

# National Museum New Delhi

Scheme of Tagore National Fellowship for Cultural Research

## Imagery of **FEMALE MESSENGERS (*Dutikas/Sakhis*)** in Indian Art Thought and Literature

A Critical Appraisal on their Socio-cultural relevance  
(From the art collections of National Museum, New Delhi)



**Dr. Choodamani Nandagopal**

Submitted by:

Art Historian UNESCO Fellow

Tagore National Fellow at National Museum New Delhi

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**Title of the project:**

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## Prologue

India, through history and culture contributed towards the world heritage, innovative and artistic creation which is of eternal value and profound significance. To a great extent our antiquities are preserved in the collections of museums in our country such as National Museum Delhi, Indian Museum Calcutta, Salarjung Museum Hyderabad, Bihar State Museum Patna, Tamilnadu State Museum Chennai, Chatrapati Shivaji Museum Mumbai, also several Archaeological site museums and unique museums set up for special collections. It is a path paved by sincere explorers, scholars, art historians, museum professionals, officers, and generations of interested common folk, have transformed the collections into a perpetual contribution to the field of Indian art and culture.

I am grateful to Government of India, and our Esteemed Prime Minister Honourable Narendra Modi ji and the Minister of Culture Respected Prahlad Sigh Patel, for bestowing the prestigious National Fellowship on me to undertake the research work on such a rare subject matter.

The genesis of this project is traced back while I was the Academic Head of IGNCA Southern Regional Centre Bangalore (2003-2006). A national conference was organized by eminent musicologist of our country Dr R Satyanarayana on the topic: Contributions of Pandarika Vitthala to Indian Art and Culture. Dr Satyanarayana gave me a wonderful topic to study and present in the conference; '*Dutikarmaprakasha* and *Shighrabodhini namawala* of Pandarika Vitthala'. Again I presented a paper on the 'Imagery of Female Messengers in Literature and Art in a national conference organized by Indian Art History Congress at National Museum Delhi. I presented this paper before the erudite scholar Dr Kapila Vatsyayan, who chaired the session, appreciated and expressed about the potential of the subject for a higher research. My association with Dr R D Choudhury, the then Director General of National Museum and Dr Daljeet Kaur, the then Curator of Painting section, provided opportunity to view many of the miniature paintings in the collections, and I am thankful to them. Since then I visualized myself to study these paintings in the light of the imagery of Female Messengers. Under the scheme of Tagore National Fellowship, Ministry of Culture, Government of India, I proposed this topic and it was selected. I am ever grateful to the

senior members of National Selection Committee, who felt the need to research on such rare and unique topic.

I would like to place on record, the official support rendered by Dr B R Mani, who was the Director General, when I was awarded Tagore National Fellowship at National Museum. As a sound scholar he also felt the need to research on the *Dutika/Sakhis*, Female Messengers portrayed in the paintings and sculptures, part of the collections of National Museum, through which the collections are enriched. It was a motivational experience to work under his stewardship and I am indebted to him.

### **Resources - National Museum Delhi as Nodal Institution**

National Museum Delhi, a treasure house for sterling collections of paintings and sculptures. Master pieces of Indian Art are preserved here and made available for researchers. To study with fresh perspectives, the students and faculty of NMI-National Museum Institute (Deemed to be University) are given preference to research on art collections. Other senior scholars and curators are given priority to conduct their research on specific topic on the basis of art works displayed in the galleries and reserved collections. Fortunately the researcher is associated with this esteemed institution and very much aware of the collections needed for the proposed research.

The National Museum has nearly 17,000 paintings, representing all important styles of Indian miniatures. It is one of the largest collections of miniature paintings in the country. The Miniature painting tradition has been a key form of Indian painting apart from murals, cloth paintings and paintings on wood. Among miniature paintings, the main schools have been- the Deccani (from the South), Mughal (Spanning Central and North India), Rajasthani (West India) and Pahari (From the hills of the North).

Earlier the researcher had worked on the collections of Victoria & Albert Museum London on Nehru Fellowship project. It was a proud moment when the overseas scholars value the collections of National Museum and the esteemed faculty and students of NMI depend largely on the collections of National Museum.

The project proposed needed a scientific research to be conducted on the presence and significance of Female Messengers pertaining to the collections displayed and also in reserve collections of National Museum. Rich Library resources of National Museum supported the reference material and facilitate to cross check with the original art works in the collection. The tangible and intangible sources and resources of Indira Gandhi

National Centre for Arts, another significant research platform was very helpful for such in depth study. The archival material and rare books library of American Institute of Indian Studies Gurgaon provided potential resources for this research. Through this project National Museum as Nodal Institution has benefitted in terms of unraveling its resources in the manner of fresh understanding towards the contribution of marginalised category of women in the services of royal household and their significant role in enriching the themes of the times. Hitherto research on such topic and analysis of artworks from this perspective was not been considered. It was a rich experience and my life-long mission to work on this unique research project with the rich resources of National Museum under the Tagore National Fellowship awarded by Ministry of Culture Government of India.

I acknowledge the academic support provided by Member Secretary Dr. Sachchidananda Joshi, Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, Delhi, the staff of Library and Cultural Archives. I am thankful to Dr Vandana Srivatsava, Director Academics, American Institute of Indian Studies Gurgaon, who extended her support to consult the rare books section of the Library, which was very helpful in this research.

In the project proposal, Exhibition and Publication were proposed on **Imagery of Female Messengers (*Dutika/Sakhis*) in Indian Art Thought and Literature** on the basis of the research conducted. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic situation in the country and Delhi, it was not possible to execute the original plan of Exhibition and Publication. Despite certain academic limitations, a detailed Project Report is being submitted. Hope and Pray to execute the original plan once the situation reaches normalcy.

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## Acknowledgement

I offer my sincerest thanks to Mr. Raghvendra Singh the CEO, heading National Museum and Shri Subrata Nath the Joint-Director General and the Finance Officer of National Museum for their kind support in all official matters. I am gratified with the concerned officers from various departments in National Museum. Dr Mohan Pratap Curator, Museum Education Officer Rige Sheba, Assistant Curator Nazia Kamal from the Education Department, Dr. Kanaklatha Singh, Assistant Curator Department of Painting, Dr Yogesh Mallinathpur, Archaeologist, Assistant Curator Publication, Dr Anamika Pathak, Former Chief Curator Department of Decorative Arts, Library staff and Deepak who assisted me in my research were mainly responsible in many ways. Without their timely help and support it would not have been possible to move ahead in the process and completion of the tenure of Tagore National Fellowship and also this Research Project, I am thankful to all.

Back in Bangalore I am thankful to some of my associates and friends. Shatavadhani Dr R Ganesh, an eminent linguist of our land and was my colleague, he was the Research Officer at IGNCA Southern Regional Centre Bangalore, he handed over to me the small Sanskrit text *Dutikarmaprakasha* authored by Pandarika Vithala in 1565-72, while I was working on a research paper for the conference I mentioned above. Discussions on this topic with Dr Ganesh have widened my horizon in understanding the rare subject. I am ever grateful to him for open heartedly sharing his valuable thoughts with me. Prof. S. Ranganath, another profound Sanskrit scholar has translated *Dutikarmaprakasha* to English for the sake of this Fellowship project that helped a great deal in analysing and interpreting the paintings that were chosen for the study. My special thanks go to him

Shri SA Jagannath, Chief Editor (Retired) Karnataka Government Gazetteer Department, rendered valuable academic support, travelled with me to Satanuru, the home town of Pandarika Vithala and helped me in documentation of the Vithala Temple, *agrahara* and ancestral place of the poet, which is significant for this project. My special thanks are due to his support in this regard. Original Text *Dutikarmaprakasha* in manuscript form is preserved in Royal Library, Ganga Trust, Anup Sanskrit Library Lalgadh Palace Archives Fort Bikaner. After the correspondence the members of royal family gave permission to go through this manuscript belonging to 16<sup>th</sup> century. I thank them immensely for their much needed support. Dr Nitin Goel, a scholar and Officer in-charge

of Jodhpur Library and collection in Bikaner, he took keen interest and helped me to contact Ganga Trust and also provided original resources from his library. I am greatly acknowledging his support which is very valuable in this research project. Mrs. Megha Parakh Vohra, scholar in literature took personal interest in sourcing original verses and translation from Rasikapriya and Gita Govinda, which enhanced the value of content and I convey my gratitude to her. My grateful thanks are due to all of them.

Bhanu Prakash provided technical assistance in the project I sincerely thank him. Mr. Prakash Wali assisted me in layout and design, I am thankful to him. I had several sessions of lively discussions with my younger sister Dr Tulasi Ramachandra, a linguist and dance researcher on the subject and she deserves to be thanked in this regard too. Last but not the least, Prof Nandagopal, was delighted to know more about the topic, travelled to Delhi with me, stayed for a year, visited Bikaner, Jaisalmer and other places for collecting data through the field work and has borne the brunt of my travel and working for long hours sometimes not taking care of health at the advanced age. Family is so important for a scholar to fall back in time of need and care. Completing a Research project gives a great satisfaction of fulfilling the work, which is a humble submission to Ma Sarasvati!

National Museum New Delhi

**Prof. Dr. Choodamani Nandagopal**

Oakyard Apartments Bangalore

9 August 2021

**Profile of**  
**Prof. Choodamani Nandagopal** Ph.D.



**Dr. Choodamani Nandagopal**, has two post-graduate degrees, in Sociology and in History and Archaeology, PhD Mysore University under the guidance of Prof A V Narasimhamurthy, an eminent archaeologist. Choodamani, an Art Historian of International repute, is awarded five International and two national research fellowships, including the first scholar to receive as the UK Visiting Nehru Fellow at Victoria & Albert Museum London, UNESCO Hirayama Fellow for Art History, UNSW Senior Fellow Sydney and Exeter Research Fellow UK. She is awarded as Tagore National Senior Fellow at National Museum Delhi for 2019-21, a prestigious one from Government of India, and just completed two years tenure of Fellowship.

**Dr Choodamani's highest achievement is working for the chapter III in the Dossier on Ramappa Temple and a scholarly volume on Remapped Temple covering Tangible and Intangible cultural Heritage played a key role in recommendation for the Inscription of RAMAPPA TEMPLE AS UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE.**

She is a prolific writer with 20 International publications, and 100 published papers to her credit.

- 'Dance and Music in Temple Architecture',
- 'Temple Treasures 3 volumes,' Ritual Utensils, Temple Jewellery, Temple Chariots'
- Arts and Crafts of Indus Civilization',
- 'The Art of Image Making', 'Ritual Enactment in Temple Tradition', published by IGNCA, 'Manjusha – An Art Genre', 'Classical Dance Heritage of Karnataka', 'Impressions – Devika Rani', 'Assam Manuscript Painting from Guwahati Museum', Rudreshvara (Ramappa) Temple, the Crest Jewel of Kakatiya Art & Architecture' are the valuable contributions to the field of art History.



In addition she worked on Research Project with **India-Sri Lankan Foundation on ‘Amaravati and Anuradhapura – Cultural Interface’**, a bilateral collaborative project strengthening the cultural ties between India and Sri Lanka. She led a team of researchers on the project Research and Documentation of Jaina art and Culture in Karnataka for a mega national project on **‘Museum of Jain Philosophy and Values undertaken by the Ferodia Trust Pune.**

Choodamani Nandagopal, a distinguished scholar and professor in Indian Art History and Culture, She has guided 20 PhD scholars. And 20 M Phil candidates. **She is founder of Art History Department at Fine Arts College Chitrakala Parishath,, She was the first Academic Head at IGNCA Bangalore, set up the Department of Cultural Studies at Manipal University. Later served as the Dean, School of Humanities & Social Sciences Jain University Bangalore.**

**Her major contribution has been to research; revive, restore the cultural heritage of India.**

She is the reputed art historian and cultural analyst, undertaken extensive research in art history, dance, music, sculpture, architecture, literature and scriptures, worshipping traditions, teaching, guiding, documentation, publication, and providing consultancy to national and international universities, institutions and museums to enhance the knowledge towards the Indian culture over four decades.

She was the Joint Secretary and now the **Vice-President of Indian Art History Congress.** She is the **Secretary and Founding Trustee of Dr .S.R. Rao Memorial Foundation, Advisory Board Member Dharmothana Pratishtana Dharmasthala, for conservation and restoring temples.** She was the member of Academic Council National Museum Delhi, the Member of UGC Curriculum Core Committee for, Art history, Museum Studies and Conservation. She was the Syndicate Member of Kannada University Hampi. Recently she is nominated by HRD Ministry as the member for drafting the Language Policy for the country. She is the visiting professor in some of the national and International Universities, and consultant to Museums. At present Dr.Choodamani is the sitting Member of Advisory Board IGNCA Bangalore, Ministry of Culture Government of India, She is actively associated with Raja Ravi Varma Foundation and Sandeep Gitanjali Maini Foundation Bangalore. Life Member Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath.

Her Awards include Chanakya Award, AttenDance Rukmini Arundale Award for her contributions to Indian Art History, Karnataka Kalashri Award from Govt. of Karnataka for her contributions to the field of dance, Danachinatamani Attimabbe, Karnataka State Award recently conferred on her for her contribution to field of culture. Chitrakala Samman H K Kejriwal Award 2021 from Chitrakala Parishath.

Travelled extensively and associated with number of universities, museums and art institutions which include, Hofstra University, Stony Brook University USA, Victoria & Albert Museum, British Museum, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Exeter University UK, Kelenia University Sri Lanka, UNSW Australia, Musee Guime France, National Museum Institute, Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, American Institute of Indian studies New Delhi to name a few. She is dedicated herself to the field of Indian art and culture.

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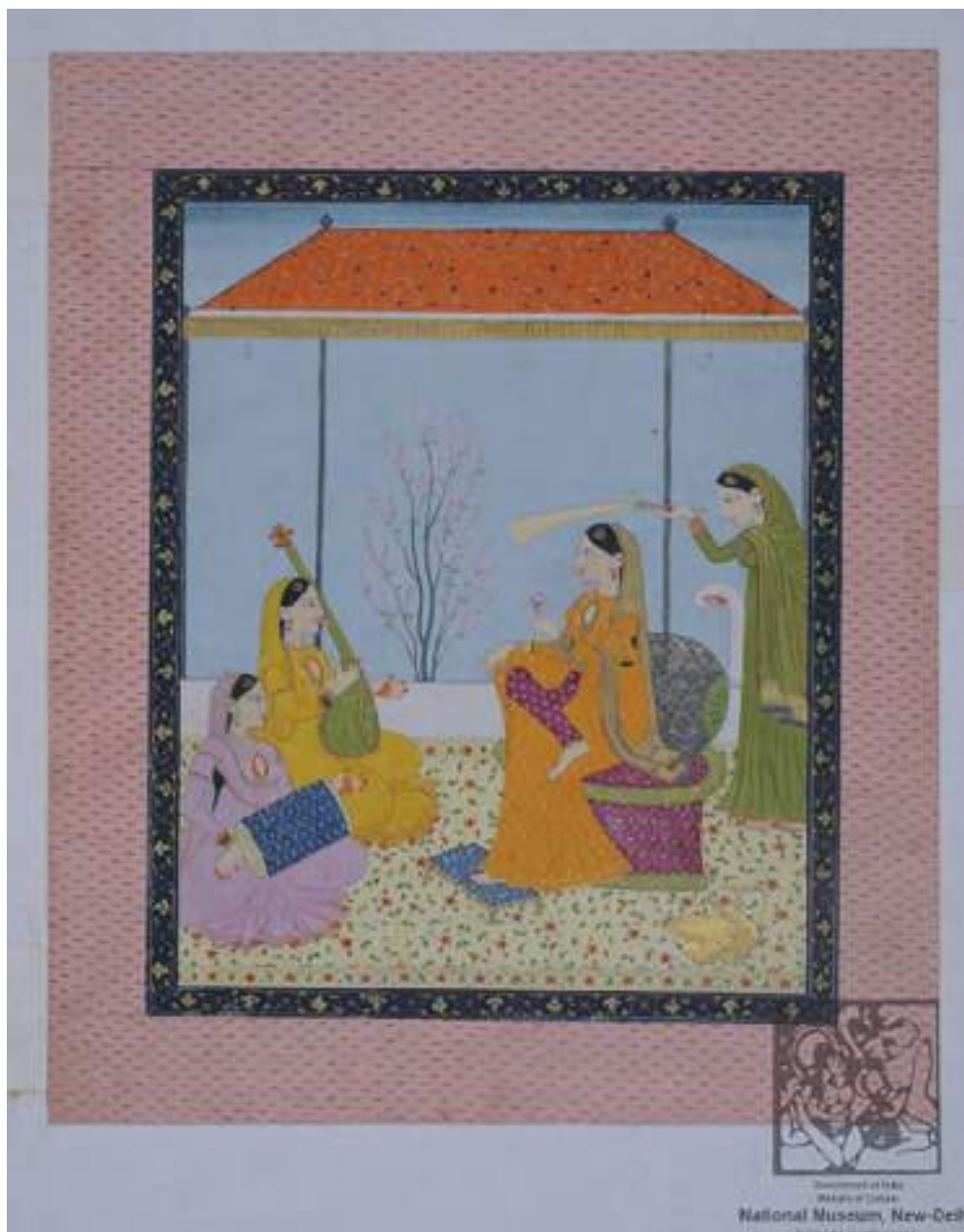
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## Chapter I

# Introduction

- Dutikas/Sakhis - The Concept, Background
- Their status in society and place of significance



A heroine on a pavilion, Pahari Painting, Kangra School 19<sup>th</sup> century, the *nayika* is accompanied by her *Sakhi*, maid and *ganavatis*, the musicians

## Introduction

Indian art when perceived comprehensively in its complete sense has achieved significant place in the portrayal of minor characters also. The imagery of heroes and heroines are always highlighted in any theme of all ages. It is only in Indian art, thought and literature that the characters closely associated with the main characters are also considered as significant and they are portrayed in interesting manner. In our classical literature, sculpture and Indian painting, dance and theatrical arts the *dutikas/sakhis*, the female messengers have a significant place. When we examine these characters we come across with astonishing details well connected to the central theme. Sanskrit scholars through the ages made rich contributions to the fields of performing and visual arts besides literature, textual tradition and *sastras*. The continuity of textual tradition and the aesthetic theories that have undoubtedly enlivened Indian classical arts despite the drastic social changes that have occurred, which have impact on thinking, expression in art and literature through centuries. One such example is the illustration of the Female Messengers, the *Dutika/Sakhis*.

In this research, serious attempts have been made to study the character of the female messengers, the art of emissary, and the expectations and limitations, in which these characters made their presence felt. When looked from the perspective of Gender Study, the female messengers were the marginalised section of the elite society. In the heroine centric studies and their portrayal in art, analysis on the conditioning and emotional state of main character takes the prime position and not the people in the supportive role who dedicated themselves for the comfort and happiness of main characters, namely hero and heroine of the theme. The Review of Literature suggests a need for understanding comprehensively from the perspective of *Dutikas* and their significant role in sensitising the themes. The art collections of National Museum is a great treasure, they are from many schools and sub-schools of Indian miniature paintings and sculptures. The paintings and art collections were part of this research, resourceful that enriched this study, made visually splendours and highly communicative in artistic expression.

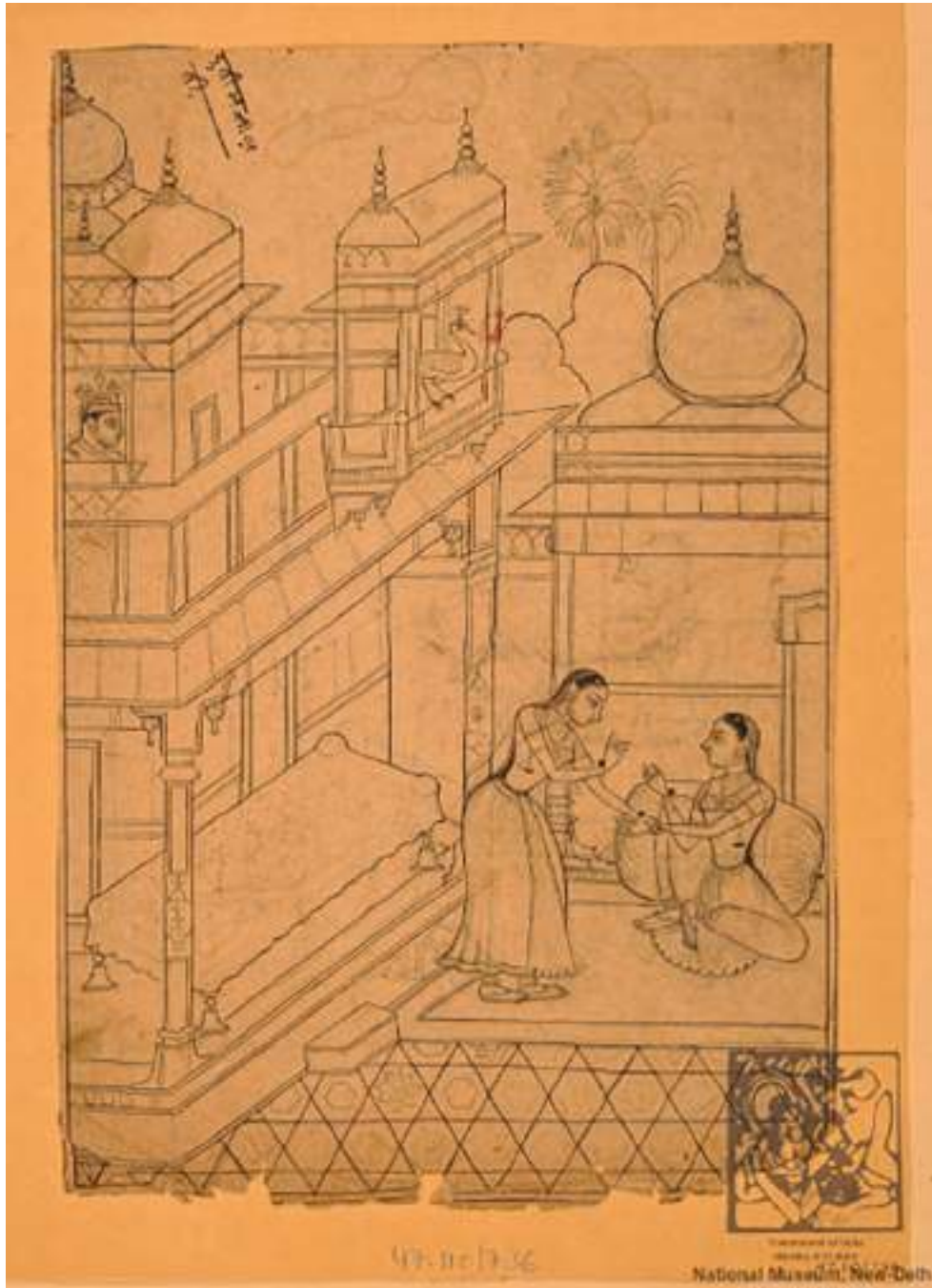
The genre of Female Messengers is also seen from the view point of Feminist Theory, the cultural analysis signifies self critical responses, situated in varied forms. Feminist analysis deconstructs the term 'Female Messengers'. To speak from this context 'women' belonged to this category were economically and culturally the under privileged group, and they fell in the bracket of lower social status of cultural traditions. Because of their loyalty towards their master or mistress and respecting the notion of integrity towards purpose, they risked their lives while accomplishing their mission. Female Messengers from the context of some of the

concerns raised above are considered. More importantly, this study addressed the need and concern in positioning the *Dutikas/Sakhis*, the female messengers with the speculative thought and dignity.

There are also grand references of celebrated *dutis* in our mythology, literature and painting, to name a few, in *Abhijnana Shakuntalam* Kalidasa epitomised the *dutikarma* in the characters of Priyamvada and Anasyaya, they followed the emotions of Shakuntala as her own shadows. Draupadi's character as Sirendhri in the royal household of Virata is an interesting epoch in Virataparva. In Jayadeva's *Geeta Govinda* the role of *sakhi* stands out by attracting the performers and painters to illustrate her in several ways and we could experience the dependence on the *sakhi* in every state of emotions of Radha and Krishna. The qualities of *sakhi* can be compared to that of Krishna's flute, as a constant sharing of his delightful moments and pangs of separation. The *Bhagavata* cult epitomises the *sakhibahv*, the character of *sakhi* and associates the concept of *moksha* to the character of *sakhi*. Folk Literature and oral traditions also portray the female messengers in innumerable ways.

Painting in India had the objective to picture the world around and to illustrate the situations, literary characters, and themes of the contemporary society, which created interest in people. Indian painting in the form of murals, miniatures or illustrative manuscript painting, recognised as *chitra* through the ages, has covered a huge range of creative dimensions. The same has been reflected in Indian sculptures which were integral part of Indian temple architecture through the ages. Depending on the theme and scenario, the role of female messengers find their place of significance in the art works as visualised by the painters and the sculptors.

The texts from Bharata's *Natyashstra* (2-4<sup>th</sup> Century CE) to Pandarika Vitthala's *Dutikarmaprakasha* (16<sup>th</sup> Century CE), literary works like *Gitagovinda*, *Rasamanjari*, *Bhagavata purana*, *Rasikapriya* and also the episodes from the epics of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* have given in detail, the qualities, responsibilities, functions and types of female messengers from time to time. These are beautifully and aesthetically articulated in visual idiom by the artists. The artist applies all his creative impulses, temperament and treats his piece of composition as a master piece. The artist with his rare sensibilities of painterly qualities treats his space with varied significant forms and at times the *dutikas/sakhis* fall in the category of female messengers. The creative process of the artist or a poet involves explicit and implicit meanings, subjectivity and objectivity and above all the penetrating experience emitting as the shining rays of the essence of their imaginative thought, the result of delightful experience.



***Scene of the terrace of the palace***

Acce. No 47.110.736

Rajasthan School 17<sup>th</sup> century

Size: 10 x 7 inches

It is a sketch, a *nayika* is seated on the terrace resting. She is being persuaded by her close associate, a *sakhi* who is the messenger to go to *nayaka* who is waiting in another terrace and watching the skill of the messenger in persuading his lover.

### Terminology of *Dutika/Sakhi* and other references:

*Dūta* (दूत) - Etymologically the term दूत is a compound word 'दू' means 'to go' and 'त' means 'dispatched' or 'sent', dispatched to go for certain purpose. Thus most of the sources mention the term *duta* in the sense of a messenger or envoy, a news-carrier or an ambassador. *Mānavadharmasāstra* (3, 163) refers as a male messenger and an envoy. Further the explanation follows as *Dūta* (दूत) refers to "ambassador", to be carefully appointed by the king. The ambassadors should be intelligent, pure-hearted man of noble family, efficient, well-versed in all the *Śāstras*, and capable of interpreting other men's feelings from their means and demeanors. The term *Dūta* is used throughout *Dharmasāstra* literature such as the *Manusmṛti* and the *Baudhāyana-dharmasūtra*<sup>1</sup>. Dharmashastra (धर्मशास्त्र, *dharmasāstra*) contains the instructions (*shastra*) regarding religious conduct of livelihood (*dharma*), ceremonies, jurisprudence (study of law) and more. It is categorized as *smṛiti*, an important and authoritative selection of books dealing with the Hindu lifestyle.

In Puranic literature *Dūta* (दूत) has been accounted with specific connotations such as '*Dūta* (दूत).—A messenger: to report as he has been told and to be skilled in languages of different countries; one who can adjust according to time and place; of Indra to Tāraka to get him ready for war after the birth of Kārttikeya; of Paṇḍraka<sup>2</sup>. *Mahabharata* the greatest Epic in the most alluring poetic form, preserving ancient India's vast cultural history, accounts for the episode where Krishna, the epic hero is dispatched as दूत to the royal court of Dhruatarashtra to propose the solution in the form of treaty to stall the Kurukshetra war between Kaurava and Pandava brothers and their powerful army. *Arthashastra* of Kautilya throws light on *Dūta* (दूत) and refers to "envoys" and represents an official title used in the political management of townships in ancient India. Officers, ministers, and sovereigns bearing such titles [eg., *Dūta*] were often present in ancient inscriptions when, for example, the king wanted to address his subjects or make an important announcement<sup>3</sup>.

*Dūta* (दूत) in Ayurveda, Indian medical sciences refers to the "informer", whose features (*lakṣaṇa*) are dealt with in the 20th century *Prayogasamuccaya* (one of the most popular and widely practised book in toxicology in Malayalam).—the tenth chapter deals with *dūta-lakṣaṇas* (features of the informer). Features of an informer which bring about good prognosis and the vice-versa are detailed<sup>4</sup>. *Dūta* (दूत) refers to a group of beings mentioned as attending the teachings in the 6th century *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*: one of the largest *Kriyā Tantras* devoted to Mañjuśrī (the Bodhisattva of wisdom) representing an encyclopedia of knowledge primarily concerned with ritualistic elements in Buddhism. The teachings in this text originate from Mañjuśrī and were taught to and by Buddha Śākyamuni in the presence of a large audience (including the *Dūtas*)<sup>5</sup>.



***A Lady with Maids, Sakhis***

Acc No 59.284.4

Rajasthani, Mewar style

18<sup>th</sup> century

28 x 17.8 cm

A lady is seated in a well furnished chamber in a palace. Totally five maids, *dutikas/sakhis* are engaged in various actions and activities. They are all in playful mood to appease their heroine who seems to be in distress. Two of them are on terrace engaged in water sports, the other two in front are looking at this amusing game. The trusted *sakhi* is behind the lady fanning her with fly-whisk and just waiting with concern that she would give her message to convey to her lover.



*Dutika Dūtikā* (दूतिका) is the term used with reference to female counterpart of *Dūta*, also acknowledged popularly in Sanskrit classical literature that included the manifold genre of *kavya* and other lyrical compositions. *Dūtikā* (दूतिका) is a female messenger, a confidante, a go-between, procuress, while in *Rajatarangini*, Kalhana accounts for a gossiping or mischief-making woman<sup>6</sup>. Other lexicographers like Amarasimha, Halayudha and Hemachandra also maintain the view on *Dūtikā* as a gossiping or mischief making woman. Bharata in his *Natyashastra*, Chapter XXIV, deals with the Harmonious Representation (*sāmānyābhinaya*), makes a specific context of a Female Messenger, such as suffering [thus] from love-sickness and being afflicted on many points she should send a female Messenger, expert in love affairs [to the beloved] to speak of her conditions (verse -198). Also the message sent through the female Messenger should relate to passionate love. She [should] deliver the same] with proper courtesy [and] say “This is her actual condition” (verse – 199). Then due to manifold significance of the communication, he is to think of some means [of relief]. This is the rule to be observed by the experts where love is to be practiced secretly (verse – 200).

*Dūtīcakra* (दूतीचक्र): is one of the five internal mystic centres (*pañcacakra*), according to the *kubjikāmata-tantra* (or, *kādiprakaraṇa*). These five *cakras* follow the general principle of a *cakra* (inward representation of a *maṇḍala*, the representation of cosmic creation). The *Dūtīcakra* is associated with the gross element Water (*apas*). It is composed of goddesses who are called *Dūtīs* (‘female messengers’). It is localized in the body (at some distance above the *Devīcakra*): in the region of the navel and just above. The components of the *Dūtīcakra* are described in relation to the process of creation. The central deity divides himself into nine male deities who, likewise, become nine fold which results in the creation of eighty-one female deities, the so-called *Dūtīs*. They symbolize another component of the six fold path, namely the *padādhvan* which consists in this case of eighty-one *padas* derived from the *Navātman*. In addition to this main aspect of their symbolic meaning, each group of nine *Dūtīs* is also associated with a special ‘field of authority or competence’ derived from *adhikārapada*. They are presided over by nine male deities (called *bhairavas*, they are emanations of Ananta, the presiding deity of the *Dūtīcakra*): they are Kapāla, Caṇḍalokeśa, Yogeśa, Manonmana, Hātakeśvara, Kravyāda, Mudreśa, Diṅmaheśvara, and Ananta. Each of these nine deities enfolds him again into nine, and as a result nine time nine *padas* are created, which are said to be the cause of the *Dūtīs*. Thus, eighty-one *Dūtīs* came into existence, arranged in nine groups of nine *Dūtīs* each<sup>7</sup>. Interpretation of the term *Dūtīs* here is expanded to a greater significance than the meaning hitherto considered as ‘Messenger’.

*Shakta* (*Shakti*) sources frequently quote an interesting form of the goddess known as Śivadūtī (शिविदूती she is one who has God Shiva her Messenger during the act of vanquishing Shumbha and Nishumbha demons. Also she assumes the form of Śivadūtī and join Shiva in the form of Rudra while vanquishing Andhakasura. She was adored and being praised by gods and sages in this form, carries in her left hands, a gem vessel, a mace, a shield and a noose. Similarly in her right hands she carries a lotus, a sickle, a big sword and a hook. She wears ornaments shining

with all the nine types of gems, the *navaratna* she has eight hands, three eyes, red complexioned and adorned with light red colour clothing<sup>8</sup>. According to *Kalika Purana* Goddess Śivadūtī possesses ten incarnations of *yoginis*. All these references reflect with an idea that not only in the realm of human society but also in the realm of divine world, the gods and goddesses engaged themselves as messengers to execute the divine acts.

Similarly few other terms makes rounds of reference such as *Devadūtī* (देवदूती), the female messenger of Gods and Goddesses and also referred to wild citron tree<sup>9</sup>. Also *Manodūtikā* (मनोदूतिका) as mentioned in Aufrecht's *Catalogus Catalogorum Vedanta*. Paris. (D 253 Iii) and *Manodūtikā* (मनोदूतिका), a *kāvya*, by Śrīnivāsadāsa. Ulwar 944. *Abhidūtī* (अभिदूति) was referred in the context of Shishupala *vadha*, while Krishna was in the process of kidnapping Rukmini, meaning 'towards the female messenger'. *Kamadutika*, *Kshetradutika*, *Manodutika*, *Nyayabindutika*, *Shivadutika*, *Yamadutika* are the other terms referred with particular context. *Agradutika* is to address the principle female messenger amongst several types of messengers.



### *Elopement of Rukmini*

Acc no 85.184

Malwa, Central Indian style

17<sup>th</sup> century

Size: 17 x 20.5 cm

The painting depicts the scene of elopement of Rukmini in two parts. On the upper register, Rukmini is with her *sakhi*, who conveyed message of Krishna's plan and the *sakhi* also convinces and gives confidence to Rukmini about future plan, risking her life she is also guarding her. Rukmini is offering *puja* to Devi in a shrine and the *sakhi* is assisting her. In the second part Krishna is carrying Rukmini to his chariot and whisking away from the scene.

In Buddhist sources, yet another term occurs as Mahādūtī (महादूती) or ‘great envoy’, referred to a class of super-human potencies attending on a Buddha or Bodhisattva<sup>10</sup>. In the *Vajrayana* Buddhism (Tibetan *Tantrayana*) *Dūtīnī* (दूतिनी) is the name of a *Ḍākinī* who, together with the *Vīra* (hero) named *Dūta* forms one of the 36 pairs situated in the *gunachakra*, according to the 10th century *Dakarnava* chapter 15. Accordingly, the *gunachakra* refers to one of the four divisions of the Tibetan Buddhism, known as *sahaja puta* situated within the *padma* (lotus) in the middle of the *Heruka mandala*. The 36 pairs of *Ḍākinīs* [viz., *Dūtīnī*] and *Vīras* are whitish red in color; they each have one face and four arms; they hold a skull bowl, a skull staff, a small drum, and a knife<sup>11</sup>.

In the traditions of Jainism *Dūtipalāśa* (दूतपिलाश) is the name of a *caitya* (‘shrine’, dedicated to a deity), located in the town *Vāṇijyagrāma* (Pkt. *Vāṇiyaggāma*), according to the *Bhagavatī-sūtra*, also known as the *vyakhyaprajnapti* (“Exposition of Explanations”). The *Bhagavatī-sūtra* is the largest of twelve Jain *āgamas* and was composed by Sudharmāsvāmī in the 6th century. *Dūtipalāśa* (दूतपिलाश) is the name of a sacred spot visited by Mahāvīra during his 20th Year as Kevali. At the end of the rainy season, wandering through many places the Lord again came to *Vāṇijyagrāma*. When he was giving a sermon at the *Dūtipalāśa caitya*, there a monk of the Pārśva tradition, Gāṅgeya came to attend<sup>12</sup>.

A brief consideration of these foundational usage of the terms related to convey the meaning of Messenger, male or female, an envoy, go between, informer or ambassador in the realm of divine world or human world gives an understanding of culture inextricably linked with the themes, situations, thought process, expressive modes and characters. All these linkages provide a vital way of understanding the life of common people and the life of the privileged portrayed in art and literature of the society pertaining to the times under consideration.

*Sakhi* and *sakha* are other terms and instances more frequently encountered in classical and regional literature of all genres. The heroine without a *sakhi* is a seldom occurrence. The themes such as *Nayikabhava* in literature or painting or dance in particular, the role of *sakhi*, many a times have higher scope for delineation than the hero or heroine. *Sakhi* in Jayadeva’s *Gitagovinda* is the central character to bring Radha and Krishna in union. The role of the *sakhi* is important and she presents a near perfect example of the conventional character with all the attributes of the poetic motif. In this respect it faithfully follows the *Gita-Govinda* format. The role of *sakhi* is persuading Radha and Krishna is indispensable to the conception of many planes, both mystical and artistic<sup>13</sup>.



***Friends persuading hesitant Radha to enter the bower of love where Krishna awaits her***

Acc No 51.207/10

Pahari Style, Basohli School

Dated 1730 CE

Size: 19 x 28 cm

Inscription on reverse

The painting is based on a series of *Gitagovinda*. *Gitagovinda* is a collection of Sanskrit poems created by Jayadeva from Kenduli Bilva near Puri Orissa. The theme of the composition deals with the *madhura bhakti*, divine love of Radha and Krishna. The scene in this painting is laid on the banks of a river shown partially in the foreground. Radha is seen seated on the banks of the river. She is trying to cover her face by a veil, while her *pranasakhi* Lalitha holds her hand. Vishakha another *priyasakhi*, of Radha is seated behind Radha and conversing with her. Both close *sakhis* as *dutikas* are convincing Radha to go and meet Krishna, who is eagerly waiting for her in a bower close by and watching the responses. *Sakhi* Lalita is the soul in *Gitagovinda* and Krishna has given wide scope for her to persuade hesitant Radha to indulge in *bhakti*. This Basohli series of *Gitagovinda* was painted by Manaku, the artist of Royal Court, well-known for his themes, the art of visualisation and precise rendition.

*Exchange of Messages through A Messenger – Dutika/Sakhi***Radha sending Message to Krishna**

Acc. No: 51.64.46

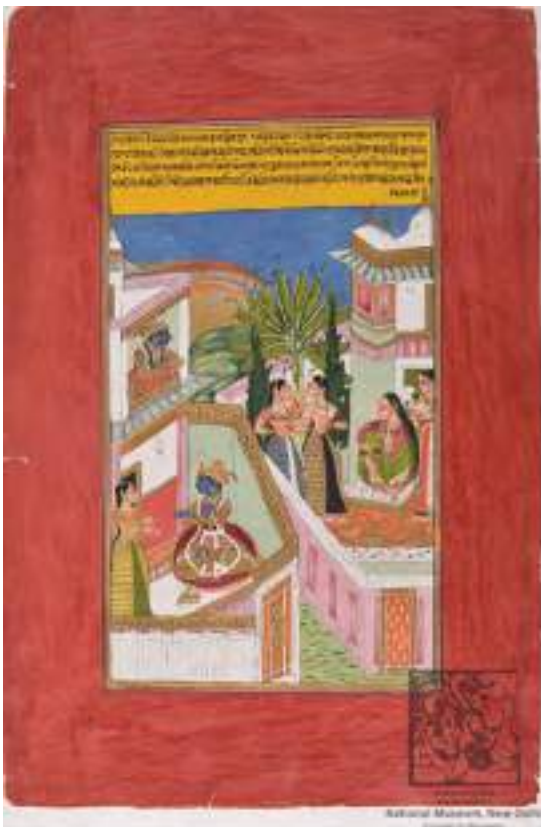
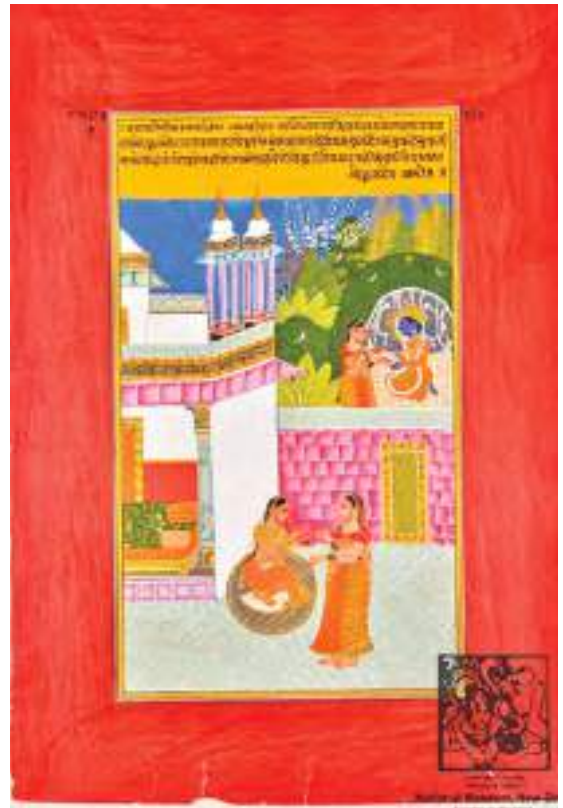
Rajasthan Schools

Early 18<sup>th</sup> century

Size: 10.1 x 15.2 inches

Inscription on the top on yellow label

The scene is laid in the courtyard of a palace. Radha is seated on a round cushion delivering some messages to the *dutika*. To the right top the *dutika* is conveying Radha's message to Krishna, who is seated under bower decorated with flowery trees, birds and blue sky in the background.

**Krishna is standing in the balcony**

Acc. No: 51.64.46

Rajasthan Schools

1800 CE

Size: 26.6 x 14.7 inches

Inscription on the top on yellow label

The painting showing Krishna speaking to *dutika* in the lower register. Then peeping at Radha from a window of the upper story. To the proper left in a second palace Radha with her ill-managed hair is seated on a *chauki*, A *sakhi* is fanning the disturbed Radha while the other two *priya sakhis* of Radha are conversing in front of her, probably they are sharing about message sent by Krishna. Behind the wall, a banana tree and a pair of tall cypress tree are composed beautifully. Vacant space is covered by Rajasthani architecture and blue sky.

### Radha, Krishna and Messenger

Acc. No: 51.64.14

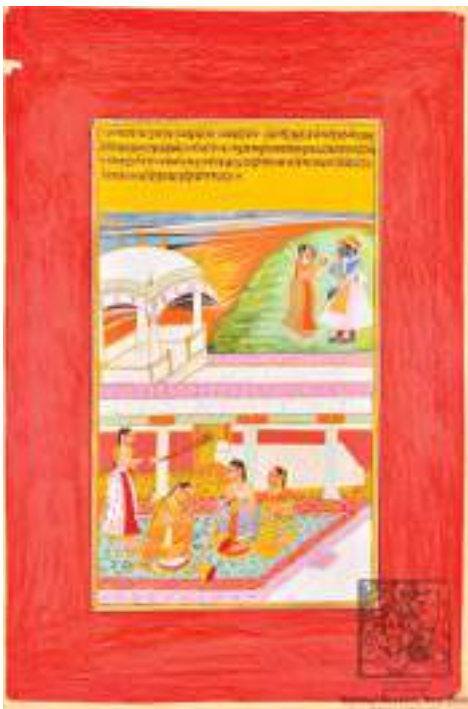
Rajasthan Schools

1800 CE

Size: 26.6 x 14.7 inches

Inscription on the top on yellow label

This painting is the part of this series, where the narration continues in a setting of two separate houses with a high wall bifurcating, two closed doors indicate two separate entry points. Pink scheme suits the moods of the characters and situation. The relaxing seating arrangement at the corner of Krishna's apartment indicates a relax time in waiting. But the *dutika* is perplexed and waiting for the command of Radha.



### Radha sends message to Krishna

Acc. No: 51.64.13

Rajasthan Schools

1800 CE

Size: 26.6 x 14.7 inches

Inscription on the top on yellow label

The painting shows Radha is seated with her *sakhis* in a courtyard of her palace. A *veena* is lying on the carpet, one of her *sakhis*, seems to ask whether she would like to listen to her music, but Radha is in a different mood, she is talking to her *priya sakhi* whether she can take her *patra*, a letter and hand it over to Krishna and study his mind and bring back the message to her. Radha with full of emotions bent her head and conversing, the *sakhi* being empathetic listening to her and assures about accomplishing the task. Another *sakhi* is fanning the entire area with a long flying whisk and emotionally concerned about the state of Radha. On the top register, *dutika* of Radha is appealingly conversing with Krishna, His bodily gestures seems to be little indifferent, and she is explaining him with all her skills the state of Radha. Here the *dutika* of Radha corresponds with the type of *dutika* known as *Vichitra Vachana*, interpreted by Pandarika Vithala in *Dutikarmaparakasha*. It is like the combination of appeasing or separating or despising or by taking resort to a pun or double intended word or by inducing fear or by taking resort to fourfold means or by employing strange words. By resorting to the beauty of the lotuses on the banks of Ganga where the bees are humming or the clacking of the peacocks or cooing of the cuckoos or of lakshmi having deceitfully killed the lion cubs inhabiting in the golden *meru* mountains you go to the abode of Krishna.. (This is *Vichitra vachana*)

### Krishna seated in a grove

Acc. No: 51.64.46

Rajasthan Schools

1800 CE

Size: 26.6 x 14.7 inches

Inscription on the top on yellow label

The painting shows Krishna seated in a bower surrounded by lush greenery on the upper register. *Dutika* of Radha comes again to the grove to make an appeal of *virahanivedana*. In the foreground Radha lying on the bed in her chamber at her palace. Two of her *sakhis* are comforting her, one seated near her and giving assurance that *dutika* will bring good message from Krishna, as an experienced woman she belongs to the *Dhatri* type of *sakhi*, an elderly companion, similarly another *sakhi* is consoling and massaging her feet, she is young, concerned and is the *Cheti* type, explained by Pandarika Vithala in *Dutikarmaprakasha*. The interior of the chamber is beautifully painted and furnished.



### Krishna sends a letter to Radha

Acc. No: 51.64.46

Rajasthan Schools

Early 18<sup>th</sup> century

Size: 10. x 15 inches

Inscription on the top on yellow label



The artist has created three situations in this painting effectively. In forefront, Krishna is seated on neatly built seat under fresh green foliage and flowery creeper. He is handing over a letter to the *dutika* of Radha and she is eagerly stretching her hands to collect the letter from Krishna, who is not disturbed here and having pleasant expression, dressed tastefully and wearing all special jewels and *bakula malika*, a garland made of fresh *bakula* flowers. On the top of the tree Rati and Kamadeva to transform the atmosphere into *shrinaga rasa*, and the impact is felt around. The other situation is happening on the top register, *dutika* with Radhika after completing her mission successfully. On the terrace pavilion Radha was eagerly waiting for the message from Krishna, when the *dutika* has unrolled a long letter, Radha could not believe herself, both are in the state of pleasant surprise. Colourful sky in the background watch the drama unfolding. In the front of right corner a bathing scene is created, where in Shiva, Parvati, Nandi and a *veena* player are seen and enjoying the situation, where Krishna and Radha demystifying themselves to enjoy the romantic play that happens for human lovers.

This is a series of paintings portraying the *leela* of Krishna in the *kunja galin* of Brindavan. The eternal *bhakti* experienced by Radha, all her friends, the *sakhis*, and every inmate of Brindavan is beyond human understanding. Artists have created this series on the theme of the *aloukik prem*, the divine love shared between Krishna and Radha. Effectively *dutikas/sakhis* played their roles in creating situations for the union of Radha and Krishna.

*Sakha* is the male counterpart of *Sakhi*. *Sakhā*, is a male friend, companion or attendant. There are four types of *sakhās* in Vraja: the land of Krishna, the first type belongs to *suhṛda* type, those whose friendship is mixed with a scent of parental mood, who are slightly older than Kṛishna, who bear a staff and other weapons and who always protect Kṛishna from demons; such as, Subhadra, Maṇḍalībhadra and Balabhadra. The second type are *sakhā*, those whose friendship is mixed with a scent of servitor-ship, who are slightly younger than Kṛishna himself and who are exclusively attached to the happiness of rendering service to Him; such as, Viśāla, Vṛṣabha and Devaprastha; The third type is the *priyasakhā*, those who are of the same age as Kṛishna and take the exclusive shelter of the attitude of friendship; such as Śrīdāma, Sudāma and Stoka-kṛṣṇa; and the fourth type is recognized as *priya-narma-sakhā*—superior in every way to the three other types of *sakhās*; they are engaged in extremely confidential services and possess a very special mood, such as Subala, Ujjvala and Madhumaṅgala. It is interesting to find such clarity in the notion of the category of friends identified by authors of *Bhagavatapurana* texts.



### *A Folio of Gitagovinda*

Acc No 83.454

Rajashtan

18<sup>th</sup> century CE

Size: 25 x 43 cm

Another folio of *Gitagovinda* different from Pahari, emerges from Rajasthan. Here Radha is shown very depressed, probably seeing Krishna with other *gopis* near bank of river Yamuna under a pavilion. They are feeling sad and trying to convince her and amuse her in different ways. One *Dutika* reaches Krishna and appealing to Krishna the emotional state of Radhika.



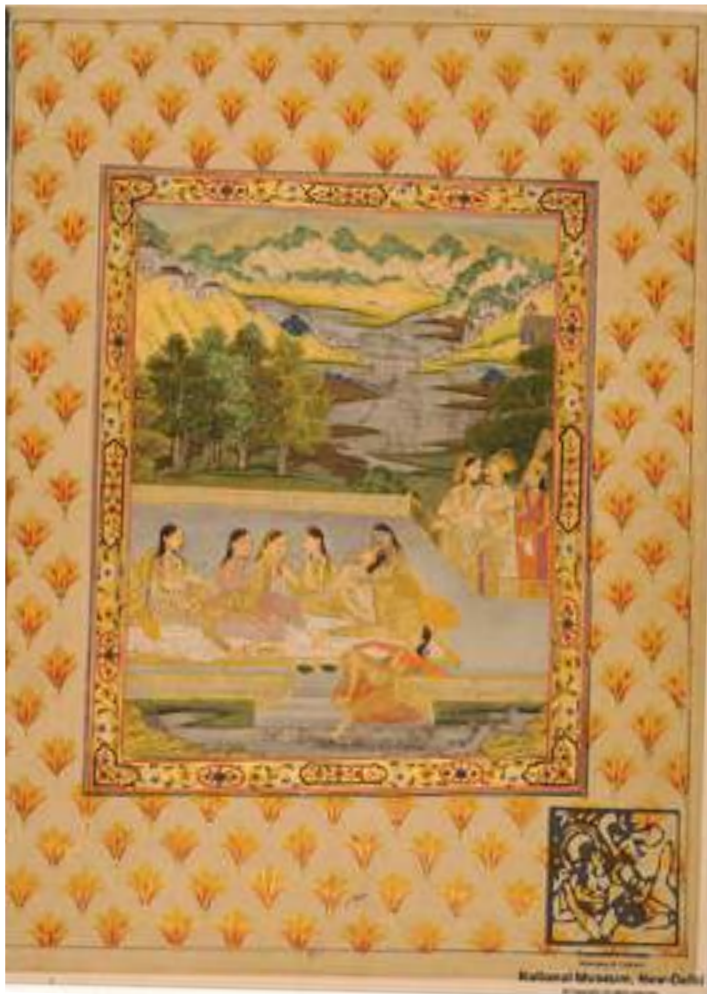
In a similar manner, *Sakhī* is a female friend, companion or attendant. *Rādhikā* has five kinds of *sakhīs*, namely, *Sakhī*–*Daniṣṭhā* is an example for those *sakhīs*, who love and serve both *Rādhikā* and *Śrī Kṛishna*, but they are slightly more inclined towards *Śrī Kṛishna*. Secondly the *Nitya-sakhīs* and thirdly *prāṇa-sakhīs* are the only two kinds of *sakhīs* who are in the category of *mañjarīs*. These *sakhīs* serve both *Śrī Rādhā* and *Śrī Kṛṣṇa*, with a tendency to favour *Rādhikā*. The *prāṇa-sakhīs*, like *Rūpa Mañjarī* and *Rati Mañjarī*, being even more intimately connected with *Radhika*, are naturally the leaders of the *nitya-sakhīs*. Very intimately associated are the fourth types and they are *Priya-sakhis* and they indulge in lenience with the heroine. and lastly, the *priya-narmasakhīs*, who are absolutely trustworthy and loyal to the core to their dearest friend *Radhika*. They are *Lalitā* and *Viśākhā*.

*Buddha Sasana* refers to *sakhi* as a kind of tree<sup>14</sup>. Also there are several terms originate from *sakhi* and give meaning of different contexts, such as *sakhāraṃ*, *sakhaṃ*, *sakhinā sakhārasmā*, *sakhino*, *sakhāro*, *sakhīnaṃ*, *sakhibhāva*. *Sakhya*, *sakhitva* and they all suggest friendliness and friendship. *Sakheya* signifies amicable, friendly and compassionate friend. *Īsasakhi* (ईशसखी) is the name of *Kubera*, who is recognized as a friend of *Shiva* that *Isha*. *Śayanasakhī* (शयनसखी).—a bed-fellow. *Śayanasakhī* is a Sanskrit compound consisting of the terms *shayana* and *sakhī* (सखी)<sup>15</sup>. Thus *Śayanasakhī* (शयनसखी) is the compound word to mean the female bed-fellow (of a woman), [*Kathāsaritsāgara*]. *Sakhipūrva* (सखिपूर्व) used in the context of more excellent than a friend. *Kāmasakha* (कामसख) designate to mean the spring, the month of *Chaitra* and also the mango tree. *Bālasakhi* (बालसखी) a friend from childhood. *Anunāyika* (अनुनायिकी) is a female character, subordinate to the *Nāyikā* or leading character, such as a friend, nurse, maid-servant.; सखी प्रव्रजति दासी प्रेष्या धात्रेयिकी तथा । अन्याश्च शल्पिकारणियो वज्जिेया ह्यनुनायिकीः (*sakhī pravrajitā dāsī preṣyā dhātreyikā tathā | anyāśca śilpakāriṇyo vijñeyā hyanunāyikāh*)<sup>16</sup>

*Sakhya* is the term very significant in the context of *bhakti* literature. *Sakhya* (सख्य) refers to “friendliness” and represents one of the nine-fold (*navadhā*) devotion (*bhakti*), as explained in the *Śivapurāṇa* 2.2.23, as *Śiva* said to *Satī* “O Goddess *Satī*, listen, I shall explain the great principle whereby the remorseful creature becomes a liberated soul (*mukta*). Devotion (*bhakti*) to me is considered as the bestowed of worldly pleasures and salvation. It is achievable only by my grace. It is nine-fold, श्रवणं कीर्तनं वशिनोह स्मरणं पादसेवनं अर्चनं वन्दनं दास्यं सकयं आत्मनविदनं’ ‘*sravanam kirtanam visnoh smaranam pada-sevanam archnam vandanam daasyam sakyam atma-nivedanam*’, namely, *Kirtanam* - In this approach one constantly chants and narrates *īśvara*’s accounts. It can be poetic or descriptive or both. *Smaranam* - This approach is to constantly dwell in the thoughts of *īśvara*. *Daasyam* - means to be in total servitude to *īśvara*. *Archanam* - This is a constant act to worship a deity with various titles/names of *īśvara*, recollecting their significance and the feats/acts leading to those titles. *Vandanam* - is a salutation to *īśvara*. *Sakhyam* - meaning to have a friendship with *īśvara*. *Atma-Nivedanam* - this approach is to present/surrender one’s *Ātman* to *īśvara* an offering, making oneself a tool to *īśvara*, giving up complete ownership/will towards karma. *Padasevanam* - meaning to serve *īśvara* in content, unified with his charm and glory<sup>17</sup>. There is no difference between devotion and perfect knowledge. A person who is engrossed in devotion enjoys perpetual happiness. Perfect knowledge never descends in a vicious person averse to devotion<sup>18</sup>.

In the *Vaishnava* literature a higher merit is accorded to *sakhyabhava*. Arjuna and Draupadi considered Krishna as their *sakha*, and surrendered themselves with ultimate faith. This *sakhyabhava* is the philosophical content that Krishna felt to dispel the *Bhagavatgita* to Arjuna. In one or the other phase of his or her life, a *vaishnava* devotee get into the mode of *sakhyabhava* and surrenders to devotional current passionately. The *sakhya* is the embodiment of the bondage between Radha and Krishna, deeply dwelled into spiritual, emotional, aesthetic, philosophical and literary contents that reflected in visual culture of our country.

The appearance of the terms such as *Duta*, *Dutika*, *Sakha*, *Sakhi*, *sakhibhav* in other words female messengers, companions, friends, attendants and all related terms discussed are significant: they appear in the literary genres of all centuries, used in general as well as in particular sense. Their derived meanings render myriad shades of emotions and situations in the pictorial representation.



### *A Princess seated on a Terrace*

Acc No 61.1023

Provincial Mughal style

1750 CE Inscription on Reverse

Size: 38.2 x 28.3 cm



A princess seated on a terrace with her maids, *dutikas/sakhis*. All of them are in different postures, adorned in beautiful *mughal* attire. A prince led by a lady and her attendant, holding a *morchal* (peacock feather fan), are coming towards the group engaged in their own amusement. Background has a scenic view with

gardens, hills and river. A beautiful floral border with a thin intricate motifs is framing the painting, which is the typical presentation of Emperor Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan and even provincial phases in Mughal style paintings. The reverse side of painting has an inscription written inside a beautiful golden floral border.



### ***Chand Biwi on a Galloping Horse***

Acc No 59.94.25

Deccani Style Ahmednagar

18<sup>th</sup> century CE, Inscription on Reverse

Size: 24.9 x 18.2 cm

“Chand Bibi, (1550 – 1599) one of the noblest characters in the History of India.” She was considered as the ‘warrior queen’ of Deccan, she was the princess daughter of Nizam Shah I of from Ahmednagar and given in marriage to the Sultan Adil Shah of Bijapur. She was also recognized by the Mughals as Chand Sultana. She acted as Regent of Bijapur Sultanate and Ahmednagar Sultanate. She was well versed in several languages, included Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Marathi and Kannada. This illustration is the proof of her expertise in horse riding and warfare. Elegantly dressed and richly ornamented Chand Bibi is shown hawking on her galloping horse. On her right hand is perched hawk whom she is ready to release to its preys soaring in the sky. In the foreground are seen three of her close confidante maids, carrying a spear and a bird by the first maid, the second one holding two birds, and the third maid is holding the bow and quiver are assisting Chand Bibi. She is riding her favourite white and black horse, handling so powerfully. A Persian inscription is on the reverse of the painting.



### *A Lady Looking in Mirror*

Acc No 75.1172

Pahari Style, Nurpur School

Late 18<sup>th</sup> century CE

Size: 19.8 x 16 cm

The lady is seated on a yellow *chauki* (pedestal) against the background of a white partition, she is looking into a mirror held by her *sakhi* seated in front of her. The lady is holding the pipe of *hukka*. She is dressed in a transparent upper garment and wears various intricately designed ornaments. Her long and black tresses are let loose. In the foreground lie two brass vessels. Beyond the partition are seen pavilions, rolled up curtains, wall and a thickly grown tree against blue ground. Red border surrounds the painting. It is an intimate scene and the *nayika* is sharing her secret affairs with her loyal *sakhi*, who is showing a mirror and listening to the message carefully and as *dutika* she would convey the message to the concerned. The Nurpur artist handled the painting with rich details and great feeling. Touch of delicacy is seen while portraying the two feminine figures in passionate mood.



### *A Nayika with her Attendants*

Acc No 47.110.762

Rajasthani Style, Rajasthan School

17<sup>th</sup> century CE

Size: 9.3 x 6.8 inches

In the Rajasthani style of miniatures, architecture and particularly the interior part is highlighted. Even in this fine sketch terrace, stairs, a well set chamber downstairs, railings etc are rendered in detail. Three *sakhis*, probably in service of the royal household are engaged in getting the *nayika* ready for the arrival of the *nayika*. On the lower storey of the house one of the *sakhis*, a maid is preparing some food. On the upper floor is seen two *sakhis* are comforting the lady, one with a fan and offering some drinks while the other is arranging a veil on the *nayika*. The mistress is seen pleased by their services.

The illustrations on Female Messengers are visually recorded in most of the miniature paintings of Pahari, Rajasthani, Deccani and Mughal schools and their sub-schools such as Kangra, Guler, Basholi, Chamba, Nurpur, Gerewal, Jaipur, Mewar, Kishangarh, Malwa, Kota, Bundi, Bikaner, Ahamadnagar, Bijapur, Golkonda, besides the period paintings of Akbar, Jahangeer, Shahajahan and later in provincial Mughal schools. In depicting the Female Messengers the artists experienced the delight in portraying them as part of themes like *Ragamala*, *Baramasa*, *Bhagavat Puran*, *Gita-Govinda*, *Rasikapriya*, *Rasamanjari* and such other narratives.

### ***Sakhi Narrating the qualities of Nayaka to the Nayika***

Dr. Choodamani Nandagopal as *Dutika* in a dance composition.

*Nayika* sends *dutika* to convey her message to him. She conveys and returns to the *nayika* and starts narrating the meeting and the way she conveyed the message of heroine to him. She was so impressed by his qualities and personality. 'He is such handsome, anyone will fall for him, you better without any ego of yours surrender to him and personally express your love to him'. The hand gesture – left hand indicating 'he' (*shikhara* single hand gesture) and the right hand expressing 'love' (*arala*, single hand gesture). Be throwing the bits of stone or by involving in the conceited speech *Dutika* accomplishes her task on hand. During afternoon summer there would be excessive heat, oh traveler do take rest on the banks of the bower of creepers. Oh young one, being all alone your face indicates the place where they distribute water to the travelers. You are an expert in exhibiting timely Bliss. (*Dutikarmaprakasha* by Pandarika Vithala, - *Dutika* is the 4<sup>th</sup> type of *Duti*)



In all classical dance forms too, several compositions commence with the heroine addressing her *sakhi*. In the context of *Bhakti*, *Sakhi* is the bridge that connects *atma* in the form of heroine and *paramatma* in the form of God. The *vaggeyakaras*, the lyrical composers such as Purandaradasa, Alvars, Kshetrajna, Jayadeva and others have depended highly on the *sakhibhava* (The portrayal of female messengers) and thereby enriched dance compositions. *Dutikas/sakhis* portrayed in paintings and sculptures are supportive visual material for the performing arts like music and dance.

**Endnotes**

- 1 <https://www.wisdomlib.org/definition/duta> 13.2.2021
- 2 *Matsya-purāṇa* 215. 12-4; 254. 24.2) *Matsya-purāṇa* 38. 19; 159. 24.3) *Viṣṇu-purāṇa* V. 34. 6)
- 3 Arthashastra (अर्थशास्त्र, arthaśāstra) literature concerns itself with the teachings (shastra) of economic prosperity (artha) statecraft, politics and military tactics. The term arthashastra refers to both the name of these scientific teachings, as well as the name of a Sanskrit work included in such literature. This book was written (3rd century BCE) by by Kautilya, who flourished in the 4th century BCE. Source Wisdom Library
- 4 Ancient Science of Life
- 5 Wisdom Library: Tibetan Buddhism
- 6 Cologne Digital Sanskrit Dictionaries: Shabda-Sagara Sanskrit-English Dictionary
- 7 Duticakra in Shaivism glossary, Source: *Wisdom Library: Kubjikāmata-tantra*
- 8 Sritattvanidhi Volume I Shaktinidhi P.318
- 9 Devadūti (देवदूति) [Mahābhāṣya 6,77,] a. Vgl. *devahūti*
- 10 *Ārya-Maṅjuśrīmūlakalpa* 11.8; 12.3, 18
- 11 (*academia.edu: The Structure and Meanings of the Heruka Maṇḍala*)
- 12 (Dutipalasha in [Jainism glossary](#))
- 13 (Kapila Vatsyayan Jaur Gita-Govinda P.4)
- 14 *Sutta: The Pali Text Society's Pali-English Dictionary*)
- 15 (*Cologne Digital Sanskrit Dictionaries: Monier-Williams Sanskrit-English Dictionary*)
- 16 (*Cologne Digital Sanskrit Dictionaries: Monier-Williams Sanskrit-English Dictionary*)
- 17 (<https://sanatanadhara.com/bhakthi/navavidha-bhakthi/> 16.2.2021)
- 18 (*Śivapurāṇa* 2.2.23),

## Chapter II

### Imagery of *Dutikas/Sakhis* Female Messengers in Indian Thought and Literature

- *Dutikas/sakhis* from Bharata to Roopa Goswamy
- *Duta Kavyas* – Kalidasa to Rabindranath Tagore
- Types of *Dutikas/Sakhis* - *Dutikarmaparakasha of Pandarika Vitthala*



Ragini Sarothi – peacock is the Messenger here  
(Details – Chapter III *Ragamala*)



## Indian Literary Visage

Literature is that kind of expression, which is the refined countenance of a culturally evolved society. The very sphere of culture has inhabited with the ethos sprung in the form of literature. The literary expression endorses the contemporaneous systems and cultural values that were evaluated and re-evaluated the notion of culture from time to time. In this context, literature is the articulating facet of socio-cultural life of a social process, within which one can explore the hidden aspirations of the people, the practicing traditions followed in arts such as painting, dance, music, sculpture and theatre.

Indian literary genres spanned through at least two millennium, with varied categories such as; firstly, Socio-religious texts like Vedic and post-Vedic, Buddhist *Pitaka* texts, Jain *Sutra* texts, followed with interpretative literature in all these textual tradition. Secondly, early texts on lexicon, grammar and other texts related to the evolution and development of language such as Sanskrit, Prakrit, Brahmi, Pali, Apabhramsha and Ardhamagadhi. Thirdly, texts recorded in large number were on *shilpa*, *nrtya*, *natya*, *vastushilpa* and *sangeeta* both in Sanskrit and regional languages composed and compiled across the country. Fourthly, encyclopedia in Sanskrit language such as *Vishnudharmottara Purana* 4<sup>th</sup> century CE, *Bruhat Samhita* by Varahamihira in 7<sup>th</sup> century CE, *Manasollasa* by Someshvara Chakravarti in 12<sup>th</sup> century CE and *Shivatatva Ratnakara* by Basava Bhupala in 17<sup>th</sup> century CE. Fifthly, texts in the form of critical editions on all the texts written previously found in large number. Sixthly, Illustrated Manuscript tradition followed in most of the regions as the illustrated texts, religious and otherwise also. Seventhly, Kavya Literature: creative poets in every century expressed their literary merits in poetic presentations, different genres of poets both in classical period, medieval and post-medieval period. These texts are in Sanskrit as well as in the regional languages reflect the life of people as well the life of royals. Other than *Kavya*, *Gadya* literature also significant because many texts in prose form attribute to the societal changes and some are like commentaries, chronicles, narratives of historical events, translations of original poetic works and so on. Drama literature too occupies interesting place in Indian cultural life. Several Sanskrit, Prakrit and regional language dramas were written and enacted from time to time, reflected largely the socio-cultural issues of the concerned times. Finally texts known as *shastras*, the sciences occupy a very significant place, contributive in nature on various subjects including fine arts and aesthetics both theoretical and practical in nature.

Sanskrit period, recognized in the Indian historiography in general and Indian literature in particular has a distinct place in understanding Indian culture as such. The literature produced in this period is characterized by several kinds of creative ingenuity that ranged from national epics, poetry, drama, fairy tales, fables and romantic sagas on one side and on the other great texts in *vyakaran*, grammar, *neetishastra*, ethics, *arthashastra*, economics, *rajaneeti*, polity,

*dharmashastra*, *vastushastra*, architecture, *sangeetashastra*, musicology, *natyashastra*, histrionics, *shilpashastra*, sculpture, and many such wide range of works. Further the scientific literature created in fields such as phonetics, astronomy, mathematics, medicine, legal systems, is said to be far greater and advanced when compared to Greeks and their accomplishments. Palm-leaf was the base material used for writing purpose inscribed by stencils using black ink. According to the Chinese pilgrim Hiouen Thsang, the use of the palm leaf was common all over India in the seventh century; but that it was known many centuries earlier is proved by the fact that an inscribed copper-plate, dating from the first century A.D. at the latest, imitates a palm leaf in shape.<sup>1</sup>

### ***Kavya* – The finest form of literary expression**

Amongst all the genres of Indian written tradition, *Kavya* occupies the central status in Classical Sanskrit literature. *Kavya*, in general is poetic expression, a Sanskrit term designate poetry variously characterized as classical, ornate, courtly or stylized. *Kavya* usually involves erudition and elegance of a creative genius known as poet. The chapter number 390 of *Agni Purana* discusses on poetry which is the basis for literary criticism, which is closely associated with the concept of *rasa*, the formation of style, the art of acting and all figuratively language prerequisite to poetry. *Acharya* Mammata in his poetics *Kavyaprakasha* precisely defines, ‘*Kavya*, the poetry as a ‘combination of sound and sense, free from blemishes, endowed with qualities and sometimes devoid also of poetic figures or embellishments’. He further clarifies, that ‘which touches the innermost chords of human mind and diffuses itself into the ruptures of the heart, working up as a lasting sense of delight. It is an expression of beautiful form and melodious language of the best thoughts and noblest emotions which is the spectacle of life awaking the finest souls’<sup>2</sup> *Sharadagama* defines *Kavya* as the expression which is endowed with *rasa*, *alamkara*, *guna*, *riti*, *laksana* and which is devoid of *dosas* has the appellation of *kavya*. Poetry or *kavya*, as defined by modern critics, holds that to be poetry only an exclusive charmingness in the composition is necessary. So a composition which is capable of generating exclusive charmingness and having minor blemishes may be designated as poetry with blemishes, but not as non-poetry. Even in the presence of *rasa* etc, if there is no exclusive type of charmingness, the impression of experienced critics that this poetry does not take place and this view is well accepted by modern critics’.<sup>3</sup>

The earliest form of literature though in oral tradition is the Vedic texts: *Rig Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, *Sama Veda* and *Atharva Veda*, known as *shruti*, at the dawn of creation is in the poetic format known as ‘*Chandas*’. *Chandas* is meant as that which provided joy and cheerfulness, it is ‘*chad*’ that ‘wraps’, thus *chandas* or Vedic *chandas*, the meter is the Attire or Wrap of the *Mantra* – which protects the content of the *Mantra* and provides it a unique outer personality in

the form of Rhythm.<sup>4</sup> Meter used in the Mantras of the Four Vedas are in Vedic chandas, Meters used in the *slokas* and poetry of classical Sanskrit literature are in Laukika Chandas. That is how Vedas, though more than 5000years, have come down to the present scholarship intact without interpolation.

The two Great Epic Sagas of the heroic age, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* are the *kavyas* and are described as the model and source of all later literary creations. Thus almost all great works are in the form of poetry and that appealed the readers of classical age. While explaining the genesis of *Kavya* literature, the erudite scholar of our times V Raghavan remarks that ‘The *kavya* literature, being derived from the epics, provided a continuation, differently expressed, of the concepts and values of Indian thought. The total output of *kavya* literature during the two and a half millennia of its history is prodigious in quantity and remarkable in variety. Although, according to the principles of Indian aesthetics, Indian writers set no great store by mere originality, this great mass of classical Sanskrit poetry constantly showed new forms, new themes, new modes of expression and treatment. The whole gamut of human emotions was gone through and given expression to; in particular, the possibilities for expressions of love seemed inexhaustible’.<sup>5</sup>

Indian literature owes its creative expression in its entire entirety to *Ramayana*, which is considered as *adikavya*, for its theme, style, treatment, meters and their variations, portrayal of characters and their interaction, harmony of emotions and messages conveyed through deeds and misdeeds. The author of this *adikavya*, Valmiki is taken by all predecessors as *adikavi* and the trend setter for the glorious development of Indian literature, considered as an outstanding contribution to world literature as such. The great grammarian Panini, who lived between 500 and 300 B.C and followed with Katyayana (Vararuci) who supplemented with critical appraisal of Panini’s works and the later illustrated writer Patanjali, added to the higher development. All these early writers have enriched greatly this genre of *kavya* literature.

*Natya, nataka* or drama emerged as a distinct genre of Sanskrit literature influenced partly by Vedic mythology. It reached its peak between the fourth and seventh centuries, before declining with Sanskrit literature as a whole. The episodic nature of these dramas reflected the Hindu and Buddhist attitude that a human life is only one episode in a long journey towards enlightenment and the restoration of cosmic balance.<sup>6</sup> One of the earliest known Sanskrit plays is the *Mricchakatika*, thought to have been composed by Shudraka in the second century B.C.E. The *Natya Shastra* (ca. second century C.E., literally "Scripture of Dance," though it sometimes translated as "Science of Theatre") is a foundational work in Sanskrit literature on the subject of dance, music literature and stagecraft. Bhasa and Kalidasa are major early authors and Kalidasa easily qualifies as the greatest poet and playwright in Sanskrit. His work deals primarily with famous legends and themes; three famous plays by Kalidasa are *Vikramōrvaśīyam* (Vikrama and

Urvashi), *Mālavikāgnimitram* (Malavika and Agnimitra), and the play that he is most known for, *Abhijñānaśākuntalam* (*The Recognition of Shakuntala*).

Over a period of time *Kavya* evolved into various kinds, such as *mahakavyas*, *laghukavyas* and *khandakavyas*. The ideology bequeathed to the classical poets by Valmiki and Vyasa was the projection through the *mahakavya*, the epic or long poem, of the personality and the heroic acts of one of the exalted nature, the *dhirodatta*, one who was a ruler sage, *rajarsi* and an upholder of *dharma*.<sup>7</sup>

The establishment of *kavya* style is accredited to two great poets, Asvaghosha and Kalidasa. Traces of the influence of Ramayana are clearly seen in the *Buddha-carita* by Asvaghosha, who pre-dated Kalidasa, where the character of Buddha is drawn on the lines of Rama. The later poets of Buddhist literature in Sanskrit such as Kumaralata, who wrote *Avadana-jataka* and *Divyavadana*, Arya Sura, who wrote *Jataka-mala* followed the style of Asvaghosha in rendition. This trend continues during the Buddhist period of Indian history. In all such story and narration, along with the innumerable main characters, *dutas* and *dutikas/sakhis*, though they are minor characters, become inevitable to the storyline and for the sustainability of the theme.

### ***Dūta kāvya / Sandeśa kāvya***

The notion of sending of a message, through a messenger, from one person to another is found in Indian epics but it was taken up as an independent theme for a poem firstly by Ghatakarpara and later on by Kalidasa, Dhoyi, Udaya, Bhavabhuti and many other noteworthy poets. Sandesha Kavya belongs to the category of *Khandakavya*. The fore-runner of *Sandesha Kavya* is a small poem bearing the title - "Poem of the Broken-jug" which is a poem by Ghatakarpara on the message sent to the husband by a wife who was in grief on account of separation; it deals with the lamentation of the abandoned wife who does not address her lamentation to one person alone but to the monsoon clouds, her confidante, her distant husband and some trees but none of them entrusted with the task of carrying her message. The poem is of twenty-four stanzas in five different meters. The author is anonymous about the poet except his name which stands mentioned at the very end of the poem but he is believed to be contemporary of Kalidasa and one of the Nine Gems in the court of Vikramāditya.<sup>8</sup>

It is interesting to note that the great poets of yore have chosen different means to send their messages to their beloved, as Kalidasa used the cloud as messenger in *Meghadūta*, where as Dohyi used the wind itself as the messenger in *Pavandūta*, Udaya chosen the bird peacock as a messenger in his *Mayurasandeśa*, and Bhavabhuti used in his *Mālatīmādhava*, the abandoned Mādhava gone in search of a cloud to take his message to his beloved Mālatī.

Legends and narratives as part of Indian Epics furnish interesting episodes where instances of *Dautya* and *dutakarma*: the service and function of the messenger are highlighted and considered as significant. Probably, Hanuman in *Ramayana* as *duta* of Sri Rama to convey the whereabouts of Sri Rama to Seeta and his assurance to her release is the first instance of the *dutaseva*. Also offering the jewel *chudamani* that was obtained from Seeta to Sri Rama, Hanuman completed commitment as *Ramaduta*. In the *haviryajna* Agni is the *duta*, bridge between Pruthvi and Duloka. In *Mahabharata* metaphorically Vedavyasa sends the *ratri*, night as the *dutika*, in *Srimad Bhagavata vipraduta* plays a significant role in the episode of Krishna – Rukmini. Vimalakeerti, the Jaina scholar refers to *Induduta* and *Chandraduta*, Moon as the Messenger.



### A Woman with Swan

Acc no 47.110.547

Rajasthan School, Jodhpur Style

18<sup>th</sup> century CE

Size: Select In the painting a woman is speaking to a swan, offering bird feed. The swan acts as the messenger to convey the required *sandasha*, message to her *nayaka*.

All these narrations instances refer to the system of sending messages, which resulted in the emergence of *sandeshakavya* or *dutakavya*, and they were popular and appealing as well as lyrical in nature. Natural phenomenon such as night, moon and clouds, animals like parrot, peacock, monkey, deer and horses, the Agni – flames (in *yajna*), angles, celestials, a class of men and women all were considered as ‘Messengers’ depending on the emotional state, the intensity of the nature of message, motive and purpose, the characters to whom the messages are to be conveyed and such other conditions. Some of the *sandeshakavya* or *dutakavyas* are, the notable one Kalidasa’s *Meghaduta* (*Meghasandesha*) 4<sup>th</sup> century, *vaishnava acharya* Vedantasesika’s *Hamsasandesha*, 13<sup>th</sup> century, Rupagosvami’s *Hamsaduta*, 16<sup>th</sup> century, Krishnadasa’s *Padantaduta*, *Hanumatduta*, *Hakaduta*, *Pikaduta*, also some instances of *Shukaduta* and *Mayuraduta*, *Mrigaduta* and so on.



Sketch of a Mughal Princess, National Museum Collections from Rajasthan, she is sending a message while singing through the *hiran* (Deer) to her beloved.

This painting represents the concept of *Sandesha*.

**A Woman with a Parrot**

Acc no 47.110.471

Rajasthan School, Jodhpur Style

19<sup>th</sup> century CE

Size: 10.541 x 6.223 cm

Against the green background a woman is conversing with a parrot, a *shukaduta*, looking at her stature she is a princess, well dressed in Jodhpuri style and sending her message through *shuka*. In several styles of sculptures *Shukabhashini* is a favourite composition for a sculptor since ages.



A *shukabhasgini* from Chalukyan era  
8<sup>th</sup> century CE, Nandi *Mandapa*  
Virupaksha Temple Pattadakal Karnataka



A *Shukabhashini* from Hoysala  
era 12<sup>th</sup> century CE *Navaranga*  
ceiling Chennakeshava Temple Beluru

***Hamsaduta* in the Nala Damayanti Theme – Pahari Paintings**



A

Kind Reference: Pahari Paintings (A B C D) Dr Karan Singh Collections from Amar Mahal Museum and Library Jammu



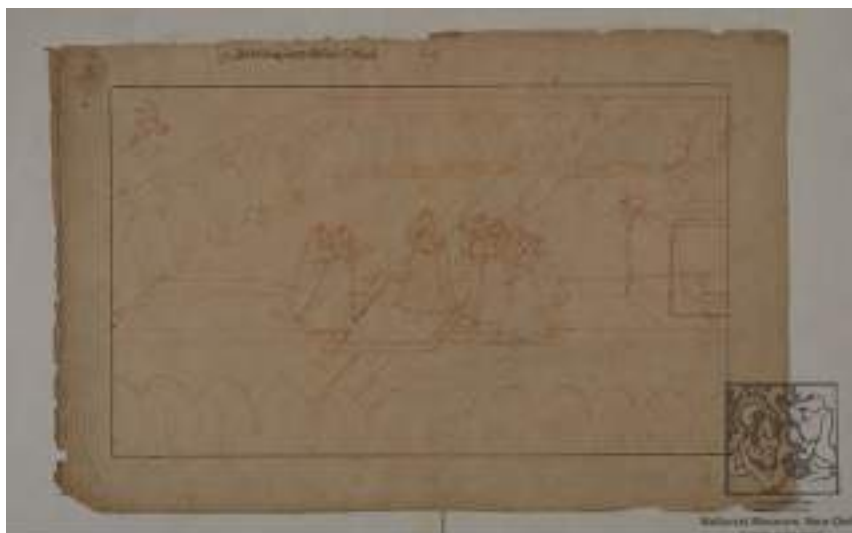
B



C



D



Pahari Sanguine Sketch, National Museum Collections, Damayanti her *Sakhis* watching the flying swan *Hamsaduta*





Pahari Sanguine Sketch, National Museum Collections,  
Damayanti her *Sakhis* sending *sandesha* through the moon



Raja Ravi Varma, The celebrated artist of India in late 19<sup>th</sup> century immortalised *Hamsa* Damayanti theme through these two paintings, (A) In the collections Jaganmohana Palace Museum Mysore.  
(B) In the collections of Chitra Gallery Trivandrum.

