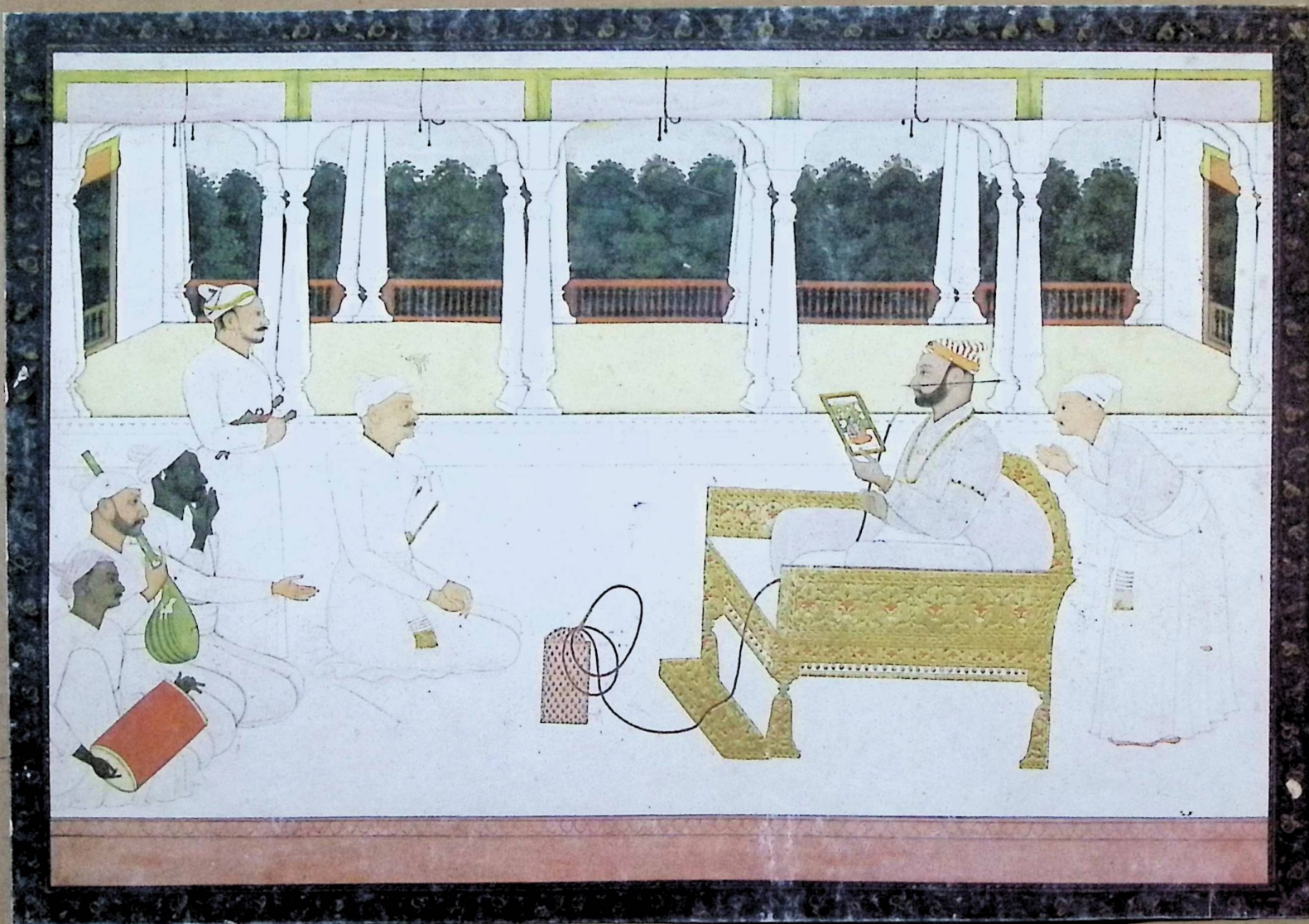


THE EYE'S DELIGHT

The Great 18th century Pahari painter, Nainsukh

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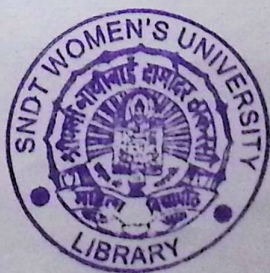
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✓ The Eye's Delight

The Great Eighteenth Century Pahari
Painter, Nainsukh.

Lalit Kala Series Portfolio No. 41

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"THE EYE'S DELIGHT"

The great 18th century Pahari painter, Nainsukh

Writing about an Indian painter of the past is not easy — it is no accident that till very recently there has been not a single full-length study devoted to an individual artist — for Indian painting is something like a world of silence in which all that one can pick up is indistinct whispers. There are remarkably few hard facts that one can base one's work on: no biographies exist; dates are elusive; pitifully few 'signed' works have come down; whatever names we have of painters remain scattered and bare, almost impossible to place in a clear context of family or community or workplace. As has been said elsewhere, an art historian who tries, with the help of these little slivers of fact, to make his way through the mysterious but exciting world of Indian painting is a little like an *Abhisārikā* heroine who, with passion in her heart, moves towards the place of her rendezvous through a dark and stormy night, full of hazards and uncertainties, her way lit only by the occasional flash of lightning appearing in the sky.

And yet, despite all the difficulties with which it is beset, effort needs to be made to look at the Indian painter afresh. The garnering of facts about him and the piecing together of his *oeuvre* apart, what is necessary is to see him — as he often was — as a person in his own right. For far too long has he been seen as belonging to an indeterminate, anonymous group of craftsmen who simply plied predetermined brushes. He was a thinking man, presented with and capable of exercising choices.

Nainsukh — literally, the 'delight of the eye' — the 18th century painter to whose life and work this portfolio sets out to draw attention, certainly was one. Born in about 1710 in the little hill principality of Guler, now in Himachal Pradesh, he was the younger of the two sons of the highly gifted Pandit Seu who worked for the royal court there. With Pandit Seu — the honorific 'Pandit' was a relic of the past, a reminder of the Brahmin origins of the family which had gradually merged with the professional caste-group of 'carpenter-painters' — one associates some fresh beginnings in Pahari painting. Steeped in tradition, the Pandit seems to have come into contact with some late Mughal works, and to have responded to their case of manner, their fluent naturalism. If one's reconstruction of his work is correct, he seems to have begun experimenting, adjusting and adapting to the new vision while staying broadly within the limits of his own tradition. This new spirit, this thinking departure, seems to have rubbed off on the young Nainsukh, then growing up under his father's tutelage, even if it left his elder brother, the wonderfully talented Māṇaku, more or less unmoved.

