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**Gushing Mercury, Fleeing Maiden: A Rasaśāstra Motif
in Mughal Painting**

SREERAMULA RAJESWARA SARMA, YADUENDRA SAHAI

1.1. Liquid and at the same time heavy, or solid and yet volatile, mercury (*rasa, pārada*) has excited the imagination of mankind in most cultures and times. In India, several amazing qualities were attributed to it. Brahmagupta and other astronomers thought that mercury can overcome inertia and produce perpetual motion.¹ Writers on engineering like Bhoja saw in it the means for overcoming gravity and of enabling ships to fly in the skies.² Alchemists tried to transmute base metals into gold with its help, and doctors of medicine imagined that it would protect the human body from decay.

1.2. The last two notions coalesced into a system of belief called *Rasa-vāda*. In the fourteenth century, Mādhava Vidyāraṇya summarised this system under the name *Raseśvara-vāda*.³ The followers of this school believed that liberation was possible within this life (*jīvanmukti*), that the first step on the path of liberation was the preservation of the physical body, and that the body could be preserved by the employment of mercury.

Mādhava stresses that the prime concern of the Rasaśāstra is not just alchemical or metallurgical (*Dhātu-vāda*). The ultimate aim of the transmutation of the body is liberation. Thus it is said in the Rasārṇava: 'Just as mercury is applied to the [base] metal, so it should be applied to the gross body, for its effect, O Goddess, is the same on the body and on the metal. Let it be first tested on

¹ Brahmagupta, *Brāhmasphuṭasiddhānta*, ed. Sudhakara Dvivedi, Benares 1902, 22.53-54. See also Sreeramula Rajeswara Sarma, 'Astronomical Instruments in Brahmagupta's Brāhmasphuṭasiddhānta', *Indian Historical Review* 13.1986-87: 163-176, and 'Perpetual Motion Machines and their Design in Ancient India', *Physis. Rivista Internazionale di Storia della Scienza* 29,3.1992: 665-676.

² Bhoja, *Samarāṅgaṇasūtradhāra*, ed. T. Ganapatisastri, rev. Vasudeva Saran Agrawala, Baroda 1966 (Gaekwad's Oriental Series 25), 31.95-100. See also V. Raghavan, *Yantras or Mechanical Contrivances in Ancient India*, Bangalore 1956 (The Indian Institute of Culture, Transaction 10), pp.24;29.

³ Mādhavācārya, *Sarvadarśanasāṅgraha*, ed. Uma Shankar Sharma, Varanasi 1978, pp.375-390.

the metal and then applied to the body.⁴

Thus the *Rasa-vāda* attempts to syncretise gold-making and immortalising the physical body, by postulating that the transmutation of base metals (*loha-vedha*) into gold through the aid of mercury is just the first step towards the transformation of the physical body (*deha-vedha*) into an undecaying entity. The expression *vedha* (from √*vidh* 'pierce') in this context means transmutation or transformation. The successful accomplishment of such transmutation through the aid of mercury (*rasa*) is *rasa-siddhi*, and those who have achieved this miracle are *rasa-siddhas*.

1.3. In one of his epigrams, Bhartṛhari employs this notion at two levels of meaning.

*jayanti te sukṛtino rāsasiddhāḥ kavīśvarāḥ
nāsti yeṣāṃ yaśāḥkāye jarāmaraṇajanmabhīḥ.*⁵

At one level, there are alchemists, who prepare benign mercury compounds (*sukṛtinaḥ*) and by the application of these immortalise their bodies (*rasa-siddha*), and these bodies do not suffer old age or death. At another level, there are master poets, who compose excellent poems (*sukṛtinaḥ*) permeated with aesthetic pleasure (*rasa-siddha*), and who become immortal because the body of their fame suffers neither old age nor death.

