



*Divine Visions,
Earthly Pleasures*

FIVE HUNDRED YEARS OF INDIAN PAINTING

DEITIES: GODS AND RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS

Included in this small assortment of paintings are images from diverse traditions in India, where gods range from nature-based to sophisticated deities who feature in intricate legends. The main Hindu sects worship either the gods Shiva and Vishnu, the latter in his various incarnations, including Krishna, as well as a supreme god; or the Goddess, usually placed under the all-inclusive name Devi. Representations of these deities can be found in various other groupings in this exhibition, since their presence is all-pervasive. Besides Hinduism other religions of India also use visual arts to illustrate their religious figures. A few paintings offer examples of the art of Jainism, and one painting in the portrait section depicts a Sikh subject.



I **Gajendra Moksha, Vishnu Saves the Elephant King**

Central India, Malwa, c. 1640–50
Ink and gouache on paper

Museum Purchase 1974.6

Vishnu is a god who takes many forms, both in divine stories and, more commonly, as incarnations or *avatars*. Among the former is a popular tale from one of the books in the *Bhagavata Purana* that recounts an incident in which Vishnu had to save the elephant king Gajendra, who was held captive by a vicious crocodile in a lake for many years. Gajendra, a devotee of Vishnu, was near death when he lifted up a lotus calling to the god to save him. Descending from the sky on his mount Garuda, Vishnu throws his discus and severs the crocodile's head, freeing the elephant. The brown shapes are a popular way of depicting mountains in this early style, as are the trees depicted as clumps of leaves on simple trunks with creepers enlivening the background. The rows of lines and zigzags at the bottom are stylistic conventions used to depict water.



2 The Dashavatara (ten primary incarnations) of Vishnu

India, Odisha (formerly Orissa), 19th century
Incised palm-leaves darkened with charcoal dust
and washes of color

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1999.15.20.1-2

The most common group of ten incarnations of Vishnu are often depicted together. In the top palm leaf, we find the first five: Matsya, the fish; Kurma, the turtle; Varaha, the boar; Narasimha, the man-lion; and, Vamana, the dwarf. Vishnu's human incarnations—Rama with a bow, Parashurama with the axe, the blue Krishna (detail at left), and the white Balarama—are depicted in the bottom leaf, with the still-to-come *avatara* Kalki depicted on horseback at the right. Curiously, the artist has put Rama before Parashurama, who was actually the sixth incarnation.

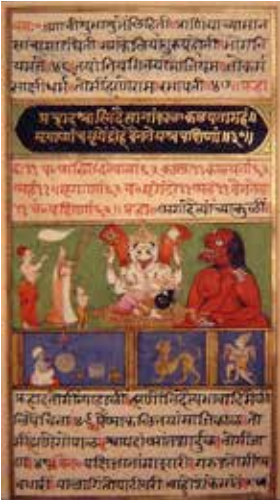


3 Matsyavatara, the Fish Avatara of Vishnu

India, Jammu and Kashmir, Basohli, c. 1675-1700
Ink, gouache, and beetle thorax casings on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1998.42.115

Vishnu's first incarnation was Matsya, the fish *avatara*. The figure of the god is emerging from the mouth of the fish, and the demon, which can be seen at the lower left, has been destroyed. A lotus grows out of Vishnu's navel and bears four figures. These depict the four *Vedas* (scriptures) that the demon had stolen from the sleeping Brahma. In popular depictions of the creation myth, the four-headed Brahma is seated on a lotus that grows from Vishnu's navel. Brahma's four heads can be equated with the *Vedas* since he is not only the creator god but also the source of all knowledge. The Brahman priestly caste takes its name from him.



4 Narasimhavatara, the Man-Lion Avatara of Vishnu

From a *Jnaneshvari* by Jnaneshvar manuscript
 A commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita*, Book X.30
 Maharashtra, Nagpur, c. 1770s
 Ink, gouache, and gold on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1999.38.4.a-b

The demon Hiranyakashipu was given a boon that he couldn't be killed by man or beast, during the night or day, inside or outside his palace. Vishnu took the form of Narasimha, half-man, half-lion, at dusk at the threshold of the palace and destroyed the demon, who is shown lying in Narasimha's lap.

This is an illustration of the *Jnaneshvari*, a commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita* completed in 1290 by the poet-saint Jnaneshvar. The verse equates Krishna (the most popular of all of Vishnu's *avatars*) to the great devotee Prahlada (the son of Hiranyakashipu), seen to Narasimha's left, as well as to time (the figure with the gong), the lion, and Vishnu's vehicle Garuda (the winged figure).



5 Shiva Family

India, Rajasthan, Bundi, c. 1730
 Ink, gouache, and gold on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1998.42.213

Shiva and his consort, usually called Uma or Parvati, are often depicted with their offspring. Here, only the elephant-headed Ganesha is shown. This grouping is popular throughout India. The bull and lion at the bottom are the pair's *vahanas* or mounts. Known as the ultimate *yogi*, Shiva is seated on a tiger skin, often associated with *yogis* who make their homes in the forest or, as in this case, a cave. The flag above the tree and the marble pillars suggest that the cave is actually a formal shrine to the god. Both Parvati and Ganesha are in poses of adoration, and Ganesha holds a flywhisk, a sign of divinity or royalty. The flow of water from Shiva's hair refers to the myth of the descent of the Ganges to the earth; the river came down with such force it had to trickle through his matted locks.



6 **Khambhavati Ragini**

From a *Ragamala* set
India, Telangana, Golkonda, c. 1750
Ink, gouache, and gold on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1998.42.179

Along with Shiva and Vishnu in their various guises and incarnations, the god Brahma is an essential member of what can be thought of as a Trinity. Indeed, early European travelers and scholars often tried to equate the three gods with the Christian Trinity. Brahma is always depicted with four heads representing his all-seeing nature. The number four is also related to the four *Vedas*, the oldest of the Hindu sacred texts. In this illustration of a musical mode Brahma is performing a religious rite offering oblations to the sacred fire.