### Three sets of Illustrations referred here on the theme of *Hamsaduta* in Nala Damayanti Episode:

Epics and Puranic texts find their fruitful expression in Pahari miniature schools of paintings. Evidently Pahari artists had natural flavor for themes drawn from such sources and they visually enriched the characters amidst Pahari landscape and architecture. *Nalopakhya* is an episode elaborately dealt in the *vanaparva* of *Mahabharata*. This episode of King Nala and his queen Damayanti is known for its heart touching sequences and picturesque rendition. *Hamsaduta*, the swan, who was a messenger flown between the royal cities and mansions of prince Nala and Princess Damayanti have become favourite theme for artists to visualize and narrate in their paintings. There are three sets of paintings here, representing the *Hamsaduta* associated with Nala and Damayanti. In the first set of paintings (ABCD), the scene around the lotus tank is depicted in a lively manner; Nala is releasing the *hamsa*, the swan after listening to the narration on the nature, qualities and beauty of princess Damayanti. In the second painting, there is a detailed rendering of the garden, where the central figure Damayanti is attracted by the swan speaking in human voice and Damayanti is tempted to follow the swan, in the foreground, swan is narrating about the King Nala as his trusted messenger. In the next illustration the swan is eagerly flying back to the garden of Nala, who is expecting eagerly this messenger too. Swan is narrating his meeting with Damayanti and makes Nala to understand he is the only suitable bride-groom to her. The entire scene is viewed from above, almost as if it were being seen from the vantage point of the swan.<sup>9</sup>

The second set from National Museum on the theme are not the paintings but the set of sanguine drawings, of which two are selected, in the first one Damayanti and her Sakhis are watching the *Hamsaduta* flying towards the city of Nala, after speaking about Nala and also taking the *sandesha*, message of Damayanti to Nala. In the second drawing, Damayanti and all her friends are in the open air looking at the full moon, and Damayanti takes the moon to her confidence and sends a message through moon to Nala. May be these drawings are the pre-sketches for the elaborate Pahari paintings. B N Gosvami states that they were significantly called '*namoonas*' by Pahari painters. Five leaves of what must have been an extensive set of drawings of the Nala-Damayanti story, done in the style that we associate with the artist Sanju of Kangra, are in the National Museum at Delhi.

In the third set of paintings here, Raja Ravi Varma, the illustrious artist rendered beautifully, the way Damayanti warmly acknowledges *hamsa*, the swan as her Messenger. The episode is popularly known as *Hamsa-Damayanti Samvad*, dialogue, as the story unfolds, Damayanti and Nala are drawn towards each other despite being miles away, courtesy the *hamsa*, the swan which doubles up as their messenger. It extols Nala's virtues to Damayanti, leaving her pining for him and in the same breath, paints a beautiful picture of Damayanti to Nala in his presence. Hence Damayanti is immensely relieved as the swan swoops in as she waits with bated breath to hear the latest news on her beloved.<sup>10</sup>

The outstanding figure in classical Sanskrit age of par-excellence, who is considered as *varakavi* is Kalidasa. His works bear the continuity of Vedic references, perfection in technique of poetic embellishment, aesthetic erudition, creative expression, seminal, symbolic and deeper treatment of feelings and emotions. Kalidasa is held to be a poet of excellence in the golden Gupta age of Hindu revival. He refers Vidisha in *Meghaduta* as a capital city, and in *Malavikagnimitram* to Agnimitra as a contemporary ruler, who has induced several scholars to place Kalidasa, the *kavi-sarvabhuma*, the sovereign among poets in the Shunga age, which was equally an age of Hindu revival. However, whether he lived in the Shunga age or the Gupta, whether he was a native of Ujjain or of any other place, Kalidasa is a national poet and a poet of all time.<sup>11</sup> Kalidasa commenced his career as a poet laureate by writing a short poem *Ritusamhara*, portraying the cycle of six seasons, the *ritus*, where a lover narrates to his beloved the way each season manifested with variation in nature, sounds of birds and animals, changing vegetation, human emotions and the attire, the kinds of flowers, the activities of people. This *kavya* a propitiation to nature finally concluded with the delightful description of *vasanta*, the spring season.



*Meghaduta* with *Tika*, National Museum Collection, Manuscript, handmade paper, Sanskrit language, Sharada script, number of folios 35, size: 19.36 x 14.92, this paper manuscript deals with commentary of *Meghaduta*.

His second *kavya Meghaduta* is brought under *laghukavya* is considered as the height of expressive creativity of the poet. The literal meaning of *Meghaduta* is a Messenger of Clouds. It is a poem with a simple theme, where a Yaksha, who was a subject of Lord Kubera (King of Wealth) is fallen off grace from Mount Kailasa and descends to the central part of Bharat, India and his wife was waiting for him at Mount Kailasa. The exiled Yaksha from Ujjain wishes to send his lovelorn message to his loving wife. For that, he convinces a cloud to take his message and pass it on to his wife. The poem narrates about the beautiful sights and visual perceptions he would come across while going northwards to take this message to his wife.<sup>12</sup>



*Meghaduta* with *Sanjivini*, collections National Museum Delhi, handmade paper manuscript, Sanskrit language, Nagari script, 24 folios, size: 35.36 x 18.41. This paper manuscript of *Meghaduta* with *Sanjivini* is written by Kalidasa and Mallinatha dealing with the literature *Meghaduta*.

This *kavya* is accredited to sixth century, but its magical influence is casted on the poets and writers of all times. *Meghadoota* opened up endless possibility of interpretation in all classical and regional languages. It is interesting to know that the Noble Laurite, *Vishvakavi* Rabindranath Tagore could not resist himself in expressing his poetic rendition of *Meghadoota*.

Rabindranath Tagore addresses Kalidasa in his poem as Supreme Poet. It is rare for one great poet to be inspired by another great poet and also to acknowledge wholeheartedly. Rabindranath Tagore was so stirred by Kalidasa's *Meghadoota* that he wrote his poem and was published in *Manasi* 1889. Tagore who lived fifteen hundred years after Kalidasa, was able to connect himself with the refined notions and looked at the Yaksha as the symbol of loneliness. The clouds that form in *ashadha* month are so moist to convey the tearful message to the separated lover. This condition of clouds is unchanged, everlasting and stands as witness to the expressions of Kalidasa as well as Tagore. The feelings of lovers and their state of loneliness is taken to higher plane by Tagore elevating beyond the existential phenomenon.<sup>13</sup>



Eternal Meghaduta in all ages  
(Photography V N Anoop Chandra)

### Rabindranath Tagore's poem on *Meghadoota*:

In a gloomy closed room I sit alone  
 And read Meghadoota  
 My mind leaves the room  
 Travels on a free-moving cloud  
 Flies far and wide...  
 That first hallowed day of Ashadha  
 On which in some unknown year  
 You wrote your Meghadoota ...  
 Your stanzas are themselves like  
 Dark layered sonorous clouds  
 Heaping the misery of separated lovers  
 Into thunderous music.  
 Who can say what thickness of clouds that day,  
 What festiveness of lightening,  
 What wildness of wind,  
 Shook with their roar the turrets of Ujjaini?  
 Long-repressed tears seem to have poured down  
 In torrents that day  
 And drenched your noble stanzas.  
 Did every exile sing to the clouds  
 The same song of yearning?  
 Did every lover ask a cloud  
 To carry a tearful message of love?  
 Countless first days of the rainy season have passed  
 Every year has given new life to your poem  
 By showering it with fresh rain.  
 With the sound of gathered clouds,  
 By filling streams with waves  
 That rush like your rain-swelled verse.  
 Poet, your spell has released  
 Tight bonds of pain in this heart of mine.  
 I too have entered that heaven of yearning.  
 Why do we aim so high only to weep when thwarted?  
 Why does not love find its true path?<sup>14</sup>

### Concept of *Dūtikā/Sakhi* – The Female Messengers/ Companions

Sanskrit scholars through the ages have made rich and landmark contributions in the field of both performing, visual arts literature, and *sastras*. The textual traditions that have left behind by generations of scholars are quite adept in their application in the concerned field of creativity. When a text is approached with a practical application, the challenges are met from various angles and this experience opens up with immense possibilities. The strength and ingenuity of a text is put to a real test when it is applied and seen with relevance of its emergence from time to time. The abstract thinking power of our aestheticians has dimensionalised our art forms and therein lifted the intellectual stagnation occurred inevitably during certain phases in the wide range of time span. The continuity of textual tradition and the tradition of critical theories have undoubtedly made Indian classical arts as the living tradition despite the drastic social changes.

The monumental works of Bharata, Matanga, Abinavagupta, Anandavardhana, Somesvara, Sargnadeva and Pandarika Vitthala are the prolific interpretation of the practicing forms of the arts namely painting, sculpture, dance and music. Classical literature is the sustainable source for research in various fields including that of the imagery of Female Messengers/Companions – *Dūtikā/Sakhi*.

*Dūtikā* is one who conveys messages from heroine to hero and vice-versa and they are identified as the go-between characters particularly in the context of *Nayaka-Nayika* to reckon with and to accomplish the duty that they are assigned. *Sakhi* is the companion, friend and attendant of the *Nayika*, to be always with her and prepare to take up any kind of risk to help. *Sakhi* in certain circumstances, also takes the role of a messenger and accomplishes the task of *Dūtikā*. Many types of women including a washer woman or the hair-dresser or a wife of barber, an elderly maid, younger maids handling several types of services are all around the *Nayika* or they are the retinue in service with the women's apartment in a palace or mansion. They are also recognized as messengers and help the women in the apartment to convey the messages either for the women in the other part of the mansion or secretly they carry messages to the required person, because of their services they are not identified as *Dūtikā* by others. The situations were very much different in that kind of social setting and the role played by the Female Messengers were very significant.

***Radha waiting for  
Krishna's answer***

Acc. No. 53.64.12

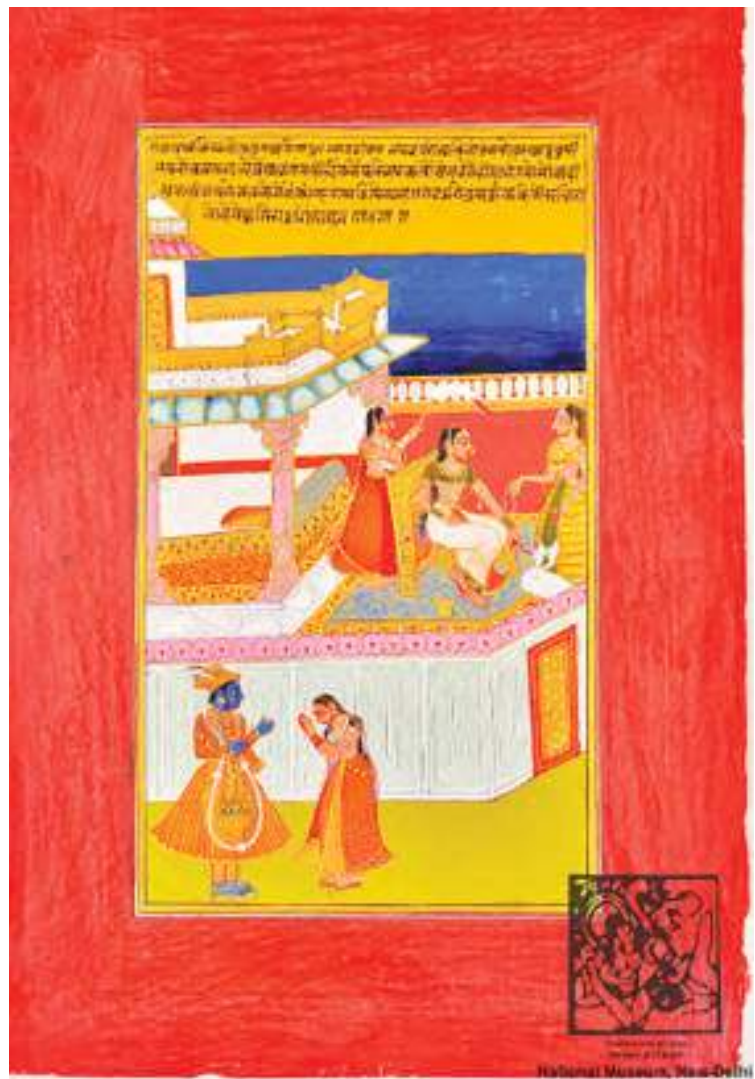
Rajasthan School

1800 CE

Size: 26.6 x 14.5 inches

Inscription on top register  
against yellow background

The painting showing Radha seated on a seat placed on terrace of the palace, one of her *nitya sakhis* standing behind her with a fly-whisk, one of the *priya-sakhis* is comforting her saying and gesturing not to worry much and she would get a positive answer from her beloved Krishna. Just to divert her attention she has placed two pea-hens before Radhika to feed them, while waiting. In the foreground, *Sakhi Lalita*, who is identified as *priya-namrasakhi*, the most beloved and trusted friend of Radhika, stands as *dutika* with folded hands before Krishna and waits for an answer to Radhika's question. Text on the top describes the content of the painting. Theme is well illustrated with the characters in expressive gestures and fine architectural features. Unlike some other paintings, Radika is dressed differently compared to her sakhis.



The authors of *alamkarashastra* have taken pleasure in explaining a wide range of *Dūtikās* and in that list *sakhi* is also included. But few authors distinguish between *Sakhi* and *Dūtikā* and deal separately with the concept and role of *sakhi*. In *Bhagavatapurana* literature and *Gitagovinda* *Sakhi* of Radhika appeared frequently. There are references of five types of *Sakhis* with Radhika, such as *Nitya-sakhis*, *Prana-sakhis*, *Manjaris*, *Priya-sakhis* and *Priya-narmasakhis*, and they were deployed to accomplish different purposes. *Sakhi* Lalita and Vishakha belonged to *Priya-namrasakhis* type, who was loyal and trustworthy to Radhika. The duties of the *sakhis* prescribed by Rudrabhatta were to keep the atmosphere around the *nayika* humorous and cajoling, to advise when required, to adorn the *nayika*, to complain about the *Nayaka* with sarcasm, to pacify and appease the *nayika*, to console at the time of separation and make sincere efforts to unite *nayika* with *nayaka*. Only a trusted friend can rise up to the situation warranted and proves most confident. The paintings taken for study from the collections National Museum illustrate most of the kinds of *Dūtikās* and *Sakhis* that are referred in the treatises discussed here.

### ***Dūtikā/Sakhi*, Female Messengers in Early Literature**

Earliest reference on the subject is dealt in the treatise of *Natyashastra* Chapter XXV, verses from 9 to 18 talks about the role of Female Messenger, her qualities and activities. Bharata has identified eleven types of *Dūtikā/Sakhi*, the Female Messengers/ Companions, such as 1. *Kathini* – Female Narrator, 2. *Lingini* – a female ascetic, 3. *Rangopajivana* – an actress, 4. *Prativeshya* – a neighbour, 5. *Sakhi* – a friend, 6. *Dasi* – a maid servant, 7. *Kumari* – a maiden, 8. *Darushilpika* – a female artist, 9. *Dhatri* – a foster-mother, 10. *Pashandini* – a female heretic, and 11. *Ikshanika* – a female fortune teller. Further Bharata explains their characteristics, qualities, the duties and responsibilities towards their profession and integrity of purpose.

They are – a female neighbour, a female friend, a female servant, an unmarried girl, a crafts woman, a nurse (a foster mother), a heretic nun and a female fortune-teller. He specifically gives warning about the persons who should not be relied on as *Dūti* such as a stupid woman or wealthy or terribly ill. One has to take care of these conditions while deploying the female messenger. (Verse – 9-10)

It is interesting to note here that Bharata prescribes certain qualities either inherent or to be nurtured in a person who will take up the duty as a messenger. A female messenger must be clever in encouraging the beloved, a sweet talker, honest, abiding her time, keeping her own secrets and above all attractive to look at. (Verse 11-12)

She should encourage the beloved by giving various reasons, she should report exact words, and be able to describe the emotional condition. (Verse 13)

She should exaggerate the family status and the riches of the lover. She should be able, by various ruses, to bring about the union of the beloved, who is in love for the first time with her lover and should be able to speak freely (Verse – 14)

This union should take place during the festivity at night, in a park, in the house of a relative, in the house of a female friend, or in invited parties or under the pretext of seeing a sick person or in an unoccupied vacant house. Union with a woman who is in love for the first time of a beloved woman who has been angry with him. (Verse – 15)

The first meeting of men (with women) may be made during festive night, in the house of a kinsman, a foster-mother or a female friend or in a dinner party or on the pretext of seeing sick person or in an empty house (Verse 16-17)

After meeting a woman in one of these various ways one should carefully observe marks whether she is attached or the opposite (Verse – 18)<sup>15</sup> In any given situation the messenger is expected to behave and act with tact and sincerity of purpose. This would bring the confidence in the heroes and heroines and the very purpose of depending on a messenger for a confidential task is worthwhile.

*Kamasutra* of Vatsyayana defines *Dūti* as one who entices another man's wife for the hero. The author prescribes certain qualities specific to female messengers such as: Skillfulness, Boldness, Knowledge of the intention of men by their outward signs, Absence of confusion, *i.e.*, no shyness, Knowledge of the exact meaning of what others do or say, Good manners, Knowledge of appropriate times and places for doing different things, Ingenuity in business, Quick comprehension and Quick application of remedies, *i.e.*, quick and ready resources.<sup>16</sup>

Varahamihira of 7<sup>th</sup> century CE is another influential author, who authored *Brhatsamhita*, an encyclopedic work. Chapter 77 deals with the Union of Man and Woman, where a discussion is dealt briefly stating Buddhist nuns, female ascetics, hand-maids, nurses, virgins, washer-women, flower sellers, corrupt women, female companions and barbers' wives serve as go-betweens. As these are the causes of the ruin of respectable families, one should carefully protect women from them in order to enhance the reputation and honour of the family.<sup>17</sup>

Sharadatanaya in *Bhavaprakasana* describes twelve types of Female Messengers: namely, *kathini*, *lingini*, *dasi*, *kumari*, *karusilpini*, *pasandini*, *prativesya*, *sakhi*, *rangopajivini*, *dhatreyi*, *prekshanika* and *dutya*. As well as Rudrabhatta in *Sringaratilaka* depicts eight types of *Sakhis* and more or less similar to that of Bharata's interpretation in *Natyashastra* but adds *karu*, the labourer to that list. His interpretation of duties assigned to the *Sakhis* largely depends on the situations they handle tactfully while performing their role as Female Messengers. For instance she has to have a great sense of humour to create amusement to please the *nayaka*, sense of beauty while decorating the heroine or the surroundings, while complaining either on *Nayaka* to *Nayika* or vice versa she should subtle in her sarcasm, she should be emotionally strong to pacify the troubled heroine compassionately, in the situation of separation she should be consoling, and finally she should be able to take pleasure in the unification of *nayaka-nayika*. With the nature of the self-reliance of the Female Messenger the situation proves successful.



Dhananjaya, the author of *Dasharupaka* gives the eightfold list of the *Dutis*, the Female Messengers, reproduces Rudrabhatta's list of eight *Sakhis* eliminating *Nati* and *Bala* from the list but adding *Sakhi* and *Svayam*, the heroine herself. The former term *sakhi* is very common to all works of this genre and the later *Svayamduti* has been introduced by Dhananjaya for the first time and later it was taken up by successive writers. Dhananjaya in *Dasarupaka* identifies *dasi*, *dhatri*, *prativesya*, *silpini*, *pravarjini*, *karu*, *sakhi* and *svayamduti*. *Svayamduti* is his own identification where the heroine herself acts as *duti*. Another 8<sup>th</sup> century text on cultural life of north India is enumerated by Damodaragupta of Kashmir in his work *Kuttani-mata*. Several narratives account for the life and interesting situations the female messengers face as part of their duty and existence. Bhoja has devoted two independent chapters known as *dootavishesha* and *dootakarmopavarna* for the discussion of the eight types of female messengers in his treatise *Srngaraprakasa*.

### ***Kuttini with an young Girl***

Acc No 60.128

Deccan School

18<sup>th</sup> Century

Size: 19.5 x 10.5 cm

*Kuttini* or a go-between character is seen standing close to a richly jeweled maiden in prime of her youth, as is evident from her diaphanous over garment. The *Kuttini* is wearing a white over garment and a green *odhani*. She holds a stick indicating her old age and matured enough in the *kuttini-mata*, She is cajoling the maiden as she is still inexperienced in the game of love and *Kuttini* is giving hints, also the duty of the Female Messenger, once she is experienced. It is interesting to note that the *kuttini-mata*, an intangible tradition of passing from one generation to another, which was familiar in 8<sup>th</sup> century CE, discussed by Damodaragupta, Kashmir poet, echoed in 18<sup>th</sup> century in Deccani painting. That gives an understanding that the concept of *kuttini-mata* was in practice in all regions of the country.



Vagbhata in *Kavyanushasana* has brought down the number of the duties to only four. They are 1. *Pravrajita* – a female ascetic, 2. *Dhatreyika* – a foster sister, 3. *Hinastri* – a woman of low status, 4. *Dasi* – a maid-servant.<sup>18</sup> Raja Bhoja has devoted two independent chapters known as *dutavishesha* and *dutakarmopavarna* for the discussion of the eight types of female messengers in his treatise *Srngaraprakasa*.



### ***Rasamanjari - Anusayana***

Acc No 61.1185

Maratha miniature style 18<sup>th</sup> century CE

Size: 14 cm x 29 cm

Here *nayika* and her *aptasakhi* are talking to each other. After a long stay with her parents, the *nayika* is on the process of going to her in-laws. Since she was enjoying extra-marital affairs here, he is worried of not getting opportunities for her secret love and thinking whether she gets that near the house of her spouse. The close associate or her companion with her bright

eyes and hand gesture suggesting the *nayika* that there are beautiful abodes nearby there and she can pursue her desires. In response to the *sakhi's* suggestion, the *nayika* gestures her friend not to talk more about the matter but her hidden smile shows that she was pleased with her *sakhi*. Painting is neatly laid in the manuscript painting format with Sanskrit script illustrated by the artistic expression. The architectural features, foliage, flower beds, background sky make a colorful picture. *Nayika* is seated comfortably on a yellow carpet while the *sakhi* is standing and both are in the gestures signifying dialogue mode. Costume, jewellery and wearing of *sarees* in Maharashtra style.

Bhanudatta's *Rasamanjari* is the pioneer work in *Alamkarashastra*, primarily deals with the *Nayaka-Nayika bheda*. The role of female messengers and companions is significant in this context and Bhanudatta dedicates a chapter for this concept. Bhanudatta's *Rasamanjari* pictures the messengers in entirely different fashion. Instead of giving any incomplete and misleading lists of *sakhis* and *dutikas*, he has given their precise definitions. The *sakhi* according to him is one who remaining by the side of the heroine is a source of a solace to her and enjoys her confidence. And the *Duti* is one who is proficient in the art of conveying messages. The important duties of the former are *mandana* (to adorn the heroine), *upalambha* (to complain

with sarcasm), *siksa* (to advice), and *parihasa* (to make humour) and those of the later are, *sanghattana* (to bring about the union), *Viraha-nivedana* (to describe before the hero the miserable plight of the separated heroine).<sup>19</sup> Thus they carry the role of *sakhi*, *parsagamini*, *sandesaparangama*, *hitakarini* and *prasadini*. Bhanudatta must have been a great feminist with an excellent knowledge of female psyche. The only means to know the nature, the heart, the feelings and emotions of a person is to observe and analyse his or her behaviour. When Bhanudatta describes a particular *nayika*, he does not enumerate the characteristic trails of her nature in a dry and drab manner but visualises a special situation and depicts the behaviour of that *nayika* under these particular circumstances. Looking beyond the behaviour of the *nayika*, a *sahrdaya* immediately apprehends the nature and mental set-up of that lady by the virtue of the force of *dhvani*.<sup>20</sup> In such special situations, the poet enhances emotional content and picturisation of the state of *nayika* by introducing the *dutikas/sakhis* who are well versed in the game of love and they create interesting events and scenarios appealing to *sahrdayas*.

*Sahitya Darpana*, authored by Vishvanatha also deals with ten kinds of Dutis, the Female Messengers as discussed by early writers in *Alankarashastra*. But he classifies these messengers both male and female into three categories: *Nisrshartha*, *Mitrartha* and *Sandeshakaraka*. When a messenger makes sincere efforts to discuss and convince both hero and heroine to accomplish the mission for which she or he is posted, such messenger belongs to the category of *Nisritartha*. Some types of messengers communicate less but concentrate on the mission and see it is accomplished, such messengers come under the second *Mitrartha* category. Third type messengers are *sandeshharaka*, who deliver message as it is and reports. Simhabhupala in *Rasarnavasudhakara* follows the tradition of Bharata in naming the *Dūti* including that of *viprasnika* or *daivagna* signifying the fortune-teller. Vidyanatha in *Prataparudrayasobhusana* refers to nine kinds of female messengers as mentioned by other writers and specifically makes the distinction between *sakhi* as companion and *Dūti* as ordinary messenger.

Rupagosvamin, a prominent *vaishnava* philosopher of 16<sup>th</sup> century was considered as devotional guru and poet. He is a reverential personality of *Gaudiya Vaishnavism* and the principal disciple of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and also the most senior most of Six *Goswamins* of Vrindavan and Vrajadesha. He is perhaps one of the most influential authorities in Sanskrit on the subject and considers two *Dūtikās*, namely (1) *Svayamduti* – the heroine, who conveys her own message to the hero through direct speech, or through movements of her limbs and through expression of her eyes. (2) *Aptaduti*: personal confidante is of three types, Firstly, *Amitartha*- a *Dūti* who discovers love of heroine for the hero, vice versa and bring them together with her sincere efforts. Secondly, *Nisritartha* – where a *Dūti* has been entrusted with the work to arrange the union of Hero and heroine with a device that suits to accomplish the work. Thirdly, *Patrahari*, is one who merely conveys the message. Other than these, *Shilpakari*. *Daivajna* (a female astrologer), *Lingini* (Female ascetic) *Paricharika* or *Dasi* (Maid-servant), *Vanadevi* (a female sylvan deity) and *Sakhi* (a trusted friend) According to Rupagosvamin Krishna's flute itself is considered as *Dūti*.<sup>21</sup>

A scholar by name Bade Sahib Akbar from Hyderabad in 17<sup>th</sup> century contributed his work *Srngaramanjari* to *Alankarashastra*. He clearly brought out the distinction between *Sakhi* and *Dūtikā*. While discussing the eight *avasthas*, the eight conditions of *nayika* of *Sviya*, *Madhya*, *Pragalbha*, *Parakiya* and *samanya* types under the categories of *Uttama*, *Madhyama* and *Adhama*, a *sakhi* has to be by her lady's side, in whom the lady confides and from whom she deserves relief. *Sakhi* under *uttama* category wishes most of the happiness of the *nayika*, under *madhyama*, the *sakhi* keeps speaking pleasing words and under *adhama*, she speaks and helps at random. Further various types of *Dūtikā* are discussed, generally the Female Messenger is one who conveys messages. *Dūtikā* are of eight types, namely servant, friend, artisan-woman, one's foster-mother, neighbor, a lady in disguise, artiste and the *nayika* herself.<sup>22</sup> The author adds two more to the list, the woman peddler – *Vikretri*, one that sells articles, in particular, the seller of glass bangles, seller of perfumes, seller of gems and seller of flowers, they are attractive specially in the context of love. The other type is *Shankita*, the anxious one, she on hearing harsh words of the lady fears that the lover may get upset and undertakes the work of nice mediation. Considering the work of messenger, which comprises bringing together, conveying the suffering of separation, conveying the love, encouraging the lover's affairs with another lady, bearing the mind and divining the mind, is some of the primary duties to be executed.

It is heartening to know that many of the *lakshanagranthas* under the category of *alankarashastra* while dealing the subject of *Nayaka-Nayika bheda* invariably discuss on the topic of *dutika/sakhi*. That gives an impression that the go-between characters are of significant consideration and without them the themes do not progress further and would not reach logical conclusion. They are irreplaceable by any other character in this context.

### **Text *Dutikarmaparakasha***

Textual references on *Dutika/Sakhi* discussed above deal this subject within the context of *nayika- bheda*, which commences from very early text of Bharata's *Natyashastra* to Roopgoswamin's *Ujjvala Nilamani* covering the time span from 4<sup>th</sup> century to 17<sup>th</sup> century. But *Dutikarmaparakasha*, a text authored by Pandarika Vitthala in the context of early references mentioned above and the time frame when it was composed claimed to be significantly consequential. It is a sole text on the subject *Dutika/Sakhi*, the Female Messengers that offers interesting aspects of the art of emissary. The fine arts like dance, music and painting have sensibly characterised the female messengers in the most enchanting way thereby enriched and elaborated many of the implications of the text. In particular the painting collections in National Museum portray the *dutikas/sakhis* in a lucidly enchanting way. The Imagery of Female Messengers is perceived brilliantly by the painters of various major schools and sub-schools of

Indian miniature painting. The royal household and their pastime activities, the intimate time spent by the princess with friend, the love affair between *nayaka* and *nayika*, puranic episodes like the elopement of Rukmini, marriage of Usha and Aniruddha, and such other legends are tastefully presented by our artists in the paintings, which are beautifully displayed in the Painting Gallery and in the reserve collections of National Museum.

**The researcher visited on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2019, the Royal Library Ganga Trust Bikaner to study the original text *Dutikarmaparakasha* authored by Pandarika Vitthala of Satanuru in 1565-72**

Original Text *Dutikarmaparakasha* is preserved in Anup Sanskrit Library Fort Bikaner. Original source for the research work the Sanskrit Text *Dootikarmaparakasha* by Pandarika Vitthala is preserved in Lalgadh Palace Archives for Manuscript Sources Bikaner. The researcher undertook a fieldwork trip to Bikaner to refer the original text. Correspondence took place earlier with the royal family and director of Archives Lalgadh Palace. The Researcher was invited to refer the original source. Photography or photocopy was not allowed. Published copy of the text was allowed to cross check with the original.

### **Details of Documentation of the Hand written Manuscript**

*Subject: the text is categorized under Kamashastra*

*Title: Dutiparakasha*

*Author: Pandharika Vitthala*

*Number of leaves: 6*

*Cover page: Dutaparakasya Vitthalakruta*

*Behind this cover page the text commences with offerings – Sri Ganeshayanamaha.*

*On every page on the top portion of the margin Duti is mentioned and on the end of the every page Ramam is mentioned along with page number.*

*Last page is not fully written, only 1 ½ verses are written and the text ends with samapta shubhamastu.*

*Width of the folios is 9 inches and length of the folios 4 inches.*

*Written in clear black ink on thin handmade paper of fine quality.*

*Horizontal layout having 8 lines on the folio. Writing style is both language and appearance exhibit clarity. From the beginning to the end writing continues in the same characters, ink, even force on the pen is even and very neat hand writing. It gives a feeling that Pandharika Vitthala was a meticulous person, aimed towards perfection.*

*The condition of the manuscript is in the state of well maintained preservation.*

The original folio was cross-checked with the published copy. There are variations in numbering between the two versions of the text, namely original and published copy.

In the original there is continuation in numbers of the verses. But in the published version numbering is inconsistent, as the first six verses are given continuous number after that instead of continuation fresh number is given. In the published version in one of the verses 4 lines left blank. The researcher was able to identify them and taken those lines from the original text.

It was learnt that after the text was placed in the collections of Jodhpur palace, all texts in the form of Manuscript were transferred to Bikaner in 17<sup>th</sup> century. Text *Dutiprakasa* was also brought here. But so far none have gone through this text. It was the fortune of the researcher to handle the original text that belonged to the dates CE 1565-1572.

### **Satanuru - Home Town of Pandarika Vitthala**



Entrance to Vitthala Temple



Rear side – *Vimana* of the Temple



Rear Side wall of the temple



Garuda in folded hands



Entrance *Mandapa* to the shrine



Vithala Shrine



Sculpture of Vitthala resembles the Pandhara pura Vitthala



Ishta devata of Vitthala



Ancestral place of Pandarika Vitthala at Satanuru



## Satanuru Documentation

About one page on the author found in the Gazetteer both in English and Kannada, mentions that Pandarika Vithala was a Sanskrit and Music scholar of the times. Bangalore Gazetteer (Rural) has recorded Satanuru under Magahi Talk, a historical township. Satanuru is a small *agrahara*, it was a small hamlet inhabited by *Brahmanas*. Satanuru situated at a distance of ten km from Magadi has been mentioned as ‘Sathnur’ in a record dated 1497 CE from the same place. The place has temples dedicated to Kabbalamma, Maruti, Svayambeshvara, Vithala Gopalasvami, Shanidevaru etc. The Vithala Temple is one of the striking monuments of the place, built in Vijayamnagar style with octagonal as well as square pillars. Though the temple looks an ordinary structure, but the image of Vithala consecrated in the Sanctum-sanctorum is a very impressive Hoysala image. The black stone image of the deity is about one meter tall with two hands, both placed on the waist. The right hand holds a conch and the left hand an object looks like pouch with its mouth tied with rope. The god is flanked by consorts who hold a *chauri* in one hand and a lotus in the other. The *prabhavali* or halo has in the upper portion well carved Dashavatara in relief amidst *makara torana*. On the exterior wall of the temple has a Nagari inscription dated 1497, which announces certain grants made by the children of one official Tirumala Somayaji of Kaliyuru to God Vithala of Sathnuru. Apparently Pandarika Vithala might have been after this deity.

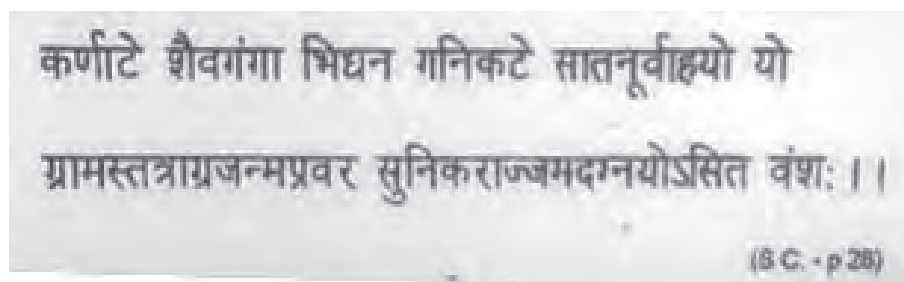
Further in another page of the Gazetteer it is mentioned as ‘there have been a number of learned artists of Carnatic and Hindusthani music hailing from the district. Pandarika Vithala (1562-1599), a native of Sathanuru in Magadi taluk was proficient both in Carnatic and Hindusthani music systems of music. He has written an authoritative work on *Ragamala*, which gives classification of *ragas* and his other works comprise *Ragamanjari and Nartana Nirnaya*. He was at the court of Emperor Akbar.<sup>23</sup>

Pandarika Vithala, the celebrated author of *Ragamala*, *Ragamanjari*, *Nartana Nirnaya* also wrote *Shadraga Chandrodaya* and *Dutikarmaprakasha*, who hailed from this place of Satanuru. It is identified as the hometown of the author Pandarika Vitthala. He belonged to the worshipping cult of Vitthala of Pandharapura in present Maharashtra. But followed by many Kannada speaking families of all communities, in particular the *Madhva* Brahmin community even today, belonging to *Bhagavata sampradaya* Local people were interviewed and they feel proud that such a great person belongs to their place and they want that such information should be familiarized by the governments both state and centre. They were happy about this research project also.

Pandarika Vithala is also referred as Pundarika Vittala, was recognized more in music circle because he was the important musicologist of during the second half of 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Pandarika Vistthala of 16th century who wrote *Dutikarmaprakasha*, belonged to a small town Satanuru situated near Bangalore, travels to Maharashtra, then to Ahamadnagar and finally he moves to Delhi and becomes part of Emperor Akbar's court. This information is furnished by Dr R Satyanarayana in the introductory Chapter of *Nartananirnaya* published by IGNCA Delhi. With these basic facts in view, tried to explore more about his first patron Burhan Khan of Ahamadnagar through literature survey, books related to Ahmadnagar and Deccani kingdoms. The Libraries of NM, NMI and IGNCA were consulted. Unfortunately not much of information was available. The character of Burhan Khan itself was confusing and failed to obtain authentic information. Regarding the information on the tenure of Pandarika Vithala in the Royal Court of Emperor Akbar and the works he has written, also could not be yielded much of the sources. In *Nartananirnaya* and *Ragamala*, Pandarika Vitthala repeatedly mentions the names of Madhava Simha, Man Simha and Emperor Akbar as his patrons.<sup>24</sup>

Satanuru a small township 40 km from Bangalore is the place where Pandarika Vithala was born and the Vitthala Temple in this central part of the town belonged to the family of Pandarika Vitthala. Bangalore Gazetteer mentions about Pandarika Vitthala and his connection with his home town Satanuru and his travel to Delhi seeking patronage. Pandarika Vithala belonged to Satanuru village near Sivaganga in Magadi taluk of Bangalore district. At the end of his text on music *Sadraga Chandrodaya* he mentions about his native place and his provenance, with that it is clear that his native place was Satanuru near Shivaganga in the province of Karnata that is present Karnataka state. Since he was in another province under the patronage of the Sultans of Malwa, he felt to give his identity that he belonged to Karnataka, otherwise his original place would have enshrouded by mystery.



Pandarika Vitthala composed this text during the period of 1565 – 1572 A.D while he was residing in Malwa. It was written at the specific request of Burhan Khan, who was a young ruler of Ahmadnagar at that time. When he was dethroned he sought the refuge under Akbar and Akbar helped him to recover his throne. It gives us a feeling that Pandarika Vitthala had somehow managed to get closer to Burhan Khan and was patronised by him initially. This helped Panadarika Vitthala to settle himself before entering into Akbar's court and probably the sympathetic patron; Burhan Khan must have introduced him to the Emperor. During his

Ahmadnagar days he composed two texts namely *Dutikarmaparakasha* and *Sighrabodhini-namamala*. Other than these two works, his major part of writing covered the dual arts dance and music seems to have extended from 1572 to 1589. During this phase of his life he was under the patronage of the Emperor Akbar directly, or he was in close association with the loyal officers of the Emperor such as Madhosingh and Mansingh from Rajasthan. Panadarika Vitthala, an erudite scholar of sixteenth century wrote a text known as *Dutikarmaparakasha*.

A complete dynastic tree of the Faruqui rulers of Khandesh of Burhanpur from 1388 to 1599 has been recorded in the Imperial Gazeteer. This tree also 37Pundarika Vittala does not contain name of Burhan Khan, Taj khan nor the town of Ananadavalli as mentioned by Pundarika Vittala. Even in the list of kings of Khandesh given by Stanley Lane-Poole did not mention any king's name as Burhan khan<sup>25</sup> But the well known Historian Sethumadhava Rao Pagadi<sup>26</sup> has suggested that Anadavalli was the sanskritised version of Darasurur, capital of Khandesh. He also says that Tej khan must have been the younger son of Ahmed Khan, and Burhan Khan was Tej khan's son. "Kingdom of Khandesh" by Radhey Shyam mentions "that at the time of Miram Muhamad Shah's death (1536) none of his children were old enough to take the reins of government and therefore his brother Mubarak occupied the throne." Thus Farishta does not mention about the accession of Ahmed Khan, son of Miran Muhamad Shah to the throne. Hence when Pundarika Vittala wrote 38 Pundarika Vittala *Sadraga Chandrodaya* Ahmed Khan the real ruler, may be, he was a young prince and Burhan Khan might have been his brother. Hence during Mubharak Khan's time only Pundarika Vittala wrote *Sadraga Chandrodaya*, approximately 1550 to 1560.<sup>27</sup>

Musicologist R.Satyanarayana in his introductory chapter of the treatise *Nartananirnaya* reviewed other works of Pandarika Vitthala. His views are quite significant in knowing the nature of the text, *Dutikarmaparakasa*. It is a tract on the science (or art) of erotica and deals with, as indicated by the title, functions and duties of the female messenger or go-between (*duti*) between the separated hero and heroine who are in love with each other. Though not suggested by the title, it also describes the male messenger or confidant of the hero, which is added probably as an afterthought or as a separate tract. Pandarika Vitthala states explicitly that *Dutikarmaparakasha* is a tract, penumbral to the science of erotic (*sringarasastra*, *kamasastra*). Pandarika Vitthala states that 'it is impossible for even the creator God Brahma to know the doings of all types of *dutis* pertaining to all kinds of heroines; nevertheless, since it affords delight to the excellent aesthetes of the world, I shall describe the functions and duties of the *duti* as only a fraction of the whole science in both definition and illustration'.

*Dutikarmaparakasa* is preserved in manuscript form in Bikaner (No. 3801) and in the Nirnaya Sagar Press edition as *Kavyamala* no. 13 edited by Sivadatta and Kashinatha Panduranga Parab, published from Bombay in 1903, and later in 1916 Kedarnath Durga Prasad edited it again.

The work commences with brief statement of obeisance, purpose, authorship and title of the treatise. The author then proceeds with a definition of *duti*, her basic duty, as she has the expertise in conveying messages, communicates to the hero effectively the pangs of separation and brings about their union etc. Pandarika Vitthala gives an exhaustive list of the types of female messenger. While all the early authors mention some of the common types and the number stops around nine to eleven. But it is really interesting to observe that Pandarika Vitthala comes out with twenty-one types of female messengers.

Pandarika Vitthala does not just stop at giving this list but continues to offer his own definitions and illustrations for each of these. The definition includes qualities and functions and duties and is invariably composed in the *anustubh* metre while the illustration contains a situation, circumstances, device or strategy, always composed in the *sardulavikridita* metre.

The way he gives the examples and comparisons show his aesthetic temperament and probably he must have closely watched and observed the significant roles the female messengers played in very critical circumstances besides his own in-depth knowledge in the *kavyas* and the theatrical texts. The characters in the royal household must have motivated him to compose on the subject, who was not treated by early writers on priority and their main concern was the heroine and to heighten the feelings and emotions the female messengers were exploited in a real sense. But Pandarika Vitthala's sympathy towards these go-between characters led him to the composition of *Dutikarmaprakasha* through which he carves a niche for the *dutikas* in the hearts of *sahridayas*. The illustrations he has given are visually recorded in most of the miniature paintings of Pahari, Rajasthani, and Deccani and Mughal schools.

The text concludes with the male messengers or confidant of the hero though the title of the text does not indicate. He talks about the types of male messengers as *pithamarda*, *vita*, *ceta* and *vidushaka*, collectively he designates them as *narmasacivas*. He snaps with crisp description on each of them; *pitamardha* is a great scholar adept in converting the anger of the heroine into pliable moods, *vita* is a cognoscente in techniques of physical love, *ceta* is skilled in convincing the quarrelsome heroine and *vidusaka* is a jester who dissolves tension, anger etc. It appears the female messengers have attracted the attention of our author than the male messengers and he has taken great delight in characterizing *dutis* with all his aesthetic pleasure and at times he becomes himself a *rasika*.

We all know that in classical dances many compositions commence with the heroine addressing *sakhi*. Apart from this every one of us at particular stage of our life, though might not have appointed as messengers, but acted in several situations as messengers. In such circumstances the *Dutikarmaprakasa* provides hints for us as to how to behave as *dutis* or emissaries when we are sent for the purpose. By understanding the qualities of *dutis* we maintain the ethics

and do not cross the limits. This also prompts us to handle the situation in a better way and more professionally. The artists who have portrayed the Female Messengers, in a way very well illustrated the text and enhanced role of the emissary in an innovative way and rendered interesting contents to their thematic compositions.



Kind Reference: The *viraha* of Damayanti, from Dr Karan Singh Collections, Amar Mahal Museum and Library Jammu.

In this exquisite painting, While Damayanti is suffering from pangs of separation, the women folk of her royal apartment and her *dutika/sakhis* are all spring into action to comfort her. Each one of them is engaged with some action or the other, the focal point in the painting is the centre of the elegant pavilion, where Damayanti is lying, an old maid has bent over her and fanning with a large lotus leaf is *dhatri*, the other *sakhi*, *napaki* massaging her feet, among standing, holding a water jug, *priyasakhi*, one is holding a container with food stuff, other one holding cooling balm, two more are questioning themselves, *viprashnika*, behind Damayanti three *sakhis*, helping her with a hand kerchief, the other one fanning and the third one holding large lotus to put as a coolant on her body. In the left quadrangle six *sakhis* are holding certain things in their hands whispering themselves or passing on messages one to another. On the right side of the quadrangle, one *sakhi*

is preparing the sandal paste, the other one, *deepacheti* is pouring oil on the lamp, one is so emotional, started crying at the sad state of her princess, Two of them are carrying a bed to the terrace, to comfort Damayanrti another *sakhi* carrying two cushions behind, another *deepacheti* is showing the way with lamp.

The details are exceedingly delicate and a shows the height of visualization when the princess is in distress. B N Goswamy brilliantly puts as “The most striking aspect of the painting however, is its colouring which is rich and soft at the same time and which has a finish that is almost beyond compare”. The text on emissary *Dutikarmaprakasha* gives the names and functions of 21 *dutikas/sakhis* who are in the service of royal household. Surprisingly in this painting the portrayal of 21 of them are presented conducting them in various actions in a given situation like this!

## ***DUTIKARMAPRAKASHA OF THE POET PANDARI VITTALA***

Having offered my prostrations to Ganesha and Sarasvathi to enhance the pleasure of the poetic cannossiturs Dutikarma is being composed by Pandari Vithala.

1. One who has mastered the task of an envoy to accomplish the work is being consolidated.
2. Envoy is of twenty one kinds like *Sakhi*, *Viprashinika*, *Cheti*, *Svayamdooti*, *Shilpini*, *Vichitra Vachana*, *Gaanavati*, *Dhatri*, *Kumarika*, *Prasangita*, *Malini*, *Skhalita*, *Prativeshini*, *Parachittavisheshajna*, *Cestasanketa Kovida*, *Rajaki*, *Sauchiki*, *Veshadharini*, *Maniharini*, *Kathani* and *Napiki*.
3. These are the general envoys pertaining to heroines. Even Brahman will not be in a position to know their character.
4. Still to please the great people I am going to depict the duties of an envoy with their characteristics and illustrations.
5. *Sakhi* is one who is trustworthy and always next to her mistress and one who is adapt in decorating and involving in light talk.
6. One who is an adept in palmistry and an expert in the art of talking is *Malini*. Another one who is an expert in love matters is *Viprashnika*.

With the essence of beauty having made the astonishing thing and with one's own effort the creator made the sacred vessel, having created the cupid and the beautiful women worthy to behold, to you my salutations. (This is *Viprashnika*)

7. *Cheti* is one who is an adept in the policy of reconciliation and she conceals in her voice. She covers up the symbol of enjoyment in her act as well as in her speech.

How did your words induce quarrel in the beginning and was it due to the falling of your beautiful tresses or due to the long sighs which made him run towards you and what made you to get confidence in him oh *cheti*? (This is *Cheti*)

8. Be throwing the bits of stone or by involving in the conceited speech *Duti* accomplishes her task on hand.

During afternoon summer there would be excessive heat, oh traveler do take rest on the banks of the bower of creepers. Oh young one, being all alone your face indicates the place where they distribute water to the travelers. You are an expert in exhibiting timely Bliss. (This is *Dutika*)

9. Having exhibited emotions in keeping with the beauty you know the mutual love just as an expert sculptor.

You are the creeper of cupid and that youth is the befitting bee to you. Indeed, it is commendable on your part and what else can one expect by the coming together of the two worthy people? You are like the combination of a human being adorned by a jewel and indeed it is really strange on the part of fate in uniting worthy people. (This is *Shilpini*)

10. It is like the combination of appeasing or separating or despising or by taking resort to a pun or double intended word or by inducing fear or by taking resort to fourfold means or by employing strange words. By resorting to the beauty of the lotuses on the banks of Ganga where the bees are humming or the clacking of the peacocks or cooing of the cuckoos or of Lakshmi having deceitfully killed the lion cubs inhabiting in the golden Meru mountains you go to the abode of Krishna. (This is *Vichitra vachana*)

11. By singing the glory of self prestige in a concealed way you have been weighed on par with fate.

In this world in the forms of ocean two jewels in the forms of men and women have been created. You are the best among the women and Hari among the men. You are befitting to him with your beautiful eyes beholding that of an Antelope. What else to say for the day? Now I will take leave of you. (This is *Ganavati*)

12. One desiring wealth, conceited in speech one who has hidden knowledge is *Dhatri* known for her cunningness. Oh dear child your husband was spotted by me in the courtyard whose hand resembled that of a lotus on the bank of Tapati river. You are the wave of beauty and your combination is indeed admirable! I am going to submit the cupid the God of love to you. (This is *Dhatri*)

13. *Kumari* is one who conveys the message mutually like the repeated uttering of the parrots or like the sportive puppet desiring for the sugarcane incessantly.

This beautiful puppet has been handed over to you. Please take a look at it oh beautiful one, even that seems to enquire your well being from outside oh one with a beautiful face! You hold onto this grape twig and give a reply and during the nights it is very difficult to spend the time under a tree which is situated at the backyard of my house and which is full of thorns. (This is *Kumarika*)

14. Irrespective of the situation one who is known for articulation is known as *Prekshata* by those who are well versed as she can adopt herself to the existing situations.

Oh elderly person where are you going is it to Gokula and there you convey my message to my beloved. Her breast resembles the bud of lotus and her smiling countenance bears resemblance to the moon. The eyelashes of her are on par with the *Kadamba* tree grown in my courtyard. (This is *Prasangini*)

15. Your speech is like the royal splendid garland which is strung with the beautiful flowers in an attractive way. It is fit to adorn the neck like the *Malini*.

Champak is adorning the neck, the shoulders are decorated with *bakula* and the back is adorned by the *kunda* wherein your name seems to be engraved. *Parijatha* has also adorned the heart and does your love know your fine arts over the adornment of flowers? (This is *Malini*).

16. She is known as the envoy *Skhalita* who has failed in making an alliance and who makes vain attempts to unite them later.

“Oh innocent dear one, don’t depart give up your anger. It is incessantly pouring, indeed it.”

Is a pity that the host of *chataka* birds is crying? At that time voluntarily appeared the lady at the door way of the house and that envoy is known as *Skhalita* who shines brightly in the dawn. (This is *Skhalita*).

17. She is known as *Prativeshinika* whenever she appears; she time and again indicates her secret symbol.

Oh one who has breasts resembling the splendor of the golden buds one whose face resembles a fully blossomed lotus. One whose hand has the luster of the red lotus leaf and whose face resembles a water Lilly. If you want to know the beauty of the body come to my house in the evening having abounded your sorrow. (This is *Prativeshini*)

18. She is known as *Visheshajna* (an expert) who by merely gazing could make out the articulation of speech of others.

It is not possible to know the intension of the husband who bit the lips in the night and so also while going in the morning a beggar cannot know the intensions of the child. Due to bashfulness she utters dearest immediately and embraces him tightly and in that mood how can he depart? (This is *Paracittavisheshaghna*)

19. In whatever manner an indication made towards the fruits and flowers. One who knows it is on expert.



Which camphor along with a portion of a white betel leaf having thrown in a pot was handed over to an envoy that Lakshmi having arrived there with a gentle smile departed with the gait of an antelope. (This is *Chestasanketa Kovida*)

20. By handing over the clothes and speaking gently she said that she has seen a jewel of a man who is befitting to you like a washerwoman.

Oh washer woman, how is that today you have not washed any clothes? It is true please listen. The cause for it I cannot articulate. By gazing at whom the women become lack luster. Such a person is here in this in this city that is befitting to you and all the women are after him, so says washer woman. (This is *Rajaki*)

21. The sentence having an intended meaning will give suggestion to both of them simultaneously. She will be prattling by taking resort to many apparels just as an Altar. (This is *Shouchaki*)

22. Oh good one whose attire have you taken today and I was your husband in the previous life. You know as before I have the gift to knowing the past life. Tell me where exactly is that Altar who is the Actor there in your door way and you could not know it all of a sudden and hence she is shedding tears. (This is *Veshadharini*)

23. Wearing the bangles made out of glass in her hand will reveal the merits of others just as the one thief the precious jewels.

In a certain city lived a worthy king and she had an ugly wife who was an adept in amorous sports and due to the play of the fate she fell on your head. You are a connoisseur of beauty; tell me how you could get her? Don't you remember the statement that fate is all powerful? (This is *Maniharini*)

24. By giving mutual indication pertaining to the merits by taking resort to various means she reveals both of them by taking resort to deceit. Who are you? I am a story teller you know my story and I know you were the hero with intoxication of praise and your wife was also proud and vain. You were bent on whimsical ways but you perished on account of fate and again you took birth and even in this life you are proud and you remember that proud lady. (This is *Kathini*)

25. Bent on applying the paint to the nails of her feet a lady barber having heard that story prattles about some other story.

Oh lotus plan how is it that your face today appears faded? Shall I tell you my agony that my husband always wanders in the night? Here is a man befitting to be your husband to whom you can extend love who is as radiant and resplendent as that of the rising sun, by gazing at whom your happy face at that very moment

shines forth. (*Napaki*) One who has stolen the prestige of the king the son of the sun God and it is like the infant sun in the lotuses of Poet's mind. On celebrated poet do the task of an envoy so say that lotus with anguish? (This is *Napaki*)

1. Due to the context there are four people who help the hero and they are *peethamanda*, *Vita*, *Cheta* and *Vidusaka* respectively.
2. They are his close confidants who are adept in the task of conveying message but they do not reveal anything outwardly beyond the screen.
3. They are experts in the talk pertaining to the place, time and art. They have expertise even in encouraging. Their nature of helping is also not outwardly. *Peethamardha* is a great scholar who can even make an angry lady to come out of her anger.

What is the fate of anger kindly lent compassion and mercy in the speech. Let mother earth be enriched with nectar drops bearing fragrance. Enough of your turning eyes causing matters of love time and again. Oh beautiful one, the ones with whom you are angry we offer our salutations to that group of sages. (This is *Peethamardha*)

5. *Vita* is one who would be an adept in love matters. The sun has arrived and the wind is blowing, the bees are humming. These are the peacocks who are dancing by opening their plumes how is it that o beautiful one the disease of love is haunting you? (This is *Vita*)
6. *Cheta* is an expert in making alliances just as the royal swans. She is the one who has a beautiful face resembling the moon. He is the son of Nanda and due to fate they entered bower of creepers but in the meanwhile their attendants who were in youth and harsh by nature went to a lake to sip water. (This is *Cheta*)
7. *Vidusaka* is one who is a comic character and creates humour by displaying his bodily gestures.

Having brought a moon faced one to the bed I was excited to remove her blouse. In the meanwhile *vidushaka* told me that it is already morning wherein one can hear the hen. (This is *Vidushaka*)

Let that Vishnu protect all of us who caused amorous sports on Lakshmi his consort wife horripilate her by putting his hand on her hair cheek and on her nipple and made her *saree* drop down which she had tied firmly.

So goes *Dutikarmaprakasha*.

**Translation of Sanskrit Text *Dutikarmaparakasha* in the collections of Lalgadh Palace Archives Bikaner. Translated by Prof. S Ranganath.**

**21 Types of *Dutis/Sakhis* in *Dutikarmaparakasa* of Pandarika Vitthala**

1	<i>Sakhi</i>	companion
2	<i>Viprasnika</i>	fortune teller
3	<i>ceti</i>	maid servant
4	<i>svayam duti</i>	heroine herself functioning as messenger.
5	<i>silpini</i>	artist or a painter
6	<i>vicitra vacana</i>	expert in persuasive eloquence
7	<i>ganavati</i>	songstress
8	<i>dhatri</i>	mother, midwife o female supporter.
9	<i>kumarika</i>	daughter or a girl
10	<i>prasangini</i>	opportunist
11	<i>malini</i>	garland maker
12	<i>skhalita</i>	strategist
13	<i>prativesini</i>	neighbour
14	<i>paracittavisesajna</i>	expert in the art of reading the minds of others.
15	<i>cestasanketa-kovida</i>	expert in understanding the body language
16	<i>rajaki</i>	washer woman
17	<i>sauciki</i>	the tailor maid
18	<i>vesadharini</i>	expert in fancy dressing
19	<i>maniharini</i>	seller and maker of beads and bangles
20	<i>kathini</i>	story teller
21	<i>napiki</i>	manicurist, hairdresser.

**References of the female messengers in other texts**

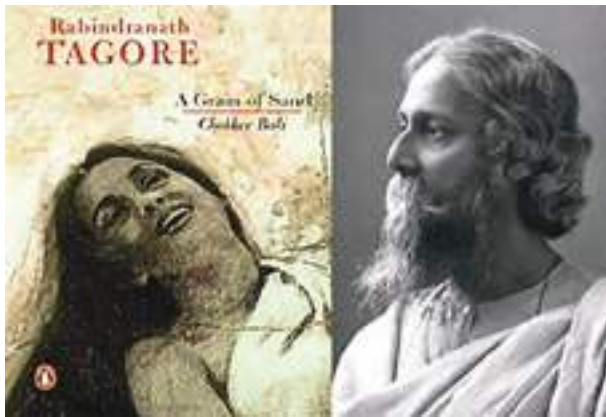
Bharata	<i>Natayshastra</i>
Vatayayana	<i>Kamasuthra</i>
Varahamihira	<i>Brihatsamhita</i>
Dhananjaya	<i>Dasarupaka</i>
Sharadatanaya	<i>Bhavaprakasana</i>
Bhoja	<i>Srngaraprakasa</i>
Bhanudatta	<i>Rasamanjari</i>
Vidyanatha	<i>Prataparudrayasobhusana</i>
Rudrabhatta	<i>Sringaratilaka</i>
Simhabhopala	<i>Rasarnavasudhakara</i>
Bade Sahib Akbar	<i>Srngaramanjari</i>
Rupagosvamin	Ujvalaneelamani
Vishvanatha	Sahityadarpana
Keshavadasa	Rasikapriya

There are also grand references of celebrated *dutis* in our mythology and literature, to name a few, in *Abhijnana Shakuntalam* Kalidasa epitomised the *dutikarma* in the characters of Priyamvada and Anasyaya, they followed the emotions of Shakuntala as her own shadows. Draupadi's character as Sirendhri in the royal household of Virata is an interesting epoch in *Virataparva*. In Jayadeva's *Gita Govinda* the role of *sakhi* stands out by attracting the performers and painters to illustrate her in several ways and we could see in every state of emotions of Radha and Krishna their dependence on the *sakhi*. The qualities of *sakhi* can be compared to that of Krishna's flute, as a constant sharing of his delightful moments and pangs of separation. The *Bhagavata* cult epitomises the *sakhibahv*, the character of *sakhi* and associates the concept of *moksha* to the character of *sakhi*. Folk Literature and oral traditions also portray the female messengers in innumerable ways.

## Tagore on the subject of Female Messengers

Even in modern literature the character of a friend or a supporter for heroine is seriously considered by the playwright and novelist. India has seen greatest expressionist of humanistic intent in the Nobel Laureate, literate Rabindranath Tagore. His novels, short stories, plays and poems have left unparalleled legacy in the fields of art, music, dance, choreography, philosophy besides literary genres. One of his novels *Chokar-Bali* written in 1909 draws attention of the friendship between two women and how each one plays the role of messenger for the other. Tagore has interestingly woven the theme cantering around human relationships and the intensity of feelings.

The story-line centres around the widowed life of Binodini, who is the educated, piano-playing, English-speaking protagonist is being set up to be married to Mahendra, a doctor in training. Mahendra, however, does not want to get married and Binodini ends up being passed over to Behari — Mahendra's cousin — who refuses to be downstream to Mahendra's hand-me-downs and finally to a poor bloke who has the misfortune of dying within six months of the wedding. Meanwhile, Mahendra falls in love with and ends up marrying the beautiful but simple Ashalata who he'd originally tried to hand off to Behari as well. Thus having wreaked havoc in the lives of everyone who has the pleasure of coming into contact with him, Mahendra embarks on a life of passionate, wedded bliss. Binodini and Behari, in the meantime, meet and fall in love — but their feelings remain unexpressed and give way as a rage at having to lead a life of deprivation as a widow takes over Binodini. She plots her way into Mahendra's family's home and forges a bond with Ashalata, even nicknaming their friendship "Chokher Bali" — literally a grain of sand, but in the context of the story, a constant irritant. Part of narrative is built around the friendship between smart Binodini and simple Ashalata, accepting each other's position and the protagonist Binodini taking the advantage of Ashalata's faith and feelings, plots her way. Binodini takes the role of a friend, a messenger to reach Ashalata's husband, and builds up illicit affair, thus striking an example of a *sakhi* or *dutika* using the situation to her own advantage of sexual desire rather than truly bringing together her friend and her husband.



Pic 1. Rabindranath Tagore and his novel Choker Bali



Pic 2 In the Film Choker Bali released in 2003 (Image courtesy IMDB)



Pic. 3 Binodini (Aishwarya Rai) and Ashalatha (Raima Sen) (Image courtesy IMDB)



Pic 4 Binodini in TV Serials Choker Bali – The Stories of Rabindranath Tagore (Image courtesy Epic Channel)

This Research is conducted on all these genres of literature, which covered the Imagery of Female Messengers in Indian thought and literature, this subject has been categorised under *Shringara Shastra* in the catalogues. In some literary works the role of *Dutika/sakhis*, the female messengers, while dealing with the chapter on the *Nayikabheda*. In textual literature like Bharata's *Natyashastra* and *Kavya* literature like Keshavadasas *Rasikapriya* After dealing with *Nayikabheda*, the go-between characters, *Dutikas/sakhis* are dealt in an interesting way. In the chapters to be followed the portrayal of Female Messengers are seen in different and varied ways in the art of paintings and sculptures selected from the art collections of National Museum with reference to the texts discussed here and more significantly of Pandarika Vitthala's *Dutikarmaprakasha*. Pandarika Vitthala states that 'it is impossible for even the creator God Brahma to know the doings of all types of *dutis* pertaining to all kinds of heroines; nevertheless, since it affords delight to the excellent aesthetes of the world, I shall describe the functions and duties of the *duti* as only a fraction of the whole science in both definition and illustration'.

## Endnotes

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- 24 Volumes of *Akbarnama*, *Ain-i-Akbari* and other sources on Akbar's court are consulted. Not much of information could be obtained from the books from these libraries
- 25 P.K. Gode
- 26 Article "Pundarika Vittala" in a magazine called Sobath, Diwali edition 1989
- 27 <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/60012> Rajagopal, Padma The study of Pundarika Vittalas treatises with reference to the systems of raga classification in post Ratnakara period



### Chapter III

## Introduction to Indian Miniature Paintings

- Imagery of Female Messengers
- *Dutikas/Sakhis* in *Ragamala* Paintings
- *Dutikas/Sakhis* in *Rasikapriya* Paintings
- *Dutikas/Sakhis* in *Rasamanjari* Paintings
- *Dutikas/Sakhis* in *Sat Sai* Paintings



Princess enjoying music , Deccani School of Miniature Painting

## Introduction to Indian Miniature Paintings

Art as a means of human expression has always served as the harbinger of truth. The process of the exploration of truth is an experience of a mysterious bliss known as *ānanda*. Thus the artistic expression, at the experiential level is the product of strongly rooted cultural values. The vitality of artistic expression lies in the continuity as well as in the improvisation of the concepts. Because art is definitely a means through which the human emotions related to life are expressed empathetically. Art has to be approached from the humanistic viewpoint. Art in the form of music, dance, drama, sculpture and painting is the creative experience of the artist only when shared with a viewer.

The artist while creating a work of art formulates his own zone where he enters with a different state of experience. He is influenced by his own cultural paradigm; the underlying philosophical concepts enhancing his thought process, emerge through his own time and space. With this experience, the artist guided by his own logic of taste and aesthetic standard creates a work of art. His creation ceases to exist as his personal expression, once it is placed before the viewers. The viewers or receivers formulate a zone around themselves guided by their own standard of taste and philosophical concepts etc. An artwork stands between these two zones. Different levels of consciousness prevail in this time and space phenomenon.

Demystification has opened up new ways of portraying the people, events, situation, landscape, portraying seasons, animal study, plant life in paintings. Such portrayal have become closer to the life and connected with the emotive aspect of life. The desire to see and represent things as they are in real life had also motivated the artists to observe the life and people from the point of view of artistic creation. The artists paid the attention towards the physical features so that their depiction of life in the paintings would go closer to the real representation of life. The human temperament and emotions transform into an aesthetic experience when they are expressed in art followed by a delightful process. Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra* enumerates the substance, which is the basic requisite to get into the process of aesthetic experience that transforms to the creation of art be it painting or dance. Moreover *Natyashastra* is considered to be the first treatise on Indian aesthetics and is the foremost contribution to the world of aesthetics. *Rasa* is the quintessential substance discussed elaborately by Bharata, which is the most influential theory of Indian aesthetics. The aesthetic delight, the outcome of '*rasa*' pervades all artistic expression and aesthetic experience that is theorised as '*rasanubhava*', the result of responsive states of experience. This experience is highly pervasive in the vocabulary of art as well as literature.

In Indian tradition or precisely drawn from the Vedic way of life, the fourfold purposes of life, the *purusharthas* namely, *Dharma* – the Right Action, *Artha* – Wealth, *Kama* – Desire and Pleasure and finally *Moksha* – the Spiritual Achievement in terms of liberation from birth

and rebirth. Arts, be it painting, sculpture, architecture or music, dance or even literature are considered as the means or path of spiritual attainment, the *moksha sadhana marga*. All arts thus tend towards a perfection in which pictorial and formal elements are not merely reconciled, but completely identified. At this distant but ever virtually present point, all necessity for art disappears.....in Indian terms *nirmana-karaka*.<sup>1</sup>

Art forms such as painting and sculpture, known as plastic arts or fine arts have evolved themselves through visual expression based on the insights of visual language. While interpreting the 'form' - '*rūpa*' one of the most important premises of visual language, Prof. Niharanjan Ray puts it very appropriately as 'forms comes out of idea, in other words form inherits idea as a possibility or potentiality. Or to say the same thing in a different language, idea is impregnated with form, and that creation of form proceeds from the unformed to the formed, from the less formed to the more formed, that is there in any activity towards form, a progressive realization of idea'.<sup>2</sup> it is an aesthetic delight when the form realizes into the lines and colours. The artist and the viewer alike share this delight through the work of art.

Eighth in order in the list of sixty-four arts is *Citrakaraṇam* - the art of painting. It is also referred as *Alekhyā* - the expression considered as significant in painting. According to Yashodhara - *rūpabheda, pramāṇa, bhāva, lāvanya yojana, sādrśya, varṇikā iti chitrakam śadāngakam*. These are considered as the six limbs of Indian painting. The *śadāngas* are: 1. The distinction of forms - *rupabheda*, 2. proportion - *pramāṇa*, 3. the emotion or aesthetic feelings expressed in the form - *bhava*, 4. the seeking for beauty and charm for the satisfaction of the aesthetic spirit - *lāvanya*, 5. truth of the form and its suggestion - *sādrśya*, 6. the combination and harmony of colours - *varṇikābhanga*. They are the primary constituents of visual arts by which every successful work of art lends itself to analysis. Oriental art is guided by aesthetic concepts where the art theories are formed in the light of these elements. *Sadrśya*, 'visual correspondence' has nevertheless been commonly misinterpreted as having to do with two appearances, that of the work of art and that of a model. It refers actually to a quality wholly self-contained within the work of art itself, a correspondence of mental and sensational factors in the work. This correspondence is indeed to the analogous to the correspondence of person and substance in the thing to be imitated; but the object of work are independently determined, each to its own good, and physically incommensurable, being the same only as to type.<sup>3</sup> In any case the terms *sadrśya, sarūpya, sahitya, anukṛti, anurūpa* etc, refer, not to likeness between things (symbol and referent, picture and model to wit) but to a correspondence between ideas and things. This correspondence tends toward identity at higher levels of reference, but attains this identity only in the Absolute, experienced 'like a flash of lightening' as *sadharanya* and *sayujya* in the consumption (*samadhi*) of contemplation (*dhyana*).<sup>4</sup> Stella Kramrisch too envisages her thought in this direction as 'Moments of creativity and aesthetic delight were to be anticipated and experienced. A connoisseur contemplating a painting could lose himself in it; he could

transcend his personal concerns and experience a delight—if for moments only—not of this world (*alaukika*) but akin in its intensity to the yogic state of *samddhi* (self-transcendancy). Thus the process of Indian spiritual contents leads through art in completing each of the process in order to reach the final summit; *sarupya*, *salokya* and *sayujya*, in other words what has explained by Coomaraswamy above. The ultimate aim and purpose of the artist is to reach the spiritual summit through his creative process of visual expression.

Art does not become an intellectual exposition but an expression of the enlightenment of the inner being through which the power of *pratibhā* sparkles in certain spiritually oriented aesthetic delight. Finally, the Indian artist, although a person, is not a personality: his personal idiosyncrasy is at most a part of his equipment, and never the occasion of his art. All of the greatest Indian works are anonymous, and all that we know of the lives of Indian artists in any field could be compressed into a dozen pages.<sup>5</sup> Stella Kramerisch envisages by sharing her thought in this direction as ‘Moments of creativity and aesthetic delight were to be anticipated and experienced. A connoisseur contemplating a painting could lose himself in it; he could transcend his personal concerns and experience a delight—if for moments only—not of this world (*alaukika*) but akin in its intensity to the yogic state of *samddhi* (self-transcendence).<sup>6</sup>

The textual discussions on the creative process of Visual Art take place in the context of the *Prayogakrama*. In *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* - The art of painting is referred to as *Citrālekhaṇa*. The earliest painting was created by Narayana Ṛshi, who portrayed the celestial dancer Urvashi by extracting mango juice. He was himself impressed and felt that it should be pursued as a fine art and he created the *Citrasūtra*. While teaching the divine architect Visvakarma he regarded this art as the highest form of all arts. The art of painting in due course took to more interesting development.

The story of King Vajra may also be referred to in this context. King Vajra requested the sage to accept him as a disciple and teach him the art of icon making so that he could worship the deities in their proper form. The sage replied that one could not understand the principles of image making without the knowledge of painting. The king wishes for instruction in this art and was told that unless he was accomplished as a dancer, he could not grasp even the rudiments of painting. The king requested that he be taught dancing, whereupon the sage replied that without a keen sense of rhythm or knowledge of instrumental music, proficiency in dance was impossible. Once again he requested that he be taught these subjects to which the sage replied that a mastery over vocal music was essential. So finally the sage took the king through all the stages before he taught him the art of iconography.<sup>7</sup>

Equally important is the other statement that as in dance so in painting and sculpture there is to be a close observation and reproduction of the world around us in as charming a style as

possible. In this context Dr. Kapila Vatsyayn, an erudite thinker of our times, says that ‘the chapters relating to arts have therefore to be seen together. Each is integral to the other. Notion of interdependence and interpretation is the norm not the exception at the level of content, form technique. Through the long period in the development of fine arts in India a framework of both sharing as well as autonomous status was maintained while the discussion and development of these arts.’<sup>8</sup> All these references time and again confirm that Indian art, whether visual or performing did not evolve in isolation. Indian aesthetic theoretical module binds these arts in a firm way with a subtle cord.

Painting in India had the objective of picturing the world around and illustrate the situations, literary characters, and themes of contemporary society, which create interest in people. Indian painting in the form of murals, miniatures or illustrative manuscript painting, recognised as *chitra* through the ages, has covered a huge range of creative dimensions. The same has been reflected in Indian sculptures which were integral part of Indian temple architecture through ages. Various themes, from the most famous epics to local legends, divine manifestation to royal evocation, pastime, events and episodes of life are part of the narratives in literature. Painters and sculptors enriched these narratives through their visual expression. In the life of royals or any person, sending messages were quite significant. Sanskrit and regional literature have enriched their narratives with the presence and actions of female messengers, already discussed with number of illustrations in earlier chapters. The painters and sculptors portrayed the female messengers in multitude expressions. Thus depending on the theme and scenario, the role they played, the female messengers, the *dutis* and *sakhis* find their place of significance in the art works created during historical times visualised by painters and sculptors. Equally significant was patronage from different quarters, the entire cultural milieu and ambience inherently gave a favourable edge for the portrayal of main characters along with their close association of female messengers, *dutikas/sakhis*.

The texts from *Natyashstra* to *Dutikarmaprakasha*, literary works like *Gita- Govinda*, *Rasamanjari*, *Bhagavata purana*, episodes from the epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* have delineated in detail, the qualities, responsibilities, functions and types of female messengers contextually. Comprehensively, the artists have beautifully and aesthetically articulated *dutikas/sakhis* in visual idiom bringing the textual narratives into enduring life. The artist applies all his creative impulses and temperament and treats his piece of composition as a master piece. The artist with his rare gift of painterly qualities treats his space with significant forms such as the female messengers. The creative process of the artist or a poet is well-nit around the emotive elements of *rasatatva*, which involves explicit and implicit meanings as well as subjectivity and objectivity, and above all the penetrating experience of emitting the rays of the essence of their imaginative thought, which finally results into the creation of the work of art.

Parallel to Sanskrit classical literature, classical painting too emerged as the medium of illustrating narratives, and the instances drawn from *Chitrasutra* of *Vishnudharmottara purana* clarify prevailed medium, material and technique of painting. As the *kavyas* of Kalidasa was the determinant of the classical period, so as the mural painting of Ajanta is the determinant of Indian classical period in art. The figurative paintings dominate the space displaying the swelling outlines, assemblage of figures and architectural elements, inner vision, the world full of life, and astounding narrative idiom. Ajanta tradition of mural painting on the wall surfaces of temples, caves, palaces continue to influence the south Indian and Sri Lankan visual perspectives. Though predominantly Buddhist themes and narratives occupy the wall space of Ajanta, the artists have mirrored the social life of the times, where several female messengers, as *dutikas/sakhis* find their place accompanying with the main characters such as prince, princess, queens, kings, royal scenes, palace atmosphere, entourage in procession and such other situations.

### Miniature Schools of Painting

During medieval period from 10<sup>th</sup> century to 17<sup>th</sup> century we come across with the Illustrated Manuscript Painting and Miniature Painting schools. In Buddhist religious texts like *Prajnaparamita* colourful pictures were used to explain the contents, they are known as Pala Illustrated Manuscript. In the same way Jaina religious texts like *Kalpasutra*, *Kalkacharyakatha* and *Dhavalas* were also illustrated and they are known as Jaina Illustrated Manuscript Paintings. Later the Hindu texts like *Devimahatmya*, *Bhagavatgita*, *Gitagovinda* and several others were illustrated with beautiful pictures. This helped people to understand the religious principles in a better way. Followed with this development we have glorious phase of Miniature Painting Schools.

Most of the famous museums in the world have the collections of Indian miniature paintings. They are in great demand. They were created on specific themes. So they are always seen in numbers known as series, for example portraits of kings, queens, nobles, and family, *Ragamala* series, *Akbarnama* folios, *Baramasa* series (depicting 12 months) and such others.

The miniature paintings have their origin in the Illustrated Manuscript Painting tradition. During 10-13 centuries the mural paintings were not considered as part of temple structure because of giving importance to sculptures in the temples. But palaces and mansions must have been decorated with paintings. In the western India commissioning of the manuscript painting was considered as sacred deed. After this phase the paintings in miniature form were done on wood and cloth. Later with the introduction of handmade paper during Mughal period, miniature painting were done on paper in large numbers. Each region came out with miniature painting tradition of its own. Thus we have four regions, such as Mughal school in Uttar Pradesh, Pahari

school from hill states of north India, Rajasthani School from the western region and Deccani school from Deccan plateau. All these have sub-schools recognised as courts of princely states.

The technique followed in Miniature painting is attending to minute details and delicate handling of colours and lines. The colours were earthly, concrete and thick. Gold and silver foil or liquid was used to give a touch of rich and illuminated appearance to paintings. Brushes were very important for the artists. Depending on the delicacy of the work, the artists created their own brushes. They painted on cloth, bark of the tree, handmade paper or board.

Like mural painters the miniature painting artists used natural pigments for colours and also followed a determinant process. First they cut the handmade paper according to the size required. Then they carefully burnish the surface of the paper. On the treated paper they made preliminary drawing in red ink of the theme they want to paint. After corrections the drawing is restated in black which is the final sketch or drawing. Then the sheet was coated with a thin wash of white or other light colour pigment. On this surface, with powdered colours mixed in vegetable resin as binding the actual miniature human figures, motifs, animals, landscape, structures was painted. Final touches were given with delicate outlines of black or the darker shades, shading is done very delicately, and gold or silver is placed in careful manner. Then the complete miniature was burnished again. Enough care was taken to handle and cover the painting. They used soft silk cloth or butter paper to cover the painting.

The miniature paintings are known for varied and interesting themes. They were like personal paintings. So they show the interests of the persons who commissioned the pictures. Royal portraits are found in large number. The stories of Ramayana and Mahabharata are painted in every school. The stories of the childhood of Krishna known as *Bhagavata* and stories on Devi in *Devi Mahatmya*, the incarnations of Mahavishnu in *Dasavatara* are painted. The poet Jayadeva composed *Giagovinda*, the story of Radha and Krishna. This was a special and favourite theme of all the painters in all the four miniature schools.

The court scenes of emperors like Humayun, Akbar, Jahangir and Shahajahan, and hunting scenes, procession and festival scenes are beautifully painted by Rajasthani and Mughal artists. The Mughal artists painted the life stories of their emperors in *Baburnama*, *Akbarnama*, *Humayunnama*, *Akbarnama* and *Jehangirnama*. They also painted animal studies, bird studies and flower studies. In *Ragamala* paintings they painted in the name of different ragas and depicted their features. In the *Nayika* paintings the poems of Keshavadasa were painted. The Pahari painters painted beautiful landscapes, seasons. The Rajasthani painters depicted the heroic stories of their prince and princes. Though they have emerged in different places they have some common features such as the size, certain themes, the colours used, and the format in which they were painted.



### *Scenes of Ramayana*

Acc. No 47.110.288

Rajasthani School

16<sup>th</sup> century CE

Size: 6.1 x 6.9 inches

Seeta is seated in a small hut shaped place while two of her maids, the three *sakhis* outside seated on a carpet and singing with action, probably about Sri Rama, all are dressed elegantly. In the background green landscape dotted with colourful floral plants.

### **Rajasthani School of Miniature Painting:**

The ancient Indian tradition of painting survived in a modified form in and around Rajasthan. This tradition has history from 15-19<sup>th</sup> century. Rajasthan was divided into many princely states and each one of them ruled independently. They have shown their taste by patronising the art of painting. Early paintings come from Malwa, Jaunpur and Mewar. The different court style in miniature school is known as '*kalam*'.





### *Awaiting Radha*

Acc. No 59.318

Rajasthani School, Mewar Style

18<sup>th</sup> century CE

Size: 21.9 x 24.5 cm

Radha is seen seated under a canopy, on a decorated carpet, and talking to a confidante seated in front of her with folded hands, while a maid holding a fly whisk stands behind her. On the first floor, in the right, a confidante is seen seated before Krishna, saying something to him.

**Mewar *Kalam*:** Under Rana Uday Singh and Rana Pratap Mewar court produced heroic paintings in original Rajasthani style. When Rana Amar Singh accepted Mughal supremacy the paintings from Udaipur and Jaipur courts were influenced by Mughal school. The themes were taken from Hindu epics and texts. The Mewar *Ragamala* series is very powerful. *Ragini Vasanta*, *Ragini Todi*, *Ragini Hindola* are the masterpieces. In portraits, shading and costumes were in Mughal style and were known as *Agra Kalam*. The most striking features of Mewar *kalam* is the use of dark colours, intensity of colours is high, the space in the painting is divided into compartments or bands where different scenes of the story is portrayed. Although they became politically and economically dependent on the Mughal empire and adapted its fashions and style to their own, they were Hindus spiritually; the art they patronized did not seek to represent the reality of the world of action but sought to conjure, by visual means, the rhythms by which the intangible world of devotion and emotion, filtered through sound and music, assumed colour and acquired visibility.<sup>9</sup>



### ***Pursuation of Radha***

Acc. No 57.68/2

Rajasthani Style, Udaipur School

Mid 17<sup>th</sup> century CE

Size: 21.9 x 24.5 cm

It is a scene of persuasion of Radha by Krishna. On the left Krishna shown in blue colours in blue colours body is holding betel in his hands and seated in the balcony of his house facing to the right. On the right in the upper storey of her house Radha is seen seated in a balcony facing to the left. She holds a betel-leaf to the mouth and a bee is buzzing above her head. Krishna and Radha are looking at each other. On the ground floor under a room Radha is again painted to be seated on a golden *chauki* furnished with yellow and purple cushion. She is engaged in discussion with her *sakhi* who is seated on the ground before her.



### *A Warrior Persuading the Heroine*

Acc. No 56.36/17

Rajasthani Style, Kotah School

1770 CE

Size: 33 x 22 cm

The scene is laid in an apartment of a palace. The heroine is seen seated on a floral carpet against a pillow. The warrior is seated in front of her on ground and conversing something by stretched his hand towards her, while his other hand is rest on the ground. A sword is seen attached to his *pataka*, a waist band. Behind the *nayika*, the bed is made ready by a close aide, the *sakhi* and she is holding a fan high in the action of fanning. Another *sakhi*, the close associate of the *nayika*, is watching the warrior and his promises before leaving to battle field, and the *nayika*, emotionally broken, with great concern. Pots are kept in the foreground, several white pigeons are seated on the rooftop, blue sky is illuminated with the full moon.

**Kotah *Kalam*:** Under Raja Umed Singh matured style in Rajasthani Painting developed in the princely state of Kotah. There is a great impact of Mughal style on these paintings. The important Kotah pictures are mainly portraits of princes and the hunting scenes. The thick vegetation of forest is treated in greater detail in these paintings along with tigers and boars in realistic manner.



