





RAJPUT PAINTINGS
FROM THE LUDWIG HABIGHORST
COLLECTION

J.P. Losty

Francesca Galloway
2019



Detail cat. 19

FOREWORD

For Asia Week New York, we are pleased to present this selection of fine Rajasthani paintings accompanied by a small group of important Pahari works. All are from the Ludwig Habighorst collection, following on from our first exhibition drawing on this remarkable group in the autumn of last year.

Collecting Indian painting, a lifelong journey and passion for Habighorst, has been not solely an academic exercise but a pursuit engaging the imagination and the senses. This can be seen in the quality and character of the work. J.P. Losty writes incisively in his illuminating introduction about Rajput painting being a conceptual art originating in a formalised style, rather than one aiming towards naturalism, as in Mughal painting. These miniatures nonetheless evoke compelling and recognisable human drama. Scenes of lavish and detailed court entertainment are juxtaposed with the pain of pining for an absent lover, the aftermath of infidelity, and illicit midnight assignations.

We would like to thank J.P. Losty for his indispensable research and his authoritative essay on Rajasthani painting, and Misha Anikst as ever for his inventive and attractive design.

Furthermore, we would like to thank John Bodkin, Julie Pickard, Helen Loveday, Matt Pia, Prudence Cuming, Gino Franchi, Mary Galloway, Danielle Beilby, Lucy Southgate and Christine Ramphal for their invaluable help with this publication.

Francesca Galloway



Detail cat. 4

A BRIEF SURVEY OF RAJASTHANI PAINTINGS

J.P. Losty

Rajput painting was a courtly art practised at the princely courts of Rajasthan, Bundelkhand and the Punjab Hills from the 16th to the 19th centuries. Its patrons were the rulers of the many kingdoms of varied size in these regions, both sovereign princes and their feudatory chiefs, and its practitioners were employed in their court studios. It was a private art meant for the delectation of the ruling chief, his nobles and his womenfolk in his zenana. The subjects were normally at first drawn from the Hindu classics, both in Sanskrit and in Hindi, as manuscript illustrations. Only later were paintings produced independent of text.

Rajput painting is a conceptual art: its ends are achieved not by aiming towards naturalism or illusionism, as with Mughal painting in the 17th century, but through the deployment of colour and form. In the finest examples characters interact with one another, sometimes with great intensity, but they do not do so in any manner consistent with naturalism; nor is the environment in which they interact naturalistic. These ideas were carried through Rajput painting both in the plains and in the hills right to the end of the 18th century in some states, whereas others muted their conceptual and idealistic nature of form under Mughal influence by attempting to give some volume to their characters and to place them in a recognisable space.

Rajput painting evolved out of the highly formalised and linear style used for earlier manuscript illustrations, in which the most prominent distortion of the human figure was the way the further eye of heads in three-quarter profile protruded into space. The style was used for both Jain and Hindu paintings in earlier centuries in Rajasthan and Gujarat, and was gradually loosened up under influence from Sultanate painting, that is to say styles practised in various Muslim courts. The first unequivocal statement of the new aesthetic is the Early Rajput style of the first half of the 16th century (cat. 1).

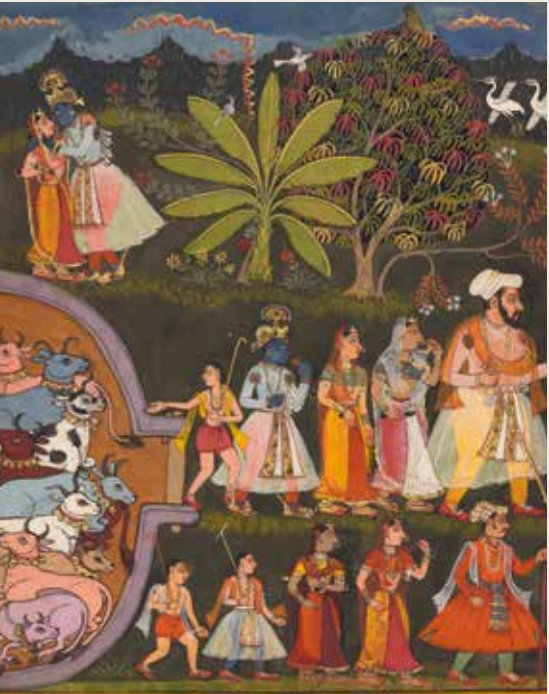
The head has now been turned towards full profile and the projecting eye is dropped, but the upper body remains facing the viewer with the hips and legs swivelled round facing the same direction as the head. Men and women wear attractively stylised garments with floating projecting ends. The style is linear and the viewpoint is strictly horizontal with no possibility of depth. In the 16th century the style seems to have

cat. 1
Rukmini proceeds to the temple (detail)
Folio from the Early Rajput *Bhagavata Purana*
Possibly Mewar, 1520–25

cat. 3
A meeting of lovers in the dark (detail)
Folio from a *Rasikapriya* series
Mewar, c. 1660



cat. 1



cat. 3

had no geographical limitations and to have been used widely across northern India and into the Punjab Hills. The few dated manuscripts utilising features of the style are of great importance, but are generally of provincial provenance, so they are not of much help in elucidating the provenance and date of the undated masterpieces of the style. The style was later to flourish and subdivide within the various Rajput court styles in the 17th century, and to be affected to a greater or lesser extent by Mughal naturalism, especially when the viewpoint was lifted from the horizontal into what is called the ‘bird’s eye view perspective’ that affords the possibility of spatial depth (cat. 3 for instance).

These Early Rajput manuscripts differ sharply from the earlier Jain and Sultanate illustrated manuscripts in which small paintings were inserted into the text at appropriate points under the influence of Persian ideas of book illustration. Instead we have large folios in which a single painting occupies most of the surface and the text is either relegated to the reverse or if short enough occupies a narrow strip above the painting. This is the first appearance of the *chitrapothi* or ‘picture book’ format in which the story is carried by the paintings, sometimes hundreds of them if the text is illustrated verse by verse. The text was later sometimes downgraded to just a caption or an abbreviated version on the reverse leaving a well-known story to be carried by the pictures. For the first time in Indian manuscript painting, we are able to sense the underlying *rasa*, the aesthetic mood, made possible by the technical revolution of turning the head around to full profile so that characters can interact with one another and evoke the appropriate aesthetic response. Where this compositional imperative of illustrating every important detail in the story is combined with the need to prepare a complete manuscript of a large text, then the result can be a vast compendium, as in the seven volumes of the *Ramayana* prepared for Rana Jagat Singh of Mewar between 1649 and 1653 (British Library, London; Chhatrapati Shivaji Museum, Mumbai; Government Oriental Research Institute, Jodhpur; and private Indian collections), but few Rajput court studios had the resources to attempt such an undertaking.

The earliest known painting cycle definitely from Mewar, the dispersed 1605 *Ragamala* from Chawand, shows its dependence on the

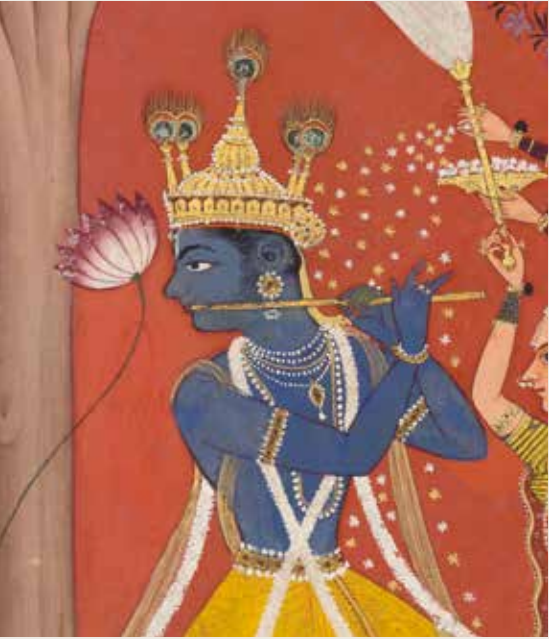
cat. 2
Hindola ragini (detail)
Folio from the ‘Berlin’ *Ragamala*
Rajasthan or Agra, 1605–06

cat. 8 verso
A fluting Krishna being saluted
by Rao Madho Singh of Kota (detail)
Kota, c. 1680

fig. 1
Hindola raga
Sirohi, c. 1680
Published in Losty 2018, cat. 37



cat. 2



cat. 8 verso

Early Rajput style in its figures, compositions and in details such as the way principal or divine figures are given red backgrounds within landscape or architectural features. Such details as these red backgrounds for principal figures continued in many of the Rajput schools throughout the 17th century (see cats 1, 2 & 8 verso). Mewar alone of the principal Rajput states remained aloof from the Mughal court throughout much of the 17th century, although its princes were required to attend court from time to time, but military service was not demanded from any ruling monarch. Mughal influence, however, did seep into the artistic productions of the state. Although the human figures remained constant, the lifting of the viewpoint, an innovation by Sahib Din, the principal artist of Rana Jagat Singh (r. 1628–52), now allowed the artist to place them within a landscape (cat. 3). It was at an earlier period, probably in the 1620s before Sahib Din began his exploration of space, that influence from Mewar spread to the neighbouring small state of Sirohi, which produced first wall paintings of *Ragamala* subjects and then painted sets that encapsulate the last unadulterated manifestation of the pure Early Rajput style with their figures interacting against flat backdrops and their horizontal layering (fig. 1).

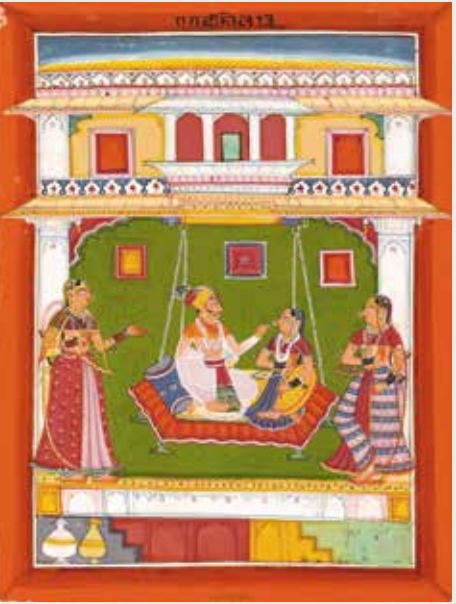


fig. 1

fig. 2
A yogi offered a gift (detail)
Mughal style, perhaps at Bikaner, c. 1620
Published in Losty 2018, cat. 25

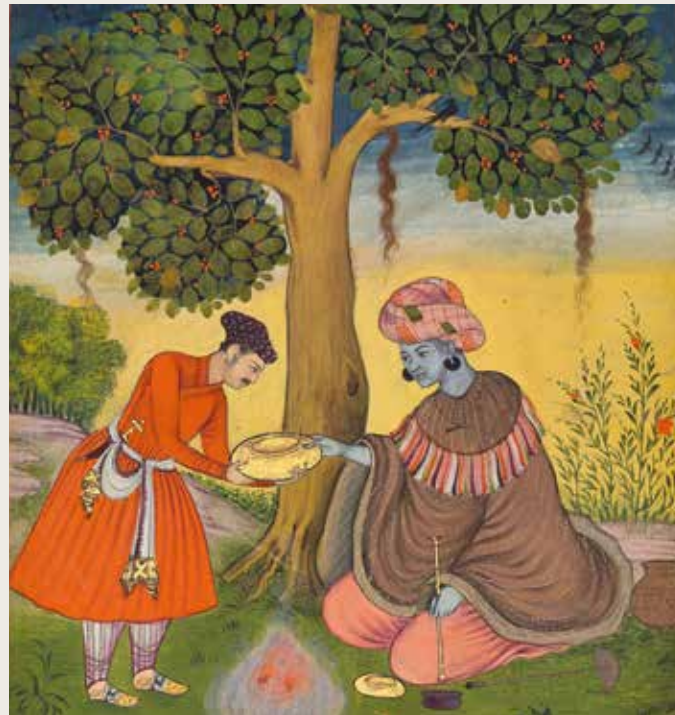


fig. 2

fig. 3
Krishna meeting his beloved at night (detail)
Folio from a *Rasikapriya* series
Bikaner, c. 1690, attributed to Nuruddin
Published in Losty 2018, cat. 41



fig. 3

fig. 4
Krishna mad with longing (detail)
Folio from a *Rasikapriya* series
Bikaner, c. 1686, by Ruknuddin
Published in Losty 2018, cat. 40



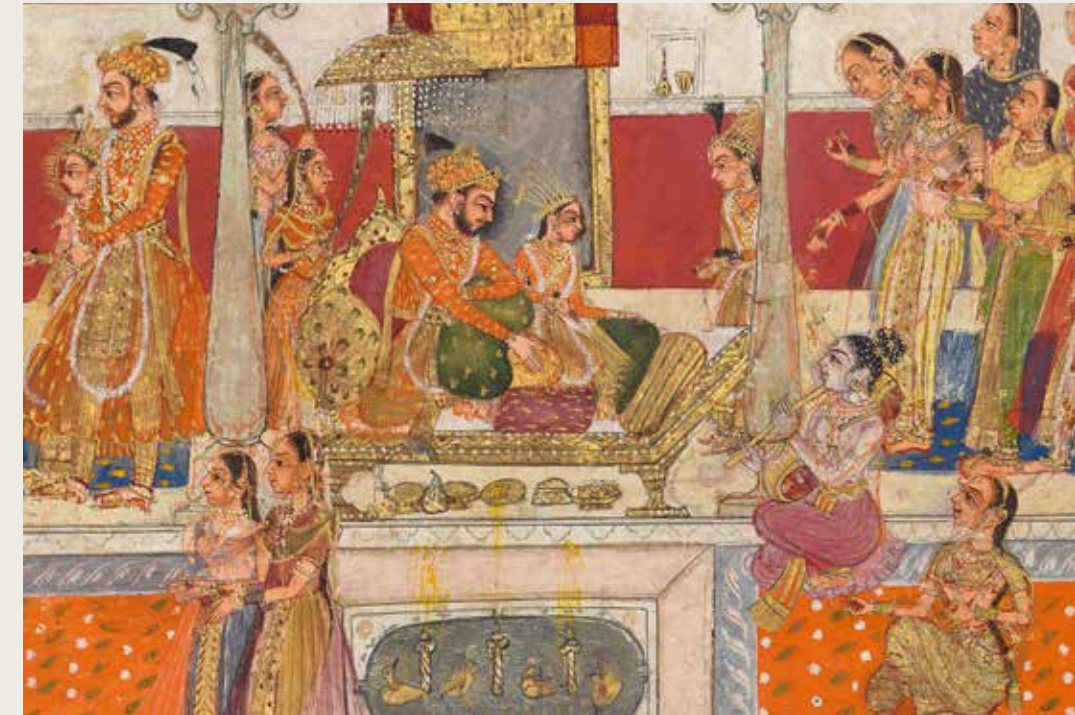
fig. 4

cat. 5
Krishna's hidden love in separation (detail)
Illustration to Keshav Das's *Rasikapriya*
Bundi, c. 1680



cat. 5

cat. 7
A Mughal prince in his zenana (detail)
Kota, c. 1675



cat. 7

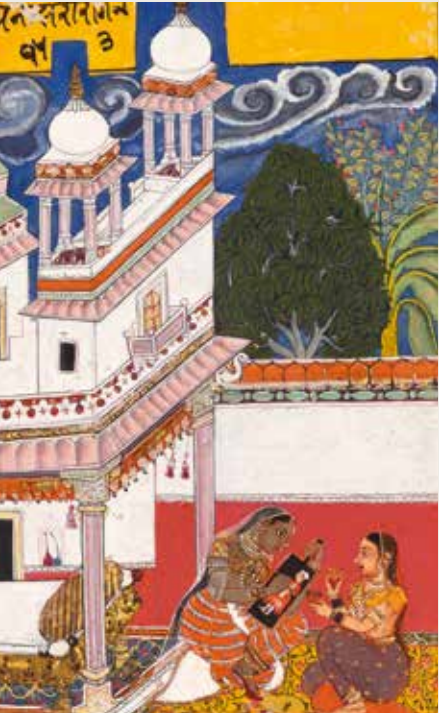
The other major states, principally Amber, Jodhpur and Bikaner, contracted marriage alliances with the emperors and their offspring and these important placements within the zenana were perhaps instrumental in the incorporation to some degree of Mughal naturalism into their own traditional styles (fig. 2). We can see this clearly in a dispersed *Ragamala* from 1605–06 that seems to have been done under Bikaner patronage (cat. 2), although whether this was in the Mughal capital of Agra or in Bikaner itself is not known. In this set the Early Rajput female form has changed to one modified by the Mughal depiction of Rajput women, while the personified *Hindola raga* is a man based on depictions of Prince Salim (the young Jahangir) depicted sitting at ease in his swing. Yet there is no attempt to depict space or depth, and the flat background incorporates a traditional red ground behind the principal figure. Bikaner painting continued to be influenced by Mughal and then later by Deccani painting as artists moved around India, propelled by hiatuses in patronage or by the forces of war (figs 3 & 4). Such influence can be seen in the modelling of the figure to suggest volume, in the attention paid to the fall of draperies, the exquisite detail of some passages and the attempts to suggest recession in the landscape.

