Hamza's son, Prince Bad'Uzzaman, embarks on a clandestine mission, kept secret even from Hamza, to breach the waters surrounding Noshad Pass and ultimately direct the capture of the fort. He has himself encased in a watertight trunk and orders it thrown into the sea. Malik Qasim leans on this courageous action, and immediately matches it with one of his own. Forging even the rudimentary vessel launched by Bad'Uzzaman, he leaps into the sea and starts to swim after the trunk. The currents are so formidable that Qasim soon begins to flail and gasp for air. He catches hold of a tree bobbing on the waters resourcefully using it as a makeshift kickboard. He propels himself, toward the safety of the cave. He proceeds down a long submarine passageway. When he emerges, Qasim finds himself in an exquisite garden resounding with the laughter of beautiful maidens. He confines his plan to one: especially comely maiden, and she converts to his cause and religion.

The artist selects an episode in the middle of this tale of peril and persuasion. As the wooden chest containing Bad'Uzzaman is swept uncontrollably downstream. Qasim thrashes about in the white water, seemingly buoyed by its foam. Danger abounds. A crocodilian monster menacingly approaches Bad'Uzzaman's trunk with teeth bared and plumes of water issuing from its snout. Qasim, whose trousers are the same bright red as the trunk, labors mightily against the current, an action the painter skillfully micks with a sea tortoise paddling in the opposite direction. One peculiar detail is that Qasim swims with sword in hand, apparently a last-minute invention by the artist. Faintly visible on either side of the blade is an arrow, double-pointed, brown in form. To judge from its length—it extends just beyond the shore—and color, this pimento is not a vestige of an earlier sword, as one would normally expect, but the tree to which Qasim is supposed to cling as he grows fatigued. The painter evidently decided to eschew this textually accurate detail in favor of a sword, an impractical attribute, to be sure, but one more in keeping with Qasim's essential bravery.

The composition is an innovative one. By allocating more space to the waters around Noshad Pass and freeing them from their previously horizontal channels, the painter lends credibility to their daunting expanse and turbulence. Yet he intuitively understands that this story, like all Horanzana tales, is still driven by figures, and he takes measures to ensure that they remain large enough to be easily readable. The primary beneficiary of this decision is Qasim, who seems practically within reach of the opposite shore as soon as he leaves his well-appointed tent. Likewise, the dotting guards at the familiar outpost of Noshad Pass become vulnerable precisely because they are so close and large. The artist often flouts his visual acuity, describing such poignant features as their droopy expressions and relaxed positions as well as such superfluous details as the damascened sword of the uppermost guard and the wood grain and string latch of the craddle.

The nocturnal scene of Qasim's camp is incidental to the action; but the nervous astonishment of his attendants at his dramatic escape provides a telling contrast to the state of unwatfulness below. Here again the artist supplies some attractive flourishes, ranging from the elaborate rigging of the stand holding Qasim's quiver and sheath to the flamboyantly streaky pattern on the mace-bearer's brown javan. The thick, wet, black contours of the rocks lining the sea are most unusual, and help provide a measure of distance between the two major features of the forbidding terrain.

Together with the very original composition, these stylistically divergent features point to a collaborative effort by two artists who are recognizable from their work in other Hamzana paintings. The overall design and the details of the painterly rocks and Qasim's heavily modeled red pants are probably the work of Dasavanta. The remainder of the painting is by Shavana, an attribution supported most centrally by the strong resemblance of Qasim's face to a figure in a Hamzana illustration ascribed to him. Likewise, the facial and figure style of the guards, and particularly the pronounced reddish Highlighting on the yellow javan worn by one guard and on the lower garment of the mace-bearer in Qasim's camp, recur in another Hamzana painting attributed to Shavana (cat. 47).
Meanwhile, Badi‘uzzaman makes landfall in his own way. When the trunk containing him washes ashore, curious bystanders pry open its lid. Badi‘uzzaman springs from his confinement and brandishes his sword, ready to kill or convert all in his path. He does not have to wait for long. A startled onlooker, one Khizrim, demands to know his name. Badi‘uzzaman proclaims that he is Hamza’s son.

“When he heard the name Badi‘uzzaman, Malik Samarqan was startled and said, ‘O Iranian, what are you saying?’ And so saying, he aimed a sword blow at Badi‘uzzaman’s head, but Badi‘uzzaman rushed forward, stretched forth his warrior’s hand, and grabbed his wrist and the pommel of his sword. With one heroic movement, he took the sword from his hand and said, ‘Take that!’ He raised his shield, but Badi‘uzzaman struck him in the head, and the sword went through his skull as though it were a ripe gourd and split him in two down to his belt. A groan came from that guebre as he fell. Just then his brother Kianus came and wielded his sword. The prince responded and dispatched him to hell too. There were three hundred men with him, and they all converted to Islam.’”

Now Zarnab hears the news of Badi‘uzzaman’s arrival and advances toward him. Badi‘uzzaman’s first local convert, Khizrim, urges Zarnab to join him in embracing Islam. Zarnab will have none of this, at least until he suffers defeat at the hand of Badi‘uzzaman.

At this point, about halfway through the text on the previous page, the story switches pace and protagonist. The outpost falls unceremoniously to Badi‘uzzaman’s forces. Hamza learns of its capture, but is also apprised that Kayhun and Qasim are nowhere to be found. But even then Qasim is making his way toward the heart of the enemy’s ranks and the triumphant conversion of Zurbab, the commander of the garrison.

From this spectrum of events the artist singles out Badi‘uzzaman’s defeat of Zarnab, his major adversary. Though more slightly built than his opponent, the young prince advances from the right—always the direction of power—and enjoys the advantage of higher ground. The painter extends this visual advantage by the calculated use of two compositional devices. The first is the placement of the red trunk that had borne Badi‘ across the sea and now lies before him. The trunk, a veritable perspective conundrum, serves as Badi‘uzzaman’s defining attribute, of course, but it also boosts him up in the composition by occupying the space between him and the water’s edge. The second device is the rocky outcrop behind the two figures. Mughal artists habitually use such features to screen distracting views into the distance. This painter follows suit, focusing attention on the figures by filling the background with a large undulating ridge, a schematic palace, and a spreading tree. But these elements are manipulated still further. It is surely by design that the outcrop fans outward to its greatest height and breadth directly behind Badi‘uzzaman, physically aggravating him as it does. And while the rendering of rocks is often idiosyncratic, the pastel-colored, thinly outlined, and flat outcrops seen here were almost certainly given this form to provide an unobtrusive backdrop for the confrontation of Badi‘ and Zarnab.

The other elements in the painting play decidedly secondary roles. The two upended and bloodied figures are the two brothers Badi‘ slew before Zarnab appeared on the scene. They are also an unambiguous sign of the fate that awaits those who dare resist, and pave the way for the bloodless capitulation of Zarnab and his numerous compatriots. Although Badi‘uzzaman’s sword is raised against a weaponless Zarnab, the combat is undoubtedly over, the gesture merely indicates the immediate impetus for Zarnab to convert, a decision whose sincerity is signaled by his undisturbed plumed turban. Witnessing all this are a host of sea creatures, some glowing from a safe distance and others oddly flourishing underfoot. The water itself is overlaid with a striking and apparently unique design of whirled serpentine crests.

The painting was formerly associated with Mahesa; this seems correct, for Mahesa appears to have been responsible for the composition and most of the figures. It is likely that Shravana added Zarnab and the onlookers to his left.