***A Royal Lady in a Garden***

Acc. No

Rajasthani School, Bundi Style

Late 17<sup>th</sup> Century CE

Size: 17.5 x 11.6 cm

A royal lady is seated against cushion in a garden and looking herself in a mirror, while her apta sakhi who is a Rajasthani woman and well dressed is holding the mirror and showing her reflection to the nayika. Another sakhi is from Muslim community wearing turban with peacock feather dressed elegantly holding a long fly-whisk and watching the other two women. Painting is in typical Bundi style, though an unfinished sketch, but the artist has paid attention to minute details, such as the floral designs on the cushion,

pyjama of the apta sakhi, the front piece of the long dress of the other sakhi and interestingly the special cap of that lady. Other highlights are the jewellery in Bundi style, dainty flowers on the trees and flora fauna, the mirror image of the architecture and trees on the marble flooring. The royal lady is showing her sitting posture and ornamentation to her sakhi who is holding the mirror and looking at her for the approval. In this intimate moment of action all the three ladies are well connected with their expression.

**Bundi Kalam:** Bundi, a princely state located near Mewar the splendour of plant life painted in detail. The Hindu and Mughal elements are beautifully blended in this style. The local folk style finds great place in these paintings. A superb work is the 'Ladies in the Garden' depict the pleasure scene of princess reminds the paintings of Ladies sports of Jeanie's time. Vivid colours and a good deal of gold are used in Bundi paintings.

**Bikaner Kalam:** Bikaner rulers were very close to Mughal emperors. They patronised Mughal painters and they have created many pictures of Bikaner court scenes, portraits and some social events. Rukn-ud-Din is the famous painter of this style. The portraits of Raja Anup Singh on horse are one of the finest pictures in this style. The fine colour sense and sophistication is felt in the Bikaner paintings.

**Jodhpur Kalam:** As in other Rajasthani states the Mughal-Rajput synthesis was seen in Jodhpur also. The pomp and splendour seen in the paintings of this style is drawn from Mughal school. But the pride and heroic expression are originally Rajasthani. Direct colours and strength in the figurative drawings are the salient features of Jodhpur style.

**Kishangarh Kalam:** Kishangarh retained the Hindu spirit in the paintings. It was a small but beautiful princely state. Under Raja Sawant Singh the series of painting done on Radha and Krishna in great devotion. These paintings are mostly the work of the talented artist Nihal Chand. The models for Krishna was Maharaja Sawant Singh himself and for Radha his beloved Bani Thani. The elegant female forms with lovely eyes, sharp nose and arched lips brought a new kind of beauty into Rajasthani paintings. Maturity in shading and lining is the striking features of the Kishangarh miniature paintings.

**Jaipur Kalam:** Jaipur was known as Amber in early times. Emperor Akbar married princess Jadhva Bai from the royal family of Amber. Her brother Raja Mansingh was an important general of Akbar's court. The life-size mural paintings are seen even now in several palaces here. The artists followed Mughal style but painted the story of Radha Krishna. Many portraits were created in typical Mughal style. The *Raslila*, Krishna dancing with *gopis* scenes are beautiful and master pieces of this style. The artists preferred bright colours for painting.



### ***Radha and Krishna in Boat of Love***

Acc. No 63.793

Rajasthani Style, Kishangarh School

1750 CE

Size: 43 x 34 cm

Artist: Nihal Chand, Signature of the artist found below



This painting is one of the Master Pieces of Kishangarh School Painting created by the illustrious artist Nihal Chand. This painting along with few others, represent the highest achievement of Kishangarh studios. Nihal Chand is the Master Artist of Kishangarh laid substantial foundation through which the unique Kishangarh School of paintings excel in miniature painting tradition of India. This painting is based on the poem of Bihari Chandrika by Nagari Das, who composed in 1731. The verse which illustrates the painting is translated as:

*And when the sun was setting in the west, the lovers sailed along the Jamuna stream*

*To music from the sakhis mingling with the murmuring of each wavelet's crest*

*And the dipping of a single ear; By lotus banks the long canoeist burden bore*

*Past marble palaces and temples gleaming white and low green hills athwart crimson sky*

*Betimes its keel caressed the shore where rose a kunj of beauty unsurpassed*

*Half clad with lengthening shadows of the night, and as he aided her alight*

*He led her deep into the darkening grove where love alone can find its way*

*And naught can mar this bliss till dawn, of beautiful limbs entwined.*

The artist has faithfully followed the verse, down to the single oar by which a *sakhi* of Radha, probably her *namrasakhi* Lalitha peddles the long canoe, who is seated behind the divine lovers and assisted by another *namrasakhi* of Radha by name Vishakha. The scene is set on the Jamuna at eventide where the river passes Brindavan with its marble topped palaces and shrines. On the middle hillock, in the distance, is depicted a group consisting of Krishna and *gopis*, perhaps to suggest the time lag between the lovers sporting in the woodland and their sailing down the river to retreat where they will pass the night.<sup>10</sup> In the middle panel Radha and Krishna are boating with musicians in a lotus pond. Radha and Krishna are depicted with halo behind their heads to distinguish them from others.

The picture is divided into two halves. The upper portion depicts the leisureed journey along the Jamuna waters, while in the lower part the lovers are seen after they have alighted and entered the *kunj* (woodland grove) and stand by a tree, momentarily shy, before they entwine into each other's arms. The landscape is characteristic of Kishangarh school. In particular, one notes Nihal Chand's fondness for fiery glowing sunsets shot with gold. But it is superb lyrical intent of the lower panel that attracts the viewer the most. Tall and slim, even as the trees under whose boughs they stand, the lovers personify the living impulse of all human hearts.

## Mughal School of Miniature Painting

### *Drunkard Husband*

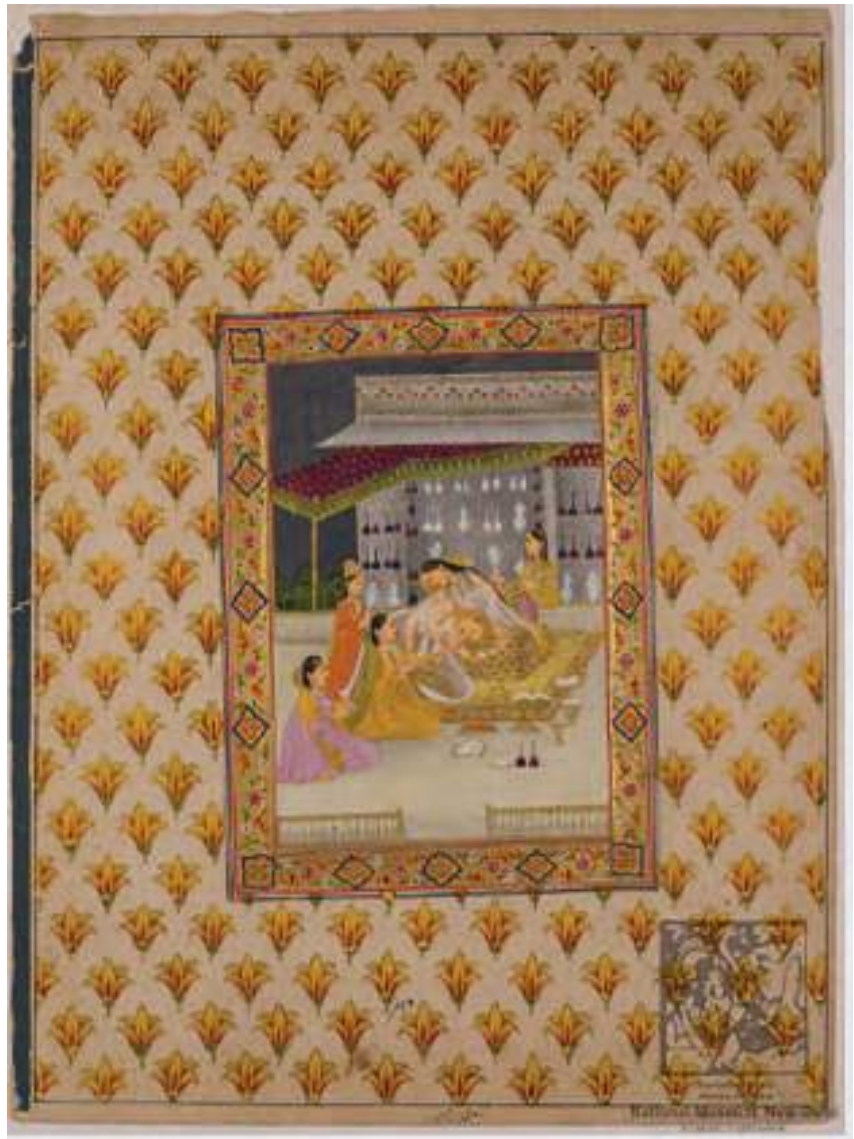
Acc. No 62.129

Mughal Style, Muhammad Shah period

1740 - 50 CE

Size: 40 x 29 cm

Inscription on reverse



This painting presents a scene of Harem (a separate place for royal ladies in the palace). Here a devoted wife, the royal lady is trying to control her drunkard husband. They both are seated on a bed on the terrace of the palace. Four of her *sakhis*, the close associates of the royal lady are helping her to put him on the bed, who is lying on the cushion in intoxicated state. She is also embarrassed before her royal aides, all four of them are shocked to see such state of affairs. But they are loyal to their mistress and feel it's their primary duty to combat the situation and help the lady. Each one of them are dressed differently, coming from respectful household,

they have extended their support to bring the situation under control. This painting shows the internal affairs of the women's apartment in a palace and the importance of female associates and messengers, who are allowed even in the private places and bed chambers. It is a fine painting displaying the Mughal artistic taste, using of soft colours, sophisticated contours and presentations, attires and adornment and tasteful display of the interiors. The painting is framed in two border scheme, the inner frame with dainty designs, the outer one is of a large border with floral motifs in soft yellow against beige background.

The rulers of Mughal dynasty were great patrons of painting. The Mughal rule was established in India by Babar in 1526. The art of painting was initiated in Humayun's time. It was carried further by Emperor Akbar in a big way. It was in the time of Jahangir the superb art works turned out. Shahajahan also promoted the art of painting along with his architectural venture.

**Akbar School:** Akbar, the Mughal emperor was a great patron of art and literature. He established a workshop for artists in Fatehpur Sikri, the new capital he had built. Here artists worked as a team one making the outline, the other figures, the third landscape and the fourth filled the coolers. The two masters, Mir Syed Ali and Khwaja Abdus Samad were the Persian Masters who taught the artists in Fatehpur Sikri Workshop. The Hindu and Muslim artists in large number under these masters learnt and mastered the art and painted hundreds of pictures. In this way the Persian and Indian styles merged in Akbar's time.

Emperors like Akbar, Jahangir and Shahajahan were so fond of paintings that they always took some of the artists of their court with them on their journeys, whether it was a hunt or a march with the army. Akbar's court poet Abdul Fazal in the *Ain-i-Akbari* has written about the love of Akbar for painting. The works of all painters are weekly laid before His Majesty by his clerks. He conferred rewards to the artists according to the excellence of workmanship or increases their salary. The emperor set up a department for the art materials, and collection of the art works. Among the many manuscripts which came to be illustrated by the painters of the court were the *Akbarnama*, the *Razmnama* and *Anwar -i-suhayli*, a book of fables. The minuteness and detail, the general finish, boldness in execution, new way of applying colours are the important features of the paintings of Akbar school of miniature paintings.

**Jahangir School:** Jahangir was the son of Akbar and took deep interest in painting even as a prince. He had his own workshop apart from his father's large studio. He patronised Farukh Baig from Central Asia and improvised the portrait style in Mughal painting. Ustad Mansur was the court painter of Jahangir. The style under Jahangir was called naturalistic. The masterpieces of Mansur are Pheasant, Zebra and Turkey Cock, exquisite pictures which show the mastery of Mansur's brushwork. Many paintings depict Jahangir and his court. The best pictures of Mughal period come from Jahangir's time. The floral border around the paintings has become the main feature of the paintings of this time.





### *Princess with a Friend*

Acc. No 72.82

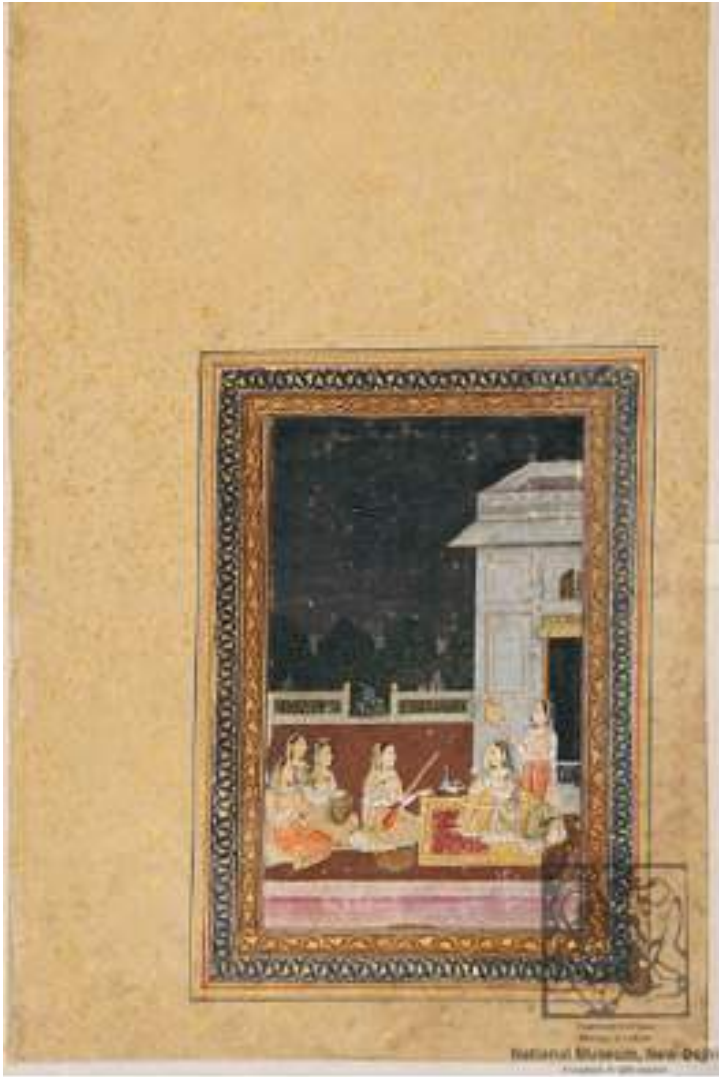
Mughal Style, Provincial Mughal School

Late 19<sup>th</sup> century

Size: 34.4 x 21,6 cm

In this painting a Princess is conversing with her friend, a *sakhi*, who understands the princess better than anyone. They both are seated on a beautifully designed floral carpet in an open courtyard. Both are resting against soft cushions and sharing their thoughts at leisure. The Mughal princess wearing a skull cap,

*jama*, and royal jewels and letting her hair loose. While her friend, the *sakhi* is probably a Rajput, dressed in Rajput style, with green *lehanga*, *odhani* covering her head partly and wearing suitable jewels, asking the princess to explain clearly. Probably the princess giving her message to convey and in turn the *sakhi* goes to the lover of the princess as a Female Messenger. A book is lying beside, probably they had discussed about the contents. Beautiful flowerbeds and a fountain cover the foreground of the painting. Two plants with plenty of white flowers symbolise the romantic atmosphere against green background. The painting is captivated in a brown colour frame with golden floral motifs on large border

***Group of Ladies******Reverse of the painting, a Kalgi***

Acc. No 63.351

Mughal Style, Provincial Mughal School

1750 CE

Size: Select



It is a perfect setting displaying chamber music in the *zenana*, (the royal quarters for women) on the open terrace. A royal lady elegantly dressed, seated on a rich brocade carpet against a huge bolster. She is holding a flower in her hand and she is being entertained by four female musicians seated in front of her. Behind her a female attendant, a *cheti* (a young maid, doing all errand chores) is fanning her mistress and enjoying music. On her right a dish containing two cups and a wine jar is seen. Besides the musicians a bowl of apples

is placed to offer them. The painting has brown inner border and blue outer border consisting of creeper designs. A very large beige colour border with golden dainty motifs frames the painting.

On the reverse of the painting a beautiful floral *Kalgi* is depicted. It has golden yellow inner border and blue outer border with geometrical design. The *Kalgi* has a huge brick red colour frame splashed with golden motifs.

**Shahajahan School:** As prince, Shahajahan also shown interest in painting As an emperor, he spent a great deal of time in building the Red Fort and the Jama Masjid in Delhi and Taj Mahal. The painters continued the previous tradition of doing portraits of noblemen, preparing portfolios and illustrating books. But the colours became more decorative, gold was more frequently used for embellishment, showiness replaced the feelings in painting. An excellent painting of his time is 'the portrait of Shah Jahan'. In times of the last Emperor Aurangzeb the artistic scene disintegrated due to discontinuation of patronage. After the fall of Mughal rule the painting as art lost its place and the artists went in search of provincial courts for livelihood.



### **Pahari School of Miniature Paintings**

#### ***Lady Smoking Huqqua***

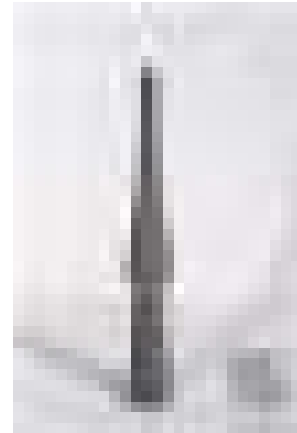
Acc. No 63.351

Pahari Style, Kangra School

18<sup>th</sup> Century

Size: Select

A lady seated on a *chauki* against the floral designed bolster. She is enjoying smoking a *huqqua*, through an extended long pipe. Probably a rainy season indicated by dark clouds and smoking is a pastime for ladies, confined to their chambers. The *sakhi* knows the needs of her mistress, arranged for *huqqua* and fanning gently with a *morchal* fly-whisk made of peacock feathers. Also observing her lady and holding the huge bolster too. Pigeons are flocked around on bird feed offered by the *sakhi* to entertain the lady. Her blue long gown



### ***Bell Shaped Huqqua Base***

Decorative Arts collection

Deccan - Bidri ware Silver

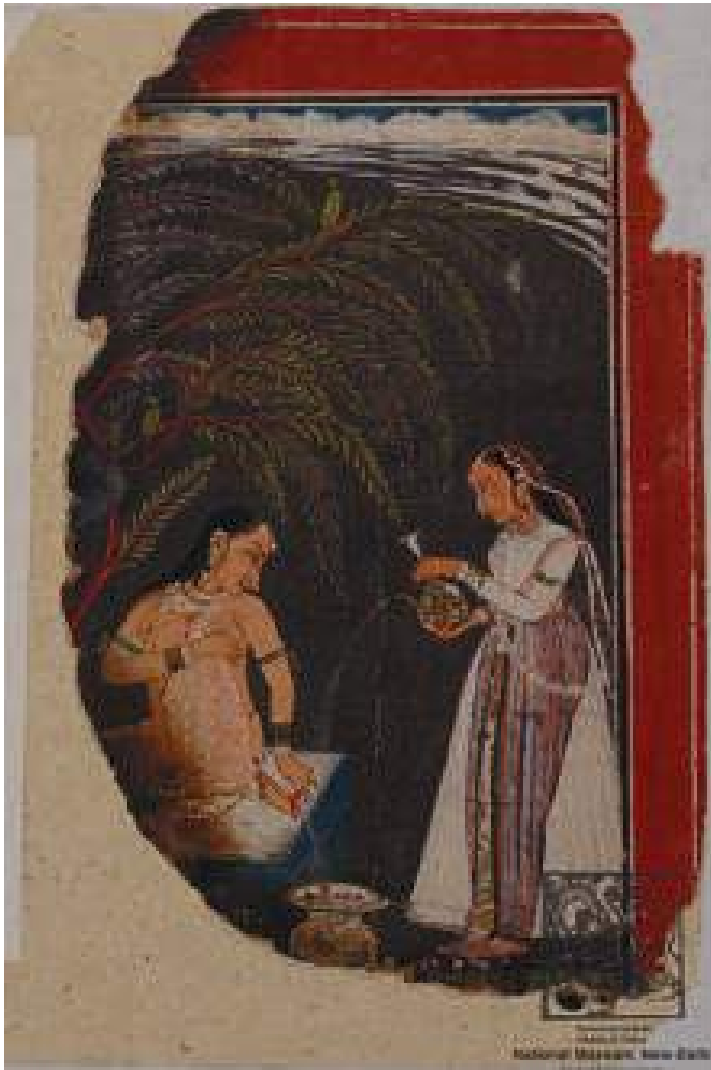
20<sup>th</sup> Century

Size: Ht. 15.2 Dia base 17 cm

is beautifully laid, *sakhi* in the contrast coloured attire. Both are enjoying the time available to them with birds.

Bidri Metal Work originated from Bidar, the northern district situated in Karnataka. Bidri bell shaped *huqqua* base is circular, narrow mouth. The entire body of the base is decorated with flower, leaf pattern which has border on both sides. These border depicts floral creeper. Neck, shoulder of the *huqqua* base is decorated with similar pattern as body has the decoration is done in raised pattern. The *Muhnal*(Funnel) and tube are attached to the *huqqua* base.

During 17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> centuries a fine style of painting emerged in Kashmir and the adjoining hill areas of Punjab and Uttar Pradesh. The paintings from these states are collectively called as Pahari paintings, representing hill area. Here the artists and paintings travelled from one state to another frequently. Because of this there was mutual influences and also drawn from Mughal school of painting. But they are very different from Mughal painting in treatment, subjects, colour sense and directly linked with folk base.



### ***A Young Lady Taking Bath***

Acc. No 76.45

Pahari Style, Basohli School

Early 17<sup>th</sup> century

Size: 17.5 X 11cm

A young lady taking bath seated on a *chauki* under a willow tree with the help of her maid, the *saksi*. The scene is laid against a chocolate background. The lady is nude, her only lower part is covered with a transparent cloth, but highly bejewelled and expression of natural shyness is visible on her face. A *saksi* equally bejewelled, wearing a striped *pyjama* with a white transparent long *jama* and matching *odhani* is attractive and dutiful. She is pouring water through a spouted jar, below a water pitcher is placed. Willow tree, birds, vibrant sky, all added dramatic elements.

**Basohli:** The earliest Pahari paintings are from the time of raja Kirpal Singh from Basohli. After the decline of Mughal empire the artists were given patronage in Basohli. They painted the themes based on the books such as *Rasamanjari*, *Gitagovinda* and *Bhagavata Purana*. Most of the paintings are on Krishna theme and the portraits of the local kings. Reds, browns, blues, yellows, and greens burst out from these pictures. The profile of the figures has big eyes as in the Jaina pictures. The paintings are flat and the jewels are specially treated.

**Guler:** Under Raja Dalip Singh of Guler, a style similar to that of Basohli emerged. The trees and structures of Basohli style are evident here. Later a Mughal artist influences the Guler school. The artist Nainsukh and his brother created outstanding paintings in Guler. The drawing became finer, colouring more sophisticated, graceful appearance of women and great skill are seen in this style. The dominant feature is the painting is the poetry in colour. The themes are based on Krishna, *Ragamala*, *Nayika* and *Baramasa* paintings.

**Kangra:** In Kangra valley under the patronage of Raja Sansar Chand a fresh phase of art flourished. Since childhood he expressed interest in painting. As the ruler he patronised the painters and acquired a large collection of pictures. Like other patrons of Pahari states he believed in Krishna cult and the artists created new series of paintings depicting *Krishnaleela* and love of Radha and Krishna. The striking feature of this style is the importance given to landscape and background. Lush green trees and bushes, clear sky, flowing river, chirping birds and fresh flowers are part of these paintings. The colours are used symbolically to express moods. With the death of Sansar Chand in 1823, the Kangra Kalam lost its inspiration.

**Jammu:** From 1700 onwards Jammu began to produce beautiful paintings. Under Raja Balwant Singh the famous painter Nainsukh created great pictures. He came from Guler and continued to paint in that style. Thus there is a great similarity between Jammu and Guler styles. The portrait of Raja Balawant singh, Kathak dancer and paintings on Krishna theme are prominent pictures that Nainsukh created. The drawings of Jammu School are more sensitive, dark colours are used sensibly and the local atmosphere dominates in this mature style.

**Chamba:** Chamba is another hilly state ruled by kings like Prthvi Singh and Raj Singh. Since the wife of Prthvi Singh was from Basohli the Basoli kalam travelled to Chamba. The early panels of the doors and paintings have high influence of Basohli. But later on this bases the Chamba painters adopted the treatment of wall paintings in miniatures. There are more of interior and narration in Chamba paintings.

**Tehri Garhwal:** Anirudh Chand, the son of Sansar Chand from Kangra migrated to Tehri Garhwal and carried many paintings with him. Some of the Kangra painters also moved with him. The paintings are mostly of Krishna legend and Ramayana. The paintings are beautiful, retained the grace of Guler and the richness of Kangra.



### *A Conversation between two Females*

Acc. No 75.11.68

Pahari Style, Nurpur School

1780 CE

Size: 20.5 X 16 cm

A young lady stands on a white terrace engaged in conversation with her *sakhi*, an intimate friend. She holds the branch of a flowering tree in her right hand and adjusting her *odhani* in her left hand. Her face is turned towards her *sakhi*, while her right leg is flexed and slightly raised. Her *pyjama* is revealed as her upper green garment moved due to wind. The *sakhi* is in mauve gown and *odhani* holding a huge fan on her shoulder and she is explaining with her right hand to her lady. Four *chakravaka* birds are seen around. A flowering bed in the foreground, two flowering trees are visible beyond the terrace railings. The blue sky is calm and serene. Sharp facial features and sophistication in treatment of figure are the special characteristics of Nurpur school of Pahari style paintings.

## Deccani School of Miniature Paintings



### *Taramati and Premamati*

Acc. No 59.52

Deccani Style, Hyderabad School

18<sup>th</sup> century

Size: 33.2 X 20.7 cm

Inscription on the wall in Urdu



### The Tombs of Taramati and Premamati at Hyderabad

Taramati and Premamati are two great sisters or friends portrayed here in exquisitely fine drapery are shown standing face to face on a raised platform in a garden. They performed the role of Female messengers when needed for each other. The lady to left is holding sitar and try to play and please the other one, but the other one, probably Premamati is offering wine to Taramati. Behind them are seen two pavilions of the two friends. A row of cypress trees against blue background is appealing. In the foreground a fountain amidst two flower beds creates a charming atmosphere, colourful

floral creeper design is typical to the Deccani paintings adds a special appeal. This picture is the restored in March 2020, the Tombs of Taramati and Premamati at the Qutub Shahi Complex Hyderabad.

Courtesans or wives? Dancers or esteemed members of court? As historians still try to trace back the real identities of Taramati and Premamati, their resting places stand in restored glory today after a year of conservation work. The restored tombs of these women who lived during the Qutb Shahi Dynasty were inaugurated by the US Ambassador to India, Kenneth I. Juster, in Hyderabad in March 2020.

Talking about the background of the women, Prashant Banerjee, Conservation Programme Officer of AKTC, said: “Taramati and Premamati are believed to have been singers and dancers in the court of Abdullah Qutb Shah, the seventh ruler of the kingdom of Golconda. But since these women have been given space in the royal necropolis, it is believed that they enjoyed a higher status. Renowned historian HK Sherwani has opined that they might have been the legally wedded wives of king Abdullah.

Two beautiful dancers were courtesans at the VIIth Qutub Shahi Sultan Abdullah Qutub Shah’s court (1626-1672) and during Abul Hasan Tana Shah (1672-1686), the last Qutub Shahi Sultan’s reign: Taramati and Premamati. They had beautiful

voices and enthralled the kings with their singing and dancing. They had pavillions built for them. Taramati Baradari is two storeyed, square shaped with strong arches on all sides, a typical Qutub Shahi structure with fine acoustics; and is located some distance away from the Golconda Fort on a hillock. It is believed that when Taramati sang the breeze used to carry her mellifluous voice to the Sultan who was two kilometres away. The sisters have also been said to have danced on moonlit nights on ropes connecting the Baradari to the Golconda fort. Taramati was a dancer and singer par excellence and devoted her entire life to her art. She used to entertain people at the Taramati Baradari. A legend says that Taramati continued dancing even when Emperor Aurangzeb had asked her to stop.<sup>11</sup>

According to the art historian Stella Kramerisch, ‘Contemporary with painting of the Imperial Mughal school, painting at the courts of independent Muslim kingdoms in the Deccan, the plateau region south of the Vindhya Mountains, reached a perfection of its own. Three independent kingdoms, Ahmadnagar, Bijapur, and Golconda, left paintings of great mastery and unmistakable Deccani identity. In the northern Deccan, too, outside these kingdoms, at the end of the sixteenth century *Ragamala* paintings of subtle intimacy vibrate with colors unknown in their combinations beyond this region. Even in the eighteenth century, when Deccani painting had long passed its zenith, the works have a subtle richness, a lingering warmth, and a reverberating depth unknown to Mughal or other Indian schools of painting’.<sup>12</sup> It is obvious that the Deccani school is the off-shoot of the Mughal miniature school. The Bahamani states were known as Deccani Sultanates. Bijapur, Ahmadnagar, Golconda, Bidar and later Hyderabad were politically in confrontation with the neighboring Vijayanagar. But culturally the artists drew the inspiration, materials and elements from the mighty empire of Vijayanagar. The early paintings from Deccan are influenced by Ellora murals, Mewar, Malwa miniature styles. The Persian elements are also deep rooted in Deccani *kalam*. Under Ibrahim Adilshahi the Bijapur school of painting thrived greatly. The portraiture of Adil Shahi and the *Ragamala* series are the best class. In Ahmadnagar also series of paintings depicting the ruler Queen Chand Bibi are found. Golkonda and Bidar produced portraits of *navabs* and courtiers in miniature style.





### *Gathering of Ladies*

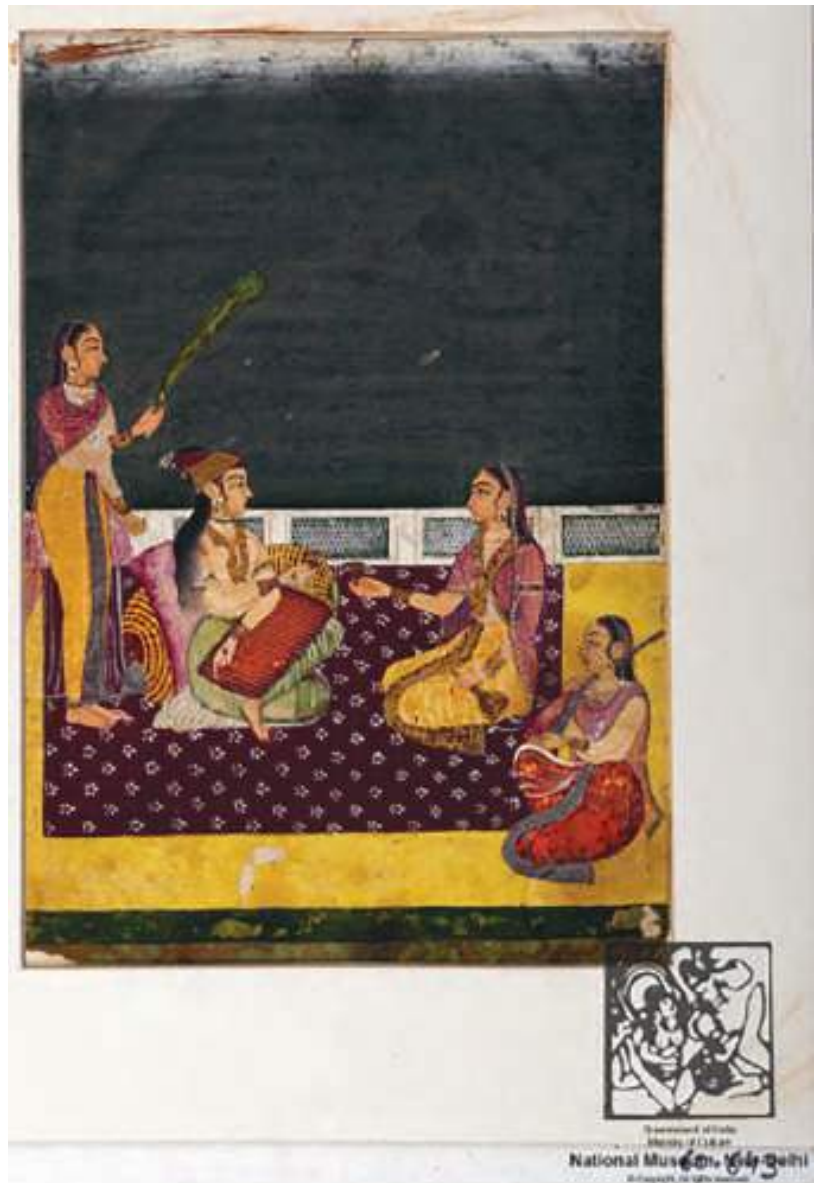
Acc. No

Deccani Style, Deccan School

19<sup>th</sup> century

Size: 6.8 X 5.1 inches

Slightly tinted sketch depicting ladies gathering in Women's apartment. Three ladies are seated against large cushions in a forecourt of the quarters conversing to each other while listening to music played by women musicians. Two Female messengers/*sakhis* are serving them with wine and fanning with a huge fly-whisk. Though unfinished, this work gives the best features of Deccani style of painting.



***Princess Enjoying the Music***

Acc. No 60.643

Deccani Style, Deccan School

18<sup>th</sup> century

Size: 20.2 X 14.1 cm

This is one of the well composed fine painting in the style of Deccani paintings. Handling of the colours is the stylistic feature here. Seated on a carpeted terrace is seen a beautiful princess, with her hands crossed over a cushion that is placed on her lap. The *cheti*, a female attendant elegantly dressed is standing erect and fanning with *morchal*. Her *apta sakhi*, the loyal maid is seated before her on a carpet offering wine to the princess while sharing intimate conversation. A female musician entertains the princess, singing melodiously. The colourful carpet highlights the colour scheme in this painting. The quiet and dark sky adds to the moods of the friends.

This style is reinforced by a touch of the Mughal during the declining stage. The artists from Mughal court migrated to Deccani states and a new variety of painting they created with Persian, Mughal and Hindu elements. Thus the Deccani School of miniature show their own identity.

Apart from these known schools there are several minor developments in all these four major schools. The miniature painting as art in demand, it's noteworthy that still flourishes particularly in the major cities of Rajasthan.

The illustrations on *dutika/sakhi*, the female messengers are visually recorded in most of the miniature paintings in the collections of Indian National Museum, namely, Pahari, Rajasthani, Deccani and Mughal schools and their sub-schools such as Kangra, Guler, Basholi, Chamba, Gerewal, Jaipur, Mewar, Kishangarh, Malwa, Kota, Bundi, Bikaner, Ahamadnagar, Bijapur, Golkonda, Akbar, Jahangir, Shahajahan and later Mughal schools. In depicting the Female Messengers the artists experienced the delight in portraying them as part of themes like *Nayika* paintings, *Gitagovinda*, *Rasikapriya*, *Rasamanjari*, *Ragamala*, *Baramasa*, and such others. Further the paintings are chosen from the large collections of National Museum. An overwhelming number of paintings contained the themes where the representation of *sakhi* and *dutikas* along with the *nayikas* are presented in an interesting manner.

## Endnotes

- 1 Coomaraswamy, *Transformation of Nature in Art* P. 21
- 2 Nihar Ranjan Ray, *Idea and Image in Indian Art* P.4
- 3 Coomaraswamy, page 14
- 4 Coomaraswamy, *Transformation of Nature in Art*, P 183
- 5 Coomaraswamy, *Introduction to Indian art*, P.80
- 6 Stella Kramirsch, *Painted Delight* P. Xi
- 7 *Visnudharmottara Purana* III 2:1
- 8 Kapila Vatsyayan in the foreword of *The Citrasutra of The Visnudharmottara Purana* by Parul Dave Mukherji
- 9 Stella Kramirsch, *Painted Delight* P. xvii
- 10 Karl Khandalwala, *Kishangarh Painting*
- 11 <http://hyderabadstory.blogspot.com/2016/11/taramati-and-premamati-royal-dancers-at.html>
- 12 Stella Kramerisch, *Painted Delight* P.

*Ragamala Paintings*



Ragaputra Basant, Pahari, Kangra

Rabindranath Tagore had visualized the strong bondage between *raga* and *chitra*, thus he rightly remarked that ‘Music and art must have their prominent seats of honour and not merely a tolerant nod of recognition’. This statement strongly leads to the significant place for the Ragamala, the combination of music, poetry and painting, in Indian art and culture. To quote H.J.Stooke, “Poetry, painting and music were brought into a new relationship” with the advent of the *Ragamalas*.

*Raga* paintings are uniquely Indian creations. The word *raga*—derived from *rang*, to color — denotes a musical mode that has “the effect of colouring the hearts of men.”<sup>1</sup> this definition, formulated in about the fifth century, was given visual form about a thousand years later in the shape of pictures of human/divine figures that personified the respective melodic patterns and could be meditated upon. In the sixteenth century the religious emotion released by the melodic patterns became centered on Krishna and Radha, and identified with love, the soul’s love of God. Literature defined the types of hero and heroine and paintings showed the state and attitude of the heroine in typical situations.<sup>2</sup>

*Raga* paintings are an epitome of the uniquely Indian interconnectedness of music and visual art. A *ragamala* or ‘garland of *ragas*’ is a set of miniature paintings depicting various musical modes, *ragas*, of Indian music. Each painting is accompanied by a brief caption or poem that describes the mood of the raga, most frequently devotion and love in its various aspects. Some of the features of iconography specified helps in identifying the *ragas*, *raginis* and *ragaputras*.

*Sangeeta Ratnakara*, is an important treatise 12th century CE on the classification of Indian *ragas*, which for the first time mentions the presiding deity of each *raga*. From the 14th century onwards, they were described in short verses in Sanskrit, for *dhyana*, contemplation, with a view to emphasise the divine qualities of music, each raga and *ragini* was attributed with a particular *rupa* or psychic form. The psychic form was further divided into the invisible sound form or the *nadamaya rupa* and tangible or image form referred to as *devatamaya rupa*. It was required on the part of a performer (*kalavanta*) to imbibe the presiding spirit or ethos of a melody and please the deified form. *Raga-dhyanas* or contemplative prayer-formulas were devised for the purpose, passed on from the master, the *acharya* to the disciple.

A melodic rendition cannot be successful without a proper invocation of the deified form and any amount of mastery over the musical structure would not ensure the attainment of the divine essence inherent in every raga. Srikantha in his *Rasa Kaumudi* (1575 CE) laid down the injunction that ‘those unskillful singers who attempt to interpret any melody without following the image given in contemplative verse (*dhyana*), can never

achieve the spiritual values (*phala*) prescribed in the science of music (*sangita shastra*)<sup>3</sup> Later the *Raga* forms with the dhyana verses were depicted in a series of paintings, emerged as the *Raga-Chitra*, popularly known as '*Ragamala*' paintings. The best artistic works of *Ragamala* are from the 16th and 17th centuries created by artists in the ateliers patronised by the royal courts and flourished through 19th century and slowly faded.

Last quarter of 16<sup>th</sup> century witnessed an interesting phase of understanding the *raga* system in the context of *Ragamala*. In 1570, Kshemakarna, the priest from Reva in Central India, gave the classification of *Ragamala* into six principal *Ragas*, namely, Bhairava, Malakoshika, Hindola, Dipaka, Sri, Raga and Megha, each of these *Ragas* having five *Raginis* and eight *Ragaputras*, except *Raga Sri*, which has six *Raginis* and nine *Ragaputras*, thus making a *Ragamala* family of 86 members.

In 1576 Pandarika Vitthala, under the patronage of Madhavasimha also compiled the *ragas* and *raginis* in the *Ragamala* concept. The description of *ragas* are brought in a family classification as *ragaparivara*, consisting of *raga*, *ragini* and *ragaputra*; this is prefaced with an account of the necessary melodic infrastructure such as *nada*, *sruti*, *svara*, *sthana*, *grama*, *murchana*, *tana*, *varna*, *alamkara*, *gamaka*, *sthaya*, varieties of *ragalapti*, *rupakalapti*, *ragasthapana* and kinds of *raga*. Six *purusha* (male) *ragas*, each possessed with of five *stri* (female) *ragas* known as *raginis* and five *ragaputras* (son-*raga*) thus totaling sixty-six are described; each description contains both a reification or iconification (*dhyanasloka*) and intervallic and scaly characterization.<sup>4</sup>

Pundarika Vittala was the first one who mentioned *ragas* and *raginis* with ordinary *nayaka* and *nayaki bhava*, he also mentioned colour of the cloth, the colour of the body, ornaments and what *tilakas* were on the forehead and hair style, along with mentioning the *svaras*. Pandarika Vitthala was the first one who analysed *ragas* under *Raga Ragini, Parivara* System, along with *svaras* and seasons.<sup>5</sup>

Coomaraswamy notes that *ragamala* poems are very closely linked to other aspects of Indian culture. As literature, the *Rāgmālā* poems are in fact related to such poetry as the *Rasikapriyā* of Keśava Dās and *Satsāiyā of Bihāri*: and like these works, they are far more than descriptions. Paintings and verses alike are traditionally and profoundly imagined pictures of human passion, and the more they are studied the more they reveal their content of experience. Their style is elusive and their vocabulary is rich in associations of both classical and folk origin. The Tertiary *Prakrits* at this time have lost the greater part of their inflections so that the poems consist to all intents and purposes of a series of words reduced to their bare roots. At the same time the poet wastes no words that can be spared: the consequence is that while the language

is highly expressive, and is used to express the deepest emotion, the meaning of the lines must be grasped as a whole rather than word by word, and can be grasped only by one familiar with, and sympathetic to, Hindu modes of thought.<sup>6</sup>

The existing *Ragamala* fabric accounts to 84 to 86 *ragas* in total. Six male *ragas* and thirty female *raginis*, and they are totally 36 *ragas*, on which the *Hindusthani* music tradition evolved and developed. Six are male (parent) *ragas*; the thirty *raginis*, their wives and the remaining forty-eight are their sons. The six groups of *ragas* on the basis of Kshemakarna (he is also known as Mesakarna) classification as follows:

**Group A. 1. Parent Raga: Bhairav raga**

*Raginis Wives* : 1. Bhairavi 2. Vilawali 3. Punyaki 4. Bangali 5. Sanehi or Snehki (Aslekhi)

*Ragaputras Sons* : 1. Pancham 2. Harsha 3. Desakh 4. Bangal 5. Madhu 6. Madhava 7. Lalit 8. Vilaval (**Total 14**)

**Group B. 2. Parent Raga: Malakosa or Malkaus raga**

*Raginis Wives* : 1. Gunkali or Gondakari 2. Devagandhari or Gandhari 3. Srihati 4. Dhanasri 5. Andharyaki

*Ragaputras Sons* : 1. Maru 2. Mustang 3. Mewara 4. Parbal 5. Chand (Chandrarkhya) 6. Khokhat 7. Bramhananda or Bhora 8. Nandana or Nad (**Total 14**)

**Group C. 3. Parent Raga: Hindol raga**

*Raginis Wives* : 1. Telangi 2. Devagiri 3. Vasanti 4. Sindhoori 5. Abhiri (Aheeri)

*Ragaputras Sons* : 1. Surmanand or Ananda 2. Chandra-Bimb 3. Mangalan, 4. Vinoda 5. Vasant 6. Bhasker or Vibhasa 7. Shubhranga 8. Kamoda or Vardhana (**Total 14**)

**Group D. 4. Parent Raga: Deepak raga**

*Raginis Wives* : 1. Kachheli 2. Patmanjari 3. Todi 4. Kumudini or Kamodi 5. Gurjari

*Ragaputras Sons* : 1. Kamal 2. Kusum 3. Rama 4. Kuntala 5. Champak 6. Kalinga or Kaalanka 7. Hemala or Gaura 8. Lahula or Kanra (Total 14)

**Group E. 5. Parent Raga: Shri raga**

*Raginis* Wives : 1. Virati or Bairadi 2. Karnati 3. Gauri, 4. Sindhavi 5. Sanveri

*Ragaputras* Sons : 1. Sindhu 2. Malava 3. Gaud 4. Gambhir 5. Sagara or Gunasagara  
6. Vigadha 7. Kalyana 8. Kumbh 9. Agadha or Amagadha (Total 15)

**Group F. 6. Parent Raga: Megh-Malhara raga**

*Raginis* Wives : 1. Sorathi 2. Gaundi-Malari 3. Suhavi 4. Asavari 5. Konkani or Kumakini

*Ragaputras* Sons : 1. Nata 2. Kanara or Kannada 3. Nara-Narayana or Saranga 4. Kedara  
5. Gunda 6. Gonda-Mallara 7. Jalandhara 8. Shankarabharana

The iconography in *Ragamala* paintings depict human or divine characters in the mode of *shringara* and *bhakti*, filling the atmosphere endowed with grace and melodic sophistication. The subject matter was primarily women-centric, where the presence of *nayikas*, *dutikas* and *sakhis* in the modes of *madhura-bhakti* – love longing and devotion towards God and such *bhavas* gain importance. The royal patrons also included women, who commissioned the *ragamala* paintings, appointed the best artists of the region to paint the best sets on the subject.

The paintings that are taken for interpretation and analysis consists of each *raga* personified by a colour, mood, a verse describing a story of a hero and heroine (*nayaka* and *nayika*), it also elucidates the season and the time of day and night in which a particular *raga* is to be sung; and finally most paintings also demarcate the specific Hindu deities attached with the *raga*, like Bhairava or Bhairavi to Shiva, Sri to Devi etc. The paintings depict not just the *Ragas*, but also their wives, (*raginis*), their numerous sons (*ragaputra*).

National Museum collections of Deccani *Ragamala* paintings are the outstanding manifestation of *raga* system, large in size and exquisitely fine in rendition. Most of the extant works of *Ragamala* are from Deccan school of Bijapur style, where Ibrahim Adil Shah II of Bijapur, was himself a fine painter and illustrator. Apart from that, some of the *Ragamala* folios of Rajasthan School also exist of which the work of an artist of the ‘Chawand’ (a part of Mewar) school of painting, Sahibdin, whose *Ragamala* (musical modes) series dated 1628, are now in National Museum of India. The Deccani *Ragamala* sets are drawn from Bijapur, Ahamadnagar, Golkonda and Hyderabad. Pahari school of *Ragamala* are based on Kshemakarna’s classification, where visual and sound imagery are closely dealt with. Always special reference is made to the Basoli



set of *Ragamala*, Baghal (Arki) set of *Ragamala*, Bilhaspur *Ragamala*, Chamba *Ragamala*, Kangra *Ragamala*, Mandi *Ragamala*, Mankot *Ragamala* and also Nurpur *Ragamala*. Some of the folios of the Pahari School are in the collections of National Museum and they are discussed subsequently.

In the context of ‘the Imagery of Female Messengers in Art’, *Ragamala* Paintings were selected where the presence of Female Messengers engaged in different roles and responsibilities, performing the task assigned to them, having devotion and sincere concern towards their mistress or master. Such significant portrayal of Female Messengers, the *dutikas/sakhis*, enhanced the narrative contents of the *Ragamala* paintings. Among the sets of *Ragamala* Paintings, the series from Deccani miniature paintings on the subject are great source to notify. Because here the series give importance to *dutika/sakhi* as much as the main character itself. Here, few works are cited to illustrate the role of *sakhi* in creating the atmosphere of the *Ragini* and her presence.

Deccani set of *Ragamala*, a very fine work, outstanding pictorial quality and details. Although not much of information about their *nayikas* are furnished in literature. Unlike Rajasthan or Pahari folios containing the verses speaking about the salient features of the *ragas*, *raginis* and *ragaputras* giving certain guidelines to the artists to portray. But in the case of Deccani set only label inscription that mentions the name of the raga is found, but possibly they had a musician or a musicologist who was well versed with the *Ragamala* tradition following of Kshemakarna system has guided these artists and they have taken pleasure portraying the *nayikas* and their *sakhis* in myriad ways as indicated in the *Dutikarmaprakasha*, which is the contemporary text (16<sup>th</sup> century) written by Pandarika Vithala, while he was in Ahamadnagar, also one of the state, *sansthan* of Deccani Kingdom.

This series of Deccani *Ragamala* paintings from Bijapur are created in an atelier of extraordinary artistic skills. Either created by a single artist of high caliber or a team of artists who were skilled, aesthetically attuned, well-versed in Sanskrit literature, because of following the text of Kshemakarna in rendering the visual iconography of each of the *ragas* and also proficient in music. The other Rajasthan *Ragamala* paintings ignore the features of *ragas* and *ragalakshanas*, portray them as genral patrons. In that sense Deccani artists who painted the *Ragamala* series from Bijapur have handled with dexterity, with a sound knowledge in music, probably because of the legacy of Adil Shah who was himself a musician, illustrator and aesthetically attuned, who authored the well-known ‘*Kitab-e-Navras*’.

### Group A. 1. Parent *Raga*: Bhairav raga

*Raginis* Wives : 1. Bhairavi 2. Vilawali 3. Punyaki 4. Bangali 5. Sanehi or Snehki (Aslekhi)

*Ragaputras* Sons : 1. Pancham 2. Harsha 3. Desakh 4. Bangal 5. Madhu 6. Madhava 7. Lalit  
8. Vilaval (Total 14)

Shiva, the aspect of Demolition in the concept of *Trimurti*, the inseparable form in Hindu Trilogy, the other two being Brahma, aspect of Creation and Vishnu, aspect of Preservation. They represent *srushti*, *sthiti* and *laya* states of the universe. Shiva is the God of life and death, of destruction and rebirth, the cause of internal process of human mind. Shiva is the primordial aspect of all enduring life forces in the context of the eternity of time and space. Shiva is manifested in various forms, for the followers to experience and explore their path of life. His one of the infinite forms is Natesha or Nataraja, the dancing God, He is also a loving husband to his consort Parvati, he is Master of music as Veenadhara Shiva, he is *samhara murti* in vanquishing attitude, and many more.

One of the form highlighting Him as mendicant, loving his freedom is Bhairava, an artistic expression. *Kapalika* is one of the main *tantric* cults of *saivism*. All Sanskrit sources claim that the *Kapalikas* worship Bhairava-Siva and his consort Bhairavi. Literary works describe them as solitary peripatetic (going from place to place) ascetics, carrying a *kapala*, the skull bowl. wielding a trident, smeared with ashes from cremation ground. *Bhairava tantra* mentions *kapalikas* as the worshippers of *Unmatta-Bhairava*.

The word Bhairava means , one with a frightening cry', regarded as one of the violent form of Siva. Bhairava form of Shiva originates from Rudra of Vedic reference and attributed to the *samhara* forms. *Brahmavaivartapurana* gives the names of eight Bhairavas; Maha-Bhairava, Samhara-Bhairava, Asitanga Bhairava, Ruru-Bhairava, Kala-Bhairava, Krodha-Bhairava, Tamra-cuda or Kapala Bhairava, and Chandra-chuda Bhairava also known as Rudra Bhairava.<sup>7</sup>

In the context of Indian classical music Bhairav *raga* is the *sampurna raga* of Bhairav *Thaat*. It is a defining *raga*, auspicious morning *raga*, also sung to commence the concert. The antiquity of the *raga* goes as the first *raga* originated from the mouth of Shiva, hence considered as the premier in the *Ragamala* tradition too. The *raga* has the features of powerful, masculine and ascetic attributes in rendition. Many variations originated from *Raga* Bhairav, namely, Ahir Bhairav, Anand Bhairav, Bairagi Bhairav, Mohini Bhairav, Kabir Bhairav, Prabhat Bhairav and so on. The five consorts of Bhairav according to Kshemakarna *Ragamala* tradition are, Bhairavi, Vilavali, Punyaki, Bangali, Snehaki.

***Bhairava Raga***

Provincial Mughal style

Provincial Mughal Early 17<sup>th</sup> Century

Inscription on reverse

33.6x22 cms

**Representation of Four *Dutikas*, namely, *napiki*, *svayamduti*, *prasangini* and *prativeshnika***

Under a pavilion Lord Shiva is seated on the tiger skin. He is wearing a garland of skulls and a female attendant massaging his left hand. Another female attendant who is holding cups in a tray, is standing at the back of Lord Shiva. In the foreground to the right corner, a lady is preparing *bhanga* for the Lord. At the background is the beautiful architecture and trees.

The illustration has all the characteristics of the provincial Mughal style, such as large floral borders and the inner frame with typical design in lighter shade, open pavilion and delightful touches in treatment of Shiva and his companions. Though the soul of Mughal painting is lost in provincial schools, still the reminiscences of early treatment is found here.

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 12)**) In an interesting manner; with his body levitating, of fair complexion, having a mass of braided hair, third eye, and a *tilak*-mark in the shape of a crescent, wearing white garments and earrings, holding a trident, lotus flower, skull bowl and musical instrument made from buffalo-horn, with snakes entwined round his neck; born from the mouth of the lotus-faced Shiva, destroyer of the poison, and sung by the gods during winter months.

Here Shiva is enjoying the luxury of four *dutikas/sakhis* attending him. One of them, in the pretext of

massaging the hands of Shiva, may be trying to convey message sent by his consort Bhairavi *Ragini*, in order to be secretive and not to be known to other *raginis*; Bilavali, Aslekhi, Bangli and Punyaki. This messenger is recognized as *Napiki*, a manicurist (*duti* – 21) Another *dutika* standing behind Shiva, waiting for her turn to present before her *nayaka*, well dressed, commanding gait of her suggest she is one of the four *raginis*, representing the category of *dutika* – *Svayamduti*, (*duti* -3) exhibiting timely bliss. The third *dutika* is standing holding a huge tray full of fruits, flowers and milk at little distance waiting to offer to Shiva once the *napiki* leaves. She is smiling with confidence because she is one who can adopt herself to the existing situation. She is the *Prekshata* or *Prasangini* type of *dutika*, (*duti* – 10) faithful to her mistress to convey the message. The fourth *dutika* in the painting is sitting in foreground away from all and busy in preparing *bhanga*. Probably *Ragini* Bangali must have sent her to intoxicate Shiva by offering *bhanga*, and then she will join him. This *dutika* is identified as *Prativeshnika* (*duti* – 13) she is secretive, whenever she appears, she indicates her secret symbol.

It is an unusual portrayal of the iconography of Raga Bhairav. Shiva is happy and enjoying the service rendered by four *dutikas*, namely, *napiki*, *svayamduti*, *prasangini* and *prativeshnika*, the envoys of their *nayikas*. They are the *dutika* types explained in *Dutikarmaprakasha* by Pandarika Vitthala.



### *Bhairavi Ragini*

Malwa, Central India

Acc.No 62.1798

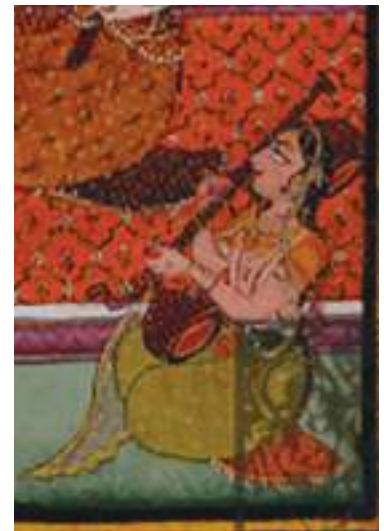
29.6x22 cm. 17<sup>th</sup> century

Inscription on the top register

Painting showing *Bhairavi Ragini*. The *nayika* (heroine) is seated in a *mandir* offering prayers to *linga*. Nandi is shown before the *linga*. The *nayika* is holding two flowers in her hands while her confidants stand on either side. At the bottom a lotus pool is shown full of flowers and aquatic birds. Two peacocks are perched on the identical trees, which are shown at the backside of the temple. Text is inscribed at the top orange margin.

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 14):** Radiant like gold, adored with beautiful jewellery, wearing white clothes, dancing while praises are sung of her. In pictorial representation, she fondles a white Bull.

The two line description in Hindi inscribed on the top register of the painting signifies the pictorial metaphor of the melody *Bhairavi Ragini*, the consort of Shiva. She is represented by a young heroine (*nayika*) worshipping at a temple dedicated to the god Shiva. She kneels in front of a linga, the anionic form of Shiva, while chanting the hymns in honor of the god and playing cymbals, a white bull seated on the steps in a pleasing expression represents Nandi, Shiva's mount. The pavilion forms a beautiful architecture of Malwa style, the banana trees on either side are placed to symbolise auspicious atmosphere and the flowering trees signify the spring season. What is interesting is *Bhairavi Ragini* is accompanied by two of her female messengers, well dressed and possess beautiful features to accompany their enchanting mistress. One of the *sakhi* belongs to the type of *malini*, she is holding a large basket full of flowers and garlands. She is an expert in making garlands, and keeps the atmosphere fresh as flowers. The other attendant standing behind *Ragini* is the real *sakhi* type, who takes responsibility of keeping all needs of her *nayika*, holding a bowl of milk, closely watching to offer.



### ***Ragini Bilaval***

Rajasthan School, Bundi style

Mid 18<sup>th</sup> Century

21.5x15.6, Inscription on reverse

A lady seated on a *chauki* (pedestal), shown looking at her reflection in the mirror, shown by her maid. She is seated on a low seat, a female musician singing and playing on *veena*.

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 15):** *Ragini Bilaval* is of fair complexion, her eyes decorated with collyrium and with a *kumkuma tilak*-mark on her forehead, fragrant, attractive, wearing bright garments, nose adorned with a pearl ornament and her tresses decorated with *champaka* and *ketaki* blossoms and chewing betel-leaves. In some pictorial representation shown as fondling a boy accompanied by a maid.

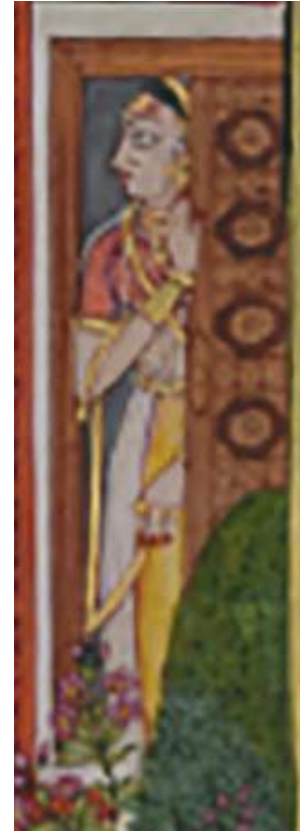
This Bundi unknown painter has taken such delight in creating such a setting for *Ragini Bilaval* to admire her own beauty and adornment. As mentioned above the painter faithfully rendered the version of Kshemakarna. The Bundi heroines are class by themselves imparting all the details such as the splendid costumes, resplendent jewellery, colorful carpet, matching upholstery, stylistic architectural parts, tastefully arranged pots, flowers and accessories reflect the refined taste of the charming *nayika*. It must be late morning and the sun is up against dark blue sky, glowing foliage and terrace and extended pavilion all display vivid colouring. The two maids are enjoying the beauty of the *nayika* and her reflection in the mirror, shown by one very close *sakhi* even she can dictate terms as far as adorning her *nayika*. The other made in the foreground singing melodiously is a *sakhi* known as *ganavati*. Both the *sakhis* are highly presentable and charming.

***Ragaputra Bangala***

Acc. No 89.281 Folio No 6

Deccani, Bijapur

40 x 24 cm,

Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century

Inscribed on the top register mentioning ‘Bangala the first son of Bhairav’

*Ragaputra* Bangala is shown seated in a small pavilion. He is worshipping and enjoying the music. A lady seated in front of him is playing on *tanpura*.

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 104):** Meditating on the word ‘Brahma’, chanting beneficial prayers and Vedic hymns, fond of all fine arts, singing in low melodious tunes and dancing too. The portrayal of *Ragaputra* Bangala is very much akin to the prescribed visual description of Kshemakarna.

The artist of this work followed the text ardently and created the *nayaka*. It is early morning, the sun is still raising, golden rays of the sun is falling on the foliage and the mansions at distance, transforming them in fine golden hues, the impact of that can be seen on the

*Ragaputra* Bangala, and blooming flower beds on the river side. birds are perching and the entire atmosphere is bathed in the golden rays of the rising sun. In contrast under the red pavilion *Ragaputra* Bangala is seated comfortably and performing Vedic *yajna* amidst chanting and offerings. Since he is very fond of music, a lady singer sitting under a separate short pavilion is rendering divine singing and playing herself on *tanpura*. Probably she is the *sakhi ganavathi* of *nayaka* *Ragaputra* Bangala and he is very much pleased with the divine atmosphere. Another female messenger is watching the scenario behind the half opened door. Probably she has been sent by the *nayika* of *Ragaputra* Bangala who must be residing in that far away mansion. This trustworthy female messenger, the *sakhi* having an eye on the *ganavathi* and narrate the entire event once she goes back to her *nayika*.

***Ragaputra Harsha***

Deccani, Bijapur

41x23.8 cm,

Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century

Inscribed on the top register mentioning ‘Harsha the fourth son of Bhairav’

The painting is divided into three parts. A small white house is painted on the left side, the hero is standing in the pavilion and holding *karatala* and lotus in his hands. He is looking at a lady who is standing under a tree. On the lower part entrance to the mansion guarded by a robust ram. Decorated parapet wall is painted beautifully.

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 21):** Adolescent of fair complexion, always smiling, wearing blue-green garments and gem studded pearl necklace, moving and talking impetuously, soft spoken and fond of playing cymbals and *karatala*.

These paintings belong to Deccani *Ragamala* series of National Museum collections. Each one of them stand for astounding quality of workmanship, at the same time colours are rich and resonant in every way. It’s an

aesthetic delight to view and experience this *Ragamala* series. Here, the sun is shining and the *nayika* is watering the *tulasi* plant, dressed in white also watching her *sakhi*, the female messenger, who is standing under the tree to convey the message to *nayaka* *Ragaputra* Harsha. She is of the kind of *viprashnika*, one who is an expert in love matters. Dressed beautifully exhibiting her charm to entice the *nayaka* who is eager to listen to the message sent by his *nayika*, having created the cupid and the beautiful women worthy to behold (*Dutikarmaprakasha* on *Viprashnika*). A crane is also attentively listening to the message as much as the *nayaka* himself, in the vivid manner *viprashnika sakhi* adding all metaphors to describe her *nayika*. Tastefully created three storied architecture is central point where the drama unfolds, flowering tree, lush foliage, raising sun, blue horizon and vanishing point landscape, all such elements make this painting highly artistic, emotionally charged, where the portrayal of *Ragaputra* Harsha is completely justified by the artist.



### *Ragaputra Lalit*

Acc No 89.284

Deccani, Bijapur

41.4 x 24.2 cm,

Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century

Inscribed on the top register mentioning 'Lalit' as the fifth son of Bhairav'

*Ragaputra Lalit* in the pavilion with his love going towards their chamber. In the upper storey the heroine is shown as *proudhā nayika*.

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 101):** Of fair complexion and indulgent, with a caste mark on his forehead, wearing diaphanous, white garments and a champaka garland and holding betel leaves.

Artist who has done this painting is loyal to the description of Kshemakarna in portraying *Ragaputra Lalit*. Each of the attributes and characteristic features given are seen very clearly in this painting. As mentioned he is fair, wearing white diaphanous and champak garland. One could see his indulgence with another woman, probably the female messenger sent by the *nayika* who is waiting for him on the terrace-pavilion. The female messengers get into some

situations like this, their position and charm are misused by the heroes. Probably the *nayika* has sent her beautiful maid, a *sakhi* as *malini* who is also skilful garland maker. Pandarika Vitthala describes the kind of female messenger, *Malini* as 'Your speech is like the royal splendid garland which is strung with the beautiful flowers in an attractive way. It is fit to adorn the neck like the *malini*. *Champak* is adorning the neck, the shoulders are decorated with *bakula* and the back is adorned by the *kunda* wherein your name seems to be engraved. *Parijatha* has also adorned the heart and does your love know your fine arts over the adornment of flowers?' (*Dutikarma Prakasha* – 11<sup>th</sup> type *dutika/sakhi*) Enamored with *champak* garland, *Ragaputra Lalit* fell for *Malini*, forgetting she is the messenger of his *nayika*, tries to drag her to his chamber in the act of love, garland is in her hand. The heroine is sitting and waiting patiently for her *sakhi malini* to come and convey the message to her about the *nayaka* and she is positively planning and keeping herself ready for the union.



## Group B. 2. Parent *Raga*: Malkaus raga

*Raginis* Wives: Gaundkari, Devagandhari, Gandhari, Seehute, Dhanasri

*Ragaputras* Sons: Maru, Mustang, Mewara, Parbal, Chand, Khokhat, Bhora, Nad (Total 14)



### *Raga Malakaus*

Rajasthan style Marwar school

Mid 17<sup>th</sup> century

4.5 x 6.2 inches

No inscription found

A. The scene is laid on the terrace of a palace. The hero smelling rose flower held in his right hand, is seated against a pillow. Behind him stands a *chauri* bearer.

B. The painting shows a royal couple sitting on a carpet in between two double storey pavilions. Few female attendants are by their sides. In the foreground three female musicians are singing and playing on musical instruments.

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 98) :** Of dark complexion, wearing yellow garments and a garland, his forehead is adorned with a beauty mark of *kumkuma* and holding a flute.

Malkauns is a *raga* in Indian classical music. It is one of the oldest *ragas* of Indian classical music. Malkauns is a *raga* that is “sung during small hours of the morning, just after midnight.” He further adds that the *raga* has a soothing and intoxicating effect. The name *Malkaush* is derived from the combination of *Mal* and *Kaushik*,



### *Raga Malakaus*

Rajasthan style, Alwar School

18<sup>th</sup> century

29.9 x 23.36 cm

Inscription found on the top register

which means he who wears serpents like garlands – the god Shiva. The *raga* is believed to have been created by goddess Parvati to calm lord Shiva, when he was outraged and refused to calm down after *Tandav* in rage of Sati’s sacrifice. In *Jainism*, it is also stated that the *Raga Malkauns* is used by the *Tirthankaras* with the *Ardhamāgadhi* Language when they are giving *Deshna* (Lectures) in the *Samavasarana*. Malkauns is a serious, meditative *raga*, and is developed mostly in the lower octave (*mandra saptak*) and in a slow tempo (*vilambit laya*).

Both of these paintings as identified as *Raga Malkaus* have no bearing with the visual iconography stated. The male figures in these paintings are the portrayal of any head or raja of the state with royal attire seated in a palace atmosphere with one *chauri* bearer, in the other painting the king is seen with his queen and her maids. Both the paintings do not have extra ordinary features as in the case of other *Ragamala* paintings.



### ***Ragini Gunakali***

Acc. No.51.103/9

Rajasthan style, Alwar school

18<sup>th</sup> century

29.97 x 24.38 cm

Inscription on top Register

Outside the palace pavillion a royal lady is sitting on chowki against a big mauve cushion. She is seen plucking flowers with her right hand and her left hand extended to the other side. A maid is standing by her side holding a chowri in her hand. Another maid is making the bed inside the palace chamber. The background has a dark sky.

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 99):** A fair lady, with open tresses and red garments, walking gracefully like a swan, in a plantain forest.

This scene of a lady plucking flowers in preparation for the arrival of her *nayaka Raga Malakaus* is one of the traditional and primary features of *Gunakali Ragini*. It is a morning raga associated with winter, evokes meditative or tranquil mood. The architecture in the painting shows of royal status. The *Ragini* is engaged in activity, where two pots with bountiful flowers are before her and she is probably arranging them. One of her close aide a *sakhi* is also engaged in fanning her *nayika Raga Malkaus* has five wives, probably he is visiting *Gunakali Ragini* and stay overnight. The other maid is arranging the bed chamber for them. Both *sakhis* give all their time to *Gunakali Ragini* and be with her when her husband is away and feel happy when their *nayika* taking interest to welcome the *Raga Malkaus*. When there is a need they raise to the situation of becoming confident female messengers to carry out their duties. A series of *Ragamala* is sourced from Alwar, a sub-school of Rajasthani Miniature School. Though not of highly painterly quality, the painting is important for the correct iconography of *Gunakali Ragini*.



### *Ragini Gandhari*

Acc. No 89.268, Folio 15

Deccani, Bijapur

Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century

40.5 x 23.5 cm

Label Inscription on the top register.

A *Ragini* is seated on a golden throne and holding a pan in her hand. Another lady is standing outside the pavillion and feeding the calf with some greens.

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 108):** Gandhari *Ragini* is also known by the other name as Devagandhari, belonging to Gandhara *Desha*. She is youthful, exceedingly beautiful, of dark complexion, wearing attractive ornaments and white garments, anointed with sandal-wood paste and holding a lump of betel-leaves, and speaking in melodious voice as anklets jingle in her feet.

All the above features of *Ragini Gandhari* are faithfully rendered by the Deccani artist. The two storied architecture draws the attention, the upper chamber in the form of pavillion is beautifully laid out with cushion and bed. In the lower spacious chamber *Ragini Gandhari* is seated and looking at her *sakhi* and giving her a message. When a message is sent to with betel-leaves, it is the symbol of invitation. She is offering betel-leaves to the *sakhi*, who will go as female messenger to convey message of her *nayika* to *Raga Malkaus*. The female messenger represents the type of *Cheshtasanketa Kovida*, An expert in understanding the mind of her *nayika* and how that message to be conveyed to the *nayaka*. The description goes like this, 'Which camphor along with a portion of a white betel leaf having thrown in a pot was handed over to an envoy that Lakshmi having arrived there with a gentle smile departed with the gait of an antelope'. (*Dutikarmaprakasha - Duti 15*)



### *Ragini Shrihatti*

Acc No Folio 16

Deccani, Bijapur school

Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century

40.5 x 24 cm

Label inscription on the top register

*Ragini* Sri Hatti is seated on a decorated cushion and holding a *tanpura* in her hand. She is shown teaching music to *Ragini* Bhupali and her friend.

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 109):** With her eyes and countenance as beautiful as the lotus, wearing delicate light garments and attractive jewellery, well versed in scriptures, holding a stringed musical instrument, honoured by the kings and accompanied by her confidantes *Raginis* Bupali and Malasari.

Very much following the above visual iconography the artist draws our attention towards the three figures

of feminine beauty and charm. They are seated in a spacious chamber beautifully and tastefully decorated with colorful motifs on the wall and floral patterned carpet of golden colour. The upper portion has artistic layout of terrace, pavilions, staircase, parapet walls and limited foliage to add freshness. Sun up on the sky, foreground has beautiful floral shrubs. The artist has attended all minute details including costume and jewellery. *Ragini* Shrihatti is proficient teacher, teaching music to her close aides and when situation warrants they will be the female messengers to *Ragini* Gandhari. These two maids belonged to the category of *Sakhi*. (*Dutikarmaprakasha* – Duti – 1) loyal to their *nayika*, learning music and accomplish the task if entrusted as female messengers.

***Ragini Andrayaki***

Acc No. Folio 17

Deccani, Bijapur

Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century

40.5 x 24 cm



Label Inscription on top register

Two *Raginis* are going somewhere or for *puja*. She is holding a tray full of flowers and her friend holding a garden.

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 107):** *Andhrayaki Ragini* belongs to Andhra Pradesh. She is slim, radiant, with sparkling white teeth and a wasp-like waist adorned with flowers. Wearing a jeweled belt, dressed in the manner of women from the south, walking briskly like the wind, and accompanied by her confidante *Dravidi* of dark complexion.

Visually rewarding scenario has two distinct parts. The upper part of the painting is filled with varieties of flora and fauna, architecture, two sages are performing *yajna* under the rising sun. Second part of the painting

has a beautiful layout with flowering trees, landscape, perching birds and the *raginis*. *Ragini Andhrayaki* is slim and beautiful, adorned with splendid jewels, wearing *saree* with golden *butis* and long gold embroidered pullover. Her slim waist, fair complexion, way of conducting herself, walking like brisk wind all add to her personality. The other lady is her close friend known as *Ragini Dravidi* coming from *Dravida Desha* is a close friend, the *sakhi*, pacing with her friend. She is dark and adorned with jewels, holding a garland and marching towards the temple. *Ragini Dravidi* in a dark colour *saree* seems to be an adorable friend of *Andhrayaki Ragini*, who falls into the category of *sakhi*. The yellow ochre background holds so well the stunning varieties of foliage and beautiful moving *Raginis*.

***Ragini Dhanasri and  
Bhimapalasi***

Acc. No 89.275 Folio 18

Deccani style, Bijapur school

Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century

40.5 x 24 cm



Label inscription on top of the register mentioning the names of other two *raginis*.

The *Ragini* is standing under a tree in white costume. In the background a beautiful pavilion is painted.

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 100):** *Ragini* Dhanashri is of blue complexion, with black glossy hair, wearing a black and white checkered garment, holding pomegranates accompanied by her confidantes *raginis* Jetasari and Bhimapalasi, shedding tears due to separation from her lover.

The drama is happening in the beautiful garden in front of the house, with neatly laid out architecture and tastefully created pavilion in expectation of *nayaka* Raga Malkaus. All the features of Visual iconography suggested by Kshemakarna for *Ragini* Dhanashri is presented by the Deccani artist; such as checked white *saree*, blue complexion, sharing her grief with *Ragini*

Bhimpalasini and Jetasari and standing in expectation of her *nayika*. She is under a slender flowering tree, holding one of the branches to support her falling stature, her longing has turned to frustration. She is the heroine in separation of her hero experiencing many stimulus emotions known as *vibhavas*. She found two of her close *sakhis*, associates namely Bhimapalasi and Jetasari, real friend in need of distress. *Ragini* Dhanashri sobbing vehemently sharing her sufferings, the *sakhi* is also equally sad and giving assurance of helping her to go the *nayika* herself as the messenger and bring him along with her. The other *sakhi* Jetasari standing behind the *nayika* watching her state of dejection closely and holding a soft cloth in her hand to wipe the tears; interestingly a crane is also taking part in the grief and conversation between two *sakhis* and *nayika*. Beautifully laid out flower bed along the path handled carefully, to go with rich foliage in the garden.



### ***Ragini Dhanashri***

Rajasthan style, Alwar School

18<sup>th</sup> century

30 x 23,75

Inscription on the top register.

A. The scene is laid in a palace, where in the centre a queen is sitting on a carpet and attended by a maid and a *chauri* bearer. She is looking at the picture of her lover. A female musician is also sitting in front of her. In the foreground a king is seen entering into the palace on his horse back. He is accompanied by three foot-soldiers.



### ***Ragini Dhanashri***

Acc.No. 57.75/8

Rajasthan style, Mewar School

Late 17<sup>th</sup> century

32.25 x 23.87

B. Name of the *raga* inscribed on the top of the painting.

In a palace courtyard a heroine is sitting on a cushioned *chauri*. She is drawing the portrait of her lover, who has gone abroad. A maid is seated in front of her on a flowered carpet. The background is painted in that yellow colour with a blue strip on top indicating the sky and some trees

There are three paintings depicting Dhanashri from the Collections of National Museum. They are; the one in Deccani style from the royal court of Bijapur and the other two in Rajasthani style from two royal courts namely Mewar and Alwar. All the three have certain common features like the *Ragini Dhanashri* is sad due to the separation of her *nayaka* Raga Malakaus and her suffering pangs are obvious. She is engaged in the conversation with her *sakhis* or drawing the portrait of her *Nayaka* and yet in another instance she is passionately absorbed seeing the portrait of her *nayaka*, hardly aware that he is very close to her home mounted on horse with his close associates mentioned by Pandarika Vitthala as *Peethemarda*, *Cheta*, *Vidushaka* (*Dutikarmaprakasha* – last verses speak about four kinds of associated who help hero namely, *Peetamardha*, *Cheta*, *Vita* and *Vidushaka*)

***Ragaputra Maru***

Acc. No 89.280 Folio 19

Deccani style, Bijapur school

Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century

40.5 x 24 cm



Label Inscription on top Register

*Ragaputra Maru* holding a spear in right hand a lotus in left hand, a well dressed attendant is standing behind him.

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 102):** Radiant with a *kumkuma-tilak*, holding a spear, wearing a crown and red garment and his skin anointed white associated with a handsome associate.

*Ragaputra Maru*, the son of *Raga Malaka* has taken an entry into the courtyard of his *nayika*, well dressed to give his best appearance before her. His garment, crown, jewellery, lotus in the hand, a long spear signifying his valorous personality and the footwear show that he has travelled from distance, all these features surely impress his *nayika*. But his first concern is to impress the *dutika* who is peeping from the short balcony through half opened door. She knew the coming of *Ragaputra Maru*, set up the ambiance of manicured creepers and foliage decorating the two pavilions, placing the decorated water pots and towels

for *nayika* and his friend to wash their face and tired feet due to travel in the sun. Aquatic birds in the pond laid on foreground, flower bed fencing, spring flowers in multi colours are all in welcoming mode. *Dutika*, this female messenger is also dressed tastefully, impressed by the appearance of *nayaka* would give a positive message and romantic description to *nayika* aspiring for the successful union of *nayaka-nayika*. Pandarika Vittala identifies such *dutika* as *Cheti* with description '*Cheti* is one who is an adept in the policy of reconciliation and she conceals in her voice. She covers up the symbol of enjoyment in her act as well as in her speech. How did your words induce quarrel in the beginning and was it due to the falling of your beautiful tresses or due to the long sighs which made him run towards you and what made you to get confidence in him oh! *Cheti*'. Similarly the associate of the *nayaka* is identified as *cheta* 'they are his close confidants who are adept in the task of conveying message but they do not reveal anything outwardly beyond the screen. (*Dutikarmaprakasha* – *Dutika Cheti* and *Duta Cheta*)



***Ragaputra Barabala***

Acc.No 89.278 Folio21

Deccani style, Bijapur school

Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century

40.5 x 24 cm

**Label Inscription on top Register**

*Ragaputra* Barabala is standing on a small platform with five steps. He is holding a pot and a flute. Two ladies are standing on the steps and seems talking with the hero.

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 103):** Handsome and youthful like Kamadeva, wearing a *champaka* garland, bangles, earrings, and colourful garments, soft spoken and giving joy to everyone by his melodious tunes.

Superbly visualised and painted the *Ragaputra* Birabal belonging to the group of *Raga* Malakaus, and his neatly laid mansion, beautiful manicured foliage and creepers placed tastefully, the artist added artistically carved wooden pillar with a crisp bracket figure, staircase, railings, and carved window cell that

matches with the carved pillar. One can experience the atmosphere of sumptuous grandeur under the evening sun. The *nayaka* is also dressed on the same scale as his rich environment, two *sakhis* dressed elegantly, the first one belonging to the type of *Kathini*, the story teller, meeting the hero and telling him a story pertaining to her *nayika*. 'By giving mutual indication pertaining to the merits by taking resort to various means she reveals both of them by taking resort to deceit. I am a story teller you know my story and I know you were the hero with intoxication of praise and your wife was also proud and vain. You were bent on whimsical ways but you perished on account of fate and again you took birth and even in this life you are proud and you remember that proud lady. (*Dutikarmaparakasha – Dutika Kathini*) The second one is her assistant dressed modestly and giving her the company.

***Ragaputra Bhramara or Bramhananda***

Acc.No Folio 24

Deccani style, Bijapur school

Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century

41 x 24 cm



Label Inscription on top Register

*Ragaputra* Bhramara is shown playing *chaupar* in a courtyard with his spouse. A lady attendant is standing behind female seated figure. Composition is decorated with a banana tree.

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 104):** *Ragaputra* Bhramara is handsome, wearing a crown, pearl necklace, splendid jewellery, colourful garments, sporting in a garden full of *champak* flowers and plantain trees.

This painting has not deviated even a bit from the description given by Kshemakarna. It's the evening

time, sun is not warm and against green background the *nayaka* Bhramara is playing *chaupar* with his consort. It looks like they are relaxed and having a good pastime. *Champak* tree with bountiful flowers providing the shade as well as lending aromatic breeze and plantain trees adding more shadow and cool breeze. Sitting next to a pool and enjoying the aquatic birds and flowerbeds the *nayaka-nayika* are in union. One maid, a *sakhi* who is always with the *nayika*, holds a *chouri*, fly whisk and a water jug, with an expression of caring her *nayika*. *Sakhi* is one who is trustworthy and always next to her mistress and one who is adapt in decorating and involving in light talk. (*Dutikarmaprakasha – Dutika/sakhi*)

### Group C. 3. Parent *Raga*: Hindol *raga*

*Raginis* Wives: Telangi, Devkari, Basanti, Sindhoori, Aheeri

*Ragaputras* Sons: Surmanand, Bhasker, Chandra-Bimb, Mangalan, Ban, Binoda, Basant, Kamoda (Total 14)



#### *Raga Hindol*

Rajasthan style  
Marwar school

Acc. No 54.68.18

18<sup>th</sup> century

28 x 19.5 cm

#### Label Inscription on top Register

A blue complexioned Lord Krishna is sitting on a swing with Radha and holding a musical instrument *veena* in his hands. Four *gopis* are standing with musical instruments in their hands on the either sides of the couple. Two peacocks are sitting on top of the swing, facing each other. Four trees at the back against blue sky.

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 98):** Born from the naval of Brahma, fair complexion, wearing a crown, holding a flower studded bow and arrow, surrounded by the bunch of bumble-bees, and king of the *ragas*.

The *Raga Hindol* signifies the swing, which is characterized by *Teevra Madhyam* at its heart, and revolves around that note, resting on *Dha* or *Ga*. . A prominent movement in Hindol is *gamak* heavy and forceful oscillations particularly using *Ma* and *Dha*. Its structure and phrasing follows the imitation of a swing.

In most of the paintings *nayaka* and *nayika* are seated on the swing and around the *sakhis* of the *nayika* will be present. Here also the artist has chosen the theme of Vrindavan, where Radha and Krishna are enjoying music. Out of *ashtasakhis*, eight main *sakhis* of Radha, first four namely, Lalita, Vishakha, Suchitra and Champakalatha are present here playing on musical instruments.



### *Ragini Telangi*

Acc No 89.300 Folio 27

Deccani style, Bijapur school

Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century

41 x 24 cm

Label Inscription on top Register

In the upper section, *Raga Hindol* is depicted having a discussion with Lord Brahma and two sages. In the lower section the *Ragini Telangi* clad in a white costume is swinging on a swing accompanied by her attendants.