7 **The Goddess Fights Shumbha and Nishumbha** **The Goddess Fights Demons with the Weapons from the Gods**



From a *Devimahatmya*, part of the *Markandeya Purana*, loose-leaf manuscript

India, Rajasthan, Sirohi, c. 1600–75
Ink and gouache on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1998.42.III.1–2

The *Devimahatmya*, part of a much longer work, the *Markandeya Purana*, tells stories of the Goddess known by the all-encompassing name Devi. These folios from a loose-leaf compendium of such tales offer striking images. In the top illustration Devi fights the two primary demons in the story. Shumbha falls to ground, then his brother Nishumbha attacks Devi. Her mount or *vahana*, the lion, is also part of the narrative.

The text for the bottom illustration describes how the *devas* or gods created the Goddess: each part of her body emanated from one or the other and each gave her specific weapons. The Goddess fights various demons, both on an elephant and on foot. The actual section concerns the buffalo demon Mahishasura, who was so powerful that none of the gods could beat him.



8 Adoration of the Goddess

India, Himachal Pradesh, Kangra, c. 1750–60
Ink and gouache on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1998.42.57

The Goddess, called Devi, is supreme in her own right. Here this is graphically underscored with the gods adoring her. We see major male deities, the four-headed Brahma and blue-skinned Vishnu, accompanied by Narada, a mythical sage and musician holding a *Rudra vina* (a stringed instrument with a resonating gourd at both ends), and two crowned figures coming to Devi's rustic forest retreat. In the foreground a deer lounges unafraid of the figures coming to worship Devi. Devi is depicted as a *yogini* or female ascetic, living in the forest in a rude hut. One hand is in a *gomukha* (named for its shape like a cow's head), a sack that hides the prayer beads she is counting. Deep in thought, she appears to be oblivious to the gods who have come to offer their devotion.



9 Enthroned Jina

From an *Anuyogadvarasutra* loose-leaf manuscript
India, Rajasthan-Gujarat, Western Indian Style, c. 1410
Ink and gouache on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1998.42.42

Jainism is an ancient indigenous Indian religion quite distinct from Hinduism. In the extensive Jaina literature, the most common illustrated manuscripts concern the lives of the Jinās, who are considered important teachers and not gods, or tell tales of religious figures. This illustration gracing the first page of the *Anuyogadvarasutra*—a work on science and logic dating from the fifth century—sums up the essence of the Jaina religion. It depicts the Jina seated on a stepped structure that signifies Mount Meru at the center of the universe, and also depicts the throne upon which Jinās sit when they deliver a sermon at the moment of their omniscience. He preaches voicelessly to the various Jaina groups, laymen and women as well as monks and nuns.



10 Yantra of Pancanguli

India, Gujarat or Rajasthan, Western Indian Style,
c. 1425

Ink and gouache on cloth

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1999.15.24

Gods and goddesses in Jainism are considered another class of beings who are as caught up in the cycle of birth and rebirth as humans. The goddess Pancanguli is surrounded by a variety of other figures including the group known as the nine planets: the sun and moon are at the top and the others curve around the painting. At the bottom a Jaina monk offers obeisance. The format calls to mind mystic diagrams (*yantras*) used for meditation practices found in various Tantric religions; rituals using similar *yantras* were performed by Jaina laymen.

Some of the syllables found in the points of the star and the repeated gold ones in the circular area between the longer inscriptions are related to mantras. Others are “seed” syllables associated with some of the *shasana-devatas* or divine attendants to each of the Jinas.



11 Ravana and His Brother Kumbhakarna

From a *Bhagavata Purana* series

Attributed to Manaku

India, Himachal Pradesh, Guler, c. 1740s

Ink on paper

Gift of Catherine and Ralph Benkaim 1984.14

The ten-headed Ravana is masterfully depicted seated on a six-sided throne. His hands holding weapons as they fan out to each side suggest great movement and energy. Ravana was a *rakshasa*, a demonic group of beings who took many shapes and guises. The *rakshasa* to the right is more monster-like in appearance while still retaining human qualities. The inscription in Takri identifies him as Kumbhakarna, Ravana’s giant brother. It also mentions one of his former incarnations—the demon seen in number 4. Ravana and Kumbhakarna are incarnations of two figures that were each born three times to be killed in turn by various manifestations of the god Vishnu.



12 Krishna and Gopis

From a *Bhagavata Purana* series
India, Rajasthan, Issarda, c. 1525–50
Ink and gouache on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1998.42.31

A multifaceted god, Krishna is worshipped as a child growing up among cowherds, as an epic hero, and depicted in amorous scenes that have a religious meaning. The nude *gopis* or cow-maidens may seem erotic in character but can be seen as symbolic of the baring of the soul to god. The addition of a mention of a tortoise in an inscription on the reverse, a reference to Kurma, Vishnu's earlier incarnation, relates to the river setting and underscores Krishna's divinity. Many depictions have Krishna "sporting" with these ladies, but stories are also told of his numerous marriages to princesses from various important families in the epics. Paintings 13, 15, 16, 42, and 43 show Krishna with Radha, his favorite *gopi*.



13 Radha and Krishna

From a *Gita Govinda* series
India, Rajasthan, Mewar, early 18th century
Ink, gouache, and gold on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1999.15.5

The nimbated Krishna stands facing Radha in the foreground while *gopas* or cowherd boys play with fish at the right and another tends the herd at the back. In this small work minute detail creates wonderful little vignettes. The bower at the top left with its bright red interior is a trysting place for the lovers. The verses of the well-known text were sung to specific *raga* tunes, in this case to Gujarati *ragini*. The constant refrain to nine of the ten verses of the song "Languishing Krishna" suggests a lovers' quarrel with a proud Radha:

*Why do you cry in hollow despair?
Your girlfriends are laughing at you.
Don't turn wounded pride on Madhava [Krishna]!
He is proud too, sullen Radha.*



14 Krishna and Attendants

India, Jammu and Kashmir, Mankot, c. 1700–25
Ink, gouache, and gold on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1998.42.1

Here we see Krishna with two of his childhood friends, *gopas* or cowherds, while he was living among them. Stories of his childhood exploits make it clear that the villagers at times knew of his godhood, and here he is the object of their reverence. (In number 12 we see a depiction from this period of his life that includes *gopis* or cow-maidens.) The bold style of the early painting of the Punjab Hills is extremely appealing and highly prized. The figures are silhouetted against a plain background, as is the elaborately patterned tree. The large eyes with their small pupils make the faces quite expressive.



