

PAHARI PAINTINGS
FROM THE
EVA AND KONRAD SEITZ
COLLECTION

FRANCESCA GALLOWAY
www.francescagalloway.com



Pahari paintings, meaning paintings from the hills, come from the mountainous regions of northern India once known as the Punjab Hills but which now form the present day states of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. They include some of the most brilliant as well as the most lyrically beautiful of all Indian painting styles.

In the 17th and 18th centuries this area was divided into over 30 kingdoms, some of moderate size, but others very small. The kingdoms were established in the fertile valleys of the rivers that eventually flowed into the plains – the Ravi, Beas, Sutlej, and the Jumna and Ganges and their tributaries – and divided from each other by high mountains. The Himalayas to the north-east formed the almost impenetrable barrier between these little kingdoms and Tibet.

Its rulers and ruling class were Rajputs, like those of Rajasthan, whose stories of their origin often suggested that they were descendants of the ruling Hindu dynasties of the north Indian plains who had taken refuge in the hills after their displacement by Muslim invaders after 1193. Although the Mughals had established their rule over the whole of northern India by the second half of the 16th century, and controlled key fortresses such as that of Kangra, their political influence in the hill states remained slight, especially with the weakening of the Mughal empire in the 18th century.

Only one painting series survives from this area before the 17th century, a manuscript of the *Devi Mahatmya* (Simla Museum) from the mid-16th century, illustrated in a style akin to the Early Rajput style of the north Indian plains. In the mid-late 17th century the hill rajas from Mandi and Bilaspur patronised artists who had been influenced by work from the Mughal court. This brief flirtation with Mughal naturalism did not last long, and by the end of the century those artists as well as others at centres such as Bahu and Basohli, now

in Jammu, and Chamba had returned to their non-naturalistic Rajput roots and were illustrating traditional Hindu texts such as the *Ramayana* (cat. 2), the *Rasamanjari* and *Ragamalas* (cat. 1) in brilliantly assured fashion, dependent again on line and colour with their figures set against conceptual renderings of architecture and landscape. Such a style had spread throughout most of the Pahari region in the early 18th century.

Although much of the hill region formed strongholds for the worship of Shiva and the Devi, and paintings and manuscripts reflected this (e.g. cats. 12, 13), the spread of Vaishnavism and, especially the worship of Krishna, induced patrons to commission illustrated versions of Vaishnava texts, such as the *Bhagavata Purana* (cat. 4) and the *Gitagovinda* (cat. 9). Texts such as the *Rasikapriya* and *Satsai* (cats. 10, 11, 15, 21 and 25) also were now added to the painters' repertoire, using the divine lovers Krishna and Radha to illustrate literary concepts. Portraiture as at all Rajput courts was especially important to the rajas of these hill states and was normally interpreted as single portraits with or without attendants (cats. 3, 7, 8, 14, 16 and 18), while intimate family portraits are also an important sub-genre here.

With the weakening of Mughal power in the early 18th century Mughal artists sought patronage elsewhere, some presumably seeking work at the hill courts, because, by about 1730, Pahari painting began to change. It moved towards a more naturalistic style, assimilating some of the canons of Mughal painting, in which the depiction of volume, space and landscape became progressively more important for the expression of poetical moods (cats. 6, 9, 10, 11, 17, 18 & 19).

This phase of Pahari painting is especially associated with the Guler artists Pandit Seu and his sons Manaku (cat. 4 & 5) and Nainsukh, who were especially influenced by the contemporary Mughal style and may indeed have

visited Delhi. Nainsukh, the most famous name in Pahari painting, is renowned for his portrayal of his patron Raja Balwant Singh of Jasrota (reg. 1743-63) in all of his many moods. This familial style was continued by their sons and grandsons who influenced the whole Pahari area but especially the large state of Kangra ruled by Raja Sansar Chand (reg. 1775-1823). This dominance gave the name of Kangra to much of the painting production of this later period, which is renowned for its lyrical interpretation of poetical Vaishnava texts (cats. 20, 21, 22, 24 & 25).

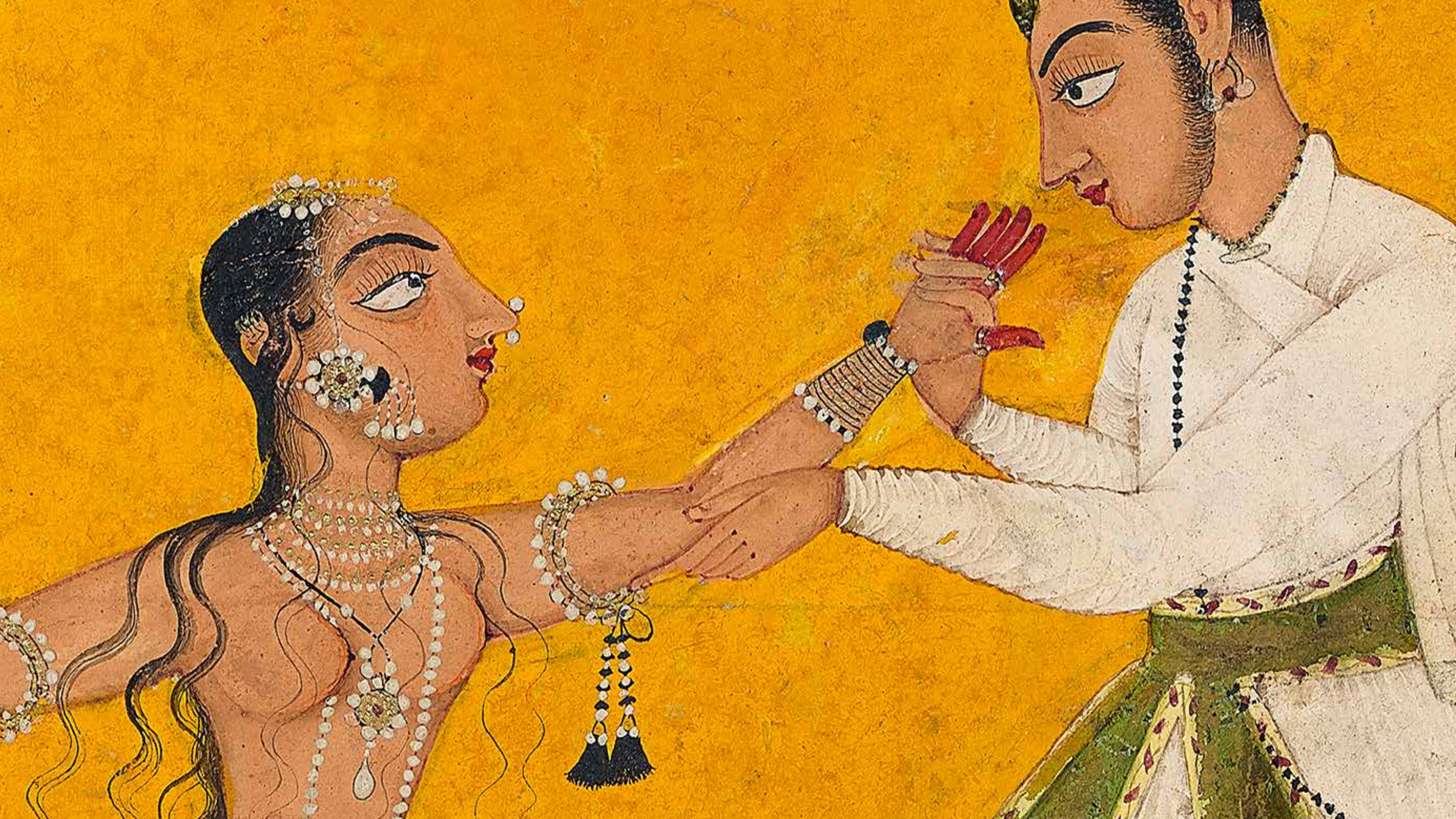
Incursions from the Gurkhas of Nepal in the early 19th century brought instability to much of the hills, only relieved when the Sikhs under Maharaja Ranjit Singh expelled the Gurkhas from the western hills and brought those states under Sikh dominance in 1809. Later, the British drove the Gurkhas out of the eastern Pahari region and back to Nepal in 1814-15. The Kangra style gradually stiffened throughout the mid and later 19th century under this new regime, and many Pahari artists migrated to Lahore and Amritsar which became important centres for Sikh painting.

The collection of Eva and Konrad Seitz contains important examples from all these phases of Pahari painting. They have assembled one of the largest collections of 'first generation after Nainsukh' Guler style painting, of which a group is now in the Rietberg Museum. Konrad Seitz first went to India as a young German diplomat in the late 1960s. He and his wife were drawn to Pahari paintings and were one of a small group of pioneer collectors in this field who recognised the importance of these schools. Over the years they have shared their collection and many of their paintings have been published, most recently in Beach, M.C., Fischer, E., and Goswamy, B.N., *Masters of Indian Painting*, Artibus Asiae, Zurich, 2011 and in Valmiki, *Ramayana illustre par les miniatures indiennes du XVIIe au XIXe siecle*, Editions Diane de Selliers, Paris, 2011.

Seitz had a remarkable career in the German diplomatic service. He was Ambassador to India, Italy and China, but he regards the pinnacle of his career the 17 years he spent as speechwriter and head of the policy planning staff to the Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, which gave him the opportunity to influence German foreign policy. He also wrote influential bestsellers on high-tech-policy and China.

In 2010 he wrote together with John Seyller a book on the „Eva and Konrad Seitz collection of Mughal and Deccani Painting. In 2015 he wrote a groundbreaking two volume book on the so called „Malwa“ paintings: „Orchha, Malwa, Panna: Miniaturen von den rajputischen Höfen Bundelkhands 1580 -1850“. The leading German art magazine „Weltkunst“ devoted the title story of the August 2016 issue to this book and wrote : Konrad Seitz hat die indische Kunstgeschichte umgeschrieben“ (has changed the history of Indian art).

We are looking forward to publishing a catalogue of the complete collection of Pahari paintings formed by Eva and Konrad Seitz with research and text by J.P. Losty and design by Misha Anikst in 2017. This present online catalogue represents a small selection. J.P. Losty has had to work quickly to produce this catalogue, which marks the beginning of our research into their remarkable collection.



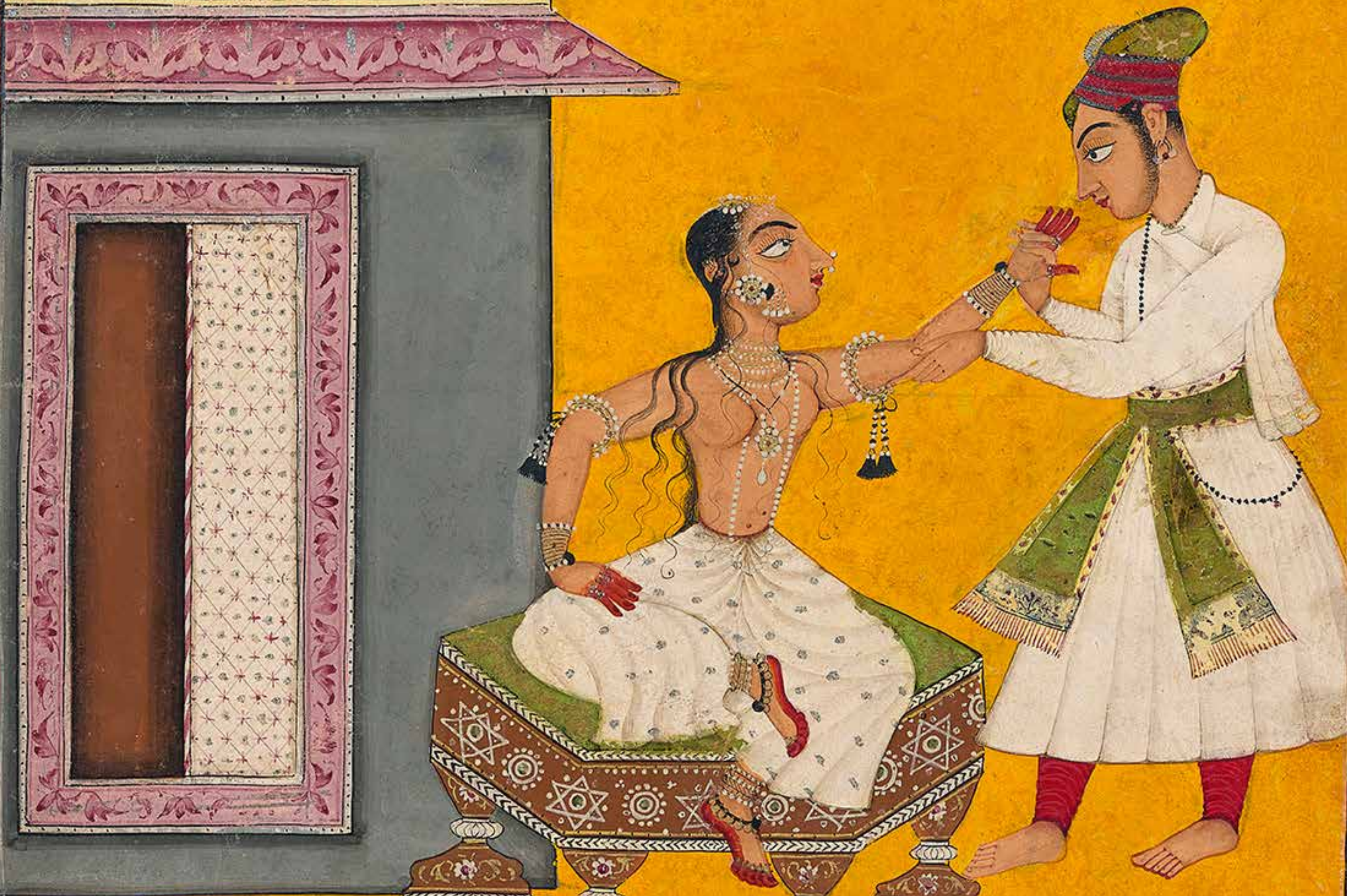


1

Tilanga Ragini
Page from a Ragamala Series

Attributed to Devidasa of Nurpur, Basohli, c. 1690–1700
Opaque pigments and gold and silver on paper
Painting 17 × 17 cm, within thin black and white rules and
an orange-red surround
Folio 20.5 × 20.8 cm
Inscribed above in *Takri*: *ragani tilangi / raga hindol bharaj*
(‘*Tilangi ragini*, wife [of] *Hindola raga*’)

For full description see page 42



2

Rama and Lakshmana on Top of the Rishyamuka Mountain contemplating entering Kishkindha
Page from the Shangri Ramayana, Style IV

By a Pahari artist, perhaps from Bilaspur, 1710–20

Opaque pigments on paper

Folio 21.2 × 31.5 cm

Painting 19 × 29 cm, within a red surround

Inscribed on the border in Pahari in *Takri* script: 116 *Kabandh sarge jo gaye. Uprant sri maharaj Lakshman agge jo baradhe. Tam ratra hoyi saye ratra parvata de sikhare upar batit kiti* ('116. Then Kabandha went up to heavenly abode. Thereafter Sri Maharaj [Rama] and Lakshmana proceeded ahead. It was night time, so they spent the night at the summit of mountain') (read by Vijay Sharma)

Inscribed on the reverse in *nagari*: *Aranya, 116* and in *Takri*: 116

For full description see page 43





3

A Raja, possibly Raja Jagat Singh of Nurpur

Nurpur or Chamba, 1730_50

Opaque pigments and gold on paper

Painting 15 × 9.8 cm, within two white rules with stars at
corners and a wide red surround

Folio 21.2 × 14.3 cm

Inscribed above in *nagari*: *Sri Raja Jagat Singh* and on the
reverse in *Takri*: *Raja Jagat Singh Pathani ka*, while a
modern hand has added *Jagat Singh Bilaspur*

For full description see page 44



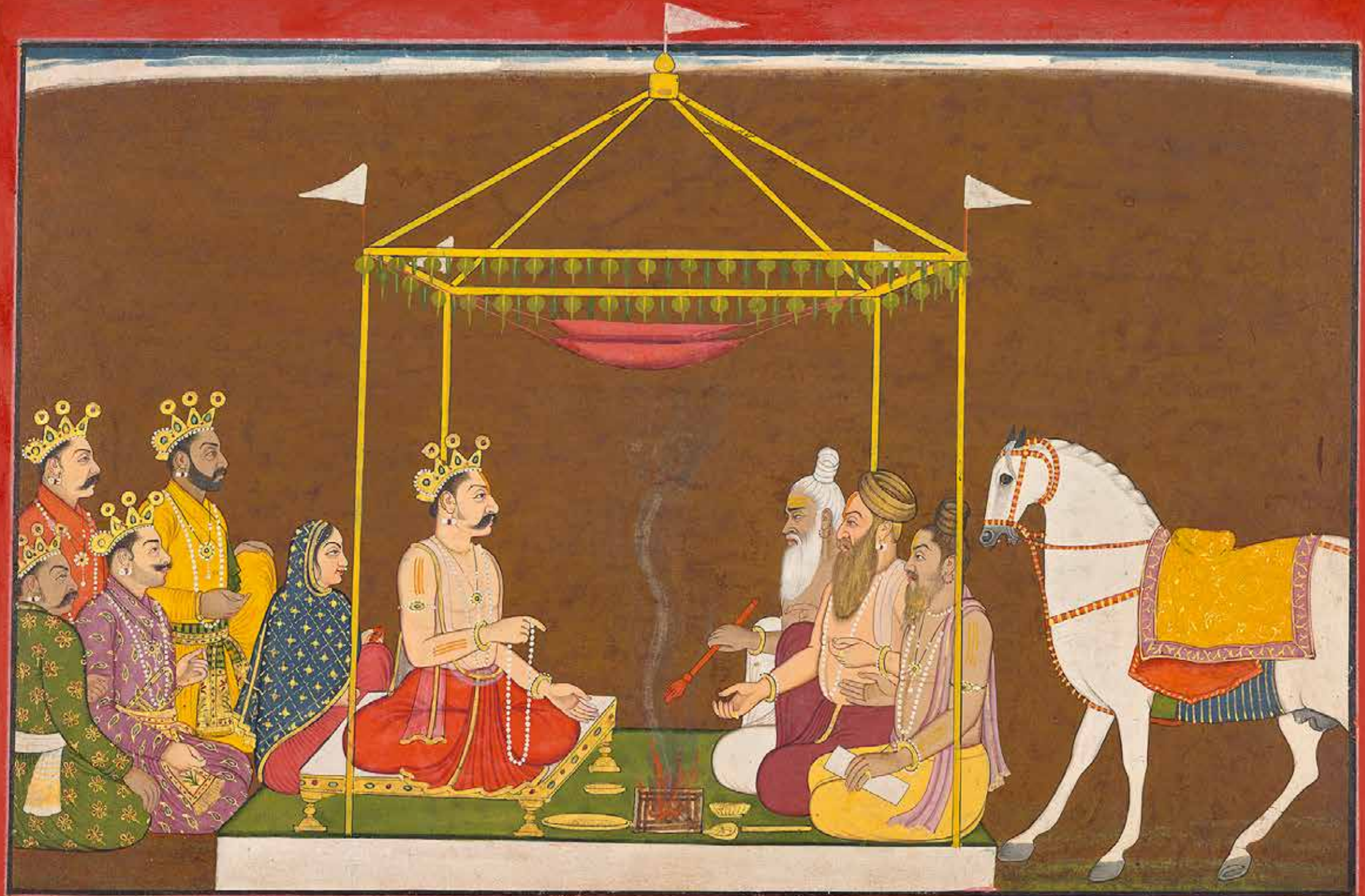
4

Yudhishtira performs the Horse Sacrifice Page from the 'Small' Guler-Basohli *Bhagavata Purana* Series

Attributed to Manaku, Guler, c. 1740
Opaque pigments with gold on paper
Painting 18 × 28.6 cm, within a narrow black
margin with a white rule and a red surround
Folio 21.8 × 32.4 cm

Inscribed on the reverse with one verse in Sanskrit in
nagari script from the *Bhagavata Purana* I, canto 8, v.
6 ('Krishna made Yudhishtira conduct three well-per-
formed horse sacrifices and thus caused his virtuous
fame to be glorified in all directions, like that of Indra,
who had performed one hundred such sacrifices') and a
colophon in alternate black and red *aksharas* stating this
is the horse sacrifice of Yudhishtira in the first book of
the *Bhagavata Purana*, no. 49.

For full description see page 45





सत्यव्रत उल्लेखितः । उक्तं सर्वविश्वस्य ।

337



5

King Satyavrata and the Fish Avatar of Vishnu
Page from the 'Small' *Bhagavata Purana* series

Attributed to Manaku, Guler, c. 1740–50
Brush drawing on paper
20.5 × 31 cm

Inscribed above in Pahari in *Takri* script: *machha talaye vich na oyi. tam bade sarovare vich sati. 227* ('The fish was unable to fit within pond, so [it was] left into the sea') (read by Vijay Sharma) and with the number 227

