109 'Qur'ān' Illustrated on p. 112. The Holy Koran.

This unclassified manuscript was purchased by Muhammad Bux Viray Singh of Alwar (1815-57) from a passing Muslim for the sum of 83,000 and a dress of bhangra used as a seal of the most sumptuous of all 15th-century copies of the Koran. Every page bears the most elaborate bordures and illustrations, partly of pure gold and partly of pure blue panels within gold arabesques. The price of production for a manuscript that resold for approximately 20,000. This Ms. was bound in Alwar by 'Abd ar-Rahman.

110 'Būhrānīma' Memoirs of Būhrān (see No. 61). This manuscript would appear to be a composite, made up around the remnants of the text of this manuscript of the 15th century. The Persian translation used is that of 'Abd al-Rahīm Khākhānī, which was not completed until 1559. The clearly expressed date of this manuscript, 1530, appears to be the year of Būhrān’s death, must therefore be a deliberate forgery, as is the addition of a page of imperial Moghal seals at the beginning, including one of Humayun’s and 9 of Akbar. However, some of the remaining 19 paintings as well as part of the gold margins of the text being written by the scribe 'All al-Kāhin in imitation of the usual miniature style, and known as Būhrānī Yūsuf. The original Moghal paintings are not very distinguishable examples of the 1520s, whereas a few of the added paintings are splendid examples of Delhi work about 1540. These are the characteristic one of Būhrān in 1536 visiting the sultans of Delhi including the tomb of Nūr al-Dīn and the splendid marble affair created by 'Abd al-Rahīm in the mid-1540s. At its arrival in Alwar, the manuscript was re-marqueed throughout with marbled paper borders in greens, browns and blues, and finely rebound by 'Abd ar-Rahman. The paintings are splendid examples of Delhi and Alwar style c. 1570-80, with examples of earlier Moghal work, as well as two fine Alwar copies of a Moghal painting of the early Akbar period showing Humayun in a top-hat, and of Albar in darkest blue in the 1600s. The covers are splendid examples of Lucknow work of the 1760s, bound in gilt and painting with hunting scenes in a fantasy landscape in gold, and inlaid.


112 'Dasīr-i Ḩimāmat' Illustrated on p. 111. The Model of Resolution, a poetical version of the story of the Kānīpars and Kānīparīl, written in 1683 by Muhammad Musārī, who named it after his patron, Himāmat, the son of the second Nawab of Aurangābād’s officials, who died in Ajmer in 1784. The story concerns a prince of Oudh, Kānīparīl, and a princess of Serendib (Ceylon), Kānīparīl, who simultaneously dream of each other and fall passionately in love through the power of the spirit, which is transferred from a rooster who was an inanimate being organized by her father. The Ms. is undated, but the date 1702, which is given in the manuscript, is assigned to Murshidabad about 1765. There are 209 in all, of which 23 are full-page. Many
of them are of ambitious scope for this period of manuscripts—illustration with compositions in depth. Palace scenes with activities in foreground and background, viewed from the traditional aerial viewpoint, and with fairly rigid lines of perspective, are a feature of individual paintings of the period but are rarely seen in manuscripts. Also of great interest are some ambitious attempts at foreshortening, as when an army of horsemen is viewed head on from above, and depictions of ships and shipwreck.

The Ms. is of the richest appearance, with every page decorates lavishly with gold and brilliant coloring. The appearance of Prince Kámárāpita might be taken as a flattering portrait ofija ad-Daula (1756–72) whose beauty was fused throughout Bengal. The attendant figures, however, have a tendency towards dampness which appears to be a stylistic trait of a slightly later period, c. 1750. However, we need not hesitate to regard the Ms. as a royal Murshidabad creation of c.1755–65.

Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, Ind. MS.12

113 'Razmānā' Illustrated on p.111. The Book of Wars, the Persian translation by Naqib Khan and others, of the Sanskrit epic Mahābhārata (see No.88). Akbar's desire that the mutual under-standing he hoped for between Muslims and Hindus could be brought about by their knowing each other's sacred books did not alas come to fruition in the intolerance practiced by his successors. However, the chief monument to Akbar's hopes, the Razmānā, was still often copied in the next two centuries, though seldom illustrated. This copy is in three uniform volumes, and is dated Murshidabad 1755–1756. It was copied for one Rāj Bahādur Singh, by Muhammad Khan, an Afghan Shirvāni from Thatta, and has 113 illustrations all painted on card with floral margins and bound in. They are numbered in large Roman numerals.