15 Radha Uprobraids Krishna

From a *Sat Sai* by Bihari Lal series
After the artist Fattu

India, Himachal Pradesh, Kangra, c. 1785
Ink, white ground, and red line on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1998.42.58

The poem illustrated here reads:

*Don't call me your beloved; call me instead a shrew.
Going away to a far-off land in the month of the rains,
You should feel ashamed at calling me sweetheart.*

The early seventeenth-century secular *Sat Sai* is a collection of some 700 poems by Bihari Lal. Only a few of the poems are specifically related to Krishna, but they were linked to the Krishna cult in the Pahari region where artists of a particular family created a series of drawing and paintings depicting this poetry. The famous artists Nainsukh and Manaku (a drawing attributed to Manaku, Fattu's father, is number 11) essentially defined a style that spread throughout the region, and a number of versions were executed by the generation after them.



16 Radha and Krishna by a Lotus Pond

In the style of Nihal Chand (1710–82)
India, Rajasthan, Kishangarh, c. 1800
Ink, gouache, and gold on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1998.42.46

The dark, lush vegetation cuts the lovers Radha and Krishna off from the world and offers a strong contrast with the bright sunlight illuminating them and the marble balustrades along the river. Two peacocks reinforce the formal symmetry of the architecture, while three white birds are at perfect ease with the figures in the center. Along the top of the composition the orange glow of the sunrise or sunset underscores the strict horizontal composition.

The paintings from Kishangarh display highly stylized faces with long curving eyes, which reflect the appearance of the paramour of the king who patronized Nihal Chand, the most noted artist from that center.



17 A Snake Demon

From a *Balagopalastuti* ? loose-leaf manuscript
India, Gujarat, late 16th century
Ink and gouache on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1998.42.181.a

Snakes figure in many Indian stories, and the tales about Krishna include quite a few. This manuscript appears to depict a tale of a snake attacking Krishna's stepfather, Nanda. Krishna had been transferred to a cowherd village at his birth to save him from his evil uncle. Many tales are told of his exploits against demons, both natural and supernatural. Here Nanda and others from the village have lain down to sleep by the river when a snake begins to devour Nanda. Krishna arrives to save his stepfather, thus releasing a supernatural being who was trapped in the form of the snake.



18 Story of the Syamantaka Gem

From a *Bhagavata Purana* series
India, Madhya Pradesh, Datia, c. 1790–1800
Ink, gouache, and gold on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1998.42.103

Offering one of the most sophisticated uses of continuous narration in the exhibit, this painting from a well-known set tells virtually an entire chapter of the Sanskrit *Bhagavata Purana* in a single composition. The most interesting stories are depicted to the left of the composition, where a man who has stolen the Syamantaka gem rides out wearing it, only to be killed by a lion, which is in turn killed by a bear that takes the gem. The gem's actual owner suspects Krishna of stealing it, but Krishna takes the man to find the bodies. We see both the killings and the finding of the bodies in the same space. Krishna then enters the bear's cave and defeats him, recovers the gem, and marries the bear's daughter, who is seen in human form lying in a swinging bed.



19 The Death of the Loyal Mongoose

From an *Anwar-i Suhayli* manuscript
India, Mughal, Akbar period, 1590s
Ink, gouache, and gold on paper

Purchased with the aid of funds from the Calvin K. and Doreen Townsend Foundation 1973.11

There is much narrative painting in India that illustrates both religious and secular texts from a number of different traditions and cultures. This painting is a Muslim take on a fable concerning the rashness of action. The story tells of a snake that threatened a child in a cradle and was killed by a mongoose. The boy's father sees blood on the mongoose's mouth and kills it in turn, thinking it had attacked the child instead of saving it. Here the event takes place in front of a ruler sitting in a pavilion. These fables are based on earlier Hindu texts like the *Pancatantra*, animal tales that were retold for hundreds of years and influenced Aesop's fables.

DRAWINGS: DRAWINGS AND PAINTED SKETCHES:

Drawings highlight the way the Indian artist worked, often with a sure line where tentative details are rarely seen. Many Indian brush drawings are actually sketches meant for use in painter families, yet close inspection of specific drawings shows them to be quite “finished” in appearance, often with portions highlighted in color. The confident quality of the line may be overlooked when viewing Indian painting, which usually catches the eye with its bold juxtapositions of color. Yet the line of the original drawing can be pronounced in the finished painting even when the pigment is built up in repeated layers and burnished to a jewel-like surface.



20 Tethered Elephant

India, Rajasthan, Bundi or Kotah, c. 1825
Ink and color wash on paper

Museum Purchase 1974.8

Many depictions of elephants, often fighting each other, are known from the related centers of Bundi and Kotah. This sensitive natural study is carefully rendered by comparison to the more abstract volumes of the chained elephant seen in number 21. Often these sketches of prized elephants are identified with the animals' names and other information. Despite the absence of an inscription, this clearly is a study of a living animal.



21 Tethered Elephant

India, Rajasthan, Bundi, c. 1720
Ink and color wash on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1999.15.16

Shackled to a post, this clever elephant has figured out how to make his escape: he merely pulls up the post and hobbles off. The ball shape of the drawing is quite pleasing, while the realistic detailing of the skin texture contrasts with the formal pattern of shapes, notably the ears. While retaining some elements of naturalism, the effect is quite different from the detailed study of an elephant in number 20.



22 Composite Camel

India, West Bengal, Murshidabad, 18th century
Ink, gouache, and gold on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1998.42.37

Composites—usually animals made up of various elements, including other animals or even human figures—illustrate a tremendous virtuosity. Forms can take on new meanings, and the universality of nature is underscored with great panache. Here a princess holding a harp sits in an elaborate howdah on a camel made up of animals and musicians. Adding to the fantastic nature of the beast, a horned demon holding a club leads the animal in procession. Less obviously, forms in other paintings in the exhibition can be read as relating to other elements of nature: the shape of an eye can look like a lotus leaf, a shoulder like an elephant's trunk.



