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FROM PRIVATE TO PUBLIC

The Movement of Pahari Paintings from Royal Collections to the Chandigarh Museum in Post-Independence India

ABSTRACT

The Government Museum and Art Gallery of Chandigarh was established to fill a cultural vacuum in post-partition Punjab. It received the seed of its collection from Lahore and the rest was amassed by M. S. Randhawa (1909–1986), an Indian Civil Service officer with a love for painting that at the time was identified as "Kangra" for its style and association with the eponymous region and kingdom. In the 1950s, he spent considerable time traveling in the western Himalayas, tracking down paintings and acquiring them for the museum. The many volumes of correspondence that he later bequeathed to the museum reveal how collections of early modern Pahari paintings were rapidly dispersing to form new collections elsewhere. Through the lens of the bureaucrat-collector Randhawa, this article sheds light on the complex history of collecting in mid-twentieth-century South Asia. In tracing the movement of paintings from private royal collections to a public government museum, the article approaches provenance as biography with the goal to contribute to collective efforts of mapping networks that connect collections and collectors.

> "When paintings are collected, they must find a home where they can be stored and also displayed. This led me to the founding of Chandigarh museum, the finest museum in India with the largest collection of Pahari miniature paintings."
>
> M. S. Randhawa[1]

In May 1952, a senior officer of the Indian Civil Service (ICS) took a walk in Shimla's cedar forest. As he strolled along the hillside, Mohinder Singh Randhawa (1909–1986) met V. S. Suri, the curator of the Punjab Museum. The latter informed him that the government of "East Punjab" (Indian Punjab) had received its share of art objects from Lahore, Pakistan, after partition.[2] In the absence of a designated building, a church had been converted into a makeshift museum to house and display the objects. Randhawa was happy to hear the news of the objects' arrival and visited them the next day. Gandharan figures of gray schist greeted him as he made his way through the rooms to the "Kangra" paintings—so named for their style and association with the eponymous kingdom and region—which he had first seen in 1927 at the Lahore Museum while a doctoral student at the botanical laboratories of the nearby college.[3] This chance encounter in Shimla initiated, for Randhawa, a lifelong association with "Kangra" painting just as scholarly

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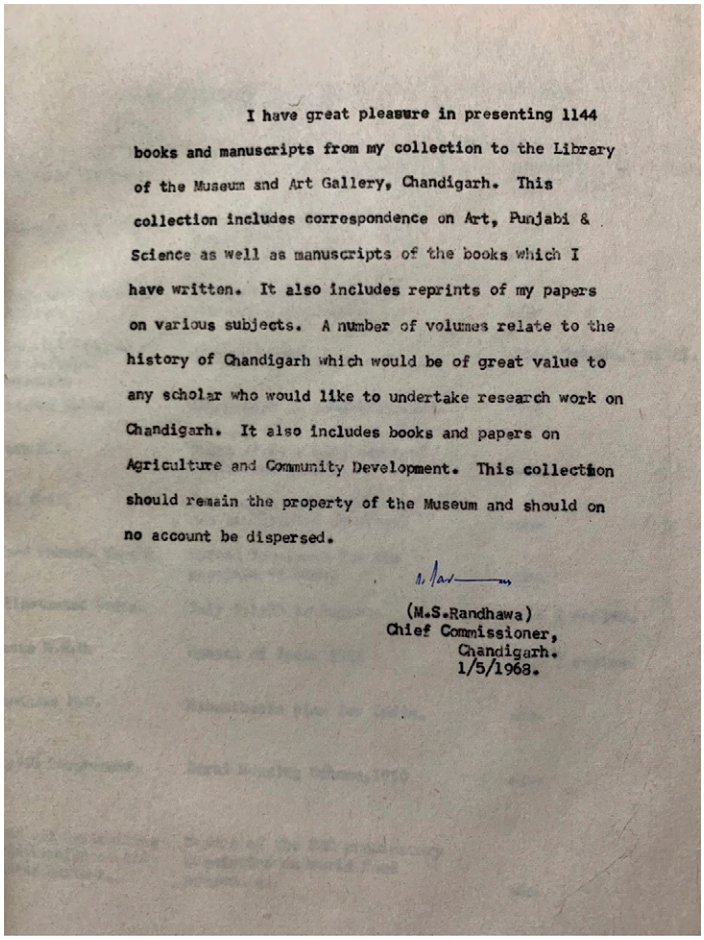
interest in it was beginning to grow. In his first publication on the subject, he defined the style as a "local art of the greatest delicacy and charm" that originated in Guler in the eighteenth century due to the "synthesis of the Mughal style with its easy flowing line with the Hindu spirit."[4] Randhawa's passion for "Kangra" painting remained consistent over the next several years, and he made considerable efforts to locate collections of paintings to publish and acquire.

Randhawa had moved to Shimla, then the capital of Punjab, as the development commissioner of the state. In this position, he played an important role in shaping matters of policy and governance for Punjab, which was reorganized to form Himachal Pradesh and Haryana in 1966. His most important contributions—town planning, urban landscaping, in addition to administrative duties—were to the union territory of Chandigarh.[5] As he participated in the founding of this new modern city—designed and planned by the Swiss-French architect Le Corbusier (1887–1965)—in independent India, Randhawa took a particular interest in the art objects from Lahore and ensured that they were given to a new museum at Chandigarh.[6] The extent of his devotion to the Government Museum and Art Gallery, known more generally as the Chandigarh Museum, is evident in his official correspondence, all of which he donated to the museum's reference library in 1968 (figs. 1, 2). These documents show that he not only founded the museum but also made major additions to the transferred collection. He bought a large number of modern and contemporary artworks from exhibitions and artists, including Satish Gujral (1925–2020), Sobha Singh (1901–1986), Krishen Khanna (b. 1925), Avinash



I have great pleasure in presenting 1144 books and manuscripts from my collection to the Library of the Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh. This collection includes correspondence on Art, Punjabi & Science as well as manuscripts of the books which I have written. It also includes reprints of my papers on various subjects. A number of volumes relate to the history of Chandigarh which would be of great value to any scholar who would like to undertake research work on Chandigarh. It also includes books and papers on Agriculture and Community Development. This collection should remain the property of the Museum and should on no account be dispersed.

(M.S.Randhawa)
Chief Commissioner,
Chandigarh.
1/5/1968.

FIGURE 1. M. S. Randhawa's note accompanying his gift of books and correspondence to the Chandigarh Museum's library. Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh, Reference Library. Photograph courtesy of Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh

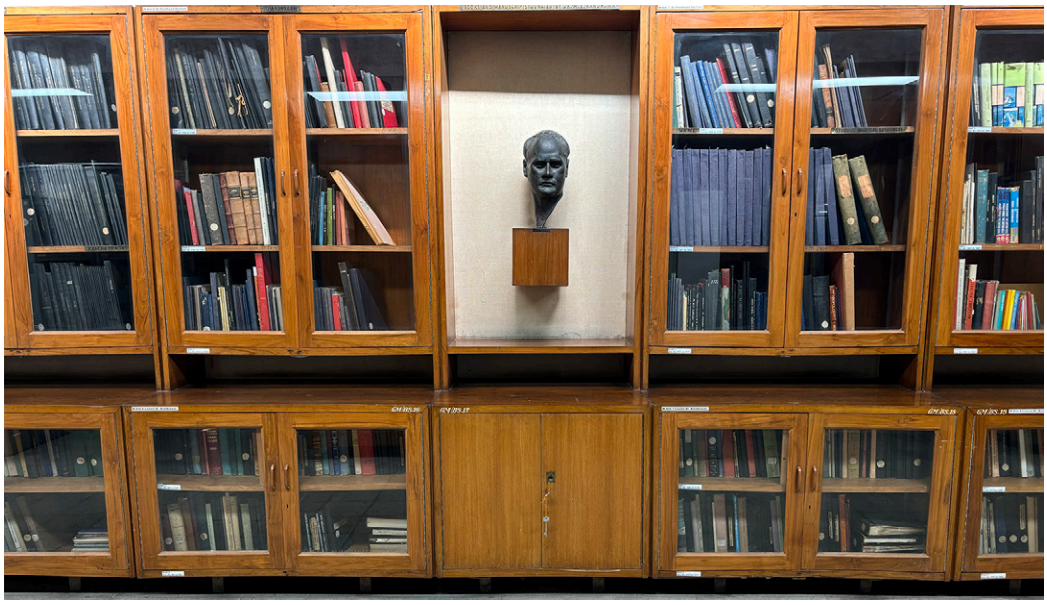


FIGURE 2.
M. S. Randhawa's books and correspondence at the museum's reference library. Photograph by the author

Chandra (1931–1991), among others. He also acquired "miniature" paintings,[7] originally created for early modern Pahari and Rajasthani courts, in anticipation of the museum's establishment. The present undertaking is a focused analysis of the provenance of some of these collections of Pahari paintings he acquired, based primarily on Randhawa's largely unpublished archives and supplemented by information from his publications.