Nainsukh seems to have matured early, for almost the first works one associates with him — a self-portrait at the age of twenty, little impromptu studies of his father and his elder brother — show him in a brilliant light. When he was ready to begin his own work, independent of his father, he seems to have been armed with prodigious skills: the ability to observe the tiniest, most casual of details with a clear eye, the use of a remarkably supple line, the power to make clean, uncluttered paintings and make a poetic air hang over them while bathing them in soft colours that he understood so well. His portraits were fine studies: well-grasped, cleanly drawn, studded with the most appropriate details, conveying the true sense and presence of the person. Even in large groups which he often rendered, he was able to swoop in on individuals, and view the most humble of characters with alert, heart-warming sympathy. When one takes in the fact that Nainsukh often placed large groups — princes in royal settings with hosts of companions, retainers and attendants — against gently receding vistas, landscape dotted with small lakes and denuded trees and daintily rendered tufts of grass, it is easy to see that his work must have come as a surprise in the context of the times to which he belonged. There were not many in the hills who were doing work of this kind, or this quality.

One does not know for how long Nainsukh worked at Guler, or by the side of his father, but by 1740, when he was about thirty years of age, he seems to have left his home-town of Guler and moved to Jasrota,

another little principality that lay to the west, across the river Ravi. What led to this move is unknown; one is not even certain for whom he started working at Jasrota first. But soon after he moved there, he attached himself to a young prince, Balwant Singh, who belonged to a junior, possibly even breakaway, branch of the royal family. This was a perfect coming together, for the painter and patron seem to have been made for each other. Balwant Singh was eager and curious, passionately fond of painting and music in his own eccentric manner, full of dreams and visions of a grandeur that life denied him, Nainsukh knew men and their nature: given to envisioning things even while observing them with his needle-sharp vision, he was obviously capable of responding to the psychological needs of a patron. The body of work that resulted from this coming together then is the stuff that legends in art history are made of. In the twenty years or so that Nainsukh worked for, and with, Balwant Singh at Jasrota, he rendered his prince in a range of moods and situations for which there are virtually no parallels outside the work of the Mughal ateliers. Through his eyes, we see Balwant Singh writing a letter, stalking a duck, watching a group of professional mimics, examining a painting, riding out on a litter for a hawking expedition, striking a lion down with his bared sword, sitting with his sons, having his beard trimmed, listening to petitioners, supervising a construction, standing on a palace roof watching rain clouds, seated in front of a fire before retiring, offering prayers or simply smoking a *huqqa* in a camp-bed, wrapped in a quilt and staring into space. Close to sixty works of this order have survived, in different stages of completion, from swift first sketches to highly finished paintings.

But this was not to last forever: in 1763, Balwant Singh died. Even this scrap of information comes to us not from a family chronicle but from a page in the register of a priest at Haridwar on which Nainsukh has made a long entry about his family in his own beautiful hand: the painter had gone to this place of pilgrimage to accompany the ashes of his patron which were to be consigned to the holy waters of the Ganga. The mildly inebriated world in which "musicians sang by day and night, painters plied their brushes, and horses kicked wild boars to death", had sadly come to an end.

For Nainsukh, however, there was to be another beginning. It seems that soon after this, he took up employment with another ruler, the pious Amrit Pal of Basohli, related to his former patron but very different in personal inclinations and taste from him. He was evidently not interested in being portrayed or having his own activities recorded. His religious bent, evidenced by the fact that he ultimately abdicated his throne to take up the life of a recluse, must have placed different demands upon Nainsukh. There is some indication in fact that, working for Amrit Pal, Nainsukh started on different projects. There is the partially unfinished leaf with a four-armed image of Vishṇu which might have served as an opening folio of a new series; also a folio with the opening, invocatory leaf from a Bihari *Satsai* series in which the poet stands adoring Rādhā and Kṛishṇa. Even if none of these or other series came to completion, it is almost certain that at this stage of his life — one has to remember that he too was ageing — Nainsukh became more and more occupied with planning rather than executing series of paintings, preferring to put down first thoughts in the form of sketches or to create a body of drawings. One of these series that Nainsukh made first sketches for and helped plan may have been the great *Gita Govinda* series, formerly in the Tehri-Garhwal collection, which is one of the glories of Indian painting. Possibly he did not live to see the series finished, for he died in 1778, according to the priests' registers. His ashes were taken to Haridwar by his nephew, Fattu, Māṇaku's son.

The work that Nainsukh did in his lifetime must have been very extensive but it has been possible so far to identify and attribute to him no more than a hundred works (reproduced in my recent book on him, published from Zurich, 1997). The style in which he worked is delicate in the extreme, but also somewhat elusive, for there are in it lightning-quick turns, elements that take one completely by surprise. There are also conventions and idioms that one has to try and make sense of through gaining a slow acquaintance with his mind, his manner of thinking. But in the final analysis, it is not idioms that dominate Nainsukh's work; and conventions are but hand-maidens. What shines forth is his ability to seize a detail and exalt it, to grasp a moment and "throw it clear beyond the reach of time". One sees this again and again. In that painting with as mundane a theme as Balwant Singh stalking a duck, for instance: the prince softly creeps up on the bird, matchlock in hand, from behind the cover of a bull and slowly, very slowly, body hunched, inches forward. There is a hush in the air, even the viewer almost has to hold his breath. Or in that poignant painting with the portable Vishṇu-shrine. Two attendants are seen waving *morchhal*-fans over the shrine with Vaishṇava emblems that contains the urn with Balwant Singh's ashes brought for immersion in the Ganga. It is a work of singular subtlety that takes hold of the viewer's mind and makes him gradually aware of the ineffable sadness on the faces of the attendants and of the stillness of the enclosure with the cloth screens which serves, in Nainsukh's hand here, as a metaphor for the great divide between the world that we can see and that which lies beyond.

DESCRIPTION OF PLATES

1. Balwant Singh standing smoking in his garden

Gouache on paper

Inscribed with the date: *Phālguna* (February-March), V.S. 1800/A.D. 1744

29.4 x 21.3 cm. (outer)

23.1 x 15.8 cm. (inner)

Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh; acc. no. D-130

Formerly in the collection of the Central Museum, Lahore.

The portrait is formal, sumptuous, remarkably clean. Nainsukh renders the prince who was to emerge as his great patron, Balwant Singh, as a sensitive young man, aware of and interested in elegance, just come into his own. He stands here, superbly attired, in a long yellow *jāmā* patterned with finely delineated floral sprigs of white and green, and tied under the left arm with lappets that hang down to the waist, their green edges barely visible under the right hand holding the stem of the *huqqa*. The hanging ends of the *paṭkā*, tied around the waist, do not fall in front but, elegantly, to the side, a fashion he seems to have greatly favoured. The *paṭkā* is orange-coloured, with gold edging and broad golden borders, matching exactly the orange of the shoes he wears. The gold and the yellow of the *jāmā* are picked up again by Nainsukh in the turban which is adorned with a series of fine, curling white-and-grey plumes. The choice of the colours, one reminds oneself, is especially appropriate to the month mentioned in the inscription, *Phālguna*, in which the festival of Holi falls and spring is insistently, fragrantly in the air. The grey clouds in the sky, rendered with singularly free brushwork, are a bit of surprise, but the bees hovering in the air, reminiscent somehow of Māṇaku's great *Gita Govinda* series, clearly belong to this time and place.