These 'picture books' remained the principal vehicle for Rajput expression throughout the 17th century. Illustrated sets of paintings of

Ragamalas, *Rasikapriyas*, *Rasamanjaris*, *Gitagovindas* and similar texts in Sanskrit or Hindi were produced in considerable quantities from each state; there seemed to be an inexhaustible need for new reactions to these texts in every generation or less. Many of these texts were devotional and concerned with Krishna, the principal deity worshipped in the Rajput states, often in the guise of the divine lover, so that even apparently secular texts on poetics such as the *Rasikapriya* could incorporate Krishna into their picture cycles as the hero or *nayaka* (cat. 5).

Individual paintings whether portraits or genre scenes were not nearly so important during this period, although there were exceptions (such as cat. 7). In Bundi painting, another conservative pictorial style, generations of artists followed for nearly two centuries the prescriptions laid down in the first Bundi *Ragamala* of 1591 (cat. 4). The 1591 set was produced in a style influenced by Mughal painting in its handling of pictorial space and made use of three-dimensional architecture derived from Akbar-period painting, yet in depicting figures it followed the flat renditions of the other traditional Rajput schools. When Kota was separated from Bundi in 1631 to become an independent state, a group of Bundi artists made their way to the new state and brought such compositional imperatives with them (as in cat. 6).

cat. 4
Dhanasri ragini (detail)
Page from the 'Berlin' *Ragamala*
Bundi, c. 1670



cat. 4

cat. 6
A lady in prayer (detail)
Bangali ragini of *Pancham raga*
Kota, c. 1700–20



cat. 6

cat. 8 recto
The heroic deeds of Krishna in Mathura (detail)
Kota, c. 1720–30



cat. 8 recto

cat. 9
Maharana Amar Singh of Mewar riding with Maharaja
Ajit Singh of Jodhpur and Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh of
Amber, along with Durgadas Rathor (detail)
Udaipur, by Tasahi, c. 1715–20



cat. 9

In several Rajput states a deity such as Krishna or Rama was declared to be the ruler of the state and its raja simply the god's minister. Krishna was the principal deity worshipped in Kota (cat. 8 verso), but even more so when Rao Bhim Singh (r. 1707–20) installed the Vallabha image of Sri Brijnathji in a temple in his capital. This small image was so important to Bhim Singh that he took it with him on his many campaigns for the Mughals. His death in battle in 1720 and the capture of the image by the forces of the rebellious Mughal governor Nizam al-Mulk resulted in great grief to his successors, so that it resulted in the creation of paintings featuring the doings of the young god Krishna (cat. 8 recto) that perhaps went some way to assuage their grief for the god's absence.

In the 18th century a general trend in Rajasthani painting was a burgeoning interest in spatial realisation that was consequent partly on movements of artists from Delhi to Rajasthani courts, such as Bhavani Das's move to Kishangarh and his son Dalchand's move to Jodhpur. This allowed newer subjects to enter the traditional repertoire of the Rajasthani studios, such as portraits of the ruler, group portraiture, durbar scenes, scenes with women's pastimes, grand hunts, and recordings of actual events, of court ceremonials and of festivals. Constant succession struggles and ruinous Maratha incursions form the backdrop to all

artistic endeavour in this period. In a period of lessened royal authority, portraiture, whether singly or in groups, served as a way of reinforcing both the ruler's self-image and his status as a prince among his feudatory chieftains.

In Mewar, with this opening up of the repertoire begun under Rana Amar Singh (r. 1698–1710), it became possible to produce large-format paintings illustrating the doings of the Maharana and his successors and their court. Sometimes, for the first time, they could show historical events such as the important meeting in 1707 of the rulers of Mewar, Amber and Jodhpur to formalise an anti-Mughal alliance (cat. 9). Such large-format paintings show the Maharana out riding or hunting or enjoying festivals (cat. 10) or in durbar, often with back-grounds of the hills of Mewar or the City Palace in Udaipur or the island palaces dotted around the lakes. Their study is much facilitated by the often lengthy inscriptions on their backs detailing the event recorded, the persons present, the artist and scribe involved and the date of its reception into the collection. Traditional Mewar features continue in the very high viewpoint and (often) simultaneous narration in the larger compositions that show the Maharana's participation in the various stages of whatever event was being depicted. Such scenes continued to be portrayed well into the 19th century.

cat. 10
Maharana Sangram Singh celebrating the Spring Festival with his nobles in the Rose Garden in Udaipur (detail)
Udaipur, 1715–20t



cat. 10

A succession struggle in Bundi at the beginning of the 18th century prevented any serious royal patronage until the second half of the century. Later Bundi painting is generally on a small scale with themes mostly concentrating on female subjects and erotic subjects with hot passionate colours. Figures are often set against a cool white architecture, an offshoot of Mughal painting under Muhammad Shah, but with strange shading round the face. In Kota there developed one of the most instantly recognisable genres of Rajasthani painting, the great hunting scenes in which the raos pitted themselves against tigers, lions, boars and wild elephants. The rao is depicted on elephant back or in a hide, shooting at the magnificent beasts, and often in the company of Brijnathji, the tutelary deity of Kota. The Kota artists of this period were master draftsmen who brushed their animals on to paper with the skill of calligraphers. The generally sparse colour tones of these pictures allow the superb quality of the draftsmanship to shine through. Throughout this period Kota artists drew constantly, often from life, and their sketches are some of the liveliest ever produced in Indian art. In the 19th century under Maharao Kishor Singh (r. 1819–28) and Ram Singh II (r. 1828–66) new strains of Kota painting developed linked to the royal devotion to Krishna as Srinathji (fig. 5) and also in charting the everyday doings of the Maharao.

fig. 5
Sri Nathji dressed for Radha's birthday (detail)
Kota, c. 1830–40
Provenance Ludwig Habighorst collection



fig. 5

cat. 11
An ideal concert with Raja Savant Singh as an audience (detail)
Kishangarh, c. 1740



cat. 11

cat. 12
Krishna and Radha at an assignation in a landscape (detail)
Kishangarh, c. 1770



cat. 12

The Mughal imperial portrait painter Bhavani Das arrived in Kishangarh in 1719 presumably at the invitation of Raja Raj Singh (r. 1706–48). He was followed by his son Dalchand, who later moved on to Jodhpur. These artists brought into painting at these courts a new influence from the Mughal court style. Bhavani Das's style was transformed under Rajput taste into something flatter and more linear and it seems to have been him who began the extravagant curving lines of eyes and backs that was carried forward by Nihal Chand, the favourite artist of Raja Savant Singh (r. 1748–57). Kishangarh paintings then and later reflect the rajas' devotion to Krishna (cats 11 & 12). Savant Singh was also a poet writing under the name Nagari Das and from his youth patronised Nihal Chand. His lyrical masterpieces in idyllic settings correspond to the idealised sacred places of Braj. Krishna and Radha are both depicted with impossibly slender waists, arching backs and sloping profiles with huge eyes upturned at the corner (the Radha figure supposedly based on Savant Singh's mistress Bani Thani); these mannerisms permeate Kishangarh painting throughout this period.

Bikaner had received considerable impetus from Deccani painting in the late 17th century and this combined with the probable Mughal origin of most of its master artists or *ustads* ensured that during the 18th century the Bikaner style remained delicate and poetic (figs 3 & 4).

cat. 13
Maharaja Sawai Jagat Singh II of Jaipur with a
favourite lady at a dance performance (detail)
Jaipur, c. 1810–15, signed by Gobind Chatera



cat. 13

Both Jodhpur and Amber in the 17th century followed a highly Mughalised style, and despite reverting to a more basically Rajput one at the turn of the century were again subject to renewed Mughal influence in the 1720s when Dalchand arrived at Jodhpur and Jai Singh II of Amber (r. 1699–1743) brought Mughal artists from Delhi to his court. In both styles, however, Mughal influence waned. Jodhpur artists pursued a bold and brilliantly colourful path throughout successive reigns for the next 100 years without deviating again in their portraits and durbar scenes, and successively reinvented in this late period the *chitrapothi* format in their many large manuscript productions.

Raja Jai Singh II of Amber transferred his capital to his new city of Jaipur in 1738 and under him and his successors, especially Madho Singh (r. 1750–68), Pratap Singh (r. 1779–1803) and Jagat Singh II (r. 1803–19), artistic activity flourished and artists reverted mostly to a more traditional flatter style (cat. 13). The many *ragamala* paintings from this period feature multi-storeyed architectural backdrops that perhaps mirror the architecture of the new city. As against this, some artists such as Sahib Ram specialised in portraiture, creating brilliantly coloured but flat icons, although others such as Ramji Das specialised in portraying in a more humanised manner not just those at court but everyone present throughout the palace. This reputation for portraiture perhaps gave Jaipur artists an edge and increasingly paintings and portraits made at this time throughout much of northern Rajasthan seem to have been made, if not by Jaipur artists, then by other Rajput artists imitating their particular style.

fig. 6
Intoxicated ascetics
Sawar, c. 1785, by Pemji (detail)
Published in Losty 2018, cat. 28



fig. 6

This brief survey of the major trends in Rajasthani painting cannot of course take account of every style and every movement of importance over two or more centuries. In addition to the main schools outlined above, most of the states had *thikanas* or subsidiary states, the rulers of which often also had their own studios which could pursue variants of the main state style. Some artists simply went their own way such as Pemji of Sawar in the late 18th century. Sawar was technically a *thikana* of Jodhpur, but Pemji's wiry line and angular movements owe nothing to the main Jodhpur style and are all his own (fig. 6). The Mewar artists Bakhta and his son Chokha in the reign of Maharana Bhim Singh (r. 1778–1828) moved to the *thikana* of Devgarh where they similarly pursued interesting, indeed eccentric, styles that were largely their own creations.

But the main trends in Rajasthani painting are clear. At first there was a concentration on manuscript production of classic texts using a format where the picture carried the story and the text became less relevant. Nearly all figures are in profile reflecting the easiest way for them to interact with others in the painting, either to suggest the underlying aesthetic emotion or to show their relationship. And though the various styles reflect the differences between the states, and the forms the artists used could be linear with flat places of colours or more modulated suggesting volume and space, they all share an underlying unity of expression that enabled artists to move from court to court and pick up the local style. Always there was the basic Indian concept that what artists produced was an ideal, a product of not what the eye could see but what the mind suggested was the ideal form. As artists became more aware of their creative powers to be able to suggest this idealised reality, they could move away from the props of texts and stories and could produce paintings that reflected an idealised vision of their society.

Folio from the Early Rajput *Bhagavata Purana*
Possibly Mewar, 1520–25
Opaque pigments on paper
Folio: 18 × 22 cm
Inscribed above on the recto in Devanagari: *Sa Nana ...* and
Rukmini ... [damaged] and on the verso with the Sanskrit
text of *Bhagavata Purana* X, 53, vv. 40–43

Listed
Ehnbom 2011, no. 22
Exhibited
Zurich, 2003, and Berlin, 2003–04
Zurich, 2011
New York, 2011–12

Canto 53 of Book x of the *Bhagavata Purana* tells the story of how the princess Rukmini had fallen in love with Krishna, and although about to marry King Sisupala, prayed to Krishna to save her. On the morning of her wedding she went to the temple:

Rukmini silently went out on foot to see the lotus feet of the deity Bhavani. Accompanied by her mothers and girlfriends and protected by the King's valiant soldiers, who held their upraised weapons at the ready, she simply absorbed her mind in the lotus feet of Krishna. And all the while *mridangas*, conch shells, *panavas*, horns and other instruments resounded.

Behind the bride followed thousands of prominent courtesans bearing various offerings and presents, along with well-adorned Brahmins' wives singing and reciting prayers and bearing gifts of garlands, scents, clothing and jewellery. There were also professional singers, musicians, bards, chroniclers and heralds (Bh.P. X., 53, vv. 40–43, online translation by Bhaktivedanta Svami).

The Early Rajput style of the early 16th century is common to a small group of manuscripts that mark the final emergence of a distinctive Rajput style from its tentative forerunners in the various Jain and Hindu manuscripts of mediaeval India. Characteristic of the style are the attractive stylisation of the human figure with faces in profile and huge fish-shaped eyes, the large colourful trees, the solid grounds and the division of the sky by a wavy white line (definitely not a horizon) between blue above and black below. The 10th canto of the *Bhagavata Purana* was illustrated in this style with over 300 paintings originally, of which some 200 are known. This is the most important Hindu manuscript paint-

ing from the pre-Akbar period, although its exact dating and provenance remain a matter of scholarly debate, divided between those who favour a provenance in what they deem the typical area of Sultanate manuscript production, i.e. the Delhi–Agra area, and those who argue for a provenance in Rajasthan where the style obviously took most root (see Ehnbom 2011 and Topsfield 2002, ch. 2). The inscriptions often encountered on the recto *Sa Nana* and *Sa Mitharam* are thought to reflect a division of ownership at a later date.

Ehnbom in 2011 distinguishes ten different hands in the extant manuscript pages terming them Hands A–J, each of whom was responsible for a section of canto X. Our painting comes from the section for which his Painter H was responsible, from cantos 50 to 59, v. 38. There is an ongoing, almost irresistible, sense of movement from right to left as the various processions make their way to the temple where the gods (here Ganesh and a *sivalingam* rather than the goddess Bhavani) await them. With wonderful economy the registers do double duty as backdrop to the processions and also act as interior spaces – rooms in palaces, chambers for the musicians and the shrine itself. The musicians are especially well portrayed in vigorously beating their *mridangams*, kettle-drums and gongs and blowing their conches and the *shehnaï*.

Painter H likes to concentrate normally on a key area of the story which he paints with large figures with lesser events around it, but he does like to use registers as well (Ehnbom 2011, figs 10–12), often stepped as here, and with panels of illumination to fill in any blanks, as in the bottom of the page. Here the whole narrative is conveyed in three (or perhaps four) registers without an obvious central section. Rukmani's palace chamber is in the *chhatra* in the top



right and the temple has two domes covering the shrine itself and its antechamber. The arrangement allows *chhatris* and turrets to project upwards, thereby mitigating somewhat the horizontal effect of the registers. The vigorously marching figures in the processions contrast with the intensely energetic musicians and drummers. The noise, as in all wedding processions, must have been tremendous!

Other paintings attributed to this artist are in the former Paul Walter collection (Ehnbom 2011, fig. 12), the Museum Rietberg, Zurich (*ibid.*, fig. 10), the San Diego Museum of Art (Binney and Archer 1968, no. 1c, also Goswamy and Smith 2005, no. 11) and the Philadelphia Museum of Art (Kramrisch 1986, no. 5).



Folio from the 'Berlin' *Ragamala*
Rajasthan or Agra, 1605–06
Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper
Folio: 20.8 × 15.3 cm
Miniature: 16.7 × 11.5 cm; within black and gold margins and a plain yellow border
Inscribed above in Sanskrit in Devanagari with the relevant verse from an early but anonymous *Ragamala* ending 13 *Hindola ragini* and with a later inscription on the side *Hindola*

Provenance
Private collection, USA

Published
Habighorst 2006, fig. 8

The verse above the painting reads:

Enjoying frolicsome delight on a swing gently pushed by fair-hipped maidens, he is called by the great sages *Hindola raga*, small, with complexion bright as that of the pigeon (translation quoted in Ebeling 1973, p. 122).

Hindola (meaning 'swing') *raga* is imagined here following the text as a prince seated at ease on a swing with ladies holding the ropes and gently swinging him. The prince is wearing a violet *jama* decorated with cruciform motifs in staggered rows, blue *paijama* and a white turban. He is making a gesture signifying his approval to the lady on his right as she uses one of her hands not to swing him but to grasp his wrist. The two have fixed eyes on each other. She is wearing a yellow skirt and an indigo blue bodice with a diaphanous *orhni*, while her fellow swing-pusher wears a grey-blue skirt decorated with rows of circles and an ochre bodice with diaphanous *orhni* and carries a handbag on a strap over her shoulder. Both ladies have hair arranged in a plait down past their knees, ending in a pompom, a feature that occurs also at the waist, wrists and shoulders.

