the alternation on most of the surviving pages of the painting occupying the full recto and the text confined to the verso suggests influence from earlier Indian painting cycles. The paintings are painted on cotton and where still extant the text is written on paper, normally a full sheet adhered to the back of the cotton. Here of course the painting has been laid down and the reverse is not accessible. Only about 150 pages are now known, widely dispersed, apart from 61 paintings in the Museum für Angewandte Kunst, Vienna, and 21 in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

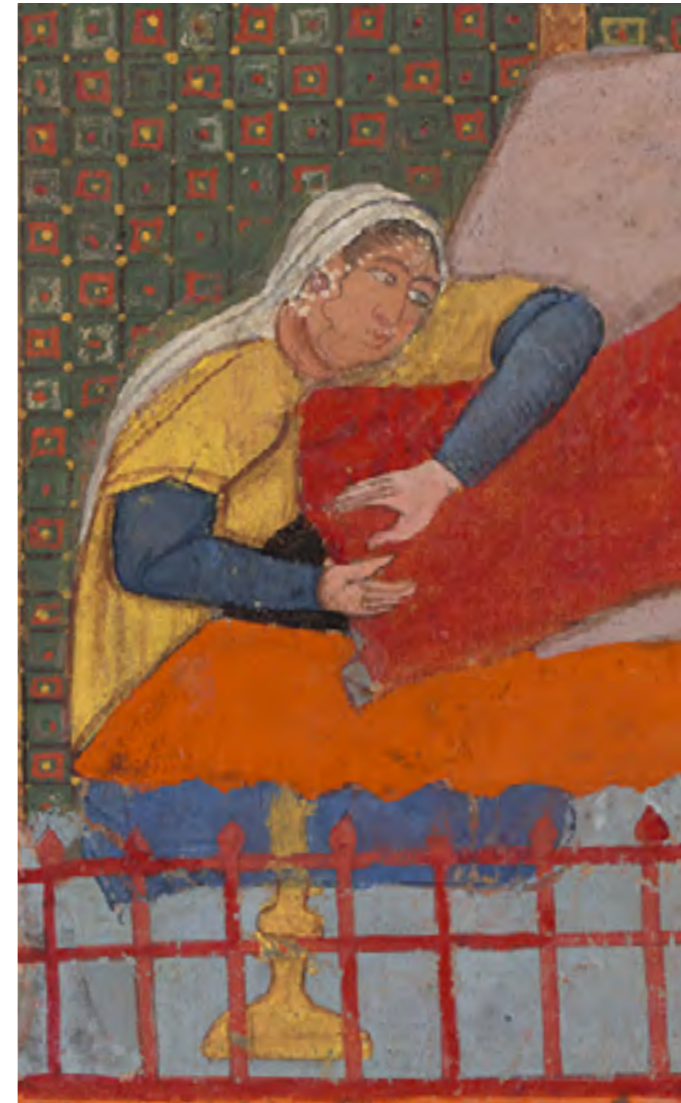
Provenance

Hagop Kevorkian

Sotheby's London, 7th April 1975, lots 88 and 89

Published

Seyller, J., et al., *The Adventures of Hamza: Painting and Storytelling in Mughal India*, Freer and Sackler Gallery, Washington, and Azimuth Editions, London, 2002, nos. 174 and 175



Folio from the Chester Beatty *Tutinama* - Khorshid replies to Kayvan's demand

Mughal, c. 1580

Opaque pigments heightened with gold on paper

Folio 25 x 15.5 cm; painting 17 x 12.5 cm

The *Tutinama* or 'Tales of the Parrot' is a collection of moralizing fables compiled by Ziya' al-Din Nakhshabi in Persia in the fourteenth century. Illustrated manuscripts of this text were twice produced for the Emperor Akbar early in his reign (r. 1556-1605). The first version executed in a notably early and simple style circa 1560-65 is known as the 'Cleveland *Tutinama*' with most of its folios being in the Cleveland Museum of Art. Although of early date, its precise status in the Akbari canon is unclear, as the paintings have been shown to be over-paintings of an earlier Sultanate manuscript (Seyller 1992). Our folio is from the second, more refined version of this text, the majority of whose leaves with 102 miniatures are in the collection of the Chester Beatty Library and the manuscript has come to be named after it (Leach 1995, pp. 22-74). Another section of the manuscript with 54 miniatures is the source of those paintings not in the Chester Beatty and now scattered in various public and private collections. A third section is dispersed in various Indian collections. All the dispersed pages then known are listed by Leach (pp. 24-26).

The text forms a book of stories told on 52 nights by a talking parrot to his mistress Khojasta in order to keep her amused and engaged and away from an adulterous affair. The various stories are vividly illustrated throughout the manuscript but occasionally there is inserted a miniature showing the parrot in its cage and his mistress seated in her chamber. Our folio comes from the story illustrating the 32nd night. A merchant named 'Utarid had a beautiful and virtuous wife Khorshid. Having to go on a journey he left her and his household in the care of his brother Kayvan. Instead however of protecting Khorshid, Kayvan sent an emissary to her telling her he was madly in love with her and entreating her to

welcome his advances. Khorshid in the miniature is being solicited by the old woman emissary, but she indignantly refuses and leaves the room. Fearful of his brother discovering his lustful actions, Kayvan accuses Khorshid of adultery – she is taken before a magistrate and immediately condemned to be stoned to death. Khorshid does however survive this and after further terrible misadventures is reunited with her husband.

Khorshid's form, wearing bodice, skirt, pompoms and wimple is obviously derived from the normal female figure seen in Early Rajput manuscripts but with the angularities smoothed out. The architecture here gives some idea of the decoration of the women's quarters in the palace at Fatehpur Sikri, Akbar's principal residence from 1571 to 1585: the small chamber is a simple red sandstone pavilion with painted dadoes, panelled wooden doors and a carpet on the floor. Outside the chamber the floor is covered in coloured tiles.

Literature

Leach, L.Y., *Mughal and Other Indian Paintings in the Chester Beatty Library*, Scorpion Cavendish, London, 1995

Seyller, J., 'Overpainting in the Cleveland *Tutinama*' in *Artibus Asiae*, vol. 52, 1992, pp. 283-318

Simsar, M.A., *The Cleveland Museum of Art's Tutinama: Tales of a Parrot by Ziya' u'd Din Nakhshabi, translated and edited by Muhammad A. Simsar*, Cleveland Museum of Art: Cleveland; Akademische Druck: Graz, 1978



Three paintings from the first *Baburnama*

Babur, the founder of the Mughal empire and Akbar's paternal grandfather, wrote his diary in the language of his native Turkestan, Chaghatai Turki, recording the events of his life until shortly before his death in 1530.

Babur's memoirs are one of the greatest and most interesting of pre-modern autobiographical books. He records in detail not only the events of his own tumultuous life, but also his reactions to India on first coming into that fabled land in 1526, and to its people, its flora and its fauna. It was written in Turki, the ancestral language of the Mughals, and his grandson Akbar ordered it to be translated into Persian for the better comprehension of his court. This work was entrusted to Akbar's friend Mirza 'Abd al-Rahim Khan-i Khanan, who presented the finished translation to Akbar in November 1589. Court artists immediately set about producing an illustrated version. This manuscript was dispersed in a sale in London in 1913, through the bookseller Luzac. Twenty folios are in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Stronge 2002, pp. 86-91). Other groups of leaves are in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington and the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin.

At least three more illustrated manuscripts based on this first version were produced within the next ten years, which are now in the British Library (Suleiman 1970); divided between the Moscow State Museum of Eastern Cultures and the Walters Art Gallery Baltimore; and in the National Museum, New Delhi (Randhawa 1983).

According to Smart 1978, 'The spontaneity, simplicity and forthright vigour of the paintings from the first manuscript are far more in keeping with the text than are the more complex ornate paintings of the manuscripts that followed' She also believes that about fifty artists from Akbar's court were involved in this project facilitating its completion within a year.



5.

Babur sits enthroned in his court

Folio from a *Baburnama*, Mughal, 1589-90

Ascribed to the artist Khim Karan (amal-i Khem Karan)

Opague pigments on paper.

Folio 34.6 x 22.7; painting 22.7 x 13 cm

Babur is enthroned within a pavilion in the courtyard of a fort with courtiers etc facing him, while attendants seem to express surprise in an adjacent court and other attendants attend to the horses of arrivals outside the fort. The absence of any relevant text makes identification of the event difficult, but Babur is still young and beardless so the scene is presumably set somewhere in Central Asia. A comparable scene of an enthroned young Babur in a courtyard in the British Library version of the *Baburnama*, the next one chronologically, is Or. 3714, f.80v, showing Babur receiving the submission of the rebel 'Ali-dust Tagha'i at Marghinan (Margilan) in 1498 (published Suleiman, H., *Miniatures of Babur-namah*, Tashkent, 1978, pl. 17; Beveridge translation p. 100, Thackston translation pp. 73-74).

Khim Karan is an important artist of the Akbar period, being one of those cited as among the excellent of the age by Abu'l Fazl in A'in 34 of the *A'in-i Akbari*. His work is found in most of the important manuscripts of the reign from the *Timornama* of 1584 onwards until the 1603-04 *Akbarnama*.

The painting has been laid down on an early 17th century *Shahnama* page (like several of the known pages from this dispersed manuscript) decorated with flora and fauna drawn in black and gold on a pink ground, with part of the text at an oblique angle. The verso is a page from a different manuscript, the *Khird-nama-yi Iskandari* section of Nur al-Din 'Abd al-Rahman Jami's *Haft Aurang*.