Nainsukh pays amazing attention to detail. The prince's left hand sets on the hilt of a sword sheathed in a golden scabbard painted with floral sprigs. The right hand holds the stem of the *huqqa* which an attendant, standing a little behind, carries. The *huqqa* itself is superbly crafted, with its metal base studded with gold, rubies and emeralds, and the rich maroon-coloured stem makes elegant loops and curves. The setting is a sparse garden with a row of neatly growing poppies in the foreground, two stately, stylized cypresses rising at the right, and flowering bushes at the back. The ground is coloured a jade green, and the background a flat grey.

Nainsukh was to paint Balwant Singh in many moods and situations but here, virtually at the beginning of his career under the young prince, he renders what must be termed a 'splendid' portrait. There is no coldness in the work, however: only the distance that a formal portrait demands. With great subtlety elements of formality and freedom are combined. Even in the vegetation, while the row of poppies and the cypresses are highly stylized, the swaying branches of a tree at the left and the clouds in the sky soften to a remarkable extent the formal effect of the conventions he uses.

2. Begum out hawking with her maids

Gouache and gold on paper

c. 1735-1740

17.5 x 26 cm

National Museum, New Delhi; no. 51.207/Ex. ix

Ex-collection: Samarendra Nath Gupta

This elegant painting, lush, poetic, finely crafted, might again have been done by Nainsukh early in his career, based upon a Mughal model. But here he places the figure of the princess, who remains

unidentified despite a late inscription at the back, and her women companions, in a rich green, undulating landscape, so reminiscent of the lower hills of the Pahari region. While the "Begum", striking a fine figure on horseback, holding a hooded hawk on a gloved right hand and looking straight ahead of her, claims attention, together with her companions – one of them standing facing her with folded hands, and five others following in a group behind her – it is the landscape that captures that wonderfully poetic air which one comes to associate later with the work of Nainsukh's family. A range of rolling hills stretches far into the distance; clinging to their rims or filling some spaces between their eminences, are neat little groves of trees, clumps of bushes and grass, against the green of which are the muted browns and pale greens of the earth.

In the midst of all this nestles a tiny lake, with blossoming lotuses and expansive, outsized lotus leaves: at its edges finely painted clumps of rushes raise their heads and water-fowl — pairs of storks and herons and egrets - sport about. The vignette with its range of carefully orchestrated colours and forms is close to nature and yet independent of it, at once closely observed and poetically idealized. Much the same feeling belongs to the treatment of the foliage, short trees with sturdy trunks and circular fan-shaped leaves, singly painted stalks of tall grass and little rocks surrounded by dainty leaves and wild flowers. In its particulars, the landscape excites the eye; taken in its entirety, it produces a gentle, calming effect.

There is an 'idealized naturalism' that Nainsukh brings not only to his treatment of the landscape but also to his figures. That the Begum is not a specific individual becomes clear the instant one compares her face and form with that of her companions: there is the same small, softly modelled face, features delicate and alabaster smooth, eyes doe-like but not overly large, gently arched eyebrows, perfectly formed noses. The figures tend to be tall, the feeling heightened by the long dresses in green that everyone wears. The bodies are firm and supple, the breasts delicately modelled, and the waists invariably slim.

The predominantly green palette of the painting may have been taken by Nainsukh from some late-seventeenth/early-eighteenth century Mughal painting but he was able to breathe fresh life in a style that had almost reached its dead end. As we see it here, he seizes an idea, refines it, gives it wings, and sends it soaring on its majestic, aerial course.

3. Balwant Singh seeing a painting with Nainsukh

Gouache on paper
c. 1745-1750
21 x 30 cm

Museum Rietberg, Zurich; no. 1551
Ex-collection: R.K. Jalan, Patna

The painting is of uncommon interest, for it is the only work in which we see both Balwant Singh and Nainsukh, patron and painter, together. The prince is seated on his low, throne-like chair, examining a painting held in his left hand; two courtiers and three musicians face him, seated or standing at an intimate distance; Nainsukh himself stands directly behind the prince's throne, body bent forward at the waist, hands folded in an attitude of submission and respect. Besides the examination of the painting which Balwant Singh is looking at with some care, nothing specific seems to be happening. It is a quiet afternoon, with the sun peeping from just below one of the rolled-up curtains in the middle of the painting. No business is being transacted, no matter of state being discussed; the day seems to be devoted, as Nainsukh paints it, entirely to savouring some of the joys of life. The prince smoke a *huqqa*; a painting is being discussed; musicians sing and play.

But there is much more in the work than is visible on the surface, for every detail is invested by Nainsukh with great, feeling elegance. The cool expanse of the marble terrace, the delicately-coloured pale yellow flooring of the *bārādari*, the salmon-pink edge of the fronting wall, the exquisitely-carved wooden balustrade at the back, the precise outlines of slender pillars, the low-key rolled-up and neatly tied screens in white edged with gold, the wonderfully detailed golden throne with its decoration so reminiscent of the

herbal borders on Mughal *paṭkās*, the *huqqa* surprisingly cased in a floral fabric cover, the loops and curls that the pipe of the *huqqa* takes: there is precision everywhere, a wonderful crispness of execution. At the same time there is an accent on simplicity: nearly everyone wears plain white dresses, the prince's of fine muslin material; the striped pattern of Balwant Singh's turban, the gold edging of Nainsukh's own *paṭkā* or the thin band of gold in the standing courtier's turban are truly under-stated; the dresses and the fine outlines of the figures merge with the marble floor as though not to draw attention to themselves. There is that distinctive sense of space, that airy openness, which Nainsukh seems to have loved to bring into his works. He is capable of making things appear as if they are being seen through a sheet of diaphanous gauze.

In this elegant but low-key setting, we come very close to the characters seen; the tall, aging man seated with his shoulders slightly hunched and hands respectfully placed one atop the other in his lap; the standing courtier-like figure with slightly straggly hair tucked under his turban and a case with the grip of a pair of scissors protruding in his waistband; the dark-skinned musician playing on the *morchang* or Jew's harp, both hands raised to his mouth; the singer with the *tānpurā* and the extended arm, the player on the *dholak*-drum with fingers delicately poised to strike. Nainsukh has observed these men, so ordinary looking in a way, with remarkable keenness. And when he paints himself, he does so with no slurring over of a feature like his prominent, slightly protruding teeth or the middle-age heaviness of girth. Things are said with moving honesty.