Scholarly conversations regarding the provenance of South Asian objects have mostly centered on collections that left the subcontinent, colonial intervention, looting, and questions of repatriation.[8] This essay adds to these discussions and expands the field using Randhawa and the Chandigarh Museum as its fulcrum. By analyzing the role of South Asian actors and networks of exchange, the essay highlights some aspects of how this public collection was formed and retained in India during a period of the art market's rapid expansion. From within the museum's expansive collections, the Pahari paintings are specifically suited to provenance research due to Randhawa's deep investment in "Kangra" art, which resulted in the simultaneous creation of the collection, the archive, and his scholarship.

In tracing the journeys of the Pahari paintings and drawings from their original, private context into the museum's public collections, this article approaches provenance as a biography. The correlation between provenance and biography is drawn from Arjun Appadurai,[9] but also from Chris Gosden and Yvonne Marshall's article "The Cultural Biography of Objects," in which they elucidated the concept that "material things are not external supports or measures of an internal life, but rather people and things have mutual biographies which unfold in culturally specific ways."[10] They suggested that it is crucial not only to consider the cultural contexts within which an object was produced, or to examine it in its present circumstances, but also to acknowledge that "the histories of many objects are composed of shifts of context and perspective."[11] As objects move between people, caused by changes in ownership, they "accumulate" histories and biographies. This process is not only dependent on physical movement, exchange, or transformation, but also on social interactions.

When provenance is treated as a biography, rather than the source or list of past owners, it becomes "saturated with information and significance, revealing not only taste but also

attitudes, events, politics, and social relations that would otherwise go unnoticed."[12] By tracing the biographies of objects, this research sheds light on the complex history of collecting in mid-twentieth-century South Asia. While for many global collections the interest in provenance is closely tied to ethical concerns and the restitution of objects, the Chandigarh Museum's acquisitions are situated within the context of a newly independent nation coming to terms with its identity, as its founder, Randhawa, experienced a rapid shift in his own position and circumstances. The boundaries of states were still in flux: absorbing, erasing, or retracing the territories that were previously individual kingdoms and states, as the transfer of power from the colonizer to the formerly colonized concluded. Bureaucrats such as Randhawa rose within structures of governance and society while simultaneously shaping art scholarship and cultural institutions, emerging as a small but growing group of art collectors. This article presents some of these biographies—of people and objects—and examines how they shaped each other.

The Search for Paintings and Provenance

One of Randhawa's earliest encounters with a collection of paintings was in 1951 when the prominent Punjabi artist Sobha Singh, who lived in Andretta, Kangra, told him about "two large series of paintings on *Kumara Sambhava* and Devi legends" that were with Ram Singh of Bhawarna.[13] One year later, Ram Singh offered some of these to Randhawa for sale. He wrote:

> Perhaps I need not say that the aforesaid paintings are a token of our heritage, de[s]cended down from Maharaja Sansarchand our dynastic Rajput ruler of Kangra [fig. 3]. These paintings comprise . . . our invaluable asset and hence their price can hardly be estimated by me. As a matter of fact the workmanship in illustrating the Poranic [Puranic] ethics of Hindus is unequalled.

FIGURE 3. *Raja Sansar Chand and his courtiers playing Holi*, Kangra, Himachal Pradesh, India, ca. late 18th century. Opaque watercolor on paper, H x W: 32.5 x 43.8 cm. Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh, 355, purchased from Ram Singh of Bhawarna. Several other scenes of Sansar Chand's court, including festival celebrations and wedding processions, were also bought from Ram Singh. Photograph courtesy of Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh

> Keeping in view the masterly work done by the artist deserves an honorarium no less than Rs. 300/- per portrait.[14]

Not wanting to pass on the opportunity, Randhawa raised funds by organizing a cultural festival at Ambala (ca. 1951–52) because there were no provisions for the purchase of paintings for the museum at this time.[15] Soon after, he wrote, "the news that ancient paintings are being purchased spread, and persons who had collections started visiting me."[16] Through dedicated effort and skilled negotiation, he acquired over 2,300 paintings and drawings by the time the museum opened to the public in May 1968.[17]

Randhawa's dedication in hunting down paintings is highlighted in *Travels in the Western Himalayas in Search of Paintings* (1974). Much like the British bureaucrat, scholar, and collector J. C. French before him,[18] Randhawa chronicled his encounters with collections including conversations that he had with their custodians and his travel companions. During these trips, Randhawa and his companions stayed in comfortable accommodations and were hosted by rajas and princes or local officials, due to his official position as a senior ICS officer. Within the documented anecdotes and interviews, there is valuable information on contemporary generations of artists and the crumbling state of wall paintings in the temples, forts, and palaces that he visited. Randhawa's interest in art historical scholarship grew with his increased exposure to art. The full extent of his historiographic engagement with what he identified as "Kangra" paintings is beyond the scope of this essay, but his work consistently demonstrates an emotional entanglement, starting with his first encounter with these paintings in Lahore. From then on, his admiration for the landscape and culture of the Kangra region grew and greatly influenced his scholarship as well as his collecting practices, which were deeply intertwined. The urgency with which Randhawa collected art to retain it within India was matched by the urgency of reproducing previously unpublished paintings in his essays and books.[19] He kept abreast of new publications, reading and sometimes critiquing the work of fellow scholars, such as Karl Khandalavala (1904–1995), N. C. Mehta (1892–1958), and W. G. Archer (1907–1979), whose *Indian Paintings in the Punjab Hills* (1952) had made a lasting impression.[20] The enthusiasm with which he wrote to Archer was reciprocated, and the two became close friends and collaborators. Encouraged by these interactions and his own findings in the field, in 1953 Randhawa published his first paper, "Guler, the Birthplace of Kangra Art," in Mulk Raj Anand's journal *Marg*.[21] The following year *Kangra Valley Painting* strengthened his standing as an emerging authority on the subject.[22]

Though over the years his extensive bibliography grew to cover a broad range of subjects, this emphasis on the art of Kangra—beginning with Ram Singh's collection, which claimed a direct connection to Raja Sansar Chand (r. 1775–1823)—remained. Randhawa devoted an entire book to the study of Sansar Chand, whom he considered to be the "greatest patron of painting in the Punjab Hills" and vital to the development of Pahari art.[23] He believed that it was due to the political stability of Sansar Chand's reign that ateliers flourished and created a large body of high-quality work.[24] For Randhawa there was a deep enmeshment of style and provenance, and while the term "Kangra" was used to identify a particular style of painting from a specific region, it was also sought after as a provenance. At that time, provenance for Randhawa, and many of his contemporaries, simply meant the origin of a painting or set of paintings. The correspondence in Randhawa's archives relating to art purchases confirms that he made sustained efforts to track down paintings that were not only associated with Kangra but also with Sansar Chand and his descendants, because Randhawa attributed the

highest-quality Pahari paintings to this specific region and reign. He pushed owners for information on provenance and genealogies, wherever possible, to uncover and establish links to Sansar Chand and the artists he patronized. Many of his letters demonstrate that paintings became more valuable to Randhawa for their connection to this royal patron. Conversely, through their association with paintings that are now highly regarded within the field of South Asian art, Sansar Chand's and Randhawa's legacies live on in collections and publications.

