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Museum—A Mirror of the Glories of the Bygone Era

'What a fitting end to your life's pursuits. You're about to become a permanent addition to this archaeological find. Who knows? In a thousand years, even you may be worth something.'

Raiders of the Lost Ark, 1981

The Italians never had different words for history and story. Maybe, they believe, once the latter is written, the former is seen in the horizon, and one is synonymous to the other—*La storia*. The ever-going narrative(s) of the world stands quiet to the face of the apparent multiple subtexts. And gradually, in almost a silence, finds its space among the memoirs of the world. Mankind decided to name it 'museums'—the Mecca of story-seekers.

Artefacts and invaluable cultural property are of great attraction for the connoisseurs mainly of the West. In fact, these items are so much in demand across the globe that a very strong and organized group of people are engaged in illicit trafficking of antiquities. **According to the Antiquities and Art Treasures (AAT) Act, 1972, export of any antiquities from India is prohibited.** Sale value of antiques in the international market are naturally very high due to their rarity, materials, and antiquity. There are innumerable artefacts strewn at many places in India, uncared and overlooked. Consequently, they are mostly taken away by the antique smugglers.

Every country has its independent act in dealing with the movement and repatriation of antiquarian objects. However, whenever the Indian Government comes to know of such lost objects surfacing, the process of retrieval is activated. We have pacts for such processes with some of the countries. In some cases, they are either handed over free of cost as a goodwill gesture, while in other cases, there are financial negotiations.

There are some international auction houses dealing in such items. Sotheby's and Christie's are the premier destinations dealing in auctions and private sale of contemporary, modern and impressionist, and old master paintings, jewellery, watches, wine, and more. They issue catalogues prior to the proposed auctions, through which India learnt about the proposed auction of Nizam's jewellery—national treasure—and the government got their auction stopped. The auction house



A necklace from the most exquisite jewellery collection of the Nizams of Hyderabad

returned Nizam's jewellery to India after legal formalities and payment of its purchase cost by the auction house. In fact, the caretakers of Nizam's property themselves were involved in selling off these items to the auction house. It was unanticipated and most unfortunate.

Disaster is always sudden, unprecedented, be it natural or man-made. In the recent past, several museums and heritage sites across the globe have suffered due to natural causes as well as destructive human actions. Fire and loot have been the main causes. Man-made disasters are caused either by negligence or with intent—war, riots, vandalism, industrial waste, nuclear explosions, casualness and ignorance about sound infrastructure, use of substandard materials, haphazard civil constructions, poor electrical work, and at last but not the least, actions by the antisocial. It is unfortunate that humankind itself destroys its stories, out of negligence, spite, and what not.

Therefore, one can easily understand the importance of security of antiquities, artefacts, and invaluable cultural treasure from the vagary of nature and man-made disaster. The so-called antique smugglers do get indulged in bribing some security staff and officials as one of their modus operandi in their bid to lay hands on identified objects. Thus, it calls for the highest degree of integrity from the officials, responsible for the safe custody of items of immense antiquarian value. So, one can get an antiquity in their personal possession only if registered by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). This is a mandatory requirement, just as the registration of vehicle and personal weapons. Publicity of such a need through electronic and print media shall be of great value in educating people regarding possession and movement of antiquities.

According to the International Council of Museums, a museum is a not-for-profit institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates, and exhibits, for purposes of study, education, and enjoyment, the tangible and intangible evidence of people and their environment. Museums are repositories of the cultural ethos of a country and showcase art and artefacts from

An interview with Capt. Pran Ranjan Prasad on Museum Security



the earliest of times to the present. In India, while many museums are under the care of the Union Government, others are under respective state governments, registered society, or are privately owned.

There has been a trend of establishing thematic museums by many agencies and individuals, namely Marine, Air Force, and Tata Steel, on various sports and many others, with the sole aim of preserving the items, photographs, documents, and their stories (history) for posterity.

A museum's business doesn't end in collecting materialistic antiques, but lies in curating and preserving the narratives of a bygone era. Reserve collection stores and sculpture sheds too are important to house their collections properly, with cautious supervision. Museums are time machines to travel to a lost narrative—a narrative that evokes generations to come with its promise of stories, overlooked or ignored.

It can well be understood that if any museum collections are damaged or lost, then the objective and purpose of a museum is lost. **So, how do we protect our beloved narratives?**

- **Periodic security audit** to keep security prepositions upgraded all the time.
- **Standard operating procedures** to ensure that the internal operation remains smooth.
- **Well-secured museum building** with enough area, with theft-preventive devices.
- **Proper accession and care** of all the museum objects.
- **Educating people** about the importance of invaluable cultural property through print and electronic media, workshops and awareness programmes, etc.
- **Mock-drills** for sudden possible disaster management.
- **Upgradation and installation** of required state-of-the-art equipment and other security gadgets well in time.
- **Dedicated heritage security force** and effective supervision at all levels.

Capt. Pran Ranjan Prasad

Former Chief Security Officer – Archaeological Survey of India, Fellow of International Security Management (FISM), Author of two books on Safeguarding Heritage and Museum Security, Member of the Committee for drafting 'Comprehensive Security Policy for Museums under Ministry of Culture and ASI'



Didarganj Yakshi (3rd century BC)

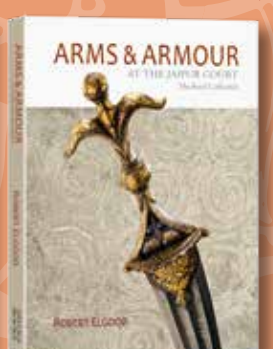
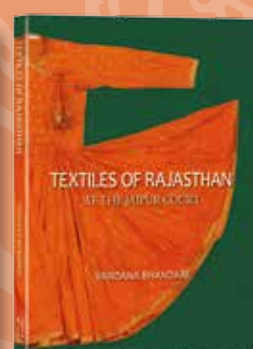
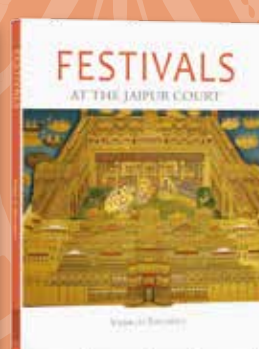
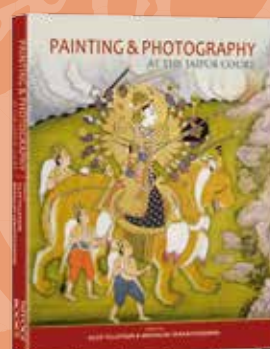
IN REMEMBRANCE...



Scholar, author, and connoisseur of the arts, Kapila Vatsyayan passed away in her Delhi home on 16 September 2020 at the age of 92. She served as a member of parliament and bureaucrat in India, and also served as the founding director of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts.

The world of letters is left poorer by her demise. We extend our condolences to her family and pay tribute to this significant writer, whose work—*Culture of Indigo in Asia: Plant, Product, Power*—we have been honoured to publish.

Some of our books highlighting Museum Collections



Find some more in the following pages...

A journey to the past and a guide to the future ... Museums

The great Chinese philosopher Confucius once said, 'Study the past if you would define the future.' Indeed, in order to exist as a part of a race, as an individual, as a cognizable being, it is imperative to know one's history, whether social, cultural, or political, or all. Since the genesis of humankind, history has been recorded and preserved in works of art, in oral traditions, in texts in the form of poetry and prose, and with the advent of technology, in photographs and documentaries, for the future generations to catch a glimpse of their past, to help realize where they might be headed. And over centuries,

museums have played a key role in educating people about their historical past. Since the first known museum was opened in Alexandria, Egypt, in 3rd century BCE, the museum as an institution has served as the cultural conscience of human civilization.