1.4. It is difficult to say when and how this belief in the efficacy of mercury originated.⁶ None of the extant texts on *Rasaśāstra*, where this belief is propagated, is earlier than the eleventh or twelfth centuries. But the belief and its practical application are certainly older by several centuries.⁷ From Bhartṛhari's verse just cited, it is obvious that in his

⁴ *Sarvadarśanasāṅgraha*, p. 383: *na ca rasaśāstraṃ dhātuvādārtham eveti mantav-
yam. dehavedhadvārā mukter eva paramaprayojanāt. tad uktam ca rasāṃave: ...
yathā lohe tathā dehe kartavyaḥ sūtakaḥ sadā
samānaṃ kurute devi pratyayaṃ dehalohayoḥ
pūrvaṃ lohe parīkṣeta pāścād dehe prayojayet.*

⁵ D.D. Kosambi (ed), *The Epigrams Attributed to Bhartṛhari*, Bombay 1948 (Singhi Jain Series 23), p.23, no.55.

⁶ For a brief history of this system of medicine, see D.M. Bose *et al.* (ed.), *A Concise History of Science in India*, New Delhi 1971, pp.232f;313-338.

⁷ According to the *Raseśvarasiddhānta*, cited by Mādhava, *op.cit.*, pp.379f., gods like Maheśa, demons like Śukra, sages like Vālakhilya, kings like Someśvara, and [other men like] Govindabagavatpādācārya, Govindanāyaka, Carvaṭi, Kapila, Vyāli, Kāpāli, Kandalāyana and several others had infused their bodies with mercury and attained libe-

times the belief in the immortalising power of mercury was quite widespread, but it is uncertain when this poet lived.

1.5. In Bāṇa's *Harṣacarita*, composed in the first half of the seventh century, there is a long list of the followers of different religious or philosophical systems. Among these are mentioned *kārandhamins*, i.e. people who practise *Dhātu-vāda*.⁸ In his other work *Kādambarī*,⁹ Bāṇa makes a more explicit reference to this system of belief. Here, in a rare pen-portrait, Bāṇa pokes fun at an old South Indian pious fraud (*jarad-draviḍa-dhārmika*¹⁰), who tries, in a bumbling way, all kinds of religious observances and magical practices in order to attain the unattainable but fails miserably in each endeavour. In his wretched ignorance, he concocts a mercury compound, but not quite in the proper manner, and this causes in him a deadly fever instead of immortality (*asamyak-kṛta-rasāyanānīta-kālaḥvareṇa*). The fact that the application of mercury for attaining immortality has become part of the poetic vocabulary in the first half of the seventh century (and much earlier if we place Bhartṛhari in the fifth) shows that by then *Rasa-vāda* must have been quite well known to a larger circle of people.¹¹

2.1. Even so, the belief in the efficacy of mercury needed a mythological justification and there grew the myth concerning the cosmic origin of mercury. This substance with its ambiguous liquid-solid state was associated with Śiva, the ascetic and the eroticist, the destroyer and the progenitor. Mercury, it is said, is Śiva's seed which he discharged

ration while still alive. It is not quite clear why gods like Maheśa needed the application of mercury (it is after all his own seed). But it should be interesting to identify the kings and other historical figures mentioned here. Some of these, like Govindabagavatpādācārya, Carvaṭi/Carpaṭi, Kāpāli and Vyāli/Vyāḍi, are the authors of alchemical texts. Cf. Prafulla Chandra Ray, *History of Chemistry in Ancient and Medieval India*, Calcutta 1956, pp.127f.

⁸ Ed. Śūranāḍ Kuñjan Piḷḷai, Trivandrum 1958 (University of Kerala Sanskrit Series 187), p.379. In the commentary *Marmāvabodhini*, to be found in the same edition, the commentator Raṅganātha explains the word as *kārandhamibhir dhātuvādibhiḥ*. See also Puruṣottamadeva's *Trikāṇḍaśeṣa* 3.235cd: *dhātuvādarate kāśyākāre kārandhami*.

⁹ Ed. M.R. Kale, Delhi ⁴1968, pp.337-340, esp. p.338.

¹⁰ Though the word *dhārmika* literally means a religious person who follows *dharma*, there is an undercurrent of irony in Bāṇa's use of the term here.

¹¹ The attribute *draviḍa* seems to indicate that, in Bāṇa's time, this system of medicine was more prevalent in Southern India, perhaps at Śrīparvata.

into Agni's mouth when the latter disturbed Śiva's union with Pārvatī. Thus the myth of the origin of mercury was appended to a much older myth of the birth of Kumāra-Kārttikeya.