Morshedlāl lies 100 miles east of Delhi and was founded about 1663 and named after Mirzā Bahādur, one of the sons of Shah Jāhān. From 1740 it was part of the Rohilla dominions, under the control of the Rohilla chief Hīfīz Rahmat, who kept a well-stocked library in Bārcīlī. However, Morshedlāl is not known as a centre of painting.

By 1772, the volumes had found their way into the collection of Sir Elijah Impey in Calcutta, whose Persian seal with this date is found on the volumes. This strongly suggests that like No. 111 they were in Hīfīz Rahmat's library at the time of the attack on the Rohillas in 1774 by the combined forces of the East India Company and Bhōj ad-Daula, Nawāb of Oudh. Impey was a patron of artists working in the Murshidabad style as well as of Company artists like Bār-lick. The style of these illustrations strongly suggests that Impey had Murshidabad artists prepare a set and then had them bound in. They are mostly uninteresting work of the period about 1780, when court patron-age was largely dead and artists were glad of any work they could get, but towards the end a much more competent painter has contributed work of great lovelessness, distinguished particularly by the prominence given to trees in compositions, whether singly or in lovely groups. Late Murshidabad work utilizes various Hindu stylizations for architecture and landscape, in a way foreign to the Lucknow school, although this is not surprising in a work like the Razmānā, where the subject of the paintings are based on earlier models. A striking feature of the Ms. is the return to a landscape format for many of the pictures, first seen among Persian manuscripts in Akbar's copy of the Razmānā prepared 200 years previously, in which the book has to be turned through 90 degrees to look at the picture. This course was the traditional shape of Hindu manuscript paintings of Akbar's time; its re-emergence here suggests an as yet unknown tradition of Razmānā illumination going back directly to the archetype.

Provenance: Elijah Impey, then N.B. Halhed, from whom they were purchased in 1794–6.

ff.413, 371, and 400: 40 x 25cm; good glazed paper; 22 large Naqīf fg in panels 5 x 14cm with margins ruled in red and black; 143 paintings on paper, laid in frames of heavily painted card and bound in European covers.

Provenance: Bought in 1875 from an East India Company officer at Calcutta.

Bibliography: BM 1879, pp.57–8, 81.1577, pp.10–&- 54.

114 Pair of manuscript covers
The text of the Ms. which these covers enclose is not known, but is said to have been dated equivalent to 1647, and was found, like No. 32, at Vithalpura in south-western Bengal.

The covers are painted on their exteriors with medallions containing flower and leaf patterns on a ground of flowers. The interiors show on one cover a scene of Krishna approaching a grieving Rādhā, with four female attendants and two deer. On the other is a scene of two young men and an older one dancing to the music of drum and cymbals, obviously devotees of Krishna dancing in his worship. The text of the manuscript must have been a devotional Krishna text, probably the Glacūmāli. By this date the angularity of the 1409 covers has given way to a much smoother line and a more varied rhythm, capable of considerable expressiveness. It is quite possible that this change is due to natural development within the style without any necessity to postulate Mughal influence. The ground is still red and the viewpoint from the horizontal, without any landscape or horizon.

British Museum, 1953, 10.8.5.


Provenance: found in Bankura District; J.C. French Collection.

Two wooden covers, bevelled edges; 15 x 41cm; painted on upper and lower sides.

Bibliography: xx, No.49, col. repro. of V & A cover.

115 'Gisgovinda'
The Song of the Cowherd by Jayadeva (see No.73), with the commentary of Nārāyaṇa Bhārati. This manuscript is one of the few finely illustrated examples of Orissan work with a date and full details of provenance. It was written and illustrated during the 37th aanika of Mukunda Deva of Khurda, c.1690, by Dhananjaya, who very prob-ably also illustrated the Rādbhākṣesṇī (No.110) in the same style. Unlike this latter manuscript, however, it includes many passages of colour, of red, yellow, blue and green applied mostly to clothes, and sometimes to figures. Krishna is sometimes yellow, sometimes green.

Most scenes take place under stepped pyramidal roofs, supported by pillars either square or rounded, but often with canopies such as faces or diamonds between the ornate base and capital. Both men and women wear their hair in tight chignons on top of the head, or sometimes loose in a pigtail. Krishna often wears a jaunty little hat. They both wear the abhi, and the females have an armband wrapped round their upper half, which is inclined to stand out stiffly. Occasionally gentlemen in mid-17th century Mughal costume make an appearance.

