

CULTURAL EXCHANGE  
IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY INDIA



STUDIES IN ASIAN  
ART AND CULTURE

# STUDIES IN ASIAN ART AND CULTURE | SAAC

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CULTURAL EXCHANGE  
IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY INDIA  
POETRY AND PAINTINGS FROM KISHANGARH



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## Preface

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It has been a true privilege to work on the material of this book. It all started out as a literary study of the Kṛṣṇa *bhakti* poet, Nāgarīdās. I was aware that some of his poems were illustrated in the elegant paintings of the Kishangarh school. As I read through his oeuvre and pursued manuscripts of his work, however, I quickly discovered how much more there was to the topic, especially with regard to visual sources. I found myself outside the comfort zone of my own discipline and it became clear I needed to complement my textual approach with art-historical and historical methodology.

I am very grateful for the help I received in broadening my horizons, without which this book would not have been possible. For initiating me into art-historical approaches, I want to express my gratitude to Dr. Navina Haidar of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Dr. Haidar wrote her excellent 1995 Oxford dissertation (which unfortunately has remained unpublished) on *The Kishangarh School of Painting (c. 1680–1850)*, and is the world's expert on the topic. She very kindly advised me on the third chapter, on Kishangarh art, during our April 2012 meetings in New York and in correspondence since. I am also grateful to Dr. Gursharan Sidhu from Seattle for generously sharing his insights with me, and illustrating it all with beautiful examples from the Elvira and Gursharan Sidhu collection. I cherish very much the delightful moments spent with the Sidhus and the treat of their great hospitality. I am also grateful for stimulating conversations with Molly Aitken of the City University of New York and Dipti Khara of New York University and Sonal Khullar, my colleague at the University of Washington, Seattle.

For the historical background, I want to express my gratitude to my historian-colleague at the UW, Seattle, Professor Purnima Dhavan, who is a specialist in late Mughal sources. We spent many delightful hours reading through eighteenth-century texts in Braj, Urdu, and Persian. She kindly took the time to read through and comment on a draft of the first chapter on the cosmopolitan culture of the time. Having a historian's view of the literary scene in the period has helped open up my own view. I also enjoyed the privilege of working during summer 2011 in Jaipur with Professor Monika Horstmann, now retired from the Institute for Indology of Heidelberg University. Prof. Horstmann's books and methodology (1999 and 2009 books and 1998 article) have all along been

a major source of inspiration for my work. I owe a lot of what is good in this book to all these colleagues. Needless to say, all remaining shortcomings are entirely my own.

In India, I am especially grateful to H.H. Maharaja Brajraj Singh of Kishangarh, first for sharing his extensive knowledge and further for his kindly permitting and facilitating my studying the poetry manuscripts in his family collection. I am grateful to Madan Mohan Ācārya, Mukhiyā-jī of the Śrī Kalyāṇarāya jī temple for reading through the manuscripts with me. It has been the most pleasant way ever to study manuscripts—to sit in the opulent palace lounge and enjoy the satsaṅg of Mukhiyā-jī, who often sang the songs we read and explained the emotions they evoked, as his intense love for Kṛṣṇa shone through. I am also grateful for those others in Kishangarh who helped me out at various junctures. I want to thank especially Shāhzād Citrakār Alī, son of Dr. Faiyāz Alī Khān, who graciously allowed me to consult and photograph his father’s works and the manuscript of Nāgarīdās’ *Pad-muktāvalī* preserved by the family; Dr. Jaykrishna Sharma, the Ācārya of the Kachariya Nimbārka Pīṭh, who was always prepared to provide background, explain difficult passages, and give tips for pursuing manuscripts; Bhagadand jī Somani and his family; and in Salemabad, Pūjārī Ravi Sharma and Śrījī Mahārāj.

In the Braj area, I enjoyed the satsaṅg of Śrīvatsa Gosvāmī and his extended family at the Śrī Caitanya Prem Sansthān and that of my good friend Swapna Sharma (now lecturer at Yale University). They generously shared their expert knowledge of the Braj area and deep insights into Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa *bhakti*. I also want to thank the staff of the Vrindaban Research Institute, Mathura Janmabhumi Library, and Jayesh Khandelval, who single-handedly has built up and catalogued the superb collection of Ras Bhāratī Sansthān in Vrindaban. For access to manuscripts preserved elsewhere, I owe special thanks to Giles Tillotson and Dr. Chandramani Singh at the Jaipur City Palace Museum, and the staff of the Sanjay Sharma Sangrahālay in Jaipur, as well as the Rajasthan Oriental Research Institute in Jaipur and Bharatpur.

Sections of chapters 2 and 3 of this book have been previously presented and written up as papers at the European Conference of South Asian Studies in Leiden in 2006 and in Lisbon in July 2012, and at the Indo-Muslim Cultures in Transition symposium at the University of California Irvine in November 2008 (Pauwels 2012, and 2014a and b). There is some overlap, but the version here has been modified substantially. I acknowledge with gratitude the online journal SAMAJ for permission to republish materials from my 2014b article. Other parts of the book have not been written up formally but were presented as talks at the yearly South Asia Conference at the University of Wisconsin

Madison in October 2011, and at the Coomaraswamy Prize Panel, in response to Molly Emma Aitken's *The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting*, at the Association for Asian Studies meeting in San Diego, March 2013. I want to thank the organizers and audiences at all these venues for their incisive comments and suggestions, from which the book has benefited much.

