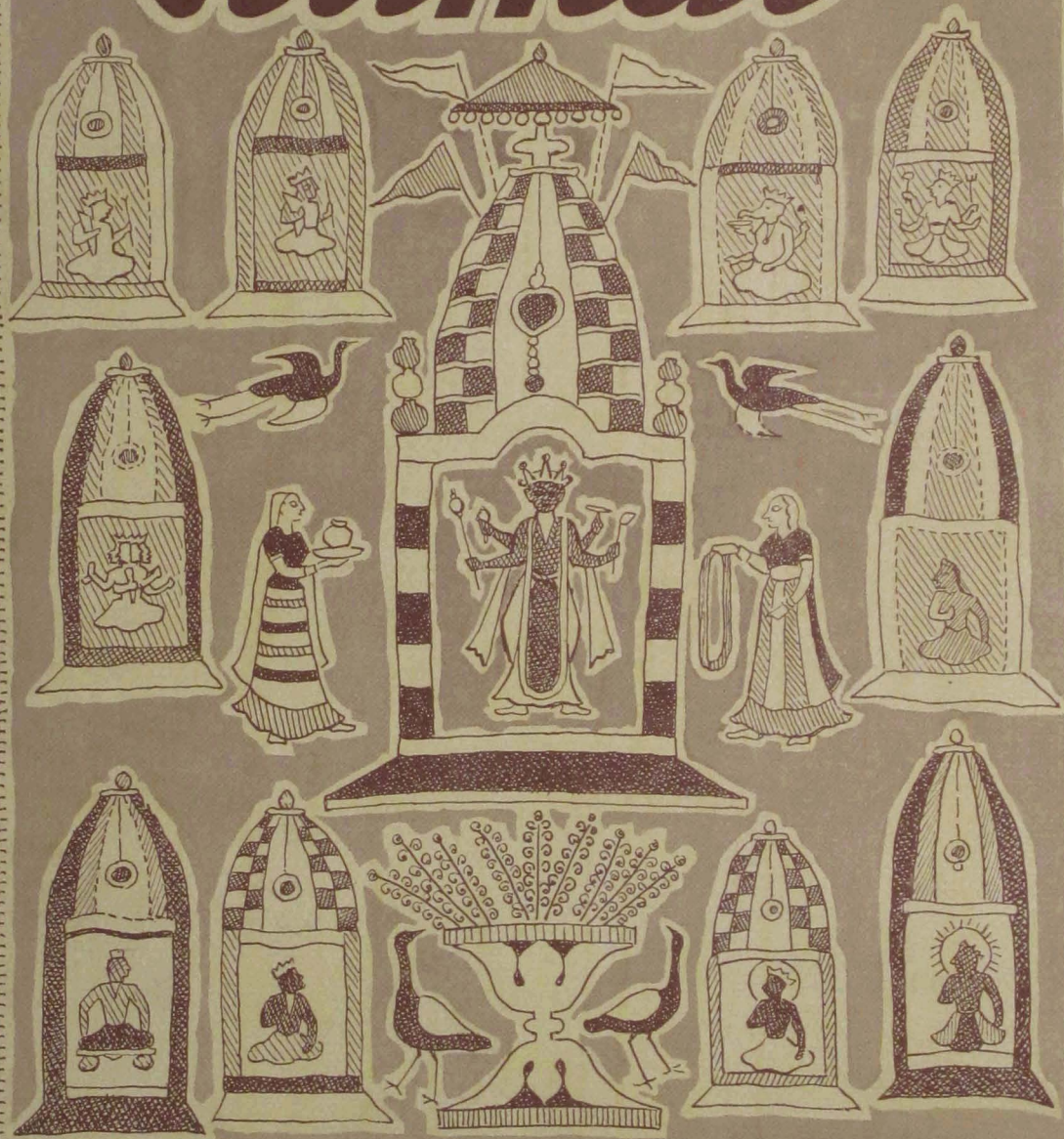


Chamba Jurnal



Haripur
1962

“...pieces of fine or coarse textile, skilfully embroidered in slight relief, with coloured untwisted silk thread so as to flower in attractive designs, this traditional craft of the Chambā Valley...have come to be known...as Chambā *rumāls*. As museum pieces, wall-hangings and pictorial examples of a phase and aspect of Indian arts and crafts...the Chambā *rumāls* have in recent times come to acquire a name and fame...”

Shri A. K. Bhattacharyya who happens to be a very knowledgeable Director of the oldest and one of the foremost museums of India,...has seen and studied a large number of Chambā *rumāls* in the various private and public collections of India, and has put forward in this elegantly produced monograph, the results of his study. A cursory glance at the marginal headings of this short monograph would be enough to convince anybody that he has discussed the subject as exhaustively as possible within the space at his disposal.

NIHARRANJAN RAY

CHAMBĀ RUMĀL

By

A. K. Bhattacharyya

M.A., P.R.S., A.M.A. (Lond.)

*Director, Indian Museum,
Calcutta*

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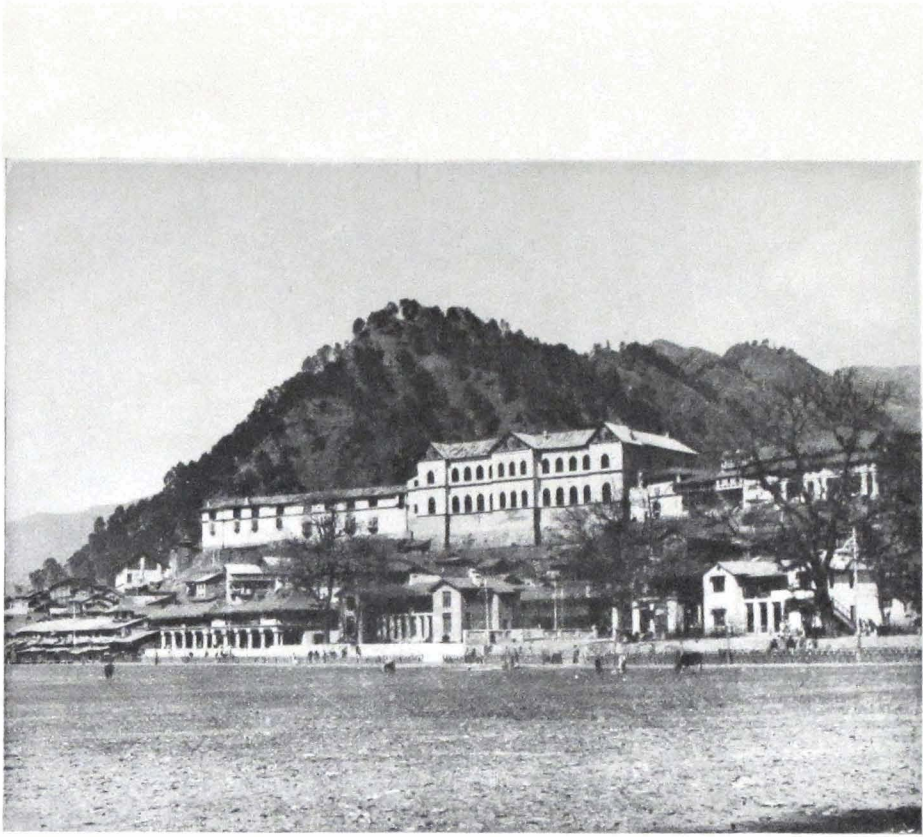
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To
The Sacred Memory
of
My revered father
Principal HARI MOHAN BHATTACHARYYA

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CHAMBĀ VALLEY FROM CHAUGAN

FOREWORD

Small, square, rarely circular as well, pieces of fine or coarse textile, skilfully embroidered in slight relief, with coloured untwisted silk thread so as to flower in attractive designs that were pictorially significant, and which were used for covering offerings made to gods and goddesses or presents made on auspicious and ceremonial occasions, seem to have been once in extensive use in the green valleys of the western Himalayas, from about the sixteenth century onwards, it seems, if one is to go by recorded evidence, but presumably from earlier times. It is somewhat curious, however, that the source of all such pieces that have come down to us and are still extant, as well as that of this traditional craft which is still practised, happen to be what is known as the Chambā Valley; one does not usually find it elsewhere. These textile pieces have, therefore, come to be known in recent times, to all connoisseurs, collectors and students of the history of Indian arts and crafts, as Chambā *rumāls*. As museum pieces, wall-hangings and pictorial examples of a phase and aspect of Indian arts and crafts and as those of translations of Pāhāḍī painting in terms of embroidery, the Chambā *rumāls* have in recent times come to acquire a name and fame that could hardly have been dreamt of by the simple and innocent village maid or maiden who used to work her thread and needle in the traditional discipline of a craft handed down from generation to generation, but which she did with intense faith and devotion, love and affection for whom her piece was intended. Not without reason, I believe Coomaraswamy asked himself: why exhibit art ?

But art or craft is no longer what it was in a traditional society as in India. Today one must know how to satisfy the collector and connoisseur who aspires to be knowledgeable, the curator in the museum who have to cater to curious and enquiring visitors, and the student of Indian arts and crafts who want to be more and more conversant with more and more facts and information to enable him write a treatise, or at the most, understand the culture and civilisation of a given time and space. These are all certainly very legitimate. But let us also bear in mind that the kind of traditional society which produced these pieces, had other aims and purposes than ours.

Mr. A. K. Bhattacharyya who happens to be a very knowledgeable Director of the oldest and one of the foremost museums of India, has done in respect of Chambā *rumāls*, what exactly a museum-curator or director should do, namely to

bring out, among various other things he has to do besides, informative, educative, attractive but knowledgeable literature that go to provide the background of the exhibits of his and other museums that he has access to and knowledge of. Mr. Bhattacharyya has seen and studied a large number of Chambā *rumāls* in the various private and public collections of India, and has put forward in this elegantly produced monograph, the results of his study. A cursory glance at the marginal headings of this short monograph would be enough to convince anybody that he has discussed the subject as exhaustively as possible within the space at his disposal.

I welcome this addition to the monograph series of the Indian Museum.

Simla
23 December, 1967

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "N. K. Bhowmik". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'N' and a long, sweeping tail.

PREFACE

This little Monograph on Chambā Rumāl is the result of studies on this interesting handicraft, mainly from the hill-guarded valley of Chambā, for a number of years, which at once explains the delay in its publication since I first wrote on the subject in 1962 in the Bulletin of the Centre National d' Etude de Textiles Anciens, Lyon, France. For, over the years, as and when new and interesting specimens came to knowledge, these were examined and studied. Yet, the fact remains that very many special types of these *rumāls* were missed, or could not be specifically discussed or illustrated in the present work. The reason is obvious, for which no apology is needed.

In the general discussions about the background of this art in Chambā, I hope I have been able to gather together such material as would be helpful in any further studies in the subject, or for the matter of that, in the wider field of art in Chambā, including paintings that form a distinctive contribution to the art of India.

Before I close, I must express my indebtedness to the Board of Trustees of the Indian Museum for readily agreeing to include this work in their publication programmes. I am particularly beholden to Prof. Dr. Niharranjan Ray, M.A., D. Lett. et Phil. (Leyden), for writing the learned Foreword to the book. I am thankful to Shri Amal Sarkar, M.A., LL.B., our Publication Superintendent, whose enthusiasm in seeing the work through the Press has always kept me enlivened during the long delay in its publication, in which the endurance of the printers, Sree Saraswaty Press Limited, has been commendable. My thanks are also due to Sarvashri Shyamal Kanti Chakravarty, M.A., Curator, Naren Ray, artist and Gour Krishna Ghosh and Debabrata Chanda of the Publication Section, for various assistance rendered.

Finally, I must express my gratitude to Miss Sipra Nandi, M.A., Curator of the Art Section, Indian Museum, who has kindly prepared the Index to the book.

Indian Museum
Buddha Purnima
12th May, 1968

A. K. BHATTACHARYYA

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INTRODUCTION

DURING the eighteenth century a very artistic branch of popular handiwork originated in the valley of Chambā in a special kind of textile embroidery which was done on hand-spun cotton cloth to be used mainly as covers and decorative pieces, widely known as *rumāls*. Chambā is a small valley situated in the

Geography of the region

Western Himalayas between north lat. 32° 11' 30" and 30° 13' 6" and east long. 75° 49' and 77° 3' with an approximate area of 3,216 sq. miles, now integrated with the State of Himachal Pradesh within the Indian Union. It overlooks the swift flowing Rāvi on one side and clings to the great Himalayan ranges on the other. From time immemorial its earlier capital Brahmor, ancient Brahmapura, situated on the Budhal, a tributary of the Rāvi not only continued to be the seat of political power till the 10th century of the Christian era, but came to be regarded through the ages as a grand treasure-house of ancient temples, sculptures and wood-carvings almost up to the middle of the 17th century A.D. Under the name Brahmapura it is mentioned in the inscriptions of the 10th century A.D. Varāhamihira's mention of Brahmapura along with the countries of the north-eastern regions, like Kīra, Kāśmīra, Abhisāra, Darada, Kulūta, etc., evidently refers to the ancient principality on the Upper Rāvi. In the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāna* also the Brahmapurakas are mentioned in the same connection. Kallhaṇa (12th cent. A.D.) praises in connection with the account of Sussala's campaigns against several chiefs of the Chenub and Rāvi valleys, a king of this region as being responsible for preserving the "enemy's land, Brahm-puri" with its temples etc. Inscriptions on several brass images take us back to A.D. 700 when Meru-varman, the king, referred to in these records must have lived. One of the famous temples, though lately damaged, that of Narasimha, contains the brass image of Narasimha form of Nārāyaṇa erected by queen Tribhuvanarekhā and endowed by Yugākara-varman, son of Sāhilla-varman, most probably in the 10th century A.D. There were elaborate wood-carvings on the State Kothi at Brahmor which are believed to have been executed in the time of Rājā Prithvī Singh (1641-64 A.D.) in the 17th century, some of which have now found their way into the local State Museum. The ancient State of Brahmor included a number of *paraṅās* like, Raṅhūr-Koṭhi, Pyuhra, Belj, Guṁ and Lilh.

Founded by Sāhilla-varman in the first half of the 10th century A.D., the little town of Chambā, however, came soon after to be recognised as the principal seat of government of the entire valley. Two of the copper-plate grants, both dated, issued by his son Yugākara-varman and grandson Vidagdha-varman are from

Chambā as the new capital. In these records the name of the town is given as Canpakā, while the *Rājatarāṅgini* has it as Champā which is the earliest mention of this capital in literature. Champā is mentioned by Kalhaṇa in connection with the incidents of the time of Anantadeva of Kāśmīra (Kashmir). The name Champā is, however, supposed to have been derived from a goddess Champāvati whose temple stands between the palace and the Chauḡān. An abundance of Champaka trees (*Michelia Champaka*) in the township may have also lent the name to the place, as is sometimes believed. The Chambā town situated picturesquely on a plateau above the confluence of the Rāvi and the Sāl (or Sāhō) is built round a rectangular green which goes locally by the name of Chauḡān (*i.e.*, Polo-game).

