

Cultural Exchange in Eighteenth-Century India:

Poetry and Paintings from Kishangarh

By Heidi Pauwels

This book studies the hybrid intellectual culture of eighteenth-century late-Mughal India, tracing the circulation of poetic and art styles between cosmopolitan Delhi and provincial centers. It presents a case study of the Rajput principality of Kishangarh, which is famous for its paintings that were stylistically influenced by Mughal models, but that thematically portrayed mostly the love play of the Hindu divinities Krishna and Radha. What is not so well known is that Kishangarh was also a literary center, not only of the Krishna devotional poetry in Old Hindi (Braj Bhasha) that inspired several of its best-known paintings, but also of poetry in “Rekhta,” the new medium that was the rage in Delhi from the 1720s onward, and that is now called Urdu. This poetry too was illustrated in painting of a more calligraphic nature, as the one featured on the cover of this book (preserved at the Los Angeles County Museum of the Arts). The book investigates these “provincial” developments in the larger context of the circulation of painting styles and literary aesthetics in the Mughal empire, tracing continuities as well as ruptures with earlier “High Mughal” trends in this “Late Mughal” period on the eve of British influence.

Highlighted in this book are the works of Savant Singh (1699-1764), alias Nagaridas, who was a prolific poet in Old Hindi (Braj Bhasha). In the first half of the eighteenth century, when he was the crown prince of Kishangarh, he commissioned the famous painter Nihalchand to illustrate his own devotional poetry to Krishna. The book studies in detail this creative transformation of poetry in painting. It does so for documented cases, including some that have only recently come to light, and in addition it also makes the connections for some other paintings that may be related to Nagaridas’s poetry. In addition to poetry in Braj Bhasha, Nagaridas also composed poetry in Rekhta. The book studies in detail how he responded to the new Delhi style that preferred a Persianized register and specific aesthetic conventions. In particular, Nagaridas acknowledged inspiration of Vali, who is now considered to be “the father of Urdu.” This last aspect of Nagaridas’ oeuvre has been omitted (perhaps suppressed?) in contemporary Hindi studies of his work. Conversely, Nagaridas does not figure at all in studies of Urdu literature. Using newly discovered manuscript sources, this book provides a first chapter in the as yet unwritten history of the reception of early Urdu in non-Muslim provincial milieus. It demonstrates the

exchange of poetry between cultural communities before the hardening into “Hindu-Hindi” and “Muslim-Urdu.” It also shows the impact of this exchange in the medium of painting, including calligraphies of Nagaridas’ poetry in Rekhta, as on the cover of the book.

Heidi Pauwels is Professor in the Department of Asian Languages and Literature at the University of Washington in Seattle, where she teaches Sanskrit and Hindi Literature. Her publications include two monographs on sixteenth-century bhakti: *Krishna's Round Dance reconsidered* (London 1996) and *In Praise of Holy Men* (Groningen 2002), and one comparing classical, medieval and contemporary film retellings of the stories of Krishna and Rama: *The Goddess as Role Model: Sita and Radha in Scripture and on Screen* (OUP 2008), as well as several edited volumes. Her research was supported by AIFS, the Guggenheim Foundation, NEH, and the University of Washington.

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STUDIES IN ASIAN
ART AND CULTURE

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॥सदीकीमुदिसिककोकिसीजुतामैहोय।कादरनादरकुसुमकाकषकदोयासोय॥२॥

रक्तमसीकीकलकै।जोसरजकीधुप।
जहोपरकतहंसापहै।कादरनादररुप।
।कहंकिद्यानदिसकाका।सोमाजभव
।धोसाहदसो।सखत्।करिकासकेगवार
।२।



।सरगिदाहोयसकसो।सोवैसवयोयानि
।सहदयानवले।सा।सुनिगसोयो।शुनि
।यादरफकीरका।हैसवजितनीजाता।दि
।गदसकमसी।अरे।सवकी।गिस्ती।ता।था

।सादेजियोदसवै।जहोपिधनअनपार।
।सकअमलेमस्ती।दियै।सिहस्ती।असवार।
।यावुदा।सकसपेट।मोलागी।सुसवपेट।
।सो।अथा।श।व।न।नो।।अरे।अरे।या।पेट।द।

।करवाजी।दिन।धन।को।कामन।न।वै
।को।या।ए।क।स।क।वा।जी।शुरे।।जा।वा।जी।सो।मि
।या।अ।स।का।टि।क।न।।अरे।।अ।ए।ए।ए।ए।ए।
।सक।मि।न।क।वै।दो।।अ।सा।है।तो।आ।व।व।

।जा।न।पा।के।सो।।अ।क।मै।।न।ले।सु।ध।र।मि।दि।व।
।मि।र।।व।।के।सो।द।ला।।सक।वि।प।न।मै।अ।व।।
।का।ब।न।।अ।क।व।।अ।न।का।।अ।।।क।न।अ।
।नो।क।र।क।वि।न।कै।दो।मै।।अ।।।अ।।।अ।।।क।

