

READING CORNER

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Kaleidoscopic Past

The Colourful World of Rajasthani Miniature Paintings

Also, engage your ears while you read.



Rajasthan is a delightful medley of vivid colours. Shades of red, ochre, green, saffron, purple and magenta combine to form a pulsating palette that stands out and yet, paradoxically, blends in with its cultural and social background. Indeed, the unique richness of the warm colours of Rajasthan cannot be compared to any other Indian state. It also has to its credit diverse creative activities that cover the vast area, stretching from Bikaner to Kotah and Bundi, with Udaipur, Jaipur and Jodhpur as its principal centres of the arts. The landscape is dotted with resplendent forts, palaces and temples; each with a legend or two to narrate. Shimmering sands and magnificent sanctuaries add to the splendour.

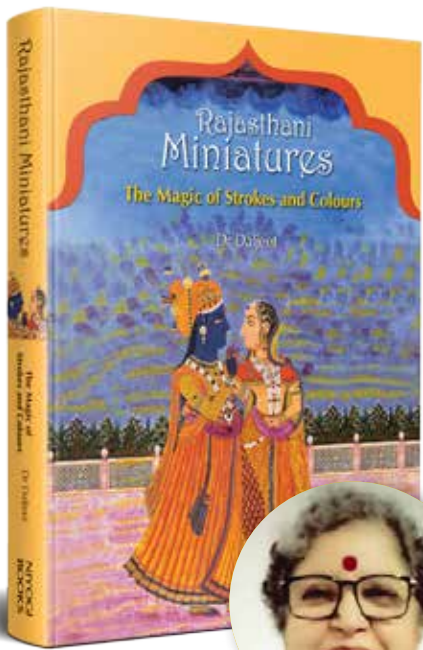
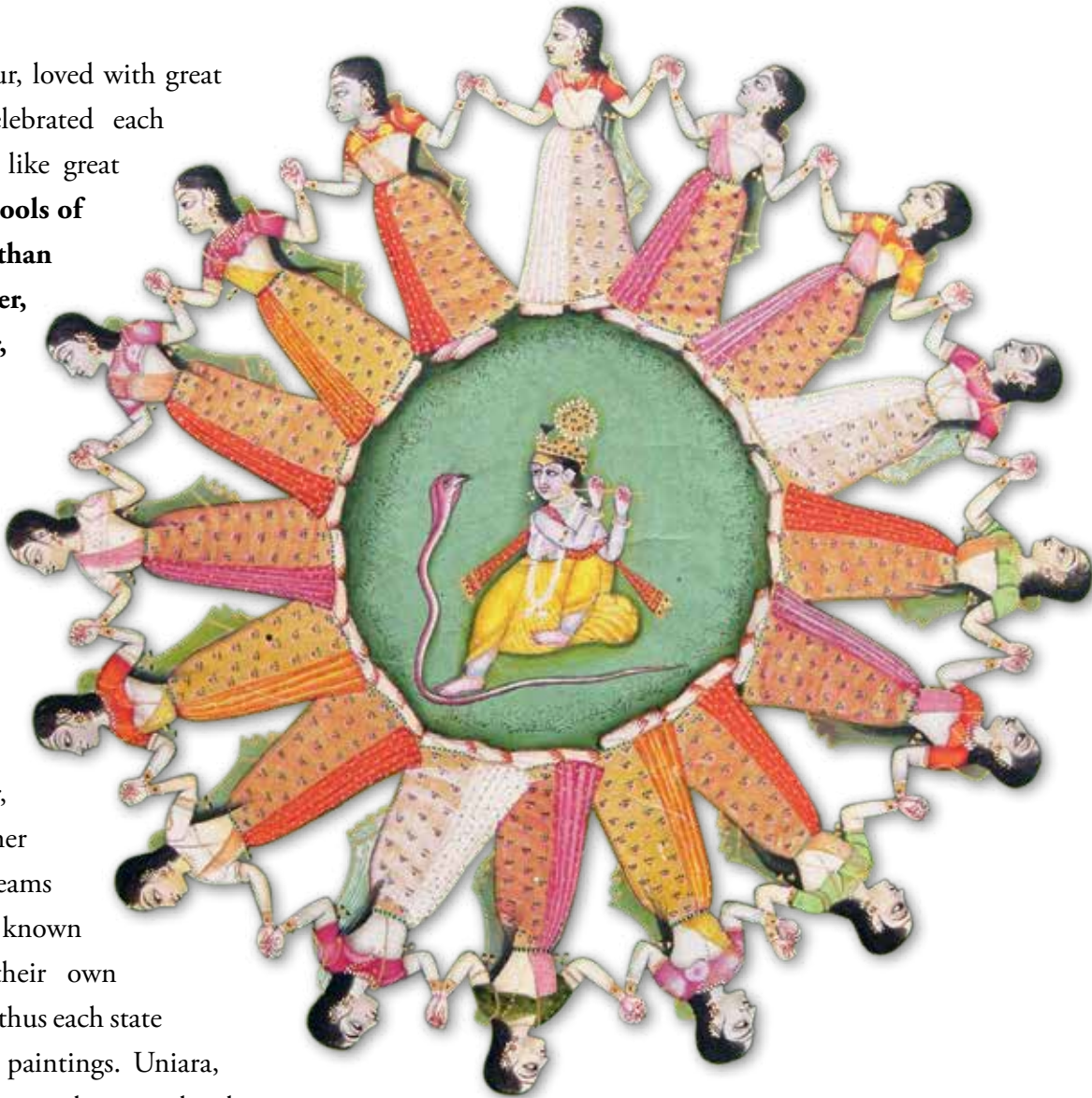
It is in Rajasthani art that shades and strokes come together in what almost appears as a divine interplay to create magic.