4. *Rāgiṇī Madhumādhavi*: Folio from a *Rāgamālā* series

Gouache on paper

c. 1765-1775

27.5 × 19.5 cm

Sarabhai Foundation, Ahmedabad; no. KE-24

Ex-collection: R. K. Jalan

There is passion in the air, and a sense of longing. Under a dark, cloud-laden sky lit by golden flashes of lightning, a young maiden rushes towards a chamber, looking back over her shoulder, one hand holding up a delicately patterned, gold-edged *dupaṭṭā*, eyes gazing up or taking in the sight of a lone, pink-tipped flower dangling from a plantain tree at right. As rain descends in a fine sheet of water in background, and thunder fills the air, thoughts of the lover from whom she is separated in this season of renewal and of union, clearly course through her mind. A bed, empty but inviting, lies in the chamber; her right arm is extended, palm open, as if to reach out to someone. There is no sadness in the image, no suggestion of inconsolable grief, just of plain longing, of the rising tide of desire.

Nainsukh catches the mood to perfection. He seems to know well the many colours that *viraha*, separation, takes, but all that he wishes to do here is to suggest, very discreetly, a state: mind caught in the gossamer web of memory, heart 'dyed in ardour'.

The young lady personifies the *rāgiṇī* Madhumādhavi, one of the wives of and thus related to *rāga* Bhairava in Hanumana's system, but she is rarely featured in a Pahari *rāgamālā* series. Elsewhere, the iconography of the *rāgiṇī* is well-established — 'she who turns to look back while hastily moving towards a shelter as rain falls and a storm pulls at her clothes with which she tries to cover herself' — and, even though there are some variations, like the lover waiting in the chamber, or peacocks drawing attention to themselves, the theme is well-understood. Clearly, therefore, Nainsukh had access to a model, a text, but one that came from elsewhere, not from the hills.

There is great refinement in Nainsukh's rendering: one notices the freely handled clouds laden with palpable moisture, the impetuous shimmer of lightning, the extremely fine 'pearl-strung' streams of rain, the richly coloured screens neatly rolled up and tied over doors and loggias, the gold floral work on the inside wall, the crisp patterning of the covers and cushions on the bed, the managed disorder of the plantain leaves. But what rivets the eye above all is the wonderfully articulated figure of the *rāgiṇī*, hope and longing written

on her face, body elegantly disposed, her clothes picking up the gold of her body: and as she lifts and holds up the diaphanous dot-patterned *dupattā* over her head to stretch behind her arching form, it looks as if a shower of dazzling sparks were issuing forth from her and falling to the ground below.

5. Vishṇu, seated on a lotus

Gouache on paper

c. 1765-1775

15.6 x 24.7 cm. (outer)

12.6 x 21.6 cm. (inner)

Private collection, Switzerland.

In another painting showing his prince in a private shrine, Nainsukh had painted an image of Vishṇu very similar to what we see here, but placed in a niche. The difference also is that the present image is meant to be seen as a *painting*, not an icon even if the approach is essentially iconic.

Here, we see Vishṇu seated on a full-blown lotus placed in the centre of a cool expanse of white marble terrace flanked by stylized trees that peer in: he is four-armed, the face very youthful, body remarkably slender. The upper part of the body is bare, revealing his glistening form, 'dark as a rain-cloud'; the lower part is dressed in a *dhoti* in his favourite *pīta*-yellow colour; an *uttariya*-scarf is loosely draped over the shoulders, its long ends falling on either side and shown scalloped so as to echo the sharp points of the petals of the lotus on which the deity is seated in all his majesty. As Vishṇu crosses his legs — his knees merging with the curve of the pericarp — the gathers of the *dhoti* fall gracefully in front, covering the feet and spreading out in a scalloped pattern. On his head is an elaborate gem-studded crown that fits like a skull-cap topped by a finial that fans out like a peacock-feather *mukuṭa*. All the four arms are bent at the elbow, the two upper ones held aloft with a *gadā*-mace and a lotus in the hands; the two lower arms are stretched horizontally, a *śaṅkha*-conch in one hand and a *chakra*-discus in the other. The *ayudhas* or attributes, save for the lotus, are all made of gold studded with precious stones; the lotus looks as if it freshly been picked and held aloft. The body is richly adorned with jewellery: a series of necklaces of gold and pearls, prominent among them the *kaustubh maṇi*; gold-and-pearl armlets and bracelets; a finely-worked girdle with little bells and pendant pearls; a long *vanamālā*-garland of wild flowers; and all over the glistening dark form — on the forehead, shoulders, forearms, stomach, even along the outer edges of the ears — are 'caste' marks made with sandal-paste. The appearance, the dress, the adornments are so detailed as to make one think that Nainsukh was attempting to achieve here a *dhyāna*-image, based on some iconographic text. But what we have here is a felt image, not a dry inventory of formulaic interest.

This leaf is likely to have been the opening, perhaps even the invocatory, folio of a series: the fact that it is damaged also suggests this, as the first and the last leaves from a series often show more rubbing and creasing than the rest, being handled more. But if this was truly the opening leaf of a series that Nainsukh planned, what series was it? The possibilities are many, and intriguing.

6. A boat adrift on a river – illustration to a folk legend

Tinted brush drawing on uncoloured paper

c. 1765-1775

36.0 x 28.5 cm.

Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi; no 868

Acquired from Radhakrishna Bharany

There is a sense of mystery and of drama in this remarkable but much misunderstood drawing. It has rightly been regarded as a work "unparalleled in the hole of Pahari painting" but also interpreted, very

arguably, as "An Allegory of Disaster". Certainly, some cataclysmic situation is depicted: on a steeply angled hill torrent is afloat a massive boat, carrying virtually a whole kingdom. On the further bank of the rushing river, a blazing fire rages, consuming 'like a thousand hungry mouths' all that comes in its way. The middle of the barge-like boat is densely packed with a crowd of men, many wearing conical Gaddi caps, and animals and objects, even a mountainous rock and a segment of a palatial building, but at either end of the boat sits an isolated figure: at the stern a youthful looking prince, with a plume prominently stuck in his turban; at the prow a somewhat heavier and older man, burdened with the weight of cares. At the dead centre of the crowded boat stands a tall man, wearing a Muslim-style *jāmā* tied under the right arm, holding in his right hand a very long pole; by his side stands a diminutive little figure, a young woman, her whole form draped in a veil with only the face visible; the tall man is conversing with a *sannyāsi*, a holy man with long matted hair, a beard, clothed in leopard skin, with a rod tucked under the arm.