2.2. The original myth, as is well known, occurs first in the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmiki. This text narrates the cosmic union between the primeval couple Śiva and Pārvatī. The union was to produce Kumāra, who would lead the army of the Devas against the Asuras. But the coitus continued for ages and the impatient Devas sent Agni to disturb the amorous couple. The reluctant Agni went there disguised as a pigeon but Śiva recognised him and terminated the coitus. However, he could not withhold the seed in himself and discharged it into Agni's mouth. The seed possessed such awesome refulgence that none could bear it for long. Agni dropped it into the River Gaṅgā, the latter deposited it in a clump of reeds, and finally Kārttikeya arose from this terrible seed.¹²

2.3. But already in this version, the myth of the birth of Kumāra is contaminated with another concerning the origin of metals. The *Rāmāyaṇa* goes on to say that, on contact with the earth, this seed also produced gold (*kāñcana*), silver (*hiranya*¹³), copper (*tāmra*), iron (*kārṣṇāyasa*), tin (*trapu*), lead (*śisaka*) and all kinds of minerals (*dhātu*).¹⁴

3.1. It may be noted that mercury is not mentioned in this earliest version of the myth of the origin of metals. At a later period when Rasaśāstra took shape, the cosmogonic myth was modified to include

¹² Critical edition, *Bālakāṇḍa*, ed. G.K. Bhat, Baroda 1960, 1.35-36. The *Mahābhārata* also narrates almost the same version, but the context is the efficacy of the gift of gold. Cf. the critical edition, *Anuśāsanaparvan*, ed. R.N. Dandekar, Poona 1966, 13.83.52-85.58.

¹³ On this ancient name for silver see e.g. Wilhelm Rau, *Metalle und Metallgeräte im vedischen Indien*, Mainz/Wiesbaden 1974 (Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, Mainz. Abhandlungen der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse 1973,8) pp.18f., J. Gonda, *The Functions and Significance of Gold in the Veda*, Leiden etc. 1991 (Orientalia Rheno-Traiectina 37), pp.63ff., and Harry Falk, 'Silver, Lead and Zinc in Early Indian Literature', *South Asian Studies* 7.1991: 111-117 (see p.111).

¹⁴ *Rāmāyaṇa*, 1.36.18-20:

yad asyā nirgataṃ tasmāt taptajāmbūnadaprabham
kāñcanaṃ dharaniṃ prāptaṃ hiranyam amalāṃ śubham.
tāmraṃ kārṣṇāyasaṃ caiva taikṣṇyād evābhijāyata
malaṃ tasyābhavat tatra trapu śisakam eva ca.
tad etad dharaniṃ prāpya nānā dhātū avaradhata.

mercury. According to this new version, after Kārttikeya was born from Śiva's semen, some part of this still remained.¹⁵ This residual semen became mecury.¹⁶ It split into four (or five) parts and entered the earth at four (or five) different places, boring holes each one hundred yojanas long. These are known as the mercury wells (*rasa-kūpa*).¹⁷

3.2. Since mercury resulted from the union of the primeval couple Śiva and Pārvatī, they were made the presiding deities of the Rasaśāstra, but usually under the names Hara and Gaurī. Hara teaches Rasaśāstra to Gaurī and in this process narrates the origin of mercury to her.

3.3. The myth of the origin of mercury from Śiva's seed was probably narrated for the first time in Govindabhagavatpāda's *Rasaḥṛdaya* in the eleventh century. This was followed by the *Rasāmava* in the twelfth,¹⁸ and by several other texts in the succeeding centuries. The *Rasaratnasamuccaya* of Pseudo-Vāgbhaṭa, for example, relates the story as follows:¹⁹

'On this mountain [Himālaya], there took place the union between Śiva and Pārvatī, when out of love each one wanted to vanquish the other [in sexual combat], and this awesome intercourse caused disturbances in all the three worlds.

'The gods, wishing that a son be born to Śiva and Pārvatī to destroy the demon Tāraka, sent Agni to interrupt their union.

'Assuming the form of a pigeon,²⁰ Agni entered the cave in

¹⁵ Or, as the somewhat later text *Ānandakanda* avers, Śiva's seed divided itself into two equal parts. One half generated Skanda and the other became mercury and entered the earth at five different places. Cf. *Ānandakanda*, Vol.I: Sanskrit text, Tanjore 1952 (Tanjore Saraswati Mahal Series 15; Madras Government Oriental Series 59), 1.1.14-15.