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 107):** Having beautiful lotus-like eyes and lips, and with full breasts, soft spoken, wearing attractive ornaments and garments and flower garland, accompanied by her confidantes and fanned by a yak-hair whisk.

While *Raga Hindol*, an enlightened *nayaka* is in the process of intellectual discourse with none other than Brahma and other two enlightened sages under a short pavilion witnessed by sun also, his first consort *Ragini Telangi* is enjoying herself in an open garden playing on swing, symbolically presented here. The portrayal of *Ragini* is handled by the artist with remarkable freshness and daintiness, touch of delicacy can be experienced with the design, transparency and luminosity of the fabric. Her facial features, fair complexion, stretched feet while on swing show aesthetic conduct of *Ragini Telangi*. Three of her *sakhis* are with her and, two of them are pushing the swing in front and behind, at the same time taking care of their *nayika*, the third *sakhi* is fanning her mistress with a huge yak-hair whisk as discussed by Kshemakarna and holding a beautiful shawl too. All three *sakhis* are seniors or of same age of *Ragini Telangi* and dressed like local women of the Bijapur region. Trees, foliage, flowers, flower beds add fragrance and pleasantness to the depiction of *Ragini Telangi*.



### *Ragini Vasanti*

Acc No 89.302 Folio 29

Deccani style, Bijapur school

Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century

40.5 x 24 cm

Label Inscription on top Register

The lady is in red printed costume with yellow *choli*. Her attendant is offering her a flower pot. Another attendant is holding a garland of white flower in her hand.

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 108):** *Ragini Vasanti* is attractive, auspicious and always smiling, endowed with large eyes and sparkling white teeth, well adorned, her firm breast covered with red *choli*, and arousing passion by her side-glances.

The musical mode here is *Ragini Vasanti*, symbolises spring season, and evokes intense passion and moods of celebration. The environment created by the artist in this painting just correlates with the auspiciousness. *Ragini* and her maids occupy the central stage while the colourful architecture, foliage, flowerbeds at the entrance gate, golden colour of the sun is covered with lush green palm leaves, a bird watching all the arrangements too. A cage is hung with a parrot welcoming the *vasanta*, the spring season, it appears *Ragini Vasanti* is expecting *Raga Hindol* to visit her and she is giving final touches to the arrangement. One of her *sakhi*, a maid has brought flower pot and they are conversing to place the same. The other younger maid is *malini*, a garland maker and she knows that her mistress will welcome the *nayaka* with the garland she made. The presence and significant role of *sakhis* are obvious in these paintings.





### ***Ragini Abhiri or Ahiri***

Acc No 89.307 Folio 31

Deccani style, Bijapur school

Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century

40.5 x 24 cm

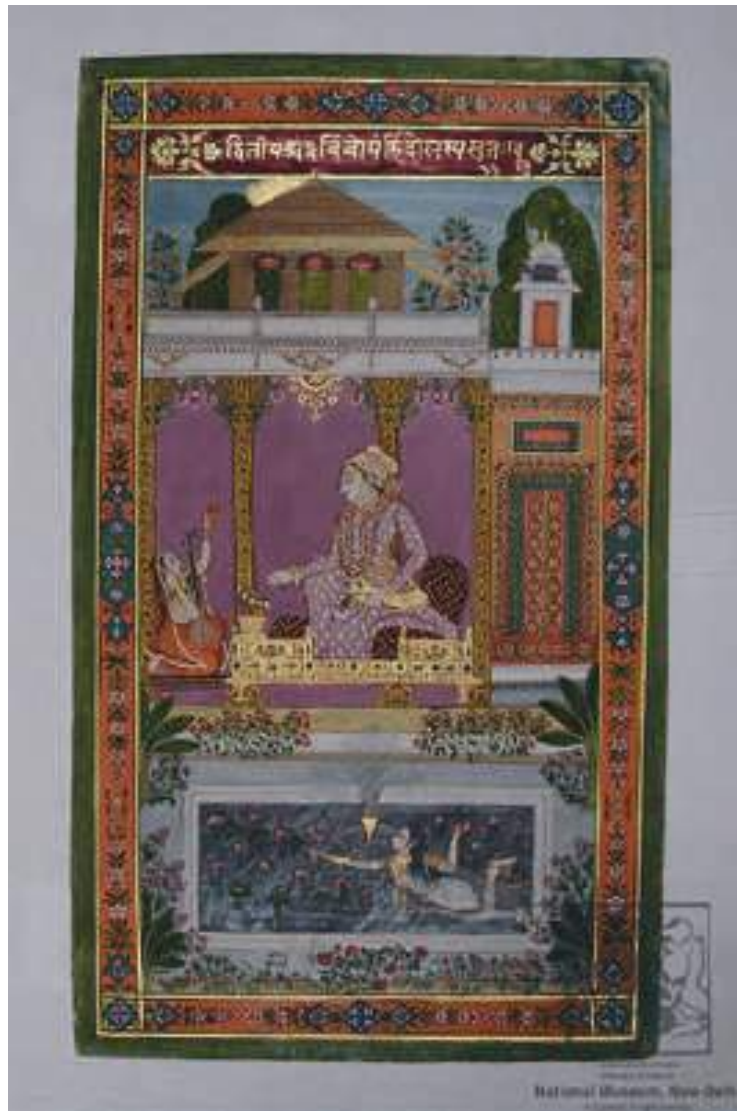
Label Inscription on top Register

*Ragini* Abhiri is standing in a decorated pavilion. A lady is playing with the fountain and holding a fan in her hand. Another lady is washing her foot in the fountain.

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 98):** *Ragini* Abhiri is a woman from Abhira tribe, dark and passionate, adorned with a *choli* made from

flowers, wearing other attractive ornaments and holding a mirror in her hand. The anklets in her feet resound as she recites in a picture gallery thus giving joy to the kings.

Complementing the Deccani artist following the visual presentation of Kshemakarna in the portrayal of *Abhiri Ragini*, incorporating the features such as wearing a *choli* made of flowers and her costume with flower motifs, holding a mirror in the hand and those passionate looks! She is framed in a beautiful picture gallery created especially for her. She has travelled to this place by her two *sakhis*, but they are attracted by the fountain and aquatic birds and they are in playful moods, while their mistress is looking around in expectation of her consort.



### ***Ragaputra Chandrabimba or Chandrarkhya***

Acc No 89.301 Folio 33

Deccani style, Bijapur school

Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century

41 x 24 cm

Label Inscription on top Register

*Ragaputra* Chandrarkhya is playing on small percussion *vadya*, and lotus in other hand, he is in purple *jama* and turban. In foreground a lady is swimming in a water pool.

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 102):** *Ragaputra* Chandrarkhya is dressed in a garment made of lotus flowers or garment of lotus pattern and colour, holding a lotus in one hand and on the other holding an axe, wearing a flower garland and has lotus like eyes.

In this painting the artist added interesting features to present *Ragaputra* Chandrarkhya; like he is wearing beautiful lotus patterned long *jama*, a nice head gear, golden embroidered *kammarbandh* tied on the waist, minimum jewels but nice mixed flowers garland. He is holding lotus in one hand, seated comfortably to play on a small percussion instrument with stick. He is seated in a beautiful pavilion against the setting sun, foliage adds for the beauty of the structure. Two female figures are introduced here. The one who is singing in a raised voice to the rhythm provided by *Ragaputra* is the female messenger *Ganavathi* sent by the *nayika*. She had dressed modestly and engaged the *nayaka* in the absence of *nayika* who is taking a swim in the pool little away from the pavilion. She is seen in resplendent jewels and also enjoying the music amidst beautifully laid foliage all around the pool and the fountain in the centre. The decorative margins painted floral motifs all around go with the foliage in the painting





### *Ragaputra Basant*

Acc No 87.1264

Pahadi style, Kangra school

Mid 1785-90 CE

Inscription on the reverse

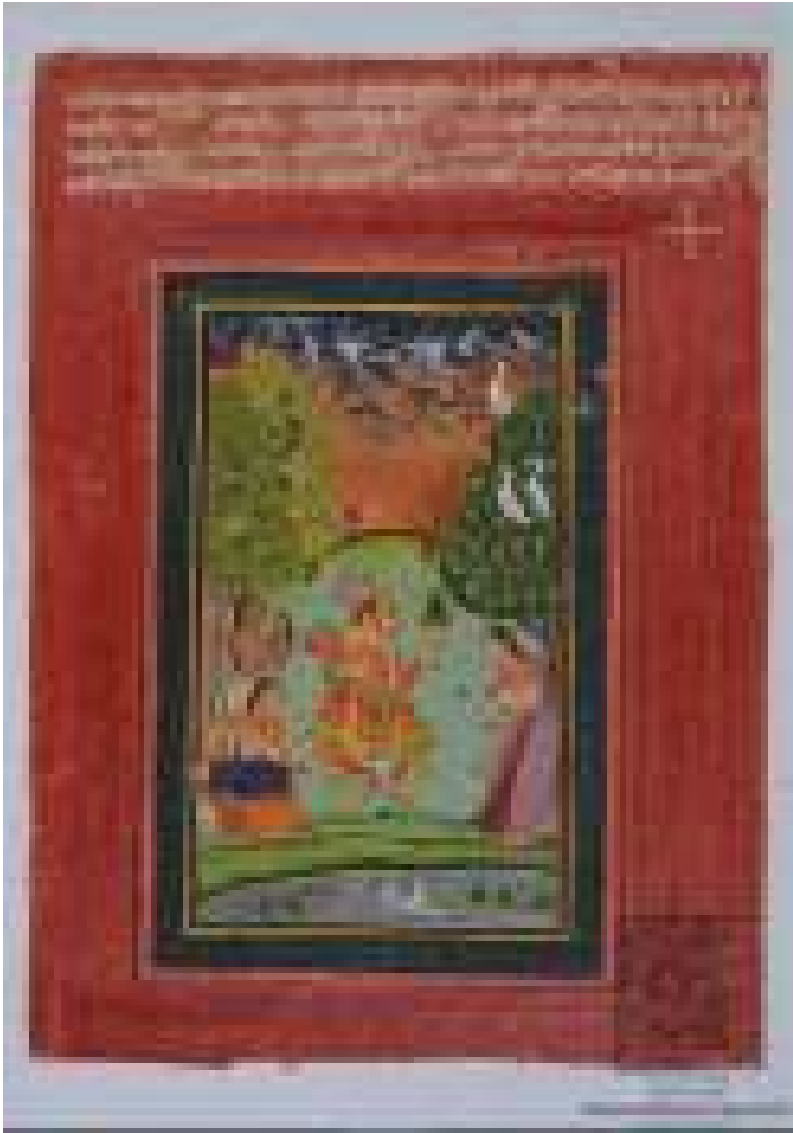
A. *Ragaputra* Basant, son of Raga Hindol is mentioned on the reverse. In the painting Basant is seen with two ladies, dancing on the beats of music. Here he is conceived as Krishna. The row of trees shows that Kangra valley is full of flowers in spring. The painting has a bold red border all around.

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 98):** *Ragaputra* Basant is even more handsome than Kamadeva, smiling: adorned with red clothes, crown and garland, sporting in a pleasure garden full of blossom and bumble-bees, chewing betel leaves holding

a *veena*, knowledgeable, surrounded by beautiful ladies among the sweet sounds of cymbals and tambourine.

These two illustrations of *Ragaputra* Basant do have some of the features of visual iconography suggested by Kshemakarna, such as in both paintings, *Ragaputra* Basant enjoying the music provided by female musicians and began to dance rhythmically. In both paintings, the enactment is in the open area.

The Pahari painter has brilliantly made use of the space by introducing a row of flowering trees at the edge of the short hillock. The beautiful backdrop of greenery dotted with flower plants in the foreground, flowing Yamuna, all highlight the Kangra school of Pahari paintings. Youthful Krishna dancing in swinging movements in great joy is the focal point of the painting, lady playing on *pakhvaz* at is Radha herself dressed in *lehanga* and *odhaini* in orange and blue combination and her *sakhi* Lalitha, the trusted *Dutika*, messenger of Radha playing on *kartala* equally enjoying the dance of her *gvala*.



### ***Ragaputra Basant***

Acc No 51.64/57

Rajasthan style, Unaira school

Late 18<sup>th</sup> century

35 x 25.5 cm

Inscription mentioning the *raga* and *ragalakshana* given on top border in Sanskrit.

A. The scene is laid in a hilly landscape by a lotus pool with flowering tree on both sides. Male personage is holding a *veena* and a flower vase is dancing to the tune of music.

In the painting from Unaira, the presence of the spring is experienced in every way, including colourful and

dramatic sky, the meeting of the orange colour sky with greenland, two trees blossomed to the maximum enjoyed by two peacocks and three perching birds enjoy the happenings on the sky and the *Ragaputra Basanta* dancing with damsels. He is wearing a crown made of lotus flowers, the hues of frilled dress and a flower vase symbolizing spring season, as in the other painting two women are playing on *pakhvaz* and *karatala* respectively, the third one is dancing and playing on cymbals, *tata*, *avanaddha* and *Ghana vadyas* are rhythmically played by these musicians, the *sakhis* of *Ragaputra Basant* and he is dancing as an embodiment of Spring season. Dance sequence is unfolded on banks of a pool, where aquatic birds and lotus too experiencing the bliss. Border design draws attention, while the text on *Ragaputra Basant* in Sanskrit inscribed legibly.

***Ragaputra Surbhang***

Acc No 89.304 Folio 33

Deccani style, Bijapur school

Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century

40. x 24 cm



Label Inscription on top Register

The *Ragaputra* Surbhangu is seated with two ladies and playing musical instruments practicing a *raga*.

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 105):** *Ragaputra* Surbhang is dressed in white garments, relieved with patterns in saffron colour, playing drums and cymbals, accompanied by beautiful women and he is favourite of ladies.

It is a superbly executed painting, exquisite in all respects. This Deccani artist has taken great care in delineating every inch speaks of the quality of work expected by the patron from Bijapur royal court. Visual iconography stated by Kshemakarna is executed here without deviating even a bit of it. *Ragaputra* Surbhang in a white dress relieved with orange floral motifs with matching head gear in the form of stylized *rumal*. He is playing melodiously on *svarmandal*, stringed

musical instrument, as he is passionately liked by women, two beautifully dressed women are sitting closely and probably learning a *raga* from him. The environment around is equally artistic with manicured lush trees and foliage, covering the setting sun. At the other side another drama is unfolding, a *dutika*, a female messenger, holding a flywhisk just unveiling a well designed curtain, carrying the message to convey to her *nayika*, who is inside another chamber, getting ready to come out and meet *Ragaputra* Surabandhu. She has laid another seating arrangement in open with white marble seat, cushions, golden plate and jar also other paraphernalia by the side of flower bed. But shocked to see the *nayaka* enjoying music with other two women. She is performing the function of a *Dutika*. Be throwing the bits of stone or by involving in the conceited speech, *Dutika* accomplishes her task on hand. (*Dutikarnaprakasha Dutika*, 4<sup>th</sup> type of Female messenger).

***Ragaputra Vinod***

Acc No 89.305 Folio 39

Deccani style, Bijapur school

Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century

40. x 24 cm



Label Inscription on top Register

*Ragaputra* Vinoda in white costume is listening some joke of his companion. Another friend is also sitting with him.

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 106):** *Ragaputra* Vinoda, of fair complexion, wearing white clothes and beautiful ornaments, holding a lump of betel leaves in the hand, and enjoying the company of beautiful young women.

The very name Vinoda means play, sport or amusement and his portrayal in this *Ragamala* painting is very much true to the visual iconography and the very name itself. *Ragaputra* vinoda is seated in front of a beautiful mansion, front door has an artistically painted doorframe and decorative motifs, parapet wall has mosaic designs, he is seated on a gilded wooden seat. He is white dress with exclusive crown and jewels made of gold, His two *sakhis*, companions are sharing a humorous moment, the one who is making gesture is *Vdushaka*, he is one who is a comic character and creates humour by displaying his bodily gestures. (*Dutikarmaprakasha Duta*, Male Messenger, or Companion) The other one who is sitting next to Vinoda is giving him company

and he is Cheta, a very close friend. Apart from this scenario, there are two interesting events taking place, where the *dutika/sakhi* are involved. At the right hand side the subject is painted as an independent painting, the *dutika* under shade of branches of a tree, a peeing golden hued sun on clear sky, beautifully stretched wings of a peacock, the *sakhi*, female messenger tastefully dressed holding a golden colour fan in one hand and feeding deer on the other hand near a short beautiful pavilion, but her heart towards the three men. Probably after listening to their conversation she is moving towards the direction to convey the message to her heroine, who is in the other part of the mansion. She is known as *Parachittavisheshajna* (an expert) who by merely gazing could make out the articulation of speech of others. (*Dutikarmaprakasha Dutika*, 14<sup>th</sup> type of Female messenger). The other event not noticed by any one of them but the painter wants to create curious situation. Below the parapet wall, birds are disturbed perching to see a snake moving close by, suddenly a tribal woman, probably belonging to the community of snake charmers, with a stick in her hand trying to catch hooded snake. The Artist of this painting enjoyed by creating the dramatic moods in all three segments of the painting and handled in an aesthetic manner. Beautiful patterns on the four side borders.

***Ragaputra Ananda or Surmananda***

Acc No 89.303 Folio 40

Deccani style, Bijapur school

Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century

40. x 24 cm



## Label Inscription on top Register

In the upper part of the painting, Ragaputra Ananda is seated against heavy bolster. In the middle portion the hero receiving pan from a lady. In the foreground nayika is offering flower to hero who is looking back.

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 106):** *Ragaputra* Ananda is Handsome, and of fair complexion, adorned with bangles, earrings and other ornaments and wearing white garments, his body is anointed with sandalwood paste, his teeth is red due to chewing of betel-leaves.

Beautiful and colourful foliage is the highlight of this painting, where minimum architecture and maximum nature occupies the space. Sun is up above the clear sky in golden hew, and red flower blossoms are seen in three places to signify atmosphere of happiness and freshness. *Ragaputra* Ananda is handsome and is with three women in three different successive action and situation. *Ragaputra* is standing under a pavilion probably coming from outside, received by *dutika*, *Vichitravachana*, (*Dutikarmaparakasha Dutika*, 6<sup>th</sup> type

of Female Messenger) dressed elegantly to give a good impression and she is like the combination of appeasing or separating or despising or by taking resort to a pun or double intended word or by inducing fear or by taking resort to fourfold means or by employing strange words to convey the message to him that *nayika* is expecting him, while offering betel-leaf.

In the second part he is seated under a pavilion with pink background, a *sakhi* may be Cheti of *nayika* dressed in nice costume fanning with a huge fly-whisk, the elegantly dressed *Ragaputra* Ananda, who is waiting and expecting his *nayika*. The third successive episode is the portrayal of the departure of *Ragaputra* Ananda after spending his time with his *nayika*. She is seeing him off by handing over a colourful fan and a water jug for his travel. He is carrying a *kinnari vadya* and *karatala*, dressed like mendicant wearing a high heeled foot wear, a large turban, replacing his white robes into colourful attire for walking comfortably, *nayaka-nayaki* are looking at each other, one can see the expression of separation on their faces.



### *Ragaputra Vibhasa*

Acc No 89.306 Folio 36

Deccani style, Bijapur school

Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century

41 x 23.3 cm

Label Inscription on top Register

In the upper pavilion a lady is sitting on a bed. In the lower pavilion the hero is standing and holding a bird and a flower stick.

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 102):** *Ragaputra Vibhasa* is of fair complexion, with large eyes, wearing dark or colourful dress and garland he is teaching a parrot to speak.

The meaning of *vibhasa* is light or luster, the musical mode is compared with the sound of milking a cow. Here the artist is able perfectly match the imagery with visual iconography suggested by Kshemakarna. The painting suggests the fall of night instead of the presence of golden sun as in all other Deccani *Ragamala* series, here the crescent moon is witnessing the dramatic episodes unfolding here. Two storied mansion occupies

the centre stage, this stylized architecture is the main feature of all the paintings of this superbly painted series.

On the top floor, a bed chamber specially made with violet painting studded with golden colour motifs symbolising *srhingara rasa*, The *nayika* is sitting on the bed with the expectation of the union with her *nayaka*, On the ground floor *Ragaputra Vibhasa*, dressed in colorful *jama*, veil, turban, appears to be in two minds, weather to go upstairs or to go out without meeting the *nayika*, he is conversing with the parrot in pretext. A *Dutika*, identified as *Skhalita*, she is known as the envoy *Skhalita* who has failed in making an alliance and who makes vain attempts to unite them later. (*Dutikarmaprakasha Dutika*, 12<sup>th</sup> type of Female Messenger) is eagerly listening to the *nayaka*, with an intension to convey his state of mind to her mistress who is waiting in the upper chamber. On the foreground another *sakhi*, well dressed has come to take the cow and calf to the cow shed, she is looking at them passionately. The painter has shown the intense love of mother cow towards the little calf and the responsive feeling of the *sakhi*. The cow and calf are specially painted with contrast colours and motifs. The floral border that surrounds the painting is an added decorative skill of the painter.

### Group D. 4. Parent *Raga*: *Deepak raga*

*Raginis* Wives: Kachheli, Patmanjari, Todi, Kamodi, Gurjari

*Ragaputras* Sons: Kaalanka, Kuntal, Rama, Kamal, Kusum, Champak, Gaura, Kanra (Total 14)



#### *Raga Dipaka*

Acc No 47.110.112

Deccani style, from  
Deccan

18<sup>th</sup> century

10.1 x 6.7 inches

Inscription is not found.

Sketch depicting a prince seated against a pillow under a pavilion with his princess on his lap. Burning lampas can be seen on the ground. A sorrowing depiction of a man can be seen in another room. A lotus pool can be seen in the foreground.

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 98):** *Dipaka Raga* is born from the eyes of the Sun-God, of red complexion and good-looking, mounted on a white elephant, wearing a diadem, garland and bright garments, holding a discus; pleasure giving like Kamadeva and sung in the middle of summer in the presence of king.

Undoubtedly *Dipaka* is an important male *Raga* in the *Ragamala* tradition, it is related to the folklore of India. The Great Musician of Akbar's court, Miya Tansen was the Master of *Raga Dipaka* and *Megh Malhar*,

associated with the well-known legend of lighting the lampas by singing *Dipaka raga* in the royal court and brought rains to bring down the heat, engulfing Tansen and the court itself by singing *Megh Malhar*. Since then the musicians rarely learn or perform this *raga*, it's almost extinct and very few compositions by modifying the *swaras*, melody and drawn from different *thaats*, *Dipaka Raga* is sung by musicians. But the above painting identified as the *Dipaka Raga* in the collection does not signify any of the features, only three lamps are burning and flames are rising in the dark open area, where the prince is spending his night in a colourful pavilion with a princess engaged in romance besides a lotus pool. In another adjacent dark chamber, probably the *sakha*, *Peetamardha*, the companion of *Dipaka Raga* is singing the *Dipaka Raga*, his gesture of closed eyes and closing his one ear signify that he is singing intensely and the lights are lit in the dark. The couple are looking at that direction and appears pleased.

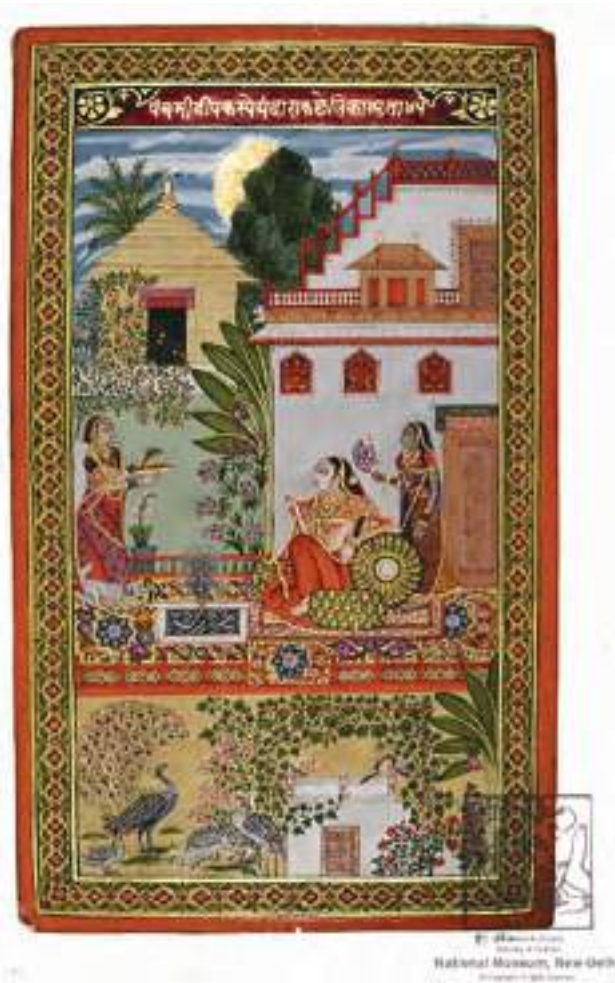
***Ragini Kachcheli***

Acc No 89.297 Folio 45

Deccani style, Bijapur school

Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century

41 x 24 cm

**Label Inscription on top Register**

The *Ragini* is seated against a big bolster and cushion, looks at her maid who is bringing grapes in a tray. A lady behind her is holding a fan.

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 109):** She is youthful, her eyes adorned with collyrium, tender like soft petals of flowers, anointed with kumkuma, a flower garland and pearl necklace decorating her bosom, wearing a golden nose ornament and dark *choli*, having a *tilak*-mark on her forehead and she is knowledgeable.

Ragini Kachcheli belongs to Kutch and also proficient in Kachelpa *raga*, music of Kutch. She also symbolizes the *kachhapa*, turtle. Here, the artist has taken note of all the features of *Ragini* Kachcheli, explained by Kshemakarna, Her dress and the gait very much goes with the women of Kutch in Gujarath. Fascination towards creating gentle lyricism in architectural perspectives never seems to leave the Deccani artists of this *Ragamala* series. In this painting to a pyramidal roof structured shrine catches the attention. In the upper floor decorative door, railings and staircase in red match with the wall decorations and decorated door frame in the ground floor. The setting is in the open, not inside the chamber as in the case of many of the paintings. Sun is

up and hidden behind a thickly grown tree, reducing the heat, plantain tree also act as fan in the summer, good number of flowering trees and shrubs decorate the entire area, the green background adds to cool atmosphere. The last register in the painting has also received the attention of the artist, a peacock with stretched feathers, beautifully treated and other birds seems to enjoy the scenario along with rich foliage. The centre of attraction *Ragini* Kachcheli is sitting against a specially designed bolster and cushion, sitting comfortably on a carpet of bold designs. She is speaking to her *sakhi*, the *Vichitravachana*. (*Dutikarmaprakasha Dutika, Vichitravachana*, 6<sup>th</sup> type of Female Messenger) She is like the combination of appeasing or separating or despising or by taking resort to a pun or double intended word or by inducing fear or by taking resort to fourfold means or by employing strange words. She understands the mind of her heroine and she would envisage the emotional state while serving her with grapes. Well dressed and dignified *dutika* is approaching *Ragini* Kachcheli with a tray of grapes and a bunch of grapes in the other hand. The other maid is of dark complexion, belongs to *cheti* type standing behind the *Ragini* and fanning her. It's a beautifully composed work with elaborate details. This time the border around is treated with not flowers but geometrical pattern which adds to the aesthetics of art work.



***Ragini Kumodini or Kamodi***

Acc No 89.289 Folio 41

Deccani style, Bijapur school

Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century

40.8 x 24 cm



Label Inscription on top Register

The *Ragini* in white costume is standing in the centre of the picture and holding a garland and flower. Her attendant is preparing bed for her.

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 108):** She is beautiful and attractive like Rati, the Goddess of passion, adorned with golden bangles, gem-studded necklaces and anklets, and attended by maid.

The colour pallet of the artist is fully utilised in this painting. Strong pink dominates in the form of flowers, huge carpet, the cloth of the pavilion where *Ragini* is standing, the flowers and garland she is holding, even the doors are decorated with the flowers of same colour, including the blooming flower at the background. This colour scheme suggest the *shringara rasa* and the height of passion. The situation is that of a setting out to meet her *nayaka*, dressed elegantly in a white *saree* with colourful motifs and a short *choli*, golden jewels on her bosom and hands add to the luster to her face,

her eyes are gazing distance in expectation and she is ready with a bunch of flower and a garland to give a passionate welcome. Meanwhile, a maid with dark complexion is preparing the marble seat by placing a hand fan, a towel, cushions for the couple to rest and she would stand behind and fan them with fly-whisk which she is holding on her back. While the other maid, very close associate of *Ragini Kamodi*, has prepared the garland and kept flowers ready performing the function of a *malini*, the garland maker and then she has come down to feed the peacocks, so that they should not be restless when the *nayaka* and *nayika* spend their time together. This *sakhi* is beautiful and modest and takes care of even minute things, which should not be the obstacle for the union for which the entire setting is getting ready. Lush green beds with fresh flowers and out stretched wings of the peacock, slowly the Sun is also rising with golden rays, and the floral border, all these add to the incredible visualization of the artist.



### *Ragini Gurjari*

Acc No 89.295 Folio 44

Deccani style, Bijapur school

Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century

41 x 24.4 cm

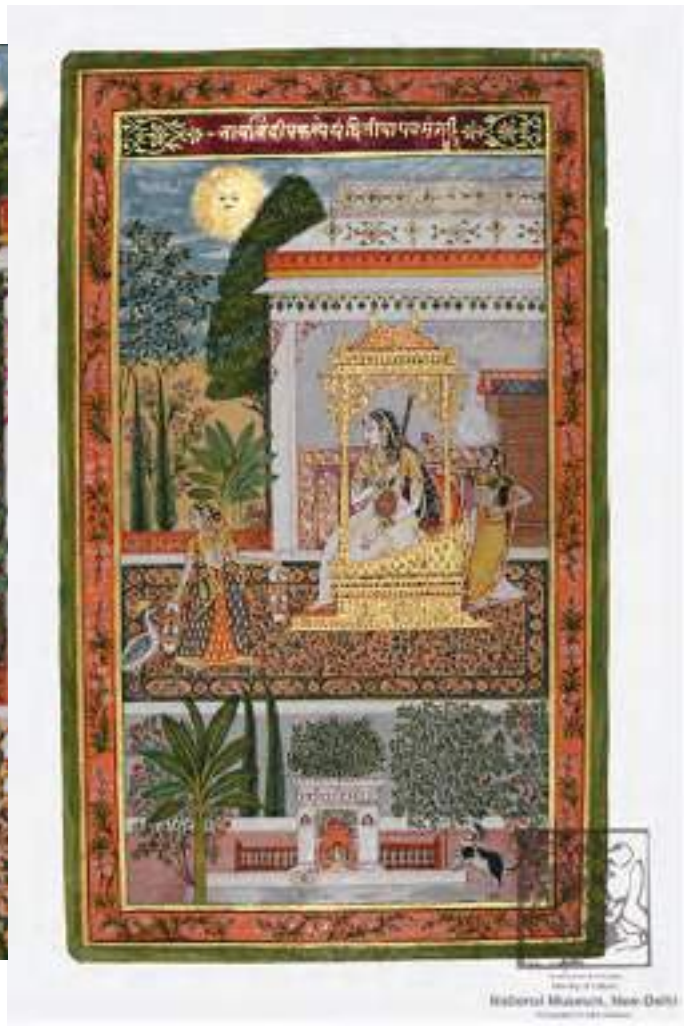
Label Inscription on top Register

The *Ragini* is standing in the centre of the painting in her house. Behind her a lady is preparing garland and in her front another lady is coming with a perfume bottle.

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 101):** With sparkling white teeth and red lips smiling gently wearing attractive ornaments and a red *choli*, and attended by three confidantes, Saurashtri, Dakshini and Dravidi.

*Ragini Gurjari* is popular among all genres of painters and in most of the paintings she is shown as singing alone holding a *veena*, not much difference with

visualization of *Ragini Todi*. But the Deccani painter has followed the description of Kshemakarna and created a very different and beautiful imagery of *Ragini Gurjari*. She hails from Gujarath, elegantly dressed, draped a saree of golden hue in a different way and her *imagery* is enhanced by delicately rendered gold jewels, special anklets, standing tall on the door step. Even the door frame is treated artistically with green and pink floral motifs also enhanced her imagery. Her Two *sakhis* are helping her to get ready to meet her *nayaka*. The dark complexioned *Sakhi* Dravidi is climbing the stairs holding a container of perfumes and another beautiful container of perfume selected for the occasion in the other hand approaching *Ragini Gurjari*, who is expecting her. This *sakhi* belongs to the type of *Shilpini*: Having exhibited emotions in keeping with the beauty you know the mutual love just as an expert sculptor. The other *Sakhi* who is preparing garland is of *Malini* type and would be used while receiving the *nayika*. Again the entire landscape is attended with passionate details, including two monkeys are engaged playing on the terrace.



### *Ragini Patamanjari*

Acc No 89.293 Folio 42

Deccani style, Bijapur school

Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century

41 x 24.3 cm

Label Inscription on top Register

The lady in white and golden costume is sitting on a golden throne. A small shrine in the courtyard is showing the plant of *tulsi*.

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 102):** With curls of hair falling loosely around her head, tender and of fair complexion, wearing white garments having a beauty on the fore-head and holding a *veena* in her hands.

Patamanjari is conceived as a separated heroine – a *virahini nayika*, whose lover is away from her and all alone she pines to meet him. In classical terminology she represents *vipralambha-shringara* – love in separation.

Ragini Patamanjari generates a melody full of pain and pathos and is known for its low-pitched notes rarely having a pitch rising to the top of the voice. Stringed instruments, such as *veena*, are its most effective organs for the pain within better reveals in the vibrating notes of strings when a hand in pensive mood strikes them.

In this painting *Ragini Patamanjari* is on open terrace Seated in a golden canopy singing herself holding *Veena*, dressed in white and adorned with gold jewels, her long tresses enhanced her beauty. Though the environment display embellishment, the *Ragini* in separation is in melancholy. To change the moods and add freshness a *sakhi*, *Malini*, the garland maker holding two garlands, beautifully made by her is approaching her heroine, meanwhile she is cajoling the bird too. She is in colorful costume and adorning herself with splendid jewels. The other *sakhi*, a close associate, knows the emotional state of her mistress is fanning with a huge fly-whisk. The artist took efforts to create a beautiful courtyard with a nice shrine for *tulsi*, a well grown plantain tree, green and flowering plants, a goat is trying reach the plant. An exceptionally beautiful border all around adds special appearance for the painting.



### *Ragini Todi*

Acc No 89.294 Folio 43

Deccani style, Bijapur school

Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century

41 x 24 cm

Label Inscription on top Register

*Ragini Todi* is searching for something in a forest. She is holding a *veena* in her hands and accompanied with an attendant.

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 102):** She is good looking, her eyes decorated with collyrium, dressed attractively, and with her hair held loosely, having pearl ornaments on her forehead, holding a *veena* and cymbals, anointed with sandal wood paste, and chewing betel-leaves.

Basically Todi is an old tribal folk melody, which later developed into a classical raga and became inseparable

part of *Ragamala* series as a classical consort of *Raga Dipaka*. She is portrayed as *khandita nayika*, who is separated from her *nayaka*, singing *Todi raga*, the deer come in herds to listen to her. *Ragini Todi* is the most popular and the most favourite *raga* of artistes to portray.

A shrine and hermitage scene is seen in both paintings. In Deccani painting, it is an elaborate rendering of hermitage in thick forest, A Shiva Temple with its mount Nandi has a huge sacred precinct where a sage is offering fire oblation, performing *yajna* in the morning before the rising Sun. Below *Todi Ragini* with her close companion *sakhi*, holding a *phoolchadi*, flower stick in one hand and on the other betel-leaves to offer to *Ragini Todi*. They both are under a flowering tree, *Ragini* is playing on a *veena*, playing *karatala* in the other hand, singing too, surprised to see the herds of deer, who are engrossed listening to her melody, they are passing by a flowing river. Deccani artist is successful in portraying the *virahini Ragini Todi* in an enchanted manner.



### ***Ragini Todi***

Acc No 96.376.2

Rajasthan style, Jaipur school

Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century

19 x 27 cm

Label Inscription on top Register

*Ragini Todi* is standing against the green leaves, she is accompanied by black and golden deer and two ladies playing on *tanpura*. On a hillock a white temple is painted with gold. The painting has an inscription.

In the Jaipur version, the shrine is shown at distance by suggesting two hillocks, *Ragini Todi* dressed elegantly, holding a *veena* with two large goats playing on the *veena* using her both hands. She is wonder struck to see her two *sakhis*, close companions, singing and playing on *tanpura* are approaching their mistress *Ragini Todi*. The flock of deer in motion are listening to the *Ragini*

*Todi* with rapt attention. Here also she is passing by a lotus pool.

These are two paintings from two different regions and miniature schools, one from Bijapur and the other from Jaipur. It indicates that the *Ragamala* tradition of visual imagery was common and popularly in use in the most of royal courts of Pahari, Rajasthani, Deccani and Mughal style of miniature traditions. In the Deccani painting above has a higher element of decorative embellishment in the treatment of flora, fauna, even the *veena*, *karatala*, the attire of *Ragini Todi* and her *sakhis*, architectural features and decorative floral border around takes to the height of embellishment. Where as in Jaipur version of the painting of *Ragini Todi*, the explanatory verse on *Ragini Todi* inscribed in detail, the attire of *Ragini Todi* and her *sakhis* are simple, landscape is presented with perspective, the herds of deer look natural and finally the border sans any embellishment. What is interesting is in both paintings the role and portrayal of *sakhis* is quite significant.



### ***Ragaputra Rama***

Acc No 87.1211

Pahari style, Kangra school

Late 18<sup>th</sup> century

26.2 x 17.7 cm

Label Inscription on top Register

This Kangra painting of Raga Rama is stylistically quite different. Though the painted form is a usual image of Rama, the Kangra artist has used the imagery for personifying a *raga*. He has painted him wearing a red turban and red boots, instead of wooden *padukas*, unusual features in Rama's imagery, besides his yellow costume, indicative of the image's royalty. Apart his usual bow and arrow, the artist has also planted a lady *chowri* bearer behind him carrying his quiver full of arrows. These are aspects foreign to Rama's imagery

and manifest a raga-form linked with mastery and royal splendor.

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 102):** Radiant, having lotus-like eyes, carrying a bow and arrow and speaking to his beloved in the shade of the tree.

The Pahari painter has taken aesthetic pleasure in creating this painting and portraying *Ragaputra* Rama in the most elegant and ideal type of a hero, the *nayaka*. Here he is not the character of Lord Rama, the hero of Ramayana but the *Ragaputra* of *Raga* Dipaka group. The painter followed the visual iconography of Kshemakarna and portrayed *Ragaputra* Rama not Lord Rama. The lady behind him is a *sakhi/dutika*, fanning him with a fly whisk and assisting him holding the quiver. She is also dressed elegantly like the *sakhi* of Pahari *Gita Govinda*. The setting in the backyard of the well structured architecture typical to Pahari paintings, partly clouded sky and manicured row of trees form an impressive background.



### ***Ragaputra Rama***

Acc No 89.287 Folio 48

Deccani style, Bijapur school

Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century

41 x 24.5 cm

Label Inscription on top Register

*Ragaputra* Rama is the son of *Raga* Dipaka

This is another version of *Ragaputra* Rama in Deccani style belongs to the Bijapur school of *Ragamala* series. Here the *nayaka* is portrayed in a strikingly different manner compared to the portrayal of all *Ragaputras* analysed so far by the Deccani artist of Bijapur *Ragamala* series. *Ragaputra* Rama is painted in blue colour unlike the Pahari *Ragaputra* Rama in the above painting. The Deccani artist hardly committed a mistaken identity in any of the painting, he is very much loyal to the visual iconography of Kshemakarna than the Pahari painters. But here he has completely succumbed to the mistaken identity of portraying the *Ragaputra* Rama very much closer to Lord Rama of

*Ramayana*. His attire crown, stature and blue colour bow, arrow, quiver with full of arrows all portray him as Raja Rama in search of his beloved, and finding under the tree he is pleased. Both are offering betel leaves to each other. The presence of *Dutika/Sakhi*, probably of *nayika* conveys several things such as the *nayika* has sent her *Dutika* to convey her emotional state to *Ragaputra* Rama and bring him to her at any cost. So 'Be throwing the bits of stone or by involving in the conceited speech *Duti* accomplishes her task on hand. During afternoon summer there would be excessive heat, oh traveler do take rest on the banks of the bower of creepers. Oh young one, being all alone your face indicates the place where they distribute water to the travelers. You are an expert in exhibiting timely Bliss'. (*Dutikarmaprakasha – Dutika*, the 4<sup>th</sup> type). It is the mid-day under scorching Sun but cool trees in a bountiful green atmosphere, *Dutika* holding an arrow and a pouch of Rama in her hand is happy that she carried successfully the mission of bringing the *nayaka* and *nayika*, love in union. Artist portrayed her as an embodiment of contentment. The pool on the foreground with all aquatic birds around and pair of hare, bed of flowers and greenery, a new design on the border create special effects in this painting.



### *Ragaputra Kuntala*

Acc No 89.281 Folio 49

Deccani style, Bijapur school

Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century

41 x 24 cm

Label Inscription on top Register

*Ragaputra Kuntala* is son of *Raga Deepaka*

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 100):** Of fair complexion wearing yellow garments and a flower garland, holding a flute and cymbals and fanned by a yak-hair whisk.

The region that covered from Bellari district to the present northern part of Karnataka state was known in ancient times as Kuntala Desha or Vishaya. May be he belongs to Bijapur from where this series of *Ragamala* is sourced. *Ragaputra Kuntala* is portrayed in some other series as associated by two of his male

*sakhas*. In this painting he is playing on *veena* and *karatala*, dressed in yellow robes and flower garland along with other golden jewels. Probably he has come from a travel, wearing *paduka*, he is holding a beautiful *veena*, singing and looking at a lady, who is sitting and feeding a child under a short colourful canopy. She is also looking at the *Ragaputra Kuntala*, probably not expected him at the time when she is nursing the child. The *sakha* of *Ragaputra* may be the *cheta* fanning him with a large yak-fly-whisk to get relief from the scorching Sun. Below amidst floral avenue a *sakhi* is taking a water jug and a fly-whisk made of peacock feathers looking at the mother and child, she is in hurry to reach them. One can see the concern on the face of the *sakhi*. This is one of the Aesthetically designed architecture with canopies, railings, suitable spread of floral plants, foliage and flower beds. Even the border around the painting this time is painted with flower bunches. Another interesting feature is that the portrayal of mother and child in the *Ragamala* paintings is a rare phenomenon, probably this is the lone illustration in the Deccani *Ragamala* series.





### ***Ragaputra Kusuma***

Acc No 89.292

Deccani style, Bijapur school

Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century

41 x 24 cm

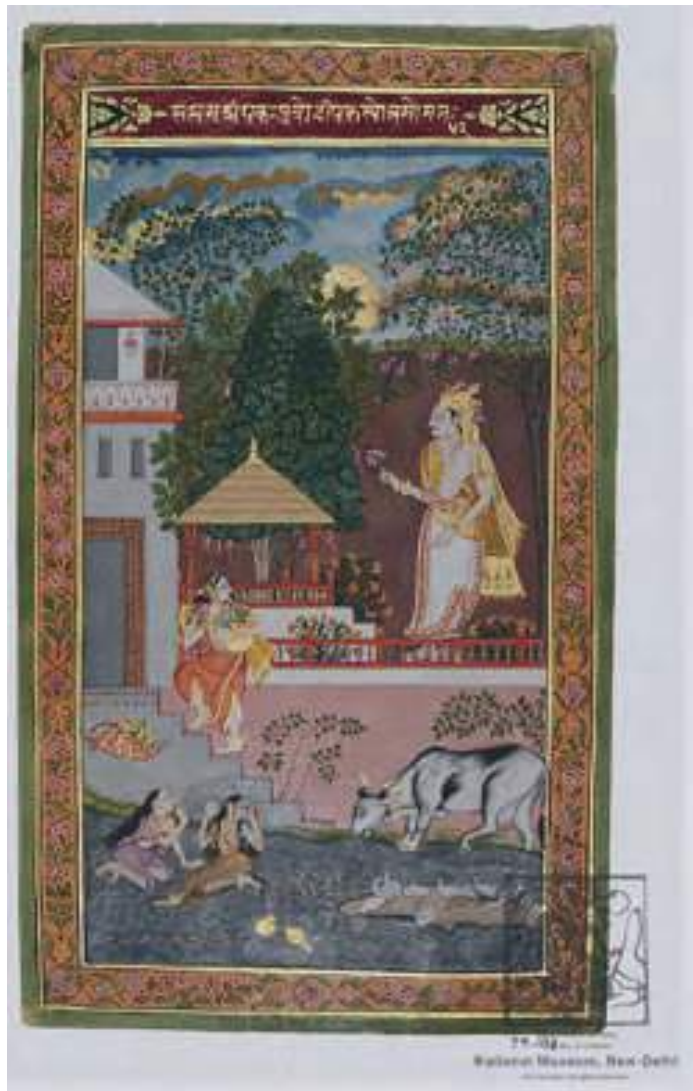
Label Inscription on top Register

*Ragaputra Kusuma* is the son of *Raga Dipaka*

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 104) :** Of fair complexion, wearing a red garment, seated on a lotus throne, holding lotus flower and accompanied by his friends.

The visual iconography given by Ksemakarna is matching exactly with the imagery of *Ragaputra*

*Kusuma* in this painting. As mentioned the hero *Kusuma* is seated on a lotus shape seat, holding a lotus flower and enjoying the company of his two companions, may be the one sitting in front of him is *Peetamardha* and the seated by his side closely is the *Cheta*. *Ragaputra Kusuma* is so engrossed in the discourse and the ambience in the courtyard, he is totally forgotten the time he has assured to his *nayika*. On the terrace the *nayika* is depressed waiting for her *nayaka*, whom she could see has no concern for her. Her *Dutika*, *Viprashnika* has brought the parrot to find out the fortune and trying to change the mood of the heroine, then she is probably assuring to convey her message to *nayaka* and send him to her. She is one who is an adept in palmistry and an expert in the art of talking and one who is an expert in love matters is *Viprashnika*. (*Dutikarmaprakasha* – *Dutika*, the 2<sup>nd</sup> type).



### ***Ragaputra Champak***

Acc No 89.298 Folio 52

Deccani style, Bijapur school

Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century

41.4 x 24 cm

Label Inscription on top Register

*Raga Champaka* is standing in white costume and holding a flower in his hands. He is standing under a tree.

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 103)** : Having lotus-like face, eyes and hands, wearing a crown, white and yellow garments and stay in the shade of a tree.

*Ragaputra* Champak signifies a fragrant flower. His imagery is true to the one described by Kshemakarna. Wearing beautiful crown, white and yellow costume, holding a flower in his hand emerged suddenly but standing under a tree, his handsome stature is majestic. Is he expecting his lover to come and meet him. Below a drama unfolds interestingly, two *sakhis* are spending their time in the pool, playing in water, they have kept their clothes on the stairs, meanwhile a disgruntled cow running towards them. They are terrified and started yelling, the other *dutika* is caught between the cow, her two companions and sudden appearance of *Ragaputra* Champak. She is trying to escape from the cow and also her primary duty of conveying the message to her mistress of the arrival of her *nayaka*. The painter has portrayed the running *Dutika* so well that one can see her flying movement, fluttering of robes and the expression on her face. It's a brilliant presentation of *sanchari bhavas*, variant emotions.



### ***Ragaputra Kamal***

Acc No 89.288 Folio 46

Deccani style, Bijapur school

Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century

41 x 24 cm

Label Inscription on top Register

Raga Kamal is the son of *Raga Dipaka*

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 105) :** *Ragaputra Kamal* is seated on throne made from lotus leaves, holding lotus flowers, adorned with bangles, pearl necklace and crown and staying in the garden among a swarm of bumble bees.

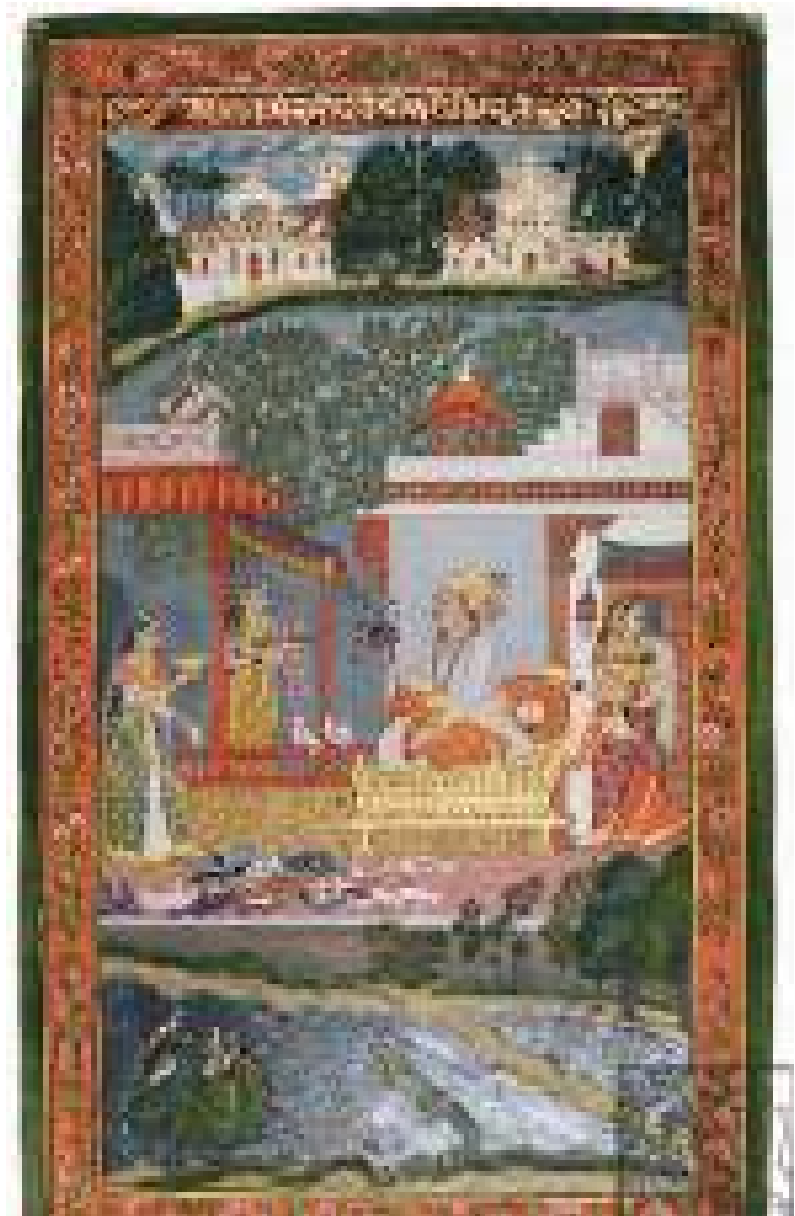
Against nice green and architectural background *Ragaputra Kamal* is seated and dressed as mentioned in the visual iconography above. Outside, a beautiful garden with colourful foliage and flowers creates an aura of charm and ambience to enjoy the music rendered by a *dutika Ganavathi*. An attendant holding a fly-whisk is waiting for command. *Ganavathi* is sent by the *nayika* who is getting ready in the upper chamber, where a bed is kept ready and outside water pots kept ready. *Ganavathi* playing on *veena* and singing melodiously before the *Ragaputra Kamal*, who is enjoying blissfully. But *Ganavathi* knows that she is presenting herself only with the instruction of her mistress. This painting is one of the best compositions of the series.

### Group E. 5. Parent *Raga*: Sri raga

*Raginis* Wives: Bairavi, Karnati, Gaudi, Asavari, Sindhavi

*Ragaputras* Sons: Salu, Sarag, Sagra, Gaund, Gambhir, Gund, Kumbh, Hamir (Total 14)

*Sri Raga* is one of the prominent male *Ragas* in the *Ragamala* tradition and is the head of 14-16 *ragas* – five to six *raginis* and eight to nine *ragaputras*.



#### *Raga Sri Raga*

Acc No 89.270 Folio 54

Deccani style, Bijapur school

Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century

41 x 24 cm

## Label Inscription on top Register

Hero is sitting in a pavilion on a golden throne and holding lotus in his hand. The lady in front is holding garland in her hands.

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 98):** Sri Raga is of fair complexion, wearing white garments, adorned with jewellery, originating from the naval of earth, King of the ragas and sung during the summer season.

The basis of this *Raga* is steeped in the traditions of mainstream Indian Classical music. Sri Raag is serious and thought-provoking in its nature and creates an atmosphere where the listener is led to heed the advice given therein. The listener (the mind) is made aware of the truth of the message and with this 'education' is given the strength to face the future with both humility and the 'gained' knowledge. According to Indian classical vocalist *Pandit* Jasraj, Sri is "an evening *raga*, sung during the sunset.

This Deccani *Ragamala* Folio obviously displays the scenario of a pleasant evening where the Sun is behind thickly grown trees and is fast moving towards the west to conclude the day in the region, the sky is slowly fallen to dusk, birds are flying on the sky towards their nests, the row of the house bear not much of activities, but few monkeys are actively engaged in their mischievous activities on the banks of the river. On the other side of the river, a scenario depicts full of life in and around the mansion. In the courtyard Sri raga is seated in the stature of a king of ragas on a golden throne, dressed in white garments and jewels made of the precious minerals sourced from earth, holding a lotus and

looking at a *nayika*, to offer the flower. The *nayika* beautifully attired is approaching the *nayaka* holding a tray of fresh flowers and a garland made of colourful fresh flowers. She is under a short pavilion, with a tree behind full of evening home coming birds and perching around their nests, the union of the *nayaka* and *nayika* is symbolically portrayed by the two birds sitting on the railings.

Two *sakhis* of the *nayika* have made all arrangements for the *samagama*, the facing each other of the *nayaka* and *nayika*, then they are engaged themselves elsewhere but at the close distance having concern to reach her needed. One *sakhi* is offering bird feed to the home coming birds in the evening presenting her elegantly. The other *sakhi* is also dressed elegantly, holding betel-leaves container in one hand, a container of *gulabjal* in another hand, yet placing the long fly-whisk on her back is moving towards the court-yard, looking elsewhere to avoid the meeting glances of her *nayika* with *nayaka*. Such fine emotional moments are subtly expressed by the painter. The workmanship is skilfully rendered and sincere efforts have been lavished on minute details, like the horary of birds perching on the trees, monkey's activities at the distance, a short *mandap* on the terrace, lowing river on the foreground surfaced with an alligator, dispersed swarm of fish, watching birds on tree top. The same kind of attention to detail is seen in the rendering of garments and their transparency, jewels, golden throne, different shades of greens and foliage, in six places the different kinds of birds and their movement portrayed in full of life and finally the design around as border adds special appearance to the painting.



### *Ragini Gaudi*

Acc No 51.70.8

Rajasthan School, Malwa style

1650 CE

7.5 x 10,7 inches

Inscription is on the reverse of the painting.

The scene is laid in a grove, gay with flowering trees and plants. The protagonist is seen holding a *veena* and a flower. She with her *sakhi* is standing on a rocky ground and engaged in a conversation. *Sakhi* holds a fly whisk in one of her hands. Red central ground attracts attention amidst the dense grove. Four birds are perched on tree tops. Navy blue background is interestingly painted.

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 99):** A beautiful woman with a fair complexion, another name for Parvati.

The imagery personifying *Ragini Gaudi*, the fifth consort of Sri Raga, is perhaps more confused than any other. In most of the *Ragamala* paintings the *Ragini*

Gauri has been represented by a young beautiful woman carrying in one or in both hands stems or twigs set with fanciful flowers walking in a garden, meadow, forest or around a dale. In courtly transform of this imagery the venue of the scene is sometimes shifted to a palatial terrace or a palace courtyard, and garland of flowers, and far more strangely a cypress with the appearance of phallus, sometimes alternates the floral twigs.

Mālwa paintings show a fondness for rigorously flat compositions, black and chocolate-brown backgrounds, figures shown against a solid colour patch, and architecture painted in lively colour. The school's most appealing features are a primitive charm and a simple childlike vision. (Britanica Malwa painting) In this folio *Ragini Gaudi* is engrossed singing in the company of her *sakhi*, who is always with her, enjoying and fanning the *Ragini* with a long fly-whisk. The painter here used decorative treatment while painting the trees in unusual colours, more of blue is used, against dark background to indicate it is night and the birds are placed in a sequential pattern against darkness. It is one of the situations where the *Ragini* and her *sakhi* are enjoying each other's company in a colourful night.



### *Ragini Virati*

Acc No 87.1260

Pahari school, Kangra style

C 1785-90 CE

26 x 18 cm

Inscription is on the reverse of the painting

*Ragini Virati* of Sri Raga as written on the reverse side of the painting. Here she is holding her cow and a lady is offering some food to the cow.

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 100):** Adorned with many coloured dress, tender blossoms and jewellery, enjoying cool breeze in the company of her confidantes, knowledgeable and attended by a *chowri* bearer.

Actual picturisation is a lady seated on a throne, caressing white water-buffalo, with a maid standing behind.

The portrayal of Kangra *Ragamala Ragini Virati* is a striking variation from what is given in the visual iconography. Here the *Ragini* is caressing a robust cow, wearing colorful clothes but adorned with minimum jewels, her *sakhi*, who is helpful and assisting the *Ragini* in all household matters, is offering food to the cow following the instructions of her mistress. The activity is happening outside the house within the campus on the green ground. The setting is relatively simple, the background is rather dry without play of clouds on the sky and without rich foliage, but the portrayal of the *nayika* and the cow are typical of Kangra figurative features. The *sakhi* of *Ragini Virati* reminds the *sakhi* of Gitagovinda series. The *lehanga* of the *Ragini* has dainty design, the yellow *odhani* is naturally draped, so also the *lehanga* of the *sakhi* has horizontal gold colour stripes and dainty designs on the border, white matching *odhani* is draped naturally. Both of them are emotionally connected, and feeling concerned and offering to the cow with care and love. Plain thick border covers the painting. On the whole it is the painter's delight.



***Ragini Vairati***

Acc No 89.269 Folio 55

Deccani School, Bijapur style

Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century

40.8 x 24 cm



*Ragini Vairati* is the wife of Sri Raga. In the centre *Ragini Vairati* portrayed as a newly wedded lady is going to meet her lover along with her friends.

The portrayal of *Ragini Vairati* in this Deccani Folio of *Ragamala* series is strikingly unusual. The painter has presented *Ragini Vairati* as a bride, from her toes to head, the description of *nakha-shikha* she is bashful, the embodiment of *lajja*, one can experience in her body language, dressed in attractive costume and jewellery with long hair and transparent veil, dreams and expectations in her eyes, loosing balance, holding tightly one of the *sakhis*, she is taking her hesitant steps.

This painting is one of the best illustrations to show the significance of *dutika/sakhi* in the life of a heroine. Four *sakhis* performing different functions, in the given set up of approaching of night and the enactment is taking place against the beautiful architectural rendering, but the principal part of painting is rich in its mood of anticipation.

Firstly, it is *Sakhi* – the one who is holding the *Ragini* and showing her a mirror and delicately taking her towards the door; *Sakhi* is one who is trustworthy and always next to her mistress and one who is adapt in decorating and involving in light talk.

Secondly, it is *Cheti*, who is holding the hand of *Ragini*, looking at her, tries to comfort her by fanning with a large fly-whisk; *Cheti* is one who is an adept in the policy of reconciliation and she conceals in her voice. She covers up the symbol of enjoyment in her act as well as in her speech.

Thirdly, The *Dutika* on the top floor, under a beautiful canopy arranging the bed for the union of *nayaka* and *nayika*, though the *nayaka Sri Raga* is not in picture, it is sure this *Dutika* is tactfully described her mistress: Be throwing the bits of stone or by involving in the conceited speech *Duti* accomplishes her task on hand. Oh young one, being all alone your face indicates the

place where they distribute water to the travelers. You are an expert in exhibiting timely Bliss.

Fourthly, this *sakhi* is *Dhatri*, appears quite matured welcoming the *Ragini* with a flower and showing her a large size lamp, dressed elegantly having an expression of welcoming and pleasantness, probably from the side of the *nayaka*; One desiring wealth, conceited in speech one who has hidden knowledge is *Dhatri* known for her cunningness. Oh dear child your husband was spotted by me in the courtyard whose hand resembled that of a lotus on the bank of Tapati river. You are the wave of beauty and your combination is indeed admirable! I am going to submit the cupid the God of love to you.

These four *sakhis* are identified in this painting according to the types and functions explained by Pandarika Vithala in his text *Dutikarmaprakasha*. The Deccani painter has woven the descriptions of the poet into rendering of *Ragini Vairati* as newly wedded bride, assisted by four of *dutikas/sakhis* completing their mission, also checking every detail to see that the union happens as they all have planned.

The Pahari representation of *Ragini Vairati* is very dissimilar to the Deccani *Vairati*. In the former she is a matured woman having command of the situation, feeding the cow with the assistance of her *sakhi*, a close confidante. In the Deccani version, *Ragini Vairati* is a *mugdha nayika*, she is under the command of others and just entered the new house with expectations and a kind of unknown fear, taking hesitant steps towards the bed chamber of *nayaka*. Both paintings are rendered by the hands of matured artists achieving wonderful clarity, in portraying the *lakshanas* of *Ragini Vairati*, worked on the rhetoric, and convincing descriptions in the painterly idiom. In both paintings the *nayaka Sri Raga* is not directly visible but the *avyakta* (non-visible) character is felt *vyakta* (visible) through passion driven moments, the painters suggestively created an aura of anticipation of the *nayaka* in the chamber inside.

### Group F. 6. Parent *Raga*: Megh Raga

*Ragini*s Wives: Sorath, Gaundi-Malari, Asa, Gunguni, Sooho

*Ragaputras* Sons: Biradhar, Gajdhar, Kedara, Jablidhar, Nut, Jaldhara, Sankar, Syama  
(Total 14)



### *Raga Megha* – *Melody of Rains*

Acc No 49.19.2

Rajasthan school, Narasingharh, Malwa Style

Artist: Madhudas

1680 CE

22 x 16 cm

Inscription on the top Register



***Raga Megha – Melody of Rains***

Acc No 49.19.2

Rajasthan school, Rajasthan style

17<sup>th</sup> century CE

7.1 x 5.2 inches

Label Inscription on the top Register

A. The painting is a visual representation of a musical melody, *Raga Megha*. *Raga Megha* means the melody of rains. *Raga Megha* is one of the six principle ragas related to clouds. For personifying the raga *Megha* painter visualized it by associated with a scene of dancing and enjoying music by the divine couple Krishna and Radha. The scene is laid in rainy season, Krishna and Radha are embraced and dancing to the tune of music played on *mrudanga*, cymbals and a sitar by three female musicians flanking them. They are looking at each other and enjoying the rain. In the black sky cranes are flying against stormy clouds with snaky golden light.

B. The sketch showing Krishna dancing with three *gopis*. He holds a *veena* in his hands, while the three *gopis* hold *veena*, *sarangi* and *mrudang*. Lotus pond and peacocks seen in the background.

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 98):** Auspicious, pleasure giving, lord of the rivers, carrying a conch-shell, his matted hair tied in a knot, wearing a loose black garments, holding a spear, which shines like a lightning, he abides among the clouds and is to be sung at the end of the night.

This is one of the very old *ragas* found in Indian classical music. This *raga* is related from Lord Krishna time period, when Govardhan Parvat (mountain) was lifted by Lord Krishna's little finger during the Govardhan *leela*, then Lord Shiva generated a Dhamru sound to protect Lord Krishna. That sound which was generated

by the *Dhamru* was *raga Megha*. The meaning of *Megh* in Sanskrit is 'Cloud'. Hence this raga is mostly sung or played in the Monsoon season. Another *raga* which describes rain is *raga Malhar*. So these 2 *ragas* were merged and a new raga was developed, this raga is *raga Megh Malhar*. There is a legend connected with that of Tansen's physical agony after singing *Raga Deepak (Poorvi Thaata)* was pacified with listening to *Raga Megh Malhar* rendered by two sisters, Tana and Riri.

In this painting Krishna is the *nayaka Raga Megha* in blue dancing with his Radhika under the cloud burst. Radhika's *ashta sakhis*, eight trusted friends, out of which three of them namely Lalita, Vishakha and Suchitra, who are playing on *mrudanga*, cymbals and a stringed musical instrument are equally joyous to dance with *Raga Megha* and Radhika. The artist Madhodas has perfectly matched the imagery of *Raga Megha* in every way.

In the sketch from Rajasthan also Krishna is portrayed as *Raga Megha*. He is dancing in the company of three musicians, Two of them are playing on stringed instruments and the *gopi* who is playing on *mrudang* is dancing with Krishna. They also carry a message from their *nayika* Radha, and when they get the opportunity they would convey the message sent by Radhika. Here the picturisation of cloud burst is not present as in the painting, instead, flashing lines as lightning and peacock dancing symbolically convey the approaching of clouds and rains.



### *Ragini Sorathi*

Acc No 87.1250

Pahari School, Pahari style

18<sup>th</sup> century

40.8 x 24 cm

She is a love longing *Ragini Sorathi* seated on a lotus flower spread on the river bank. A peacock is on her lap while a peahen is seated on the branch of a tree. Here the peacock is the love messenger. The background has a landscape with hills and river. The painting has a red colour border.

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 101):** *Sorathi* is visualized as of ivory complexion, affectionate, with sparkling teeth, wearing attractive ornaments and a red *choli*, her luxuriant tresses adorned with pearl strings and soft spoken.

The Pahari artist personified *Sorathi Ragini* as a beautiful woman longing for love and waiting for

*Raga Megha*, sitting on the soft and huge lotus flower on the banks of a swiftly flowing river. The painter of this brilliant Pahari *Ragamala* series evidently seen the *nayika* completely immersed in cajoling the birds and inviting for their union. Very interestingly like other paintings, there is no presence of human messenger, instead the peacock is the messenger, which has come from distance and resting on the lap of *Ragini Sorathi*. She is eager to know the message but she is also concerned towards the emotional state of peacock and peahen during the cloudy environment and she is inviting peahen to meet the peacock. The beautiful landscape in the background, the swirling river in the foreground the peacock and peahen very close to her all indicate the state of mind of the beautiful *Ragini Sorathi*. Her elegantly arranged skirt with blue border, saffron colour *lehanga* with dainty motifs, yellow *odhani* falling naturally on her youthful bosom, the crescent face drawn with fluid ease and adorned with selective jewels, and the bird's natural depiction, all make this painting very special. It is sure that this is the painter's delight.



### ***Ragini Malhari***

Acc No 91.21

Pahari School, Kangra style

19<sup>th</sup> century

35 x 34 cm

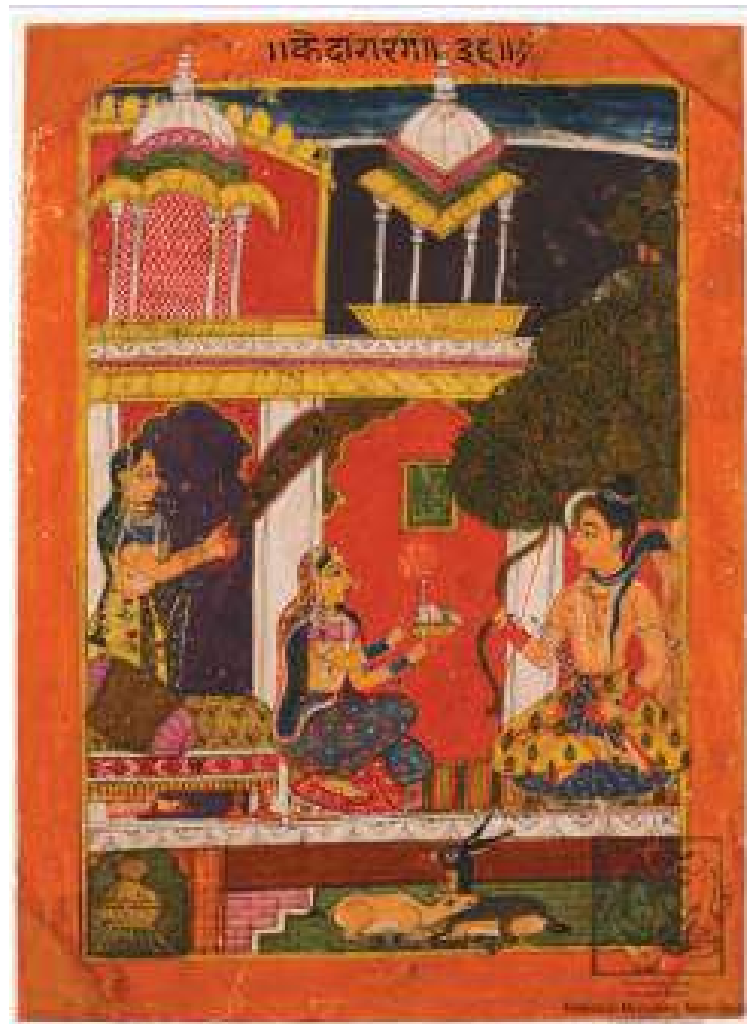
Label Inscription on the top

It is a sketch of the *Ragini Malhari*, standing in a garden, holding a *veena* in her hands.

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 99):** Beautiful, of dark complexion, her bosom tinted yellow with sandalwood-paste, wearing attractive ornaments, with red lips, and sporting in the rain-clouds

and lightning, while the peacocks dance joyously around her.

It is a sketch of *Ragini Malhari* or *Gonda-Malhari*, the consort of *Raga Megha* in Kangra style. She is passing through a forest amidst thick clouds on the sky and few of the birds are soaring high. The flying birds and fast moving clouds are the Messengers taking her message, which she is rendering in the melody of *Malhari* while playing on her *veena*. Though it is not a painting, but Indian artists are the best at the linear expression. From Ajanta paintings to Kangra paintings, even if they do not apply the colours, the expression of lines convey more than the colours, only they add to the enhancement of beauty. But the substance and core strength is the line. We can experience the strength and inner essence through the singing lines here.



### ***Ragputra Kedara***

Acc No 63.1717

Rajasthan School, Sirohi style

1710-25

23 x 17.5 cm

Label Inscription on the top

This painting presents visual depiction of *Ragaputra* Kedara. He is the son of *Raga* Megha. *Ragaputra* Kedara is named after Lord Shiva and occupied a pride place in the Hindusthani pantheon. As the Raga is related with Shiva, a male seated in this painting in front of a house is dressed like Lord Shiva. He is wearing half moon on hair knot and holding bow and arrow in his hand. A royal lady is worshipping this man. A female attendant is standing behind the royal lady.

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 103):** *Ragaputra* Kedara is strong in body, fond of *yoga*,

with eyes like red lotus, holding a spear in his hand and meditating upon Shiva.

Generally in *Ragamala* tradition *Ragaputra* Kedara is described as a man sporting dreadlocks, body smeared with ash, and a snake draped around his neck. The visage of Kedar is such-lost in trance, having adopted a look of detachment. In the painting from Sirohi *Ragaputra* Kedara is sported in the attire of Shiva and seated under a tree in front of a palace. A well dressed royal lady, possibly a princess holding a tray with flowers and food offerings to Kedara. He is pleased to receive the offerings and also to meet the well mannered lady. The lady has her *sakhi* with her, who is standing and watching attentively the meeting of *nayaka* and *nayika*. She is holding a long *morchal*, the peacock feather fan. She is making her presence felt and the man to behave modestly. Two deer watching the scene seated on the foreground. Arching skyline, the two *chattris* on the terrace and the saffron painted wall surface symbolically represent the atmosphere congenial to the union of *Ragaputra* Kedara with his consort.



### ***Ragaputra Nara-Narayana***

Acc No 87.1224

Pahari School, Kangra style

1800

\_select

Inscription is found on the reverse of the painting

*Ragaputra* Nara-Narayana, son of *Raga* Megha is written on the reverse. The front depicts him in the form of *Hati-Hara*. Both half figures are carrying their attributes and their vehicles (*vahanas*) *Nandi* and *Garuda* are standing by their sides.

**Visual Iconography suggested by Kshemakarna (Verse 103):** *Ragaputra* Nara-Narayana is also known as *Saranga*, of dark complexion, four-armed like *Vishnu*, mounted on *Garuda*, with his attractive consort seated

on to his left, carrying bow, arrow, conch, discus and club, wearing yellow garments and worshipped by gods.

*Ragaputra* Nara-Narayana is depicted in an unusual form of portraying the binary form of *Shiva* and *Vishnu*. The right side of the figure is *Hara* and the left is *Hari* with the attributes in the four hands, A *trishula* and *kapala*, begging bowl in right hands of *Hara*, a *shankh*, conch and *padma*, lotus in the left hands of *Hari*. Even the attire, head dress, and adornment differ according to their *roopa*, the form and standing on the full bloomed lotus. Their mounts, the *vahanas* *Nandi* and *Garuda* are looking at this Great Form of their Master. They are the *dutas*, the Male Messengers, who carry the messages and convey to the concerned and they go before their masters and take a security check and announce the arrival of their Master. The artist presents the form of *Nara-Narayana* against the Kangra landscape and using soft colours and treatment of figures.



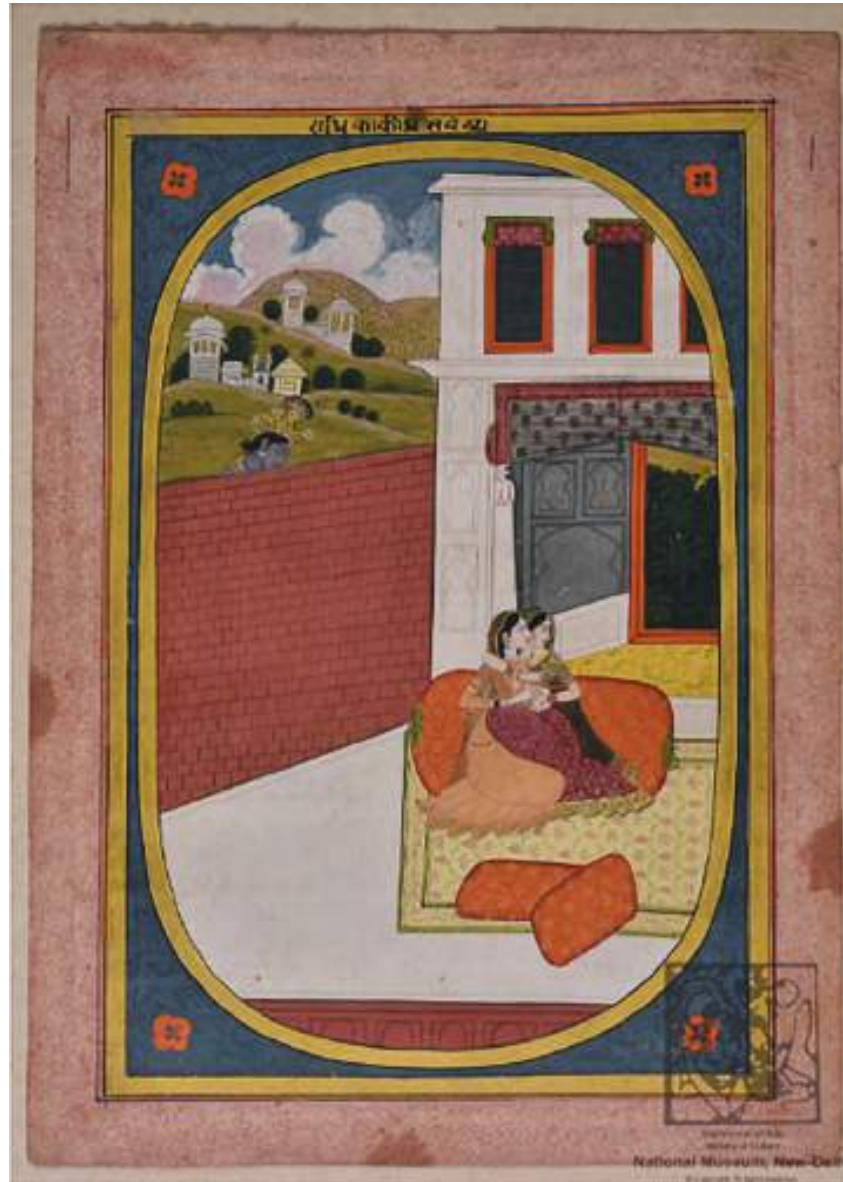
The paintings belong to a *ragamala* (garland of *ragas*, or musical modes) melody, which forms a unique genre that may be termed “pictorial music”, visualized by the artists from the regions of Rajasthan, Pahari, Mughal and Deccan and rendered in the aesthetic manner is unique to Indian art, thought and literature. They also correspond to varying emotional states and are associated with specific times of day or seasons of year and here also the artists have brought under their imagination and visual composition through specific symbols and portrayal. In the first instance *Ragamala* Paintings were selected where the presence of Female Messengers is significant. Among the sets of *Ragamala* Paintings, the series from Deccani miniature paintings on the subject of *Ragamala* are great source to notify. Because here the series give importance to *Dutika* or *Sakhi* as much as the main character itself pertaining to specific raga, ragini or ragaputra in the rendition. Works cited above illustrate the role of *Dutika* or *sakhi* in creating the atmosphere more congenial to the persona of visual iconography of various ragas, the melodies, parallel to that, highlighting the presence of *Dutika* and *sakhi* executing their functions, prominently in the portrayal of heroes and heroines. In most of the paintings discussed, the maids or *sakhis/dutikas* are dressed in modest way and performing their duties; giving the information as messenger, bringing message from the beloved or waving the *chouri* or flywhisk or singing with their musical instruments. Their presence is highlighted in a supporting status. Rajasthani architecture takes major share in depiction of the atmosphere and scenario in the paintings that are selected from Rajasthan schools and sub-schools. .

The set of Deccani Miniature *Ragamala* paintings are different from the Rajasthan and Pahari schools of *Ragamala* paintings in the way of rendering by the artist and the portrayal of characters . Imagery of female messengers in the Deccani set of *Ragamala* from Bijapur illustrates the status and types of female messengers as indicated by Pandarika Vitthala in his text *Dutikaramaprakasha*. Correlation and cross-checking with the *Ragamala* system codified by Kshemakarna with the Deccani *Ragamala* paintings, it gives a clear indication that the Deccani artists have loyalty towards the visual iconography of Kshemakarna and created aesthetically refined set of *Ragamala* paintings. R K Tandon, while discussing on Pahari *Ragamalas* had drawn the attention towards the efforts of Pahari painters to remain faithful to Kshemakarna classification of *Ragamala* system and his visual iconography. But the analytical thought process and approaches, clearly elucidate that of all the genres of *Ragamala* paintings, delicacy and evolved stylization that is associated with the Deccani *Ragamala* paintings orient them as unique. The portrayal of female messengers are not limited to few activities, but varieties of them such as *dutika*, *sakhi*, *cheti*, *skhalita*, *kathini*, *malini*, *viprashnika*, *ganavati*, *svayamduti*, *vichitra vachana*, *dhatrī*, *prativeshini*, *prangita*, *chestasanketa kovida* and *napiki* find their places in making the paintings more interesting and engaging. Identification of these varieties of *sakhis* is made possible due to the proper understanding of Pandarika Vitthala’s text *Dutikaramaprakasha*. Another coincidence is that this text was written when the author was under the patronage of the Royal Court of Ahamadnagar, one of the states of Deccani Kingdoms of 16<sup>th</sup> century. Probably he must have come across with such a wide range of female messengers in the service of royal retinue. It is interesting to find several types of *dutikas* as discussed in the text *Dutiprakasha*.

### Endnotes

- 1 O. C. Gangoly, *Ragas & RaginTs (Bombay, 1948), vol. 1*
- 2 Stella Kramrisch, *Painted Delight P. xxi*
- 3 CAA & ARCE American Institute of Indian Studies
- 4 Satyanarayana, *Nartana Nirnaya P28*
- 5 <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/60012> Rajagopal, Padma The study of Pundarika Vittalas treatises with reference to the systems of raga classification in post Ratnakara period
- 6 Ananda Coomaraswamy, 'Hindī Rāgamālā Texts,' *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 43 (1923): 396
- 7 S.K.Ramachandra Rao *Encyclopedia of Indian Iconography P 1093*

## *Rasikapriya* Paintings



Folio of *Rasikapriya* painting from Pahari School, Chamba

‘Rasa’ is the unifying principle of all creative expression. All art forms, including poetic expression and their basic elements are governed by rasa. Rasa is often considered as aesthetic pleasure, but in the realm of poetry combined with arts, rasa in the expressive levels integrate with responsive process. *Rasika* relishes the rasa when he is involved in such process. When such relish is channelised towards divinity and divine vision is *bhaktirasa*. All summit of expression culminates into *bhaktirasa*. “A man inspired with intense devotional love has nothing to seek except love for the divine”. Divine love is the essence of life and saturates living with

eternity and joy.<sup>1</sup> Poets belong to the genre of *bhakti* chosen their path of expression through *premebhakti*, *uttamabhakti*, *navavidhabhakti* or *madhurabhakti*. Poet Keshavadasa sought his intense longing for the union of supreme soul through *shringara rasa* weaving around the pure love between Radha and Krishna. The result of his *bhakti rasa* is the poetic composition '*Rasikapriya*'.