The geographical placement of Chambā is very interesting from the point of view of its easy intercourse with some of the art centres in the western Himalayan ranges. The Sundhārā road provides a direct communication between Chambā and Basohli, the capital of the State of that name. Medieval foreign travellers also record a second road from Chambā to Basohli along the right bank of the Rāvi. The trade-route that runs from Delhi to Kashmir through the lower hills includes this journey through Basohli. Balor (anc. *Vallāpura*), ancient capital of the Basohli (anc. *Viśvasthali*) State is within five miles from Bhaḍu which lies on the above route to Kashmir. Between Chambā and Kānḡrā, a distance of about 54 miles, a direct line of communication was supplied by the Cuārī road which passes the village of Maṅglā (Skt. *Maṅgala*). The main road from Cuārī passes by the ruins of Tārāgaḍ, a strong-hold founded by Jagat Singh, the Paṭhanīa chief of Nurpur, and defended by the latter against a Mughal attack in 1641-42 A.D. under Shāhjahān. That Tārāgaḍ was under the rule of Chambā is vouchsafed by a few inscriptions in Ṭākari dated in the year 63, *i.e.*, 1787 A.D. in the reign of Rājā Rāj Singh of Chambā. This road itself after a further run of half a mile connects Chambā with Nurpur.

With the ascension of Umed Singh of Chambā (1748-64 A.D.) a definite impetus to art and architecture was given from during the latter half of the 18th century, which continued during the reign of his son and successor, Rāj Singh (1764-94 A.D.), followed by the latter's son and successor Jit Singh (1794-1808 A.D.). And it is quite likely that the art of the *rumāls* originated sometime during the period and continued well into the early years of the present century. As will be presently seen, considerable influence of the pictorial art of the miniatures, specially from Basohli and Kānḡrā, is noticed in these embroideries done with silk threads providing a glossy effect. The influences from Kānḡrā and Basohli in these *rumāls* can be traced back to the political contacts with these regions almost constantly since the middle of the 17th century A.D. An early contact is evidenced in a land-grant of king Balabhadra (1589-1641 A.D.), the Nurpur Plate of Śāstra era 94, bestowing land on a

certain Byāsa, a priest of Nurpur requiring the latter to be loyal to Chambā. Slightly later in date is Pṛithvī Singh's (1641-64 A.D.) dispute with Basohli in about 1648 A.D. About a century later, in 1744 A.D. (A.H. 1158), the bestowal of the *parganā* of Pathiyār, a *jāgir* in Kāngrā, on Rājā Dāl Singh, *i.e.*, Diler Singh (1735-48 A.D.) of Chambā by Zakariyya Khān, Governor of Lahore, in a *sanad* issued under his seal, which was confirmed in A.H. 1175 (1762 A.D.) in Umed Singh's reign by Durānī Ahmad Shāh by a *sanad* issued under the seal of the latter, proves a clear opportunity for cultural contacts through political annexation. The Rihlu '*ilāqa* and Palam (anc. *Pralamba*) which once formed part of the Chambā State and had been annexed by Akbar to the Mughal dominions, were re-occupied by Umed Singh. The Mughal court artists with their superior technique of the lines and imbued with the spirit of the Hill painters were thus available to the expanding Chambā State under Umed Singh. Rāj Singh, son of Umed Singh, conquered Basohli in 1782 A.D. and concluded a treaty with Rājā Sansār Chand Katoch of Kāngrā in 1788 A.D.—incidents which brought the two States still closer to Chambā, and in the field of art and culture a great interchange of ideas and techniques took place as an obvious result thereof. It is a very happy augury also to note that the Treaty with Kāngrā was signed at *Nadona*, now Nadaun, a great centre of art in Kāngrā. In fact, the political conquests and treaties were greatly helpful in the exchange of artists and artistic works. And while it is presumable that gifts of miniatures and possibly of other art objects including the typical embroideries, the *rumāls*, were offered as a good gesture of political alliance, artists from one region were despatched to the other in order to help and develop the arts mutually. In about 1794 A.D., however, Rāj Singh crossed the Dhaulā Dhār in an attempt to curb the ambitions of Sansār Chand of Kāngrā who claimed Rihlu as an integral part of his dominions but was slain at Nērti near Shāhpur in the same year. In the train of these political expeditions, it is likely that cultural units, the local artists and artisans, followed the royal ambition for a cultural expansion, and seeking new fields and new societies, even new geographical setting, the artists and craftsmen came over to the new settlements and were absorbed there. Rihlu was finally occupied by Mahārājā Ranjit Singh in 1821 A.D. so that as a part of the Sikh dominions, the colourful Sikh style of paintings came to influence Chambā art specially in portrait paintings, and also the Chambā *rumāls*, though very remotely, in so far as colour distribution is concerned.

Epigraphic records also confirm this fact of exchange and mutual influence in the field of art through specific instances. In the Lakshmi-Nārāyaṇa temple inscription of Śrī Simha dated 1915-17 V.S. (1858-60 A.D.) there is mention of an artist-scribe, Upādhyāya Mirachu (*Mirachu*, the teacher) from Viśvasthalī (*i.e.*, Basohli) who was settled by the king Śrī Simha in Chambā and who wrote the record in question (*likhitamidam Upādhyāyo Miracu Viśvasthalivāsī Śrīman-Mahārājādhirāja Śrī Śrī Śrī Śrī-Simhāttamām Śrīman-Mahārāja-kṛipayā Campāyām kṛitavasatinā Miracunā likhitam*).

One of the main uses of the embroidered *rumāls* or covering pieces from this place was to provide an artistic sheet on the offerings to deities, on presents from bride's home to that of the bride-groom or *vice-versa*, though their utility as mementos and sheer works of art done at leisure by skilful housewives remained the overall impelling force in their wide variety and fineness of execution. This latter use makes it clear that they were presented also on occasions of festivals. A counterpart of these embroideries can be seen also in the embroidered *cholis* or blouses or even scarves. Their wide use as scarves or *rumāls* probably ultimately lent the name to these covering pieces. A Kāngra painting depicting the Brahmins' wives carrying offerings to Kṛishṇa shows a casket covered with an embroidered *rumāl*. The painting is

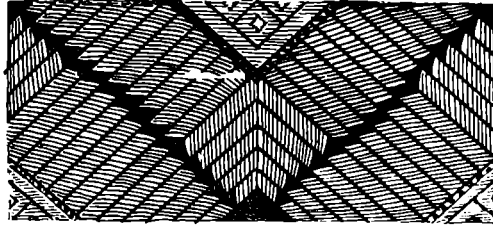


Fig. 1—Gopinis carrying offerings covered with embroidered cloths to Kṛishṇa. Kāngra painting, 18th Century A.D.

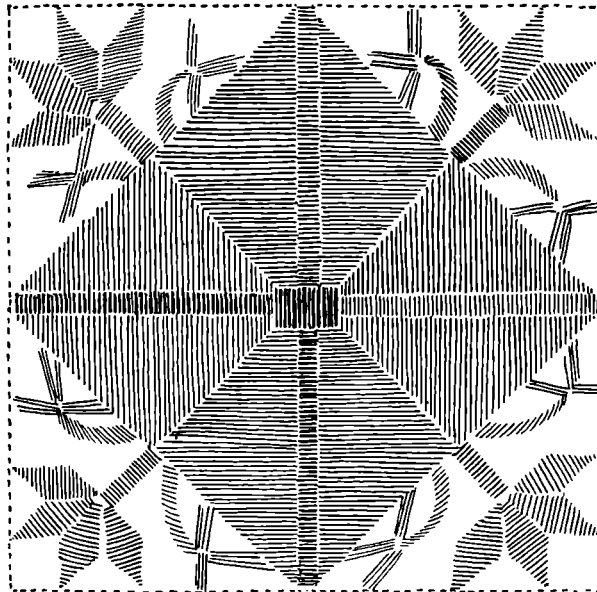
preserved in the Provincial Museum at Lucknow (fig. 1). Yet extant specimens and other evidences go to show that such embroidery was done not only on scarves or coverpieces but on a much larger field of utilitarian garments and household accessories, such as, fans, caps, pillows, dice-cloth (*chaupaḍs*), bedstead, wall-hangings, ceiling covers (*chāndoās*), etc.

The embroidery was effected by a double satin stitch carried forward and backward alternately, done simultaneously on the two sides of the cloth, so that the space on both sides is filled up making the embroidered field on both faces appear equally effective and similar in content. This is technically known as

Technique *dorukhā*. The satin stitch is generally resorted to for covering large and continuous patterns spread over a wide surface without pressuring the cloth. The untwisted and dyed silk thread of a wide variety of colours used in this kind of embroidery leaves the figures and patterns smooth and glossy, and equally graceful on both sides, the positive and the negative. The outline drawn in black usually with fine charcoal is in general practice filled in with black silk threads in simple stem stitch. While, however, this is mostly true in patterns, human figures and also minute and delicate floral and plant motifs are given no separate contour avoiding repulsive



Details from a Bāgh from Hazara distt.: worked by variations in white and orange silk with the pattern emphasised by continuous double-running stitch



Details of design in Chambā rumāl similar to phulkāri, showing horizontal, vertical and diagonal stitches

glaringness in the general artistic and lyrical effect.

In some cases of Chambā embroidery, the influence of *phulkāri* technique and pattern from Eastern Punjab is largely noticeable. In these *phulkāri* or 'flowering works', the entire field of the *rumāl* is covered up with the floral patterns, the main content of which is geometrical and, therefore, stylised and formal. The similarity of these lies not only in the pattern or the technique itself, but also in the fact that the base is coarse *khaddar* in both cases and the yarns are untwisted silk of deep yellow, white, orange, red and blue. The designs thus common to *phulkāri* and Chambā *rumāls*, brought about by horizontal, vertical and diagonal stitches, have distinctive names, of which the *Bāgh* or the garden design, rectangular in layout, are mostly in common.

The cloth used for this purpose is a kind of *mal-mal*—a handspun thin fabric mainly manufactured in the Punjab. These specially delicate and thin threads are made in Sialkot, Amritsar and Ludhiana. A slightly different variety of cloth used as the base for these was the *khaddar*, also hand-woven with hand-spun yarn.

The base-cloth Perhaps a more sophisticated variety was the machine-made fine cloth used for this purpose more often in later specimens. The cloth is generally unbleached, and the design is drawn in outline with fine charcoal usually on this unbleached fabric. Traces of these drawings are often left on unfinished and unembroidered portion of a *rumāl*.

The task of drawing the outline was generally entrusted to an artist as may be easily guessed from some of the motifs and compositions of these embroidered *rumāls* revealing features and characteristics strikingly common with contemporary paintings not only in the murals and miniatures from the regions immediately close but also from areas round about and noted for specific styles and idioms, like Guler, Nurpur, Kāngrā and Basohli,—the same touch of lyricism running through both these expressions of art, the paintings and the embroidered *rumāls*. In these miniature compositions endowed with a balance and a harmony of colours the consummate hand of the Pāhāḍī artist is easily discernible. In fact, the choice and distribution of colours clearly reveals the unseen under-current of the aesthetic feeling of the artist with which the embroiderers must have been greatly imbued. For, it is quite apparent that the choice and distribution of the different colours were in most cases dictated by the artist involved rather than being left to the embroiderers. The soft flowing lines of both flowers and figures, of background vegetation, hills, trees and shrubs—all recall the miniature compositions in the great Pāhāḍī styles. Even the borders in its typical decorative pattern of the meandering flowers are clearly taken almost intact from the Pāhāḍī miniatures, specially of the Kāngrā *qalam*. The same Kṛishṇa-lilā themes, notably the *Rāsamaṇḍala* and the divine Flute-player worshipped by *gopīs* form the subject-matter of these *rumāls*. The same floral abundance with the dreamy willow, the green plantain, and the same architectural background with similar accessories

accompany the figures, apart from the similar details of the dresses, etc. These leave us in no doubt as to the master minds of the painters that worked behind the beautiful compositions brought to colourful finish through the deft needle of the embroiderers.

Within the linear boundaries, the inside space was filled up by double running stitches in parallel courses. The result is an elevated charm spread by these coloured threads with the relief best brought out by this technique. The contrasting and bold colours of the threads in the embroidery in their own elevation leave the drab and dull background of the *mal-mal* or the *khaddar* into complete insignificance and nullity. The result imparts an unprecedented depth to the designs with a spontaneous feeling of relief. The cloth pieces are generally square, with a few rare circular ones, though similarly embroidered. In fact, there are two circular covers at the Bhuri Singh Museum, Chambā.

