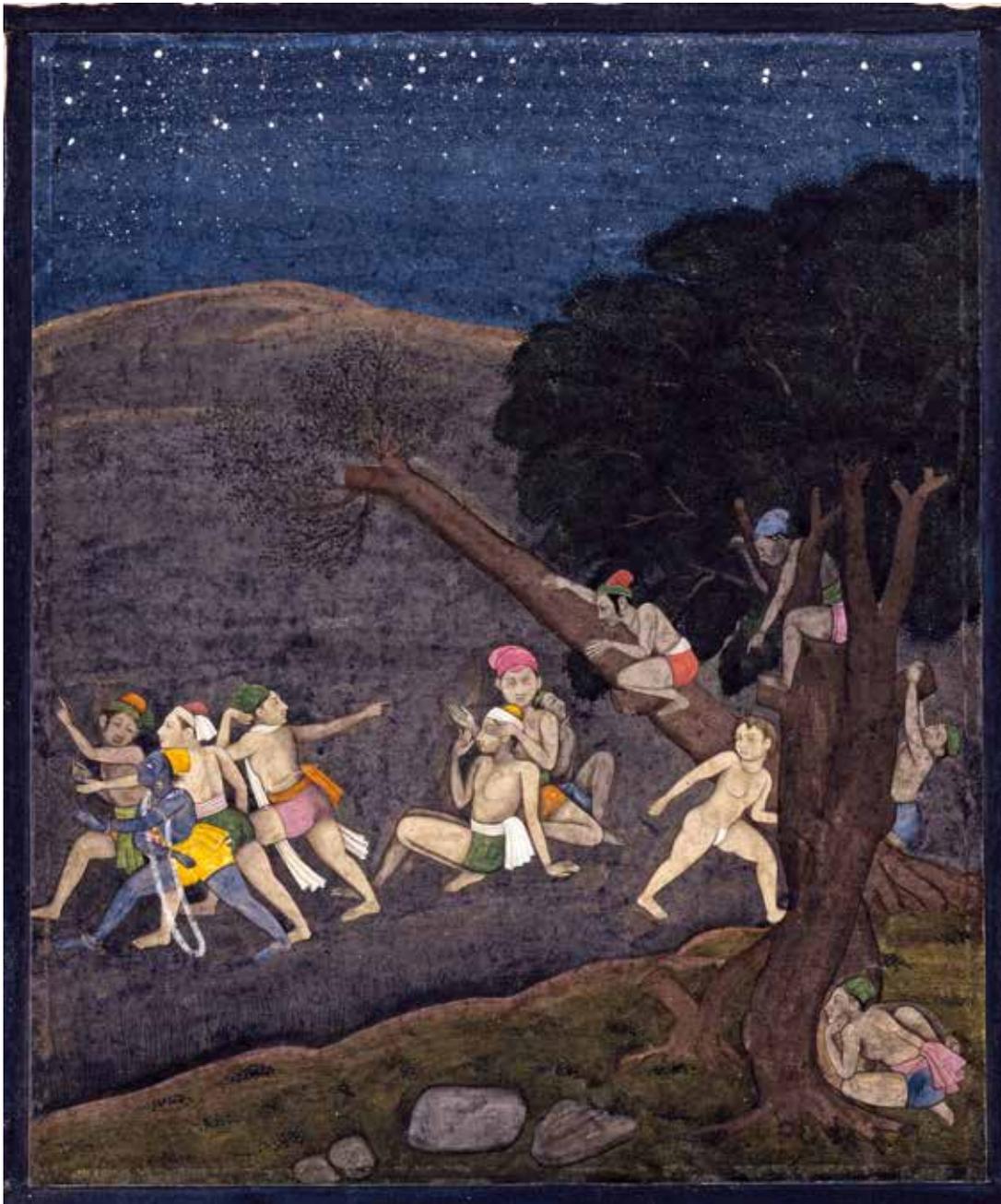


PAINTING IN THE
KANGRA VALLEY



Blindman's buff, Guler, ca. 1750, Habighorst collection, Koblenz (Germany)