The wooden swing is hanging from a frame enclosing a red ground, in common with earlier painted representations of divine or important personages here transferred to the prince, who bears a passing resemblance to Prince Salim at this time, Akbar's son and heir. Outside the frame of the swing the ground is coloured *eau-de-nil*, while in the strip of deep blue sky above two cranes with greatly extended legs and beak are flying through the rain which falls against the ground but not within the red. The *ragamala* is dispersed. Four of its folios are in the Berlin Museum für Asiatische Kunst, hence the

name given to the series, with one of its pages dated Samvat 1662 / 1605–06 (Waldschmidt 1975, pp. 427–31). Four more pages are in the Kronos collection and the Metropolitan Museum, New York (McInerney 2016, nos 7–10).

The style is one which shows traditional Rajput painters adjusting their compositions and manner of representation in getting to grips with Mughal naturalism. Thus, the composition has a single focus and the figures and swing have a certain presence that suggests their reality, in line with Mughal ideas, but there is no attempt yet to indicate recession or space in line with Rajput traditional concepts and conventions such as faces in strict profile, uniform background colours, red backgrounds for important or divine figures and so on. The female form combines both the traditional representation of women in the Early Rajput style and also the way Hindu women were painted in the Mughal studio. The style is one practised by artists trained in the Mughal studio but who left it, perhaps in Jahangir's downsizing of the numbers in the studio on his accession in 1605, and earned their livings either in the Mughal capital of Agra working for Rajput clients or else in certain Rajput courts such as Bikaner, where there is some evidence of the style taking root. A widely dispersed *Bhagavata Purana* in this style formerly in the Bikaner collections is thought to have come from there (Topsfield ed. 2004, nos 56–58 and references; McInerney 2016, nos 11 & 12). The style is also called Popular Mughal but is often confused with a related style called Sub-imperial Mughal, which is a term that should be confined to works done in simplified versions of the Mughal style for Muslim patrons other than the emperors and princes (thoroughly surveyed in Seyller 1999).



Folio from a *Rasikapriya* series

Mewar, c. 1660

Opaque pigments and gold on paper

Folio: 29.2 × 22 cm

Painting: 22.5 × 19.3 cm, within a yellow margin and red border

Inscribed above with a Hindi verse from the *Rasikapriya* of Keshav Das, V.30, and the heading *niscaraka* ... ('going out by night') and on the reverse with a Bikaner inventory note from the 1694 inventory: *Am.32 jam. ...* [damage] *su sambhaliya* ('no. 32 ... bundle') and the stamp of the personal collection of the Maharaja of Bikaner

Provenance

Bikaner royal collection

Private collection, USA

Published

Bautze 2000–01, fig. 8

Dehejia 2008, p. 195

Habighorst 2014, no. 10

A storm is brewing in the darkening sky above Braj and streaks of lightning flash in the rolling clouds and strike the ground. Raindrops are falling as the cranes rush to take shelter in the trees. The cowherd boys and girls have taken their charges back to the cow-pen in the village and are now guided to their houses by Nanda and another villager. Krishna is there too and his favourite *gopi* Radha is just in front of him, but they both seize the opportunity to escape and be with each other. We see them again after they have moved to the shelter of a grove where Krishna ardently embraces her, ignoring the falling rain. As is normal in Mewar painting, all the brightly coloured figures and trees are silhouetted against a fairly plain green ground, on which the well-worn paths leading from the cow-pen and indeed through the grove stand out.

The page illustrates *Rasikapriya* V.30, *Nisimilan* ('meeting in darkness'), from chapter 5 on the subject of how lovers meet:

One day a group of *gopis* and *gopas* went to Gokul, and when it was time to return, it became late in the night and everyone hurried to their home.

Dark clouds formed in the sky, and it was so dark that one could identify another only by calling their names.

Krishna took Radha aside and engaged in love sports with her (translation Harsha Dehejia, 2013, p. 195).

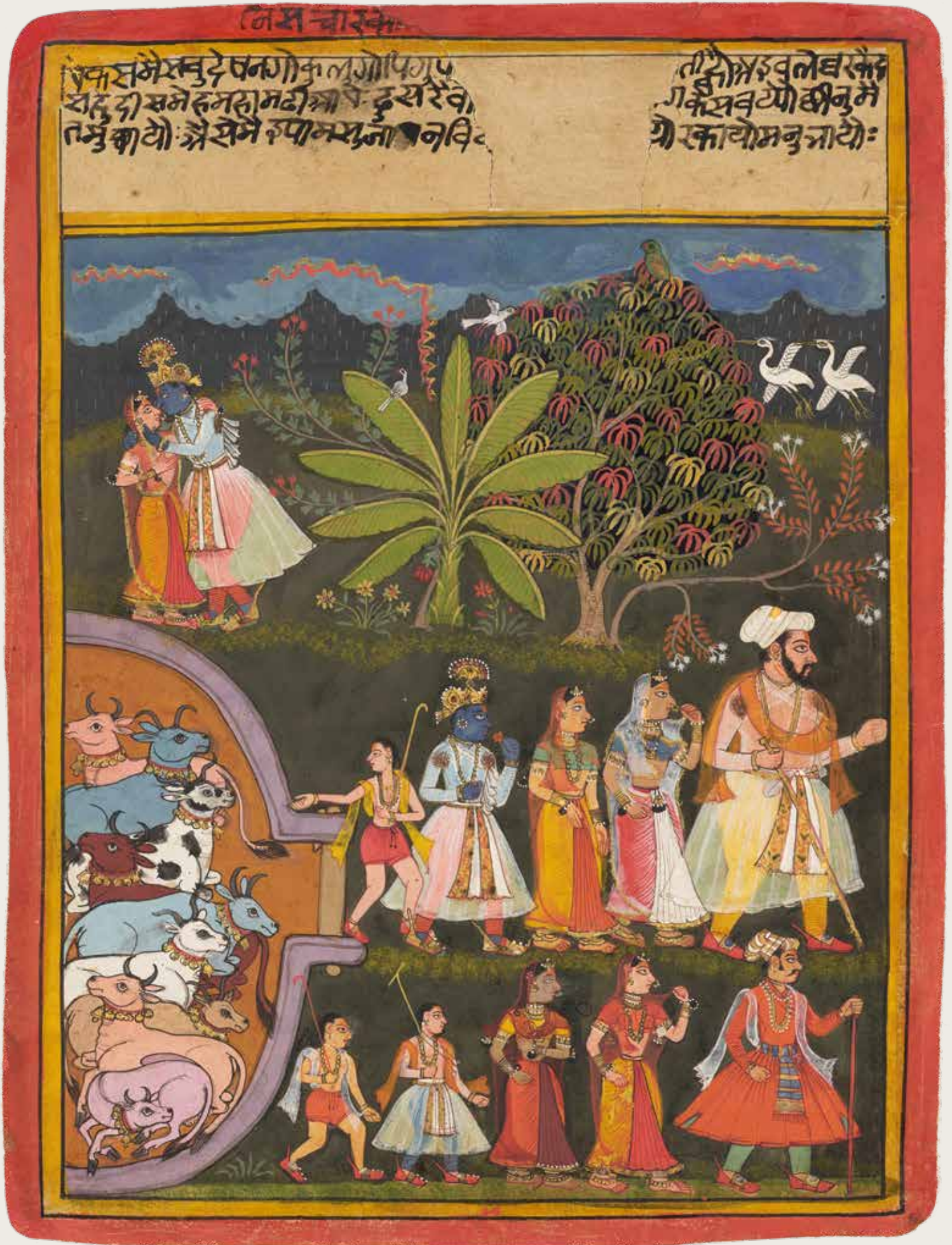
This series of the *Rasikapriya* dates from early in the reign of Rana Raj Singh (r. 1652–80); 54 pages from it were in the former Bikaner royal collection by 1694 (Topsfield 2002, pp. 91–92, and p. 103, nn. 41 & 42). Many of the Bikaner pages have large chunks missing from the top where the pile of folios must have been damaged, since replaced with plain local

paper, as in our example. The series is largely based on the earlier ones done in the reign of Rana Jagat Singh (r. 1628–52) by Sahib Din (much of one of which was also in the Bikaner collection). Several different hands of various abilities would seem to have been involved in this new series.

An earlier version of our subject by Sahib Din from the 1630–35 set in the Government Museum, Udaipur, shows almost the same composition: the second man and one of the *gopis* have exchanged places, while there is a smaller cow-pen and number of cows, and just the one boy ends the lower line of figures instead of our two, one behind each line (Desai 1995, fig. 12). In the earlier version, although a storm is brewing there is as yet no rain, and Krishna is showing his erotic intentions by putting his hand on Radha's breast rather than embracing. Our painting from the c. 1660 series closely follows the second version attributed to Sahib Din and his workshop from 1640–50 in the Goenka collection (*ibid.*, fig. 14), differing only in the trees in the landscape. Both now show two young boys, for behind Krishna there is an additional one who turns round to bid goodnight as it were to the cows.

Many pages from our series are now in the National Museum, New Delhi, the Neotia collection and the Goenka collection (Topsfield 2002, pp. 90–91, and p. 103, n. 41; Sharma ed. 2006, nos 80–84; Goswamy and Bhatia 1999, nos 102 & 103). Seven pages were formerly in the Khajanchi collection in Bikaner (Khandalavala et al. 1960, nos 24a–g, figs 32 & 33). A page formerly in the Stuart Cary Welch collection was sold at Sotheby's London, 12 December 1972, lot 87, while another page was illustrated in the Sam Fogg catalogue (Fogg 1999, cat. 41).

A Bikaner painting illustrating the same verse also from the Habighorst collection (Losty 2018, no. 41), obviously influenced by its Mewar predecessors already



in the royal collection, allows us to compare the different artists' approaches. It is evident that the Bikaner version attributed to Nuruddin is based on the earlier Mewar versions in its composition, but he has chosen to leave out the cow-pen so that the cows are just following the group of cowherds and cowgirls home across a hillside, while it is getting dark, owing to evening falling and not to a storm. Radha and Krishna are placed where they are in the Mewar versions and the artist follows our version in having the couple ardently embrace, rather than Sahib Din's more sedate pair.



4 DHANASRI RAGINI

Page from the 'Berlin' *Ragamala*
Bundi, c. 1670
Opaque pigments and gold on paper
Folio: 30.2 × 24.4 cm
Painting: 20 × 11.1 cm, within a narrow gold margin and wide red border covered with silver arabesques
Inscribed in a yellow panel above in Devanagari *Dhanasari ragan* 15 3 ('Dhanasri *ragini* no. 3 [in *Hindola*'s group] and no. 15 [in the whole set]')

Provenance
William K. Ehrenfeld collection

Published
Ehnbom 1985, no. 58
Bautze 1991, no. 30

Exhibited
Zurich, 2011
Hamburg, 2013

Dhanasri *ragini* verses describe the *virahini nayika*, the lady pining for her absent lover or husband, and usually in the Rajasthani tradition the iconography shows a dark-skinned lady drawing his portrait, in the belief that this will conjure up his presence. Our painting shows a lady seated in the classic position for an artist, one knee raised for the *takht* (drawing board) to rest against, her right hand wielding the brush that is painting her beloved, her left firmly holding the *takht* by its handle, while her eyes concentrate fiercely on her task. Her companion sits beside her holding a little cup of paint. The pair sit on a rug on a terrace outside a pavilion in the classic Bundi architectural style, domed and with two *chattris*, arranged with a bed (for the returning lover). Beyond the garden wall we see trees and the sky with rolling, curling white clouds, suggestive of the oncoming monsoon when lovers are meant to return home.

The leaf comes from the so-called Berlin Bundi *Ragamala*, named after folios in the Staatliche Museen, Berlin (four folios are published in Waldschmidt 1975). The series is widely dispersed and has been reconstructed by Joachim Bautze (1991, pp. 86–94), with a list of known folios and an analysis of the six variant silver arabesque floral borders found in the set. Other published folios are in the Goenka collection (Goswamy and Bhatia 1999, nos 127 & 128), the Horst Metzger collection now in the Museum Rietberg (Bautze 1991, nos 29 & 30), and the Mittal collection in Hyderabad (catalogue: Seyller ed. 2015, nos 39–42). In the Mittal catalogue Milo Beach has catalogued them as Kota, c. 1660, seeing them as the exuberant work of a recently formed Kota atelier under Rao Jagat Singh (r. 1658–83), breaking away from their more conservative colleagues left in Bundi. Certainly, their energy and

exuberance differentiates them from the more sober and meticulous Bundi artist of cat. 5 in this catalogue, but the series could equally well have been done in Bundi before the artist migrated to a less conservative studio in Kota. Another Dhanasri *ragini* from a slightly later Bundi *Ragamala* c. 1690 is identical in composition but the figures are slightly flatter and there are no swirling clouds (Bautze 1991, no. 32).

The composition, as always with Bundi and Kota *ragamalas*, is based on the Bundi 'Arch-*Ragamala*' done at Chunar in 1591 under Mughal influence and shows later artists' continuing preoccupation with the three-dimensional architecture found there. The Dhanasri *ragini* from that set is not yet known, but our version's dependence on an earlier composition is suggested by our portrayed *nayaka* wearing a *chakdar* or four-pointed *jama* from c. 1600. The elaborate marginal decoration would also seem a reflection of the Mughal-inspired marginal decoration on some of the Chunar *Ragamala* folios, but this was not an idea much favoured by later artists. The whole composition of this set is extremely rich as reflected not only in the silver decoration, but in the lavish use of gold and the rich textiles.

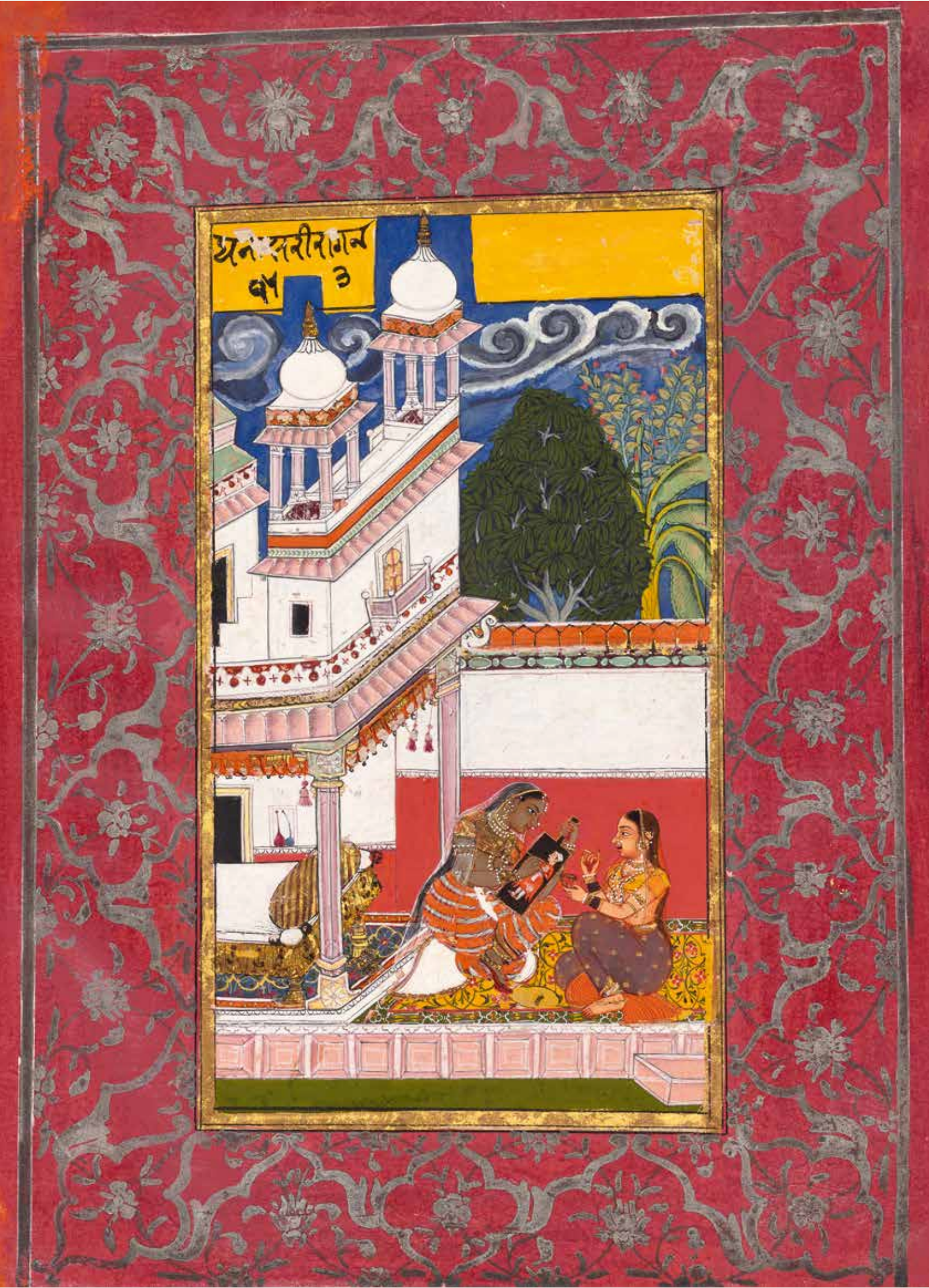


Illustration to Keshav Das’s *Rasikapriya*
Bundi, c. 1680
Opaque pigments and gold on paper
Folio: 37.7 × 24.1 cm
Painting: 29.9 × 16.9 cm, within a gold margin and a red border with black and white rules
Inscribed above in a yellow panel in Devanagari with the Hindi text of a verse from Keshav Das’s *Rasikapriya* I, 26, numbered 8, with *prathama* 8 in the border, indicating v. 8 in the first chapter