Randhawa's official position with the government of India and his growing stature as a published scholar of art helped him to gain access to collections of paintings as he took on the additional role of collector.[25] In some cases, he first borrowed a select number, offering an incentive of Rs. 50 for each painting that would appear in his forthcoming book or catalogue. Once familiar with the collection and its owner, he would either be offered the paintings for sale or make the offer himself. In doing so, he made sure to remind the custodians that selling or gifting the paintings to the government would preserve the legacy of their ancestors and be a service to the nation. Randhawa wanted to enrich the collections of public museums and prevent the departure of art objects from India. On August 7, 1953, he wrote to the departments of education and finance within the government of Punjab, asking for more funds:

> I have been able to discover some important collections of Kangra paintings which are of considerable historical importance, and also possess artistic merit. . . . The owners of these collections, mostly Rajas or their relations[,] are hard up on account of stoppage of their Jagirs [hereditary land revenues]. As a result they are bringing out their collections in the market. If we do not purchase them, there is a danger that these may go out of the Panjab to the Art Galleries in USA. The best Kangra paintings are in fact found in the Art Gallery at Boston [Museum of Fine Arts] and in the British Museum, London. We must preserve these paintings in the Punjab[26] as they represent our richest cultural heritage.[27]

Randhawa knew that the collections that were not purchased for museums in India would disperse and disappear from public view. Therefore, he tracked down folios in royal family collections, with art dealers, and in private collections. While some purchases were agreed upon easily, not everyone was keen to sell to a government museum that had a limited budget. This often led Randhawa to push the government to release additional funds while he simultaneously negotiated prices with the owners. There were times when Randhawa facilitated acquisitions for the National Museum in New Delhi if the Chandigarh Museum could not acquire individual works or sets of paintings due to financial constraints.[28]

There is no description of Randhawa's process of viewing and assessing paintings, beyond what he wrote in *Travels in the Western Himalayas*, but the paintings themselves bear evidence of their encounters with him. The versos of most of the acquisitions made by him have prices (his valuations) written in ink or colored pencil—usually red or blue—accompanied by his signature. Asserting ownership through signing, stamping, or otherwise marking objects is a common phenomenon, and even though Randhawa did not own these folios, he inserted himself into their stories by inscribing on them.[29] After his evaluation, once a painting or drawing had been officially acquired by the museum, it was stamped, given an accession number, and signed by the curator V. S. Suri (fig. 4).[30] Through such ordering and numbering, a collection emerged, and new characters and locations became part of each folio's inscribed biography, along with all the other markers of people, networks, and pathways that had brought these folios to the Chandigarh Museum.[31]

FIGURE 4. Detail of the verso of figure 3, with the museum stamp, accession number, year, and signature of the curator, V. S. Suri. Photograph courtesy of Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh

From Private to Public

When looking into an object's biography, especially one that is closely tied to a change in ownership from royal to public, it is imperative to examine the ways in which the object was and is viewed in each of these circumstances.[32] It is known that most folios, like those in the Chandigarh Museum's collections, were originally viewed when held in one's hands. There are paintings that document this viewing experience. The famous image attributed to Nainsukh, for example, shows his patron Balwant Singh examining a painting by holding it in his hand.[33] Another painting, of Sansar Chand of Kangra, depicts how folios of the same set or series were viewed in a group (fig. 5). The paintings and drawings that Randhawa acquired moved from this private, royal context into a public museum administered by the government.

As the development commissioner for Punjab, Randhawa was heavily involved in every aspect of the Chandigarh Museum's design and therefore played a role in how objects were displayed. He often visited other museums around the world to gather inspiration and wanted to hire the most qualified people to fill each position. For the Gandhara sculptures, the former curator of the Central Museum of Lahore, C. L. Fabri, was consulted to provide attributions and other historical notes. His wife, Ratna Mathur Fabri, was hired to design the displays in each gallery. She had studied museum display and previously worked with the government of India for its exhibitions at world fairs, but this project was her first undertaking for a museum, and in his inaugural speech Randhawa called her the "first Indian to design the lay-out of a major museum."[34] The process of planning the display appears to have presented many challenges: Randhawa had concerns that Le Corbusier's design was more suited to artworks on a larger scale, and that the display of smaller and more intricate objects such as Pahari and Rajasthani paintings would be difficult.[35] As a solution, partitions divided some larger galleries into sections, and paintings were mounted at eye level in cases made of wood, metal, and glass (figs. 6, 7). Although the smaller paintings could no longer be held or touched, as part of the museum's Miniature Gallery they were made accessible to a much wider audience: citizens of a newly independent, democratic India. Randhawa strongly believed in this cause—his own encounter with "Kangra" paintings had first happened at a museum and had been life changing.[36]

As Appadurai has noted, the movement of "kingly things" from "enclaved spaces," or the transfer of valuable objects from controlled viewing environments into more public spaces, is not a unique phenomenon.[37] He has described this shift and its cause: "The diversion of

commodities from specified paths is always a sign of creativity or crisis, whether aesthetic or economic. Such crises may take a variety of forms: economic hardship, in all manner of societies, drives families to part with heirlooms, antiques, and memorabilia and to commoditize them."[38] In a letter of August 7, 1953, Randhawa wrote about the economic hardship of the royal families within the context of the region's sociopolitical landscape. By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, most of the Indian states and their chiefs had little

FIGURE 5. *Raja Sansar Chand of Kangra looking at paintings with his courtiers*, attributed to Purkhu of Kangra, ca. 1788–1800. Opaque watercolor on paper, H x W: 29 x 22 cm. Museum Rietberg, Zürich, Bequest Balthasar Reinhart, 2005.9

FIGURE 6. Display of the museum's Miniature Gallery in 1968. Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh, Library, Archives. The three panels with large-scale *nāyikā* paintings were commissioned from a contemporary artist to complement the display. Photograph courtesy of Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh

FIGURE 7. A section of the present display of the museum's Miniature Gallery. Photograph by the author

or no political power and dwindling treasuries. An overview of the history of the Pahari kingdoms shows a long and tedious struggle for power, with additional conquests by the Gurkhas, the Mughals, the Sikhs, and ultimately the British.[39] Kangra, a region that had patronized some of the most talented and prolific artists, suffered financially under the diplomatic control asserted by Ranjit Singh and his allies. The condition of the state and Sansar Chand was described by William Moorcroft (1761–1825), a British employee of the East India Company, who visited Kangra in 1820: "Sunsar Chund [Sansar Chand] has a taste for the arts, [which] would have been magnificent had he possessed the means and is now more generous than

suits his finances although his liberality is occasionally shaded by efforts of parsimony."[40] He was "formerly the most powerful Raja from the Setlej [Sutlej] to Indus . . . he was extremely wealthy, possessing a revenue of thirty-five lacs of rupees. He is now poor, and in danger of being wholly subjected to Ranjit Singh."[41] While Moorcroft may have exaggerated the extent of Sansar Chand's ruin, there was a marked decline in the raja's fortunes.

The curtailment of access to hereditary land revenue (*jāgir*) continued under British rule and ensured that most royal families never returned to their former days of abundance. The limitations to financial and political autonomy increased as India moved closer to becoming an independent democracy, culminating in the complete cessation of all financial support and other privileges accorded to these states in 1971 with the Princely Derecognition Act.[42] Without access to these sources of income, these former rulers could no longer patronize new art and had to resort to selling their inherited collections. Chhotelal Bharany, an art dealer, recounted:

> Small-time dealers or suppliers—the runners or go-betweens between us and the rulers—used to go from house to house, from raja to raja in the Kangra Valley. The owners of the paintings were blue-blooded but the art of their ancestors was just pieces of paper for some of them, and their declining fortunes forced them to barter these pieces of paper for the basic necessities of life.[43]

Similarly, the starting point for the acquisitions made by Randhawa was when Ram Singh approached him in 1951 because he was "in need of money for the marriage of his daughter."[44] Two years later, the Tikka of Garhi Manaswal disclosed a similar situation: "We feel assured that you would be able to sell the paintings and get money before the first week of October for we would need it for the betrothal ceremony of my daughter."[45]

Another compelling example is that of the former kingdom of Nadaun. In 1953, Randhawa was also in touch with Abhey Raj Singh, a cousin of the ruler of Nadaun, and Singh informed him that after the demise of Raja Narender Chand (r. 1890–1924), the family had sold most of their paintings:

> There were of course beautiful collections of paintings in the Raja family of Nadaun State which had come down from Maharja Sansar Chand's time. I had seen four such big collections known as "Chitras." They were "Arjun Tap," "Parjat," "Krishan Arjun Yudh" and "Krishan Sudama." All of them were quite big volumes depicting the whole mythological story. "Arjun Tap" Chitra alone comprised . . . about 300 paintings but I regret to say that . . . these paintings were disposed of very cheaply . . . and as such the Raja could not inherit them. However, there might be some stray paintings with the present *jagirdar*.[46]

With Singh's help some paintings were purchased for the museum, but a large portion of the Naduan collection had already made its way to the art market. Randhawa bought ten folios of a series from the art dealer Chhotelal Bharany in Kolkata (then Calcutta) in 1956. This complete series of paintings with episodes from the life of the Hindu god Krishna had been purchased by Bharany's father from the raja of Nadaun in the 1930s and is now widely dispersed.[47]

These incidents were part of a pattern that grew simultaneously with the demand for paintings of "historical value": art that had been commissioned by royal patrons. Foreign travelers and British officers had long been collectors of such antiquities, acquiring them as "curiosities" and souvenirs.[48] By the twentieth century, however, Indians who had not been "traditional" patrons began collecting art not only for its aesthetic allure, but also for its historical associations. With

rapid sociopolitical changes, these unexplored gold mines became available to collectors and art dealers, who in turn acquired as much as they could. Besides Randhawa there were other bureaucrats who gained access to many of the royal collections through their official positions. In *Travels in the Western Himalayas*, Randhawa gave the example of an unnamed "art-loving" official: "After we had tea we tactfully broached the subject of paintings which was the main object of our visit. As in some other hill States we were told that the State collection of paintings had been taken away by an art-loving official. This was the familiar tale, which we heard in many places in the Punjab Himalayas."[49] This anecdote confirms that Randhawa was not a solitary seeker but part of an important phenomenon: the rise of the Indian bureaucratic system that paralleled the decline of the royal states, and the movement of art mirrored this transfer of power.