So whether it is the Dundhar area, that includes the capital city, Jaipur; or the Mewat area, which has important places such as Alwar, Deeg and Bharatpur; or the Mewar region (includes Udaipur), known in Indian history for its valour and chivalry, Rajasthan is one of the most attractive places to visit in India. The exquisite marble sculptures of Mount Abu; the Jain temples in Ranakpur; the havelis of Jaisalmer; the pilgrim cities of Ajmer, Pushkar, Merta and Nagaur beckon the eager tourist. And then there is Shekhawati (includes Sikar, Nawalgarh, Mandawa, Fatehpur and Jhunjhunu), whose wall paintings hold a special charm. Rajasthan is also known for its colourful fairs and festivals such as the camel festival in Bikaner; Jaisalmer's desert festival; the Pushkar cattle fair; the winter festival in Mount Abu and the Mewar festival in Udaipur. Rajasthani cuisine is as diverse as its culture. A large bulk of Indian miniature paintings comes from Rajasthan. **These miniatures are endowed with warm colours, primitive vigour, directness of expression and all that corresponds to the unique land of Rajasthan.** They encompass its fun and festivities, the charming women and heroic men

who fought with valour, loved with great zeal and warmth, celebrated each inch of life and died like great heroes. **The major schools of miniatures of Rajasthan are Mewar, Bikaner, Jodhpur, Nagaur, Jaipur, Alwar, Bundi, Kotah, Kishangarh and Nathdwara.**

The Rajput states seem to have been treating the art of painting almost as a status symbol. Mewar, Jodhpur, Kishangarh, Jaipur, Bundi, Kotah, Bikaner and Sirohi had larger teams of painters and are known to have developed their own stylistic specialties and thus each state has its own school of paintings. Uniara, Nathdwara and Alwar rank second whereas Shahpura, Deogarh, Pratapgarh, Jaisalmer and Jalor are considered as minor schools of Rajasthani paintings, though they all have their styles and peculiarities and each a distinctiveness of its own. Famous art historian Anand K Coomarswamy rightly emphasised that 'Rajput art creates a magic world where all men are heroic, all women are beautiful and passionate and shy, beasts both wild and tame

are the friends of man, and trees and flowers are conscious of the footsteps of the bridegroom as he passes by...the magic world is not unreal or fanciful, but a world of imagination and eternity, visible to all who do not refuse to see with the transfiguring eyes of love.' It is in Rajasthani art that shades and strokes come together in what almost appears as a divine interplay to create magic.



Author & Art Historian
Dr Daljeet



MEWAR



JODHPUR



INDERGARH



ALWAR



DEOGARH



SIROHI



UNIARA



AJMER



PRATAPGARH



KISHANGARH



NATHDWARA



BUNDI



BIKANER



KOTAH



JAIPUR

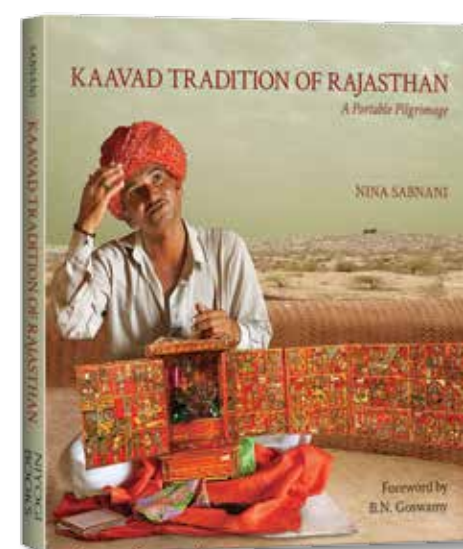
Excerpt taken from *Rajasthani Miniatures: The Magic of Strokes and Colours*

From the land of the Golden Fortress (Satyajit Ray's *Shonar Kella*), palaces and uniquely painted buildings, where the Pink City lies, and where the folk music melts your heart amidst the sea of sands, the 'land of the kings', we bring you this treasure trove of books on the art and traditions of Rajasthan!

Cycling into the rarely visited northern Rajasthan, in tiny desert towns, **Ilay Cooper** discovers impressive buildings, their walls covered with vibrant paintings, in the district of Shekhawati. After studying for 10 years all aspects of the paintings, the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) commissions him to document the phenomenon. *Rajasthan: Exploring Painted Shekhawati* describes 2,260 buildings from these painted towns, mapped over a period of two-and-a half years.