Orissa State Museum, Bhubaneswar, Ext.166.

ff.81; 4 x 20cm; palmyra leaves; text in one or two lines in centre with commentary above and below, in incised Oriya script; 14 lines between margins with incised decorations; most folios with incised illustrations; covers lacking.

Bibliography: 1890 (most folios reproduced).

116 'Rādābhākṣesṇī'
The Sport of Rādā and Krishna, a poem in simple Oriya verse composed by Karkhana in the 17th century, and on the Glacūmāli of Jayadeva. It describes Krishna's boyhood and exploits, and then the first meeting in public of Rādā and Krishna, the arrangements Rādā makes to fulfill her desires via a go-between, and the eventual union of the two lovers. It is full of pastoral images to the river, the flowers and trees, the moon and the birds, all the standard motifs of Indian love poetry.

This lovely little manuscript of this rare work is fully illustrated with incised drawings in the Orissan style; it is unusual, but must belong to the earliest group of sur-viving illustrated manuscripts of Orissa, and is probably the work of Dhananjaya, the illustrator of the Glacūmāli (No.113) c.1650. His work is of the greatest elegance, with a lovely contrast between the extremely detailed drawing of figures and architecture, and the blank leaf behind.

British Library, London, Or.1612.

ff.201; 15 x 3.4cm; palmyra leaves; Oriya script, 13 lines between margins with incised decorations; most folios with incised illustrations; covers lacking.

Bibliography: 1946 (most folios reproduced).

117 The 'Rānakūdra' from the 'Bhagavata Purāṇa'
The tenth cantos of this Purāṇa dedicated to Krishna/Viṣṇu (see No.36) was the one most frequently copied, both in Sanskrit and in its vernacular translations, and from it the episode of the Rānakūdra, the Play of Love, is the most famous. In it the Lord Krishna satisfies the desires of the cowherds (go-cowists) of Bhrirādana in a magical, conjured union, which latter commentators regarded as a symbol of the wool's longing for, and eventual union with, God.

In Orissa this text and others in Sanskrit or Orissa which stress the erotic nature of the encounter between the cow and the god were particularly popular. This Ms. of the Rānakūdra section is probably of early 18th-century date, and is in the mainstream of Orissan illustration at this time, with immensely ponderous limbs and sharply pointed features, although despite the heaviness of the style the effect is still of considerable graceful-ness. The sparing use of colour on some of
The folios creates a most charming effect, as in the episode where the god asks the trees of the forest where Krishna has disappeared. In the text, the god is described as having a beard and a human profile which displays a sharpened nose and chin, and a creased forehead. The lines are drawn in a neat and consistent manner, with the text being carefully differentiated between sections. It was probably intended to be read aloud, possibly to children or to a group of listeners.

British Library, London, Or 1689, ff. 27v; 45 v. 370mm; palm leaves; Sanskrit in Oriya script, various lines per page (up to 25), text in centre with commentary by Shrirdhara above and below, with margins and geometric and arabesque decorations; most folios with incised drawings, three with colour; plain bevelled wooden covers.


The "Akrūra Upākhyāna" from the Bhagavata Purāṇa
The tenth canto of the Bhagavata Purāṇa after describing the Rājārīti (No. 117) deals with the wondrous deeds of Lord Krishna’s uncle Kamsa in order to kill him. He sends the god Akrūra to persuade Krishna to come to Mathura to fight his champion wrestler, which Krishna reluctantly agrees to do.

On the way back to Mathura they meet at the river Jumna and Krishna allows Akrūra a view of himself and his brothers Balarama and their divine forms respectively as the four-armed Vishnu, Divine Preserver of the Universe, and the cosmic serpent, the 8,000-headed, 1,000-headed Ananta.

This 18th-century manuscript from Orissa is in a rather unusual style—the draughtsmanship is superior to that of the Rājārīti (No. 117) and it is indeed probably somewhat earlier, as it lacks the fineness of the earlier manuscript. It is, however, in a tradition of even greater size and detail. The human figure is illustrated with other Orissan styles, with narrow waist and immensely wide shoulders and breasts and a human profile which displays a sharpened nose and chin, and reeding forehead. The lines are drawn in a neat and consistent manner, with the text being carefully differentiated between sections. It was probably intended to be read aloud, possibly to children or to a group of listeners.

British Library, London, Or 15719, ff. 28; 4 v. 22 xcm; palm leaves; 38 lines between margins with geometric and arabesque decorations; most folios with incised drawings; bevelled wooden boards, with floral designs in interiors and traces of paint on exterior.