There is very little colour in the work; the ground is plain; the river uncoloured save for light grey streaks that mark the wavy surface; the banks are touched by a light wash in greyish green; the splendidly rendered fire raging on the further bank is lightly tinted in orange and grey. Whatever colour there is has been applied thinly: one sees it in the figures of the man with the long pole and his young woman companion; a little white and grey define the contours of the mountainous rock — the suggestion possibly is that there is snow on the high mountain, the habitat of the Gaddi hillmen wearing those distinctive caps — the *sannyāsi*'s matted hair is coloured a rust-brown. But in the painting as a whole, it is the smooth ecru of the uncoloured paper that stands out, adding to the suggestion of a vast uncharted expanse, evoking feelings of vague unease.

The difficult-to-read inscriptions, which have only recently been deciphered, provide helpful clues to this mysterious work. Apparently, some folk legend is being referred to in them. The two men at the stern and the prow, according to the words written, are musing about the foolishness of the man with the pole in the middle, identified as the "Mir" who, at this critical point, is more interested in marrying and learning the secrets of making the *rasāyan*-potion from the *sannyāsi*, than in saving the boat. The dire state of the boat is referred to again in the inscription at bottom left, a Persian saying being cited to say that in such a circumstance only disaster can lie ahead. But the story in the painting is not the point: the feeling is: grandeur being combined here with fine detail, a sense of wonder and of mystery being evoked.

7. Villagers around a fire

Gouache on paper

c. 1765-1775

20.8 × 16.5 cm. (outer)

15.0 × 11.0 cm. (inner)

Indian Museum, Calcutta; no. 250/628

This painting is in many ways the most dramatic of all Nainsukh's works, even if not the most subtle and as understated. In it, he sets out to explore the world of light and dark around a crackling woodfire burning in the centre. Figures are placed boldly against the darkness of the night, shadows flicker, walls emerge gradually, leaves glisten in the light, and people are silhouetted against the flames. A velvety darkness surrounds the group, and in the intensely black sky some stars glow like scattered embers. The effect is vivid, and the work technically very daring. Havell, writing from his own perspective in the early years of this century, saw it as a painting done "with the simplicity and directness of a true genius".

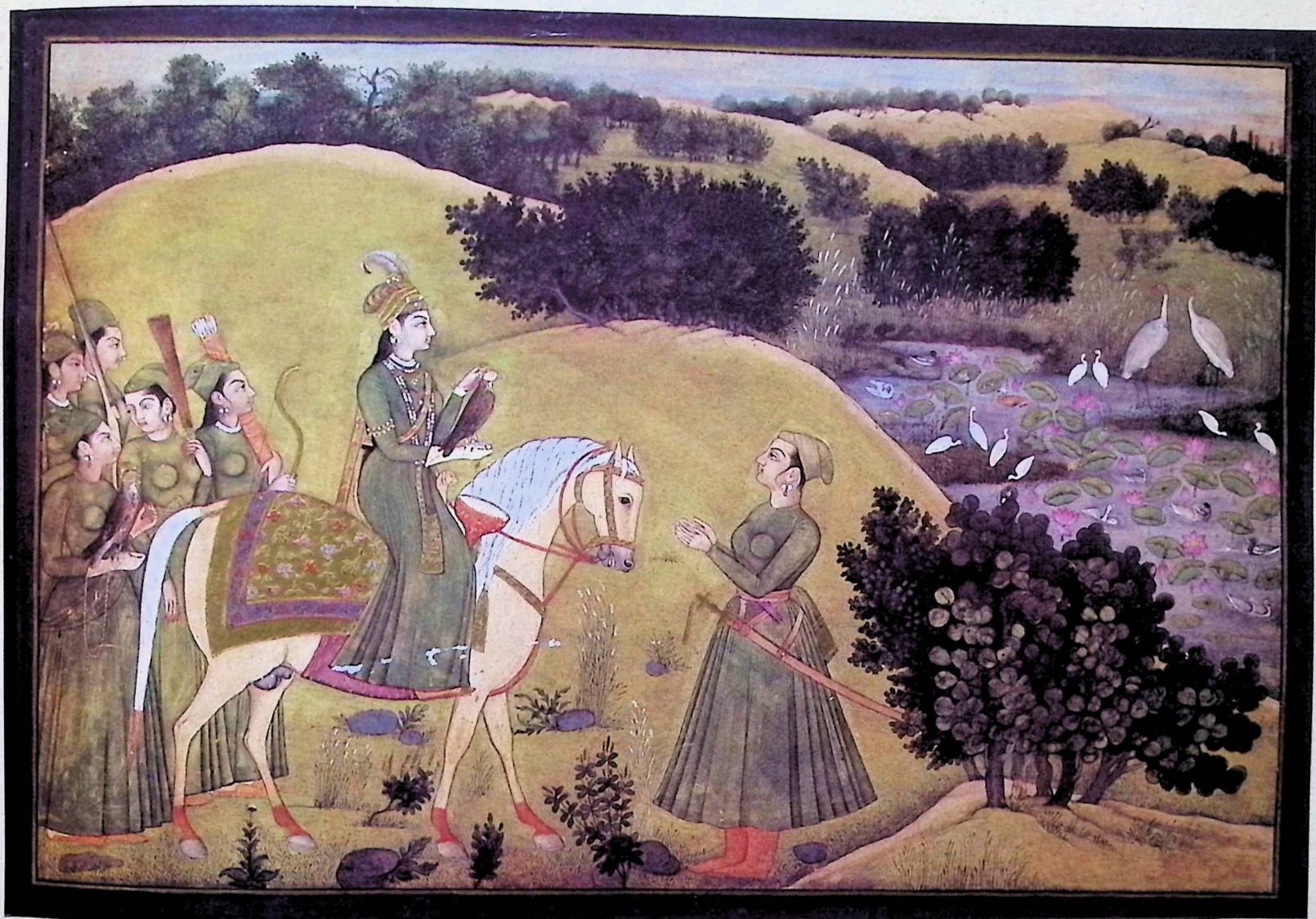
Nainsukh may have played, earlier, with some of the elements seen in this startling painting. But here he seems to have decided to test himself, pressing against established limits, breaking out of the enchanted circle of convention. The night is no longer suggested merely by torches, and candles burning under elegant glass-cases; the light does not glow on its own, casting no shadows; with every object perfectly lit. We do not know what led Nainsukh to so depart from convention - competition, the patron's wish, the challenge posed by a work brought in from outside, or simply the wish to break free, do something truly different. What is certain is that, judging from what has survived of his work, this painting stands out as a *tour de force*, an experiment that was not followed up.