23 Study of a Leopard

Attributed to Shivalal
India, Rajasthan, Mewar, Fateh Singh period,
late 19th–early 20th century
Ink and color wash on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1998.42.26

Many late masterpieces of Indian drawing and painting are given earlier dates based on the belief that art must be old to be great. Past scholars gave this sensitive study of a leopard in various poses earlier dates, but it closely resembles work done in the court of Maharana Fateh Singh of Mewar (Udaipur) (1889–1930), a style that has been studied recently. Fateh Singh had sent a painter to England to study Western styles and techniques, and some of the naturalism seen here may reflect those influences. The drawing may in fact be by the master court painter Shivalal, who uses a bold line, with the silhouette taking on a prominence against the plain background.



24 Flower Studies

India, Rajasthan, Bikaner or Mughal, 17th century
Ink on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1998.42.28.a

This detailed study of myriad flowers illustrates the great love of gardens and, specifically, the appreciation of flowers associated with court life throughout Indian history. The flowers all evidence close, sensitive observation, but some appear fanciful even while suggesting true forms. They call to mind the best known floral elements of the reign of Shah Jahan, those of the Taj Mahal. A close examination of the sprigs illustrates the modeling of European herbals, volumes of which, by botanists like Sweerts and Gerarde, were brought to the Mughal court as early as the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.



25 Shah Jahan Saves Anup Rai

India, Mughal, Delhi or Pakistan, Lahore, c. 1680
Ink and color wash on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1998.42.12

Although Shah Jahan (1592–1666) killed the lion in 1610 as a young man, this depiction of the event as told in his father's memoirs has him with a gray beard. In many paintings based on older works the artist was careful to get the age of the characters right, but not in this case. An important drawing by the famous Pahari artist Nainsukh is very similar in detail to this sketch. The fact that labels appear on this work in both the Persian Nasta'liq and in the Takri script of the Punjab Hills suggests that this very drawing may be its source.



26 Raja Ram Singh II and Palanquin with Image of Shri Nathji

India, Rajasthan, Kotah, c. 1840

Ink and color wash on paper

Museum Purchase 1974.9.10

One can view this as an unfinished painting, but it gives the impression of a finished work. The most important figures are decorated with color while others are merely sketched in, suggesting their form but keeping the focus on the image of Shri Nathji under the umbrella, the king Ram Singh II (ruled 1828–66) at the right, and the two attendants who hold flywhisks to either side of the image in the palanquin. The four figures carrying the palanquin are convincingly suggested with a few deft strokes of the brush. Another drawing from the Shri Nathji cult is number 27.



27 Svarupa of Shri Nathji The Festival of Saptaswarupa Annakutotsava

India, Rajasthan, Bundi, c. 1750–1800

Ink on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1998.42.186

Shri Nathji, an important image of Krishna that is thought to be self-revealing, not man-made, is the object of popular devotion in Rajasthan. The main image of Shri Nathji and other statues of Krishna are depicted on the altar of the temple at Nathadwara, one of the most vital living temples in northern India. A pile of rice representing Mount Govardhana and vessels full of food are placed below the images while two of the main priests of the temple flank the scene. The one on the left holds a *cauri* or yak-tail flywhisk while the one on the right holds a *morchal* made of peacock plumes. While each of the forms of Krishna display lively attitudes, each is actually a depiction of specific images worshipped within the sect.



28 Kurmavata, the Tortoise Avatara of Vishnu

India, Rajasthan, Bikaner, early 18th century
Ink on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1998.42.146

This iconography depicts Vishnu as his *avatara* Kurma, the tortoise. The gods and the *asuras* or demons have made peace and use a snake to churn the Sea of Milk to produce various treasures, objects, and beings along with the sacred *amrit* or elixir of immortality. Vishnu is also seen dominating the composition atop the mountain and actively churning the sea with the three other gods.

An example of the fine drawing at Bikaner, this drawing is pierced with pinholes for use as a stencil. It could have been placed over a plain sheet of paper while powder was rubbed through the holes, leaving an outline of the full drawing or certain elements. It is clear that the seated figure to the top left has been treated in this way.



29 Horseman at a Well

India, Rajasthan, Bundi, c. 1834-67
Ink and color wash on paper

Purchased with the aid of funds from the Calvin K. and Doreen Townsend Foundation 1973.8.a,b

This painting can be viewed either as an unfinished work in which the artist has delineated the composition and applied dabs of color to suggest the finished color scheme or, more likely, as a model for an artist to know what colors to use when he copies the composition. Such compositions were painted multiple times, and the theme of ladies offering water to a nobleman on horseback at a well is seen in number 50, as well. This one includes many other characters, all women except the horseman and his two attendants on foot. With the simplest means the artists creates convincing figures full of movement and verve.

Even when Indian painting is at its most abstract, it is strictly representational. Influenced by Western portraiture, the early Mughal artists working in the royal ateliers became proficient at capturing not only the external likeness of an individual but often the personality as well. Virtually all of the portraits in the exhibition are courtiers from the imperial Mughal family and Rajput rulers. Because of their isolation (*purdah*), women in these paintings, usually ladies of the court, tend to represent ideal types rather than specific treatment. This is true even when depicting musical modes or ideal lovers placed in what can be considered more rustic settings.



30 Sarmad, the Mystic

India, Mughal, Delhi/Agra, c. 1675–1700

Ink, gouache, and gold on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1998.42.197

Muhammad Sa'id, known as Sarmad Kashani or simply as Sarmad (c. 1590–1661), was a Persian mystic, poet, and saint who made the Indian subcontinent his home. Originally Jewish, he renounced his religion to adopt Islam. In his poetry he states that he is neither Jewish nor Muslim nor Hindu. Unlike most Muslim mystics he roamed about nude, likely one reason Aurangzeb had him executed. Sarmad was also associated with Dara Shikoh, Aurangzeb's eldest brother, whom Aurangzeb killed during the war of succession leading to their father Shah Jahan's removal from power. This painting with its elaborate borders was originally part of a *muraqqa'* or album.