Unlike most of the other bureaucrat-collectors, however, Randhawa's correspondence and, at times, the paintings themselves provide documentation of a reversal of roles through the deliberate use of deferential language. For example, from among the 150 or so paintings acquired from Raja Baldev Singh of Guler, one inscription describes the subject of the painting and then reads:

> Only the almighty knows the true value of the painting and the heart of the artist. Price ~~500~~ rupees.
>
> This painting is a gift from the Raja of Guler to the Government of Punjab. This humble offering is made [*pēṣ*] at Haripur, 15/9/1953 by Baldev Singh Raja Guler (B. S.)[50]

The Urdu word *pēṣ* creates an important distinction between a gift and a tribute and reveals the power dynamic in the relationship between giver and recipient. Ann Lambton has studied the Persian root of this term and its implications within the Safavid court. She elucidates how, among other words, *pīṣkaṣ* developed from a neutral term to "mean a present from someone of an inferior status."[51] In the same period, presents given at the courts in Mughal South Asia "corresponded to a subtly graded hierarchy . . . and every visitor and *mansabdār* (vassal) had to make an offering in order to bring forward his request or to preserve and enhance his status."[52] This, when considered in light of Appadurai's concept of the economy of gifts, exposes new details and layers of meaning of this give and take, between a collector—who was also a representative of the museum as a bureaucrat—and a raja. Furthermore, it is not just the nature of exchange that is noteworthy; in terms of Randhawa's acquisition of Baldev Singh's collection, provenance inscribed on the objects themselves documented not just their journeys but also the essence of the relationship that led to their movement into a new environment.

In his early scholarship, Randhawa identified Raja Govardhan Chand (r. 1743–1773) as the main patron of art at Guler[53] and made special efforts to locate the collection of the Guler royal family for the Chandigarh Museum. He visited Baldev Singh in March 1954, accompanied by W. G. Archer, and examined "three portfolios" of paintings in depth. Randhawa describes some of them in *Travels in the Western Himalayas*, noting that "the coloring of Kangra pictures of this period is extraordinarily delicate. The Kangra artist had the color of the dawn and the rainbow on his palette."[54] Along with Randhawa and Archer's interactions with the raja, who talked to them about the history of the state, letters also indicate that Randhawa relied on Baldev Singh for his knowledge of royal genealogies and the histories of Pahari kingdoms for his publications.

Interestingly, in response to a query from Randhawa, in April 1953 Baldev Singh wrote: "I cannot part with my historical and religious paintings at present."[55] However, the museum's

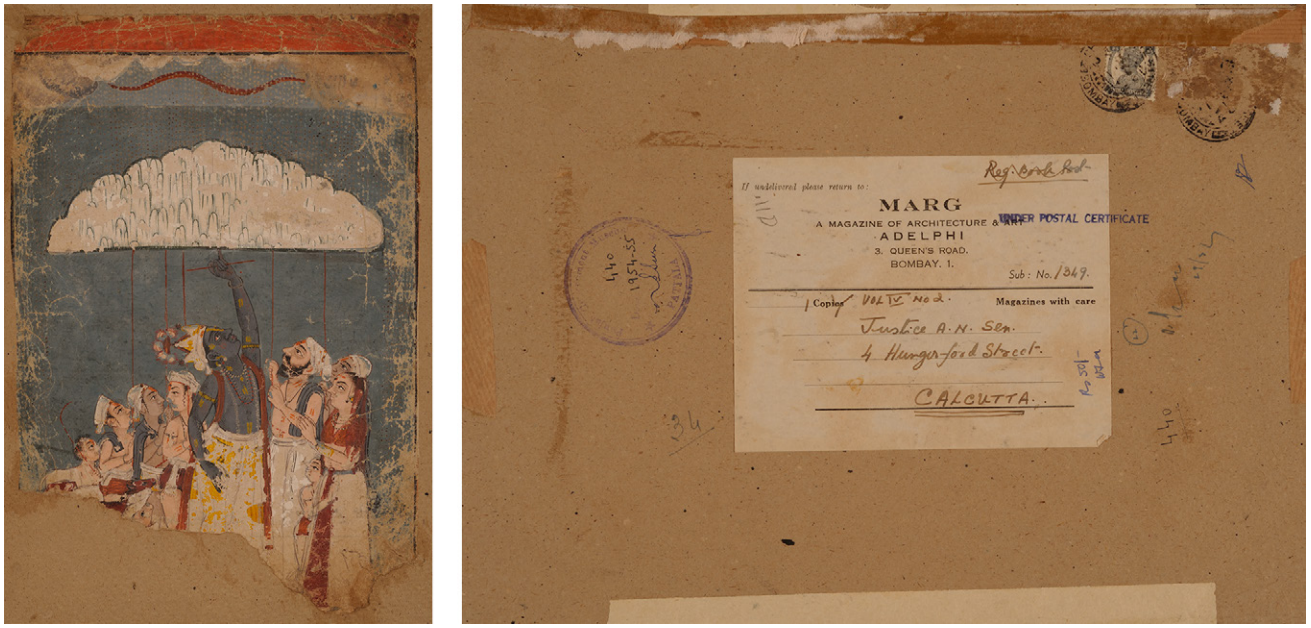
accession records list 150 paintings from Baldev Singh that were added to the collection in the 1954–55 fiscal year, including a few paintings that were presented as gifts, perhaps after meeting Randhawa and Archer in person.[56] Letters exchanged between Baldev Singh and Randhawa reveal that the price of the paintings was negotiated, although one letter addressed to Randhawa echoes the deferential tone of the inscription on the flyleaf of accession number 295: "Kindly don't worry about the price; I will accept any price which you will give me, rather, if you please, I will present the same to you as a friendly token."[57] Before giving the paintings to the museum, Baldev Singh marked his gifts by inscribing "PRESENT" on some of them, although how he chose some paintings as gifts over others is unclear. It was, perhaps, out of admiration for Randhawa's position as a bureaucrat and scholar, or simply an aspect of ongoing negotiations over prices.

In the first purchase, made on March 2, 1954, a total of nineteen paintings were bought for a sum of Rs. 3,270. At this time, Baldev Singh also made a gift of forty-two paintings, each of which were listed by Randhawa in his letter requesting funds to make the payment for the purchase.[58] In addition, he also wrote about his negotiations involving the painting of "Krishna quelling Kaliya Nag" (fig. 8) for which he bargained the original price of Rs. 1,000 down to Rs. 750. Later in the month, eighty-one more paintings were purchased.[59] The inventory numbers from this list and the prices quoted in it correspond to inscriptions in the hand of Randhawa on the back of each painting, each one also signed by him. Once acquired, the paintings were housed at Patiala (where another makeshift museum was established, after that in Shimla), stamped by Suri, and given accession numbers.[60]

FIGURE 8. *Krishna quelling Kaliya Nag*, attributed to an artist from the first generation after Nainsukh and Manaku of Guler, ca. 1790. Opaque watercolor and gold on paper, H x W: 25.2 x 39.2 cm. Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh, 147, purchased from Raja Baldev Singh of Guler. Photograph courtesy of Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh

Not all paintings came to Randhawa directly from royal collections. Pratapaditya Pal's survey of nineteenth-century collectors includes a few other Indian bureaucrats who collected art for their own private collections, such as N. C. Mehta of Ahmedabad, Gurusaday Dutt (1882–1941) of Kolkata, and retired High Court Justice A. N. Sen (d. 1954), who lived in Kolkata and later in New Delhi.[61] Some of these bureaucrat-collectors were concerned about the fate of their collections and became a source for Randhawa. Pal wrote that he did not know the "fate" of Sen's collection but described him as "a consummate aesthete who began collecting late in his career when he was in poor health. Nevertheless, he continued to collect Indian paintings passionately until his death."[62] It is also known that Sen often bought from the art dealer Chhotelal Bharany in Kolkata, who remembers him with equal admiration.[63] The connection between Sen and Randhawa, however, was facilitated by Archer, who had seen Sen's collection, priced each painting, and told him to get in touch with Randhawa, as he would be interested in acquiring for the museum. Sen described his collection as "Kulu, Kangra, Moghul, Persian, Jammu and early Rajasthan paintings—almost 400 in number."[64]