Provenance

Christie's 13 June 1983, lot 141; and 11 April 1989, lot 90

Pan Asian Collection

Published

Haase, C.P., Kröger, J., Lienert, U., *Oriental Splendour*, Hamburg 1993, Pl. 183b

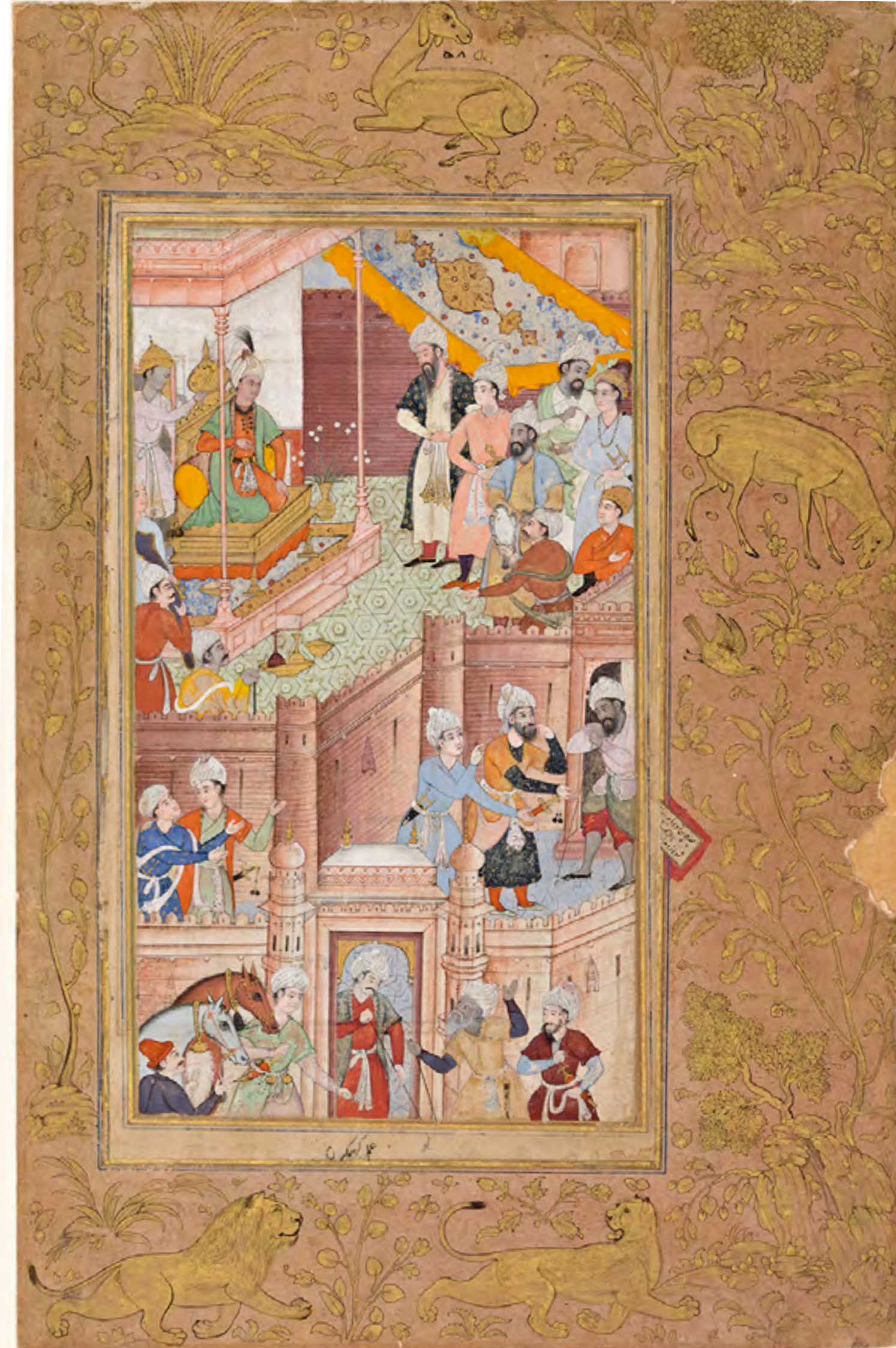
Habighorst, L.V., *Blumen – Bäume – Göttergärten*, Koblenz 2011, figs. 105-106

Exhibited

Orientalische Pracht, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg 1993

Blumen, Bäume, Göttergärten, Völkerkunde-Museum, Hamburg 2013

Akbars goldenes Erbe, Rietberg Museum Zürich 2015/2016



Babur's ally Khwaja Qazi besieges Uzgend to force Abu-bikr Dughlut to surrender in 1493-94

Folio from a *Baburnama*, Mughal, 1589-90

Opague pigments on paper

Folio 26.5 x 15.5 cm; painting 24.9 x 13.5 cm

This miniature illustrates an event from the early part of Babur's memoirs while he was still a youth in his home area of Farghana where local chiefs were struggling with one another for land and authority. The incident illustrated is recounted with a certain hind-sight in the light of Babur's subsequent victories and success:

'For some years, Aba-bikr Kashgari Dughlat, bowing the head to no-one, had been supreme in Kashgar Khutan. He now, moved like the rest by desire for my country, came to the neighbourhood of Auzkint [Uzgend], built a fort and began to lay waste the land. Khwaja Qazi and several begs were appointed to drive him out. When they came near, he saw himself no match for such a force, made the Khwaja his mediator and, by a hundred wiles and tricks, got himself safely free.' (Beveridge, p. 32)

The illustration represents the forces of Babur's ally, Khwaja Qazi, as well equipped and superior, while those of Aba-bikr within the fort are relatively meagre. The figure at top left, dressed in blue and loading a gun, is probably Aba-bikr himself. The central figure of the attacking cavalry, in green and holding a shield, must be Khwaja Qazi.

The Persian number 9 at the foot of the miniature indicates the number of the illustrations as it fell within the original volume, a succession reconstructed by Smart (1977). In most cases the miniatures of this manuscript had the names of the artist inscribed in the lower margin in red, though in this case the artist ascription is absent. The reason may be that the vertical measurement of the miniature is larger than usual, leaving minimal space for such inscription, or otherwise putting it at risk if the margins were

trimmed. The ascriptions that survive on the miniatures indicate that many of the greatest artists of Akbar's atelier, including Basawan were employed on the manuscript's illustration.

Provenance

Sotheby's 7.4.1975 (lot 97)

Hagop Kevorkian

Literature

Beveridge, A.S., *The Babur-nama in English*, London, 1922 (and reprinted)

Smart, E.S., *Paintings from the Baburnama – A study in 16th century Mughal historical manuscript illustrations*, University of London (Ph.D.thesis), 1977

Smart, E.S., *Six folios from a dispersed manuscript of the Baburnama*, in *Indian Painting*, Colnaghi, London, 1978

Beach, M.C., *The Imperial Image – Paintings for the Mughal Court*, Washington, 1981, no. 7, p. 77

Leach, L.Y. *Mughal and Other Indian Paintings from the Chester Beatty Library*, London 1995, vol.1

Randhawa, M.S., *Paintings of the Babur Nama*, Calcutta, National Museum, New Delhi, 1983





7.

Babur receives an envoy from Uzun Hasan when lying sick in 1497

Folio from a *Baburnama*, Mughal, 1589-90

Opaque pigments on paper

Folio 30.3 x 19.5 cm; painting 20.7 x 12.5 cm

The painting shows a servant of the Aqqoyunlu ruler Uzun Hasan being admitted to the presence of the sick Babur in the year 1497. According to Babur's own record of this event, just after he had taken Samarkand in 1497 he became very sick and was lying near death's door for four days. During this time the rebel Uzun Hasan laid siege to Babur's old capital of Andijan and took it. The begs were each seeking their own advantage in this perilous situation and accordingly admitted the rebel's messenger into Babur's chamber. See the Beveridge translation of the *Baburnama* pp. 86-87 and the Thackston one pp. 64-65. Babur looking wan and ill lies in bed wrapped up on a blanket and propped up on a bolster, while the begs look at each other and the messenger seems very concerned.

The page has two lines of the original text of the *Baburnama* painting in separate panels. It has been laid down into the text panel of a manuscript of the *Khamisa* of Amir Khusrau concerning a story about Musa (Moses), with splashed gold borders.

Provenance

Christie's London 11 June 1984, lot 188; and 11 October 1988, lot 93

Published

Haase, C.P., Kröger, J., Lienert, U., *Oriental Splendour*, Hamburg 1993, pl. 183a.
Habighorst, L.V., *Moghul Ragamala*, Koblenz 2006, fig. 2

Exhibited

Orientalische Pracht, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg 1993 Blumen, Bäume, Göttergärten, Völkerkunde-Museum Hamburg 2013
Akbars goldenes Erbe, Rietberg Museum Zürich 2015/2016





A Princess is attended by her Women

Mughal, c.1620-30

Opaque pigments and gold on paper within a modern blue frame and album mount

Folio 31 x 23.5 cm; painting 20.5 x 14.5 cm

Our painting is a summary of the luxurious life led by the princesses in the Mughal harem. The princess lies on a comfortable mattress supported on a gilded charpoy with posts for the fixing of mosquito nets if need be. She lies languidly smoking from a hookah and supported by two cushions while her feet are supported by a third. Her every need is being attended to. The four women on the left bring her fruit, a mirror and a covered cup with a drink, while one shampoos her feet to cool them. On the right a woman crouches attending to the princess's hookah, another two hold a *morchhal* or peacock-feather fan and a white cloth, normally a sign of royalty. A third holds an actual peacock. A platter filled with fruit – grapes, pomegranates, peaches, apples, plums – is set beside the bed along with other luxurious objects – spittoon, a covered glass cup, an incense burner. The scene is set between the white marble balustrades of a terrace covered with a carpet and under a canopy. Outside the balustrade stands a woman singing while accompanying herself on the *tambura*. Beyond the terrace rise large single plants – irises, roses, poppies etc. – while brightly coloured birds flit around and a skein of geese passes overhead.

It must be the height of summer since all the women wear only *pajama* with *patka* and a sheer transparent *pashwaj* over all that leaves their upper bodies exposed. A young girl stands on the other side of the bed trying to attract her mother's attention, but she is staring fixedly at the woman with the Chagatai hat holding a peacock suggestive perhaps of an unexpressed longing – does the peacock symbolize her absent husband, amusing himself elsewhere or perhaps off fighting? What appears to be a mirror is in fact a painting on a silvered surface, perhaps an early reverse glass painting, of a man standing legs apart dressed in European costume – short belted tunic, baggy pantaloons and a round flat hat with a brim. Is this one wonders the man she is pining for?

The painting is quite remarkably refined in the rendition of textiles and flesh. All the women's faces are exquisitely modelled and expressive in their various ways of sympathy towards the princess. Indeed the woman holding the portrait has a determined look as if reproaching the princess for her unrequited or inopportune passion. Such refinements suggest one of the finest artists of the first half of the 17th century. A date towards the end of the reign of Jahangir and beginning of that of Shah Jahan is suggested by the details of dress and jewellery. The women's *patkas* still retain the decoration of geometrical or repeated rosette patterns common in Jahangir's reign rather than the floral sprays that were ushered in towards the end of the 1630s. The princess is wearing the sort of jewellery worn by the princesses and principal women in the Dara Shikoh Album which has been redated to 1630-32 (Losty and Roy 2012, pp. 124-28), and all the other women wear relatively restrained ropes of pearls just round their neck and otherwise longer ropes of beads.