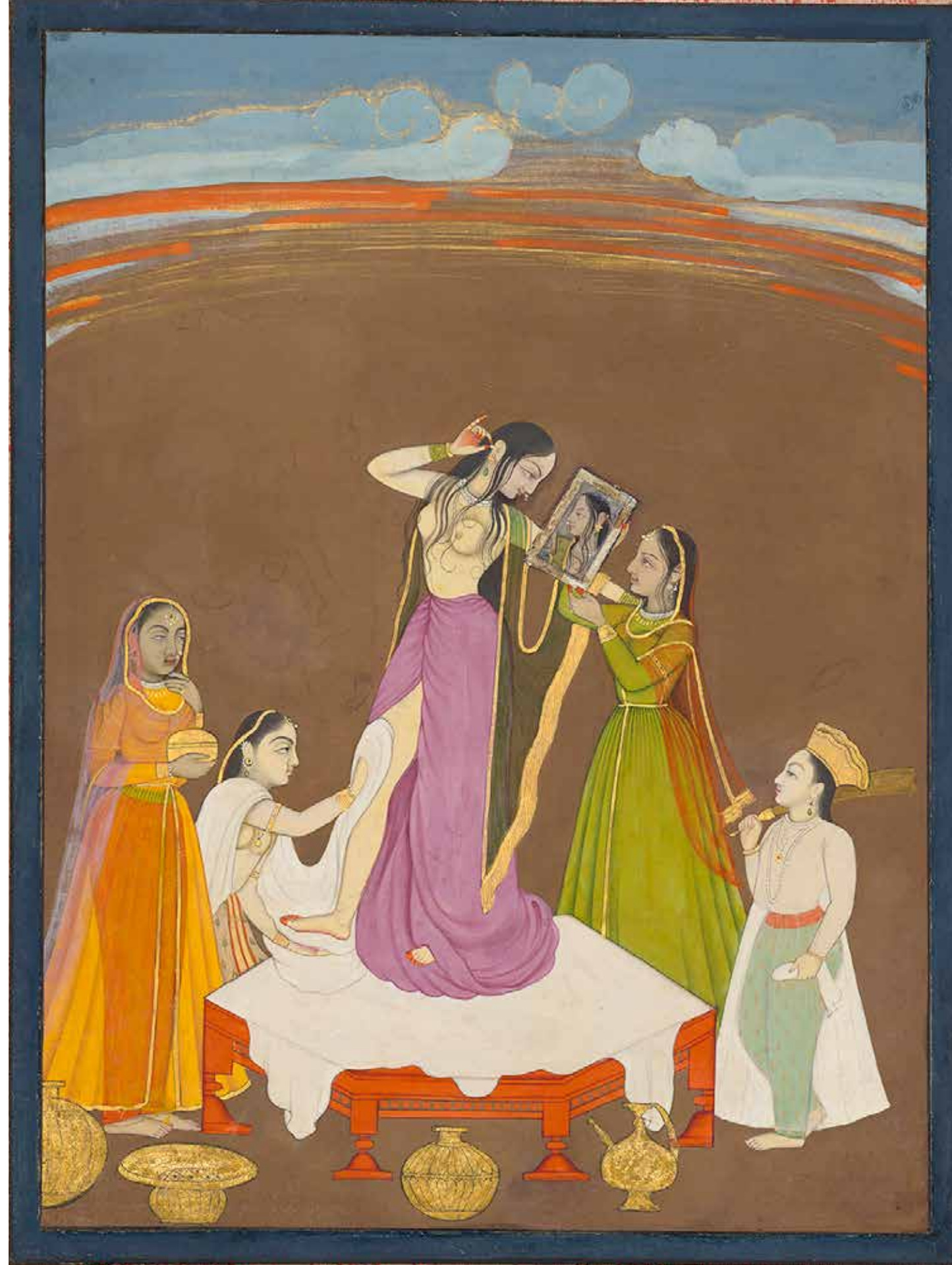
For full description see page 46

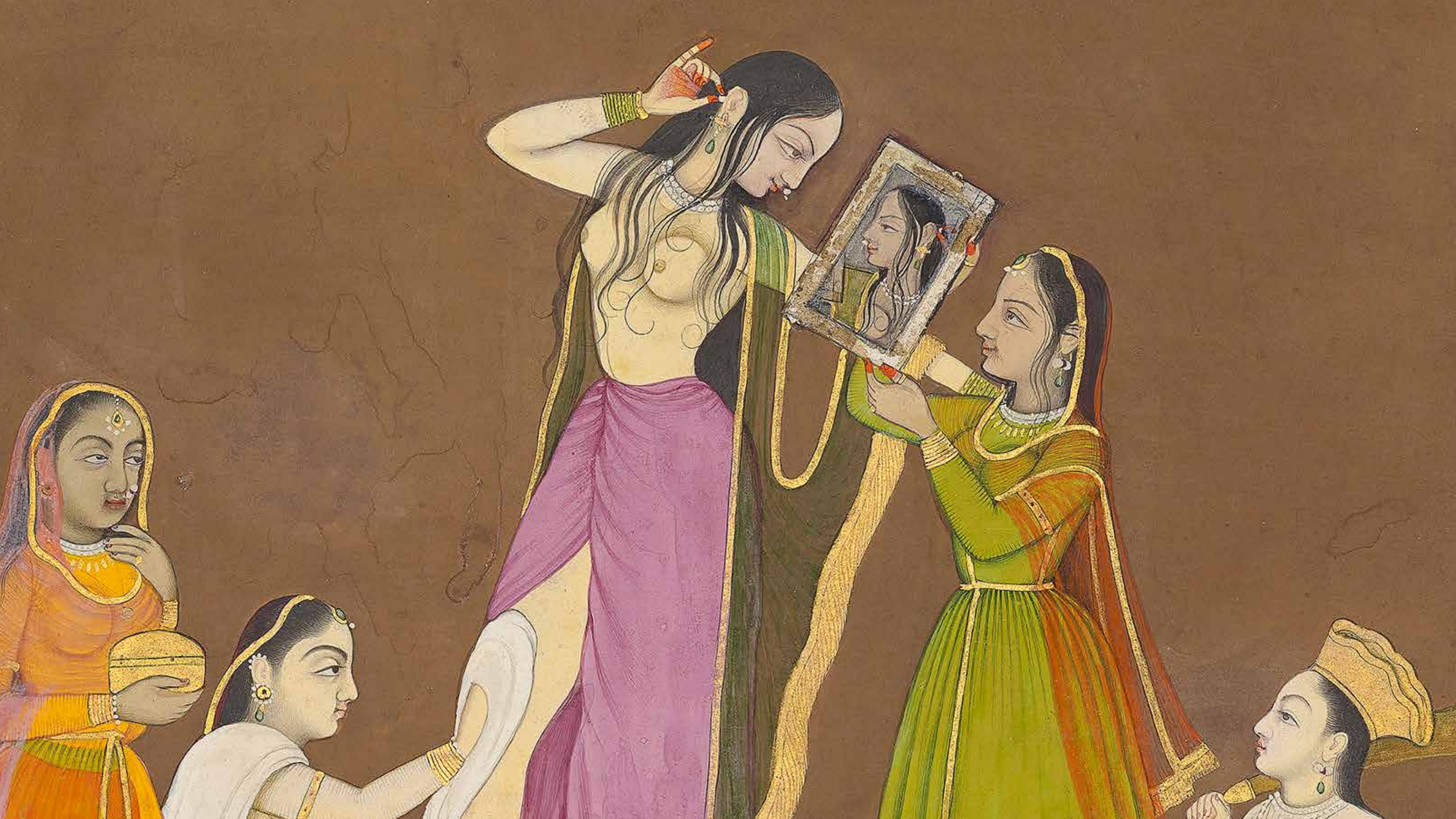
6

A *Nayika* at her Toilette

Guler, c. 1750–60
Opaque pigments and gold on paper
Painting 20.4 × 15.1 cm, within a plain dark blue border
and a wide pink surround
Folio 29.4 × 20.6 cm

For full description see page 47





7

Portrait of Raja Kirat Prakash of Sirmur

Guler, c. 1765–70

Opaque pigments with gold on paper

Painting: 21 × 13.8 cm, within a dark blue margin with two white lines and a lighter blue surround

Folio: 25.8 × 18.3 cm

Inscribed above in white *nagari*: *sri Raja Kirti Prakas ji*

For full description see page 48



Mian Mukand Dev of Jasrota

Jasrota or Jammu, under Guler influence, c. 1740
 Opaque pigments with gold and silver on paper
 Painting 25.3 × 17.3 cm, within a red border with a single
 white rule

Folio 29.8 cm × 20.5 cm

Inscribed above in white *Takri* characters: *sri Miya Makund
 De* and on the reverse in a dealer's label: *Miyan Mukunda,
 a famous prince.*

For full description see page 49



9

**The *Sakhi* describes Krishna's lovelorn
State to a hesitant Radha
Page from the 'Tehri-Garhwal' *Gitagovinda*
Series**

Guler or Kangra, c. 1775–80

Opaque pigments and gold on paper

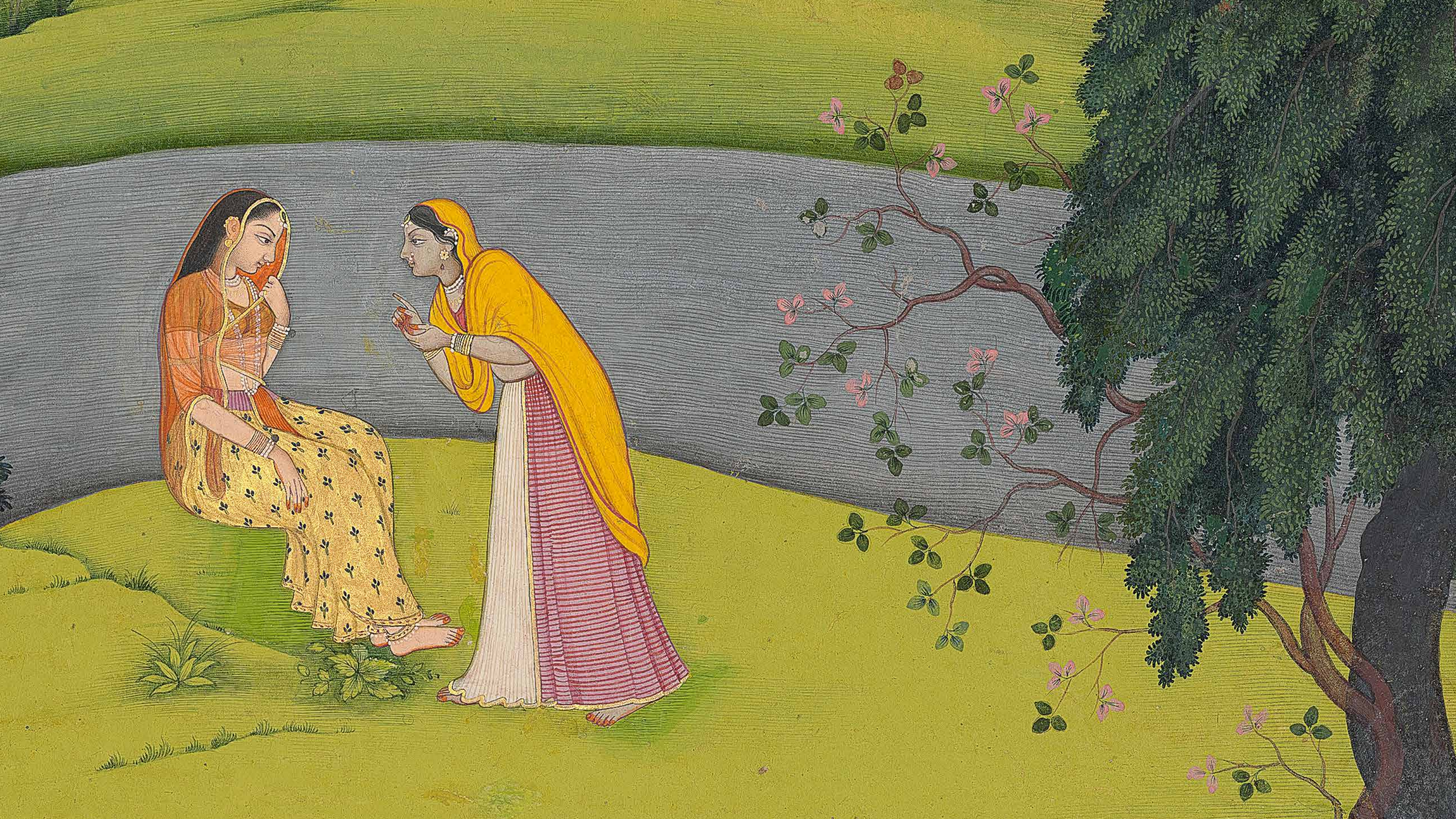
Painting 15.3 × 25.7 cm, within a wide blue border and
pink surround

Folio 17.6 × 27.5 cm

Inscribed on the reverse in *nagari* with the Sanskrit text of
Jayadeva's *Gitagovinda*, V, 12, with a Pahari paraphrase of
the Sanskrit original

For full description see page 50





Krishna observes Radha's Toilette
Page from the 'Tehri-Garhwal' Satsai of
Bihari

Probably painted by the Guler artist Fattu at Kangra,
 c. 1785

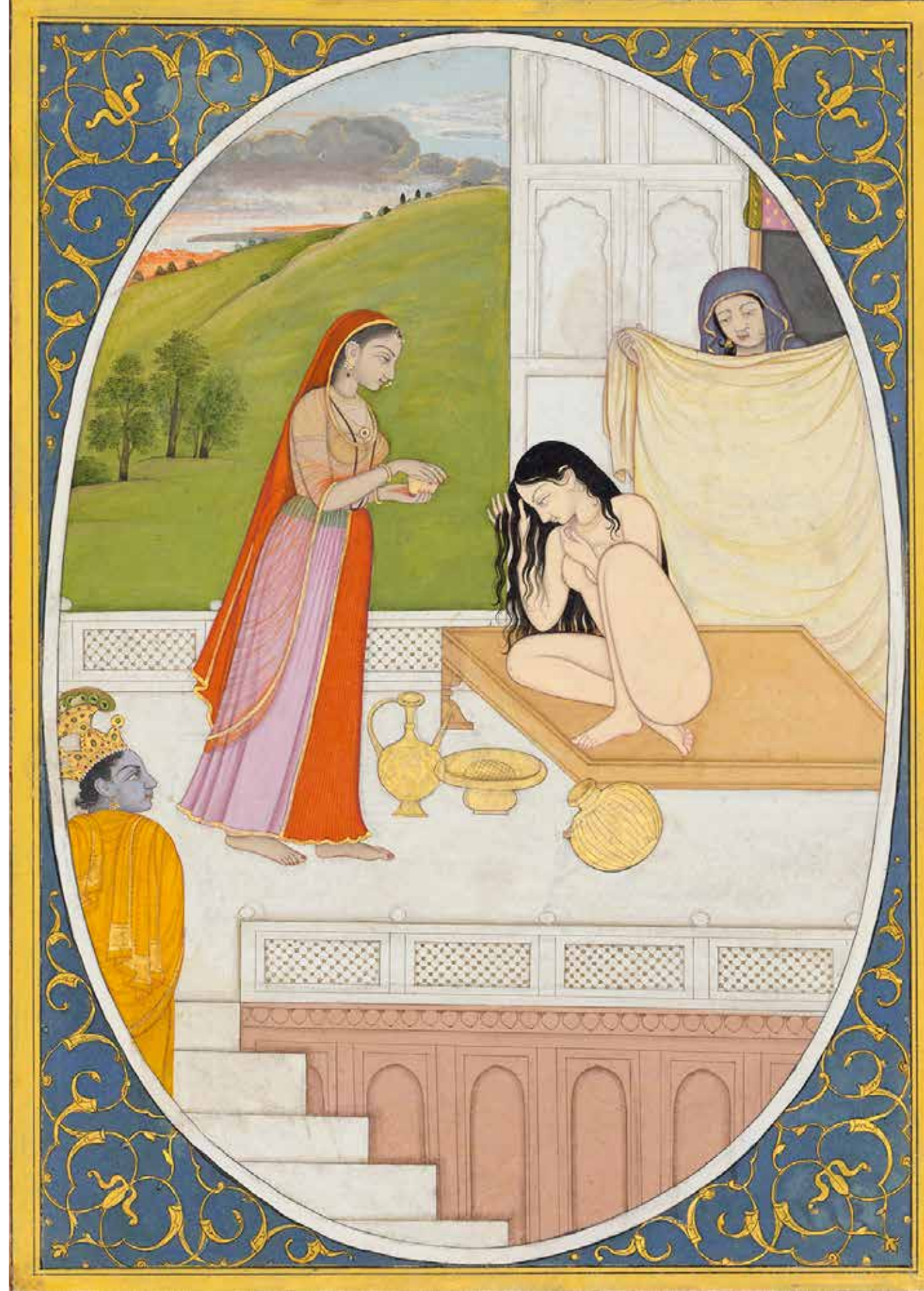
Opaque pigments and gold on paper

Painting 15.4 × 25.5 cm, oval, with spandrels in blue decorated with gold arabesques, with a yellow margin and thin pink surround

Folio 16.8 × 26.8 cm

Inscribed on the verso in *nagari* with the numbers 15 and 112 and on the cover sheet in Hindi in *nagari* script with nine verses of the *Satsai* of Bihari, numbered 13–21 (in Grierson's edition verses: 481, 451, 477, 478, 93, 453, 444, 479, 472, and K.P. Bahadur's translation 469[13], 476[14], 473 [15], 477 [16], *deest* [17], 492–94 [18–20], 498[21]) and with the number 18 above

For full description see page 51





The lovelorn *Utka Nayika*

Chamba, School of Mahesh, c. 1765–70
Opaque pigments with gold and silver on paper
Painting 21.5 × 15.8 cm, within black and white lines
and with a red surround
Folio 28 × 21.8 cm

For full description see page 52

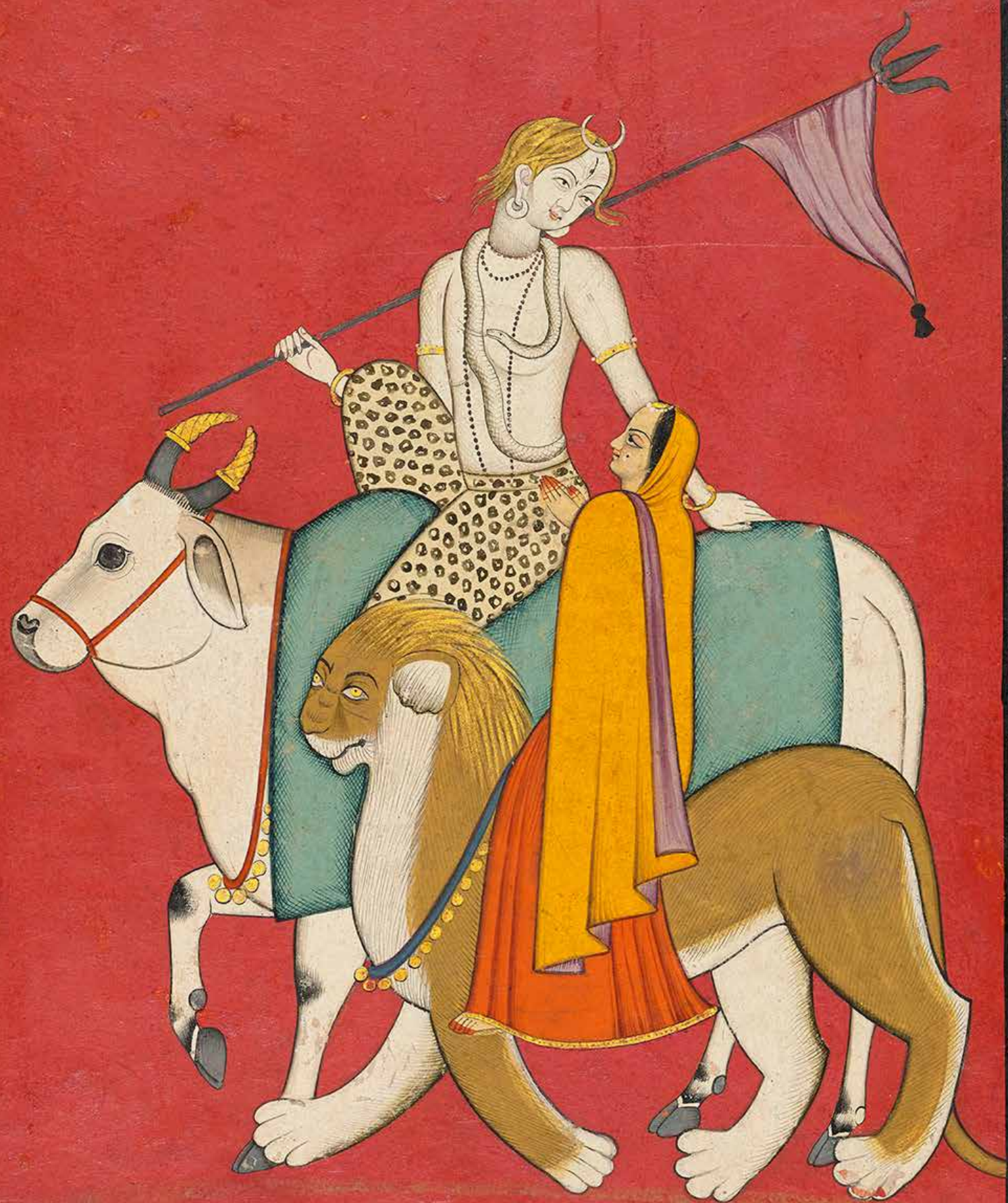


12

Shiva and Parvati riding their Vehicles Nandi the Bull and the Devi's Lion

Chamba, c. 1780–90
Opaque pigments with gold on paper
Painting 23.3 × 14.1 cm, within two thin yellow rules on
a wide dark blue surround
Folio 29 × 19.8 cm

For full description see page 53



**The Goddess emanates from the Essence
of all the Gods**
Page from a *Devi Mahatmya* Series

By a Guler artist, 1775–80
Opaque pigments on paper
Painting 16.7 × 26.2 cm, within a buff border painted
yellow
Folio 20 × 29.5 cm

Inscribed on the verso with a Sanskrit verse in *nagari*
from the *Devi Mahatmya* Canto 2, v. 11: *ann[ya]esam caiva
devanam sakradinam sariratah/ nirgatam sumahattejas
tac caikyam samagacchata* ('And then from bodies of
the other gods, Indra etc., there came forth a very great
splendour and they united into one form')

For full description see page 54



Portrait of Mian Arjun Singh

Mandi, c. 1780–90

Opaque pigments with gold on paper

Painting 19.2 × 13.3 cm, within black and white rules and a wide red surround

Folio 22.4 × 16.7 cm

Inscribed on a re-used backing sheet on the verso in Pahari in *Takri* script: *Bhai sri Arjane jai payen pauna samhale Bhote nafare* ('Respectful obeisance to brother Shri Arjun from his humble servant Bhota (?)') (read by Vijay Sharma); and with a Mandi royal inventory number 3455

For full description see page 55



15

Krishna's Confusion on seeing Radha
Page from a *Rasikapriya* Series

Mandi, 1780–90

Opaque pigments with gold on paper

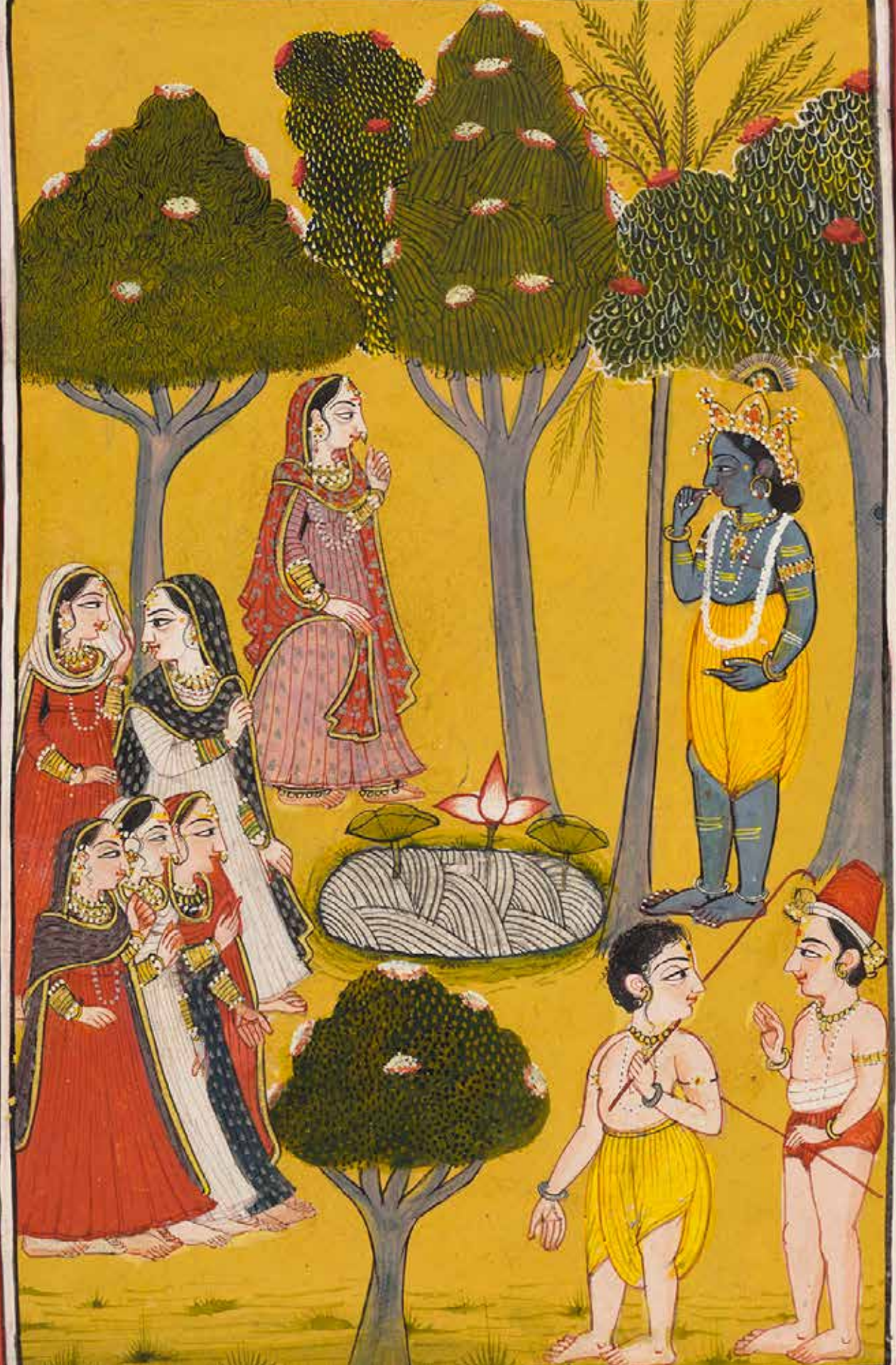
Painting 21.7 × 13.5 cm, within a white margin with black
rules and a wide red surround

Folio 26.7 × 18.5 cm

Inscribed on the cover page in Hindi in *nagari* within
a floral surround with the text of *Rasikapriya* ch. 6, v.
32, beginning *atha sri Krishna ko vibhrama hava* ('now
Krishna's emotional state of confusion'), the series
number 34 and *kha.16*

And with the Mandi royal inventory number 1790

For full description see page 56



Raja Shamsheer Sen of Mandi

Mandi, c. 1770–80

Opaque pigments with gold and silver on paper

Painting 22.5 × 15.5 cm within a narrow black margin and
an orange surround

Folio 27.5 × 20.3 cm

Inscribed above in careless *Takri*: *Sri Davan Sri Shamsh-**er Sen* ('Sri Divan Shamsheer Sen')and on the reverse with two late inscriptions by separate hands in *nagari*:*3 jayanta* and *Kumar Mohan Singh* (an owner possibly);and *Raja Shamsheer Sain Mandi*

