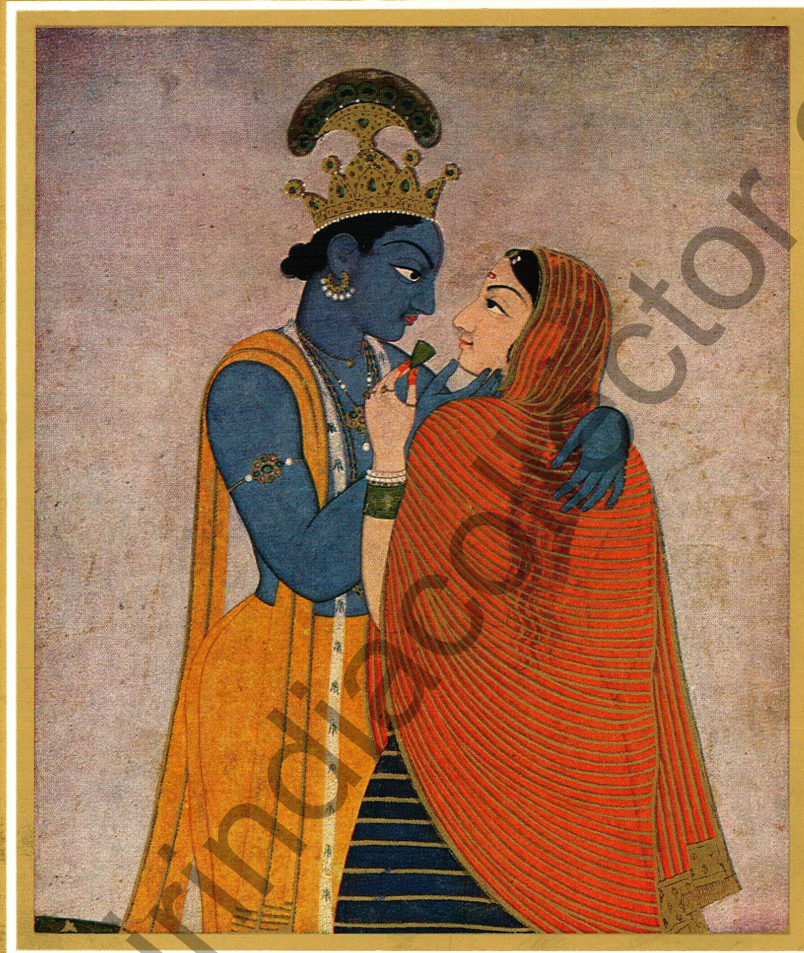




Seven four Seven  
Legends  
of  
Love







*“O friend, I cannot tell you  
Whether he was near or far, real or a dream.  
Like a vein of lightning  
As I chained the dark one,  
I felt a river flooding in my heart,  
Like a shining moon,  
I devoured that liquid face,  
I felt stars shooting around me”*