A rather similar painting to ours and very possibly by the same artist since it shows the same princess on her bed at night suckling her baby child and the same heavy features on the women was once in the Heeramanek collection and is now in the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa (Heeramanek 1984, pl. 199). Other group portraits of women in this period are relatively few and mostly of contestable date. The birth of Jahangir in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts is relatively uncontested as around 1620 and by Bishndas (Das 2011, fig. 11). His portrayal of women still retains that heaviness of features and of jowls which he did not lose in the 1630s (ibid. fig. 13b), so although two of the women here have a similar heaviness of feature, the artist is more likely to have been one influenced by Bishndas rather than he himself. Jahangir celebrating Holi with his womenfolk in the Chester Beatty Library was dated 1615-20 and



attributed to Govardhan by Leach (1995, no. 3.15, col. pl. 59), but was redated to 1635-45 by Stronge (in Wright 2008, no 41) partly on the basis of the women's jewellery which she thought was like that in the Dara Shikoh Album but still relying on the latter's old dating of 1633-42. Nur Jahan entertaining Jahangir and Shah Jahan in the Freer Gallery of Art, also long associated with Govardhan c.1620, has been redated to 1640-50 by Beach (2012, no. 35) relying on Stronge's redating of the Dublin page, who comments on the Freer page's "bland, less individual characterization". If this is truly the case then by that time Govardhan must have been nearly 70. All this of course is debatable. The adornment of our women is most close to that in the Chester Beatty painting, which seems to us to have been redated too late on insufficient grounds and to be Govardhan's work fairly early in his career, particularly on account of the same somewhat awkwardly depicted architecture found in others among his early works (e.g. Seyller 2011, figs. 6-7). While our painting is sufficiently close to that to be comparable in date, it lacks that indefinable quality that would make it sufficiently distinctive to be linked to any individual artist.

The solid blue carpet is somewhat puzzling at first glance. However, the pigment is original because the women's transparent gowns are obviously painted over the blue carpet as is the case for instance with the *dupatta* of the woman shampooing the princess's feet. There are areas of old restoration and a full conservation report is available.

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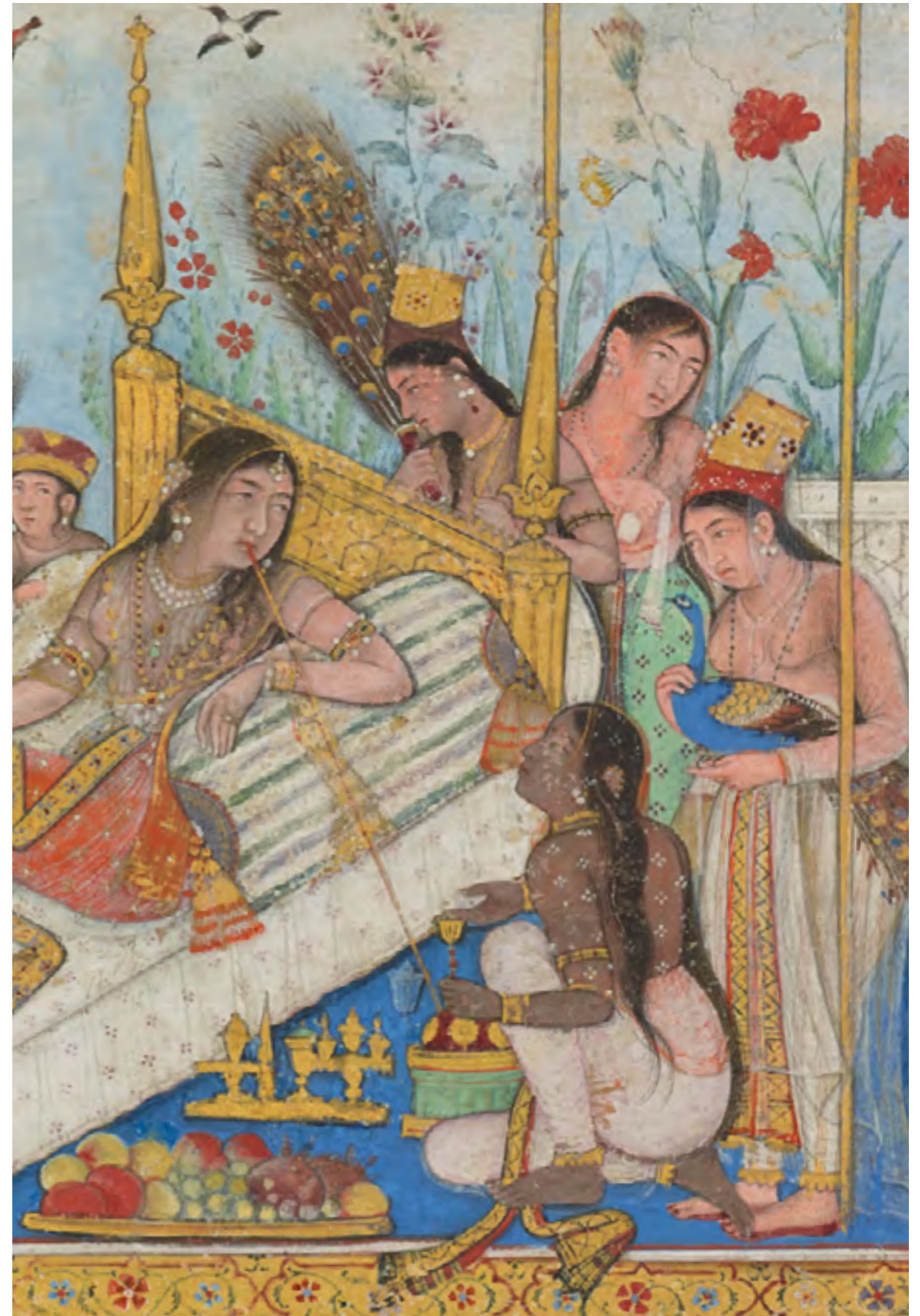
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Provenance

Private Collection, USA (since 1930)





A prince and his consort enjoying the festival of Shab-i Barat

Mughal, c. 1720-30

Opague pigments on paper

Folio 39.8 x 29 cm; painting 37 x 26 cm

A prince and his consort are seated on a terrace on a yellow rug and propped up by bolsters covered in brocade, having their every desire catered for by the numerous attendant women. He is holding her hand and holding out a little gold cup of liquor for her to take, while one of the women seated close by pours wine from a gem-inset gold flask into a porcelain cup. Another seated woman holds the white cloth signifying royalty. A gem-set gold pan-dan and spittoon are on the rug beside the pair. Other women bring delicacies in gold vessels and a basket of flower garlands. Four seated women on the right play musical instruments – tambura, sarod and mridangam – and one of them is clapping her hands and singing. Standing women behind them chatter among themselves. On the left behind the prince other women hold sparklers and set light to them. Differently coloured candles are attached to a large decorated white model elephant and to a three-tiered decorated white candelabra. The terrace on which all this activity takes place is bounded by a delicately carved white marble balustrade above an arcaded base, with lanterns of glass or perhaps mica hanging from the parapet. From a lion's mouth on the terrace wall issues a stream of water cascading into a lotus pool. A row of little oil lamps are all lit on the far side of the pool and on the near side is a firework display of Roman candles, frameworks holding multiple little fireworks and bowls of what appears to be burning naphtha. Behind the couple the terrace is closed by an arcaded white marble baradari with baluster columns and pietra dura inlay. On the roof are more burning candles and a display of coloured glass bottles, while burning rockets whiz through the night sky. Dark clouds partly obscure the full moon.

Paintings of elaborately lit displays of fireworks in a Mughal context are thought to represent the night of Shab-i Barat, a festival in the middle of the month of Sha'ban. It is a night when Muslims believe the for-

tunes of men are decided for the year ahead. Prayers are held through the night so that worshippers can ask for forgiveness for themselves and for their dead ancestors and lamps are lit outside mosques. Whether this description holds good for such an entirely secular scene as the one portrayed in this beautiful and ambitious painting is another matter. It could equally well be a Mughal prince and his household enjoying Diwali.

The painting is a work of the early Muhammad Shah period (reg. 1719-48) and in its largely successful ambition is clearly the work of a major artist, but perhaps an early work. It is a rather unusual composition in that the terrace with the figures on it are placed quite far back behind the lotus pool instead of the other way round as was usual in Muhammad Shah period paintings (see McInerney 2002 figs. 10, 14 by Nidhamal), although an early work attributed to Govardhan II has dancing figures in the foreground with the emperor on a terrace further back (*ibid.*, fig. 4). That this is an early work is suggested by a still rather 17th century density of colour, prior to the onset of the lightness of touch which characterises paintings of this artist and of others from later in the reign, as well as the impasse which the artist finds himself in when trying to render the perspective of the side walls with the lanterns hanging from the parapet.



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Published

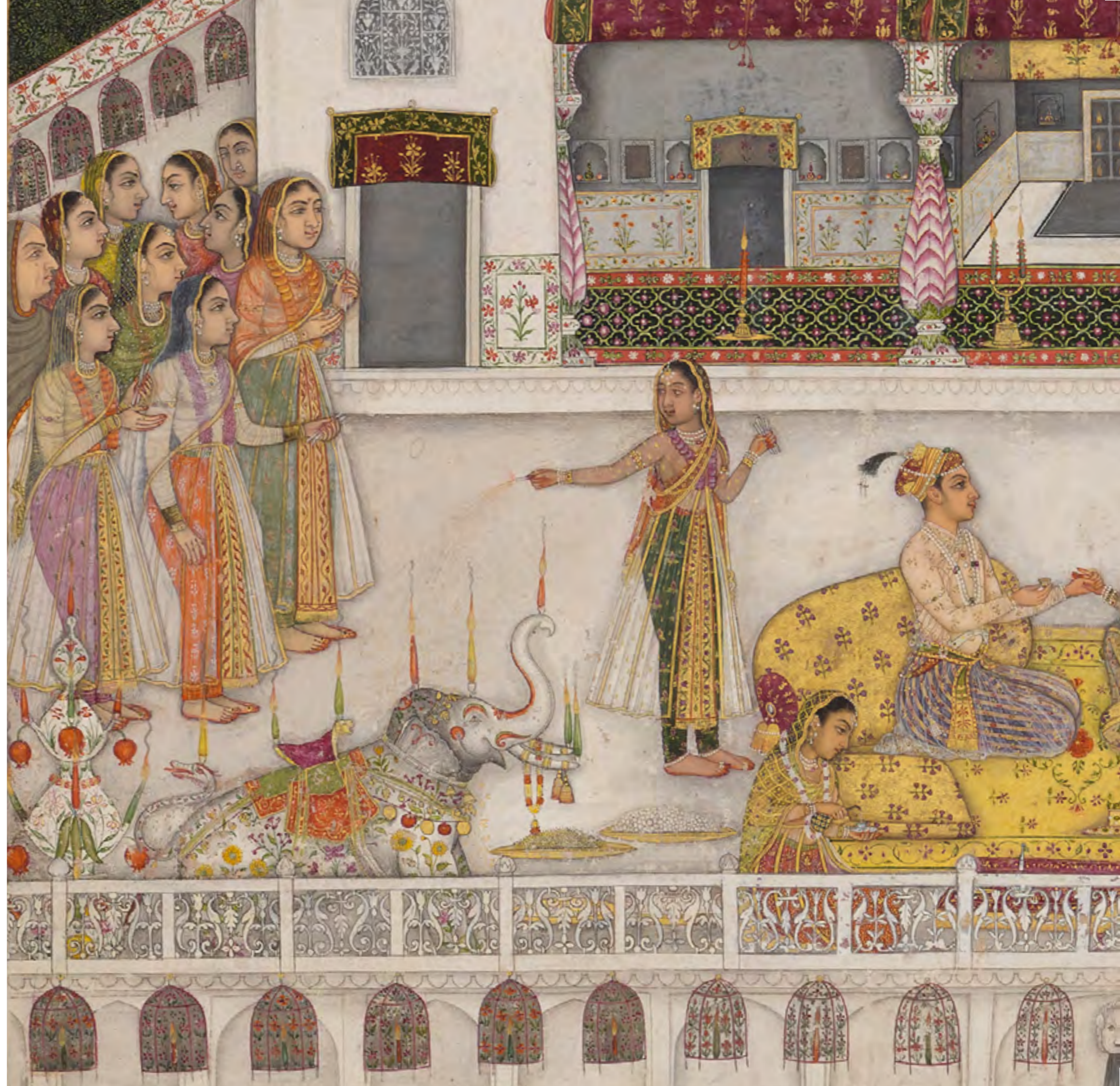
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Habighorst, L.V., *Blumen – Bäume – Göttergärten*, Koblenz 2011, fig. 24, p. 46