'Real museums are places where Time is transformed into Space.'

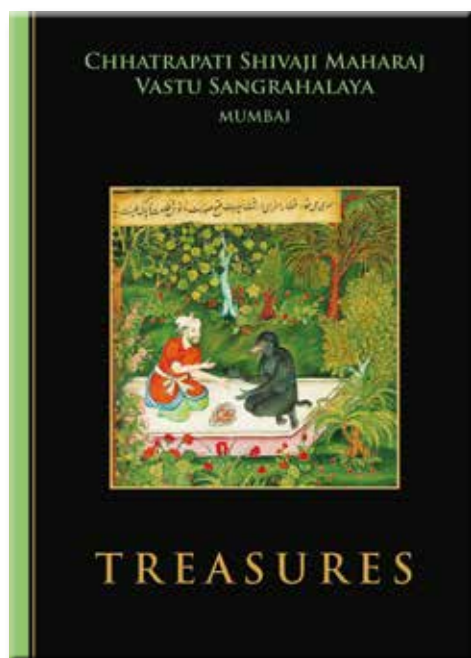
– Orhan Pamuk,
The Museum of Innocence

India, with a rich cultural heritage since time immemorial and a vivid colonial past, is home to a number of magnificent

museums. Amid the most illustrious ones, the Indian Museum, Kolkata, is the oldest and the largest museum in India. The National Museum, Delhi, is one of the most iconic museums in the country and one of its kind, housing artefacts ranging from the pre-historic to the modern age. One of the youngest textile museums in India, the Calico Museum of Textiles, Ahmedabad, is of prime significance in the textile world as of today. While the list of all Indian museums could go on forever, let us give you a tour to some of the most popular museums of the nation through our books...

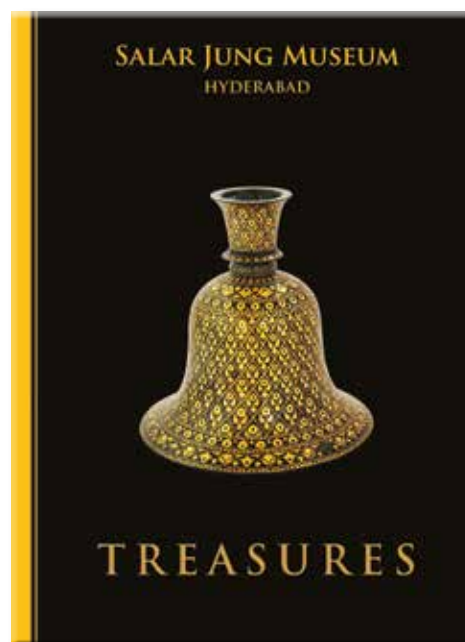
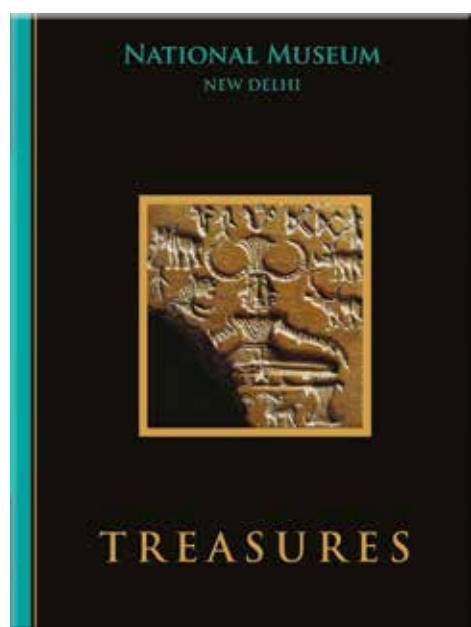


Treasures: *Allahabad Museum, Allahabad* highlights the rich and diversified collection of art, antiquities, paintings, sculpture, coins, ceramics, arms and armour, personalia collections pertaining to Gandhi, Nehru, and literary personalities of Allahabad. The museum has one of the oldest collections, which is of natural history, consisting of the taxidermy collections of animals, birds, reptiles, and mammals including migratory birds.

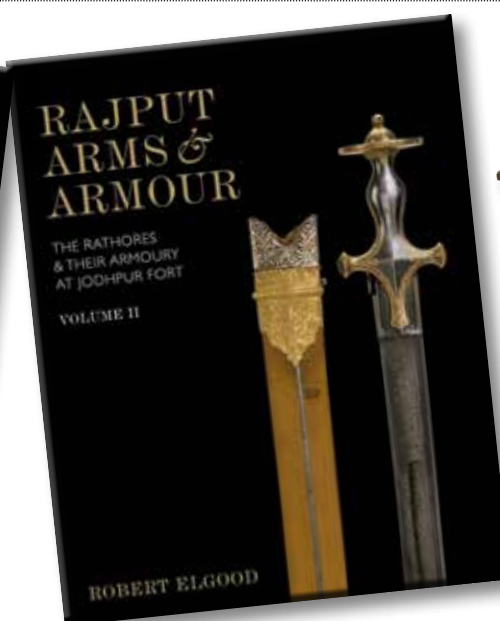
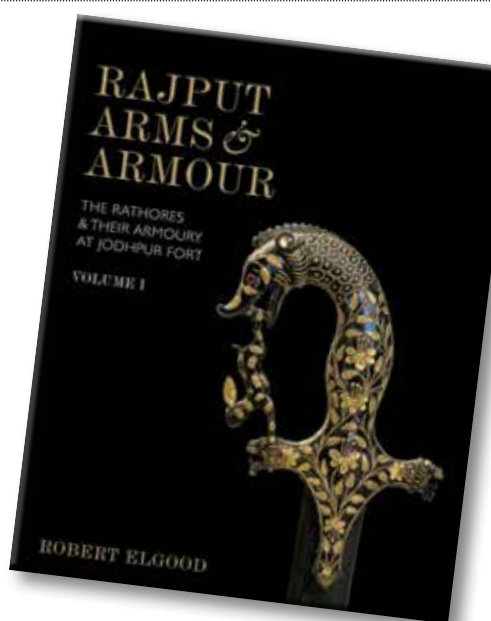
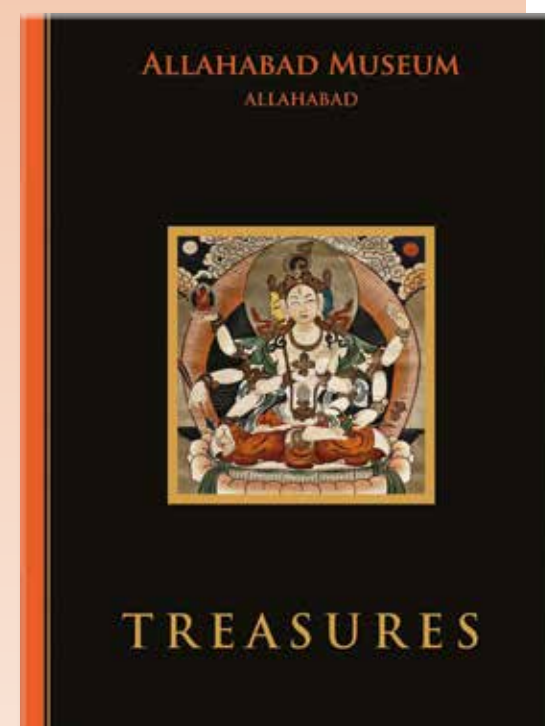


Treasures: *Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai* takes the readers through the collections of what was previously known as the Prince of Wales Museum of Western India. Categorized primarily into three sections: art, archaeology, and natural history, the museum features some rare and fine ancient Indus Valley artefacts that date back to 3,000 BC, as well as relics from the Maurya and Gupta period (320 BC to AD 800). The Indian Miniature Painting Gallery houses art treasures from almost every significant school of miniature painting.

