

RAJPUT PAINTING

*Reprinted from the Burlington Magazine,
March, 1912.*

Swa and Parvati (Pahari, Nola Ram, 1833) Comarawang's collection.

Birds - Pahari

Pahari - birds, finer borders, long eyes, few portraits, costume and architecture, folk element,

Sikh

Comarawang 'Rajput Painting' Burlington Stage 1907 12



RAJPUT PAINTINGS

BY ANANDA K. COOMARASWAMY



ABŪL FAZL, the minister, friend and historian of Akbar (1556-1605), must have been familiar with the best of contemporary Persian art, and with the Persian artists who worked at the Mughal court. After speaking of these he refers to Hindu painters in the following terms: "Their pictures surpass our conception of things. Few indeed in the whole world are equal to them".¹ The paintings which so much impressed Abūl Fazl are scarcely known in Europe, and those which do appear in the collections are classified with the Mughal portraits and book illustrations as "Indo-Persian miniatures", sometimes even as Persian. Yet there could scarcely be two schools more diverse in temper than the Rājput and Mughal.

What, then, are the Rājput paintings here described? They are those executed by Hindu painters, from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries, in Rājputāna and the Panjāb Himālayas. That they have been so long confused with works of the Mughal school has arisen from a variety of causes. The best examples of surviving works are in both cases nearly contemporary; a majority of works in both cases are portfolio pictures of moderate size; also the Rājput paintings show occasional traces of Persian and Mughal influence, while the Mughal paintings owe a very great deal to indigenous tradition. Only the subject matter seemed different. From these premises it has been concluded that the Hindu

¹ Blochmann's *Ain-i-Akbari*, I, 107. In English collections there are the following:—At South Kensington: Siva with Pārvalī, Ganesh and Kārūkeyya in a mountain cave; Pahārī (Kāngra valley). At the British Museum: Rājput Prince on a Terrace with a Girl Attendant, Or. Add. 22363, 6. In the Bodleian: Head of a Girl, Ouseley Add. 167, f. 2 (reproduced in my *Indian Drawings*, Pl. XV); Princess with Two Attendants on a Terrace, Moonlight, Ouseley Add. 171, f. 15; Bhils Hunting at Night, Ouseley Add. 166, f. 2. The first of those from the Bodleian is from Jaipur; the two others may have been done for Mughal patrons, and might perhaps be called Mughal. Reproductions of Rājput paintings and drawings are given in my *Indian Drawings*, Pls. XII, XV, XXIV, XXVI, and *Selected Examples of Indian Art*, Pls. I-VI.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ILLUSTRATION OPPOSITE: PLATE I

KĀLIYA DAMANA: quelling of the serpent Kāliya.—This was one of the heroic deeds of Krishna's youth. The poisonous nāga (*i.e.*, half-human water-serpent) Kāliya, to escape his hereditary enemy, the Garuda, lived in a certain whirlpool of the River Jumna. Thither Krishna, with the other cowherds, one day came, and Krishna sprang into the pool to fight the serpent. His comrades were afraid that he would be killed, and cried and stretched out their hands. Then Yasodā and Nand (foster-mother and -father of Krishna), along with the cowherdesses and cowherds, weeping and beating their breasts, falling and stumbling, ran to the whirlpool of Kāli. Then Śrī Krishna, round whom the serpent was entwined, seeing their distress, suddenly sprang away and mounted on his head. The serpent king was overpowered, his pride broken. In his heart of hearts he sought the protection of Nārāyana (*i.e.*, Krishna himself in his divine aspect). The serpent's wives also worshipped Krishna's feet, and prayed for their husband's life, saying, "Pity us, Mahārāj, and please release this one, otherwise

paintings represent, if not mere imitation, at least the result of the stimulus of imported Persian art.

The very ancient art of wall-painting in India is frequently referred to in Sanskrit and other literatures, generally in its secular aspect (portraiture). It survives everywhere at the present day in coloured drawings of large scale on the plastered walls of houses and temples: these vary in style in different parts of India, but are always vigorous and full of movement. All that we know of this art in very early times from actual remains is confined to the paintings at Ajanta² (second to seventh century), the fragmentary remains at Bāgh,³ and the fifth century fragments at Sigiri⁴ in Ceylon. In Ceylon there are also mediæval (twelfth century) paintings at Polonnaruva.⁵ Further research may add something to our knowledge, but, broadly speaking, we know nothing of mediæval Indian painting till we come to the works here described as Rājput.

The historians of art are always too much inclined to seek for the sources of art anywhere but where the art itself has flourished; at least, to look anywhere but in India for the sources of Indian art. They do not stop to enquire what are the *a priori* probabilities, whether an art so deeply rooted in Indian soil as that of the Rājput painters could have originated in a sudden inspiration derived from a foreign and secular art of book-illustration; they forget that, though mannerisms might be borrowed, passionate expression must be from within outwards.

The Rājput painting has none of the characteristics of a new art. It is, on the contrary, related to the classic art of Ajanta, as the Hindi language and literature are related to the older Prakrits and to Sanskrit. It is the latest phase of the great tradition which was still developing, or at its zenith, in the seventh century. The fact that no walls

² Now well known through the admirable copies made by Mrs. Herringham and others.