Although in this letter Sen mentions that his collection was priced and signed by Archer, there does not seem to be any physical evidence of this assessment on the paintings and drawings in the Chandigarh Museum, that is, they bear no marks or signatures that connect them to Archer. Paintings were purchased from Sen by Randhawa for the museum in 1954–55 and given accession numbers 419(1) through 419(50), and 420 through 442. Among the acquired artworks are important drawings, including one by Manaku,[65] a few by Nainsukh,[66] and others by artists from the same family, created in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Sen did not sign any of the paintings or drawings that he sold to Randhawa, but he did use the postal packaging from a *Marg* issue as backing for one painting (figs. 9, 10), making



FIGURES 9 and 10. The recto and verso of *Krishna lifting Mount Govardhan*, Mandi, Himachal Pradesh, India, ca. 18th century. Opaque watercolor and gold on paper, H x W: 33.2 x 23.1 cm. Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh, 440, purchased from Justice A. N. Sen. The verso has the museum's stamp, Sen's address, postal stamps, Randhawa's signature, and a few other markings. Photograph courtesy of Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh

FIGURE 11. Folio from a dispersed *Bhagavata Purana* series of drawings, attributed to an artist from the first generation after Nainsukh and Manaku of Guler, ca. 1780–85. Lightly shaded brush drawing on paper, H x W: 28.3 x 38.8 cm. Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh, 468, purchased from Justice Jai Lal. Photograph courtesy of Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh

FIGURE 12. Folio from a dispersed *Bhagavata Purana* series, attributed to an artist from the first generation after Nainsukh and Manaku of Guler, ca. 1780–85. Opaque watercolor and gold on paper, H x W: 27.2 x 35.1 cm. Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh, I-197, received from Lahore. Photograph courtesy of Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh

himself, his Kolkata address, and the journal part of the painting's accumulated and inscribed biography.[67]

Another judge, Jai Lal, who was based in Shimla and Delhi, sold his own collection to Randhawa in 1953–54 and 1955–56.[68] In addition, he mediated negotiations between Randhawa and the raja of Nadaun, who also sold some paintings and drawings to the museum. Among the folios acquired from Lal are many from the Manaku-Nainsukh family workshop. One drawing corresponds directly to the painting of the same scene from a dispersed *Bhagavata Purana* series that was received from Lahore (see figs. 11, 12). All folios purchased from Lal are inscribed on the verso "from Shri Jai Lal High Court Judge Retired."

The examples above testify not only to the social context within which inherited private collections changed hands, to be collected and seen by newer audiences, but also bring to light

connections that existed among collections and collectors. As the paintings began to move out of their original contexts, the way they were valued and viewed also changed. The rise of the bureaucrat-collector, therefore, paralleled the sociopolitical decline of the patron-raja, as older collections dispersed to form new collections in new locations.

Collecting and Dispersing

Padma Kaimal has written about scattering as a consequence of collecting in her study of nineteen *yogini* sculptures that were taken from a temple in Kanchi, Tamil Nadu, and are now spread across the globe. She views the two activities as interconnected because the assembly or building of any collection can only result from the dispersal of one or more others.[69] This is certainly true in the case of the royal collections of Pahari art: through the distribution of folios, manuscripts, royal portraits, and even entire series that were produced for a specific court, collections in other kingdoms were formed. The networks of exchange that facilitated the movement of these objects, however, have not previously been examined in scholarship. Provenance research into the collections of the Chandigarh Museum through the lens of Randhawa's collecting practices has uncovered some of these pathways. The following discussion delves into three of these routes: the movement of paintings in the form of wedding dowry, their travel with migrating royalty and artists, and finally their commercial commodification through the intervention of local art dealers.

When Randhawa traveled across the western Himalayas in the mid-twentieth century, he encountered collections that were still largely intact. His observations of the works that he viewed and his interactions with their custodians, combined with his efforts to establish provenance and family lineages, created a repository of essential data that would have otherwise been lost. Furthermore, in the absence of inventory records for royal collections, such as those created for the early modern courts of Rajasthan, Randhawa's archives are invaluable in tracking the meandering journeys of these paintings and drawings. Within the letters that Randhawa received, there is evidence that sets of paintings, or an assortment of folios from different sets, were often added to a bride's dowry. Tikka Narender Chand of Garhi Manaswal discussed the provenance of his paintings: "As a matter of fact these paintings were given to my wife by her grandmother on marriage. She was from Guler family and married with Maharaja Pratap Shah of Garhwal who was grandson of Sudarshan Shah. She might have taken them from her father's house when married. Anyhow these are all of Kangra art."[70] While Arik Moran has proven that the strong ties maintained by elite Pahari women with their natal states, even after their marriages, played an important role in the production of art,[71] the movement of paintings through matrimonial alliances and the associated giving of gifts has previously not been studied. Marriages between royal families of the Pahari states could explain the presence of royal portraits of the rulers of one kingdom in the collection of an entirely different kingdom. Most of the Chandigarh Museum's portraits of the rulers of Mandi state, for example, were purchased by Randhawa from Dhruv Dev Chand of Lambagaon.

The migration of members of the Pahari royal family and other nobility was another common cause of the scattering of collections. When Captain Sundar Singh of Mirthal, Punjab, wrote to Randhawa about his collection, he also discussed the movement of paintings as a consequence of his family's migration: "The stuff in my possession is not a collection by me, it is the only wealth inherited to me by my ancestors, who were Wazirs of Raja of Guler. These paintings were presented to the Rulers of the Time, in Haripur Kangra Distt: For certain

these Paintings were made before the year 1777, when my ancestors left Haripur for some reasons."[72] Additionally, defeat in battle or the formation of new alliances facilitated the movement of art and artists when rulers were forced to relocate to other courts to seek refuge in times of war. Like a dowry, the gift of valuable paintings was one of the ways to strengthen bonds with allies. The exchange of fineries and luxuries, including art, has long been part of the system of diplomacy in many cultures across the world.[73]

Randhawa understood that traditionally in the western Himalayas, professions were passed down within the family, so he located contemporary generations of artists to obtain information about their ancestors who worked for the early modern Pahari courts.[74] His writing reflects very little interest in technique or materiality; rather the emphasis is on genealogical information that he uses to make attributions regarding place of origin and period of creation. The impact and relevance of Randhawa's research on his art historical scholarship is beyond the scope of the present article. It is notable, however, that in his effort to establish provenance through the lives of artists, Randhawa was one of the first to take into account the movement of artists and paintings in India, and to look beyond the current location of a work. Over the years, he was often posted far from the western Himalayas, and most of his trips to Kangra were limited to a few days at a time. In his absence, a local civil service officer, Mangat Rai Khanna, was delegated the responsibility of interviewing artists and compiling detailed charts that contained relevant information about the histories of artist families. Most of this data remains unpublished but is preserved in a volume titled "Kangra Artists Genealogies, 1954," in the archives at the Chandigarh Museum. Migrating artists also resulted in the migration of collections.[75] For example, other scholars of Pahari painting, most notably B. N. Goswamy, have proven that artists of the family of Seu-Manaku-Nainsukh migrated from their home state of Guler to Kangra, Chamba, Basohli, Mandi, and elsewhere, in search of appropriate patronage.[76] Goswamy has further linked preparatory drawings to paintings and established that artists maintained a collection of art in the family as reference. There are several cases of the same composition appearing in different sets with minor changes, underscoring the use of reference drawings. Deeper examination of these networks and movements has the potential to yield much more than information on developments in artistic styles.

While tracking down artists and collections, Randhawa came across a few sets of paintings that were wholly (or mostly) intact.[77] From Ram Singh of Bhawarna, he was able to purchase 110 paintings of the *Skanda Purana*[78] and 174 of the *Devi Mahatmya*.[79] However, he did not always have the financial backing to purchase paintings immediately, and he missed a few opportunities. In 1953, for example, he saw the series that is now known as the "Shangri" Ramayana in the collection of Raghbir Singh, then raja of the Shangri branch of the Kullu royal family. He wanted to acquire it for the Chandigarh Museum and offered Rs. 1,500 for the entire set, but Raghbir Singh told him that he preferred to wait and he later sold it to one Naulakha, a dealer from Kolkata.[80] While the archive of Randhawa's correspondence mostly contains examples of successful negotiations with rajas, this example shows that there were also some who exerted their agency during a period of decline to wait for the highest offer. Randhawa's position as a high-level bureaucrat made travel and access to collections easier, but the constraints of governmental budgets often limited when and what he could acquire. In such cases, art dealers like Naulakha stepped in and amassed large collections of art.