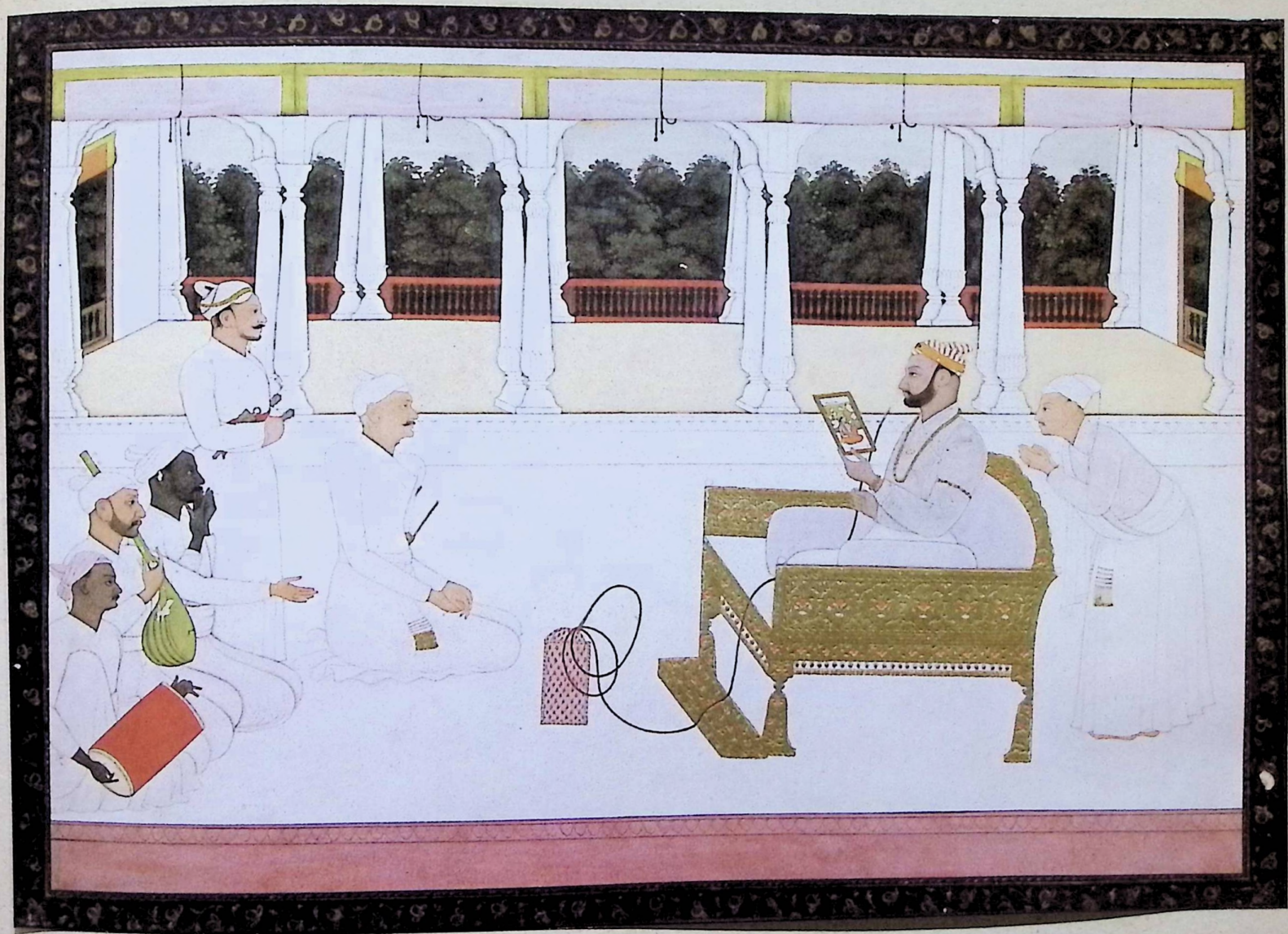
However, being the kind of man he was, Nainsukh also invests the painting with great human interest, and warmth. The setting has a rustic charm; seated around the fire on this wintry night are fifteen persons of varying ages and stations in life while, from the nearby house, a young woman, draped in a long veil and perfectly framed inside a lit doorway, turns slightly to look at the company. The wall of another house with a sloping roof rises at the left and two trees spread their branches over the group, some finely articulated leaves yellowed by the light they catch. Among the men he brings in Nainsukh establishes the types, the individual characters, with remarkable assurance, and immediacy. These were perhaps the very kind of person he felt most comfortable with: village headman, local *vaidya*-physician, goldsmith, petty shopkeeper, and the like. Deftly, and with a few strokes, Nainsukh whittles the distance between them and the viewer.