³ Luard, *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XXXIX, Pts. xdvii, xdviii, 1910.

⁴ Havell, *Indian Sculpture and Painting*, Pls. XLVII, XLVIII.

⁵ Ann. Rep. Arch. Survey Ceylon for 1907 (1911), p. 34.

slay us also with him. For death itself is desirable for a woman without a husband". So Krishna did this, banishing Kāliya to Ramanaka Dvīpa (*related in the Bhāgavata Purāna and Prem Sāgara*). This picture, in the magnificence of its colour scheme, the grandeur of its design, and its most expressive drawing, illustrates the best qualities of Rājput painting. Especially noticeable are the rhythmic grouping and sinuous movement of the figures in the pool, and the effortless power with which the dark blue Krishna raises up the serpent's body; also the tender pleading of the wives, wholly human in their absolute devotion, making us share their hope of pardon for the nāga. The group of excited figures on the bank is equally expressive in another way. The various subdued purples and greys of the water and the serpent bodies, and the tender bluish-greens of the landscape, give added value to the brilliant colours of the dresses and the occasional notes of gold.

Size of the original, 19.5 × 13.7 cm. Seventeenth or eighteenth century. Rājput, Pahārī (Kāngra?). Author's collection.

Rājput Paintings

remain on which the mediæval frescoes could have been preserved, and that paintings on paper older than the sixteenth century are, like Hindī manuscripts of similar date, almost unknown, cannot blind us to the unmistakable stylistic evidence afforded by the paintings themselves. Their tradition is altogether Indian, and, like a mediæval version of one of the great epics, takes one back to a remote antiquity. The Rājput paintings, indeed, show a remarkable combination of folk-idioms with ancient hieratic design. They are as completely expressive of northern Hindu India as are the contemporary music and poetry; are, in fact, exactly analogous to the various dialects of Hindī, more especially the old Braj.⁶

The technique of the Rājput paintings is important evidence in the same direction. It is a sort of tempera or gouache. All the painting has for its foundation definite outlines. Over these is laid a thin surface of body colour, which does not stain the paper, but readily flakes off when it is bent, revealing the under-drawing. Probably when paper was introduced into India (perhaps in the tenth or eleventh century), the existing technique of wall-painting was adapted to the production of smaller works meeting a more popular demand. At any rate, the character of these smaller works, in respect of scale of design, and of technique, is such that, in the absence of all other evidence, the existence of an older school of wall-painting could have been certainly inferred from it.

The Rājput paintings often show clear traces of their early ancestry. Thus, in the "Death of Bhishma", here reproduced [PLATE II], we have unmistakably a composition reminiscent of the great Buddhist Parinirvānas. Old elements found in other works are the spiral convention for water, the interest in the juxtaposition of varieties of skin colour, the frequent introduction of the three-pointed Hindu crown, the decorative treatment of the trees and flowers, the constant introduction of the lotus, and the adherence to old Indian ideals of physical beauty, such as the slender waist and very long eyes. But it is in other ways that these paintings bear most clearly impressed the marks of their origin. Especially is this true of the scale of the design. The small pictures are miniature only in actual measurement; they are really reduced frescoes. The Mughal art, on the other hand, is one of true miniature painting, while Persian is one of illumination. In the rare cases where Mughal work is executed on palace walls, as at

⁶Old Hindī verses descriptive of the subject are often written on the back of, or above or below, the Rājput pictures. Occasionally Sanskrit texts are quoted in the same way. The names of persons or subjects, when given, are written in Nāgarī characters, occasionally in Gurmukhī. The labels of Mughal pictures, on the contrary, and artists' signatures are always in Persian characters, and the calligraphic texts associated with them have hardly ever anything to do with the subject of the picture.

Fatehpur Sikri, it has the character of enlarged miniature. The Mughal art belongs to the gaily-decorated pages of books of adventure and romance and the portfolios of princely connoisseurs like Dārā Shukoh,⁷ whereas the Hindu art has stepped from the walls of palaces and shrines and public buildings, where its traces linger still. The Mahābhārat "gambling scene" [PLATE II], for example, might well have been a large fresco. Scarcely a single finely illustrated Hindī or Sanskrit manuscript exists; the art of the illuminated Hindu books, written out in Persian for the benefit of the Mughals, is altogether hybrid, more Persian than Indian in everything but subject. Had Indian painters, apart from those at the Mughal courts, been much influenced by the Persians, this influence must have resulted in the production of illustrated Sanskrit and Hindī manuscripts; but nothing of the sort took place. Such of these as exist are executed in purely Indian fashion, and they form the least important part of Rājput art.