Provenance
Private collection, USA
Sotheby’s New York, 28 October 1991, lot 26

Published
Habighorst et al. 2007, fig. 19
Habighorst 2011, fig. 35
Dehejia 2013, p. 133
Habighorst 2014, no. 21

Exhibited
Hamburg, 2013
Koblenz, 2014

A *nayaka* trying to conceal his love (*prachanna vijoga sringara*) exhibits all sorts of strange signs, which is when the *sakhi*, perhaps sent by a concerned Radha, asks him:

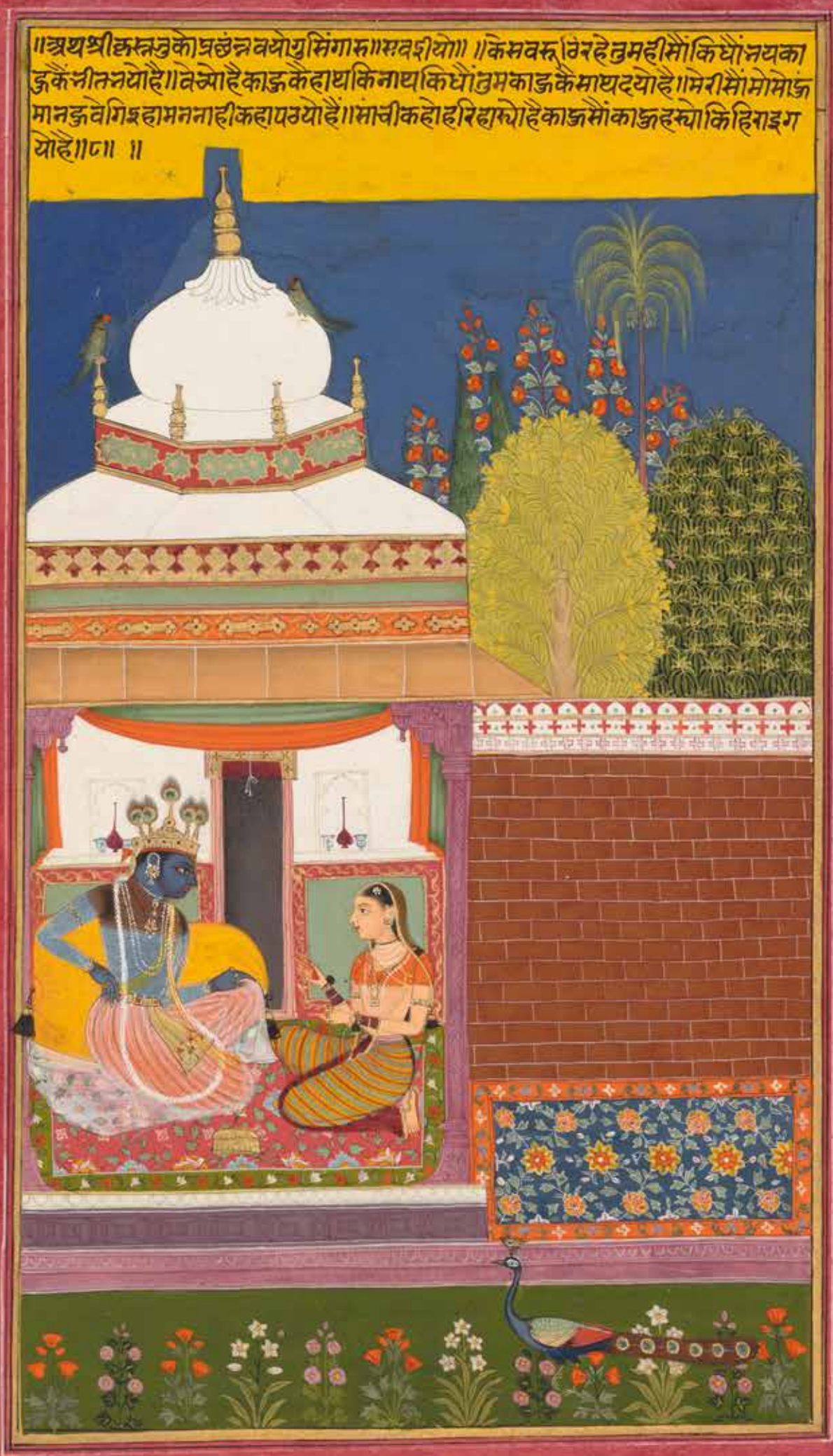
Krishna, tell me, has your mind taken offence to you or has someone frightened it away? Or have you sold it or lent it to someone? I implore you, please tell me where you have sent your mind away? Please be frank and tell me if your mind has been affected by anyone? Or has someone stolen it? Or has it been lost somewhere? (translation Harsha Dehejia, 2013, p. 133)

In the verandah of a typically Bundi pavilion with a domed roof on top of an octagonal drum, Krishna sits looking dejected, one hand on his knee, the other on his hip, wondering what to say to this concerned friend of Radha’s, when he is trying to keep hidden his burgeoning love for her friend. She sits in front of him with the index finger of both her hands extended, perhaps counting the various ways Krishna’s mind seems distracted. The pavilion, rather unusually for a Bundi painting, is viewed just in elevation, with only the drum of the dome viewed in perspective. The bejewelled Krishna is wearing a crown with peacock feather finials and a long diaphanous *jama* over his salmon pink *paijama*; the artist enjoys recording the effects of seeing through it to his blue body, his pink *paijama* and the green and pink rug on which they are both sitting. The *sakhi* is more soberly dressed, but her skirt of alternating stripes of yellow, purple and green and purple diaphanous *orhni* is striking. The terrace beside the pavilion is covered with a rather lovely rug, patterned with orange flowers on an indigo blue ground, and in front of both pavilion and terrace is a

parterre of flowers depicted in a line rather in the manner of a Mughal album border, amidst which a peacock is strutting. Behind the wall at the back of the terrace are some beautiful trees and tall spikes of flowers, the whole topped by a coconut palm. Two parakeets sit atop the dome.

Joachim Bautze has attempted a reconstruction of this large and widely dispersed set (1991, pp. 140–43), with references to the then-known pages and their whereabouts. The majority of the known pages are in the National Museum, New Delhi, with another fourteen in the Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi. Individual pages are in museums in Cincinnati, Cleveland, Seattle, New York, Madison, Los Angeles, Boston, Zurich, Gwalior and Ahmadabad, and in a small number of private collections in India and the USA. For some of the published pages, see Archer 1959, figs 13–15; Bautze 1991, nos 53 & 54; Sodhi 1999, pls 50, 54–60. All the paintings of this fine set are meticulously drawn and coloured with figures and architectural parts somewhat smaller than in other 17th-century Bundi paintings, allowing a much greater variety of composition and the inclusion of many beautiful decorative details.

प्रथम
८



Bangali ragini of Pancham *raga*
Kota, c. 1700–20
Opaque pigments and gold on paper
Folio: 32 × 24.5 cm
Painting: 20.2 × 11.4 cm, within black and gold margins and a wide red border
Inscribed above in Devanagari in the yellow panel: 30.
Pancama ki ragani. Bangala ragani. Gayai ghara do yada napa chaluasu ('30. Bangala *ragini* of Pancam *raga*. To be sung when two *gharis* [a *ghari* is about 24 minutes] of the [unclear] ... have passed); and above in the border: *Bheru ki ragini Bangali* ('Bangali *ragini* of Bhairo')

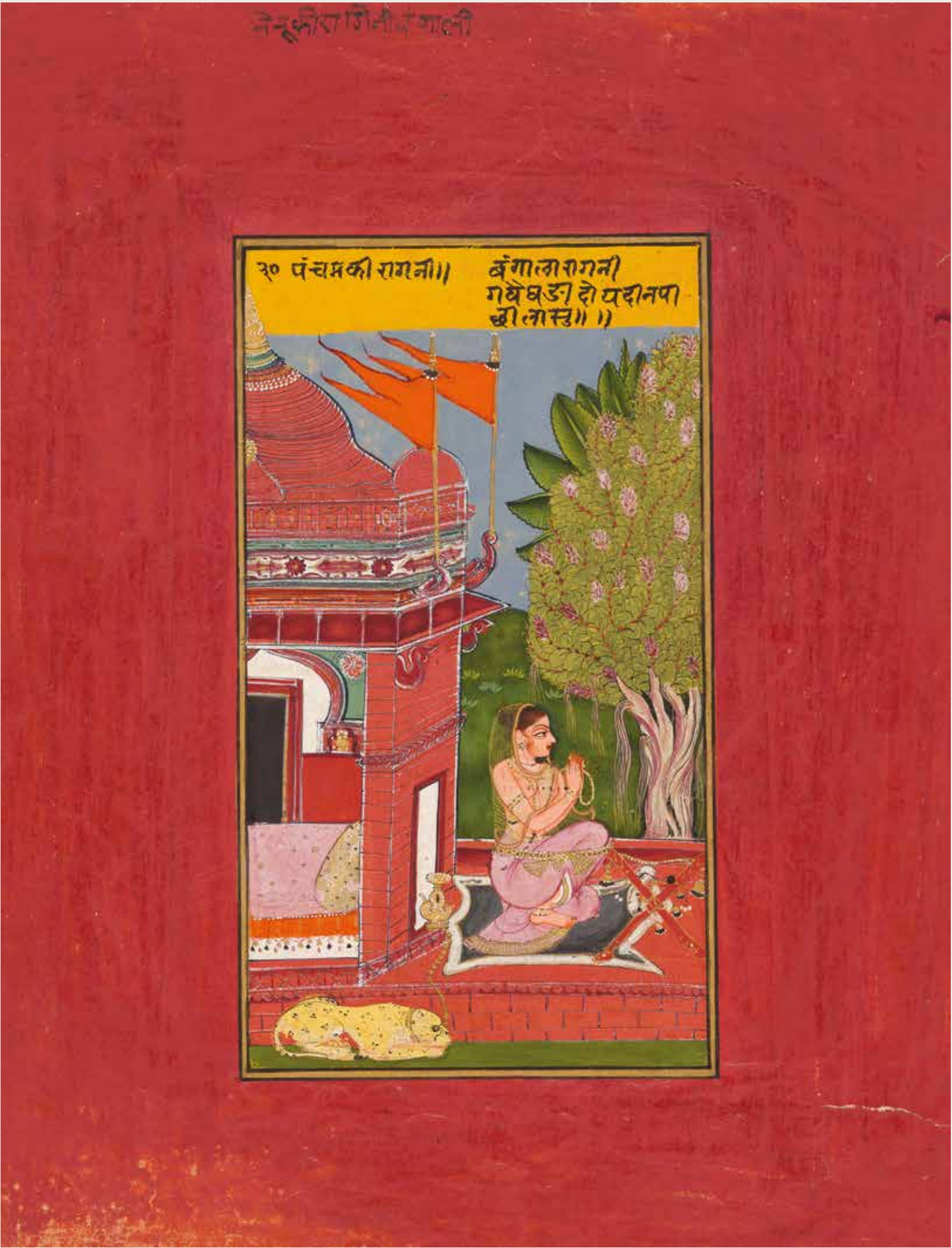
Provenance
Jagdish Mittal, Hyderabad
Horst Metzger, before 1993

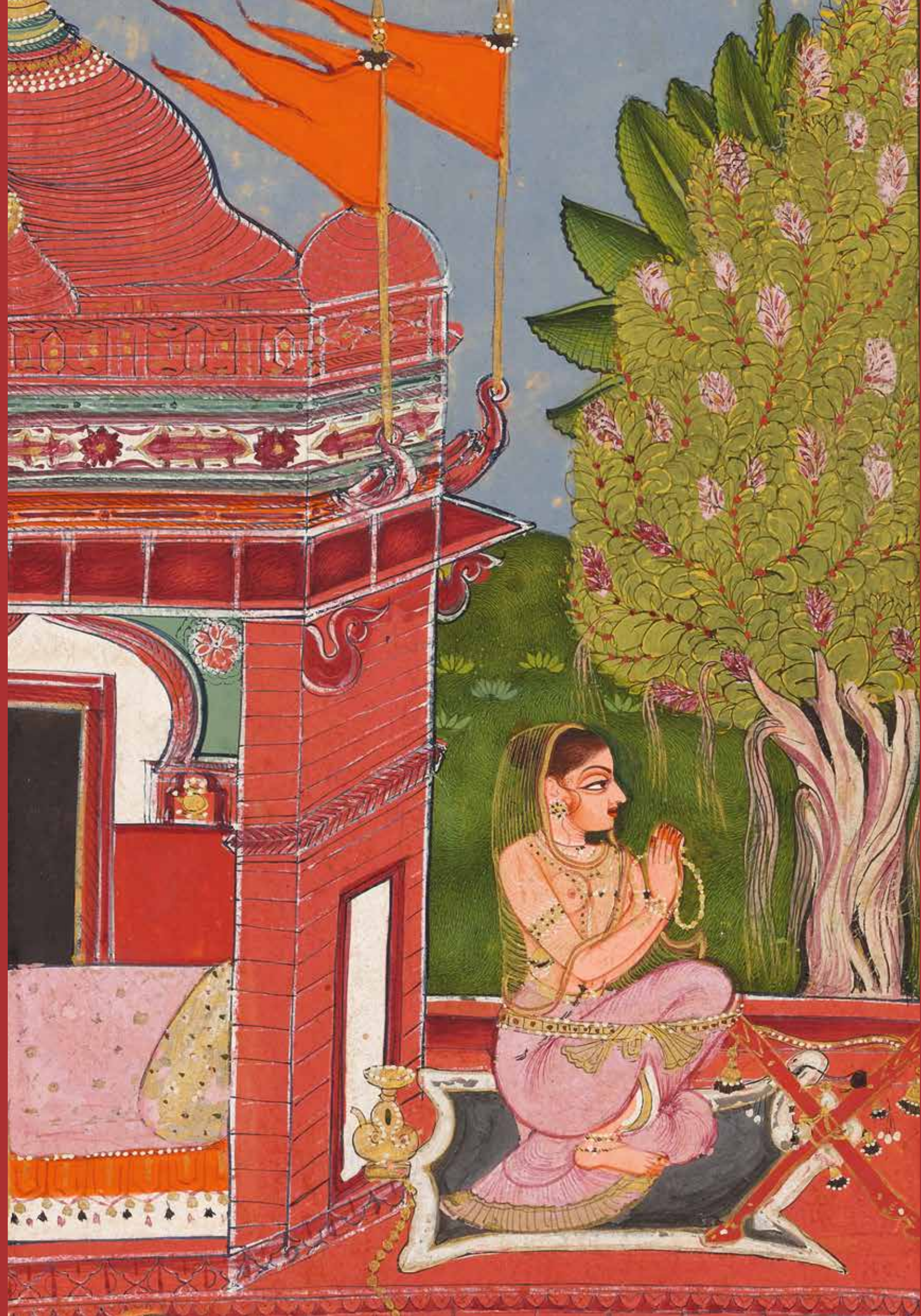
Published
Habighorst 2011, fig. 70

Exhibited
Hamburg, 2013

Bangali ragini is usually denoted by a woman whose husband or beloved has gone away; to wait for his return she adopts the trappings of an ascetic existence. She is often accompanied by a tame cheetah. Outside a domed red pavilion, of the type that often does duty for a temple in *ragamala* imagery but here is obviously lived in since it has a bed inside it, the *ragini* sits in prayer on her antelope skin, her hands raised together and holding a rosary. A *yogapatta* is tied round her knees to keep them in position. The folds of her pink *dhoti* fall gracefully around her. Her upper body is bare save for a diaphanous *orhni* wrapped round it and over her hair, which is arranged in a tight chignon. In front of her is a small stool-like object with an X-frame and cloth top, which in a Jain context is known as a *sthapanacarya*, a substitute for the absence of the guru, and probably has the same function here. It is decorated with various pompoms and tassels. The little temple of red stone has curled corbels supporting its heavy *chajja*, and projecting beam ends with *makara* finials carrying orange flags in the 16th-century manner, supporting a central dome with subsidiary domes around it. In front of the terrace on which are the temple and the woman there crouches a tame leopard, a chain around its neck. Behind the terrace rises a flowering many-trunked banyan tree, with aerial roots descending from the branches, and behind it a large plantain, in front of a green hillside and plain blue sky. The page comes from a complete set seen originally in London in 1943–45 by Alan H. Colquoun and described originally in Ebeling (1973, p. 185) as Bundi/Kota, c. 1700, who then knew of nineteen folios. One is in the Chhatrapati Shivaji Museum in Mumbai, a few others in private collections, but most were in the Jagdish Mittal collection in Hyderabad. Like all Bundi and Kota *ragamala* sets, its iconography is determined by the Bundi Arch-

