CHAPTER FOUR

THE EVIDENCE OF PAINTINGS: PORTRAITS

A. ROYAL PORTRAITS

Numerous as they clearly are, pahari portraits have not received the attention that they deserved. There are relatively few studies of these, possibly because they were not thought to be deserving of much notice following Dr. Coomaraswamy, who did not attach much importance to portraiture as an aspect of Rajput art. Dr. Coomaraswamy was so certain about Rajput patrons being so different from Mughal patrons that he omitted to include portraiture even as a separate category under the list of themes of Rajput art in his Catalogue of the Boston Museum. It may be true that the portraits were never "the typical expression of Rajput art", yet

1. Dr. Coomaraswamy returned again and again to this theme. Thus, "the Rajput painting is deeply religious, the Mughal art is secular,...." Coomaraswamy, "Rajput Painting," Burlington Magazine, XX, 1911-12, 317. Or, again: "... there could scarcely exist two contemporary schools more diverse in temper." Coomaraswamy, Rajput Painting, I, 5-6. Coomaraswamy, ".... Mughal Painting... reflects an interest that is exclusively in persons and events, is essentially an art of portraiture and chronicle..." Rajput Painting is essentially an aristocratic folk art, appealing to all classes alike, static, lyrical, and inconceivable apart from the life it reflects." Coomaraswamy, History of Indian and Indonesian Art, 127-133.

they are by no means negligible either in quality or
in numbers. Apart from very few studies, among them those by
Dr. W.G. Archer, Dr. M.S. Randhawa and Mr. Karl Khandalavala,
so little has been written on portraits that one is not
in a position to gather together the material for Pahari
portraiture very easily.

But neither the style of Pahari painting, in
portraiture which has been contrasted with Mughal work
so sharply, nor the general quantity of the Pahari
portraits is of much direct or immediate interest to the
present study. This study is concerned with the Pahari

1. Dr. Archer draws attention to a large number of
portraits in his *Indian Painting in the Panjab
Hills*, and in the two Catalogues of the loan
exhibitions of miniatures from his collections.
Currently he has collected a vast amount of material
on portraits for incorporation into his forthcoming
comprehensive history of Pahari Painting.

2. See, e.g., Randhawa, "Paintings from Mankot",
*Lalit Kala*, No. 6; "Paintings from Nalagarh",
*Lalit Kala*, Nos. 1 & 2; "Maharaja Sansar Chand-
the patron of Kangra paintings", *Roopa-Lekha*,
1962, XXXII, ii.

3. Mr. Khandalavala has drawn attention to a
large number of portraits in the hills. Also see
"Portraiture in Rajasthani and Pahari Painting",
*Times of India Annual*, 1968.

4. "... none of them (Rajput portraits) save in
rare instances, produced work comparable either
in skill or subtlety to that of the artists of
the Imperial atelier... Rajasthani and Pahari
portraiture must be judged within its limitations
..." Khandalavala, "Portraiture in Rajasthani and
portraits to the extent that they yield information on the subject of the religion of the patrons of painting. From this point of view the portraits of Pahari Rajas or Mians can be divided into two categories: those which actually show a Raja at worship; those which show the rulers seated in darbar or otherwise, but wearing on their foreheads clear tilak marks indicative of their personal faith. These tilak marks are not very easy to discern in reproductions but the present writer has had

1. There are numerous variations of sectarian tilak marks, details of these being available in the Agamas, and some of the Puranas. It is unnecessary to list here the great variety of tilaks even inside each sect. But a general distinction can be made and is easy to follow. The Vaishnava tilak, called generally Urdhva-pundra consists of a vertical line running from the root of the hair to the bridge of the nose. Of this also there are many variations. The Vaishnava tilak travels down because Vishnu is Water, and the nature of water is to flow downwards. The Shaiva tilak consists principally of horizontal lines across the forehead, two or three being generally drawn either by themselves or in conjunction with dots. The tilak with three horizontal lines is called the Tripurāraka. The Shakta tilak consists principally of a Bindu, dot. This is also applied with many variations and combinations with semi-circular lines. For a general introduction see, George Birdwood, Industrial Arts of India, 96-97.
the occasion to carefully study many collections of Pahari painting, including the vast collection of the Chandigarh Museum, and the equally rich collection of the National Museum at New Delhi. As a result, it has been possible to make a note of some of the more important Pahari portraits, particularly from the point of view of their yielding information on the faith of the subject.

The section that follows is by no means an exhaustive account of all Pahari portraits; such a task would be both difficult and beyond the scope of the present study. But an attempt is here made to draw attention to some portraits of significance. Of the same Raja sometimes there may be numerous studies, some showing the tilak mark on his forehead and some not; there may be some which are repetitive, and others which are copies from earlier models. But there are some pictures which can reasonably be linked only to the Raja in his own time. It was possible, and usual, perhaps to reproduce or duplicate portraits at a late stage and produce portrait sets of neighbouring rulers or ancestors 1 for a particular patron; but most often where we see in

1. The Lambagraon collection which is very varied and very rich in portraits may serve as an example.
a portrait a Raja actually at his prayer, one can be reasonably certain that the painting dates back to the time to which the Raja himself belonged. This is so, because there are often detailed references in the painting to an actual situation and to the precise idol which the Raja has before him, and so on. These portraits take on an air generally of much greater authenticity than others which do not show in an intimate situation. It would be easy thus to see the possibility of a late picture of a Raja simply seated on a carpet smoking hookah or seated in a balcony with one of his arms resting on a carpet on the balustrade and absorbed in the act of consuming a pan; this kind of picture could be easily made when a Raja was no longer alive, or in a State to which the Raja himself did not belong. A painting of this type did not depend upon the personal experience of the artist. But when a Raja is seen with precise instruments of worship before him, and a specific idol, and when the style roughly suggests relationship with his date, it may be reasonably concluded that the painting of that Raja is contemporary. In rare cases, where much portraits are not contemporary, they are based not on imagination but on actual earlier studies. And this again, from our point of view, makes these portraits especially important. One of the most striking portraits
in all Pahari painting, and one which is extremely relevant to the present study, is of Raja Jagat Singh Pathania of Nurpur (A.D. 1619-46). This inscribed painting (see fig. 7) has not received notice before. It shows the Raja standing with his hands held in front of him, cupped to suggest his begging for a boon, in front of an idol which is placed on a rather peculiar-shaped pedestal, high and very ornate. The Raja is dressed only in a dhoti and is wearing on the upper part of his body a scarf or a dupatta which trail behind his shoulders. The Raja is resting his weight on his left leg and the right toe is gently placed resting on the ground, the foot being slightly raised. This manner of standing is suggestive, like the hands, of a mood of supplication. The Raja is wearing jewels in the ears as around his neck. He wears a Jahangir period turban which is rather loose and richly coloured. What is most striking is the penetration which the artist clearly possessed into the character of this intrepid chief who had became a legend even in his own lifetime. The bravery, the cunning, the firmness, perhaps also the

devotion, of Jagat Singh are reflected in this superb portrait. Behind the Raja is an attendant who is holding in his left hand a chauri which he is, in fact, resting on his shoulder; in his right hand he is holding a cup on a platter. The figure of the attendant impinges partly on the border of the picture. The attendant is also, as the Raja at the hour of worship, divested of any garment on the upper part of his body and is wearing only a dhoti. What is of special interest is the idol which is the object of Jagat Singh's veneration.

The hour-glass shaped pedestal at the bottom has another pedestal, almost echoing its shape, and on this is a chhatra with a carved stem which has a beautifully carved peacock on top. Below this chhatra tiny figures of Vishnu and Lakshmi are seated on lotus. Lakshmi is seated in fact in the lap of Vishnu, and Vishnu carries his usual attributes, sankha, chakra, a gada, and a padma. There is absolutely no mistaking the identity of the idol in this case. Below, curbed round the lower pedestal, curiously, are two serpents. On the ground are a cowrie shell, a platter, and other objects which are not readily

1. It was usual to wear only a dhoti while at puja. Bikram Singh of Guler, and even Sansar Chand performing a havan can be seen like this in portraits in the Chandigarh Museum.
recognisable. On top of the lower pedestal also, on the edges are two little stands which hold conch shells, apparently used in the worship of deity. This whole structure is under a canopy supported by two poles and on the inside of which there is a beautiful pattern of straight lines which converge towards the centre and meet in a circle. The canopy is supported by two ropes attached to the front corners, fastened on an imaginary wall with the help of nails.