The national character of the Rājput paintings is equally clearly marked in their subject matter and the outlook upon life which they reveal. Trees, flowers and animals, especially the lotus, banyan and flowering creepers, and elephants, cows and peacocks are used, as in old Indian art, as significant motifs. The character of animals is studied for its own sake, and not, as in Persian art, solely from a human, and usually utilitarian, point of view. Nature is friendly, everywhere revealing to man his own soul. In the human figures there is great concentration and intensity of emotion; eye looks into eye, as Blake would have drawn it, hand clasps hand, the very animals are spell-bound by the sound of Krishna's flute, the elements obey the *rāgs* and *rāginīs*.⁸ There are notes of swift, excited movement, and of self-forgetful adoration, which show that the later Hindu painters were still "curious of those movements of ardour and of tenderness", of which the representation so moves at Ajanta. Not always, however, is the art thus lyrical: it expresses also—as in drawings of Devī leading the hosts of heaven against the Asuras, or Pārvalī seated with Siva in the burial ground, stringing for him a garland of the heads of the Overlords of successive æons, as a girl might thread a daisy-chain—a sense of the conflict of titanic forces in the universe, an imagination of non-human gods that "bring man bliss or tear his life to shreds without a break in their own serenity".

All this is foreign to the aristocratic art of the

⁷One of whose picture albums is now at the India Office.

⁸"Hari is singing with unwavering sweetness, eyebrows, hand and cheek he sways;

The doe with her loved one, hearing the flute, is brought to a standstill;

The Jumna turns aside, the cows are there collected together". . . .

"There was such harmony of *rāgs* and *rāginīs*, that, hearing it, even wind and water no longer flowed".

—PREM SĀGAR.

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Mughal courts, with its profound interest in personal character, its sense of pageantry, and constant representation of obvious beauty. The Rājput painting is deeply religious; the Mughal art is secular, concerned with the doings of princes and courtiers, its outlook upon the present moment. It is not an idealisation of life, but a very refined and accomplished representation of a magnificent phase of it. The Mughal art is eclectic, the Rājput has the unity and the intensity of thirteenth-century Gothic. The Mughal painters were always thinking of making beautiful pictures; the Hindu artists were almost wholly occupied with what they had to say, and could not refrain from saying. The Mughal art is very modern, akin in spirit to the eighteenth-century painting of Europe or the colour-printers of Japan—hence, no doubt, its relatively greater popularity with students and collectors. Even in portraiture the distinction is clear. The Mughal draughtsman tells you just what such and such a man was like, the Rājput usually (not quite always) shapes the likeness to a preconceived ideal.

But Mughal painting is an art which did not, and could not, travel far beyond the circle of court life. Rājput art, where it is not purely hieratic, is a transfiguration of the life of the folk, almost as it is still lived in the north-west Himālayan valleys, on the banks of the Jumna, or the plains of Rājasthān. It illustrates also popular ballads and romances, such as Bāz Bahādūr and Rūpmatī, Mohna Rānī and Chel Batāo, or the Panjābī Sonī-Mahinwāl. But above all, the conception of Krishna as the Divine Cowherd illuminates the life of a people amongst whom cattle are treated as friendly guests, and not as mere possessions.

This is an anonymous art: scarcely a single name is attached to even the finest Rājput paintings. Indeed, to no individual could the credit be given for designs and conceptions which are the work of many artists and the whole people. Successful pictures were generally copied as tracings, and handed on from generation to generation in pupillary succession. At the same time it is rare to find two pictures ever exactly alike, for the painters freely modified or made additions or omissions as they wished, besides contributing entirely new designs. It follows from its traditional and hieratic character, and from this handing on of outlines, that the Rājput paintings cannot readily be dated. There is not, as in the Mughal work, a definite period of development and decline, which can be followed decade by decade. Good work was done as late as the nineteenth century, bad work already in the seventeenth. Still, the later can generally be distinguished from the earlier works by some artificiality of sentiment or weakening of the brushwork. The "Death of Bhishma" is, no doubt, the oldest of the examples here illustrated: it may date from the sixteenth century

or even earlier. The dates suggested in the descriptions of the plates do not pretend to exactness.

It must be borne in mind that the rise of emotional Vaishnavism as a popular religion in northern India dates from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and that the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries represent the period of greatest achievement of the vernacular literatures. Great poets and musicians such as Sūr Dās, Tulsi Dāst Tān Sēn, and many others lived then. Rājput, painting owes much to these contemporary humanistic and lyrical influences.

The term Rājput used in a wide sense is equivalent to the "Indo-Aryan" of ethnologists,⁹ which designation covers the Rājputs, Khattris and Jāts of Rājputāna, the Panjāb (and Kashmir), *i.e.*, the unconverted indigenous population of North-Western India. The racial term Rājput is preferable to any sectarian term such Hindu, which would include contemporary South Indian and Bengali¹⁰ work of a different character, and at the same time would not be analogous to already familiar names of schools of painting such as Persian, Taimurid and Mughal.

Rājput painting falls geographically into two main divisions, the first including the work done in Rājputāna, hitherto usually classed as of the Jaipur school, from the city of that name representing the chief centre of activity; I now propose also to speak of these as of the school of Rājasthān (= Rājputāna), as the name of a district and not merely of a single city. The second group of Rājput paintings includes those from the Himālayan valleys of the Panjāb (Jammu, Kāngra, Chamba, Rāmpur, Patiāla, Gahrwāl, etc.). These have been generally assigned to the Kāngra Valley school, from the place where the most important and purest examples appear to have been painted. This valley is the "most exclusively Hindu portion of the Panjāb". I now propose to speak of all the hill-paintings collectively as of the Pahāri school.¹¹

Thus one may classify the Rājput paintings as Rājasthānī, or Pahāri; mentioning Jaipur or the Kāngra Valley or other local name when more detailed information is available. I do not think that any greater sub-division of styles is possible at present, and perhaps it will never be necessary.