These *rumāls*, as Dr. Kramrisch would observe, are paintings translated into embroidery. Nevertheless, the whole texture of these embroidered *rumāls* is permeated by a strong feeling for patterns. The artists commissioned for the drawings, as can be naturally expected, were familiar with paintings of the Hill States, more particularly of Kāngra, and within the rectangular framework of the textile pieces they tried to transplant the poetic imagery of the delicate paintings on to the embroidered field. Both the lay-out and the contents prove that these textile pieces are greatly inspired by contemporary paintings, more closely by those from Kāngra, and the embroidered pieces pictorially form a veritable replica of these. A lyrical touch permeates throughout the composition which is brought out by fine workmanship with the needle. Even the immediate decorative framework of the Kāngra paintings which is characteristic of that famous school is invariably adopted in these colourful *rumāls*. In fact, the adoption of the elliptical frame, so usual with Kāngra painters, in a superb embroidery in a *rumāl* depicting the different kinds of *nāyikās* for each panel of a type of heroine (pl. IX) brings it still closer to that form of the Pāhāḍī art of the 18th century. The floral decorations at the borders occupy about 3.2 to 4.8 cm. of ground all around and reveal a large variety of patterns and combinations. Sometimes an inner circular border around the central figure is formed by a meandering creeper interspaced with flowers, often within a lined band, while in some cases, as in *Rāsamaṇḍala* scenes, it is formed very skilfully by the outstretched arms of dancing *gopīs*. An inner square border is also noticed, though rarely, made of a different floral composition than the outer one. The central space is generally occupied by figures, such as, the dancing pair of Rādhā and Kṛishṇa, elephant with a royal rider, Kṛishṇa as four-armed Viṣṇu, and the like except in those pieces where a series of individual panels or continuous scenes are depicted. Though these embroideries derive their inspiration from paintings in their general lay-out and themes, there is a

predominance of figures of deities, specially of Vishṇu in his different forms. We have in these also not only pure and simple geometrical patterns, floral and stellar designs, scenes of the *chaupāḍ* play, but they reveal a series of motifs from *Kṛishṇa-līlā*¹ or love-sports of Kṛishṇa, such as *Rāsālīlā* and *Rukmiṇī-haraṇa*, social scenes like marriage processions and the arrival of the bridal pair, the *nāyikā-bhedas* or different kinds of Heroes and Heroines, hunting scenes or *sikārgāh*, Gaṇeśa enthroned and being adored, Rāma and Sītā enthroned, and the triad of Jagannātha, Balarāma and Subhadrā of Puri, Orissa, being worshipped as a form of Vishṇu, the Ten Incarnations, scenes from the Great Battle of Kurukshetra, the ten Mahāvīdyās, and a few others. Because of the available symmetry of arrangement of the figures, the most favourite of *Kṛishṇa-līlā* motifs and most frequently embroidered is, however, the *Rāsamaṇḍala* composition. The predominance of the Vishṇuite deities in these *rumāls*, it may be remembered, was due to the prevalent Vaishṇava cult in Chambā in the 17th and 18th centuries. From very early times temples were dedicated to Vishṇu, though Śaiva shrines were also known in the valley. In the northern-most part of the Chambā town is the temple of Lakshmi-Nārāyaṇa or Lakshmi-Nāth, the principal shrine of Chambā, said to have been founded by Sāhilla-varman in the 10th century and the image greatly embellished by the various kings of Chambā during the 17th and 18th centuries. According to tradition, however, it was during the 10th century also that a few *līṅga*-shrines were erected and they are almost all by Sāhilla-varman. The most important of these, known as Trimukh and Gaurī Śankar, are ascribed respectively to Sāhilla-varman and his son, Yugākara. A Vishṇu temple of some importance stands, however, near the Chaugān Gate and is said to have been built according to an inscription, in the second half of the 11th century by a certain Lākshmaṇavarman, probably belonging to the ruling house. From the epigraphical evidence of Chalahadi records devotion of the ruling house of Chambā to Vishṇu is also proved. The Plate of Gaṇeśa-varman and the Chambā Plate of Balabhadra state that the king bestowed a village on a Brahmin, out of devotion to Vishṇu (*Vishṇu-prītyartham*). King Balabhadra's Jungal Plate of V.S. 1648 (1591 A.D.) and a few other following Plates mention that a similar bestowal was made by him out of devotion to Lord Kṛishṇa (*Śrī-Kṛishṇa-prītayē*). Some of these begin with an invocation to Śrī Gaṇeśa, while a few to Kṛishṇa, the Lord. There is evidence also of the Chambā kings being equally devoted to Śiva. King Pratāpasīmha is said in his Drabila Grant to have performed *havana* at the temples of the gods Chandragupta (*Śiva-līṅga*) and Lakshmi-Nārāyaṇa. The same king is said in the Maṅgalā Plate to have granted a village to the temple of Śrī Nārāyaṇa, *i. e.*, Lakshmi-Nārāyaṇa of the city of Chambā. Prīthvīsīmha's devotion to Chāmuṇḍā is well-known from his Mindhal Plate of V.S. 1698 (1641 A.D.). While Umed Singh patronised devotees of Chaṇḍī, as is evident from his Chambā Plate of V.S. 1805 (1748 A.D.), his successor Rāj Singh's Grant from the same place dated V.S. 1833 (1776 A.D.) clearly indicates

¹ See p. 40 fn 1.

the latter's devotion to Kṛishṇa, the land-grant being made for the pleasure of Lord Kṛishṇa (*Śrī-Kṛishṇa-prīṭaye*). Rāj Singh's catholicity in religious worship, however, is manifest in his invoking the gods, Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa, Manimaheśa, Chāmuṇḍā and Champāvati equally in connection with his Treaty with king Sansār Chand of Kāngrā in 1788 A.D., the text of the Treaty opening with a homage to Rāma, whose figures find conspicuous expression in the embroideries. King Śrī-Simha's donation in honour of a local deity Jālāmukhī is known from his Vadi Grant of V.S. 1913 (1856 A.D.), while his devotion to Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa is made manifest in his Plate dated 1915-17 A.D. from this temple. It is, therefore, quite natural that with almost an unbroken continuity of Vaishṇavism in the valley backed by royal patronage, Vaishṇava cult-images like the four-armed Nārāyaṇa, or Vishṇu as Jagannātha of Puri (pl. VII), should find a more favoured place in the embroidered patterns. The permeating Bhakti cult of the eighteenth century centering round Kṛishṇa and his love-sports with *gopīs* which almost over-flowed the whole of northern India also left its indelible impress on the Chambā embroiderers.¹

The possibility of a complete scene or motif on a miniature ground was largely explored in this art of the *rumāls* as it developed in Chambā. It is through this possibility that the embroidered Chambā *rumāls* grew and developed in the image of the miniature paintings. In the predominance of the Kṛishṇa legends as motifs on these *rumāls* and in their depiction of the *nāyikā-bhedas* (pls. IX & X) and *Rāga-Rāginīs*, the entire imagery of the Kāngrā paintings may be said to have been reflected here, though through a different channel. Of the different individual incidents in the life of Kṛishṇa taken as motifs for these *rumāls*, the following largely predominate, *viz.*, Kṛishṇa's birth in prison, his journey from Mathurā to Gokul on Vāsudeva's lap, the miracles of Govardhana-*dhāraṇa*, Kāliya-*damana*, etc., and last but not the least, his sports with cowboys and his dalliance with Rādhā in the company of *gopīs*, specially in the form of the *Rāsamaṇḍala*, where not only his figure in the company of Rādhā, or as Lakshmī-Nārāyaṇa, is shown in the centre but with each *gopī* joined hand in hand in the circle (*maṇḍala*) on miraculously assuming a multiple of forms at the same time (pls. V & VI). In fact, a large variety of *Rāsamaṇḍala* compositions is available.

In the development of the art of embroidery in Chambā at least two to three stages in the technique may be recognised. A kind of small stitches in the usual
Stages double-run perhaps forms the earliest technique. The second stage is reached when the stitches appear long, though the back field

¹ Cf. Figs. of four-armed Nārāyaṇa with Lakshmī in *rumāl* No. 61.1009 of National Museum, No. 14207 of Indian Museum, Kṛishṇa playing on the Flute in No. 61.962 of National Museum, four-armed Kṛishṇa standing within a shrine in No. 104 A.G. of Indian Museum, Kṛishṇa four-armed, seated, in No. 50 A.G. of Indian Museum, Kṛishṇa with Flute, and Rādhā in No. 15041 and in 14208 of Indian Museum, Kṛishṇa with *gopā* boys, *gopīs* and the cows in No. 14126 of Indian Museum, Divine triad of Jagannātha, Balarāma and Subhadrā of Puri in a piece in Bhuri Singh Museum, Chambā (pl. VII) etc.

which forms the negative side of the cloth appears equally glossy and smooth, and though the ground cloth remains handspun *mal-mal* or *khaddar*. A definitely late stage is marked by the use of machine-made cloth. On such cloth though the fine small stitch embroidery is sometimes effectively done¹ very often a coarser type of embroidery emerges leaving the back unsmooth and crude on the textiles.² In the earlier specimens another technique followed is the interweaving of silver threads or *badlā*, for eye-lets, ornaments, *buṭīs* (small flowers) and border of garments, etc., as exemplified in pl. III etc. In the matter of 'styles' in the Chambā *rumāls* at least two different types may be discerned. Though the more sophisticated one in the style of the Pāhāḍī paintings was the usual and more widely used one, there was a folk style where the women embroiderers seem to have drawn their own patterns and designs. These were mostly done on personal garments, like the *choli* etc. though *rumāls* proper were also embroidered with these folk patterns and figures (pls. IV & V). On the *rumāls* they sometimes take peculiar forms specially in the facial outlines. Strange bird-like heads with beak-like lips drawn in profile form the special characteristics of this folk style and when Kṛishṇa and Rādhā and the *gopīs* are drawn in this style they appear so strangely peculiar. The threads used in the style are greatly fibrous and boldly coloured. The limbs of the figures are sometimes disproportionate, with dresses showing no clear lines. The base-cloth in such style is generally coarse *khaddar* and the technique is so loose as to leave the other side as unfinished negative, unlike of Chambā embroideries proper. It seems, the folk-style was one of the earlier modes though even after the compositions were being drawn by the classical artists, this popular style continued to find favour. But while brilliant pink and lemon yellow along with purple and moss green were common in the folk style, the classical painters' directive changed them to colours of much more pictorial effect, e.g., ochre yellow, dark green, etc.

In the characteristic dresses in some of the early Chambā *rumāls*, the head-dress and the lower garments for *gopa*-boys are peculiar and interesting. In the *Rāsamaṇḍala* scenes of early origin,³ Kṛishṇa is shown with a conical head-gear with protruding folded ends at the sides, typical of Chambā paintings. The short lower-dress with a flowing band and a knot at the waist, as revealed here in the multiple forms of the *gopa*-boys in dance with the *gopīs* or approaching Kṛishṇa, is also characteristic of the Chambā school of paintings. The flowing *chāddar* over the shoulders is always parted, and from the back near the neck, it invariably flows on the two sides flappant with the movement of the figures. The dress of the women, the *gopīs* in dance or in attendance, is equally peculiar, the

Dresses

¹ Cf. *Rumāl* showing *Rāsamaṇḍala*, No. 60.500, in the National Museum, New Delhi.

² Cf. *Rumāls*, No. 60.502 in folk-style, No. 60.844 showing *Rāsamaṇḍala* and No. 61.55 showing another composition in *Rāsamaṇḍala*, now in the National Museum, New Delhi.

³ Cf. Chambā *rumāls*, No. 14126 now in the Indian Museum, Calcutta and No. 51.28/24 now in the National Museum, New Delhi.

dopattā covering the back of the head falls apart at the front, while the *ghāgrā* is bordered below in a different colour. The ladies' dress is more typical of Chambā where, figures of *gopīs*, as in the scene of Kṛishṇa playing on the flute in a composition framed immediately by a pair of willow trees on two sides, have *ghāgrā* banded horizontally or vertically, in variegated colours¹. The vertically banded upper garment of male figures is also a notable device with Chambā embroideries. In fact, not only in the case of garments of human beings, but the bodies of animals are often shown banded as a special feature in these Chambā embroideries (pl. XVI)². The conical head-cap for the *gopa*-boys was the usual type of head-gear for the common people as noticed earlier³. This is a variation of the head-gear worn by the *gaddīs*, i.e., shepherds (from *gadar*=a sheep) in the Hill States like Kulu, Chambā, etc. Generally a cap is worn along with a piece of cloth considered as *parsād* of Śiva, usually in orange colour. A wide combination of the variegated bands and also of rectangular and even oblong segments in the patterns of the flowing *ghāgrā* is available, as in the multiple figures of the *gopīs* forming the *Rāsamaṇḍala*⁴. In the distinctive crown for Kṛishṇa and Rāma marking divinity, at least two types are discernible, one with a single *tiara* and the other with an upper tuft of peacock's feathers. This latter is also a familiar feature known to Kāngrā. The *kamar-bandh* or waist-band which was adopted in Kāngrā art as from the Mughals who inherited this from the Persians, continued to be shown in the Chambā *rumāls*, and figures of Kṛishṇa as also of Rāma invariably reveal this feature in the dress. The other kind of full-robe is also noticed as in the dress of Rāma seated on the throne with Sitā⁵, Kṛishṇa as four-armed Viṣṇu in the central circle of the *Rāsamaṇḍala*, elephant-rider, *nāyikā* figures, etc. In some cases, a more direct image of the Kāngrā paintings is noticed in that an overlapping long coat down almost up to the ankle and tied at the waist by a *paṭkā*, with a *pyjama*, rather closely fitted, is the usual dress of the robed males (pl. XVI etc.).

As in Kāngrā paintings, attempt at sketching perspective inherited from Mughal art, is interesting in these embroidered *rumāls*. In the marriage scene (pl. XIII) the study in perspective depicting the different sequences of the ceremony is clever, the upper panel showing the bridal pair coming home, and the lower, the arrival of the procession. The idea of movement of the figures in both these, constitutes the excellence of these compositions in hand-stitched embroideries. The veil of the bride here is formed by woven threads of silver (*badlā*).

For the delineation of the trees, a certain usual and conventional type is

¹ Cf. Chambā *rumāls*, Nos. 51.28/21, 61.960 and 61.1009, now in the National Museum, New Delhi. Also pls. IV, V, VI, VII, IX, XII & XIII.

² Cf. Also the dress of the rider in the Elephant-rider scene, Chambā *rumāl*, No. 61.452, now in the National Museum, New Delhi.

³ See also, the head-gear of the attendant of the rider, in the *rumāl* cited at *fn.* 2 above.

⁴ Cf. Chambā *rumāl*, No. 51.28/46, now in the National Museum, New Delhi.

⁵ Cf. Chambā *rumāl*, No. 51.28/45, National Museum, New Delhi.

followed, as in the paintings of the period from this region. The conventional willow trees, the cypress and the most characteristic clustering thick trees typifying Chambā paintings, and lastly, the soothing plantain trees often bent with flower and the fruits, are embroidered in magnificent colours.

Apart from trees and flowers, the animals depicted in the *rumāls* are large in variety. They include running deer, prancing horses, leaping tigers, fleeing rams, running boars—all dynamic and vivacious. These often go in the corners as decorations rather than at the bottom. Sometimes they fill up the inter-spaces and form a part of the general back-ground of green vegetation. In Kṛishṇa-lilā figures the calf leaping at the sight of the returning mother cow, in the composition depicting Kṛishṇa playing on flute, flanked by *gopīs*, is a lively portrait, and possesses the subtlety of a painted scene¹. The richly caparisoned horse and the elephant, as in the *Rukmiṇī-haraṇa* scene² and the Elephant-rider scene³ respectively, reveal Mughal grandeur inherited by the Pāhāḍī artists and transplanted in these works. Caparisoned camel was also depicted by the Chambā embroiderer with equal zeal (pl. XIII). The birds include peacocks, swans, ducks, sometimes decorative and sometimes symbolic. The peacock stands for the absent lover, while the ducks in pair symbolise love in union.

There are a few characteristic musical instruments depicted in this folk art. They are typical of the Hill States to which the embroideries belong. Among the flute variety, the more usual is the *raṇasiṅgā* which is a curved blowing instrument of copper (see pls. VI, XIII, etc.). Though by name it is a war trumpet, it is used also on such occasions as marriage ceremony. Another typical blowing instrument is the *kahāl* which is a straight longish blow-pipe (see also pls. VI, XIII, etc.). A slightly flatter bottom and longer blowing mouth in another variety of this is known by the name of *karnāl*, which also is largely in use in the music in marriage processions. The varieties of drums depicted in these embroidered *rumāls* are several in number. Of the commonest types is the two-faced *ḍholak*, known in shorter variety as *ṭolki*, which has a somewhat smaller face on one side (pl. VI and fn. 2 below) being played by hand. Another variety is the *niḡārā* type which has one flat face and a domical body, and is played by two sticks one in each of the hands. This is generally used while seated and is avoided in processions⁴. The other types of musical instruments usually depicted are the *kharatāla* (cymbals), the *sitār* and the *tāṇpurā* (pls. VI, XIII etc.).