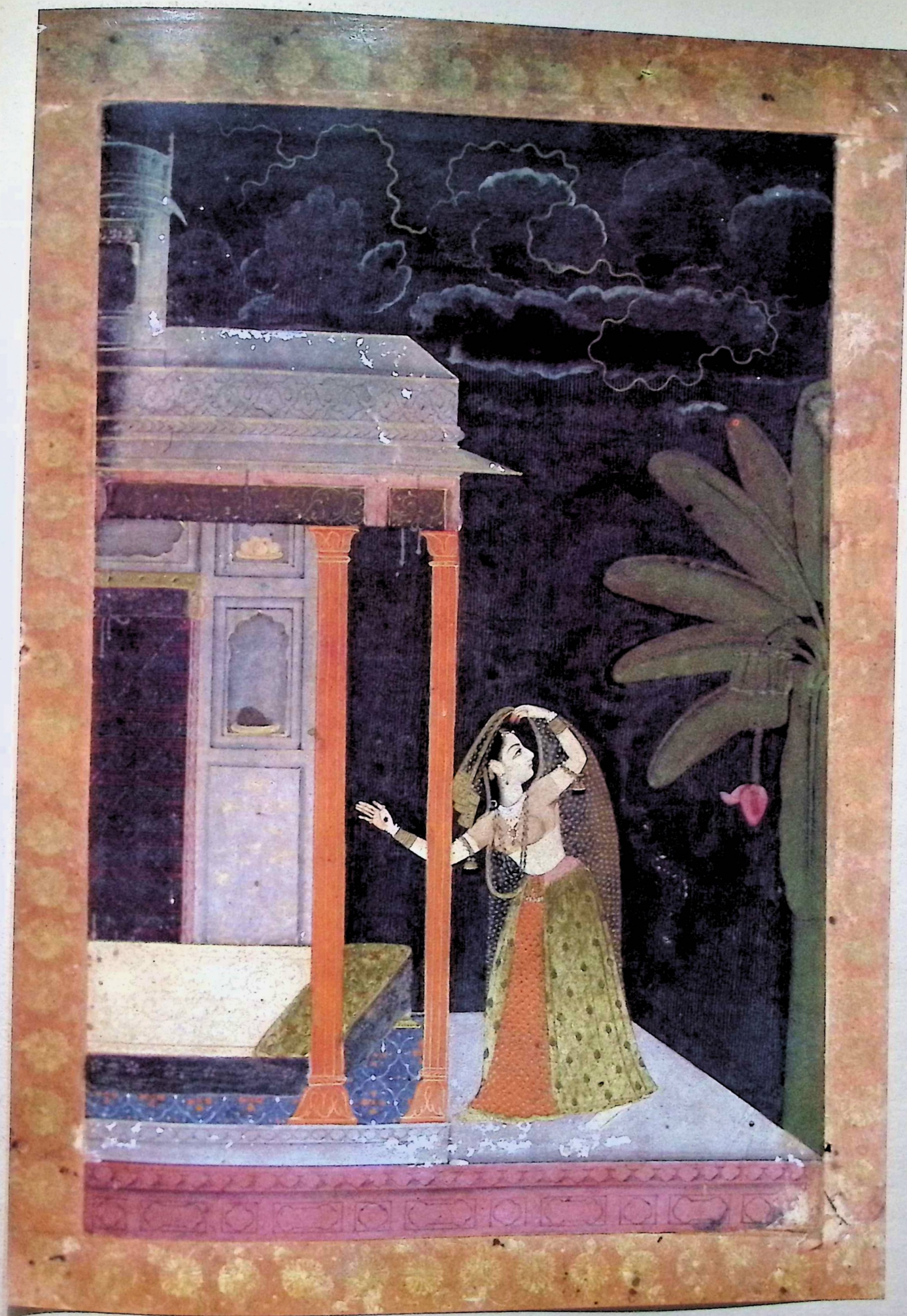
B. N. Goswamy

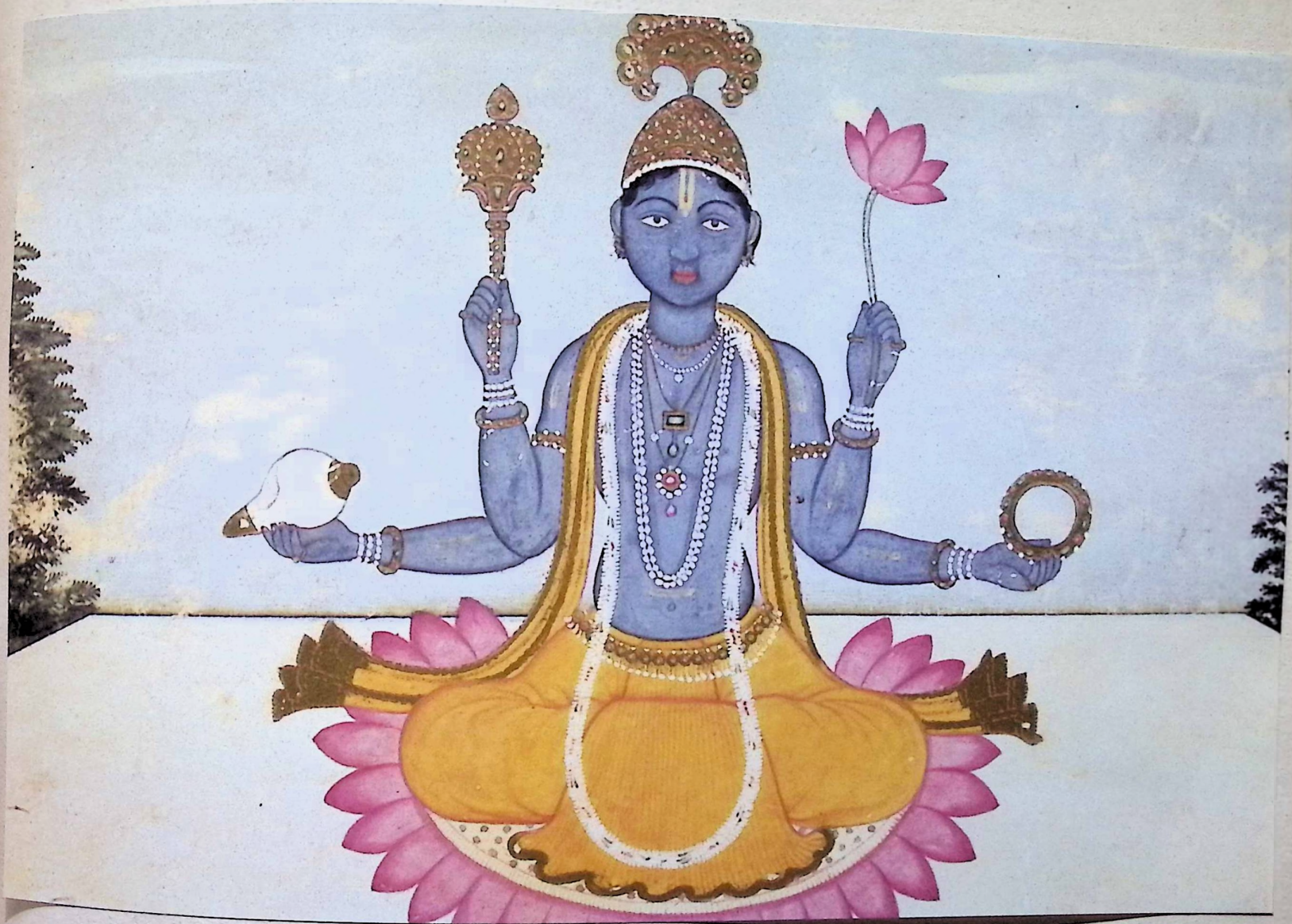
मम उदरु मी वल वं तमि य सी सी तो उ ते कि ते थ उ उ म ग्री व लि पी पी ड उ म व ड र की डी पी
म डी त ड गु ल म म उ ग ० र म उ प्र