Jaipur, the famed Pink City of Rajasthan conjures up images of a bygone era in the mind's eye. The splendour of its palaces and forts and the breathtaking array of its traditional crafts continue to attract tourists and connoisseurs of history and art from all corners of the world. The Jaipur textile industry in Rajasthan has for long, inspired countless artists and designers to create exquisite products of both beauty and utility. **Krystyna Hellström's** *Jaipur Quilts* is a celebration of the Jaipuri *razai*, a perfect example of this exclusive trend in its display of excellent traditional craftsmanship and aesthetic beauty as well as its high utility value.

Rajasthani Miniatures: The Magic of Strokes and Colours, through a detailed narrative and exquisite photographs, traces the stylistic sources of Rajasthani miniatures, discovering elements that go beyond geography and time to reveal Rajasthani art's generic growth. **Dr Daljeet's** study covers the various regions and rulers of Rajasthan, their influence on this style and the significant themes of the miniature paintings.

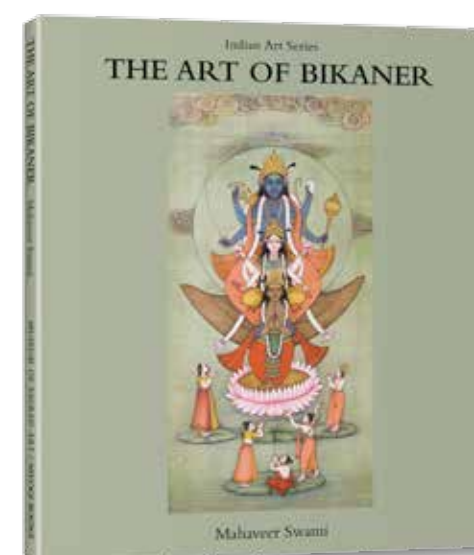
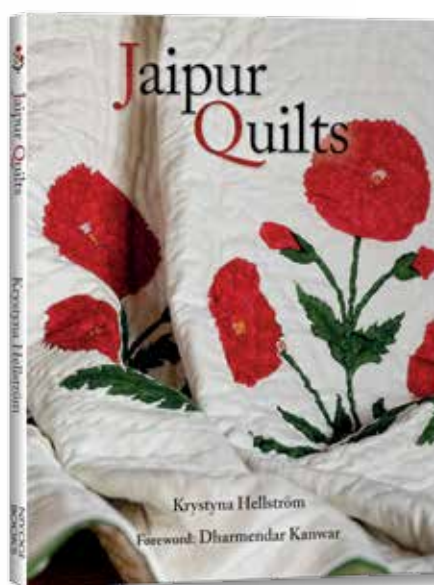
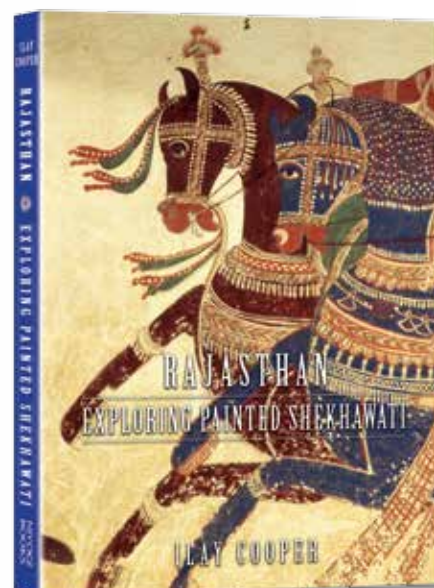


Kaavad Tradition of Rajasthan: A Portable Pilgrimage is a portable shrine with multiple doors that fold into themselves. The Kaavadiya Bhat or the storyteller journeys with this brightly painted wooden box to the homes of his patrons, to recite their genealogies and regale them with the stories of the pantheon of deities painted on the shrine. It is a tradition that binds communities in common memory and mythology.

Where did it come from?