Exhibited

Genuss und Rausch. Betel, Tabak, Wein, Hasch und Opium in der indischen Malerei, Museum Rietberg Zürich, 2010

Blumen, Bäume, Göttergärten, Völkerkunde-Museum Hamburg, 2013



Two pages from a series illustrating the *Bhagavata Purana*
Bikaner, 1600-10

The series from which these paintings come is an early Rajput attempt at illustrating the *Bhagavata Purana*, the principal text finalised in about the tenth century AD dealing with the life of Krishna. In the tenth book we read of his living in the groves of Vrindavan leading the life of a cowherd or *gopa* while all the *gopis* fall in love with him. The style of the series is otherwise Popular Mughal, but its provenance from the royal collection in Bikaner suggests it might have been prepared there.

Book illustration was not an art that came easily to Hindu India, and one of these paintings exemplifies one of the problems. Artists seem to have thought that as a divine being Krishna had to be separated from the mundane world, which they did here by creating divine space around him in the form of the red rectangle. This device, regardless of its pictorial logic, is found also in the sixteenth century Isarda *Bhagavata Purana* series (see Pal 1978, no. 3 for an example) and the *Gitagovinda* series in Bombay. The series was first discovered in the Bikaner royal collection (Goetz 1950, pp. 99-100, pl. 91) and seems to have been created there at the beginning of the seventeenth century, when Rajput artists had been to a considerable extent influenced by Mughal painting. This can be seen here in the attention paid to the folds of drapery and in the lyrical albeit conceptual landscape of the river scene.

The pages from this set originally in Bikaner are widely dispersed. Pal remarks of a different page in the Walter collection (1978, no. 4a) the series has yet to be studied. Three pages are in the Polsky collection illustrated in Topsfield 2004 (nos. 56-58), q.v. for references to further paintings from this series.

Literature

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Provenance

Bikaner Royal Collection



10.

The marriage of Vasudeva and Devaki

Folio from a *Bhagavata Purana* series

Bikaner, 1600-10

Opaque pigments and gold on paper

Folio 24.5 x 30 cm; painting 16.8 x 25.4 cm

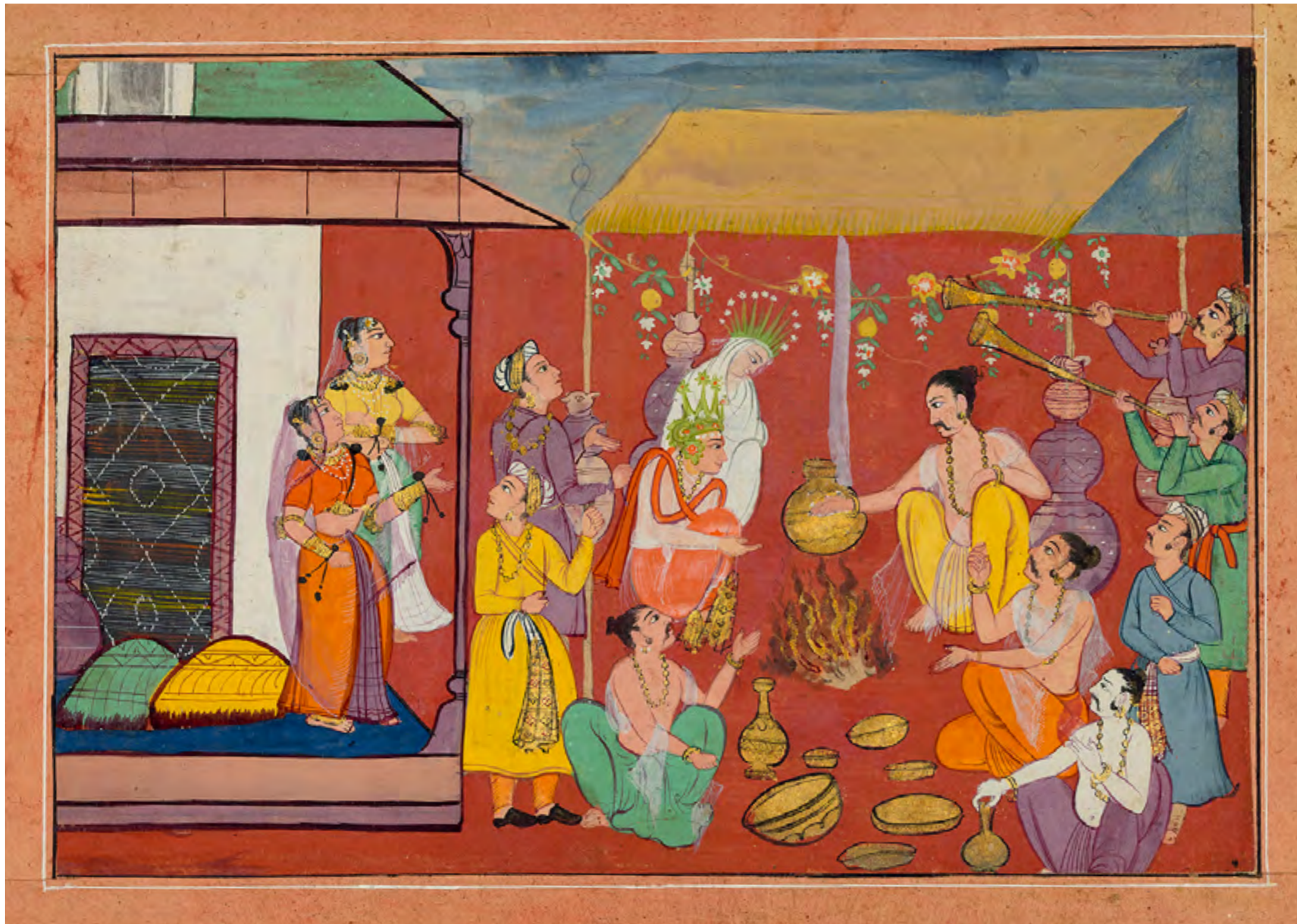
Inscribed on the reverse in nagari: Devaki Basudev vivaha ('the marriage of Vasudev and Devaki') (in two different hands) with an erased stamp of the personal collection of the Maharaja of Bikaner

The bride and groom wearing crowns formed of leaves and flowers sit by the sacred fire intent on the marriage ritual performed by the Brahmins. A *pandal* is erected above them hung with flowers and fruit with the posts rising out of auspicious pots. The onlookers seem perturbed and look up to the sky.

The marriage of Vasudeva with Devaki is briefly mentioned in the first chapter of the tenth book of the *Bhagavata Purana*. After the ceremony Kamsa, Davaki's sister, hears a voice from the sky warning him he will be killed by Devaki's eighth child, i.e. Krishna, and it is this perhaps which perturbs the wedding guests.

Provenance

Paul Walter collection



11.

Krishna appears to the gopis on the banks of the Yamuna

Folio from a *Bhagavata Purana* series

Bikaner, 1600-10

Opaque pigments and gold on paper

Folio 24 x 30 cm; painting 17.7 x 24.8 cm

Inscribed on the reverse in nagari: sriKrishnaji pra-gata huva gopiya ro samadhan kiyo 69 ('Sri Krishna decides to reveal himself to the gopis') with an erased stamp of the personal collection of the Maharaja of Bikaner

In chapter 30 of Canto X of the *Bhagavata Purana* Krishna has met the gopis on the banks of the Yamuna at night and singled out one for special favour. The Purana does not specify Krishna's chief beloved as Radha, but she is so identified in slightly later texts such as Jayadeva's *Gitagovinda* of the twelfth century. He disappears with her leaving the other gopis lamenting his absence. The varied trees are a reminder that in the next chapter the distraught gopis ask the individual trees if they know where Krishna has disappeared to.

Published

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12.