*—Vidyapati*

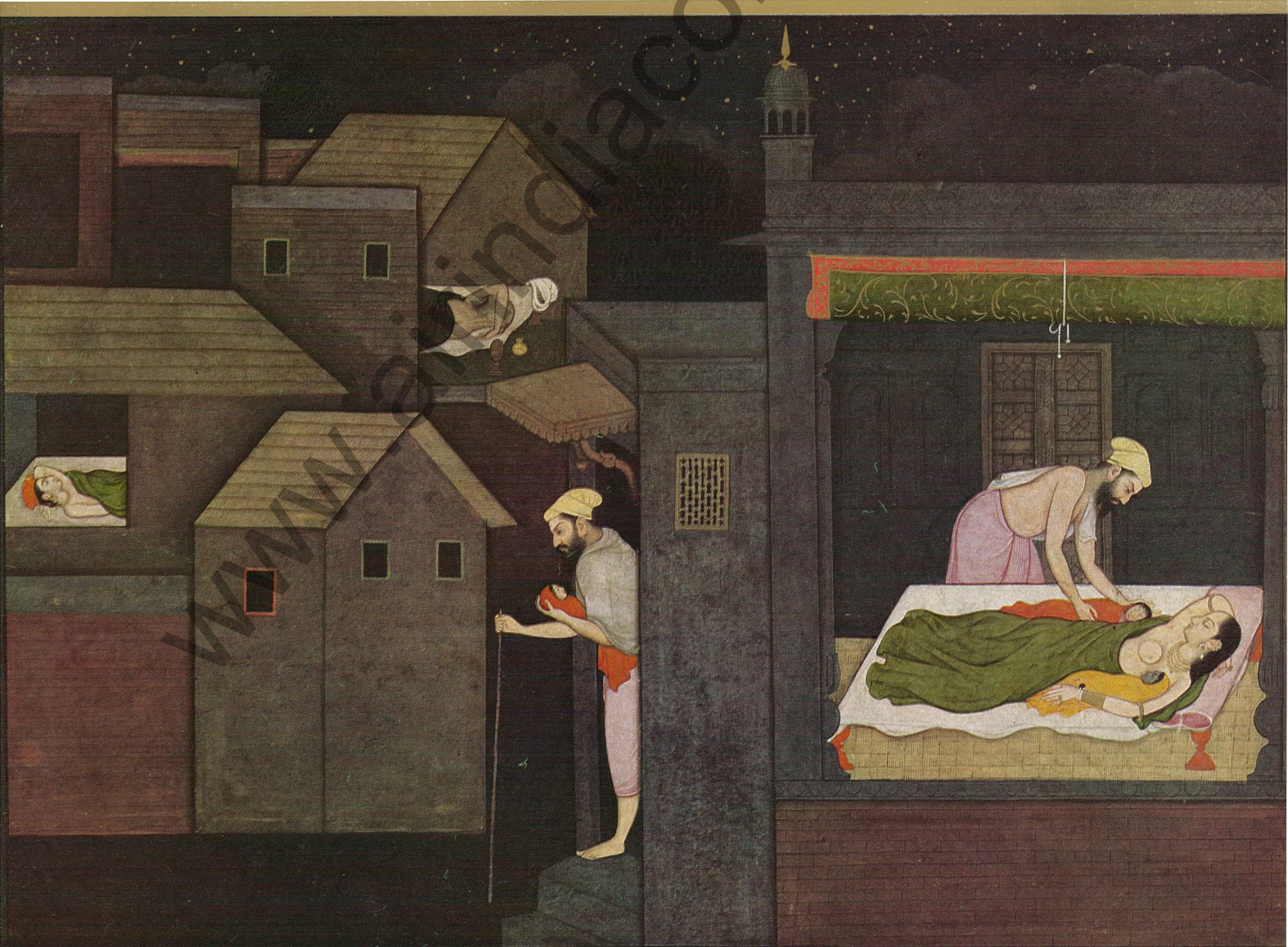


*"On reaching the kingdom of Nanda, Vasudeva saw the cowherds there profoundly asleep through the influence of Yoga-Maya (the powers of delusion). Thereupon placing his son Sri Krishna on the bed of Yashoda, wife of the cowherd king Nanda, and taking with him her new-born daughter, Vasudeva returned to his prison-room. Thereafter Vasudeva laying the female child on the bed of Devaki and having his own feet under fetters as before, remained imprisoned. Yashoda, the wife of Nanda, felt that she was delivered of a child; but fatigued and with her memory clouded under delusion, she could not discern whether she was delivered of a son or a daughter."*

— *Bhagavata Purana,*  
Book X, verses 51-53

#### THE BIRTH OF KRISHNA

Kangra school, end of the 18th century  
Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras





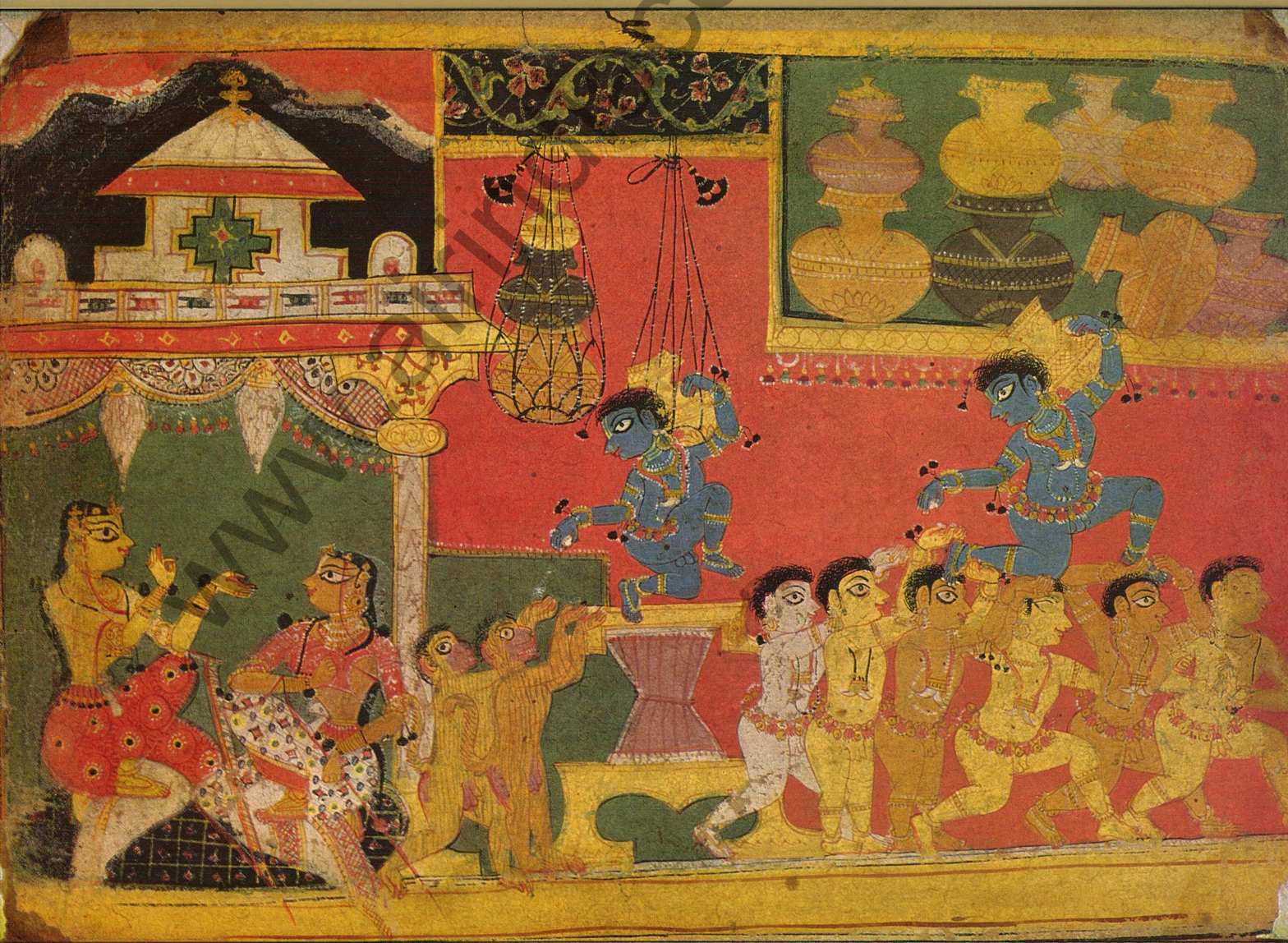
*"When he does not find anything, being angry on the household, he goes away after having made the infants cry aloud. When these things such as milk, curd, etc. are placed beyond the reach of his hands, he creates expedients by piling wooden seats and mortars, etc. Again, knowing these to be concealed in pots hanging in swings, he will strike holes into the pots. At times when the wives of the cowherd will be occupied in the performance of household duties, he will finish his works of theft in dark rooms, making the jewels of his person to serve the purpose of lamps."*

— Bhagavata Purana, Book X verse 48-52



#### MAKHAN CHOR: THE BUTTER THIEF

Provenance uncertain, probably Uttar Pradesh  
second or third quarter of the 16th century  
Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras.







KALIYA DAMANA: KRISHNA'S SUBJUGATION OF THE SERPENT KALIYA

Kangra school, end of the 18th century  
Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras.

"Then Krishna, the master of dancing, began to dance upon the hood of that serpent, having his lotus-like feet rendered reddish by the lustre of the many jewels of the serpent's head. The chastiser of the wicked, Krishna, trampled underneath the tread of his feet the erect hoods of the hundred-headed serpent that was moving in spite of his decay of life..."

Beholding that terrible serpent sinking under the heavy weight of Krishna who bore the universe inside his womb, and seeing the serpent's umbrella like hoods ailing with the tread of his feet, the serpent's wives were greatly distressed. Saluting the Lord of beings with their palms folded, and prostrating their bodies on earth, they sought shelter in him who gives shelter to all."

— Bhagavata Purana, Book X, XVI, verses 69-66



## CHIRA HARANA: STEALING THE CLOTHES OF THE GOPIS

Kangra school, end of the 18th century  
 Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras.



*"Compassionate to the humble, beloved remover of grief  
 O Mohan, please give us our clothes.  
 Hearing them Krishna says, I will not give thus,  
 Come out one by one, then you will receive your clothes."*

—Bhagavata Purana, Book X, XXII, verse 18-22





*"With Krishna in their midst  
the cowherds come to their homes.  
The calves and cows are ahead,  
frisking and playing as they go.  
All the pipes and horns go forth,  
each his own notes playing.  
The sound of the flute moves the cows  
To low as they raise a cloud of dust."*

— Sur Das

GO DHULI BERA: THE HOUR OF COWDUST

Bundi school, mid-18th century  
Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay







GIRI GOVARDHAN: KRISHNA SUPPORTING MOUNT GOVARDHAN

Kangra school, end of the 18th century  
Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras.