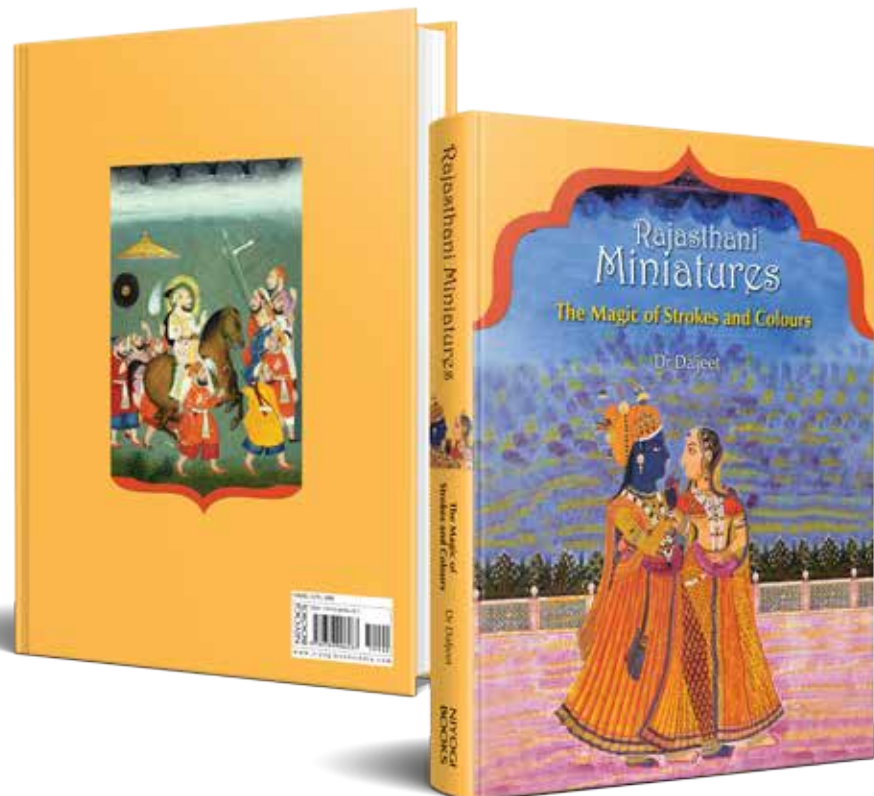
What is its fate in the world today?

Exploring a panel at a time of this curious mnemonic device, the author of *Kaavad Tradition of Rajasthan*, **Nina Sabnani**, leads us on a journey to uncover the myths and mysteries of this unique oral-storytelling tradition.



The Art of Bikaner features about 60 paintings on handmade paper or silk. Executed in Bikaner style, the works have clearly been impacted by Mughal traditions. The artist's observations during his sojourns to renowned pilgrimage sites and the sketches that were made there were later developed into paintings. The repertoire also encompasses 24 distinct avatars or godly incarnations based on studies of the *Bhagwat Puran*.

The author, Rajasthan-born **Mahaveer Swami** is one of the finest traditional artists working in India today.



In 2014, Niyogi Books and Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II launched a new series of Illustrated titles with the intention of bringing the collections of the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum, City Palace, Jaipur, to the attention of a pan-Indian as well as a global audience to raise awareness and interest in preserving the legacy of the magnificent culture and heritage of Rajasthan.

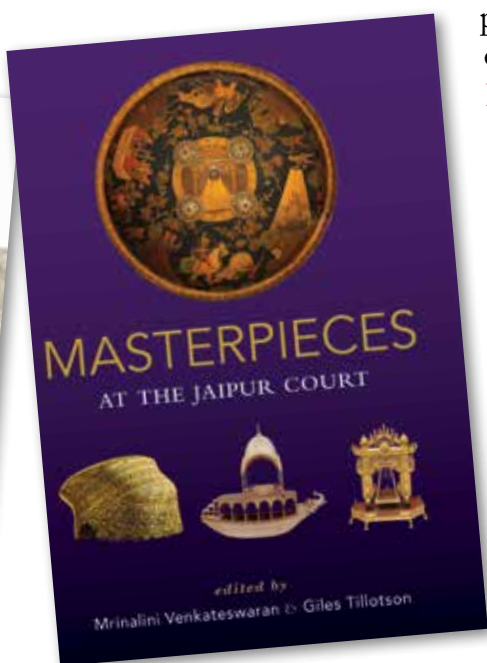
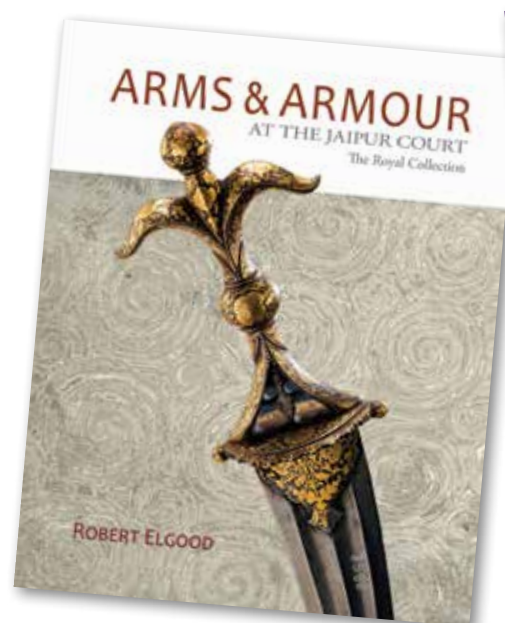
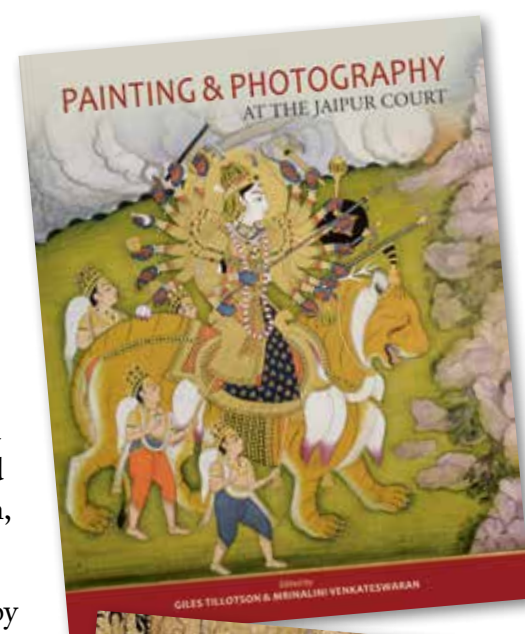
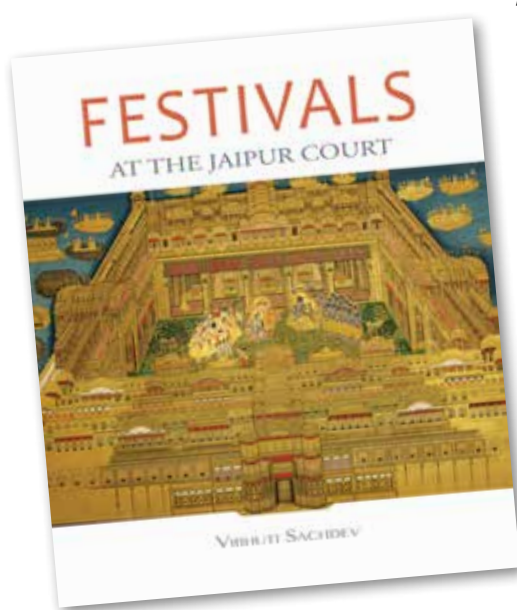
The first in the series is *Festivals: At the Jaipur Court* (2014) by **Vibhuti Sachdev**. This splendidly illustrated book examines the 'living traditions' of the former royal court of Jaipur, in the light of the objects and materials that were integral to the established rituals and celebrations. The author takes us on a vibrant and informative journey through the Hindu seasonal calendar and the year-round panoply of festivity and ceremonial observances that are special to Rajasthan, particularly Jaipur.