Kirtanagbha
A cycle of poems in Asamase in praise of Krishna by Shankaradeva (c. 1449–1553), which is one of the classics of Asamase literature as one of its greatest poets and religious figures.

The Ms. has suffered some degradation and now consists of 277 double-leaves of paper (originally there were 278) of the pulped variety, each leaf being folded in two lengthwise and tightly stitched along the fold. Chain and wire marks are very prominent. Only the recto of each half-sheet was utilised for the text. There are 356 paintings in all in the popular style of Asamase painting, i.e. that practised from at least the 17th century in the Vaishnavite schools or monasteries in Assam. Its style is very close to the Bhagavata Ms. in the Bali Satra Newong which bears the doubtful date of 1350. Doubtless both manuscripts were produced in such a style about 1630.

British Library, London, Or 12086, ff. 170; 17 v. 46cm; palm leaves; 16 lines Asamase text, 13 v. 36cm; important passages (Cajendarnebha, Rājārīti, etc.) with coloured margins; 356 paintings, usually underneath some of the lines of text; folio 1 verso left margin preceded by 12; plain wooden boards 18 x 48cm; 10 stringholes.


The Honey Hive of Elephants
The Honey Hive of Elephants, a treatise on elephants to everything to do with elephants—varieties, functions, modes of keeping and training them, their illnesses and remedies. It was written by Sukumara Bharati for the Ahom King Sib Singh and his queen Ambikā in 1716/1724. Gowriamati states that it was written for the benefit of the Hara Bana, the Keeper of the Royal Elephants, but nothing is known of the author.

The manuscript was written in a large and elegant Asamase hand on 193 folios of paper, coloured yellow, of which 135 still survive. Most of the leaves are illustrated with gaily painted pictures of elephants in their numerous varieties and functions, with their keepers and other attendants. Numerous pictures show the royal function of elephants, with King Sib Singh riding one, or watching from his palace windows with his queen beside him. The colophon implies that the author also wrote this work, and gives the name of the two artists responsible, Dirlar and Dossil, who depict themselves receiving the manuscript from the author for illustration. Their names do not occur on any other manuscript.

The Honey Hive of Elephants is perhaps the finest of the group of manuscripts in the Ahom court style associated with Sib Singh and his queen, and is considered the most valuable of the group. The two artists hardly stray beyond the normal limitations of the style—monochrome grounds, horizontal viewpoints—but their realistic subject-matter enables them to give us glimpses of daily life in 18th-century Assam.

Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Guwahati.

Provenance: Collection of Mohibbar Burhagobain, grandson of Purnananda Burhagobain (see No. 122).

British Library, London, Or 12086, ff. 170; 17 v. 46cm; palm leaves; 16 lines Asamase text, 13 v. 36cm; important passages (Cajendarnebha, Rājārīti, etc.) with coloured margins; 356 paintings, usually underneath some of the lines of text; folio 1 verso left margin preceded by 12; plain wooden boards 18 x 48cm; 10 stringholes.

The 'Brahma\'vacharī Purāṇa' is a highly important text in the Assamese language, written by the renowned knower of the court of King Bipasha Chakravarti, who was a great scholar and historian. The text is a comprehensive treatise on the history and culture of the Assamese people, and it is a valuable resource for understanding their history and traditions.

The text is divided into several sections, each of which is dedicated to a different aspect of Assamese life. The sections include a detailed account of the history of the state of Assam, the customs and rituals of the people, and the various dynasties that ruled over the region. The text is written in a clear and concise style, and it is easy to follow even for those who are not familiar with the language.

The text is a valuable resource for historians and scholars interested in the history of Assam. It is also a useful reference for anyone who wants to learn more about the culture and traditions of the people of Assam.
Allah Khán. The data is corroborated by the mention in the first colophon of Emperor Farrukhsarj as reigning in Delhi (1713–76) and in the last of Emperor Raf’s ad-Dawlat, who reigned for a few months in 1719.