I shall now describe in detail the respective characteristics of the two schools of Rājput painting.

⁹ *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, 1907, I, 293, 322.

¹⁰ I take this opportunity of calling attention to the good reproductions of old Bengali paintings on book-covers given in Babu Dinesh Chandra Sen's *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, Calcutta, 1911, pp. 220, 224, 528 (not the frontispiece, the early date assigned to which I cannot accept). These belong rather to the South Indian (Dravidian) tradition than to any Rājput group.

¹¹ Hindi *pahāri*, "belonging to the mountains". The words Rājasthānī and Pahāri are both employed as linguistic terms with the same geographical connotation as above (*Imperial Gazetteer of India*, I, 367, 368).

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In Rājputāna actual wall-paintings of seventeenth and eighteenth century date are preserved at Udaipur (the island palaces) and at Bikaner, in the old palace.¹² Others, including the very fine Rādhā-Krishna picture of which details are here reproduced from old tracings, are in the Mahārāja's library at Jaipur. In the Calcutta Art School collection there is a very fine series of pictures of *rāgs* and *rāginīs* (musical modes) from Jaipur, of which one is here reproduced [PLATE III]. There is now a School of Art in Jaipur where pupils are

¹² A noteworthy point in connexion with Rājput painting in Rājputāna is the clear evidence of Chinese influence which it sometimes shows. This influence does not, as in the case of Mughal painting, take the form of an almost completely assimilated tendency, widely diffused, but appears as a close reproduction of Chinese formulas in occasional works, such as the wall paintings at Udaipur and certain decorations of clouds, lightning and cranes at Bikaner. I believe that this element, which is quite absent in other works of the same time and place, has been introduced, not overland by the Mughals, but directly by sea-borne trade from China. To this day Chinese embroidery adapted to Indian requirements—*i.e.*, on the tunics known as *jablas*, and for *sari* borders—is imported *via* Bombay for the use of Indian ladies in Gujerāt.

taught to draw by being required to copy English school diagrams of domestic and farm animals!

Amongst other characteristics of Jaipur work, distinguishing it from that of the hills, may be noted the type of scenery depicted,¹³ the peculiar sharply angular representation of the margins of the lotus ponds the painters were so fond of introducing into their pictures, the occasional use of silver (which blackens with age), especially for water; details of dress and architecture, and the physical type of the human figure. The eyes are large but not remarkably long, the nose straight and finely cut, the lips full and very sensitive, the hair with two black scorpion locks hanging over each cheek close to the ear, the figure a little thickset, and not represented in a great

¹³ For example, the very characteristic Rājputāna scenery in the so-called *Adam and Eve*, by Mani, reproduced by Gayet in *L'Art Persan*, Paris (?), 1895, p. 293. It may be remarked that the true subject of this picture is Rādhā and Krishna sheltering from the monsoon rain! Gayet, like other writers of similar handbooks, makes nearly every possible mistake in dealing with Indian pictures.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ILLUSTRATIONS OPPOSITE: PLATE II

SIVA AND PĀRVATĪ: attributed to Mola Rām of Garhwāl (d. 1833).—A moonlit night in the hills, Siva watching over Pārvatī sleeping. Siva's trisul, drum, gourd and banner on the right, the bull Nandi on the left; a lotus lake and low wooded hills in the distance. The clear night effect is very well suggested; the figure of the Great God is drawn with much tenderness. The trees are somewhat artificial, the figure of Pārvatī a little stiff, the fingers unnaturally pointed; these may be regarded as late features in a work otherwise well designed, and fascinating by its romantic, but not sentimental, tenderness.

Size of original, 15 × 22½ cm. Early nineteenth century. Rājput, Pahārī, attributed to Mola Rām, Author's collection.

DEATH OF BHĪSHMA: an episode of the Mahābhārata.—Bhīshma, the venerable uncle of Pāndu and Dhritrāshtra, and instructor of the Pāndavas and Kauravas alike, fought on the side of the latter in the Great War. On the tenth day the aged hero grew weary of the slaughter, and desired to meet his own fate. At last he fell, wounded by many arrows. When he fell from his car the hearts of all fell with him. "That foremost of all bowmen, that mighty-armed hero, fell down, like an uprooted standard of Indra, shaking the earth as he fell. Pierced all over with arrows, his body touched not the ground. At that moment a divine nature took possession of that great Bowman lying on a bed of arrows". The sun was then in the southern solstice, an inauspicious time for death. Wounded as he was, Bhīshma resolved to hold his life until the sun should reach the north; so, "having recourse to that Yoga which is taught in the great Upanishads, he remained quiet, expectant of his hour". Subsequently Bhīshma, in response to the inquiries of Yudhishtira, instructs him in the four branches of knowledge at great length. The story says that when Yudhishtira came to Bhīshma, "he lay stretched on his arrowy bed, resembling in splendour the evening sun"; again, he appeared "like unto a fire that is about to go out". When at last the sun turned towards the north, Bhīshma gave up his life-breaths: "in the midst of those great-hearted men it was a marvellous thing to see". The fine picture has grandeur of design proportionate to its subject. Perhaps the surpassing dignity of the aged warrior's death could not have been more nobly expressed. The painter has been concerned with this alone, and not with any thought of making an attractive picture, or

obviously beautiful. The figures to the left of Bhīshma are rishis (amongst whom is seen Nārada with his *vinā*) and Krishna; on the right Duryodhana and the five Pāndavas.