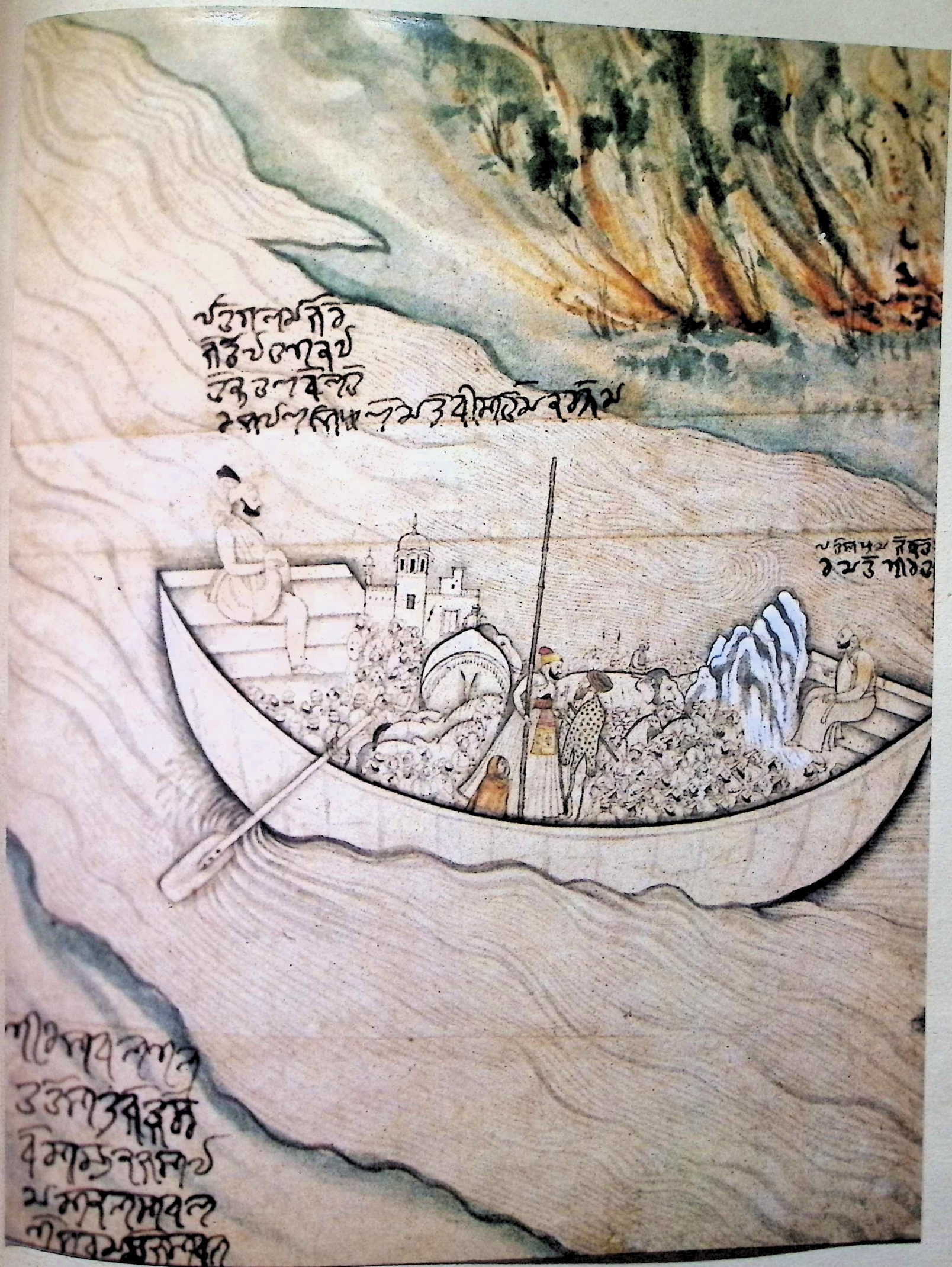








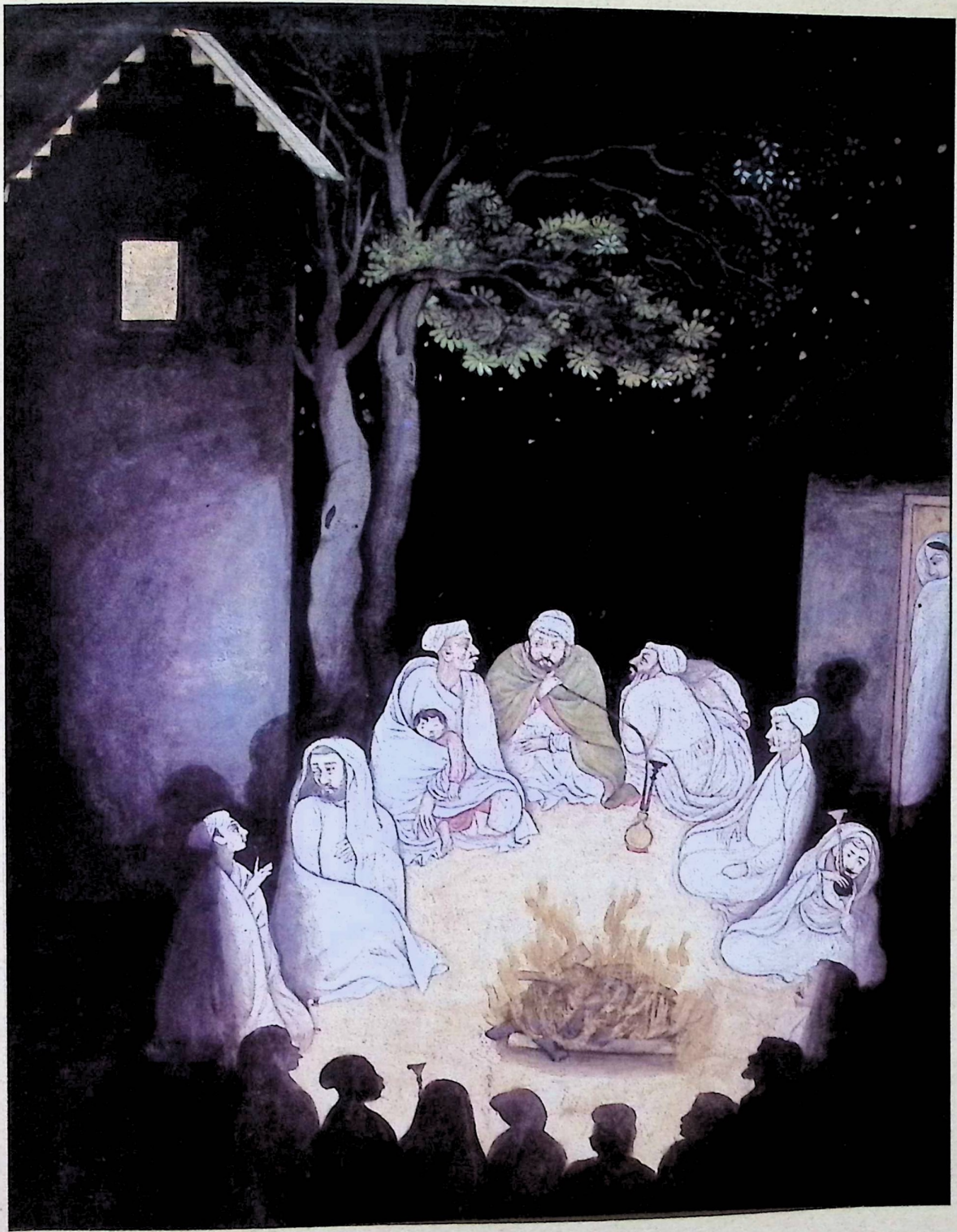




ਪੰਤਾਲੀ ਜੀਰ
ਜੀਰ ਪੰਤਾਲੀ
ਤਕਤਾ ਕਲਾ
ਦਸਪੰਨਾ ਸਿਖਾ ੨੨੩ ਵੀਸਰੇ ਕਮੇਲ

ਪੰਤਾਲੀ ਜੀਰ
੨੨੩ ਮੀਰ

ਗੀਰਪਾਲੀ
ਤਕਤਾ ਕਲਾ
ਵੀਸਰੇ ਕਮੇਲ
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ਗੀਰਪਾਲੀ



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