31 The Emperor Shah Jahan

India, Telangana, Golconda, c. 1700
Ink, gouache, and gold on paper

Gift of Albert M. Bender

This typical formal portrait, although not inscribed, probably represents the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan (1592–1666, ruled 1628–58) in old age. His garment consists of elaborate brocade with a matching turban. He has a dagger tucked into his *patka* or sash, and his left hand rests on a sword over a shield behind him. Standing rigidly, he lifts a flower with his right hand in a gesture seen in many portraits. This was likely part of a set of royal portraits, a very common practice beginning in the late seventeenth century. Sets of portraits of the entire Mughal imperial lineage were copied at various centers in North India and the Deccan farther south, and a number of albums depicting these genealogies made it to Europe around this time.



32 The Emperor 'Alamgir / Aurangzeb

India, Mughal, Delhi/Agra, or Deccani, c. 1720–50
Ink, gouache, and gold on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1998.42.199

Although this portrait appears highly stylized, one can easily identify it as Aurangzeb, who usurped his father Shah Jahan's throne after contesting it with his three brothers. One brother, Shah Shuja, is seen in number 33. Aurangzeb's regnal name was 'Alamgir (r. 1658–1707), but unlike other emperors he is usually referred to by his original name. He is shown in strict profile, wearing elaborate jewelry and holding a turban jewel. The elongated nature of his face suggests this may have been one of the Deccani copies of the Mughal lineage. The ornate borders let us know that this was once in a *muraqqa'* or album and would have faced a similar portrait.



33 **Shah Shuja and His Son Sultan Zaynul-Abidin**

Ascribed to Ilyas Khan

India, Mughal, Eastern India, c. 1658–59

Ink, color wash, and gold on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1998.42.48

The wars of succession that ultimately found Shah Jahan imprisoned and Aurangzeb on the Mughal throne saw many battles between Shah Jahan's four sons. When this documentary painting was done, his second son, Shah Shuja (1616–61), and grandson Sultan Zaynul-Abidin were involved in a battle against the imperial troops led in part by one of Shah Shuja's nephews. The precise depiction of the army arranged in rows in the distant background and the active scenes in the foreground are found in a number of important paintings from this period. The fact that it is a tinted drawing and not a densely painted work is typical of a genre of Mughal art. Long inscriptions in both Persian and Devanagari scripts appear on the back and identify the artist.



34 **A Mughal Lady, Nur Jahan**

India, Mughal, Delhi, dtd. VS 1831 (1774 A.D.)

Ink, gouache, and gold on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1998.42.47

Many portraits claim to depict important Mughal women, but most are fanciful stereotypical depictions of generic beauties, since the women were kept in strict *purdah* and the artists did not have access to them. This posthumous portrait is inscribed in both Devanagari and Nasta'liq with the date of execution on the back simply as Nur Jahan (1577–1645). In 1611 Nur Jahan became the wife of the emperor Jahangir and consequently Shah Jahan's stepmother; her niece was the famous Mumtaz Mahal, the wife of Shah Jahan and mother to Aurangzeb and Shah Shuja, seen in numbers 32 and 33.



35 A Mughal Lady

India, Mughal, Delhi, late 18th century
Ink, gouache, and gold on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1999.38.6

Comparing this uninscribed portrait of a Mughal lady to that of Nur Jahan in number 34 illustrates the generic quality of these works; it is rare to see a painting of a woman that displays any individual characteristics. This small portrait is set into an elaborate *muraqqa'* page and demonstrates the sumptuousness of these albums. It also illustrates that paintings of various sizes would be chosen when compiling albums, here a tiny portrait on a large page. Usually the facing page would be of a similar size with identical border decorations.



36 Surajamala-ji, Son of Rao Nirandasa

India, Rajasthan, Devgarh, c. 1820
Ink, gouache, and gold on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1999.15.11.1

Although following conventions that are not portrait-like in a realistic manner, Indian artists often manage to get a sense of the sitter into their paintings. The stylized *Surajamala* convinces as a portrait of an actual person. In this painting the artist has managed to instill the background with great animation. At first glance the play of color may suggest some abstract treatment, especially of the brilliant sunrise, but on closer examination it is fully representational.



37 Nawab Dost Muhammad Khan of Afghanistan

After a lithograph after Emily Eden
India, Mughal, Delhi, c. 1845–55
Ink and color wash on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1999.38.5

This is a fairly close copy of a lithograph published in Emily Eden's 1844 *Portraits of the Princes and People of India*. Eden was the sister of the governor general of Bengal, and her book was widely disseminated in Indian princely states. British publications quickly made it to India and one finds copies of their illustrations, especially portraits, at courts in both North and South India. Some European artists who worked in India had influence over local artists, as well. Indian artists copied non-Indian works from at least the end of the sixteenth century.



38 A Rathor Noble on Horseback

India, Rajasthan, Jodhpur, c. 1720
Ink and gouache on paper

Bequest of Emily L. Callaghan 2000.19.15

This unfinished painting allows us to see how these miniatures were made. The artist offers a well-thought-out composition emphasizing the arch of the horse's back. There is a certain formality with the *thakur* (noble) seated stiffly upright as if frozen in time. One might expect the artist to have painted both figures at the same time, but the attendant standing in front of the horse is merely sketched in, suggesting that his color scheme was intended to be quite different from the colors already applied. Often in Indian art there is an impressive monumental quality to the whole, as is the case here—the figures fill the space and appear to break out of the frame.



39 Maharaja Samat Singh at Court with His Son Dipa Singh

Ascribed to Ramao Thutar
India, Uttar Pradesh, Pratapgarh, dtd.
VS 1857 (1800 A.D.)
Ink, gouache, and gold on paper

Bequest of Emily L. Callaghan 2000.19.16

The inscription identifies the Maharaja with an elaborate title and also identifies some of the other figures. Maharaja Samata Singh of Pratapgarh sits on the terrace smoking a hookah and is surrounded by attendants, two holding *cauris* or yak-tail flywhisks, with a group of musicians on the right. The fact that the group wears white except for the honored guest, Dipa Singh, who is dressed in pink, suggests some festival occasion, perhaps Holi, a spring festival. The white marble palace architecture with its intricate pierced screens, domes, and arcades adds to the cool effect of the whole.