Size of the original, 13.8 × 6 cm. Fifteenth or sixteenth century. Old Rājput. Author's collection.

THE GAMBLING SCENE: from the Mahābhārata.—The Kauravas jealous of the power of the five Pāndavas, invited them to a gambling contest, where, through the unfair play of Sakuni uncle of Duryodhana, eldest of the Kaurava princes, Yudhishtira, eldest of the Pāndavas, lost everything—kingdom, wealth, army, brothers, himself, and finally Draupadī, their common wife. In spite of the protests of his father, and of Bhīshma and others, Duryodhana loses all self-control, and heaps insults upon the five brothers and upon Draupadī, sending his brother Dussāsana to drag her, "whom never before even the winds or the sun had seen", before the assembled princes. At this sight all present, except these two and two others, are filled with grief. But Dussāsana, seizing Draupadī's attire before the eyes of all, began to drag it off her body. She in her distress called upon Visṇu (= Hari, Nārāyana, Krishna). Then, as each garment was dragged from her, another of the same kind appeared beneath it, until hundreds and hundreds of robes had been taken from her, and lay heaped upon the floor. Then arose a deep murmur of many voices praising Draupadī and blaming Duryodhana. Ultimately a compromise is effected, whereby the brothers go into twelve years' exile with Draupadī, who is adjudged not legitimately staked or won. This dramatic scene is here represented as taking place at a mediæval Hindu court. The five Pāndavas are seated in hopeless dejection on the floor; Dussāsana is endeavouring to drag the clothes from Draupadī. The Kauravas are seated with all their councillors on the dais above. The scale of the design is clearly suited to a large wall-painting, though the actual picture is only 13 in. in length. [At Gujranwala, in the Panjāb, in an octagonal building known as the Samādhi of Madhan Singh, there is a painted pavilion, in which one of the pictures is of the same subject. This building, however, is not older than the early nineteenth century. I have not seen the paintings, which are mentioned in Murray's "Handbook for India".]

Size of original, 32 cm. long. Seventeenth or eighteenth century. Rājput, Pahārī (Kāngra). Lahore Museum.



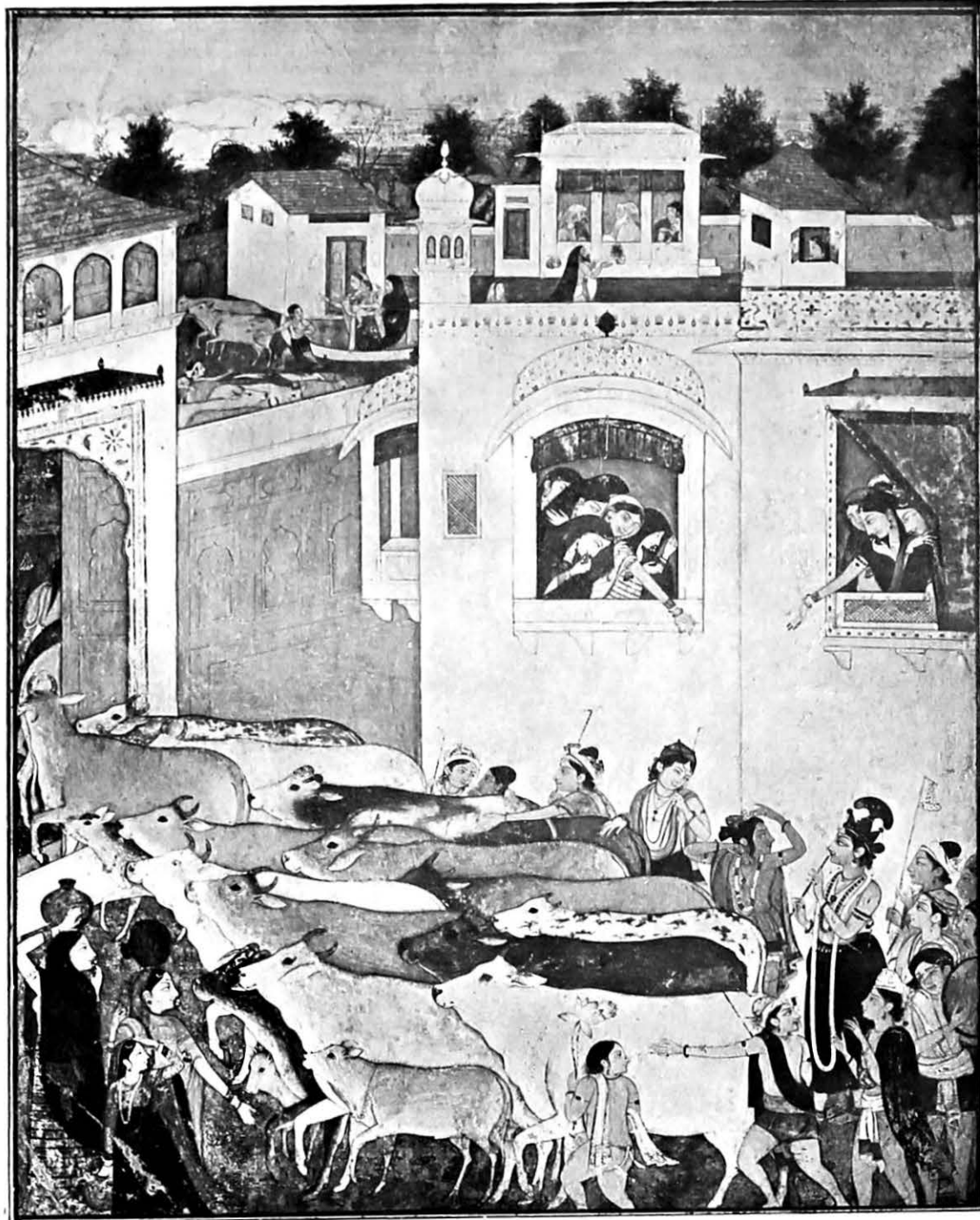
SIVA AND PĀRVATĪ. PAHĀRĪ, ASCRIBED TO MOLA RĀM OF GAHRWĀL (D. 1833). AUTHOR'S COLLECTION