"That long ago day  
When Gokul was flooded by Indra's revengeful  
pitiless, annihilating rain  
when, to save the Vraja vasis,  
and telling them to seek shelter in the heart  
of their secret cave,  
Shri Krishna raised his proud arms  
on which was poised the mount Govardhan.  
And when the grateful gopis rushed to Sri Krishna  
to tell their love, to kiss his all-encircling arms,  
the kiss of their loving lips merged with the  
vermillions stroke that marks the horizon:  
the spaces of Eternity.

— Gita Govinda by Jayadeva, Canto IV







*"The breeze that has wanted round the delicate clove  
plants breathes from the southern himalayas.  
The arbours resound with the notes of the koel  
and the buzzing of bees. In this lovely Spring  
when love cannot endure separation, Hari  
is enjoying himself and dancing with young damsels..."*



**KRISHNA LILA: KRISHNA WITH THE GOPIS**

Basohli school, first quarter of the 18th century  
National Museum, New Delhi.

*Sandal and garment of yellow, and lotus garlands  
upon his body of blue  
In his dance the jewels of his ears in movement  
dangling over his smiling cheeks  
Krishna here disports himself with charming women  
given to love."*

— Gita Govinda by Jayadeva, Canto I



*"Where then is the pre-eminence of Srimati?  
and in what way then, is she his special love,  
and in what way was this love pre-eminent?  
So, with loitering feet, reluctantly,  
she moved away*

*Moved away from this magic wood  
to another leafed-in world,  
where the bees hovered over the tree-tops  
singing their ceaseless song,  
and there Srimati, like any wounded  
love-sick girl, wept,  
and crying out to her companion said:  
O my dear, my companion, Sakhi,  
those lips which on touching the flute  
sound the mind-beguiling call,  
and whose crown flashes the faceted light  
as he turns to look at those gopis,  
and whose earrings dance in the loveliness of joy,  
that Sri Hari has forsaken me today."*

—Gita Govinda by Jayadeva, Canto 11



**RADHA ALONE, IN MEDITATION**  
Western Indian school, early 17th century  
Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay



*"Where then is the pre-eminence of Srimati?  
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**RADHA ALONE. IN MEDITATION**  
Western Indian school, early 17th century  
Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay



The poet states: Sri Krishna, having spent all his time with other gopis, is now frantic with anxiety, not knowing where to now find his Radha. He sends a companion of Radha to become his messenger of love, to persuade Radha to come to him.



*"O my dear  
on the banks of the Yamuna he waits:  
seeming the very god of love he awaits you,  
the God of your heart.  
Desiring you today with a terrible want  
he waits.*

*O beautiful one with lovely limbs  
hurry, hurry, your lover waits,  
his whole being is lambent with desire  
as he waits to take you in his arms,  
O my dear, make haste.  
Gently he is playing his flute,  
softly it calls only your name.*

*Today he welcomes even an infinitesimal  
grain of sand, of dust, upon his hands,  
for that grain has touched you and returned to him."*

—Gita Govinda by Jayadeva,  
Canto V

#### THE SAKHI PERSUADES RADHA TO MEET KRISHNA

Basohli school, first quarter of the 18th century  
National Museum, New Delhi.







RADHA AND KRISHNA IN THE FOREST  
Kangra school, end of 18th century  
Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay.

*"Like stilled lightning her fair face  
I saw her by the river  
Her hair dressed with jasmine  
Plaited like a coiled snake.  
O friend I will tell you  
the secret of my heart.  
With her darting glances  
and gentle smiles,  
she made me wild with love—"*

—Chandi Das







# THE NIGHT OF LOVE

Mewar school, end of the 17th century  
Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay

"There was a shudder in her whispering voice  
she was shy to frame her words,  
What has happened tonight to lovely Radha?  
Now she consents, now she is scared.  
When asked for love, she closes up her eyes.  
Eager to reach the ocean of desire.  
He begs for a kiss.  
She turns her mouth away  
And then, like a night lily, the moon seized her."

—Vidyapati



*"At first discarding her langour, she looked up in the mirror, then for some time pounded the camphour. Then the fair lady wearing a bathing sari applied scented oil to her body and wiped it with soft cloths. Says Kesava, she mixing the collyrium with musk and frankincense applied it to her eyes; my friend, as ill luck would have it, how am I to see him when shyness still sticks to my eyes."*