These dealers played a vital role in the dispersal of Pahari paintings and drawings in the twentieth century, facilitating their movement from private royal collections in the western

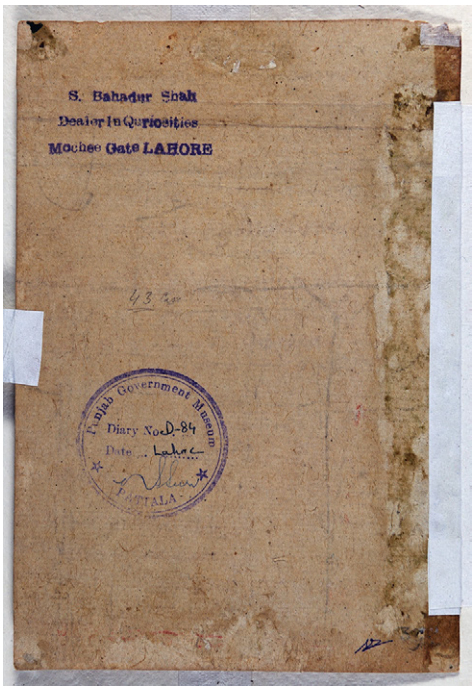


FIGURE 13. Verso of an unfinished portrait (ink on paper) of Sansar Chand of Kangra. Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh, D-84. Note the stamp of S. Bahadur Shah at the top left. Photograph courtesy of Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh

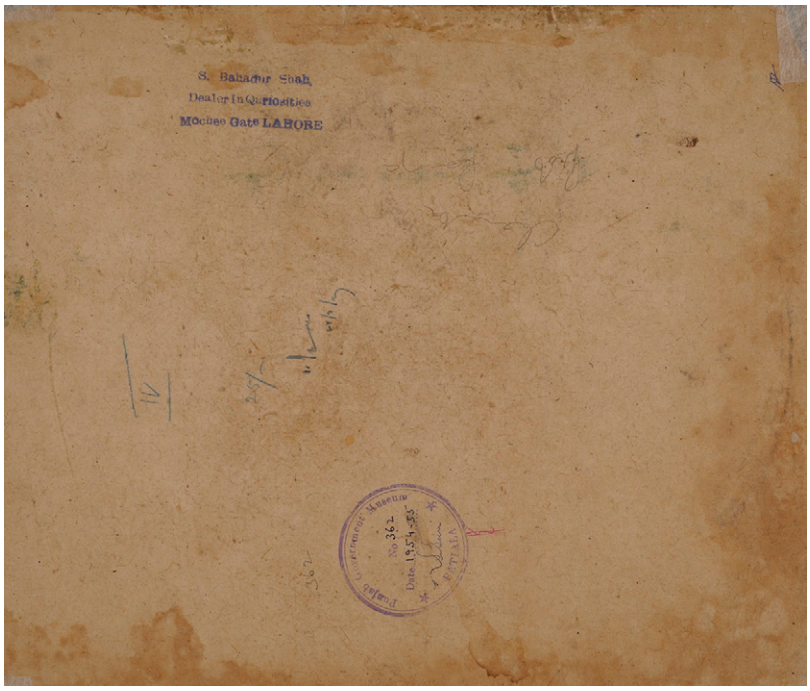


FIGURE 14. Verso of an unfinished painting (opaque watercolor and ink on paper) of Radha and Krishna. Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh, 362, purchased from Dr. Paira Mall of Amritsar. Note the stamp of S. Bahadur Shah at the bottom. Photograph courtesy of Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh

Himalayas to other collections, often public, across the globe. By connecting folios from the Chandigarh Museum to specific art dealers, connections between collections—most of which were formed around the same time—can be uncovered. One of the names most frequently encountered in connection with Pahari paintings is that of S. Bahadur Shah of Lahore. His stamp appears behind some paintings in the Chandigarh Museum that were received from Lahore and one that was purchased from Dr. Paira Mall of Amritsar (see figs. 13, 14).[81] Located in Gujjar Gali in Mochee-Gate, Shah was one of the earliest dealers of Pahari paintings and drawings.[82] Folios sold by him are now perhaps in every important collection of South Asian paintings in the world.[83] Apart from Lahore, Amritsar was another key hub for dealers of "curiosities," including Radha Krishna Bharany (ca. 1877–1942), who also began his business in pre-partition India. The mark of his stamp is on the versos of six folios of Pahari drawings that were acquired by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston as part of the (Denman Waldo) Ross–(A. K.) Coomaraswamy collection in 1917.[84] The business was later inherited by his son Chhotelal Bharany and nephew M. R. Bharany (Mohanlal), who expanded it to Kolkata and New Delhi.[85] In the early twentieth century, collectors such as Coomaraswamy bought Pahari paintings and drawings from Radha Krishna Bharany, but Chhotelal later developed his own contacts, including Pratapaditya Pal, Randhawa, and several others.[86] In addition to the Chandigarh Museum,[87] he sold to the National Museum in New Delhi, the Indian Museum in Kolkata,[88] and many other collections, but his connections to them are yet to be examined.

The dispersal of sets of paintings and the emergence of art dealers within South Asia paralleled the decline in royal fortunes and patronage. For the patrons who commissioned paintings in the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, the sets were more important as a whole because each folio existed through its relation to the rest. It is believed that sets of paintings were commissioned on important occasions such as royal weddings. However, by the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the scale of art production and patronage had drastically shrunk, so inherited paintings within family collections were not only sold to fund weddings but also given as gifts in the absence of new art. Sellers of antiquities and curiosities became middlemen who offered money to those who had art and offered art to those who had money. Often, collectors who were looking to build diverse collections, for themselves or associated institutions, were more inclined to purchase a variety of paintings than to acquire hundreds of folios of the same set. For art dealers, too, it was perhaps easier to find buyers who were able to afford a smaller number of folios, and thus there may have been little financial incentive to keep a series intact. The depletion of royal collections in the 1950s and the corresponding strengthening of the collections of art dealers are evidenced by the fact that Randhawa supplemented his acquisitions from royal collections with a significant number of works purchased from art dealers such as Bharany.

Conclusion

> "The impact of the [Kangra] Valley and her people on me was the same as that of Beatrice on Dante. . . . Paintings, literature, folk-songs, the people, and the mountain scenery, all combined, wove a spell, which kept me as if in a trance."[89]

The movement of Pahari paintings from royal collections to the Chandigarh Museum was directed by various interdependent factors and events. The arrival of the collections from Lahore may not have prompted the same response from Randhawa had he not had a chance encounter—a falling in love—with "Kangra" paintings as a doctoral student. Furthermore, his posting to Punjab from Delhi, around the same time as the objects were received from Lahore, put him in close proximity to the collections that he went on to acquire. As a high-level bureaucrat, he deftly navigated negotiations to prevent South Asian art from leaving India during a period in which the market for these paintings was rapidly expanding. Along with early modern patrons and creators, Randhawa was a key individual in the biographies of these paintings and drawings, amassing one of the most expansive collections of Pahari paintings in post-independence India. The objects, in turn, asserted their own influence on him, featuring prominently in his biography and historiography.

The interconnected biographies of collector and objects have broad implications for the field as they reveal how collections of early modern Pahari paintings were rapidly dispersed in the mid-twentieth century to form new collections elsewhere. Beyond their movement from private to public, which this essay documents, they also traveled from mountainous landscapes to cities, from collections of royal patrons to the showrooms of dealers, from India to other parts of the world. Through the example of the collections of Pahari paintings in the Government Museum and Art Gallery of Chandigarh, this article underscores the importance of provenance research for works of art that were retained in India and demonstrates its potential to contribute significantly to collective efforts at mapping networks of movement and exchange between collections and collectors of South Asian art.

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Notes

1 M. S. Randhawa, *Indian Paintings: Exploration, Research, and Publications* (Chandigarh: Government Museum and Art Gallery, 1986), ix.

2 Following the forced migration of people during the partition of India, which resulted in East and West Pakistan (now Bangladesh), the governments were also tasked with the division of archives, records, and, in this case, art and antiquities of the provinces that were divided. See Nayanjot Lahiri, "The Past Is a Divided Country," *Open: The Magazine*, August 10, 2017, accessed January 19, 2024, https://openthemagazine.com/freedom-issue-2017/freedom-issue-2017-essay/the-past-is-a-divided-country/. For a more detailed discussion of the division and movement of the Lahore Museum's collections, see Aparna M. Kumar, "Partition and the Historiography of Art in South Asia" (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2018).