There are many places named Rájír in India, most of them in the northern Deccan. However, the place that seems most suitable as a provenance in Rajauri also called Rampur, now in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, which is on the road to Srinagar from Nahan via the Pir Raja pass. Its early history is obscure, although often mentioned in the Kashmiri chronicles, the Rájír-wára, its rulers apparently became Muslims about 1500, but interestingly kept the Hindu title of Rájír. Akbar and Jahangir always used this route up to Kashmir and stayed at Rajauri. A passage in Jahangir’s Memoirs, in which he calls the place Rajaur, refers to the rulers’ title of Rájír and how Hindu and Muslim customs had become mixed there. The ruler in 1702 was Rájír Amár Allah Khán, who reigned from 1703 to 1719, according to the royal records. Only three years old at his accession, the throne was seized by his uncle Rafi Allah Khán and the boy fled to Delhi, to the Rajauri princes Bahlam um-Nissa, one of the wives of Aurangzib, and mother of Náṣir Khán, the future Emperor Bahshandár Sháh (r.1727–1813). When somewhat older, the boy returned to Rajauri and apparently reigned until 1750. These Rajauri records are inadequate (the Rajauri princess was probably dead by 1693), but the name Rajauri seems correct. Corroborating evidence that the Rajaur of the Ms’s colophon is this little state in Kashmir is furnished by another Ms of a Sháhnamá imitation dated 1700–1709, now in a private collection in London, done at Rájír in the reign of Rájír Inayat Allah Khán with paintings in the same style as the 1719 manuscript. In the Rajauri family records, Rájír Amár Allah Khán’s grandfather, Rájír Inayat Allah Khán who reigned c.1653 to 1679. The paintings of this Ms. must have been added c.1719, as they are in precisely the same style as the 1719 Sháhnamá.

This style is one of great richness achieved by lavish use of gold and silver and good-quality pigments; the paintings are by an artist of originality, without many models to follow for his compositions. The style on occasion has a Decani feel about it—female costumes, occasional Decani turbans, favorite Decani colour combinations of greens and purples, blues and pinks, the sky painted in bands of gold and blue, occasional compositional layout. It is noteworthy that many of these are also in Kashmiri painting. The artist has made a conscious attempt to understand the Iranian origin of the text, to judge from the

frequently depicted in vivid shades of blue and orange, with a bare, leafless tree, and typically terminating the landscape or protruding above the horizon. Water is silver or silver-mottled, with intricately interwoven baskets, pattern and whorls. The architectural details seem basically mid-17th century with occasional Ottoman influence, and pillars of the Jhängírí type. Much of his idiom conforms to the Post-Popular Mogul tradition, while some of it goes back through the Subahname tradition to a 15th-century Persian origin. In one painting a Chinese scroll-cloud drifts across the landscape, in another, the powerful Indian instinct for spatial organization according to higher criteria than mere naturalism, is combined with the more fantastic elements in the Sháhnamá story to produce paintings of the greatest originality as in the scene of Iskandar and Isrâ‘il talking to the birds (f.125a), while there are scenes of great loveliness, as in the traditionally Indian court scene of f.1.94a, Alexander with Darúsh’s daughter.

British Library, London, Add.1880; ff. 195v–196; high-quality polished paper; four columns of Nast-i Sq script; in panels 23v–4; gold and silvered gold and gold; two sarlatés; 37 paintings from full-page to horizontal strip in size; original leather binding with flap, with central hook-mouldings and perpendiculars, and frame of gold and blue leather painted with gold roses.


126 Collection of Sanskrit Devotional Texts

A collection of Hindu texts, the Bhagavad-gítrí, Dwárakhíhíyat, and many other ritual and devotional texts. There are several hands involved in the writing of these texts, the script being the Sárkáhi hand of Kashmir, probably of the mid-18th century. The Ms. is important however for its illuminations, which were only partly completed, but which represent an attempted synthesis of the Hindu and Muslim manuscript traditions.

There are 27 miniatures in the Kashmiri style by two different hands, of which the finer, seems closely derived from the hand of the painter of the Almámedháhá of 1675–76. The artists attempt ambitious landscapes with varied buildings, mountains, hills and rocks, which occupy the lower corners of his pictures, while his male figures are largely derived from Poplar Mogul dress of the 17th century. There is also a strength in the color that is unusual in some of the pages, and also had not enough space in it—the Bhagavadgítrí contains only two paintings by the earlier artist, the

character of Arjuna and Krishana between the armies, and the Fish crossing the Ganges. At about 1735 the other paintings were added, including repeats of the same two Bhagavadgítrí pages. The Paisley watercolor on f.1.94a was probably added even later.

British Library, London, Or.1.1835.

Provenance: Bequeathed by F. C. Mann and Miss G. M. Coles through the National Art Collections Fund, 1947. ff. 188–192 (169v–170v) being fleshy leaves with notes: 205–210m. b/v, burnished paper; 14 lines of Sárdát script in panels 13r–15m with margins ruled in gold and colours; 14 folios decorated with gold margins; 20 full pages of illumination and miniatures; modern binding. Bibliography: Unpublished.