¹ Cf. Chambā *rumāl*, No. 51:28/21, now in the National Museum, New Delhi.

² Cf. Chambā *rumāl*, depicting scene of *Rukmiṇī-haraṇa*, now in the collection of the All-India Handicrafts Board, New Delhi.

³ Cf. fn. 2, p. 10.

⁴ Cf. Chambā *rumāl*, No. 51:28/24, now in the National Museum, New Delhi.

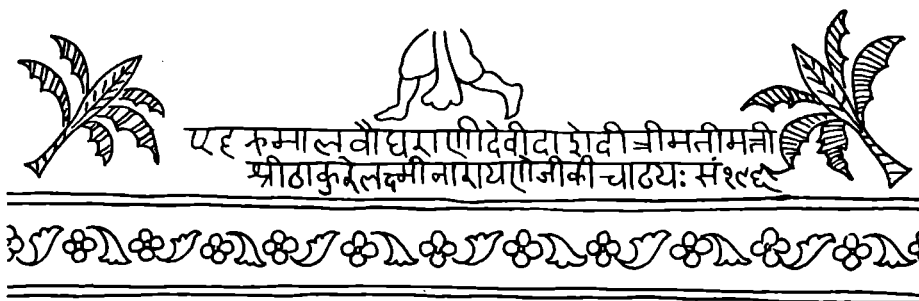
Though not very common, architectural background sometimes provides the real similarity in the Chambā *rumāls* with the contemporary Pāhāḍī miniatures.

Architecture The straight trabeate type of architecture in the *rumāl* showing the *Rukmiṇī-haraṇa* scene with its small minarets and the typical arched drawings at the square niches clearly remind one of its direct reflection from Kāṅgrā painting and ultimately from the Mughal. The distant architecture in some of the embroidered panels, like the one showing the *nāyikā-bhedas*, is also an influence drawn from the Mughal convention in the same direction.

The colours used are varied and large in number. No Chambā *rumāl* is in a single colour. The preponderance of blue in some of the earlier pieces is remarkable. Kṛishṇa, whenever depicted bare-bodied, is embroidered blue, except in a few cases, where the colour is mauve. Green, sky blue, orange, yellow are some of the other colours of the threads frequently in use in these embroideries. In the choice of colours, however, it must be said, the guiding principle was the variety, rather than appropriateness.

Like paintings, the embroiderers chose to remain anonymous in most cases. In a *rumāl* with marriage scene, however, the name of the lady who embroidered the piece is given by a few long stitches at the left corner as **The Embroiderers** Govindadāsi¹. Similarly, a *Rāsamaṇḍala rumāl*² is not only called so in the piece itself by a writing made by long stitches but is stated to be the work of one Baudha Rāṇī Devi. It is further stated there that the *rumāl* was offered to (literally, placed on) the deity Lakshmi-Nārāyaṇa, and is dated Samvat 1968, i.e. 1911 A.D.

“Baudha Rāṇī, wife of Devī Dās, offered this *rumāl* to Śrī Ṭhākur Lakshmi-Nārāyaṇa Samvat 1968”.



¹ Cf. Chambā *rumāl*, No. 60-891, now in the National Museum, New Delhi.

² Cf. Chambā *rumāl*, No. 60-500, now in the National Museum, New Delhi.

Sometimes a whole poetic verse is stitched on to the *rumāl* describing the subject, usually a scene from Kṛishṇa's life, as in a piece in the collections of the Lahore Museum, now in Pakistan.

So far as dated and dateable pieces of *rumāl* are concerned, the earliest belong to the late 16th century A.D. A historical person, Babey Nanki, sister of Guru Nānak, is said to have embroidered in the Chambā technique a piece now preserved in the historic Sikh shrine in Gurdāspur district, Punjab.

The *rumāls* of Chambā are more intimate to the life of the common people than even the contemporary miniature paintings. As household products, the handi-work of the most graceful lady of the family, the wife, or the most devoted and venerated one, the mother, these *rumāls* have a rare touch of intimacy and grace not obtainable in any other form of art. As pieces of art, these have rare pictorial quality. Laid in the form of miniature paintings these achieved a subtlety and liveliness in no way different from the works with the paint and the brush. Done with devoted skill of the lady in the family, these are spontaneous expressions of joy of life, revealing a thorough appreciation of the sentiments of love and devotion. The depiction of the marriage scenes, *nāyikās*, and Kṛishṇa's love-episodes with Rādhā, bears ample testimony to the intimacy with which the eternal sentiment of love in its aspects of union and separation is treated in these *rumāls*. This dynamic approach and intimacy of its execution are all pervaded by a divine grace which is symbolically present almost everywhere in Indian art, these *rumāls* from the Chambā Valley being no exception.

Table showing the comparative dates of kings reigning in Chambā and the States around

Guler	Kāngra	Chambā	Nurpur
Hari Chand founds Haripur-Guler c. 1405			
Vijay Chand c. 1605			
Rūp Chand c. 1610			
Mān Singh 1635		Balabhadra 1589-1641	Suraj Mall c. 1618
Bikram Singh 1661	Vijay Rām Chand c. 1660	Prithvī Singh 1641-64	Jagat Singh 1619-46
Rāj Singh c. 1675	Uday Rām Chand 1687		Rājrup Singh 1646-61
Dalip Singh 1695	Bhim Chand c. 1690	Chattar Singh 1664-90	Māndhātā 1661-1700
	Ālam Chand c. 1697	Uday Singh 1690-1720	Dayādhātā 1700-35
	Hamīr Chand 1700	Ugar Singh 1720-35	
	Abhaya Chand 1747	Dalel Singh 1735-48	Prithvi Singh 1735-89
	Ghamand Chand 1751	Umed Singh 1748-64	
	Sansār Chand 1775-1823	Rāj Singh 1764-94	Bir Singh 1789-1846
		Jit Singh 1794-1808	
		Charhat Singh 1808-44	

PLATE I

WORSHIP OF GAṆEŚĀ

68·5 cm. × 70 cm.

Indian Museum, Calcutta

The worship of Gaṇeśa as a theme was very popular with embroiderers in Chambā, specially for the *rumāls*. This theme in various lay-outs and compositions was drawn and embroidered since very early years of this tradition. In the present *rumāl* of an early technique is revealed a very fine and soothing delineation with a great pictorial effect. As in classical Kāṅgrā paintings, the main subject-matter is put under a framework of scalloped arch resting on pilasters. The deity is seated cross-legged on a full-blown lotus and is invariably shown four-armed in such compositions. In his upper right hand he holds a lotus, in his upper left a battle-axe (*paraśu, kuṭhāra*), in his lower right the broken tusk, and in the lower left probably a sweet-meat (*modaka*). The stalk of the lotus sprouts from a lotus pond denoted by a few lotus leaves and watery shrubs. The attribute of a lotus in the hands of Gaṇeśa is not common, though in the case of Mahā-Gaṇapati and the figure of Nṛitta-Gaṇapati sculptured in the Hoysaleśvara temple at Halebid, the presence of a lotus in his hand is vouchsafed. On two sides below the seat are two figures of mouse, the vehicle of the deity, that to the left is a seated one and the one to the right appears standing. Beyond, there are flowers and flower plants. The two corners left by the scalloped arch in the rectangular framework are filled with floral patterns and designs with a few lotuses interspersed. The figure of the deity is under a green-leaved tree serving as an umbrella from one side but symmetrically placed. The figure is flanked by two female devotees, that to the right carrying sweetmeats in a tray and the one to the left swinging *chowri* with her right arm stretched out in adoration. According to some thinking, these may represent Buddhi and Siddhi, the consorts of Gaṇeśa. Both the figures of the attendants are under typical willow tree familiar in Kāṅgrā paintings. The dresses of the female devotees are a 'combination' and a *chāddar* (or *odhni*, scarf) which acts as a veil. These constitute typical Pāhāḍī dress of ladies in the 18th-19th centuries A.D.

The rectangular space inside is further bounded by rectilinear bands crossing each other at the four corners, showing formal and stylised floral patterns. Except for the floral petals, deep red is seldom used and whenever used pleasantly so. The



WORSHIP OF GANEŚA

over-all impression of the composition which is spaced with flowers, is of green and light-green bringing about a very soothing visual effect.

From the compositional excellence and workmanship of a high order, as also from the use of the earlier type of the base-cloth, namely *mal-mal*, this can well be assigned to the middle of the 19th century A.D.

PLATE II

WORSHIP OF GAṆEŚA

53 cm. × 49 cm.

Bhuri Singh Museum, Chambā

A more stylised form of the composition than in Plate No. I, this *rumāl* shows a central figure of Gaṇeśa within a framework of rectangular bands with cross-petalled floral patterns in each individual segment therein. Beyond, there is a still broader band of ruby patterns in variegated colours arranged in zigzag lines. The deity at the centre, crowned, has a decorative umbrella fitted with bells, supported on a metal rod as it were, with two flowering banana trees in their natural colour flanking it from the two sides. Flowering banana trees, a veritable sign of plenty and auspiciousness, was a great favourite of Chambā, and in general, Pāhāḍī painters, and naturally so with the embroiderers too. A specially designed and highly decorative lamp hangs from the backwall, lending an elegance of its own to the entire set-up. The devotee at the left waves the *chāmara* (*chowri*) over the deity by the left hand while the right hand holds probably a garland. The right hand of the devotee at the right holds a water-pot, while the left hand carries a tray of offerings. Gaṇeśa holds in his upper right hand a battle-axe (*paraśu*) while his lower right hand has a lotus. The upper left carries a dish of sweets (*modaka*) which the trunk touches for partaking from it and the lower left has the rosary of beads (*akṣhamālā*). The deity apparently in *dhyānāsana* sits on a lotus embroidered in blue with a dish of offering confronting him on the ground. Apart from a small bowl of offering there is a jug of water with a sprout and a handle which is typical of similar water-pots obtainable in Pāhāḍī paintings and is clearly taken from the Mughal proto-types. The small mouse, the usual vehicle of the deity, seated beside on the ground, typifies the lively creature in such deft workmanship of the needle.

The typical Chambā feature of the banded skirt (*ghāgrā*) is noticeable here in the pieces worn by the female devotees attending on Gaṇeśa. The gradually diminishing vertical bands are an ingenuity introduced here.



WORSHIP OF GANEŚA

PLATE III

RĀDHĀ AND KṚISHṆA UNDER A TREE

76 cm. × 77.5 cm.

Indian Museum, Calcutta

Of all the Kṛishṇa themes perhaps the most favourite with the Punjab hill painters, from whom the embroiderers of Chambā imbibed much of this art was the scene of *Rāsamaṇḍala*. Apart from its devotional and musical appeal, its symmetry of composition was no less responsible for its being readily and widely adopted for embroidery. *Rāsa*, however, was love in union with Rādhā, and may be available in the lonely composition of the pair, Rādhā and Kṛishṇa, instead of the group of *gopinīs* encircling the Lord dancing and dallying at the centre. The present composition is one of the finest, showing this exclusive scene of Kṛishṇa and Rādhā under the willow tree whose drooping branches provide the canopy for the divine pair, and, in art, supply the most convenient, yet unobtrusive, symmetry of composition.

The figure of Kṛishṇa in blue, with *hāra* (necklace) in silver thread, crowned in two-tiered *mukūṭa*, typical of paintings in the hill States, specially Kāngrā and Garhwal, stands gracefully clad in yellow robe (*dhoti*) with an *oḍhni* over the shoulders, holding the divine flute in the right hand and stretching the left arm over Rādhā standing beside. While Kṛishṇa speaks with Rādhā in affection, Rādhā dressed in a red combination and an *oḍhni* in yellow raises her right hand as if in course of a talk, with the left hand raised to the waist. A decorative border of the composition shows silver *buṭi* work. Both Rādhā and Kṛishṇa stand on full-blown lotus. The figure of Kṛishṇa answers the *Gīta-Govinda* verse:

चन्दनचर्चितनीलकलेवरपीतवसनवनमाली ।

केलिचलन्मणिकुण्डलमण्डितगण्डयुगः स्मितशाली ॥

I, 2

The composition is well-laid inside a rectangular space bounded by a band of meandering floral patterns in variegated colours. The inside corners of the inner space show green pine trees, while there are four flowering plantain trees, two with leaves in light chocolate and two in green. Each of these trees is flanked by a pair of



RĀDHĀ AND KṚIṢṆA UNDER A TREE

peacocks, one on each side, the two pairs on the right and the left, show blue body with red feathers, and the two others, top and below, with deep chocolate body and light brown feathers. The whole composition is a successful study in symmetry and balance in rectilinear arrangements.

PLATE IV

KṚISHNA (FOUR-ARMED ?) WITH GOPINĪS

52 cm. × 55 cm.

Indian Museum, Calcutta

The most typical of the folk-style embroideries is represented by the present *rumāl* which delineates a four-armed figure in dark chocolate at the centre, probably Kṛishṇa, and two figures, one on each side, apparently female, and in banded skirt, (*ghāgrā*) probably representing *gopinīs*. The so-called folk-style embroideries are those where the figures and patterns are drawn in outline by the housewife herself who is also the embroiderer. As such, these drawings are necessarily very crude and peculiar, though no less vivacious. Some of the postures and dresses, and other accessories, like the hair-do, appear extremely funny and satirical. The peculiar beak-like mouth is typical of this style and almost invariably outstretched arms are a common element. Even in some cases, the blunted feet, covered up in the flowing dress in a very symmetrical pattern, constitute a characteristic feature. The flowers and the floral patterns are similarly stylised, and in the present case, fill the corners of the inner quadrangle which is bounded by rectangular bands containing meandering flowers and leaves.

The three figures are in the dancing pose, as though in *Vasanta-rāga*, with the central figure, probably Kṛishṇa, waving a flower in the right and a leaf in the left upper hand.