*Rasikapriya* is the foundational text of *ritikavya*, written for connoisseurs and poets alike, it breaks new ground in the evocation of *Shringara rasa*. The romantic personae are none other than Radha and Krishna but they move away from the verdant environs of the *Gitagovinda* to courtly spaces. *Rasikapriya* has to be read at multiple levels as Keshavadas takes it from sheer sensuality of *Shringara* to serene spirituality of *Bhakti Shringara*.<sup>2</sup> Keshavadasa's works are *Rasikapriya*, *Kavipriya* and *Ramachandrika*. He was born in the Sandhya Brahmins family. His Grandfather Khrishna Dutta Mishra had studied *Puranas* very well and was honoured by Raja Rudra Pratap. His father Kasinath was a favourite of Madhukar Shah. Keshavadasa's brothers were elder Balabhadra and younger Kalyana. Even the servants in their household were conversing in Sanskrit.

Indrajit Singh the ruler asked the poet what are his wishes which he could fulfill. The poet requested him for his continuous patronage. Pleased by his attitude his patron Indrajit Singh gifted him with 21 villages and treated him as his ardent friend. Poet Keshavadasa lived during 1555 to 1617. This period was one of the most brilliant ones in Indian history. Keshavadasa lived most of the time in the town of Orcha and was associated with the royal court of Orcha.

Keshavadasa represented in his writings the various influences and tendencies of the age in which he lived and wrote, though this influence was not very marked in some directions.<sup>3</sup> The work of Keshavadasa is widely known in the form of *Rasikapriya*, written in Braj *bhasha*, the language of Braj from Braj *Bhumi*. While Krishna's early life is narrated in Bhagavata in classical Sanskrit style, Krishna's legends in popular style is narrated in Braj region in Braj *bhasha*. The central theme of *Rasikapriya* is around the love-story of Radha and Krishna, Radha is portrayed as *ashtanayika*, in the context of eight kind of heroines and Krishna as the *nayaka*. While dealing with *nayika-nayaka bedha*, the *navarasas*, the nine major state of emotions are delineated. In the twelfth chapter the author Keshavadasa discusses with the *sakhi varnan* and their *karma varnan*. This chapter is dedicated to the explanation on the friends of *nayika* and their roles, responsibilities and duties they carried on behalf of their *nayika*.

*Rasikapriya* remains one of the most profusely illustrated texts in India and finds a place in collections of museums and individuals alike all over the world. In its pages are whispers of Krishna and Radha and the hushed voices of the *sakhis* as they celebrate romantic moments of longing and belonging in the regal splendor of *pranaya mandap* of *havelis* or verdant and idyllic groves.<sup>4</sup>

Paintings created on the basis of Keshavadasa's *Rasikapriya* are found in the collections of National Museum which are mainly known for the *nayika* depiction. *Sakhis* are also portrayed and carried their functions and executing them on behalf of *nayika*.

**Keshavadas submitting his Manuscript to the king Indrajit of Orcha**

(Source: Rasikapriya – Ritikavya of Keshavadas in Ateliers of Love by Harsha V Dahejia 2013)



**Meeting of Raja Indrajit and Keshavadasa**

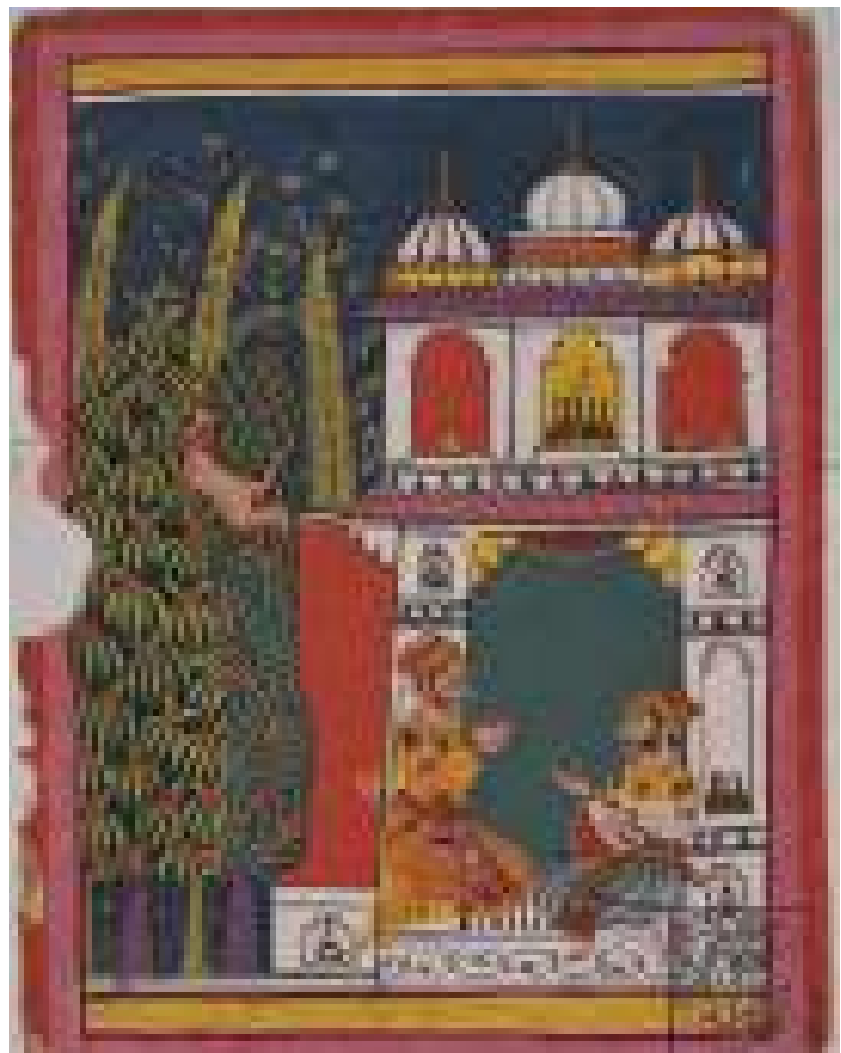
Acc. No: 51-34-12

Rajasthan School: Malwa

Late 17<sup>th</sup> Century

Size: 6.7 x 8.9 inches

Meeting of Raja Indrajit of Orcha Kingdom, Central India and Keshavadasa inside a palace. They are seated in Persian fashion facing each other and engaged in conversation. Flowering trees are one of the main features of this painting along with a playful monkey overseeing the two friends. The conversational mode and gestures show the intimate relation between the poet and the king. Palace structure is handled with the central Indian style of architecture. Reverse side of the painting has the two lined verse, King Indrajit requesting the poet Keshavadasa to write the poetic composition '*Rasikapriya*





### Radha and Krishna admiring each other in a mirror

Acc No 51.120/2

Rajasthan School, Mewar style

1630 – 40 ACE

Artist : Shahibdin

Size 20 X 20 C.M



The elaborate setting in this painting display the luxurious articles such as a jewelled hand-mirror, artistic perfume jugs, a beautifully hand-crafted seat and equally bejewelled characters. Here the painter delightfully portrayed Krishna and Radha the main characters, the two *sakhis* partaking in the *shringara* play. Moonlit terrace with perching birds, varieties of trees with full bloomed flowers and swaying creepers. sensibly placed water pot and jug, two playful deer enjoying the ambience, all indicate a setting for pleasurable situation.

In the centre of stylised architectural elements with ornamental terrace, a well structured doom flanked by short canopies placed on an extended *chajja*, under which a pillared chamber and arch created a royal abundance. Krishna holding Radha fondly, and Radha is enjoying the passionate embrace, while seated so closely on his lap. A *sakhi*, had been a messenger, the *dutika* several times to bring them together, enjoying herself the love game between the lover and the loved, for which she is responsible herself. Suddenly she

fetches a jewelled hand-mirror and show them. They both share the warmth while viewing their reflection in the mirror consciously. *Sakhibhav* in a refined manner is portrayed here. The other *Sakhi* holding the beetle leaves trying to offer them, a symbol of *shringara*, looking at the scenario and making signs to the principal *sakhi*.

On the top register the verses of *Rasikapriya* pertaining to the subject painted is indicated. The verse has inspired the painter to render such impressive portrayal of the *leela* of Krishna and the participation of *Sakhis*.

The seventeenth century painting in Mewar is dominated by two main artists namely Sahabdi (Sahabdin) and Manohar. Sahabdin's colophons of the *Ramayana Khandas* and *Bhagavata Purana* and also from his own style has been realized more and more over the last two decades. Sahabdin is obviously the main guiding factor in Mewar painting. A detailed study of his career, style, his appearance and migration to Mewar and his ancestry are discussed by Sridhar Andhare in his book *Chronology of Mewar Paintings*.<sup>5</sup>

The verse chosen for this painting is from the First chapter of *Rasikpriya* (pg 60)

( २२ )

प्रकाश तस्योग सथा—( सर्वथा )

कैसब एक समै हरि-राधिका आसन एक जसै रँगभीने ।

आनंद सौ लिल-आलन की दुति देखत दर्पन में हग दीने ।

भाल के लाल में बाल बिलोकि तही भरि लाल न जोवन लीने ।

सासन पीय सबासन सीय हुतासन में भवो आसन कोने । २२।

शब्दार्थ—रँगभीने प्रेम से युक्त । लाल=मासिक । बाल=(बाला) राधिका (राधिका) । आलन - नायक (श्रीकृष्ण) । लालन=आज्ञा । पीय=प्रिय (रामचंद्र) । सबासन = वस्त्रों सहित (धरते पहने हुए) । हुतासन = अग्नि ।

भावार्थ—(अद्विरंग सखी की उचित अद्विरंग सखी से। हे सखी, एक बार श्रीकृष्ण और राधिका प्रेमपूर्वक एक ही आसन पर विराजमान थे और श्रीकृष्ण दर्पण में आनंदसहित राधिका के मुख की छवि टकटकी लगाकर देख रहे थे। (दर्पण में राधिका का प्रतिबिंब पड़ रहा था। उस प्रतिबिंब में राधिका के भाल की लाल टिकुली में लाल-राधिका था—दूतः प्रतिबिंब पड़ रहा था।) जब भाल पर की बेंदी के मासिक में पड़नेवाले राधिका के प्रतिबिंब को देखकर तुरंत श्रीकृष्ण ने अपने नेत्रों में आंसू भर लिए। (श्रीकृष्ण को अपने रामावतार के रंग-समय की सुषुष्मा गई जब पति की आज्ञा से सीता ने अग्निपरीक्षा किया था।) मानो अपने पति रामचंद्र की आज्ञा से सीता ने (अग्निपरीक्षा के लिए) तबल अग्नि में प्रवेश किया हो।

अर्थकार—स्मरण और उल्लेखित वस्तुत्वेषा या अंगानिभाज संकेत ।

<https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.484151>

<https://ia801606.us.archive.org/13/items/in.ernet.dli.2015.484151/2015.484151.Rasik-Priya.pdf>

#### Meaning of the verse:

A *sakhi* to another: O *Sakhi*, once Shree Krishna and Radhika were lovingly seated together, and Shree Krishna was staring at the image of Radhika's face in the mirror with pleasure. (Radhika's face was getting reflected in the mirror. In that reflection, Radhika's face was again getting reflected in the red *tikuli* (a small round spangle like dot / bindi) on her forehead.) Looking at Radhika's reflection in that *bindi*, Krishna's eyes filled with tears. (Shree Krishna remembered the time of his Ramavantara, when Sita underwent *Agni*

*Pariksha*, as though to obey her husband's command, Sita entered the fire with her clothes on)

Essence of the verse, One of the *sakhis* tells another, that once when Shree Krishna and Radhika were seated together, Shree Krishna was lovingly gazing at Radhika's reflection in the mirror. In the mirror reflection, Radhika's face was yet again getting reflected in the *bindi* on her forehead. Shree Krishna's eyes filled with tears looking at Radhika's reflection, as he was reminded of the time during his Ramavantara, when Sita had to undergo *Agni Pariksha*.





**Krishna with Lotus Flower**  
(A Folio of *Rasikapriya*)

Acc No: 54 69/6

Rajasthan school, Mewar style

Late 17<sup>th</sup> century

Size: 25.5 x21cm

This painting is an evidence for the popularity of the *Rasikapriya* of Keshavadasa, which was not only popular in Bundelkhand but also as far as Mewar. It is one of the folio, painted on handmade paper. Krishna is holding a lotus flower standing amidst a group of *gopis*. He wishes to offer it to Radha, it appears he is

in confusion and trying to find out Radha, One of the *sakhi* of Radha is covering Radha the other one from behind and the third one waving the fly-whisk. One of the love-sport the *gopis* are enjoying.

This painting is displayed in the Painting Gallery. Here Radha and Krishna are enjoying each other's company. The two *sakhis* the companions of the *nayika*- Radha are also equally pleased that with their efforts they were able to bring the two lovers together in union. One of the *sakhis*, right in front showing the mirror to see the reflection of the *dhirodatta nayaka neelameghashyama* and the *mughdha nayika* as Radha, while the other *sakhi* standing behind is seeing the mirror reflection of the lovers and showing the beetle leaves, suggesting the *shringara* state.

The verse chosen for this painting is from the sixth chapter of *Rasikpriya* (pg 134)

(२१२) नैद्वन्द्वन खेलत हे बने गात बनी छवि चन्दन के जल की ।  
 वृषभानुसुताहि विलाकत ही रुचि चित्त में विभ्रम की मलकी ।  
 गिरि जात न जानत पाननि खात विरी करि पंकज के दल की ।  
 बिहँसी हय गोपसुता हरि लोचन मुँदी सुरोचि दगंचल की ।३२।  
 शब्दार्थ—हे = ये । बने गात = शरीर सजाए । रुचि = छटा । रुचि

चित्त में = चित्त में विभ्रम का रंग भा गया । सुरोचि = सुंदर छटा ।

भावार्थ—( सखी की उक्ति सखी से ) हे सखी, श्रीकृष्ण शरीर सजाए खेल खेल रहे थे । उनके शरीर में चन्दन-लेप की शोभा अच्छी बनी थी । ( एकाएक उन्हें श्री राधिकानी देख पड़ीं ) उन्हें देखते ही उनके चित्त में विभ्रम का ऐसा रंग बढ़ा कि उन्हें पता ही न चला कि उनके हाथ से पान ( तावून ) छूटकर कब गिर गए । तब वे हाथ में लिए हुए कमल के पत्तों का ही बीड़ा बनाकर खाने लगे । ( यह देखकर ) समस्त गोपियाँ हँस पड़ीं । ( उनका हँसना देखकर ) श्रीकृष्ण ने अपने दर्पणों की छटा को नेत्रों में बंद कर लिया । अर्थात् श्रीकृष्ण को ' लज्जा लगी' अतः उन्होंने अपने नेत्र बंद कर लिए, नेत्रों के मुँद लेने से उनके दर्पणों की वह छटा नहीं रह गई ।

अथ विह्वल हाव-लक्षण—( दोहा )

#### Meaning of the verse:

A *sakhi* to another: O *Sakhi*, Shree Krishna seemed to be in a playful mood. His body was adorned with sandalwood paste. Suddenly he experienced an illusion that he saw Radhika. Under this illusion he did not realize when the *paan* (a preparation in which a betel leaf is folded into a shape and filled with spices like areca nut, catechu, lime etc) fell from his hands. Absent mindedly he began to eat the lotus leaves that were in his other hand, just like *paan*. All the *gopis*

started laughing at this. Shree Krishna looked a little bashful or embarrassed and closed his eyes.

The essence is, one of the *sakhis* describes the playful mood of Shree Krishna to another, and that how his body was adorned with sandalwood paste. However, when he suddenly experienced an illusion of looking at Radhika, he didn't even realize when the *paan* fell from his hands, and instead began to eat the lotus leaves as if they were the *paan*. When the *gopis* started laughing at his action, he closed his eyes in embarrassment.



### Rasikapriya Folio

Acc. No 55 24/4

Rajasthan School, Mewar style

18<sup>th</sup> Century CE

Size: 32 x 19.05 cms

The scene is laid in the courtyard of a walled palace where the hero is seen standing facing the heroine who is seated on a throne with one of her legs pendant and attended by *morchal* and pot bearer female maids. A white cat is seated near her feet.

The courtyard of the palace is the venue for the painting where the *nayika* is seated comfortably on a high raised seat like throne. The *nayika* is standing and waiting for her instructions, as though the situation signify the *svadhinapattika* or *Khandita nayika*. Her two maids are supporting the *nayika* holding pot and the other waving the *morchatra* fly-whisk made of peacock feathers, looking at the *nayika* in a questionable way 'where were you last night? The bed was kept ready'. The *nayika* appears perplexed looking at all the three women.

The verses in the above painting is not legible.



### A folio from Rasikapriya

Acc No:75.891

Rajasthan School, Mewar style

Early 18<sup>th</sup> Century

Size:27.8x19 cm

Krishna is seated against a long mauve coloured cushion under a canopy in a palace. A lady messenger seated in front of him on the carpet and talking to Krishna with gestures.

Artist has wisely divided the space into two parts narrating two separate sequences, the one on the top register the *nayika* is seated in a *mandap* and narrating her state to her *sakhi*. In the forefront in a pavilion Krishna as *nayaka* seated resting on a cushion and with eagerness listening to the messenger who is narrating the state of her heroine. The female messenger is expressive and holding the attention of the *nayaka*. The door entry is the indicator that the happenings in two separate apartments.

The verse chosen for this painting is from the eleventh chapter of *Rasikpriya* (pg 212)

(४००) तूँ करिहै कहिँ धौँ कब गौनहि नंदकुमार तौ गौन कियोई ।  
मोहि महा डर तो डर को न रहै लटि लै जिनि को धौँ लियोई ।  
ऐसी न बूझियै केसव तोहि बिचारै जु बीच बिचार बियोई ।  
तेरे हो जीय जियै जिनको जिय रे जिय ता बिन तूँ ब जियोई ।

शब्दार्थ—गौनहि = गमन । लटि = श्लेष होकर । बियो = दूसरा ।

भावार्थ—( नायिका की उक्ति प्राण से ) हे प्राण, नंदकुमार तो गए, अब तू कब गमन करेगा ? मुझे तो बड़ा डर तेरे हृदय का है । कहीं वह दुर्बलता-क्षीणता का बहाना लेकर रह न जाय, प्रत्युत उसने यह बहाना ले ही लिया । तुझे वैसा नहीं करना चाहिए जैसा तू इस समय दूसरे प्रकार का विचार करके करने लगा है ( गमन न करके रहना चाहता है ) । तेरे ही जी से जिनका जी जीता है ( जो तुझे प्राणों की भाँति प्यार करते हैं ) ऐसे श्रीकृष्ण के बिना भी तू अब भी जी रहा है ? ( यह कार्य ठीक नहीं ) ।

सूचना—‘नंदकुमार तौ गौन कियोई’ से प्रवासविरह । प्राणों के प्रति उक्ति होने से प्रच्छन्न है ।

श्रीराधिकाजू को प्रकाश प्रवासविरह-वर्णन, यथा—( कवित्त )

Meaning of the verse:

This inscription does not seem to be in direct relation to the painting, or may be somewhat related to the upper register/ section of the painting:

*Nayika* (Heroine) to her soul/ spirit: O spirit, Nandkumar (Shree Krishna) has left, when will you leave? I'm worried of your heart. Hope it does not use feebleness and attenuation as a pretense to stay. But it

does so. You shouldn't be doing this that you continue to want to stay. He who loves you like his own life, and you still continue to live on without him.

The Essence of the verse, the *nayika* seems to be addressing her soul/ spirit and wonders how it continues to stay or live in the absence of Shree Krishna. She thinks that she is dear to Shree Krishna like his own life, and thus it's unfair on her heart's part to continue to function in his absence.

## Krishna and Radha

Acc.No:63.1735

Rajasthan School, Bikaner style

Circa 1683

Size:

It is one of the early works based on the *Rasikapriya* of Keshavadasa. Unlike the Mewar school painting, the inscription, the poem is not inscribed on the top portion of the painting. There are two separate sets of narration depicted in the painting. The top portion is spread in the interiors of a mansion where Krishna is seated on the swing trying to convey his feelings to Radha, whereas Radha is seated on a cushioned chair and aptly listening and responding Krishna. Artist has worked intricately on the interiors. On the foreground the spread is on the open natural settings, both are under trees seated on separate carpets and cushions. Here the central figure is the female messenger who is gesturing to Krishna, conversation Radha had with her. The role of the messenger is emphasized as both are depending on her to make a beginning of their conversation.

The collections of National Museum based on *Rasikapriya* of Keshavadasa are basically from Rajasthan and Malwa that shows the popularity of this text in that region. Bikaner folios though do not have inscribed text on the top of the painting, it is mentioned behind the painting and they belong to early period compared to Malwa and Mewar schools. Also the artist made an attempt of landscape and open air atmosphere while the other schools have the palace atmosphere. In all these paintings the female messengers are given significant place in bringing the *nayaka* and *nayika* together.

This painting, illustrating *Rasikapriya*, is notable as it is inscribed with a date and name of the artist. Painted in 1683 by artist Nuruddin, who worked in the court of Bikaner from 1674 to 1698, it



presents a stark and simple composition with minimal and suggestive representation of architecture and elements of landscape. Nuruddin has ingeniously employed the device of soft undulating mound in the centre to divide the painting into two sections. It operates as a pictorial prop that transforms an urban setting into a tree-laden countryside and vice versa. An architectural pavilion in the upper part of the painting pictorially qualifies that space as the 'palatial interior', while few trees on the green grassland suggest 'outdoors and pastoral' landscape. Hence, one understands the movement of the narrative from top to bottom as a progression of activities from indoors to outdoors. Appearing in the upper section of the painting, Krishna seated on a swing seems to be enjoying himself in the company of a *gopi* at her dwelling. On learning about his rendezvous a jilted Radha, stricken with grief, disappears into the countryside and finds herself alone under a tree. Guilt-ridden Krishna, on learning of Radha's sorrow, follows her but there is no truce happening. Meanwhile, Radha's *sakhi* (friend) gets to know of the fall out and takes on the role of a messenger and pacifier. She comes to Krishna and tells him of the misery and plight of Radha, and implores him to appease her. This painting is in the collection of National Museum.<sup>6</sup>



**Title: A folio of *Rasikapriya***

Acc No: 61.814

Rajasthan School, Malwa style

1634 CE

Inscription: Nagari text above and below the painting

Size: 21.5X15.7 cm

Obverse Krishna is conversing with a lady who is seen holding the arms of another lady. A peacock is perched on the pavilion. Reverse Radha is engaged in conversation with a lady.

In this painting, the central theme is the *sakhi*, the close companion of Radha is explaining the intense feelings of her mistress to the lover, and the *nayaka* holding a fine lotus flower to offer is faithful to the *sakhi* and her

discourse. She is holding the hand of Radha in one hand and gesturing in a commanding way with the left hand, while Radha is shy and turned her head the other way, her body language indicates, that she is scratching the ground with one of her toe, the main feature of *lajja*, the jewel of chaste woman. Her other hand is in a gesture of conversation with her another *sakhi*, though not visible in the picture.

The chamber besides is kept ready for the lovers to relax, red background and moving dark clouds in the painting suggest the early expressive technique of miniature paintings, not so rich as in the later Kangra landscapes. On the top register the verses pertaining to the painting in *Devanagari* is inscribed, which continues on the lower register. With the available material the artist and scribe try to make a detail rendition. This is a typical of early Malwa style painting.

The verse chosen for this painting is from the thirteenth chapter of *Rasikpriya* (pg 242)

कृष्ण सों विनय—( कवित्त )

(४४६) कंज कैसे फूले नैन दारथौं से दसन ऐन,  
बिब से अधर, हास सुधा सो सुधारथो है ।  
वेनी पिकवैनी की त्रिवेनी सी बनाइ गुही,  
बार कै सेवार करिहाँ कौं करि हारथो है ।  
कीने कुच अमल कल्पतरु के से फल,  
केसोदास यातें बिधि मुग्ध बिचारथो है ।  
देखौ न गुपाल सखी मेरी को शरीर सब,  
सोने सों सँवारि सब सोंघे सों सँवारथो है ।५।

**शब्दार्थ**—दारथौं = (दाड़िम) अनार । ऐन = ठीक । बिब = बिबाफल, कुंदरू । सुधारथो = बनाया हुआ ( आनंददायक ) । वेनी = वेणी, चोटी । पिकवैनी = कोयल के से कंठ ( वाणी ) वाली । कै = करके ।

**भावार्थ**—उसके नेत्र कमल के से हैं, दाँत ठीक अनार ( के दाने ) की भाँति हैं, ओठ बिबाफल से हैं और हँसी अमृत के समान आनंददायक है । उस कोकिल के से कंठ वाली की चोटी त्रिवेणी ( गंगा, यमुना, सरस्वती के संगम ) की भाँति, केश सेवार के से करके ब्रह्मा कमर बनाते बनाते अंत में हार ही बैठा । उसने कल्पवृक्ष के सुंदर फलों के से उसके कुच बनाए हैं, इसलिए ब्रह्मा ( अपनी ) उस सृष्टि पर स्वयम् मुग्ध है । इसलिए हे गोपाल आप मेरी सखी का शरीर देखिए न ! मुझे तो ऐसा जान पड़ता है कि वह (शरीर) सोने से बनाया गया है और सुगंध से सँवारा गया है (सोने में सुगंध नहीं होती, पर उसका शरीर देखकर ऐसा जान पड़ता है कि सोना और सुगंध दोनों एकत्र हैं ) ।

राधा को मनाइबो—( सवैया )

#### Meaning of the verse:

*Sakhi* to Shree Krishna: Her eyes are like lotus, teeth are like seeds of a pomegranate, lips are like *bimbaafal* (a fruit having the shape of pointed gourd or ivy gourd obtained from a vine plant/ creeper) and her laughter is pleasurable like nectar/ elixir. She, whose voice is like a cuckoo, whose braid is like *Triveni* (union or confluence of the rivers Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati), led Lord Brahma himself to give up when he reached till her waist. He has made her breasts like the beautiful fruits of the *Kalpavriksha* (wish-fulfilling divine tree), and he is enchanted with his own creation. Thus, O Gopal, look at the body of my friend. It seems her body is made of gold and adorned with perfume. (Gold does not have any fragrance, but looking at her body it seems as if gold and fragrance are together)

Essence of the verse, a *sakhi* is describing her friend's (presumably the nayika) beauty to Shree

Krishna. According to the *sakhi*, her friend's eyes resemble lotus flowers and her teeth the seeds of a pomegranate; her lips are shaped like a fruit similar to pointed gourd and her laughter is an elixir to the ears. The *sakhi* further compares her friend's voice to that of a cuckoo and her braid to the *Triveni sangam* (union or confluence of the rivers Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati). She continues that Lord Brahma created her breasts like the beautiful fruits of the *Kalpavriksha* (divine tree) and the Lord appears to be captivated with his creation. She mentions to Krishna that her friend's body or physical appearance is lustrous like gold adorned with fragrance.

(Here, the role of the Female Messenger or *sakhi* seems to be of the one who is skilled in talking/ describing – may be *Vichitra Vachini* or *Kathini* as referred in the *Dutikarmaprakasha* of Pandarika Vitthala.





**Illustration from  
Keshavadasa's Rasikapriya**

Acc No 51.72.230

Rajasthan School, Kotah style

Late 18<sup>th</sup> century

Size 7.8 x 10.4

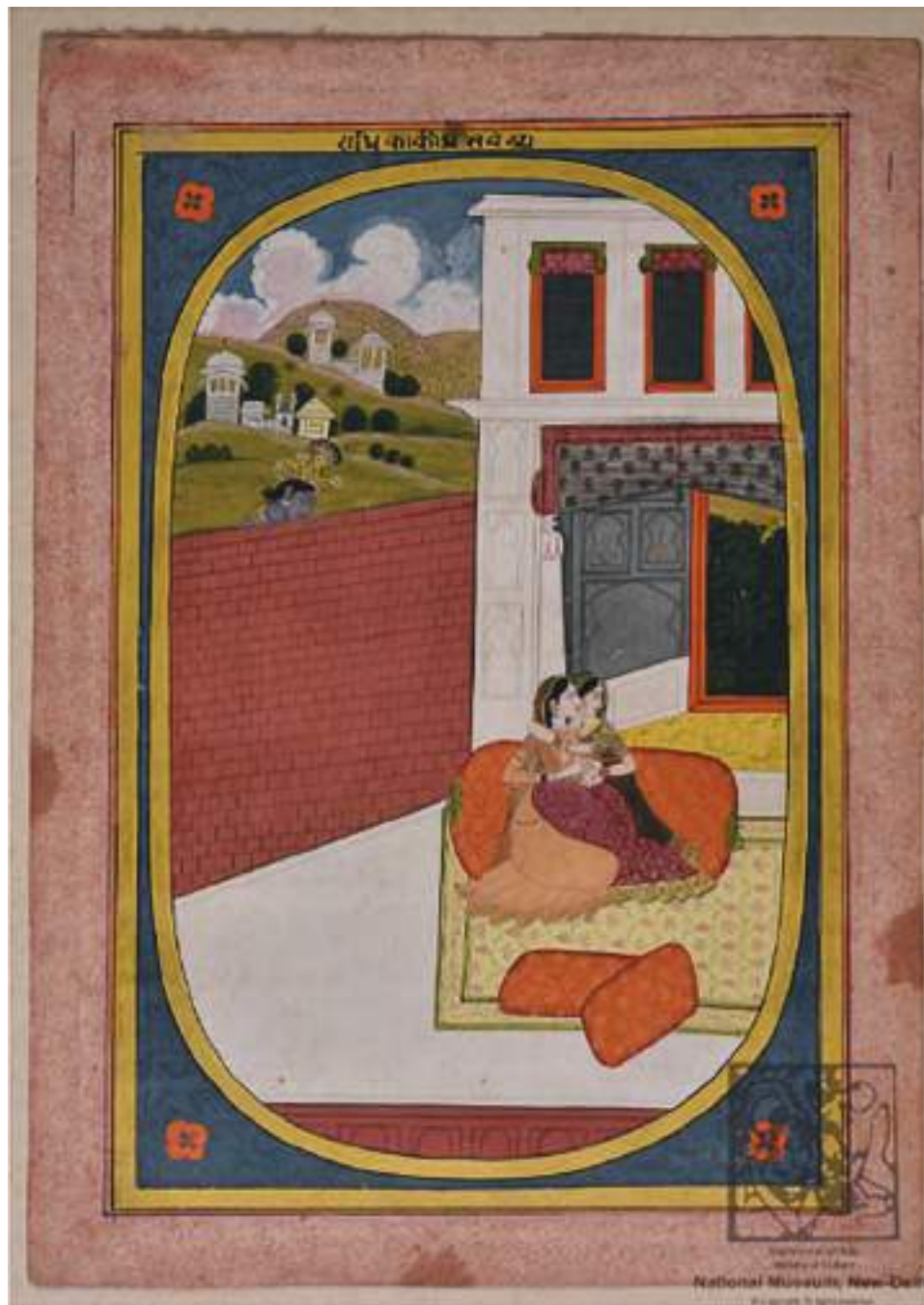
Inscription at the top

An illustration from Keshavadasa's Rasikapriya. The scene is laid in a palace, Krishna is shown holding the right foot of Radha. She is seated on *chouki* against a huge cushion and she has extended her right hand in conversation.

She is in the mode of a *Khandita nayika*, dictating Krishna for his affairs with other women. Radha's close friend *sakhi* Lalita was with her before the arrival of Krishna, But she is shocked and standing at distance behind Krishna, probably wondering at the unusual incident that she is watching. Also felt how Radha can be harsh to her beloved.

Costume and adornment of all three characters are in typical Kota style. Colourful foliage behind the wall is complementing with the design and colour scheme of the pavilion.

The inscription on the painting above is not legible.



### Keshavadasa's Rasikapriya

Acc No 67.60

Pahari School, Chamba style

Early 19<sup>th</sup> century

Size 32.3 x 23,3 cm

### Inscription on the reverse

In this painting Radha seated on a finely laid carpet against a huge orange colour cushion. She is holding her *priya sakhi* probably Lalitha and speaking intimately. They are in their own world probably sharing the fine moments they had spent with beloved Krishna. Krishna is watching the friends behind the wall.

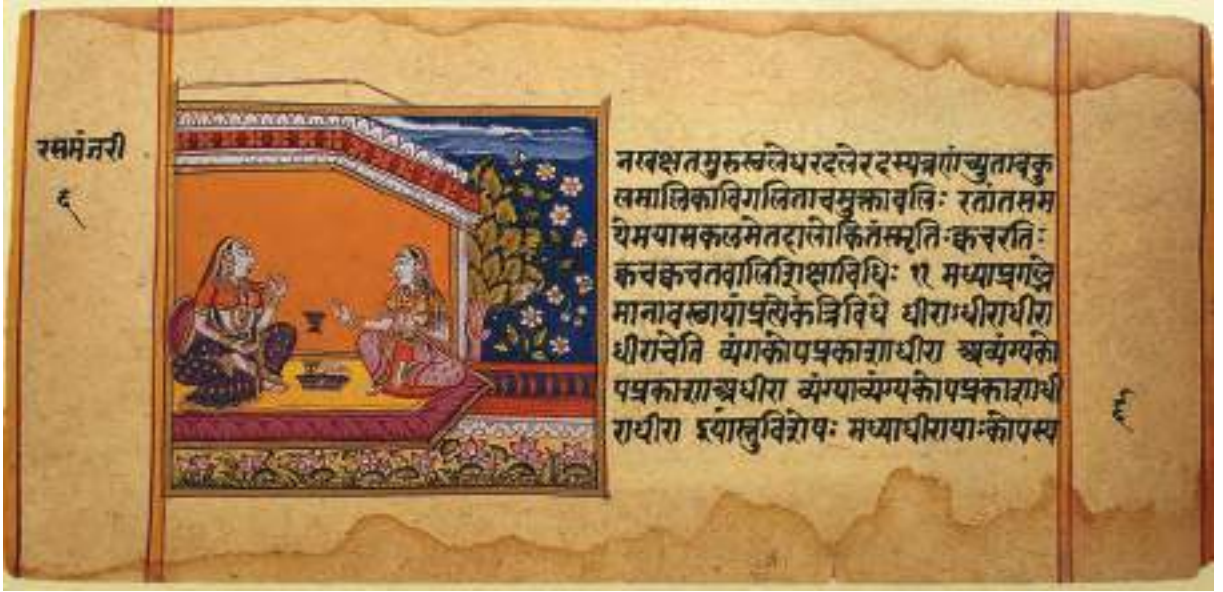
*Prabhava* (chapters) 12 and 13 of the text *Rasikapriya* are dedicated to the types of *Sakhis-Sakhijana varnan* and the role, responsibilities and functions of *sakhis – Sakhi karma*. The poet Keshavadasa speaks of 13 types of *sakhis* namely 1. *dayi* –nurse, 2. *jani* – servant or maid, 3. *nayin* – barber’s wife, 4. *nati* – actress, 5. *parosini* – neighbour, 6. *malini* – gardener’s wife, 7. *barain* – beetle seller, 8. *shilpini* – artist, 9. *churiharini* – bangle seller, 10. *sunairin* – goldsmith’s wife, 11. *ramjani* – woman of low caste, 12. *sanyasin* – female ascetic, 13. *padu patuva* – female ornament maker.

Each of these *sakhis* in *Rasikapriya*, which is in the poetic form, first speaks to Radha, the *nayika* and then to Krishna, the *nayaka*. According to their own understanding of the situation these *sakhis*, maids, attendants and belonging to different types of work and profession they approach and carry the function that are amicable to hero and heroine. Keshavadasa must have come across with the *sakhijan* in the household of Indrajit and his queens, apparently he was inspired to dramatise the role of Female Messengers in the theme of *nayaka-nayika* through his poetic compositions in myriad ways.

### Endnotes

- 1    Bhattacharya 2003:110
- 2    Harsha V Dahejia, *Rasikapriya – Ritikavya* of Keshavadas in *Ateliers of Love* by 2013
- 3    K P Bahadur
- 4    Harsh Dahejya
- 5    Sridhar Andhare, *Chronology of Mewar Paintings* P66
- 6    <https://ncert.nic.in/textbook/pdf/lefa102.pdf>

## Rasamanjari Paintings



Rasamanjari, Folio no 6 - Anandasammohavati Pragalbha nayika with her pranasakhi

Rasamanjari belongs to that special category of works which like Meghaduta and the Gitagovinda has given rise to almost a new genre of literature. Scores of later poets imitated Meghaduta to create a whole series of *dutakavyas*: more than one hundred fifty imitation are known to exist of the Gitagovinda, but the influence of the Rasamanjari has even been stronger and profound, especially in the Hindi belt of North India since it brought about a whole new epoch of literacy activity right from the beginning of 17<sup>th</sup> century to the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1</sup> Bhanudatta's *Rasamanjari*, a *shringara kavya* became instantaneously chosen by the ateliers of some special schools such as Basohli and Maratha. A series of paintings under the rule of Raja Kirpal of Basohli were done based on this Sanskrit text. This series contains 87 paintings. It begins with the history of *Rasamanjari* and followed by the details of the portrayal of *Nayikas* in these paintings. Bhanudatta aesthetically characterized and classified the *nayikas* with their description, which caught the fancy of the artists across the region and beautifully illustrated from time to time.

The 15<sup>th</sup> century work *Rasamanjari*, is often considered significant in the context of *Nayikabheda*, though antiquity of the term and concept is attributed to *Natyashastra*. “*Nāyika* is a female leading character in a drama who leads her audience to a preferred emotional state of association with the story. The *nāyika* enhances the principal character of the story through her manifold performance”.<sup>2</sup> *Nāyika* is an important element in India's traditional art practice and the female principles with myriad variations are prompted not only by the *nāyika*'s state of

youth but by blending of the emotions in the youthful *nāyika*. The variety of *nāyikas* depends on situation, occasion, on place, season, and even time of day. A detail explanation of *nayika*, the heroine, the *vidha*, classification of *nayikas*; *Uttama*, (the best), *Madhyama*, (the middle level), *Adhama* or *Nicha* (the lower level), *Ashtanayika*, the eight types of *nayika* namely, *Vasakasajja*, *Virahotkanthita*, *Svadhinapattika*, *Kalahantarita*, *Khandita*, *Vipralabdha*, *Proshitabhartika*, and *Abhisarika*, are dealt in *Natyashastra*, a premier text on Indian aesthetics. *Rasamanjari*, as an extensive text through ages is known as shringara *kavya*, The text classifies the *nāyikas* into new sub types in addition to the original is comprehensive and it upholds aesthetic supremacy and fascination.

According to Bhanudatta, *nāyikas* are of three types: *Sviya*, *Parakiya* and *Sāmānya*. They are further divided and sub-divided. A *nāyika* may have two *nāyikas* out of which one who is loved more is called *jyeshtha* and the one less loved called *kanishta*. Bhanudatta classifies the eight *nāyikas* as follows: *Proshitabhartika*, *khandita*, *kalahantarita*, *vipralabdha*, *utka*, *vāsakasajja*, *svādhinapatika* and *abhisārika*. According to him, the classifications of *nāyika* are based only on their condition. If we take the classification based on their birth or class, then also the *nāyikas* can be classified on the same basis. *Proshitabhartika* is a woman whose beloved goes away to another country, the *nāyika* who suffers separation. *Utka*, *kalahantarita* and *vipralabdha* do not come under this. This is further divided into *mugdha*, *madhya*, *praudha*, *parakiya* and *sāmānya*. *Khandita*: She is a woman whose husband returns with indications of having sex with another woman. The emphasis is on the husband's return in the morning. Here also the *khandita nāyika* is further classified into *mugdha*, *madhya*, *praudha*, *parakiya* and *sāmānya*.

The *ashtavidha nāyikas* have been described where *mugdha*'s main characteristics are bashfulness, *madhya* is shy at the same time interested in love sports, *pragalbha* explicit, *dhira* is bold, *adhira* is not bold, *dhirādhira* is a combination of boldness and timidity. *Jyeshtha* is more intimate, *kanishta* is less intimate, *parodhāra* is secretive, *mugdha* is like *kanyaka* and *sāmānya* gives importance to money.<sup>3</sup> The ninth *nāyika* added to the eightfold classification is "*Pravatsyatpatika*". She is a *nāyika* anticipating separation. Where the beloved decides to go to another place, the *nāyika* comes under this category. She does not come under *vipralabdha* or *utka*. *Kalahantarita* or *khandita*, according to Bhanudatta, one can see internal anguish, with the departure of the beloved next moment to another country. Such characteristics shown by *nāyika* becomes *prosyatpatika* (Rao, Pappu Venugopal 2011:80-147)

A set of Illustrated Manuscript Painting is well preserved in National Museum New Delhi. This set based on Bhanudatta's *Rasamanjari* caught the attention of a renowned Sanskrit scholar Satya Vrata Tripathi, who was serving in the Manuscript Department at National Museum. He worked on this fascinating collection and the Publication section of National Museum has published an illustrative volume entitled 'Mysteries of Love - Maratha Miniatures of *Rasamanjari*' in the year 2001. Since then this set of paintings has drawn the attention of scholars and commoners in the field of Art History, Museum studies, Sanskrit literature and Cultural studies. It is one of the significant source for the present research in understanding the socio-cultural position of the *dutika/sakhis* in the life of common people and aristocrats.

Indian Manuscript Painting has rich legacy dating back to 12<sup>th</sup> century CE, commenced with the Pala Buddhist painting styles, and illustrated a text known as *Prajnaparamita*. Simultaneously in Gujarat emerged the tradition of Jaina Manuscript painting, illustration the texts such as *Kalpasutra* and *Kalkacharya Katha*. In the following centuries many texts were illustrated giving importance to painting. This period also produced some non-Buddhist and Jaina illustrated manuscripts. The texts of *Vasanta Vilasa* and *Balagopala Stuti* are significant from the point of view of tracing out the early Hindu illustrated manuscripts. This was the efflorescence of the *Bhakti* movement which transformed the religious, aesthetic and literary expression into an intense devotional plunge. In this regard, a Mewar *Gitagovinda* of the 16<sup>th</sup> century retains the characteristics of early illustrated manuscript tradition.<sup>4</sup>

At the same time Gujarat had many centres like Cambay, Saurashtra, Surat, and Baroda where such artistic craftsmanship flourished. Gradually, the art of manuscript painting extended to the centres like Ahmednagar, Satara, Puna and Nagpur in Maharashtra. Under the rise of Maratha power, developed new school of painting under new circumstances, influenced by the adjacent Deccan, Malwa and Tanjore. Maratha painting is an off-shoot of Deccani miniature paintings school. The famous artist Venkatachalam was the pioneer of this school. He trained many artists who were working in Puna, Satara, Nagpur and Tanjore. This Illustrated Rasamanjari Manuscript painting preserved in the Rare Collections department, were probably created by the artists from Satara and Puna. Although the set does not bear any dates, it is attributed to second half of 18<sup>th</sup> century by observing other features such as a dominant influence Tanjore, colour scheme, contours and apparel designs. This present series of Maratha Rasamanjari has 117 illustrated folios, with the contents of the manuscript are disciplined under vertical borders in bright yellow colour with red linings, on both sides. The format is horizontal in nature and the text is written either on left and right side of the painting.<sup>5</sup> Life styles, mode of living and the status of women and men in the society, may be conjunctured by looking at these illustrations; as the illustrator, while illustrating any verse is directed by his own experiences and imagination. In depicting the situation as an insider of the house, he is quite cautious about surrounding materials.<sup>6</sup>

It must be remarked that this set of paintings are a wonderful visual representation of the various situations depicted in the *Rasamanjari* and they very sincerely and faithfully capture the mood of the concerned characters. It is not easy to create an aesthetically delectable picturisation of a literary composition and the work of an artist is far more subtle than that of a literature, since his main task lies in bringing to paper the facial expressions betraying specific feelings and emotions of his characters as well as depicting bodily movements appropriate to the inward and outward situations. The task is rendered even more difficult and intricate in the small format of a miniature. But the artist or group of artists has wonderfully succeeded in their endeavour in this work and the paintings can really be termed as gems of the Maratha school of Art. (Prof. G.C.Tripathi) Apart from the flora, fauna, settings, costume and jewellery, the emotional state of the categories of *nayika*, the *dutikas/sakhis* find great relevance in complementing the *nayikas* in pursuing their amorous activities. Here are about folios selected for the interpretation and analysis of *Rasamanjari* Manuscript paintings in the reserve collections of national Museum.



### *Ajnatayauvana Mugdha Nayika*

Rasamanjari Paintings

Acc. No 61.1185

Provenance: Sanskrit

Script: Devanagari

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> Century CE

Size: 14 x 29 cm

The *nayika* had a bath in the pond and came out, she is a *mugdha* and stepping from adolescence to youth, still not able to conduct herself, *dhatri*, an elderly friend is offering a saree and instructing the *nayika* to cover herself. The poet compares the eyes of the *nayika* as the lotus lifted out of water and her ears as the lotus leaf as *karnapatra*. The other *sakhi* is bringing the tray of perfume and cosmetics to dress her up. Even the pond is painted in the shape of the eye and the foliage is framed beautifully with pink flowers and entire scenario depicts *shrinagara rasa*.



### *Anandasammohavati Pragalbha*

Rasamanjari Paintings

Acc. No 61.1185

Provenance: Sanskrit

Script: Devanagari

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> Century CE

Size: 14 x 29 cm

*Pragalbha nayika* is sharing her blissful experience of union with her husband to her *pranasakhi*. On the otherhand the *sakhi* is an experienced in such act and suggested the *nayika* to enjoy the union whole heartedly and how she experiences *ananda* and to remain in that state. Her gestures suggest the amorous actions she enjoyed. *Sakhi* is happy that the *nayika* has valued her suggestions. Both of them are sitting in a pavillion, amidst beautiful flowery bushes and flower beds.



### *Mugdha Prositabhartrika*

#### Rasamanjari Paintings

Acc. No 61.1185

Provenance:Sanskrit

Script: Devanagari

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> Century CE

Size: 14 x 29 cm

In this folio, in the absence of nayika two of her *sakhis* are covering about about their nayika, who is in the state of *Prositabhartrika*, her husband has departed to distant place. In the right side, a lady with her right hand lifted in the gesture, describing the agony of the chaste and innocent nayika, whose husband is away from her. The other lady is expressing the feeling of inability to help her in the matter. They are narrating the condition of woeful, *mugdha* nayika and their faces bear the expression of sympathy. Two pavillions, foliage, carpet all make the composition aesthetically appealing.



### *Praudha Pravatsyatpatika*

#### Rasamanjari Paintings

Acc. No 61.1185

Provenance:Sanskrit

Script: Devanagari

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> Century CE

Size: 14 x 29 cm

It is the scenario depicts the *proudha nayika*, Radhika undergoing suffering of the very thinking that Krishna is leaving the town for ever. Her *pranasakhis*, three of them trying to console her, by offering a lotus flower as coolent, a hand fan bed cushion are around but nothing help Radhika and her suffering continues. Her *priya-namrasakhi* Lalitha is raising her hand to console, goes in vain, not able withstand the suffering of her friend Lalita goes as *dutika* and meets Krishna under a bower outside the house of Radhika. Her gestures seems to show why are you leaving us, how we live without you and look at the terrible state of Radhika. The entire painting is a fine narrative of the emotional state of separation.





**Virahanivedana**  
Rasamanjari Paintings

Acc. No 61.1185

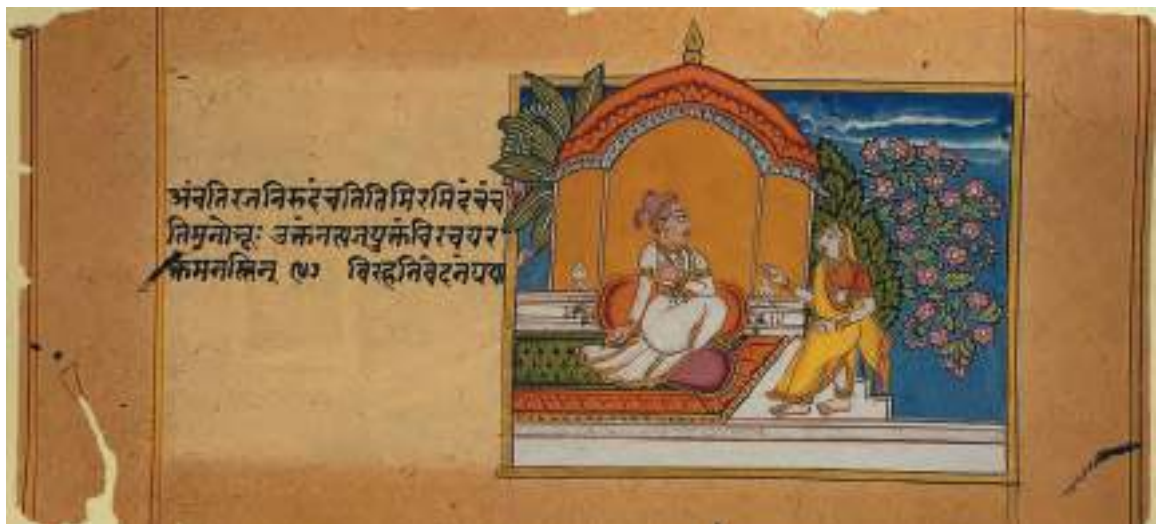
Provenance: Sanskrit

Script: Devanagari

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> Century CE

Size: 14 x 29 cm

Radhika's most trusted and beloved *sakhi* Lalitha considered as *Priya-namrasevasakhi* goes as a messenger, *dutika* to Krishna and explains him 'the creator created moon faced Radhika, as the flame of the lamp, on this earth. She, because of power of destiny, is most likely on the verge of the last stage. That is why, I request you with my head bowed, O Keishna, to shower your love upon her, so that the universe, is not merged in complete darkness. (S V Tripathi P 199)



**Sanghattana**  
Rasamanjari Paintings

Acc. No 61.1185

Provenance: Sanskrit

Script: Devanagari

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> Century CE

Size: 14 x 29 cm

A messenger, *dutika* loyal to her *nayika* with keen concern addressing the lover and he is listening to her with same concern, she is saying to be affectionate to her *nayika*, as the night is falling, cupid is acting on her, keep up your promise and spend time in romance with my *nayika*. It is a very good example for *sanghattana*, the efforts of bringing together of the two lovers. The scene is beautifully set up in a tasteful atmosphere with colourful pavillion, carpet and flowering bowers.

***Mandana*****Rasamanjari Paintings**

Acc. No 61.1185

Provenance:Sanskrit

Script: Devanagari

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> Century CE

Size: 14 x 29 cm

Nayika in her relaxed passtime mood. Her *Sakhi*, *Sakhi* is one who is trustworthy and always next to her mistress and one who is adapt in decorating and involving in light talk according to *Dutikarmaparakasha*. One of the important deeds of *sakhi* is *mandana*, painting or decorating the *nayika*. Here she is painting on the breast of *nayika*, instead of painting a *makarika*, mischievously painted the hand of the lover, knowing that the *nayika* throwing a blue lotus towards her, an amorous act and *sakhi* welcomes with a smile.

***Sakhikrita Parihasa*****Rasamanjari Paintings**

Acc. No 61.1185

Provenance:Sanskrit

Script: Devanagari

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> Century CE

Size: 14 x 29 cm

This is an exclusive painting where Sita is with her *sakhi* and the *sakhi* is questioning Sita, who is the seventh incarnation of Mahavishnu, Sita looks at the paintings and fixed her eyes on the incarnation of Rama and her beaming smile is the answer to the tricky and appealing question of *Sakhi*, and she belongs to the type of *Cheshtakrita kovida*, 15<sup>th</sup> type of *dutika* according to *Dutikaramaparakasha*. Bhanu datta named it as *Sakhikrita parihasa*, this shows the place of significance given by the poet to the entire community of *dutikas/sakhis*. *Sakhijan* were integral part of the household. The situation is beautifully framed with the 10 incarnations of Mahavishnu and the 7<sup>th</sup>, Rama is directly on the eye level of Sita, which she fondly attributes, *sakhi* turning herself and looking whether chaste Sita has answered rightly. One flowery foliage suggests they are under a pavillion in a garden, the pavillion is also painted to suit the Dashavatara frame.



### *Dakshina Nayaka*

Rasamanjari Paintings

Acc. No 61.1185

Provenance: Sanskrit

Script: Devanagari

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> Century CE

Size: 14 x 29 cm

This looks like a full fledged painting than to limit as manuscript illustration. Beautifully laid out scene of Krishna seeing the maids approaching him. The green tree, flowery bower, extra-ordinary spread of the flower bed, orange background and the wavy sky all contributing to the inviting moment airing romance. Beautiful women are approaching Krishna, they are all maids, the *sakhis* of Radha, Krishna is worried, for how does his eyes cover all of them, thus Krishna stood constant with an expression of thrill.



### *Nayakabhasa*

Rasamanjari Paintings

Acc. No 61.1185

Provenance: Sanskrit

Script: Devanagari

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> Century CE

Size: 14 x 29 cm

It is a funny situation, the *nayika* is explaining about how the man is not apprised of her amorous trick to the messenger, the *dutika*. She is addressing O Messenger, in the pretext of plucking flowers in front of him, exhibited him several ways of passionate actions, but this man is not allured of my passionate gestures. The messenger also adds the ways of trapping him and while they are making fun of him, the lover is approaching them still ignorant of amorous expressions of his beloved.



***Parakiya Abhisarika***  
Rasamanjari Paintings

Acc. No 61.1185

Provenance: Sanskrit

Script: Devanagari

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> Century CE

Size: 14 x 29 cm

“The Sun is felt as cloud, the night as day, the darkness as lamp, the forest as house and the problematic path, as an easy way for women who are inclined to approach their lovers”. (S V Tripathi 2001) Two damsels dressed to appeal the man they seeking to meet. *Parakiya abhisarika* being always with her elders, hardly get time to spend with her lover. She is in a great hurry to reach her destination and asking her *priya sakhi* to take longer step to follow her. Anxious state is obvious in their expression, gestures and movement. The picture is rendered with painterly quality in profiling of her mansion, a bower with colourful flowers, the sky with waves of clouds and dark blue background added unusual charm to the illustration.



***Madhya Vipralabdha***  
Rasamanjari Paintings

Acc. No 61.1185

Provenance: Sanskrit

Script: Devanagari

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> Century CE

Size: 14 x 29 cm “When the deer eyed went to the assigned pleasure house and found it without the lover, her lips looked distinguished due to concealed inhaling, the words were half spoken, the eyes partly opened and the betel, half chewed in her mouth”. (S.V.Tipathi) A *nayika* trapped in the *vipralabdha shringara*, in a terrible state not finding her lover at the time and place designated, mediated by the *dutika/sakhi* of *nayika*. *Sakhi* brought her assuring the union, she is also shocked to see the vacant pavillion. The artist has very well conveyed this emotive narrative in this painting aesthetically.

**Parodha****Rasamanjari Paintings**

Acc. No 61.1185

Provenance: Sanskrit

Script: Devanagari

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> Century CE The lady and her priya sakhi are taking a stroll in a flowery grove on the bank of the Reva River. Amidst cool breeze of fragrance provoking the romantic sentiments in the heart of the *nayika*, she expresses her sensuous pleasure to the sakhi, who is equally adept in the sports of love. Irrespective of the situation one who is known for articulation is known as *Prekshata* by those who are well versed as she can adopt herself to the existing situations, such a woman belongs to the category of *dutika-Parangini* according to *Dutikarmaprakasha*.

*Rasamanjari* of Bhanudatta, through these illustrated manuscript painting folios is immortalised. This 13<sup>th</sup> century text captivated the artists from Maratha region and they transformed the text into the context of visual culture of 18<sup>th</sup> century. Out of 117 folios contained paintings, only few of them where the role of *dutika/sakhis* depicted are chosen. Prior to Bhanudatta, rhetoricians though discuss about the go-between characters also known as *sakhis* and *dutikas*, they seldom distinguished their performed tasks. It is Bhanudatta, who specify the companions of heroines with their assigned tasks. The four important functions of *sakhi* being *vinoda* or *parihasa*, *mandana*, to adorn the *nayika*, *shiksha*, to advise *nayika* and *upalambha*, to complain to *nayika* about *nayaka* with sarcasm. *Dutika* is specific role in *sanghatana*, bringing the *nayaka* and *nayika* together and *virahanivedana*, communicating the state of separation to the concerned. While analysing these paintings it is felt that portrayal of *dutikas/sakhis* are also much closer to the go-between characters, explained by Pandarika Vithala of 16<sup>th</sup> Century in his *Dutikarmaprakasha*. Out of 21 types of *dutikas/sakhis* discussed in *Dutikarmaprakasha*, *Sakhi*, *Dhatri*, *Dutika*, *Parangini*, *Cheshtakrita kovida* find their place of eminence.

### Endnotes

- 1 Prof. Gaya C Tripathi in Foreword, *Mysteries of Love*
- 2 Prasad, Nandagopal 2015
- 3 <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/288586>, Prasad Rashmi Nandagopal Choodamani Impact of Gitagovinda on the Gitakavyas of Post Medieval period With reference to Nayikabheda Jain University
- 4 R D Choudhury and Choodamani Nandagopal, *Manuscript Paintings of Assam State Museum* P. 6
- 5 Satya Vrata Tripathi *Mysteries of Love - Maratha Miniatures of the Rasamanjari* P 4
- 6 *Ibid*; P 7

## Bihari's *Satsai* – Paintings on *Bhagavat Purana*



Krishna and Radha in Dialogue in Kung

In some of these miniature paintings *dooti/sakhi* is treated eloquently, which indicates that the character of *sakhi* or *dooti* was almost inevitable in the themes. Artists take pleasure in portraying the *sakhis* in different gestures, movements and performing their duties in an interesting way. A set of miniature paintings that illustrates *Bhagavata Purana* in the collections of National Museum are evidently portraying *Krishnaleela* in a lucid way. Some of them are the illustrious events of the love sequences of Radha and Krishna. The *sakhis* or *gopis* as they were popularly known are the go-between characters as they are like interesting interludes to make the scenario more painterly and aesthetically with the various shades of *shringarabhava*.

These *sakhijan* are concerned with the emotional states of their friend Radha and sometimes as messengers they are portrayed conversing with Krishna, other times, with compassionate feelings try to explain Radha that Krishna also equally suffers with the *viyoga*, separation. When Radha listens to them coming with the message from Krishna, or when Krishna gives importance to them listening to their narration of the state of Radha, the *sakhijan* feel their efforts were worthwhile. When Radha and Krishna meet, the *samagama* these *sakhi* folk feel the perpetual happiness and they were the cause of the divine integration. In all these portrayal the divinity is endowed and that makes the art divine too.



### ***Krishna and Radha in Dialogue***

Acc.No: 49.19/67

Rajasthan, Sub School: Mewar

Period: Mid Period 18<sup>th</sup> Century

Size: 12.7x 8.6cm

The scene is laid in a grove by the side of river Yamuna. On the left Krishna and Radha are seated facing each other on a platform and engaged in a conversation. Gopis are standing in a pavilion looking at Radha and Krishna.

This painting is one of the large set of *Bhagavata Purana* illustrating *Krishnaleela*. This whole set belongs to the Mewar School of Rajasthani miniature paintings, based on the verses, *dohas* of Bihari's *Satsai*. In Hindi literature Bihari is considered as the major *ritikal* poet of early 18<sup>th</sup> century. It is one of the *shringarapradhan* compositions, which earned popularity in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and central region of India. It is treated as unique poetic tradition, which enabled the artists to visualize and portray the *Bhagavata* in colours and

forms. In this genre of miniature paintings, the *dohas* are quoted on the top of the painting. The calligraphy is neat, bold and artistic, the black letters having been written on yellow ground. The miniatures are important for the proof they furnish about the character, style and quality of Mewar school of painting in the 18<sup>th</sup> century CE.<sup>1</sup>

The artist has painted with all details of a beautiful garden on the banks of river Yamuna. Two happenings are taking place on one pane, on the right side under a flowery bower, the main characters, Radha and Krishna are seated in a relaxed way and conversing, the mood is obviously blossoming as the flower garlands and colourful fresh flowers indicate. On the other side at a distance under a beautiful pavilion, five friends, the *sakhis* of Radha are anxiously looking at their friend, whether she is spending the value time with Krishna. Probably in the previous painting they have persuaded her and almost tutored her to behave in a required way when she meets her lover. These five *sakhis* also symbolise the *panchendriyas*, the five senses of Radha, responding to her emotional state in balance.





***Krishna playing hide and Seek***

Acc.No: 55.50/51

Rajasthan School, Sub School: Mewar

Period: Mid Period 18<sup>th</sup> Century

Size: 12.7x 8.6cm

Krishna is playing hide and seek with *gopis*. He is shown closing the eyes of one of the *gopis*.

The scenario here is much more beautiful with flowering trees and flowering grove competing with the colourful garments of *gopis* scattered all over. River is prominently seen here, where as the moon is witnessing the *leela*, play of Krishna. The green ground, starlit sky, bounty bushes and hanging white garlands are harmoniously blended in this painting. Krishna is closing the eyes of one of the *gopis* and all other participants in the play are trying to hide themselves in a place, their gestures, body language and eyes are curious and one of them is trying to hide behind Krishna, so confident herself. The artist probably took great delight in visualizing Krishna playing hide and seek with the *gopis* on the banks of the river Yamuna and the way *gopis* were thronging to participate in the play with no hesitation but with the will to surrender themselves in *samarpanabahva*. Though they came with Radha as her *sakhis* but got this great opportunity to take part in the *leela* of *Leelamaya* Krishna. This is one of the best representations of *Krishnaleela* scene of Mewar school atelier.



### ***Krishna and Gopis***

Acc.No: 55.50/58

Rajasthan School, Sub School: Mewar

Period: Mid Period 18<sup>th</sup> Century

Size: 12.7x 8.6cm

Krishna is approaching Radha to get back his flute. Two *gopis* are conversing and two others are looking at Krishna. The *gopis* stand to the right of Krishna under two trees. Flowering plants are shown on the bank of river Yamuna in the foreground.

Another alluring composition from the same set of *Bhagavata* miniature painting, where Krishna is in search of his closest attribute, also one of the features to identify Krishna as such. When such thing is lost what could be the moods of Krishna? He is lost himself, having spent relaxed time with Radha under a flowery bower, played hide and seek game comprising Radha and her *sakhis*, when Krishna could not found his *venu* or flute he is requesting all those engaged with him for some time. Finally he goes to Radha and the *yachakabhava*, requesting her whether in any case she has seen his flute. In the painting the hand gestures, her movement and expression of Radha is 'you and your flute, how should I know?, you wander from place to

place and in the company of so many *gopis*, how can I keep the count of all these and fetch your flute, go and fetch yourself'. Saying so, she is trying to brush aside Krishna, with whom her entire world is evolved. She behaves as a *khandita nayika*, when the *nayaka* reposing all his confidence and requesting. She is leading him intentionally to the way to the *latavatika*, the flowery bower, where they spent their time earlier, and she would give his flute to him in private moment. The four *sakhis* are perplexed to see the behaviour of Radha, they are wonderstruck too, to see her brushing aside Krishna. Two of the *sakhis* are very much considerate towards Krishna and his emotions, and conversing between themselves. The other two are looking at the central figures Radha and Krishna in great surprise.

Environment in the painting is kept seemingly romantic to support the emotive contents of the main characters namely Radha and Krishna with their four *sakhis*. River Yamuna with its winding movement is witnessing the enactment of Krishna losing his lute and pleading Radha to find out. The beautiful bower, flowery tree of different hues, flowing waters of Yamuna treated in decorative manner with flowery bushes all around, the jade green background and all such elements of nature received careful rendering of brushwork of a talented artist.



### ***Meeting of Krishna and Radha***

Acc.No: 55.50/55

Rajasthan School, Sub School: Mewar

Period: Mid Period 18<sup>th</sup> Century

Size: 12.7x 8.6cm

Krishna and Radha are standing facing each other and engaged in a conversation. On the right Radha's confidante is seated on a raised platform under a bower. Flowering plants can be seen on the river bank. Stormy clouds and golden streaks of lightening are seen in the sky. Text in a yellow label at the top with red border on four sides of painting.

Among the large number of folios of Bhagavata Purana series in the collections of National Museum this is the last painting that is chosen, which has different interpretations as such. Adris Banerji narrates the situation in his article in Rooplekha mentions, this miniature shows the departure after meeting. Masses of vaporous clouds fill the sky, on which lightening is shown. Deep coal black represents the intensity of the black night while a plane of lighter black bearing parallel rows of pin-like white line indicate cloud-burst. On the left is a decorative tree. In front of it Krishna is taking leave of Radha. On the left is a bower showing Radha seated in a dejected mood after his departure. Below are two cows with legs immersed in the water of Yamuna.<sup>2</sup>

The label details with this painting given by documentation team of National Museum that Krishna and Radha are standing facing each other and engaged in a conversation. On the right Radha's confidante is seated on a raised platform under a bower. Flowering plants can be seen on the river bank. Stormy clouds and golden streaks of lightening are seen in the sky. Text in a yellow label at the top with red border on four sides of painting.

In the first narration there is no mention of the *sakhi* of Radha, both the feminine figures are denoted as Radha while meeting Krishna and Radha dejected after Krishna left. In the second narration it is stated as Radha conversing with Krishna while a *sakhi* seated in the bower. But this painting can also be interpreted in another way too.

Sri Radha's name is not mentioned directly in *Srimad Bhagavatam*. In other *Puranas* the descriptions of Sri Radha are given directly, especially in *Sri Brahma-vaivarta Purana*. All of the great *bhakti* schools in India accept the transcendental existence of Radha and Krishna. Some schools may not give special significance to these forms of the Lord, but they certainly accept such worship as authorized. Vishnuswami, Ramanuja, Vallabhacharya, and Chaitanya all accept the transcendental position of Sri Radha. Though some think the worship of Radha is of recent origins, this is not the case. It is true that in recent times the importance of Radha worship has been especially stressed by Sri Chaitanya.<sup>3</sup> By the time of Jayadeva the cult of Radha was established rooted through the *bhakti* movement swept the country.

*Madhurya bhakti* had replaced the hard core rituals and the mantra were transformed into poetic expression, music and dance in the form of community worship and activities. In such captive environment Jayadava's *Gitagovinda* received highest recognition. Further by 14<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> century the iconic representation of *madhurya bhakti* manifested in the devotional activities towards Radha-Krishna philosophy. *Bhagavata purana* from time to time recorded the role of love and devotion of Radha towards Krishna through poetry, music, dance and thought process. In course of time the theme of Radha-Krishna became a central subject in the schools of miniature paintings such as Rajasthani and Pahari sub-schools.

The third interpretation is the scenario of Departure of Krishna, supported with the relevant factors such as one of the eight *sakhis* of Radha is Lalitha, who is her close confidante is conversing with Krishna and pleading to meet Radha before he is leaving Vrindavan. Some of the legends give the picture that Radha had hid the flute of Krishna so that he would not leave Vrindavan, when Krishna comes she is seen in totally dejected mood and had no courage to face him and his separation. Krishna leaves behind his flute and his beloved *sakhi* Radha never to come back to Vrindavan, never played on his flute and never met Radha. It is for the last time Lalitha, the *sakhi* of Radha is trying to create a situation for meeting of Radha and Krishna. This painting in the series is depicting the *virahi* Radha dejected sitting in the bower, where as it is Krishna's feeling and expectation for the last glimpse of his beloved Radha and also the helpless situation of *sakhi*.

It is one of the outstanding portrayal of nature on the moment of departure resulted in *viyoga*, the separation. A specially treated tree with colourful flowers fail to create a mood for meeting of divine lovers, the treatment of clouds on the sky indicate the thunder and lightning, rain drops falling distinctly symbolize the tear drops of *sakhi* Lalitha, it's a painful experience for her, unlike the other three paintings where the background is so

colourful, this fourth painting has black and grey colour background shows the sorrowful event. Yamuna too flowing not so gently and the two cows at the right corner of the painting are the mute witness for the event taking place, but still hopeful of the meeting of Radha and Krishna. The entire environment in its pictorial expressiveness demanding the attention of the forthcoming state of Vraj without Krishna.

These four Mewar miniature paintings as part of the series from *Bhagavata Purana Dashama skanda* dated early 18<sup>th</sup> century, reveal a new milieu and décor, remarkable for amazingly tender sensuous feeling and a high quality of pictorial expressiveness. The painters were particularly made use of primary colours, sparkling gem-like deep blue, black, gold and red reflect the limpid depths of the mind and soul of characters. All the four miniatures have profoundly reflected the *sakhibhava* and the role played by the *sakhis* in the *Krishnaleela*.

### Endnotes

- 1 Adris Banerjee, Mewar Miniatures P 70, Ed. M S Randhawa, Rooplekha July 1959 Vol.XXX Nos.1 and 2
- 2 Adris Banerjee, Mewar Miniatures P 71, Ed. M S Randhawa, Rooplekha July 1959 Vol.XXX Nos.1 and 2
- 3 Web-site: Bhakti Vedanta Ashram - <https://www.bvashram.org/why-is-sri-radhas-name-not-mentioned-in-the-bhagavatam/>13.Oct 2020.

## Portrayal of *Sakhis/sakhas* and *peya* figures in the Collection



From terracotta figurines of Indus Valley to the expressive stone and metal images of medieval times, Indian art and science of sculpture have evolved into a major art form with almost every century contributing fresh styles of expression. The *puranic* incarnations of Vishnu emerged as mighty figures in the Gupta period as a divine boar in Udayagiri and Dashavatara cave at Ellora of Rashtrakuta times. Similarly, the abstract form of Linga reveals itself into the anthropomorphic forms of Shiva reaching the height of manifestation in Chalukya, Pallava, Rashtrakuta and Chola art. The Maheshamurthi in Elephnta represents the pinnacle of human creative expression wherein the human hand and touch could transform the formless into a divine form.<sup>1</sup> The expression of spiritual qualities and the sense of attainment of salvation reached its height of idealization in the form of the Buddha and *Tirthankara* images. The Buddhist imagery though originated from the Gandhara region during the times of Kushans, found its dynamism in the Sarnath and Ajanta in Gupta period reaching to Sri Lankan region in the south and Tibet and China in central and East Asian regions. So also the *Tirthankara* imagery of Jainism found its way through Magadh, Rajasthan and enters Karnataka at Shravanabelagola and other Jaina temple architecture with fine finish and perfect proportions. Thus, Indian sculpture exists in the timeless being, simply at rest within its fullness, surrounded by silence.

Even as a dynamic piece, the Dancing Shiva is not caught in the moment of dance in the elemental state. There is no history, no temporal boundary here. Shiva as the eternal Cosmic Energy is the creator of Time itself, yet while continuously dancing in the universe, he remains somehow perfectly balanced, simultaneously, still and active, ever transcends to what he creates.<sup>2</sup> the essence of dance, music, spirituality, functional objectivity, and surrendering sublimity are

faithfully rendered in the sculptural art of India. It is undoubtedly true that the feminine form in Indian sculpture pervades the mundane expression and the sculptor opens up the process of divine consciousness when he chisels the images of Yakshi, Salabhanjika or the Devi in Sanchi, Khajuraho and Belur.

Womanhood transcended into the divine form, spirit and strength in the images of Mahishamardhini and Saptamatrikas. Great temples were built to worship Devi in the form of Kali, Durga, Lakshmi, Saraswathi, Chamundi and Mahishamardhini. Housing the gods took a great expression in the form of artistically created temple architecture covering all the faiths. Considering the ritual needs and the scope for the participation of the people in temple precinct, with the sacred space as the focal point, the vicinity expanded and extended to satisfy the functional needs, and the most important was the religious congregation and procession. At this juncture, Indian sculptor had to provide the divine images in a portable form for the purpose of rituals and temple processions. During these times, the innovation was the beautiful images of various sizes. The Chola artists created masterpieces in bronze with intense dynamism as expressed in the eternal images of Nataraja. The great Indian texts, the *Shilpa* texts laid down all the minute and infinite details that are conducive for the realization of manifestations of the concept in the form of icons. Over a period of time, the art of making images has turned to the science of iconography, which is considered as a very important academic discipline. Iconography, the art and science of icons is endowed with finest aesthetic expression on account of classical tradition that was handed down to the artists through the centuries.

Indian sculpture is the product of Indian culture. The sculptural tradition primarily emerged from folk level in villages. The potter wheel is the first instrument which turned the clay molded into different shapes of pots and dishes. In the beginning, images were created in clay in a small way. Later, it progressed as the terracotta art. The images were made out of fine clay and then baked in the kiln so that the images did not melt when they came in contact with water. Sculpture as an art form progressed into many styles during historical period. We get to see many sculptures of gods and goddesses created in sculpture, metal, wood and ivory for the purpose of worship. The sculptures were also created to decorate the different parts of the Buddhist, Jaina and Hindu architecture. The very process of imagination involves the idea and the form, which transforms into a concept and the concept manifests into multiple, tangible forms. In order to concretise the form visualized, the artist prepares a number of sketches by composing along with juxtaposing human forms with inanimate as well as animate forms. Then, he treats the transcended form in a passionate manner.

Thus, the emergence of form is the internalised and personalised experience of an artist and being faithful to form in all its manifestation matters the most. Conceiving of the form is a spiritual phenomenon; the treatment of a form is a technical evocation where the artist is completely involved. Indian aesthetic theories lend higher insights into the creative process and the ability of an artist very much depends on the way the form is significantly treated. To embellish the form, the artist uses decorative treatment, to bring serenity to the form. He may take up a divine approach, to beautify the form, he searches parallels in nature. To get a vicarious pleasure, he distorts the form or to obtain an empowering form he exaggerates the normal form by filling up with strength and vigor. These are the certain ways in which the artist

transforms the imaginative form he had visualised to obtain a tangible form. Interpreting the 'form' is one of the primary element of visual language, be it painting, sculpture or architecture.

India has a rich heritage of sculpture from as early as the Indus period to as late as Vijayanagar times. The different styles in sculpture are influenced by the dynasty which ruled at the time of the creation of that class of sculpture. The element of style in sculpture is an important factor to know the changing trends of culture. The art of sculpture created by the gifted sculptors in different times gives an idea of the patronage endowed to this art and the artistic genre of each of the period and the contribution.

There is a limited scope in the portrayal of *sakhis* or *peya* (offering) figures in the composition of sculptures. The compositions are individualistic and become necessary compulsive element in the schema of sculptures. Legends and narratives of literature are expressed evocatively in the medium of painting than sculptures. Even the process of creation in the medium of sculpture takes longer period of time. May be due to such limitations, selection of themes and narratives have different and distinctive connotation in the art of sculpture.

Figures carved on the *Dvara* or doorway at the threshold of the shrines hold a unique position in the scheme of sculptures adorning a temple. As door-keepers, the figures guard the shrine and welcome visitors into the space, guiding them towards what lies within. Both male and female images are present, dependent on the deity occupying the shrine. They carry the emblems of the deity they guard; at the entrances to *Saiva* and *Vaishnava* shrines, two or four armed male *palakas* (guards) are present and in the shrines of goddesses, female *palakas* flank either side of shrines. Also known as *Dvara Paricharakas*, they offer service to the deity through dance, offering flowers and holding fly whisks. In this temple, both *Palakas* and *Paricharakas* are found.<sup>3</sup> Inside, or the outer architrave, even forming the lower part of the *dvara*, door jamb are figures of women. On either side groups of five women are present, surrounded by foliage. With intricate hairstyles and wearing ornaments, they stand in different poses conveying a multitude of moods. Some of them lean on the foliage; a woman looks into a mirror, a huntress stands with her bow and some women dance while welcoming the devotee into the shrine. *Dvara* images are inviting and the figures here do so in many ways through their postures, activities, moods and meanings.

Similarly, the *Vaisnava* and *Saiva* temples and even the Jaina Basadis have well proportioned figures on either side of the doorway of the main entrance and also the *garbhagrha*. They are considered as the guarding deities, corresponding to the main deity in size, decoration and facial features. The ceilings, niches and the outer walls are used to show *dikpalas* in standing, sitting and moving positions. The *Dvarapalakas* in most of the styles of sculptures are represented with attractive postures and poses. Male and female figures flanked on the sides of doorway along with their attendants add beauty to the door frame. The sculptors made use of the concept of *dvarapalaks* in serving their purpose of creating magnificent figures while decorating the temples.<sup>4</sup>

In the collection of National Museum Delhi a large number of sculptures find their presence under the section of Archaeology. From the pre-historic to early historic and medieval times sculptures in the mediums of terracotta, stone and metal are well preserved. Of them



few sculptures display the *sakhis* and *peya* figures, some of them *gandharvas*, *kinnaras* and *vidydharas* along with main figure as part of composition. Most of them are independent sculptures without much importance given to the subsidiary figures. A few sculptures are cited here from the collection.



### ***Vasantasena***

ACC. No 2800

Kushan period from Mathura

Archaeology, stone

Dated 2<sup>nd</sup> Century CE

Size: 38 x 30 inches

Vasantasena is one of the most prominent characters, a protagonist, found in Indian classical drama. Shudraka's *Mrichchakatika* is a realistic presentation of characters in a unique story of love, loss and desire. The playwright goes beyond the usual conventions followed by traditional Indian dramatists. His originality of vision and capability is seen in his presentation of the central female character Vasantasena. She is portrayed as a unique *nayika* of times who stood for human values

than luxurious life. Being unparalleled in the art of dance, life of luxury, but ready to forsake everything for the sake of true values, fell in love with a simple Brahman Charudatta. This is the central part of the theme. The sculpture displayed in the gallery has two faces, behind this part a scene of Vasantasena in a drunken state being carried by two men.

Here in this panel, Vasantasena is going on the street, where as her *priyasakhi* Madanika goes with her holding an umbrella as the status symbol of the time. Sakhi Madanika conveys the lovelorn state of Vasantasena to Charudatta and thus playing the role of emissary. Whenever her mistress expresses her desire to meet Charudatta, Madanika at first instance reaches lover Charudatta and makes an announcement of Vasantasena. It is probably the first tangible evidence, belongs to as early as 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE providing the clear picture of a *sakhi* with *nayika*.



### ***Musical Group***

ACC. No 51-99

Shunga period from Besnagar Gwalior

Archaeology, stone

Dated 2<sup>nd</sup> Century BCE

Size: 30.15 x 26 cm

This panel displays a pastime sequence at the women quarters of royal household. It is a fragment of railing pillar carved on the two sides of relief. On one side there is a musical scene while on the other side a prince in a chariot drawn by two horses and his attendants. The royal household employed a large number of musicians, dancers, artists and scribes in their service. Two royal women seated on the sides of a skilful female drummer, below a flutist, players on harp and singers are engrossed in their soulful presentation. The queens and princesses entrusted to these artists in service other tasks such as emissary, to adorn the heroine, to bring about the union between *nayaka* and *nayika* and also play the advisory role.



### ***Royal Couple with Attendants***

ACC. No 51-99

Shatavahana period from Pithalkora, Cave I Aurangabad

Archaeology, stone

Dated 2<sup>nd</sup> Century BCE

Size: 45.5 x 45.5 cm

A fragmentary sculpture showing a royal couple seated with attendants. Appears to be spending their time in intimacy, while the *sakhis* of the royal household are around and one principal *sakhi* is offering probably the betel leaves placed in the tray, the queen is picking up from the tray to offer to the king. Such sequences occur in the *Krishnaleela* themes, where Krishna offers betel leaf to Radha and the *ashtasakhis* watch the scene fondly, which was considered as *tambula seva*. Probably this panel is the earliest identified as offering of betel leaf and the couple sharing the same.



### *Ganga*

ACC. No L.2 png

Gupta period  
from Ahichchatra U.P

Archaeology, Terracotta

Dated 5-6 Century CE

Size: 45.5 x 45.5 cm



Life sized Terracotta image of the personified river goddess Ganga, hails from a Shaivite temple in Ahichchatra. Ganga and Yamuna, the two sacred rivers of India are represented as goddesses in several Hindu temples in Gupta period and continue in later periods also as they are placed on the either side of the entrances of main temples. These images are considered as the auspicious symbols for the devotees to take *darshan* of them before entering the temple. *Gangavatarana* legend is associated with the descent of the river Ganga. Ganga symbolizes purification and fertility, is represented as a bejeweled young goddess, standing on her vehicle a *makara* (crocodile), signifying untamed energy. The graceful posture and the relatively modest ornamentation reflect the standard convention of the period. The goddess is adorned with simple cloth

covering her bosom (*stanottariya*) and the tight lower garment known as *chandataka*, fastened to the waist by a girdle and holding a *kalash*. The figure represents the peak of great creativity, technical perfection and refinement of Indian terracotta art in the late fifth century in Gupta period. Profile figurative in a living movement is the outstanding feature of this creation.

Equally interesting and fascinating figure is the *sakhi* who is following Ganga, Holding a high raised *chatra* the umbrella, covering the *kalash* and Ganga with a concern to protect her from rain and sun also indicating the high status. She is also elegantly dressed and adorned with choicest jewel to feel proper to accompany Ganga. Gently tilted torso of hers lends a special charm to the entire composition.



### ***Standing Parvati***

ACC. No 53.14

Pratihara period from Baijanath Dist, Almora  
Uttaranchal

Archaeology, Stone

Dated 11<sup>th</sup> Century CE

Size: 70 x 38 cm

An exclusive icon of Goddess Parvati standing on the lotus pedestal, surrounded by her *sakhis* or the *peya* (offering) figures. Image of four armed Parvati standing on lotus pedestal surrounded by several figures in offering mode are grouped on either sides in the most artistic fashion. She is profusely ornamented including an elaborate crown holding her hair arranged in a conical fashion. A *stanottariya*, beaded long mala, armlets bangles, anklets, semi-circular halo adorn her youthful figure. The *sakhis* and *peya* figures hold *chamara*, *kalash*, and some are playing musical instruments and all of them in the mode of divine offering.