The situation here is recognizable. Jagat Singh whom we have already seen as a devout Vaishnava and who is associated in Nurpur tradition with having introduced Vaishnavism in the State by bringing the Brijraj Idol from Rajasthan, is standing in an attitude of obeisance before the deity whom he so devoutly revered. Only the serpents present some difficulty in the beginning because they do not quite go with the Vishnu and Lakshmi idols. The Sesha Serpent on which Vishnu rests is not generally portrayed in this manner, and in any case there are two serpents. The enigma gets solved, however, by a reference once again to Nurpur history. The Kula-devta of the Pathania Rajas of Nurpur is the Naga, and as we have seen before, in spite of the introduction of Vaishnavism the reverence paid by them to the Kula-devta was undiminished. To this day, as pointed
out earlier, at the shrine of Nagabari sacred to the snakes, the Pathania families take their children for their tonsure or mundan ceremony. Here, quite clearly, then, the artist has brought together the two elements in the worship of Raja Jagat Singh: Vishnu and Lakshmi who receive his prayers, but also the snakes to whom a part of his reverence is due. This whole circumstance is of some significance, because this painting could have been executed only by an artist who was thoroughly familiar not only with Nurpur tradition but also with the personal faith of Raja Jagat Singh. The Vaishnava tilak that Jagat Singh wears on his forehead could have been worn by anybody else, but what is important is the combination of these two elements, and, of course the style of the picture which does indicate a very early date indeed. The colours, the drawing, in fact that the figures are monumental and statuesque, and the attendant who cuts in on the border, all raise clear presumptions. The picture must be seen to be a contemporary study. If this is so, and it is extremely reasonable to conclude that it is, this should succeed in making us re-think about the date to which we assign the beginnings of paintings in the Punjab hills. Even though Dr. Coomaraswamy in his classic work on the art of the Rajputs, had suggested the tentative date for

---

1. In his Catalogue of the Boston Museum, Dr. Coomaraswamy, refers to many paintings as coming from the early 17th century.
the earliest Pahari pictures as about the year 1625 A.D.,
later scholars have placed the beginnings in about the 
year 1675. Our conclusion, then, that this study of 
Jagat Singh whose dates are from A.D. 1619 to 1646 is 
contemporary, could thus be of significance. It may 
legitimately be asked as to what the antecedents of this 
king of portrait in the hills are, because this is 
no chance achievement; it is the mature flower of an 
early tradition. But to this question there are 
admittedly not very easy answers.

The Rajasthani associations of Jagat Singh may 
have had something to do with the portrait, or there 
might be other possibilities which in our present state 
of knowledge we cannot precisely envisage. But the 
fact there are not very many portraits of this kind 
either from Nurpur or from other states from this 
period should not, by itself alone, render this painting 

1. Mr. Khandalavala is emphatic about the view that 
there was no pre-Mughal miniature painting in 
the Hills at all; in fact, that "there were no 
schools of Pahari Miniature Painting till the 
period 1678-1694 A.D." Pahari Miniature Painting, 
51-58. Mr. Archer has also associated the 
beginnings of Pahari paintings with the reign of 
Kripal Pal, "Until the second half of the 17th 
century, this stretch of country bordering the 
western Himalayas seems to have had no kind of 
painting whatsoever". The Loves of Krishna, 
104.
suspect as being contemporary. In any case it is a splendid work, an achievement of a very high order, and from the point of the view of the relationship of painting to Vaishnavism, it is of deep significance. From the next reign in Nurpur, we have many paintings of Raja Mandhata (A.D. 1661-1700), who is also said to have been a Vaishnava. A Thakurdwara in Nurpur State, at Fatehpur, is associated with Raja Mandhata and even though they are now destroyed, there are said to have been early frescoes in that Thakurdwara which dated from the Mandhata period and which also included a portrait of him. The portraits that we now have of Mandhata, however, are more or less stylised, or based on an earlier study. The fact that they show him accurately in a Shahjahani turban almost always is significant; the suggestion that comes is that they are likely to have been based on a contemporary study. What is of interest to us is that in at least two of these portraits

1. See, Kanora D.G. Part I, 1924-25, 508. The Thakurdwara is said to have been also decorated with frescoes of the legend of Krishna. Mr. Khandalavala, P.M.P., 369, has mistakenly identified the Fatehpur Thakurdwara with the one in the Nurpur Fort.

2. See, Chandigarh Museum, Nos. 2694, 2695. Other portraits of Mandhata are in the National Museum, See, Nos. 65.187 & 65.188.
he wears a Vaishnava tilak on his forehead. This is, again, entirely in keeping with his Vaishnava character about which we have other evidence. There are other paintings of Nurpur Chiefs, including one of Raja 1 Daysadhata, (A.D. 1700-35) which shows him with a Vaishnava tilak, but a study which is of quite unusual interest is one which shows Raja Bir Singh (A.D. 1789-1846) of Nurpur with a Mahant. This painting by the artist Fattu (see fig. 8) has been discussed briefly by 2 Karl Khandalavala, even though he does not identified the Mahant. He is in fact not even wholly certain of the identification of the prince and generally has referred to him simply as "Virasimha". There is little doubt that this painting which is in the Bharat Kala Bhavan at Benaras shows Bir Singh of Nurpur with a Mahant of Damtal. The inscription on this painting gives the name of the Mahant as Mahant "Mansaram". We have the genealogy of the mahants of Damtal and Mahant Mansaram figures in the list (see Appendix). We also have information from other sources that Bir Singh who was


2. Khandalavala, P.M.P., 234. The painting is reproduced as fig. 8. In the Bharat Kala Bhavan the painting bears No. 363 and has an inscription on the fly leaf which clearly gives the name of the Mahant as "Mansa Ram Ji".
especially unfortunate in his career, having been forced
to live most of his life in exile and in making attempts
to recover his lost kingdom, sought refuge for many years
with the Mahant of Damtal. Quite clearly this painting
represents a true situation in which the Raja of Nurpur
is seen in the presence of the Mahant who gave him asylum.
The painting is a competent work, even though it comes
from the early years of the 19th century, but from our
point of view it establishes a closeness of connection
once again between the Rajas of Nurpur and the Mahants
of Damtal which we alluded to earlier. It is interesting
to remark that the Raja is reverently sitting with
folded hands, while the Mahant is busy telling his rosary
concealed in the *gomukha* glove. /From Basohli, which is
now generally associated with the rise of the first great
style of Pahari painting, we have, rather significantly,
another early portrait, showing a Raja with a *tilak*.

2. Chandigarh Museum, No. 1262.

This is the portrait of Sangram Pal (see fig. 9) whose
dates are given as A.D. 1635 to 1673. Monumental and
primitive as it is, the portrait may well be contemporary
again. The costume, the shadows under the armpits, the
vigorous and archaic outline are all suggestive of an early

---

1. See Hutchison & Vogel, I, 264. A fresco panel in the
Damtal temple also possibly shows Raja Bir Singh
on horse back.

2. Chandigarh Museum, No. 1262.
date. One does not see in the portrait that handsomeness of appearance for which Sangram Pal is said to have been far-famed. But one sees strength in the character and some flamboyance. The Raja wears a prominent Vaishnava tilak; but another feature which one notices is the jama tied under the right arm, Muslim fashion. This is a feature that appears in many Basohli portraits, and perhaps represents an unusual fashion that Sangram Pal may consciously have brought back from his long stay at the Imperial Court. From Basohli, contrary to expectations, a portrait of Kripal Pal (A.D. 1678-1693) shows him as wearing a Shiva tilak mark which consists of three horizontal lines on the forehead, and not a Vaishnava mark. This portrait of Kripal Singh is of interest, nevertheless because it is with Kripal Pal that painting is said to have begun in the hills. The colophon of a manuscript of medicine, the Sysruta Samhita which was in the collection of Pahda Kunj Lal of Basohli as recorded by Thakur Kahan Singh Balluria, contained verses in praise of Kripal Pal whose...j mentioned specifically here as a "bhakta of Vishnu". One would

1. Reproduced in Randhawa, Basohli Painting, Plate I. A portrait of Kripal Pal is also reproduced in Khandalavala, P.M.P., fig. 58.


3. Kahn Singh, 61-62. The manuscript was written by one Shiva Prasad.
have expected Kripal Pal to be wearing, therefore, a Vaishnava tilak on his forehead if he were to wear a tilak at all, but in the painting in the Chandigarh Museum he is clearly seen with a Kripundarik. The situation in Basohli portraits, as far as the religion of the Raja is concerned, remains the same in the next reign because we have a portrait of Dhiraj Pal (A.D. 1693-1725) wearing, even more prominently, if it were possible, a Shaiva tilak on his forehead.