For full description see page 57



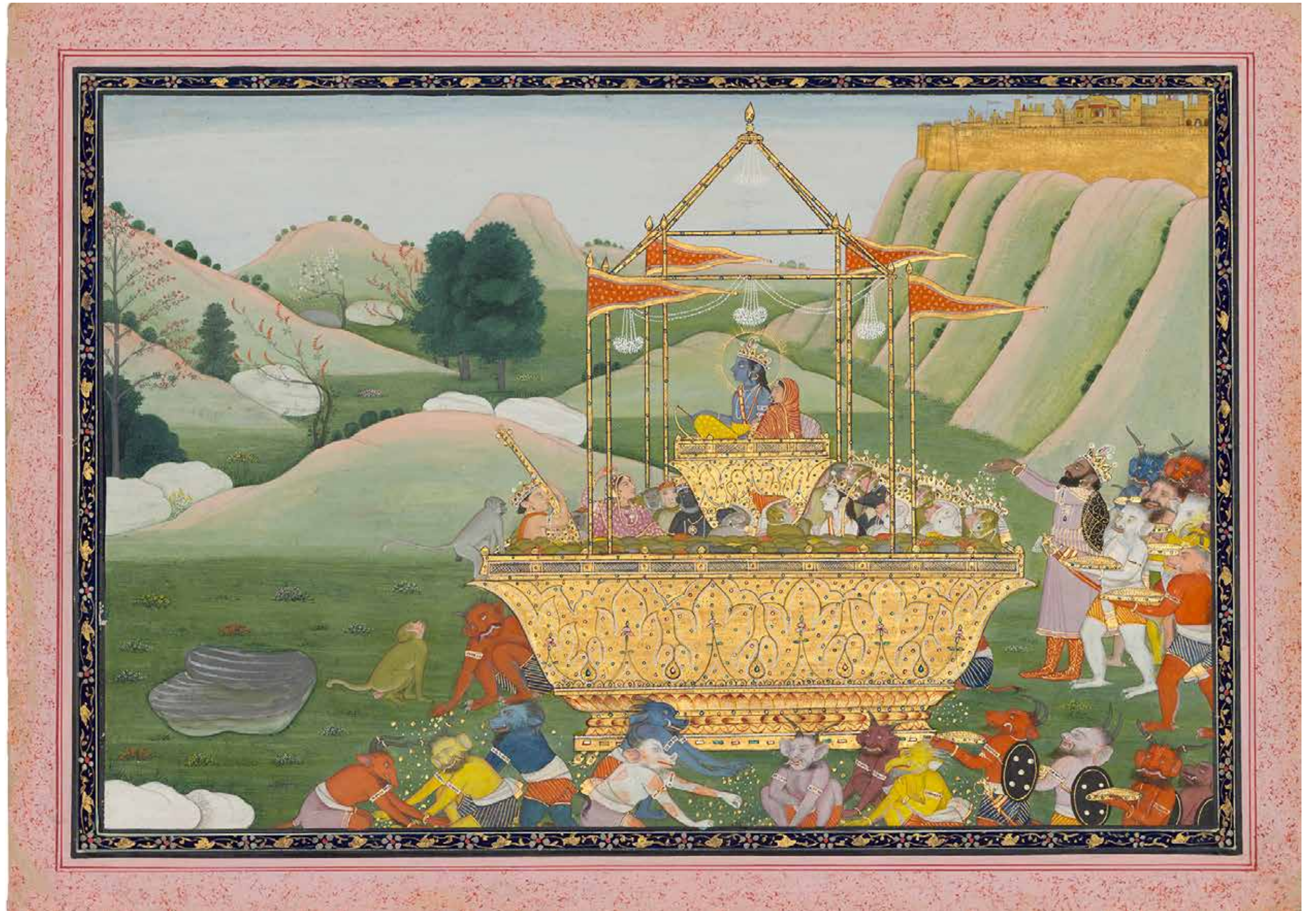


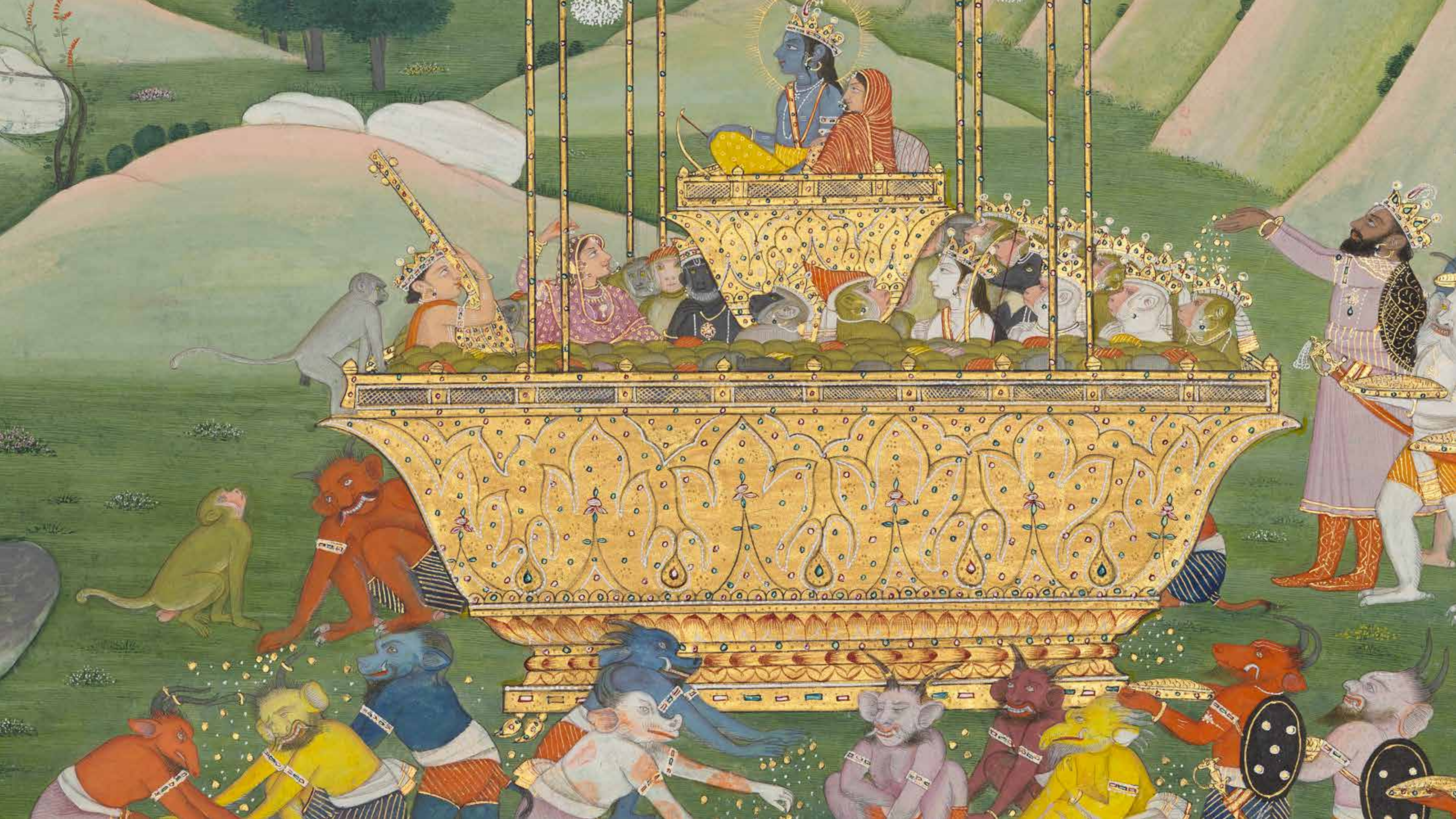
17

**Rama, Sita and his Followers begin the
Return to Ayodhya in the Pushpaka Chariot**
Page from the second part of the 'Bharany'
Ramayana

Kangra, c. 1800–10
Opaque pigments and gold on paper
Painting 20.3 × 30.6 cm, within a blue margin decorated
with a gold and red foliate scroll, and with a wide pink
surround with two red rules
Folio 25.6 × 36 cm
Numbered 33 on verso

For full description see page 58





18

A Raja, probably Raj Singh of Chamba, smoking on a Terrace

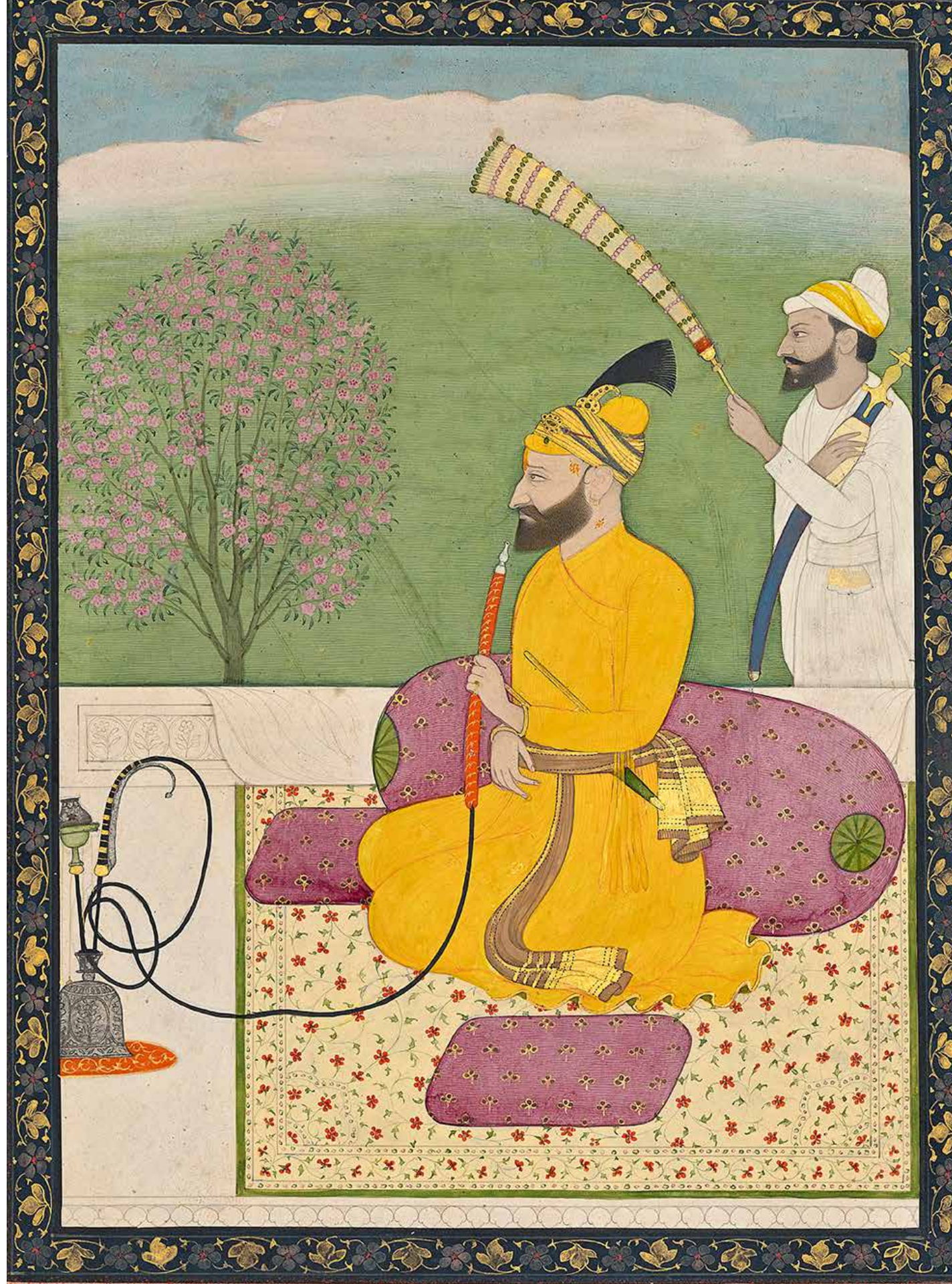
Guler style at Chamba, c. 1790

Opaque pigments with gold and silver on paper

Painting 18.8 × 13.8 cm within a blue margin decorated with gold and silver foliate arabesque and a wide pink surround

Folio 26.2 × 20.5 cm

For full description see page 59

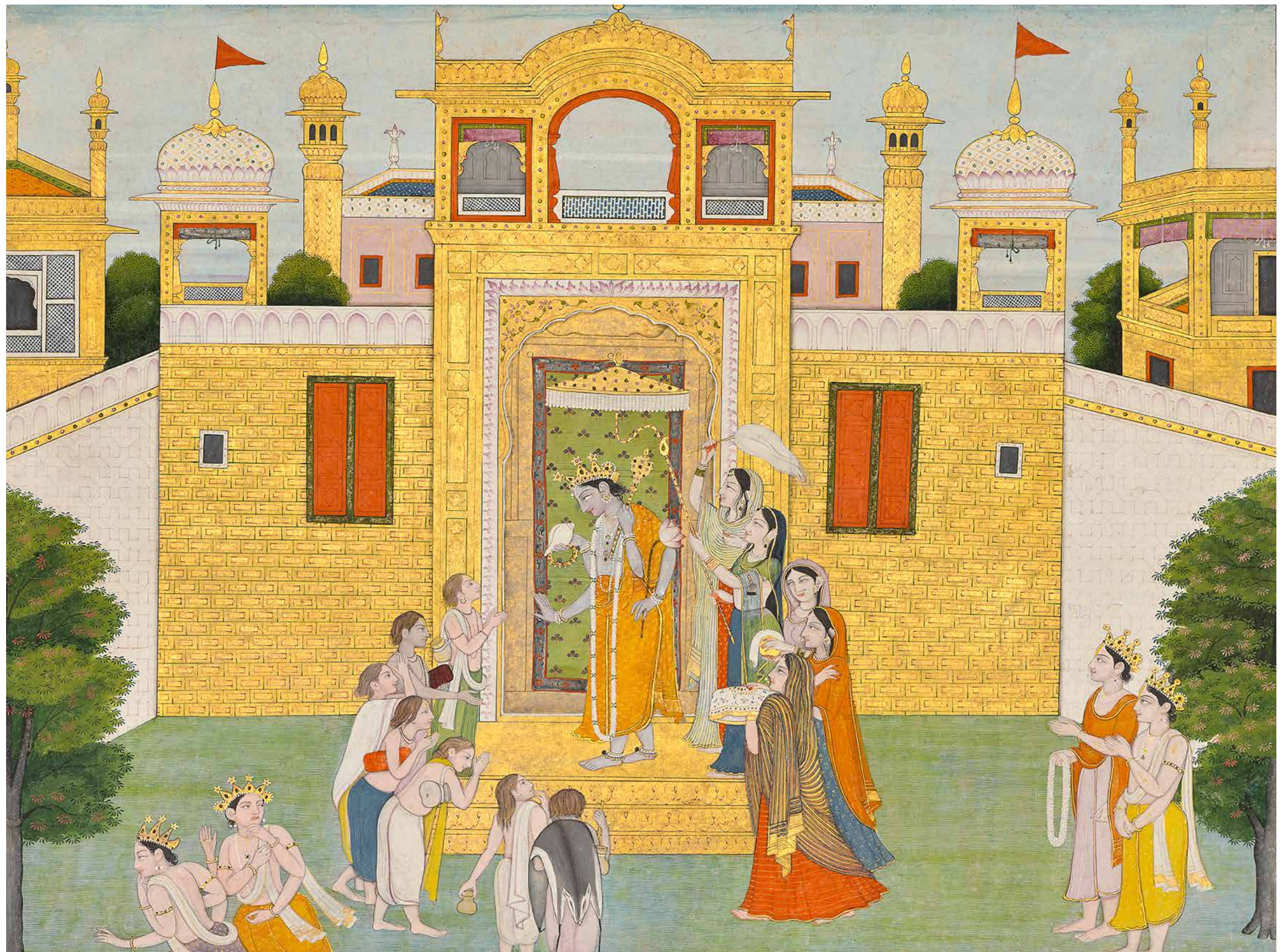


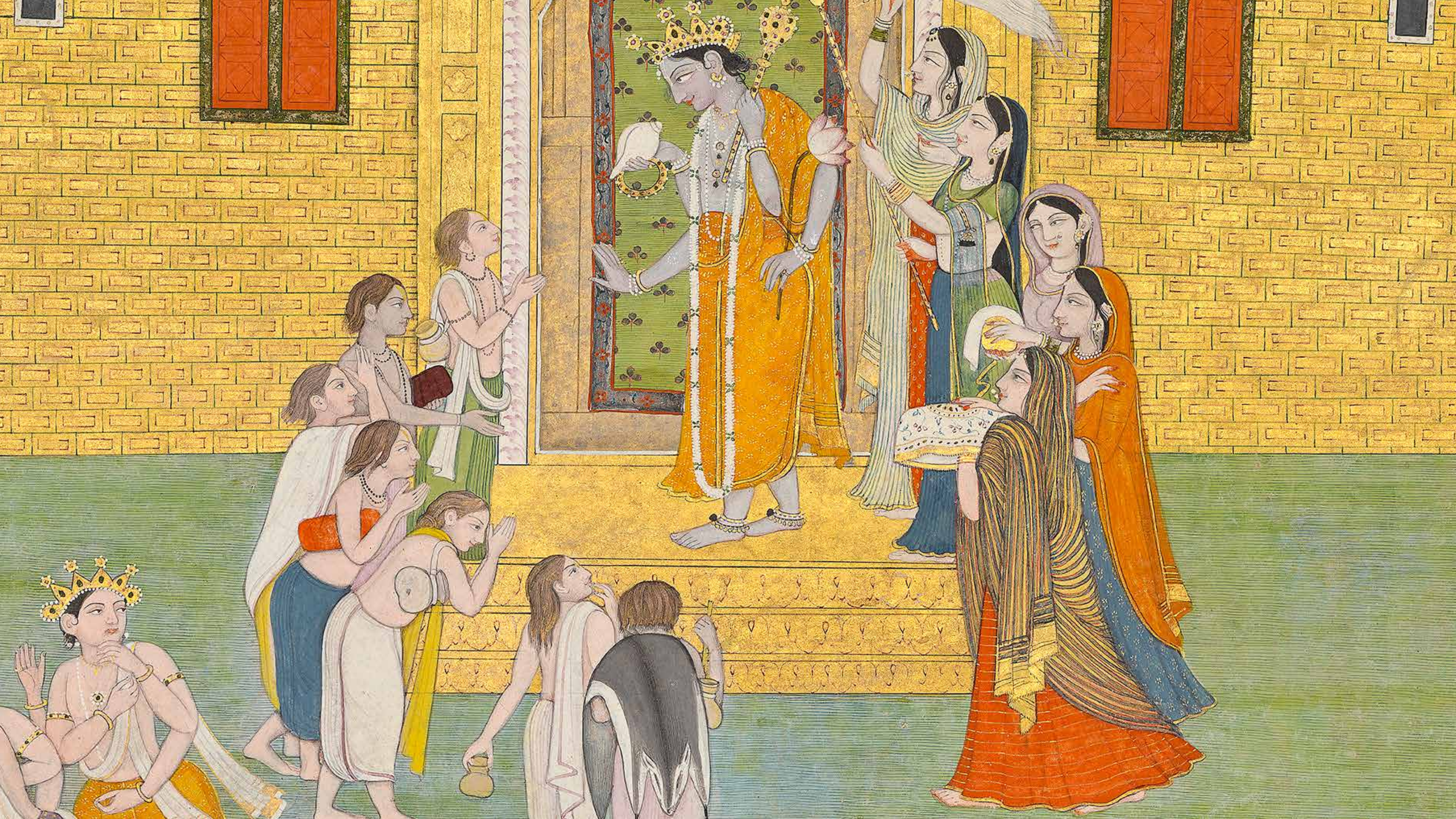
19

Vishnu outside his Vaikuntha Palace with other Gods and Attendants

Attributed to the Guler artist Ranjha at Chamba, 1790–1800
Opaque pigments and gold and silver on paper
Painting 23.7 × 31.7 cm, within thin black and gold margins,
with no surround
Folio 24.7 × 32.6 cm

For full description see page 60





20

**Krishna and his Kin dallying with their
Wives and Courtesans by the Sea Shore at
Pindaraka**
Page from a *Harivamsa* Series

Style of Purkhu, Kangra, c. 1810–20
Opaque pigments and gold on paper
Painting 35 × 44.5 cm, within a narrow black border with
three inner white rules and a red surround with another
white rule
Folio 38.4 × 48.2 cm
Inscribed on the recto with the names of the principal
figures in white *nagari* and numbered 70 on the cover
paper with a Mandi inventory stamp, also various other
numbers including 66 which is possibly the number in
the series

For full description see page 61





श्री प्रलम्ब
सुभद्रा

रघु
श्री नरुध

सुवभाम्य

कीर्ति

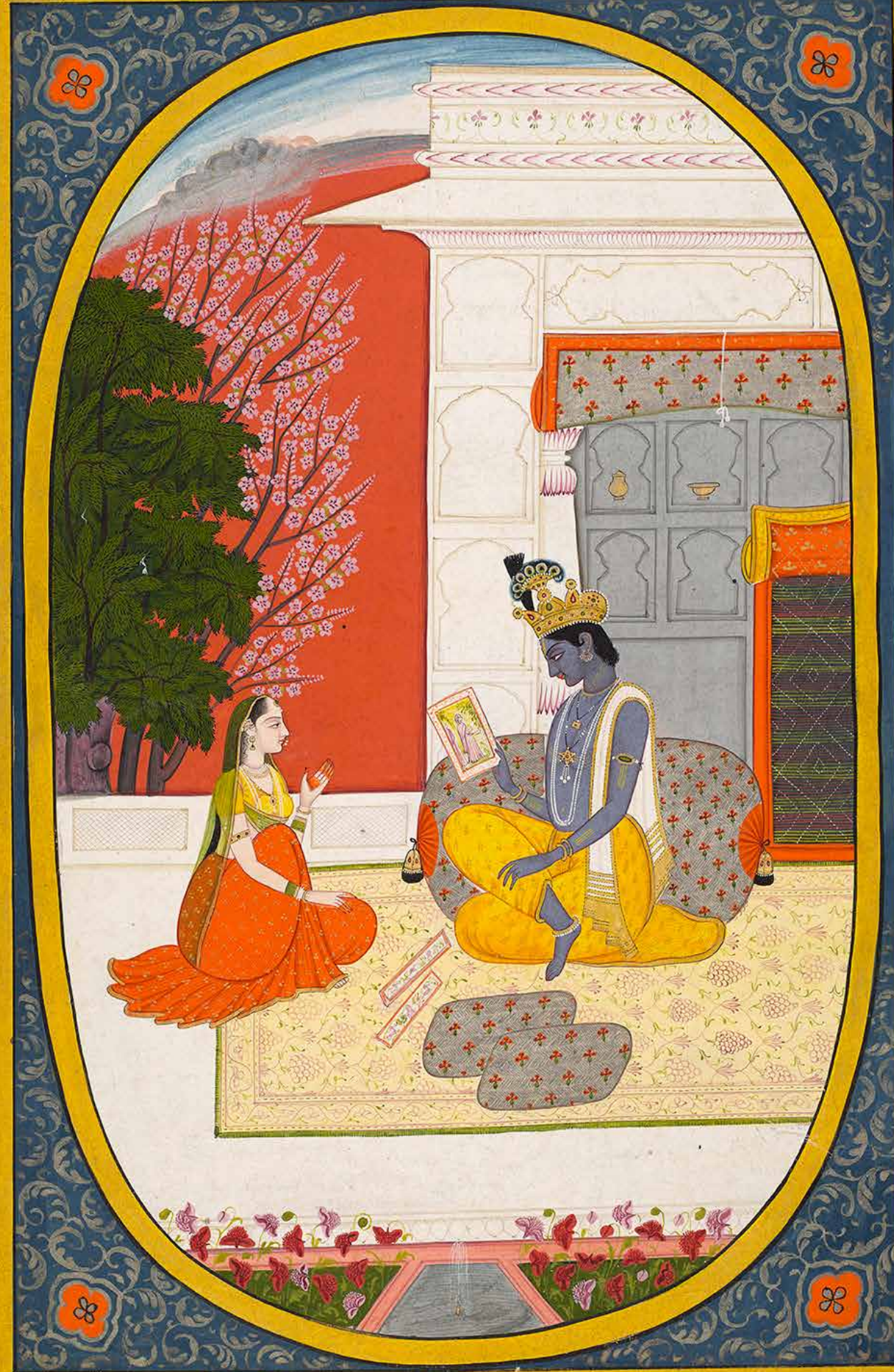
रुक्मणी

**Krishna examines a Picture of his beloved
which the *Sakhi* has brought him**
Page from the *Rasikapriya* of Keshav Das