The second one in the series is *Arms & Armour: At the Jaipur Court* (2015) by **Robert Elgood**. Lavishly illustrated, the book covers 186 of the most interesting arms in the Jaipur Royal Palace including stunning historic firearms, swords, daggers and more. Most of the arms showcased in the book are from the museum's reserve and have been published for the first time.

The next two in the series are: *Painting & Photography: At the Jaipur Court* (2016), edited by **Giles Tillotson** and **Mrinalini Venkateswaran**, that traces the journey of visual arts, specifically painting and photography, in Jaipur, right from its inception in 1727 to the mid-20th century, under the patronage of the royal family; and *Textiles & Garments: At the Jaipur Court* by **Rahul Jain**, which showcases nearly 150 of the most remarkable pieces from the royal collection, including some of India's earliest and finest *kalamkaris* and rare woven silks and velvets, most of which came from renowned Indian textile centres across the subcontinent, as well as from Iran.

Masterpieces: At the Jaipur Court, edited by **Mrinalini Venkateswaran** and **Giles Tillotson** is the latest one in the series till now, published in 2020, which features some of the most exquisite images, artefacts, paintings, monuments and historical treasures of the Jaipur Court.

This series is the fruit of the endeavours of many scholars who have copiously contributed in its making, making this a celebration of collaboration, in addition to a tribute to the museum's collections.



'The clearest way into the Universe is through a forest wilderness.' — John Muir

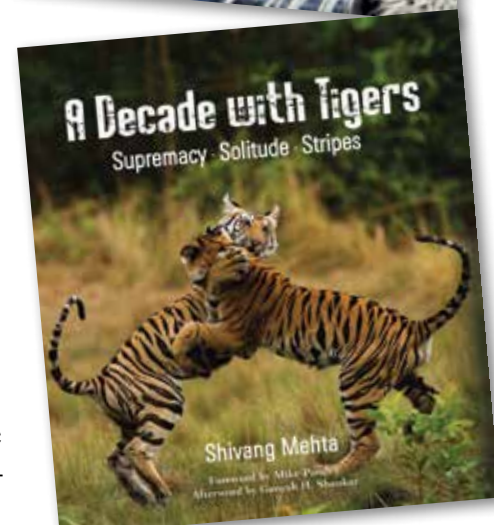
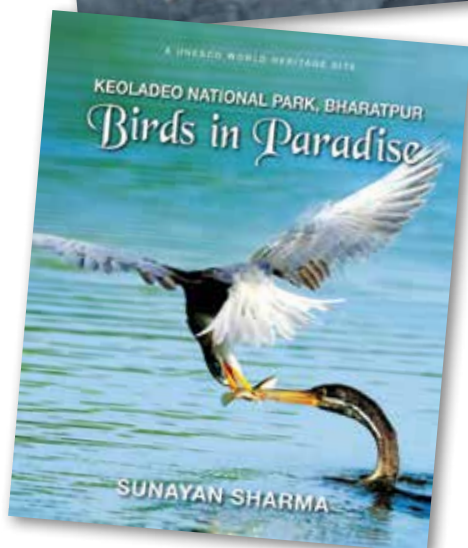
Rajasthan has in its reserve not only India's rich cultural heritage, but also the rich natural beauty of wilderness in its reserve forests like the Sariska which had lost its entire tiger population to illegal poaching. After much discussion and deliberations, a few tigers were brought in from Ranthambore. This one-of-a-kind experiment turned out to be a grand success. Penned by **Sunayan Sharma**, formerly a member of the Indian Forest Service as Wildlife Warden at Jodhpur, *Sariska: The Tiger Reserve Roars Again* presents such stimulating anecdotes from among the author's first-hand experiences of working at the reserve forest.