Treasures: *National Museum, Delhi* showcases the treasures of the National Museum, New Delhi, which has over 200,000 works of art representing 5,000 years of Indian art and craftsmanship. Antiquities from Central Asia and pre-Columbian artefacts form the two non-Indian collections in the museum.



Treasures: *Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad* highlights the treasures of the extraordinary personal collection of the Salar Jung family. Presented under five themes, the book focuses on ancient sculptures, exceptional pieces of ceramic, oil and water colour paintings, furniture, and household collections of glass.



While it is true that the Mughals dominated India, the empire they ruled was predominantly Hindu. *Rajput Arms & Armour: The Rathores & their Armoury at Jodhpur Fort*, in two volumes, reclaims the Hindu contribution to the military culture of the Mughal period. With a foreword by the 37th Custodian of Marwar-Jodhpur, His Highness Maharaja Gaj Singhji Sahib Bahadur II of Jodhpur-Marwar, the book showcases the significance of the Rathores in history and the scale of the 556-year-old fort itself.

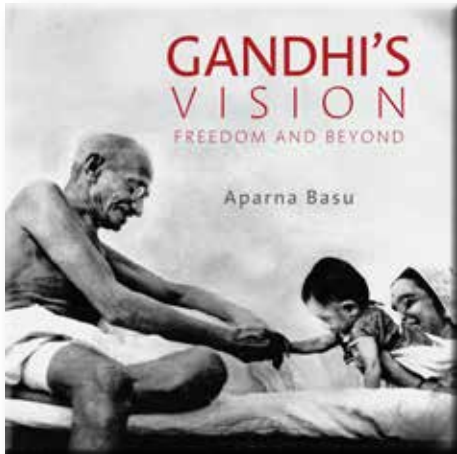


Gandhi's Vision merits attention because it offers glimpses of the man and the nation he led in diverse moods. These images are not rare, but they still resonate on account of their portrayal of the brutalities confronted by the man who uprooted an empire

—The Telegraph

...gives a perfect opportunity to look beyond Gandhi, the icon, and makes a genuine attempt to assimilate the thoughts of an individual who has inspired so many lives

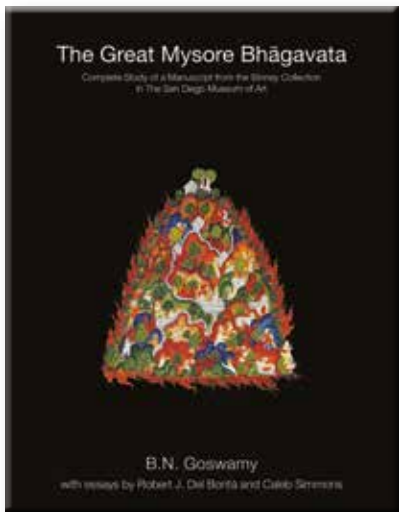
—Millennium Post



Gandhi's Vision: Freedom and Beyond, authored by the Late Prof. Aparna Basu, who was the Chairperson of the National Gandhi Museum, Raj Ghat, was conceptualized from an exhibition organized by the museum and India International Centre, New Delhi, in August 2017, to commemorate 70 years of Indian independence. The book features hand-picked photographs from the museum's collection, portraying various scenes from Gandhi's life with his friends and co-workers in South Africa, and Kasturba, his wife.

What makes the book special is the care which has been taken to bring out the essence of the manuscript and the rich illustrations of the miniature from South India that is rarely seen

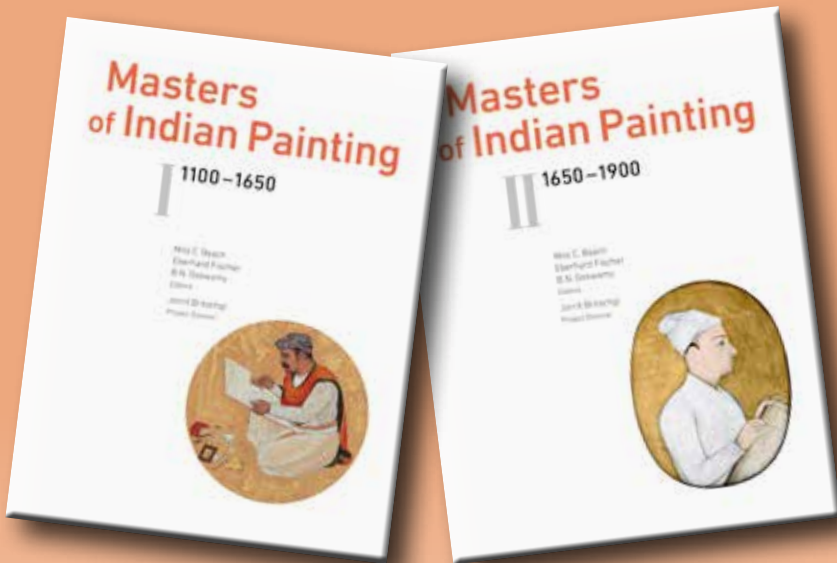
—The Hindu



The Great Mysore Bhāgavata: Complete Study of a Manuscript from the Binney Collection in the San Diego Museum of Art presents the tales of the great and sacred text, the *Bhāgavata Purana* (till the Tenth Book), in a way that at each step, the painters seem to have been aware of the importance of the text itself. The *Purana* they were engaging with has a very special place in the heart of devotees, there being the belief that the *Bhāgavata* 'is equal in status to the Veda'.

Brings together a wealth of cutting-edge scholarship, curatorial innovation and a veritable cornucopia of excellent reproductions that make them a milestone publication in the study of Indian Art

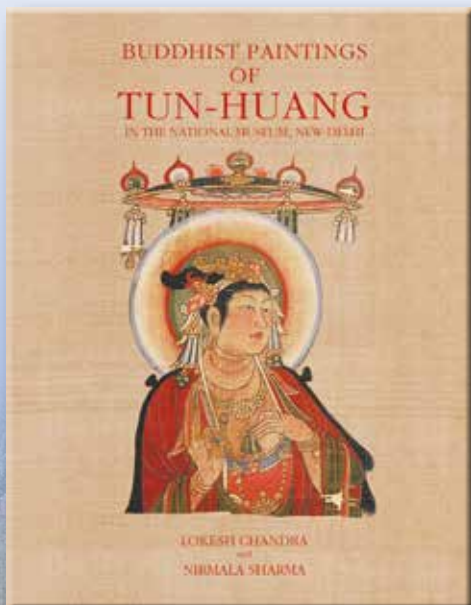
—The Telegraph



Replete with magnificent illustrations, **Masters of Indian Painting**, in two volumes, by the renowned art historian B.N. Goswamy, is an homage to the great artists of India. The project was taken up by Museum Rietberg, focusing on non-Western art, supported by the government of Himachal Pradesh, India. The two-volume set is organized into historical periods with specific bibliographies given to each painter. It follows the grand exhibition, *Pahari Masters—The Court Painters of Northern India*.