KRISHNA (FOUR-ARMED?) WITH GOPINĪS

PLATE V

RĀSAMANḌALA WITH VIṢṢU AT THE CENTRE

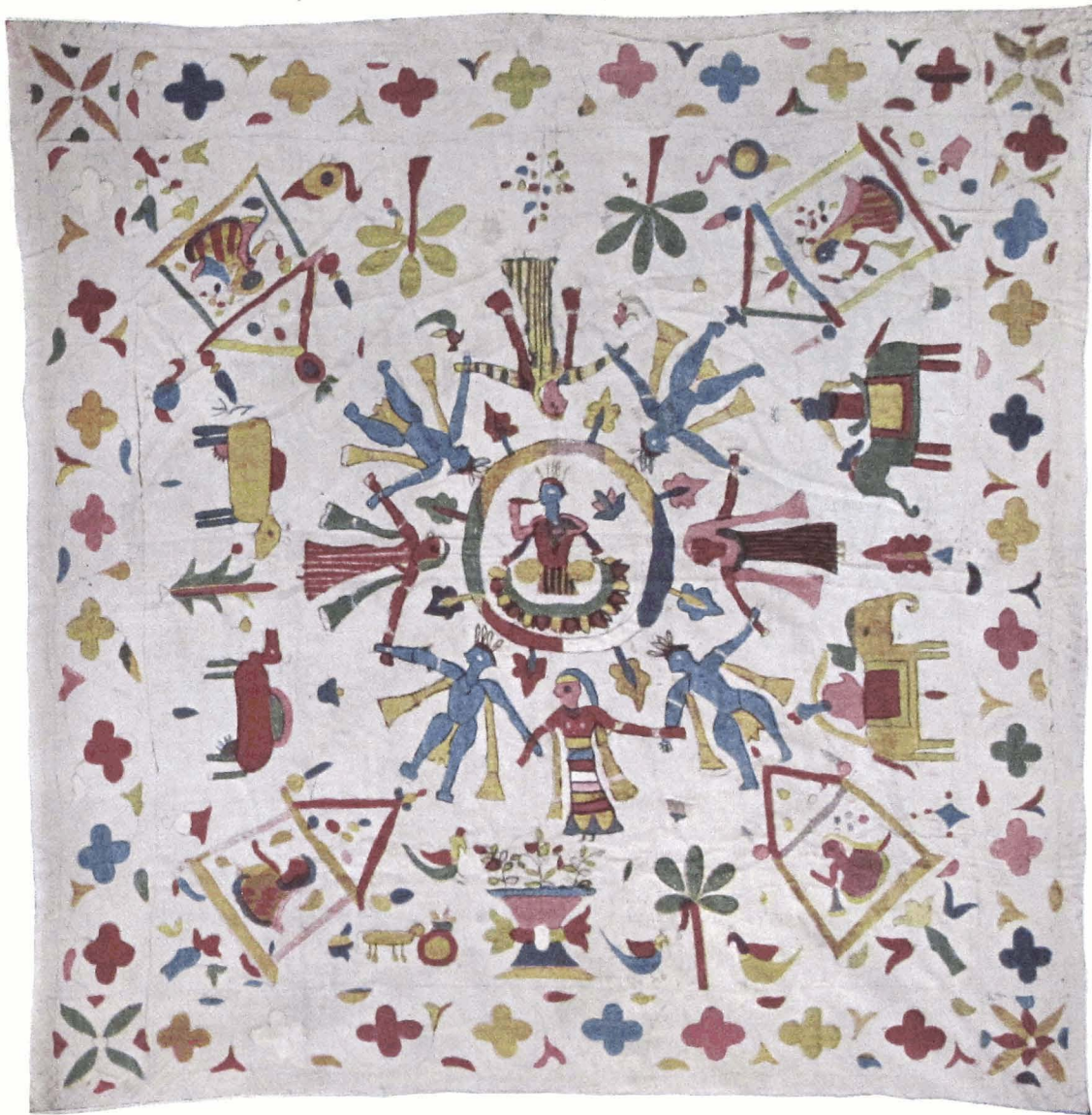
84 cm. × 85 cm.

Indian Museum, Calcutta

Rāsamaṇḍala where Kṛishṇa dances with *gopinīs* clasping them in their hands in a circle has a peculiar composition in painting and embroidery, viz., that Kṛishṇa is shown not encircled by *gopinīs* but he assumes a multiple of forms and holds the hands of each *gopinī* so as to form a circle. This peculiarity is apparently due to compositional difficulty in delineating profiles and shaded figures. In paintings, more so in embroidery, the centre of this encirclement is occupied by four-armed Viṣṇu with normal attributes, sometimes accompanied by Lakshmī.

The present *rumāl*, one of the folk-styles, embroidered on *khaddar* (see *ante* p. 10), shows the usual disproportionate and stiff delineation of the figures, though the figures of *gopinīs* reveal banded designs, typical of *Chambā* embroideries. That the folk-style also appears to have been of very intimate workmanship is proved by their similarity in the design and figure-patterns to the decorations and animal-motifs in *Kānthās* of Bengal and other parts of eastern India. The little doll-like figures in the hanging quadrangular swings at the four corners support this view. The swans and ducks, and other birds as also the animals, including the two elephants with mahouts at right in bright colours also amply testify to this. The trees, the floral shrubs and individual flowers are stylised both inside the central pictorial quadrangle as also in the outer bands and corners. This is also true of the small flower-pot with little plants at the centre, below the *Rāsamaṇḍala* figures.

Viṣṇu, the central deity, is here four-armed, and is unaccompanied by Lakshmī, his consort, and sits on a thick petalled lotus in variegated colours. This figure, which is crowned, is encircled by a plain band of varied colour-strips.



RĀSAMANḌALA WITH VIṢṆU AT THE CENTRE

PLATE VI

RĀSAMANḌALA WITH LAKSHMĪ-NĀRĀYAṆA AT THE CENTRE

94 cm. × 98 cm.

Indian Museum, Calcutta

It is well-known that on account of a general upheaval of Vaiṣṇavism in northern India, in the few centuries following the 16th, a number of popular lyrics were composed and sung among the masses. Jayadeva's *Gīta-Govindam* of the 12th century A.D. was already popular as a lyrical composition to be sung in praise of Rādhā and Kṛishṇa. Their love-sport at Vṛindāvana, described in this poem, was the inspiring force also for the most delicate paintings specially from the Punjab Hill States of Basohli and Kāñgrā. The embroiderers of Chambā found in this continuous melody a convenient subject for the most lustrous and colourful composition. Of all the items in the love-sports, the *Rāsamanḍala*, because of its circular symmetry and its scope for variegated colours in the dresses and poses of the figures respectively of the individual *gopī* and of the numerous figures of Kṛishṇa, has an appeal of its own in paintings and also in embroideries following closely the paintings.

The present *rumāl* depicting the *Rāsamanḍala* shows the figure of Viṣṇu, four-armed, with Lakshmī beside, both seated on a double-petalled lotus, the inter-leaves of which are not filled in. The figure of Viṣṇu, however, is crowned like that of Kṛishṇa, and is depicted blue, with the usual attributes in the anti-clock-wise order, conch-shell (*śaṅkha*), disc (*chakra*), lotus (*padma*) and staff (*gadā*). The divine pair is flanked by an adoring monkey on each side. Of the five figures of Kṛishṇa, who generally thus multiplies himself in a *Rāsa-līlā*, four are in blue as usual, while the fifth one on the top, shows light pink colour. The figures of *gopinīs*, each wearing a combination of a different colour, has an *oḍhnī* taken in various ways, are as lively and playful as can be expected in a dynamic and musical love-sport as this.

The dancing circle of *gopinīs* and figures of Kṛishṇa, alternating each other, has five figures of musicians, one at each of the four corners and a fifth one at the bottom below. The corner figures, all female, show as playing, in the clock-wise order, from top left, a *karnāl*, a pair of cymbals, a *raṇasiṅgā*, and a *tāṅpurā*. The sole male figure, at bottom, is a drummer, shown with an uplifted stick, with his left hand at the other



RĀSAMANḌALA WITH LAKSHMĪ-NĀRĀYAṆA AT THE CENTRE

face of the drum, in a most realistic way. Flowering shrubs flank this figure, while plantain trees, two in natural green and yellowish green, and two in variegated colours, separate the figures and floral patterns, symmetrically.

The inner quadrangular space is bounded by floral bands crossing each other at right angles, with the corners, so left out, filled with floral designs. At the four rectangular spaces beyond the floral bands, there is a pair of peacocks set in the most exquisite colours, interspaced with floral shrubs, marked with a most imaginative combination of colours, and drawn and embroidered with finest linear precision.¹

¹ Cf. Rādhā and Kṛishṇa on throne with *sakhis* all around gathering flowers, etc., from trees—'Some Rumāls from Chambā' by Puraṇ Singh, *Rūpam*, October, 1927.

PLATE VII

KING WORSHIPPING JAGANNĀTHA, BALARĀMA AND SUBHADRĀ, OF PURI

101 cm. × 98 cm.

Bhuri Singh Museum, Chambā

The embroidered piece reveals a unique architectural pattern with surmounting domed watch-towers in miniature approached by steps. The horizontal and vertical bands on the front elevation, on the first floor, including the cornices, are filled in with floral compositions. The design is essentially trabeate, and the central quadrangle enshrines the crowned figure of Krishna playing on the flute attended by Rādhā in red *ghāgrā*. This is flanked by two figures, one on each side, enclosed in a typical horse-shoe-shaped arch, available with the Kāngrā paintings, each of the figures facing the central deity with folded hands in worship. At the left, the figure wears a *sarpech* and probably represents a Rājā. Though it is very difficult to identify him, it is significant that he is without a beard. The three successive Rājās, Rāj Singh (1764-94 A.D.), Jit Singh (1794-1808 A.D.) and Charhat Singh (1808-44 A.D.) had bearded figures, and since the *rumāl* cannot be later than 1844 A.D., on stylistic grounds, the figure with *sarpech* most probably represents a prince that reigned before 1764, and therefore, determines the date of the embroidery as earlier than the latter half of the 18th century A.D.

On the ground floor, there is a group of the Vaishṇava triad, Jagannātha, Balarāma and Subhadrā, represented as in the famous Puri temple, with bowls of offering placed before them. This group is also enshrined in a horse-shoe-shaped arch, flanked by two similar arches on the two sides, the left one enclosing the figure of a prince and the right one showing an animated composition of a lady busily going up over steps and turning right to talk to an attendant. Two series of steps on two sides lead to these rooms or shrines, which are separated by the usual pine trees. The main and central flight of steps, broader than the side ones, approach the central shrine housing the divine triads. This central stair is flanked by a figure of a tiger on each side, and further beyond the smaller stairs, is a flanking pair of peacocks, one on each side. There are two pine trees, embroidered in a stylised way and formal colours, standing vertically parallel to the structure.

The *rumāl* has a border of a floral band, meeting at the corners.



KING WORSHIPPING JAGANNĀTHA, BALARĀMA AND SUBHADRĀ, OF PURI

PLATE VIII

DAŚA-MAHĀVIDYĀS

89 cm. × 94 cm.

Indian Museum, Calcutta

Figures of the ten Mahāvidyās or Tāntric goddesses *par excellence* are not uncommon as a subject in Chambā embroideries though they are not as frequent as are such Vaishṇava theme as *Rāsamaṇḍala*. In fact, areas covered by the small States of Punch and Kulu are given to worship of Śrī Chaṇḍī and her aspects, in a large measure. Tāntric influence in this area is discernible quite early, and the Mahāvidyās, or the Siddhavidyās as they are otherwise called, are one of the popular manifestations of the Tāntric concept of the Primordial Power as current in this and other parts of India. The names of the ten Mahāvidyās, however, remain almost constant throughout different parts of north India where they were popular, though there are minor variations in the appellations, in a few cases. In the present *rumāl*, in the inner quadrangle formed by a double row of dotted embroidery, the ten figures of the Mahāvidyās are put inside circles in three rows, there being 3 on the top, 4 at the middle and 3 again at the bottom line. The entire space between these circles is filled up with floral patterns of six petals in different colours and colour-combinations. The corners have three leaves, representing a small tapering form of a tree resembling the pine which is usual in such embroideries and paintings. There are four leafy shrubs at suitable positions on two sides at left and right, inside these quadrangles. The outermost border is formed by symmetrical floral decorations stylised in nature, though highly colourful and dimensionally restrained.

The first figure at left on the top row represents Mahāvidyā called (1) Ādyā which, according to other texts, is called Kālī. The figure in the middle represents (2) Tārā, while that to the right represents (3) Śrīvidyā, according to the inscriptions embroidered on the *rumāl*, otherwise known as Shoḍaśī or Sundarī.

In the second row, the first figure at left is that of (4) Bhuvaneśvarī and the adjacent one is that of (5) Chhinnaṁastā. Chhinnaṁastā is followed by (6) Tripura-bhairavī and (7) Dhūmāvātī. The order in this line is a little changed from usual enumeration of the ten Mahāvidyās in popular verses which place Bhairavī before Chhinnaṁastā.

In the third row, the first figure at the left is that of (8) Vagalāmukhī, the next is of (9) Mātāṅgī, and the last one to the right represents (10) Mahālakshmi described in other texts as Kamalātmikā. The practice of writing in print the names of these Mahāvidyās on a sort of religious scarfs embodying the ten names is well known and may be seen in a textile piece of this character from Murshidabad in Bengal preserved in the Indian Museum. These were worn as *nāmāvalī* by Śaivaite devotees. The text there runs as follows:

*Kāli Tārā Mahāvidyā Shoḍaśī Bhuvaneśvari
Bhairavi Chhinnamastā ca Vidyā Dhūmāvati tathā
Vagalā Siddhavidyā ca Mātāṅgi Kamalātmikā
Etā daśamahāvidyāḥ Siddhavidyāḥ prakīrtitāḥ
(From Chāmuṇḍā and Muṇḍamālā Tantra)*

The above is according to the texts *Chāmuṇḍā* and *Muṇḍamālā Tantra*, and, as being quoted by Krishṇānanda Āgambāgīś in his *Tantrasāra*, must be placed before the 17th century A.D. Āgambāgīś also refers to ten Mahāvidyās as quoted by him from *Mālinīvijaya-tantra*, as follows: Kāli, Nilā, Mahādurgā, Tvaritā, Chhinnamastikā, Vāgvādinī, Annapūrṇā, Pratyāṅgiri, Bālā and Mātāṅgī. The concept of the Mahāvidyās, at least in some individual cases, can be traced back to 12th century A.D. or even earlier. Mahīdhara's *Mantramahodadhī* refers to Kāli, Tārā, Chhinnamastā and Sundarī (Shoḍaśī), and though not specifically introduced as Mahāvidyās, these certainly were the same personalities as the Mahāvidyās that emerged subsequently. Halāyudha of the 12th century A.D. refers to Mātāṅgī or Mātāṅginī in connection with the subject-matter of *Mahāvidyoddhāra*. Some scholars are of the opinion that the concept of Mahāvidyā took shape in Bengal after Halāyudha. At least one of the ten Mahāvidyās, *viz.*, Kamalā or Lakshmi or Mahālakshmi, it may be pointed out, is a very old conception being traceable iconographically to the Bhārhut railings of the 2nd century B.C.