#### THE TOILET OF RADHA

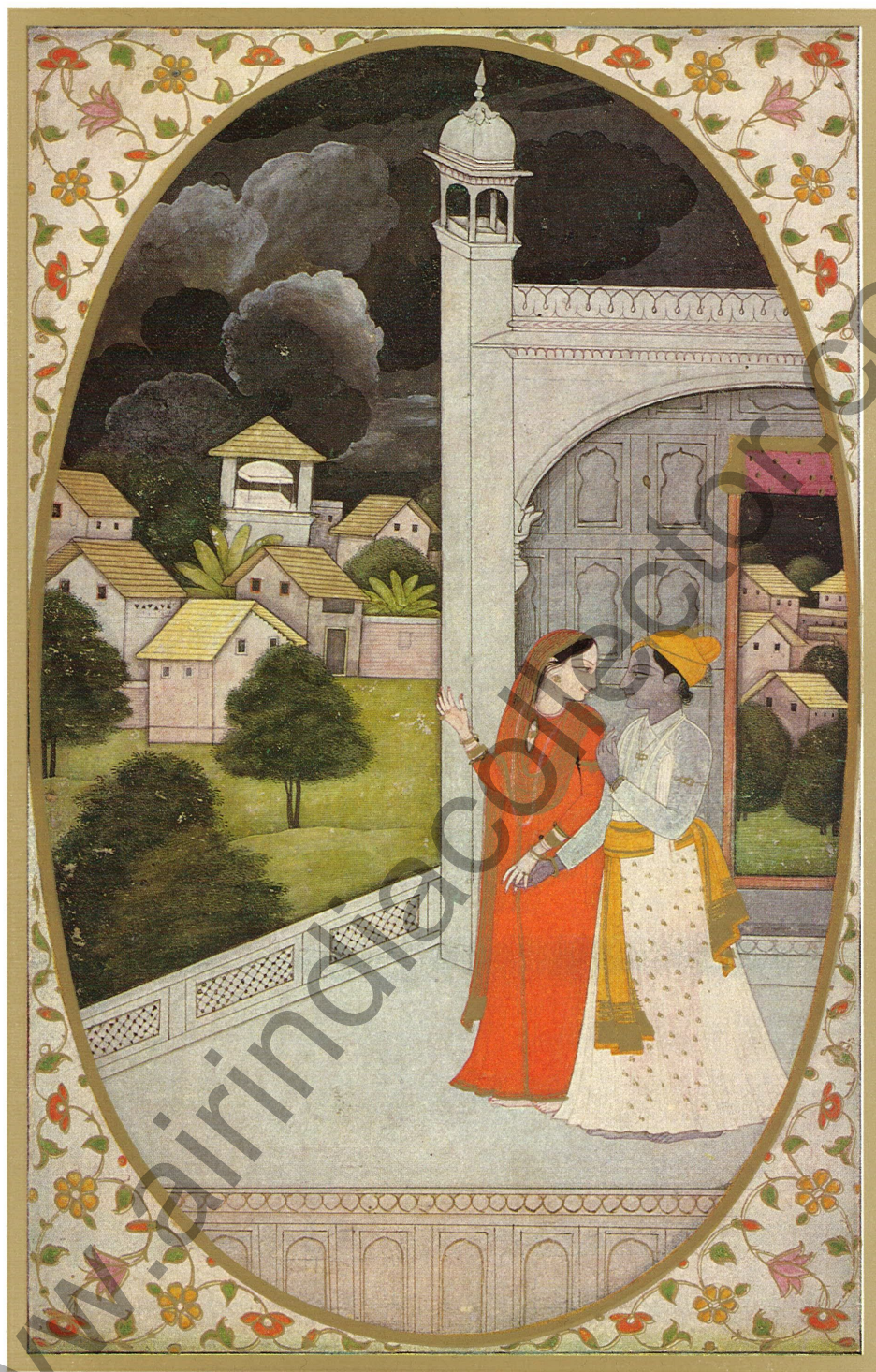
Rajasthan, Mewar school, mid-seventeenth century  
Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras.



*The pleasure giving strand strung to red thread intertwined the hair lock, wreathed with flowers. The saras-eyed lady holding a mirror is beholding it languorously. Says Kesava, seeing Krishna who was concealed, a pointed simile suggests itself: within the halo of the sun has penetrated the orb of the moon, and in between them has penetrated as it were the triveni."*

— Rasikapriya by Kesava Das





THE MONTH OF ASADH: ENJOYING THE MONSOONS  
 Kangra school, end of the 18th century  
 Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras.

*"The approaching season of Rain, dear love,  
 comes like a king in pride of power,  
 the rain-laden clouds are its rutting war elephants;  
 the lambent flashes of lightning  
 serve for its streaming pennons,  
 and the reverberating thunder  
 is the rattle of its kettle-drums:  
 It is hailed by a host of lovers  
 as the royal cavalcade is acclaimed  
 by crowds of suppliants."*

— Ritusamhara by Kalidasa







# SAMYOGA SRINGARA

Rajasthan, Bundi, end of the seventeenth century  
Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras.