Attributed to Purkhu, Kangra, c. 1810–20
Opaque pigments and gold and silver on paper,
Painting 25.6 × 15.7 cm, oval, within a gold margin and
blue spandrels with silver arabesques and stylised flow-
ers, with gold and red margins and a pink surround
Folio 32.5 × 23.1 cm

Inscribed on the reverse in Hindi in *nagari* script with the
text of *Rasikapriya* ch. 4, v. 12, entitled in red: *atha Sri*
Krishna ko prakasa citra darsana ('Sri Krishna's manifest
vision [of his beloved] through a painting')

For full description see page 62



Abhimanyu trapped in the *Chakravyuha* Formation strikes Ashvatthama with his Mace
Page from a *Mahabharata* Series

Kangra, c. 1820

Opaque pigments with gold on paper

Painting 32 × 44.6 cm, within a thin red surround with two white rules

Folio 33 × 46 cm:

Inscribed on the recto with names in small white *nagari*:

Abhimanyu, Asvatthama, Jedratha and Kaliketa and on the verso with the number 35

For full description see page 63



A gigantic Hanuman carrying Rama and Lakshmana across the Ocean

Style of Sajnu, Mandi, c. 1810

Opaque pigments and gold and silver on paper

Painting 22.5 × 16.9 cm, oval, with gold spandrels decorated with floral and white arabesques, within a black border with a gold and red floral scroll

Folio 24.3 × 19 cm

Inscribed later on the verso in Hindi in *nagari*: *yah tasvir*

Shri Ramachandraji aur Lakshmanaji aur Hanumanji

(‘this [is] a picture of Shri Ramachandra and Lakshmana and Hanuman’)

For full description see page 64



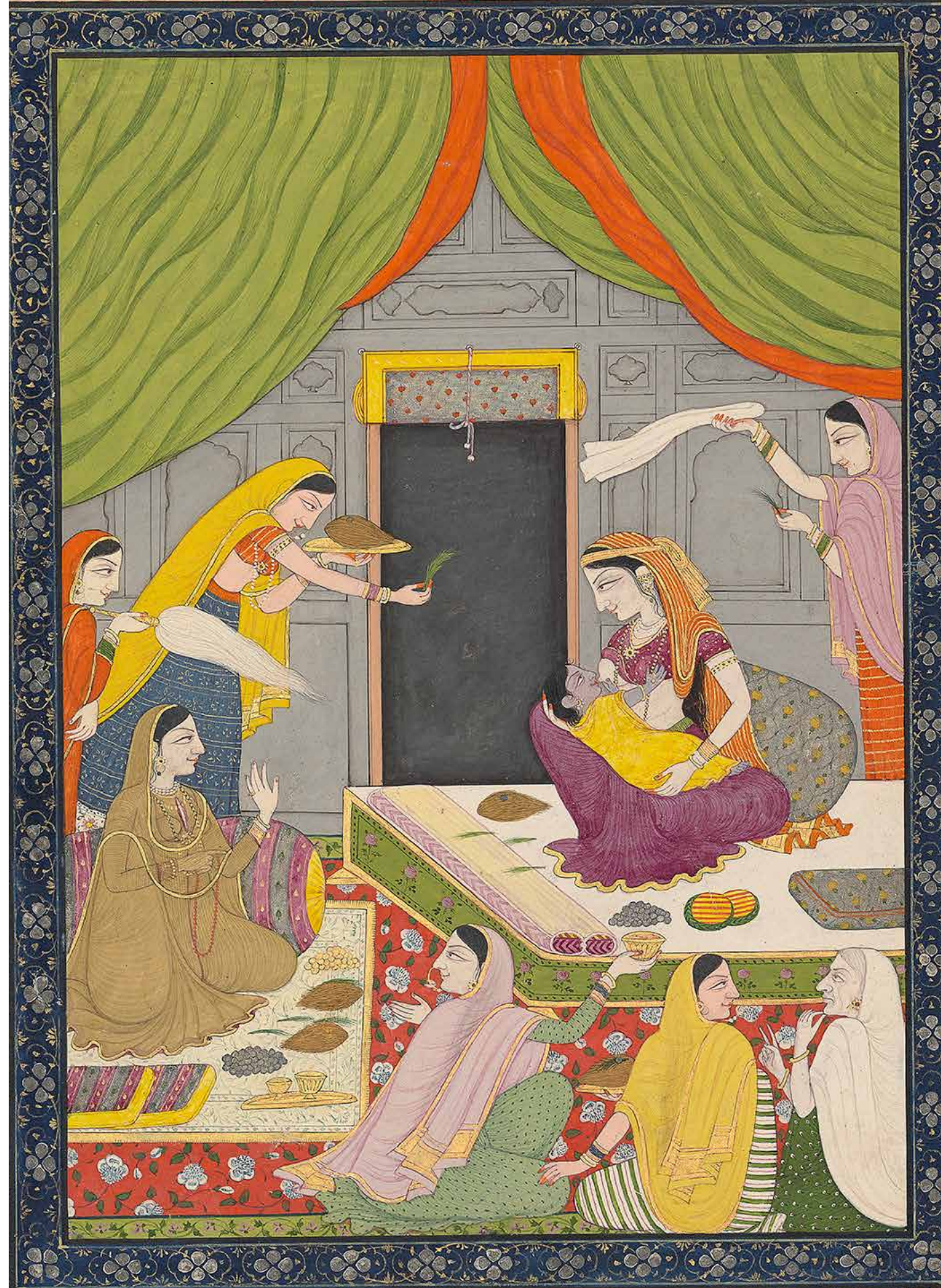
The Birth Ceremonies of the Baby Krishna

Mandi, style of Sajnu, c. 1820

Opaque pigments and gold and silver on paper
Painting 18.2 × 13 cm within a blue margin with floral
arabesques and a pink surround

Folio 26.2 × 20.2 cm

For full description see page 65



25

Vipralabdha Nayika

Style of Sajnu, Mandi, 1810–20

Opaque pigments with gold and silver on paper

Painting 20 × 16.7 cm, within a dark blue border with foliate silver scroll with two red rules and a pink surround

Folio 27.5 x 22.6 cm

For full description see page 66



26

Elephants destroy the Camp of the Merchants with whom Damayanti is travelling From a *Nala–Damayanti* Series

11Kangra, 1820–30
Painting 25 × 35.8 cm, within a blue margin with a red surround
Folio 28.7 × 40 cm
Numbered 22 on the verso

For full description see page 67





Topsfield, A., *Visions of Mughal India: the Collection of Howard Hodgkin*, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, 2012

In this wonderfully erotically charged scene, the *ragini* sits on a wooden *chauki* or stool having an arm massaged by a young man. The *chauki* is beautifully decorated with designs inlaid in ivory. She is naked to the waist and wears only a white *dhoti*. Her jewels are rich and elaborate and all her many pearls are raised in impasto. Her unbound hair cascades in ripples over her shoulders and down her back, while a few loose strands curl enticingly over her pert, swelling breasts. Her feet and hands are richly hennaed. She holds out her left arm to a young man standing beside her who is gently holding and massaging her elbow, presumably with the help of the oil that comes from a little ewer at his feet. He supports her extended arm by intertwining her fingers with those of his own right hand, depicted in such a way that his thumb must be beneath her palm and no doubt gently rubbing it. He is wearing a white *jama* with maroon *pajama*, green *patka*, green turban with a maroon turban band, and hooped earrings and a long chain of beads over his body. His eyes are torn between fixing them on his work and shyly looking up at her, while she stares boldly and provocatively up at him. The scene is set outside a small pavilion with door invitingly open and curtain half concealing the interior, concealing no doubt a bed. The figures and pavilion stand out in silhouette against a rich saffron ground with a streak of blue sky at the top, while a little band of flowers runs along the base of the painting. The figures glitter not only because of the richness of their gold ornaments, but on account of the silver details punctuating her *dhoti* and the ends of his *patka*.

Talangi is one of the wives of *Hindola raga* according to Mesakarna's system and its sound is likened to a grindstone and an iron and its appearance to a beautiful woman in the

company of other girls (Ebeling 1973, p. 74). In the Pahari drawings series in Berlin illustrated by Ebeling (fig. 347), *Talangi ragini* is depicted with the same composition as our painting. Pahari artists seem to have devised their own compositions for this *ragini* based on the rubbing motif of the sound. The name is properly *Tailangi* referring possibly to oil (*taila*).

This series which only became known in the 1990s includes some of the most appealing late seventeenth century Pahari paintings on account of their wonderful imagery, the intensity and combination of their colours and the portrayal of the emotions of the characters. Some pages from this new series are in published catalogues: in the Fondation Custodia, Paris, see Gahlin 2002 no. 36, who calls the series Basohli 1690-95; in the Moscatelli collection, London, see Glynn et al. 2011, nos. 4-5, and pp. 33-34, who calls it Nurpur c. 1690; and in the Howard Hodgkin collection presently in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, Topsfield 2012, nos. 53-57, who calls it Basohli or Nurpur c. 1680. A wonderful page now in the Freer Gallery, Washington DC, shows the *ragaputra Vihagra*, who leans backwards with his hands linked above his head and letting out a tremendous yawn (published Galloway 1998, no. 8). Other pages from this series are in the Cleveland Museum, the Rietberg Museum, and in other Francesca Galloway catalogues: 2003, no. 10, and 2004, nos. 21-22. For other pages from the series previously on the art market, see Glynn et al., p. 46.

Goswamy and Fischer remark (2011, p. 441), à propos of the *Ragamala* series that they attribute to Devidasa of Nurpur, that the latter's 'second' *Ragamala* shares 'a number of stylistic traits with a series that is widely dispersed but differ in size and inscriptions', i.e. our series. These traits indeed are often so similar that it is difficult not to attribute some at least of the paintings of the dispersed series, including this one, to this artist, whose name is known of course from the colophon of the 'second' *Rasamanjari* series from Basohli dated 1695 and

whom Goswamy and Fischer have shown (1992, pp. 60-63) to be the father of the Nurpur artist Golu, hence Devidasa's soubriquet. Our young *nayaka* for instance seems very close in profile and in the handling of the eye to the slightly older *nayaka* in the *ragamala* series (Goswamy and Fischer 2011, fig. 10), and to the *nayaka* of the *Rasamanjari* series (Goswamy and Fischer 1992, no. 23; Archer 1973, Basohli 15iii, v). The treatment of the closed eye of the *Rasamanjari's* sleeping *nayaka* (*ibid.*, no. 24 and 15i) can be compared to the closed eye of the yawning *nayaka* in the page from our series now in the Freer (Galloway 1998, no. 8).

1

Tilanga Ragini

Page from a *Ragamala* series

Attributed to Devidasa of Nurpur, Basohli, c. 1690-1700

Opaque pigments and gold and silver on paper

Painting 17 × 17 cm, within thin black and white rules and an orange-red surround

Folio 20.5 × 20.8 cm

Inscribed above to the left in *Takri*: *ragani tilangi / raga hindol bharaj* ('*Tilangi ragini*, wife [of] *Hindola raga*')

References:

Archer, W.G., *Indian Painting from the Punjab Hills*, Sotheby Parke Bernet, London, 1973

Ebeling, K., *Ragamala Painting*, Ravi Kumar, Basel, 1973

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Galloway, F., *Indian Miniatures, Asian Textiles*, Francesca Galloway sale catalogue, London, 1998

Glynn, C., Skelton, R., and Dallapiccola, A., *Ragamala Paintings from India from the Claudio Moscatelli Collection*, Philip Wilson, London, 2011

Goswamy, B.N., and Fischer, E., *Pahari Masters: Court Painters of Northern India*, Museum Rietberg, Zurich, 1992, *Artibus Asiae Supplementum* 38, reprint Niyogi Books, Delhi, 2009

Goswamy, B.N., and Fischer, E., 'Kripal, Devidasa and Golu of Nurpur' in Beach, M.C., Fischer, E., and Goswamy, B.N., *Masters of Indian Painting*, Artibus Asiae, Zurich, 2011, pp. 439-58



2

Rama and Lakshmana on Top of the Rishyamuka Mountain contemplating entering Kishkindha
Page from the Shangri *Ramayana*, Style IV

By a Pahari artist, perhaps from Bilaspur, 1710–20

Opaque pigments on paper

Folio 21.2 × 31.5 cm

Painting 19 × 29 cm, within a red surround

Inscribed on the border in Pahari in *Takri* script: *116 Kabandh sverage jo gaye. Uprant sri maharaj Lakshman agge jo baradhe. Tam ratra hoyi saye ratra parvata de sikhare upar batit kiti* ('116. Then Kabandha went up to heavenly abode. Thereafter Sri Maharaj [Rama] and Lakshmana proceeded ahead. It was night time, so they spent the night at the summit of mountain') (read by Vijay Sharma)
 Inscribed on the reverse in *nagari*: *Aranya, 116* and in *Takri*: *116*

Provenance

Raja Raghbir Singh of Shangri

Published

Randhawa, M.S., *Basohli Painting*, New Delhi, 1959, pl. 17

Valmiki, *Ramayana illustre par les miniatures indiennes du XVIe au XIXe siecle*, Editions Diane de Selliers, Paris, 2011, vol. IV, p. 71¹

Literature

Archer, W.G., *Indian Painting from the Punjab Hills*, Sotheby Parke Bernet, London, 1973

Britschgi, J., and Fischer, E., *Rama und Sita: das Ramayana in der Malerei Indiens*, Museum Rietberg, Zurich, 2008

Daljeet, and Mathur, V.K., *Ramayana in Indian Miniatures: from the Collection of the National Museum*, New Delhi, 2015

Galloway, F., *Indian Miniatures, Asian Textiles*, Francesca Galloway sale catalogue, London, 1998

Goswamy, B.N., and Fischer, E., *Pahari Masters: Court Painters of Northern India*, Museum Rietberg, Zurich, 1992, *Artibus Asiae Supplementum* 38, reprint Niyogi Books, Delhi, 2009

McInerney, T., *Divine Pleasures: Painting from India's Rajput Courts – the Kronos Collections*, Terence McInerney with Steven A. Kossak and Navina Najat Haidar, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2016

Topsfield, A., ed., *In the Realm of Gods and Kings: Arts of India*, Philip Wilson Publishers, London, 2004

Valmiki, *Ramayana illustre par les miniatures indiennes du XVIe au XIXe siecle*, Editions Diane de Selliers, Paris, 2011

In this page from the end of the Forest Book of the *Ramayana*, the *Aranyakanda*. Rama, Sita and Lakshmana had been living peacefully in the forest for more than twelve years when Sita was kidnapped by Ravana. Distraught, Rama and his brother wander the forest looking for her and her unknown kidnapper. The dying Jatayu had told them that he had been mortally wounded trying to prevent Ravana from carrying off Sita; and the demon Kabandha whom Rama had killed had told them to find Sugriva and his monkeys near Laka Pampa and the Rishyamuka mountain and to ask for their assistance. Now at the end of the book they have reached the mountain and rest on it while considering their next step.

In this elegant, uncluttered page, one of the finest in this style, the two brothers are seated on top of the mountain by a small fire, Rama at ease seated on a deer skin, his arm resting nonchalantly on his knee, his weapons laid aside, Lakshmana still alert holding his bow and arrows and wearing his sword. The green

mountain has some trees upon it and the enchanting groves surrounding the lake are represented by a single tree. The lake behind the mountain is dark in the night though stars abound in the sky and a crescent moon. Rama has given way to his grief again and is plunged in misery, while Lakshmana has attempted to console him. A page in this style comparable in its intensity showing the devoted Lakshmana keeping watch by night beside the sleeping Rama is in the National Museum, New Delhi (Valmiki 2011, vol. III, p. 149; also Daljeet and Mathur 2015, pl. 48).

The famous set of paintings known as the 'Shangri' *Ramayana* series was thought by W.G. Archer to have been executed at Shangri in the eastern Punjab Hills state of Kulu, where it was found (Archer 1973, vol. 1, pp. 317–30). Archer discerned four major painting styles in the manuscript which he dated 1690–1710. The artists of styles I and II both have a wild sense of spatial organisation in their compositions, sometimes creating believable settings for their characters and sometimes not bothering, and often showing both traits on the same page. More recently, Goswamy and Fischer (1992, pp. 76–79) questioned this attribution to Kulu and assigned paintings in Archer's first two styles to Bahu near Jammu in the western group of hill states, on the basis of stylistic affinities with a portrait of Raja Kripal Dev of Bahu (one that Archer thought was done by a Kulu artist linked to the Shangri series). They dated them 1690–1700 and 1700–1710.

Style III of this dispersed series including wonderfully humanized portraits of the monkeys is found mostly in the Book of Kiskindha and Book of Battles. Paintings in Archer's Style IV is found mostly in the Books of the Forest, as here, and of Kiskindha, and are often inscribed on the recto with a description of the subjects of the paintings in Pahari in *Takri* script. Archer sees a perceptible influence from Bilaspur in the work of this artist. For discussion as to the disputed origin of the series, see among others Archer, op. cit., pp. 325–29, who places Style III in Kulu

with Bilaspur influence; Goswamy and Fischer 1992, pp. 76–91, having moved Styles I–II from Kulu to Bahu, do not take a view on the place of origin of Styles III and IV; and Britschgi and Fischer 2008, pp. 12–14, feel that Styles III and IV were done elsewhere (unspecified) 'for the court at Bahu'. Topsfield (2004, no. 47) suggests either Bahu or an artist from Nurpur for Style III. More recently McInerney (2016, p. 136) has suggested that Bilaspur or Mandi artists influenced Style IV of this part of the *Ramayana* series or perhaps artists from those two court studios were working in Jammu to finish the series and later the whole series was given to the court in Kulu. Archer in 1973 (Kahlur, 13i–iii) cited the dispersed Madhavanala–Kamakandala series from Bilaspur c. 1700 as an obvious parallel to his Style IV and it is difficult to disagree with him, particularly in the light of the depiction of Rama and Lakshmana in *Raja Ajmer Chand of Bilaspur worshipping Rama and Sita* in the V&A from the same period (ibid., Kahlur 14) with their elongated, calm faces and intense gaze. Dark grounds and narrow strips of sky at the top of the painting with stripey clouds as here are common in Bilaspur painting at this time. It is not known when the whole series reached Kulu or Shangri, and it would certainly be more reasonable that an artist from nearby Bilaspur was called in to finish the series than that such an artist would have journeyed to Bahu in Jammu at the other end of the Punjab Hills.

¹ Wrongly captioned as Rama and Lakshmana on Mount Prasravana and placed in Book IV rather than the correct Book III as determined by the identification on the verso



3

A Raja, possibly Raja Jagat Singh of Nurpur

Nurpur or Chamba, 1730_50

Opaque pigments and gold on paper

Painting 15 × 9.8 cm, within two white rules with stars at corners and a wide red surround

Folio 21.2 × 14.3 cm

Inscribed above in *nagari*: *Sri Raja Jagat Singh* and on the reverse in

Takri: *Raja Jagat Singh Pathani ka*, while a modern hand has added *Jagat Singh Bilaspur*

Literature

Aijazuddin, F. S., *Pahari Paintings and Sikh Portraits in the Lahore Museum*, Sotheby Parke Bernet, London, 1977

Archer, W.G., *Indian Painting from the Punjab Hills*, Sotheby Parke Bernet, London, 1973

Goswamy, B.N., and Fischer, E., *Pahari Masters: Court Painters of Northern India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1992

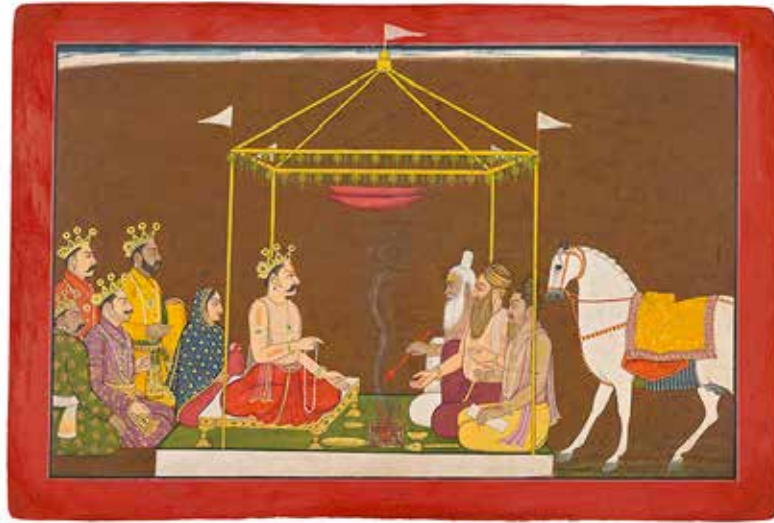
Khandalavala, K., *Pahari Miniature Paintings in the N.C. Mehta Collection*, Gujarat Museum Society, Ahmedabad, 1982

The Raja is dressed in a white mid-calf length *jama*, green and gold striped *paijama*, a gold *patka* decorated with green leaves as well as a plain red one, and a plain mauve turban with a brocade turban band fringed with pearls and a black feather aigrette. Large hooped earrings with two pearls, gold jewelled armbands and bracelets, a locket with pendant jewel and a large *katar* thrust through his cummerbund complete the ensemble, apart from the very large straight sword that he is holding vertically, the tip of its scabbard on the ground. He stands against a plain green ground with bands of white and blue above.

The costume is typical of the seventeenth century. This is possibly Raja Jagat Singh of Nurpur (reg. 1618–46) who raised Nurpur to its greatest power in the reigns of Jahangir and Shah Jahan. A Mughal portrait of him is in the Cleveland Museum, formerly in the Benkaim collection, unpublished,² while a late seventeenth century portrait from Nurpur in the Chandigarh Museum shows him worshipping Vishnu, whose worship he introduced into Nurpur (Archer 1973, Nurpur 1). An eighteenth century portrait possibly from Nurpur is in the N.C. Mehta collection in Ahmedabad and shows the same features (Khandalavala 1982, fig. 77). The large aquiline nose and handlebar moustache is found in all these portraits. The ruling clan of Nurpur were Pathania Rajputs, named from their first capital of Pathankot, hence the inscription.

The double white rules with stars at the corner seems a speciality of Chamba, especially of paintings attributed to Mahesh of Chamba, see Goswamy and Fischer 1992, nos. 68–69, 72–74. The portrait however does not seem to be like those from Chamba (e.g. Aijazuddin 1977, Chamba 1–3), but rather resembles Nurpur portraits such as those of Raja Daya Dhata c. 1710 (Archer 1973, Nurpur 9).

² <https://www.clevelandart.org/art/2013.324>



4

Yudhishtira performs the Horse Sacrifice
Page from the 'Small' Guler-Basohli *Bhagavata Purana* Series

Attributed to Manaku, Guler, c. 1740
 Opaque pigments with gold on paper
 Painting 18 × 28.6 cm, within a narrow black
 margin with a white rule and a red surround
 Folio 21.8 × 32.4 cm

Inscribed on the reverse with one verse in Sanskrit in *nagari* script from the *Bhagavata Purana* I, canto 8, v. 6 ('Krishna made Yudhishtira conduct three well-performed horse sacrifices and thus caused his virtuous fame to be glorified in all directions, like that of Indra, who had performed one hundred such sacrifices') and a colophon in alternate black and red *aksharas* stating this is the horse sacrifice of Yudhishtira in the first book of the *Bhagavata Purana*, no. 49.