40 Guru Gobind Singh with a Falcon on Horseback

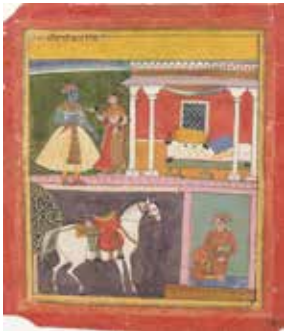
India, Himachal Pradesh, Mandi, c. 1780–1800
Ink, gouache, and gold on paper

Bequest of Emily L. Callaghan 2000.19.14

Sikh Guru Gobind Singh (1666–1708) introduced the military aspect of Sikhism with his creation of the *khalsa*, the army of the initiated. Gobind Singh rides out on a spirited, prancing horse accompanied by his hunting falcon, a gyrfalcon, and dog. The palette is limited to soft pastels with only a few elements more densely colored, most notably the coloring of the horse. The dog is adorned with a necklace and his paws have been hennaed red, an auspicious decoration. The decoration of the borders underscores the idea of a hunt, the birds perhaps relating to the lore of Gobind Singh as a Baaz Guru, keeper of the hawk.

LOVERS

As the poetry quoted in the *Ragamala* section of this exhibit demonstrates, themes of love were extremely important in Indian poetics and literature. Isolating some paintings that concern this theme lets us focus on the romantic character of Indian painting, representing idyllic love in its many facets, whether joyous, humorous, or sorrowful. Love is not only on the human sphere—often we find paintings of the gods, particularly Krishna, in these romantic compositions. When Krishna is introduced into a romantic dalliance, a religious meaning is usually intended, one that suggests the personal relationship between the god and his devotee. Such paintings were especially popular in the Rajput kingdoms of northern India.



41 Dhiradhira Nayika

Probably from a *Rasikapriya* by Keshavadas series
In the style of Sahibdin
India, Rajasthan, Mewar, c. 1630
Ink, gouache, and gold on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1998.42.65

The poet Keshavadas described various kinds of heroes and heroines (*nayaka-nayikas*) in his *Rasikapriya* (*A Connoisseur's Delight*, composed in 1591), which consists primarily of poems describing a variety of heroines. Dhiradhira *nayika* sometimes can control her resentment against her lover but at other times is overpowered by her feelings. She simply cannot make up her mind. (A simple verse describes the *nayika* thus: *A dhiradhira nayika is one whose speech is not romantic, but secretly she desires to be near her beloved.*) Here the male figure is depicted as Krishna, who often replaces the secular lovers in painted series illustrating sets of poems about lovers. The Muslim painter Sahibdin created a distinctive style in the early seventeenth century in the court of the Hindu Mewar Maharana at Udaipur.



42 Krishna Combing Radha's Hair

India, Uttarakhand, Mankot, c. 1740

Ink, gouache, beetle thorax casing, and gold on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1998.42.174

With its formal pose of stiff figures displaying highly stylized faces, this composition offers a frozen moment in time. Radha sits against a bolster on an elaborate multisided stand, which almost suggests some kind of throne. She wears elaborate jewelry, and the crowned and bejeweled Krishna runs a comb through her hair, suggesting subservience not expected from a figure who is god. A reversal of roles is found frequently in the love poetry concerning Krishna and his favorite *gopi*, or cow-maiden, Radha. Although Krishna has a number of wives, he is often depicted as dallying with other women, usually the *gopis*, underscoring the fact that one's love and approach to god transcends conventional relationships.



43 Radha and Krishna

From a *Rasikapriya* by Keshavadas series

Central India, Malwa, 17th century

Ink and gouache on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1998.42.59

Earlier than the other paintings in this section, this and others from Malwa retained a conservative pre-Mughal style for a considerable time, with flat planes of color and the highly stylized treatment of figures. Keshavadas's well-known work of 1591 was popular throughout much of India. The verse written on the back, concerning a ruse Krishna used to draw a *nayika* (here Radha) alone into the secluded woods, reads in part: *I have left going to the forest with the cowherds and instead I have made these monkeys as my friends...My monkey friends understand me and listen to me. The cowherds play mischief and then blame me...* Krishna said this to Radha implying that he is alone in the forest.



44 Vishnu and Lakshmi

India, Himachal Pradesh, Kangra, c. 1810–20
Ink and color washes on paper

Purchased with the aid of funds from the Calvin K. and Doreen Townsend Foundation 1973.9

One could easily take this delicate drawing to be a depiction of Krishna and Radha as seen in other works on exhibit. But note the fact that the male figure has four arms! This is actually Vishnu with his consort the goddess Lakshmi, each taking a very human guise. He holds two of his usual attributes, his *gada* or club and *shankha* or conch, in two of his hands and with the others cups the goddess's chin and cradles her head. They gaze into each other's eyes, locked in rapturous love. The elaborate marble pavilion in a forest setting is fronted by a lotus pool. The artist has added subtle washes of greens and pinks, enlivening the scene.

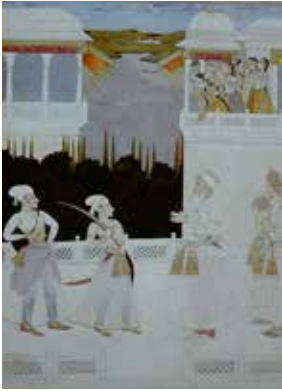


45 Nayaka Nayika Garden Scene

From a *Sat Sai* by Bihari Lal series
India, Madhya Pradesh, Datia, c. 1760
Ink, gouache, and gold on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1998.42.15

The verse in red at the top reads: *Her glance brushes others only a moment, hastening back to her lover, as a kibalānumā needle vibrating before it steadies towards Mecca.* Bihari Lal was writing during the reign of Shah Jahan, so he would be aware of Muslim compasses—the needle mentioned in the verse, which is necessary to orient oneself towards Mecca. Poetry in this period was a mix of languages and cultures encompassing Hindu, Jaina, and Muslim conceits. Another drawing from a set depicting the 700 verses of Bihari Lal's *Sat Sai* is number 15.