A newly married couple retire for the night

Bikaner, c. 1720

Opaque pigments and gold on paper

Painting: 18.5 by 27.5 cm

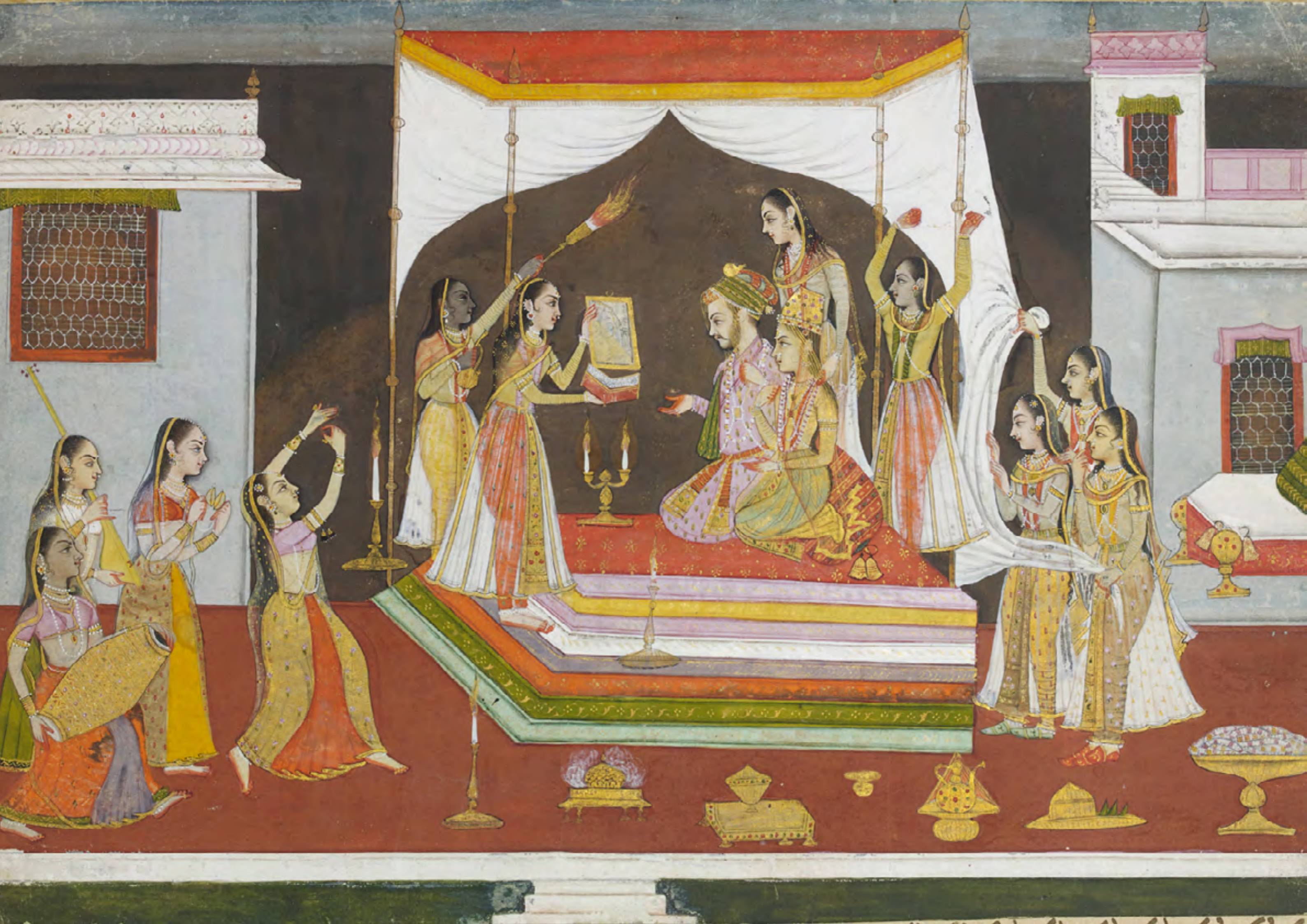
Inscribed on the reverse in Persian: *jalva-i nika* ('revelation during the wedding').

The painting represents a night scene on a terrace. Inside a temporary pavilion a bashful newly married couple, their hands still hennaed, are seated on their nuptial bed while an attendant holds out a book and a mirror and another waves a torch. The groom is shyly parting the veil from his face as is an attendant for his bride so that they can each see other, perhaps for the first time, in the mirror. Two dancers gyrate to the accompaniment of tambura, drum and cymbals, while other attendants prepare to draw the curtains round the pavilion to give the couple privacy. Everything they might need in the night is beside the pavilion: other candles, burning incense, a gold pot containing sweetmeats, a *pan* set, a spittoon, a gold ewer of water and a heap of scented garlands. A further bed awaits them inside the pavilion to the right.

There is no doubt that the couple are Mughal from the prince's turban and beard and the girl's high Persian headdress, suggesting that this is the marriage of a Mughal prince., perhaps intended for Shah Jahan and his beloved Mumtaz Mahal or his eldest son Dara Shikoh and his beloved Nadira Banu Begum. The female attendants near them are dressed in the Mughal manner with *paijama* and transparent overgown, while the dancing group are in Rajasthani costume of skirt, bodice and transparent sari. The whole artistic milieu, however, is Rajput as can be determined from the perspective and the non-representational architecture.

Provenance

Aaron Vecht, Amsterdam





13, 14, 15

Three paintings from a Sirohi *Ragamala*, c. 1680

Sirohi, a small state in southern Rajasthan between Mewar and Gujarat, seems to have produced various *ragamala* sets in the late seventeenth century, all in a brilliant style of its own as well as using highly individual iconographies. The lower parts of the compositions with their small terraces, steps and pots show the style's dependence on that of the school of Sahib Din in Mewar, further suggested by the surviving wall paintings in the Sirohi palace (Topsfield 2002, p. 102, n. 1). Beach (2011, pp. 484-85) traces the dynastic and marital links between Sirohi and its much larger neighbour in the 17th century, suggesting thereby the transference of basic elements of the style and compositional formats of Sahib Din. It is evident that the artist he dubs the Sirohi Master has transformed the style in his own way, particularly as regards his distinctive colour scheme of brilliant yellows and oranges.

Beach further suggests (2011, p. 480) that the Sirohi Master was responsible for three *Ragamala* sets, all of them now dispersed and probably incomplete, all slightly differing in the size of their folios. Our painting comes from what he dubs Set C which he illustrates with Behag, Devagandhar, Gauri and Sarang raginis (2011, figs. 5-8), in which the inscription is normally placed in the middle of the border above the painting. The other sets have slightly different arrangements.

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13.

Lalita ragini

Sirohi, c. 1680

Opaque pigments and gold on paper

23 x 17.8 cm

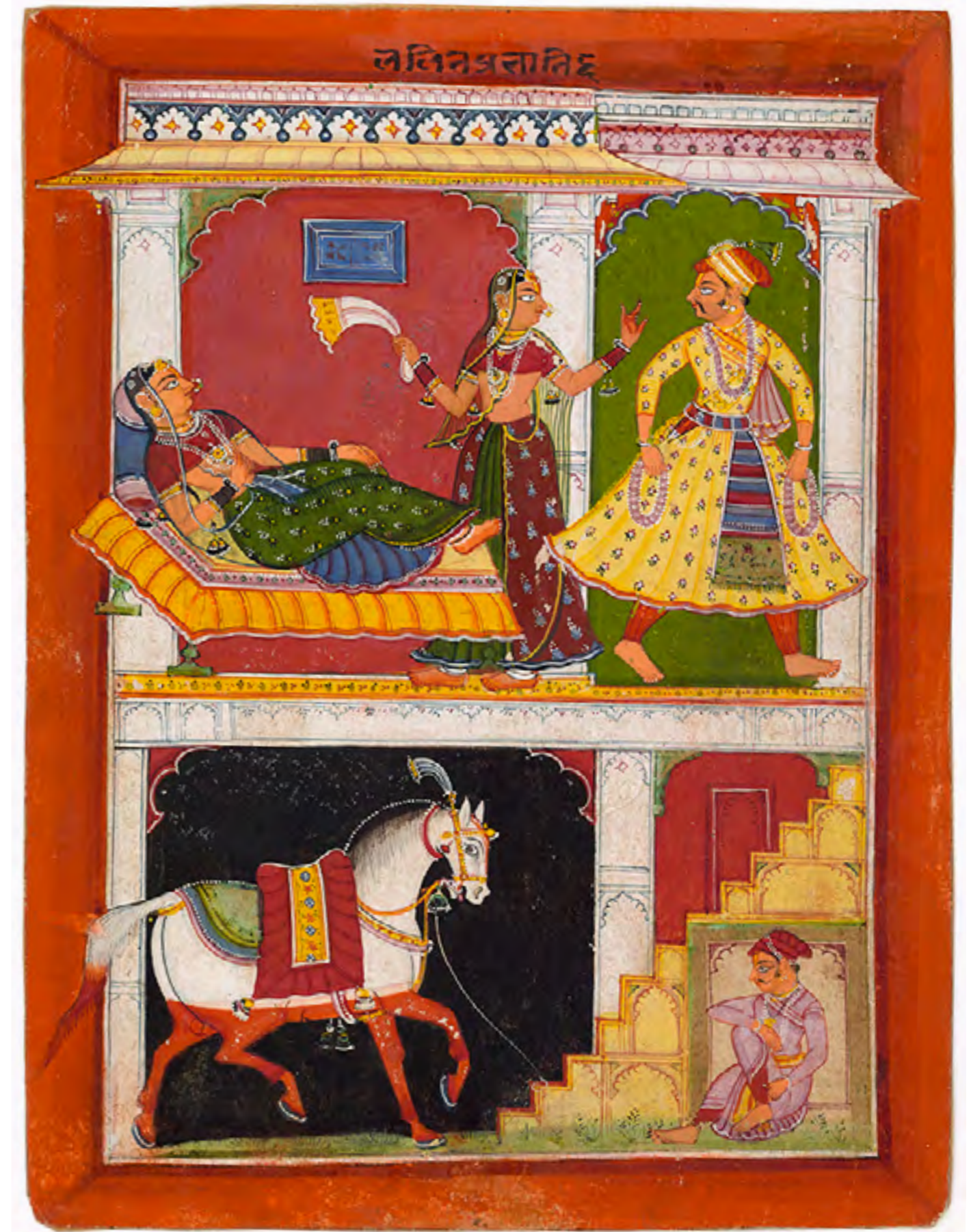
Inscribed above in *nagari*: *Lalita prabhati 6* ('Lalita, a dawn raga, 6')

A scene divided into two registers upper and lower. In the upper register a prince carrying two garlands is leaving his mistress still lying on her bed while her attendant waves a scarf over her. In the lower register his horse fully saddled is waiting, anxiously pawing the ground, watched by a seated attendant.

The division into registers is another indication of the influence of early Mewar painting on that of Sirohi.

Provenance

Marco Polo, Paris, 1984





14.

Hindola raga

Sirohi, c. 1680

Opaque pigments and gold on paper

23 x 17.5 cm

Inscribed above in *nagari*: raga *Hidola 13*

A prince is seated with his mistress in a swing in a pavilion in a palace, between two female attendants. This is one of the rarer type of Sirohi *ragamala* scenes where the figures are centrally placed instead of the usual off-centre arrangement.

Provenance

Marco Polo, Paris, 1984

Madhumadhavi ragini

Sirohi, c. 1680

Opaque pigments and gold on paper

23 x 17.5 cm

Inscribed above in *nagari*: raga *Madhumadhavi* 18

A lady seated on a terrace outside a pavilion watches while her attendant hands pan to two other seated ladies.

Madhumadhavi ragini in Sirohi has this unique iconography. Ebeling 1973 fig. 220 illustrates a very similar *Madhumadhavi ragini* from the Chhatrapati Shivaji Museum, Mumbai, from Beach's set A, c. 1670; another very similar composition of *Madhumadhavi* from the Art Institute of Chicago, from Beach's set B, is illustrated in Leach 1986, fig. 95(A).