### *Yamuna*

ACC. No 68. 53

Rashtrakuta? Madhya Pradesh

Archaeology, Stone

Dated 8<sup>th</sup> Century CE

Size: 61 x 41.5 cm

The image of Yamuna, the river goddess standing on her *kurma vahana*, tortoise in a beautiful *tribhanga* mode. Her *aptasakhi* Vanamalika is standing close to her probably holding a bunch of flowers, a bag is hung on her left shoulder crossing and lying on her right hip. It looks like a modern sling bag. Visitors are surprised to see such a purse kind of apparel. Goddess Yamuna is picking up from her hand, Vanamalika is standing in such a way and looking at Yamuna, asking whether it is appropriate. Yamuna's coiffure and ornamentation is exclusive, her veil encircled her and the lower garment is attenuated to show her sensuous form. The other *sakhi* holding an umbrella is trying to reach as high as possible to provide shelter to Yamuna, The profile of this *sakhi* exhibit a well combed plait, a large ear ring and tight lower garment. Flying Gandharva couple is seen on the right. This panel is an unparallel from the context of *sakhis* and their concern to their dear *nayika*, the heroine.



***Mohini (A female representation of Vishnu)***

ACC. No 50.190

Western Chalukya, Gadag Karnataka

Archaeology, Stone

Dated 12th Century CE

Size: 92 x 41 cm

This sculpture of Mohini is a typical example of delicacy in style. It is a bracket figure in true sense. The bending of the leg, waist and placement of hands make a flower bracket. The figure is a real representation of all the characteristics of a dancing Mohini. Holding a mirror in her right hand in the mode of *darpanasundari* and the left hand adjusting her hair ornament and

the extreme bending of the *kati* makes this pose an extraordinary one. The left leg is rooted firmly to balance the *tribhanga*. The figure is overpowered with erotic sentiment depicting the *Lasya* gesticulation. She is smiling gracefully obviously proud of her enchanting poise. A special kind of ear ring is observed, known as *sopanakrama vinyasta kundala*. Exceptional kind of jewellery adorns her lithesome form. This sculpture belongs to the Kalyana Chalukyan period which is distinctly marked by the sophisticated treatment of form and material to the maximum revelation. Mohini is supported by a male attendant or *sakha* who is playing on musical instrument rising above his head. The *sakha* also trying to imitate tribhanga of Mohini. Since it is Vishnu transformed into Mohini, the sculptor thoughtfully provided a male attendant.



***King Narasimha seated on a swing***

ACC. No 50.185

Senas, Orissa, Konark

Archaeology, Stone

Dated 13th Century CE

Size: 88.5 x 46 cm

King Narasimha Varman seated on a swing under an arch with the right leg suspended and the left is flexed. Two women, the *sakhis* in the service of the palace are helping in swinging. On the pedestal in front are two female *chauri*-bearers, another set of *sakhis* in service. Below a set of musicians playing on *veena*, cymbals and two of them are in singing mode.



The collections in the Department of Archaeology are the most prestigious among all the collections of National Museum. It has the wide range of masterpieces of sculptural art from 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE to 19<sup>th</sup> Century CE. and some of them are worthy of their eminence. Here in this part of the research study few of the selected sculptures are presented as the representation to understand the place and significance of sakhi, *sakhas*, or maids, peya figures, musicians and attendants. Almost every Vishnu image in all styles, Surya images, image of Lakshmi, standing Sarasvati, Shiva and Parvati in their abode with the *shivaganas*, all Devi images, *salabhanjikas*, dancing images all such panels are supported by either one or two and some times more subsidiary images on the sides at the knee level of the main image.

This kind of placement of images also brings balance to the composition and upholds the swaying rhythm of the main figure. In some panels the subsidiary figures try to play tricks to lighten the moods of the *nayaka* or *nayika*. Graceful placement of the subsidiary images adds elegance to the main form as many ways as possible. The *nayika* figures particularly are endowed with such elegant little figurines, further complement towards the refinement of the theme and composition.

### Endnotes

- 1 Choodamani Nandagopal, Manjusha – An Art Genre, P 3
- 2 Alistair Shearer the Hindu Vision. P. 14
- 3 Choodamani Nandagopal, *Ramappa Temple, The Crest Jewel of Kakatiya Art and Architecture* P 112
- 4 Choodamani Nandagopal, *Dance and Music in Temple Architecture* P 110

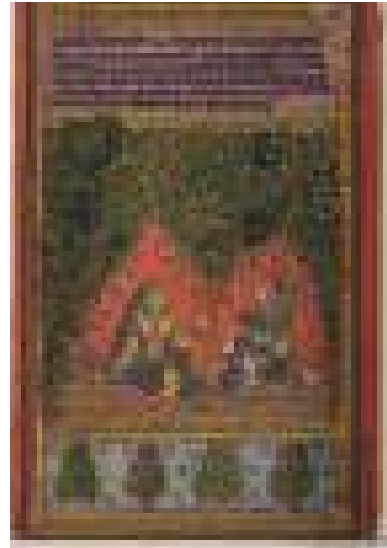
## Chapter IV

### Imagery of Illustrious *Dutikas/Sakhis* in Indian Epochs

- **Priyamvada and Anasuya, *the Dutikas/Sakhis* of Shakuntala**
- **Lalita the *Namra Sakhi* of Radha in Gitagovinda**
- **Chitrlekha the *Priya Sakhi* of Usha**
- **Bani Thani the smart *Sakhi* from Kishangarh**



Priyamvada and Anasuya with  
Shakuntala and Dushyanta



*Sakhi* and Radha  
conversing under a tree



Bani Thani, the Illustrious  
*Dutika/Sakhi*



Chitrlekha, the Illustrious  
*Dutika/Sakhi*

## Imagery of Illustrious *Dutikas/Sakhis* in Indian Epochs

Indian epochs contain several legends of love stories and love affairs which are eternally present in Indian art thought and literature. Gods, demons, kings, heroes, heroines, their friends and messengers were portrayed in the visual imagery, which became the vehicle for the extension of consciousness to the energies, the essences and the ethos of the life process. In this process the many talents of the *Dutikas/Sakhis*, the Female Messengers were explored and rediscovered through successive generations. The poets were always sympathetic towards these go-between characters, which were so significant to give twists and turns to the theme that they are portraying in the idyllic situation. The artists through different schools under the patronage of kings and masters, who were normally of aesthetic tastes and temperaments, filled the eyes of the aspirants with the sense of wonder and beauty of creative works of all time. 'We feel that he is right who builds for himself his whole life and shares with others. We know that our people have to come out of the stagnant pools of half deadness, the residuum of insecurity, into the act of living vital new lives in the silent area of here-now, which area is the source of inspiration of the spirit, where the past becomes the present and the present the future'.<sup>1</sup>

In this context the legends are one of the earliest expressions of human mind, through creative impulse they are transformed into narrative imagery. Out of such impulses and rare insights even the minor character like the go-between get a place of significance in weaving the situations that brings continuity to the theme to reach a logical end. The *dutikas/sakhis* are like the metaphors in *kavya* literature through which the transformation can be glimpsed at every juncture of the theme. At times they are the concrete characters, essentially romantic in their temperament, inspire the main characters through their deeds using ideal symbols; they are also knowledgeable in right and wrong. The metaphor and imagery of the portrayal of *Dutikas/sakhis* in the poems from the *Srimadbhagavata*, *Abhjnana Shakuntala* of Kalidasa, *Gitagovinda* of Jayadeva, the *Rasikapriya* of Keshavadasa, *Rasamanjari* of Bhanudatta, Bihari's *Sat Sai*, through the love songs of Vidyapati and through the rich regional poetic literature, the drama unfolds of the introduction, meeting, separation and union, *viraha* and *samagama* of *nayaka* and *nayika*. In all such idyllic situations, the long waits, passionate upsurges, tensions, dangerous happenings, intimacies of togetherness, the *dutikas/sakhis* emerge as saviors in salvaging the passionate hearts, just waiting for someone to mediate.

From the celestial abodes to the kings and *navabs* households and to the ranks of feudal courts, *dutikas/sakhis* or *dutas/sakhas* were considered as the prime mediators. Excellent examples enrich the roles of Female Messengers who cross beyond their comfortable zones to accomplish their mission as messengers. Probably Hanuman was the first illustrious *duta*, the Messenger

sent by Sri Rama to trace the status of Seeta and to collect information about the Lankapuri, the ruler and the military power. His mission was successful and it was the turning point in Ramayana. Similarly because of Manthara, the *aptasakhi/dasi*, the maid and messenger of queen Kaikeyi, whose evil advice to Kaikeye changed the whole course of Ramayana; Sri Rama took the 14 years of *vanavasa*, exile to forest. In Mahabharata Krishna visits the Kaurava Court as the *duta*, an envoy and a mediator to strike a war treaty between Kauravas and Pandavas, as a solution to avoid the Mahabharata war. It is also taken as an example for insulting a *duta* when he stands for neutral status.



Image of Sanghamitta and a bodhi shrine dedicated to Sanghamitta at Anuradhapura



Sanghamitta holding bodhi tree meets her brother Mahindra – A painting and panel illustrate the Dutika Sanghamitta - at the precinct of Tooth Relic Shrine Kandy

Historical evidences are many in this regard. For the religious purposes, Mahindra and Sanghamitra (children of Emperor Ashoka) were chosen to travel to distant lands, who are the Illustrious Messengers from India to Sri Lanka. Their mission to spread Buddhism in Sri Lanka gave them an ultimate place in the history and culture of Sri Lanka. The religious text *Mahavamsha* is the supportive evidence for their dedication. Sanghamitta is regarded as a young illustrious Female Messenger, who carried the saplings of *bodhi* tree from Bodh Gaya to Anuradhapura in Sri Lanka. The name *sanghamitta* itself indicates *sanghatana*, bringing together and she brought Sri Lanka and India together with a strong cultural bond.



*Stupa* of Sanghamitta under *bodhi* tree, recently Identified at Anuradhapura.



Cleopatra before Caesar by Jean-Leon Gerome,  
Oil on canvas, 1866 in Private collection

Cleopatra the queen of Egypt travels to Greece and presents as *svayamduti*, herself a Female Messenger unrolled from a carpet brought as gift to the royal court to the Greek Emperor Julius Caesar. Cleopatra confronts Gaius Julius Caesar after emerging from a roll of carpet. The Egyptian Queen had been driven from the palace in Alexandria by her brother/husband Ptolemy XIII. She had to disguise herself to regain entry and treaty with Caesar for protection and restoration of her throne.<sup>2</sup>

In the collections of National Museum several sets of thematic paintings represent the well-known legends from Indian ethos. In this section some of the series covered are immensely valuable to the present research as they portray the imagery of illustrious *dutikas/sakhis* such as Priyamvada and Anasuya in *Abhjnana Shakuntala*, *Sakhi Lalita* the prime Female Messenger of Radha in *Gitagovinda*, Chitrlekha, the *pranasakhi* of Usha from *Srimadbhagavata*, Bani Thani, the illustrious maid of Kishangarh royal household and some other such references.

## Priyamvada and Anasuya, the *Dutikas/Sakhis* of Shakuntala



### *Abhijnana Shakuntala*

Author: Kalidasa, script Sharada

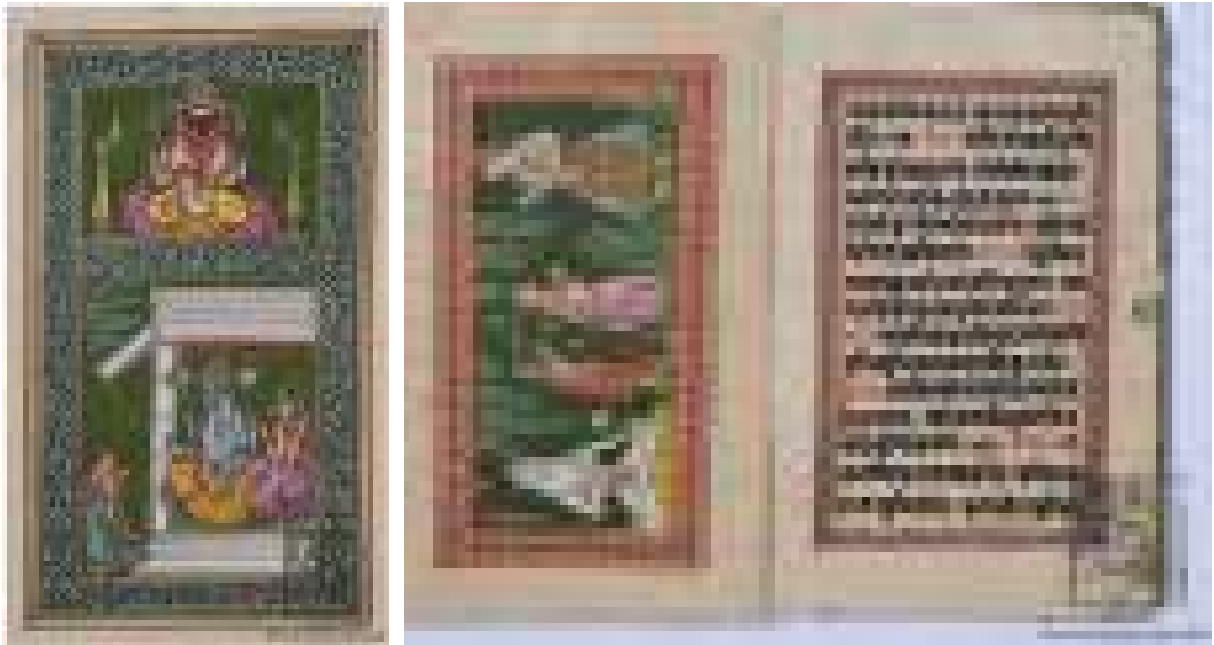
Manuscript on hand made Paper

Acc. No 57.106/1235

Size 26.03 x 17.78 cm

*Abhijnana Shakuntalam* written by the great poet Kalidasa is copied on this paper manuscript having 36 folios.

A thematic set of paintings were selected for this chapter. The theme is the paintings pertaining to the narrative paintings on the heroine of *Abhijnana Shakuntala*, the poetic literature by Kalidasa immortalized the character of Shakuntala. In the Manuscript Section of National Museum two manuscripts are available on the subject: one is a paper Manuscript *Abhijnana Shakuntalam* in Sanskrit hand written without any illustrations. The other one is the Illustrated Manuscript known as *Shakuntala Nataka* in Hindi language with illustrations in Marathi tradition. This shows the popularity of Shakuntala in the length and breadth of our country found in Sanskrit literary tradition and all regional languages.



### *Shakuntala Nataka*

Acc. No C A A M – 595

Illustrated Manuscript on Hand made Paper

Year 1748 Language Hindi

Number of folios 64, illustrations 13

Size: 23.5x14.5 cm

This is an illustrated manuscript of *Shakuntala Nataka*. The manuscript contains paintings in Maratha style.

**The series of paintings on the theme of Shakuntala from the collections of National Museum originated from the princely state of Nalgarh in present Himachal Pradesh**

This series of paintings on the theme of Shakuntala are painted around mid 19<sup>th</sup> century in the region of Pahari. The features of these paintings can be closely attributed to the Hindur, belonging to the times of Sansar Chand, when the Kangra miniature painting school was in its zenith. This series on Shakuntala, Pahari miniature painting sourced from Nalgarh finely executed in the atmosphere of hermitage is one of the pride collections

Late Daljeet Kaur, who was the curator of the section of Indian Painting, has authored a small book on Shakuntala with the illustrations from the collections of National Museum. She discusses about the Kangra school of Pahari paintings, their features, other different collections from different museums and private collectors and also a detailed description on each of the paintings on this theme selected from the collections of National Museum.

The paintings on the theme of Shakuntala are specially selected from the perspective of the *Sakhis* of Shakuntala, by their name Priyamvada and Anasuya. They were inseparable companions of Shakuntala sharing every aspirations, wishes and secrets of her life. She spent her childhood with them and they always followed her as her own shadow. Sage Kanva felt confident that his foster daughter Shakuntala is safe in the company of these two loyal friends. This series of paintings illustrate the role of Anasuya and Priyamvada as *Sakhis*, (friends), *Dutikas* (Messengers), in bringing Dushyanta and Shakuntala into a wedlock and providing them an atmosphere, where the two lovers spent time under the care of the intimate friends, Anasuya and Priyamvada.

The story of Shakuntala fascinated the artists from the fields of performing art as well as visual arts. The enactment of the story of Shakuntala remained as central theme in theatrical settings through centuries. Even in regional languages in the form of drama, poetics fascinated the people of all regions. Painters from Nalgarh in Kangra region took keen interest in narrating the story of Shakuntala in the pictorial medium. . They took pleasure in narrating the happenings in the life of Shakuntala in the beautiful natural atmosphere in the backdrop of Kangra landscape. This version of story was quite familiar to people of Kangra and they could relate themselves.

Here, in this series of painting, the *Sakhis* Anasuya and Priyamvada are well illustrated with fine features and friendly body language. Because of their trustworthy character Shakuntala in one of the paintings expresses her secret to them. Knowing the inner mind of their friend the *Sakhis*, who followed her every footstep guessed the secret love of Shakuntala towards the king Dushyanta. They compassionately extended their help to Shakuntala and clarified Dusyanta about the birth of Shakuntala. When Dushyanta fell for Shakuntala at first sight, he wanted to justify himself that the reason being she was not the daughter of the sage Kanva. When he got an opportunity to spend time with the two *sakhis*, Priyamvada and Anasuya, Dushyanta raised certain queries regarding the real parents of Shakuntala, when they explained that she was born to Rishi Vishvamitra and Apsara Menaka, he could defend himself of his choice and the celestial beauty of Shakuntala. He accepts Shakuntala as his wife. Despite many paintings are in the collection belonging to this series, paintings where the *dutikas/sakhis* are portrayed given emphasis while choosing from the series.



***Abhijnana Shakuntalam***  
***The Day-Break at Hermitage***

Acc. No 89.503/15

Pahari School, Nalgarh Style

1840-50 CE

Size: 33 x37 cm

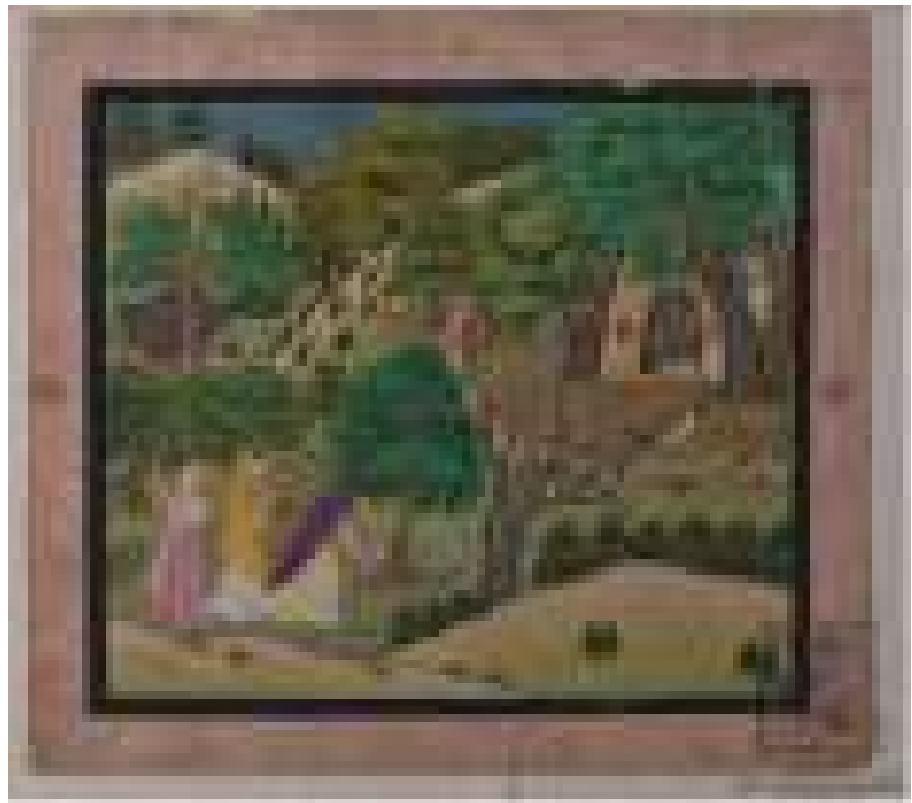
The painting showing the day-break at the hermitage and as prescribed, all have to get up to complete their morning routine. Shakuntala's male colleague sage

relinquishes his bed and quietly leaves for the forest. Shakuntala, *sakhis* Priyamvada and Anasuya also waking up from their sleep realizing of the day-break.



***King Dushyanta  
finds Shakuntala  
watering the plants,  
Acc. No 89.503/50***

The painting depicts the most popular scene, where Shakuntala is watering plants near her hut in the company of her *sakhis* Priyamvada and Anasuya. King Dushyanta peeping through the tree and looking at her. He is amazed to see the beauty of the lady, who has no parallel.



***King Dushyanta  
hiding behind the  
trees.  
Acc No 89.503/32***

The painting shows Shakuntala lying on a stone slab escorted by her *sakhis* Priyamvada and Anasuya to the shady tree near the bank of the river Malini, perhaps she is stricken by the heat of the sun or may be the heat of love. King Dushyanta watching hiding behind the screen.



***Shakuntala applying  
Tilak on the forehead  
of King Dushyanta,  
Acc No 89.503/49***

The painting has two registers. The first, shows Shakuntala welcoming the king Dushyanta to the hermitage by applying *tilak* on his forehead as mark of respect to the royal guest. She with her *sakhis* fulfilling the duties in the absence of sage Kanva. The second register on the foreground is the depiction of the famous scene of bees irritating Shakuntala. She is watering her favourite *navajyotsna* plant with blooming *navajyotsna* flowers, she is irritated by the giant bee, and her friends are watching and trying to help the disturbed Shakuntala. The beauty of landscape marvels in this part of painting.



***Shakuntala asks  
Dushyanta to hide  
behind the shrubs,  
Acc. No 89.503/26***

Shankuntala asking Dushyanta for hiding behind the shrubs in bower, where they were spending their time as she saw her foster mother Gautami approaching her.



***Shakuntala Expressing  
her Feelings,  
Acc. No 89.503/31***

Shakuntala is expressing her feelings towards Dushyanta and the intimate moments they spend together to her *sakhis* Priyamvada and Anasuya. While Dushyanta from his hide out is listening the conversation between her friends



***King Dushyanta Accepts  
Shakuntala as his Wife.  
Acc. No 89.503/30***

Dushyanta came to know about the feelings of Shakuntala towards him while she was expressing before her *sakhis*. He comes out of his hide out in the presence of Shakuntala's *sakhis* Priyamvada and Anasuya accepts her as his wife.



***Gautami, Anasuya  
and Priyamvada are  
discussing how to adorn  
Shakuntala.***

*Acc. No 89.503/12*

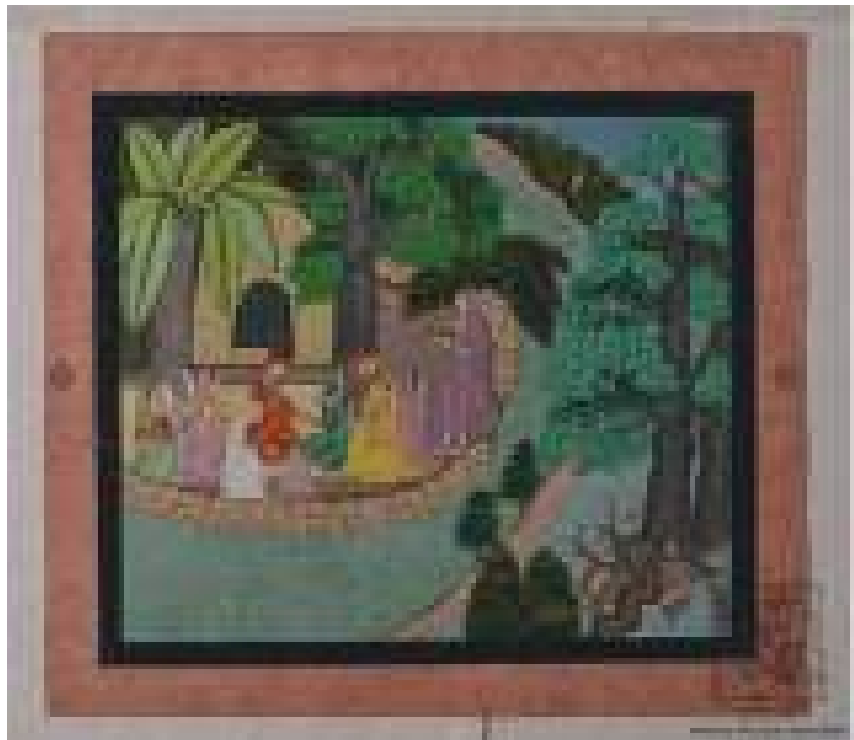
In this painting everyone in the hermitage feels mentally relieved but sentimentally moved. After the announcement of marriage and sending off Shakuntala everyone is discussing about the preparation before the departure of Shakuntala.



***Friends of Shakuntala  
with a tray of make-up  
Materials,***

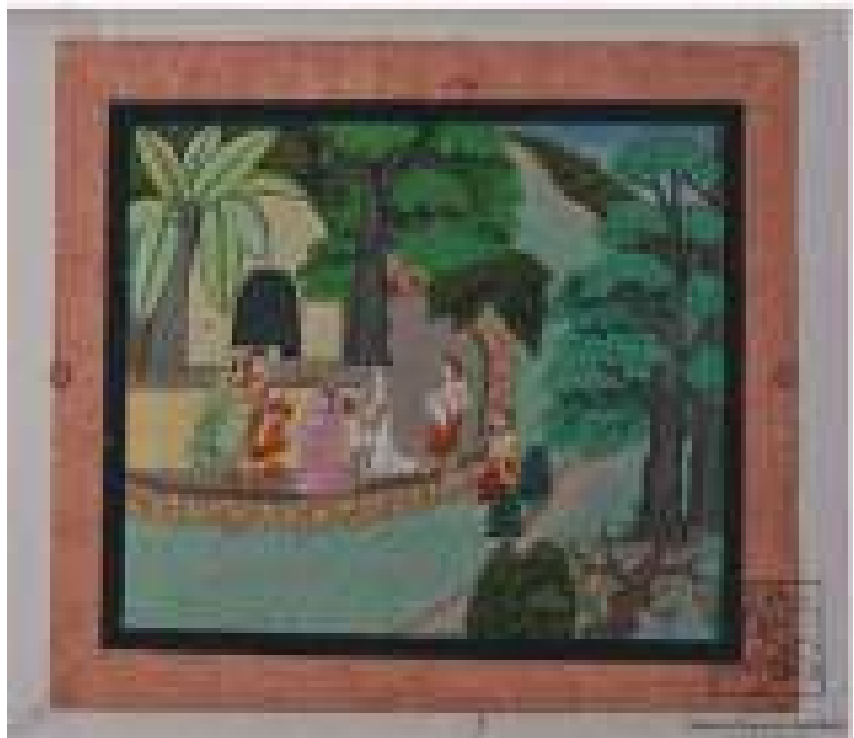
*Acc. No 89.503/10*

The ladies from ashrams (Hermitages) came to the hut of Shakuntala and assembled in front of the hut to adorn her. Her *sakhi* Priyamvada brought a tray of cosmetics and oils for bride.



***Two Devakumaras  
appeared with jewels,  
Acc no 89.503/10***

The *priya sakhis* Priyamvada and Anasuya were very much worried about the adornment with jewels and silks, the bridal *shringar*, which is not available in any form in the forest and hermitage where only penance has importance. But suddenly they found two Devakumaras approached those offering invaluable jewels and clothes to the *sakhis* to adorn Shakuntala



***Priyamvada and  
Anasuya are Adorning  
Shakuntala,  
Acc. No 89.503/11***

The most important assigned duty of the *sakhi* is adorning her heroine, bring solace and enjoy the confidence according to Bhanudatta. Priyamvada and Anasuya are the *sakhis* of Shakuntala in true sense. They are preparing her for bridal get up. The paraphernalia of cosmetics and dressing are placed around. The beauty of landscape adds to the moods of celebrations.



***Shakuntala's friends  
applying Anjana on her  
Eyes, 89.503/7***

The painting showing the friends, the *sakhis* of Shakuntala adorn her with applying *anjana* in her eyes and bridal costumes brought by Devakumaras who have handed over the gifts to the friends of Shakuntala. They are watching the bridal adornment by the *sakhis*.



***Shakuntala with  
her Friends,  
Acc. No 89.503/6***

The painting showing Shakuntala standing with her friends and sage lady Gautami who are insisting her to get blessings from her foster father Sage Kanva but due to shame and grief she hesitate to face him. He was not in the hermitage when the entire episode of the *Gandharva Vivaha* took place. Shakuntala was not comfortable to face her foster father sage Kanva.



***Shakuntala with mother  
Gautami and sakhi  
Priyamvada at her  
cottage, 89.503/14***

The painting showing Shakuntala seated in front of her cottage and her mother Gautami and *sakhi* Priyamvada standing aside. The cottage having three trees with full of leaves and birds can also be seen on the trees.



***Shakuntala and her  
sakhis listening to the  
recitals, 89.503.17***

The painting showing a young sage of hermitage narrating story from holy scriptures and Shakuntala and her *sakhis* listening to him. But Shakuntala is not concentrating on the discourse, but she has lost in thoughts of her *vivaha* with Dushyanta, and how to face the Sage Kanva who will be arriving shortly.



***The Night at the  
Hermitage,  
Acc. No 89.503/16***

After all the happenings in the Hermitage, the night is fallen, all inhabitants including the *sakhis* of Shakuntala are sleeping near her, but she is widely awake with many passing thoughts, anxieties, longing and could not slip into the state of sleep. The artist has created the effects of night on trees, landscape, and sleeping state of *sakhis*.



***Shakuntala Prostrating  
before her father Sage  
Kanva, 89.503.5***

Shakuntala prostrating before her foster father Sage Kanva who had returned from his holy sojourn and seeking his blessings. Her action has multiple purpose and meanings. Her *sakhi* Priyamvada following and reading the mind of Shakuntala . While *Sakhi* Anasuya and mother Gautami are sharing the conversation regarding the state of mind of their beloved Shakuntala. Landscape is beautifully laid out at this part of the hermitage.





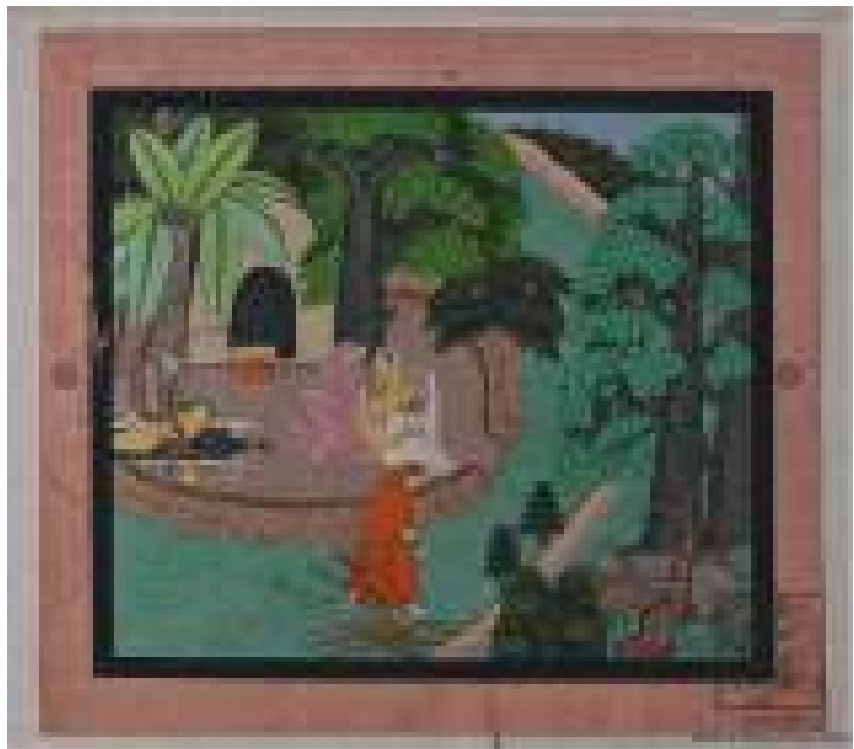
***Sage Kanva hugs  
Shakuntala and bids  
good bye. 89.503/13***

After knowing the happenings that have taken place in his absence, Sage Kanva felt that Shakuntala has to leave the hermitage and take her travel to her husband's place. That emotional bond of the daughter and feeling her absence makes him to hug her daughter Shakuntala.



***Shakuntala moving  
around the Celestial Fire  
of Yajna, Acc.503/ 3***

The painting shows the scene of Shakuntala walking around the celestial fire, which is lit afresh before the final send off to Hastinapura. Sage Kanva suggested her to follow this ritual as that would protect her from all evils that she would confront in her future life as the wife of King Dushyanta and the queen of Hastinapura.



***Shakuntala Send Off,***  
**85.394 size:23 x 30 cm**

Entire landscape in green symbolising plenty and prosperity in the future path. Shakuntala is dressed in red clothes, and the melancholic mood has covered the entire hermitage. The inhabitants have come out and blessing her and even the trees and plants bear quite and sorrowful status. To show how she is moving from one part to the other part of hermitage, the artist placed her twice at a distance to give an idea of continuity.



***Sage Kanva is leading***  
***Shakuntala. 89.503/1***

Moving from one part of hermitage to another, Shakuntala met all the inmates and sought their blessings and wishes finally reaches the hut of Sage Kanva, the close associates of Shakuntala, mother Gautami and a senior lady are conversing and trying to console themselves as Shakuntala leaves. Sage Kanva with another young hermit leading the way towards the palace for Shakuntala. It is the last leg of her familiar hermitage, *sakhi* Priyamvada is still trying be with Shakuntala as much as possible, another hermit follow the group to give company to sage Kanva. *Sakhi* Anasuya could bear the departure scene and probably in grief hiding in the hut itself. This heart breaking situation brings tears into the eyes of *sanyasin* who have denounced the worldly affairs.



In the first painting of this series, *sakhis* and Shakuntala are waking up with the day break, then the story unfolds with all happenings in the absence of sage Kanva. The last few paintings here portray the send off of Shakuntala from hermitage by the inmates and in the last painting Shakuntala is leaving the boundaries of her hermitage, one of the *sakhis* Priyamvada tries to be with her friend taking last few steps with heavy heart. Shakuntala hardly knew her hardships and those were the last few steps in her life with her *sakhis*. The void she created was never filled in the lives of her *sakhis* Priyamvada and Anasuya, also in the entire hermitage.

### Endnotes

- 1 Mulk Raj Anand, MARG Volume XXXI Number 2 March 1978
- 2 [http://www.mezzo-mondo.com/arts/mm/orientalist/european/gerome/index\\_b.html](http://www.mezzo-mondo.com/arts/mm/orientalist/european/gerome/index_b.html)

## Lalitha the *Namra Sakhi/Dutika* of Radha in *Gita Govinda*



### *Poet Jayadeva worshipping Radha and Krishna*

ACC. No 47.110/317

Pahari School, Basohli Style

Dated 1730 CE

Size: 20 x 30 cm

Inscription on reverse of the painting

Artist: Manaku



Radha and Krishna are seated on a lotus. They are adored by the poet Jayadeva. He is holding a flower in his raised right hand and a bell in his left hand. A *veena* is lying on the ground by his side. Krishna is holding a lotus bud in one of his hands, while his other hand is around Radha. Radha is sitting besides Krishna, with folded hands. The deities are adorned with ornaments.

Krishna is wearing a *kirit mukut* decorated with two lotuses and peacock feathers. A flowering plant can be seen on the right and a green bushy tree on the left. One white bird is flying near the flower plant and the other is seated on the plant. The painting has an yellow background, flowing water and blue sky. The verse in the Inscription reads as:

## Chapter [Sarga] 1- सामोद दामोदरम्

श्रीजयदेवकवेरदिमुदतिमुदारम् । शृणु सुखदम् शुभदम् भवसारम् ।

केशव धृतदशवधिरूप जयजगदीशहरे ॥ अ प १-११

पदच्छेद : श्री जयदेव कवेः इदम् उदतिम् उदारम् शृणु सुख दम्

शुभ दम् भव सारम् केशव धृत दश वधि रूप जय जगदीश हरे

a pa 1-11-. jagadiisha hare= as above; dhR^ita dasha vidha ruupa= one who can assume, ten, kinds, of forms; o, keshava; udaaram = excellent one; sukha dam= comfort, giver [blithesome]; shubha dam= wellbeing, giver [blissful]; bhava saaram= worldly life, having pith [to get release from it]; jayadeva kaveH= Jayadeva, by poet; uditam= articulated by; idam= this; shrii= shrii suukti= auspicious saying; shR^iNu= you listen; jaya= hail to thee.

Oh, Keshava, O, Hari, the Almighty of worlds who assumed ten kinds of forms for the sake of humanity, pray, listen to this auspicious articulation of poet Jayadeva, which has an excellent pith and kernel of worldly living, and will be an aid for blissful and blithesome release from this world, hail to thee... [a pa 1-11]

With this stanza the poet is dedicating his work in his god and asking him to bear testimony for his work. And if Krishna endorses his work, this will be as good as canonised by him, so that this work will become a valid devotional song. *rasa shaanta; alankaara paryaayokti*. The poet is summarising all these incarnations that are so far said separately. This can be sung in maalava raaga; ruupaka taala.

The essence of the poem: O Keshav, O Hari, the Lord who assumed ten forms for the sake of humanity, listen to this song of Jayadeva, which bestows goodness and joy and is the essence of life. Hail to thee! The poet is dedicating his work to the Lord and asking him to bear testimony for his devotional song.

अनुवाद- हे जगदीश्वर! हे श्रीहरे! हे केशनिसूदन! हे दशवधि रूपों को धारण करने वाले भगवन! आप मुझ जयदेव कवर्की औदार्यमयी, संसार के संसार स्वरूप, सुखप्रद एवं कल्याणप्रद स्तुति को सुनें ॥ 11 ॥

पद्यानुवाद श्रीजयदेव कथति हर-लिला, सुनो सुखद यह शुभ गतशीला। केशव दशवधि-रूप लसे, जय जगदीश हरे ॥ 11 ॥ बालबोधनी - इस प्रकार दशावतार स्तुति के अन्त में महाकवि जयदेव प्रत्येक रस के अधिष्ठान स्वरूप एक-एक अवतार का जयगान कर अब समस्त रसों के अधिनायक श्रीकृष्ण से नविदन करते हैं कि हे दशवधि स्वरूप! आपकी जय हो। सुखद- सद्यः परनवृत्तकारक होने के कारण यह स्तुति काव्य श्रवण काल में ही परमानन्द प्रदान करने वाला है। यह स्तोत्र जगन्मङ्गलकारी है जो कि आपके आवर्भाव के रहस्यों को अभिव्यक्त करने वाला है।

*Gita Govinda* of Jayadeva is a sensual *vaishnava* literature widely known for its lyrical and pictorial beauty. For a poet, dancer, musician, actor, painter and connoisseur, *Gita Govinda* is a delightful transmission for inner feelings. *Gita Govinda* has created tremendous impact on the social life of India throughout the centuries and inspired millions of people with the expressions of divine love. Lassen considered this poem a lyrical drama. Jones called it a pastoral, Levi regarded it an opera and Pischel placed it in a category between song and drama. Von Schroeder regarded it as a refined *yatra*. A. Keith holds “this Jayadeva’s work as a master piece and it surpasses in its completeness of effect, any other Indian poem. It has all perfection of the miniature word-pictures”.<sup>1</sup>

Jayadeva's *Gita Govinda* has been subjected to serious criticism from time to time. Many regard it as the dominant forte of eroticism than devotional poem, more materialistic than spiritualistic and not to be sung in the sacred atmosphere. Many feel how it was possible for him to compose such an erotic literature. An in-depth vision of his social and historical background would enable us to find the solution for this query. Up to 9<sup>th</sup> century CE under the rule of Palas Buddhism was predominant in Bengal. During 10<sup>th</sup> century CE *vamachar Tantric* cult was followed, the great advocator of this cult was Kannu Bhatta. This cult was based on the process of rituals where in young and beautiful women were loved and worshipped. Their interpretation was that in sexual love there is a higher perpetuation of divine love.

The Senas, originally from Karnataka introduced *vaishnavism* in Bengal. Ballalasena was the founder of the institution of *Kulinism*. His beautiful mistress Padmini was brought by the King to his palace to help him in Tantric practices. His successor Laxmana Sena, devoted himself to music and poetry enjoyed the company of beautiful Kalinga women, was the patron of Jayadeva. The delightful composition of *Gita Govinda* has to be viewed in the context of such historical and social background. The erotic contents definitely influenced the sculpture, architecture, poetics, literature and paintings of the Sena territory. The temple buildings of Khajuraho, Konark, Bhubaneswar and Puri bear the testimony of the popularity of this cult.

The spread of *Bhakti* movement took a new trend and belief in Bengal, as passion was a natural force, instead of being extinguished, it should be submitted into divine love. Thus the emotions are transformed from the sensual to spiritual, giving a way for the human emotions to merge into great ocean of mystic love. *Bhakti* implies devotion to God, without any questioning. This was treated as the only path to salvation and that is through love. The literary compositions apart from *Gita Govinda*, like *Bhagavata Purana*, *Rasika Priya*, *Rasamanjari*, *Sat Sai* etc followed the concept of *Madhura Bhakti* in their exposition. But, no work to compare *Gita Govinda* in creating a mesmeric effect on the *Sahridayas* all over the world from the times of its composition in 12<sup>th</sup> century.

The trend of *bhakti* poetry propounded by *Bhagavata Purana* expressed the concepts and emotional sentiments in the Krishna and Radha legend in *Vaishnavism*. The *nāyikanāyaka bheda* tradition influenced the poets who picked up the theme and gave a new realm of poetry with the introduction of *Gita Govinda*. Several love situations have been portrayed in *Gita Govinda*. It not only caters to the moods of Radha only but to the temperaments of Krishna also. It made *nāyaka-nāyika bheda* an ideal way of expression in poetry both at secular and spiritual levels. Classical tradition delighted with the *nāyaka-nāyika bheda* fantasy, in diverse earthly ways prior to *Vaishnavite* ideas.<sup>2</sup>

The contemporary records are scanty of Jayadeva's life. He became a legendary figure in course of time. His wife Padmavati, a dancer in service of Jagannath Temple is said to have inspired him to compose such a great work. In the work, *Bhaktamala* of Nabhadasa, we get the information of the early life of Jayadeva. Nabhadasa<sup>3</sup> describes Jayadeva as "an incarnation of melody. In his youth he was a poor wandering ascetic, roamed from place to place with a brass bowl in hand, which was his only possession. He would not sleep under the same tree twice, lest he would become attached to it". Marriage with Padmavati had put an end to his wandering life and he settled in Laxmana Sena's court and had set up to this creative composition.

The birth place of Jayadeva, Kenduli Bilva of Birbhum is vibrated in the middle of January on the second day of *Maghamas*, a fair is held in the honour of Jayadeva, attended by a large number of people where *vaishnava* saints sing *Ashtapadis* in homage to Jayadeva and Krishna. The paddy fields stretching like ocean, ponds, groves, lilies, the moistures surroundings created a beautiful natural and peaceful atmosphere for Jayadeva to compose his songs. The Raja of Birbhum in 17<sup>th</sup> century erected a beautiful terracotta temple on the site of poet's home. Inside the temple the images of Radha and Krishna are installed on the pedestal of famous words of Jayadeva "*Dehi Padapallavemudāram*" is inscribed in Bengali script. The Brahmin priest of the temple even today recites the verses from *Gita Govinda* sitting in front of the images. A stone slab on the bank of Ajai River is treated sacred on which Jayadeva used to sit, facing the river meditated and adorned the beauty of the surrounding which influenced his composition.

*Gita Govinda* made a tremendous impact on the poets of future generations. A few centuries later Chandidas sang these enchanting songs, Vidyapathi from Mithila wrote on matchless beauty of Radha's love for Krishna. Shiv Singh, the Raja of Mithila conferred the title as "*Abhivana Jayadeva*". This shows the wide spread popularity of Jayadeva in India.

### **Theme of the poem:**

The theme pictures with full details, the state of *Virahadukha* or pain of separation ignored by Krishna, Radha feels hurt return to a bower, asks her maid to bring Krishna to her. In the meantime, Krishna felt sorry for his conduct, searches for Radha and on not finding she is in deep anguish. Radha's messenger finds Krishna and tells how Radha is pining away in grief for him and asks him to go to her. Female messenger goes to Radha and tells her the feelings of Krishna finding Radha too weak to move and asks him to go to Radha's bower. Meantime Radha becomes impatient and petulant and imagines Krishna flirting with the cowherd damsels. Early in the morning, Krishna comes to Radha, who rebukes him for his liberality in love. Krishna leaves, and Radha's companion chides her for her obstinacy, and ultimately persuades her to meet Krishna in his bower at night time. When the night of love is over, Radha rises, and finding herself disarranged indulges in love play and asks her lover to paint a circlet of musk on her breasts and arrange her hair, clothes and ornaments in their proper places.

The thematic representation of *Gita Govinda* finds its full expression in the miniature paintings of different regions. S.K. De remarks “*Gita Govinda* as a creative work of art, it has a form of its own and it defies conventional classification. No doubt it is an original piece of remarkable beauty”.<sup>4</sup> This Krishna legend with the quality of descriptive poetry rose to the realm of high expression in the art forms. The description of Krishna, Radha, *gopis*, their amorous actions, the river side setting, the bower, groves, moon light night etc provided the painters a sort of guidelines. They retained the original sequences and settings faithfully in their paintings. Being inspired by this dramatic theme, the painter handled the love scenes in a highly sensitive manner. This work of erotic mysticism, which sings with such abandon of “the secret passions of Radha and Krishna” and the triumph on the bank of Yamuna offered especially rich opportunity to painters. Jayadeva’s *Gita Govinda* sought the form of visual expression in the miniatures schools of Gujarat, Rajasthan, Orissa, Punjab hills, Mughal School.

The earliest illustrative evidence of *Gita Govinda* in art tradition can be seen in Gujarat in 1450. Another manuscript painting from Jaunpur, commissioned in 1590, now at Prince of Wales Museum Bombay. During 1615 a series of *Gita Govinda*, a manuscript was commissioned by Akbar who was an enthusiast in the mystic poetry of Jayadeva.

Rajasthan developed as another center of *Vaishnavism* and the spread of the *Vaishnava* movement has a vital impact on the Rajasthani art form. During 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries Krishna legend became the favourite subject of the artists of Rajasthan. In every sub-school, the paintings based on *Krishnaleela* are found in large number. During 1580 and 1610, *Gita Govinda* was painted in *Chaurapanchashikha* style.<sup>5</sup> The artists of all schools of painting take pleasure in portraying *Sakhi* in her different roles. The following are some of the illustrations:

The artists who undertook the work of *Gita Govinda* were just not painters. They were engravers, writers and well versed in Sanskrit. Either the script is found on the upper portions of the painting, or sometimes carried on in the same leaf side by side. Early *Gita Govinda* illustration was in palm leaf. Later, Kishnagarh and Kangra paintings are done on the paper and the script is written at the reverse side of the painting. . They used black ink for engraving; the script was legible, either in Sanskrit or sometimes in the local language.

***Gita Govinda* in Orissa school:** Orissa miniatures are mainly focused on the *Gita Govinda* and *Bhagavata Purana* illustrations. The earliest manuscript painting of the Orissa tradition is attributed to an artist by name Dhananjaya who completed the work in 1690. There are 81 folios of palm leaf and most of them have incised drawings on both sides and the script in Sanskrit. One or two lines in Oriya script is added as the commentary. In some cases not only costumes and figures, but the background lives in fresh colour.





### ***Gita-Govinda of Jayadeva***

Acc. No 57.46

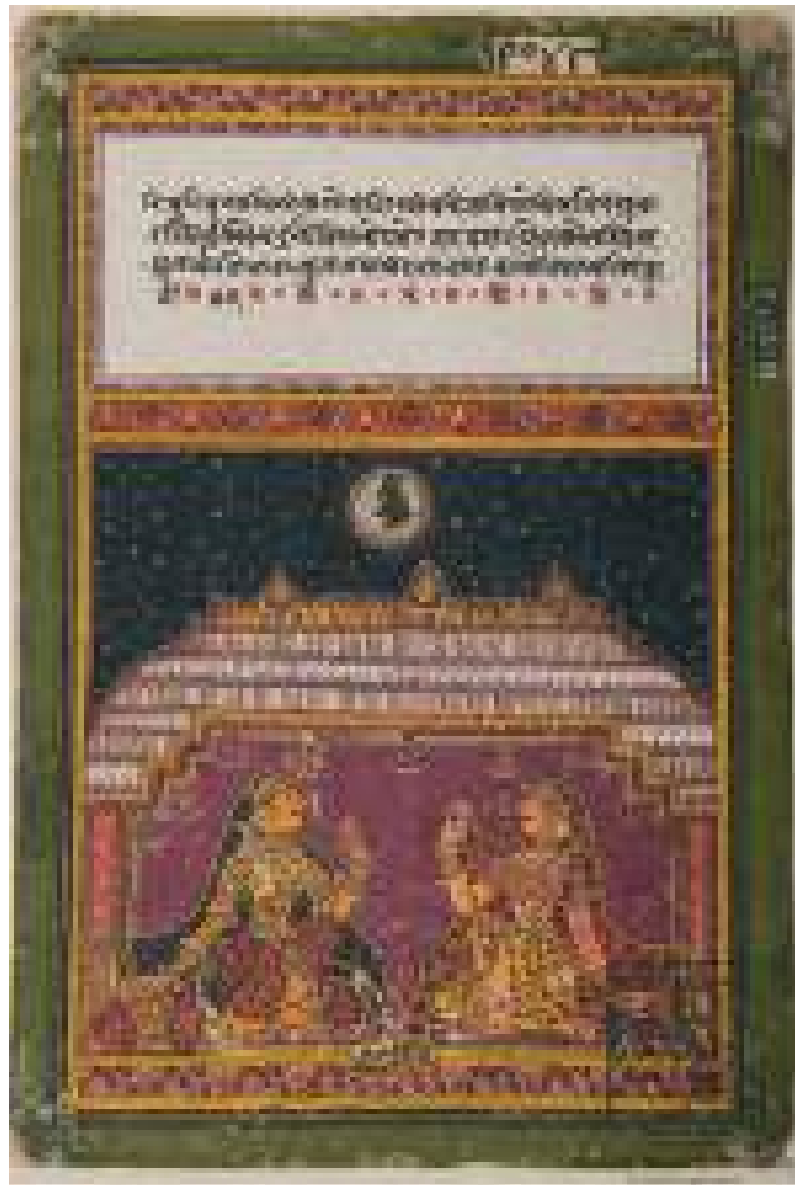
Manuscript painting, Oriya script

Palm leaf, 14 folios in accordion format

Period: 18<sup>th</sup> century

Size: 5.6 x 26.5 cm

Fourteen palm-leaves have been stitched together on open like a hanging and contain Jayadeva's great lyrical poem to Krishna –the love song of the Dark Lord on *Gita-Govinda*. Radha commands her divine lover to paint a leaf on her breasts, 'put colour on my cheeks/lay a girdle on my hips/twine my heavy braid with flowers/ fix a row of bangles on my hands and put jeweled anklets on my feet' with all doubts resolved, an eager Krishna 'does what Radha asks'. There is a central image on this hanging, below a sixteen petalled lotus, stands the image of Jagannath, the Lord of the world, with Balabhadra, his elder brother and their sister Subhadra are the presiding deities of Jagannath Puri temple in Odisha. The text is so artistically written that the arrangement of words creates the outline of the Jagannath Temple façade. At the top of the temple spire are sculpted lions and peacocks and a flag fluttering in the wind, these forms are filled with minutely written Sanskrit verses.<sup>6</sup>



*Folio from Gīta-Govinda*

Acc. No 49.19/85

Orissa Style

Late 18th century

22.35 x 14.98 cm

Radha and her *sakhi* Lalitha are seated under a decorated pavilion. Starry sky in the background with a milky white moon. Even the deer shaped form is painted inside the moon. On the top register a verse of the poem is inscribed against white background. Radha is in a pleasant mood, as *sakhi* Lalitha is describing Shyamasundara Krishna and they are sharing pleasant experiences and enjoying the starry sky. The pavilion is in typical short *mandap* style of Orissa. The text on the top reads as:

## Chapter [Sarga] 7- नागर नारायण

रपिरवि सखीसंवासोऽयम् शखीव हामिनल्लो  
 वषिमवि सुधारश्मरियस्मन्दिनोतमिनोगते ।  
 हृदयमदये तस्मन्निनेवम् पुनर्वलते बलात्  
 कुवल्यदृशाम् वामः कामो नकामनरिकुशः ॥ ७-१०

7-8. *yasmin*= which one [which Krishna]; *manaH gate*= in [my] heart, having entered; *ayam*= his; *sakhii sa.nvaasaH*= girlfriends, staying in their togetherness, flirting; *ripuH iva dunoti*= enemy, like, anguishing [me]; *hima anilaH*= cool, breeze; *shikhii iva*= tongues of fire, like [dunoti= agonising me]; *sudhaa rashmiH*= nectarine, moonbeams; *viSam iva [dunoti]*= venom, like, [afflicting me]; *tasmin*= in him; *a+ daye*= one without, mercy, merciless Krishna; *evam hR^idayam* = this way, heart; *balaat*= vehemently; *punaH*= repeatedly; *valate*= swivelling; *nikaama*= persistent; *nir a.nkushaH*= without, goad [unstoppable]; *kaamaH*= Love-god; *kuvalaya dR^ishaam*= those with slanting, glances [winsome girls]; *vaamaH*= becoming leftist, extremist, a desperado.

Radha tells her *sakhi*, Parted from Krishna, even the pleasing company of friends also seems to me like association with enemies; the cool breeze agonizes me like fire; the beams of the moon inflicts pain on me like venom. My heart swivels around the merciless Krishna. The persistent and unstoppable love god is cruel to beautiful women अनुवाद- हे सखी! सखियों का सुखमय साथ, शत्रु के समान मेरे मन को शत्रु की भाँत अनुभूत हो रहा है, सुशीतल सुमन्द समीरण हुताशन के समान प्रतीत हो रहा है और सुधा-रश्मियाँ वषि के समान मुझे कष्ट दे रही हैं, फरि भी मेरा हृदय बलात् उसी में लगा हुआ है, सत्य है, कुवल्य सदृश कामनियों के प्रती काम सर्वथा ही नरिकुश हुआ कर

### *Folio from Gita-Govinda*

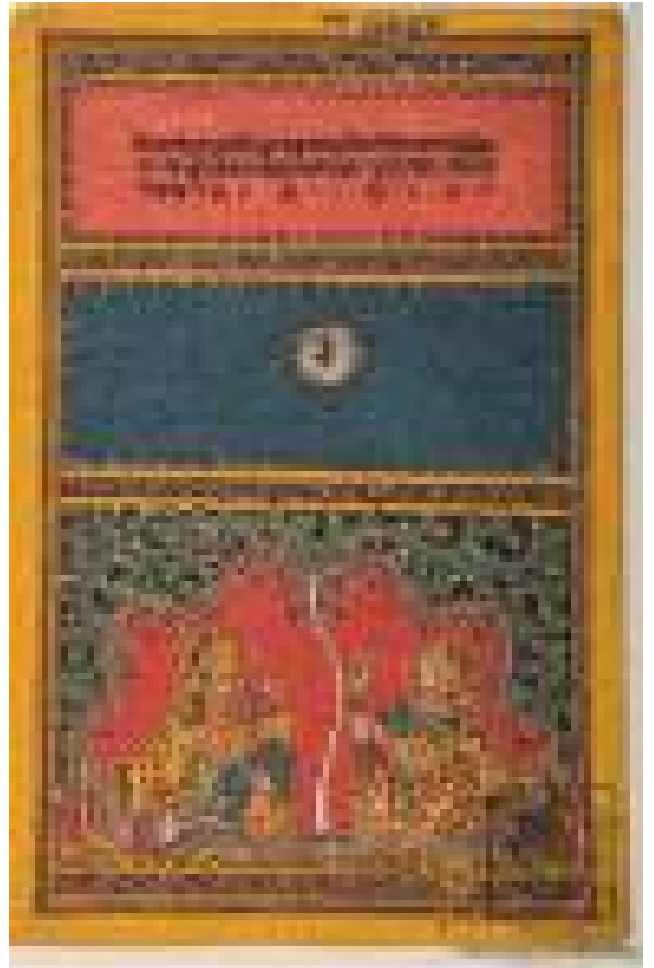
Acc. No 49.19/95

Orissa Style

Late 18yh century

22.35 x 14.98 cm

Radha and her *sakhi* are sitting on a cushioned carpet under a flowery tree against a green background. Both of them are wearing gold, pearl ornaments and colourful attire. On the top register there is verse of *Gita Govinda* and the bottom register has a beautiful foliage pattern. Inscription is very clear and legible. The verse on the above inscription reads as:



## Chapter [Sarga] 7 - Nagara Narayana नागर नारायण

वरिह पाण्डु मुरारिमुख अम्बुज द्युतिः अयं तरियन् अपावेदनाम्  
वधिः अतीव तनोति मनोभुवः सुहृत् अये हृदये मदन व्यथाम्

7-5. aye= oh, friend; ayam vidhuH= this, moon; manobhuvaH suhR^it= Love-god's, good friend [moon]; viraha= [my] anguish in dissociation; paaNDu= pale faced; muraari= Krishna's; mukha ambuja dyutiH= face, lotus-like, its resplendence; vedanaam tirayan api= anguishes, covering up [abated,] even though; hR^idaye madana vyathaam atiiva tanoti= in heart, love's, anguish, muchly, intensifying.

“Oh, friend, this moon earlier had a pale face like that of the lotus-like face of Krishna, by which my anguish in dissociation was somewhat abated, waiting for him... but now, unabated is the palish silveriness of this very moon, as his friend Love-god is abetting him to take vengeance on me, as I am unmoving to Krishna, thus my anguish too, is muchly unabated... [7-5]

अनुवाद- प्रिय सखा! मेरे वरिह में पाण्डुवर्ण हुए श्रीमुरारी के मुखकमल की कान्ति के समान धूसरति यह चन्द्रमा मेरी मनोव्यथा को तरोहित कर कामदेव के सुहृद्भूत मेरे हृदय में मदन-सन्ताप की अभिवृद्धि कर रहा है।

Essense of the Verse: Radha confides her anguish to her *sakhi*. She says that the colour of the waning moon reminded her of the lotus like face of Murari (Shree Krishna), which must have paled in separation from her. On the other hand, she feels that the moon being the friend of Madan or Kamadeva (Hindu deity of love) is conspiring to inflict more torment on her heart.

### *Folio from Gita-Govinda*

Acc. No 49.10.72

Orissa Style

Late 18yh century

22.35 x 14.98 cm

Here, the subject is treated in different way and divided between two registers. In the upper register against a green background blue-bodied Shayma Sundara is in dialogue with the *pranasakhi* of Radha. The *sakhi* came to Krishna as *dutika* and portraying before him the pining state of Radha and what she felt, ‘parting from Krishna is a sad thing, even the friends appear like enemies’. While Radha is seated on a cushioned carpet with stretched legs, visualising the dialogue between Krishna and her *dutika*. She has dressed elegantly, sitting under the flowery bower in an amorous mood with pleasant smile.



वासकसज्जावर्णने कुण्ठवैकुण्ठः

### Chapter [Sarga] 6 - Inconsiderate Krishna

वहिति विशिदबसिकसिलयवलयया ।

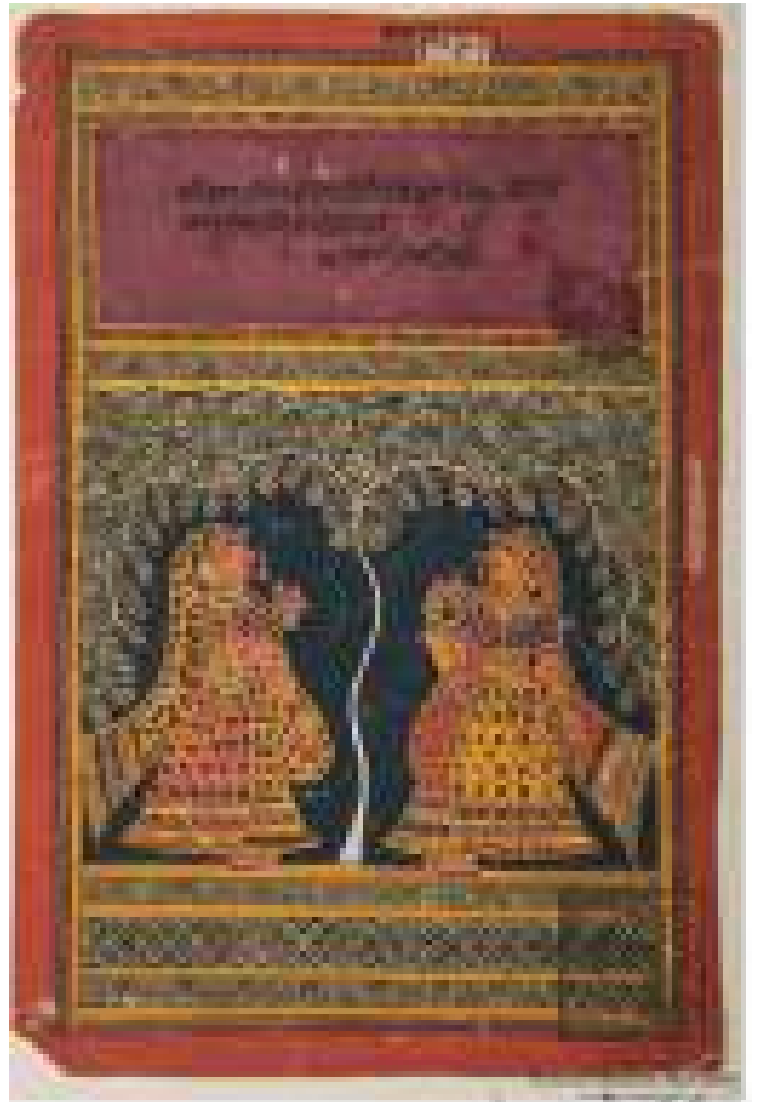
जीवतापरमहि तव रतकिलया ॥ अ प १२-३

a pa 12-3. Rādhā; vihita= on making; vishada= fresh/cool; bisa kisalaya= lotus, tender leaves, or stems; valayaa= [lexically] by bracelets - but a veil, cover, soother for the present burning; tava param rati kalayaa= your, blissful, [earlier enjoyed] association, by dream; iha jivati= now, living.

“On making fresh and cooling tender lotus leaves as a soothing veil against the present burning, she is now living by the help of dreams on your blissful association, enjoyed earlier by her... [a pa 12-3]

अनुवाद- वमिल-धवल मृणाल एवं नव-पल्लव वरिचति वलय-समूह को पहने वह केवल आपके साथ रमण करने की इच्छा से जी रही ह

Essense of the verse: Radha has decked herself in armllets, bracelets and other ornaments made of fresh and tender lotus leaves and stalks. She only lives in the hope of a blissful union with you again.



#### *A Painted Folio from Gita Govinda*

Acc. No 47.110/1929

Orissa Style

Late 18yh century

22.35 x 14.98 cm

*Sakhi* returns from Krishna's bower and explains Radha that she should meet him and he is also eager to meet her.

The verse reads as:

## Chapter [Sarga] 11 – saanandadaamodaram सानन्ददामोदरम्

रचतिरुचरिभूषाम् दूषटमिषे प्रदोषे  
स्फुरति निरिवसादाम् कार्पा राधाम् जगाद ॥ ११-१

11-1. kR^ita veshe keshave= on making getup, [on befittingly dressing up,] Krishna; su chiram anunayena priiNayitvaa= for a long time, with coaxing words, on gladdening; mR^iga akShiim= fawn, eyed Rādhā; ku.nja shayyaam gatahati [sati]= in bower, on couch, having gone, [awaiting for her, while being so]; kaapi= some other milkmaid, who; rachita ruchira bhūSaam= while decorating [Rādhā], very tasty, decorations; dR^iSTi moSe pradoSe = eye, stealing [dimming,] late evening; sphurati sati= when [that late evening is] gleaming; nir + avasaadaam= to one without, sinking mood - to Rādhā; rādhā am [idam] jagaada = to Rādhā, [this way], said.

अनुवाद- मृगनयना श्रीराधा को चरिकाल तक अनुनय-वनिय से प्रसन्ना करके श्रीकृष्ण चले आये और मोहनवेश धारणकर नकिञ्ज-मन्दिरि स्थिति शय्या पर अवस्थति हो उनकी प्रतीक्षा करने लगे, इधर दूषट-आच्छादनकारिणी सन्ध्या उपस्थति हुई तब वविधि मनोहर अलंकार वभिषति श्रीराधा से कोई सखी इस प्रकार कहने लगी-  
Essense of the Verse: Krishna soothes Radha with his pleas and adulation. He then goes to his bower, gets dressed and lies on his couch waiting for Radha. In the glimmer of the late evening, an elated Radha is bedecked in beautiful ornaments. Her *sakhi* encourages her to meet Krishna.

### *Orissa Gita Govinda*

Acc. No 47.110/1927

Orissa Style

Late 18th century

22.35 x 14.98 cm

In this illustrated folio Radha is sharing her experiences with her *priya-namra- sakhi*. The artist used red background. Below the deep sky symbolizing the depth of Krishna's passion to Radha and the moon rays feel scorching. The foliage, flowering, winding creeper and ornamentations of the figure speak the richness of the painting. On the top a long verse is inscribed and on bottom short trees painted to show the perspective.



## Chapter [sarga] 2 – अक्लेशकेशवम् - Blithesome Krishna

गणयतगुणग्रामम् भामम् भ्रमादपानिहते ।  
 वहताच परतोषम् दोषम् वमिञ्चतादूरतः ।  
 युवतषु वलस्तृष्णे कृष्णे वहारणिभाम् वनि  
 ४पुनरपामिनो वामम् कामम् करोताकरोमाकिम् ॥ २२

2. hè sakhii= oh friend; mama manaH vaamam= my, heart, is divergent; maam vinaa= me, without [leaving me out]; vihaariNii= frolicking; yuvatiSu= among damsels; valat tR^iSNe kR^iSNe = one over, ambitiously [involved] in such a Krishna; [mama manaH= my, heart] punaH api= again, even [repeatedly]; kaamam= abhilASa= desire; karoti= doing [inciting]; guNa graamam gaNayati= [his] traits, group of [lot of,] reckoning; [mama manaH= my, heart] bhramaat api= by mistake, even; bhaamam nehate= resentment, thinks not; dosham duurataH vimu. nchati= error, distantly, discarding; [mama manaH= my, heart] paritoSam vahati ca= gladness, bearing up, also; kim karomi= what, I should do.

अनुवाद- “श्रीकृष्ण ने तुमहें परत्याख्यान किया है, फरि भी तुम क्यों उनके प्रेम में व्याकुल हो रही हो” परयिसखा के द्वारा इस प्रकार भ्रत्सना किये जाने पर श्रीराधा कहने लगी सखा! श्रीकृष्ण मुझे परत्यागकर दूसरी-दूसरी युवतियों के साथ अतशिय अनुराग के साथ वहार कर रहे हैं, यह देखकर उनके प्रती अनुराग दिखाना व्यर्थ है, यह मैं जानती हूँ, फरि भी मैं क्या करूँ, उनके प्रती मेरी प्रबल आसक्ति किसी तरह से दूर नहीं होती है, मैं तो उनके गुणों की गणना ही करती रहती हूँ, अपने उत्कृष्ट का अनुभव कर आनन्द में उन्मत्त हो जाती हूँ, भ्रम से भी मुझे उनके प्रती क्रोध नहीं होता, उनके दोषों को देखे बनि ही सन्तोष का अनुभव करती हूँ, उनकी बार-बार स्पृहा करती हूँ, सखा, वे मुझसे भुलाये नहीं जाते मैं क्या करूँ?

Essence of the verse: Radha tells her *Sakhi* that her heart is not in her control inciting desire for Krishna, but he left Radha in a lurch and is frolicking with other Gopis. Radha then says that her attachment to Krishna is so strong that her heart overlooks any faults and only reckons his noble and wonderful traits. She can never think of resenting him even by mistake. She tells her *Sakhi* that she gets ecstatic thinking about him. She cannot forget him and ardently longs for him.

Radha tells her *sakhi* that once she went to a secluded bower at night to meet Krishna as per a prearranged plan. Krishna had already arrived earlier and had mischievously concealed himself in the dark foliage. When Radha started looking for him eagerly with her tired eyes, he suddenly appeared startling her and delighted her with the nectar of his amorous laughter. She tells her *Sakhi* to organize such a meeting with Krishna now as her heart and mind longs for him.

### *A painted folio of Gita Govinda*

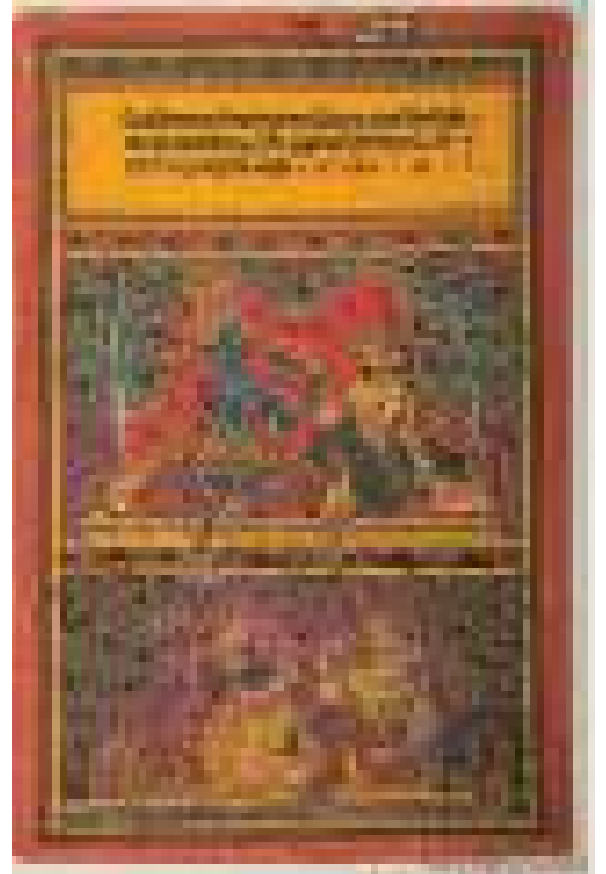
Acc. No 49.1983

Orissa Style

Late 18th century

22.35 x 14.98 cm

This panel is in two registers. In the lower register Radha and her close confidante sakhi are sitting against each other and sakhi convincing Radha to go to Krishna and it is not fair to make him wait. In the upper register Krishna and Radha are sitting on a carpet under a flowery tree that is creating a bower. Paying heed to the advice of her sakhi, Radha finally goes herself to Krishna and she was received by him warmly.



## Chapter [Sarga] 7- नागर नारायण

जतिबसिशकले मृदुभुजयुगले करतलनलनीदले ।  
मरकतवल्यम् मधुकरनचियम् वतिरतिहिमशीतले ॥ अ प १५-४

प च्छे- जति बसि शकले मृदु भुज युगले कर तल नलनी दले  
मरकत वलयम् मधुकर नचियम् वतिरतिहिम शीतले

a pa 15-4. muraari= Krishna; jita bisa shakale= triumphant [than] lotus, stalks; hima shiitale= snowy, coolness; kara tala= hand's, surface [with palms]; nalinii dale= [like] lotus, leaves; mR^idu bhuja yugale = softish, shoulders, a pair of; marakata valayam= emerald, armllet; madhukara nichayam [iva] = honey-makers [honey bees,] a swarm [alike]; vitarati= he is keeping [adjusting.]

अनुवाद- सुकेशी, पीनस्तनी उस रमणी के मृणालदण्ड से भी सुशीतल भुजयुगल जनिमें उसके सुकुमार करतलरूपी नलनी-दल सुशोभति हो रही है, उनमें वे भरमर-सदृश मरकतमय वलयरूपी कंगन धारण करा रहे हैं।

Krishna slips a sapphire studded bangle on Radha's soft hand, which is compared to cool lotus petals. The bangle on her hands appears like a swarm of bees encircling the tender lotus stalk.

### ***Gita Govinda* in Mewar School:**

Mewar is one of the very important sub school of Rajasthani paintings, depicts the original Rajput qualities. Mewar School sustained original style avoiding to be influenced by Mughal School. A large series of the *Gita Govinda* was painted in 1723 under the patronage of Sangram Sing II. This series is available in Saraswati Bhandar Udaipur. Here Krishna is dressed in deep blue and richly jeweled turns to his lover Radha. She is clad in brilliant garments of yellow, red and gold, wearing elaborate pearl ornament, offers Krishna a necklace as a token of love. They walk together in the dark forest along the river Yamuna. Here, Radha has turned down Krishna when he comes to her after realizing his mistake of his neglect towards her. Radha at least once is very rude to Krishna, he is leaving the bower. But the *Sakhi* appears again and she makes Radha to understand that what she has done was wrong and Radha feels ashamed of her behaviour.

National Museum has a number of *Gita Govinda* paintings, of which some are displayed in the Painting Gallery and others are in the reserve collections. A set of 30 folios as part of manuscript painting known as *Jaur Gita Govinda*, a dated 16<sup>th</sup> century text from Mewar in the collections of National Museum was one of the key research subject of erudite scholar Kapila Vatsyayan. She had researched and documented nearly 40 manuscripts and 600 paintings pertaining to *Gita Govinda*. Her research on the subject has built up a huge repository on this fascinated poetic and enriched the intense commitment towards the transformation of textual to contextual visual vocabulary. Her writings, discourses, and thought process enhances the process of furthering this research on the Imagery of Female Messengers.



One of the study material of Dr Kapila Vatsyayan, Gita Govinda text is sourced from the Manuscript Section of National Museum. It is from a village called Jaur or Javar, thirty miles from Udaipur, the village continues to be the centre of traditional arts of Rajasthan. The name Kiratadasa may refer either to painter or the author and the exact date 17<sup>th</sup> February 1594 CE. The narrative is in the form of a story in dialogue between three characters: Radha, *Sakhi* and Krishna. This text has heavy reliance on Gita Govinda and the author is faithful to the content and lyricism of Gita Govinda. The manuscript and illustrations are of great importance in establishing a fact that the spread of Jayadeva's Gita Govinda in different parts of India is quite obvious. The author of Jaur Gita Govinda was also familiar with the commentary of Rana Kumbha on Gita Govinda. The manuscript is also valuable to analyse the mobility patterns of the spread of the Gita Govinda tradition in both the visual arts and performing arts.



## ***Gita Govinda***

ACC No 76.115/1-30

Gujarati Language and *Devanagari* Script

1650 *Samvat*, 1593 CE

Total Folios 30, Illustrations 28

Size: 27 x 7 cm

Picture: 1. Illustration Folio No 8

Picture: 2 Illustration Folio No 11

Picture: 3. Illustration Folio No 19

### **Picture: 1. Illustration Folio No 8**

In this illustration, three sequences are depicted. In the first part, Krishna waits for Radha expectantly in an indoor chamber and the flowers around creates the romantic mood while Krishna reclining on a bed in a pensive mood. In the next section, it is a scene of *sakhi* persuading Radha who is in an agitate mood, a good deal of discussion happen here and Radha is reluctant to go to Krishna. The body language of Radha and her *sakhi*, expression on their faces and hand gestures all indicate different shades of feelings leading to emotional combat between the two. In the last section an animated solitary figure shows the expression of wonder, may be another *sakhi* of Radha is shocked to see the emotional combat between the two.

### **Picture: 2 Illustration Folio No 11**

In this illustration the artist narrated the story in two sections. The text in the sections 14 and 15 describes poignantly the weakened state of Radha, compared to the setting sun and waning moon. She fell into this terrible state longing to meet Krishna. In the first section the scene is dominated by the *sakhi*, she portrays before Krishna, the state of affairs at the quarters of Radha and her pining, the expression of *sakhi* suggests that 'I have narrated before you O Krishna everything, now it is you who has to take care of your love, I have done my duty of a Female Messenger'. She has raised her hands in the air and cautions Krishna and walks briskly.

In the second large section, the group of *sakhis* form an interesting composition. Three stand with feet closed and outstretched arms as if pleading with Krishna, unfortunately he looks away. One of them carries a diminutive Radha or a portrait of Radha. The lyrical flow of some preceding folios is replaced here by a sense of dramatic tension. This folio is a kind of tableaux-like recreation of the *sakhis* pleading Krishna to show love and mercy towards their friend Radha.

### **Picture: 3. Illustration Folio No 19**

In this folio also found two unequal sections. In the first part Radha sits under a cluster of trees. The painter recreates the scene beautifully in pictorial language. Trees large and small create a foliage around. Radha sits under the shade of large tree in disturbed mood, expectant, anxious but proud too. With full of agitation, sits straight with a sense of restraint and tries to be in great composure.

In the second section, it is surprise to see the guts of the *sakhi*, pulling the scarf of Krishna. It was always the other way round, Krishna pulls the veils of Radha, her *sakhis* and *gopis*. To create a lighter mood, to draw the attention of Krishna at once towards lovelorn Radha, the *sakhi* takes liberty to draw Krishna towards her by pulling his scarf, because she is the most trustworthy *sakhi* of Radha and she equally adore Krishna with her *bhakti*. The two sections are part of a whole scenario where Radha – *Sakhi* – Krishna are portrayed, the primary characters of *Gita Govinda*. Here the artist tries to create contrasts, in one section static and stiff Radha is sitting under a tree, in the other, a moving scenario, where Krishna and *sakhi* are sharing movement, almost chasing and running. As the drama unfolds, a touch of humour, wonder and mischief of *sakhi* adds to the charm of this composition.

Thematically, the illustrations have a vague but not a precise relationship with the text. The illustrations are like a stimulus for the painter to interpret the theme according to his unique understanding. As regards the style of the paintings, and the use of spatial demarcations, sense of perspective, the linear drawings of figures, the use of 'extended eye' or the 'farther eye', the pointed nose the use of coiffures and garments are some of the unique features of these paintings served as illustrations for the Jaur *Gita Govinda*.



### *Krishna playing with Gopis*

ACC. No IMG 3066

Rajasthani School Mewar Style

Size: Select

## Chapter [Sarga] 7- नागर नारायण

वचिलदलकललताननचन्द्रा । तदधरपानरभसकृततन्द्रा ॥ अ प १४-३

a pa 14-3. vi chalat= liltingly, pulsating; alaka= hair-locks; lalita aanana chandraa= pretty, with face, moonlike; tat= his [Krishna's]; adhara paana= lip, swilling [long kiss]; rabhasa= by speediness [ by happiness]; kR^ita tandraa= made [became,] dozily."Her hair-locks are liltingly pulsating on her prettily moony face, and she is taking a long kiss of his lip, she is happily dozy... [a pa 14-3]

अनुवाद- उसका मुखचन्द्र घुँघराली अलकावलियों से सुललति हो रहा होगा और श्रीकृष्ण की अधर-सुधा का पान करने की अतशिय लालसा के कारण नयनयुगल आनन्दपूर्वक नमीलति हो रहे होंगे।

Essense of the verse: The lilting, curling locks of her hair must be enhancing the beauty of her pretty moon like face. Her eyes must be blissfully closed out of an all-consuming greed to drink the nectar of Krishna's lips.



an in-depth study of these paintings and discovered the reason why it is in Garhwal. Finally they were able to draw the conclusion that with destruction of Kangra court, Sangram Singh's son sought refuge under the British and while leaving his kingdom, he carried away the valuable paintings of his father and treated like wealth. His sisters were given in marriage to the Tehri-Garhwal family and these paintings were handed over as dowry. The cultured queens of Garhwal family preserved and maintained the paintings with utmost care. The beautiful surroundings of Kangra valley, natural settings have been used with great care by Nainsukh in these paintings.

W.G. Archer observes "Kangra artists accomplished the supremely difficult task of translating poetry into painting, created in the process a type of art, which is literary in origin, transcends literature in ultimate achievement."<sup>8</sup>

### **Krishna's desolation by Radha:**

Depicting a *Khandita Nayika* episode. In the Canto entitled "Lotus-eyed Krishna longing for Love", Jayadeva narrates the torments that Krishna suffers when Radha, offended and comes to him no longer. He persuades the *Sakhi* of Radha to go and narrate his pathetic condition and in this painting he is demonstrating the same. The painter is faithful to Jayadeva's expression. The painter has shown the state of despair symbolically by throwing the staff and flute, the tensing of the arms, curling of the garland and lying down helpless on ground. An inner struggle is expressed on his face meaningfully.

In Kangra Gita Govinda series seasons are represented, landscape with perfect rhythm of colour, poetic expression, musing, sensational feelings are dealt with care and passion. Visions of beauty and love glowing upon the darkness of the night have been blended. All these Kangra paintings are self-explanatory. Here a lovelorn *Gopi* is very close to Krishna, she, feels so fortunate to be with him for that moment as though experiencing eternal feelings, words fail to describe.

In one of the paintings of this series, the *Sakhi* brings Radha and showing her way to Krishna's bower. The location, the direction of the river flowing the two elegant female figures makes this painting a very remarkable piece of landscape. The intimate moments of Radha and Krishna as in Manuku's work the images are more concentrated but the landscape is subsidiary. Here it is otherwise, the images have merged in the natural composition and lost themselves.

While Krishna began to play on the eternal music, Radha engrossed in the divine music and bathed in the divine love of Krishna, lost completely and she has not realized the gathering of *Gopis*. Everyone has totally forgotten and merged into the eternity of Krishna's music. Throughout the depiction of series, so many changes are noticed such as in the time, day and night, characters, landscape, the position of the moon etc but the passion remains the same. The paintings depict Krishna as the human soul. *Gopis* represent the delights of the illusory world and Radha has been portrayed as the personification of intellectual and moral beauty.