Birds in Paradise, by the same author, is a handy guide to Bharatpur's Keoladeo National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site which is indeed a birds' paradise, with all kinds of birds, resident and migratory, in different colours and sizes. The book features 280 spectacular images of the birds in their natural habitat.

A dramatic encounter with a belligerent tiger; a near-death experience; hunting for missing tigers; a mystifying leopard who attacks humans at will with no fear; tracking and monitoring tigers and

the fascinating story of an aggressive male tiger—such striking true-life tales feature in **Daulat Singh Shaktawat's** *My Encounter with the Big Cat and Other Adventures in Ranthambhore*. Accompanied by rare photographs, it is also a tribute to the unsung heroes of Ranthambhore who gave up their lives and livelihood for the protection of others.

Shivang Mehta's *A Decade with Tigers* is a photographer's take on the dramatic rise in the popularity of tigers in the past decade. Powered by social media and an increasing number of photographers interested in documenting the various moods and behaviours of tigers in forests across the country, some of these tigers have become the 'tiger icons' of India. The volume chronicles legendary tiger mothers and male tigers, and their tales of survival, complemented by exquisite images by the wildlife photographer-turned-author.



Rajasthani Flavours

Out of the Royal Past, Into the Global Kitchen

Rajasthan offers a wide and a most delectable variety of traditional food items, which are unique in taste and add plenty of nutritive value to the diet.

Gradually, with the fast-changing scenario and life increasingly shifting to the fast track, some of these traditional dishes are losing out to the global fast food culture and getting lost in this transition. Hours of toil in the kitchen to lay a meal for the family on the table is not of top priority any longer as work hours outside home have increased and the younger generation has adapted itself to multi-tasking and being 'on the job' and 'on call' almost through the entire day.

Eating habits, along with lifestyle, have also undergone a change; with limited time on hand, 'snacking' is increasingly replacing full sit-down meals while 'finger food' and 'quick bites' during a social engagement in the evening often serve the purpose of a light dinner.



Mirchi Bada

Fried chilli fingers

It is a popular snack in Rajasthan. Mirchi bada of Jodhpur is famous.

Ingredients

Mirch (thick, with a yellow tinge in the skin) : 100g
Besan (Bengal gram daal flour) : 100g
Potato : 3 medium size
Amchur (dried green mango powder) : 5g
Garam masala powder : 5g
Turmeric : a pinch
Salt : to taste
Cooking soda : a pinch
Coriander leaves : 2-3 stems
Oil : for deep frying