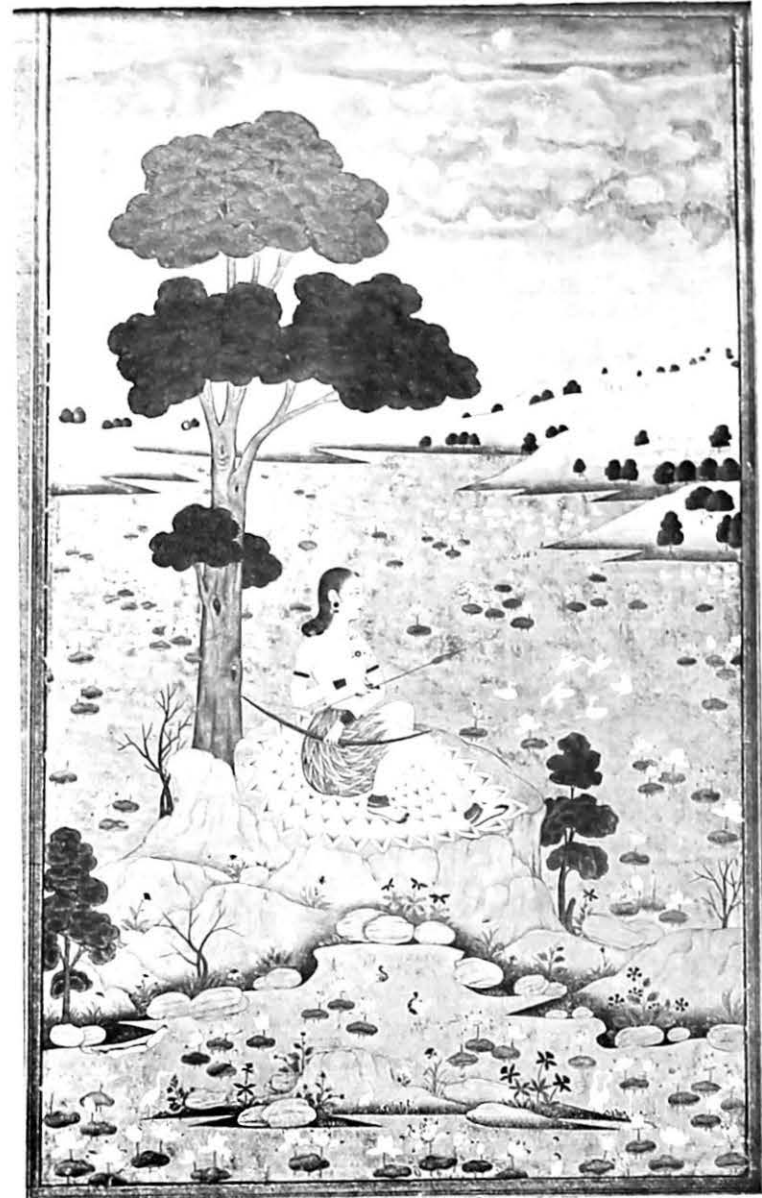
THE DEATH OF BHĪSHMA. EARLY RĀJPUT. AUTHOR'S COLLECTION



THE GAMBLING SCENE FROM THE "MAHĀBHĀRATA". PAHĀRĪ. LAHORE MUSEUM



THE DIVINE COWHERD. PAHĀRĪ. AUTHOR'S COLLECTION



MALĀR RĀGINĪ. JAIPUR. CALCUTTA SCHOOL OF ART

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variety of positions. Amongst the Jaipur pictures also there are some exceedingly clever drawings of animals, especially wild elephants.