From Mankot, among the earliest portraits that we have are those of the blind Raja Sital Dev. In one of them he is seen being helped by two attendants, but unfortunately we have no indication or clue here of the faith of this ruler. In the other there is a faint indication of what is perhaps a Vaishnava tilak, but it is not possible to be certain from the reproduction. But Sital Dev's successor, Raja Mahipat Mankotia, appears to have been a determined Vaishnava. There is

1. Chandigarh Museum, No. 1265. Also see, a portrait with Shiva marks, No. D.106.

2. Rep. in Randhawa, Basohli Painting, Pl. 2.

3. Rep. in Khandalavala, P.M.P., fig. 70.

4. Rep. in Ashton, The Art of India & Pakistan, fig. 515. The portrait is in the Alma Latifi collection.
There is some uncertainty about his identification, but a portrait of his which is likely to be authentic shows him with a Vaishnava tilak quite clearly (See fig. 10). This portrait can very easily be placed into his reign which belongs to the third quarter of the 17th century, probably, but we cannot be certain about this matter considering that the dates of the Mankot rulers are not easily available. In the Chandigarh Museum portrait referred to above, Mahipat Mankotia appears not merely wearing the Vaishnava tilak but also something which looks like a Vyantimala, a garland which is specifically associated with Vishnu or Krishna. This may well be an additional indication of the Raja's faith. In this very portrait, Raja Mahipat Dev is holding a small rosary in his hand also which further strengthens his image as a Vaishnava devotee.

But the most interesting portraits from Mankot are those of Tēdhi Singh, also referred to locally as Tredi Singh. There are many portraits of Tredi Singh

1. Dr. Randhawa, in his article "Paintings from Mankot", Lalit Kala No. 6, has reproduced three portraits, Figs. 1, 4 & 5, as being all of Mahipat Mankotia. There is no resemblance between these, even though the paintings bear inscriptions of this name. Mr. Khandalava, in his editorial note to this article says that out of these Fig. 1, which is being included in this study is not a portrait of Mahipat. Out of all the three pictures, it is, however, this portrait which looks to be the earliest in style and therefore possibly authentic and contemporary.

2. Chandigarh Museum, No. 1194, Rep. in Randhawa, "Paintings from Mankot", Lalit Kala, No. 6, as fig. 1.
in various collections; some in the very hot and primitive style which we generally associate with Basohli and some in a relatively softer style, a style that we associate with the softening which came into Pahari Painting with Mughal, Influence. The dates of Raja Tredi Singh are not definitely known, but he is believed to have been a contemporary of Adina Beg Khan which places him in the 2nd quarter of the 17th century.

In one of the paintings, Tredi Singh appears having darshans of Krishna (see fig.11). It may not exactly be a vision that the artist has portrayed, but he has clearly juxtaposed a scene of Krishna playing upon his flute and attended upon by gopis that stand on either side of him in a forest with the large figure of Tredi Singh who appears at the left with folded hands and a long rosary of tulsi beads in his hand, wearing a Vaishnava tilak on his forehead. There is no mistaking the identification of Tredi Singh here, because he has the same apparel, the same facial features and, what is more, the same flowing moustache which one associated with him from other portraits in a distinctive style, because here we have the same treatment that we sometimes see in

1. See, e.g. Randhawa, "Paintings from Mankot", Lalit Kala No. 6, fig. 7; Archer, Indian Painting in the Panjab Hills, fig. 45. The inscription on the painting reproduced by Mr. Archer correctly reads: "Mian Tedhi Singh Mankotia", That on the painting reproduced by Dr. Randhawa is also, "Sri...Raja Tedhi Singh..." and not "Shri Harjodh Singh".

2. Chandigarh Museum, No. 1294.
Rajasthani pictures, by which the patron of the artist is painted very large next to a small image or figure. In this case, Tredi Singh appears in direct association with Krishna, whose blessings he is apparently seeking in a humble manner. This is a charming painting in its own right, but for the present study its importance clearly lies in the strong indication it gives us of Tredi Singh's devout nature. In yet another painting the same Raja appears before a deity who is shown with one head but eight arms, clearly an ashtabhuji image of Vishnu himself. In all the eight arms the deity is holding lotus flowers and is seen wearing a vadyanti-mala. There are a number of female devotees who are standing before the throne of the deity. They are shown as of a very small size, but at the left of the picture, appears again Raja Tredi Singh shown much larger than the women by the rules of hieratic scaling, and holding in his hands a platter and the same long rosary of tulasi beads. He is also wearing precisely the same tilak mark on his forehead. In addition, the tilak, he had other marks made with the same substance, possibly sandal-wood paste on his temples and also on the sides of the neck, so that there is once again no mistake about the religious leanings of the Raja.

The successor of Tredi Singh on the Mankot gaddi, Raja Azinat Dev, whose name has mistakenly been read at one or two places as Chhajmatdev, seems also to have been a great devotee of Vishnu. In some of the portraits we see him smoking a hookah and wearing a Vaishnava tilak on his forehead, but there is another painting which indicates his personal faith much more explicitly. In this he appears twice, once seated with folded hands and wearing a tulsi rosary around his neck facing a deity on a six legged throne. It is an unusual image deity with eight heads and eight arms; in each hand a different weapon is held. There are eight charis; the Sesa Serpent appears curled up at the right. The Raja again appears at the bottom of this picture in the lower half, standing with folded hands and holding a lotus flower as an offering for the deity. Quite clearly the deity is Vaishnava although what precise form it takes here is not entirely clear. The tilak mark on Azinat Dev's forehead here does not leave any doubt about his personal belief.

The Mankotia rulers appear to have had consistent affiliation with Vaishnavism, perhaps through the Pindori

1. Randhawa, "Paintings from Mankot", Lalit Kala, No. 6, 74.
2. See, e.g., Randhawa, "Paintings from Mankot", fig. 6; Archer, Romance and Poetry in Indian Painting, fig. 26. The painting reproduced in Khandalavala, P.M.P., 73, is also most probably of Ajmat Dev.
establishment, and it is pertinent to draw attention to portraits of later rulers of Mankot also, including one of Raja Apurab Singh who was unfortunate in being exiled from his kingdom when the Sikhs took over. It is a late picture showing Apurab Singh at worship. The Raja is here seated and in front of him, on a tall, clothed pedestal appears a tiny shaligram with a chhatra over it. Instruments of worship are lying around the Raja who is picking up a flower from a platter to offer it to the deity. While this is happening, a Pandit seems to be reciting from a book which is in front of him; and an attendant is seated behind him. Just a little at the back is a high pedestal on which there are two similar deities placed on little chaukis. Next to them there is a figure of Krishna playing upon his flute. We have thus in Mankot paintings evidence of the continued worship of Krishna over a long period of time.

The state of Bandralta, later called Ramnagar, has not received much attention at the hands of scholars, though there was apparently a considerable amount of painting done there. We have portraits of Bandralta rulers which bear testimony to this. Among the most interesting of the

1. Chandigarh Museum, No. 1328.

2. See, e.g., a painting in the Victoria and Albert Museum, No. I.S.L. 217-1950; also, one of Mian Kailas Pat Bandral, rep. in Archer, I.P.P.H., fig. 46.
early Bandralta portraits is one of Chhatrsal who may be placed between A.D. 1640 and A.D. 1660 or so. In
the matter of dates, for Bandralta rulers we have to
depend upon surmise because precise dates are not available,
and one has to make one's own calculations from the
genealogical table. The painting however does not give
us very much of a clue to the development of religion
under Raja Chhatarsal. But from the reign of Indra Dev
who appears to have been a devout Vaishnava, we have
many portraits, virtually each one of them showing him
wearing the Vaishnava tilak. Mr. Khandalavala has
reproduced three pictures in his Pahari Miniature Painting,
two of which he seems to think are of Raja Brijraj Dev of
Jammu (A.D. 1781-1888-87) and the third one (see fig.12) he
has taken to be as possibly coming from Nalagarh, although
he has expressed doubts about the identification of
the Raja. It is this last painting which really is
of great interest because in this the Raja is seen
worshipping. He is seated with his legs folded under
him, telling the beads of a tulasi rosary with his
right hand, and facing a six-legged throne on which the

1. Bharat Kala Bhavan, No. 171. In this the Mian appears
in balcony in the stylised manner of many portraits
of this series.

2. See, e.g., Nos. 2152, 2162, 2183 in the Chandigarh Museum.

3. Khandalavala, P.M.P., Nos. 73, 74.

4. Ibid., No. 76. The painting is in the National Museum,
New Delhi.
figures of Vishnu and Lakshmi are seated. The throne is highly ornate with a bejewelled Chhatra. The Raja wears Vaishnava tilak marks on his forehead and temples. There is an open book, possibly a religious text, lying on a little square piece of cloth in front of the Raja, who is quite clearly seen here in an attitude of intimate relationship with the idol whom he is worshipping. On this particular painting there is an inscription on the top margin which has been recently read as: "Sri Dewan Inder Dev Bandral" thus placing the identification of the Raja beyond much question. The present writer is inclined to believe that at least one of the two portraits reproduced by Mr. Khandalavala as being possibly of Brijraj Dev of Jammu is also of Indra Dev. There are many things in common between these pictures. The Raja is wearing the same tilak mark, shows the same preference for flowers and holds a rosary in his hand. There are strong physical similarities, in the athletic frame as also in the nose and the set of the eyes. It is entirely possible that this is a portrait of Raja Indra Dev although it shows him at a slightly younger age, judging


2. Khandalavala, P.M.P., 74.
from the thickness of his beard and moustache.
The identification of Indra Dev of Bandralta is of some importance, because it gives substance to Bandralta painting, while it also happens to clinch the matter of the personal belief of the ruler. In the Chandigarh Museum there are many other portraits of Indra Dev, some of them showing him seated in a darbar with attendants; in others he is seen hunting. But in most of these the Raja wears the Vaishnava tilak mark; and there is thus no mistake either his identity or his faith. The epithet "Dewan" which precedes Indra Dev’s name in the inscribed portraits is interesting. It raises some doubts to begin with, but Thakur Kahan Singh Balulra tells us that this Raja was a favourite of the Mughal Governors and had received from them the title of a "Dewan" which he quite approvingly prefixed his name with.