PAINTING IN THE
KANGRA VALLEY

VIJAY SHARMA

Foreword by J.P. LOSTY

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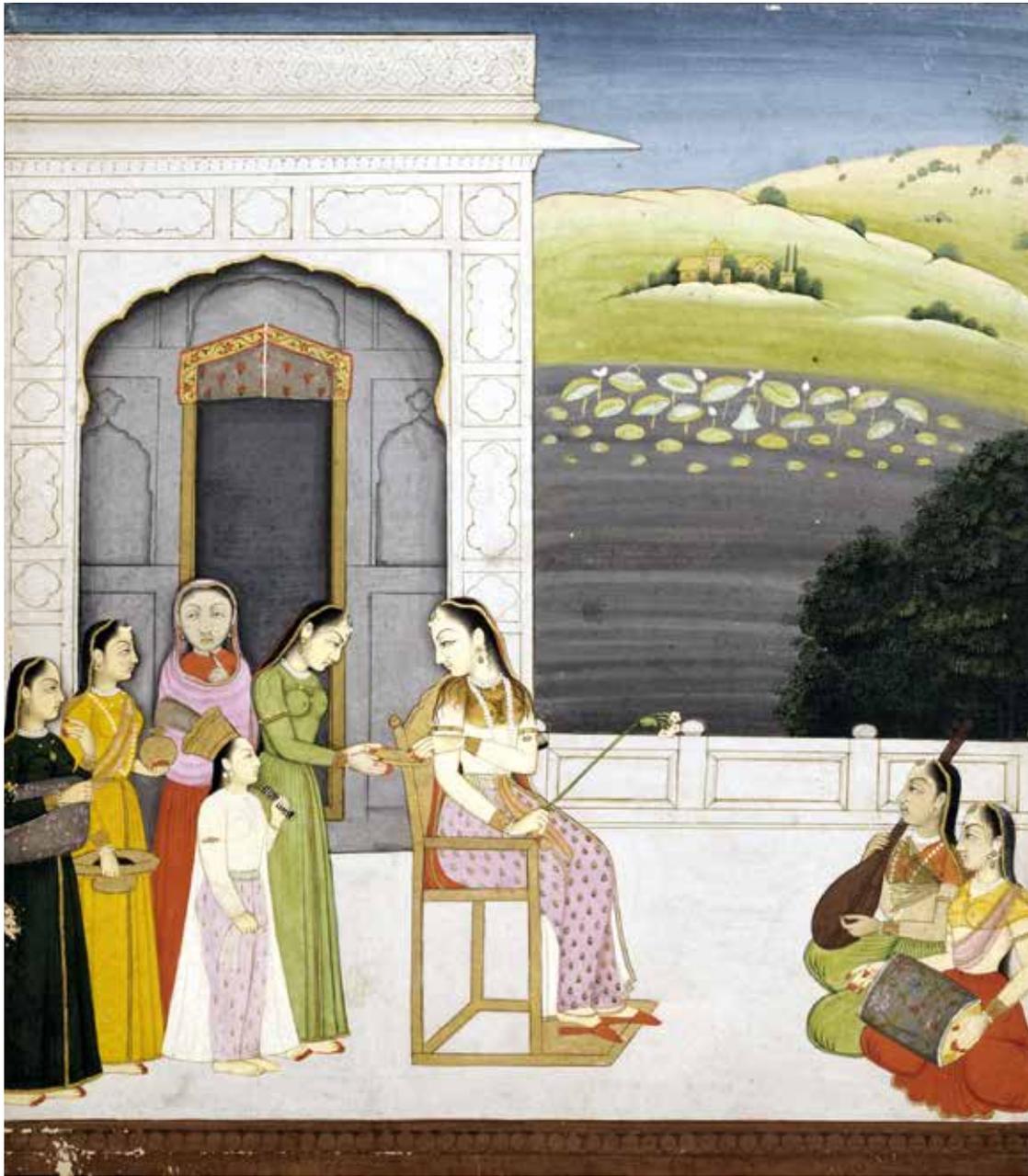
*In fond memory of Dr Vishwa Chander Ohri,
my mentor and guru, who inspired me
throughout my research career*



Fluting Krishna, folio from the *Bihari Satsai* series, Guler, ca.1775, Lahore Museum

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A royal mistress listening to music, Guler, circa 1750.
Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh

FOREWORD

by J.P. Losty

Vijay Sharma is a gifted artist specialising in creating paintings in the style of the major schools of Pahari painting—Guler, Kangra, Chamba, Mandi, and especially Basohli. He has amassed a wealth of knowledge about the techniques and subjects of Pahari miniature painting and brings his knowledge to bear in this survey of painting in Guler and Kangra. Artistic developments in Guler in the middle of the 18th century led to the flowering of one of the last great schools of miniature painting in India, one of India's greatest gifts to the world of art, and one that was for many years in the first half of the 20th century synonymous with Indian painting itself, of beautiful maidens and youths disporting themselves amid flowering glades in the verdant landscapes of the Kangra Valley.

Yet there is far more to the painting of this period than this superficial view, and the author here brings his literary knowledge to bear in unravelling the poetic background to these idealised images. Such knowledge is necessary for the better understanding of these beautiful paintings. The author takes the reader through the development of new painting modes in Guler and their spread to Kangra and then through the subjects of the paintings and their literary and indeed religious background.

All the schools of Pahari painting are bedevilled by scholarly controversies over artists and their schools and their dates and places of work, and Guler and Kangra are no exception. Not all will agree with the author's interpretation of how precisely Mughal painting influenced Manaku and Nainsukh in Guler, or where and for how long they and their six sons worked or when and how the focus of artistic activity shifted from Guler to Kangra. Yet whenever and wherever they were produced, the paintings from this group of artists and then their sons and grandsons are some of the most wonderful in the whole range of Indian art, and Vijay Sharma's analysis will help all to a better understanding of them.



Raga Hindola, folio from a *Ragamala* series, Guler, ca. 1800, National Museum, New Delhi