3 M. S. Randhawa, "Love at First Sight," in *Travels in the Western Himalayas in Search of Paintings* (New Delhi: Thomson Press, Publication Division, Govt. of India, 1974), 3–6. Although he was a student of botany at the time, what Randhawa experienced on encountering "Kangra" paintings at the Lahore Museum was, for him, like falling in love.

4 M. S. Randhawa, "Guler: The Birth-Place of Kangra Art," *Marg* 6.4 (1953): 32. Randhawa relied heavily on the work of A. K. Coomaraswamy, J. C. French, and W. G. Archer, who were also the only sources cited in this article. Later, B. N. Goswamy's research resulted in a more nuanced categorization and understanding of style, and much of what Randhawa and his contemporaries attributed as "Kangra" was identified by Goswamy as the characteristic style of the family workshop of Manaku (ca. 1700–1760) and Nainsukh (ca. 1710–1778) of Guler. Attribution of style, therefore, shifted from regional association to familial. For this reason, the term *Kangra*, when referred to as a style, appears within quotation marks in this article. See Goswamy, "Pahari Painting: Family as the Basis of Style," *Marg* 21.4 (1968): 17–62.

5 A union territory is governed by the Union Government of India (also known as the central government) rather than a state government of its own.

6 See S. D. Sharma, "Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh," in "Presentation Volume for Dr M. S. Randhawa on His 60th Birthday," special issue, *Roop-Lekha* 38.1/2 (ca. 1968): 247–66. This article has a full account of the movement of the objects received from Lahore, as well as the establishment of the museum and Randhawa's immense contribution to the project and the construction.

7 Alhough *miniature* is an archaic and colonial term, it is what Randhawa used in his correspondence and it remains the categorization that the Chandigarh Museum uses for its collection of pre- and early modern paintings.

8 See, for example, Allysa B. Peyton and Katherine Anne Paul, eds., *Arts of South Asia: Cultures of Collecting* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2019); Richard H. Davis, "Loss and Recovery of Ritual Self," in *Lives of Indian Images* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020), 222–60.

9 Arjun Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

10 Chris Gosden and Yvonne Marshall, "The Cultural Biography of Objects," in *World Archaeology* 31.2 (October 1999): 169–78.

11 Gosden and Marshall, 174.

12 Gail Feigenbaum, "Manifest Provenance," in *Provenance: An Alternate History of Art*, by Feigenbaum and Inge Jackson Reist (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2012), 6–28.

13 Randhawa, *Indian Paintings*, v.

14 Ram Singh to M. S. Randhawa, November 22, 1952, Government Museum and Art Gallery, Library, Chandigarh, Purchase of Paintings (hereafter cited as Purchase of Paintings), vol. 1, 1951–54, 77.

15 The archives contain limited information on the breakdown of the museum's budget or the allocation of funds for the acquisition of paintings during these early years, as the city of Chandigarh had not yet been inaugurated or appointed as the capital of Punjab. The Chandigarh Museum, or Punjab Museum, as it was originally called, was still just an idea that was evolving.

16 Randhawa, *Indian Paintings*, v.

17 A total of 447 "miniature" paintings were received from Lahore, but Randhawa had acquired 2,348 more by the time the museum opened to the public in 1968. During most of the period that Randhawa was collecting, there was no dedicated museum for the collection.

18 J. C. French, *Himalayan Art* (London: Oxford University Press and H. Milford, 1931). French was a British officer of the Indian Civil Service and had toured the region extensively, at his own volition, documenting his encounters with art. Indian paintings from French's collection are now in the British Museum and the V&A.

19 Vidya Shivadas, "Mapping the Field of Indian Art Criticism: Post-Independence," accessed July 8, 2020, https://cdn.aaa.org.hk/_source/resources_documents/mapping-the-field-of-indian-art-criticism-01-final-report.pdf.

In one of his last publications, Randhawa himself stated that the very value of a publication was tied to the "new material that it exposes. A book in which paintings are included which have already been published does not excite much interest. . . . In India, we are passing through a phase when masterpieces are being identified and published." Randhawa, *Indian Paintings*, 29.

20 Karl Khandalavala was a lawyer based in Mumbai who authored several books on Indian art, including a few specifically on the subject of Pahari painting. Karl J. Khandalavala, *Pahari Miniature Painting* (Mumbai: New Book Company, 1958). N. C. Mehta was, like Randhawa, an ICS officer who wrote about art and also collected it. See N. C. Mehta, *Studies in Indian Painting: A Survey of Some New Material Ranging from the Commencement of the VIIth Century to circa 1870 A.D.* (Mumbai: D. B. Taraporevala Sons, 1926).

21 Randhawa, "Guler," 30–44. Randhawa had a long-lasting association with Anand and *Marg*. The two men traveled to Kangra and the adjoining regions together and collaborated on many *Marg* publications. Anand was also present at the inauguration of the museum.

22 M. S. Randhawa, *Kangra Valley Painting* (New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1954).

23 M. S. Randhawa, *Maharaja Sansar Chand, the Patron of Kangra Painting* (New Delhi: All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society, 1970).

24 Randhawa's claims were supported by the extensive sets of paintings, such as the *Bhagavata Purana*, *Ramayana*, and *Gita Govinda*, consisting of more than a hundred folios each. More-recent scholarship has also shown that during this period artists came to Kangra from other areas, bringing with them a remarkably varied range of aesthetics and artistic styles. See B. N. Goswamy and Eberhard Fischer, *Pahari Masters: Court Painters of Northern India* (New Delhi: Niyogi, 2009).

25 In this, Randhawa was not alone. N. C. Mehta, J. C. French, and others also used their official positions to access art. Some of them are discussed below.

26 Himachal Pradesh and Haryana had not yet been created out of the Indian portion of post-partition Punjab.

27 M. S. Randhawa to the Secretary of Education and the Secretary of Finance, Government of Punjab, August 7, 1953, Purchase of Paintings, 1953–54, vol. 3, 12–14.

28 The now dispersed "Modi" *Bhagavata Purana* is one prominent example. Letters between Modi and Randhawa document the negotiations. A folio of the series is now in the Freer Gallery of Art Collection of the Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art, Washington, DC (F2017.13.5).

29 As Feigenbaum ("Manifest Provenance," 12) has aptly pointed out, inscribing provenance information onto its surface is "one of the most efficient ways to attach a story to an object."

30 Paintings with accession numbers up to 2928 bear the stamp of "Punjab Government Museum, Patiala," with the year marked as "1962–63." The next painting to be accessioned, no. 2944, has the updated name and location of "Govt. Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh." A later member of the

curatorial staff, S. K. Dosanj, also initialled most of the paintings during their time at the museum.

31 This phenomenon is noted in Feigenbaum, "Manifest Provenance."

32 Anne Higonnet, "Afterword: The Social Life of Provenance," in Feigenbaum and Reist, *Provenance*, 195–209.

33 See *Raja Balwant Singh of Jasrota viewing a painting presented by the artist, presumably Nainsukh*, attributed to Nainsukh, ca. 1745–50, Museum Rietberg, Zurich, RVI 1551.

34 *Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh* (Chandigarh: Government Museum and Art Gallery, 1968), 50.

35 Undated report on the history of the museum, in *Chandigarh Museum and Art Gallery, 1.11.66 to 25.10.67*, Chandigarh Architecture Museum, Archives.

36 Randhawa, "Love at First Sight," in *Travels in the Western Himalayas*, 3–6.

37 Appadurai, *Social Life of Things*, 24.

38 Appadurai, 26.

39 *Gazetteer of the Kangra District, Part I: Kangra 1883–84* (New Delhi: Indus, 1994), 40. For a summarized history of the region and the main patrons of painting, see J. P. Losty, *Paintings for the Pahari Rajas* (London: Francesca Galloway, 2020).

40 William Moorcroft, journal entry, July 14, 1820, cited in *Indian Paintings from the Punjab Hills: A Survey and History of Pahari Miniature Painting*, by W. G. Archer (London: Sotheby Parke Bernet Publications; New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1973), 1:262–63.

41 William Moorcroft and George Trebeck, *Travels in the Himalayan Provinces of Hindustan and the Panjab; in Ladakh and Kashmir; in Peshawar, Kabul, Kunduz and Bokhara, from 1819 to 1825* (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1880), 1:126–27.

42 William L. Richter, "Traditional Rulers in Post-Traditional Societies: The Princes of India and Pakistan," in *People, Princes and Paramount Power: Society and Politics in the Indian Princely States*, ed. Robin Jeffrey (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1978), 343.

43 Chhotelal Bharany, "Recollections," in *A Passionate Eye: Textiles, Paintings, and Sculptures from the Bharany Collections*, ed. Giles Tillotson (Mumbai: Marg, 2014), 41.