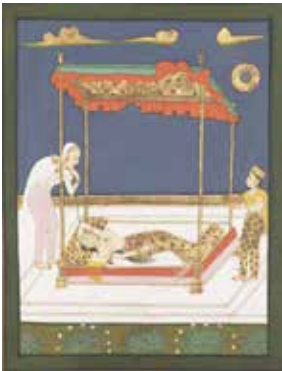


46 Reception of the Groom

India, Rajasthan, Kishangarh, c. 1750–70
Ink, gouache, and gold on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1998.42.22

One sometimes gets the impression that love has an illicit quality in Indian poetics, but marriage and social order were always prized. This painting involves a wedding ceremony where the groom visits the bride's family. It uses a hierarchical scale: the important figures are depicted larger than those of lesser position, the ladies are significantly smaller, and the groom and his pal are just shorter than the father of the bride and his friends. The contrast between youth and maturity is very obvious, the older courtiers depicted as if actual portraits, while the younger figures are elegantly stylized. The long eyes seen on the courtiers to the left and the princesses on the balcony are distinctive of the painting of Kishangarh, the easiest of all Rajasthani styles to identify.



47 Lovesick Lady

India, Telangana, Hyderabad, c. 1760
Ink, gouache, and gold on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1998.42.45

The idea of a lady pining for her absent lover runs through much of Indian literature and is a common theme in *ragamala* paintings. This lovesick courtesan is in dire straits, and burning with fever. The old crone at the left tries to comfort her, and the serving girl tries to coax her to eat, but to no avail. The wonderful pattern formed by the canopy is placed boldly against a stark blue background symbolic of the girl's agitation.

The distinctive use of costume found in much of Deccani painting, of which Hyderabad was an important center, is derived from the art of Persia, with which these Islamic courts had direct ties. There is a flatness to the whole that is quite different from the deep space in the developed Mughal painting of the same period.



48 **Nayika on a Terrace**

From a *Nayika* series

India, Himachal Pradesh, Kulu or Nurpur, c. 1725–35
Ink, gouache, and gold on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1998.42.53

Poetry about the different classes of *nayikas* or heroines often concerns women separated from their paramours. Rather distraught, this one sits against a brocaded bolster smoking a hookah. Her head is bowed as she thinks of her absent lover. A sparse willow tree beyond the terrace where she sits adds a sense of melancholy to the scene. An attendant standing behind her with a tray of small wine bottles is holding aloft a *cauri* or yak-tail flywhisk, usually a sign of the nobility of the figure. The *nayika*'s full skirt fans out under the figure adding agitation to the scene.



49 **Princess Holding Child with Ladies on a Terrace**

India, Hyderabad, c. 1695–1700

Ink, gouache, and gold on paper

Purchased with the aid of funds from the Binney Foundation 1974.7

Courtesans and their attendants sit on a patterned rug on a marble terrace: the whole painting has a static quality, a formal portrait of a court scene. One lady offers a cup to another with a child on her lap. With strict symmetry two attendants stand to either side, one holding a *morchal* or peacock feather whisk and the other an object on a scarf. Two other women flank the lower portion; one plays a *vina* or Indian lute and the other holds out a cup. Various plates of food and beverages are scattered on the rug. The foliage beyond the parapet railing is equally formal in design with various patterns built up into a dense backdrop against a pale green sky.



50 Horseman at a Well

Attributed to Mola Ram

India, Uttarakhand, Garhwal, c. 1770

Ink, gouache, and gold on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1998.42.91

This is a common scene, first found in Mughal painting, depicting a courtier out in a rustic environment and having a pleasant dalliance with village maidens. A drawing of a similar composition with indications for color is in the drawing section of the exhibition, number 29. This published painting is attributed to Mola Ram, who was born around 1743 in Srinagar and worked for the Garhwal Kingdom from 1777 until 1833. He descended from a Mughal artist who went to the Punjab Hills during the battle for the succession of Aurangzeb, which caused an exodus of many artists from the Mughal court. Mola Ram's style incorporated elements from earlier Mughal painting and the styles of the local region.

PICTURING MUSIC: RAGAMALA PAINTING

Music, so important in the cultural and courtly life of India, finds its place in visual art as well. Works known as *ragamala* paintings, which were usually executed in sets (*ragamala* means “garland of *ragas*”), are linked with musical patterns and melodies. The musical modes are separated into families headed by the “male” *ragas*, whose related “female” modes are called *raginis*. *Ragas* are associated with particular moods, seasons, and times of day. The poets personified these as courtly figures and much of the poetry tends towards descriptions of romantic dalliance. *Ragamala* painting flourished at the Hindu and Muslim courts of North and Central India, the Deccan, Rajasthan, and the Punjab Hills from as early as the fifteenth century.



51 Bilaval Ragini

From a *Ragamala* set
India, Gujarat, from a set dated 1608 A.D.?
Ink and gouache on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1998.42.38.2

The charming style of this painting is somewhat unpolished, but aspects of it contributed to the formation of Mughal painting; among the elements found in later works are the pavilion with its dome, the interior shown with the bed and bolster, and the manner in which the tree is depicted. The painting is from one of the earliest of all *ragamala* sets, apparently the first to be inscribed with the famous Sanskrit couplets attributed to the poet Kashyapa. The *ragini* Vilaval (also called Bilaval) is associated with morning. Here she puts on earrings while looking in a mirror awaiting the visit of her lover. *Preparing for her love-tryst and with jewels on her person the fair-hipped one, praying ever to her god of love—such, beautiful as the blue lotus, is Vilavali.*



52 Bilaval Ragini

From a *Ragamala* set

India, Mughal, Delhi, c. 1800–25

Ink, gouache, and gold on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1998.42.162

The *ragini* tying her turban and looking into a mirror awaits the visit of her lover. While Bilaval is usually shown putting on earrings, in this late Mughal example her arms are lifted in the same manner as she adjusts her coiffure. The way in which the painting is mounted on an album page with elaborate floral decoration is typical of Mughal and Mughal-inspired styles. These *muraqqa*'s or albums were very popular, with related paintings facing each other alternating with facing pages of highly prized calligraphy also placed in elaborate borders. A typical poem associated with this *ragini* is in the description of an earlier painting, number 51, depicting the same musical mode.