Buddhist Paintings of Tun-Huang in the National Museum, New Delhi is the first book to reproduce and describe the paintings from Tun-Huang in this museum, one of the three major repositories of the Tun-Huang paintings—the other two being the British Museum, London, and the Musée Guimet, Paris.

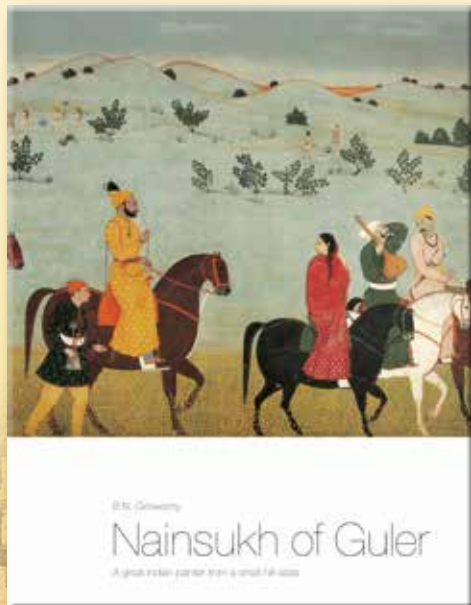


Nainsukh of Guler: A great Indian painter from a small hill-state brings together all of Nainsukh's known or ascribable oeuvre: close to a hundred paintings, painted sketches, and drawings, which contain the first flush of his thoughts. The first ever book to appear on a traditional painter of the past in India, it has attained worldwide notice and the status of a classic.



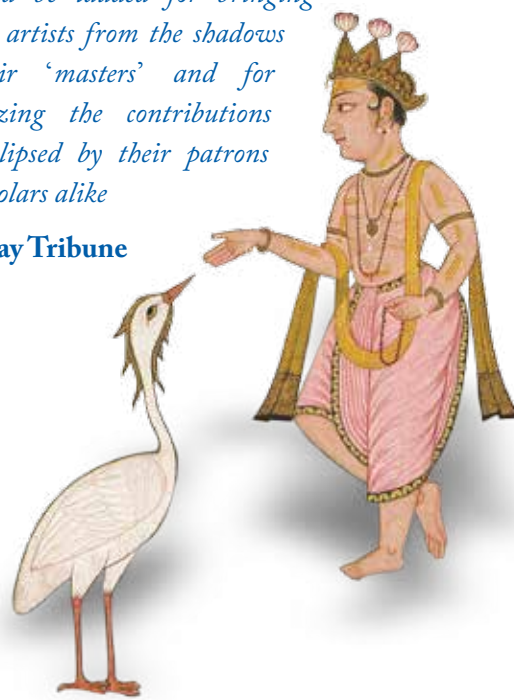
..virtually poetic in its style of writing, the author also delved in deep and traces the journey of one painter, Nainsukh

—Asian Age

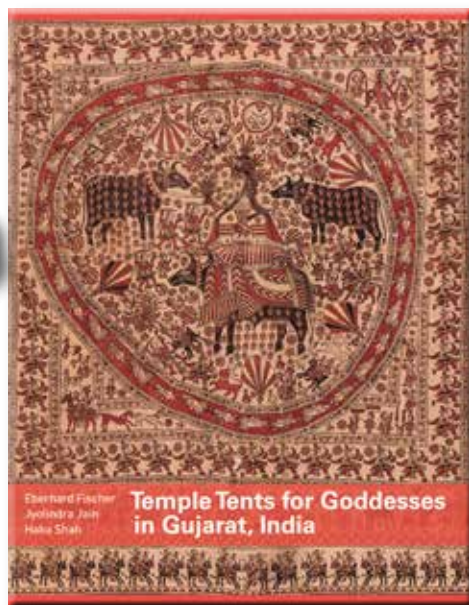
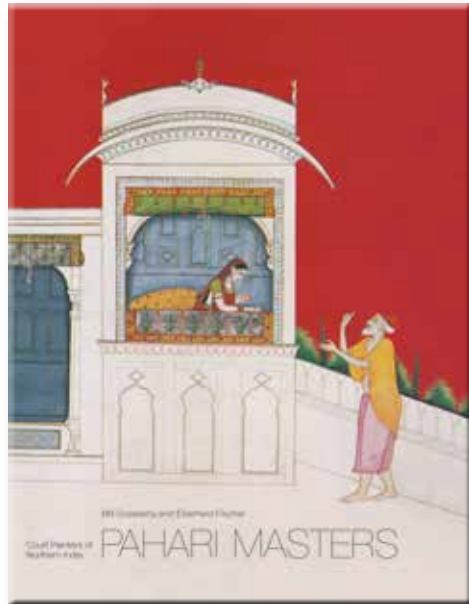


...should be lauded for bringing out the artists from the shadows of their 'masters' and for recognizing the contributions long eclipsed by their patrons and scholars alike

—Sunday Tribune



Pahari Masters—The Court Painters of Northern India, acknowledged as one of the greatest achievements in Indian art, challenges the popular notion of the Pahari painter being an anonymous craftsman plying predetermined strokes. Fourteen Pahari Masters, whose works span three hundred years, have been addressed in this book. The paintings come from twenty museums and private collections.



Conceptually based on an exhibition catalogue (in German), produced by Eberhard Fischer in collaboration with Jyotindra Jain and Haku Shah in 1982 for an exhibition at the Museum Rietberg in Zurich, **Temple Tents for Goddesses in Gujarat, India** is a monograph on printed and painted canopies and awnings used by some underprivileged groups in Gujarat to erect temporary sacred spaces to perform ceremonies invoking goddesses.



साक्षात्कार

कोरोना काल में संग्रहालय

जिस तरह विश्व में घटित अनेकों ऐसी घटनाएँ, जो इतिहास के पन्नों में दर्ज हो जाती हैं, उसी तरह कुछ दुर्लभ चीज़ें भी इतिहास बनकर हमारी धरोहर बन जाती हैं। उनका महत्व और संरक्षण देश-दुनिया के लिए ख़ास बन जाता है। उनके संरक्षण के लिए हमारी सरकार ने संग्रहालयों की व्यवस्था की है, चाहे वह राष्ट्रीय आधुनिक कला संग्रहालय हो या इलाहबाद संग्रहालय, भारतीय संग्रहालय या राष्ट्रीय विज्ञान संग्रहालय एवं दिल्ली के राजघाट स्थित राष्ट्रीय गांधी संग्रहालय आदि। आइए, आज हम संग्रहालयों को समर्पित, अपने इस विशेष परिशिष्ट में, जो ख़ासतौर से संग्रहालय की वास्तविक स्थिति पर रोशनी डालता है, ऐतिहासिक व अद्भुत गांधी संग्रहालय की विशेषताओं के बारे में जानते हैं, यहाँ के निदेशक ए. अन्नामलाई से एक ख़ास बातचीत में:

प्रश्न: आप इसे कितना सही मानते हैं कि विश्व विख्यात व्यक्तित्व महात्मा गांधी के बारे में लोग जितना जानते हैं, उतना संग्रहालय के बारे में नहीं?