Ragamala, as first defined in the Chunar Bundi *Ragamala* of 1591, in which a concern for rendering architectural forms in three dimensions first appears that is clearly based on Mughal influence. Joachim Bautze describes a page from this set in the Horst Metzger collection as from Bundi c. 1680 (1991, no. 33, now in the Museum Rietberg), with other pages in the Achenbach Foundation in the Fine Arts Museum, San Francisco, the Vollmer collection in Freiburg, the National Museum, New Delhi, and the Jagdish Mittal collection. The composition and iconography of the Bangali *ragini* in the Bundi 'Kanoria' *ragamala* from c. 1680, one of the earliest to show the *ragini* as a female rather than a male ascetic, is very close to our version (Dahmen-Dallapiccola 1975, fig. 30.18). The *ragini* in the Metzger page seems clearly to be from Bundi in the 17th century, but the *ragini* in our page seems to have moved on a little, with the protagonist being fuller of body with more emphatic shading as well as being more svelte in outline. In the recent catalogue of the Mittal Museum, Milo Beach prefers to date the only page from this series published there to a later date c. 1720 and from Kota (Seyller ed. 2015, p. 119), and remarks on the way that various *raginis* in the set are defined by female figures rather than the more usual males, suggesting that the set might have been commissioned by a female member of the Kota court. In our fine example from this later period, we note Kota features such as the more dramatic shading of the female form, the distinctive eye, sharp nose and high arched eyebrow. It seems probable that the set was worked on by artists from both Bundi and Kota at different dates.





7 A MUGHAL PRINCE IN HIS ZENANA

Kota, c. 1675
Opaque pigments and gold on paper
Folio: 25.9 × 19.1 cm
On the reverse is the stamped impression of the seal of Raj Singh Rathor, servant of 'Alamgir, 1701/02

Provenance
Private collection, USA
Sotheby's New York, 17 June 1993, lot 181

Published
Beach 1974, fig. 70
Habighorst 2011, fig. 1

Exhibited
Zurich, 1997–98
Hamburg, 2013
Zurich, 2016

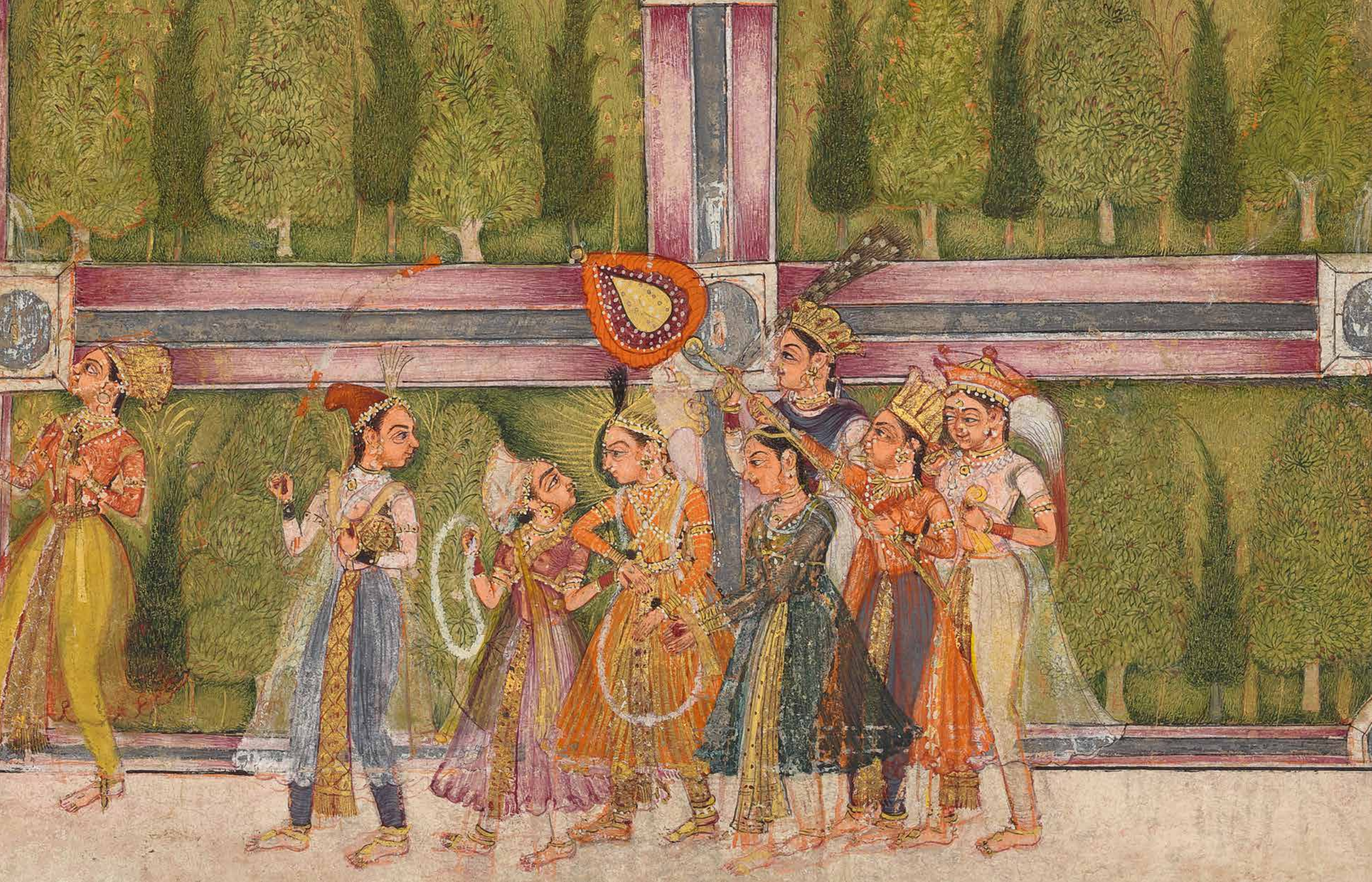
The scene is set in the courtyard garden of the *zenana* of a palace. A ruler and his favourite are enthroned in the verandah under a parasol and attended on by the women of the *zenana*. Two musicians are playing the *vina* and another from her attitude appears to be singing. The ruler and his favourite are both depicted again in the verandah walking towards another woman standing before them. In the courtyard is a pool with a fountain with an orange rug on either side of it and then a *char bagh* garden divided into four by channels of water and with further fountains at the corners and crossing point. The garden is filled with cypresses and flowering trees. In the foreground of the picture the favourite is seen again, walking with other women and linking arms with a smaller woman, perhaps her sister. The verandah and its architrave is supported by baluster columns that seem based on the actual architecture of a palace. Above the architrave is the wall of the *zenana* with a row of small windows and a central little balcony.

The ruler, when standing, is depicted nimbate as is the woman beside him, which suggests that she must be his wife. She is depicted nimbate again when walking with the other women and has her own fan bearer. He is bearded and wears his *jama* tied to the right, in the Mughal fashion, which suggests that the Kota artist is imagining a scene in a Mughal *zenana*. The architectural framework at the top of the painting is similar to that in a painting in the Kanoria collection showing Rao Jagat Singh of Kota (r. 1658–83) in his *zenana* (Beach 1974, fig. 68). That view is a close-up of Jagat Singh in the verandah of a courtyard framed by two solidly square pillars. Our artist too has changed the solid pillars of the Kanoria picture to the baluster columns found in Shahjahani palace architecture.

The artist is applying his experience of a courtyard in the Kota palace to his imaginary scene of the Mughal *zenana*.

On the reverse of the painting is the seal of Raj Singh Rathor, dated the equivalent to 1701. Beach notes that this person has been identified by Kumar Sangram Singh as Raj Singh, grandson of Mota Raja Udai Singh of Jodhpur, and founder of the little state of Junia near Ajmer (1974, p. 32, n. 79).





This double-sided folio is from a royal album that was assembled in Jaipur in the later 18th century. The individual folios in the album for the most part have on one side early 18th-century Kota paintings, concerned mostly with Krishna, and on the other later Jaipur paintings, both with decorative borders in the Jaipur style. The reasons for the Jaipur connection are not known at present. Our folio has the early 18th-century Kota painting on one side, but unusually has an earlier Kota painting on the other.

8r THE HEROIC DEEDS OF KRISHNA IN MATHURA

Kota, c. 1720–30
Opaque pigments and gold on paper
Folio: 30.8 × 21.1 cm
Painting: 28 × 20.2 cm, within a gold margin and a brown border with gold foliate scroll

For additional pages from this Kota–Jaipur album, see Beach 2011 (figs 14, 15, 17, 18 and references). Most of the known paintings in this album concern Krishna or Rama, and Beach points out (p. 472) the importance of this religious expression at a time when Rao Bhim Singh of Kota had brought to Kota from Nathdwara an image of Krishna as Brijnathji and declared in 1719 that the god was the ruler of the state and that he was just his *diwan* or minister.

Published
Habighorst 2014, no. 9

Exhibited
Zurich, 1997–98
Koblenz, 2014

The recto shows three of Krishna’s heroic deeds from the time when he went to Mathura finally to confront King Kamsa. In the first, on their way to Mathura, Krishna and Balarama saw a hunchbacked maidservant with a tray of unguents also on her way to the city and after talking with her Krishna was able to straighten her back (*Bhagavata Purana* X, 42, 1–12). Then, as Krishna went to the wrestling ground, he was confronted by the enormous elephant Kuvalayapida and its keeper who would not let him pass. Krishna was able to overcome the elephant and yank out one of its tusks, with which he killed the elephant and its riders (*ibid.*, X, 43, 1–14). Kamsa, being increasingly afraid, then pitted his champion wrestlers Chanura and Mustika against the two boys and after sparring with them for a while, Krishna whirled Chanura round in the air and threw him to the ground so hard that he died, while Balarama struck Mustika such a blow on the chest that he fell dead with blood coming from his mouth (*ibid.*, X, 44, 1–30).

Our artist vividly illustrates these moments. With furious energy Krishna has forced the elephant down so that blood oozes from its mouth and with one foot keeps it pinned to the ground. He has pulled out both its tusks, one of which with great force he slams into the mahout’s chest forcing blood from his mouth, as the poor man is pushed backwards apparently hooking his fellow rider with his *ankus*. The two wrestlers lie dead with staring eyes, one prostrate with blood coming from his mouth and ears, the other apparently prostrate but with his

head twisted round unnaturally with blood oozing from his ears. The earlier episode with the hunchback is illustrated above, as bowed before Krishna she offers him a tray of flowers and garlands, one of which he picks up and admires. He also holds the elephant tusk which he should not of course have at this stage. She is eyeing him up lasciviously as she does in the text, after she has been straightened, and he laughingly tells her that he is rather busy at the moment. A man runs past her into the palace, but must be connected with the later episodes below, going to tell his master of the disasters. The artist shows Kamsa, looking out at these events from the *jharokha* of his palace, with a rather grim expression on his face. In both Krishna’s appearances on this page he has a half halo in white and with a gold rim of rays.

All this is relayed with vivid clarity and energy in bright colours, orange and yellow being prominent, but also with considerable subtlety. Great attention is paid to hands and to eyes in their deep sockets with prominent eyelashes and to the modelling of such details. Krishna is serene throughout of course, but the artist pauses in his haste for painterly effects such as changes in the colours of clothes beneath his diaphanous *jama* and to record the swinging movement of his various ornaments in his vigorous actions. The white *jama* over his red *paijama* below produces an orange effect, as if the *jama* were yellow, while his actual yellow *jama* above results in orange *paijama* and a greenish tinge to his blue body.





Kota, c. 1680
Opaque pigments and gold on paper
Folio: 30.8 × 21.1 cm
Painting: 28.2 × 20.2 cm, within a gold margin and a maroon border with a gold trefoil scroll

On the verso of the folio is an earlier Kota painting depicting an elegant adolescent Krishna, contriving to dance at the same time as he is playing his flute. He is standing on a little *chauki* with one foot raised out of its sandal as his yellow *dhoti* and garlands swing to reflect his movements. A crown with peacock feather finials is upon his head. Two *gopis* beside him have to reach up and lean in to him as one waves a chowrie and the other sprinkles him with flowers from a dish. He is without any halo but stands against the by-this-time archaic solid red background seen in earlier paintings of divinities and important personages (see cat. 2). Two peacocks and a cow and its calf gaze up at him reverently from beside the pool at his feet.

Krishna and the *gopis* are framed by a plantain and a central blossoming tree, while this tree and another plantain frame the standing figure of Rao Madho Singh of Kota (r. 1631–48), the first ruler of the divided Hara state after the separation of Kota from Bundi. A stout figure with thin moustache, long sideburns and a single curl before the ear, he has bared his feet and raises his hands reverently towards the figure of Krishna, who has locked his eyes on him. His diaphanous *jama* spreads out gracefully in folds over his red *paijama*. Another version of our painting is in the British Museum, almost identical in composition, save that Krishna has four arms, the other two showing him in dance posture (Ahluwalia 2008, fig. 39). Krishna and the *gopis* in our picture appear much as they do in a contemporary painting of Krishna portrayed as Vasanta *raga* in the Fort Museum in Kota (Welch 1997, no. 10). This again has a composition of three trees used as framing devices and a solid red ground behind the similarly crowned Krishna.



9 MAHARANA AMAR SINGH OF MEWAR RIDING WITH MAHARAJA AJIT SINGH OF JODHPUR AND MAHARAJA SAWAI JAI SINGH OF AMBER, ALONG WITH DURGADAS RATHOR

Udaipur, by Tasahi, c. 1715–20
Opaque pigments and gold on paper
Folio: 25.4 × 40.7 cm
Painting: 22.5 × 39.5 cm, within a gold margin and a red surround with black rules
Inscribed above in Devanagari: *ovi cit* (unclear) and on the verso with 16 lines of Rajasthani by Laksman Pancholi with the details of the occasion, the names of the participants and its date of *Samvat 1764, Jyestha badi 5* (2 May 1708), Mewar inventory number (5/11) and a value (*kimat*) of 120 rupees. The inscription ends: *likhatam pancholi laksman chitaro tasahi ro kam kare* (‘written by Pancholi Laksman, the work of the painter Tasahi’)

Provenance
Mewar royal collection
Swiss private collection before 1978
Francesca Galloway

Published
Bautze 1995, fig. 138
Aitken 2010, fig. 3.12
Habighorst et al. 2007, fig. 32

Exhibited
Zurich, 2002
Zurich, 2011
Hamburg, 2013

Three of the chief rulers of Rajasthan in the early 18th century are depicted riding together, Maharana Amar Singh II of Mewar (r. 1698–1710) in the centre, Maharaja Ajit Singh of Jodhpur (r. 1679–1724) to his right and Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II of Amber (r. 1688–1744) to his left. Slightly behind rides the elderly Rathor hero Durgadas (1637–1718), Ajit Singh’s former mentor and now a wise counsellor to the Maharana. Amar Singh, the only one of the rulers to be depicted nimbate and also smoking from a hookah, showing his (in the Mewar view) superior status to the other two rulers, turns to address Durgadas, who raises his hands up together in respect. All three chiefs have royal sunshades and chowries borne by their attendants, appropriately turbanned, but only Amar Singh has a golden parasol. Similarly, men follow the riders holding staffs of office and precede them holding more staffs of office, lances, wrapped swords, bows and arrows, etc., but whereas this group has three men wearing Jodhpuri turbans and another three with those of Amber, they are outnumbered by those with Mewari ones. The procession proceeds across a green ground rising to a vividly coloured sky and the only thing depicted apart from the figures is a *sivalingam* representing Eklingji, the tutelar deity of Mewar, enshrined in a temple to the north of Udaipur.