*"As the mirror to my hand  
the flowers to my hair,  
kohl to my eyes,  
tambul to my mouth,  
musk to my breast,  
necklace to my throat,  
ecstasy to my flesh,  
heart to my home—*

*as wing to bird,  
water to fish,  
life to the living—  
so you to me.  
But tell me,  
Madhava, beloved,  
who are you?  
Who are you really?*

*Vidyapati says, they are one another.*

—Vidyapati



## Seven four Seven Legends of Love

Many a visitor to India has been delighted and enchanted to find so much of epic mythology alive in contemporary traditions. The poetry of Krishna, the legends of Krishna, and the worship of Krishna are widespread in the everyday life of the Indians whom they meet. Krishna, the god brought up among cowherds, the mischievous child, the endearing lover, that eternal paradox of flesh and spirit. Why are we drawn so to the ambiguity of his divinity, this god incarnate among men?

Krishna, they say, is eternal: manifesting himself upon earth in so many different roles to continually surprise and bewitch us. Much of this is introduced through the literary sources of the times, expressing the changing, evolutionary aspects of the god from a semi-historical hero to become the supreme godhead, the legendary lover of all times . . . As chief of the Yadavas and the supporter of the Pandavas, he appears in the epic saga of the *Mahabharata*, in the golden age of heroes when gods and men lived and fought together. As Arjuna's charioteer and guide, he brings to us the essential philosophy of the *Bhagavata Gita*, that spells out the salvation of *bhakti-yoga* or devotion. Finally, as Krishna the cowherd boy of Gokula, he appears in a lighter vein in the texts of the *Bhagavata Purana*, the *Hari Vamsa* and others, to become more human, more lovable than ever before—the popular god of the woods, the river, the cattle and the village folk of Vraja. Dark as the clouds and beautiful, emerging from the forests of Vrindavana to play upon his flute and lead home his cows, he delights the maidens of Vraja to become the eternal lover, the subject of poets and painters and musicians for centuries without end . . .

Born as an incarnation of the Lord Vishnu, he was destined to slay Kansa, the demon king of Mathura, and to destroy the evils that had multiplied upon this earth. Kansa was forewarned of his doom by a prophecy. He imprisoned the parents of the child Krishna and slaughtered their earlier offsprings. But at the time of his birth a strange radiance filled the palace prison, the doors swung open and the guards fell asleep; his father Vasudeva took the divine child across the river, to Gokula, and exchanged him with the newly born babe of Yashoda, the wife of Nanda, the village headman.



So Krishna was reared at Gokula, a small town on the banks of the Yamuna in North India, delighting the pastoral people with his exploits as a child and astonishing them with his miracles. When his foster mother or the village girls were churning butter, he would distract their attention and steal butter from their pots, becoming the adorable child who stole their affection with his charms. From childhood he gave evidence of superhuman powers. The demon king Kansa continued to make repeated attempts on his life, but each aggression met its inevitable doom. Even the vengeful god Indra had to acknowledge the superiority of this benign incarnation of Vishnu, for in torrential rains he raised Mount Govardhana upon his little finger to shelter beneath it the entire people of Vraja, their children and their cattle.

With his companions he led an idyllic life, playing in the charmed woodlands of Vrindavana and returning with the cattle at the romantic hour of dusk. And as he grew, his beauty acquired an adult charm, and the village girls found him irresistible. The haunting melodies of his flute filled them with a desperate longing: Krishna became the object of their most intense passions. Faced with this situation, the gopis recalled that bathing in the early winter is believed to wipe out sin and fulfil the heart's desire. On one such occasion they chose a sheltered part of the river Yamuna, and leaving their clothes on the grass they entered the water. Unknown to them, Krishna who was grazing his cows in the vicinity stole quietly up to the bank. When they emerged from the river they found their clothes missing and saw Krishna sitting on the *kadamba* tree, glorious in his raiment of gold and peacock plumes. Despite their pleas and remonstrations he remained unmoved, and asked them to abandon shame and come out of the water in their lovely nakedness. This scene has been immortalised by artists through the long years.

When autumn came the beauty of the nights stirred old passions. Belatedly, Krishna decided to fulfil his promise to the village girls. That night his flute sounded in the forest more haunting than ever before and the girls thrilled to hear it, knowing it to be the call to love. As they arrived in the forest, Krishna stood splendidly before them, wearing his crown of peacock feathers and a yellow dhoti, his blue-black skin shimmering in the moonlight. Wild with delight and love, they abandoned all modesty and joined him as their lover. Using his powers of delusion, he provided each girl with a semblance of himself, as they joined hands in a circle to dance in raptured ecstasy. And the moon shone brighter than ever before, saturating the forest and the night air. In poetry and in drama this is still celebrated today as the *ras-lila*.