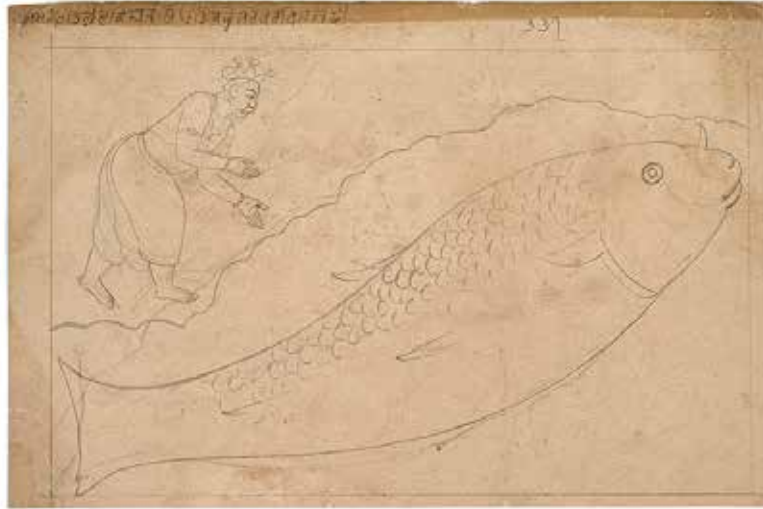
Literature

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 Craven, Roy, 'Manaku: a Guler Painter', in Ohri, V.C., and Craven, R., ed., *Painters of the Pahari Schools*, Marg Publications, Bombay, 1998, pp. 46–67
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 Seyller, John, and Mittal, Jagdish, *Pahari Drawings in the Jagdish and Kamla Mittal Museum of Indian Art*, Hyderabad, 2013

King Yudhishtira sits within a sacrificial enclosure facing the three Brahmins who are performing the sacrifice by adding offerings to the sacred fire. Behind the Brahmins stands the white horse that will be duly sacrificed. Yudhishtira is supported by his four brothers – Arjuna, Bhima, Nakula and Sahadeva – and their common wife Draupadi. The composition has a geometrical simplicity of construction and is perfectly balanced, the plain bright colours of the participants' clothes standing out against the brown background. Streaks of white and blue at the top indicate the sky. Yudhishtira, Draupadi and the Brahmins are seated on a small platform under the framework of a *pandal* adorned with sacred leaves and white pennants, one of which obtrudes into the upper margin. The page comes from the large series known as the 'Small' Guler *Bhagavata Purana* series. Archer (1973, vol. 1, p. 51) thought the series came from Basohli and was later than the 'Large' *Bhagavata Purana* series of 1760–65, followed by Aijazuddin (1977, Basohli 7i–xi). Goswamy and Fischer established its provenance in Guler and attributed the series to Manaku and his workshop about 1740 (1992, pp. 244–45, nos. 105–10; and 2011, p. 643, figs. 9–11 and 11a). It is a very extensive series widely dispersed, with the later parts existing only as drawings. For other pages from this extensive series, see Craven 1998, figs. 10–16, Seyller and Mittal 2013, nos. 11–14, and McInerney 2016, nos. 67–70. Manaku is one of the most controversial of Pahari artists, the varying viewpoints of themselves, W.G. Archer, Jagdish Mittal, Karl Khandalavala, Roy Craven and V.C. Ohri are summed up in Goswamy and Fischer 2011, pp. 654–66.

The Brahmins in our painting are nicely distinguished in physiognomy, hair style and beard and might at first sight be compared to the several varied types in *Indra's Disguises after he stole Prithu's Ashvamedha* in the Rajasthan Oriental Research Institute (Craven 1998, fig. 10), except that the individuality of these seven types is even more pronounced so that Craven attributes it to the aged Pandit Seu. The simplicity of our composition and the faces of the princes match other paintings from this series attributed to Manaku, such as *Dhruva meeting with Ravana* in the Daytona Beach Museum, Florida (*ibid.*, fig. 15). Whether or not Pandit Seu and his sons Manaku and Nainsukh had visited Delhi, Manaku has clearly studied Mughal painting of the Muhammad Shah period intensely, in that he makes the poles of the *pandal* rise from the plinth outside of the figures occupying it and the pyramidal top is in correct perspective. The horse too has a ground on which to place its hooves, but the brothers, despite their solid appearance, still seem to be floating in space in the old-fashioned way, since the ground and the background are not distinguished. For a drawing from this series, see cat. 5.



5

King Satyavrata and the Fish Avatar of Vishnu Page from the 'Small' *Bhagavata Purana* series

Attributed to Manaku, Guler, c. 1740–50

Brush drawing on paper

20.5 × 31 cm

Inscribed above in Pahari in *Takri* script: *machha talaye vich na oyi. tam bade sarovare vich sati. 227* ('The fish was unable to fit within pond, so [it was] left into the sea') (read by Vijay Sharma) and with the number 227

Literature

Aijazuddin, F. S., *Pahari Paintings and Sikh Portraits in the Lahore Museum*, Sotheby Parke Bernet, London, 1977

Archer, W.G., *Indian Paintings from the Punjab Hills*, Sotheby Parke Bernet, London and New York, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1973

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McInerney, T., *Divine Pleasures: Painting from India's Rajput Courts – the Kronos*

Collections, Terence McInerney with Steven A. Kossak and Navina Najat Haidar, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2016

Seyller, John, and Mittal, Jagdish, *Pahari Drawings in the Jagdish and Kamla Mittal Museum of Indian Art*, Hyderabad, 2013

The story of King Satyavrata occurs in the last canto of Book 8 of the *Bhagavata Purana*, and tells how Vishnu was first incarnated to save the earth. The pious king of the Dravida country, Satyavrata, intent on performing penance by the sea shore and subsisting only on water, inadvertently caught a tiny fish. Unwilling to harm it, he kept it in a container, but day after day the fish grew bigger and bigger and the king ran out of containers that could hold it. Recognising that the fish must be a powerful god, he worshipped it as Vishnu, who then revealed to him that he was indeed Vishnu and that he had come to save him from the upcoming mighty flood that would cover the earth when Brahma was asleep. Satyavrata became Manu, the first man, and when the flood came he gathered up the seven sages and examples of all living things and took them into the boat that miraculously appeared. Vishnu appeared again as a great fish and using the snake Vasuki as a towing rope, towed the boat through the night of Brahma until that god awoke again and resumed his creation duties.

The page comes from the large series known as the 'Small' Guler *Bhagavata Purana* series. Archer (1973, vol. 1, p. 51) thought the series came from Basohli and was later than the 'Large' *Bhagavata Purana* series of 1760–65, followed by Aijazuddin (1977, Basohli 7i–xi). Goswamy and Fischer believe it to be from Guler and attributable to Manaku about 1740 (1992, pp. 244–45, nos. 105–10; and 2011, p. 643, figs. 9–11 and 11a). Craven in his study of Manaku's work (1998, figs. 10–16), Seyller and Mittal (2013, nos. 11–14) and McInerney (2016, nos. 67–70) are of the same opinion. It is a very extensive series widely dispersed, with the later parts existing only as drawings such as this one. These drawings have the lines of the frame drawn

around the subject and normally a brief indication above of the subject written in *Takri* script. For a finished painting from this series, see cat. 4.

In our drawing the fish is treated on the largest possible scale, drawn in large sweeping strokes of the brush over faint traces of underdrawing. The elderly king bends forwards reverently, his hands expressing his wonder at this miraculous ever-enlarging fish. Many of the drawings of this series are more obviously workshop productions, but here the eloquent figure of King Satyavrata suggests it is attributable to Manaku himself. Manaku is one of the most controversial of Pahari artists, the varying viewpoints of themselves, W.G. Archer, Jagdish Mittal, Karl Khandalavala, Roy Craven and V.C. Ohri are summed up in Goswamy and Fischer 2011, pp. 654–66. Goswamy is shortly to publish a monograph on Manaku.



6

A Nayika at her Toilette

Guler, c. 1750–60
 Opaque pigments and gold on paper
 Painting 20.4 × 15.1 cm, within a plain dark blue border and a wide pink surround
 Folio 29.4 × 20.6 cm

Literature

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- McInerney, T., *Divine Pleasures: Painting from India's Rajput Courts – the Kronos*

Collections, Terence McInerney with Steven A. Kossak and Navina Najat Haidar, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2016

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

The *nayika* stands on a low octagonal *chauki* or stool. A purple *dhoti* is tied round her waist with the end dropped free round her feet and a transparent green *orhni* is draped over her shoulders. She looks at herself in a mirror held by one attendant while fixing an ornament in her ear. Another attendant crouches at her feet drying her leg, while a third stands with a pot of unguents of some sort. A young girl holds a *morchhal*. Pots of water are in the foreground. The vivid colours of the clothes – mauve, green, orange, yellow – stand out against a neutral beige ground with curving rim leading up to a pale blue sky with gold rimmed clouds and streaked with orange.

The central three figures repeat a composition found in a painting from Mankot c. 1730 in the V&A (Archer 1973, Mankot no. 37) that also has the *nayika* treading over her purple *dhoti*. Another painting from Mankot in the Kronos collection has five more ladies doing the same, two of them in mauve *dhotis*, and three in white (McInerney 2016, no. 63). The handling of the *dhoti* has been altered in a later version also from Mankot with five figures in the Boston Museum so that it falls more naturalistically round her leg (Cummins 2006, pl. 97), there dated about 1760.³ Our version seems intermediate in its conforming to the earlier way of depicting the *dhoti* although in other ways it is more advanced in terms of the development of Pahari painting in the middle of the eighteenth century.

The artist is close to that of 'A princess on a terrace with musicians' in the Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh (Craven, 1998, fig. 7, p. 56). Both paintings reflect Manaku of Guler's handling of the female form, in particular in the latest work that has been attributed to him c. 1750 such as

The Meeting of the Eyes in the San Diego Museum (Goswamy and Fischer 'Manaku', 2011, fig. 12). Figures are now more fully rounded and their clothes fall naturalistically around their limbs. Their eyes are now seen from the side and within their sockets and engaged with one another. In fact our woman shampooer with her full face and delicate modelling of her neck is very close to the heroine in Manaku's San Diego picture. The other two principal women seem closer to Nainsukh's female ideal (see Goswamy and Fischer 'Nainsukh', 2011, figs, 13–14). So it would seem that Guler artists were taking up the innovations of Manaku and Nainsukh, whether or not they were their sons, and incorporating them into their own work.

The exposure of these artists to Mughal painting is clear in the way that they are now interested in depicting the effects of transparent veils pulled across more heavily coloured garments. All these effects may be seen in *The Meeting of the Eyes* and in our painting. The deeply coloured ground likewise is similar, but whereas in the San Diego painting it is a background not a landscape, here receding space is suggested as it meets a sunset sky streaked with gold and orange with blue clouds outlined in gold. Such effects are found in earlier Guler painting obviously derived from late seventeenth-century Mughal painting, as for instance in a portrait of Raja Raj Singh of Guler c. 1740 (Seyller and Mittal 2014, no. 65).

The subject remained popular. Later versions include one published by Khandalavala as Nurpur, 1780–90 (1991, pl. XVIII), and a Kangra version of 1810–20 published by Desai and Pal (2004, pl. 95, no. 185).

³ It is dated surely too early to c. 1740 by Beach (*Mughal and Rajput Painting*, 1992, fig. 151)



7

Portrait of Raja Kirat Prakash of Sirmur

Guler, c. 1765–70

Opaque pigments with gold on paper

Painting: 21 × 13.8 cm, within a dark blue margin with two white lines and a lighter blue surround

Folio: 25.8 × 18.3 cm

Inscribed above in white *nagari*: *sri Raja Kirti Prakas ji*

Literature

Archer, W.G., *Indian Paintings from the Punjab Hills*, Sotheby Parke Bernet, London and New York, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1973

Pal, P., *Desire and Devotion: Art from India, Nepal and Tibet in the John and Berthe Ford Collection*, Philip Wilson, London, 2001

Raja Kirat Parkash of Sirmur (b. 1743, r. 1754–70) dressed sumptuously in red and gold sits at his ease on a white durrie smoking from a hookah while supported by gold brocade cushions. He was an able ruler who according to Archer (1973 vol. 1, p. 414) effected great reforms and was able to protect Sirmur against the inroads of his neighbours, as well as helping them against the attacks of Gurkhas and Rohillas. The scene is set on a terrace in front of a balustrade and under a lobed arch. A garden with a bamboo in flower to the right extends beyond but the artist has left the sky blank. The composition typifies

the spatial conventions of Guler portraiture around 1770 with their suggestions of depth beyond the fictive framing arch (cf. Archer 1973, Guler nos. 48–50). A portrait of Raja Prakash Chand of Guler with a lady has the same tree as in our painting (*ibid.* no. 50). There is much to admire in this portrait of a man still young captured in paint towards the end of his short life: his handsome face with its keen gaze, the wispy chin beard and the heavier beard towards the back of his jaw, the long elegant fingers, the carefully depicted pleats of his heavy winter gown and of his turban with its dangling pompoms, and the rhythmic patterning of his gown as it folds around him on the carpet.

Another portrait of the Raja is in the Ford collection (Archer 1973, Kangra 8v and Pal 2001, no. 83), one of a series of portraits done in Kangra round 1770–90 that ended up in the Lambagraon collection. The Kangra artist copies our portrait closely but in a harder manner and without the characteristic Guler arch. All four of Kirat Prakash's sons became successive Rajas. Sirmur, a state in the eastern hills next to Garhwal and close to the plains, came to grief in the reigns of the younger sons, firstly against Kangra and then the Gurkhas, who occupied the state 1803–14. The Gurkha occupation seems to have destroyed any earlier paintings from Sirmur itself.



8

Mian Mukand Dev of Jasrota

Jasrota or Jammu, under Guler influence, c. 1740

Opaque pigments with gold and silver on paper

Painting 25.3 × 17.3 cm, within a red border with a single white rule

Folio 29.8 cm × 20.5 cm

Inscribed above in white *Takri* characters: *sri Miya Makund De* and on the reverse in a dealer's label: *Miyan Mukunda, a famous prince*.

Literature

Archer, W.G., *Indian Painting from the Punjab Hills*, Sotheby Parke Bernet, London, 1973

Goswamy, B.N., and Fischer, E., *Pahari Masters: Court Painters of Northern India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1992

Goswamy, B.N., *Nainsukh of Guler*, *Artibus Asiae Suppl.* XLI, Museum Rietberg, Zurich, 1997

Mian Mukand Dev, a prince of the little Pahari state of Jasrota near Jammu, is seated holding a falcon. Dressed in a long white *jama*, with a yellow turban and narrow *patka*, he is sitting on a red carpet covered with silver arabesques and supported by a gold brocade bolster and cushions decorated with a regular green leaf pattern. The Mian has a full but close cut black beard and a moustache curling round his cheeks. He wears a Vaishnav *tilak* on his forehead, a pearl necklace, a modest turban jewel

and aigrette holder, and large hooped earrings with two large pearls. His sword lies on the carpet beside him. He holds his falcon on his open gloved right hand, while the other hand rests idly on the cushions holding the jesses which fall down and merge into the arabesque of the carpet. Despite the golden hookah and snake, he is not actually smoking from it; its mouthpiece is stationary waiting for him to move his mouth towards it. An adolescent boy with the beginnings of sideburns and a moustache stands behind him, dressed in a long white *jama* and pale mauve turban and *patka*, and holding the *morchhal* and white cloth of royalty. The scene is set on a terrace bounded by a white parapet and a white multilobed archway above, with nothing but the pale blue sky beyond.

According to B.N. Goswamy, Mian Mukand Dev was the younger brother of Raja Zorawar Singh of Jasrota and the uncle of Raja Balwant Singh (reg. 1743–63).⁴ Several other portraits of him are known (listed in Archer 1973, vol. 1, p. 214), but most famously one by Nainsukh c. 1740–45 showing him on a riding expedition with a girl and a musician, formerly in the Manley collection (Archer 1973, Jammu fig. 48) and now in the V&A (Goswamy 1997, no. 25). The portrait format of the subject seated on a terrace under a lobed arched surround is typical of the Guler style of portraiture, e.g. a portrait of Raja Govardhan Chand seated on a terrace smoking, now in the Chandigarh Museum (Archer 1973, Guler 24), a style that may have come to Jasrota with Nainsukh c. 1740 when he took service with Raja Zorawar Singh, but that was not employed by that artist himself.

Mukand Dev's dates seem not to have been recorded, but since he was the younger brother of Zorawar Singh, who died in 1743 when his son Balwant Singh was nineteen, it seems safe to assume he was born c. 1705–10. His early portraits are in a Jammu style (e.g. Archer 1973, Jammu 27; Jasrota 2, 5 and 6) presumably done before Nainsukh's influence was brought to

bear in the early 1740s. Later portraits such as the one by Nainsukh in the riding expedition and one very similar to ours in composition in the Karam Singh collection (Archer 1973, Jammu 62, from the 1740s rather than c. 1760) are much smoother and Guler influenced, although his appearance changes little and it is difficult to date them.

The Karam Singh portrait, showing him seated with falcon, cushions and sword, is closest in format to ours, but without the Guler arch. Although our portrait is finely drawn with some telling details, such as the boy's face and hands and feet in general, it lacks the finesse and sense of individuality that would allow us to attribute it to a Guler artist. While extensions of the subject into the borders can add depth to the subject, suggesting different planes, as for instance the sword here, the same cannot be said of the boy attendant, whose body behind the border frame and head our side of it appears merely disjointed. It would seem to have been done by a Jasrota or Jammu artist under the influence of the portrait style of Guler.

⁴ W.G. Archer of course thought Balwant Singh was from Jammu itself and not Jasrota, so his accounts of the rulers of both states are somewhat muddled.



9

The *Sakhi* describes Krishna's lovelorn State to a hesitant Radha

Page from the 'Tehri-Garhwal' *Gitagovinda* Series

Guler or Kangra, c. 1775–80

Opaque pigments and gold on paper

Painting 15.3 × 25.7 cm, within a wide blue border and pink surround

Folio 17.6 × 27.5 cm

Inscribed on the reverse in *nagari* with the Sanskrit text of Jayadeva's *Gitagovinda*, V, 12, with a Pahari paraphrase of the Sanskrit original

Provenance:

Maharajas of Tehri-Garhwal

Literature:

Archer, W.G., *Indian Painting from the Punjab Hills*, Sotheby Parke Bernet, London, 1973

Miller, B.S., *Love Song of the Dark Lord*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1977

Goswamy, B.N., and Fischer, E., *Pahari Masters: Court Painters of Northern India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1992

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

McInerney, T., *Divine Pleasures: Painting from India's Rajput Courts – the Kronos*

Collections, Terence McInerney with Steven A. Kossak and Navina Najat Haidar, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2016

Randhawa, M.S., *Kangra Paintings of the Gita Govinda*, National Museum, New Delhi, 1963

Radha's friend, her *sakhi*, has come to Radha from Krishna and describes to her in the fifth canto of the poem his lovelorn state as he wanders in the wilderness or tossing sleepless in his bed of leaves at night. She urges her friend to go to him and make love to him:

'Your garland falls on Krishna's chest like white cranes on a dark cloud,
Shining lightning over him, Radha, you rule in the climax of love.
In woods on the wind-swept Jumna bank,
Krishna waits in wildflower garlands'
(translation Barbara Stoler Miller)

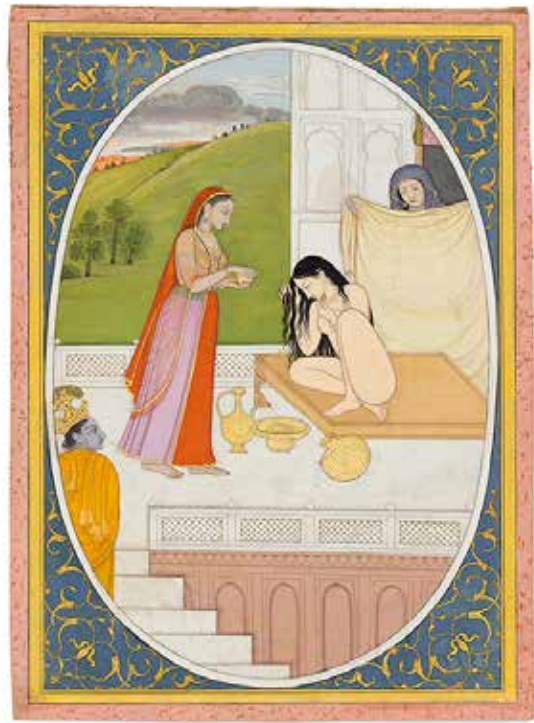
The artist has beautifully caught Radha's hesitation as she sits by the river bank looking down in modesty and attempting to veil her face from her friend's urgent prompting. Beyond the river the ground rises gently to a hill with above it a pale sky reddened at dawn. The two women are framed by trees, two solitary ones on Radha's side, suggestive of her hesitation, and on the *sakhi's* side a large upright tree entwined with a flowering creeper, suggestive of her urgings, the trees being linked by the gentle curve of the river.

This *Gitagovinda* has been widely praised as one of the most important and beautiful of all the Pahari sets. Over 140 paintings are known. When first published (Randhawa 1963) it was in the family collection of the Maharajas of Tehri-Garhwal who probably acquired it with the marriage of two Kangra princesses to Raja Sudarshan Shah in 1829. A set of 151 drawings, partly in the National Museum, New Delhi, and dispersed, represents the drawings for the complete set.

Archer in 1973 (vol. 1, pp. 291–93) thought the series was possibly originally prepared for the marriage of Raja Sansar Chand of Kangra in 1781, along with the *Bhagavata Purana* and *Ramayana*. Goswamy and Fischer (1992, pp. 308–31) argue for the artists having a Guler provenance, being the sons of Nainsukh and his brother Manaku, the first generation after Nainsukh.

The set is now widely dispersed in India, the USA and Europe, in both public and private collections. For other paintings from this series see Randhawa 1963, *passim*, Archer 1973, Kangra 33i–vii, Goswamy and Fischer 1992, nos. 130–37, Goswamy and Fischer 2011, p. 689, figs. 4–7, McInerney 2016, nos. 77–85.

The Rietberg Museum will shortly organise an exhibition of the 'Tehri-Garhwal' Gita Govinda with an in-depth publication of the entire series including the drawings.



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

Grierson, G.A., *The Satsaiya of Bihari, with a commentary entitled the Lala-Chandrika by Cri Lallu Lal Kavi ...* edited ... by G.A. Grierson, Calcutta, 1896

Jain-Neubauer, Jutta, 'Fattu: a Rediscovery' in Ohri, V.C., and Craven, R., ed., *Painters of the Pahari Schools*, Marg Publications, Bombay, 1998, pp. 81–97

McInerney, T., *Divine Pleasures: Painting from India's Rajput Courts – the Kronos Collections*, Terence McInerney with Steven A. Kossak and Navina Najat Haidar, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2016

The *Satsai* ('700 [verses]') of the seventeenth century poet Bihari Lal, court poet of Raja Jai Singh of Amber, consists of over 700 fairly brief verses in the *Riti* or literary style of Hindi poetry, dealing principally with the erotic, *shringara, rasa* in all its aspects. The verses are spoken by the *nayaka* and *nayika* (hero and heroine) and their confidants, who are interpreted in the artistic tradition as Krishna and his beloved Radha. In our painting, the scene is set on the terrace outside a pavilion, with a distant view of gentle hills and an evening sky. Radha is crouched on a *chauki* on a terrace, naked after her bath. She is running one hand through her long black tresses that snake down around her and seems to be trying to decide whether to peep through them. Her confidante dressed in a lilac skirt, flesh coloured bodice and red *orhni*, approaches holding a gold jar of unguent of some sort – other golden vessels are on the ground. An attendant with a blue veil over her head stands behind her depicted almost full face and looking down at her, while holding up a sheet to screen her from the view of anyone inside the pavilion. Krishna is portrayed below the terrace, swathed in his usual peacock feathered crown and a saffron robe and *dupatta*, and intently observes the scene before him.

In the verses on the verso, Radha's beauty is described – first her whole dazzling self, then the various parts of her face and her ornaments: the black *tikas* on her cheek and forehead, her

eyebrows, her forehead, the pendant on her forehead, her face, her ear ornament, her nose ornament. Krishna is describing them to himself as he spies on her. In actual fact, Radha has not assumed any of these added beautifications. The artist however appears to be illustrating an entirely different verse:

While tidying her hair after her bath
That lotus-eyed girl made a peephole
Of her fingers and her tresses
Through which she kept shyly glancing at her lover Krishna
(trans. Bahadur 1992, no. 19, pp. 49–50)

Radha's physical charms are wonderfully caught by the artist as well as her shy indecision. A brownish-purple line defines her exquisite form along with the merest hint of modelling to give her volume. The *sakhi* is painted slightly differently with obvious stippling on her cheek and neck while her hair is painted with individual brush strokes. The *sakhi* looks at Radha with a hint of amusement at her indecision, while Krishna gazes at her with rapt attention. Does Radha's downward gaze reflect an indecision suggested by the other hand placed under her chin, or has she perhaps already seen through her tresses Krishna's ardent gaze and modestly averts her eyes?