Portraits from Guler, associated so often and correctly with the origin of the "greatest style in all the Punjab Hills", are somewhat puzzling. Here we have portraits which thematically appear to relate quite clearly to the time in which the particular Raja who is the subject of the portrait must have ruled, and yet stylistically they appear to be rather anachronistic,
because one does not associate that period with the style in which they are executed. The portraits of Man Singh (A.D. 1635-1681) which show him with a Vaishnava tilak are quite likely to be late copies because they seem to relate to a type and not to an individual. But there is an extremely interesting portrait (see fig.13) showing Raja Bikram Singh (A.D. 1661-1675) at his prayer. In this, the Raja, with his massive body mostly bare as is appropriate to the occasion of puja, is seen sitting cross-legged before an idol. The Raja has a powerful look about him and this is quite in keeping with the legends told about his personal prowess. Here he appears as having a shade of a beard but a moustache which is quite long and which curves down at the sides of the mouth. His head is nearly clean-shaven but on the head is a top-knot once again suggestive of the Raja taking his faith very seriously. Around the Raja are lying instruments of worship, including a bell, a platter with flowers, a conch shell, a stand for incense, a vessel for water and so on. And on a chauki in front of him is a high pedestal the main part of which is formed of the figure of the Garuda, the vehicle of Vishnu.

The Garuda appears here as a devotee with folded hands, supporting on his head a large thal or platter laden

1. Two of these portraits were in the collection of Mr. B.R. Sharma of New Delhi. The portraits came originally from the Lambagraon Darbar.
2. Chandigarh Museum, No. 2194.
3. Hutchison & Vogel, I, 205, "He was famed for his physical strength, and could break a cocoanut in pieces with his fingers."
with flowers. Discernible inside the pile of flowers are two figures, apparently idols of Vishnu and Lakshmi; and there is also a Shaligram. The presence of the Garuda on the base of this pedestal as also the Shaligrams are indicative of the idol being Vaishnava. The Raja's being occupied with telling a tulsi rosary as also wearing a Vaishnava tilak are further indications of his faith. This is an altogether unusual picture; the characterisation is very strong and appears to be personally felt. The Raja is full of concentration and there is an expression of involvement on his face. It is of interest to mention that in the Bharat Kala Bhavan also there is a portrait (see fig. 14) showing Raja Bikram Singh at his prayers. If these pictures are late studies the artist must have had almost certainly a contemporary portrait before him when he made these. Other, but possibly stylised, pictures of Bikram Singh show him wearing the Vaishnava tilak mark also. But from the point of view of our study this is the most interesting painting of the series, from Guler. Mian Gopal Singh, who also belongs to the royal family of Guler, appears wearing a Vaishnava tilak in one of the portraits. But of greater

1. Bharat Kala Bhavan, No. 16.

2. Two portraits of Bikram Singh from the Lambagraon Darbar are in the collection of Mr. B.R. Sharma of New Delhi.

Interest is the painting which shows Dalip Singh (A.D. 1685–1730) of Guler at worship. In this painting, the Raja is seated crossed-legged on the floor, in the same manner as Bikram Singh. The instruments of worship are very nearly the same as in the picture of Bikram Singh and the chauki in front of the Raja holds also a platter supported by a stand. The metal figure of the Garuda does not appear here but entirely submerged in flowers on the platter are four tiny images. One of them can be recognized as that of Bal-Krishna seen crawling on the ground as an infant and holding a sweet in his hand. Another tiny idol appears to be of Krishna playing upon the flute. But most interesting also is the presence of the Shailgram on the same platter exactly in the manner in which it appears on the platter in front of Bikram Singh. The instruments of worship are very nearly the same as in the case of Bikram Singh's picture. There is the bell, the conch shells, the platter full of flowers and leaves, the vessel of water, the archyaputra for pouring water, and a little figure of a peacock holding a stick of dhupa or incense in its beak. It is a splendid picture again, showing the Raja concentrating on his idol, his right hand telling beads, inside a gomukha glove and a rosary or tulsi beads around his neck. Another important picture of Dalip Singh, a

1. Chandigarh Museum, No. 185.
2. National Museum, No. 60.1230.
drawing, in a different style more akin to primitive, shows him wearing a Vaishnava tiltak, indicating again that the painters saw him as a great devotee.

From among the sons of Raja Dalip Singh, we have the portraits of Bishan Singh, one of which shows him wearing a tiltak of Vaishnava description. The portraits of Goverdhan Chand, of which we have a great number, also show him wearing a very prominent Vaishnava tiltak on his forehead. We do not have a painting showing Goverdhan Chand (A.D. 1730-1760) at his prayers or sitting before an idol, but there is no mistaking the tiltak on his forehead. The son of Goverdhan Chand, Prakash Chand, also appears in a possible portrait as wearing a Vaishnava tiltak. In this manner from Man Singh onwards we have an almost series of continuous portraits of Guler Rajas which show them wearing Vaishnava tiltak marks and indicating their personal belief.

From Kangra we do not have any portraits of Bije Ram Chand, the Raja with whom the arrival of Vaishnavism in that State is associated. But from the end of the


3. Chandigarh Museum, No. 325.
17th century, we have a picture of quite unusual interest. 

This is a portrait (see fig.15) of Raja Alam Chand (A.D. 1697-1700) worshipping. The painting is inscribed, and there needs be little doubt about the identification.

The Raja appears seated on a small carpet, with an attendant standing behind him holding in one hand a morchhal and in the other a sword. The Raja is wearing a mala around his neck and is holding in his hand a leaf of a manuscript. But what is of interest is the small group of instruments of worship in front of him and these include a leaf with some kusha grass on it, a conch shell on a stand, a small unidentified object and another conical stand on which is the figure of a bird, apparently the Garuda. In the beak of the bird is stuck a dhup stick from which smoke is rising. There is no visible deity in this particular picture; but the presence of the Garuda is clearly indicative of Vaishnava worship.

The Raja's Vaishnava tilak is also suggestive of his belief. And when we combine this with the fact that his name is associated with a Thakurdwara at Alampur, we are left with no doubt at all about the faith of Alam Chand himself. Raja Alam Chand's portrait is an important one from the point of view of art history also, because so early a picture from Kangra, a painting which is quite

clearly contemporaneous and authentic, is not yet known. This is a painting which has generally weak colouring despite the background which is yellow. But the drawing has both power and skill. In any case if it is any indication of the style that belonged to the State of Kangra towards the end of the 17th century, it is a portrait of considerable significance.

1. There are Kangra portraits of Hamirchand (A.D. 1700-1747) and Ghamand Chand (1751-1774) which show them with Vaishnava tilaks also. But of unusual interest are two pictures of Sansar Chand (A.D. 1775-1823) which show him present at the celebration of religious festivals.

2. We have the testimony of William Moorcroft on the interests of Sansar Chand in epic themes, in Brijbhasha songs which, one imagines, had the love of Radha and Krishna as their principal content. The indications about the personal faith of Raja Sansar Chand are not exactly clear because his name is associated with many non-Vaishnava temples also. In one of these paintings


4. Rep. in Randhawa, "Maharaja Sansar Chand etc.", *Roopalekha*, XXXII, ii, fig. 20. The painting is in the Chandigarh Museum.
Sansar Chand is seen in a gathering around a deity on a swing (see fig. 16). It is generally believed that in this picture Sansar Chand is presiding over the Janmashtmi festival which celebrates the birth of Krishna. But quite possibly the idol here is not of Krishna himself, but a Shaligram which is covered with flowers on a platter. The swing which is being attended upon by priests with chauries in their hands. What comes as a great surprise is another painting from Sansar Chand's court, in which the Raja is seen apparently inside a temple. The crowd is quite considerable, and includes his brothers Fatehchand and Manchand, and some other princes. There are fireworks which are being let off on the steps to the temple in the lower corner of the picture. At the back, under a canopy, is a swing, once again, which is attended upon by attendants with chauries and purohits who are seated on the ground. There are streamers hanging in front of the swing which holds possibly some Shaligram idols. But what comes as almost a shock is the fact that Sansar Chand who appears in the centre of the painting is seen smoking a hookah. Not only this, but

2. Rep. in Khandalavala, P.M.P., fig. 81.
there are two girls who are dancing to the accompaniment of the Mirasis and singers who usually happened to be Muslims in these parts. The appearance of at least one of the music makers who is playing a drum, is suggestive of a Muslim. But one cannot be sure. In any case, it looks to be more of a scene of merriment than anything else. If one were to forget the swing with the idols in the background, it would be a perfectly normal painting. But the fact that Sansar Chand appears here holding the stem of a hookah which is placed right in the centre of the picture, comes as extraordinary proof of irreverence on the part of the Raja, because it is inconceivable that a hookah should be taken inside a temple.