The *Bhagavata Purana* returns us to Krishna's primary mission as an incarnation of Lord Vishnu: to rid the earth of the demon tyrant Kansa. The anxious quest to destroy the child saviour has met with humiliation for all the demon warriors. When the true whereabouts



of Krishna is finally revealed by a sage, Kansa decides to decoy him to Mathura by declaring a special tournament of arms. At the challenge Krishna leaves abruptly for Mathura, with the gopis to lament eternally his departure. With his brother Balarama and the cowherds he attends the sports and defeats the wrestlers; and leaping on to the royal dais, he seizes Kansa and hurls him to the ground.

The death of the tyrant begins another chapter in Krishna's life, a different role as hero and prince. Acknowledging Vasudeva and Devaki as his true parents, Krishna is reunited with the Yadava clan of warriors, and obliged to sever all connections with his former pastoral life. He succeeds to the throne of Mathura, and his abduction and marriage with Rukmini is recounted with great passion. To save the Yadavas from extinction by demons, Krishna decides to move his kinsmen to a new city on the seafront called Dwaraka, built by the divine architect Visvakarma. But a curse has fated the death of the entire Yadava tribe, and signs portend the destruction of Dwaraka. The inebriated warriors fall into fighting and killing each other; and later Krishna too, meets his death when a poisoned arrow pierces his foot. The supreme role of Krishna as the godhead, as the supporter of the Pandava brothers and Arjuna's charioteer is played out in the epic saga of the *Mahabharata*.

The adoration of Krishna in ancient India proved to be one of the most vital elements in village and court life. The love play of Krishna and the gopis is known as the Krishna Lila. In *Vaishnava* experience, Krishna's flute is the call of God which causes the souls of men and village girls to forsake all worldly attachments and gather to adore him. The drama of life and the most intimate moments of passion are sometimes interpreted to be a spiritual experience, reflected in the relation of the lover and the beloved, the very same ecstasies of bliss that are expressed in terms of sexual imagery by the Christian mystics.

This is an allegorical interpretation of the theme. It is possible also to regard Krishna's romances in terms of human love, and to appreciate why his personality still holds a strong fascination for the contemporary mind. His life as a cowherd of Gokula was simple, spontaneous and free. The rapturous love between him and the gopis was voluntary and unselfconscious. "Krishna had loved and been loved, and in his contemplation lay nothing but joy". This is the source of all *bhakti* (devotion), and becomes the basis for the Krishna cults of love which grew to flower into the richest source of medieval literature and poetry in India.

Earlier texts such as the *Hari Vamsa*, the *Vishnu Purana* and the *Bhagavata Purana* narrate to us the life of Krishna in its entirety. The poem to herald a new approach is the *Gita*



*Govinda* by Jayadeva, introducing Radha for the first time as the main heroine, to bring new poignancy to the theme of love.

The dramatis personae of this exquisite lyric are Krishna, Radha, and the *dutika* or messenger who also serves as their confidante. Now it is Radha who is fascinated with Krishna's beauty, as he is by hers. She relates to her confidante her hesitations, her anguish, her longings—it is she who pines for him in his absence, and chides him for his fickleness in love—and it is their meeting in a grove of trees on the banks of the river that is described in the most ardent terms of passion. The anguish of their estrangement and reunion, and the many phases of their love becomes the immortal subject of countless poems and poets. In Bengal the poems by *Vidyapati* and *Chandi Das*, in Western India the ecstatic songs of Princess *Mira Bai* and the movement by *Vallabhacharya* which inspired in turn *Sur Das*, *Krishna Das* and others.

Krishna emerges from their poems as more than a mere lover or a hero-prince: he becomes the personification of love itself.

The miracles of this divine herdsman and his encounters with the village maidens become an immortal subject to be celebrated in Indian painting. In *Vaishnava* literature there is a sensuous delight in the charms of wild nature, in the flowering of trees and the songs of birds, in the peaceful air of the countryside. There are vivid descriptions of the seasons, of the lakes and the rivers in the monsoon, of the moon in autumn. The artists who translated these poems into painting interpreted the lush scenery of Vrindavana and Gokula in the light of their own experience. In terms of art this brought difference in style and expression that vary between the most sensitive and the crude, between the exquisite and the savage.

The most exalted expression of the theme are from the low hills of the *Kangra* valley where the ruler Sansar Chand recreated the Krishna legend in idyllic terms of refined delicacy and a rhythmic beauty. On the other hand, *Basohli kalam* from the hills introduces vivid colours of blue-black and brilliant yellow to suggest the passionate intensity of the Krishna lyrics. In the miniatures of the *Rajasthan school* bold flat colours are used to suggest a primitive purity that remains unrivalled today, to express the religious feeling of the *Vaishnava* lyrics. It is thus that Krishna captures the imagination of princes, poets painters, and the common man, to lead us to some of the most intimate revelations of the Indian mind.