The occasion commemorated in this painting took place on 2 May 1708, when the three chiefs met to cement an alliance between them in the period of weakened Mughal authority following the death of Aurangzeb in the previous year. Mewar had stayed aloof from Mughal politics, but both Jodhpur and Amber supported the losers in the war of succession following Aurangzeb’s death, and the victor, now Bahadur Shah I, retaliated by depriving them of

their ancestral lands. This was a new and unwise development in Mughal–Rajput relations. Now the two rulers joined forces with Mewar in an anti-Mughal alliance, cemented by the Maharana marrying his daughter to Jai Singh, to whom Ajit Singh also gave a daughter in marriage, and the three launched a campaign that eventually led Jodhpur and Jaipur to regain their sequestered lands. Molly Aitken’s researches have revealed that a number of portraits of the rulers were exchanged on this occasion (Aitken 2004, and 2010, p. 139).

While Amar Singh is known to have grown a beard for the last three years of his reign, paintings show it to be a longer and more pointed affair than the one worn by the Maharana here, as in Amar Singh in the rose garden in Melbourne (Topsfield 2002, fig. 113) and swimming with his ladies in the rose garden, again in the Howard Hodgkin collection (Topsfield 2012, no. 98). Our Maharana with his shorter beard and more rounded head greatly resembles later portraits of Amar Singh’s son Sangram Singh II (r. 1710–34) around 1720 when his full moustache had met his beard (see cat. 10 and compare with Topsfield 2002, figs 130–32, for the development of Sangram Singh’s moustache, there dated c. 1712, c. 1715 and 1725–30). One wonders if the original Amar Singh period painting of this event was by his favourite ‘Stipple Master’ and thought in need of updating stylistically (see Glynn 2011). By this date, the Udaipur studio was more used to portraying the reigning Maharana and seems to have placed on his father’s features the current appearance of Sangram Singh. The well-written inscription on the verso is in the hand of Pancholi Laksman, who was a well-known scribe in the Sangram Singh period, but who had earlier written around 1690 the later portions of the



second *Suryavamsa*, the illustrated history of the Sisodiya dynasty up to Raj Singh's reign.

Our artist Tasahi, almost unknown otherwise, contributed a painting to the *Suryavamsa* series showing Raj Singh in durbar c. 1690 (Topsfield 2002, fig. 79), in a distinctly old-fashioned style, when compared to our rather lively and finely painted scene, but perhaps at that time he was just young. A copy of this painting with identificatory inscription above and a copy of our inscription dated 1867 on the reverse is in the National Gallery of Victoria (Topsfield 1980, no. 59; Aitken 2004, pl. 5), both showing the same features of Sangram Singh.

Another painting connected with these events is in the Mehrangarh Museum at Jodhpur, showing Amar Singh seated smoking a hookah and his new son-in-law Jai Singh seated facing him and showing his respects. Beside the Maharana stands his minister Biharidas Pancholi. The subject of the painting is mentioned in the Jaipur *suratkhana* records as among the gifts of paintings exchanged between the rulers on this occasion (Aitken 2010, p. 139). That painting has not yet surfaced, but a slightly later version of it was painted in Udaipur, this time actually with Amar Singh and not Sangram Singh, which found its way to Jodhpur (Jasol et al. 2018, no. 144).



10 MAHARANA SANGRAM SINGH CELEBRATING THE SPRING FESTIVAL WITH HIS NOBLES
IN THE ROSE GARDEN IN UDAIPUR

Udaipur, 1715–20
Opaque pigments and gold on paper
Folio: 51 × 89 cm
Painting: 46.5 × 85 cm, within a black margin and red border
Inscribed on the verso in Rajasthani with the details of the event

Provenance
Mewar royal collection
British Rail Pension Fund, before 1978
Sotheby's London, 26 April 1994, lot 23

Published
Cimino 1985, no. 70
Bautze 1995, fig. 129
Habighorst 2011, fig. 4
Topsfield 2002, fig. 141
Topsfield 2004, fig. 9, detail

Exhibited
Turin, 1985
Stuttgart, 1995
Zurich, 2002
Hamburg, 2013
Zurich, 2016

This large painting is one of the earliest of the *tamasha* paintings from Maharana Sangram Singh's reign (r. 1710–34). As Andrew Topsfield wrote in 2002 (p. 142): 'The themes of court life initiated under Amar Singh were assimilated by Sangram Singh's atelier to the mainstream Mewar style artists and developed to an unprecedented breadth of incidental and topographical detail. Hunts, processions and great *tamashas* were all depicted with extraordinary documentary zeal and in a style that was unimpeachably Mewari. This achievement set the course for Udaipur artists for the next two centuries.

Sangram Singh is with his nobles celebrating the new year Flower Festival in the Gulab Bari or Rose Garden at Udaipur. They all wear garlands of roses. We see him three times, first sitting under a baldachin and smoking from a hookah in a formal session with his principal *sardars* and his young son Jagat Singh (b. 1709), while a troupe of entertainers perform a story based on Radha and Krishna, accompanied by a drummer and two singers. In front of the Maharana is a garland of roses and a platter containing others is in front of the prince, no doubt for honouring the performers. At a discreet distance hidden within the rose bushes are three court musicians, who we know from the inscription on the verso are Kan playing the *rebab*, the singer Chand and Piro performing on the *dholak* drum. The Maharana then leaves and we see him proceeding to a less formal spot in the garden, where he is seen again seated with his hookah and a smaller number of *sardars* watching the performers continue their enactment of the story of Radha and Krishna, again with the court musicians at a discreet distance. The inscription on the reverse names all the *sardars* present on this occasion (listed by Andrew Topsfield in Cimino 1985, no. 70).

The Gulab Bari to the south-east of the City Palace was remodelled by Maharana Sajjan Singh (r. 1874–84) as the Sajjan Niwas garden, though it is popularly known as the Gulab Bagh where roses still grow in profusion. Our painting is in the burgeoning tradition of recording court occasions in great detail begun by Rana Amar Singh (r. 1698–1710), and no doubt was inspired by a large picture now in Melbourne of Amar Singh playing Holi in another rose garden (Topsfield 2002, fig. 113). The Gulab Bari in our picture is seen as a large garden enclosure walled on two sides with the central rose garden laid out on the pattern of a Mughal *char bagh*. Royal red *qanats* separate the rose enclosure from the rest of the garden and maintain some feeling of privacy for the Maharana. His usual accoutrements of *chowries*, *morchhals* and parasols wait near the entrance of the garden, and the horses and elephants that conveyed the party to the garden wait outside. The royal elephant Pitabar waits in an enclosure at the bottom of the picture. Just inside the entrance wall is a well with a Persian wheel apparatus for raising the water, but the means for distributing it round the garden is not indicated, unless it is the two women with water pots on their head in an adjacent courtyard. It is more likely though that they are getting the water for domestic purposes and bringing it to the houses of the gardeners around the little court.







Kishangarh, c. 1740
Opaque pigments and gold on paper
Folio: 35.3 × 25.9 cm
Painting: 28.9 × 20.2 cm, laid down on an album page within a blue margin with gold floral scroll and a pink border with a gold foliate scroll

Published
Bautze 1995, fig. 145
Habighorst 2011, fig. 18

Exhibited
Stuttgart, 1995
Hamburg, 2013

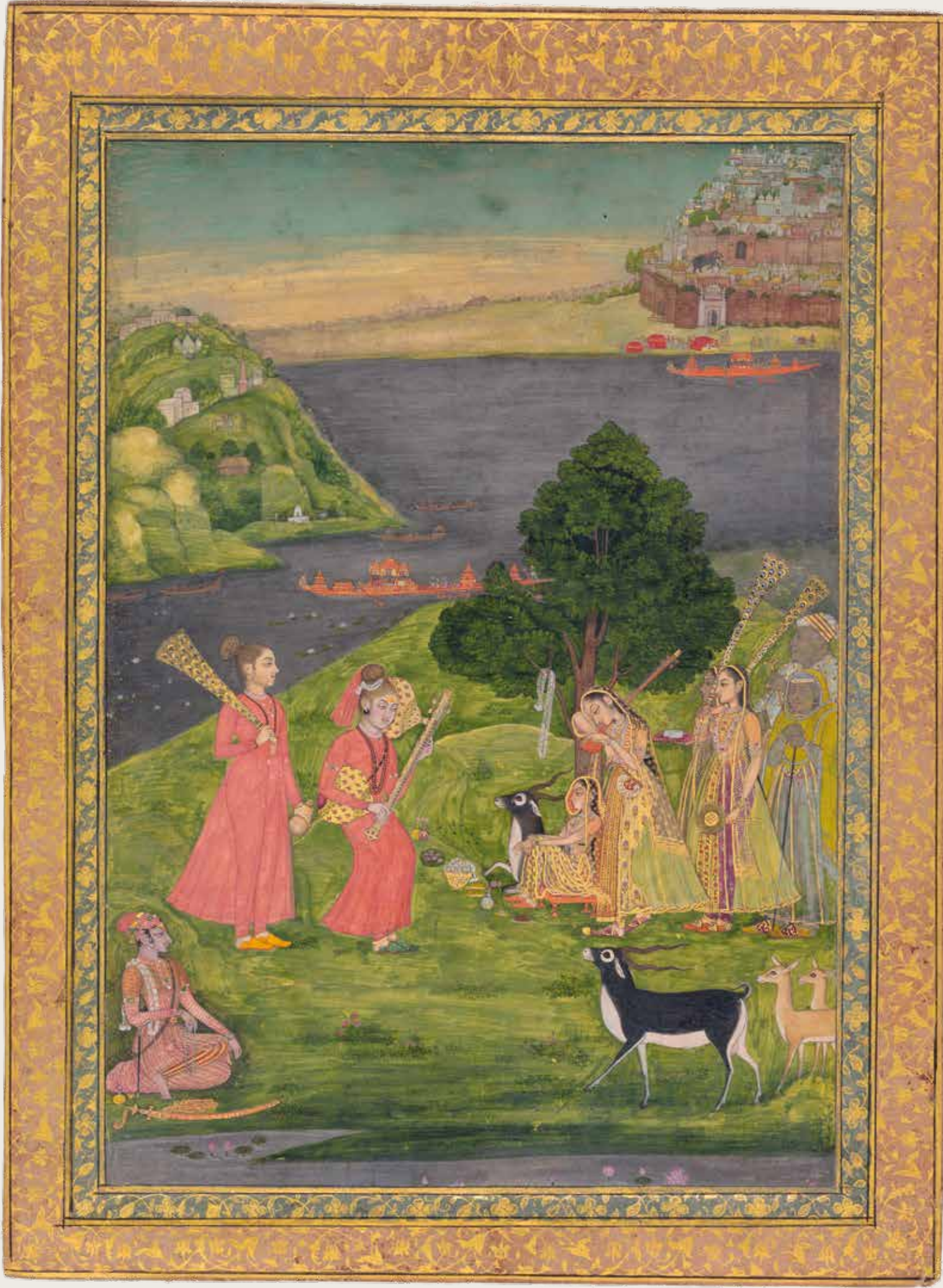
An informal concert is taking place in a landscape, where a *yogini* with piled up hair and wearing a long pink robe is playing a golden *vina* and swaying to the rhythms. A young female acolyte stands beside her carrying a *morchhal* and a flask. The principal listener sits on a little *chauki* under a tree facing her, intent on the music. She is royally dressed in brocade *paijama* and a beautiful diaphanous *orhni* allowing her many jewels to be seen. A blackbuck rests beside her. Fruit, wine and garlands are arrayed before her, while a garland for presenting to the musician hangs on the tree. The princess is accompanied by a young attendant holding a hand fan and a *tambura*, her arm crooked on a branch of the tree. She looks down dreamily on her mistress. Two other attendants stand behind with fans, *morchhals* and a tray, as well as an old woman and an elderly eunuch, the guardians of the *zenana* holding their staffs of office. The princess and her women wear most beautiful brocade *paijamas* with chequered flowers and with long brocade *patkas* hanging to the front, together with delicately patterned *orhnis*. The rhythmic patterning of the hems at the bottom of the folds in the garments is notable.

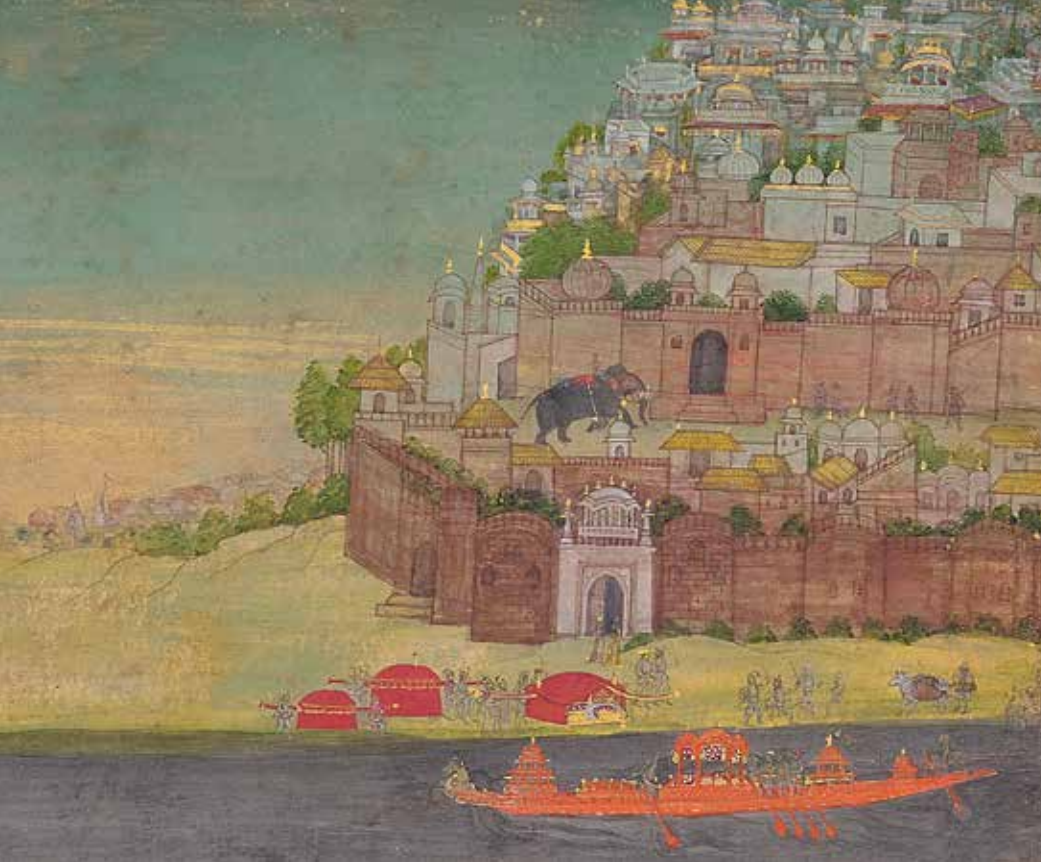
The position and appearance of the other listener who sits here removed in the corner by himself suggests that this is a royal concert, for despite his sharp features and leaf-shaped, upswept eyes and violet skin colour as if he were Nihal Chand's Krishna, this is in fact the god's devotee Raja Savant Singh of Kishangarh (1699–1764) as depicted in the guise of the god. He is wearing a long pink *jama* and a pink turban and is listening to the music completely at his ease, one leg crossed over the other and his left hand resting lightly on his knee while his right arm is supported by a fakir's crutch with a

jewelled handle. He tells his beads with a rosary made of pearls in his right hand. His sword in its scabbard rests beside him, the presence of which seems to be the mark for determining whether such figures are intended for Savant Singh or for Krishna himself (e.g. Dickinson and Khandalavala 1959, p. XII; Mathur 2000, fig. 8). A garland over his shoulder is for presenting to the musician. For Savant Singh's actual features, see Dickinson and Khandalavala 1959, pl. II, and Haidar 2011a, fig. 9b.