127 ‘Divin’ of Háfís

The collected poems of the Persian poet Háfís (see No.73).

Fine-quality Persian manuscripts from Kashan in the 18th century exhibit some of the richest illuminations ever attempted in India. In addition to the normal sarlák and ‘awámì, every page may have a fully illuminated border of floral decoration, and scattered throughout the text can be little illuminated rectangles and circles, quite sparse from the numerous sarlák and ‘awámì. The autumn page is the thinnest, finest quality, burnished and gold-sprinkled, a special style of Kashan. For it is found nowhere else at this time, while the covers are often painted and lacquered, or finely patterned in leather. Kashmir was famous for its paper through-
out the east at this time. All these qualities are displayed by this copy of the Deīn of Hāfīz, a superbly liturgical manuscript which exhibits Kashmiri illumination at its best. Of course as a work of art it is not up to the highest standards, seeking to compensate for the lack of high quality miniatures by over-abundance in other forms of illumination. Every page has a wide border around the text of flowers and styled leaves in a star pattern in gold and colours. Occasionally these are varied to include cartouches with different floral arrangements. More flowers in rectangular or triangular panels are sprinkled throughout the text. The 112 miniatures are fairly elaborate compositions without the dogmatism and uniformity which affects Kashmiri work in the next century. The calligraphic style (f. 3b–4a) has the broad gold and blue bands typical of Kashmiri illumination in the border around the normal arrangement of panels around the opening of the text and displays a characteristic Kashmiri element - the two sides are echoed by ones at top and bottom in the middle, split between the two pages. A final gold bookplate is in the shape of the Kashmir tree of life seen in No. 126, with a date of 1211/1737-8 at its base, and the name Yūsufī, without any other information. This would seem to be the date of the Ms., and the name of the illuminator, who was perhaps also the artist. A very similar Ms. of Hāfīz in the State Public Library, London, bears this same date of 1211/1737-8.


Provenance: Collection of Claudia James Rich, acquired in 1688; purchased in 1825.

f. 33, with 21 extra illustrated leaves: 9½ x 7½; polished white paper; 16 lines of gold-brown minuscules; at left margin 16 lines of gold fine rules; at right margin 16 lines of gold and red fine rules; at middle margin 16 lines of gold and red fine rules; at top margin 16 lines of gold fine rules; at bottom margin 16 lines of gold fine rules; all with red and green fine rules. (5) 2 columns on gold-spinkled paper 15 x 8 cm; panels of floral illumination throughout text; text panels with gold and green ruled margins with border one cm wide of floral illumination with outer ruled margins of gold and colours; one 'lance'; two 'safar'; one gold bookplate; 111 miniatures, occupying about one-third of the text panels; covers with central panel stamped and gilded and red leather margins painted in gold with stamped and gilded cartouches; red double gold in gold; rebound in Europe with new spine.


f. 71, vol. VI, p.75. with colour replica.

138 "Gūtagośānda"
The Song of the Cowherd, by Jyadeva (see No.37).

The text was copied in 1590-1740 by the scribe Mahmūd Rāyā in Kashmiri, in white Nāgarī on a black ground, with borders of gold illuminated with simple floral arabesques. Like several other such manuscripts in the Jaipur royal library, after acquisition (in this case through Mārāphāt Rāyā Ramnālī, Minister of Maharaja Pratap Singh in 1852/1796) it was embellished with miniatures, 21 folios being inserted with paintings on the verso, and bound up. These miniatures' subjects include the nāgas to which the Gūtagośānda is suited. The Rāyā was the second scribe in the later 18th century who also was employed by William Jones and Charles Wilson in Calcutta, where he copied several manuscripts for each of them, mostly now in the Bodleian and India Office Libraries respectively. He was more than a simple copyist, as many of the Wilkins' Minds provide rearrangements of the text at the latter's request. His clear and elegant style is typical of the Kashmiri script used at this period, although paradoxically he does not appear to have been a Kashmirī in one of the Wilkins Ms.s. He says he comes from the south (dakhpulānī). Some of his Calcutta work is dated between 1787 and 1790, and he appears to have moved on first to Benares and then to Kashmir. Other work by him is to be found in the Jaipur royal library, including another Gūtagośānda dated the same year (1794) also in Kashmiri, in an extremely large style of Nāgarī, and similarly well embellished with inserted miniatures.