¹⁶ That is why, except *rasa* and *pārada*, nearly all other Sanskrit terms denoting mercury literally mean Śiva's seed or semen.

¹⁷ Note that the seed seeks to enter a female body and that the earth is a female. Note also that both the earth and the female may be called *ṣetra*.

¹⁸ On the *Rasāmava*, see especially David Gordon White, 'Why Gurus are Heavy', *Numen. International Review for the History of Religions* 31, 1.1984: 40-73.

¹⁹ Vāgbhaṭa, *Rasaratnasamuccaya*, ed. Jivarāma Kālidāsa Vaidyārāja, Bombay V.S. 1965, 1.1.61-68.

²⁰ Traditionally, cooing pigeons outside the bedroom are supposed to be erotically stimulating. Cf. Someśvara's *Mānasollāsa*, ed. G.K. Shrigondekar, Vol. II, Baroda 1939

the Himālaya and watched their intercourse, in a manner that was not quite bird-like.

Śiva recognised that this was not a bird but Agni. Ashamed of being watched by Agni, he withdrew from the union but his seed (*çaramo dhātuḥ*²¹) was ejaculated. Gathering it into his hand, Śiva threw the seed into Agni's mouth, but it fell into the River Gaṅgā. Scorched by it, the river deposited the seed outside [in a clump of reeds].

'From its impurities (*malādhāna*), there arose minerals (*dhātu*) that can grant superhuman abilities (*siddhi*).

'When [some drops of] the semen fell on the earth from Agni's mouth, then five²² wells sprang up all around. Each of these was one hundred yojanas deep. Since then the semen that lay in these five wells has become five-fold [mercury].

'Thus this semen of Śambhu became five-fold: *rasa*, *rasendra*, *sūta*, *pārada*, and *miśraka*, each differing from the other on account of its location (*kṣetra*).'

4.1. The story does not end here. Some texts extend it further and state that this active male principle of Śiva does not lie dormant in the earth's womb but is constantly on the look-out for a human womb for fructification. Therefore, if a young maiden²³ peeps into a mercury well — having taken the purificatory bath after her first menses and thus in the right physical state for receiving the male seed for conception — the mercury swells up from the well and attempts to enter her womb. But since no woman can bear this terrible seed of Śiva, she must flee from the well astride a swift horse. The mercury comes out of the well and pursues her for one yojana and then, its force spent, withdraws into the well.

(Gaekwad's Oriental Series 84), p.264 (= 4.11.1296f.):

*ratikāle pi te dhāryā rāgavardhanahetave
galaghūrṇitanādena harṣam utpādayanti hi.*

²¹ According to Indian medical theory, semen is the last (here: *carama*) of the seven basic elements (*dhātu*) of the body derived from food.

²² The number of mercury wells varies from text to text: one, four, or five.

²³ All the texts stress that she must be a virgin (*kumārī*, *kumārikā*). See the Appendix.

4.2. On this backward journey the mercury is very weak. Hence, if there are small pits or depressions in the ground around the well, the mercury that has fallen into them cannot rise up and go back into the well. Such mercury can be collected by human beings and consumed after proper treatment.²⁴ The implication is that one can easily collect mercury by digging pits around the mercury well and by causing the mercury to rise and fall into these pits, with the bait of a young woman. One must, of course, first find these mythical wells.

4.3. This curious lore of extracting mercury is narrated in the following texts, which were composed between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries: (i) *Rasendracūḍāmaṇi* of Somadeva, (ii) *Rasaratnasamuccaya* of Pseudo-Vāgbhaṭa, (iii) *Rasaprakāśasudhākara* of Yaśodhara, and (iv) *Dhātūpatti* of Ṭhakkura Pherū. Again, the *Śivatattvaratnākara* repeats it in the eighteenth century.²⁵

5. Interestingly enough, this motif of mercury issuing forth from a well at the sight of a pretty young maiden attracted the attention of Mughal painters in the eighteenth century. It is depicted in at least four Mughal miniature paintings which have not received scholarly attention so far.