उत्तर: आप सही हैं। उसमें कोई दोराय नहीं कि महात्मा गांधी एक प्रसिद्ध नेता थे। उन्होंने देश ही नहीं, विश्व स्तर पर भी बहुत काम किया है। वे कई लोगों के संपर्क में थे और दुनिया भर में चर्चित थे। संग्रहालय तो समुद्र में सिर्फ़ एक बूँद की तरह है। इसलिए आश्चर्य नहीं कि बहुत-से लोग संग्रहालय के बारे में नहीं जानते हैं। लेकिन जब हम अपने कार्यक्रमों के माध्यम से विभिन्न लोगों तक पहुँचते हैं, तो उनकी उत्सुकता देखते ही बनती है। इसके व्यापक प्रचार-प्रसार के लिए हमें आज भी प्रिंट मीडिया, इलेक्ट्रॉनिक मीडिया व सोशल मीडिया जैसे जन-माध्यमों के द्वारा लोगों तक पहुँचने की आवश्यकता है। वही अब हम कर भी रहे हैं।

प्रश्न: महात्मा गांधी से जुड़ी ऐसी कौन-सी चीज़ें हैं यहाँ, जिन्हें लोगों को जानना और देखना चाहिए?

उत्तर: गांधी जी का जीवन ही उनका संदेश है। उस सरल जीवन के पीछे महान ऊर्जा थी। हमारा संग्रहालय उस सरल जीवन का प्रतिबिंब है। उनके द्वारा उपयोग की गई सभी महत्वपूर्ण सामग्री प्रदर्शनी में प्रदर्शित है। विशेष रूप से आखिरी समय में उन्होंने, जो खून से सनी पोशाक पहनी थी, वह बहुत सावधानी से बरसों से संरक्षित है। हर वस्तु के पीछे एक कहानी होती है। हम गांधी द्वारा प्रयुक्त इन सामग्रियों के माध्यम से उनकी कहानी बताने की कोशिश करते हैं। इससे गांधी जी के साथ दर्शकों का एक भावनात्मक बंधन जुड़ने की संभावना बनती है। यहाँ अनेक दुर्लभ वस्तुएँ हैं।

इसी तरह हमारा दूसरी सेक्शन—फोटो सेक्शन है, जहाँ गांधी जी की करीब दस हज़ार तस्वीरें हैं। गांधी जी की पांडुलिपियाँ व दुर्लभ वस्तुएँ हमारी लाइब्रेरी



राष्ट्रीय गांधी संग्रहालय

में हैं। इसलिए आगंतुक प्रदर्शनी के अलावा, फोटो सेक्शन, लाइब्रेरी व गांधी साहित्य केंद्र पर भी जा सकते हैं। यहाँ गांधी जी के बारे में बहुत-सी दुर्लभ जानकारी प्राप्त करने का भी अवसर मिलता है।

प्रश्न: कोरोना के वातावरण में क्या गांधी जयंती के अवसर पर कुछ विशेष आयोजन किए जाने के बारे में विचार है?

उत्तर: यद्यपि विभिन्न क्षेत्र कोरोना से प्रभावित हुए हैं, पर्यटन को सबसे अधिक आघात पहुँचा है। विभिन्न राज्यों और विदेशों से लोग हमारे संग्रहालय में आते हैं। लेकिन वर्तमान में यह स्थिति नहीं है। स्कूल और कॉलेज बंद होने के कारण गांधी जयंती विशेष कार्यक्रम एक अलग प्रारूप में बनाया जाना चाहिए। इसके लिए हम प्रयासरत हैं। ऐसे दौर में संग्रहालय में सभी को एकसाथ लाना संभव नहीं है, इसके लिए ऑनलाइन कार्यक्रम आयोजित करने की योजना बना रहे हैं, जहाँ छात्र और अन्य लोगों से रू-ब-रू हो सकते हैं।

प्रश्न: आज जिस तरह आधुनिक तकनीक का विकास हो रहा है, संग्रहालय के विकास को लेकर सरकार से आपकी क्या अपेक्षाएँ हैं?

उत्तर: गांधी जी हमेशा जनता के लिए हैं। वह किसी सरकार से संबंधित नहीं हैं। इसलिए वर्तमान स्थिति को ध्यान में रखते हुए आधुनिक तकनीक और गांधीवादी विचार के विकास के साथ, हम कई विशेषज्ञों को अपने साथ जोड़ने का सोच रहे हैं, ताकि अधिक से अधिक लोग प्रदर्शनियों का आनंद लाभ ले सकें। कुछ प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थानों तथा गूगल जैसी कंपनियों ने हमारे साथ काम करने के लिए सहमति व्यक्त की है। पैसों से ज़्यादा जनता का सहयोग मुख्य है। हमें भरोसा है, वह हमें मिलेगा और हमारी उपलब्धि अधिक होगी।

वेदना गुप्ता

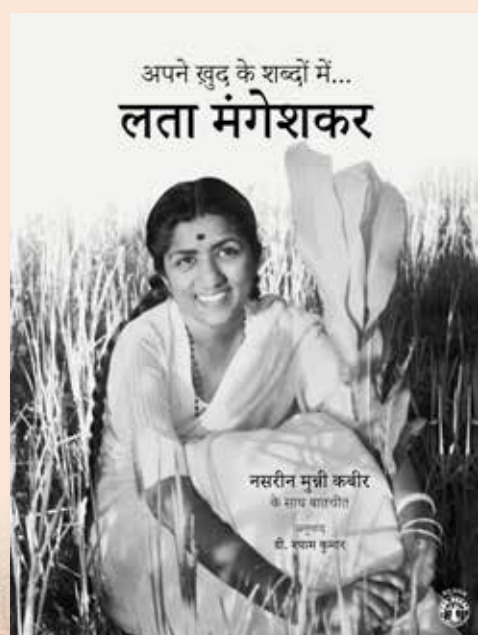


अपने खुद के शब्दों में...लता मंगेशकर

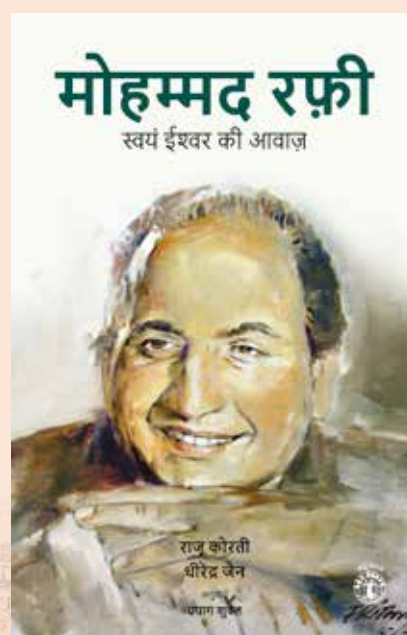
लेखक: नसरीन मुन्नी कबीर

वर्ष 1949 में लता के द्वारा गाया गया गाना, 'आएगा आनेवाला' जिसे फ़िल्म महल के लिए फ़िल्माया गया था, इस गाने ने लता की अद्भुत गायन कला को एक विशेष परिचय दिया; और उन्हें लोगों ने अपनी कल्पनाओं में जगह दी। बारंबार याद किए जाने वाले इस शाश्वत गीत ने, अद्भुत गायन शैली, विशुद्ध आवाज़ और शब्दों पर पकड़ की खूबसूरती की वजह से श्रोताओं के बीच रातों-रात अपना जादू बिखेर दिया। लता मंगेशकर, दुनिया के किसी भी गायक से ज़्यादा गाने वाली गायिका के रूप में प्रसिद्धि के शीर्ष पर, विराजमान होने के बावजूद, एक नितांत निजी इंसान हैं, जिन्होंने तड़क-भड़क और चकाचौंध से हमेशा ही दूरी बनाए रखी है।