Another blackbuck and his does have come to listen to the music. In the background is a lake dotted with pleasure boats. A steep hill rises on the left dotted with villages and temples while on the other side of the lake is a walled city approached by various travellers and bearers with palanquins. In the far distance the landscape fades in aerial perspective with an elephant, villages and trees fading into a golden haze. Such exquisite feeling displayed in the treatment of the landscape and the figures contrasts with the broadly washed green of the ground.

The composition is based on earlier Deccani and Bikaner versions of Todi *ragini*, which at its simplest is a girl playing a *vina* to one or more attentive deer (e.g. in a painting from Bikaner c. 1650, from the Richard Johnson collection, Falk and Archer 1981, no. 505vi), but which became more complex in the next few decades when the musician has become a *yogini* of sorts and gained an attendant and the girl now hangs on to the tree and has her own attendants (Sotheby's London, 10 October 1977, lot 17; Sotheby's New York, 21 March 1990, lot 53; Christie's London, 8 April 2008, lot 261). A steep hill similar to ours rises behind the scene with sometimes a lake background and sometimes a landscape. Our Kishangarh version has introduced another layer of complexity, adding a





seated princess beneath the tree and Savant Singh himself as listeners.

Savant Singh was a poet writing under the name Nagaridas and his writings reflect his devotion to Krishna and Radha. His violet skin here likewise is a reflection of his devotion to Krishna. The whole painting would seem to be Raja Savant Singh's idealised vision. On the death of his father Raja Raj Singh in 1747, Savant Singh and his younger brother Bahadur Singh engaged in a war of succession, not resolved until the state was divided between them in 1756 and Savant Singh became Raja of Rupnagar. He made over the government of his state to his son Sardar Singh and retired to Brindaban with his beloved Bani Thani. She is possibly the model on which is based the typical Kishangarh face with its curving upswept eyes (Haidar 2011b, fig. 6). The lady in our painting does not appear to be her.

12 KRISHNA AND RADHA AT AN ASSIGNATION IN A LANDSCAPE

Kishangarh, c. 1770	<i>Provenance</i>
Opaque pigments and gold on paper	Colnaghi 1978
Folio: 39.4 × 28.9 cm	William K. Ehrenfeld collection
Painting: 32 × 24.1 cm, laid down on a buff album page with black rules	Sotheby's New York, March 1990, lot 28
	<i>Published</i>
	Falk 1978, fig. 73
	Ehnbom 1985, no. 74
	Dehejia 2008, p. 250
	Habighorst 2011, fig. 91
	Habighorst 2014, no. 31
	<i>Exhibited</i>
	Hamburg, 2013

A nimbate Krishna dressed as a young lightly moustached prince in a long white *jama* and yellow turban stands holding out a flower towards his beloved Radha, who, similarly dressed in court costume of lime-green skirt and bodice and blue diaphanous *orhni*, stands facing him. Her long loose hair flows down her back and over her shoulders. She holds a drooping lotus in one hand and with the other modestly draws her *orhni* over her face, as she lowers her eyes to avoid looking at Krishna's frankly appraising gaze. The two are drawn with the extreme stylisation typical of the Kishangarh style as introduced by Nihal Chand in the 1730s, thin, with arching backs, sloping profiles, arching eyebrows, large pointed noses and sweeping upturned eyes (see Dickinson and Khandalavala 1959, especially pl. IV for Radha with this profile, also Haidar 2011b).

The two girls in attendance on Radha are drawn more naturalistically in the Mughal-inspired manner introduced into Kishangarh by Bhavani Das under Raja Raj Singh (r. 1706–48). The group stands behind a balustrade on the side of a tank and between two little groves of trees. Krishna's horse with a long spear attached to its saddle waits amidst the trees behind him. The plain behind them painted in broad green washes sweeps back to the horizon. It is dotted with pleasure pavilions, a lake and walled town. A palanquin and oxcart wait for Radha in the distance behind her trees. Over all is a lowering monsoon sky filled with rolling black clouds with the sun sinking through them.

It is difficult sometimes to determine whether such figures are meant for Krishna and Radha or for Raja Savant Singh (d. 1764) and his beloved Bani Thani, who died a few years later, eternally young in the groves of Brindaban. While Kishangarh rajas were given nimbuses by Bhavani Das, Nihal Chand

does not depict Krishna and Radha with them. The mundane details of their arrival by the lake – via horse and oxcart – and the presence of the nimbus and the spear might suggest that these are in fact Savant Singh and his beloved, but the painting is somewhat late for the subjects to be them. The divine couple would seem to have taken on some of their attributes and Krishna is here treated as an elegant prince.



**13 MAHARAJA SAWAI JAGAT SINGH II OF JAIPUR WITH
A FAVOURITE LADY AT A DANCE PERFORMANCE**

Jaipur, c. 1810–15, signed by Gobind Chatera
Opaque pigments and gold on paper
Folio: 34.5 × 25.2 cm
Painting: 32.4 × 23.1 cm, within a yellow border
Inscribed on the balustrade below in Devanagari: *kalam*
Gobind Chatera ki ('work of the artist Gobind')

Published
Bautze 1995, fig. 127
Habighorst et al. 2007, fig. 39

Exhibited
Hamburg, 2013
Zurich, 2016

Maharaja Sawai Jagat Singh II of Jaipur (b. 1784 or 1786, r. 1803–19) is depicted enthroned in his *zenana* with a favourite lady watching a *nautch* performance of four dancers accompanied by various musicians playing *sarangi*, *tabla*, *dholak* and *rebab* and attended by many of his women, who stand ready with fans and refreshments. The Maharaja's gesture with his right hand with index and middle finger extended towards the dancers seems significant. Two golden hookahs are placed ready for the Maharaja and his favourite, along with vases of flowers, bowls of flower garlands, rosewater sprinklers and so on, while covered trays beside the Maharaja's sword suggest gifts to be bestowed on the dancers who pleased the couple. The scene is set on a terrace covered with a green and gold carpet with a view to the pool beyond with fountains playing and to the garden. Beyond the garden we see part of the pink city of Jaipur and the sky glowing in the evening.

This highly decorative painting is typical of Jaipur in the first half of the 19th century. Jagat Singh was a very young man when he came to the throne but maintained his father Pratap Singh's *suratkhana* (court studio) and became a patron of artists and of literature. For another grand court painting such as ours showing Maharaja Pratap Singh of Jaipur in his *zenana*, see Soni 2016, fig. 12, and Randhawa and Galbraith 1968, pl. 25. The Jaipur *suratkhana* is unusually well documented from the middle of the 18th century, since many paintings in this period have the names of their artists inscribed, beginning with major artists such as Sahib Ram and Ramji Das. Gobind Chatera had a long career since he also worked with Ramji Das in drawing figures at court in earlier reigns (Soni 2016, p. 22). Like other Jaipur artists, Gobind also worked in other courts where his talents were much appreciated, such as in his

grand durbar painting of Rao Raja Bakhtawar Singh of Alwar from c. 1815 in the San Diego Museum (Goswamy and Smith 2005, no. 116), which has over 120 figures round the raja, not just the state's nobles but also administrators, functionaries and even servants, all of them individual studies inscribed with their names.



Nurpur, c. 1720
Opaque pigments and gold on paper
Folio: 19.6 × 26.1 cm

Published
Habighorst et al. 2007, fig. 10
Sharma 2010, p. 62
Lutz 2019

Exhibited
Zurich, 2019

The poem *Rasamanjari*, by the mediaeval Sanskrit poet Bhanudatta, classifies women in love, the *nayikas*, under different types, including the first full statement of the eight types of *nayika* which became such a feature of later Hindi poetry in the *Riti* style such as the *Rasikapriya*. It was a popular text for illustration in the western Pahari region: three versions are known from Basohli, the last by Devidasa dated 1694–95, and another one is attributed to Golu of Nurpur c. 1710 (see Goswamy and Fischer 2011b; Archer 1973, nos 14i–vii). Golu of Nurpur is known as the son of Devidasa, and in his series he seems to have used the image of Raja Daya Dhata of Nurpur (r. c. 1700–35) as his model for his *nayakas* in their clothes, turbans, small moustache and features (for the raja see Archer 1973, Nurpur 9 & 11).

Our page seems to have been trimmed, so its border has disappeared, as well as any caption above. Although it has no text on the reverse, so that it cannot definitely be linked to the *Rasamanajari*, and its size seems to differentiate it from earlier series, it seems to illustrate verse 46 about a *Khandita Nayika*, the wronged heroine, although in that case the *nayaka* and his friend are meant to be conversing:

Seeing in the morning my face coloured with the red paint of the other woman's feet, my wife cast her face down and remained still as a painted picture. She did not utter harsh words, nor did she let her eyes become inflamed with anger. Instead of holding the mirror in the palm of her hand, she put it in front of me (translation Randhawa and Bhambri 1981, p. 56).

In our painting the angry heroine in her bedroom confronts her errant lover, who as the sun is rising has just returned home after a night elsewhere. The

room where the confrontation takes places and the doorway of the house occupy nearly the whole picture plane; there is only room above the doorway for a hill to be seen with the sun just rising over it. The bed seems to have been unoccupied, a cushion is thrown on the floor, and the box of *pan* remains unused. The *nayika* holds out her hands in exasperation and in her agitation her diaphanous *peshwaj* swings open a little, allowing the floral meander of her long ochre *patka* to be seen contrasting with the chequered flowers of her ochre *paijama*. The colour of the latter is modified when seen through the thin material, and doubly so where the draping of her diaphanous *orhni* also falls across it. Her lover seems unperturbed by her agitation, one hand held out and gently cupped, the other holding a dagger for some reason, and the smoothness of his long white *jama* remains unruffled. Perhaps only his somewhat dishevelled piled up maroon and gold turban cloth with locks of hair escaping from under it indicate some internal unease or perhaps suggest it was assumed in a hurry as he returned from his nocturnal adventure.

A beautiful rug in green with arabesques of roses and irises occupies the floor, a green floral blind with red border hangs above and two pairs of mirrors are on the far wall. Delicate filigree patterns fill the architectural features including the mirror frames, the pillars and spandrels, parapet and *chajja*. The way the two mirrors show the reflections of the two figures seems apposite to the verse quoted above, but the reflections' being in mirror reverse to each other suggests perhaps the lovers' estrangement. All these details are very refined, as are the two figures with their delicately depicted hands and subtly modelled features. Also very refined is the colour scheme with white and a pale ochre being the dominant colours,



with sage greens, reds and a beautiful maroon bringing up the rear.

Pages from an earlier series of *Nayika–nayaka–bheda* from Nurpur in the V&A seem relevant to our page (Archer 1973, Nurpur 12i–ii; also Archer 1955). The first has a text corresponding to our verse above and shows the *nayika* waiting in the pavilion and the *nayaka* outside. The second has the same composition as ours, even to the door at the side, but has simple niches instead of the mirrors, and illustrates the *pragalabha nayika*, one who is mature and thoughtful, but in this case has become impatient with her lover and scolds him. On the other hand our page, which is more sophisticated and finer than these two and also than Golu's work, must be somewhat later than Golu's series, where ankle-length *jamas* are the norm, since the hero's *jama* is longer so that only the lower parts of his bare feet are visible, a length it did not reach until early in the reign of Muhammad Shah (1719–48).



Guler, 1750–60
Opaque pigments and gold on paper
Folio: 18.5 × 27.9 cm
Painting: 16.5 × 25.8 cm, within a blue border

Published
Sharma 2010, p. 31
Habighorst 2011, fig. 26
Habighorst 2014, no. 29

Exhibited
Hamburg, 2013
Koblenz, 2014

Krishna, Radha and two of her *gopi* friends are playing *chaupar* while seated on a terrace overlooking a lake. The four are teamed up in pairs seated at the ends of the cross-shaped board, so Krishna, here with a jaunty feather in his crown, is playing with the girl opposite him across the board who is talking to an older friend, no doubt advising on strategy. Radha on Krishna's left is holding the three long dice that distinguish the more aristocratic *chaupar* from the slightly more commonplace *pachisi*, a very similar game that is played with cowrie shells rather than the long dice. Three women

are standing on the left with a *morchhal* and refreshments, and two musicians are seated on the right with *tambura* and *dholak*. Beyond the curving end of the lake the land is dotted with trees as it retreats to a similarly curving horizon. It is evening and the sky is reddening.

The women's faces show the changes that were happening in Guler painting as the earlier squarer faces of Manaku and the young Nainsukh (the seated women) gradually gave way to the more elegant faces first found in Nainsukh's images of goddesses and then more generally in Guler painting (see Losty 2017, pp. 21–24), and here seen in the three standing women on the left. Curving horizons and striped skirts are both frequently found in Guler painting at this time, as are the effects of seeing differently coloured garments through diaphanous *orhnis*. Noteworthy here is the intensity of Krishna's gaze on the board as he calculates the best throw and also that of Radha as she stares at him across the board as if willing him to make a mistake.



Page from the 'Large Guler–Basohli' *Bhagavata Purana* series
Guler or Basohli, c. 1765, attributed to Fattu and workshop
Opaque watercolour with gold and silver on paper
Folio: 27.6 × 38 cm
Painting: 23.5 × 34.3 cm, within a dark brown margin and a wide red border with two white rules

Provenance
Mrs F.K. Smith collection
Sotheby's London, 1 February 1960, lot 3

Published
Sharma 2010, p. 71
Habighorst 2014, no. 1
Goswamy 2017, fig. 41, p. 31 (detail)

Exhibited
Koblenz, 2014

In chapter 8 of the 10th canto of the *Bhagavata Purana*, the sage Garga, the family priest of the Yadus, has come to Gokul; and having being asked by Nanda to perform the *samskarana* or naming ceremony for the two boys, the sons of Yasoda and Rohini, he does so in secret. He warned Nanda that should Kamsa come to hear, that he, the family priest of the royal family, had performed this ceremony, then the boys would be in danger. The sage and his assistant sit before the sacred fire making their oblations, while on the other side of the fire are the two boys Krishna and Balarama, dressed in fine brocade *jamās* and round caps for the occasion, and Nanda and their foster mothers. The scene is set in a beautiful hall with double columns supporting the roof, rolled-up silver brocade hangings above and double niches along the rear wall. Outside the pavilion is nothing but two sides of a very tall wall of dark brown brick, meticulously detailed, meeting in a corner. Above the wall is a violently coloured sky shading from orange to slate blue with dark clouds rising like mountain peaks.

Although slightly smaller than the normal size of this well-known dispersed series attributed to Fattu and his workshop and lacking the customary inscriptions on the verso, it nonetheless seems to be from that series. The pavilion is almost identical to that depicted in a page from the series in the V&A (Archer 1973, Basohli 22xi), while the rather awkward junction of the enclosing wall and its meticulous detailing is seen in other pages in the same museum (*ibid.*, Basohli 22vii & 22xii).

The series is concerned solely with the 10th book of the *Bhagavata Purana* dealing with the exploits of Krishna and follows on naturally from the earlier series attributed to Manaku which illustrates the earlier books and which seems to have been

abandoned unfinished (Goswamy 2017). If Manaku is regarded as the presiding genius of that earlier set, then his footprints are all over this new series too, but in a slightly diluted form. It would seem logical therefore to regard some of the work as being guided by Manaku before his death, which is widely held to be around 1760, and carried on by his elder son Fattu either at Guler or Basohli.

The series, which is widely dispersed among many public and private collections, is discussed in every major book on the subject. It is also among the most controversial. Khandalavala and Ohri took different views to those of Archer and of Goswamy and Fischer. See among other sources Archer 1973, vol. I, pp. 49–51, Basohli nos 22i–xiv; Leach 1986, nos 106i–iv; Ohri 1998b; Goswamy and Fischer 2011a, no. 1a–d, figs 1–3, pp. 697–99.

On 1 February 1960, 151 folios (in 63 lots) from the 10th book of the 'Large Guler–Basohli' *Bhagavata Purana* series were dispersed at Sotheby's (property of F.K. Smith). Our painting was part of lot 3.