Provenance

Artesia London / acquired Marco Polo, Paris, 1984

Colnaghi, 1978, no. 64





Three images of Srinathji dressed in different *sringars*

Kota, c. 1830-40

Opaque pigments and gold on paper

Approx 21 x 14 cm

The idol of Srinathji had been miraculously found buried underground at Govardhan near Mathura, which when uncovered turned out to be an image of the divine child Krishna aged seven in the act of holding up that very mountain. The sage Vallabhacarya (1479-1531) enshrined it at Govardhan and built a sect and a philosophy around it. The idol takes the form of the divine boy Krishna holding his left hand up, which he did in the *Bhagavata Purana* to lift the mountain Govardhan in order to shelter the villagers and their cattle when the god Indra sent a fearsome thunderstorm down on them.

Srinathji was the most important image in Braj when, in order to escape the persecutions initiated by the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb (1658-1707), the pontiff of the sect, Tilakayat Damodarji, decided in 1669 to move the sacred image from Mathura into Rajasthan. The rath or chariot of Srinathji kept on moving ahead confronting all hurdles, until two years later it finally stopped at Sinhada in Mewar, where it was given leave by Maharana Raj Singh of Mewar (1652-80) to remain. A new *haveli* (mansion) was built over the image which became the great shrine of Nathdwara. Srinathji lives in *havelis* or mansions, not temples, where he is treated exactly like the child he is – awakened, dressed, fed, entertained, made to take naps, undressed and finally put to bed. For each of these various occasions during the day he is dressed in appropriate garments (*sringars*), while the many different festivals celebrated at Nathdwara throughout the liturgical year each occasion their own individual set of garments.

For further information about Vallabhacarya's sect and the art it inspired, see Skelton 1973; Ambalal 1987; and Ghosh ed 2015.

Several of the rulers of Rajasthan were devotees of Srinathji and almost all paid him the most elabo-

rate reverence. Maharana Raj Singh of Mewar, for instance, when the image arrived in his territory in 1669, gave him land and revenues fit for a prince. Maharaja Savant Singh of Kishangarh, the great patron of painting, was a personal devotee. The rulers of Kotah owed their personal allegiance to Brijrajji while Brijnathji was the tutelary deity of the state, both *pusti-svarups* (man-made images) of the Vallabha cult, but Srinathji was extremely important in Kota also. Maharao Kishor Singh of Kota fled to Nathdwara in 1821 after the Battle of Mangrol and was entertained there by the Tilakayat Damodarji or Dauji for three months (Woodman Taylor in Welch 1997, p. 188). He probably brought back to Kotah after his reinstatement painters from Nathdwara to paint the set now mostly in the Fort Museum, Kota, of him in liturgical worship of Brijrajji (Welch 1997, nos. 55-62)..

At least two other sets of paintings concentrating on the individual *sringars* of Srinathji were painted in Kota under Maharao Ram Singh. The Kota provenance of the set from which our paintings come was suggested by Joachim Bautze in 1987 and 2000 and is in any case clear from their similarity to Kishor Singh's set with the same deep red borders and yellow inner border with two white lines all around, as well as their similar inscriptions along the top border in white *nagari* script. They concentrate on the *sringars* of Srinathji exclusively, filling the frame of the painting with the stele to which the image is attached, either covered with the appropriate coloured cloth or else left bare revealing its carvings

Published

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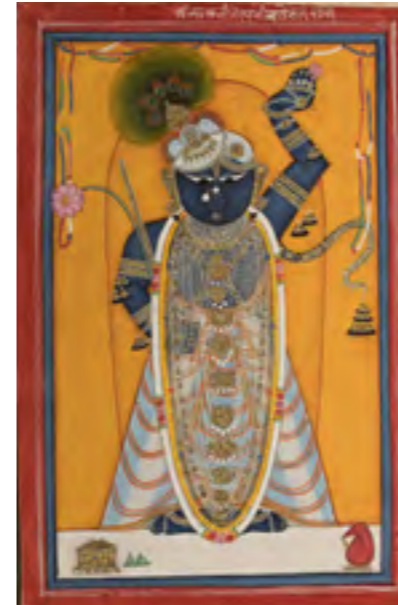
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16a.

An image of Srinathji dressed for the festival of Pavitra

Inscribed above in white *nagari*: *Srinathji ko pavitra ekadasi ko* ('Srinathji at the Pavitra [festival] on the eleventh')

Pavitra on the eleventh day of the dark half of Sravana commemorates Vallabhacharya's finding of the image of Srinathji on Govardhan. While at Gokul, Srinathji appeared to him at night and instructed him to initiate all true seekers with the sacred words, which would secure for them the grace of the Lord. Vallabhacharya, overcome, garlanded the Lord with a pavitra or garland of cotton threads (Ambalal 1987, p. 50). In this *sringar* Srinathji wears a white dhoti with gold trim. On Srinathji's head is his turban with peacock feathers (*morachandrika*) and he carries his golden flute and a pink lotus in his right hand while his upraised left hand holds what seems to be a rose. His many garlands of pearls interspersed with golden

plaques are hung round his neck with garlands of flowers and the key *pavitra* garland. His *chutilla* or decorated artificial braid is floating out behind him. At his feet are his prepared betel chews (*pan*), his pan-box and his water jug. On this occasion the stele is covered in yellow and flower garlands hang from above.

The painting is virtually identical to another one from a different and slightly larger Kota set showing Srinathji dressed in the same *sringar* (Bautze 2000, fig. 3).



16b

An image of Srinathji dressed for Radha's birthday

Inscribed above in white *nagari*: *Srinathji ko Radha ashtami ko uchaho* ('Srinathji at Radha's birthday festival of the eighth')

Srinathji is dressed in a saffron chakdar jama (four-pointed coat) with a blue hanging behind him covering the back plate of the image. This is a type of *sringar* worn on only three occasions during the year. These are the festivals celebrating Krishna's birthday (*Janmastami*) on the eighth day of the dark half of the month Bhadrapada; his consort Radha's birthday (*Radhastami*) on the eighth day of the light half of the same month; and the birthday of Sri Vitthalnathji, Vallabhacharya's son and successor (Gosainji ka utsava) in Pausha (see Skelton pp. 90-91, 95). On Srinathji's head is his turban with peacock feathers (*morachandrika*) and he carries his golden flute and a white lotus in his right hand while his upraised left

hand holds what seems to be a rose. His many garlands of pearls interspersed with golden plaques are hung round his neck with garlands of flowers. His *chutilla* or decorated artificial braid is floating out behind him. At his feet are his prepared betel chews (*pan*), his pan -box and his water jug. On this occasion the stele is covered in blue.

The painting is virtually identical to another one from a different Kota set showing Srinathji dressed in the same *sringar* (Francesca Galloway catalogue 2007, *Sringar*, no. 25).



16c

An image of Srinathji dressed for the birthday of Vishnu's avatar Narasimha

Inscribed above in white *nagari*: *Srinathji ko Narasiha chaturdasi ko uchava* ('Srinathji at Narasimha's [birthday] festival on the fourteenth')

The festival of Narasimha's birthday is held on the fourteenth day of the bright half of the month of Vaisakha, when Srinathji wears a yellow *dhoti* with gold trim. On Srinathji's head is his turban with the full peacock feather regalia (*morachandrika*) and he carries his golden flute and two white lotuses, one still in bud, in his right hand while his upraised left hand is empty but in fact the mountain of Govardhan that he upholding is represented on the backplate of the image, here without any cover. His many garlands of pearls interspersed with golden plaques are hung round his neck with garlands of flowers. His *chutilla* or decorated artificial braid is floating out behind him. At his feet are his prepared betel chews (*pan*), his pan-box, two rose water sprinklers and his water jug.

The stele of the image is seen uncovered during various summer *sringars* (e.g. Ambalal 1987, pp. 22, 49, 102 and 134), including this one. It represents the sacred mountain Govardhan on which reside various ascetics, birds and snakes, while cows roam its lower slopes. The lion-headed figure above the peacock on the right represents Narasimha. Narasimha, the Man-Lion avatar of Vishnu, appeared to protect his devotee Prahlada when threatened by his demon father Hiranyakashipu.

Scenes from the *Ramayana*

Folio from an unknown Marathi text on aesthetics
Nagpur, 1750-75

Opaque pigments and gold on paper

Folio: 33 x 18 cm



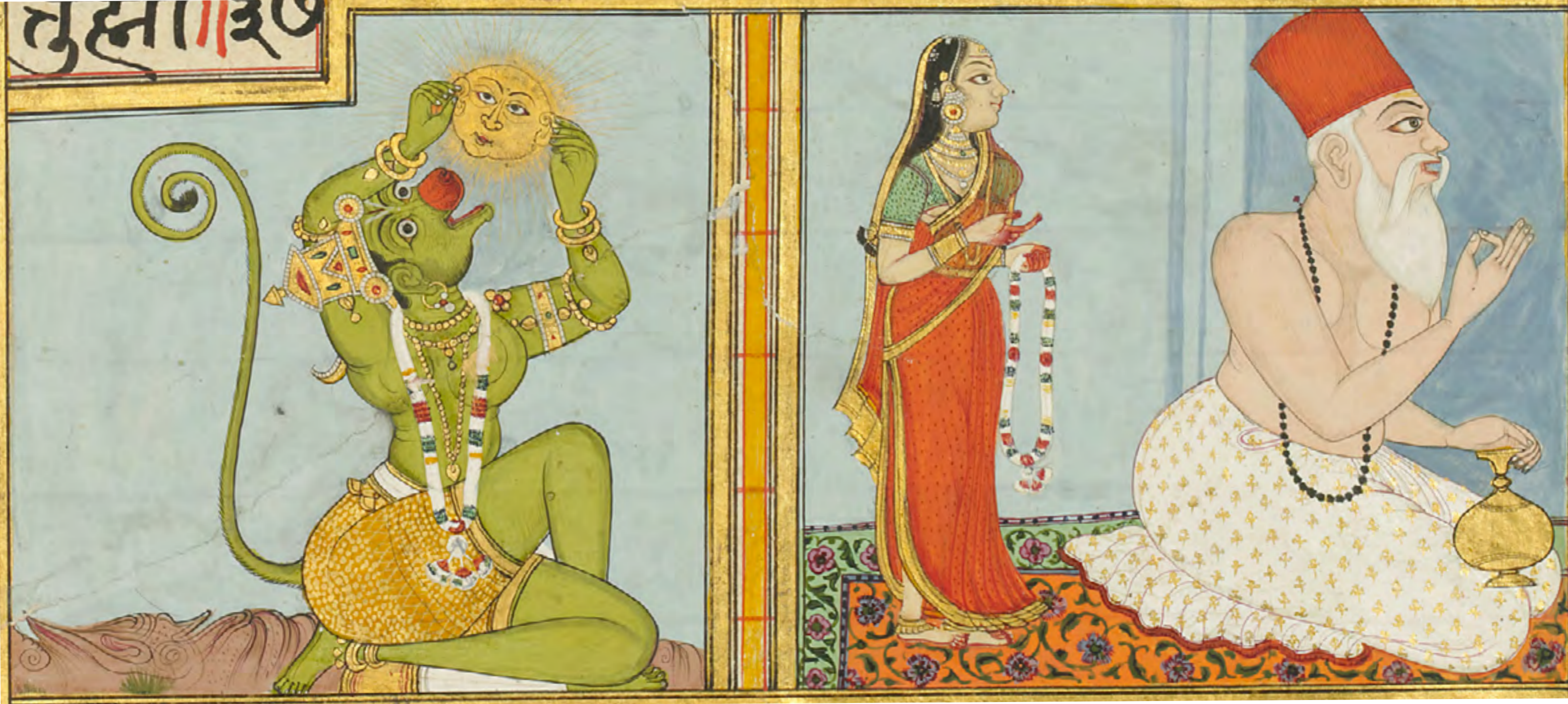
This rare and beautiful folio comes from a Marathi text dealing here with poetic figures of speech. The verses run from vv. 25 to 36/1 on the recto and vv. 36/2 to 37 of chapter 9 of the text on the verso, then begins chapter 10 after the red chapter colophon at the bottom of the verso, but the name of the work is nowhere given. The folio number 3 appears bottom right in the margin of the verso as does a [dhyaya] 10 in the top left meaning chapter 10. Text and illustrations are enclosed within compartments by gold margins, with a gold margin surrounding the whole.