This series is fully in the Guler idiom established by the sons of Nainsukh and Manaku for the *Gitagovinda*, *Bhagavata Purana* and *Ramayana*. It was probably in the Kangra collection before moving on to the Tehri-Garhwal collection, and probably got there through the marriage of two of Sansar Chand's daughters to the Raja of Garhwal in 1829. The total number of pages is unknown as the number of verses on the reverse of each varies considerably. This seems the earliest major series to adopt the elongated oval format, which seems peculiarly suited to this concise and elliptical text with its descriptions viewed as it were through a window.

The series is now widely dispersed in public and private collections. For other pages, see Archer 1973, Kangra 39(i–iv); Bautze 1991, nos. 74–76; Goswamy and Fischer 1992, no. 150; Jain-Neubauer 1998, figs. 14–15; Goswamy and Fischer 2011, figs. 19–21; McInerney 2016, nos. 89–91. Goswamy and Fischer write in 2011 that drawings after the finished series are in the National Museum and the IGNC, New Delhi, one with a later scribbled ascription to Fattu, Manaku's son, who may have been responsible for the entire series. McInerney writes that the original series contains some 40 paintings, with some 20 more existing as unfinished sketches now in the Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi, and the majority of the finished paintings have no text or, following Randhawa, one that has no relevance to the painting. This seems to be true of our painting.

10

Krishna observes Radha's Toilette

Page from the 'Tehri-Garhwal' Satsai of Bihari

Probably painted by the Guler artist Fattu at Kangra, c. 1785
Opaque pigments and gold on paper

Painting 15.4 × 25.5 cm, oval, with spandrels in blue decorated with gold arabesques, with a yellow margin and thin pink surround
Folio 16.8 × 26.8 cm

Inscribed on the verso in *nagari* with the numbers 15 and 112 and on the cover sheet in Hindi in *nagari* script with nine verses of the *Satsai* of Bihari, numbered 13–21 (in Grierson's edition verses: 481, 451, 477, 478, 93, 453, 444, 479, 472, and K.P. Bahadur's translation 469[13], 476[14], 473 [15], 477 [16], *deest* [17], 492–94 [18–20], 498[21]) and with the number 18 above

Published

Randhawa, M.S., *Kangra Paintings of the Bihari Satsai*, National Museum, New Delhi, 1966, pl. XI

Literature

Archer, W.G., *Indian Painting from the Punjab Hills*, Sotheby Parke Bernet, London, 1973

Bahadur, K.P., trans., *Bihari; the Satsai*, Penguin Books/Unesco, London, 1992

Bautze, J., *Lotosmond and Löwenritt: Indische Miniaturmalerei*, Linden Museum, Stuttgart, 1991

Goswamy, B.N., and Fischer, E., *Pahari Masters: Court Painters of Northern India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1992

Goswamy, B.N., and Fischer, E., 'The First



11

The lovelorn *Utka Nayika*

Chamba, School of Mahesh, c. 1765–70

Opaque pigments with gold and silver on paper

Painting 21.5 × 15.8 cm, within black and white lines and with a red surround

Folio 28 × 21.8 cm

Literature

Dehejia, Harsha V., *Rasikapriya: Ritikavya of Keshavdas in Ateliers of Love*, DK Printworld, New Delhi, 2013

Fischer, Eberhard. 'Laharu and Mahesh: Two Master Painters of Chamba', in Ohri, V.C., and Craven, R., ed., *Painters of the Pahari Schools*, Marg Publications, Bombay, 1998, pp. 28–45

Galloway, F., *Indian Miniatures from the Archer and Other Private Collections*, Francesca Galloway sale catalogue, London, 2005

Glynn, C., Skelton, R., and Dallapiccola, A., *Ragamala Paintings from India from the Claudio Moscatelli Collection*, Philip Wilson, London, 2011

Kramrisch, S., *Painted Delight: Indian Paintings from Philadelphia Collections*, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, 1986

Ohri, V.C., 'Nikka and Ranjha at the court of Raja Raj Singh of Chamba', in Ohri, V.C., and Craven, R., ed., *Painters of the Pahari Schools*, Marg Publications, Bombay, 1998, pp. 98–114

In this lovely painting, a tall and elegantly dressed lady both reaches up to grasp the branch of a willow tree, but also reaches out with her other hand to feed some grass to a pet deer. She

is dressed in an orange and gold transparent *peshwaj* over rose *paijama* and a purple *orhni* with a gold diaper pattern that falls down her back from her head and gathers on the grass by the deer. She is richly bejewelled with pearl necklace and gold link chain and jewelled pendants, large pearls and emerald earrings, and jewelled armbands with bejewelled tassels. She stands on a green meadow brilliantly lit with a stream rippling by, naturalistically painted with a silver wash over. The green meadow recedes naturalistically to the willow and grove of other trees which tend to merge into the dark ground. A band of deep indigo sky runs across the top of the painting.

The female type is described in Keshava Das's *Rasikapriya* as an *Utka nayika* who waits in vain for her lover to appear. Sometimes artists depict her in her anguish grasping a tree to support her (e.g. Dehejia 2013, pp. 220 and 224, illustrating ch. 7, v. 9.), and sometimes with animals around her (*ibid.*, p. 225). A comparable image of a *nayika* grasping the willow tree and feeding a deer is in the Philadelphia Museum of Art, there called a *virahini nayika*, thought to come from Bilaspur 1700–25 (see Kramrisch 1986, no. 97).

The *nayika* has a long face, high forehead, long nose, well marked eyebrow with the arch towards the back, and a large eye with a big pupil placed towards the front, while her *orhni* is pushed well back on her head. Her appearance is linked to the female figures in the dispersed album from the Mandi royal collection but attributed either to Bilaspur around 1700–20 (see Galloway 2005, nos. 22–25) or else to Chamba c. 1700 (see Glynn et al. 2011, pp. 34–35). These physical characteristics are to a considerable extent shared by the *raginis* of the various Bilaspur *ragamalas* from the first half of the eighteenth century (see for instance Archer 1973, Kahlur (Bilaspur) 17–19, 29–36, also Seyller and Mittal 2014, no. 39).

The *nayika's* elongated face, however, is also found in the work of Laharu and Mahesh of Chamba 1750–60, in the *Bhaga-*

vata Purana of 1757 and the *Ramayana* series (Goswamy and Fischer 1992, nos. 60 and 62) and then in the *Dasavatara* series showing Prahlada's mother worshipping Narasimha (Fischer 1998, figs. 7 and 8). Indeed the whole appearance of the painting suggests Chamba: Fischer remarks that all Mahesh's paintings have the same characteristics of a black rule round the painting that is further circumscribed by one or more thin white rules and a wide red surround, although in our case the little star or trident shape made by the white rules as they cross at the corners is absent.

Of course all the females in these Chamba sets are dressed in Rajput costume, whereas our lady is very much in a Mughal costume. This costume and its heavy gold outlining suggest some kind of renewed Mughal influence. This influence could have come into Chamba work either as a consequence of the dispersal of artists from Delhi in the 1750s, but more likely it was at second hand through the settling in Chamba of Nainsukh's sons Nikka and Ranjha under Raja Raj Singh (reg. 1764–93) (see Ohri 1998), whose father and uncle had been exposed to Mughal painting in the Muhammad Shah period. Such influence is also found in what seems to be the latest known work of Mahesh, the *Dana lila* in the Rietberg Museum (Goswamy and Fischer 1992, no. 75; Fischer 1998, fig. 10), in which Radha is dressed in the Mughal costume of *peshwaj* and *paijama* and even has a little turban on her head, pretending to be a Mughal official taking Krishna, also dressed in a Mughal *jama*, into custody. Mahesh has there adopted a new style with an attempt at a more open landscape and with other activities in the background, and also a different facial type for his women. The foreground river lined with little plants and the projection of little slivers of land into the water are as in our painting, as are the semi-naturalistic trees, with lighter leaf shapes painted over darker green irregularly-shaped masses. So our artist has retained some of the earlier characteristics of Chamba painting such as the facial features of his *nayika*, but was open to the new late style of Mahesh as in his *Dana lila* painting.



12

Shiva and Parvati riding their Vehicles Nandi the Bull and the Devi's Lion

Chamba, c. 1780–90

Opaque pigments with gold on paper

Painting 23.3 × 14.1 cm, within two thin yellow rules on a wide dark blue surround

Folio 29 × 19.8 cm

Literature

Goswamy, B.N., *Essence of Indian Art*, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, San Francisco, 1986

Goswamy, B.N., and Bhatia, U., *Painted Visions: the Goenka Collection of Indian Paintings*, New Delhi, 1999

Goswamy, B.N., and Fischer, E., *Pahari Masters: Court Painters of Northern India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1992

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

Leach, L.Y., *Indian Miniature Paintings and Drawings: the Cleveland Museum of Art Catalogue of Oriental Art, Part One*, Cleveland, 1986

Ohri, V.C., 'Nikka and Ranjha at the court of Raja Raj Singh of Chamba,' in Ohri, V.C., and Craven, R., ed., *Painters of the Pahari Schools*, Marg Publications, Bombay, 1998A, pp. 98–114

Ohri, V.C., 'Pandit Seu and his sons Manaku and Nainsukh,' in Ohri, V.C., and Craven, R., ed., *Painters of the Pahari Schools*, Marg Publications, Bombay, 1998B, pp. 149–66

Shiva is depicted as a young man dressed only in a leopard-skin *dhoti*, but with snakes round his neck and the crescent moon in his hair. He wears large hooped earrings like a yogi, two *rudraksas* or rosaries round his neck and jewelled arm-bands. He is nonchalantly riding his bull Nandi sitting on a teal cloth slung across its back. One hand carries his trident decorated with a mauve pennant slung over his shoulder, the other leans on the bull's rump as he turns round to gaze adoringly at his *shakti* Parvati, who rides her lion by his side, while she in turn looks back at him equally ardently. She is clad in an orange skirt and a heavy yellow shawl draped round her head and shoulders that falls down in folds around her. They ride across a uniform deep red ground with a curved horizon with white streaks for clouds above.

The appearance of Shiva and the deep red ground behind the divine pair recall a painting of Shiva under a tree in the Cleveland Museum (Leach 1986, no. 120, col. pl. XXIII), in which he is similarly dressed and accoutremented and also poised against a deep red ground. Leach dates this beautiful study to Kangra c. 1780, whereas its subtle drawing is surely more closely linked to Guler twenty years earlier, and to the Guler paintings of the holy family of Shiva and Parvati with their offspring and *vahanas* (Archer 1973, Guler 16 and 25). Shiva's majestic bull Nandi is similar to those in the holy family paintings and also to that in another Guler painting of Shiva as an archer perched on Nandi in the Indian Museum, Calcutta (Goswamy 1986, no. 128). The subtle naturalism of those studies of Shiva is echoed here but the drawing is harder and the modelling less fluent.

Solid red backgrounds are not usual in Pahari painting and seem confined to a certain phase at Guler around 1760 and then also at Chamba around 1780 in the *Rukminiharana* series. This series is thought by Ohri to be the work of Nainsukh's son Nikka, who had obviously brought to Chamba that trait from

the earlier work at Guler (Ohri 1998A, figs. 11–13). Parvati's high forehead with its pronounced curve and prominent nose and chin cannot be fitted into earlier Guler work, but is also a feature of Chamba painting (*ibid.*, fig. 17). While the solid juxtaposed blocks of colour – teal, ochre, orange and brown set against the red ground – are not a feature of either Guler or Chamba painting, they can perhaps be more easily assigned to Chamba later in the century.

The divine pair on their vehicles seems an abbreviated version of the holy family descending from Kailasa with the two children, as for instance a version of this subject in the Himachal State Museum, Shimla, attributed by V.C. Ohri to Nikka at Chamba c. 1780 (1998B, fig. 12). Our artist is working in the same tradition but perhaps slightly later.



13

The Goddess emanates from the Essence of all the Gods

Page from a *Devi Mahatmya* Series

By a Guler artist, 1775–80

Opaque pigments on paper

Painting 16.7 × 26.2 cm, within a buff border painted yellow

Folio 20 × 29.5 cm

Inscribed on the verso with a Sanskrit verse in *nagari* from the *Devi Mahatmya* Canto 2, v. 11: *ann[y]esam caiva devanam sakradinam sariratah/ nirgatam sumahattejas tac caikyam samagacchata* ('And then from bodies of the other gods, Indra etc., there came forth a very great splendour and they united into one form')

Literature

Ahluwalia, R., *Rajput Painting: Romantic, Divine and Courtly Love from India*, British Museum Press, London, 2008

Archer, W.G., *Indian Paintings from the Punjab Hills*, Sotheby Parke Bernet, London and New York, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1973

Aijazuddin, F. S., *Pahari Paintings and Sikh Portraits in the Lahore Museum*, Sotheby Parke Bernet, London, 1977

Bautze, J., *Lotosmond and Löwenritt: Indische Miniaturmalerei*, Linden Museum, Stuttgart, 1991

Carré, Patrick, *Dieux, tigres et amours. Miniatures indiennes du XVe au XXe siècle*, Spain, 1993

Coburn, Thomas B., *Encountering the Goddess: a Translation of the Devi*

Mahatmya and a Study of its Interpretation, Albany, 1991 (Delhi, 1992)

Coburn, Thomas B., *The Threefold Vision of the Devi Mahatmya*, in Dehejia 1999, pp. 37–57

Dehejia, V., *Devi the Great Goddess: Female Divinity in South Asian Art*, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, 1999

Goswamy, B.N., *Essence of Indian Art*, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, San Francisco, 1986

Goswamy, B.N., and Bhatia, U., *Painted Visions: the Goenka Collection of Indian Paintings*, New Delhi, 1999

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

Leach, L.Y., *Indian Miniature Paintings and Drawings: the Cleveland Museum of Art Catalogue of Oriental Art, Part One*, Cleveland, 1986

Losty, J.P., *A Picture Book of the Devi Mahatmya*, Simon Ray, London, 2016

Poster, Amy G., et al., *Realms of Heroism: Indian Paintings at the Brooklyn Museum*, New York, 1994

Indra and the other gods have been dispossessed of their heaven by the buffalo-headed demon Mahishasura and they appeal to the great gods Vishnu and Shiva for aid in ridding the world of the demon. The anger of all the gods becomes channelled into pure energy that coalesces into a female form. This painting shows the Goddess taking form from all their combined energies, here wonderfully represented pouring into her unfinished shape: her head, torso and eighteen arms have been created, but not yet her legs. The artist has left the ground blank indicative of this happening outside of space and time. Apart of course from the instantly recognisable gods Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu, the gods in this painting are all distinct, of different ages and appearance. All are crowned, and they wear differently coloured *dhotis* or *dupattas* (Shiva's is of leopard skin) and shawls. Some are eagerly proffering their weapons, others appear more hesitant, perhaps wondering what this development will mean for their own individual powers. On the left Shiva is presenting his trident and Varuna a conch, while Vishnu's discus and Indira's thunderbolt have yet to appear. The

bearded Kala (Time) at the bottom is presenting his sword and shield, while on the right Brahma is presenting his water pot and a rosary and Kubera a drinking cup full of wine. The lion on which she will ride to victory is presented by Himavat, but seems reluctant to leave his master at whom he is looking up pitifully. Some divine sages on the right are also depicted as being in on the act, although they are not in the text. Once all the gods have given her their individual weapons, the all-powerful Goddess roars with laughter and pervades the three worlds with her effulgence.

The Sanskrit hymn *Devi Mahatmya*, the great text summing up the origins and worship of the Devi, the Great Goddess, dates from around the close of the Gupta period around the middle of the first millennium AD. Like all Puranic texts, it is told at several removes, originally by the sage Markandeya to a disciple as part of the *Markandeya Purana*. Markandeya says that the story of the Goddess, and her triumph over different demons, was in fact related by the sage Medhas to two distressed travellers: Suratha the king exiled from his own country and the merchant Samadhi, who was betrayed by his family. For the text, its importance the ritual surrounding its recitation, see Coburn 1991 and 1999.

The text is one of those included in the great series of religious classics illustrated by artists from Guler around 1780, comparable in devotional terms to the *Gita Govinda*, *Bhagavata Purana* and *Ramayana*. As with those series, it is painted in a style associated with Guler, the artists being almost certainly the sons and grandsons of Nainsukh and Manaku (see Goswamy and Fischer 2011). These artists spread out over the Pahari region, but the early versions of the *Devi Mahatmya* would seem to have been done in Guler rather than in Kangra or any other state. Although there are earlier Pahari paintings of individual scenes from the text, including of course the ubiquitous icon of the Goddess slaying Mahishasura, the

Buffalo-demon, there seems to have been no earlier local complete manuscript for them to draw on for its imagery.⁵

Various series of this key text were prepared at this time in Guler. The earliest appears to be the dispersed set with uncoloured borders from which our page comes, prepared 1775–80, of which only a few pages have been published. See Leach 1986, no. 116; Bautze 1991, no.20; Carré 1993, pp.110–111; Poster 1994, nos. 208–09; Gosvamy 1986 (no. 152); Goswamy and Bhatia 1999 (no. 191, the border also painted yellow as in our example) and Ahluwalia 2008, fig. 103. The most well known set is that with blue borders divided between the Lahore and Chandigarh Museums and dated 1781. The Lahore pages have been fully published (Aijazuddin 1977, pp. 29–33, illustrated Guler

⁵ Apart of course from the mid-16th century manuscript in the Early Rajput style now in the Himachal State Museum, Shimla.



14

Portrait of Mian Arjun Singh

Mandi, c. 1780–90

Opaque pigments with gold on paper

Painting 19.2 × 13.3 cm, within black and white rules and a wide red surround

Folio 22.4 × 16.7 cm

Inscribed on a re-used backing sheet on the verso in Pahari in *Takri* script:

Bhai sri Arjane jai payen pauna samhale Bhote nafare ('Respectful obeisance to brother Shri Arjun from his humble servant Bhota (?)') (read by Vijay Sharma); and with a Mandi royal inventory number 3455

Provenance

Mandi Royal Collection

Literature

Archer, W.G., *Indian Painting from the Punjab Hills*, Sotheby Parke Bernet, London, 1973

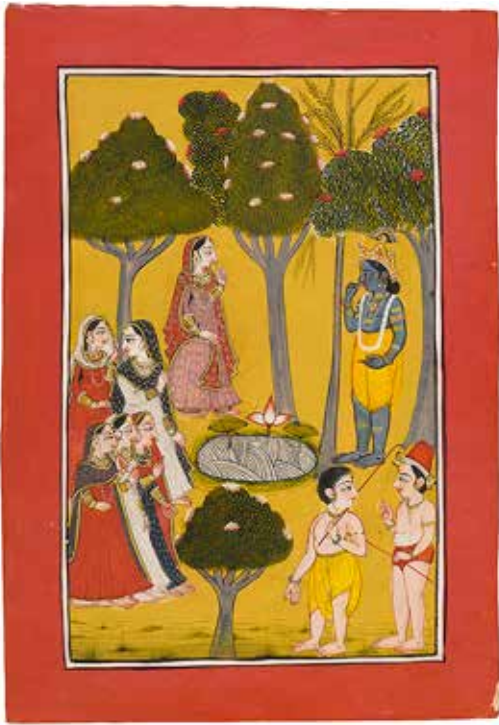
Goswamy, B.N., and Fischer, E., *Pahari Masters: Court Painters of Northern India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1992

Arjun Singh was a great-grandson of Raja Sidh Sen (reg. 1684–1727) of Mandi and grandson of Shiv Jawala Sen, the heir apparent of Sidh Sen and co-ruler of Mandi 1719–22, when he died, leaving two one year old sons. Sidh Sen was succeeded by his grandson Shamser Sen (reg. 1727–1781). Shiv Jawala Sen had by a concubine another son named Agar Datt Singh, and the

latter had a son Arjun Singh, the apparent subject of our portrait.

The Mian seems aged about forty. He is dressed almost entirely in white (*jama*, short *patka* and turban) and is seated on a rug striped vertically in pink and white, the latter stripes adorned with regular little flower motifs. His ample girth is securely kept in check by his tightly tied cummerbund. His *tulwar* in a red scabbard rests across one thigh, while a *katar* with a yellow handle is thrust through his cummerbund on the other. A typically Shaiva rosary of *rudraksa* beads is his only adornment, though he does not have a Shaiva *tilak* on his forehead. Gold is used very sparingly, for a ring and a turban ornament. One hand rests on his thigh, the other is raised in greeting someone who is not yet in the picture. A bristly curling moustache and a curl of a sideburn are all that is left of his hair; his head is shaved and his chin bears a heavy stubble. Heavy stippling marks the shadows beneath his eyes and round his neck. An attendant dressed much like himself and seemingly a younger relative with similar features stands behind him, holding a white cloth and a *tulwar* within a green scabbard. A green background ends at the top with a band of blue sky and below it a band of white cloud, populated by little black birds.

The old-fashioned manner of having the attendant stand behind the rug acting as a parapet is similar to many Mandi portraits of the eighteenth century beginning with the series painted under Raja Sidh Sen (reg. 1684–1727) at the beginning of the century and continuing right through it (see Archer 1973, Mandi 1–2, 4, 7, 29, 32 36–39; also Goswamy and Fischer 1992, nos. 77–79). This conservative format was continued throughout the eighteenth century as in a portrait of Raja Shamsher Sen in the Cleveland Museum and a retrospective one of Raja Sidh Sen in the V&A, both of which Archer assigns to the third quarter of the century (Archer 1973, Mandi 29 and 32). In most of these portraits the striped durries and the little black birds in the white strip of sky at the top of the painting continue to feature. In view of the subject and his apparent age, our portrait would seem to be a little later than either of them.



15

Krishna's Confusion on seeing Radha
Page from a *Rasikapriya* Series

Mandi, 1780–90
 Opaque pigments with gold on paper
 Painting 21.7 × 13.5 cm, within a white margin with black rules and a wide red surround
 Folio 26.7 × 18.5 cm
 Inscribed on the cover page in Hindi in *nagari* within a floral surround with the text of *Rasikapriya* ch. 6, v. 32, beginning *atha sri Krishna ko vibhrama hava* ('now Krishna's emotional state of confusion'), the series number 34 and *kha.16*
 And with the Mandi royal inventory number 1790
 Provenance
 Mandi royal collection
 Sotheby's London 11 July 1973, lot 301

Literature
 Archer, W.G., *Indian Paintings from the Punjab Hills*, Sotheby Parke Bernet, London and New York, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1973
 Dehejia, Harsha V., *Rasikapriya: Ritikavya of Keshavdas in Ateliers of Love*, DK Printworld, New Delhi, 2013

The page is from a series of the *Rasikapriya* of Keshav Das, which, although a text on poetics, was often illustrated with Krishna and Radha in the place of the *nayaka* and *nayika*. The verse illustrated describes Krishna's *vibhrama* or confusion, one of the *hava* or emotional states aroused by love.

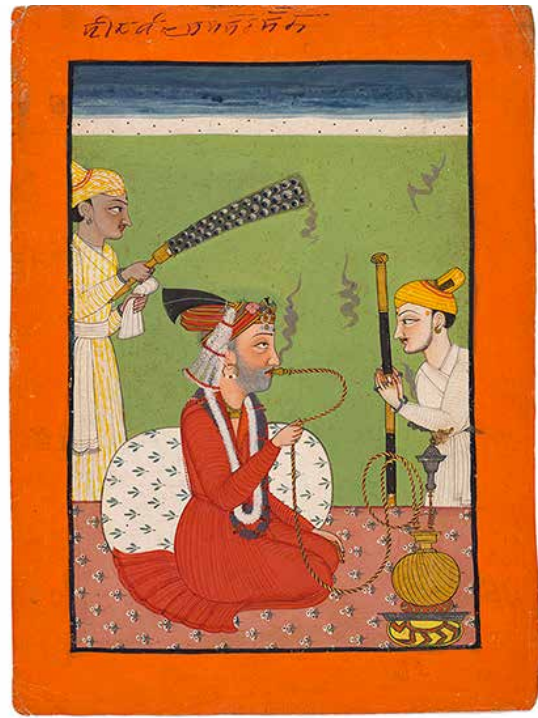
'Krishna had adorned himself and was sporting with sandalwood paste on his body and was looking resplendent. Just then he saw Radha and was perplexed. He did not realise that the betel leaves he was holding slipped down and he started eating petals of a lotus that he was holding in his hand. Seeing that, the gopis burst out in laughter and Krishna was embarrassed and shut his eyes.' (translation Harsha Dehejia)

Krishna and his cowherd friends have come to a grove where are Radha and her friends. Krishna is beautifully adorned with sandalwood paste as in the text. He gazes at Radha and puts his fingers to his mouth instinctively to chew his *pan* according to the text, but the artist seems to prefer the idea of putting the finger to the mouth in wonderment, and the lotus leaves are relegated to a pool at their feet. Their respective friends gossip to each other. Highly stylised trees are dotted about, all against a plain yellow ground, while the basket pattern of the water in the pool indicates just how conservative the studio at Mandi remained throughout the century.