5.1. One of these miniatures (Fig.1) belongs to the Maharaja Sawai Mansingh II Museum and Library, City Palace, Jaipur.²⁶ The painting shows, in the right foreground, a well with a low stone wall around it. From this well, the mercury is coming out like a white cloud and is chasing a young lady on horseback who occupies the left foreground. The fleeing beauty, however, is looking backwards at the mercury and beckoning it with an outstretched hand to follow her. At the top left,

²⁴ There are said to be eighteen such treatments or *saṃskāras*, which are enumerated in the *Sarvadarśanasaṅgraha*, p.382:

*svedana-mardana-mūrçhāna-sthāpana-pātana-nirodha-niyamās ca
dīpana-gamana-grāsapramāṇam atha jāraṇa-pidhānam.
garbhadruti-bāhyadruti-kṣāraṇa-saṃrāga-sāraṇās caiva
krāmaṇa-vedhau bhakṣaṇam aṣṭādaśadheti rasakarma.*

On these *saṃskāras*, cf. Damodar Joshi, 'Mercury in Indian Medicine', *Studies in History of Medicine* 3.1979: 234-297.

²⁵ The relevant passages are given in the Appendix.

²⁶ The painting is on display. Recognising its theme, the second author of this paper, Mr. Yaduendra Sahai, the Director of the Museum, renamed it the 'Mercury Well'.



Figure 1

three persons are waiting behind some shrubs with wooden or metal pitchers in their hands to collect the mercury. The artist has attempted to mythicise the personae. The young lady on horseback, whom the mercury is chasing, is depicted with a halo around her head, indicating that she is a royal princess or even a divine being. The three men waiting to collect the mercury are, for some curious reason, dressed in European cloaks and hats.²⁷ In the background, there is a highly interesting composition of hillocks, lakes and buildings, with neatly drawn flora and fauna. To judge from the style of composition and the technique of receding background, this painting clearly belongs to the late Mughal school of the eighteenth century.

²⁷ Mughal painters occasionally depicted European or Christian themes but in the present case there is no direct connection with Europeans.

5.2. The second painting (Fig.2) was formerly at the Louvre and is now with the Musée Guimet, Paris. In composition, this one appears to be a mirror image of the previous painting. Here the well is in the left foreground; the mercury is issuing out from it like two white clouds or clumps. The larger cloud is chasing the girl while the smaller one seems to represent the mercury that has fallen into the pit and cannot go back to the well. Here also the lady on horseback is looking backwards at the mercury as if she were inviting it to catch up with her. She occupies the centre of the painting which is filled with a desolate landscape, bordered by impressionistic outlines of shrubbery and architectural elements. Towards the right, in a kind of depression, there are some faintly drawn human figures, obviously waiting to collect the mercury. Perhaps the rough landscape in this monochrome painting more truly represents the elemental forces that are at play.

In his catalogue of the Mughal miniatures at the Louvre, Ivan Stchoukine describes the painting thus: 'Mercury, according to an Indian belief, is not insensitive to beauty. It is enough that a pretty woman passes by its resting place on her steed in a gallop for the metal to come out of the earth and chase her. The painting places the legend in the ambience of a nocturnal landscape, executed by means of an India-ink drawing under a strong European influence. The woman and the horse, however, are painted according to the rules of Indian tradition.' Stchoukine assigns the painting to the second half of the eighteenth century.²⁸

At the back of this painting, there is a cryptic inscription in Persian: *kār-i ustād-i qādīm sīmāb kih az ġā mī-ravad xūb savār*, which may be rendered as follows: 'The work of an old master[.] Quicksilver (i.e. mercury, lit.: silver water) which moves from its place [attracted by] a fair horse-rider.'

Mario Bussagli published this painting, perhaps for the first time, in his work on Indian miniatures, but he misunderstood its theme. He introduced the painting with this remark: 'Mythological scene concerning the personification of the planet Mercury. Provincial Mogul art, second half of the 18th century. Musée Guimet, Paris. The composition is rather exceptional for the provincial Mogul school of miniature painting. The isolated figure in the vast landscape corresponds to a spiritual atti-

²⁸ Ivan Stchoukine, *Les Miniatures indiennes de l'époque des grands Moghols au Musée du Louvre*, Paris 1929, pp.76f. (no. 120).