44 Randhawa, *Indian Paintings*, v.

45 Tikka of Garhi Manaswal to M. S. Randhawa, August 24, 1953, Purchase of Paintings, 1953–54, vol. 3, 25.

46 Abhey Raj Singh to M. S. Randhawa, May 26, 1953, Purchase of Paintings, 1951–54, vol. 1, 173.

47 Bharany, "Recollections," 54. Three of the ten folios are published in Tillotson, *Passionate Eye*.

48 Pratapaditya Pal, "A Tale of Two Bharanys and Collecting Art in British India," in Tillotson, *Passionate Eye*, 21. Many dealers responded to this demand by marketing themselves as dealers of curiosities rather than art.

49 Randhawa, *Travels in the Western Himalayas*, 111.

50 Inscription on the flyleaf of acc. no. 295; emphasis added. Transliteration of the Urdu text: *Musavvir ka bhao jaanle vein aalmul ghaib to ek shri parmatma hi hosaktay hain jo kay musavvir kay dil ki baat jaan sakte hain + bila qeemat ~~500~~ rupaya + / Ye tasveer kabhi kamtareen raja Guler ba taraf se Shri Government Punjab seva me - Bataur hadya nacheez pēṣ ki jati hai = fakat+Haripur+15 9/1953 + Baldeo Singh Raja Guler = (B.S.)*. The translation is mine.

51 Ann Lambton, "'Pīshkash': Present or Tribute?," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 57.1 (1994): 145.

52 Kim Siebenhuner, "Approaching Diplomatic and Courtly Gift-Giving in Europe and Mughal India: Shared Practices and Cultural Diversity," *Medieval History Journal* 16.2 (2013): 535.

53 Randhawa, *Kangra Valley Painting,* 3.

54 Randhawa, *Travels in the Western Himalayas*, 15.

55 Baldev Singh to M. S. Randhawa, April 24, 1953, Purchase of Paintings, 1951–54, vol. 1, 150.

56 Accessions made from Baldev Singh: acc. nos. 147–296, 901–4, 1833–41.

57 Baldev Singh to M. S. Randhawa, August 15, 1957, Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh, Library, Correspondence, 1953–60, 1961–65, vol. 6.

58 M. S. Randhawa to the Chief Engineer of the Capital Project of Chandigarh, March 9, 1954, Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh, Library, Art Purchase, 1954, vol. 9, 7–9.

59 M. S. Randhawa to Chief Engineer, Capital Project, March 25, 1954, Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh, Library, Art Correspondence (hereafter cited as Art Correspondence), 1954–55, vol. 11, 8–10.

60 The archives show that an acquisition committee was formed to assess paintings that were to be acquired closer to the inauguration of the museum. The museum continues to maintain an acquisition committee. However, it is not clear what the process was in the 1950s—that is, whether Randhawa was the only one making these decisions or if members of the museum staff were involved.

61 Pal, "Tale of Two Bharanys," 14–37. N. C. Mehta's collection of South Asian paintings is presently

housed at the Lalbhai Dalpatbhai Museum in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

62 Pal, 27.

63 Bharany, "Recollections," 60.

64 A. N. Sen to M. S. Randhawa, [1954], Purchase of Paintings, 1953–54, vol. 3, 64.

65 Acc. no. 419 (34). Published in B. N. Goswamy, *Manaku of Guler: The Life and Work of Another Great Indian Painter from a Small Hill State* (New Dehli: Niyogi, 2017), no. B293.

66 Acc. nos. 419 (22)–419(26). Published in B. N. Goswamy, *Nainsukh of Guler: A Great Indian Painter from a Small Hill-State* (Zurich: Artibus Asiae, 1997), nos. 20, 31, 47, 48, 75.

67 The present location of the rest of the three hundred artworks that were not purchased by Randhawa is unknown.

68 Acc. nos. 459–76, 938–70.

69 Padma Kaimal, *Scattered Goddesses: Travels with the Yoginis* (Ann Arbor, MI: Association for Asian Studies, 2012), 1–5.

70 Narendra Chand to Randhawa, July 18, 1953, Art Correspondence, 1953–54, 2:23–24.

71 Arik Moran, *Kingship and Polity on the Himalayan Borderland: Rajput Identity during the Early Colonial Encounter* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018), 102–3.

72 Sundar Singh of Mirthal to M. S. Randhawa, February 25, 1953, Art Correspondence, 1954–55, vol. 11, 54.

73 Birgit Tremml-Werner, Lisa Hellman, and Guido van Meersbergen, introduction to "Gift and Tribute in Early Modern Diplomacy: Afro-Eurasian Perspectives," special issue, *Diplomatica* 2.2 (2020): 185–200; Marian H. Feldman, *Diplomacy by Design: Luxury Arts and an "International Style" in the Ancient Near East, 1400–1200 BCE* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

74 Randhawa, *Indian Paintings,* 74.

75 B. N. Goswamy, *Pahari Paintings of the Nala-Damayanti Theme in the Collection of Dr. Karan Singh* (New Delhi: National Museum and Publications Division, Govt. of India, 2006). See also B. N. Goswamy, "The Technique of Pahari Painting: A Discussion of Colour and Pattern Notes," *East and West* 17.3/4 (1967): 287–94.

76 Goswamy and Fischer, *Pahari Masters,* 77–78.

77 Pahari paintings, unlike Mughal or Rajput paintings, were rarely bound together.

78 Goswamy and Fischer, *Pahari Masters,* 369–70.

79 Suwarcha Paul, *Devi Miniatures in Chandigarh Museum* (Chandigarh: Government Museum and Art Gallery, 1985).

80 Randhawa, *Travels in the Western Himalayas*, 166. Two folios of this series were published in Randhawa's *Basohli Painting* (pl. 16), and 168 folios of the total 270 are in the National Museum, New Delhi. See Goswamy and Fischer, *Pahari Masters,* 75–81. Of the rest, many frequently show up in auctions. In conversation with the author on March 20, 2024, Jagdish Mittal of the Jagdish and Kamla Mittal Museum of Indian Art, Hyderabad, recalled that Naulakha was originally an art dealer from Rajasthan but later moved to Delhi.

81 The archives do not offer much information on Dr. Paira Mall, but he claimed to have been a friend of Coomaraswamy, who supplied him paintings for the MFA, Boston. For the Chandigarh Museum, Randhawa bought about ten paintings from him in the 1954–55 fiscal year, and they were given the accession numbers 359–68. Out of these, at least three have an inscription or stamp that has been crossed out such that it is illegible.

82 Arif Rahman Chughtai, "Bahadur Shah of Mochi Gate—The First Antique Dealer of Lahore," *Chughtai Museum* (blog), January 3, 2014, accessed January 19, 2024, http://blog.chughtaimuseum.com/?p=889

83 See, for example, stamps of S. Bahadur Shah behind some of the folios from Werner Reinhart's (1884–1951) collection at the Museum Rietberg in Zurich. Rosine Vuille, "The Werner Reinhart Collection and the Reception of Indian Miniature Paintings in Switzerland," in *Pathways of Art: How Objects Get to the Museum*, ed. Esther Tisa Francini (Zurich: Museum Rietberg and Verlag Scheidegger & Spiess, 2022), 195–210. The Ross-Coomaraswamy collection at the MFA, Boston also has several works that bear Shah's stamp. It is possible that Coomaraswamy acquired these directly from him during his visit to Lahore in 1907.

84 MFA, Boston, 17.2581, 17.2589, 17.2592, 17.2595, 17.2596, 17.2738.

85 "I [Chhotelal] often travelled to Amritsar, it being my birthplace and a great centre of my collecting. There was another man from Tibber, Gyan Chand, who used to bring very beautiful paintings. . . . If I was not there he used to bring them to my cousin, Mohanlal Bharany, who too had a very good eye. He was also brought up by [my] father [Radha Krishna Bharany] and developed a great interest and taste in art. Dealers of Guru Bazaar, Batti Hatta, were his financiers. He had a very good reputation in the market and the financiers had great faith in him. They trusted his eye and integrity. If he fixed any price for a lot, the financiers would not question him. If Mohanlal said, 'This one is for 15 rupees and

8 annas,' then it was 15 rupees and 8 annas. When the cash came in, Mohanlal would put aside his profit and give the rest to the supplier." Bharany, "Recollections," 44.

86 See Tillotson, *Passionate Eye*.

87 Several folios of the Chandigarh Museum have the stamp of Bharany, and each of the sales is also documented in letters and invoices that are in the archives.

88 For example, acc. no. 14143/652; published in Goswamy, *Nainsukh,* no. 28.

89 Randhawa, *Travels in the Western Himalayas,* 6.