Maharaja Mansingham Museum, Jaipur, MS AG 1729.

f. 30, 21 x 31 x 24 cm; dark-blue paper; 17 lines of gold Nāgarī in panels 15 x 7 cm, with wide borders of polychrome floral and geometric designs; cover of dark-red velvet, forming pomegranate flowers in livery in central rectangular panels on front and back, with similar flowers in border, and red flap. Bibliography: Jaipur 1971, pp.13-20.

139 'Bhāgavat Purāṇa' Illustrated in 1581.

The Book of the Lord (see No.36). During the 18th century, the Hindu sacred texts were frequently copied in miniature script and illuminated on long rolls of thin, highly burnished paper, the most frequently occurring being the Bhāgavat Purāṇa. Vittāvīga Purāṇa and Devī-mahībhārata. Some of the earliest appear to be from Kashmiri of the early 18th century and it may have been a fashion started in imitation of the long strips of birch bark which were not infrequently made into rolled manuscripts as amulets. Another possible source is the Middle Eastern tradition of rolled-up copies of the Koran in miniature script as amulets within cases. Certainly the remittance of the writing employed points to this source, and also the type of illumination. However, whereas the Koran could be copied onto a relatively small roll of paper, a text like the Bhāgavat Purāṇa could require considerably more, a roll nearly 4 metres in length.

Very surely any of these Ms. boast of a colophon, and those that do are usually out of the normal style, as the copy of the Adhyatmanirūpya in the Bodleian, copied by Gāhārīnma Krahma in Benares in the early 18th century. More usually the style is similar to this one, a more or less indeterminate style common to much 18th-century work in northern India. From the large number of them presently in the Alwar Museum, the royal library in Bhubnagar under Visaj Singh (1815–57) seems to have been a centre for these, and Jaipur also must have been a centre for such work. The lavish illumination and attention to detail of this one border a rich patron. A series of eight-lobed cartouches at the beginning first introduce the great gods of Hinduism— the sacred syllables Oṃ, Ganeśa, Brahmā, Vishnū and Śiva, and then twelve scenes from the life of Krishna, before the text proper begins. The twelve shamandras are separated by twelve (the tenth cancels in two parts) paintings in cartouches containing subjects from the Purāṇa itself, and there are 55 smaller paintings in roundels within the text of Krishna, sages, princes, and, as in this instance, a roll nearly 4 metres in length.

The illustrations are in the Hindu equivalent of the Delft style, with heavily modelled figures and luxuriously coloured landscapes. Two artists are involved, the style of the opening series of 17 paintings being much lighter than the remainder.


Provenance: Purchased at Wilks Sale in 1847.

Bisect. format; 15½ x 11½ x 12 cm; very thin, dark brown paper; 21 lines of fine Nāgarī script; five lines to the cm, 8 cm wide between broad borders gilded and with floral borders; opening shamandra with cartouches of alternating sizes, with polychrome floral and geometrical designs; 17 miniatures in eight-lobed cartouches at opening, and another 12 between the lines in the text of which 16 roundels scattered throughout text at regular intervals (apart from last two shamandras).

23 cm, and a larger leaf, 36 cm, with other similar leaves, one cm wide of floral illumination with outer ruled margins of gold and colours; one ‘lance’; two ‘safar’; one gold bookplate; 111 miniatures, occupying about one-third of the text panels; covers with central panel stamped and gilded and red leather margins painted in gold with stamped and gilded cartouches; red double gold in gold; rebound in Europe with new spine.


CHAPTER V
European Influence on the Manuscript Tradition

Europeans had been visiting India regularly since the 16th century, with the discovery of the sea route round southern Africa. The Portuguese were firmly established in Goa, which was part of Bijapur territory, and the Sultans of Bijapur valued the trading links this presence afforded them with the outside world. They sent presents to Akbar in Agra, including European paintings and prints, and for many years Jesuits were present at court. European art greatly intrigued Akbar and his son and considerably influenced the development of the Mughal style, as we have seen. Other Europeans came to trade and as ambassadors—Roe, Mannucci, Bernier. Some have collected paintings and manuscripts—the Lourd Rāgaśās (No.102) must have been brought back to England by one of these early embassies. Not until later in the century do we have evidence of European patronage of painting—the albums of Empeors and Sultans of which Golconda made a speciality for dealing with Europeans, particularly the Dutch, until well into the 18th century. Although Europeans may have commissioned these albums of portraits, they had no influence on their style which is purely Golconda work.