Kangra, c. 1810–20
Opaque watercolour and gold and silver on paper
Folio: 25.4 × 18.5 cm
Painting: 19 × 12.8 cm, within an extended oval with gold margin, with spandrels in gold and colours and surrounded by a cream margin with silver floral scroll, and a pink border flecked with red dashes

Provenance
Svetoslav Nikolaevich Roerich collection

Published
Galloway 2011, no. 31

Exhibited
Hamburg, 2013

Dressed all in white with a gold crown on each of her five faces, the Goddess is seated on a lotus that arises out of a pool. Normally standing or seated in the lotus position, she is here instead seated in the posture of royal ease with one knee raised. She is all white as are her garments of *dhوتي*, *dupatta* and bodice, all gold-trimmed. Nine of her eighteen arms hold a green drinking vessel, the other nine hold a jewel-encased golden pot containing liquor. She has three of the attributes of Siva, his third eye in the centre of his forehead, a crescent moon which links two of the points of each crown, and five faces reflecting perhaps the *pancamukha linga* (the five-faced lingam) associated with Siva. Some of the large lotuses are still in bud, others are in full flower, while one mysterious yellow flower also arises from the pool. A band of green ground lies beyond the pool, giving way to a resplendent gold sky.

The Devi is here all powerful and is not the consort of any god. Normally her eighteen hands carry different weapons or attributes, but here she concentrates on just one attribute, the wine which is normally forbidden to Hindus, but which is imbibed in extreme forms of Tantric ritual along with the consumption of meat. According to the second canto of the *Devi Mahatmya*, when the gods were all defeated by Mahisasura, they created the Goddess out of their combined essences and gave her their essential attributes, among which a cup of wine was given by Kubera, the god of wealth.

The famous ‘Tantric Devi’ series from Basohli, c. 1660–70 has what seems a relevant image of the goddess Siddha Laksmi, now in the Brooklyn Museum. The goddess is sitting on a lotus arising from a lotus pond and imbibing from a golden cup, while Kali stands beside her holding a golden pot

(Poster et al. 1994, no. 191; Dehejia 1999, no. 191). The *dhyana* accompanying that image reads:

One should meditate on Perfected Laksmi, who is young with a face resembling the rising moon and garlanded with the crescent moon. Her body is clad in a priceless, yellow garment and she is seated on an eightfold lotus. One should meditate thus in the lotus of the heart on the Lady Bhadrakali (‘Auspicious Kali’) remembered drinking her draughts again and again, accompanied by Kali.

Although the iconographical fit is not perfect (the many faces and arms are missing, as is Kali), our image captures the essentials of this rare auspicious image of the Goddess – her beautiful features, the moon in her crowns, the drinking of the liquor, and the eightfold lotus, here represented by the lotus seat and the seven lotuses rising from the pool.

A painting of Sadasiva in the Alice Boner collection in the Museum Rietberg seems to be from the same oval-format series (Boner et al. 1994, no. 485, col. pl. 22) and shows the same elegant and delicate treatment of the spandrels and margin. The five-faced god is seated on Nandi on a large lotus in a lotus pool and is seen against the same gold sky as in our painting.



Page from a *Bhagavata Purana* series
Guler, c. 1790, attributed to Ranjha
Opaque pigments and gold on paper
Folio: 24.7 × 30.2 cm
Painting: 18 × 25 cm, within a blue margin with gold and silver
floral arabesques and a pink border with red streaks

Published
Sharma 2010, p. 144
Habighorst 2014, cat. 25, pp. 62–63
Exhibited
Koblenz, 2014

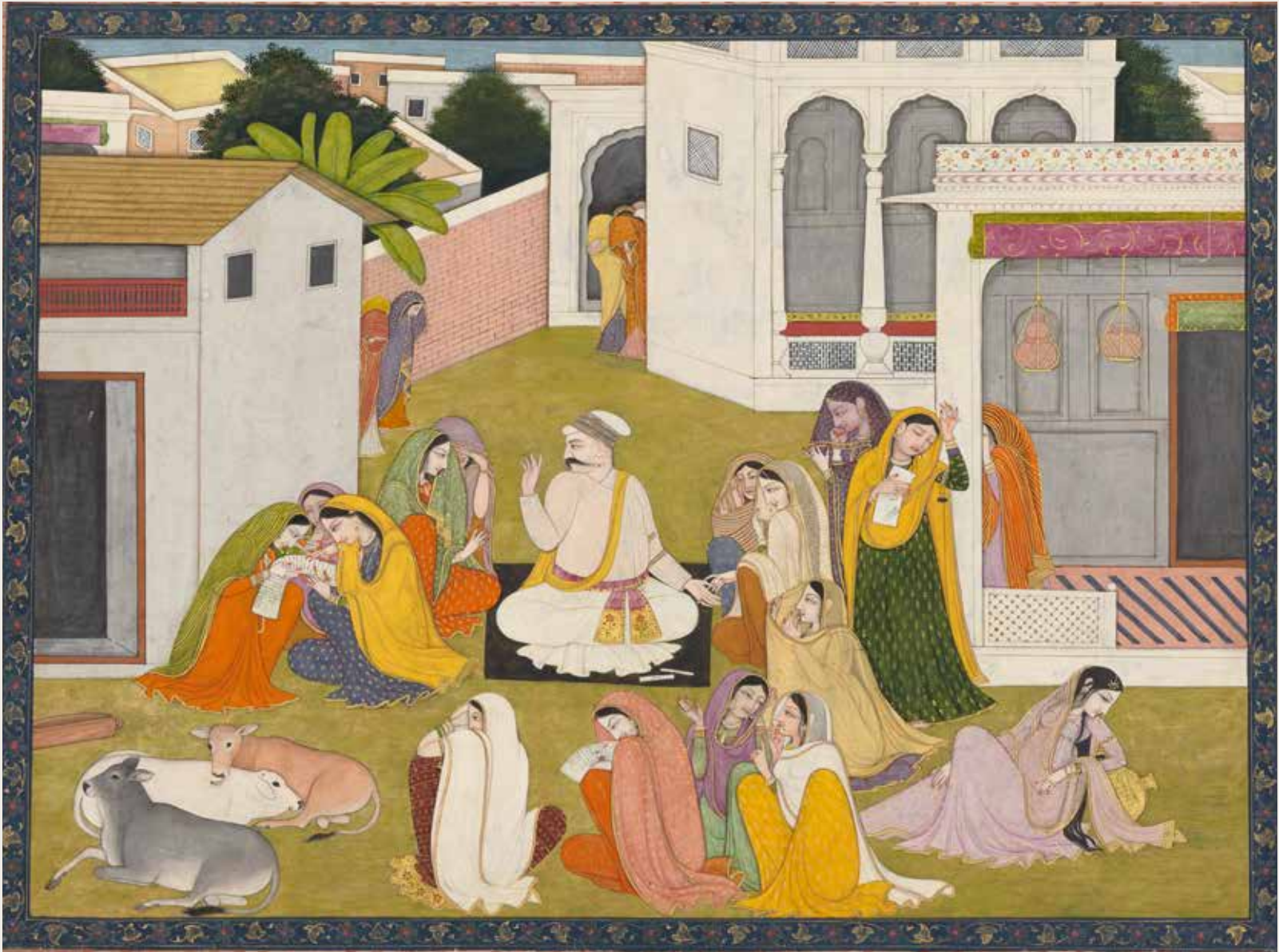
In Book x of the *Bhagavata Purana*, Uddhava was a friend utterly devoted to Krishna and in cantos 46 & 47, Krishna, after disposing of Kamsa and installing his elderly relative Ugrasena on the throne of Mathura, sent Uddhava to Brindaban to assuage the grief of the women of Braj at his never returning to them. Here Uddhava is surrounded by beautiful *gopis*, who have emerged from their various houses spaced all around the open area in the village to hear what he has to say. The artist imagines that some of them have received messages written by Krishna and delivered by his friend. Uddhava tries to console them for Krishna's absence and for his not returning to them by praising their intense devotion to Krishna, which ensures that he is ever present in their hearts. Uddhava, according to the text, was actually a young man looking very like Krishna, but our artist chooses to portray him looking rather more avuncular. The same episode from the Guler *Bhagavata Purana* c. 1770 showing Uddhava in conversation with Nanda and Yasoda shows him actually as an even older man (Jain-Neubauer 1998, fig. 16).

This is an exceptional subject needing very sensitive handling, and the artist has responded with some wonderful passages as he charts the different reactions of the *gopis*. Some are still perusing their letters beginning to smile inwardly, others are still wondering what it means and are talking to their friends about it. Some withdraw into private contemplation turning their faces away or hiding their faces beneath their *orhnis* with inward smiles on their faces; one dressed in yellow and green seems about to swoon as she clutches the letter to her bosom; another already lying on the ground turns away leaning on her water pot, her eyes almost closed in her sorrow. A group has moved away back

into the village lowering their heads beneath their *orhnis* to hide their grief. Uddhava in his white *jama* serves as the still centre of the group as he turns to talk to one contemplating *gopi*, while another reaches out shyly to touch the hand that has been in touch with Krishna. A group of three young bulls lying beside the women in the foreground is possibly suggestive of the absent man of their dreams.

All these *gopis* are dressed in a wonderful symphony of colours in their contrasting *orhnis* and *peshwaj*. The draperies are most beautifully handled as they fall from head or shoulder or upturned knee onto the ground in graceful folds. Whereas painting the effect of differently coloured garments seen through diaphanous veils is one attempted in many schools, the most ravishing effect here is one rarely seen in any Indian style, of a face lost in inward contemplation seen through the diaphanous lilac *orhni* pulled over it. It is the more effective for being contrasted with the near swooning *gopi* in front of her who is dressed in a striking combination of green and yellow and shown nearly full face.

Ranjha was the youngest son of Nainsukh and accompanied his father to Basohli when he took service with Raja Amrit Pal. For a comparable work attributed to Ranjha with similarly dressed and varied women and the same kind of composition of a triangular open space behind the foreground action, see Seyller and Mittal 2014, no. 82, and Losty 2017, no. 12. For other works attributed to him see Ohri 1998a and Seyller and Mittal 2014, nos 81, 83 & 84. A famous painting in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts showing a woman questioning an artist who is decorating her walls also has the same elongated and narrow eyes as our women (Cummins 2006, pl. 107).





19 THE LOVESICK LADY

Mandi, 1810–20, attributed to Sajnu and workshop
Opaque pigments and gold on paper
Folio: 29.4 × 21.3 cm
Painting: 21.6 × 13.9 cm, within a dark blue margin with a gold floral scroll and a plain white border decorated with a vine arabesque with grapes and birds

Provenance
Svetoslav Nikolaevich Roerich collection

Published
Khandalavala 1958, fig. 46
Sharma 2010, p. 86
Habighorst 2011, fig. 119

Our heroine lies supine on her bed, her head to the side, her eyes closed, her arms extended above her head, her legs twisted and her *peshwaj* and *dupatta* all dishevelled from her tossing and turning. Her friends and attendants try all sorts of remedies to calm her, massaging her hands and feet or just keeping them steady, waving a hand fan over her and sprinkling her exposed bosom with rosewater. Other women prepare special pastes to soothe her and bring in special drinks or even large plantain leaves to act as fans. The bed is in the courtyard of a palatial house with views onto a garden and its trees. The lady's women are anxious not only for their mistress's health but for their own futures as well and are desperately trying to ease her misery in accordance with Keshav Das's description in the eighth canto of his *Rasikapriya* of the various states of his *nayaka* and *nayika* when separated from each other. He records ten states of anxiety induced by separation from the beloved beginning with yearning and ending with death.

There is no inscription on our painting but it illustrates one of the later stages of the *nayika's* anxiety about her separation, either *vyadhi* (sickness) or *jadata* (stupor).

When the body becomes pale, breathing becomes sighing, eyes are filled with tears and you suffer pain, the state is called 'sickness' (8.45) ...

When you forget both sorrow and happiness and there is no difference between the two, that state is called 'stupor' (8.48) (translation Harsha Dehejia, 2013, p. 90)

The most appropriate verse from the chapter seems to be that describing Radha's hidden stupor:

Suitable remedies have a cooling effect on feverish bodies, but here, in spite of such remedies, her body is pining away. Any other remedy may worsen her condition. You can see how she is fading away! What shall we do then? To whom shall we go? How shall we live, and how shall we live without her? (8. 49, translation M.S. Randhawa, 1962, p. 119).

The painting's setting in the courtyard of a palatial house, with the main building to the left and a gateway pavilion to the right with a little gabled summer house on top, with minaret and distant trees, is found in several other paintings from the early 19th century, some of them attributed to Sajnu and his workshop after his arrival in Mandi c. 1808 to work for Raja Isvari Sen. He brought Guler sensitivity and Kangra elegance into a court studio that had been noted hitherto for rougher and more dramatic qualities and changed the style totally for the last few decades of its existence. There are few actual inscribed paintings attributed to Sajnu, but see Archer 1973, Mandi 43 & 46, who publishes two paintings with inscriptions naming Sajnu. He and his workshop produced a *Baramasa* set for Raja Isvari Sen and other illustrations of Hindi *Riti* literature, for instance Goswamy and Fischer 1992, nos 155 & 156. A delicate painting of a *nayika* with a pet bird in the Mittal Museum also has an attribution to Sajnu (Seyller and Mittal 2014, no. 101). Many of these paintings from Sajnu and his workshop have decorative borders such as ours. This delicate green vine arabesque with highlights of sage green and ochre fruit punctuated by black and grey birds adds to the pathos of the scene. For other paintings illustrating *vyadhi* or *jadata* in a similar way, see Randhawa 1962, fig. 68; Dehejia 2013, pp. 257–58.



Chamba, c. 1800–10, attributed to the Guler artist Chajju
Opaque pigments and gold on paper
Folio: 30.6 × 43.8 cm
Painting: 22.9 × 35.8 cm, within a blue margin with gold and silver scroll and a cream border decorated with grey and black clouds

Provenance
Svetoslav Nikolaevich Roerich collection

Published
Dehejia 2008, p. 110
Sharma 2010, p. 77
Habighorst 2011, fig. 20
Habighorst 2014, no. 15
Seyller and Mittal 2014, fig. 20

Exhibited
Hamburg, 2013
Koblenz, 2014
Zurich, 2016

It is evening in Brindaban and the cowherd boys are driving the cows home to their cow-pens. Krishna runs off from his duties waving farewell to his fellow cowherds and hides behind a tree to spy on Radha and her friends. Hidden so they think by the glade in which they are play-acting, Radha has donned Krishna’s yellow *dhoti* and *dupatta*, garland and peacock-feathered crown and pretends to be him. She is standing on a little stool with a flute in her hand and crossed legs in Krishna’s characteristic stance when playing the flute. Her friends surround her waving a chowrie and making offerings as if she were Krishna himself. One offers *pan* taken from a jewelled cup, another a garland and a drink in another such cup, a third a gold flask and others hold lotuses. The glade with its beautifully depicted trees and many flowering creepers is on the bank of the river Yamuna, with a hillside concealing it from what seems to be a nearby town rather than a village, with many buildings and towers. The landscape is of folded hills dotted with trees retreating to the distant horizon and a reddened sky.

Our painting with its confident handling of a receding landscape is a rather rare example of such a composition among the grandsons of Manaku and Nainsukh and their workshops, who are generally much happier with a flatter composition or else with a zig-zagging arrangement of architectural forms. Two comparable paintings immediately suggest themselves, one in the Mittal Museum in Hyderabad (*Two Princesses stroll in a Grove*, Seyller and Mittal 2014, no. 84), there attributed to Nainsukh’s youngest son Ranjha at Chamba 1790–1800, and another in the Seitz collection (*A Gopi’s Confusion on seeing Krishna*, Losty 2017, no. 64), there attributed to Nikka’s son Chajju also at Chamba 1800–10, both with well-handled receding landscapes. Chajju and

his brother Harkhu were the sons of Nikka and grandsons of Nainsukh, and along with their father practised their art at the Chamba court under Raja Raj Singh (r. 1764–94) and his successors (see Ohri 1998a and Mittal 1998, and also Seyller and Mittal 2014, nos 76–89). Our painting is also published in the Mittal Museum catalogue (*ibid.*, fig. 20, p. 247), in support of the authors’ attribution of the Mittal painting to Ranjha, but it was argued in the Seitz catalogue that in fact both paintings should be rather attributed to Chajju. While our receding landscape with its folded hills resembles those in the *Nala-Damayanti* series attributed to Ranjha (Goswamy 1975), the figural drawing and especially the female profiles have moved on to the somewhat harder treatment found in the work of the next generation of artists. Another comparable painting is published in Cummins 2011 (pl. 121), showing Krishna and Radha meeting in the forest, represented as a secluded grove with village activities continuing to the side.





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