Figure 2

tude alien to Indian thought.²⁹

Now the painting does indeed depict mercury, but it is the element and not the planet. The verbal identity between the element mercury and the planet Mercury is possible in European languages, but not in Hindu or Muslim conceptions. In the light of the foregoing discussion, there cannot be any doubt that this painting, like the one at Jaipur, depicts the curious lore narrated in the texts of *Rasaśāstra*, of the element mercury rushing out of the well in order to impregnate the fleeing maiden. The identity postulated in the myth and in the paintings is between the element mercury and Śiva's creative energy, but not between the element and the planet, which is impossible on linguistic grounds. There is, of course, also no question of a personification of mercury here, whether of the planet or of the element.³⁰

5.3. A third painting (Fig.3) on this theme was formerly in the collection of Dr. Alice Boner. Its current location is not known. However, a reproduction is available in the archives of the Musée Guimet, Paris. Here the woman horse-rider occupies nearly the entire surface of the painting. Mounted on a white charger, she is looking back at the mercury which appears as a white patch on the left foreground.

5.4. Ivan Stchoukine mentions yet another painting on this theme at the Bodleian Library, Oxford (Douce, *Or.a.2*, fol.12). Apparently it has a longer inscription which describes the theme more explicitly, but it has not been possible for us to view this painting.

5.5. These paintings show that the amusing lore of extracting mercury was quite widely known outside the sphere of the practitioners of

²⁹ Mario Bussagli, *Indian Miniatures*, translated by Raymond Rudorff from the Italian original *La Miniatura Indiana*, New Delhi etc. 1976, painting no. 64, pp.136f.

³⁰ Bussagli's misinterpretation is perpetuated by Dalu Jones who published this painting once again in her article 'Patronage under the Medici and the Mughals: Cultural Parallels and Artistic Exchanges' in a volume edited by her with the title *A Mirror of Princes. The Mughals and the Medici*, Bombay 1987. The painting has not been specifically discussed either in the above-mentioned paper or elsewhere in the volume. In the paper itself, Jones argues, *inter alia*, that the Mughal paintings on allegorical themes were inspired by European models. To illustrate this point, she reproduces on pp.12f. three Mughal paintings, which she considers allegorical in character and thus of European inspiration. One of the three is the painting under discussion with the following caption (obviously borrowed from Bussagli): 'Mythological scene referring to the personification of the planet Mercury; Mughal, 18th century; Paris, Musée Guimet.'



Figure 3

rasa-cikitsā. This lore, it may be recalled, is an extension of the myth of the origin of mercury from the cosmic union between Parvati and Śiva, and this myth formed part of the credo of many heterodox Tantric cults. Stylistically these miniature paintings are attributable to a late phase of the Mughal school of the eighteenth century. Beyond that, we do not know where they were painted, nor in what context. There is, however, no doubt that the artists saw the dramatic possibilities in the motif of tempting the subterranean mercury with the bait of a fair horse-rider, and executed it each in his individual manner.³¹

Appendix

1. *Rasendracūḍāmaṇi* of Somadeva,³² 15.13:
snātām ādyarajasvalām hayagatām prāptām jighṛkṣuś ca tām
so 'py āgacchati yojanam hi paritaḥ pratyeti kūpaṃ punaḥ
tanmārgē kṛtagartake ca bahuśaḥ santiṣṭhate sūtarāḥ
so 'yaṃ tatra nivāsibhiḥ khalu janair evaṃ samāṇīyate.
2. *Rasaratnasamuccaya* of Vāgbhaṭa,³³ 1.1.87-89 (pp.8f.):
prathame rajasi snātām hayārūdhām svalaṅkṛtām
vikṣamānām vadhūm dṛṣṭvā jighṛkṣuḥ kūpago³⁴ rasaḥ.
udgacchati javāt sāpi taṃ dṛṣṭvā yāti vegataḥ
anugacchati tām sūtaḥ sīmānaṃ yojanonmitam.
pratyāyāti tataḥ kūpaṃ vegataḥ śivasambhavaḥ
mārganimitagarteṣu sṭhitam gṛhṇanti pāradam.