अपने खुद के शब्दों में...लता मंगेशकर, लता मंगेशकर और नसरीन मुन्नी कबीर के बीच, दिलचस्प बातचीत की वृहद श्रृंखला है, जो भारत की सबसे ज़्यादा प्रतिभासंपन्न गायिका के जीवन के तमाम पहलुओं से परिचय कराती है, जिनकी आवाज़ ने, असंख्य लोगों के दिलों में अपनी जगह बनाई हुई है।



नई पुस्तकें

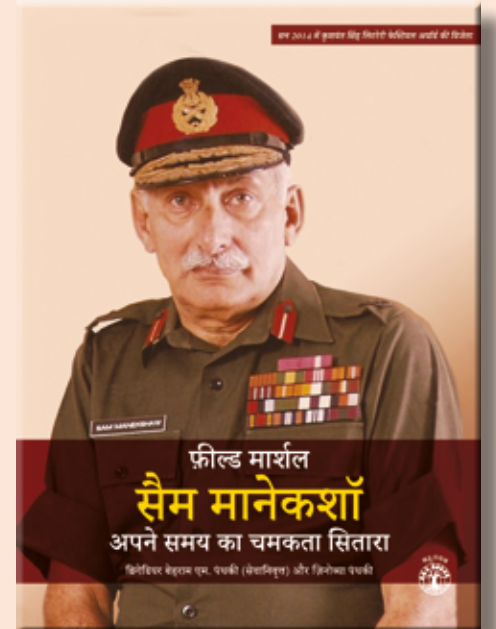


मोहम्मद रफ़ी स्वयं ईश्वर की आवाज़

लेखक: राजू कोरती, धीरेंद्र जैन

मोहम्मद रफ़ी एक ऐसी शख्सियत है, जिनकी जगह पिछले चार दशकों से 'नंबर वन' ही है। उनकी जगह कोई नहीं ले सकता। ऐसे महान गायक की लंबी संगीत यात्रा का वर्णन करने के लिए मानो शब्द भी कम पड़ जाते हैं। ऐसी अभूतपूर्व ख्याति थी, उस विरले गायक की। वास्तव में रफ़ी कई सितारों से बड़े थे, जिन्होंने उनकी सुनहरी, सुरीली आवाज़ के साथ होंठ हिलाए। रफ़ी के लिए उनका मेहनती अंदाज़ और आवाज़ का हुनर ही मानो सब कुछ था; और इसी के दम पर मुंबई की इस व्यावसायिक नगरी में अपनी ख़ास जगह बनाई। यही वजह है कि रफ़ी के गुज़र जाने के इतने वर्षों बाद भी उनकी लोकप्रियता कुछ कम नहीं हुई है।

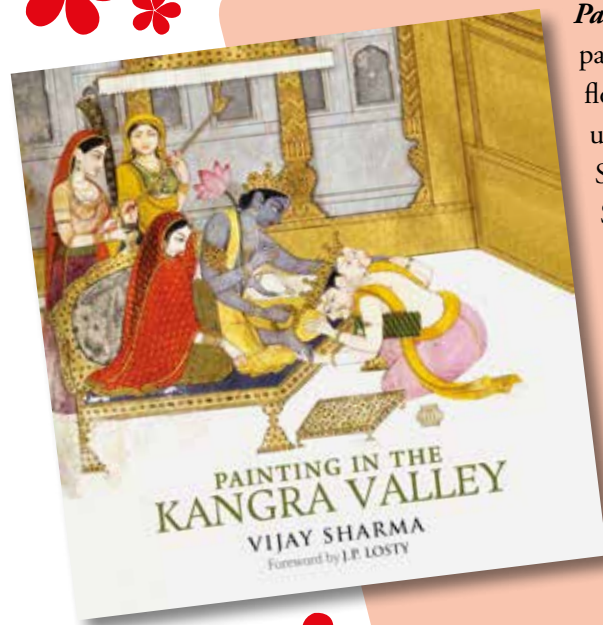
इस पुस्तक में गहन शोध के बाद उन करीब 7000 गीतों का वर्णन है, जो रफ़ी ने देश-विदेश में प्रस्तुत किए। इनमें से लेखकों ने अधिकांश को एकसाथ जोड़ने की कोशिश की है और बेहद रोचक ढंग से हर अध्याय में उसे सिलसिलेवार रखने का प्रयास किया है। हर एक घटना असाधारण लोककथा के समान कहानी में अपना योगदान देती है और आगे बढ़ती है।



फ़्रील्ड मार्शल सैम मानेकशॉ 1969 से 1973 तक भारतीय सेना के अध्यक्ष रहे। यह किताब सैम के जीवन, व्यवहार की विशेषताओं, विनोदप्रियता, नैतिक एवं पेशेवर साहस और उन रहस्यों को चित्रित करती है, जिन्होंने उनके व्यक्तित्व को इस प्रकार गढ़ा।

घटनाओं से भरी यह किताब पढ़ने में आसान है, क्योंकि यह उनके बचपन से लेकर कीर्ति के शिखर तक पाठक को साथ लेकर चलती है। एक व्यक्तिगत जीवन गाथा के साथ राजनीतिक ताने-बाने को ऐसे बुना गया है, जो इस बात पर ज़ोर देता है कि कैसे एक बेहतरीन सैन्य रणनीतिकार ने भारतीय उपमहाद्वीप का नक्शा ही बदल दिया। यह किताब सैम के जीवन की विशिष्ट उपलब्धियों का वर्णन करती है।



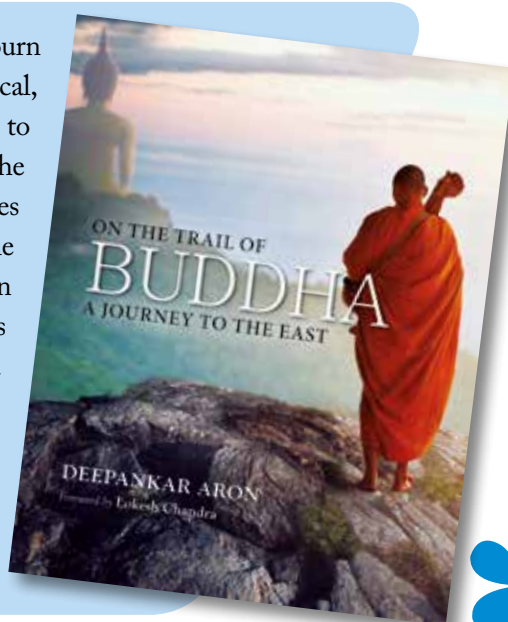


Painting in the Kangra Valley presents the painting styles of Guler and Kangra, which flourished in the 18th and 19th centuries, under the royal patronages of Raja Dalip Singh (1695–1741) of Guler and Maharaja Sansar Chand (1776–1823). Influenced by the Bhakti movement, the artists developed a preference for Krishna as a theme and the sentiment of love as the main subject of the Guler-Kangra paintings. Vijay Sharma's **analytical approach gives new insights into the origin and development of the Guler school and the marked influence of later Mughal painting on the style of Manak and Nainsukh.**

A significant read for researchers as well as connoisseurs.