Research in India was made possible thanks to an American Institute for Indian Studies senior short-term fellowship during 2011–2012. I am very grateful to Philip Lutgendorf and Purnima Mehta for making this possible by moving my paper work along in timely fashion, so I could do my fieldwork still at the beginning of my sabbatical. The writing up of my findings was supported through a Guggenheim Fellowship (2011–2012), which also allowed me to visit Dr. Haidar in New York. I also received research leave of the University of Washington and a Royalty Research Fellowship (2011–2012 and Spring 2013). Collaboration with Dr. Dhavan was facilitated during 2011–2012 by a grant from the Simpson Center of the Humanities at the University of Washington, and the South Asia Center there also provided funding to organize a series on “Persian and the Vernaculars” that allowed extended interaction with Muzaffar Alam of the University of Chicago, Rajeev Kinra of Northwestern University, and Sunil Sharma of Boston University, to all of whom I am very grateful for stimulating discussions.

The publication of the images for this book was made possible thanks to a subvention of the College of the Arts and Sciences of the University of Washington. For the images reproduced, I am grateful to the following individual collectors for their kind permission to reproduce images of the paintings in their collections: Mr. Shāhẓād Citrakār Ali, son of Dr. Faiyāz Ali Khān of Kishangarh, India; collectors from London, UK, Zürich, Switzerland; and Mr. Eberhard Rist from Germany; as well as to the following institutions: the National Gallery of Victoria, Australia; Fondation Custodia in Paris; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the Harvard Art Museums/ Arthur M. Sackler Museum; the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore; the San Diego Museum of Art; and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. I am grateful to Sotheby's and Francesca Galloway for reproductions of the images they have sold. I also owe a special thanks to Stephen Markel of LACMA for sending me early on a high-resolution image of the *Isq-caman* calligraphy on the cover and for fascinating correspondence on the topic.

Special thanks go to Margaret Case for her wonderful help in improving the English of this book and Susan Miller for help with some of the translations featured.

Finally, I want to thank my children for their patience with “mama's so-manieth book” and trips to India, and most of all, heartfelt thanks to my

husband whose intellectual and practical support in so many ways means more than I can say.

## A NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION AND OTHER CONVENTIONS

Throughout this book both Hindi and Urdu poetry are cited, and on occasion a little bit of Persian. For the Hindi I have followed the transliteration system of the prestigious *Oxford Hindi-English Dictionary* (OHED) by Stuart McGregor, but for quotes from Old Hindi, I have preserved the neutral vowel “a,” which is silent in modern Hindi but counts as a syllable in the Old Hindi poetry.

For the Urdu and Persian, as per convention, I have not transliterated that neutral vowel. I have followed Frances Pritchett’s transliteration system in her *Nets of Awareness* (1994: xi), with two exceptions for the sake of consistency with the Hindi. First, the *cīn* is transcribed as “c” whereas “ch” (used by Pritchett) is reserved for the aspirate palatal, so as not to confuse the two. Second, the *nūn-e ḡhunnah* is, like the corresponding nasal indicator in Hindi, transliterated with either the tilde on top of the vowel or as the appropriate nasal from the Hindi alphabet before a consonant. Also differing from Pritchett, I spell *sher* rather than *shīr*, since it is a term widely used in secondary literature. Following the Persian conventions leads to some inconsistency with the Hindi, as the *śīn* is transliterated as “sh” rather than “ś,” but the advantage is it allows for spelling Shāh rather than Śāh.

The texts of Nāgaridās’s works follow the vulgate Nāgarī Pracāriṇī Sabhā edition by Gupta (1965), unless indicated otherwise. Since most manuscripts of Nāgaridās’s Rekhtā work are in Devanagari, I have transliterated it as Hindi, rather than as Urdu. This is justified because at this period there was not yet much concern with orthography of Persian loans. However, when quoting the poetry of Valī, I have used the Urdu transliteration and based the text on the standard edition of his *Kulliyāt* by the foremost Valī scholar, Sayyid Nūr ul-Ḥasan Hāshmi (1982).

In order not to overload the visual image of the text, I have refrained from giving diacritics for place names and the names of scripts and languages (though for little-known languages like Dakhanī, I have given diacritics, mainly to distinguish the language from the term denoting the region, “Deccani”). Similarly, names of gods come with diacritics. Commonly occurring words in the literature, such as the occupational names munshi, zamindar, subedar, vazir, and so on, or caste names such as Khatri, Kayasth, and Brahmin, have been given without diacritics and not in italics. For the names of authors and their Hindi

works, I have followed the generally accepted model of R.S. McGregor's standard encyclopedic work (1984); for Urdu and Persian, I have again followed Pritchett (1994). In several cases it was difficult to determine whether to transliterate according to Hindi or Urdu. For transliteration from Devanagari I write Khān, whereas for Urdu names I have ẖhān. I have opted for "Rekhtā" rather than "Rekhtah" throughout, because I am mainly working from Devanagari versions of poetry in that idiom. Names of meters have been given with full diacritics and capitalized in italics, such as *Dohā*, *Pada*, *Kavitta*, *Ġhazal*; names of musical genres also have diacritics and are capitalized: Khyāl, Dhrupad, Qawwālī. These choices are somewhat arbitrary, but I have tried to be consistent, and I hope they will not distract too much from the content of the book.