The scope of the enquiry that follows is modest and limited. No attempt has been made here to write a sectarian history of the Vaishnava faith in the hills; nor is this a history of Pahari painting. All that has been attempted is to see the nature and the extent of the connection between religion and art in a small area of study. Since religion in this context has mostly been taken to be Vaishnavism only, the enquiry has resolved itself into a study of the connection between Vaishnavism and Pahari painting. The details of dogma or theology would concern the history of religion; and the discussion of styles and dates, patrons and painters, would concern the history of art in general. For this reason neither of these two areas have been made the theme of this study proper. It remains a study of relationships.

For all its limited ambit, however, it is hoped that the study is of some significance, because little attempt has been made up to now to enquire in any depth into this relationship. The statements that have been made on this subject are both rigid and precise, if eloquent. The conclusions which are advanced here tend to support some and question other assumptions. But it was felt necessary to focus sharply on this area of study, for
general statements do not go with the intensive researches that have been made into Pahari painting in the last quarter of a century.

Much information has been taken for granted here. Details of geography, historical developments, the general history of religion and painting in India, have not been treated of at any length. These details are easily available elsewhere, and, in any case, the aim of the present study is not to write a general introduction to Pahari painting, but only to draw attention to that aspect of it that has been chosen. The account may therefore not be found to be as exhaustive as it could perhaps be made. But an honest attempt has been made here to bring together and examine evidence that is likely to have bearing on the theme.

Research in a subject like Pahari painting presents many difficulties which all scholars of the subject have encountered. The written records are few, historical accounts patchy, and collections of paintings dispersed. Within these limitations, especially within the one mentioned last, an endeavour has been made to go into the subject as intensively as was possible.

I am keenly aware of the shortcomings of the work. More could have been done. But that is perhaps true of all
studies. I only hope that a modestly clear picture emerges from the following pages.

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The photographs reproduced here have been received from various institutions and are included through their kind courtesy.

Chandigarh: October 22, 1968.

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