Our painting was one of a group of ten from this series sold in 1973, lots 297–306, while another twenty pages had been sold at Sotheby's 27 March 1973, lots 167–86, and a further fifteen pages were sold subsequently at Sotheby's 11 December 1973, lots 374–88. Each page originally bore a cover page with text within coloured floral borders.

The series is illustrated at the end of the period of the traditional style of Mandi in the reign of Raja Surma Sen (reg. 1781–88) in a charming but rather dry and folksy style. For other paintings in this style see Archer 1973, Mandi 34 and 35, with very similar figures, costume etc. The accession of the

infant Ishvari Sen in 1788 resulted in quarrels within the ruling classes that led to the intervention of Sansar Chand of Kangra in 1791, the award of parts of the state to its neighbours, and the captivity of Ishvari Sen in Kangra until 1805.



16

Raja Shamsheer Sen of Mandi

Mandi, c. 1770–80

Opaque pigments with gold and silver on paper

Painting 22.5 × 15.5 cm within a narrow black margin and an orange surround

Folio 27.5 × 20.3 cm

Inscribed above in careless *Takri*: *Sri Davan Sri Shamsheer Sen* ('Sri Divan Shamsheer Sen') and on the reverse with two late inscriptions by separate hands in *nagari*: *3 jayanta* and *Kumar Mohan Singh* (an owner possibly); and *Raja Shamsheer Sain Mandi*

erature

Archer, W.G., *Indian Paintings from the Punjab Hills*, Sotheby Parke Bernet, London and New York, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1973

Archer, W.G. and Binney, Edwin 3rd, *Rajput Miniatures from the Collection of Edwin Binney*, 3rd, Portland Art Museum, Portland, 1968

Goswamy, B.N., and Fischer, E., *Pahari Masters: Court Painters of Northern India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1992

Khandalavala, K., *Pahari Miniature Paintings in the N.C. Mehta Collection*, Gujarat Museum Society, Ahmedabad, 1982

Raja Shamsheer Sen (reg. 1727–81) was the son of Shiv Jawala Sen, the heir apparent of Sidh Sen and co-ruler of Mandi 1719–22, when he died, leaving two one year old sons. Raja Sidh Sen (reg. 1684–1727) was therefore succeeded by his six year old grandson Shamsheer Sen. Mandi was first under the regency of his mother and when she died around 1740, he came increasingly under the influence of his half-brother Durlachia,

who even proposed to set aside the raja's son Surma Sen. The latter fled to Kangra and returned with a force sufficient to expel Durlachia. Shamsheer Sen according to Goswamy and Fischer (1992, p. 200) was 'deeply religious, whimsical [and] enigmatic' and clearly not greatly interested in governing his kingdom.

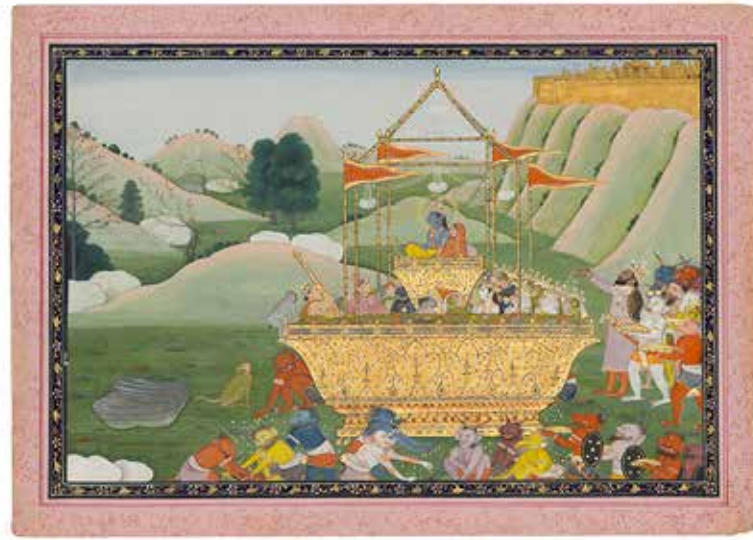
Our portrait shows the raja comparatively elderly with a white beard cut close. He wears a red and gold turban, decorated with two black feathers and sprays of jasmine flowers, and a red *jama*, with a jasmine garland and another of dark flowers round his neck. He is kneeling on a dull pink rug decorated with regular floral sprays and supported by a white bolster decorated with an arrow head pattern. He is smoking from a gold hookah fashioned into a twisted spiral pattern. The details of the hookah are beautifully depicted: the snake is covered in a red and gold braid, and the hookah sits upon a ring of red and gold chevron pattern placed on a silver tray with a mat beneath again of red and gold chevron pattern. Wisps of smoke rise into the air. A young attendant holding a staff of office before the raja wears a white *jama*, a yellow turban and silver dagger thrust through his cummerbund which protrudes into the margin, while another young attendant behind the raja, dressed in a striped yellow turban and *jama*, holds a *morchhal* and the white cloth signifying royalty. Both young men are positioned behind the carpet acting as a parapet in the old-fashioned manner, while a solid green ground behind is terminated by bands of white and blue at the top of the painting indicating the sky. Black specks in the white band of cloud denote the birds that are often depicted in this position in Mandi portraits (e.g. Goswamy and Fischer 1992, nos. 76, 80–82, also cat. 14), but are here more regularly spaced than usual.

Shamsheer Sen is the subject of many contemporary portraits (Archer 1973, Mandi 23–25, 29, 31–34, 36; Khandalavala 1982, figs. 45–50 and col. pl. J). Another version of our painting

but in mirror reverse is in the Binney collection in the San Diego Museum (Archer and Binney 1968, no. 67), with the staff holder replaced by a *hookah-bardar*. Our painting is also very similar to one formerly in the Archer collection (Archer 1973, Mandi 36), except an elderly courtier stands in place of the young attendant, but also holds the staff. Shamsheer Sen was the subject of several strange portraits earlier in his reign, attributed to the 'Master of the Court of Mandi' (Goswamy and Fischer 1992, nos. 80–82), although of course in date nearer to 1750 than to the 1730 assigned to them there when he was not yet ten years old.. One of them, showing the raja with a leopard skin over his shoulder being escorted by two young men dressed as women, is inscribed *Sri Devan Sri Shamsheer Sena ri sabhi hi ji*, giving Shamsheer Sen the title of Divan or minister, as does our portrait, a title which the rajas bore since Raja Suraj Sen gave his state to Madho Rai or Vishnu in 1648. This made little difference to subsequent rulers or to the people of Mandi, since the state remained strongly devoted to Shiva and the Devi. Indeed Shamsheer Sen here like his father (Goswamy and Fischer 1992, no. 76) wears Shakta marks in his forehead, although his staff-bearer is Vaishnava.

The same attention to detail that the artist devoted to the hookah is evident in his handling of his subjects' faces. All three are strongly stippled, giving them a three-dimensional appearance. With Shamsheer Sen we note the large apparently flattened nose and red lips, the carefully depicted white hairs of his beard and especially the large eyes in hollowed sockets with the eyelashes individually depicted all around the eye. He is smiling up at the young staff-bearer before him, who bends forward in gentle solicitation. The youth's sparse chin-beard and incipient moustache indicate his age. His eye too sits within a hollowed socket but only his forward eyelashes are depicted, as are those of the young man holding the *morchhal*, who has the same kind of skimpy moustache but no beard.

Shamsheer Sen liked to surround himself with young men and boys as evidenced in his portraits – in one of the finest artistically he is shown lying down smoking a hookah and fondling a young boy (Khandalavala 1982, col. pl. J).



17

Rama, Sita and his Followers begin the Return to Ayodhya in the Pushpaka Chariot

Page from the second part of the 'Bharany' *Ramayana*

Kangra, c. 1800–10

Opaque pigments and gold on paper

Painting 20.3 × 30.6 cm, within a blue margin decorated with a gold and red foliate scroll, and with a wide pink surround with two red rules

Folio 25.6 × 36 cm

Numbered 33 on verso

Provenance

Bharany, 1972

Published

Valmiki, *Ramayana illustre par les miniatures indiennes du XVIe au XIXe siecle*, Editions Diane

de Selliers, Paris, 2011, vol. VI, pp. 296–97

Literature

Archer, W.G., *Indian Painting from the Punjab Hills*, Sotheby Parke Bernet, London, 1973

Pal, P., 'Ramayana Pictures from the Hills in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art' in R.C. Craven, Jr., ed., *Ramayana Pahari Paintings*, Marg Publications, Bombay, 1990, pp. 87–106

The Ramayana of Valmiki, translated by Hari Prasad Shastri, Shanti Sadan, London, 1952–59

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

Valmiki, *Ramayana illustre par les miniatures indiennes du XVIe au XIXe siecle*, Editions Diane de Selliers, Paris, 2011

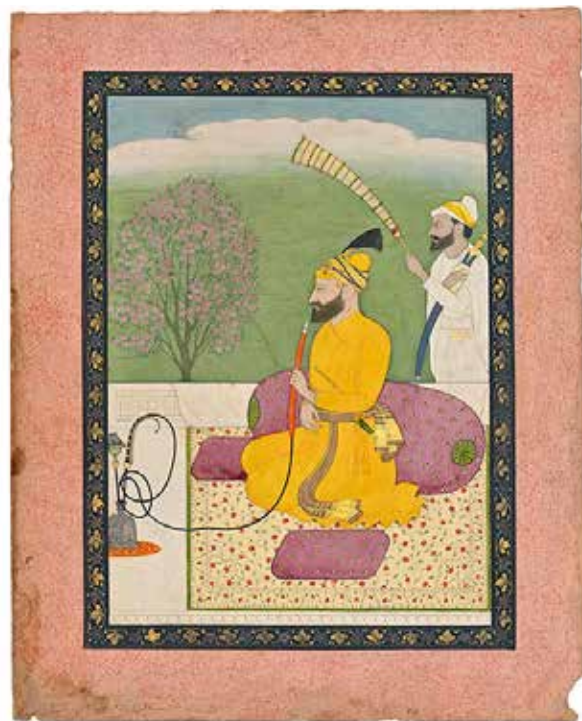
Rama and Sita are seated on a golden throne within the magical Pushpaka chariot which will convey them and their followers aerially back to Ayodhya. The chariot is depicted rather like a boat with a central poop deck, both being covered with gold foliate decoration. A central golden *pandal* is erected over the throne which is surrounded by four golden poles flying orange standards. The chariot is crowded with Lakshmana, Hanuman and the other monkey and bear chiefs, as well as a divine musician and an apsara. Vibhishana the new king of Lanka is still standing outside the chariot and in the text (Shastri's translation *Yuddhakanda*, chapter 124) questions Rama as to what he should do, since he and the monkey chiefs desire to accompany him. It is not until later in the chapter that Vibhishana and the monkeys actually board the aerial chariot. In the meantime, Vibhishana casts gold coins over those already in the chariot, which some of his demon followers are quick to try to pick up from the ground with gleeful expressions. Other demons bring trays of rich gifts in the traditional Indian fashion. The artist envisages the golden city of Lanka with its walls, towers and palaces in the distance perched on top of a series of steep bluffs; the chariot rests on the plain below, which is punctuated by more gentle hills and dotted with dark green trees and some bare ones in blossom.

The painting comes from the second part of the Bharany *Ramayana* (named after the dealer who dispersed it) which covers books 4–6 of the *Ramayana*, in continuation, although with some overlapping, of the earlier Guler *Ramayana* attributed to various of the sons of Manaku and Nainsukh c. 1775–80. For the earlier part see Goswamy and Fischer 1992, nos. 143–45;

and 2011, no. 6, figs. 12–13 and 25a; also Valmiki 2011, *passim*.

The later part is of the same size but instead of the plain inner blue border it is decorated as here with gold and polychrome arabesques. See Goswamy and Fischer 2011, no. 7, figs. 14–15, who date it to c. 1790, also Britschgi and Fischer 2008, nos. 54, 56, 58 and 78. In the Jagdish Mittal Museum is a page from this second part of the *Ramayana* which actually shows Rama and Lakshmana watching while the demon Indrajit, Ravana's son, carries off Sugriva (Seyller and Mittal 2014, no. 99), and the authors observe that 'the looser treatment of the faces – especially those of Rama and Lakshmana – and the more severe rendering of landscape forms suggest a date of c. 1810–20'. In the magnificent *Assault on Lanka* from this series now in the Los Angeles County Museum (Pal 1990, fig. 8), Pal suggests a date of c. 1800 for this page.⁶ The facial profile of Rama and Lakshmana with their sharply pointed make it impossible to date it too late either. Clearly several artists were involved in this series of varying competence and a broader span of dates for the series such as 1790–1810 seems appropriate.

⁶ This painting is so magnificent in its energy that it induced a later owner to paint over the blue border with its arabesques with gold. It is clearly from the same series as our painting and that in the Mittal Museum.



18

A Raja, probably Raj Singh of Chamba, smoking on a Terrace

Guler style at Chamba, c. 1790
 Opaque pigments with gold and silver on paper
 Painting 18.8 × 13.8 cm within a blue margin decorated with gold and silver
 foliate arabesque and a wide pink surround
 Folio 26.2 × 20.5 cm

Literature
 Archer, W.G., *Indian Paintings from the Punjab Hills*, Sotheby Parke Bernet, London and New York, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1973
 Ohri, V.C., 'Nikka and Ranjha at the court of Raja Raj Singh of Chamba', in Ohri, V.C., and Craven, R., ed., *Painters of the Pahari Schools*, Marg Publications, Bombay, 1998, pp. 98–114
 Seyller, John, and Mittal, Jagdish, *Pahari Paintings in the Jagdish and Kamla Mittal Museum of Indian Art*, Hyderabad, 2014

A raja dressed in a yellow *jama* and a yellow turban with a black eagle feather sits on a summer carpet on a terrace smoking from a hookah and supported by a lilac bolster and cushions. A heavy pointed beard and a large aquiline nose are his dominant facial features. His brocaded *patka* is tied round his waist in an interesting manner; it is knotted at front and back

and falls onto the folds of his *jama* rippling over the carpet. A *katar* is stuck through his cummerbund and he wears discreet turban jewels but no other ornamentation, other than his conspicuous Vaishnava tilak on his forehead and Vaishnava leaf designs on the side of his face and on his neck. An attendant stands behind him (on the other side of the parapet) waving a *morchhal* and clasping a large *tulwar*. Beyond the terrace is a flowering prunus tree and a green ground merging into the sky.

The style of the portrait is Guler c. 1780 but the obvious candidate for this raja's identity is Raja Raj Singh of Chamba (b. 1755, reg. 1764–94), who greatly expanded Chamba's influence among the hill states but fell a victim in battle to Raja Sansar Chand of Kangra. Various portraits of this ruler exist firstly in his youth in a traditional Chamba style (Seyller and Mittal 2014, no. 20) and then in a Guler-influenced style after Nikka and Ranjha, the third and fourth sons of Nainsukh, had settled in Chamba in the 1770s (*ibid.*, no. 76; Archer 1973, Chamba 40, 42–44; also Ohri 1998, figs. 1, 17–18). The later portraits from 1790–95 show Raj Singh with the aquiline nose of course but also with the heavy pointed black beard that we see in our painting, but none shows him with the Vaishnava *tika* or the leaf marks. Chamba was historically devoted to Shiva and the Devi as Chamunda, but in the seventeenth century the rajas became devotees of Vishnu and of Rama in particular. Archer however writes that Raja Raj Singh supplemented the family worship of Rama with a new emphasis on Krishna (1973, vol. 1, p. 66).

Closest to our portrait is a similar seated portrait of the Raja in the Bhuri Singh Museum, Chamba, seated with a falcon and smoking a hookah with an attendant with a *morchhal* (Archer 1973, Chamba 43). This is datable to 1790–95 and shows the raja with a long pointed beard. Stylistically our portrait recalls several of those attributed to Nikka or Ranjha (the authorities

cited above differ). The hookah with its slightly askew stem and snake curling on itself several times is common also to Raj Singh with a rani and their infant son in the Chamba Museum (Ohri 1998, fig. 17) and the same raja with his son and a wazir in the Mittal Museum in Hyderabad (*ibid.*, fig. 18 and Seyller and Mittal 2014, no. 76). A large *tulwar* resting on the rug is very much a feature of these portraits, which finds a counterpart in our portrait of the attendant clasping a similar sword.



19

Vishnu outside his Vaikuntha palace with the seven Kumaras

Attributed to the Guler artist Ranjha at Chamba, 1790-1800
 Opaque pigments and gold and silver on paper
 Painting 23.7 × 31.7 cm, within thin black and gold margins, with no surround
 Folio 24.7 × 32.6 cm

Literature

- Archer, W.G., *Indian Paintings from the Punjab Hills*, Sotheby Parke Bernet, London and New York, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1973
- Archer, W.G., *Visions of Courtly India*, International Exhibitions Foundation, New York/London, 1976
- Ohri, V.C., 'Nikka and Ranjha at the court of Raja Raj Singh of Chamba', in Ohri, V.C., and Craven, R., ed., *Painters of the Pahari Schools*, Marg Publications, Bombay, 1998, pp. 98-114
- Seyller, John, and Mittal, Jagdish, *Pahari Paintings in the Jagdish and Kamla Mittal Museum of Indian Art*, Hyderabad, 2014
- Topsfield, A., ed., *In the Realm of Gods and Kings: Arts of India*, Philip Wilson Publishers, London, 2004

Vishnu is standing at the doorway of a palace, crowned and four-armed, but without the peacock feather aigrette, thereby indicating that this is meant to be Vishnu and not Krishna. His four arms are somewhat unusually holding his conch and discus in one hand, leaving one hand free to make a gesture of

abhaya mudra, while club and lotus are in the other two. He is gesturing and looking down smilingly towards a group of seven boys: they are obviously young and look up at the god with various gestures of respect and adoration. These are in fact the Kumaras or mind-born sons of Brahma, who are depicted as eternally young boys.⁷ They all wear plain *dhotis* with shawls (one has an antelope skin) round their upper bodies and carry water pots and packages wrapped up in cloth. Five females attend Vishnu, two waving the chowrie and holding the jewelled parasol over the god, while the other three hold between them a covered pot and dish. These five are dressed in the usual skirt, bodice and *orhni* but in solid colours of blues and oranges. The nearest woman has a shawl of richly striped brocade. Two young gods, four-armed and crowned, stand in reverence to the right carrying garlands while another two depart on the left apparently confused.

The story being illustrated comes from the third book of the *Bhagavata Purana*, cantos 15-16. The Kumaras have come to Vaikuntha, Vishnu's heavenly abode, where on account of their youthfulness and childish appearance they are refused admittance by two of the semi-divine doorkeepers, Jaya and Vijaya. The Kumaras being Brahmins curse the two doorkeepers to be exiled from Vaikuntha, thereby losing the supreme bliss of the presence of Vishnu, but Vishnu himself appears and mollifies the enraged Brahmins, so that the two will eventually be united with Vishnu again. The two doorkeepers were born as the demons Hiranyaksha and Hiranyakashipu, both of whom were eventually slain by Vishnu as Varaha the Boar avatar and as Narasimha, the Man-lion.

The palace behind them has a frontal elevation of gold bricks laid in staggered rows, punctuated by two large and two small openings, the former closed by wooden red shutters. The façade is unusually symmetrical with a Bengali-roofed *naqqar khana* over a great arched doorway at the centre and a *chattri* at

each of the front corners. The courtyard behind ends in an enclosed block with the visible part of its elevation consisting of an upper storey with nine windows in arched niches and golden corner turrets with domed *chattris*. Only at either side beyond the walls is the architectural symmetry broken by a two storeyed pavilion with slightly differing details.

For a somewhat similar painting from Mandi c. 1810 involving Shiva and Parvati being worshipped by gods and others, see Topsfield 2004 no. 38. Shiva is crowned and holding a bow and arrow, with golden parasol and chowrie bearers behind him.⁸ Our painting is earlier, however, with Vishnu's face closely resembling that of Krishna in a painting of Krishna and the gopis formerly in the Archer collection (Archer 1976, no. 44) datable to c. 1790, which Archer considered to be Kangra work: he writes of the 'fluid naturalism' of early Kangra painting, something that is also in evidence here in the fine drawing and in the grouping of the figures giving a sense of space. Other considerations however argue against a Kangra provenance.

The gold bricks staggered in rows with surrounds of mortar is a feature of the architecture of a *Sudama-carita* series from Chamba c. 1780, attributed by Ohri to Nainsukh's youngest son Ranjha (Ohri 1998, figs. 8-9), but attributed by Archer to his brother Nikka (Archer 1973, Chamba 39). This series of which only three paintings seem to be known (two in Chamba and one in Chandigarh) was later copied, certainly in part, in a set of eleven paintings from Garhwal divided between the V&A and the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin (Archer 1973, Garhwal 7i-v; Leach 1995, 11.56-61, compare Ohri 1998 figs. 8 and 9 with Leach 1995, 11.61 and 11.60). The staggered gold bricks of Ohri's fig. 8 are not actually replicated in the copy in the Garhwal set, suggesting the priority of Chamba for this feature. Symmetrical composition round a central feature seems to be a characteristic of Ranjha's work (Ohri 1998, pp. 104-05), and if indeed he is the artist of the *Sudama-carita* series then one of the

Garhwal copies of that work in Dublin (Leach 1995, 11.58).

The distinctive and unusual striped *orhni* worn by the nearest woman is found in a painting showing Radha adorning herself attributed to Ranjha at Guler 1775-80 by Seyller and Mittal (2014, no.82). Our painting's women have very distinctive profiles, their high foreheads and long noses occupying two-thirds of the facial profile, with straight mouths with little dimples and small pointed chins finishing them off. All these features are found in the painting of Radha and her women and even more pointedly so in another painting attributed to Ranjha at Chamba ten years later (*ibid.*, no. 84).

⁷ The *Bhagavata Purana* acknowledges only four Kumaras, but other traditions, of which our artist is obviously aware, speak of seven.

⁸ Another large version on cloth of this scene is in the Los Angeles County Museum, thought by Pal to be of the gods worshipping Rama and Sita, see Pal, P., 'Ramayana Pictures from the Hills in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art' in R.C. Craven, Jr., ed., *Ramayana Pahari Paintings*, Marg Publications, Bombay, 1990, pp. 87-106, fig. 10



20

Krishna and his Kin dallying with their Wives and Courtesans by the Sea Shore at Pindaraka

Page from a *Harivamsa* Series

Style of Purkhu, Kangra, c. 1810–20

Opaque pigments and gold on paper

Painting 35 × 44.5 cm, within a narrow black border with three inner white rules and a red surround with another white rule

Folio 38.4 × 48.2 cm

Inscribed on the recto with the names of the principal figures in white *nagari* and numbered 70 on the cover paper with a Mandi inventory stamp, also various other numbers including 66 which is possibly the number in the series

Literature

Goswamy, B.N., and Fischer, E., *Pahari Masters: Court Painters of Northern India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1992

Goswamy, B.N., and Fischer, E., 'Purkhu of Kangra' in Beach, M.C., Fischer, E., and Goswamy, B.N., *Masters of Indian Painting*, Artibus Asiae, Zurich, 2011, pp. 719–32

Ray, Simon, *Indian and Islamic Works of Art*, London, 2006

Krishna, his brother Balarama, his son Pradyumna and grandson Aniruddha and great friend Arjuna are playing with their wives and courtesans in the water by the sea shore at Pindaraka. On the bank is a group of tents in front of which are perched their clothes and the crowns that they normally wear. Blue-skinned Krishna is in the middle playing with Satyabhama behind him, Rukmini to the right and many other women. Arjuna, also blue and bearded as a warrior, is above him to the left playing with Subhadra, his wife and Krishna's sister. Aniruddha is above Krishna to the right playing with Usha, whom he won from her enraged father Bana. Balarama, here called Balabhadra, is below Krishna to the left, playing with his wife Revati. Krishna's son Pradyumna, also blue, is to the lower right playing with his wife Rukmavati, here called Rati of whom she was an incarnation. The only other inscription is to the middle right above Satyaki, whose taunts later led to the mutual destruction of the entire clan. Many other men of the Vrishni clan are in the water and numerous girls, enjoying themselves splashing water up at one another or diving under it.