The recto deals with verses illustrating the theme of the figure of speech that discriminates between different kinds of knowledge. It has two small illustrations at the foot of the page depicting the chariot drawn by a seven-headed horse of Surya the Sun-god, here meeting Krishna/Vishnu, while the other panels shows a variety of animals. The verso uses themes from the *Ramayana* to illustrate figures of speech such as ananvaya (comparison of an object with its own ideal) and upama (simile). The several depictions illustrate scenes from the *Ramayana* including the building of the bridge across the ocean, Hanuman as a child grabbing the Sun as a toy and the fight between Rama and Ravana. The standing lady is perhaps Sita with a guru. She is wearing a Maratha type of nine-yard sari caught up between the legs. All these images are invoked as illustrations of poetical figures of speech (alamkaras). Regardless of why they are there, these are delightful vignettes. One admires especially the lively long-tailed monkeys in the building of the bridge, the gleeful surprise on young Hanuman's face as he catches the Sun (his features with their huge eyes are reminiscent of the shadow puppets from northern Karnataka and Andhra), and the intensity of the beautifully modelled guru as he looks across at no doubt a similar

figure on the opposite page.

The style of painting relates closely to mid-eighteenth century Hindu Hyderabad painting with the heroes wearing the tall crowns typical of that style (for instance Falk and Archer 1981, no. 427iv). Our solitary heroine strikes a chord with a group of ladies worshipping a lingam, all of them wearing the Maratha nine-yard sari, a painting thought by Zebrowski (1983, fig. 235) to possibly be Maratha. Very little has been published on Maratha painting, which seems to have centred at this date round Nagpur. Several dispersed pothi sets of the Bhagavata Purana have been attributed to that city by Dr Moti Chandra (Falk and Archer 1981, nos. 561-62), with a similar manuscript in the Mumbai CSMVS Museum (54.2(1-4)). More importantly for our purposes a complete manuscript of the Marathi classic text, Jnanadeva's Jnanesvari, a commentary on the Bhagavad Gita, in the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, is profusely illustrated in a richer but similar style to our page (Dye 2001, no. 162, pp. 370-74). It is dated 1763 at Nagpur and copied by the scribe Narayana for a patron who is named as the son of Sri Gopinath. Its calligraphy is extremely fine and virtually identical to that on our page, suggesting the latter is from the same atelier and possibly by the same scribe. Ladies worshipping Ganesh at the beginning of the manuscript (ibid., no. 162, 1) wear the same kind of sari as our Sita, while little vignettes are interspersed with the text (nos. 162,3-6) with the figures silhouetted against a coloured ground as in our page.

Nagpur originally the centre of a Gond kingdom and never Mughalized, was taken over by Raghoji Bhonsle, a Maratha general governing Berar for the Peshwa, in 1743. After his death he was succeeded by his son Janoji (1755-73). They and their eighteenth-century successors were roughly spoken warriors,



continually fighting, who were uninterested in the arts, and certainly never founded a court studio. Such artistic patronage as there was at Nagpur must have been from wealthy merchants such as presumably Sri Gopinath, who had possibly been exposed to the sophisticated court at Hyderabad and was stirred into emulating its artistic productions.

It was not until the eighteenth century that Hindu patrons became aware of the possibilities of creating manuscripts that matched their Muslim counterparts in the beauty of their calligraphy and binding as well as in their paintings. Little attention had been paid by such patrons or scribes previously to the possibilities of beautiful calligraphy, which hitherto was at best

a workmanlike production no matter how wonderful the paintings. Hindu manuscripts had also been traditionally in loose leaf 'landscape' format, but now in imitation of Islamic manuscripts they began to be made in upright 'portrait' format and bound, normally in brocaded cloth. Kashmir and Jaipur have hitherto been considered the centres where such fine work was produced (Losty 1982, pp. 118-21), but clearly Nagpur has now joined them. According to Mate and Ranade (1982, p. 4), Maratha families of the eighteenth century made it a practice to collect richly illustrated manuscripts of religious and literary texts (see Dye 2001, p. 374, n. 9, for more details), but they do not unfortunately illustrate any

18.

Raja Jai Singh of Kulu with Ladies

Arki, c. 1730

Opaque pigments with gold on paper

Folio 20.5 x 20.5 cm; painting 16.5 x 15.5 cm



Jai Singh of Kulu (r. 1731-1742) is seated against a bolster on a bed smoking a hookah and holding a betel-leaf while a seated lady converses with him. Two maids stand on either side of the bed. A striking chocolate brown carpet with red and blue floral design covers the ground, while the grey wall behind is decorated with jali screens and oblong and vertical niches enclosing multi-coloured bottles and blue and white porcelain.

Although little has been recorded of Jai Singh's life and career and no paintings have so far come to light from his rule at Kulu, four portraits of him were painted at Arki. As a young prince he was painted in the 1720s in the company of Rana Mehr Chand of Arki (r. 1727-43, Binney 1968, no. 75; Archer 1973, Baghal/Arki no. 9) and again in the company of Rana Devi Chand of Kahlur (r. c. 1740-78, Skelton 1961, pl. 61; Archer 1973, Baghal/Arki no. 10). A portrait of him about 1730 receiving another young prince was also painted at this time at Arki (Pal 1972, no. 60). Our portrait and another in the Victoria & Albert Museum (painted at Bilaspur, Archer 1973 Kahlur no. 22) were painted when he was in early manhood at the beginning of his reign, by which time he had shed the long locks hanging down beside his face that he wore as a prince. Jai Singh as a prince must have been a frequent visitor to Arki from Kulu. After his accession he ruled until 1742 when he fled to Lahore, escaping an internal revolt. There, the Muslim ruler's daughter was so enamoured of his beauty that she desired to marry him. Jai Singh, however, beat a hasty retreat and went on a pilgrimage. He is not known to have returned to Kulu (Archer 1973, vol. I, p. 321)

The state of Baghal, whose capital is Arki, was largely dependent on Bilaspur. According to W.G. Archer, Arki developed its own style of painting in the course of the 18th century which can be identified by a light, delicate hand, often with detailed observation of textiles and costume.

Published

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Literature

Pal, P., *The Classical Tradition in Rajput Painting*, New York, 1978
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Skelton, R. *Indian Miniatures from the 15th-19th centuries*, Venice, 1961

Portrait of Mian Mahendra Pal

Basohli, c. 1800, in the style of Ranjha

Opaque watercolour heightened with gold and silver on paper

Folio: 22 x 16 cm; painting: 14.5 x 10 cm

Inscribed on the reverse in *nagari*: *sri Mian Mahendra Pal ji*

The prince Mahendra Pal of Basohli was born in 1784 to the Jammu Rani of Vijay Pal (reg. 1776-1806) and had a short reign from 1806 to 1813. He is depicted here smoking from a hookah and kneeling on a light yellow floor spread placed over a red trellised-pattern carpet on a terrace under a rich purple canopy with a gold and silver fringe. He is dressed in a lilac *jama* and turban with a gold cummerbund. He is wearing two jewelled turban ornaments and jewelled armbands and a pendant. A sword in a green scabbard is suspended from a shoulder strap. The canopy has silver poles while his hookah, bolster and attendant cushions are also of silver. A bearded attendant stands behind him holding both a fly-whisk and a cloth signifying royalty. Beyond the white parapet of the terrace, the green ground stretches back and merges into the sky. The prince is young with only the beginnings of moustache and beard showing, so he is depicted here at about the age of 16 around 1800.

During this time Basohli was tributary to the Sikh power and regular visits to Lahore were required, during one of which Mahendra Pal died. He extended the palace at Basohli and embellished the Rang Mahal with mural paintings. He was supposed to have been very handsome and fond of good living. He was married to a princess from Jasrota who acted as regent for their young son Bhupendra Pal after her husband's early death and he or the Rani must have initiated the commissioning of the vast set of 702 drawings of the *Ramayana* by the artist Ranjha which were finished in Basohli in 1816 (Goswamy 1971; Archer 1973, Basohli no. 30).

This style of terrace portraiture seems to have originated in Guler such as seen in the portrait of Raja

Govardhan Chand c. 1750 (Archer 1973, Guler no. 24) which has a precisely detailed landscape beyond the terrace. In the double portrait of Prakash Chand of Guler with Sansar Chand of Kangra c. 1780 (*ibid.*, Guler no. 52), the background has become less detailed, just green fading as here. This compositional format spread to other courts such as Chamba with the portrait of Raja Jit Singh of Chamba with his son Charat Singh c. 1805 (*ibid.*, Chamba no. 48), where carpets and attendant are very close to our portrait of Mahendra Pal. It is seen earlier in Basohli in the double portrait of Amrit Pal of Basohli with Mian Dalel Singh of Jammu c. 1775 (*ibid.*, Basohli, no. 26). We know from various sources that Nainsukh in 1763 took up residence in Basohli on land granted to him by Amrit Pal and that his youngest son Ranjha lived with him there. Nainsukh died in 1778 and Ranjha stayed in Basohli until his own death around 1830. Ranjha's work is fully attested only in the large series of *Ramayana* drawings now in the Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi, dated 1816 and done in Basohli (Archer 1973, Basohli no. 30). His son Gursahai is also known to have lived and worked at Basohli, and both he and his father worked at other courts but never severed their connection with the family home in Guler.