The poet Jayadeva is bowing to Lord Vishnu and the ten incarnations are painted behind. This illustration goes with a *sthuti*, and Jayadeva puts all the praises into one single stanza summarizing the purpose of ten incarnations of Mahavishnu. Thus *Gita Govinda* paintings have a special place in Indian art traditions despite the gap of eight centuries the verses, music and colourful renditions of *Gita Govinda* reverberates in the minds of connoisseurs of all ages and all times.



***Krishna waiting for Radha***

Acc. No 65.304

Pahari School, Kangra Style

Year 1810 CE

Inscription on reverse

Size: 27 x 35 cm

It is a narration of a scene based on the story of Radha and Krishna in which Radha and Krishna are painted twice on one frame. In the first scene Radha and her friends are painted in the centre of a garden. Radha is being urged from her *sakhis* to meet Krishna. Krishna is seen standing behind a tree, in another scene Radha is proceeding to meet Krishna, who is waiting for Radha. Krishna is peeping through the trees for a glance of his beloved, while being seated on a bed of leaves. The rich lyricism of early Kangra painting is effectively brought out by the artist with the help of bright colours in the costumes of the women and the blue-black background. Radha is also painted in two places, one, where she is being persuaded by her *sakhi* and at another place she is moving towards Krishna with her *sakhi*. Krishna is also illustrated in two places. At one place he is peeping to have a look at Radha and on the other he is seated on the bed of leaves.

It is to be observed that the *sakhi* is depicted three times along with Radha. A special gravity and prominence is given to the character of *Sakhi* by the painter. In the first instance Radha is conversing with her close associate the *sakhi* Lalita, about the long separation from her Damodara (Krishna) her eyes are fluttering with tears and she would not withstand this *viraha*. When she realised from her *sakhi* Krishna is close by in a bower she began to shed tears of joy, *harsha ashru*. Then *Sakhi* comes out from their bower little further to check the where about of Krishna, she could see Him peeping from behind a tree. Realising the avidity and eagerness of Krishna, *Sakhi* the soul of *Gita Govinda* takes Radha into confidence and leads her towards the bower, where Krishna is seated on the bed of leaves and waiting for Radha. After leaving Radha into the bower of Krishna, the *sakhijan* tactfully retreated from the bower making pretense and concealing their smiles, she neared the edge of the bed. The doe eyed Radha then cast a sidelong glance at her beloved Krishna as if under the spell of the Love God, and soon her shyness also took her leave.

The painting is one of the beautiful compositions in Kangra style, where the role of *sakhi* is of utmost importance as both Radha and Krishna completely depended on the *sakhi* Lalita for their reunion. In the midst of greenery and foliage *Sakhi* engages Radha in dialogue in seated position, further they both stand and try to grasp about the presence of Krishna at distance, in the third action they both occupy the central space, *sakhi* leading Radha with an expression of showing her way to the bower. While Radha dressed elegantly, as an embodiment of *lajja*, shyness, she with her bent head and hand gestures steps hesitantly towards the bower where her *dhirodhata nayaka* is waiting eagerly to meet his lady love. The overcastting starry sky watching the drama unfolding on the banks of River Yamuna, and the *kunja galin* of Vrindavan. Myriad shades of green layered on the landscape with thick trees, streaks of colorful flowers, flowery creepers, and five pairs of *chakora* birds signifying the union of lovers. Amidst such starry and greenery atmosphere the human characters are illumined with *swyamprakash*.

It is an interesting way the artist portrayed the characters in animation mode. Krishna is overseeing the scenario of Radha and her *Sakhi's* persuasion, soon he is sitting on the spread of fresh leaves and eagerly waiting to see the *Sakhi* first. In the extreme side of the painting under a tree *Sakhi* conversing with the reluctant Radha, in the second part, she is allowing Radha to see Krishna behind a tree and in the third, the *Sakhi* is leading her friend with convincing note towards Krishna. Here Krishna is gazing at *Sakhi* in appreciation of her efforts

### The verse refers to the Chapter [*Sarga*] 11 of Gita Govinda

**Saananda Daamodaram** सानन्ददामोदरम्

अतकिरम्य अपांगम् श्रवण पथ पर्यन्त गमन  
 पर्यासेन इव अक्षुण्णोः तरल तर भावम् गमतियोः  
 इदानीम् राधायाः प्रथितम समालोक समये  
 पपात स्वेद अम्बु परसर इव हर्ष अश्रु नकिरः

Meaning of the verse: Presently Rādhā's fisheye glances crossing over the edges of eyes widened along the path unto ears so as to reach ears, in which strain those eyes felt much fluttering sensation; but on gazing her most loveable lover with such wide-eyed adoration heaps of happy tears started to flow, as though her glances sweated with strain in seeing him at a long last time. [11-7]

The Essence of the verse suggest: After a prolonged separation, when Radha met her beloved Krishna, her inner ecstasy overflowed in the form of tears of joy. It seemed as though in an effort to look at him, the edges of her eyes widened along the path unto ears, and the tears gave the impression of the perspiration arising from the strain on her eyes.

भज्यन्त्याः तल्प अन्तम् कृत कपट कण्डूता पहिति  
 स्मृतिम् याते गेहात् बहिः अपाहिति आली परजिने  
 प्रथि आस्यम् पश्यन्त्याः समर शर समाकूल सुभगम्  
 स लज्जा लज्जा अपविद्यगम् इव दूरम् मृग दृशः

Meaning of the verse: When her well-wishing friends have gone away from that bower, concealing her happy smile by feigning some itching on some limb, she neared the edge of bed; then, on seeing her dear one's auspicious face her body language changed as Love god ensorcelled her, and even the prudery of that fawn eyed Rādhā became as though effected by a bit of prude, left her off. [11-8]

The Essence of the verse suggest: When Radha's friends tactfully retreated from the bower making pretense and concealing their smiles, she neared the edge of the bed. The doe eyed Radha then cast a sidelong glance at her beloved Krishna as if under the spell of the Love God, and soon her shyness also took her leave.



### *Folio of Gita Govinda*

Acc. No 66.90

Pahari School, Kangra Style

Year 18<sup>th</sup> century CE

Inscription on reverse

Size: 28 x 36.2 cm

Radha and Krishna are seated on the bed of leaves in a grove and engaged in conversation. Two *gopis* are standing on the extreme left in the grove. Painting from Kangra, Krishna and Radha are spending their time in a burrow, while the *Sakhi* who was responsible for this union is conversing with her friend.



### Basohli Series of *Gita Govinda*

The painting style of Basohli originated in the princely state of Basohli and then the style spread to the Hill states of Mankot, Nurpur, Kulu, Mandi, Suket, Bilaspur, Nalagarh, Chamba, Guler, and Kangra. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy was the first to publish them, in his book, *Rajput Paintings* in 1916. Later the mention of Basohli painting is in the annual report of the Archaeological Survey of India for the year published in 1921. Referring to the acquisitions of the Archaeological Section of the Central Museum, Lahore the report states that “a series of old paintings of the Basohli School were purchased, and the Curator concludes that the Basohli Schools is possibly of pre-Moghul origin, and so called Tibeti pictures are nothing but late productions of this school». <sup>9</sup> Basohli Paintings is a fusion of Hindu mythology, Mughal miniature techniques and folk art of the local hills, evolved in the 17th and 18th centuries as a distinctive style of painting.

The main features of the style of Basohli paintings are considered with the stylized facial type, shown in profile, is dominated by the large, intense eye. The colours are always brilliant, with ochre yellow, brown, and green grounds predominating. A distinctive technique is the depiction of jewelry by thick, raised drops of white paint, with particles of green beetles’ wings used to represent emeralds. <sup>10</sup> The most popular themes of Basohli Paintings come from *Shringara* literature like *Rasamanjari* or Bouquet of Delight (a long love poem written in 15th century by Bhanudatta of Tirhut Bihar), *Gita Govinda* and *Ragamala*. These paintings are marked by striking blazing colors, red borders, bold lines and rich symbols. The faces of the figures painted are characterized by the receding foreheads and large expressive eyes, shaped like lotus petals. The painting themselves are mostly painted in the primary colors of Red, Blue and Yellow. <sup>11</sup>

These paintings from Basohli is attributed to the great painter Mānaku, of Guler. He has painted a series of *Gita Govinda*, commissioned by the queen of Guler. A serious debate among the scholars during the last decade has thrown light on the queries such as whether Manuku was from Guler, whether he has painted another series of *Gita Govinda* for Basohli court, Manuku and Nainsukh were the brothers. Jayadeva’s dream comes true in the Guler series of *Gita Govinda* painted by Manuku. This is very simple but unique composition. The thick green grove is reflected in the emerald jewellery. Here, Vrindavan witnesses the wondrous mystery of Krishna’s love, there he revels in many damsels embraces.



### ***Krishna Dallying with Cowherd Maidens***

Acc. No 51.207.26

Pahari School, Basohli Style

Year 1730 CE

Inscription on reverse

Size: 20.5 x 31 cm

Artist: Manaku

Jayadeva describes the love of Radha and Krishna with intense devotion and makes the love of God really true to the status of God. In this painting, Krishna is in the centre, surrounded by *gopis*, and he is being attended by them. Krishna in his *pitambara*, the yellow garment, *kirit mukut* with two lotuses and peacock feathers. Krishna holding a flute in his right hand and resting on the shoulder of a *gopi*, and his other hand is around the waist of one of the *gopis*. Small and big trees partially hide the intimate scene of Krishna dallying with the *gopis*, while the orange ground provides a colourful background to the figures, flora and fauna. The *Sakhi* Lalitha of Radha is watching cautiously the playful atmosphere and feels the absence of Radha and at the same time she is thinking how to convey Radha.



## Chapter [Sarga] 1- All pervasive Exuberant Krishna

सामोद दामोदरम्

वश्वेषामनुरंजनेन जनयन्नानानन्दमन्दीवर

श्रेणीश्यामलकोमलैरुपनयन्नङ्गैरनङ्गोत्सवम् ।

स्वच्छंदम् व्रजसुन्दरीभरिभतिः प्रत्यङ्गमालङ्कितिः

शृङ्गारः सखाभूरतमिनिवि मधौ मुग्धो हरिः क्रीडति ॥ १-११

1-11-. sakhi= oh, friend, Rādhā; mugdhaH= charming [not meekish]; hariH= Krishna; vishveShaam = for all in the world; anuranjanena= to cause mutual intimacy; aanaanandam janayan= happiness, to cause; indiivara= blue black lotuses; shreNii= rows of; shyaamala= blue blackish; komalaiH= daintily; angaiH= with limbs; ana. nga utsavam= Love god's, festival [vasanta utsavam, carnivalesque excitation]; upa nayan= to near, draw [to draw nigh]; abhitaH= by all [external limbs and internal heartfelt feelings]; svacChandam= unreservedly; prati a.ngam= each, limb; vraja= county called Vraja province; sundariibhiH = by beautiful damsels [of Vraja county]; aali.ngitaH= embraced [Krishna is embraced]; shR^i.ngaaraH iva muurtimaan= romance, like, embodiment of; madhau= in springtime; kriiDati= playing [titillating.]

अनुवाद- हे सखा! इस वसन्तकाल में वलिस-रस में उन्मत्त शरीकृष्ण मूर्तमिनि शृंगार रसस्वरूप होकर वहार कर रहे हैं। वे इन्दीवर कमल से भी अतीव अभरिम कोमल श्यामल अंगो से कन्दरूप महोत्सव का सम्पादन कर रहे हैं। गोपियों की जतिनी भी अभलिषा है, उससे भी कही अधिक उनकी उन्मत्त लालसाओ को अतः अनुराग के साथ तृप्त कर रहे हैं। परन्तु व्रजसुन्दरियाँ विपरीत रतरिस में आवष्टि हो वविश होकर उनके प्रत्येक अंगप्रत्यंग को सम्यक् एवं स्वतन्त्र रूप से आलङ्कित कर रही हैं ॥ 1 ॥

*Sakhi* stimulates or excites Radha by telling her about Krishna in Brindavan in this springtime. His divine personage delights everyone and causes mutual intimacy among all the worldly beings. Krishna seems to be Cupid personified as he revels with the Gopis, intoxicated by the rasa of romantic springtime encounters. With his blue limbed body which surpasses the beauty of blue lotus flowers, he is inaugurating the Cupid's festival. He is pleasing and fulfilling the gopis' unbridled passion. The beautiful gopis of Vraja, lost in the rapture, unreservedly embrace each and every part of his body, either with their bodily limbs or by their heartfelt feelings.



### *Krishna's Dalliance with Gopis*

Acc. No 51.207.15

Pahari School, Basohli Style

Year 1730 CE

Inscription on reverse

Size: 12 x 8.3 inches

Artist: Manaku



This painting is an exquisite series of Gita Govinda where on the right, Krishna is shown in dalliance with the gopis behind the tree. On the left, Radha is sitting and conversing with her confidante. *Kadamba* tree is depicted in the centre. In the foreground, four small trees along with big tree on the right corner is depicted. All the figures are set on the side of a rivulet. The painting is adorned with red border. The painting has two separate sections, divided almost equally, the central *kadamba* tree is like a divider witnessing the happenings on its two sides. Also, the portrayal of two contrast emotional states, in one, Krishna in the moods of dalliance with all the five *gopis*, holding all of them closely, each one looking into the eyes of Krishna, while the last one is looking the other side, thinking of Radha would come anytime. Krishna has no inhibition or probably to

make Radha envious, he is playing with *gopis*. The other side, *sakhi* has presented herself as *dutika* or a Female Messenger is drawing the attention of Radha and rousing in her desire and passion. The expression and hand gestures of *sakhi* is like telling Radha, 'do you know what is happening behind the scene, all gopis are feeling fortunate to be in the company of Krishna, and he, your lover is happily playing with gopis, if you do not make your move earlier, you will lose your love, he! What are you waiting for'. Radha could not believe her *sakhi* first, with several narrations and ways of putting like a *dutika vichitra vadini*, *sakhi* charges Radha. Now Radha is shocked and as an innocent and meek lover seeking her advice for the further course of action. The attire of Radha and *sakhi* are beautifully rendered with a fine colour combination and exclusive jewels.



***Friends persuading hesitant  
Radha to enter the bower  
of love where Krishna awaits her***

Acc No 51.207/10

Pahari Style, Basohli School

Dated 1730 CE

Size: 19 x 28 cm

Inscription on reverse

Artist: Manaku

The theme of the composition deals with the *madhura bhakti*, divine love of Radha and Krishna. The scene in this painting is laid on the banks of a river shown partially in the foreground. Radha is seen seated on the banks of the river. She is trying to cover her face by a veil, while her *pranasakhi* Lalitha holds her hand and driving Radha towards Krishna who is waiting in the bower. Vishakha another *priyasakhi*, of Radha is seated behind Radha and conversing with her. Both

close *sakhis* as *dutikas* are convincing Radha to go and meet Krishna, who is eagerly waiting for her in a bower close by and watching the responses. *Sakhi* Lalitha is the soul in *Gita Govinda* and Krishna has given wide scope for her to persuade hesitant Radha to indulge in *bhakti*. This Basohli series of *Gita Govinda* was painted by Manaku, the artist of Royal Court, well-known for his themes, the art of visualisation and precise rendition.

## Chapter [Sarga] 11 - सानन्ददामोदरम्

अधगितमखलिसखीभरिदिम् तव वपुरपरतरिणसज्जम्।  
चण्डारिसतिरशनारवडण्डिमिमभसिर सरसमलज्जम् ॥ अ प २०-६

a pa 20-6. hè mugdhe= you ignorant girl; tava idam vapuH api= your, this, body, even; rati raNa sajjam= passion, battle of [for grapples of courtship], primed for; adhgatam akhila sakhiibhiH= familiar, to all, girlfriends; hè chaNDi= you wildcat; rasita rashana rava DiNDimam= making to thrum, waist-strings', tinkle bells, by sound, drumming like sound paraspara virodhaa alankaara where delicate tinkling of 2mm bells of waist-strings magnified as war drum beats- to say 'become a love-warrior - for the grapples of courtship'; a + lajjam= without, embarrassment - unembarrassedly; sa rasam= with, romance; abhi sara= towards [him,] you make move.

"Seek him for your body is primed for the battle of passion, which to all your girlfriends is well-known; hence, oh, ignorant wildcat, chime tinkle bells of your waist-strings like the drumbeats of combatants and make a move towards him like a love-warrior to that rhythm, unembarrassedly but romantically, for he is your seeker... [a pa 20-6]

स्मरशरसुभगनखेन करेण सखीमवलंब्य सलीलम्।  
चल वलयकवणतिरवबोधय हरमिपनिजिगतशीलम् ॥ अ प २०-७

a pa 20-7. hè mugdhe= you innocent girl; smara shara subhaga nakhena= Lovegod's, arrows [like,] beautiful, with fingernails; kareNa sakhiim avala.mbya= hand of [arms], girlfriend [that is me], hanging on [to me - I will support your near-swoon posture]; sa liilam= with, grace; chala= you move; valaya kvaNitaH nija gati shiilam= round silver bracelets', by clanging, your, movement's [approach,] way of - let them herald your arrival; avabodhaya harim api= make known, to Krishna, even.

"Seek him by moving gracefully while the clinks of your bracelets herald your oncoming to him; if need be, by bracing yourself on my shoulders with your arms that have beautiful fingernails, akin to the flowery arrows of Lovegod, so that you may not swoon to a waltz; still and all, seek him for he is your seeker... [a pa 20-7]

श्रीजयदेवभणतिमधरीकृतहारमुदासतिवामम्।  
हरविनिहितिमनसामधतिष्ठतु कण्ठतटीमवरामम् ॥ अ प २०-८

a pa 20-8. adharii kR^ita haaram= to ground, that makes; one that flattens, pearl-pendants; udaasita vaamam= smoothed out [straightened], tortuousness; jayadeva bhaNitam shrii suukti= by Jayadeva, said, auspicious, saying; hari= in Krishna; vinihita= embedded; manasaam= those that have such hearts [steadfast on Krishna's disports]; kaNTha taTiim= [on their] throats, on the banks [as riverbanks are to a river, so are the edges of lips to throats - on the tips of lips of adorers]; a + viraamam= without, remitting; adhitiSThatu= preside over.

Let this auspicious song said by Jayadeva, that flattens pendants of pearls to ground, for this song is strung up with more soothing words than pearls, and that which has no tortuosities in outlining the sports of rādhā-krishna, preside over the tips of lips of adorers of Krishna, unremittingly... [a pa 20-8]

अनुवाद- हे रतरिणनपिणे! हे चण्डा! तुम्हारा यह शरीर रतरिण हेतु सुसज्जति हो रहा है। यह वलिकृषणता तुम्हारी सखियों ने जान ली है। अतः लज्जा का परत्याग कर मणमिय मेखला के मनोहर सज्जिन से डण्डिम ध्वनि करती हुई परमोत्साह के साथ अभसिरण हेतु गमन करो।

स्मर-शर-सुभग-नखेन सखीमवलम्ब्य करेण सलीलम्।

अनुवाद- तुम्हारे करकमल के रमणीय पञ्चनख रतरिणोपयोगी मदन के पंचबाण स्वरूप हैं। इनसे अपनी सखी का आश्रय करके तुम लीलापूरवक चलो। प्रख्यात शीलमय श्रीहरि को भी अपने वलय की कवणति ध्वनि से अवबोध करा दो।

श्रीजयदेव-भणतिमधरीकृत-हारमुदासतिरामम्।

हर-विनिहित-मनसामधतिष्ठतु कण्ठतटीमवरामम्

मुग्धे.... ॥८॥[1]

अनुवाद- श्रीजयदेव कथति यह गीत भूषण-स्वरूप मनोहर हार तथा मनमोहनी वरांगना को तरिसकृत करने वाला है, जनिका मन श्रीकृष्ण के प्रती समर्पति हो गया है, ऐसे भक्तों के कण्ठ में यह गीत अवरिल रूप से वरिजति हो।

Essence of the Verse: *Sakhi* tells Radha not to feel bashful about her rendezvous with Krishna. She says that all the friends know that Radha is primed for the battle of passion. Like the drumbeats used in a battle, the bells of her waist chain/ waist string or *kardhani* would chime when she would move like a love warrior to meet Krishna.

*Sakhi* tells Radha that the attractive fingernails of her tender hands are like five flower studded arrows of the love-God Kāmadeva. She tells Radha to use these arms with beautiful fingernails to brace herself on the *Sakhi*'s shoulder for support and move ahead. She further tells her that the clink of her bracelets or bangles would notify Krishna of her arrival.

This auspicious song by Sri Jayadeva eclipses even the beauty of an elegant necklace, for this song is strung up with more soothing words than pearls. May it perpetually adorn the throats of those devotees, who have completely offered their hearts to Hari.

Of all the themes, *Gita Govinda* fascinates for various reasons. This is one poetics in the form of 8 compositions with 8 *sargas* or verses known as *Ashtapadi* in Sanskrit composed by the poet Jayadeva during 12<sup>th</sup> century from Orissa received pan-Indian patronage since 12<sup>th</sup> century. The text has been translated in regional languages and one of the favorite themes of painters, dancers, musicians, aestheticians, literates and also central to *Bhakti* movement. Painters from Rajasthan schools, Pahari schools and Deccani schools received Royal patronage to portray Radha, Krishna and *Sakhi*, which are the main characters of *Gita Govinda*. This text was illustrated in the miniature style and every miniature school tried to bring out the best set of *Gita Govinda* paintings. Besides the above mentioned miniature schools, this theme was portrayed in the royal courts of Gujarat, Orissa, Assam and Mysore too.

Some of the paintings on this theme are displayed in the painting gallery. Among Rajasthani Schools, Mewar, and Jaur sets are displayed and also in reserve collections. As far as Pahari *Gita Govinda* miniatures are concerned, Basohli and Kangra schools find their place and few of Orissa and Deccani paintings on the theme are in the collections of National Museum. These works have their own stylistic features and landscape settings. Though Radha and Krishna are the central characters, one more character of *Sakhi* of Radha and her portrayal steals the show. *Sakhi* is the soul of *Gita Govinda*, probably the poet takes himself the role of *sakhi* in enjoying the romantic nuances that made this poetic an eternal love poem. 'The role of the *Sakhi* is important and she presents a near perfect example of the conventional character with all the attributes of the poetic motif. In this respect it faithfully follows the *Gita-Govinda* format. The role of *Sakhi* in persuading Radha and Krishna is indispensable to the conception, on many planes, both mystical and artistic'.<sup>12</sup>

*Gita Govinda* is approached in several ways as discussed above. The text and paintings, here are viewed, reviewed and analysed from the perspective of *Sakhi* as the illustrious female messenger. *Sakhi* is the companion of the heroine, handling multiple functions as the situation demands. She is also a close friend, follows her royal friend as her shadow. She knows her mind, heart and action much better than her own self. Thus the heroine wrests complete faith in her *sakhi*. She is an excellent messenger, knows the art and science of emissary. She uses all gift of gab to win the heart of the hero for her heroine. Such a character of *Sakhi* in *Gita Govinda* was immortalised by the painters in miniature style of painting. Bharata, Vatsyayana, Dhananjaya, Bhoja, Bhanudatta, Vidyanatha, Pandarika Vitthala and Rupa Gosvamin, all of them have discussed the significant role and responsibility of a *sakhi*. Pandarika Vitthala discusses *Sakhi*

in the light of an envoy accomplishes the work being consolidated. *Sakhi* according to him is trustworthy and always next to her mistress and one who is adept in decorating and involving in light talk. Here in *Gitagovinda* apart from being a close companion, she is deployed as *dutika* or not able to withstand the *viraha* of her friend Radha she goes to Krishna as *dutika* to put forth the state of Radha before him. Finally she is responsible for their union.

It is quite strange that the name 'Radha' never mentioned in Srimad Bhagavatam, but the character, who was the dearest to Krishna in Vrindavan and Vrajdesha was very much present, and instead hinted about her by the word '*aradhana*', It is a mystery that some of the texts are silent to specify the name 'Radha. Later puranas directly describe Radha by name. By 12<sup>th</sup> century, the life time of poet Jayadeva the character of Radha occupy a central stage in the *bhakti* movement. All of the *bhakti* thought and *bhakti* schools upheld the transedental existence of Radha and Krishna. The *madhurya-rasa-bhakti* primarily viewed the divine love of Radha and Krishna as the *bhakti-parakashtha*. Socio-cultural life of the people during those days also gave a prominent place for *bhaktibhav*. Jayadeva, experienced this fervor hardly resisted himself to write his poem Gita Govinda the tryst of Radha and Krishna through the continuous efforts of their dear *sakhi*, Lalita, who performed the duty of *dutika* also the prime *sakhi* among the *ashtasakhis* of Radha. The passionate love sequences, where the *sakhi* as the mediator caught the prime attention of royal patrons and artists across the country, as a result Rajasthani, Pahari and Deccani Schools produced brilliant art works on the basis of *Gita Govinda*, having significant place in the art collections of museums across the world.

Sources – Gita Govinda, Verses, meaning and translation:

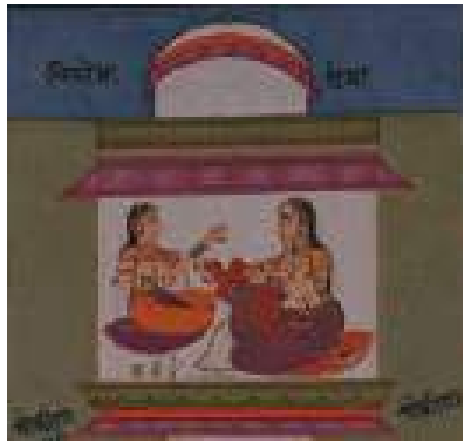
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## Endnotes

- 1 Keith Sir A.B. History of Sanskrit Literature P 18
- 2 Prasad Rashmi, guided by Nandagopal Choodamani, *Impact of Gitagovinda on the Gitakavyas of Post Medieval period With reference to Nayikabheda*.
- 3 M S Randhava, *Kangra Paintings of the Gita Govinda*, P 42
- 4 DE. S K Indian Studies Past and present Vol I No 4 1960 P. 647
- 5 one of the four Jaina miniature styles
- 6 Treasures National Museum P 104
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- 8 M S Randhava, *Kangra Paintings of the Gita Govinda*, P 14
- 9 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basholi>
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## Chitrlekha - The Illustrious *Dutika/Sakhi* of Usha



*Sakhi* Chitrlekha conversing with Usha

### The Marriage of Aniruddha

A very interesting series in the collection from the Painting Section of National Museum depict the narration of the story of Usha and Aniruddha. This is a set of miniature paintings that illustrate the chapter 62 from canto 10 of *Srimad Bhagavatam*. It is an interesting legend of Usha in love with Aniruddha which caused a fierce battle between Hari (God Vishnu) and Hara (God Shiva). Aniruddha was the son of Pradyumna and grandson of Sri Krishna of Yadukula. Usha, specially known for her beauty was the only daughter of Banasura, the demon son of Bali Chakravarti of *asurakula*. This was the major obstacle for the lovers to come together as the conflict between the two clans had ancestral enmity and continued to generations. The beautiful city of Banasura was located in the state of Assam known as Sonitapura. He kept his daughter secluded in a palace surrounded by fire and posted with trusted guards. Usha could not have glimpse of anyone except his close companion and friend Chitrlekha, who was the daughter of Kambandha, the minister of Banasura.

Usha explains her dream of having the glimpse of most handsome Aniruddha and her feelings towards him. As a true *sakhi*, Chitrlekha, who was an expert artist, called for all her drawing materials, and took her seat ; and having propitiated Ganesa and Narada, and meditated on her spiritual preceptor [*guru*), began to draw. At first she drew and exhibited the Three Worlds, the Fourteen Spheres, the Seven Isles, and the Nine Parts of the Earth, the Sky, the Seven Seas, the Eight Heavens and *Vaikuntha*. Afterwards she severally drew and exhibited all the *Devas*,

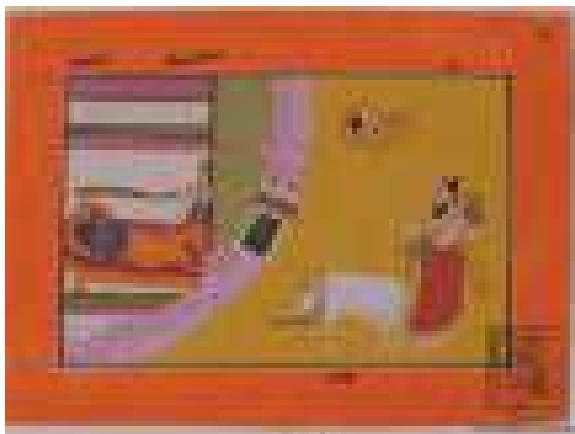
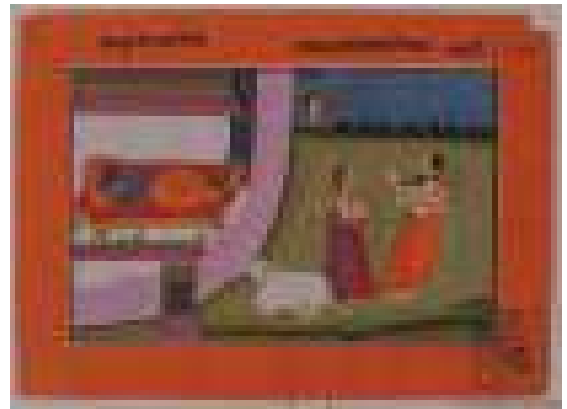
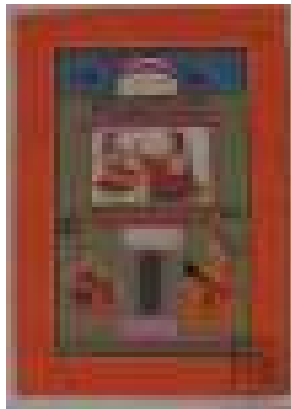
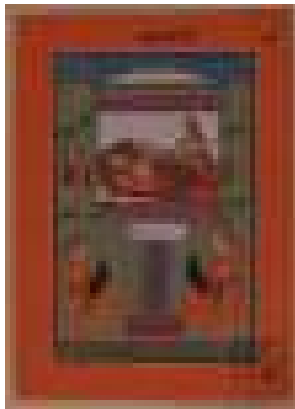
*Danavas, Gandharvas, Kinnaras, Yaksas, Rishis, Munis, Lokapalas, Dikpalas*, and the kings of every country ; but Usha did not find the one she wished for among them. Then Citrarekha began to draw and exhibit one by one the forms of all the Yaduvarnis ; and hereupon Usha, on seeing the portrait of Aniruddha, said, “Now I have found my heart’s thief!”.<sup>1</sup> Chitrlekha created a portrait of Aniruddha and also helped Usha to meet her lover. She goes to the extent of transporting Aniruddha from his palace in Dwaraka to Sonitapura where Usha resided. Chitrlekha lifts him along with his bed while he was sleeping and travels through air and reaches Sonitapura. She brings the lovers, Usha and Aniruddha together at the cost of inviting wrath of Banasura. Banasura had special blessings from Shiva earned through his hard *tapas*, he invokes Shiva, who stood to protect Banasura against the *devatas* including Sri Krishna. Aniruddha being the grandson of Krishna, He took the stand to protect him. For the sake of two young lovers, who were supported by a true friend Chitrlekha, a fierce war was pitched in between Pradyumna and Banasura, between Shiva and Sri Krishna and ultimately it was *deva danava yuddha*, it was between gods and demons. This war took place on the gates of Sonitapura, which caused massive loss on both sides, when it reached climax between Hari and Hara, Brahma emerges between the two eternal forces and stops the war.

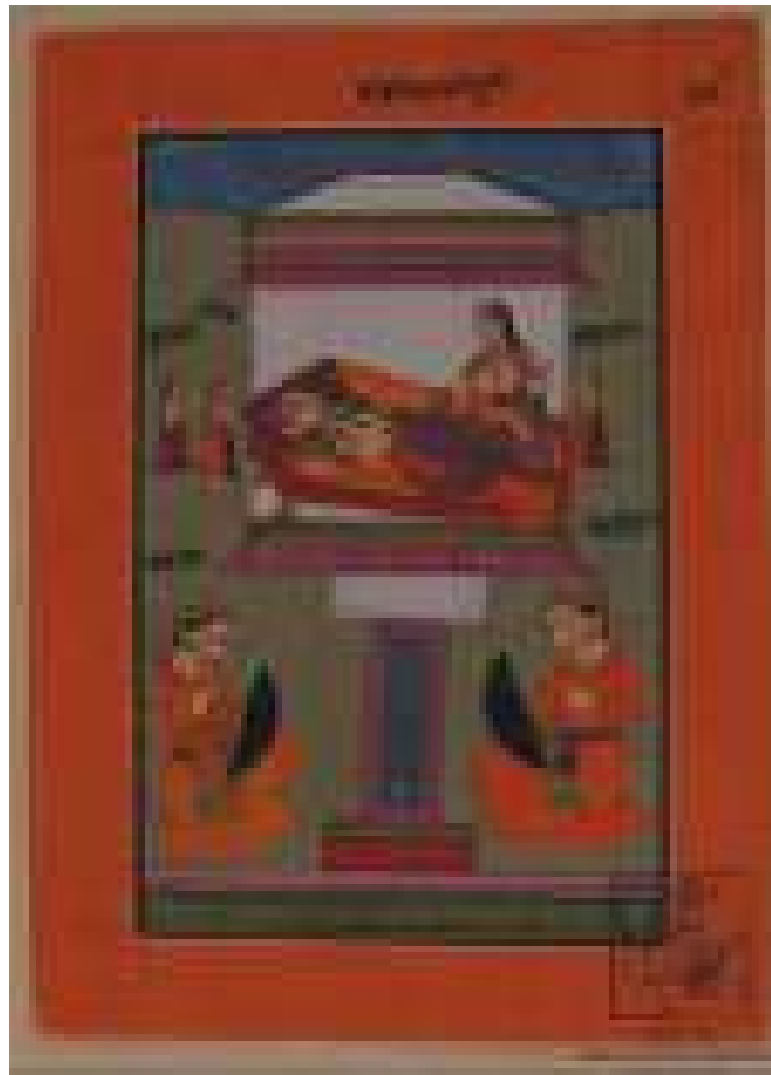
With the help of Chitrlekha who played the significant role of *sakhi, dutika* and mediator between the two parties, the 62<sup>nd</sup> chapter, 10<sup>th</sup> canto of *Srimad Bhagavatam* has special place in the *vaishnava* literature. A series of miniature paintings narrating the episode of the love legend of Usha and Aniruddha are found in the art collections of National Museum. The following are about seven paintings, which belongs to Raghogarh, sub-school of Rajasthan School, of distinctive format, simple lay out and colour scheme as well cryptic narrative style. In these seven paintings the role and imagery of female messenger, as Chitrlekha here is clearly visualized by both the artist and narrator of early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The *gatha* (ballad) of Usha, Aniruddha and Chitrlekha was so popular that in Tezpur, the ancient Sonitapura of Assam, and on the site believed to be the fiery (Tez) palace of Chitrlekha the entire story is recreated with the images and placed them on the site. The visitors to the place are introduced with the love legend of pauranic lovers, who faced opposition for their wedlock even in those days because they belonged two different races.

Similarly the celebrated painter of India Raja Ravi Varma was captivated with the handsome Yadava appearing in the dreams of Usha. He portrayed this theme in number of paintings. Though it is *puranic* theme of *puranic* society, the resentment between the families belonging to two opposite clans in the case of marriage relationships stand even in present socio-cultural conditions of society. Certain traditional practices die hard, but take again and again new versions or *avatars*.

Here are seven miniature paintings probably part of series, which narrate the story.





### *Usha lying in the bed room*

Acc. No: 51.66/75

Rajasthan School, Raghogarh style

18<sup>th</sup> Century CE

Size: 12.3x 9.2 inches

Usha is lying in her bed room and Chitrlekha is attending on her. In the foreground two gate keepers are guarding the entrance to the palace.

Text 10 : In a dream Bana's daughter, the maiden Usha, had an amorous encounter with the son of Pradyumna, though she had never seen before or heard of her lover.

Text 11: Losing sight of Him in her dream, Usha suddenly sat up in the midst of her girlfriends, crying out 'where are you my lover? She was greatly disturbed and embarrassed.

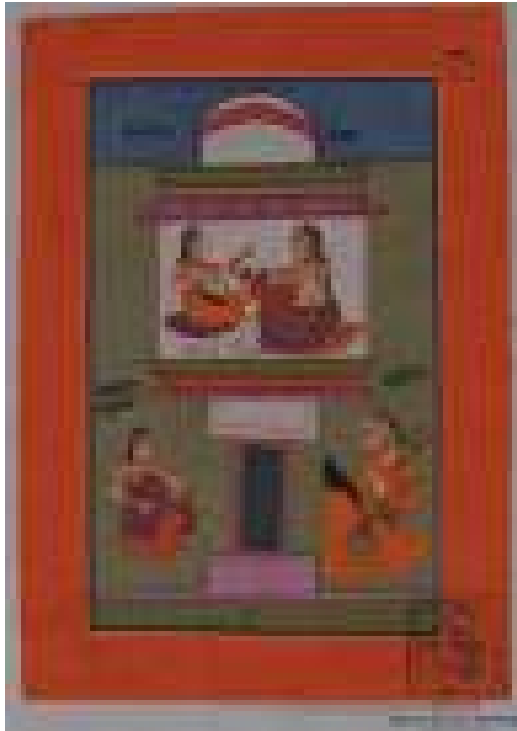
Text 12: Bāṇāsura had a minister named Kumbhāṇḍa, whose daughter was Citralekhā. A companion of

Uṣhā's, she was filled with curiosity, and thus she enquired from her friend.

Text 13:[Citralekhā said:] Who are you searching for, O fine-browed one? What is this hankering you're feeling? Until now, O princess, I haven't seen any man take your hand in marriage.<sup>2</sup>

In the painting here some of the interesting features are noticed. Usha is lying on the bed in a distress state in her chamber. She is guarded heavily by two strong armed men. Around her three tiny features *sakhis* are in service where as one damsel seated near her trying to console her.

It is interesting to note the labeling on the paintings in Hindi. The three damsels are named as *nidra* – sleep, *udasi* – boring, *aalasya* – laziness have surrounded Usha and she is in a terrible state. The two main figures, Usha and her companion Chitrlekha are not labeled. Painting is relatively flat with limited colours, as far as figures are concerned, the detailing is obvious but while handling of the surroundings and indication of steps, and least importance is given.



### *Usha and Chitrlekha*

Acc. No: 51.66/76 and 77

Rajasthan School, Raghuvarar style

18<sup>th</sup> Century CE

Size: 12.3x 9.2 inches

Usha and Chitrlekha are seated in a palace chamber. Chitrlekha painted a portrayal of Aniruddha. In the third painting, after knowing the person who appeared in the dream of Usha, Chitrlekha proceeds to Dwaraka to meet Aniruddha. In all the three paintings, male and female gate keepers are seated outside palace.

Text 14: [Ūṣhā said:] in my dream I saw a certain man who had a dark blue complexion, lotus eyes, yellow garments and mighty arms. He was the kind who touches women's hearts.

Text 15: It is that lover I search for. After making me drink the honey of His lips, He has gone elsewhere, and thus He has thrown me, hankering fervently for Him, into the ocean of distress.

Text 16: Citralekhā said: I will remove your distress. If He is to be found anywhere in the three worlds, I will bring this future husband of yours who has stolen your heart. Please show me who He is.

Text 17: Saying this, Citralekhā proceeded to draw accurate pictures of various demigods, *Gandharvas*, *Siddhas*, *Cāraṇas*, *Pannagas*, *Daityas*, *Vidyādhara*s, *Yachats* and humans.

Texts 18-19: O King, among the humans, Citralekhā drew pictures of the *Vṛṣṇis*, including Sūrasena, Ānakadundubhi, Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa. When Ūṣhā saw the picture of Pradyumna she became bashful, and when she saw Aniruddha's picture she bent her head



### *Chitrlekha proceeding to Dwaraka*

Acc. No: 51.66/78

Rajasthan School, Raghuvarar style

18<sup>th</sup> Century CE

Size: 12.3x 9.2 inches

down in embarrassment. Smiling, she exclaimed, "He's the one! It's Him!"

The verses from 14 to 19 are taken as the theme for this painting. There is change in the placement of guard, where a woman is placed in place of male guard but without any weapons in her position. She was placed to report to Banasura the changing situations or behaviors in Usha and Chitrlekha. The chamber where Usha seated and conversing with her Sakhi is well defined.

Usha is explaining the handsome prince she had encountered in her dreams and his looks, each and every features of the prince. Chitrlekha being well versed in making pictures draws the pictures of all demy-gods, seeing one by one of the paintings, Usha gives negative signal. Finally, when Chitrlekha paints a last portrait, Usha with a smile approved. Chitrlekha recognized the person as Prince Aniruddha, the most handsome grandson of Sri Krishna bad son of Pradyumna, belonged Yadava clan. Chitrlekha trying to bring smile on her friend's face she makes all efforts. This painting is the central theme where the identification of the prince who appeared every night in the dream of Usha takes place, also the imagery of Chitrlekha as a trusted *Sakhi* is emphasized. She with great confidence promises Usha to drive away her distress. To carry out her promise to her friend Chitrlekha proceeds to the city of Dwaraka.



### *Aniruddha lying on the Bed*

Acc. No: 51.66/80

Rajasthan School, Raghogarh style

18<sup>th</sup> Century CE

Size: 12.3x 9.2 inches

Aniruddha is lying on bed in the walled palace chamber. To the right against pale green background Narada is conversing with Chitrlekha

Text 20: Citralekhā, endowed with mystic powers, recognized Him as Kṛṣṇa's grandson [Aniruddha]. My dear King, she then traveled by the mystic skyway to Dvārakā, the city under Lord Kṛṣṇa's protection. More of narrative elements are given importance in this painting. After travelling the mystic skyway, Usha's *sakhi* Chitrlekha reaches the walled city of Dwaraka which was under protection of Sri Krishna. The artist tried to give the clear idea of walled city. Palace entrance through closed door and stairs show that

it is night and Aniruddha is in deep sleep inside his palace.

Chitrlekha took trouble in travelling from Far East, Sonitapura in Assam to reach on the far west the city of Dwaraka located. The city is guarded by none other than Sudarshana Chakra of Sri Krishna in the form of human head blowing *jwala*, fire. On the foreground a cow, Kamadhenu in crystal white is guarding the gate. Chitrlekha met sage Narada and sought his support to identify the Yadava Aniruddha and to make an entry to the palace. Here the painter took great care in portraying Narada and Chitrlekha as she was a royal *sakhi* and enjoyed higher status as she was the daughter of the minister. He rendered the costume, jewellery, her gestures and stretching of her hand naturally towards the door and her intent of entry in a more confident way. The portrayal of Narada too with his *dandige* (musical string instrument), saffron clothing and facial expression rendered in great detail. On the whole, this painting including that of the central figure possesses an atmosphere of assuredness.



### *Aniruddha sleeping*

Acc. No: 51.66/81

Rajasthan School, Raghogarh style

18<sup>th</sup> Century CE

Size: 12.3x 9.2 inches

To the left Aniruddha is sleeping in the bed chamber of a walled palace, while Chitrlekha holding a *morchehatra* stand in attendance on him.

Sage Narada stage manages everything to gain Chitrlekha the entry into palace through the door. Narada is showing her the direction to follow, he engaged the sacred cow who was guarding diligently the doorway by offering good fodder. Similarly the Chakrapurusha is directed to look in frontal direction and could not notice the action in the foreground. Chitrlekha after gained the entry into walled palace, further enters the bed chamber of Aniruddha, who was fast asleep. She stood in attendance to fan, which is made up of peacock feathers. She gave picture that she is one of the maid of palace who was in personal service of Aniruddha's palace. The pure intent of Chitrlekha to help her friend Usha to meet her lover Aniruddha is seen here. The colour scheme in the painting is kept minimum to enhance the action oriented narrative content of the theme. All characters are keenly engaged in their own activities under the guise of mid night situation.



***Chitrlekha Moving Sleeping Aniruddha***

Acc. No: 51.66/82

Rajasthan School, Raghogarh style

18<sup>th</sup> Century CE

Size: 12.3x 9.2 inches

Chitrlekha is carrying away Aniruddha who was lying on bed. Narada is looking towards the palace of Aniruddha.

In this part of the series of the paintings, an enactment of high drama is taking place. Chitrlekha occupies the central stage lifting the cot along sleeping Aniruddha with her mystic powers. The effect of the weight of the cot and sleeping Aniruddha is felt on the body of Chitrlekha, which the artist consciously expressed and also portraying the empty chamber of Aniruddha. While Chitrlekha has moved from the scene towards the direction shown by the sage Narada, Kamadhenu and Chakrapurusha returned to their duty of guarding the doorway and the walled city of Dwaraka. This is the scene of a woman kidnapping the man to fulfill the promise made to her friend Usha. She is on her skyway to show that effect in artistic way, her clothes are flying the air and one could feel the swinging movement.





### ***Chitrlekha and Aniruddha***

Acc. No: 51.66/83

Rajasthan School, Raghogarh style

18<sup>th</sup> Century CE

Size: 12.3x 9.2 inches

Chitrlekha is carrying away Aniruddha along with the bed and looking at Aniruddha. A gate keeper and a lady are guarding the entrance of the palace.

Chitrlekha landed at Sonitapura and gained entry into Usha's palace without giving any clue to the guards who were steadfastly guarding the entry gate of the palace. Usha is on her bed but was shocked by the action of Chitrlekha as she never expected that she would bring her lover Aniruddha to her palace. The spatial divisions are interestingly created: three activities are narrated. They are 1. To the extreme left the entire space is occupied by the action of Chitrlekha and it is dramatically portrayed. She is still in flying

state, while carrying the strong young sleeping prince, her lower garment is fluttering and the veil is in swinging movement, Chitrlekha looks goal oriented, to place the kidnapped Yadava prince in the palace of Usha. Her hair is tied up to carry out her heightened action. 2. The right part of the space is divided into two parts for the purpose depicting two separate activities. On the top, Usha almost trying to come on her feet in an utter shock, woke up and looking through the unexpected action of Chitrlekha.

3. below, the male and female guards in conversation and boasting themselves their capabilities as guards. They are guarding the entry through high steps. Other than these five characters, a huge plantain tree with its blooms is the lone witness for all the activities taking place. Saffron colours and shades are used to its maximum and the entire ground is kept with single complementing colour. The role of dutika, who was the *sakhi* of Usha is deliberated in an exemplary manner in this narrative painting. It is also noteworthy that the artist expressed faithfully to the original text of *Srimad Bhagavata*.



### *Aniruddha Sleeping*

Acc. No: 51.66/84

Rajasthan School, Raghogarh style

18<sup>th</sup> Century CE

Size: 12.3x 9.2 inches

In the upper portion Aniruddha is sleeping in the bed chamber and to the right Usha and Chitrlekha are conversing against a pale green background.

The last painting in the series shows the accomplishing task of Chitrlekha. After placing sleeping Aniruddha on the bed, inside the chamber of Usha, Chitrlekha sitting down comfortably and taking her breath. The cot that she carried sleeping Aniruddha is still lying outside. Inside the bed chamber Aniruddha woke up and listening to the conversations of two friends. Probably he allowed himself to be kidnapped because that is the only way he could meet his lover. Here embarrassed Usha came running outside and talking to Chitrlekha, probably the next course of action. She appeared to be happy, smiling and in amorous moods. Also Chitrlekha, narrating her all the sequences and the way her lover was kidnapped and brought in. Probably for the first time in this series of painting Usha is active and charged with expression and thanking Chitrlekha for her herculean act.

The upper register of the painting is packed with something which cannot be shared to the world outside Usha's chamber. Colour scheme of pale green and the nice pavilion where Aniruddha is lying on the bed

are suggestive of amorous moods. While the lower register is painted in yellow ochre is dominated by two, the *chouki* and *cheli*, the male and female guards respectively are engaged in a serious discussion by stretching their hands in a gesture language. Probably they both have felt something happened under their nose, which they were to safeguard, something undesirable to happen. The characters in the painting are treated with care according to their *svabhava*. Chitrlekha and Usha are dressed in beautiful attire, as though they have to be presentable before Aniruddha for the first time in reality and also nothing should be falling short to impress him. Aniruddha is also awake and thinking when he should appear before them. The characters at the entrance gate are worried about their plight once the inner chamber activities are revealed to their master. In many ways this painting is backed with different emotional content.

This series containing seven paintings are at first sight look flat, lack of perspective while dealing with architectural units such as the entrance path or steps to Usha's palace, the chamber of Usha and Aniruddha, steps wherever indicated and the walled city and door way. Landscape is kept simple except the large plantain tree, raised buildings at distance to indicate the city of Dwaraka and while Chitrlekha takes to skyway, the artist tried to show river Gomathi and the sea from the aerial perspective. Because of not giving importance to flora and fauna the characters emerge significantly with their narratives. The Raghogarh School has this distinguished feature amongst Rajasthan miniature schools of painting.

### **The theme of Usha and Aniruddha, fascinated the legendary painter Raja Ravi Varma**

The Episode of Usha and Aniruddha is a subject of content in the lore's of Puranic times may be datable to the compiling of *Purana* literature in ancient Indian time-line. As one of the popular stories related to *Dushta harana*, tranquil of evil forces in the form of Banasura, father of Usha and *shishta paripalana*, protection of good forces in the form of Usha continued with this concept through medieval times as cultural values. These cultural values reverberated in the paintings discussed above, and they make cross-linkages again in the art works of Raja Ravi Varma in the late 19th century, who was the celebrated artist and immortalised Puranic episodes in his paintings. This theme is the subject matter in four works of Ravi Varma. They are found in the form of oleographs.

All these 4 works are prints from different presses between 1890-1898. There are no clear records of any original oil works of these prints and as such the story that revolves around them is about Usha - the protagonist, Aniruddha the man, her dreams and Chitrlekha - Usha's *sakhi*, a close companion and confidant.



### **Usha's Dream by Raja Ravi Varma**

Ravi Varma Press

In her slumber, Usha, daughter of Banasura, a great devotee of Lord Shiva, dreams of a prince Aniruddha, who is the grandson of Lord Krishna. Aniruddha is the son of Pradyumna.

### Chित्रलेखा रवी वर्मा प्रेस

Searching that charming face of the man in her dreams, Usha enlists help from her companion Chित्रलेखा.

The print from Ravi Varma Press derived from a painting by RRV narrates an episode in the Bhagavata. Usha is unable to identify the man in her dreams when her companion Chित्रलेखा paints pictures of all princes known to her. Finally when Chित्रलेखा paints Aniruddha's face Usha's heart misses a beat and she is ecstatic as she recognises him from her dream.



### अनिरुद्धा is unconscious

Unknown

When Usha's father, the powerful Banasura, a devotee of Lord Shiva finds a stranger in his palace, he imprisons him and makes him unconscious with some kind of 'serpent magic'. This is the scene that is depicted in the print. Legend has it that Krishna comes to his grandson Aniruddha's rescue.



***Aniruddha and Usha Parinayam***

Colour Lithograph – Bengal Art Studio – Calcutta Press

This lithograph is also known as Aniruddha & Usha in the forest

Calcutta Press

Legend has it that Aniruddha is brought to Usha's palace by Chitralkha. After getting secretly married they spend time together. Here they stand in a forest with a western influenced landscape, with a pair of swans floating in a pond.

**Love site in North East.**

**Legend of Usha and Aniruddha in Mahabharat era. Lord Krishna and Shiva fought here.**

Review of Agnigarh Hill

The reverberation of this episode is reconstructed in the vicinity of Tezpur as the tourism site, so that people continue to know the cultural link. Though the sculptures are made of cement and mortar, they convey the theme and keep alive a recreated story for the visitors in an interesting way. This legend kept alive the significance of Tezpur as the Puranic site known as Sonitapura.

India is a land of folklores and legends and these go back to thousands of years in history. Thousands of years before, in the times of Mahabharat, this place was ruled by Banasura, son of Bali who had a beautiful and charming daughter called Usha. She dreamt of Aniruddha, grandson of Lord Krishna and fell in love with him. Her sakhi, the companion Chitralkha was instrumental in identifying the prince charming and making them to meet and marry. As it happens, Banasura was not happy at the turn of events and apprehended and imprisoned Aniruddha. Lord Krishna came to rescue of Aniruddha and Lord Shiva came in support of Banasura and a fierce battle was fought here. Lord Brahma was forced to intervene in the fight.

This is a lovely place next to Brahmaputra River in Tezpur town. On the hill, beside the breathtaking view of Brahmaputra and snow capped Himalayas, one can see sculptures which depict beautifully this legend of love and war. A lovely place to visit when in Tezpur.

[https://www.tripadvisor.in/ShowUserReviews-g858474-d3150042-r266008553-Agnigarh\\_Hill-Tezpur\\_Sonitpur\\_District\\_Assam.html](https://www.tripadvisor.in/ShowUserReviews-g858474-d3150042-r266008553-Agnigarh_Hill-Tezpur_Sonitpur_District_Assam.html), 24<sup>th</sup> Sep 2020

### The Theme Park in commemoration of *Sakhi* Chitrlekha

A commemorative Site, believed to be the palace of Usha, the daughter of Banasura at Agnigarh. The entire park is in the form of a theme park with the imagery of the story retold here. Chitrlekha as the *sakhi* of Usha, who played an important role is beautifully narrated in the imagery of Theme park.



Ancient site of the temple



Entrance to Agnigarh



Entrance view to the palace of Usha



Chitrlekha creates portrait of Aniruddha



Guards at the gate on the palace of Usha



Friends in conversation with the portrait of Aniruddha, created by Chitrlekha



Chitrlekha carrying sleeping Aniruddha from Dwaraka city to Sonitapura, Tezpur



Chitrlekha carrying sleeping Aniruddha from Dwaraka city to Sonitapura, Tezpur



Chitrlekha carrying sleeping Aniruddha from Dwaraka city to Sonitapura, Tezpur





Chitrlekha carrying sleeping Aniruddha from Dwaraka city to Sonitapura, Tezpur



Chitrlekha carrying sleeping Aniruddha from Dwaraka city to Sonitapura, Tezpur



Chitrlekha carrying sleeping Aniruddha from Dwaraka city to Sonitapura, Tezpur



**Chitrlekha**, being the *pranasakhi*, the best friend of **Usha**, daughter of King Bana who once ruled the beautiful Tezpur helped Usha get his lover Aniruddha as her husband. Chitrlekha kidnapped Aniruddha for Usha as King Bana was not satisfied with him and which later lead to historical “Hari-Har” war. So this park is named after Chitrlekha for her efforts for uniting two lovers.



Chitrlekha carrying sleeping Aniruddha from Dwaraka city to Sonitapura, Tezpur



The story of Usha and Aniruddha



A lintel displaying the celestials – part of the ruined temple



Temple site in ruins



The legend might be embedded in folklore, but Agnigarh hillock does exist in Tezpur. Today, it has been turned into a park called *Usha-AniruddhaUdyan*. From here the magnificent Brahmaputra's is a soothing sight for the tired eyes.

Even in recorded history, Tezpur had been known for its ancestry. The ruins strewn around the town provide enough proof. The Cole Park is a sprawling area with a lake in between. The visitors get to sit not on the usual benches but on blocks of embellished stone slabs which were recovered from ruined sites.

Bamunipahar hills, sometimes called Ushapahar, display beautifully carved stone sculptures belonging to 11th and 12th century when kings from the Salashambha dynasty made their capital at Harupesvar, which historians locate at Tezpur. Pundits say that it was the largest temple complex in Assam. Another remarkable example of architectural excellence is located at Dah Parbatiya village close to Tezpur. The doorframe bears two beautiful figures identified as Ganga and Yamuna and representative of the Gupta period. <https://www.tribuneindia.com/2013/20130217/spectrum/main5.htm> 1.10.2020

<https://vedabase.io/en/library/sb/10/62/> 8<sup>th</sup> Sep 2020

**Bhaktivedanta Vedabase**

Library » *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāna)* » Canto 10: The Sumnum Bonum Chapter 62 –The Meeting of Usha and Aniruddha

## Endnotes

- 1 Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy, Rajput Painting P. 38
- 2 Text 10 & 11 - *Srimad Bhagavatam* Canto 10 Chapter 62 <https://vedabase.io/en/library/sb/10/62/> 8th Sep 2020

**Bani Thanni - The Illustrious *Sakhi* from Kishangarh**



***Bani Thanni***

Acc. No 63.814

Rajasthan School, Kishangarh style

18<sup>th</sup> century CE

Artist: Nihal Chand

As mentioned by Goswamy, it is through constant efforts of search, the researcher is able to lay his/her hands on proper sources in the form of art collections in Museums. In the context of search for the celebrated maids and they getting painted is again a rare phenomenon. But one such portrait emerged from the court of Kishangarh, which elevated Kishangarh School to the best genre of painting. It is all the more important because the artist is also denoted with the painting. This celebrated maid is none other than Bani Thanni, there are two portraits in the collections of National Museum and among them one is ranked as the master piece of Indian miniature paintings.

Sawant Singh composed a poem on her describing as Bihari Jas Chandrika:

*High arched twin-pencil eyebrows  
Hover on her brow like bees over a lily pond.  
Her dark tresses fall here and there  
Like a curling tendrils of a creeper.  
Bejeweled is her nose curved and sharp  
Like the thrusting saru (cypress plant).  
Her lips have formed a gracious bow  
parting into a queenly smile  
Lips red as poppy flowers glowing  
In the scorching sun.*

Sawant Singh composed devotional poetry on Krishna and Radha in Brajbhasha under the pen name Nagari Das. He is said to have been passionately in love with a young singer, who was accorded the title 'Bani Thanni', the bewitching lady of fashion, because of her unparalleled beauty and elegance. She was an attendant of Raj Singh's wife and a gifted poetess, singer and dancer. Bani Thanni was Sawant Singh's muse for the poetry he wrote, celebrating the love of Radha and Krishna. He writes about her in a poem Bihari Jas Chandrika, which became the basis for Nihal Chand's painting of Bani Thani, thus, representing a blending of poetry and painting. Troubled by fratricidal conflict,

Sawant Singh, eventually, abdicated the throne in 1757 and retired to Vrindavan along with Bani Thanni. The exaggerated facial type of Kishangarh, which becomes the distinctive and salient stylistic feature of the Kishangarh School, is believed to have been derived from the attractively sharp facial features of Bani Thani. Artist Nihal Chand is attributed with the credit of contriving this exquisite and characteristic Kishangarh physiognomy that is perceived in figures of Sawant Singh and Bani Thani is always represented as Krishna and Radha in brilliantly coloured, panoramic landscapes. Radha's face in Bani Thani as Radha is unique in her deeply curved eyes, exaggerated arch of the eyebrows, pointed nose, serpentine curl of hair spiralling down the cheek, thin lips and pronounced chin.<sup>1</sup>

During the second quarter of the 18th century, there developed the most charming school of Rajasthani painting in Kishangarh under the patronage of Raja Savant Singh (1748-1757 A.D.) who wrote devotional poetry in praise of Krishna, under the assumed name of Nagari Das. Unfortunately only a small number of Kishangarh miniatures are available. Most of them are believed to have been done by the master painter Nihal Chand who, in his works, has been able to create visual images of his master's lyrical compositions. The artist has executed types of human figures, delicately drawn, with slender bodies and up tilted eyes. One of the most stylised of all Rajasthani miniatures, Kishangarh paintings are distinguished by their exquisite sophistication and distinct facial type exemplified by arched eyebrows, lotus petal shaped eyes slightly tinged with pink, having drooping eyelids, a sharp slender nose and thin lips.

Indian painting as a subject has a great variety, large in number and fascinating stories to tell. Some are documented because they were generated in the royal courts under the patronage of aesthetic minded patrons as *rajyas*, *nawabs*, princes and princesses. 'Very few documents deal directly or at the length with Indian painting. From time to time one comes upon references to painting and painters – in stray colophons, in contemporary chronicles, occasionally in memoirs. Some works have survived in which one can see painters at work or come upon signatures, as well as attributions by scribes or librarians. But there are no exhaustive accounts. Art historians

have to mostly make their insights by having a broad cultural understanding of the period, but they are working with very little material'.<sup>2</sup>

As mentioned by Goswamy, it is through constant efforts of search, the researcher is able to lay his/her hands on proper sources in the form of art collections in Museums. In the context of search for the celebrated maids and they getting painted is again a rare phenomenon. But one such portrait emerged from the court of Kishangarh, which elevated Kishangarh school to the best genre of painting. It is all the more important because the artist is also denoted with the painting. This celebrated maid is none other than Bani Thanni, there are two portraits in the collections of National Museum and among them one is ranked as the master piece of Indian miniature paintings.

Karl Khandalwala, in his book *Paintings of Bygone Era*, makes a special reference to the Kishangarh school of paintings from Rajasthan and the portrait of the maid Bani Thanni. Early Kishangarh painting style was marked with the influence of Mughal style of Faruksiya period ascribed to 1713-1719. One of the acclaimed artists of Mughal atelier, Bhawanidas visited Kishangarh in 1715 and created works for Raja Raj Singh of Kishangarh and obviously the local artists worked under him. Among them was Nihal Chand, who became famous in association with the prince Sawant Singh son of Raja Raj Singh. Sawant Singh belonged to the cult of Vallabhacharya's *pushtimarg* acceptance of Krishna as Supreme. Sawant Singh's devotion towards Krishna motivated him to write poems in Hindi of exceptional lyrical quality, and he became a well-known poet by name Nagari Das. When Sawant Singh was still a prince he fell deeply in love with a young beautiful singer, *gayana* who was in service in his step-mother's house-hold. She was recognized as Bani Thanni – the bewitching lady of fashion.

The legendary romantic life of these two lovers infused new spirit like that of Baz Bahadur and Roopmati, in the Hindi literature and also a new style of painting portraying the themes of Radha and Krishna. In the painter Nihal Chand, Prince Sawant Singh identified a sensitive artist, who could translate the feelings of the prince into beautiful compositions of line and colour of high pictorial quality. Sawant Singh himself merged into Krishna and his beloved Bani Thanni merged into Radha. The romance of the two commenced in the year 1731 and from 1735 onwards, series of great masterpieces by Nihal Chand rendered and was remembered as a tradition for over a century and half and recorded as far back as 1898. The physical type of Radha was based by Nihal Chand on the features of Bani Thanni, in a highly stylized form, and the face of Sawant Singh also in a stylized manner, was translated into that of Krishna. The pictorial evidence supports, the elongated facial features, which became in the refined hands of Nihal Chand the model for the stylized Kishangarh Radha.<sup>3</sup> A beautiful miniature of the Kishangarh School, from the National Museum collection is illustrated here. It portrays a lovely pastoral scene of the return of Krishna with *gopas* and cows to Gokula in the evening. The painting is marked by delicate drawing, fine modeling of the human figures and cows and the broad vista of landscape showing a stream, rows of overlapping trees, and architecture. The artist has displayed a masterly skill in the grouping of many figures in the miniature. The painting has a golden inner border. It is ascribed to the middle of the 18th century and may be the work of Nihal Chand the famous artist of Kishangarh.<sup>4</sup>





***Bani Thanni***

Acc. No 63.812

Rajasthan School, Kishangarh style

18<sup>th</sup> century CE

Artist: Nihal Chand

This is the portrait of Bani Thanni. She is holding a lotus in one hand and on the other hand holding a cup. Delicately handled subject with fine jewellery and attire. Probably at the later date than the masterpiece portrait of Bani Thanni, and that is only the bust, where as this painting displays a full figure of the illustrious maid of the Royal Household of the mother of Sansar Singh. As she was known for the way she smartly dressed and presented herself with a special appearance, versatile in poetry, music and dance and was able to steal the heart of the prince Sansar Singh. Later she was treated as the model figure of Radha in Kishangarh paintings on the theme of Krishna and Radha.



***Prince Sawant Singh***

Acc. No 63.813

Rajasthan School, Kishangarh style

18<sup>th</sup> century CE

Artist: Nihal Chand

In the painter Nihal Chand, Prince Sawant Singh identified a sensitive artist, who could translate the feelings of the prince into beautiful compositions of line and colour of high pictorial quality. Sawant Singh himself merged into Krishna, painted by Nihal Chand. The face of Sawant Singh also in a stylized manner, was translated into that of Krishna. The pictorial evidence supports, the elongated features and also the facial features, became divine in the refined hands of Nihal Chand.<sup>5</sup>



### ***Krishna Offering Flowers to Radha***

Acc. No 63.1767

Rajasthan School, Kishangarh style

1750 CE

Size: 26.7 x 11.5 cm

Krishna offering flowers to Radha who is in the lake in an orange coloured boat with female attendants and musicians. Next to the boat, in the water Krishna is seated on a white and ochre horse, offering flowers to Radha.

This painting is distinct with the painting style of Nihal Chand, where he harmoniously brings the architectural and natural elements without disturbing the visual perspective. Kishangarh landscape is narrated in the idiom of colours and forms. Krishna and Radha are engaged in *leela* of sporting to the world of devotees. To offer Radha lotus flowers, he has paved his way riding on horse through the lake, while Radha is sailing in a long orange coloured boat, enjoying her ride with her *ashtasakhis*, the eight friends. Two singers are singing melodiously and all in the boat are enjoying the music, suddenly they see Radha bending out of the boat to receive flowers from Krishna. They have stretched their hands showing their concern towards their Radha. On the other side of the bank women have come out to experience the leela of Krishna. Thick foliage, light shade of water, attractive stature of the horse, lotus studded edge of the lake all make this painting a very special one.



***Krishna offering jasmine flowers to Radha***

Acc. No 63.813

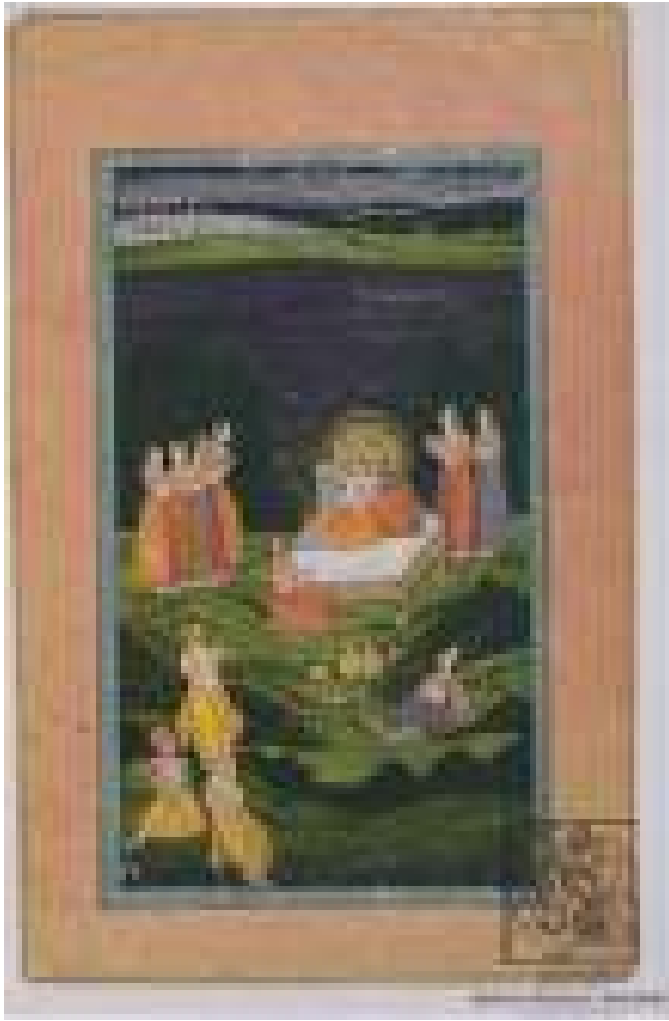
Rajasthan School, Kishangarh style

18<sup>th</sup> century CE

Size: 42 x 31 cm

On the terrace of a palace, which has been made by white marble, Krishna is with Radha engaged in a conversation. Krishna is offering flowers (jasmine) to Radha. Behind them a group of gopis are standing and looking at them. The palace is located on the bank of a lake, full with long boats and river side scene of a city painted skillfully. In the foreground, decorated utensils are placed and a white bed is made.

Radha and Krishna are engaging in the leela to entertain the devotees. Radha is accompanied by her *sakhi* Lalitha, to distinguish Radha from her, a halo is sported and so also Krishna dressed in white. The offering of jasmine flowers to Radha is happening in front of the *ashtasakhis*. All of them fondly watching and rejoicing to be part of the leela of Radha and Krishna.



### ***Tambula Seva***

Acc. No 63.813

Rajasthan School, Kishangarh style

18<sup>th</sup> century CE

Size: 43 x 33.5 cm

The scene is laid against green background, full of trees and vegetation. In the middle Radha and Krishna are seated on a high backed *chouki* studded with jewels against red brocade *masand*. They are seated facing each other and exchanging the betel leaves. This is one of the outstanding paintings probably by the artist Nihal Chand. The *tambula seva* leela is the subject of the painting. Green undulated landscape on the bank of the lake is the centre stage for Radha and Krishna to enjoy their time amidst their *sakhis* and *sakhas*. Krishna dressed in the attire of a stately prince and Radha in her royal attire sitting close to each other in a gesture of endearment offers betel leaf to the lips of his beloved. Subtle contours and colours are noteworthy while handling with the human figures or the natural elements. Here also the *ashtasakhis* of Radha are the involving themselves in the leela and enjoying the scene. The principal *sakhi* Lalita as mentioned in the poem of Sansar Singh is seated at the edge of the *chouki* and probably expressing her *bhaktibhav* by singing. Three *sakhas* of Krishna are in different modes also watching the scene at a distance.

The work of the school of Kishangarh, known from the later part of the seventeenth century, was remarkable for its elegance. It attained its peak in the paintings of Nihal Chand under the rule of Raja Sawant Singh, himself a painter and poet of deep religious inspiration. This inspiration pervades those of the paintings assigned to Nihal Chand that have Radha and Krishna for their subject. The enigmatic and iconic Radha and Krishna were the stylistic epitomes of Kishangarh paintings. Thus Bani Thanni became the archetype of feminine beauty in many paintings of the Kishangarh school. Whether it is the depiction of *kunj* or landscape or the figurative subjects Kishangarh artists reveled in the depiction of vistas in accentuated colours. In the hands of Kishangarh artists, Bani Thanni emerged as stylized Radha and was immortalised, to an extent she is regarded as Indian Monalisa. To portray this Radha with highly sophisticated features, several types of *leelas* of Krishna were visualized and conceived, which the delight of the followers of pushtimarg were.

### Endnotes

- 1 <https://ncert.nic.in/textbook/pdf/lefa102.pdf> ref:21.7.2021
- 2 B N Goswamy, *The Spirit of Indian Painting* 2014, Penguin Books India P 602
- 3 Karl Khandalwala, *Paintings of Bygone Era*, Vakil and Sons Bombay Page 15
- 4 <http://crtindia.gov.in/miniaturepainting.php>
- 5 Reference:Editors: Milo C Beach, Eberhard Fischer and B N Goswamy, *Masters of Indian Painting 1650-1900*, Artibus Asiae Publishers. Karl Khandalwala, *Paintings of Bygone Era*, Vakil and Sons Bombay

## Epilogue

Art is the mirror of culture. The stages of human development find the path of refinement through the emancipation of culture. This fine cultural expression through art created from time to time sustains human spirit in all the ages; past, present and future. Thus, Indian art, thought and literature have focused around the concept of unconscious to conscious through which the seeker aspires to attain bliss; in Indian understanding, it is *atmananda* – joy of the soul. From time to time, Indian philosophy has tried to link the abstract concepts such as space in terms of existence, time in terms of experiencing the bliss and thought in terms of consciousness. Out of such philosophical thought emerged the idea of creating the image proper, concentrating in it all the abstract properties. In this process, the formless, a unique concept has transformed itself into an embodiment of magnificent expression in the form of sculpture. In this way painting or *chitra* two dimensional and sculpture or *shilpa*, three dimensional art forms express the concrete form of divine beings, kings and sovereigns also queens and all kinds of retinues.

Art has its own language through which it communicates effectively. Human beings have an inherent quality to express in a creative way and also to appreciate beautiful things. In the literary expression like poem, drama or narration, the word is the verbal language. Proper usage of the words with their meanings and formation of sentences enhances the quality of literature. Similarly, it is with an art learnt through acquiring skill, technique and aesthetics. Theater is a kind of communication, which unfolds in a space on the stage. The main element of stage language is the spoken word. The spoken word is used in combination with acting, miming, costume, expression of feelings and emotions, lighting, position of the actors on stage and their gestures. Thus, the stage play is the effective means of artistic communication. In painting, colour is the essential language. The line, brush stroke, position of the image and handling of the space are all important in using the colour. In the same way, handling of the medium and modeling form the basic language for sculpture.

Treasure in the form of paintings and sculptures left to the art world by the kings, *navabs*, feudal princes are priceless inheritance that are acquired and preserved in collections. Perhaps, the acquisition represents insights from the remnants of the culture of the last four to five centuries are necessary for the growth of the generations to come. Because without acquiring the illumination sourced from these works of art the continuous consciousness and

cultural identity remain unchannelised. They represent essential values of humanness that drive to rediscover our heritage with awareness and higher perceptions. In this context, the pioneer work *Rajput Paintings* of Ananda Coomaraswamy can never be forgotten, as it laid the foundations for the studies on Indian painting from socio-cultural, artistic and aesthetic perspectives.

Since then generations of art historians expanded the horizon of Indian art through their vital insight and vitality and penetrating analysis within which built a holistic knowledge system. The lives of heroes and heroines echoed in the narrative contents of poetry, myth and legends, folk ballads, moralities and philosophies, are contextualized and created great works of art by gifted artists, who relied on their consciousness and soulful insights. The analysis conducted so far revealed that *alankara shastra* poetic and prose literature in Sanskrit and regional languages have given prime importance to the stories of hero, heroine and their *sakhis/sakhas*, *duta/dutikas* in the schema of creation. This study is conducted primarily to know about the lives and significance of *dutikas/sakhis*, portrayed in various themes, from mythological and historical. A number of *alankara* texts from *Natyashastra* to *Dutikarmaprakasha*, from 4<sup>th</sup> century to 16<sup>th</sup> century dedicate a chapter on *Nayaka-Nayika bedha* and continue with a subsidiary chapter on *sakhijan* or *dutikas*. It was Pandarika Vithala in *Dutikarmaprakasha* paid his attention to write an exclusive text, though small in size contains the description of 21 types of *Dutikas/Sakhis*.

Our epics and *puranas* are endowed with illustrious examples of *dutas*, *dutikas* and *sakhis*. Hanuman is the first *duta* to offer the *dutyaseva*. A bad example of a kind of *dhatri*, an elderly *dutika/sakhi* is the character of Manthara the *aptasakhi* and *dhatri*, a senior by age with her evil advice changed the course of early part of Ramayana. That shows about the influential role played by such *dhatri*s or *dayis*. There was also another kind of *dhatri*s, who left behind a legacy of soul touching stories. One among them is the sacrificing story of Panna *dasi* a Rajput maid who was taking care of the prince, when situation arose, replaced her son to prince and takes away the prince who will be the future ruler, but her son was killed by enemies and stands with great respect in the Rajasthani ballads as the embodiment of sacrifice.



***Dasharatha***

Acc. No 54.67.87

Rajasthan School, Mewar Style

1700 CE

Size: 17.5 x 24.5 cm



A series of paintings on all the *kaandas* of *Ramayana* are in the collection of National Museum. This painting has four sections, starting with the evil advice of Manthara, the *dutika/sakhi*, senior to the queen Kaikeyi, who followed her to Ayodhya after the marriage of

Kaikeyi with Dasharatha. The evil design of Manthara resulted in the death of Dasharatha, exile of Rama and Lakshmana with Seeta to Dandakaranya. The course of the story completely changed with this instance.

***The scene of Elopement***

Acc. No 55.58/28

Mughal School, Provincial Mughal Style

Late 18<sup>th</sup> century

Size: 41 x 28 cm



Portrayal of the scene of elopement is interesting, whether it is the elopement of Rukmini, with the help of her *sakhi* who was taken away by Krishna in *Mahabharatha* or a princess eloping with her lover in Mughal times, the artists done justice to the concept. The Mughal artist painted a remarkably beautiful portraiture of the event. It is the favourite theme of Nurpur artists from Kangra region. Here the princess has just crossed the roof and putting her feet on the elephant to fall into the arms of her lover. She is helped by her lover and her dhatri, the senior *sakhi* holding her behind with love, trust and care. Though the human world is in deep slumber, the Moon from the stellar world is watching the elopement of the princess.

Another illustrious *dutika/sakhi* from Mahabharata is Draupadi as Sairandhri, who was in the service of queen of Dhruvad during their 13<sup>th</sup> year of exile incognito. She is a striking example that how a *sakhi* in service of royal household was abused by Kichaka. Sairandhri becomes helpless, curses her own beauty and state of her affairs, she has to follow the order of the queen to serve the wine and liquor to her brother lustful Kichaka. This shows the marginalised status of a *sakhi*, at every step she would face such challenges, at times fall prey to circumstances and to combat violent situations also. Such instances in the past or present reflect the vulnerable situations the *sakhis*, maids or mediators placed in the disadvantageous position. Economic reasons or otherwise drive the women to get involved in such tasks. A series of Mahabharata paintings in the collection portray Draupadi in exile but none in Exile incognito – *virataparva*.



*Sairandhri on her way to meet Kichaka* (Wikimedia)

**Illustration from Mahabharata**

Acc. No 55.58/134

Rajasthan School, Mewar Style  
by Raja Ravi Varma

18<sup>th</sup> century

Size: 38.8 x 24 cm

Pandavas, Draupadi and Krishna are engaged in conversation and on the other side the royal scene, two princes are engaged in the dice game. Probably Krishna is bringing the flash back of their deeds, and reminding his *sakhi* Draupadi about the future course of action that she should intend to take and to lead.



Pastime activities of the royal household are portrayed in several ways, the *dutikas/sakhis* have major and distinct role in such events, sports, amorous pastime, celebrations, and outdoor activities to please the queens, princesses and members of royal household. Paintings displaying such activities are found in good numbers in the collections of National Museum. Some of the paintings here showcase the activities take place in the women quarters of royal household.



### ***Private Apartment***

Acc. No 51.69.5

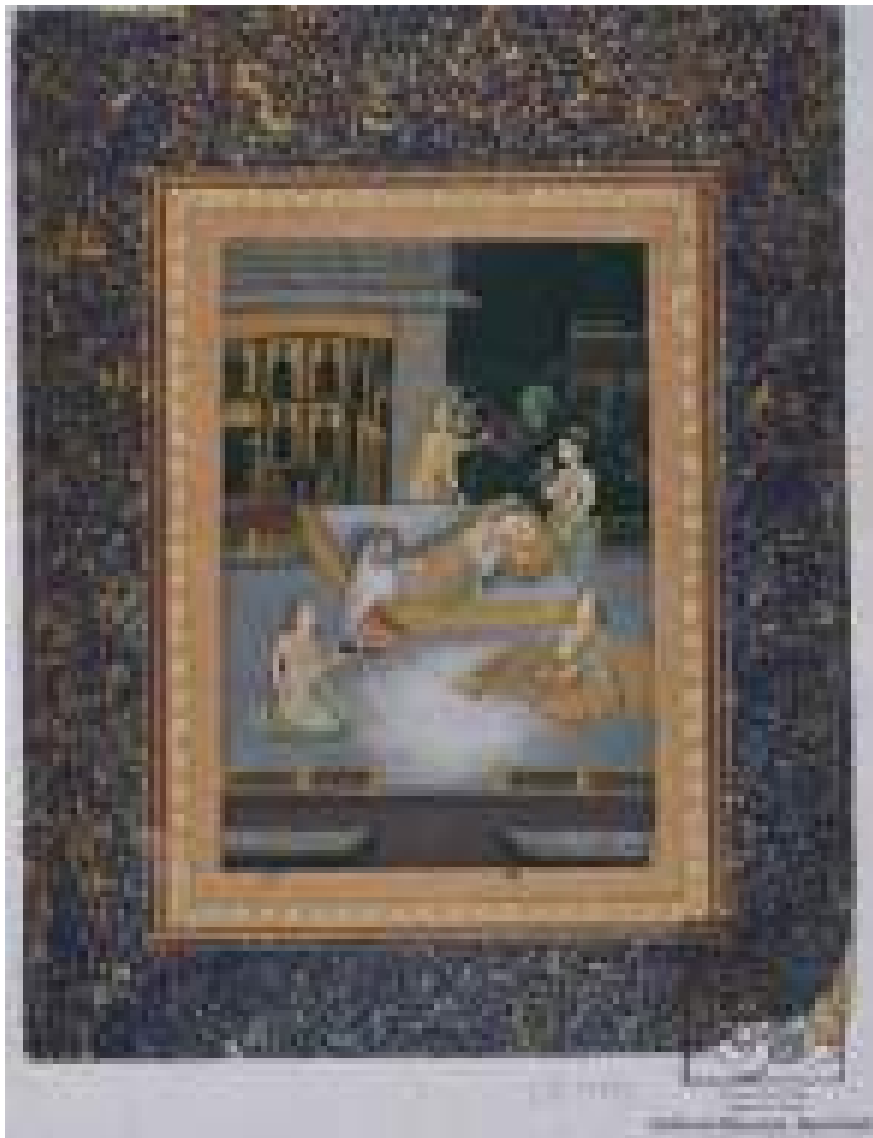
Mughal School, later period

Early 19<sup>th</sup> century

Size: 9.5 x 7.5 inches

This scene is laid in a private apartment in a palace. A semi nude lady is seated against a pillow on a *masnad*. She is flanked by her two *sakhis*. Probably, it is a massage session, where one of the *sakhis* is massaging the hands of the lady and getting her ready for the body massage, *sharira udvartana*, rubbing and cleansing the body with fragrant unguents; an item in daily regimen; kneading the body. This was one of the primary duties of the *sakhi*, notified in *Dutikarmaprakasha* as *sakhi*, *shilpini* or *napaki*, a manicurist. The *sakhi* according to Bhanudatta in text *Rasamanjari* is one who remaining

by the side of the heroine is a source of a solace to her and enjoys her confidence. The other *sakhi* is offering a hot drink, a stimulant prior to massage. The third *sakhi* is approaching them holding a fan with long handle, in one hand and she is holding a container filled with ingredients used in massage in her right hand, waiting for the instructions of the main *sakhi*. An oil container is lying close by, also the entire activity is happening in front of a beautiful structure and wide borders around is one of the typical features of Mughal Painting.