This complex and beautifully drawn and painted picture illustrates canto 88 of the *Visnuparvan* of the *Harivamsa*, when Krishna and the Vrishni princes left Dvaravati and went to the sea shore at the pilgrimage centre of Pindaraka. They were accompanied by thousands of courtesans with whom they passed the time in delightful dalliance. Those many thousands who were with Krishna thought like the *gopis* of Brindavan that she alone was with Krishna as they played in the water, which Krishna had made miraculously free of salt for the occasion. The composition centres on Krishna surrounded as he is by the women as he was depicted in the *Rasamandala* with the *gopis* of Brindaban. The other princes act as foils around this central grouping, but each with their own group.

The *Harivamsa* is an ancient appendix to the *Mahabharata* that reuses the same material as in the epic itself but with more

emphasis on the role of Krishna and of his descendants. A well-known *Harivamsa* series from Kangra, c. 1800–15, was once in the possession of the Raja of Nadaun and is now widely dispersed. A large group is in the Chandigarh Museum (mostly unpublished, but see Goswamy and Fischer 1992, nos. 164–65, and Goswamy and Fischer 2011, figs. 4–5, with inner blue border and outer red one). These authors argue for the series to be given to Purkhu, the principal court artist of Raja Sansar Chand of Kangra (reg. 1775–1823) in the period 1800–15. Our folio and three others from the same series (Simon Ray 2006, nos. 75–76; Sotheby's Sven Gahlin sale, 6 October 2015, lot 96) are slightly different in size and with a thinner inner black border and wider red one. All four illustrate this story of the Yadavas bathing by the sea shore. They do nonetheless seem to be based on the earlier series sharing Purkhu's characteristic grouping of figures and his colour schemes favouring the hot oranges and yellows seen at the top of the painting. Our painting abounds in various painterly felicities, especially the way the water is depicted – grey with thin and thicker white lines rippling through it and covering the lower parts of the bathers, whose variously coloured *dhotis* and limbs fade beneath the water. The solid masses of dark hair on the women are very typical of the work of Purkhu and his school as are the facial profiles with their sharp noses.



21

Krishna examines a Picture of his beloved which the *Sakhi* has brought him

Page from the *Rasikapriya* of Keshav Das

Attributed to Purkhu, Kangra, c. 1810–20

Opaque pigments and gold and silver on paper,

Painting 25.6 × 15.7 cm, oval, within a gold margin and blue spandrels with silver arabesques and stylised flowers, with gold and red margins and a pink surround

Folio 32.5 × 23.1 cm

Inscribed on the reverse in Hindi in *nagari* script with the text of *Rasikapriya* ch.

4, v. 12, entitled in red: *atha Sri Krishna ko prakasa citra darsana* ('Sri Krishna's manifest vision [of his beloved] through a painting')

Literature

Archer, W.G., *Indian Painting from the Punjab Hills*, Sotheby Parke Bernet, London, 1973

Dehejia, Harsha V., *Rasikapriya: Ritikavya of Keshavdas in Ateliers of Love*, DK Printworld, New Delhi, 2013

Goswamy, B.N., and Fischer, E., 'Purkhu of Kangra' in Beach, M.C., Fischer, E., and Goswamy, B.N., *Masters of Indian Painting*, Artibus Asiae, Zurich, 2011, pp. 719–32

Krishna sits on the terrace rapt in admiration of the picture of his beloved that her friend has brought to him. He says to the *sakhi*: 'Heavenly women with beautiful eyes are no match for this *nayika*. *Kinnari* women, women of this earth, serpent women, women of the mountains, wives of demons and deities all admire her beauty and bow to her. Are women of the netherworlds or the wife of Kamdev more beautiful than her? She is picture perfect verily as beautiful as Sita and Lakshmi' (translation Harsha Dehejia).

Krishna is tall, handsome and elegant in this large series, a young man rather than a boy, with black hair curling on the back of his neck. His normal peacock-feathered crown is enhanced here by a black eagle feather, suggesting that he is also a prince. This is not a normal feature of his appearance in this series, although it is found in one of the paintings from this set in the V&A (Archer 1973, Kangra 66vi). Sometimes in this series he wears a turban (e.g. *ibid.*, Kangra 66iv). Here in our painting he sits absorbed in the picture of Radha, which shows her walking in a grove with her *sakhi*, her companion, who in fact sits opposite Krishna eager to tell him about her. His blue skin and the silver and grey colours that surround him contrast with his yellow dhoti, the only other dominant colour on the right side of the picture, as opposed to the vivid orange of the *sakhi's* costume and the deep red ground and green tree on the left side. The great curving sweep of the *sakhi's* skirt over her raised thigh and the rippling folds around it are seen again on the *nayika* in the *Night tryst* from this series in the V&A (*ibid.*, Kangra 66ii).

The white stuccoed pavilion behind him has a silver brocade awning rolled up over the arched opening, while a doorway within the chamber concealed by a bamboo blind with richly coloured slats leads through the grey wall with its arched niches. Beyond the terrace rise a dark green tree and a prunus covered with white blossom. The beautifully drawn and paint-

ed composition conforms to Purkhu's penchant for depicting only a shallow space, here reinforced by the vivid red ground that does duty for a landscape. The flaming red of the background is perhaps expressive of Krishna's ardent love, as is the touch of red applied to the corner of his eye.

Archer describes the series (1973, Kangra 66), from which sixteen paintings are in the Victoria and Albert Museum, as having originally several hundred paintings, now widely dispersed. Archer dates the series 1820–25 and Goswamy and Fischer (2011, p. 721) conform to Archer's dating and attribute the series to Purkhu. This does seem a little late for the finer paintings of this series, such as this one, although such a large series was probably in production over a decade or more.



22

Abhimanyu trapped in the *Chakravyuha* Formation strikes Ashvatthama with his Mace

Page from a *Mahabharata* Series

Kangra, c. 1820

Opaque pigments with gold on paper

Painting 32 × 44.6 cm, within a thin red surround with two white rules

Folio 33 × 46 cm:

Inscribed on the recto with names in small white *nagari*: *Abhimanyu*, *Ashvatthama*, *Jayadratha* and *Kaliketa* and on the verso with the number 35

Literature

Archer, W.G., *Indian Paintings from the Punjab Hills*, Sotheby Parke Bernet, London and New York, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1973

Isacco, E., and Dallapiccola, A.L., *Krishna. The Divine Lover. Myth and Legend through Indian Art*, Serindia, London, 1982

Khandalavala, K., *Pahari Miniature Paintings in the N.C. Mehta Collection*, Gujarat Museum Society, Ahmedabad, n.d.

Seyller, J., and Mittal, J., *Pahari Drawings in the Jagdish and Kamla Mittal Museum of Indian Art*, Hyderabad, 2013

On the thirteenth day of the *Mahabharata* war when the *chakravyuha* troop formation is launched by Drona, Arjuna's young son Abhimanyu (his mother being Krishna's sister Subhadra) manages to enter the formation; he intends for the Pandava forces to follow after him and smash the formation from the inside. But the Kaurava ally Jayadratha moves to close the gap, and is able to hold all the Pandava brothers and their forces at bay as promised to him by Shiva in his boon. Abhimanyu, who does not know how to exit from the *chakravyuha*, is trapped, but defeats all of the Kaurava heroes and kills many of their sons. Here he is depicted twice, first having already struck down Kaliketa the son of Suvala, who falls back lifeless covered with blood, and then striking with his mace Ashvatthama, who recoils in terror in his chariot. Although laying about him lustily now, Abhimanyu is actually brutally killed by the Kaurava warriors in a combined attack led by Drona and Karna. The story of Abhimanyu's death is told in Book 7 of the *Mahabharata*, canto 47.

The *chakravyuha* formation is represented by the square of mounted soldiers round the battling Abhimanyu. On the right Jayadratha on his elephant confronts the Pandava forces which cannot come to Abhimanyu's aid, because Shiva had promised Jayadratha that he could hold the Pandava forces at bay for one day. The artist has suggested the limitless nature of the *chakravyuha* formation by having the outer warriors disappear under the frame at the top. For the previous page from the series showing Abhimanyu attacking Drona within the *chakravyuha* formation see Sotheby's New York, 15 December 1978, lot 180, where the same device is also deployed. Two other similar pages from this series are published in Isacco and Dalapiccola 1982, fig. 91, and in Khandalavala [n.d.], fig. 85, the latter in the N.C. Mehta collection Ahmedabad. Khandalavala writes that a page from this series in the National Museum, New Delhi, is dated 1803, but this does not seem to have been published, nor

has another page in the Government Museum, Chandigarh, referred to in Seyller and Mittal 2013 (p. 181) when publishing an earlier *chakravyuha* drawing from Chamba.

The figures in our painting are distinguished by their various sizes, with principal figures being larger than less important ones, and despite the scene of action in the centre, curiously static. Heavy beards and large moustaches are much in evidence. For a painting from a *Kiratarjuniya* series in similar style, see Archer 1973, Kangra 61, with references to other pages from that series sold at Sotheby's in 1969 and 1970.



23

A gigantic Hanuman carrying Rama and Lakshmana across the Ocean

Style of Sajnu, Mandi, c. 1810

Opaque pigments and gold and silver on paper

Painting 22.5 × 16.9 cm, oval, with gold spandrels decorated with floral and white arabesques, within a black border with a gold and red floral scroll

Folio 24.3 × 19 cm

Inscribed later on the verso in Hindi in *nagari*: *yah tasvir Shri Ramachandraji aur Lakshmanaji aur Hanumanji* ('this [is] a picture of Shri Ramachandra and Lakshmana and Hanuman')

Literature

Archer, W.G., *Indian Painting from the Punjab Hills*, Sotheby Parke Bernet, London, 1973

Ohri, V.C., *The Exile in the Forest*, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi, 1983

A gigantic Hanuman is depicted striding through swirling water teeming with fish and other creatures, while carrying Rama and Lakshmana on his shoulders. They are still boys with long curly hair and wear a yellow and blue *jama* respectively, and crowns with a larger central panel, that of Rama having additionally a black feather and a jasmine garland. They carry their bows and quivers of arrows, shields and swords (though Rama's is not visible) and wear rich jewels. Hanuman

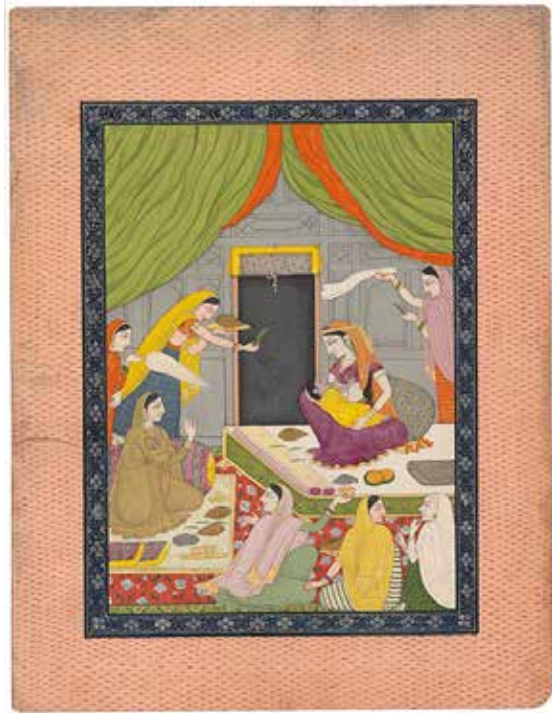
wears just drawers of a rich striped brocade material, a purple cap and an orange and gold *patka* knotted front and back. His golden jewelled mace is thrust through his cummerbund. Various jewelled necklaces and chains, armbands and bracelets adorn his person. Gold has been added to the brown paint depicting his fur, so that his body shines.

The swirling patterns in the oxidised silver water, which have been thought peculiar to Garhwal, are in fact found elsewhere in Pahari painting, at Chamba in particular (Ohri 1983, pl. III). Nonetheless the boys' facial profile resembles those seen in Mandi painting c. 1810–20 (see Archer 1973, Mandi nos. 47, 50). The floral and arabesque decorations in the spandrels are seen in the *Barahmasa* series attributed to Sajnu c. 1808 (*ibid.*, Mandi 43–45).

This is obviously a devotional painting done for an important patron, expressive of Hanuman's being the supreme devotee of Lord Rama. Although Hanuman's body is modelled just with contour shading, great care has been taken over his clothes and decorations. His cummerbund is beautifully draped around his waist and we note the dip in his torso for his navel and the finely depicted hairs around it. Although the faces are largely impassive, the two boys stare at each other with a certain quizzical expression, while we note the tender care with which Hanuman grasps them to make sure they do not fall as he gazes up in adoration. Their faces are beautifully and carefully modelled.

Although there is nothing quite like this in Sajnu's *oeuvre*, it seems reasonable to attribute so fine a painting from Mandi to at least his workshop there. Sajnu is credited with bringing the Guler and Kangra style to Mandi under Raja Ishvari Sen (reg. 1788–1826), after the latter's return to Mandi in 1805 from captivity in Kangra under Sansar Chand. Archer (1973, vol. 1, pp. 360–67) discusses Sajnu's origin and the change in style in Mandi painting from its 'bold, primitive but at times crude style

of the eighteenth century'. Very little work can actually be ascribed to Sajnu himself (*ibid.*, Mandi 42, 43, 46) but the new Mandi style he established follows his general indebtedness to Guler and Kangra painting such as the gentle landscape and the features of the participants. Sajnu favoured a fairly angular facial profile with a large nose such as we can see on the two boys in this picture. This particular trait is found in other Ramaite Mandi pictures such as Rama and Sita enthroned and the Return of Rama both in the V&A (*ibid.*, Mandi nos. 62 and 64).



24

The Birth Ceremonies of the Baby Krishna

Mandi, style of Sajnu, c. 1820

Opaque pigments and gold and silver on paper

Painting 18.2 × 13 cm within a blue margin with floral arabesques and a pink surround

Folio 26.2 × 20.2 cm

Literature

Archer, W.G., *Indian Painting from the Punjab Hills*, Sotheby Parke Bernet, London, 1973

Goswamy, B.N., and Fischer, E., *Pahari Masters: Court Painters of Northern India*, Museum Rietberg, Zurich, 1992, *Artibus Asiae Supplementum* 38, reprint Niyogi Books, Delhi, 2009

Krishna's father Vasudeva has exchanged the new born Krishna for his kinsman Nanda's newly born daughter. Yashoda the mother accepts the baby as her own and here is now performing the birth ceremonies. All her women friends and relations bring offerings of coconut, fruit, *kusha* grass etc. as Yashoda sits on her bed with the baby Krishna in her arms suckling at her breast. Rohini the mother of Balarama sits on the floor opposite her. The birth ceremonies of Krishna are described in the *Bhagavata Purana* Book X, canto 10, vv. 9–18, in very elaborate detail, in which the gopis of Braj beautifully dressed and

adorned with jewels hastened to Yashoda's residence to congratulate her as well as make their ritual offerings, while Nanda honoured the Brahmins and arranged for music and feasting.

The artist has toned down this description of extravagance in favour of a more realistic rendering of what might happen at a birth ceremony in a Pahari village, the women being simply dressed and the offerings merely ritualistic. Yashoda has tied a headband round her head like any Pahari woman at the time of giving birth (Goswamy and Fischer 1992, p. 110). The artist has devised for this intimate scene a striking colour scheme in which the women's richly coloured garments, the red carpet and the orange and green curtains contrast with the grey wall behind. Through movement, looks and gesture the women surround Yashoda in a protective circle. The great hanging swags of the green curtains with their orange linings go back to the incorporation of such European devices into the artistic vocabulary of the Mughals in the early seventeenth century.

The women's faces are striking, strong rather than beautiful: large heads, very elongated eyes slightly angled with a double curve of the upper eyelid, the main curve of the eyebrow near the ear, sloping forehead angled into a large nose, curving mouths. They seem closest to those characterised by Archer as Kangra, c. 1820–25 (1973, Kangra 59–65, especially 60), although the unusual composition and strong colour contrasts seem alien to the gentle Kangra style of that time. Similar faces were also being produced then in Mandi (*ibid.*, Mandi 55–60). An especially telling comparison can be made between our Yashoda holding the baby Krishna and Parvati holding the infant Karttikeya in the holy family being worshipped by gods and ascetics in the V&A thought by Archer to be Mandi c. 1810–20 (*ibid.*, no. 60).



25

Vipralabdha Nayika

Style of Sajnu, Mandi, 1810–20

Opaque pigments with gold and silver on paper

Painting 20 × 16.7 cm, within a dark blue border with foliate silver scroll with two red rules and a pink surround

Folio 27.5 x 22.6 cm

Literature

Archer, W.G., *Indian Painting from the Punjab Hills*, Sotheby Parke Bernet, London, 1973

Dehejia, Harsha V., *Rasikapriya: Ritikavya of Keshavdas in Ateliers of Love*, DK Printworld, New Delhi, 2013

Khandalawala, Karl J., *Paintings of Bygone Years*, Vakils, Feffer and Simons, Bombay, 1991

Pal, P., *Desire and Devotion: Art from India, Nepal and Tibet in the John and Berthe Ford Collection*, Philip Wilson, London, 2001

Randhawa, M.S., *Kangra Paintings on Love*, National Museum, New Delhi, 1962

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

Sharma, O.P., *Indian Miniature Painting: Exhibition Compiled from the Collection of the National Museum, New Delhi*, Bibliothèque Royale, Brussels, 1974

The *vipralabdha* is one of the eight varieties of *nayika* described in Keshav Das's *Rasikapriya* (ch. 7, v. 23). She has fixed an assignation with her lover, and she has prepared a bed of leaves for them to make love, but he fails to turn up. The *sakhi* later describes her feelings to Krishna:

'Flowers are like arrows, fragrance becomes ill odour,
pleasant bowers like fiery furnaces,
Gardens are like the wild woods, Ah Keshava, the moon rays
burn her body as though with fever,
Love like a tiger holds her heart, no watch of the night
brings her any gladness,
Songs have the sound of abuse, betel has the taste ofnpoi-
son, every jewel burns like a firebrand'
(translation M.S. Randhawa)

Here the *nayika* is discarding the jewellery that burns her, although her mood is clearly one of sorrowful contemplation rather than anger. The bed has been made with lotus leaves and jasmine blossoms and she is casting her armband into the middle of it. Richly dressed in a white *peshwaj* and *dupatta* with gold trim, the artist has fun with the folds and loops. The pale fresh colours are intended to suggest moonlight, the moon being depicted quite high in the sky as a white orb radiating rays, which is reflected in the water of the stream running at the bottom. A beautifully depicted grove of trees on the right, some of them in blossom, adds to the generally elegiac mood of the painting. The gentle green hillsides suggest the Kangra valley, although the *nayika's* appearance and the folds of her gown and her *dupatta* are more typical of the school of Sajnu in Mandi 1808–20 (e.g. Archer 1973, Mandi 45 and 49), or in a painting of Radha's confusion in the Museum Rietberg (Goswamy and Fischer 1992, no. 156). The *nayika's* facial profile and her beautifully modelled face are close to that of a *nayika* talking to a pet bird in the Mittal Museum in Hyderabad

(Seyller and Mittal 2014, no. 101), which has an ascription to Sajnu in 1808. For a somewhat similarly posed *nayika* watching the coming storm in the Lalbhai collection, see Khandalavala 1991, pl. XIII, who attributes it to Sajnu himself, also the figure of Radha in *Radha's Tryst with Krishna* in the Ford collection (Pal 2001, no. 69), and the *nayika* remembering her absent husband in the National Museum (Sharma 1974, no. 95, pl. 92).

Sajnu is credited with bringing the Guler and Kangra style to Mandi under Raja Ishvari Sen (reg. 1788–1826), after the latter's return to Mandi in 1805 from captivity in Kangra under Sansar Chand. Archer (1973, vol. 1, pp. 360–67) discusses Sajnu's origin and the change in style in Mandi painting from its 'bold, primitive but at times crude style of the eighteenth century'. Very little work can actually be ascribed to Sajnu himself (*ibid.*, Mandi 42, 43, 46) but the new Mandi style he established follows his general indebtedness to Guler and Kangra painting such as the gentle landscape and the features of the participants.



26

Elephants destroy the Camp of the Merchants with whom Damayanti is travelling
From a Nala–Damayanti Series

Kangra, 1820–30
 Painting 25 × 35.8 cm, within a blue margin with a red surround
 Folio 28.7 × 40 cm
 Numbered 22 on the verso

Literature
 Dallapiccola, A., *Princesses et courtisanes, a travers les miniatures indiennes*, Galerie Marco Polo, 1978
 Goswamy, B.N., *Pahari Paintings of the Nala-Damayanti Theme*, National Museum of India, New Delhi, 1975
 Goswamy, B.N., and Fischer, E., ‘The First Generation after Manaku and Nainsukh of Guler’ in Beach, M.C., Fischer, E., and Goswamy, B.N., *Masters of Indian Painting*, Artibus Asiae, Zurich, 2011, pp. 687–718
 Losty, J.P., *Sita Ram: Picturesque Views of India – Lord Hastings’s Journey from Calcutta to the Punjab, 1814–15*, Roli Books, New Delhi, 2015
 Poster, Amy G., et al., *Realms of Heroism: Indian Paintings at the Brooklyn Museum*, New York, 1994

The well-known story of Nala and Damayanti is found first in the *Vanaparvan* of the *Mahabharata*, where the Pandavas tell stories in order to while away the time of their exile. Nala the king of Nisada, and Damayanti, princess of Vidarbha, already

know of each other before Damayanti’s *svayamvara*, where she was allowed to choose her own husband. Such was her beauty that the gods themselves came down from heaven to attend the *svayamvara*, but despite their spoiling tactics Damayanti was able to choose Nala. They married and lived happily for a time. This is the story told in the great *mahakavya Naisadhacarita* by the mediaeval poet Shriharsha, and it was this version of the story of Nala and Damayanti that was illustrated in the various series of paintings and drawings from Kangra 1790–1810 (see Goswamy 1975 and Goswamy and Fischer 2011, nos. 21–25, figs. 23 and 24).

The story however is much longer. The gods were jealous and angry at their being rejected and visited misfortunes on the couple. Nala’s downfall was his love of gambling, in which he lost everything including his kingdom. Exiled to the forest, Nala resolved to leave his sleeping wife so that she could find her way to her parents and went off by himself. Damayanti on awakening was terrified at being left alone, but managed to fall in with some merchants travelling in a caravan on their way to the capital of the kingdom of Chedi.

It is this part of the story that this painting from Kangra illustrates, and it is presumably part of a series carrying the story on to its conclusion. The merchants pitched their camp at night by a lake, but a herd of elephants regarded the water as theirs by right. They are shown running amok in a mist at night and destroying the camp and killing nearly all the merchants. Damayanti is shown three times wandering by herself, the last time approaching cowherds with a herd of cows who have come upon the scene on devastation. A cowherd boy with a spear attempts to drive the elephants away.

For other known pages from this series illustrating this second half of the story, see Poster et al. 1994, no. 203; Dallapiccola 1978, no. 45; Sotheby’s London 4 April 1978, lot 296; Sotheby’s New York 27 March 1991, lots 71–72. The series is

remarkable for its open landscape. Beyond the road the open plain dotted with trees merges with the sky in aerial perspective. The other known pages are similar with very open landscapes dotted with trees fading in aerial perspective. Such a landscape convention, so alien to the art traditions of the hills, can only have been learned from European examples, perhaps filtered through the work of Indian artists such as Sita Ram who was in Haridwar in 1815 (Losty 2015, *passim*).