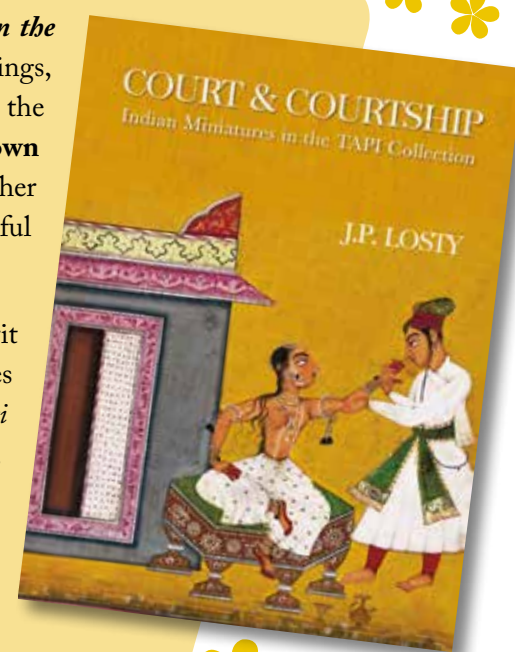


On the Trail of Buddha is a unique sojourn in search of the spiritual, philosophical, and cultural linkages that bind India to the East Asian civilizations. From the wandering monks of Asia to the temples and monasteries they visited; from the statues and frescoes in grottoes to those in the museums; from the diverse ethnicities of the people to their common gods and goddesses—the book explores ‘ancient India’, beautifully preserved in the traditions, art, and architecture of China, as also in Mongolia, Korea, and Japan, to where it spread from China.

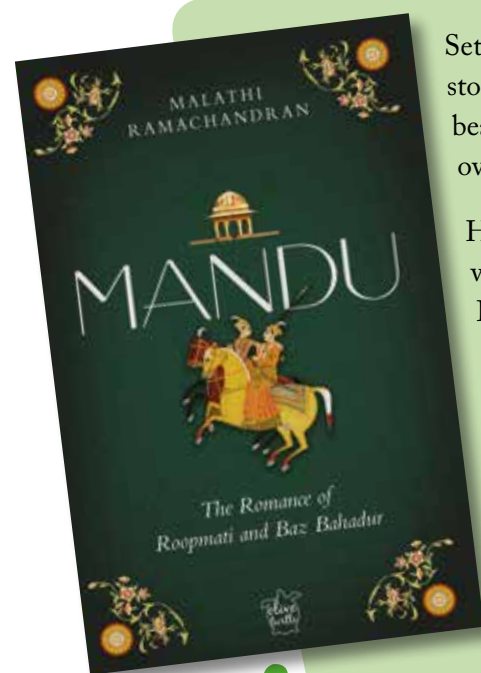
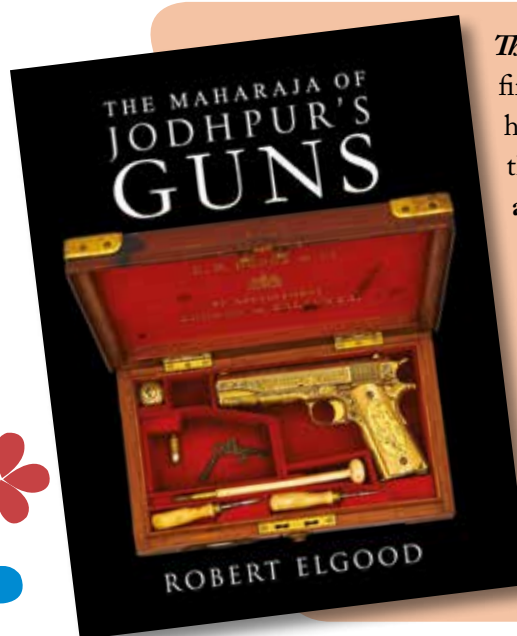


Court and Courtship: Indian Miniatures in the TAPI Collection is a study of Indian paintings, in which, the author J.P. Losty explores the well-trod highways and **the lesser-known byways of miniature paintings**, put together by the well-known textile collectors—Praful and Shilpa Shah.

Representing the classic texts of Sanskrit and Hindi literature are stunning examples from a 17th-century *ragamala*, the *Shangri Ramayana*, the *Gita Govinda*, *Harivamsha*, and *Rasikapriya*. Showcasing 90 superb images, this collection is sure to be of interest to lovers of Indian art.



The Maharaja of Jodhpur's Guns is the first book to be written specifically on historic Indian firearms. With more than **350 unique images of guns and Rajput paintings** from private collections showing their use, this book offers scholars and collectors the opportunity to see the superb Jodhpur collection and to learn about Rajput traditions relating to hunting and war.



Set in 16th century India, *Mandu* tells the legendary story of the young sultan, Baz Bahadur, and the beautiful shepherdess, Roopmati, who come together over their common love for classical music.

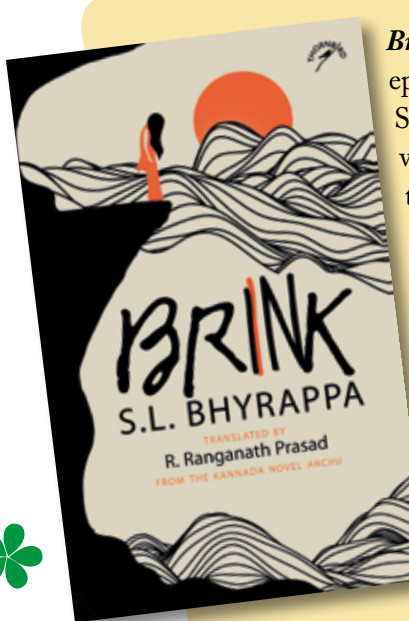
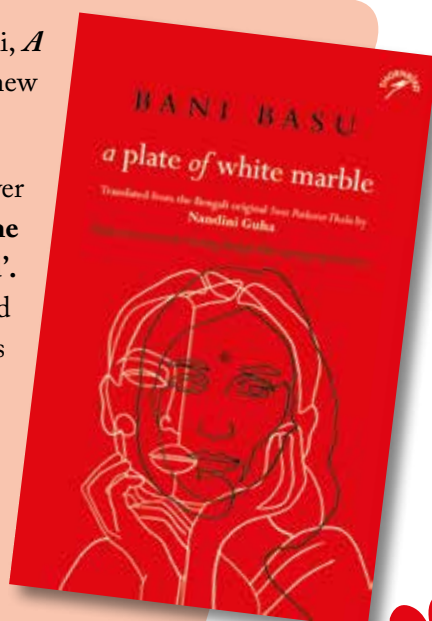
He is a man who can have any woman, and she a woman too proud to ever be part of his harem. But night after night, as they sing together in the enchanting world of Mandu, the fortress city lit up with lanterns and throbbing to the beat of ghungroos and tablas, a magic begins to happen. Baz and Roopmati fall in love. Alas, far away, in Agra, Mughal Emperor Akbar is planning his campaigns, and Mandu has been pinned on his map as a kingdom to be captured. **Will Baz be able to protect his capital, and more importantly, the woman he loves from the enemy forces?**



First published in 1990 in the original Bengali, *A Plate of White Marble* tells the story of the ‘new woman’ of the post-Independence era.

Bandana, the protagonist, though grieves over her husband's early death, **never conforms to the social connotation and ideals of ‘widowhood’**. She dares to begin her life afresh. But the road proves to be full of thorns, as she faces bitterness and opposition from many quarters of the society. She leaves behind the safe concrete walls of what she used to consider ‘home’, and she joins a children's home to work for those who need her the most.

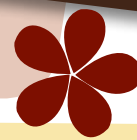
This first translation brings this significant Bengali novel with important social concerns to a wider audience.