53 Gurjari Ragini

From a *Ragamala* set

Central India, Malwa, c. 1650

Ink, gouache, and gold on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1998.42.23

The usual representation of Gurjari *ragini* depicts two women with one playing an instrument, since the verse typically describes a lady playing a *vina* or lute, as in this example: *On a coach of soft and bright sandal-tree leaves, dark and with fine hair, her hand in position (upon the lute [vina]), she distinguishes between the seven notes. She is Dakshina-Gurjari.* As in many of the purer Indian styles, the figures here are silhouetted against bold, densely colored backgrounds. The artist has tried to depict the elaborate architecture in a realistic way, but the overall effect is flat. Simply labeled Gurjari, it is associated with dawn and the monsoon season.



54 Hindola Raga

From a *Ragamala* set

India, Bundi, Rajasthan, c. 1670

Ink, gouache, silver, and gold on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1998.42.5.1

A common verse describes the *raga* thus: *Enjoying frolicsome delight on a swing gently pushed by fair-hipped maidens, he is called by the great sages Hindola Raga, small, with complexion bright as that of the pigeon.* This folio is from a famous set recognizable by its distinctive borders (another from this set is number 55). Typical of the Bundi school, red ink has been used to outline the faces, giving great vitality to the features. Compared to many of the *ragamala* paintings in this group, the Bundi style is more naturalistic in its treatment of the figures due to the influence of the Imperial Mughal style. At the same time it retains many of the pre-Mughal conventions, such as the curve of the horizon and the angular outline of the female form with its distinctive wasp-like waist.



55 Khambhavati Ragini

From a *Ragamala* set

India, Bundi, Rajasthan, c. 1670–80

Ink, gouache, silver, and gold on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1998.42.5.2

The iconography of Khambhavati is consistent throughout most of India, since adoration of the four-headed god Brahma is almost always the theme. Within the palace walls, Khambhavati pays homage to the god with a sacrificial fire burning between the two figures. The scene is beautiful and lush. Other examples of Khambhavati, numbers 6 and 56, underscore the consistency of compositions over wide swathes of India.

This comes from a famous series sometimes referred to as the Berlin *ragamala*, since four of the thirty-six paintings are in that city. But another four are in a Hyderabad collection and two are here in Berkeley. Seven are either lost or in unknown locations.



56 Khambhavati Ragini

From a *Ragamala* set

India, Rajasthan, Amber, or Central India, c. 1700
Ink, gouache, and gold on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1998.42.27

The verses in Devanagari script in a saffron colored field above the scene inform us that Khambhavati *ragini* is so blessed that Brahma tells her anecdotes. Her beauty is so dazzling and her talk so enchanting, Brahma forgets to recite the *Vedas*, and the god of love, Kama, is shamed. The couplet refers to Kama being reduced to ashes, a common poetic cliché that here relates to the sacrificial fire between the two figures. Similar to number 55, the god Brahma is holding sacred texts while Khambhavati and her attendant look on. This is an example of a distinctive *ragamala* style developed in Amber and its later capital of Jaipur during the eighteenth century; it illustrated a particular set of *ragamala* poems in Hindi.



57 Nata Ragini, Son of Megha

From a *Ragamala* set?

India, Rajasthan, Bundi, c. 1735–45
Ink and orange wash on paper

Museum Purchase 1974.9.3

Nata *ragini* usually is visualized as a combat scene. Sometimes the figure on horseback will be female, but more often a male takes her place, as in this drawing. This work underscores how paintings are constructed, first with fine lines and then with more definite darker overdrawing. Red lines are often used initially to delineate the most important elements of the composition. Once paintings are finished and colored with dense, bright pigments the viewer is less aware of the bold line, but it is this sure line that defines the finished painting. The artist here has actually changed the composition. The man on the ground fighting the *ragini* appears to hold both a bow and a shield in his left hand and the figure on horseback's shield has two different angles, one in the orangey-red pigment and another in black line. One is struck by the incredible sense of movement seen in the figures.



58 Karnati Ragini

From a *Ragamala* set

India, Jammu and Kashmir, Basohli, c. 1680–1700
Ink and gouache on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1998.42.212

Karnati *ragini*, a wife of Shri *raga*, is playing a stringed instrument (probably one called a *rabab*) accompanied by another musician and fanned by a servant. These figures are strikingly placed against a plain dark background. In Mesakarna's text used in this region, Karnati is described as a dark-skinned woman dancing and frolicking continuously. None of the *raginis* of Shri are described as holding an instrument, but other paintings of Karnati are similar in subject to this one. The style is quite different from many of the paintings in the exhibition, much more stylized in a less naturalistic manner, but the bold shapes and colors make for an impressive effect.



59 Set Malhara Ragini

From a *Ragamala* set

Attributed to Mihr Chand, the son of Ganga Ram
India, Uttar Pradesh, Lucknow, c. 1770
Ink, gouache, and gold on paper

Gift of Jean and Francis Marshall 1999.15.14

The iconographies of *ragas* and *raginis* vary considerably in different traditions, but many sets that follow what has been dubbed the *Painters' System* involve the depiction of a lone ascetic or *yogi*. One published example is virtually identical to this sensitive painting of an emaciated ascetic meditating on a tiger skin and is labeled as Set Malhara *ragini*. But without an inscription it is difficult to know for sure. The drawing here is very close to the signed works of the Lucknow artist Mir Chand (fl. 1759–86). In any case a number of poems describe Set Malhara as an ascetic, male or female, meditating on an animal skin, as in this example: *By reason of separation (from her beloved) Malhara is in a mood of renunciation. She has become an ascetic by adopting the dress of a male.*



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