In another painting (see fig. 17) of nearly the same theme, we have a prince who is, with more propriety, seen in front of a swing with idols. A prayer is obviously in progress and some people are blowing upon conches. This prince is almost certainly Anirudh Chand son of Raja Sansar Chand and he is seen in the same act of worship as his father. Only he appears to be in a more reverent mood.

With the association with Vaishnavism that Chamba rulers clearly had, one would have expected many portraits from Chamba as showing Rajas wearing Vaishnava tilaks. But, strange as it appears, they are very few. One Chamba picture of this theme is one of Raja Ugar Singh (A.D. 1720–1735) which is reproduced by Mr. Archer. In this, even though quite faintly, is seen a Vaishnava tilak on the forehead of the Raja. Daleh Singh (A.D. 1735–1748) of Chamba also appears wearing a Vaishnava tilak in a painting. But other paintings, which will be discussed elsewhere, show the Rajas of Chamba wearing Shakta or Shaiva tilaks on their foreheads. Most surprising of all is the portrait of Prithvi Singh who is normally associated with introducing the worship of the Raghuvira idol in Chamba in the middle of the 17th century, having brought it with him from Delhi. This portrait, even though late, shows him clearly wearing a Shakta tilak on his forehead, thus creating at least pictorially a piquant situation. The portraits of Jammu rulers do not indicate much connection with Vaishnavism till the period of Ranjit Dēv. This, of course, unless we place a painting in the Bharat

1. Indian Painting in the Punjab Hills, fig. 54.
2. Chandigarh Museum, No. 2676. Also see, No. 2762.
Kala Bhavan (No.173) which is inscribed with the words "Sri Raja Sarangdhar" (see fig.18) to Jammu. There was a Sarangdhar of Jammu who was the brother of Raja Haridev (A.D. 1650-1657). He was the elder of the two brothers but did not rule because, according to Thakur Kahn Singh, he died early of a fall from a horse. But it is not unlikely that he might have ruled for a short period and that it was only after his death that his kingdom passed on to his brother. The painting that we have of Sarangdhar deserves serious notice because it apparently belongs to a series of similar pictures. The setting of many of these pictures is nearly the same. In any case they have highly stylised compositions. The Raja appears in an arched balcony in front of which is a small balustrade covered with a flowered carpet. The spandrills made by the arch of the balcony are covered with floral designs. The colours of nearly all the pictures of this group— and there are many of them—are brilliant and warm. The paintings are in what is generally referred to as the early or Basohli style. Raja Sarangdhar who is wearing a Vaishnava tilak may have belonged to the period between A.D. 1640 and 1660 or so. And this date again is of significance, considering that many portraits of this group are of rulers who

belong to this very period. We have thus, in the same
setting, portraits supposed or real, of Prithvi Singh
1 (A.D. 1641-1664) of Chamba, Mian Chhatarsal of
2 Bandrala, Murid Khan or Bhan Singh of Nurpur, Sukh Dev
3 of Jasrota, and Mandhata of Nurpur. There is clearly
some common link between these. The paintings appear to
belong to a series, although they are not in the same
hand; nearly all of them are inscribed and the fact
that they are of rulers or princes who roughly belong to
the same period is of unusual interest. The composition
of these pictures may have been suggested to the Pahari
painters by some pictures of Mughal rulers. The fact
that Mughal rulers, often appeared in a jharoka, for the
purpose of giving darshan to the subjects at a fixed
time of the day, would have been well known. It is not
without interest to mention here a portrait of the
Emperor Aurangzeb which is stylistically very close to
these and is a Pahari painting. To sit in a balcony
would have been deemed to be a royal stance for many
Pahari rulers to strike. For the present study, however,
it is the portrait of Sarangdhar, who may possibly be

1. Rep. in Khandalavala, "Portraiture in Rajasthani
and Pahari Painting", Times of India Annual, 1968, fig.1.
2. Bharat Kala Bhavan, No. 171.
3. Bharat Kala Bhavan, No. 10251. The original name of
this prince was Bhan Singh but he embraced Islam and
took the name of Murid Khaas.
of Jammu, which is of interest because of the Vaishnava tilak that he is seen wearing in this portrait. It might be mentioned that the Raja wears here a more or less transparent jama; shadows appear under his armpits which is another feature common to this group of pictures. The jama is tied at the left, in the Hindu manner except, in this series, by Bhal Singh, in his portrait, who ties the jama at the right. And this is following Muslim practice. Clearly, the artist was aware of the implications of the faith of Bhal Singh who had turned Muslim.

Whether this Sarangdhar is from Jammu or not, from the time of Ranjit Dev we have clearly portraits which show Vaishnava affiliation. Ranjit Dev (A.D. 1735-1781) 1 some of whose coins bore a legend with the name of Lakshmi-Narayana, appears with Vaishnava tilak in the painting in which he appears with two children in front of him. His recalcitrant son, Brijraj Dev (A.D. 1781-1786) 2 also appears twice in portraits wearing a Vaishnava tilak quite prominently on his forehead.

The portraits of the rulers of Jasrota are not available in a series. There is an early one of Raja Sukh Dev, followed by a somewhat stylised one of Raja

2. Rep. in Barrett & Gray, Painting of India, at p.181.
3. Chandigarh Museum, No. 1256, & Archer, I.P.P.H., fig. 44.
Dhruv Dev. In the latter the Raja appears behind a balustrade, wearing around his neck a tulsi necklace (see fig. 19). On the forehead and the neck are Vaishnava tilak marks. Raja Dhruv Dev may have ruled in the beginning of the 18th century or perhaps even from the end of the 17th century, and it is not unlikely that this particular portrait of his in the Chandigarh Museum is also from a series. But of more interest is a puzzling picture, puzzling because of an inconsistency between its possible date and its style, of the same Raja "examining the points of a horse by a torchlight". This painting which has been discussed at some length by Archer shows a Raja seated at the left, supported by two cushions and telling the beads of a tulsi rosary. He wears the same Vaishnava tilak as in the other portrait. This portrait, based as it may be on earlier portraits, bears a strong facial resemblance to the earlier one. But it has an inscription on the top margin. Difficult as it is to read, the inscription clearly mentions the name Dhruv Dev so that this painting may also be quite clearly of Dhruv Dev of Jasrota, even though it may


2. I.P.P.H., 47-49, fig. 43. The inscription on this painting has been read by Dr. B.N. Goswamy.
have been executed long after his death. From the Lambagraon collection comes a portrait of Raja Rattan Dev of Jasrota in the usual Lambagraon manner. This shows him with one of his sons, Bhañ Singh, the Raja appears here wearing a Vishnava tilak.

Another painting that is full of exceptional interest, and which seems to relate to Jasrota, is one which is in the Bharat Kala Bhavan (see fig. 20). This shows a prince seated in a Thakurdwara with his back towards us. In a low balcony is seated the figure of Vishnu himself, holding in his four arms the sankha, the chakra, the gada and the padma. At the right of the picture is a Pandit, wearing a Tulsi necklace and holding in his hand the leaves of a manuscript. This painting, which is only partially coloured, the finished part of it being the figures and not the architectural details, bears three inscriptions. The one in the top left corner says "Jastota de Thakurdwara" meaning the Thakurdwara of Jasrota. The inscription above the head of the Pandit reads "Harisaran Pandit". The inscription above the figure of the person whose face we cannot see, because it is averted from us, reads "Shri Mian Balwant Singh Jasrotia". Here then, we have another Jasrota

2. Bharat Kala Bhavan, No. 851.
prince worshipping before Vishnu, while a priest ministers to the puja. The picture is of unusual competence as seen in the figure of Vishnu and of the profile of the Pandit. And if it is a Nainsukh painting as it clearly seems to be, it is a significant addition to the list that we have of pictures by that great artist.