Brink, the English translation of S.L. Bhayrappa's epic Kannada novel *Anchu*, is a love saga between Somashekhar, a widower, and Amrita, an estranged woman. Despite Somashekhar's affection for Amrita, time and again, she inflicts pain and torture on him in lieu of her mental condition. **Will Somashekhar be able to help her overcome depression by his perseverance and sacrifice?**

Reviewing the book, eminent scholar Dr R. Ganesh wrote: ‘The term “brink” is both apposite and guileful. At the very moment we choose to resign to the culmination, or think that it is cessation time for our clamour and desires, some force somewhere transports us back to the core.’

An enthralling read, the novel has stood the test of time. Packed with internal drama, tension, and flashbacks, the book promises to impart an aesthetic experience to the reader.



Reaching out...lending a virtual hand

As the whole wide world stared at a crisis called Corona, it was beyond doubt that we would have to live with the virus and take care of ourselves.

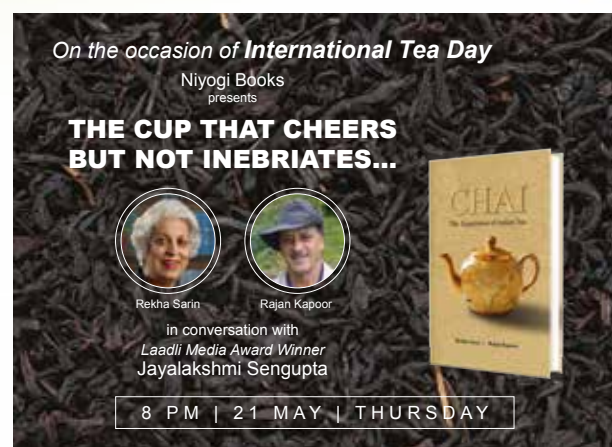
Thus, under the cloud of Covid-19 and the lockdown/stay-at-home phenomena, and believing social-distancing did not have to be a distancing-socially card, we at Niyogi Books looked towards the social media platforms to reach out to our readers, followers, and friends during the 68 trying days and even beyond.

We had poetry readings, interviews, and talks with eminent authors, editors, and stellar performers—in short, with specialists in their respective fields.

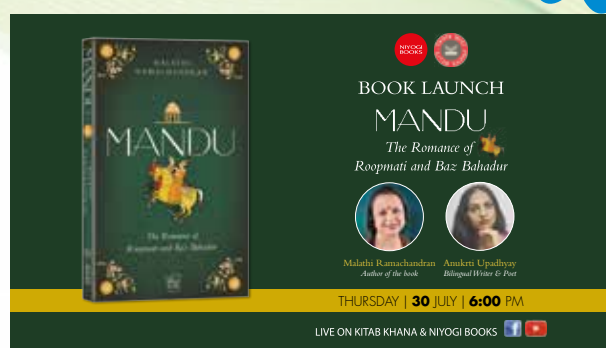
It not only gave us immense pleasure in carrying out such outreaching programmes, but also a feeling of satisfaction when we saw the kind of enthusiastic response we received from our audience. The accolades that followed each session made our day, day after day!



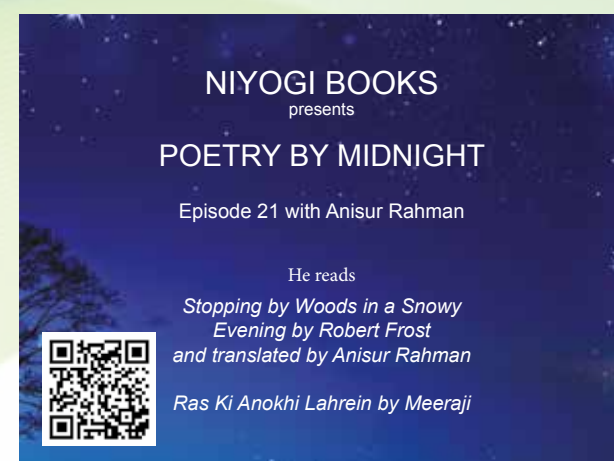
With our series for the quarter, **#3pointers**, we went further to get across three heavily laden questions to stellar performers, like Bickram Ghosh and Maneka Sorcar, with the objective of adding to the knowledge base that exists beyond books of our readers.



#virtualbookclub featured our authors and books, interacting with our readers. For instance, on the occasion of the International Tea Day, we took the opportunity of talking to Rekha Sarin on her award winning book *Chai: The Experience of Indian Tea*.



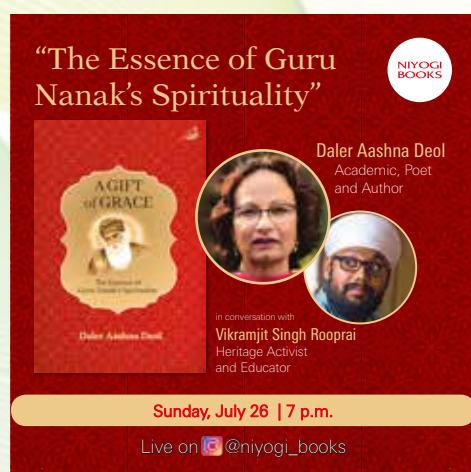
Niyogi Books, together with Kitab Khana, digitally launched one of its latest publication—a historical fiction, *Mandu: The Romance of Roopmati and Baz Bahadur*, which was followed by an extensive interaction between the author, Malathi Ramchandran, with bilingual writer and poet, Anukriti Upadhyay, at the helm.



#poetrybymidnight was a series of poetry sessions for the night owls. As a part of this initiative, poets and poetry enthusiasts read their favourite poems in multiple languages. Whether you consider poetry a detractor or equipment in these times of crisis, poetry can at the very least resolve a sleepless night. The poems that were read were either in English or in another Indian language with an English translation, which included Anisur Rahman's translation from English to Urdu. We had the likes of the author Jane Borges, heritage activist Vikramjit Singh Rooprai, musician Anmol Malik, and theatre artist and translator Santanu Gangopadhyay reading poems even from Punjabi and Bengali. This endeavour was taken up with the hope to bring the best of Indian poetry on a national platform.



Our continued effort also paved the way in paying homage to our authors who passed away. We collaborated with *Scroll.in* in remembering two of the legendary chroniclers of Delhi—R.V. Smith and D.N. Chaudhuri. Remembering them were historian Sohail Hashmi, journalist Sunalini Mathew, and heritage activist Vikramjit Singh Rooprai. Each of them had interacted with both Smith and Chaudhuri.



In a different spectrum, we had Daler Ashna Deol, the author of *A Gift of Grace* in a conversation with another of our esteemed authors, who is also a heritage activist and educator, Vikramjit Singh Rooprai.

Vikramjit interviewed the author about her book, its genesis and journey, and her own journey through faith and religion.

The author responded with enthusiasm and revealed that she believes in God's grace, that God is the one and same across all forms of faith and religion, and God's grace is attainable by living an honest life as Guru Nanak has said—and that

is heaven. She believes, by being on the path to attaining God, she is 'in heaven'.

It was an enlightening session as the author discussed on differences and similarities between Sikhism, Hinduism, Islam, and Buddhism; the subject of monotheism; the relevance of Nanak's sayings in the modern world, particularly his reverence for nature; and how Nanak emphasized on the importance of music and poetry in everyday life.

The discussion in itself was a spiritual journey both for the speakers and the audience.



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