।सक।वि।प।न।म।ह।व।का।।जहो।न।जावै।को।व।
।जा।वि।सो।जी।वि।न।है।।जा।वि।सु।वै।रा।हो।य।।।।
।अरे।सक।के।वि।प।न।मै।।स।मि।के।ए।ध।रि।अ।व।
।वी।अ।रु।क।वृ।ध।न।।क।व।ट।म।।दि।व।व।व।।अ।

।भारे।फिर।फिर।मारि।यो।।व।स।नी।र।सो।है।व।कि
।ये।अ।दा।ज।न।जु।अ।र।की।।ज।हो।दे।व।।म।ह।व।व।।
।अ।श।मि।क।पी।र।है।मै।अ।रि।ला।।नो।अ।क।तो।श।मि
।या।व।व।म।ह।व।व।की।।म।द।भ।म।वै।पी।र।।।।।।

।अ।श।मि।क।वि।अ।प।नो।अरे।।मि।रि।दें।वै।क।जा।य।
।वै।नि।म।क।म।ह।व।व।के।।करे।अरे।अन।म।या।अ।प।
।।है।न।करे।ज।न।ता।अरे।।म।ह।व।वै।कि।नै।न।।अ।
।कि।क।निर।को।गि।है।सो।।पै।ले।त।व।है।।चै।न।।ह।।

।धुर।धु।व।स।म।ह।व।व।नो।।ब।ज।र।कि।वै।सं।व।र।।मि
।क।मै।को।है।सो।रंगे।।आ।मि।क।पु।ज।य।र।।।।
।सक।वै।त।सो।न।दि।दें।नो।।अ।वि।वै।उ।म।व।।म।अ।
।सक।वी।ट।सो।शिर।म।मै।।ध।उ।वो।नो।स।व।व।।।।

।रा।न।सो।र।व।।।सक।ता
।जा।।।सक।वा।नी।पु।सक
।ज।है।वो।।।जे।को।ई।।।
।सक।क।म।या।ले।है।।सि
।धुर।स।ली।अंगन।मो।है।।।

।ब।ल।क।कि।या।ध।मि।क।अरे।है।सु।न।दें।को।धु।व
।सहने।के।अ।मि।क।किया।।म।र।न।को।म।ह।व।व।।
।अ।व।र।मो।सो।ज।पी।अरे।।स।म।सु।वि।चै।नो।ज
।ट।त।सु।रु।ह।।धे।के।दि।न।व।सु।करे।ने।ता।र।

।मि।त।पू।जा।पा।क।दि।ला।।ए।दि।ष।।।म।दि।का।य
।।जो।।ज।र।व।अ।रु।शि।य।न।को।।सं।वै।ग।वै।त।नि।न।य
।।।।पा।वै।सं।वै।न।दि।व।तुरि।के।।दुरि।व।स।की।पी
।।जो।जा।ने।जा।के।वै।।म।ह।र।ज।ह।र।के।तोर।।।।

।सक।क।म।या।ले।है।।सि
।धुर।स।ली।अंगन।मो।है।।।

।धीर।नि।गा।रु।क।जंगे।।दर।व।धु।क।स।ह।या।ज
।स।नी।ज।र।है।सो।।मि।ले।न।र।के।घ।या।अंगन
।नो।वी।र।वि।जा।क।ध।र।अ।रु।म।ह।व।वै।का।ह।का
।व।दो।।सक।की।के।य।।उ।तरे।मि।र।के।ला।।।।

।क।सो।।तु।वै।कर।न।ली।।अ।मि।के।सं।वै।नि।हो।न।
।व।स।की।वो।गी।रि।ह।।अरे।वृ।ट।जा।ग।न।।स।प।
।जा।नी।र।ज।म।ध।र।वि।।वि।पै।वि।अ।ई।सै।का।न
।दि।उ।तरे।ता।ही।वि।ये।है।।क।सक।की।के।क।प।है

।अरे।पि।स।र।सा।कं।।ना।दि।र।सै।नो।गा।को
।सु।री।वि।न।वा।रु।दो।।वि।पै।सक।की।अंगन।व
।आ।त।स।ज।पेटे।ग।की।।सु।रु।वै।दि।व।दि।र।क।
।आ।श्वै।सक।वा।सु।रु।की।।न।न।क।न।गी।जा।य।
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।वि।वै।मि।र।रु।क।की।।ज।ले।अरे।अंगन।।म
।नै।न।के।पी।सक।वि।च।मि।वृ।टे।धु।ये।के।ध।मा।र।स
।मि।र।है।नी।जि।रु।है।।धु।त।क।क।न।सं।व।नै।न।।
।अ।वि।य।जा।।।य।के।।अ।य।है।पेटे।नै।।।।

॥के।ले।म।ज।रु।अनेक॥इसकवाजसिरताजको॥इसकपियायाएक॥२॥

॥इसकवाजसिरताजको॥इसकवाजसिरताजको॥इसकवाजसिरताजको॥इसकवाजसिरताजको॥