The remote state of Kulu has yielded comparatively few portraits of Rajas. But we have possibly a very significant one in the Bharat Kala Bhavan (see fig. 21). This is an inscribed portrait, unfortunately the inscription at the back is partially rubbed off. It reads now: "... la Jagat Singh" (1657-1672). The first word is not clear but it might well be "kola" which would make this portrait as being of Jagat Singh of Kulu which lends it considerable significance both because of its date and its theme. There are stylistic indications of the portrait belonging to a rather early period. The hookah that the Raja is of an early type, with a large bulbous base and a stiff stem slightly curved in the middle. There is some resemblance that one could see in the face of the Raja and some faces that we see in the well known Ramayana set from

1. Bharat Kala Bhavan, 1068.
2. The clan name of the ruling family of Kulu is Kola or Kolua.
In the left hand of the Raja are held two or three flowers which are often associated with people of Kulut; the gaddis wear them ever so often in their turbans or caps. The Raja is wearing a prominent Vaishnava tilak on his forehead, and if this is indeed a painting of Jagat Singh of Kulu who introduced the worship of Raghunathji in that area, it becomes at once very important. In front of the Raja is seated one of his attendants with folded hands. His body cuts a little on the border which, in turn, may be again some indication of the early date of the picture. The style is altogether bold and primitive and it would not come as a matter of surprise if this does turn out to be an authentic Kulu portrait of the middle of the 17th century of a Raja who played a central role in the introduction of Vaishnavism in that remote part.

From Bilaspur we have an early painting, of an uncertain date and of an unidentified Raja, although the Raja is wearing a Vaishnava tilak. This painting has an inscription at the bottom probably inscribed by the artist who painted this because he refers to his own condition in the one and a half life. But quite clearly

---

1. This painting is from the collection of the Raja of Bilaspur and was seen through the courtesy of Dr. W.G. Archer.
from Bilaspur and inscribed to that effect, is a portrait of Mian Danehand who was the younger brother of Raja Bhimchand (A.D. 1667-C.1712) of Bilaspur. Mian Danehand is seen standing, holding a sword in one hand and a flower in the other, almost in the manner of a Mughal courtier. His costume is grand; he wears a beautiful, flowered jama and a patka. But what is of interest to us is the Vaishnava tilak that he is also seen wearing on the forehead. This is quite clearly an early painting from Bilaspur. The Bilaspur rulers, Ajmer Chand (C.1712-1741) and Devi Chand (1741-1779) also appear in their portraits wearing Vaishnava tilaks although there is nothing very remarkable about their portraits from the point of view of the present study or of art history.

The tiny State of Jaswan had strong connections with the Pindori darbar, as we have seen above. The association of Raja Ram Singh of Jaswan with the Pindori Mahants is not celebrated in any painting that has survived; but of a much later date, in fact contemporaneous, more or less, with Ghamand Chand and Sansar Chand of Kangra, there are portraits of Jaswal rulers which show

2. Ibid., No. 2704.
3. Ibid., No. 2763.
their Vaishnavi leanings. We have thus the portraits of Raja Abhai Rai Singh, and of Narpat Singh son of Jagrup Singh and a nephew of Abhai Rai Singh, showing distinct Vaishnava tilaks. Ajit Singh of Jaswan also appears in a similar fashion, as does his brother Mian Jhagar Singh. These portraits belong to a series which have come from the Lambagraon collection and quite clearly were executed by Kangra artists at the Kangra court.

Mandi presents a rather unusual situation. The ruler who is associated with the introduction of Vaishnavism in Mandi by the erection of the well-known Madho Rai temple, Raja Suraj Sen (A.D. 1637-1664) appears in a portrait of his (see fig. 22) wearing clearly a Shakta tilak on his forehead. This is certainly unusual, but unmistakable. The attendants of the Raja also wear the same tilaks on their respective foreheads. But of the successor of Suraj Sen, Gaur Sen, who was very devout and is said to have gone on many pilgrimages, including one to Shri Jagannath, there is

1. In the collection of Mr. B.R. Sharma of New Delhi.
2. In the collection of Mr. B.R. Sharma of New Delhi.
3. Ibid.
a portrait showing him with a Vaishnava tilak. The pictures that come afterwards, of Shyam Sen (1664-1679) and Sidh Sen (1684-1722) for example, leave no doubt about the Mandi rulers adhering to their earlier Shakta faith. The association of Shyam Sen with the Shyama-Kali temple above Mandi town and of Sidh Sen with the tantrik practices almost prepare us for a situation in painting of this sort.

From the neighbourhood state of Suket, we have pictures again of the 18th century which show Raja Ranjit Singh or Ranjit Sen and his younger brother Mian Kishan Singh wearing Vaishnava tilaks. Mian Kishan Singh appears in quite a few portraits from the Kangra series of the Lambagraon collection and he wears very prominently a tilak mark on his forehead. This does not come as a surprise again because he is said to have been a deeply religious and, at one stage of his life, renounced

2. Chandigarh Museum, No. 2849.
3. Ibid., Nos. 2714, 2726, 2727, 2729, 2764, 2792.
5. Ibid., II, 388-390.
6. In the collection of Mr. B.R. Sharma of New Delhi.
7. There are two portraits of his in the collection of Mr. B.R. Sharma of New Delhi. Also see, Chandigarh Museum, No. 1066.
everything and retired to Jagannath. The presence of Mian Kishan Singh's pictures in the Kangra series is again to be expected because he was the father-in-law of Sansar Chand of Kangra. The fact that a great deal of attention is paid to him is not therefore without reason. In another painting it is not only Mian Kishan Singh but also his son, Mian Bishan Singh, who also wears the same Vaishnava tilak.

There are portraits from other States, but none so unusual as one of a Raja of Siba (see fig. 23). This is Narain Singh whom, however, we do not meet in the list of the rulers of that State. But the portrait is unusual because the Raja wears a topi on his head, the base of it tied with a scarf, quite clearly suggestive of the headgear adopted by the Vaishnava Mahants of Pindori and Damtal. The Raja also wears a prominent Vaishnava tilak and holds in his hands a tulsi rosary. This Raja's appearance is highly suggestive of his feeling of kinship with the Pindori gaddi. He seems to have adopted this style of apparel not for a special occasion but almost permanently, because in another painting in which many hill princes appear in the presence of Jai Singh Kanhaiya, this Raja is seen wearing the same topi and

2. Ibid., No. 228.
3. Ibid., No. 250.
scarf. The date of Narain Singh is not clear, because he does not even figure in the genealogy of Siba Rajas, but his presence in Jai Singh Kanhaiya's paintings indicates that he must have lived around A.D. 1780 or so.

This is only an incomplete and partial list of Pahari portraits which show Vaishnava associations of Rajas. We have many others. We find, for example, a Raja of Chamehni, Gaje Singh of Nalagarh and Kirit Prakash of Sirmur also appearing in their portraits with Vaishnava tilaks. But then the more significant from among this considerable number have been discussed above. The attention must now shift to a group of portraits which are not of princes but of a different set of personalities.

B. PORTRAITS OF RELIGIOUS PERSONS

This section is devoted mostly to a discussion of portraits, either contemporary or imaginary, of religious personages, prominently the Mahants of the gaddis of Pinderi, Damtal and Bathu. Mr. Khandalavala

2. Ibid., No. 2682.
3. Collection of Mr. B.R. Sharma of New Delhi.
reproduces an important painting in his *Pahari Miniature Painting* (See fig. 24). This he ascribes to an unidentified kalam and dates to about the year A.D. 1750. Approximately 10 inches by 7 inches in size, the painting shows on the left the figure of a royal personage, seated on a throne with a canopy above him, holding a goblet of wine in his hand. An attendant who stands behind him waves a chauri over him, betokening his sovereignty. Seated facing him are two persons. One of them, clad in white, is shown being administered something from a cup by an attendant. The other person, sharp-nosed, clean-shaven and of a heavier build is seated beside him, holding a two-gourdred *vina*. An attendant standing behind him is waving a chauri over his head also. Both of the persons at the right wear long conical head-gears which have little *chhatras* at the top. On the upper margin of the painting is an inscription in Takri which Mr. Khandalavala has deciphered. The name of the Gosain in the white costume drinking wine, says Mr. Khandalavala, "is Nirmalji, while the one who holds a musical instrument is named Bhagwanji (d.c. 1622–A.D.). The name of the prince is given as Shripat Simha Jagir." Mr. Khandalavala seems to feel that the names given in these inscriptions

1. Khandalavala, P.M.P., fig. 8.
2. Ibid., 100-101.
may well be slightly corrupted forms: "Mirizalji" standing, in fact, for "Narainji", while "Shripat Simha", he says is "a honorific title"; "Jagir", may be a corrupted version of "Jahangir". A recent re-reading, however, suggests that the scribe of this inscription has not made any error and the inscription does, in fact, clearly read as "Shri Padshah Jahangir, Shri Gosain Narainji (d. A.D. 1659). Shri Gosain Bhagwanji", thus proving what was only a surmise of Mr. Khandalavala to be wholly correct.