It was not until Europeans established themselves in the political system of India during the process of the dismemberment of the Mughal empire that their patronage had any serious impact on the various Indian styles. The British East India Company was officially established in political control of Bengal from 1765, and had representatives and agents at many of the Indian courts, as well as a full bureaucratic establishment in Calcutta. The French were denied any serious political role in India as a consequence of the Treaty of Paris in 1763 which ended the Seven Years War, but many Frenchmen were still resident in India. Some were content simply to collect. Men like Richard Johnson and Antoine Polier, both of whose Indian careers took them to Hyderabad and Lucknow, the latter especially being a dispersal point for the royal Mughal collections, assembled muraqqa’ in the way Indian collectors did, having their paintings and calligraphic specimens mounted in frames and bound up (No.131). They both also collected manuscripts, in the various languages used in India (No.126). One of Polier’s great achievements was his commissioning a complete set of manuscripts of the Vedas which he was able to obtain only with the greatest difficulty from scribes in Jaipur with the aid of Maharaja Pratap Singh, and on his return to Europe in 1789 made haste to deposit them in the British Museum for the benefit of scholarship. His most important muraqqa’, which is probably the album visible on the table in John Zoffany’s portrait of Polier with his friends painted in 1786 or 87, contains notable examples of Mughal, Deccani and Lucknow painting.

Others like Elijah Impey, the Lord Chief Justice of Bengal, and his wife, both collected and commissioned examples of Munsibdad painting (No.113), but also commissioned artists to draw things that they wanted and in the way they wanted. Despite being in the East, the governing classes in Calcutta lived much as they did in England and wanted paintings of their houses, their horses, their dogs and their wives, and in a style to which they were accustomed. The Indian artist, who had so radically changed his style to suit Mughal taste in the 16th century, now changed it once more in the 18th to accommodate English sensibilities. For every patron like the Impeys who appreciated his own paintings and persuaded him to essay natural-history drawings, having divined the Indian artist’s passion for minute attention to detail and intuitive sympathy with the natural world, there were a hundred who wanted paintings only according to the latest received opinion in London on what constituted correct perspective and the correct manner of rendering the ‘picturesque’. The Indian artist, ever eager to please his patron, obliged by churning out in station after station, as British influence spread throughout India, albums of stock themes: the Emperors and princes of India, select views of Calcutta or of Agra and Delhi, above all traders and occupations, the ‘natty’ types, as mementos to the memsahib when she returned to England. They often have a certain charm, but the monotony of these sets is finally repellent. The style is termed Company, after the East India Company’s officials who patronized the artists.

Numerous artists went out from England to India to try their luck among the expatriates and also the Indian princes. John Zoffany was the most distinguished artist who visited India, and the Danes, Thomas and William, did fine work there. But it was the more run-of-the-mill artists who had the greatest influence in shaping the Indian artist’s new style. Tilly Kettle, for example, visited Lucknow in the 1770s and painted portraits of Shuja’-ad-Daula with his sons, which were imitated by various Lucknow artists and became the standard prototypes for the Nawab’s portrait. From this period on, there is a consistent Europeanizing trend in Lucknow painting first found in the work of Mir Kallan Khan. The Lucknow rulers were gripped by a fervent love of things European in the first half of the 19th century. Tilly Kettle and Zoffany in the 1780s were succeeded by a string of British painters including the Danes, all of them finding favour at court. Robert Hone and George Beechey were successively court painters to all the Nawabs (created Kings by George IV in 1819) from Ghazi ad-Din Haidar (1814-17) to Wajid Ali Shah (1847-56), and the palace of Lucknow was built in European style, hung with European oils and decorated in European taste (No.133). The Kings held banquets in the European fashion for British visitors, and there are paintings in the India Office Library of different Nawabs entertaining successive Governors-General—Moira, Bentinck and Hardinge.

Lucknow was one of the few courts which still maintained a manuscript studio during this period, and the Nawab’s taste for European art greatly affected the manuscript style. In the 1780s, an important stream of Lucknow painting was a water-colour style with figures all in three-quarter profile (after Tilly Kettle’s portrait of Nawab Shuja’-ad-Daula), with heavy modelling and shadows (always falling to the right), with still occasionally brilliant colouring, but set in a drab, washed out, flat landscape with tiny distant hills dotted with trees under a pale wash of blue for a sky, of a type apparently invented by Mihir Chand in the 1760s. Polier patronized this sort of artist, with a commission for a set of Hindu deities (No.131). For the next half century this style dominated Lucknow painting, although stronger colours were usually employed. In manuscripts such as the Gultōr-i Nāṣīm (No.132) and Nizām-i Ikhvānī