Iconographically, the figures in the Chambā embroidery do not present any notable variation from the usual and accepted iconographic details of the respective deities. The conformity or otherwise of these to the available *dhyānas* may be stated as below:

1. Kāli

शिवारूढा महाभीमा घोरदंष्ट्रा वरप्रदाम् ।
हास्ययुक्ता त्रिनेत्राञ्च कपालकर्तृकाराम् ॥
मुक्तकेसी लोलजिह्वा पिवन्ती रुधिरं मुहुः ।
चतुर्बाहुयुता देवी वराभयकरां स्मरेत् ॥

Tantrasāra, ed. Upendranath Mukhopadhyaya, Sam. 1316, p. 318

Description of the goddess quoted from *Kālī-hṛidaya* runs as follows:

देवीवामोर्द्धाधोहस्ते खड्गं मुण्डञ्च पूजयेत् ।
देव्या दक्षहस्तोर्द्धाधिः पूजयेदभयं वरम् ॥

Ibid., p. 315

Our figure shows the deity standing on a dead body though it attributes a sword (*khadga*) and a severed head (*muṇḍa*) in the left hands, upper and lower respectively, and shows protection-offering and boon-giving attitude in the two right hands in the same order, as given in the *Kālī-hṛidaya-tantra*. There are two jackals, one on each side, and the deity is crowned, and not with loose and dishevelled hair, as described in the *dhyāna* quoted.

2. Tārā

प्रत्यालीढपदां घोरां मुण्डमालाविभूषिताम् ।
खर्वी लम्बोदरीं भीमां व्याघ्रचर्मवृतां कटौ ॥
नवयौवनसम्पन्नां पञ्चमुद्राविभूषिताम् ।
चतुर्भुजां लोलजिह्वां महाभीमां वरप्रदाम् ॥
खड्गकर्त्तृसमायुक्तसव्यतरभुजद्वयाम् ।
कपालोत्पलसंयुक्तसव्यपाणियुगान्विताम् ॥
पिङ्गाग्रैकजटां ध्यायेन्मौलिवक्षोभ्यभूषिताम् ।
बालार्कमण्डलाकारलोचनत्रयभूषिताम् ॥
ज्वलच्छितामध्यगतां घोरदंष्ट्रां करालिनीम् ।
स्वावेशस्मेरवदनां स्थूलङ्कारविभूषिताम् ॥
विश्वव्यापकतोयान्तःश्वेतपद्मोपरिस्थिताम् ।
अक्षोभ्या देवी मूर्द्धन्यस्त्रीमूर्तिनागरूपधृक् ॥

Ibid., p. 334

The embroidered figure answers in general to the description in the *dhyāna* quoted above. The important variation lies, however, in that the deity does not hold *kapāla* and *utpala* in the two hands which show in our figure *varada* and an uncertain attitude probably of holding a severed head. The *khadga* and the *kartri* are respectively in the upper left and upper right hands with the right lower showing *varada* and the left lower showing the uncertain pose. The goddess, however, is shown in the prescribed *pratyāliḍha* standing pose and wears a garland of skulls, appearing fierce with her hair matted into a single braid. She rides on a male figure probably representing a dead body. The apparel, a tiger-skin as prescribed, is also shown almost correctly in the embroidered figure. That she is in the midst of a burning funeral pyre, is also indicated by the flames issuing out from the bed of the prostrate figure below. Two jackals flank the deity as in the case of *Kālī*. One of them is depicted as apparently drinking the blood of the severed head held in the hand of the deity.

3. Śrividya

ततः पद्मनिभां देवीं बालार्ककिरणोज्ज्वलां ।
 जवाकुमुमसङ्काशां दाडिमीकुमुपोपमाम् ॥
 पद्मरागप्रतीकाशां कुङ्कुमारुणसन्निभाम् ।
 स्फुरन्मुकुटमाणिक्यकिङ्किणीजालमण्डिताम् ॥
 कालालिकुशमङ्काशकुटिलालकपल्लवाम् ।
 प्रत्यग्राहणमंकाशवदनाम्भोजमण्डलाम् ॥
 किञ्चिदद्वन्द्वकुटिलललाटमुदुपट्टिकाम् ।
 पिनाकिधनुराकारभ्रूलतां परमेश्वरीम् ॥
 भ्रानन्दमुदितोल्लासलीलाम्बोलितलोचनाम् ।
 स्फुरन्मयूखसंकाशविलसद्वेमकुण्डलाम् ॥
 भुगण्डमण्डलाभोगजितेन्द्रभूतमण्डलाम् ।
 विश्वकर्मविनिर्माणसूत्रमुस्पष्टनासिकाम् ॥
 ताम्रविद्रुमबिम्बाभरक्तोष्ठीममृतोपमाम् ।
 स्मितमाधुर्यविजितमाधुर्यरससागराम् ॥
 अनूपम्यगुणोपेतचिबुकोद्देशशोभिताम् ।
 कम्बुग्रीवां महादेवीं मृणालललितैर्भुजैः ॥
 रक्तात्पलदलाकारमुकुमारकराम्बुजाम् ।
 रक्ताम्बुजनखज्योतिर्वितानितनभस्तलाम् ॥
 मुक्ताहारलतोपेतसमुन्नतपयोधराम् ।
 त्रिवलीवलयायुक्तमध्यदेशशोभिताम् ॥
 लावण्यसरिदावत्तकारनाभिभिभूषिताम् ।
 अनर्घरत्नघटितकाञ्चीयुतनितम्बिनीम् ॥
 नितम्बबिम्बद्विरदरोमराजिवराङ्कुशाम् ।
 कदलीललितस्तम्भमुकुमारोरुमीश्वरीम् ॥
 लावण्यकुमुपाकारजानुमण्डलबन्धुराम् ।
 लावण्यकदलीतुल्यजङ्घायुगलमण्डिताम् ॥
 गूढगुल्फपदद्वन्द्वप्रपदाजितकच्छपाम् ।
 तनुदीर्घांगुलिस्वच्छन्नखगजिविराजिताम् ॥
 ब्रह्म-विष्णुशिरोरत्ननिधृष्टचरणाम्बुजाम् ।
 शीतांगुशतसङ्काशकान्तिसन्तानहासिनीम् ॥
 लौहित्यजितसिन्दूरजवादाडिमरूपिणीम् ।
 रक्तवस्त्रपरिधानां पाशाङ्कुशकरोद्यताम् ॥
 रक्तपद्मनिविष्टान्तु रक्ताभरणभूषिताम् ।
 चतुर्भुजां त्रिनेत्रान्तु पञ्चबाणधनुर्धराम् ॥
 कर्पूरशकलोन्मिश्रताम्बूलपूरिताननाम् ।
 महामृगमदोद्दामकुङ्कुमारुणविग्रहाम् ॥
 सर्वसृङ्गारवेशाढ्यां सर्वाभरणभूषिताम् ।
 जगदाह्लादजननीं जगद्रञ्जनकारिणीम् ॥
 जगदाकर्षणकरां जगत्कारणरूपिणीम् ।
 सर्वमन्त्रमयीं देवीं सर्वसौभाग्यसुन्दरीम् ॥

सर्वलक्ष्मीमयी नित्यां सर्वशक्तिमयी शिवाम् ।
एवं रूपमात्मानं ध्यात्वा मानसैः संपूजयेत् ॥

Ibid., p. 282

The figure of Śrīvidyā, otherwise known as Shoḍaśī or Sundarī, as embroidered, is iconographically perfect and artistically superb. Her body is reddish like the rising sun or pink like the lotus as prescribed in the *dhyāna* and is depicted as required, with a jewelled crown adorning her head. Her seat is almost touched by the figures of the four deities—Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rāma and Śiva. The text of the *dhyāna* aptly points to this:

Brahmā-Viṣṇu-śīroratna-nighriṣṭa-charaṇāmbujām

The deity is four-armed holding in the anti-clock-wise order *pāśa*, *ankuśa*, a flower and a bow. The flower probably represents the five flowery arrows mentioned as *pañchabāṇa* in the *dhyāna* text. The figure in its attributes, therefore, corresponds to the prescription in the *dhyāna* text quoted.

While the figure of Brahmā embroidered shows in the upper right hand an indistinct object and in the upper left hand a *pustaka*, the lower two, right and left, seem to hold a rosary each. The figure of Viṣṇu, four-armed, with a crown (*kirīṭa*) and seated on lotus, shows in the anti-clock-wise order *chakra*, *śaṅkha*, *padma* and *gadā*. The next figure, which is also crowned, probably represents Rāma, as it holds a bow in the left hand. The fourth figure represents Śiva with a serpent round his neck and holds in the left hand the *damaru* (small drum shaped like hour-glass) with the right hand, raised, holding no object.

4. Bhuvaneśvarī

जवाकुसुमसङ्काशां दाडिमीकुसुमोपमाम् ।
चन्द्रेखां जटाजूटां त्रिनेत्रां रक्तवाससीम् ॥
नानालङ्कारसुभगां पीनोन्नतघनस्तनीम् ।
पाशाङ्कुशवराभीतिर्घारयन्तीं शिवां श्रये ॥

Ibid., p. 235

Alternative *dhyāna*:

उद्यद्दिनकरद्युतिमिन्दुकिरीटां तुङ्गकुचां नयनत्रययुक्ताम् ।
स्मेरमुखीं वराङ्कुशपाशाभीतिकरां प्रभजेद्भुवनेशीम् ॥

Ibid., p. 103

The figure embroidered as prescribed in the *dhyāna* quoted above, wears a red garment, though she is not having matted hair as laid down, but wears a



DAŚA-MAHĀVIDYĀS

crown. In her four arms, according to the alternative *dhyaṇa* also quoted above, she is, however, to be shown with a crown (*kīrīṭa*). In her four arms in the anti-clockwise order, she is holding *aṅkuśa*, shows *varada mudrā*, has *abhaya* attitude, and holds *pāśa*. This is according to the prescribed text : *Varāṅkuśapāśābhītikarām*.

5. Chhinnamastā

जवाकुमुमसङ्काशं रक्तवन्धूकसन्निभं ।
 रजःसत्त्वतमोरेखायोनिमण्डलमण्डितम् ॥
 मध्ये तु तां महादेवीं सूर्यकोटिसमप्रभाम् ।
 छिन्नमस्तां करे वामे धारयन्तीं स्वमस्तकम् ॥
 प्रसारितमुखी भीमां लेलिहानाग्रजिह्विकाम् ।
 पिबन्तीं रौषिरीं धारां निजकण्ठविनिर्गतां ॥
 विकीर्णकेशपाशाञ्च नानापुष्पसमन्विताम् ।
 दक्षिणे च करे कर्त्रीं मुण्डमालाविभूषिताम् ॥
 दिगम्बरीं महाधोरां प्रत्यालीढपदे स्थिताम् ।
 ग्रस्थिमालाधरां देवीं नागयज्ञोपवीतिनीम् ॥
 रतिकामोपविष्टाञ्च सदा ध्यायन्ति मन्त्रिणः ।
 सदा षोडशवर्षीयां पीनोन्नतपयोधरां ॥
 विपरीतरतासक्तौ ध्यायेदतिमनोभवौ ।
 डाकिनी-वर्णिनीयुक्तां वामदक्षिणयोगतः ॥
 देवीगलोच्छ्रलद्रक्तधारापानं प्रकुर्वन्ती ।
 वर्णिनीं लोहितां सौम्यां मुक्तकेशीं दिगम्बरीम् ॥
 कपालकर्तृकाहस्तां वामदक्षिणयोगतः ।
 नागयज्ञोपवीताढ्यां ज्वलत्तेजोमयीमिव ॥
 प्रत्यालीढपदां दिव्यां नानालङ्कारभूषिताम् ।
 सदा द्वादशवर्षीयामस्थिमालाविभूषिताम् ॥
 डाकिनीं वामपादवस्थां कल्पसूर्यान्लोपमाम् ।
 विद्युज्जटां त्रिनयनां दन्तपवितवलाकिनीम् ॥
 दंष्ट्राकरालवदनां पीनोन्नतपयोधराम् ।
 महादेवीं महाधोरां मुक्तकेशीं दिगम्बरीम् ॥
 लेलिहानमहाजिह्वां मुण्डमालाविभूषिताम् ।
 कपालकर्तृकाहस्तां वामदक्षिणयोगतः ॥
 देवीगलोच्छ्रलद्रक्तधारापानं प्रकुर्वन्ती ।
 करस्थितकपालेन भोषणेनानिभीषणाम् ॥
 ग्राम्यां निषेव्यमानां तां ध्यायेद्देवीं विचक्षणः ।
 पिबन्तीमिति तेन मुखेनेति शेषः ॥

Ibid., p. 299

The most outstanding feature of the iconography of Chhinnamastā, viz., holding her own severed head in her left hand, is depicted very cleverly in the embroidery showing the blood issuing from her cut-off head being drunk by the

severed head. The other streams of blood are received by the two figures on the two sides described in the *dhyāna* as Dākinī and Varṇinī. The beautiful form of the deity mentioned as being of 16 years of age is aptly delineated in the embroidery. Her parted legs probably indicates *pratyālīḍha* pose prescribed for her. She is shown wearing a garland of severed heads and a sacred thread of serpents, both as prescribed in the *dhyāna*. Her right hand, however, is supposed to hold *karṭrī*, i.e., a cutter (scissors ?) as required under the *dhyāna*. This is missing in the embroidery. The two figures of Dākinī and Varṇinī hold, as prescribed, a *kapāla* and a *karṭrikā*. They are also supposed to be in the *pratyālīḍha* pose in which they are shown.

6. Tripurabhairavī

उद्यद्भानुसहस्रकान्तिमरुणश्रीमां शिरोमालिकां ।
रक्तालिप्तपयोधरां जपवटीं विद्यामभीति वरम् ॥
हस्ताब्जैर्दधतीं त्रिनेत्रविलसद्रक्ताग्निन्दश्रियं ।
देवीं वदद्दिमांगुस्तमुकुटां वन्दे समन्दस्मिताम् ॥

Ibid., p. 224

The embroidered figure of this Mahāvīdyā perhaps comes nearest to the prescribed text as in the *dhyāna*. She is described as wearing a silken garment of the colour and splendour of thousand rays of the sun. This description is answered by the embroidery. She has a garland of severed heads (*śiromālikām*) and in her four hands she shows in an anti-clock-wise order, protection-giving pose (*abhīti*), boon-giving pose (*varam*), the book (*vidyām*) and the rosary (*japaṭīm*) (cf. *japaṭīm vidyāmbhītim varam*). Her head-gear is also a jewelled crown (*ratna-mukuṭām*) with which she is actually shown in the embroidery.