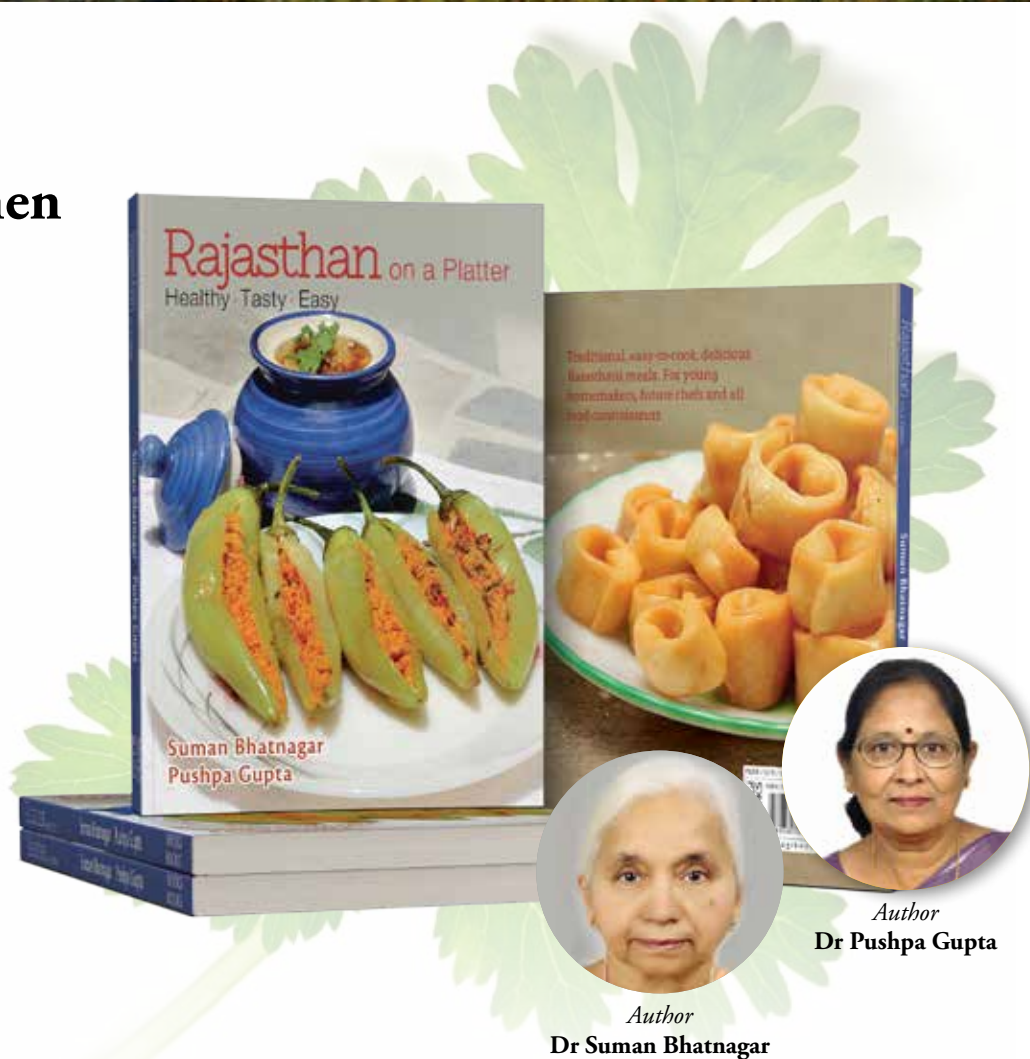
Did You Know?

Rich with Vitamin C, green chillies can help you maintain radiant skin.

- ❖ makes 6 pieces
- ❖ preparation time : 10 minutes
- ❖ cooking time : 15 minutes

Method

Boil potato and mash it ❖ Add salt, other ingredients and finely chopped coriander leaves ❖ Slit the mirch vertically from one side and remove seeds ❖ Stuff with potato masala ❖ Add salt and a pinch of soda in besan ❖ Prepare batter of medium consistency by adding water ❖ Dip stuffed mirch in batter for coating ❖ Heat oil and fry coated mirch on medium flame till it turns golden ❖ Serve hot with green coriander chutney/sauce/ tamarind (imli) chutney.



Rajasthan on a Platter: Easy, Tasty, Healthy, authored by Dr Suman Bhatnagar and Dr Pushpa Gupta, offers a wide, select and unique variety of traditional and delectable but simple homemade recipes. It transfers homegrown knowledge to the young generation and caters to a multicultural readership.



Did You Know?

Garlic used to be known as 'Russian penicillin' & given to soldiers as medicine during World War II.

Lahsan Chutney

Garlic Chutney

It is a very popular dish in Rajasthan especially in rural areas. The combination is with bati, kadhi, chawal. Lahsan adds aroma and taste to food, and has medicinal value.

Ingredients

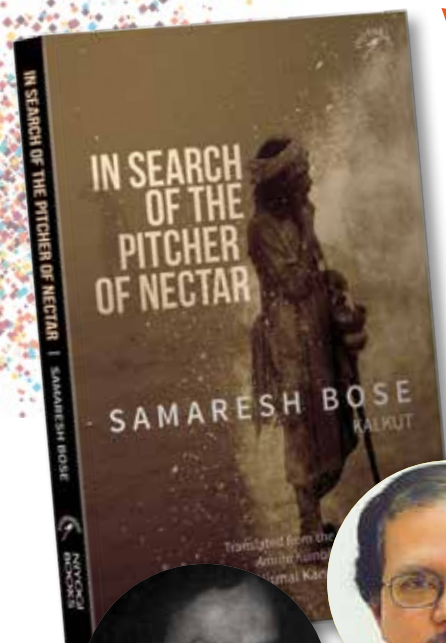
Garlic : 1 big bulb
Whole (sabut) red chillies : 5
Turmeric : 3g
Coriander powder : 3g
Garam masala powder : 3g
Oil : 10g
Salt : to taste

- ❖ makes 1 bowl
- ❖ preparation time : 15 minutes
- ❖ cooking time : 5 minutes

Method

Take out garlic cloves and peel them ❖ Grind with red chillies and make a paste ❖ Heat oil, add paste and masala ❖ Cook till golden and oil is released from the paste ❖ Serve hot at lunch or dinner.

‘The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page,’ said St. Augustine. Let us travel through the world, and the world of books, as we take a look at these exciting new releases!