In the Pahārī pictures there is often mountain scenery represented, sometimes with snow; the pastoral element more greatly predominates; Krishna, as the "wild lovable hero of the North-West valleys" is in his own country; the pictures have sometimes characteristic borders of flowers and occasionally birds, and one often finds exquisite little studies of flowers, fruit or leaves made directly from nature. The human figure is of a different type; the eyes are very long (but not at all Mongolian) and not widely opened, the mouth a little upward turned at the corners, the scorpion locks not emphasized, the figure very slender and willowy, represented in every possible variety of attitude. The brush drawing of outline and drapery is very free and sweeping; movement is magnificently rendered with bold straight lines clearly emphasizing the intention (well seen in the Kāliya Damana here illustrated). Portraits are fewer than in Rājputāna. There are also distinctions of costume and architecture. A characteristic technical detail is the frequent use of fine parallel brush lines over a lighter ground colour for grass, trees and rocks. The colouring is very brilliant, sometimes more like stained glass than water-colour painting on paper. This brilliancy is quite different from the jewelled gaiety of an art of pure illumination, dependent on a lavish use of gold; it is rather due to a peculiar purity and luminosity of the pigments used, especially the whites, and to the painters' sense of open air. On the whole the folk-element is more evident in the hill pictures than in those from Rājputāna; they have, too, a greater

depth and spontaneity of feeling, and perhaps (as we might expect from the relative inaccessibility of the hills) a somewhat purer idiom.

A few words may be said in passing about the Sikh style. It is a school of portraiture of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, with brilliant colouring and rather unfeeling outline. It derives from the Mughal school, with Pahārī influence, and is the only late development of Indian painting possessing any character. There are many examples in the Lahore Museum. The best pictures are the darbar scenes, in which there is a certain grandeur and dignity of design and grouping; but, on the whole, the Sikh work is of very minor importance. Some quite modern examples are reproduced in the "Empire Magazine" for January, 1912.

The usual subjects of Rājput paintings in both areas may be classified as follows, approximately in order of frequency:—

(a) Krishna subjects, his birth, gestes in childhood and youth (both of love and heroism), but especially the mystic love of Rādhā and Krishna, and pictures of Krishna as the Divine Cowherd.

(b) Saivite subjects, especially Siva wandering with Pārvaṭī in the mountains, He as the Great Yogī, clad in a tigerskin, smeared with ashes and gleaming white, seated before a sannyāsi's fire, She as a girlish, loving wife, often with their children, Ganesh and Kārtikeyya, and with the bull Nandi, just as the folk-imagination pictures them haunting the hills and forests. In other works Siva dances to a chorus of the gods assembled on the golden floor of heaven, or seated with Pārvaṭī in his paradise of Kailās far above the white-peaked hills. There are also abundant illustrations of the Devī

DESCRIPTION OF THE ILLUSTRATIONS OPPOSITE: PLATE III

THE DIVINE COWHERD: Krishna bringing home the cows.— This is the everyday life of Krishna's youth, a transfiguration of the pastoral life of the north-west valleys.

"When they troop home, our tiny street
Wears beauty like a diadem,
Though mean enough before".

From the story of Hīr and Rānjhā.

Krishna, with crown and flute, walks behind the cows on the right hand, his brother and the other cowherds with him, cowherdresses to the left looking back at them. The dappled cows are eagerly streaming through the great gateway into the inner enclosure. Other gopis (cowherdresses) are looking down to welcome Krishna from the upper windows. (The *jhārokha*, a window with long-pointed overhanging eaves, is a characteristic feature of Rājput architecture.) His foster-father, Nand, and others are seated in a small pavilion in the upper part of the picture. It would be difficult in words to give any adequate idea of the pure, bright colouring and luminous whites of this picture, so perfectly expressive of the simplicity and gaiety of its motif. The arrangement of the subordinate notes of black is very effective. The scale of the whole design, as so often in Rājput paintings, is large, and might well be mural. This picture loses much in reproduction.

Size of original, 21½ × 27 cm. Seventeenth to eighteenth century. Rājput, Pahārī, Kāngra Valley. Author's collection.

MALĀR RĀGINĪ, "Rainy Mode".—The Indian musical modes are regarded as the manifestations or perceptible forms of angels. These modes and their genii are called Rāgs and Rāginīs, the former being masculine, the latter feminine. The Rāgs and Rāginīs are held to express and awaken definite emotions, and to exercise special powers over the elements. Their visualized forms have characteristics representing the same qualities; definite colours, costumes, actions and environment are associated with each. Here the Rāginī is represented as a woman-fowler, resting on a lotus seat in the midst of a lake surrounded by low hills, under a cloudy sky. The colouring of the original is pure and brilliant, filled with a sweet purity and freshness, recalling, as the Rājput paintings so often do, the delicate landscape backgrounds of early Italian paintings, though here the landscape is an essential part of the picture, not merely an exquisite accessory. This "Italianness" is no borrowing of mannerisms, but the fruit of a certain outlook upon life. The foreground and landscape are very characteristic of Rājasthānī painters, the lotus and zigzag water-margins constantly recurring. The picture is one of a series of pictures of Rāgs and Rāginīs, of which the greater number are now in the Calcutta School of Art collection. [In "Selected Examples of Indian Art", where another of these pictures is reproduced and described, it is erroneously stated to belong to Mr. G. N. Tagore.]