7. Dhūmāvati

विवर्णा चञ्चला रुष्टा दीर्घा च मलिनाम्बरा ।
विवर्णकुन्तला रुक्षा विधवा विरलद्विजा ॥
काकध्वजरथारूढा विलम्बितपयोधरा ।
सूर्पहस्तातिरुक्षाक्षी धूतहस्ता वरान्विता ॥
प्रवृद्धघोणा तु भृशं कुटिला कुटिलेक्षणा ।
क्षुत्पिपासादिता नित्यं भयदा कलहप्रिया ॥

Ibid., p. 365

The embroidered figure remarkably conforms to the *dhyāna* prescriptions, except in some minor details. Her figure with dishevelled hair and seated on a chariot almost resembles the rough and angry demeanour prescribed in the *dhyāna* for Dhūmāvati. Her dirty cloth, as indicated in the *dhyāna*, is also depicted in a suitable colour. The most conspicuous feature, viz., the *kākadhvaja-ratha*, i.e., the

chariot with an emblem of a crow, is remarkably embroidered with the figure of the bird on the roof of the chariot. The breasts, as prescribed, are shown as long and loose, and although her left hand does not show clearly the winnowing basket (*sūrpa*), her right hand, in conformity with the *dhyāna*, is shown upraised, as though shaking in anger.

8. Vagalāmukhī

मध्ये सुधाब्धिमणिमण्डपरत्नवेदीसिंहासनोपरिगतां परिपीतवर्णाम् ।
पीताम्बराभरणमाल्यविभूषिताङ्गीं देवीं स्मरामि धृतमुद्गरवैरिजिह्वाम् ॥
जिह्वाप्रमादाय करेण देवीं वामेन शत्रून् परिपीडयन्तीम् ।
गदाभिघातेन च दक्षिणेन पीताम्बराद्यां द्विभ्रुजां नमामि ॥

Ibid., p. 376

The embroidered figure of Vagalāmukhī is in general up to the description in the *dhyānas* of the Devī. She is shown on a jewelled throne with a canopy of *chhatra*, wearing a yellow garment as prescribed. Her right hand holding a club aimed at the enemy and her left hand holding the tongue of the enemy depicted as with a sword and a shield in hand, are details that scrupulously conform to the prescription in the *dhyāna*.

9. Mātāṅgī

श्यामाङ्गीं शशिशेखरां त्रिनयनां रत्नसिंहासनस्थिताम् ।
वेदैर्बहुदण्डैरसिखेटकपाशाङ्कुशाधराम् ॥

Ibid., p. 362

Mātāṅgī sits on a jewelled throne which is more or less depicted as prescribed. The *āyudhas* or 'weapons' held by her are in the anti-clock-wise order, a sword, a goad, a noose and a club, with the deviation that the *dhyāna* prescribes a shield (*kheṭaka*) in place of the club, along with the other three, *viz.*, a sword, a goad and a noose.

10. Mahālakshmi

कान्त्या काञ्चनसन्निभां हिमगिरिप्रख्यैश्चतुर्मिर्गजैः ।
हस्तीत्क्षिप्तहिरण्मयामृतघटैरासिच्यमानां श्रियम् ॥
विभ्राणां वरमब्जयुग्ममभयं हस्तैः किरीटोज्ज्वलां ।
शौभावद्धनितम्बविम्बललितां वन्देऽरविन्दस्थिताम् ॥

Ibid., p. 141

The description in the *dhyāna* of Lakshmi, as above, is followed in toto by the embroidery except that the two upper hands of Mahālakshmi, though in the pose of

holding, do not have the lotus flowers. The lotus pond sought to be indicated by blue water, and a few lotuses and lotus leaves are all very skilfully done. The two lower hands, right and left, however, show the pose of offering protection, as prescribed.

PLATE IX

NĀYIKĀ-BHEDAS (Types of Heroines)

63 cm. × 100.5 cm.

National Museum, New Delhi

As in paintings from the Punjab Hill States, specially Kāngrā Valley and the Garhwal State, the different kinds of Heroes and Heroines are a favoured subject-matter for the embroiderers whose inspiration is largely drawn from the painters in these styles. In fact, in the present *rumāl* ten drum-shaped panels in two rows, with five in each, reveal different varieties of Heroines in their distinctive moods and environments conforming to such orthodox descriptions as are found, for example, in the *Rasamañjarī* of Bhānudatta¹. Similarly as paintings do these embroidered panels reveal intense symbolic representations, as the male peacock to signify the absent lover, the pair of goats, ducks and peacocks, to denote the poignancy of separated lovers (*viprayoga*) quarrelling for disappointed love, the symbolic pair of white and black serpents on the way to the tryst, though fierce, yet reminding the love in union (*sambhoga*), and so on.

The panels, ten in number, are not in any order for the different varieties of *nāyikās*, the classical texts, however, mentioning only eight main types. In two rows, five in each, these are arranged in a horizontal way. These depict, in order, from left to right, in the top row, (1) *Proshitabharṭrikā*, or the extra-ordinary variety, *Proshyat-patikā*, (2) *Vipralabdā*, (3) *Vāsakasajjā*, (4) *Utkañṭhitā*, (5) *Svādhinapatikā*, and in the same order in the lower row, (6), (7) and (8) *Khaṇḍitā*, (9) *Kalahāntarītā* and (10) *Abhisārikā*.

(1) **Proshitabharṭrikā**

The 1st panel, framed as in the Kāngrā paintings, shows the Heroine at left being consoled by her friend, both seated on a cushion inside a pavilion. A lone male peacock below the seat signifies the absent lover. According to Bhānudatta, the description of the Heroine with husband gone away from her, is as follows:

देशान्तरगते प्रेयसि मन्तापव्याकुला प्रोषितभर्तृका ।

¹ Cf. also a *rumāl*, preserved in the Lahore Museum, showing Eight Nāyikā types (*Aṣṭa-nāyikā-bhedas*) in eight rectangular panels—'Some Rumāls from Chambā' by Puran Singh, *Rūpam*, October, 1927.



NĀYIKĀ-BHEDAS

श्वश्रूः पद्मदलं ददाति तदपि भ्रूसंज्ञया गृह्यते
सद्यो मर्मरसंकया न च तया सस्पृश्यते पाणिना ।
यातुर्वाचि सुहृद्गणस्य वचसि प्रत्युत्तरं दीयते
श्वासः किन्तु न मुच्यते हुतबहुरुर कुरंगोद्गशा ॥

Rasamañjari, ed. J. Vidyasagar, 1888, p. 388

This figure may as well be a representation of the additional variety of *Nāyikā*, viz., *Proshyatpatikā*, i.e., a Heroine whose husband is about to go away from her. The description is as under:

अग्निमक्षणे देशान्तरनिश्चितगमने प्रेयसि
प्रोष्यत्पतिकापि नायिका ॥

प्राणेश्वरे किमपि जल्पति निर्गमाय
क्षामोदरी वदनमानमयांचकार ।
आली पुननिभृतमेत्य लतानिकुञ्ज-
मुन्मत्तकोकिलकलध्वनिमाततान ॥

Ibid., p. 413

(2) **Vipralabdā**

In the next panel similarly arranged as the first one, the Heroine (*Nāyikā*) represented is of the *Vipralabdā* type, i.e., a Heroine who is upset, being disappointed by the Hero (the lover) not turning up at the tryst. Such a Heroine is described as follows:

संकेतनिकेतने प्रियतममनवलोच्य समाकुलहृदया विप्रलब्धा ।

आलीभिः शपथैरनेककपटैः कुञ्जोदरं नीतया
शून्यं तच्च निरीक्ष्य विक्षुभितया न प्रस्थितम् न स्थितम् ।
यस्ता किन्तु तवोदनीरजदुशा कुञ्जोपकण्ठे रुषा
भ्राम्यद्भृंगकदम्बडम्बरचमत्कारस्पृशो दृष्टयः ॥

Ibid., pp. 394-5

Here she is throwing off her ornaments in disappointment that the lover did not turn up at the tryst where a flower-bed was spread at night, which is also very skilfully shown here.

(3) **Vāsakasajjā**

Here in the third panel, the Heroine with the bed spread for the lover, and with accessories like water-jar, pots of sweets, spittoon, etc., and flowers being plucked

from the trees overshadowing the bed, amply answers the prescribed variety known as *Vāsakasajjā*. According to Bhānūdatta, *Vāsakasajjā* is the type of Heroine who arranges together the accessories required in love-making thinking that her dear day of union has come:

अद्य मे प्रियवासक इति अभिप्रेत्य या मुरतमामग्री
सज्जीकरोति, सा वासकसज्जा । वासको वासरः ।

हारं गुम्फति तारकान्तरुचिरं ग्रथ्णाति काञ्चीलतां
दीपं न्यस्यति किन्तु तत्र बहुलं स्नेहं न दत्ते पुनः ।
आलीनामिति वामकस्य रजनौ कामानुरूपां क्रियां
साचिस्मेरनवोदनीरजमुखी दूरात् समुद्रीक्षते ॥

Ibid., p. 401

(4) *Utkaṅṭhitā*

Having spread the bed and collected the accessories, the Heroine naturally waits anxiously for the lover to come and join her. Though the stage of *Vāsakasajjā* and that of *Utkaṅṭhitā* are apparently one following the other, as arranged in the embroidery, they are, in fact, unconnected. The depiction of the *Utkaṅṭhitā* Heroine dressed in the typical 'Combination', holding the branch of a tree with one hand, while the other is in the pose of doubt and anxiety, and with the bed spread in a pavilion with a window, and surrounded by a number of accessories—is according to traditional description. Bhānūdatta lays it down as:

सकेतस्थलं प्रति भर्तुरनागमनकारणं या चिन्तयति सा उत्कण्ठिता ।

यन्नाद्यापि समागतः पतिरिति प्रायः प्रपेदे पराम्
इत्थं चेतसि चिन्तयन्त्यपि सखीं न व्रीडिता पृच्छति ।
दीर्घं न बवसितं दधाति चकितं न प्रेक्षते केवलं
किञ्चित् पक्कपलाण्डुपाण्डुररुचिं धत्ते कपोलस्थलीं ॥

Ibid., p. 398

(5) *Svādhīnapatikā*

The last panel in the first row depicts the variety *Svādhīnapatikā* in which the Heroine is shown seated on a bed with the feet dangling down and the Hero in all submissiveness and devoted love is anointing them with lac-colour (*alaktaka*). The Hero is here shown as Kṛishṇa himself, as is usual in such scenes which are greatly common in Kāṅgrā and other Pāhāḍī paintings. The addition of an astonished attendant lends animation to the scene, while the presence of a male peacock with

neck raised as if in shame and surprise, gives a symbolic touch to the entire environment. *Svādhīnapatikā* is described by Bhānūdatta as follows:

सदाकृतज्ञापरा प्रियतमा स्वाधीनपतिका ।

मध्ये नो कृशिमा स्तनं न गरिमा देहे न वा कान्तिमा
श्रोणी न प्रथिमा गती न जडिमा नेत्रे न वारक्रिया ।
लास्ये न द्रुद्धिमा न वाचि पटिमा हास्ये न वा स्फीतिमा
प्राणेशस्य तथापि मज्जति मनो मय्येव किं कारणम् ॥

Ibid., p. 404

This particular action (*cheshṭā*) of anointing the feet as indicative of the *Svādhīnapatikā* type of a Heroine is very aptly described in Jayadeva's *Gīta-Govindam* where Kṛishṇa beseeches Rādhā to permit him to anoint her feet with lac-dye (*alaktaka*):

स्थलकमलगञ्जनं मम हृदयरञ्जनं जनितरतिरञ्जपरभागम् ।
भण मसृणवाणि करवाणि चरणद्वयं सरसलसदलक्तकरागम् ॥

cd. Nirnayasagar Press, X. 6

(6), (7) and (8)

Khaṇḍitā

The first three panels in the lower row from left probably represent three different attitudes and situations in the type of Heroine known as *Khaṇḍitā*. The first of these depicts the scene of the return of the Hero in the morning when the offended Heroine points to the Sun already risen. The vacant space is conveniently filled in by a lone standing pine and a plantain tree in variegated colours. The second one shows the Heroine questioning the shamelessness of the Hero in spending the night with other women with raised hand, while the Hero tries to hide the marks of enjoyment with other ladies with his hand on the breast. The Heroine standing beneath a domed archway typifies the Pāhādī style, while a couple of goats in the foreground, a male and a female, symbolises love. The third panel in the group is a continuation of the same, though the entrance to the pavilion is very artistically presented in an appealing combination of colours, and a pair of ducks takes the place of the goats, the female in great anguish looks down, with the male duck moving away being repelled.

The description of the *Khaṇḍitā nāyikā* is provided by Bhānūdatta:

अन्योपभोगचिह्नितः प्रातरागच्छति पतियस्याः सा खण्डिता ।

नवनखपदमङ्गं गोपयस्यंशुकेन
स्थगयसि पुनरोष्ठं पाणिना दन्तदष्टम् ।

प्रतिदिशमपरस्त्रीसङ्गसांसी विसर्पन्
नवपरिमलगन्धः केन शक्यो बरीतुम् ॥

Ibid., p. 390

(9) **Kalahāntarītā**

The *Kalahāntarītā nāyikā* is one who humiliates her lover first and feels repentant afterwards. The Hero here is in the person of Kṛishṇa who, crowned and in blue body colour and yellow robe, with a *paṭikā* or waistband, is shown going away while the Heroine in remorse sits with the face on left hand on a cushion, under a pavilion. The male peacock in the foreground symbolising the Hero is also shown stepping out, while the female, corresponding to the Heroine, shrinks herself, as if in anguish. This correspondence with the human behaviour above, is a skilful composition in keeping with the psychological interpretation of Indian painting supported by Sanskrit rhetorics.

The textual description laid down by Bhānudatta runs as follows:

अग्रे अवमत्य पति पश्चात् परितप्ता कलहान्तरिता ।

भर्तुर्यस्य कृते गुह्यं घुरभूद् गोष्ठी कनिष्ठीकृता
धैर्यं कोषघनं गतं सहचरीनीतिः कृता दूरतः ।
निर्मुक्ता तृणवत् त्रया पङ्क्तिता श्रोतस्वन्ती विन्दुवत्
स क्रोधादवधीरितो हतधिया मातर्वल्लोयान् विधिः ॥

Ibid., p. 393

(10) **Abhisārikā**

The last panel in the series depicts the *Abhisārikā* type of a Heroine who, in the embroidery, stands between two trees of a pleasing, yet unusual kind. In front, there are two serpents with a lotus pond showing leaves and flowers still nearer in the foreground. This composition is in entirety a reflex of any corresponding painting of the Kāṅgrā or other Pāhādi schools. The hesitant yet firm footsteps of the *Abhisārikā* looking back in trepidity, with the clouds hovering over head are very scrupulously and skilfully embroidered in appropriate colour composition.

According to *Rasamañjarī*, the *Abhisārikā* is described as follows:

स्वयमभिसरति प्रियमभिसारयति सामिसारिका ।

* * *
दूती विद्युदुपागता सहचरी रात्रिश्चिरस्थाधिनी
देवज्ञो जलदः स्वनेन दिशति प्रस्थानवेलां क्षुमाम् ।
वाचं मांगलिकीं तनोति तिमिरस्तोमोऽपि किल्लीरवे-
र्जातोऽयं दयिताभिसारसमयो मुग्धे विमुञ्चवपाम् ॥

Ibid., p. 407

PLATE X

LOVE SPORTS OF RĀDHĀ AND KṚISHṆA

67 cm. × 102 cm.