### ***Love sick Princess***

Acc. No 57.47/1

*Mughal School*, later period

Early 17<sup>th</sup> century

Size: 38.5 x 30.2 cm

Interior chamber of the palace of a princess, who is lying on the bed, her face turned pale and obvious that she is love stricken, showing no interest what is happening around her. The painting displays the interior arrangements, such as the beautiful façade made of Islamic arch designs and screens, flowery flooring in contrast to the plain grey flooring of the chamber of the princess symbolising melancholic moods. In her pining state she is consoled by her close companions, engaged in various tasks: among two standing *sakhis*, one is fanning holding a huge fan but looking at the door, in

expectation of the lover of the princess and the other one holding a fly-whisk and she too has fixed her gaze on the door. Without any expectation the princess has turned her back against the door. Another *aptasakhi* is trying to console and speak to her while rubbing her feet with a hot cloth. Two more *sakhis*, one must be reciting a story or an anecdote from the book, she is *kathini*, while the other is reclining on bolster and speaking with action the narratives describing the sharing between the princess and her lover, she is *vichitra vachana* type as specified in *Dutikarmaprakasha*. The lone pacifier is the lamp emerging from an oil container providing low light on the atmosphere and faces of all *sakhis* who are captivated with love, concern and anxiety and worried about their heroine who is suffering the state of *viraha*, love in separation. Blue and grey colour scheme including that of border created a special charm and ambience to the work of art.



***Lady with her attendant***

Acc. No 88.8

Pahari School, Kangra style

Mid 19<sup>th</sup> century

Size: 23 x 16 cm

A lady with her attendant, the *sakhi* is standing on terrace and conversing. Probably instructing her to go as her *dutika* and convey her messages to her *nayaka*. The architectural setting on the terrace indicates the royal style so also the costume and jewellery. Her gesture and facial expression is quite assertive, thick foliage beyond the terrace wall and swirling clouds add to the painting. Her *sakhi* is also dressed smartly, trying to clarify with the *nayika* and ascertaining the message to be conveyed. The painter enjoyed himself while creating the images of *nayika* and *sakhi* and one of the masterpieces of Kangra painting.



***Nayika attended by sakhis and attendants***

Acc. No 47.110.693

Rajasthan School

Mid 17<sup>th</sup> century

Size: 6.8 x 6.3 inches

A *nayika*, may be the queen, seated on canopied throne surrounded by the *sakhis* in the service of the royal household. On the foreground a number of finely designed cosmetic-jars and containers are placed signifying for a toilet session to be commenced. Two *sakhis* dressed elegantly presented themselves before the *nayika*: but the one holding the *sakhi* is senior, appears to be the member of royal household introduces the younger *sakhi* to the *nayika*. The new incumbent seems not yet come out from her *mugdha manobhava*, innocent hood, bent her head lowered her eyes before the queen. She is naturally beautiful, surpassing all *sakhis* in beauty and natural charm has presented her by stretching her hand coyly for all remarks of appreciation and sarcasms. The well dressed *nayika* is watching the new *sakhi* from all angles, whether she is suitable to join the service, as she has to be cautious of her beauty, which can be a threat against her own *nayika*, the hero. Behind the *nayika* her three *sakhis* in service are awestruck to see such a beautiful maiden, who is presenting herself to join as *sakhi* in the royal household.



***A Princess with her maids***

Acc. No 60.1726

School not specified

Period not specified

Size: 31.3 x 24.5 cm

A princess is sitting on a golden throne attended by five of her maids or *sakhis*. It looks like, they are enjoying a session they are trying to intoxicate themselves by serving wine. The central figure appears to relax her without much ornaments and veil to cover her torso and head, but her maids are all fully dressed, to distinct her from her maids the face of the princess framed in a halo. Behind her the *sakhi* is having lighter moment with another *sakhi* chiding her away. The main *sakhi* enquiring the princess with her over stretched hands, whether she would offer with wine, and waiting for an answer from the princess. In the foreground two *sakhis* are engaged in a comic situation, one is pouring the wine and the other is forcibly intoxicating a man who is lying on her lap. This is a sequence indicating the unsatisfied desire of a woman, whether a princess or her maid to overpower a man by various means that bring vicarious pleasure and enjoy them. Swirling and colourful clouds behind the pavilion reciprocate the mood on the terrace.



***A woman served wine by attendant***

Acc. No 47.110/584

Rajasthan School, Kotah style

Period not specified

Size: not indicated

Paintings from Kotah are marked with distinct style and themes. One such theme is a woman enjoying wine session in style. By her stature and surroundings looks like she belongs to a household of higher status. Her maid, the *sakhi* who is very close to the *nayika* and aware of all her weakness serving wine in a special wine glass, where as the lady holding a finely designed wine cup in her hand and looking at the second serve, probably the *sakhi* also must have given company to her *nayika*, taking few serves, both are in an intoxicating moods but enjoying together. Aquatic birds add to the amorous atmosphere.





***Ladies enjoying music and wine on terrace***

Acc. No 54.61.7

Rajasthan School, Mewar style

Early 18<sup>th</sup> century

Size: 11.8 x 7.6 inches

Rajasthan women, particularly from royal household enjoy outings during spring season, which is short and only pleasant season for outdoor activities in Rajasthan. Here in this Mewar painting, a princess lying on a carpet on a terrace garden under a canopy surrounded by maids and musicians. At distance the horizon is laid with heavy clouds, and four aquatic birds enjoy their swim. Thick foliage provide cool breeze, flower beds in foreground and a fountain in a way comforts the princess. All women, the close companions of princess are wearing long skirts with an embroidered front piece, transparent *jamias*, colourful *odhani*, suitable jewellery, and are in merry mood. Two of the *aptasakhis* of the princess are watching the intoxicated state of the princess, one is fanning her with concern and the other sitting on head side of the princess singing melodiously to lighten the moods. Three more *sakhis* standing at a distance closely observing the state of their *nayika*. On the foreground on either side two women are sharing their experiences intimately and enjoying the wine session. The Rajput women from Mewar enjoyed their lives among themselves whatever brings happiness to their heart and soul. They also knew when a situation arises to lay down their lives and enter the fire, the *jouhar* custom of entering the funeral fire after the death of their husbands. They were ever ready to take ultimate steps to safeguard their pride as Rajput women. The best example in this context is the Rani Padmani of Chittorgarh, entered the fire along with countless women to save from the atrocities in the hands of Alauddin Khilji.



***Princess with musical instruments***

Acc. No 60.361

Deccan School,

Early 18<sup>th</sup> century

Size: 29.4 x 25.5 inches

An elegantly dressed princess is seated under sun shade on a cushioned chair and holding a *sitar*, a stringed instrument. On her right a female *morchal* bearer is standing, while on the left three ladies are playing on musical instruments. The princess is a well trained musician that shows the way she is tuning the pegs of Sitar and the way she is holding the instrument with great confidence. Music session was one of the great pastimes of Deccan region, as most of the queens, kings, prince and princesses were themselves trained in vocal and instrumental music. They would choose their *sakhas* or *sakhis*, who were also musicians. This painting refers to the musical culture of Deccan and Ibrahim Adilshah was a great musician and favourite figure of Deccani artists.



### *Maid and Raja Madho Singh*

Acc. No 63.249

Rajasthan School, Bundi Style

1750 CE

Size: 26.5 x 20.2

It is a pastime of entertaining the lovers by the *sakhis*, are found in many instances. Because of the inscription on the reverse, it is certainly belongs to Raja Madho Singh, is he from Malwa, not sure and this painting is not contemporaneous to Raja Madho Sing, the prominent ruler of Amber, brother of Raja Mansingh during the time of Akbar. But the subject is interestingly portrayed, a woman seated in the centre

of the quadrangle against the window of Raja Madho Singh's chamber. The smart *sakhi* observing the presence of *nayaka* at the window brings a mirror to show the *nayika*, who was getting ready to take bath, she has partly disrobed herself, water filled pitchers are in place. The reflection of *nayaka* in the mirror made her feel shy, but the *sakhi* had adjusted the mirror in such a way, the *nayaka* also can see the reflection of his beloved. *Sakhi* is elegantly dressed with colourful *lehanga* and black *odhani*. Artistic ambience created by the artist in the form of entrance door, beautiful green trees, flowers beyond the wall, colourful flooring and thick blue sky and the orange colour window curtain against white architecture all make this portraiture as one of the masterpieces of Bundi style of painting.



***Lady smoking a hukka***

Acc. No 47.110.484

Pahari School, Kullu style

Early 18<sup>th</sup> century

Size: 7.2 x 5.1 inches

One of the great pastimes among women of late medieval and colonial India is smoking a *hukka*. It appears there was no strong objection or smoking by women was considered as taboo in those societies as of today. The hill states due to the climatic conditions, and having more leisure time, it became a kind of engagement among the aristocrat and feudal household. To arrange *hukka* and the ambience for *nayika* to enjoy was the job of her maid, who can be her *sakhi*, companion or just a servant. This Pahari painting illustrates *hukka* smoking by a lady of higher status, holding the pipe in one hand and on the other a flower, she is gazing at a distance, traversing by the side of a lake. A *sakhi* holds the heavy *hukka* base and walks behind the *nayika*. She is modest, wearing a long green gown and bright ornaments, probably they are conversing or singing to pass time and cover the distance. Three aquatic birds are perching at distance and giving company to these two beautiful damsels.



***Lady seated on a chair***

Acc. No M 81. 226

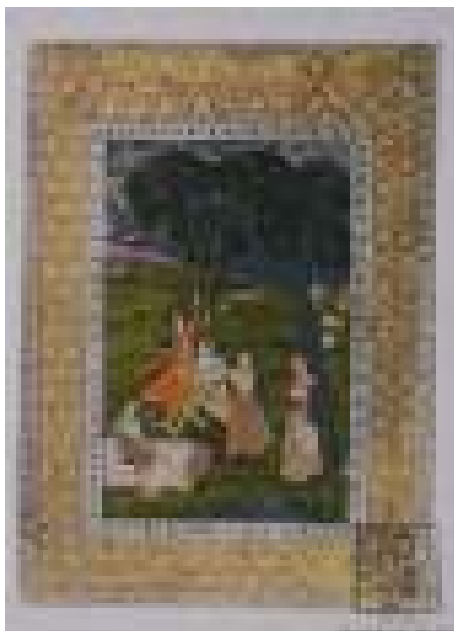
South India

Early 19<sup>th</sup> century

Size: 24.3 x 20.7 cm

A lady seated on a chair, wearing heavy ornaments including a heavy anklet smoking *hukka*, appears from family of high status and looking at the maid with her wide eyes. The maid also looking straight at her mistress, holding the *hukka* base which is heavy and bulky. Unlike the above Kullu painting, the maid here coming from meager background is in the attitude of servitude and work in compulsion.

### Pastime activities on Outdoor



***A nayika enjoying the swing***

Acc. No 47.110.801

Rajasthan School, Rajasthani Style

17<sup>th</sup> century

Size: select

All these paintings showcase the outdoor activities of the royal ladies along with their *sakhis*. The months of *chaitra vaishakha* and *savan* are known for swing festival. These months are favourable for conducting outdoor games such as playing on swing and hide and seek. In all these three paintings, the swing is suspended from a strong tree branch. In the first picture it is a sketch incomplete but exhibits a fine workmanship. Here the *nayika* is standing on the swing and swinging herself with high speed. Her two *sakhis* are shouting with concern to go slow and another *sakhi* near the tree is wondering the way things are happening. A peacock sitting alert on the tree is joining the *sakhis* to caution the *nayika*.

***Ladies on swing***

Acc. No 47.110.483

Rajasthan School, Jodhpur Style

Early 19<sup>th</sup> century

Size: 33.5 x 25 cm

In the Jodhpur painting, the scene is laid on an open ground with the swing tied to a large fruit borne mango tree, where number of peacocks and other birds are enjoying with the mango fruit. Five ladies, and one of them a *nayika*, probably on the swing swinging in high speed, artist successful in showing the velocity of wind by showing the clothes flying. One *sakhi* on ground is helping the two women on the swing. One is sitting tired after playing, the other to escape from hurrying moved to the corner and holding the tree. Artist has displayed his high decorative ability in treating the tree, swirling clouds and the ground.

***Ladies on swing***

Acc. No 58.20/32

Deccan School

Late 18<sup>th</sup> century

Size: 35.5 x 25.5 cm

One of the masterpieces from Deccan is this swing game played by the royal ladies in the company of their *sakhis*. Here also the swing is hung from a robust mango tree. Two women: one seated and the other standing is being moved on swing by a *sakhi*. On the right, a lady is embracing the heavy trunk of the tree while the other seated on the ground holding her reeling head, probably she is tired of playing on swing. Another well dressed woman, may be a senior queen is seated on a white carpet and enjoying the outdoor beauty and a pond nearby. Grassland with undulating landscape grazing cattle, wild colourful sky all makes this a special work of high quality.

***Ladies playing***

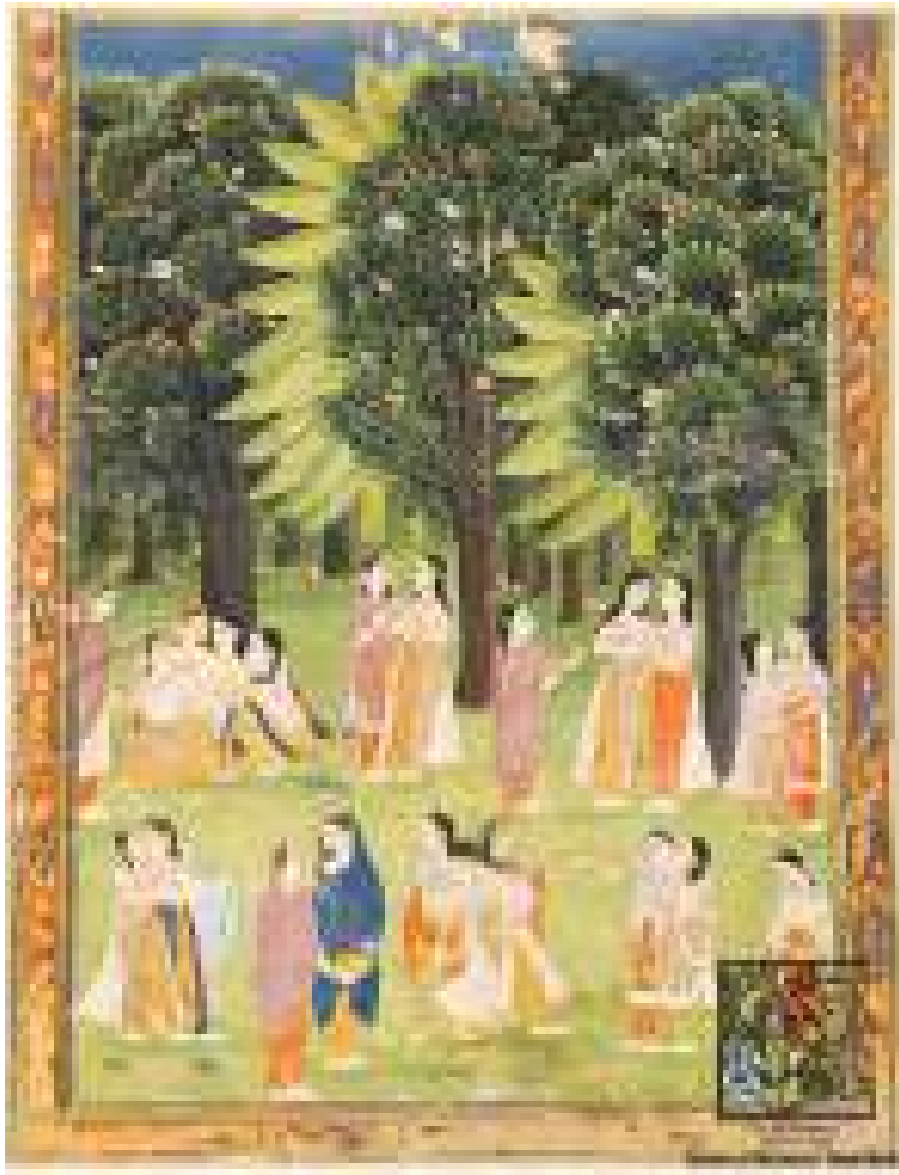
Acc. No 85.331

Rajasthan School

18<sup>th</sup> century

Size: 17.5 x 27 cm

All women, eight in number are playing hide and seek. In the centre one woman is seated and one of her mate closing her eyes, while the princes standing erect giving her directions. All *sakhis* are trying to figure out the place where they can hide. The play is taking place on the bank of a river, thick green trees lined the other edge of the space, skillfully treated leaves and flowers with the curling clouds lend a special charm to this painting. Krishna also played hide and seek with Radha and her *ashtasakhis*, eight *sakhis* in a Bihari Sat Sai painting from Mewar.



***Ladies enjoying the carousing***

Acc. No 60.644

Deccan School

18<sup>th</sup> century

Size: 27.3 x 20.3 cm

A scene set in a beautiful garden shows women are enjoying totally their freedom in these outdoor pastime activities. Some of them are the ladies of higher rank whereas about six to seven of them are the maids serving these ladies at the same time talking to each other about the behaviour of women drinking and hobnobbing with each other. Some are in the state of high intoxication,

but the *sakhis* are helping them, a group of women seated are also in the same state. In the background a range of trees painted beautifully with shades of green colour and perching birds on the trees added attraction in this painting. The entire painting seems to be dominated by the pale green colour background against which around 20 women in colourful garments stand out strikingly. The thick and strong stemmed trees with blooms figure prominently in this painting. The artist of this remarkable painting shows his mastery over technique and inspired understanding of the subject, the women in various moods and their involuntary states, the *vyabhichari bahvas*. Women of historical times enjoyed their lives.



Art collection is the life and soul of a museum. Dynamics of museum is built on the web of relationships, through its collection: writings on collection, display of the collection which connect the people of all genres, thematic exhibitions on the collection contextualize the significance of particular category of collection, museum-audience interactions enrich the value of collection, and development of library and archives encourage the writings on the collection. Through all such enterprising vocation, and continuous process, museum identifies its role to collect, preserve and educates the society. Writing on a thematic collection of a museum is like mapping a cultural repertoire of a period to which the collection belongs, to connect them with the socio-cultural milieu of the contemporary society.

From an art historian's perspective, working on the museum collection is the technical and aesthetic evocation, backed with cognitive, conative, objective and introspective process, involved with the networking between the art works and cryptic writing. Working on the collection of Victoria and Albert Museum London on the theme of 'Colonial Influences on South Indian Paintings', (As the first scholar to receive UK visiting Nehru Fellowship at Victoria and Albert Museum London in 1992) had set a paradigm on sourcing and containing the collection with implicit meaning from cultural understanding and prerogative.

The present project on 'Imagery of Female Messengers *Dutikas/Sakhis* in Indian Art Thought and Literature' pertaining to the art collection of National Museum, opened up an incredible treasure imbued with meaning and rich content. Academic inquiry towards the concept of Female Messengers and the relevance of their presence in the themes, paintings and sculpture across those notional boundaries defend the cultural values of the times when these art works were created. Connoisseurs and patrons, poets, artists and artwork all were inseparable entities of a conceptual framework. Creative genesis in the form of textual contents as in the case of *Dutikarmaparakasha* by Pandarika Vitthala, creative poetic content as in the case of *Abhijnana Shakuntalam* by Kalidasa and *Gita Govinda* by Jayadeva, aesthetic content as in Bhanudatta's *Rasamanjari* and Keshavadasa's *Rasikapriya*, musical content as in *Ragamala* texts, myths and legends as of Bani Thanni, Bihari Sat Sai and Usha-Aniruddha *Parinaya* from *Srimad Bhagavata* are the cultural sources for the artists to create their works on the basis of intrinsic, sustainable cultural process. Artists of all Indian miniature schools and sub-schools have immortalised the literary content and their creators through their unparalleled art works. At the same time selected works for this research showcase the significance of Female Messengers obtaining the centrality of experience and construct that fulfilled the Mission of this Research Project.

SHUBHAMASTU

## Appendix

दूतीकर्मप्रकाशः ।

२५

पण्डरीविहलाख्यकविविरचितो  
दूतीकर्मप्रकाशः ।

गणेशं भारतीं नत्वा रसिकानन्दवृद्धये ।

पण्डरीविहलाख्येन दूतीकर्म प्रकाश्यते ॥

दूती पारंगमा दौत्यव्यापारे संनिवेदनम् ।

विरहस्य च तस्यास्तु कर्म संघटनादिकम् ॥ १ ॥

सखी विप्रश्रिका चेटी स्वयंदूती च शिल्पिनी ।

विचित्रवचना गानवती धात्री कुमारिका ॥ २ ॥

प्रासङ्गिनी मालिनी च स्वलिता प्रतिवेशिनी ।

परचित्तविशेषज्ञा चेष्टासंकेतकोविदा ॥ ३ ॥

रजकी सौचिकी वेषधारिणी मणिहारिणी ।

कथिनी नापिकी चेति सैकविंशतिधा मता ॥ ४ ॥

एताः साधारणा दूत्यो नायिकास्वखिलास्वपि ।

तच्चरित्रमिति ज्ञातुं ब्रह्मणापि न शक्यते ॥ ५ ॥

तथापि लौकिकश्रेष्ठरसिकानन्दकारणम् ।

दूतीकर्मकदेशेन लक्ष्मोदाहरणं ब्रुवे ॥ ६ ॥

सखी विश्वासविश्रामकारिणी पार्श्वचारिणी ।

मण्डनोपालम्भशिक्षापरिहासादिका यथा ॥ १ ॥

चक्रे चन्द्रमुखी प्रदीपकलिका धात्री धरामण्डले(?)

तस्या दैववशाद्दशापि चरमा प्रायः समुन्मीलति ।

तद्भ्रूमः शिरसा न तेन सहसा श्रीकृष्ण निक्षिप्यतां

स्नेहस्तत्र यथा तथा न भवति त्रैलोक्यमन्धं तमः ॥

(इति सखी ।)

ज्योतिःसामुद्रिकाभिज्ञा मालिनी चेति भाषिणी ।

तव योग्योऽपरः कामो भवेद्विप्रश्रिका यथा ॥ २ ॥

१. अयं हि कविवरः कदा कं धरामण्डलं मण्डन्याचकारेति न निश्चीयते.

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काव्यमाला ।

निर्माय स्वयमेव विस्मितमनाः सौन्दर्यसारंणं यं  
 स्वव्यापारपरिश्रमस्य कलशं वेधाः समारोपयन् ।  
 कंदर्पं पुरुषाः स्त्रियोऽपि दधते दृष्टे च यस्मिन्सति  
 द्रष्टव्यावधिरूपमाभुहि मतिं स्वस्त्यस्तु ते संततम् ॥

(इति विप्रन्निका ।)

संधानमधुरा चेटी स्वरतो गुप्तचारिणी ।  
 छादयन्ती भोगचिह्नं तत्कार्यवचनैर्यथा ॥ ३ ॥  
 नीरङ्गाधरता कथं तव वचः संजल्पतस्तत्पुरा  
 किं अष्टालकपत्रकं तव पतेर्मानप्रणामान्मुहुः ।  
 दीर्घोच्छ्वासतरः कथं द्रुततरादाधावतस्तेऽन्तिकं  
 युक्तं चेति किमत्र तस्य वसनं विश्वासहेतोस्तव ॥

(इति चेटी ।)

श्रावादिशकलक्षेपाद्बचनच्छलभेदतः ।  
 सूचयन्ती स्वयंदूती तत्कार्यवचनैर्यथा ॥ ४ ॥  
 मध्याह्नेऽथ घने निदाघसमये तापो घनो वर्तते  
 कुञ्जे शीतवटे सुशीतलतटे भो पान्थ विश्रामय ।  
 एकाकी च भवाननं च तरुणी शून्या प्रपा विद्यते  
 लज्जा मे गदितुं त्वमेव चतुरो जानासि कालोचितम् ॥

(इति स्वयंदूती ।)

तच्चद्रूपगतं भावं पटे रूपं प्रदर्श्य च ।  
 विजानत्युभयोः प्रीतिं चतुरा शिल्पिनी यथा ॥ ५ ॥  
 सा त्वं मन्मथमञ्जीरी स च युवा भुङ्गस्तवैवोचितः  
 श्लघ्यं तद्भवतोः किमन्यदपरं किं त्वेतदाशासहे ।  
 भाग्यौगोम्यसमागमेन युवयोर्मानुष्यमाणिक्ययोः  
 श्रेयानस्तु विधेर्विचित्ररचनासंकल्पशिल्पश्रमः ॥

(इति शिल्पिनी ।)

सामभेदतिरस्कारश्लेषान्योक्तिभयादिभिः ।  
 चतुरोपायसंपन्ना विचित्रवचना यथा ॥ ६ ॥

## दूतीकर्मप्रकाशः ।

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गङ्गाशेषमधुव्रताब्जधनुषां पङ्केरुहस्य श्रियं  
 वेणीपोतककीरकोकिलकपोताधीशकोकार्जितम् ।  
 हत्वा काञ्चनमेरुसिंहकरिणां लक्ष्मीं तथा तस्करि  
 त्वं गच्छ प्रभुकृष्णदेवनिकरं संयान्ति यावन्न ते ॥

(इति विचित्रवचना ।)

मानविद्याच्छलेनेति गायन्ती तद्गुणश्रियम् ।  
 तुलितौ विधिना साम्यं युवां गानवती यथा ॥ ७ ॥  
 संसाराम्बुनिधौ तदेतदजनि स्त्रीपुंसरत्नद्वयं  
 नारीणां भवती नृणां पुनरसौ सौभाग्यसीमा हरिः ।  
 सा त्वं तस्य कुरङ्गशावनयने योग्यासि लक्ष्मीपते-  
 रेतचे कथितं किमन्यदधुना यास्याम्यहं श्वस्तने ॥

(इति गानवती ।)

धनाभिलाषिणी मिथ्या पुत्रीति च्छलभाषिणी ।  
 गुप्तशिक्षी विशेषज्ञा धात्री धूर्ताधिका यथा ॥ ८ ॥  
 पुत्रि त्वत्पतिरथ चत्वरतटे दृष्टो मया कूर्चवा-  
 न्संतालाङ्गपलाण्डुपङ्कजकरः प्रायः पयोष्णीपशुः ।  
 त्वं सौन्दर्यतरङ्गिणी च युवयोर्योगावयोगो वरं  
 कामोऽन्योऽस्ति समर्पयामि सुभगे तस्मै चल त्वामहम् ॥

(इति धात्री ।)

कुमारी शुकवच्छिक्षावाक्यमन्योन्यसूचिका ।  
 क्रीडापुत्तलिका लोभाद्राक्षेक्षुफलतो यथा ॥ ९ ॥  
 दत्तेयं कमनीयपुत्तलितरा येन त्वया पश्य मे  
 रे रे सुन्दरि सोऽपि तिष्ठति बहिस्त्वत्सौख्यमापृच्छति ।  
 त्वं द्राक्षास्तबकं गृहाण सुमुखि त्वित्युत्तरं दीयतां  
 मद्देहाङ्गणपृष्ठकण्टकितरोर्मूलेऽतिकष्टं निशि ॥

(इति कुमारिका ।)

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काव्यमाला ।

प्रसङ्गाद्येन केनापि पत्नी वचनचातुरी ।  
प्रेक्षता सा तदा प्रोक्ता तज्ज्ञैः प्रासङ्गिनी यथा ॥ १० ॥

भो वृद्ध क्व च गच्छसि प्रभुवर श्रीगोकुले नूतने  
तत्र त्वं मम पत्रिका प्रियतरं संदेशमाश्रावय ।  
यस्याः पङ्कजकुञ्जलस्तनयुगं चन्द्राननं सस्मितं  
नेत्रापाङ्गवहिर्गतश्रुतितटं द्वारे कदम्बद्रुमः ॥

(इति प्रासङ्गिनी ।)

पुष्पशिल्पातिचातुर्यराजमालाधिपस्तव ।  
कण्ठयोग्य इति श्लेषं गदन्ती मालिनी यथा ॥ ११ ॥

कण्ठालम्बितचम्पको वकुलवद्यूथीभुजः पृष्ठभा-  
ग्भङ्गीपाण्डरबन्धकुन्दरचनावर्णस्नानामाङ्किता ।  
सेवन्ती कजपारिजातकगुलालोरस्थलामण्डितः  
सोऽयं पुष्पसुशिल्पकश्च किमये ज्ञातस्त्वया बल्लभः ॥

(इति मालिनी ।)

अष्टसंधानिका पश्चादुपालम्भनतत्परा ।  
अथवा स्थीयते तूर्ण्यी सा दूती स्वलिता यथा ॥ १२ ॥

हे मुग्धे प्रिय मा ब्रज, त्यज रूपं, वर्षानिशा वर्तते,  
हा कष्टं कलकण्ठचातकगणा गर्जन्ति रोलम्बकाः ।  
तत्काले स्वयमागतः प्रियतमो द्वारान्तरात्तद्गृहं  
सा दूती स्वलिता तदोपसि महोपालम्भमालम्भते ॥

(इति स्वलिता ।)

यदा कदा समायाता सूचयन्ती मुहुर्मुहुः ।  
स्वगृहे गुप्तसंकेतं प्रतिवेशिनिका यथा ॥ १३ ॥

रे रे काञ्चनकञ्जकुञ्जलकुचे फुल्लारविन्दानने  
रक्ताम्भोजदलाभपाणिचरणे नीलोत्पलालोचने ।

दूतीकर्मप्रकाशः ।

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नो जानासि तवाङ्गसङ्गिचरितं ज्ञातुं यदिच्छास्ति चे-  
त्सायं क्लेशमुपाय्य भर्तृसदनादागच्छ होऽस्मद्ब्रह्म ॥

(इति प्रतिवेशिनी ।)

तत्तद्वदनचातुर्यभावं दर्शनमात्रतः ।

जानाति परचित्तस्य विशेषज्ञा तदा यथा ॥ १४ ॥

नाथेनाधरखण्डनं निशि कृतं ज्ञातुं न शक्ता मुदा

प्रातर्यातृषु मध्यगातिचतुरा भिक्षोः शिशोर्भावनम् ।

ज्ञात्वा सान्तग्लज्जितातिसहसा गच्छेति मुक्ताकणां-

स्तस्मै चार्पति कण्ठलग्नसगुणान्सा ते कथं यास्यति ॥

(इति परचित्तविशेषज्ञा ।)

फलपुष्पादिसंकेतं कथंचिदपि यत्कृतम् ।

तजानाति च या चेष्टासंकेतकोविदा यथा ॥ १५ ॥

कर्पूरं सितपर्णचूर्णसहितं सुभेतपूगीफलं

क्षिप्त्वा कञ्जकरण्डके स्मितहरिर्दूतीकरे न्यस्तवान् ।

सा लक्ष्मीं समुपेक्ष्य सस्मितमुखी तस्याः पुरं स्थापय-

न्पद्मान्तःस्मितपूर्वकं मृगमदं दत्त्वा पुनः प्रेषिता ॥

(इति चेष्टासंकेतकोविदा ।)

वदन्ती मधुरं मन्दं वसनादानदानतः ।

नृरत्नमद्य दृष्टं मे त्वद्योग्यो रजकी यथा ॥ १६ ॥

रे रे रे रजकि त्वयाद्य वसनं धौतं न किञ्चित्कथं

सत्यं स्वामिनि कारणं शृणु तथा वक्तुं न शक्तास्म्यहम् ।

यं दृष्ट्वा प्रमदा भवन्ति विमदाः सोऽस्मिन्पुरे वर्तते

त्वद्योग्यः कियती त्वहं युवतयः सर्वाश्च तन्मोदिताः ॥

(इति रजकी ।)

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.....सौचिकी यथा ॥ १७ ॥

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काव्यमाला ।

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(इति सौचिकी ।)

अन्योक्तिकैतवं वाक्यं संकेतमुभयोर्मुहुः ।  
 जल्पन्ती बहुवेषज्ञा वेषधारिणिका यथा ॥ १८ ॥

वेषः कस्य धृतस्त्वयाद्य सुभगे जन्मान्तरं त्वत्पते-  
 स्त्वं जानासि कथं पुरातनगतिं जातिसरत्वं मम ।  
 कुत्रास्ते स वद प्रयोगचतुरे त्वद्द्वारदेशेऽस्त्यसौ  
 न ज्ञातः सहसा त्वयेति वचनादश्रुणि सा मुञ्चति ॥

(इति वेषधारिणी ।)

सुकाचवलयान्कारी करमूले प्रयोजिका ।  
 तदा वदत्यन्यगुणं मणिहारिणिका यथा ॥ १९ ॥

एकस्मिन्नगरे वरो नरपतिः कामः कलाकालवि-  
 न्तारी तस्य कुरूपिणी विधिवशाद्गमा त्वरन्मूर्धनि ।  
 त्वं सौन्दर्यरतिः कदा च युवयोर्योगोऽस्ति चेत्संमतं  
 धात्रा किं न पुरा स्मृतं सखि वद प्रायः पुराणो विधिः ॥

(इति मणिहारिणी ।)

तत्तद्गुणकथावाक्यभेदस्यान्योन्यसूचनात् ।  
 उभयोः कथयन्तीति छद्मना कथिनी यथा ॥ २० ॥

त्वं काहं कथिकासि मद्गतकथां जानासि जानामि ते  
 पूर्वं दुर्मदनामकः पतिरभूत्तस्याङ्गना दुर्मतिः ।  
 स्वेच्छाक्रीडनतत्परौ विधिवशान्नाशं गतौ तत्पुन-  
 र्जातौ संप्रति दुर्मदेन च बहिस्त्वं सख्यते दुर्मतिः ॥

(इति कथिनी ।)

दूतीकर्मप्रकाशः ।

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नखोच्चारणतो लाक्षारङ्गतः पादरञ्जने ।

नापिकी तत्कथां श्रुत्वा जल्पत्यन्यकथां यथा ॥ २१ ॥

भो भोः पद्मिनि तेऽथ वक्रकमलं म्लानं कथं वर्तते

दुःखं ते कथयामि किं मम सदा रात्रिचरो वल्लभः ।

हा हात्रास्ति सुबालभास्करसमस्त्वत्प्रेमयोग्यो वरो

यं दृष्ट्वा तव सुप्रसन्नवदनं तत्कालमाफुल्लति ॥

(इति नापिकी ।)

नरपतिचुरहानः फारुकीतीजसूनुः

कविमतिनलिनीनां भासते बालभानुः ।

कविवर कुरु दूतीकर्मवर्मप्रकाशं

त्विति गदति कृतं तत्पण्डरीविह्वलेन ॥

नायकानां सहायोऽत्र चतुर्धापि प्रसङ्गतः !

पीठमर्दो विटश्वेटविदूषकाविति क्रमात् ॥ १ ॥

त एव नर्मसचिवा दूतकर्मविचक्षणाः ।

किं त्वन्तरपटाद्वाह्ये न प्रत्यक्षेऽपि बोधकाः ॥ २ ॥

देशकालकलाभाषा माधुर्यं च विदग्धता ।

श्रोत्साहने कुशलता यथोक्तकथनं तथा ।

निगूढमन्त्रतेत्याद्याः सहायानां गुणा मताः ॥ ३ ॥

पीठमर्दो महाविद्वान्कुपितस्त्रीप्रसादकृत् ।

कोऽयं कोपविधिः प्रयच्छ करुणागर्भं वचो जायतां

पीयूषद्रवदीर्घिकापरिमलैरामोदिनी मेदिनी ।

आस्तां वा स्पृहयालुलोचनमिदं व्यावर्तयन्ती मुहु-

र्यस्यै कुप्यसि तस्य सुन्दरि तपोवृन्दाय वन्दामहे ॥

(इति पीठमर्दः ।)



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काव्यमाला ।

कामतन्नकलावेदी भवेद्विटवरो यथा ॥ ४ ॥

आयातः कुमुदेश्वरो विजयते सर्वेश्वरो मारुतो  
 भृङ्गः स्फूर्जति भैरवो न निकटं प्राणेश्वरो मुञ्चति ।  
 एते सिद्धरसाः प्रसूनविशिखो वैद्योऽनवद्योत्सवो  
 मानव्याधिरसौ कृशोदरि कथं त्वचेतसि स्थास्यति ॥

(इति विटः ।)

संधानप्रचुरश्चेटः कलहंसादिको यथा ।

सा चन्द्रसुन्दरमुखी स च नन्दसूनु-  
 देवान्निकुञ्जमवनं समुपाजगाम ।  
 अत्रान्तरे सहचरस्तरुणौ कठोरे  
 गनीयपानकपटेन सरः प्रतस्थे ॥

(इति चेटः ।)

विदूषको हास्यकारी विकृताङ्गादिभिर्गथा ॥ ५ ॥

आनीय नीरजमुखीं शयनोपकण्ठ-  
 मुत्कण्ठतोऽस्मि कुचकञ्चुकिमोचनाय ।  
 अत्रान्तरे मुहुरकारि विदूषकेण  
 प्रातस्तनस्तरुणकुक्कुटकण्ठनादः ॥

(इति विदूषकः ।)

कचचिबुककुचाग्रे पाणिषु व्यापृतेषु  
 प्रथमजलधिपुत्रीसंगमेऽनङ्गभूमौ ।  
 प्रथितनिबिडनीविग्रन्थिनिर्मुक्तिहेतो-  
 श्वतुरतरविलासः शार्ङ्गिणो वः पुनातु ॥

इति श्रीकार्णाटकजातीयदूतीकर्मप्रकाशः ।

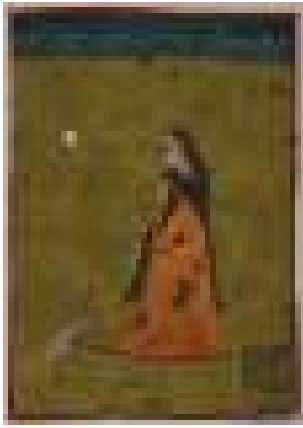


## Catalogue on Art Collection





Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
1.		<p><b><i>Scene of the terrace of the palace</i></b>                      Acce. No 47.110.736                      Rajasthan School 17<sup>th</sup> century                      Size: 10 x 7 inches</p>
2.		<p><b><i>Lady with Maids, Sakhis</i></b>                      Acc No 59.284.4                      Rajasthani, Mewar style                      18<sup>th</sup> century                      28 x 17.8 cm</p>
3.		<p><b><i>Elopement of Rukmini</i></b>                      Acc no 85.184                      Malwa, Central Indian style                      17<sup>th</sup> century                      Size: 17 x 20.5 cm</p>

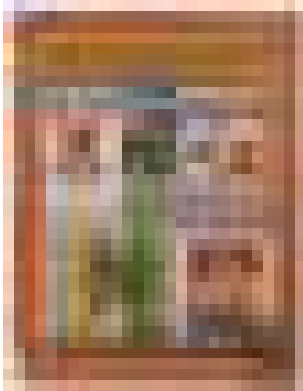


Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
4.		<p><b><i>Friends persuading hesitant Radha to enter the bower of love where Krishna awaits her</i></b>            Acc No 51.207/10            Pahari Style, Basohli School            Dated 1730 CE            Size: 19 x 28 cm            Inscription on reverse</p>
5.		<p><b>Radha sending Message to Krishna</b>            Acc. No: 51.64.46            Rajasthan Schools            Early 18<sup>th</sup> century            Size: 10.1 x 15.2 inches</p>
6.		<p><b>Krishna is standing in the balcony</b>            Acc. No: 51.64.46            Rajasthan Schools            1800 CE            Size: 26.6 x 14.7 inches</p>
7.		<p><b>Radha, Krishna and Messenger</b>            Acc. No: 51.64.14            Rajasthan Schools            1800 CE            Size: 26.6 x 14.7 inches</p>

Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
8.		<p><b>Radha sends message to Krishna</b>            Acc. No: 51.64.13            Rajasthan Schools            1800 CE            Size: 26.6 x 14.7 inches</p>
9.		<p><b>Krishna seated in a grove</b>            Acc. No: 51.64.46            Rajasthan Schools            1800 CE            Size: 26.6 x 14.7 inches</p>
10.		<p><b>Krishna sends a letter to Radha</b>            Acc. No: 51.64.46            Rajasthan Schools            Early 18<sup>th</sup> century            Size: 10. x 15 inches</p>
11.		<p><b><i>A Folio of Gitagovinda</i></b>            Acc No 83.454            Rajashtan            18<sup>th</sup> century CE            Size: 25 x 43 cm</p>


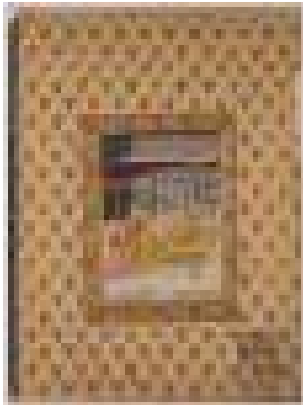


Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
12.		<p><b><i>A Princess seated on a Terrace</i></b>            Acc No 61.1023            Provincial Mughal style            1750 CE Inscription on Reverse            Size: 38.2 x 28.3 cm</p>
13.		<p><b><i>Chand Biwi on a Galloping Horse</i></b>            Acc No 59.94.25            Deccani Style Ahmednagar            18<sup>th</sup> century CE, Inscription on Reverse            Size: 24.9 x 18.2 cm</p>
14.		<p><b><i>A Lady Looking in Mirror</i></b>            Acc No 75.1772            Pahari Style, Nurpur School            Late 18<sup>th</sup> century CE            Size: 19.8 x 16 cm</p>
15.		<p><b><i>A Nayika with her Attendants</i></b>            Acc No 47.110.762            Rajasthani Style, Rajasthan School            17<sup>th</sup> century CE            Size: 9.3 x 6.8 inches</p>

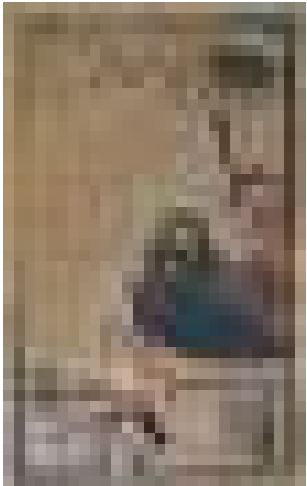



Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
16.		<p><b>A Woman with Swan</b>            Acc no 47.110.547            Rajasthan School, Jodhpur Style            18<sup>th</sup> century CE</p>
17.		<p><b>A Woman with a Parrot</b>            Acc no 47.110.471            Rajasthan School, Jodhpur Style            19<sup>th</sup> century CE            Size: 10.541 x 6.223 cm</p>
18.		<p><b><i>Damayanti looking at the flying swan</i></b>            Acc. No. 57.107/15            Pahari School, Kangra style            18th Century            28 x 39.5 cm</p>
19.		<p><b><i>Damayanti pointing at Moon</i></b>            Acc. No. 57.107/19            Pahari School, Kangra style            18th Century            28 x 40 cm</p>



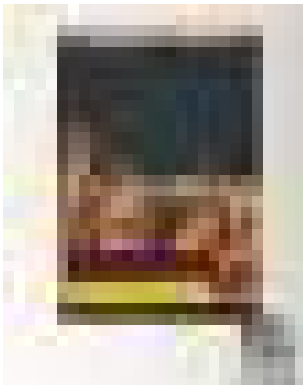

Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
20.		<p><b><i>Radha waiting for Krishna's answer</i></b>            Acc. No. 53.64.12            Rajasthan School            1800 CE            Size:26.6 x 14.5 inches</p>
21.		<p><b><i>Kuttini with an young Girl</i></b>            Acc No 60.128            Deccan School            18<sup>th</sup> Century            Size: 19.5 x 10.5 cm</p>
22.		<p><b><i>Rasamanjari - Anusayana</i></b>            Acc No 61.1185            Maratha miniature style 18<sup>th</sup> century CE            Size: 14 cm x 29 cm</p>
23.		<p><b><i>Scenes of Ramayana</i></b>            Acc. No 47.110.288            Rajasthani School            16<sup>th</sup> century CE            Size: 6.1 x 6.9 inches</p>

Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
24.		<p><b><i>Awaiting Radha</i></b>            Acc. No 59.318            Rajasthani School, Mewar Style            18<sup>th</sup> century CE            Size: 21.9 x 24.5 cm</p>
25.		<p><b><i>Pursuation of Radha</i></b>            Acc. No 57.68/2            Rajasthani Style, Udaipur School            Mid 17<sup>th</sup> century CE            Size: 21.9 x 24.5 cm</p>
26.		<p><b><i>A Warrior Persuading the Heroine</i></b>            Acc. No 56.36/17            Rajasthani Style, Kotah School            1770 CE            Size: 33 x 22 cm</p>
27.		<p><b><i>A Royal Lady in a Garden</i></b>            Acc. No            Rajasthani School, Bundi Style            Late 17<sup>th</sup> Century CE            Size: 17.5 x 11.6 cm</p>

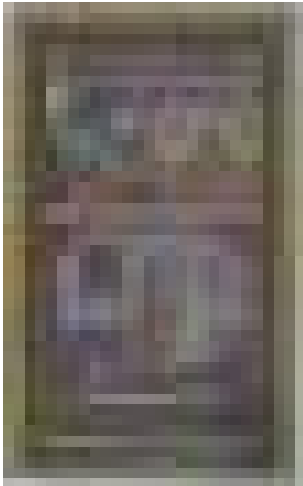





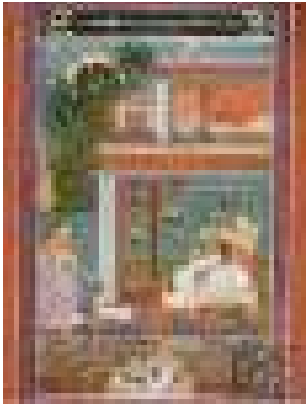



Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
28.		<p><b><i>Radha and Krishna in Boat of Love</i></b>            Acc. No 63.793            Rajasthani Style, Kishangarh School            1750 CE            Size: 43 x 34 cm</p>
29.		<p><b><i>Drunkard Husband</i></b>            Acc. No 62.129            Mughal Style, Muhammad Shah period            1740 - 50 CE            Size: 40 x 29 cm</p>
30.		<p><b><i>Princess with a Friend</i></b>            Acc. No 72.82            Mughal Style, Provincial Mughal School            Late 19<sup>th</sup> century            Size: 34.4 x 21,6 cm</p>
31.		<p><b><i>Group of Ladies Reverse of the painting, a Kalgi</i></b>            Acc. No 63.351            Mughal Style, Provincial Mughal School            1750 CE            Size: Select</p>

Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
32.		<p><b>Pahari School of Miniature Paintings</b>  <i>Lady Smoking Huqqua</i>            Acc. No 63.351            Pahari Style, Kangra School            18<sup>th</sup> Century            Size: Select</p>
33.		<p><b>Bell Shaped Huqqua Base</b>            Decorative Arts collection            Deccan - Bidri ware Silver            20<sup>th</sup> Century            Size: Ht. 15.2 Dia base 17 cm</p>
34.		<p><b>A Young Lady Taking Bath</b>            Acc. No 76.45            Pahari Style, Basohli School            Early 17<sup>th</sup> century            Size: 17.5 X 11cm</p>
35.		<p><b>A Conversation between two Females</b>            Acc. No 75.11.68            Pahari Style, Nurpur School            1780 CE            Size: 20.5 X 16 cm</p>

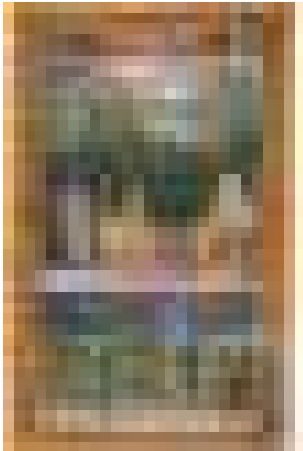



Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
36.		<p><b><i>Taramati and Premamati</i></b>            Acc. No 59.52            Deccani Style, Hyderabad School            18<sup>th</sup> century            Size: 33.2 X 20.7 cm</p>
37.		<p><b><i>Gathering of Ladies</i></b>            Acc. No            Deccani Style, Deccan School            19<sup>th</sup> century            Size: 6.8 X 5.1 inches</p>
38.		<p><b><i>Princess Enjoying the Music</i></b>            Acc. No 60.643            Deccani Style, Deccan School            18<sup>th</sup> century            Size: 20.2 X 14.1 cm</p>
39.		<p><b><i>Bhairava Raga</i></b>            Provincial Mughal style            Provincial Mughal Early 17<sup>th</sup> Century            Inscription on reverse            33.6x22 cms</p>

Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
40.		<p><b><i>Bhairavi Ragini</i></b>  Malwa, Central India  Acc.No 62.1798  29.6x22 cm. 17<sup>th</sup> century</p>
41.		<p><b><i>Ragini Bilaval</i></b>  Rajasthan School, Bundi style  Mid 18<sup>th</sup> Century  21.5x15.6, Inscription on reverse</p>
42.		<p><b><i>Ragaputra Bangala</i></b>  Acc. No 89.281 Folio No 6  Deccani, Bijapur  40 x 24 cm,  Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century</p>
43.		<p><b><i>Ragaputra Harsha</i></b>  Deccani, Bijapur  41x23.8 cm,  Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century</p>

Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
44.		<p><b><i>Ragaputra Lalit</i></b>            Acc No 89.284            Deccani, Bijapur            41.4 x 24.2 cm,            Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century</p>
45.		<p><b><i>Raga Malakaus</i></b>            Rajasthan style Marwar school            Mid 17<sup>th</sup> century            4.5 x 6.2 inches            No inscription found</p>
46.		<p><b><i>Raga Malakaus</i></b>            Rajasthan style, Alwar School            18<sup>th</sup> century            29.9 x 23.36 cm</p>
47.		<p><b><i>Ragini Gunakali</i></b>            Acc. No.51.103/9            Rajasthan style, Alwar school            18<sup>th</sup> century            29.97 x 24.38 cm</p>

Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
48.		<p><b><i>Ragini Gandhari</i></b>            Acc. No 89.268, Folio 15            Deccani, Bijapur            Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century            40.5 x 23.5 cm</p>
49.		<p><b><i>Ragini Shrihatti</i></b>            Acc No        Folio 16            Deccani, Bijapur school            Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century            40.5 x 24 cm</p>
50.		<p><b><i>Ragini Andrayaki</i></b>            Acc No.        Folio 17            Deccani, Bijapur            Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century            40.5 x 24 cm</p>
51.		<p><b><i>Ragini Dhanasri and Bhimapalasi</i></b>            Acc. No 89.275 Folio 18            Deccani style, Bijapur school            Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century            40.5 x 24 cm</p>

Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
52.		<p><b><i>Ragini Dhanashri</i></b>  Rajasthan style, Alwar School  18<sup>th</sup> century  30 x 23,75</p>
53.		<p><b><i>Ragini Dhanashri</i></b>  Acc.No. 57.75/8  Rajasthan style, Mewar School  Late 17<sup>th</sup> century  32.25 x 23.87</p>
54.		<p><b><i>Ragaputra Maru</i></b>  Acc. No 89.280 Folio 19  Deccani style, Bijapur school  Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century  40.5 x 24 cm</p>
55.		<p><b><i>Ragaputra Barabala</i></b>  Acc.No 89.278 Folio21  Deccani style, Bijapur school  Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century  40.5 x 24 cm</p>




Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
56.		<p><b><i>Ragaputra Bhramara or Bramhananda</i></b>            Acc.No Folio 24            Deccani style, Bijapur school            Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century            41 x 24 cm</p>
57.		<p><b><i>Raga Hindol</i></b>            Rajasthan style Marwar school            Acc. No 54.68.18            18<sup>th</sup> century            28 x 19.5 cm</p>
58.		<p><b><i>Ragini Telangi</i></b>            Acc No 89.300 Folio 27            Deccani style, Bijapur school            Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century            41 x 24 cm</p>
59.		<p><b><i>Ragini Vasanti</i></b>            Acc No 89.302 Folio 29            Deccani style, Bijapur school            Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century            40.5 x 24 cm</p>







Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
60.		<p><b><i>Ragini Sindhuri</i></b>            Acc No 89.309      Folio 30            Deccani style, Bijapur school            Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century            41 x 24 cm</p>
61.		<p><b><i>Ragini Abhiri or Ahiri</i></b>            Acc No 89.307      Folio 31            Deccani style, Bijapur school            Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century            40.5 x 24 cm</p>
62.		<p><b><i>Ragaputra Chandrabimba or Chandrarkya</i></b>            Acc No 89.301      Folio 33            Deccani style, Bijapur school            Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century            41 x 24 cm</p>
63.		<p><b><i>Ragaputra Basant</i></b>            Acc No 87.1264            Pahadi style, Kangra school            Mid 1785-90 CE</p>



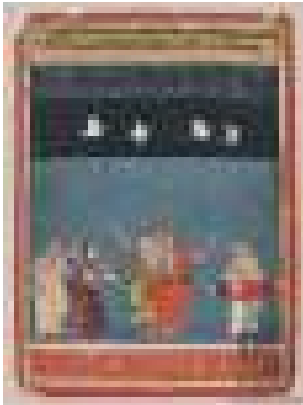
Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
64.		<p><b><i>Ragaputra Basant</i></b>            Acc No 51.64/57            Rajasthan style, Unaira school            Late 18<sup>th</sup> century            35 x 25.5 cm</p>
65.		<p><b><i>Ragaputra Surbhang</i></b>            Acc No 89.304 Folio 33            Deccani style, Bijapur school            Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century            40. x 24 cm</p>
66.		<p><b><i>Ragaputra Vinod</i></b>            Acc No 89.305 Folio 39            Deccani style, Bijapur school            Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century            40. x 24 cm</p>
67.		<p><b><i>Ragaputra Ananda or Surmananda</i></b>            Acc No 89.303 Folio 40            Deccani style, Bijapur school            Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century            40. x 24 cm</p>

Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
68.		<p><b><i>Ragaputra Vibhasa</i></b>            Acc No 89.306 Folio 36            Deccani style, Bijapur school            Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century            41 x 23.3 cm</p>
69.		<p><b><i>Raga Dipaka</i></b>            Acc No 47.110.112            Deccani style, from Deccan            18<sup>th</sup> century            10.1 x 6.7 inches</p>
70.		<p><b><i>Ragini Kachcheli</i></b>            Acc No 89.297 Folio 45            Deccani style, Bijapur school            Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century            41 x 24 cm</p>
71.		<p><b><i>Ragini Kumodini or Kamodi</i></b>            Acc No 89.289 Folio 41            Deccani style, Bijapur school            Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century            40.8 x 24 cm</p>

Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
72.		<p><b><i>Ragini Gurjari</i></b>            Acc No 89.295 Folio 44            Deccani style, Bijapur school            Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century            41 x 24.4 cm</p>
73.		<p><b><i>Ragini Patamanjari</i></b>            Acc No 89.293 Folio 42            Deccani style, Bijapur school            Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century            41 x 24.3 cm</p>
74.		<p><b><i>Ragini Todi</i></b>            Acc No 89.294 Folio 43            Deccani style, Bijapur school            Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century            41 x 24 cm</p>
75.		<p><b><i>Ragini Todi</i></b>            Acc No 96.376.2            Rajasthan style, Jaipur school            Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century            19 x 27 cm</p>





Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
76.		<p><b><i>Ragaputra Rama</i></b>            Acc No 87.1211            Pahari style, Kangra school            Late 18<sup>th</sup> century            26.2 x 17.7 cm</p>
77.		<p><b><i>Ragaputra Rama</i></b>            Acc No 89.287 Folio 48            Deccani style, Bijapur school            Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century            41 x 24.5 cm</p>
78.		<p><b><i>Ragaputra Kuntala</i></b>            Acc No 89.281 Folio 49            Deccani style, Bijapur school            Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century            41 x 24 cm</p>
79.		<p><b><i>Ragaputra Kusuma</i></b>            Acc No 89.292            Deccani style, Bijapur school            Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century            41 x 24 cm</p>

Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
80.		<p><b><i>Ragaputra Champak</i></b>            Acc No 89.298 Folio 52            Deccani style, Bijapur school            Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century            41.4 x 24 cm</p>
81.		<p><b><i>Ragaputra Kamal</i></b>            Acc No 89.288 Folio 46            Deccani style, Bijapur school            Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century            41 x 24 cm</p>
82.		<p><b><i>Raga Sri Raga</i></b>            Acc No 89.270 Folio 54            Deccani style, Bijapur school            Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century            41 x 24 cm</p>
83.		<p><b><i>Ragini Gaudi</i></b>            Acc No 51.70.8            Rajasthan School, Malwa style            1650 CE            7.5 x 10,7 inches</p>


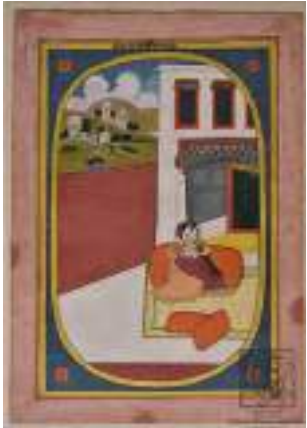



Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
84.		<p><b><i>Ragini Virati</i></b>            Acc No 87.1260            Pahari school, Kangra style            C 1785-90 CE            26 x 18 cm</p>
85.		<p><b><i>Ragini Vairati</i></b>            Acc No 89.269 Folio 55            Deccani School, Bijapur style            Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century            40.8 x 24 cm</p>
86.		<p><b><i>Raga Megha – Melody of Rains</i></b>            Acc No 49.19.2            Rajasthan school, Narasinghgarh, Malwa Style            Artist: Madhoda            1680 CE            22 x 16 cm</p>
87.		<p><b><i>Raga Megha – Melody of Rains</i></b>            Acc No 49.19.2            Rajasthan school, Rajasthan style            17<sup>th</sup> century CE            7.1 x 5.2 inches</p>

Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
88.		<p><b><i>Ragini Sorathi</i></b>            Acc No 87.1250            Pahari School, Pahari style            18<sup>th</sup> century            40. 8 x 24 cm</p>
89.		<p><b><i>Ragini Malhari</i></b>            Acc No 91.21            Pahari School, Kangra style            19<sup>th</sup> century            35 x 34 cm</p>
90.		<p><b><i>Ragputra Kedara</i></b>            Acc No 63.1717            Rajasthan School, Sirohi style            1710-25            23 x 17.5 cm</p>
91.		<p><b><i>Ragputra Nara-Narayana</i></b>            Acc No 87.1224            Pahari School, Kangra style            1800            _select</p>










Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
92.		<p><b>Meeting of Raja Indrajit and Keshavadasa</b>            Acc. No: 51-34-12            Rajasthan School: Malwa            Late 17<sup>th</sup> Century            Size: 6.7 x 8.9 inches</p>
93.		<p><b>Meeting of Raja Indrajit and Keshavadasa</b>            Acc. No: 51-34-13            Rajasthan School: Malwa            Late 17<sup>th</sup> Century            Size: 6.7 x 8.9 inches</p>
94.		<p><b>Radha and Krishna admiring each other in a mirror</b>            Acc No 51.120/2            Rajasthan School, Mewar style            1630 – 40 ACE            Artist : Shahibdin            Size 20 X 20 C.M</p>
95.		<p><b>Krishna with Lotus Flower</b>            (A Folio of <i>Rasikapriya</i>)            Acc No: 54 69/6            Rajasthan school, Mewar style            Late 17<sup>th</sup> century            Size: 25.5 x21cm</p>




Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
96.		<p><b>Rasikapriya Folio</b>            Acc. No 55 24/4            Rajasthan School, Mewar style            18<sup>th</sup> Century CE            Size:32 x19.05cms</p>
97.		<p><b>A folio from Rasikapriya</b>            Acc No:75.891            Rajasthan School, Mewar style            Early 18<sup>th</sup> Century            Size:27.8x19 cm</p>
98.		<p><b>Krishna and Radha</b>            Acc.No:63.1735            Rajasthan School, Bikaner style            Circa 1683            Size:</p>
99.		<p><b>Title: A folio of Rasikapriya</b>            Acc No: 61.814            Rajasthan School, Malwa style            1634 CE            Inscription: Nagari text above and below the painting            Size: 21.5X15.7 cm</p>


Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
100.		<p><b>Illustration from Keshavadasa's Rasikapriya</b> Acc No 51.72.230 Rajasthan School, Kotah style Late 18<sup>th</sup> century Size 7.8 x 10.4</p>
101.		<p><b>Keshavadasa's Rasikapriya</b> Acc No 67.60 Pahari School, Chamba style Early 19<sup>th</sup> century Size 32.3 x 23,3 cm</p>
102.		<p><b><i>Ajnatayauvana Mugdha Nayika</i></b> Rasamanjari Paintings Acc. No 61.1185 Provenance:Sanskrit Script: Devanagari Date: 18<sup>th</sup> Century CE Size: 14 x 29 cm</p>
103.		<p><b><i>Anandasammohavati Pragalbha</i></b> Rasamanjari Paintings Acc. No 61.1185 Provenance:Sanskrit Script: Devanagari Date: 18<sup>th</sup> Century CE Size: 14 x 29 cm</p>
104.		<p><b><i>Mugdha Prositabhartrka</i></b> Rasamanjari Paintings Acc. No 61.1185 Provenance:Sanskrit Script: Devanagari Date: 18<sup>th</sup> Century CE Size: 14 x 29 cm</p>

Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
105.		<p><b><i>Praudha Pravatsyatpatika</i></b>  Rasamanjari Paintings  Acc. No 61.1185  Provenance:Sanskrit  Script: Devanagari  Date: 18<sup>th</sup> Century CE  Size: 14 x 29 cm</p>
106.		<p><b><i>Virahanivedana</i></b>  Rasamanjari Paintings  Acc. No 61.1185  Provenance:Sanskrit  Script: Devanagari  Date: 18<sup>th</sup> Century CE  Size: 14 x 29 cm</p>
107.		<p><b><i>Sanghattana</i></b>  Rasamanjari Paintings  Acc. No 61.1185  Provenance:Sanskrit  Script: Devanagari  Date: 18<sup>th</sup> Century CE  Size: 14 x 29 cm</p>
108.		<p><b><i>Mandana</i></b>  Rasamanjari Paintings  Acc. No 61.1185  Provenance:Sanskrit  Script: Devanagari  Date: 18<sup>th</sup> Century CE  Size: 14 x 29 cm</p>
109.		<p><b><i>Sakhikrita Parihasa</i></b>  Rasamanjari Paintings  Acc. No 61.1185  Provenance:Sanskrit  Script: Devanagari  Date: 18<sup>th</sup> Century CE  Size: 14 x 29 cm</p>
110.		<p><b><i>Dakshina Nayaka</i></b>  Rasamanjari Paintings  Acc. No 61.1185  Provenance:Sanskrit  Script: Devanagari  Date: 18<sup>th</sup> Century CE  Size: 14 x 29 cm</p>

Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
111.		<b><i>Nayakabhasa</i></b> Rasamanjari Paintings Acc. No 61.1185 Provenance:Sanskrit Script: Devanagari Date: 18 <sup>th</sup> Century CE Size: 14 x 29 cm
112.		<b><i>Parakiya Abhisarika</i></b> Rasamanjari Paintings Acc. No 61.1185 Provenance:Sanskrit Script: Devanagari Date: 18 <sup>th</sup> Century CE Size: 14 x 29 cm
113.		<b><i>Madhya Vipralabdha</i></b> Rasamanjari Paintings Acc. No 61.1185 Provenance:Sanskrit Script: Devanagari Date: 18 <sup>th</sup> Century CE
114.		<b><i>Parodha</i></b> Rasamanjari Paintings Acc. No 61.1185 Provenance:Sanskrit Script: Devanagari
115.		<b><i>Krishna and Radha in Dialogue</i></b> Acc.No: 49.19/67 Rajasthan, Sub School: Mewar Period: Mid Period 18 <sup>th</sup> Century Size: 12.7x 8.6cm
116.		<b><i>Krishna playing hide and Seek</i></b> Acc.No: 55.50/51 Rajasthan School, Sub School: Mewar Period: Mid Period 18 <sup>th</sup> Century Size: 12.7x 8.6cm

Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
117.		<p><b><i>Krishna and Gopis</i></b>            Acc.No: 55.50/58            Rajasthan School, Sub School: Mewar            Period: Mid Period 18<sup>th</sup> Century            Size: 12.7x 8.6cm</p>
118.		<p><b><i>Meeting of Krishna and Radha</i></b>            Acc.No: 55.50/55            Rajasthan School, Sub School: Mewar            Period: Mid Period 18<sup>th</sup> Century            Size: 12.7x 8.6cm</p>
119.		<p><b><i>Vasantasena</i></b>            ACC. No 2800            Kushan period from Mathura            Archaeology, stone            Dated 2<sup>nd</sup> Century CE            Size: 38 x 30 inches</p>
120.		<p><b><i>Musical Group</i></b>            ACC. No 51-99            Shunga period from Besnagar Gwalior            Archaeology, stone            Dated 2<sup>nd</sup> Century BCE            Size: 30.15 x 26 cm</p>

Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
121.		<p><b><i>Royal Couple with Attendants</i></b>  ACC. No 51-99  Shatavahana period from Pithalkora, Cave I  Aurangabad  Archaeology, stone  Dated 2<sup>nd</sup> Century BCE  Size: 45.5 x 45.5 cm</p>
122.		<p><b><i>Ganga</i></b>  ACC. No L.2 png  Gupta period  from Ahichchatra U.P  Archaeology, Terracotta  Dated 5-6 Century CE  Size: 45.5 x 45.5 cm</p>
123.		<p><b><i>Standing Parvati</i></b>  ACC. No 53.14  Pratihara period from Baijanath Dist, Almora  Uttaranchal  Archaeology, Stone  Dated 11<sup>th</sup> Century CE  Size: 70 x 38 cm</p>
124.		<p><b><i>Yamuna</i></b>  ACC. No 68. 53  Rashtrakuta? Madhya Pradesh  Archaeology, Stone  Dated 8<sup>th</sup> Century CE  Size: 61 x 41.5 cm</p>





Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
125.		<p><b><i>Mohini (A female representation of Vishnu)</i></b>  ACC. No 50.190  Western Chalukya, Gadag Karnataka  Archaeology, Stone  Dated 12th Century CE  Size: 92 x 41 cm</p>
126.		<p><b><i>King Narasimha seated on a swing</i></b>  ACC. No 50.185  Senas, Orissa, Konark  Archaeology, Stone  Dated 13th Century CE  Size: 88.5 x 46 cm</p>
127.		<p><b><i>Abhjnana Shakuntala</i></b>  Author: Kalidasa, script Sharada  Manuscript on hand made Paper  Acc. No 57.106/1235  Size 26.03 x 17.78 cm</p>
128.		<p><b><i>Shakuntala Nataka</i></b>  Acc. No C A A M – 595  Illustrated Manuscript on Hand made Paper  Year 1748 Language Hindi  Number of folios 64, illustrations 13  Size: 23.5x14.5 cm</p>



Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
129.		<p><i>Abhijnana Shakuntalam</i>  <i>The Day-Break at Hermitage</i>            Acc. No 89.503/15            Pahari School, Nalgarh Style            1840-50 CE            Size: 33 x37 cm</p>
130.		<p><i>King Dushyanta finds Shakuntala</i>  <i>watering the plants,</i>  <i>Acc. No 89.503/50</i></p>
131.		<p><i>King Dushyanta hiding</i>  <i>behind the trees.</i>  <i>Acc No 89.503/32</i></p>
132.		<p><i>Shakuntala applying</i>  <i>Tilak on the forehead</i>  <i>of King Dushyanta,</i>  <i>Acc No 89.503/49</i></p>

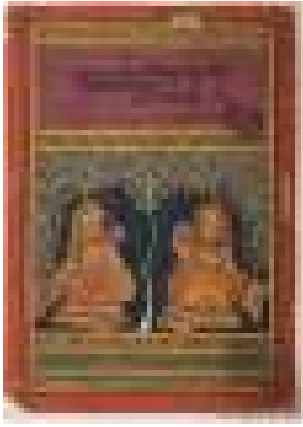
Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
133.		<p><i>Shakuntala asks Dushyanta to hide behind the shrubs, Acc. No 89.503/26</i></p>
134.		<p><i>Shakuntala Expressing her Feelings, Acc. No 89.503/31</i></p>
135.		<p><i>King Dushyanta Accepts Shakuntala as his Wife. Acc. No 89.503/30</i></p>
136.		<p><i>Gautami, Anasuya and Priyamvada are discussing how to adorn Shakuntala. Acc. No 89.503/12</i></p>

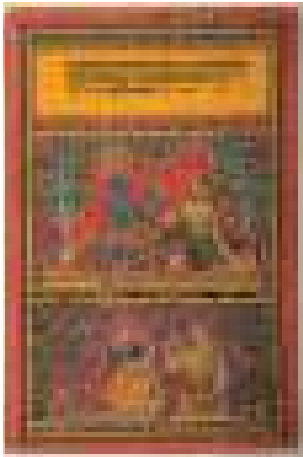





Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
137.		<p><i>Friends of Shakuntala with a tray of make-up Materials, Acc. No 89.503/10</i></p>
138.		<p><i>Two Devakumaras appeared with jewels, Acc no 89.503/10</i></p>
139.		<p><i>Priyamvada and Anasuya are Adorning Shakuntala, Acc. No 89.503/11</i></p>
140.		<p><i>Shakuntala's friends applying Anjana on her Eyes, 89.503/7</i></p>

Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
141.		<p><i>Shakuntala with her Friends,</i> Acc. No 89.503/6</p>
142.		<p><i>Shakuntala with mother Gautami and sakhī Priyamvada at her cottage,</i> 89.503/14</p>
143.		<p><i>Shakuntala and her sakhīs listening to the recitals,</i> 89.503.17</p>
144.		<p><i>The Night at the Hermitage,</i> Acc. No 89.503/16</p>

Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
145.		<p><i>Shakuntala Prostrating before her father Sage Kanva, 89.503.5</i></p>
146.		<p><i>Sage Kanva hugs Shakuntala and bids good bye. 89.503/13</i></p>
147.		<p><i>Shakuntala moving around the Celestial Fire of Yajna, Acc.503/ 3</i></p>
148.		<p><i>Shakuntala Send Off, 85.394 size:23 x 30 cm</i></p>




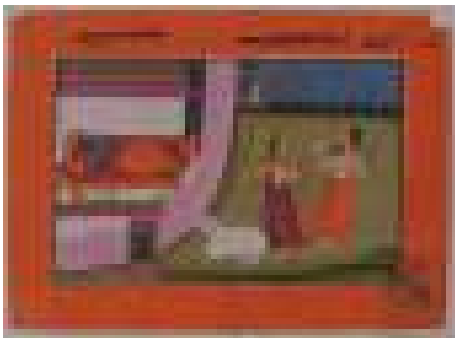
Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
149.		<p><i>Sage Kanva is leading Shakuntala.</i> 89.503/1</p>
150.		<p><i>Poet Jayadeva worshipping Radha and Krishna</i> ACC. No 47.110/317 Pahari School, Basohli Style Dated 1730 CE Size: 20 x 30 cm Inscription on reverse of the painting Artist: Manaku</p>
151.		<p><i>Gita-Govinda of Jayadeva</i> Acc. No 57.46 Manuscript painting, Oriya script Palm leaf, 14 folios in accordion format Period: 18<sup>th</sup> century Size: 5.6 x 26.5 cm</p>
152.		<p><i>Folio from Gita-Govinda</i> Acc. No 49.19/85 Orissa Style Late 18<sup>th</sup> century 22.35 x 14.98 cm</p>

Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
153.		<p><b><i>Folio from Gita-Govinda</i></b>            Acc. No 49.19/95            Orissa Style            Late 18yh century            22.35 x 14.98 cm</p>
154.		<p><b><i>Folio from Gita-Govinda</i></b>            Acc. No 49.10.72            Orissa Style            Late 18yh century            22.35 x 14.98 cm</p>
155.		<p><b><i>A Painted Folio from Gita Govinda</i></b>            Acc. No 47.110/1929            Orissa Style            Late 18yh century            22.35 x 14.98 cm</p>
156.		<p><b><i>Orissa Gita Govinda</i></b>            Acc. No 47.110/1927            Orissa Style            Late 18yh century            22.35 x 14.98 cm</p>

Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
157.		<p><b><i>A painted folio of Gita Govinda</i></b>            Acc. No 49.1983            Orissa Style            Late 18yh century            22.35 x 14.98 cm</p>
158.		
159.		<p><b><i>Gita Govinda</i></b>            ACC No 76.115/1-30            Gujarati Language and <i>Devanagari</i> Script            1650 <i>Samvat</i>, 1593 CE            Total Folios 30, Illustrations 28</p>
160.		<p>Size: 27 x 7 cm            Picture: 1 (Sl No. 158). Illustration Folio No 8            Picture: 2 (Sl No. 159) Illustration Folio No 11            Picture: 3 (Sl No. 160). Illustration Folio No 19</p>
161.		<p><b><i>Krishna playing with Gopis</i></b>            ACC. No IMG 3066            Rajasthani School Mewar Style            Size: Select</p>
162.		<p><b><i>A Folio of gita Govinda</i></b>            ACC. No IMG 83.454            Rajasthani School Mewar Style            Size: Select</p>



Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
163.		<p><b><i>Krishna waiting for Radha</i></b>            Acc. No 65.304            Pahari School, Kangra Style            Year 1810 CE            Inscription on reverse            Size: 27 x 35 cm</p>
164.		<p><b><i>Folio of Gita Govinda</i></b>            Acc. No 66.90            Pahari School, Kangra Style            Year 18<sup>th</sup> century CE            Inscription on reverse            Size: 28 x 36.2 cm</p>
165.		<p><b><i>Krishna Dallying with Cowherd Maidens</i></b>            Acc. No 51.207.26            Pahari School, Basohli Style            Year 1730 CE            Inscription on reverse            Size: 20.5 x 31 cm            Artist: Manaku</p>
166.		<p><b><i>Krishna's Dalliance with Gopis</i></b>            Acc. No 51.207.15            Pahari School, Basohli Style            Year 1730 CE            Inscription on reverse            Size: 12 x 8.3 inches            Artist: Manaku</p>




Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
167.		<p><b><i>Usha lying in the bed room</i></b>            Acc. No: 51.66/75            Rajasthan School, Raghogarh style            18<sup>th</sup> Century CE            Size: 12.3x 9.2 inches</p>
168.		<p><b><i>Usha and Chitrlekha</i></b>            Acc. No: 51.66/76 and 77            Rajasthan School, Raghogarh style            18<sup>th</sup> Century CE            Size: 12.3x 9.2 inches</p>
169.		<p><b><i>Chitrlekha proceeding to Dwaraka</i></b>            Acc. No: 51.66/78            Rajasthan School, Raghogarh style            18<sup>th</sup> Century CE            Size: 12.3x 9.2 inches</p>
170.		<p><b><i>Aniruddha lying on the Bed</i></b>            Acc. No: 51.66/80            Rajasthan School, Raghogarh style            18<sup>th</sup> Century CE            Size: 12.3x 9.2 inches</p>

Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
171.		<p><b><i>Aniruddha sleeping</i></b>            Acc. No: 51.66/81            Rajasthan School, Raghogarh style            18<sup>th</sup> Century CE            Size: 12.3x 9.2 inches</p>
172.		<p><b><i>Chitrlekha Moving Sleeping Aniruddha</i></b>            Acc. No: 51.66/82            Rajasthan School, Raghogarh style            18<sup>th</sup> Century CE            Size: 12.3x 9.2 inches</p>
173.		<p><b><i>Chitrlekha and Aniruddha</i></b>            Acc. No: 51.66/83            Rajasthan School, Raghogarh style            18<sup>th</sup> Century CE            Size: 12.3x 9.2 inches</p>
174.		<p><b><i>Aniruddha Sleeping</i></b>            Acc. No: 51.66/84            Rajasthan School, Raghogarh style            18<sup>th</sup> Century CE            Size: 12.3x 9.2 inches</p>
175.		<p><b><i>Bani Thanni</i></b>            Acc. No 63.814            Rajasthan School, Kishangarh style            18<sup>th</sup> century CE            Artist: Nihal Chand</p>

Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
176.		<p><b><i>Bani Thanni</i></b>            Acc. No 63.812            Rajasthan School, Kishangarh style            18<sup>th</sup> century CE            Artist: Nihal Chand</p>
177.		<p><b><i>Prince Sawant Singh</i></b>            Acc. No 63.813            Rajasthan School, Kishangarh style            18<sup>th</sup> century CE            Artist: Nihal Chand</p>
178.		<p><b><i>Krishna Offering Flowers to Radha</i></b>            Acc. No 63.1767            Rajasthan School, Kishangarh style            1750 CE            Size: 26.7 x 11.5 cm</p>
179.		<p><b><i>Krishna offering jasmine flowers to Radha</i></b>            Acc. No 63.813            Rajasthan School, Kishangarh style            18<sup>th</sup> century CE            Size: 42 x 31 cm</p>

Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
180.		<p><b><i>Tambula Seva</i></b>            Acc. No 63.813            Rajasthan School, Kishangarh style            18<sup>th</sup> century CE            Size: 43 x 33.5 cm</p>
181.		<p><b><i>Dasharatha</i></b>            Acc. No 54.67.87            Rajasthan School, Mewar Style            1700 CE            Size: 17.5 x 24.5 cm</p>
182.		<p><b><i>The scene of Elopement</i></b>            Acc. No 55.58/28            Mughal School, Provincial Mughal Style            Late 18<sup>th</sup> century            Size: 41 x 28 cm</p>
183.		<p><b><i>Illustration from Mahabharata</i></b>            Acc. No 55.58/134            Rajasthan School, Mewar Style            by Raja Ravi Varma            18<sup>th</sup> century            Size: 38.8 x 24 cm</p>

Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
184.		<p><b><i>Private Apartment</i></b>            Acc. No 51.69.5  <i>Mughal School</i>, later period            Early 19<sup>th</sup> century            Size: 9.5 x 7.5 inches</p>
185.		<p><b><i>Love sick Princess</i></b>            Acc. No 57.47/1  <i>Mughal School</i>, later period            Early 17<sup>th</sup> century            Size: 38.5 x 30.2 cm</p>
186.		<p><b><i>Lady with her attendant</i></b>            Acc. No 88.8  <i>Pahari School</i>, Kangra style            Mid 19<sup>th</sup> century            Size: 23 x 16 cm</p>
187.		<p><b><i>Nayika attended by sakhis and attendants</i></b>            Acc. No 47.110.693  <i>Rajasthan School</i>            Mid 17<sup>th</sup> century            Size: 6.8 x 6.3 inches</p>

Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
188.		<p><b><i>A Princess with her maids</i></b>            Acc. No 60.1726            School not specified            Period not specified            Size: 31.3 x 24.5 cm</p>
189.		<p><b><i>A woman served wine by attendant</i></b>            Acc. No 47.110/584            Rajasthan School, Kotah style            Period not specified            Size: not indicated</p>
190.		<p><b><i>Ladies enjoying music and wine on terrace</i></b>            Acc. No 54.61.7            Rajasthan School, Mewar style            Early 18<sup>th</sup> century            Size: 11.8 x 7.6 inches</p>
191.		<p><b><i>Princess with musical instruments</i></b>            Acc. No 60.361            Deccan School,            Early 18<sup>th</sup> century            Size: 29.4 x 25.5 inches</p>

Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
192.		<p><b><i>Maids and Raja Madho Singh</i></b>            Acc. No 63.249            Rajasthan School, Bundi Style            1750 CE            Size: 26.5 x 20.2</p>
193.		<p><b><i>Lady smoking a hukka</i></b>            Acc. No 47.110.484            Pahari School, Kullu style            Early 18<sup>th</sup> century            Size: 7.2 x 5.1 inches</p>
194.		<p><b><i>Lady seated on a chair</i></b>            Acc. No M 81. 226            South India            Early 19<sup>th</sup> century            Size: 24.3 x 20.7 cm</p>
195.		<p><b><i>A nayika enjoying the swing</i></b>            Acc. No 47.110.801            Rajasthan School, Rajasthani Style            17<sup>th</sup> century            Size: select</p>



Sl.No.	Picture	Catalogue details
196.		<p><b><i>Ladies on swing</i></b>            Acc. No 58.20/32            Deccan School            Late 18<sup>th</sup> century            Size: 35.5 x 25.5 cm</p>
197.		<p><b><i>Ladies on swing</i></b>            Acc. No 47.110.483            Rajasthan School, Jodhpur Style            Early 19<sup>th</sup> century            Size: 33.5 x 25 cm</p>
198.		<p><b><i>Ladies playing</i></b>            Acc. No 85.331            Rajasthan School            18<sup>th</sup> century            Size: 17.5 x 27 cm</p>
199.		<p><b><i>Ladies enjoying the carousing</i></b>            Acc. No 60.644            Deccan School            18<sup>th</sup> century            Size: 27.3 x 20.3 cm</p>

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**in Indian Art Thought and Literature**

A Critical Appraisal on their Socio-cultural relevance

(From the art collections of National Museum, New Delhi)

Submitted by:

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