³¹ The authors have pleasure in acknowledging the help and advice received from many scholars. Dr. Arion Roşu (Versailles) and Dr. Mira Roy (Calcutta) provided some of the passages cited in the Appendix. Dr. Roşu also went through the whole paper meticulously and made a number of valuable suggestions. Prof. Ahsan Jan Qaisar (Aligarh) drew our attention to the second miniature discussed here. Prof. Nalini Balbir (Paris) helped in obtaining a reproduction of it. Prof. Irfan Habib (Aligarh) translated the Persian inscription on the same painting. Madame Amina Okada, Conservateur au Musée national des arts asiatiques — Guimet, Paris, generously offered advice and material on the last three paintings discussed in this paper. Finally, we are beholden to Prof. Rahul Peter Das, for his infinite patience with the slow progress of this paper and for many helpful suggestions.

³² Ed. Siddhinandana Mishra, Varanasi/Delhi 1984.

³³ Cf. note 19.

³⁴ Printed *kūpako*.

3. *Rasapraṅkāsasudhākara* of Yaśodhara,³⁵ 1.13-16:
himālayāt paścimadigvibhāge girindranāmā ruciro 'sti śailaḥ
tatsannidhāne 'tisuvṛttakūpe sākṣād rasendro nivasaty ayaṃ hi
kumārikā rūpaguṇena yuktā svalaṅkṛtā vāhavare 'dhirūdhā
tatrāgatā kūpaṃ avekṣamānā nivaritā sā mahatā javena.
pradhāvitaḥ sūtavaraś caturṣu kakupsu bhūmau patito hi nūnam.
4. *Dhātūpatti* of Ṭhakkura Pherū,³⁶ 17-19 (pp.40f.):
rasakūva bhaṇamtege taruṇatthi tattha karivi siṅgāraṃ
turayārūḍhaṃ³⁷ jhakkivi apuṭṭhapayarehiṃ nassei.
kūvāo tassa kae pāraṃ ucchalavi dhāvae pacchā
bāhuḍāi dahamakāo puṇovi nivaḍei tatthe va.
jaṃ rahaī niyaṭṭhāne katthava kattheva khaddakhaḍḍhiṃ
tatthāu gahaī sā tiya uppattī pārayassa imaṃ.
5. *Śivatattvaratnākara* of Keḷadi Basava,³⁸ 6.33.45-50 (Vol. II, p.169):
prathamārtavasusnātā surūpā śubhalakṣaṇā
śuddhāmbaṛadharā mālyagandhaliptā subhūṣitā.
uttamāśvasamārūḍhā patisaṅgavivarjitā
abhyarcya gaṇanāthaṃ ca rasendraṃ ca guruṃ tathā.
rasendraṃ īśvaraṃ dhyātvā kūpasya pāraḍaṃ tathā
paśyec chīghraṃ tato gacchet punaḥ pṛṣṭhaṃ na vīkṣayet.
ekayojanamātreṇa kumārī hayasādhanā
tadānīṃ hararetaḥ tu kumārīsaṅghīkṣayā.
kūpamadhyāt samutpatya so 'nudhāvati tāṃ prati
yāvad yojanam āgatyā punaḥ kūpaṃ viśet kṣaṇāt.
paritaḥ kṛtagarteṣu teṣu teṣu ca saṃsthitam³⁹
tāṃ rasendraṃ śucir bhūtvā grhṇīyād rasadeśikāḥ.

³⁵ Ed. Siddhinandana Mishra, Varanasi/Delhi 1983.

³⁶ Ṭhakkura Pherū, *Ratnaparīkṣādi-sapta-grantha-saṅgraha*, ed. Agar Chand Nahata and Bhanwar Lal Nahata, Jodhpur 1961. See also Sreeramula Rajeswara Sarma, *Ṭhakkura Pherū's Rayanaparīkṣā*, Aligarh 1984, pp.10f.

³⁷ Printed *turiyārūḍhaṃ*.

³⁸ Ed. R. Rama Shastri, Vol. II, Mysore 1969 (Oriental Research Institute, Publication 112). In a note on p.163, the editor states that this passage is extracted from the *Rasasiddhāntaśāstra*.

³⁹ Printed *saṃsthitam*.