## AIR-INDIA'S SEVEN-FOUR-SEVENS

Inspired by these glorious lyrics of love, we have conceived the interior for our Boeing 747s. Suspended in time and in space, we intend to transport you to that exquisite age of enchantment when Krishna played upon his flute and danced with his companions in the verdant greens of Vrindavana.

The Krishna legend extends itself to all levels of human experience. Some of these episodes are depicted on the side panels of the cabin, framed in delicate arches or 'mihirabs' that derive from medieval palaces. They depict moments when Krishna is caught stealing butter or stealing the clothes of the gopis; when he lifts up Mount Govardhana on a mere finger, when he plays upon his flute and calls the maidens to the moonlit forest, and finally when he meets Radha by the banks of the Yamuna.

These motifs are styled after the traditional schools of miniature painting and they comprise part of this brochure. Our first two 747s have pink and blue panels in alternate zones, while our third and fourth have a purple and carmine interior. The colours of the upholstery have been carefully selected to match the interior and evoke the various moods so closely linked with the legend of Krishna—the blues and the amber, crimsons and purples associating with the hours of dusk when the cowherd returns home with his cows—red and yellow, saffron and soft pink reminding one of the colourful costumes of the gopis.

The designs on the bulkhead partition and stairwell area are on the other hand inspired from another source, being patterned after the exquisite paisley motif of the embroideries of Kashmir—a design that has been perfected and reproduced through centuries by our craftsmen.



The Maharajah Lounge on the upper deck introduces us to another age of beauty and grace, to the classicism of Gupta art. The large mural in the lounge is composed from the celebrated frescoes of Ajanta, illustrating scenes from the Jatakas or the previous lives of Lord Buddha. On the left is depicted the story of King Mahajanaka, who while still young, decided to renounce the world and visit the ascetics Narada and Majjama.

Alms-giving being the first of the Ten Perfections of the Buddhist faith, this aspect of charity is emphasized in the Visvantara Jataka which is represented on the right side of the mural. The partitions reproduce the elephants and lotus patterns from the ceiling frescoes of Ajanta. They represent a vision of the Indian world, teeming with plants, birds and animals, and the figures of supple-limbed men and women moving freely through porticos and pavilions and the gateways of cities—expressing the ideals and perfection of Gupta art at its best.

We have tried to recapture a culture that is basically ours, the elements of a life that is Indian and the most romantic of all things Indian.

The decor, our soft spoken hostesses and the ancient traditions of hospitality come through as a complete message of love.

Our 747 exteriors too are different, Indian—a vast palace in white with a row of delicately painted arches in red, a palace in the sky designed especially, dear passenger, for you.



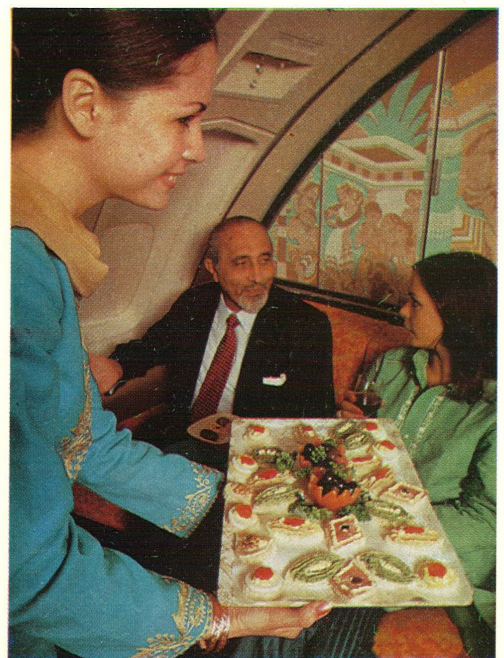








The Maharajah Lounge on the Upper Deck. The semi-circular mural in the rear is adapted from the celebrated frescoes at Ajanta. The Rajasthani costume of the hostess in the Lounge is reminiscent of the attire of the gopis.





First Class cabin. The bright upholstery sets off the purple of the panels and carpet. The sari uniform of the hostess is in the colourful "bandhani" print of Rajasthan.



Spacious economy cabins of the 747s are enriched with the exotic colours of India. The intricate gold design on the rear galley partition, is inspired by traditional Kashmiri embroidery. The churidar-kameez uniform of the hostesses is enriched with silk embroidery which repeats the Kashmiri motif.



Economy Class cabin. The row of arches on the window panels is reminiscent of Rajasthani palace architecture.







Purple and carmine window panels of the cabins, decorated with episodes from the immortal Krishna Legend ... Krishna lifting Mount Govardhan; hiding the clothes of the gopis; stealing the butter; meeting Radha by the river; playing langorously on the flute...

left: Detail of illustrations on the panels.