Provenance

Private Collection, USA

Ray Lewis

Sotheby's 20th/21st September 1985, Lot 431

Dr Karan Singh

Published

Randhawa, M.S., 'Some Portraits of Rajas of Basohli in Kangra Style' in *Roopa-Lekha*, vol. XXXIV, 1965, pp. 5-9, fig. 10



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Goswamy, B.N., *Pahari Paintings of the Nala-Damayanti Theme*, National Museum of India, New Delhi, 1975

Goswamy, B.N., and Fischer, E., 'The First Generation after Manaku and Nainsukh of Guler' in Beach, M.C., Fischer, E., and Goswamy, B.N., *Masters of Indian Painting*, Artibus Asiae, Zurich, 2011, pp. 687-718





Raja Mahendra Pal of Basohli in procession with ladies

Basohli, c. 1810, attributed to Ranjha

Opaque pigments and gold on paper

Folio 25.5 x 35.3; painting 23.6 x 33.3 cm

A terrace portrait of this ruler when still a prince, inscribed on the reverse with his name, (see cat. 19 in this catalogue), is the key to identifying this ruler, since the portraits are identical. The young face with its rather large straight nose, slight moustache and incipient beard on the front of the slightly receding chin and below the jaw is the same, and he wears the same lilac jama and turban and almost the same set of jewels. These paintings provide important evidence of the continuation of Guler-style painting at Basohli well into the 19th century, as documented first by Randhawa in 1965.

According to W.G. Archer (1973, vol. 1, p. 19), Mahendra Pal of Basohli (reg. 1806-13) was born in 1784 to the Jammu Rani of Vijay Pal (reg. 1776-1806) and ascended the *gaddi* when he was twenty years old in 1806. The start of his reign witnessed the ascendancy of the Sikh Maharaja Ranjit Singh over much of the Punjab Hills and Basohli became tributary to the Sikh power. Regular visits to Lahore were required, during one of which Mahendra Pal died. During his short reign, he extended the palace at Basohli and embellished the Rang Mahal with mural paintings. He was supposed to have been very handsome and fond of good living, perhaps reflected here in the large number of ladies who accompany him on this jaunt. He was married to a princess from Jasrota who acted as regent for their young son Bhupendra Pal after her husband's early death.

Mahendra Pal is depicted enjoying a ride on an elephant with his ladies. Three ladies accompany him in his howdah while another eleven follow in howdahs on two more elephants. Retainers on horseback accompany the elephants while the state musicians, flag- and arms-bearers, lead the way. The chief elephant is breaking into a run causing its caparison to flutter and alarming the nearest horseman. The procession is heading across a grassy hillside dotted with occasional small trees.

We know from various sources that Nainsukh in 1763 took up residence in Basohli on land granted to him by Amrit Pal and that his youngest son Ranjha lived with him there. Nainsukh died in 1778 and Ranjha stayed in Basohli until his own death thought to be around 1830. His son Gursahai records in a priest's register at Pehowa in 1828 that he himself was still living in Basohli on the land granted to his grandfather by Raja Amrit Pal (Paul 1998, pp. 131-32). It seems reasonable to assume that any portraits of the Basohli rajas Vijay Pal and Mahendra Pal should be attributable to either Ranjha or Gursahai, although both of course worked elsewhere for other courts. Ranjha's work is fully attested only in the large series of *Ramayana* drawings now in the Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi, dated 1816 and done in Basohli (Goswamy 1971; Archer 1973, Basohli no. 30), but numerous other paintings have been attributed to him including the painted Nala-Damayanti paintings now in the Hari Tara Trust in Jammu. This authorship was first suggested in B N Goswamy's 1975 monograph on the Nala-Damayanti material, but has since been firmed up – see Goswamy and Fischer 2011, no. 35, p. 693. See also Ohri 1998, Seyller and Mittal 2014, pp. 235-46 and Losty 2017, no. 12, for other works attributed to Ranjha. The evidence there presented as to Ranjha's authorship is confusing, but he had a long and productive life and could certainly have changed his style as he matured as an artist, from one closely imbued with his father's ideals to one more in tune with the flatter, more angular and more decorative *zeitgeist* of the early 19th century. For the moment Ranjha seems the most likely candidate to be the artist of our impressive and well organised processional scene. His son Gursahai seems to have cultivated a much more involved and decorative style (Paul 1998; Seyller and Mittal 2014, pp. 260-63). The present picture may be compared with a similar processional scene in the painted Nala-Damayanti series attributed to Ranjha showing the different princes heading to Damayanti's svayamvara (Gos-

wamy 1975, pl. 24). In this very similar composition the three elephants caparisoned in the same way are processing across a yellow hillside dotted with small trees while smaller figures ride or walk across the landscape, and all the foreground attendant riders and walkers are cut in half by the bottom border. This somewhat disconcerting element is rare in earlier Pahari painting, though not unknown, as in *The Road to Vrindavan* from the c. 1770 Guler *Bhagavata Purana* (Goswamy and Fischer 2011, fig. 10).

Published

Sharma, Vijay, Kangra ki citramkan parampara, 2010, p 143 (as Raja Bhup Chand of Guler, c.1800)

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Suwarcha, P., 'Gursahai: A Guler Painter at Basohli', in Ohri, V.C., and Craven, R., ed., *Painters of the Pahari Schools*, Marg Publications, Bombay, 1998, pp. 131-40

Randhawa, M.S., 'Some Portraits of Rajas of Basohli in Kangra Style' in *Roopa-Lekha*, vol. XXXIV, 1965, pp. 5-9

Seyller, J., and Mittal, J., *Pahari Paintings in the Jagdish and Kamla Mittal Museum of Indian Art*, Hyderabad, 2014



21.

The jealous Radha strikes Krishna with a lotus stem

Kangra, 1800-10

Opaque pigments and gold on paper

Folio: 28 x 20.2 cm

Miniature in an elongated oval: 22.8 x 14 cm

Krishna has strayed away from his involvement with Radha and stayed out all night while she has spent the night waiting for him anxiously. When he finally turns up, in her jealous rage she strikes him. The artist has interpreted this scene in a playful manner, so that she strikes him with a lotus stem. Here she grabs hold of his right hand so he cannot escape and raises her own right arm with the lotus stem to strike him again. Krishna ruefully rubs his left cheek where her blow had fallen.

This is the classic situation of the *khandita nayika*, the enraged mistress whose lover has strayed. Instead of the usual scene on the terrace of the heroine's house with the lover ruefully appearing at dawn prepared to be scolded, the artist has stripped the situation to the bare essential: the two lovers confronting each other on a terrace, beautifully poised and balanced, she wearing violet and he yellow, both with red shawls, standing beneath an elegant willow silhouetted against the sky.

Published

Habighorst, L.V., *Der blaue Gott in indischen Miniaturen*, Mittelrhein Museum, Koblenz, 2014, fig. 24

Exhibited

Blumen – Bäume – Göttergärten. Indische Malerei aus sechs Jahrhunderten, Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg, 2013

Der Blaue Gott in indischen Miniaturen, Mittelrhein Museum Koblenz, 2014

Indische Gärten in der Parkvilla Rieter - Gärten der Welt, Museum Rietberg Zürich, 2016



22.

Siva in a passion is calmed by Parvati

Guler, c. 1800

Opaque pigments and gold on paper

Folio: 24.2 x 18.3 cm

Miniature: 22.3 x 14.4 cm

Shiva is enraged and sits his two eyes closed his third eye open, which spells destruction for anything caught in its gaze. In his passion his hair has become unbound from its usual state and flies off above and behind him. Arms akimbo on his thighs, he sits on a leopard skin perhaps absorbing the fumes of what is on fire in the brazier before him. One of his snakes rears up from the ground trying to absorb the fumes. Parvati sits with a vina trying to calm him while his bull Nandi sits placidly by. The divine pair sit by a lotus lake beneath trees and flowering creepers impressionistically painted.

Published

Habighorst, L.V., *Blumen – Bäume – Göttergärten*, Koblenz 2011, Abb. 68

Mukandi Lal, *Garhwal Painting*, Delhi, 1968, pl. XVI

Sharma, Vijay, *Kangra ki citramkan parampara*, 2010, p 74

Exhibited

Blumen – Bäume – Göttergärten. Indische Malerei aus sechs Jahrhunderten, Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg, 2013





23.

Rama and his brothers ride on horseback in a circle shooting at demons trying to abduct Sita

Chamba, c. 1850

Opaque pigments and gold on paper

Folio 25.5 x 26.3; painting 21.5 x 22.4 cm

Inscribed on the reverse in *Takri*: *Sita ki Mahiravana layi geya tha.*

Rama, Lachhmana, Bharatha Chhatraghana ne rakasa mare (Mahiravana had taken away Sita. Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Shatrughna killed the demons').

Four princes ride in a circle shooting arrows at four demon horsemen, one of whom is carrying off a woman. One of the princes is blue-skinned suggesting this must be Rama along with his three brothers, so that the abducted woman must be Sita. The demons are all of the normal bug-eyed and horned variety, none of them intended to be Ravana. Rama's crown is also with its peacock finial akin to those normally worn by Krishna. This is confirmed by the Chamba takri inscription (Archer 1973 vol.II, no 62 for stylistic similarity). Vijay Sharma who has kindly read it notes that Ahiravan(a) was the son of sage Vishravas and a brother of Ravana. He was a rakshasa who secretly carried away Rama and his brother Lakshmana to the nether-world, consulted his friends and decided to sacrifice the life of the two divine brothers at the altar of his chosen deity, goddess Mahamaya. But Hanuman saved their life by killing Mahiravana and his army. This is in fact a story told not in the Valmiki Ramayana but in other vernacular traditions including Bengali and Telugu versions.

The painting is one of those clever conceits of circular interlocking animals, so that two of them can share one body part. Here the horses all share their hindquarters. The horses ridden by the four princes with fully extended bodies at the gallop all kick back their hind legs which then become the hindquarters of the cowering horses ridden by the demons. The idea is an ancient one found throughout Eurasian art, as in the circle of three hares sharing their ears found from China to northern Europe.

Other Indian examples include an 18th century tiger hunt of interlocking horses, elephants and tigers in an album in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (Ouseley Add.171, f. 12v), an interesting album which also includes that other form of composite, an elephant composed of the heaped together bodies of innumerable animals (Topsfield 2008, no. 60). Humans too could be interlocked sharing body parts as in a Golconda painting from the late 17th century of four women with but two heads and torsos between them (Falk and Lynch 1987, no. 13).

Provenance

Latifi Collection

Exhibited

The Royal Academy of Arts, London 1947

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