National Museum, New Delhi

The *rumāls* from Chambā imbibed the Vaishṇava trend as obtained throughout northern India specially in the States round the Punjab Hills from the 16th century onwards. As in the paintings, so in embroidery, the love-sports of Kṛishṇa or scenes from his life, have, therefore, found their way almost imperceptibly, though unavoidably, in these household handicrafts¹. In the present *rumāl*, Kṛishṇa has been presented in four different situations with Rādhā and her friend (*sakhī*) expressive of different stages of love in union (*sambhoga*). The four panels are arranged symmetrically, with two on top row and the other two on the lower row. The central rectangular space with these four is bounded with two rectilinear floral bands crossing each other at right angles, leaving four corner spaces also filled with floral patterns. The space beyond the band, on all four sides is also filled with symmetrically placed flower and leaf designs, each one in a different colour.

The first panel at upper left shows crowned Kṛishṇa embroidered dark blue, entreating Rādhā with folded hands and two *gopinīs*, one on each side, looking on. Rādhā as *mānini* or offended and unbending, draws her veil by the right hand turning away from Kṛishṇa and seated on a cushioned seat, while Kṛishṇa sits on the ground. This recalls the most appropriate song of Jayadeva in the *Gīta-Govindam* (ed. Nirnayasaragar Press) in its tenth *sarga* with Kṛishṇa entreating Rādhā as follows:

वदसि यदि किञ्चिदपि दन्तरुचिकौमुदी
हरति दरतिमिरमतिघोरम् ।
स्फुरदधरशोधने तव वदनचन्द्रमा
रोचयतु लोचनचकोरम् ॥
प्रिये चाक्षुशीले मुञ्च मयि मानमनिदानम् ।
सपदि मदनाललो दहति मम मानसं
देहि मुखकमलमधुपानम् ॥

—X. 19.1-Dhruva

¹ Cf. Love of Rādhā and Kṛishṇa in *pūva-rāga* embroidered in a *rumāl* preserved in the Lahore Museum—'Some *Rumāls* from Chambā' by Puran Singh, *Rūpan*, October, 1927.



LOVE SPORTS OF RĀDHĀ AND KṚIṢṆA

In the next group of figures, Kṛishṇa stretches his hands to receive Rādhā, as it were, with two *gopinīs*, one on each side, one having a silver-starred *ghāgrā* on. Kṛishṇa here tells Rādhā, —‘I am before you, O slender one, your silence pains me. Sing out to my delight by your sweet words, and beguile me by your sweet looks. Do not disappoint me’; in the words of Jayadeva:

व्यथयति वृथा मोहनं तन्वि प्रपञ्चय पञ्चमं
 नरुणि मधुरालापैस्तापं विनोदय दृष्टिभिः ।
 मुमुक्षि विमुक्षीभावं तावद्विमुञ्च न वञ्च न
 स्वयमतिशयस्निग्धो मुग्धे प्रियोऽहमुपस्थितः ॥

—X. 19.5

The tree represented here is of a characteristic type found largely in Chambā *rumāls* and Chambā paintings. In the first figure in the lower row Kṛishṇa having won over Rādhā holds her in embrace, both seated on the cushioned platform, and two attendants (*gopinīs*), one on either side holding out sweets or betel-leaf from a pot. Jayadeva aptly describes their stage of the love-sport of Rādhā and Kṛishṇa, with the significant rôle of the attendants (*sakhis*). He says:

भजन्यास्तल्पान्तं कृतकपटकण्डूतिपिहित-
 स्मितं याते गेहाद्वहिरवहिताली परिजनं ।
 प्रियास्यं पश्यन्त्याः स्मरपरवशाकूतमुभयं
 सलज्जा लज्जापि व्यगमदिव दूरं मृगदृशः ॥

—XI. 22.9

‘Having occupied a part of the common bed her bashfulness moved away *i.e.*, was given up, though with shyness, having looked at the face of the beloved one (Kṛishṇa)—the face which concealed his smile (of love) by a false scratching ‘of the face’ and which was beautiful through an expression of love, after the friends had stepped out of the room with a caution (to Rādhā)’.

The usual horizontally banded *ghāgrā* of the attendants is typical of Chambā. The composition is rendered colourful by insertion of floral patterns below, and a plantain tree and a pine in distant perspective. Separated by a willow-tree, so favourite of the Kāñgrā and Chambā artists, the last composition shows an attendant (*gopini*) being playfully tied in hand by crowned Kṛishṇa, who is being fanned with a white yak-tail fan (*chāmara*) by another attendant whose pleasing dress, a ‘combination’ in light green, is very deftly embroidered. A figure, apparently of Rādhā, in red, with an *oḍhni* in yellow, and a lotus in her right hand, looks at the fun with an innocent smile.

The entire composition, so colourful in details, is a masterpiece of Chambā embroidery.

PLATE XI

DICE-PLAY WITH THREE FIGURES AT THE CORNERS

66 cm. × 62 cm.

Bhuri Singh Museum, Chambā

This embroidered piece is apparently on a comparatively late type of cloth though the embroidery is in classical Chambā style. Within a floral band with four full-blown flowers at the corners and done in a formal and stylised manner, the design of the *chaupaḍ* is purely geometrical, with three male figures at each of the four corners and a figure of Lakshmi-Nārāyaṇa at the central quadrangle. The figures at the corners, each one in a different colour, reveal the *gaddi* type of conical caps and are greatly animated in their movements. Sets of dice also in variegated colours, are laid before the figures who generally sit on some colourful mats in banded design typical of Chambā. The embroidery shows the typical *Bāgh* design which was used in the *rumāls* exclusively showing patterns (see figs. on p. 5 *ante*). This is characterised by a very thickly stitched embroidery, almost resembling carpets and *Phulkāris* of the Punjab. The three figures at the corners are very symmetrically arranged with pleasing alignment among themselves.

The figure of Nārāyaṇa at the centre has four arms holding as usual, *śaṅkha*, *chakra*, *gadā* and *padma*, and is crowned. Lakshmi, the consort, sits on the lap of Nārāyaṇa, and the lotus-seat on which the Lord is seated is indicated by wavy outlines.



DICE-PLAY WITH THREE FIGURES AT THE CORNERS

PLATE XII

DICE-PLAY WITH TWO FIGURES AT THE CORNERS

67.5 cm. × 66 cm.

Bhuri Singh Museum, Chambā

In Chambā *rumāls*, *chaupaḍ* play occupies a prominent feature and was a great favourite with artists and embroiderers. In paintings, too, the subject had its due share of attention. The design of the *chaupaḍ* in the present *rumāl* deserves special notice and consists of stylised floral patterns. At each corner formed by the sides of the *chaupaḍ*, there are invariably two figures, one male and the other female, in different compositions in the four groups, but invariably with a *hukkā*, smoked either by the lady or the male figure. It is remarkable that while all the male figures probably represent a prince, two of them, the one at the top and the other at the right, have beards. It also seems plausible that all the figures represent one and the same prince with his queen, and in that case, the absence of the beard in the remaining two figures is accountable to the embroiderer's mistake. However, the bearded figure, at least one of them, might represent any of those princes of the Chambā dynasty, who are characterised by the presence of beard. From the late style of the composition, it appears that the bearded figure may in all probability represent Charhat Singh who lived from 1808 A.D. to 1844 A.D.

It is remarkable that each pair of figures in the embroidery represents very aptly any of the different moods in course of the play, sometimes thoughtful and sometimes argumentative.



DICE-PLAY WITH TWO FIGURES AT THE CORNERS

PLATE XIII

MARRIAGE SCENE

94 cm. × 98 cm.

Indian Museum, Calcutta

Scenes of marriage are as favourite with the Chambā embroiderers as scenes of hunting or of mythology. Products of household handicraft, these *rumāls* can claim very reasonably the attention of the embroiderers who happened mostly to be married wives in the family. Reminiscent of the most thrilling experience of life, *viz.*, her own marriage, the house-wife would naturally show a predilection for details in such scenes, which are at the same time, sacred occasions. It is thus that along with the entire paraphernalia of musicians, the riders on horse, elephant and camel, and accessories like beds, presents and the like, we have always the entire group of divinities come down on earth to bless the occasion, represented in the *rumāl*.

The present piece shows in the topmost row of figures, three musicians at left playing cymbals and *raṅasingā*, with two riders at right, one leading a camel and the other a horse, both trotting ahead. At left in the second row, is a *mahout* on an elephant with two empty seats, each enshrined and canopied with a crested dome on each, probably signifying the seats for the bridegroom and his associate who had already arrived at the bride's house and is shown seated at the ceremony. The elephant is unfinished. Preceding the elephant-rider is a musician playing on the long *kaṛṇāl*. At right in the same row is a lampstand, a few brass utensils, together with a bedstead with accessories gifted at the marriage.

Further below, a pair of males probably representing the bride's or the groom's relations, while correspondingly at right, there are two milk-pots, a cow and a playful calf, all accessories to the rituals at the ceremony.

At the centre is the marriage pavilion showing parrots perching on it at every vantage point including the surmounting silver pot (*kalāśa*). At the ground level of this, from left are the deities, Gaṇeśa, Śiva and Brahmā, followed at the lower row by personified figures of Chandra and Sūrya with an eight-armed Durgā (Devī) on lotus. The latter goddess, it must be remembered, in this sitting posture is a great



MARRIAGE SCENE

favourite of the people in the northern Himālayas, including Chambā. Immediately beside the deities is a male figure in folded hands, who in all probability is the high priest (or may be the father of the bride), facing whom, the groom, richly bedecked specially with a *mukuta*, is closely followed by the shy and veiled bride, both seated on *darbhāsana* (seat of sacred grass). At the right, a group of four ladies, the first one fanning the bridal pair with a fan of peacock-feathers, which is almost lost in the embroidery, the second one holding a pot of offering, the third playing on a drum, and the fourth holding an indistinct object in her left hand, probably an winnowing basket used in the ritual. Another group of five ladies is also depicted in a lower row, consisting of one attending to the deities, another pointing to something with a raised hand, still another holding a silvery bowl of offerings, the fourth, a musician, playing on the *tānpurā*, the fifth, again, flying an indistinct object in her right hand. At left, in the still lower row of deities is depicted Rāma with a quiver of arrows and a bow, Nārada playing on the *Vīṇā* and winged Garuḍa with folded hands. At right, at the lowermost row is a pair of horsemen leading two caparisoned horses, apparently meant for the members of the groom's party, who arrived on these horses.

Beyond an immediate rectangular band of flowery scrolls crossing each other at the corners, there is a thick band showing figures each separated by a willow tree or a plantain tree,—the two most favourite with the Chambā embroiderers,—in variegated colours and with silver thread interspersed. At the bottom row, from the left the first figure is a lady with her pet parrot in hand, while the three others are standing in simple poses, though with colourful dress, including silver banded *ghāgrās*. At right row, the first one is a male figure facing whom is a lady, both separated by a plantain tree. Each pair of figures is separated by a willow tree, here as in the previous case, and the other pair in this row consists of two ladies appearing as approaching each other though separated by a plantain tree in different colourful leaves. In the top row, there are four ladies similarly placed with different colourful dresses, specially showing banded *ghāgrā* with horizontal and vertical bands in different cases, sometimes with silver lines. The last figure in this row carries a flower and faces the plantain tree which shows hanging flowers and a few plantains. The most interesting, perhaps, is the last row at the left in which the final pair shows crowned Kṛishṇa with the flute and probably Rādhā beyond the plantain tree in flowers which separate them. In the other pair, one of the ladies turns towards the other lady though touching the willow tree standing by her side.

The entire scene is bounded by a further rectangular band of small floral scroll which contains flowers in silver at regular intervals.

PLATE XIV

PATTERNS

48 cm. × 49.5 cm.

Indian Museum, Calcutta

Simple patterns have a great popularity with the Chambā embroiderers. As noted elsewhere (see p. 5 *ante*), this is due to the fact that several kinds of embroidered cloth from neighbouring regions developed a distinctive style of embroidery giving rise to distinctive patterns. Here is an instance how technique helps to bring about patterns. Similar to *phulkāri*, these patterns are best brought into being in a kind of thick embroidery. In this, even petals of flowers are thickly embroidered into quarters of rectangles or are otherwise segmented into stylised forms bound together by a central dot or a small diamond. In these, as in *phulkāri*, there is a strong bias for rectangles and right lines. The colours are invariably bright, like red, orange, yellow and sometimes also deep blue or deep green.



PATTERNS

PLATE XV

PATTERNS

74 cm. × 74 cm.

Indian Museum, Calcutta

In patterns sometimes a more decorative and delicate form than the diamond-shaped units as in *phulkāri*, is discernible specially where flowers and floral compositions are the main subject-matter. In the present composition floral bunches fill the corners, with the same patterns in almost the same colours, which is really something unusual in the embroideries of Chambā, which are noted for their brightness and their variety in colours. Nevertheless, the zig-zag patterns in the bands crossing each other at right angles recall the *Bāgh* design from Hazara Distt. (see p. 5 *ante*). In fact, the floral petals are slightly modified form of the individual half-blocks embroidered in the present *rumāl*. The floating composition and the subdued colours have lyrical effects of an abiding nature.



PLATE XVI

HUNTING SCENE

80 cm. × 81·5 cm.

Indian Museum, Calcutta

Hunting by an individual, or with limited number of hunters and animals, is a common subject with the Chambā embroiderers. The present piece, however, is remarkable for its variety of chased animals and also the wealth of accessories of a hunting expedition. It is also remarkable for its variegated colours for the animals as also for the wide range of patterns for the dresses of the hunting men. The different weapons used in the expedition like the muzzle-gun, the sword and the shield, the spear, the bow and arrow, and the noose,—are all meant to bring about an effect of realism to an expedition of this kind undertaken in the early or late 19th century A.D. The animals, either in flight or in the attitude of counter-attacks, have been depicted in a very lively way. The consternated timid deer, the obdurate wild boar attacked by the hounds, and the rebounding spotted tiger are all drawn and embroidered in a manner most vivid and life-like. In different poses of hurling the weapons, the hunters in their variegated colours of dresses in banded design present a greatly animated picture of an expedition. The interspersed floral shrubs and a few birds here and there lend additional aid to the naturalness and otherwise quiet nature of the woods, while the different areas of undulated wasteland indicated by the different heights and lines of the ridges half-hiding the trees and shrubs—are drawn and embroidered in a most realistic way. The corners are filled with stylised floral patterns in different colours, and the whole composition is framed by a rectangular outer border formed by a running scroll of flowers and leaves.



HUNTING SCENE

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