The present writer has elsewhere drawn attention to the legend on which this painting is based. The story obviously comes from Pindori and has been briefly given above. The importance of the painting lies in the fact that it is an early work, though certainly not contemporary to the dates either of Bhagwanji or Narainji. And it represents a theme which was a favourite of the Pahari painters. There are numerous paintings of this theme in private and public collections and some of them are being drawn attention to here. It is not entirely clear as to who commissioned these paintings. But the presence of frescoes both at Pindori and Dantal clearly indicates the possibility of some of these paintings

1. B.N. Goswamy, "Re-reading of some Tahri Inscription in Khandalavala's 'Pahari Miniature Painting'" , Reepalekha, XXXV, Nos. 1 & 2, 70.
having been commissioned by the Mahants themselves. In fact, in the collection of the present Mahant of Pindori Shri Ram Das, (1908-) are several miniature paintings in a late Kangra manner, by the various Mahants of the gaddi who ruled at Pindori. There is another version of the poison drinking miracle in the Pindori collection and this has been reproduced on the title cover of the history of Pindori by Pritam Zayai. But it is quite clearly a late work. The interest that belongs to the present painting is that it is a painting which is likely to have been made not very long after the death of Narayanji. And the present writer is inclined to date it in the second half of the 17th century, and no later. We have seen earlier that there are paintings of the middle of the 17th century or so, various collections; an early date is suggested by the colours and the high degree of intensity in some of the figures in this painting also. What is of interest in this particular painting is that the painter had neither seen the Emperor Jahangir himself, nor any likeness of him. For he paints him wearing a full-beard which Jahangir never did. Clearly the painting is inspired by tradition both about the Emperor and the two Mahants, it is the result of an artist's lively imagination, and not his observation.
Another thing that needs to be noticed in this painting is that a distinction is established between Bhagwanji and Narayanji. Bhagwanji is shown clean-shaven and holding a Vina. Narayanji, on the other hand, wears a beard and does not hold a Vina in his hands. This distinction must have been based on memory preserved at Pindori, because several other pictures, not related to this style or to this period, continue this tradition. Bhagwanji is almost always shown as holding a Vina in his hands and as being clean-shaven and rather youthful in appearance, Narainji always appears bearded and not carrying the musical instrument. The Vina is interesting because many of the teachings of Bhagwanji like those of other saint mystics of the 16th century were cast in musical modes. The manuscript at Bathu clearly mentions a number of Ragas and Raganis by name.

Mr. Khandalavala also reproduces another painting in which appear two persons "with two hands, four arms but one lower portion...", He seems to think that here "the two Gosains are obviously the butt of the painter's wit, They sit with a single shawl around them, comically embracing each other..." Unfortunately, here, as the present writer has pointed out earlier, Mr.

1. P.M.P., fig. 27. Also see, p. 101.
Khandalavala judges this painting erroneously and misses the point completely. He is quite right about the identification of the two Gosains who are Bhagwanji and Narayanji. The headgear is the same: a long conical cap which Mr. Khandalavala in this context calls a "dunce-cap". But quite clearly the persons in this painting are not comical, nor are they being made here "the butt of the painter's wit". They are the Pindori saints themselves, rendered quite devoutly by the painter. Their stance and this way of painting them is the artist's simple effort symbolically to show the extreme closeness between these two. The intention of the painter was quite religious, far from satirical. The conical caps worn by the two figures are not ordinary topis wither. They have a sectarian significance and were worn by the presiding Mahant of the establishment at Pindori as the symbol of his authority. There is a long tradition behind these topis as worn at Pindori and Damtal, and a topi of this type is even to this day brought over from the Jakhbar establishment, near Pathankot, at the installation of a new mahant. In fact the ceremony of installation is not


complete without this ritual. And it is not a matter of surprise that all paintings of Bhagwanji and Narayanji and even of successive mahants of Pindori, show them wearing these caps.

This painting is, in its manner and style, very closely related to another painting in the Chandigarh Museum. In that the two mahants or teachers appear facing each other, and not joined together. But their faces are very much the same as in this painting. Narayanji is seen holding a lotus in his folded hands, seated before Bhagwanji who has a youthful appearance indeed. Behind the two of them is an attendant wearing a marqhal above the head of Bhagwanji. The colouring of this painting is rather dry and the drawing highly summary. On the whole there is some peculiarity about this style of painting which distinguishes it from other pictures. This painting has an inscription at the bottom which identifies the two persons and which says that it was painted by the artist "Qurbaksh" who describes himself as a "chakya" (servant) of Shri Shukat Chand. We are unfortunately not in a position to identify the


patron of the artist, but the name of the artist on this picture is a matter of some importance. Quite clearly the same Gurbaksh was responsible for the picture reproduced by Mr. Khandalavala.

The manner in which the two Gosains of Pindori are shown seated is again the same in another picture of Bhagwanji and Narayanji which has come out of the Mankot collection. In this, Bhagwanji and Narayanji are sitting on an eight-legged throne with a canopy above them. They are seen sitting joined together, with two faces, two bodies, two torsos, and four arms. There is almost a suggestion of the figure of Vishnu with four arms in this painting. In one of the hands is held a lotus, in another an open manuscript, and two of the hands are joined together. The Mahants wear large flower garlands, like crossed belts across their shoulders and waist. They are dressed in those conical caps which we can now recognize and at the base of which are scarves tied at the back. Bhagwanji appears here as clean-shaved except for a moustache, while Narayanji wears his usual beard. There are two attendants at the left, one and at the right wearing a long jama and waving a chauri. And there are two

musicians at the extreme right who are seated on the striped carpet, one playing cymbals and the other on a stringed instrument. There is a single, highly stylised and beautifully drawn tree.

A remarkable feature of this painting is the manner in which the texture of the canopy, the throne, and the tiara worn by Bhagwanji and Narayanji is rendered. There is clearly repousse metal work which has been done here, and it was possibly silver which was used for adding to the sumptuousness of the painting. If one moves one's hands gently over the picture the thickness of the metal sheet can be felt. Apart from adding to the appearance, this feature lends to the painting more weight, as it were. The painting bears an inscription on the top margin which identifies the two Mahants as "Shri Gosain Bhagwanji" and "Shri Gosain Narayanji". This is, quite possibly, a significant painting, because in its style it is very close to a portrait that we have already discussed above, that of Raja Mahipat of Mankot. The fact that this painting has also come from the Mankot collection is to be remarked. What is important, and worth noticing, is also the closeness in the manner in which the figures of Mahipat in his portrait and Bhagwanji
In the present painting have been rendered. Even their facial features appear rather similar. Also similar are the general air about the picture, the sage-green colour of the background, the garland of flowers which is worn like a yagyapavita passing over one shoulder and going under the other arm across the body. There is some resemblance in the attendant who is present in the Bhagwanji and Narayanji picture and the attendant in Mahipat Mankotia's portraits. The Mankotia rulers were closely attached to the Pindori gaddi and it would have been perfectly natural for Mahipat Dev to have commissioned an artist of his own to produce a painting of the two founders of the shrine to which he paid such devout homage. The date of this painting may well be the second half of the 17th century, which again makes it a picture of some importance.

A painting in the Bharat Kala Bhavan shows only Bhagwanji seated with a vina on his shoulder. He appears here with the same handsome face and tranquil expression. But it is a late picture, in the high Kangra manner. And, quite possibly, the work of an artist who was at least for some time attached to the Pindori darbar. In the Chandigarh Museum is a painting which is clearly in the

1. Bharat Kala Bhavan, No. 19.
2. Chandigarh Museum, No. 369.
hands of a member of the Guler family of artists, like
the one just discussed, showing Bhagwanji seated on a
carpet and resting gently against a cushion, a vina on
his right shoulder, left hand raised. The features are
by now recognizable. Facing him on the ground is seated
Narayanji, cross legged, clearly occupying a lower
status here than Bhagwanji himself. He has before him
a little calabash and a manuscript wrapped in a piece
of cloth. In the middle and behind the little terrace
on which the two are seated is a flowering tree
which is so common to many Guler paintings. Also
recognizable at the left corner is the figure of an
attendant who wears a morchhal, because so many attendants
in Guler and Kangra paintings appear in this manner. This
is one of the more finished pictures of this theme,
and testifies to the popularity of it among the painters
of the hills.

An unusual composition is to be seen in another
painting in the Chandigarh Museum (see fig. 30). This
shows a person one can now easily identify as Narayanji,
seated cross-legged and completely wrapped in a gown
or shadar. He is seated on a tiger skin by the bank
of a small stream in an area from which forest is not
very far. His right hand which has come out of the
shadar is holding a mala. But what is almost startling

is a large serpent which seems to have come out from somewhere and entwined itself around the body of the ascetic, and spreading his hood above the head, Narayanji seems to be looking up at the serpent. The purport of the painting becomes clear with reference to Indian tradition and to Narayanji in particular. A great personage was deemed as protected by a serpent spreading its hood over his head to afford shade while he meditated. This was also interpreted as an omen of divine status as in the legend told of Guru Nanak. Similar stories are heard of other saints also. Quite clearly the painter here has tried to import that legend into the Narayanji story. Also, possibly, a reference here is made to the long periods of meditation spent by Narayanji on river-banks. It is to be remembered that he was a 'Mauni' for several years, being under the vow of silence. The suggestion made here is that he possibly sat here in so immobile a fashion that he was perhaps mistaken by the serpent to be merely a heap of clay. This painting is not isolated; there is another of this theme in fresco at Pindori.