Size of original, 8¼ × 5½ in. Eighteenth century. Rājput, Jaipur. Calcutta School of Art.

Rājput Paintings

Purāna (Markandeya Purāna, Chandi Parva), where the supremacy of Devī is insisted on, and She is constantly represented as fighting the Asuras.

(c) Subjects from the epics, especially the Rāmāyana—*e.g.*, the wanderings of Sitā and Rāma in the forests and Sitā's abduction. Mahābhārat subjects are rarer.

(d) Lyrical subjects and love scenes and pictures of ideal heroine types (*nāyikās*) in various circumstances.

(e) *Rāgs* and *Rāginīs* (the angels of the musical modes).

(f) Portraits.

(g) Pictures of well-known forts and shrines, and semi-historical fighting scenes.

(h) Drawings of wild animals and flowers.¹⁴

To Western minds these are for the most part unfamiliar subjects, and they have been regarded as emotionally barren, partly on account of religious prejudice, partly because very little information has been available to the general reader, apart from the dry pages of learned works about mythology. But to the Hindu painters and those for whom they worked these things were living realities, as real and as familiar as the subject

¹⁴Careful studies of domestic animals are more characteristic of Mughal work. Much of the beautiful flower design in Mughal architectural ornament must be of Pahlāri origin.

matter of Christian art to Western painters. Therefore it is that these works are so deeply charged with feeling, and so easily and surely made their appeal to those who understood them: for these had vivid imagination of their own, which could work together with the artist's symbols and suggestions. The European needs at first to make an intellectual effort to grasp the subject matter of the Hindu paintings: this barrier did not stand between the painters and their own public.

Probably Hindu painting, for these reasons, will never be an art widely or popularly appreciated in Europe; but to those who care for pure expression rather than mere representation, or are in some other way prepared to understand and sympathise with Indian thought, these paintings are the key to the door of an enchanted land which, once entered, can never be forgotten.¹⁵

¹⁵It is a strange and disquieting thought that, in spite of all difficulties, Indian art is likely to be more appreciated in Europe than in India. The tendency of modern India is to a great extent away from humility and sincerity of sentiment; all that has been learnt from Europe in art is to prefer even the clumsiest illusion to any work of the imagination. So it is that to modern Indian eyes even the noblest of the old works in painting and sculpture seem insignificant, or at the best material for historical research. To their æsthetic qualities there is almost absolute indifference. One of the most unfortunate results of this attitude has been the neglect and destruction of many works which might otherwise have been preserved.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ILLUSTRATION OPPOSITE: PLATE IV

MUSICIANS: from a tracing prepared and used as a pouncing.— This is one of (or one closely resembling) a series of contemporary tracings of the large picture of Rādhā and Krishna dancing together, which exists as a tempera or gouache painting on two large panels in the library of the Maharaja at Jaipur. The whole composition consists of the two central figures and the two groups of musicians behind

them on right and left. The fragment illustrated is from one of these groups of musicians. It well exemplifies the special type of feature characteristic of the larger work of the Jaipur painters. The straight nose and finely chiselled mouth mark a high-bred and aristocratic type.

Size of original, 53 × 73 cm. Eighteenth century. Rājput Jaipur. Author's collection.

BRISTOL PORCELAIN IN THE TRAPNELL COLLECTION BY R. L. HOBSON

THE Trapnell Collection of Bristol and Plymouth porcelains which has been purchased by Mr. Amor and is now on exhibition at 31 S. James's Street, is probably the most representative ceramic collection ever made in this country. In the last twenty-six years, in spite of liberal gifts to the Bristol and Bath Museums, Mr. Trapnell has brought together some five hundred specimens which exemplify practically every known type issued by these factories. The only notable absences are the rare Harford or Hickey service made in 1774 and the two tumblers exhibited by Richard Champion in the Houses of Parliament in 1775 and now in the British Museum.

There are many reasons why the porcelain made at these western factories should be specially dear to both collectors and students of English ceramics. It represents the only serious attempt on record to manufacture true "hard-paste"

porcelain in the Chinese and Meissen style in this country. The ware is necessarily scarce owing to the brief duration of the works, and the obscurity of its earlier history leaves plenty of scope for imagination and research. How tantalizingly limited, for instance, is our knowledge of the pioneer work done at "Lowris' china house". Two short passages in Dr. Richard Pococke's "Travels through England," under the date 1750, inform us that it was "lately¹ established by the principal of the manufacture at Limehouse which failed"; that the experiments were started at a glass-house; that two kinds of ware were made, "one called stone china . . . that I suppose is made of pipe clay and calcined flint" and the other

¹By a curious error it is stated in Mr. Trapnell's catalogue that these works "had been established from twelve to fourteen years" (p. 10). The figures are evidently taken from the sentence preceding the passage quoted from Dr. Pococke's *Travels*, and they refer not to the china works, but to "the very fine exchange" which had just been built at Bristol!



MUSICIANS (ORIGINAL POUNCED TRACING); JAIPUR. AUTHOR'S COLLECTION