There are paintings of the later Mahants of Pindori also. One of them (see fig. 31) inscribed at the back, is of Mahant Anandghan, the third mahant in the line of succession at Pindori. It is a good, though late, work.
in the Kangra style. The mahant wears here a Vaishnava tilak and the conical topi with a chhatra of top.

Another painting inscribed on the top, but in a rather indifferent hand, is of Maharaj Hari Ram Ji the fourth Mahant of Pindori (see fig. 32). This shows him sitting under a scalloped ajrak balcony with an attendant behind him holding a morchhal. The Mahant himself wears not the conical top in this case, but a turban which is tied like a scarf. He holds in his left hand a lotus flower. The inscription on the top margin is in Devanagari.

Another painting, in the hand of the painter Gurbaksh, again, is of Mahant Sukhdev or Sukhnidhan, also of the Pindori establishment (see fig. 33). This is rough work even when compared to the earlier works of Gurbaksh that we have seen, but as a record of the portraiture of Pindori Mahants it is not without importance. The painting of Mahant Mansa Ram of Damtal has already been drawn attention to earlier. A picture of considerable competence in this series is a small painting in which a Mahant is seen seated at the left (see fig. 34). He wears a Vaishnava tilak and a topi and is resting against a cushion, one of his hands holding a mala. A book is lying open on the ground on a piece of cloth.

1. Chandigarh Museum, No. 245.

2. Ibid., No. 247.

3. Ibid., No. 280.
In front of him is a very competently drawn figure of a lady who is holding on a platter two little triangular objects which may well be pens, so that she may be offering these to the Mahant out of a sense of homage. Despite the small size of the picture, the fineness of the line as also the clarity of the tone establishes this as the work of a good artist belonging to the Guler-Kangra tradition. We are again not able to identify this mahant. Another drawing shows two mahants clearly of Pindori of Damtal seated facing each other (see fig. 35). It may well be a portrayal of a mahant and his disciple because one of them appears to be much younger in age than the other. The line of this drawing is sure and fluent. The work is by a member possibly of the Guler family again. Another picture, the main person in which we cannot exactly identify, shows a man seated with his hand in a gomukh glove inside a temple. Over his head is being waved a chauri and to his right are two musicians playing on instruments, one with cymbals and the other with Tanpura. But what is of interest is the building in the background. Here on a high pedestal appears an image of Krishna flanked on either side by a gopi. Also in one of the arches is a

2. Ibid., No. 300.
the Sadhu who is seated in a posture of concentration. Although we are not able to identify the person, it may well be that the picture comes from Bathu. We are led to this assumption by the fact that the image which is installed in the main temple of Bathu was of Krishna alone - "Kewal Krishna".

Bound in the manuscript at Bathu there are other pictures showing Bhagwanji and Narayanji (see figs. 36, 37). One of them shows Raja Govardhan Chand paying obeisance to Bhagwanji and Narayanji. But these are the products of a folk kalam possibly practised at that time. They are to be mentioned, however, as important records. A painting in a very competent hand in the Bharat Kala Bhavan shows a mahant with a large number of devotees or kirtan-singers, all assembled in front of the Jagannath idol in the centre of the picture. Neither the mahant, nor the locale, can be easily identified. It is known that some of the rulers and their artists did travel to the Jagannath in Orissa, but it is a little unlikely that the painting refers to an actual scene of that place. It is to be remembered that there are several Jagannath temples in the hills.

1. These paintings are all bound in a batch at the end of the volume containing the manuscripts. The painting of Dalip Singh before Bhagwanji and Narayanji does not bear much resemblance to his other portraits except a general one. Govardhan Chand is recognizable only from his peck-marks.

2. Bharat Kala Bhavan, 84/105.
also, one in Suket, another in Shirmur. And it is not unlikely that this is either an imaginary picture of a mahant who had actually gone to Jagannath, or portrayal of one of these temples. The architecture of the subsidiary temples seen on either side of the main shrine suggests a Pahari origin, and no reference to the Jagannath temple in Orissa.

Of considerable interest to this study, in addition to these paintings of the Mahants of Pindori and other places, are some portraits of pandits or other persons who are seen wearing Vaishnava tilak marks prominently. Great interest attaches to some of these pictures because some of them appear to be contemporary studies. A painting in the Chandigarh Museum shows a very lean person seated on a striped carpet. He wears a Vaishnava tilak, a tulsi necklace around his neck, and his left hand is partially raised. The air about the picture suggests an early date, the colours as also the drawing being some indications. The significant part of the painting is the inscription at the back in Takri. This reads: "Gokul... Prohit. Shri Rai Sital Mankotia di Khidmat kiti." This, in

translation would read as: "Gokal Prohant, Faithfully served Shri Rai Sital Mankotia." The painting is from the Mankot collection, and a painting placing a person in direct relationship with a former Raja, the blind Sital Dev of Mankot appears naturally to belong to Mankot, and to the time in which the purohit lived. The fact that this purohit is mentioned here as having personally served the Raja Sital Dev is not without significance because the Raja did need personal assistance because of his blindness. The inscription has to be taken, therefore, as authentic, and this would push the picture back to a period a little after that of Raja Sital Dev, possibly in the third quarter of the 17th century. This picture is quite close to those of many courtiers and other persons from the Mankot collection which is unbelievably rich in early portraits. Many of the various persons cannot or easily be identified in this series of portraits are not Rajas or princes. But, and this is of interest, some of them wear Vaishnava tilaka. We are clearly being led by pictorial evidence to a conclusion about the firm connection of the people of Mankot with the Vaishnava faith.

1. See, e.g., Chandigarh Museum, Nos. 1208, 1233, 1236.
From the Bhuri Singh Museum at Chamba comes another important painting (See Fig. 38). This is of Pandit Utsava, first Pujari of Raghuvira, seeing worshipping Lakshmi Narayana. According to Dr. Vogel, "the Pandit must have lived in the days of Raja Prithvi Singh (A.D. 1641-1664) in whose reign the image of Raghuvira (i.e. Rama) was brought to Chamba from Delhi." In this the pandit appears at the left of the picture, somewhat in the manner of Todhi Singh of Mankot, as a large figure covering nearly the whole height of the painting. His hands are folded in front of him and he is wearing a tulsi mala around his neck. The object of Pandit’s adoration are the figures of Lakshmi and Narayana. They are to be seen on a high, six-legged throne. Vishnu carries all the four attributes, the shankha, the chakra, the gada, and the padma. Lakshmi, a tiny figure, is seated in his lap. At one side of the throne is a lady offering something in a platter and looking up at Vishnu. At the right is another female attendant holding a shauri which she is resting on her shoulder. In the forefront is the suggestion of a stream of water by the side of which are flowering tiny little shoots of grass and flowers. Above the throne is a highly

From the Guler collection come two paintings of Purohit also. One of them shows Dinmani Raina, one of the important figures in Guler history, seated on a carpet against a cushion. He has a dignified, noble bearing and holds in his right hand an open book on which the words "Ram, Ram, Ram" etc. are written. The Pandit is wearing a Vaishnava tilak on his forehead and two tulsi malas around his neck. In another painting, in which the same Pandit appears, at a slightly older age playing a game of chess with Mian Gopal Singh of Guler, we find him as wearing the same tulsi malas and a clearly Vaishnava tilak on his forehead. This leaves little doubt that Dinmani Raina was a Vaishnava in his faith even though we have had recorded an oral tradition earlier about the members of this family being generally

2. Ibid., No. 214.
In the Bharat Kala Bhavan are two portraits of Vaishnava devotees whom we cannot with certainty identify. The names given in the inscriptions are of "Brindaban Gesain", and "Chaturbhuj Purohit". From the Lambagraon collection comes a picture of a courtier, in fact an official, of a Katoch Raja. The inscription at the back of the painting reads "Bhagwant Katwal Bakshi Raja Katoch" which means that it is the portrait of a Kotwal named Bhagwant who was the pay-master of the Katoch Raja. It shows him as standing his left hand resting on the hilt of sword, his right hand holding a little flower. But the thing of importance to us is the Vaishnava tilak which he is clearly wearing.

This and the other paintings leave little doubt that, apart from the Rajas, many other persons who were painted from life and not only from imagination, wore the Vaishnava tilak. And the artists made it a point to indicate the faith of these persons in their portraits. For the study of the extent of Vaishnavism in the hills, these portraits are of obvious importance.

1. Bharat Kala Bhavan, No. 52.
2. Collection of Mr. B.R. Sharma of New Delhi.