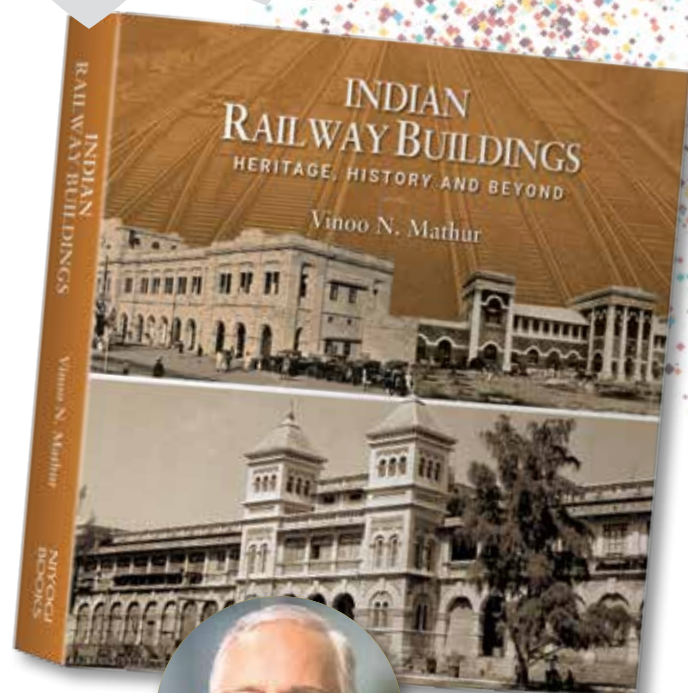
Author
Samaresh Bose



Translator
Nirmal Kanti
Bhattacharjee

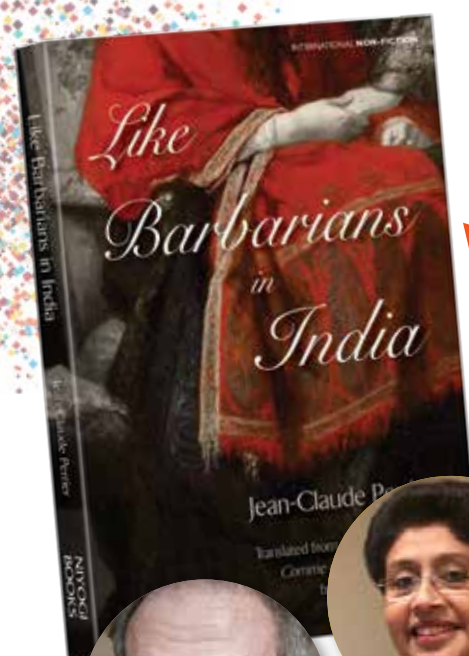
Kalkut aka Samaresh Bose is regarded as one of the greatest Bengali writers of all times. *In Search of the Pitcher of Nectar*, translated by Nirmal Kanti Bhattacharjee from the Bengali original *Amrita Kumbher Sandhaney*, is Samaresh Bose's travelogue narrating his trip to Kumbh-mela at the holy site of Prayag, not to achieve atonement, but to learn about life through the experiences of the numerous pilgrims who go there in search of the pot of *amrita*, the nectar of immortality.

Rediscover the romance of the railways on a journey with Vinoo N. Mathur's *Indian Railway Buildings: Heritage, History and Beyond*. Featuring historic information and many rare photographs about the construction of these structures, the author reveals interesting and little-known aspects about the heritage railway buildings of India, such as the Bengal Nagpur Railway House, which is the oldest and one of the finest Classical Revival buildings of the Indian Railways.



Author
Vinoo N. Mathur

Like Barbarians in India, translated from the original French *Comme des barbares en Inde* by Sriparna Chatterjee, is a heartfelt tribute to India and to four French writers—Pierre Loti, Henri Michaux, André Malraux and André Gide—who felt a common attraction to this country of ‘ancient civilization’. The author discusses these writers and their interaction with India, as well as his love for the country.

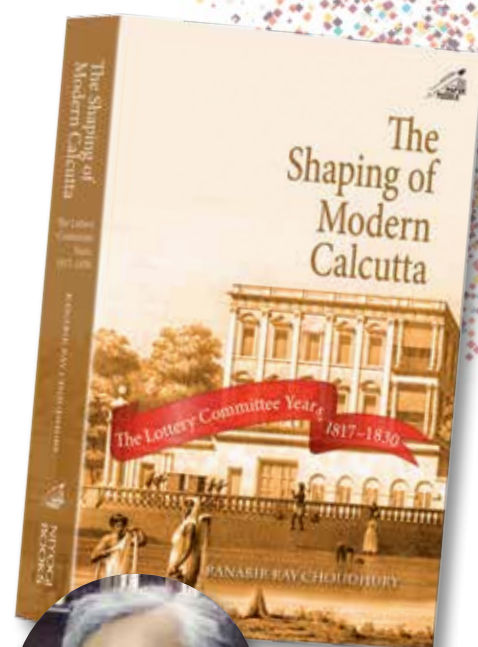


Author
Jean-Claude Perrier



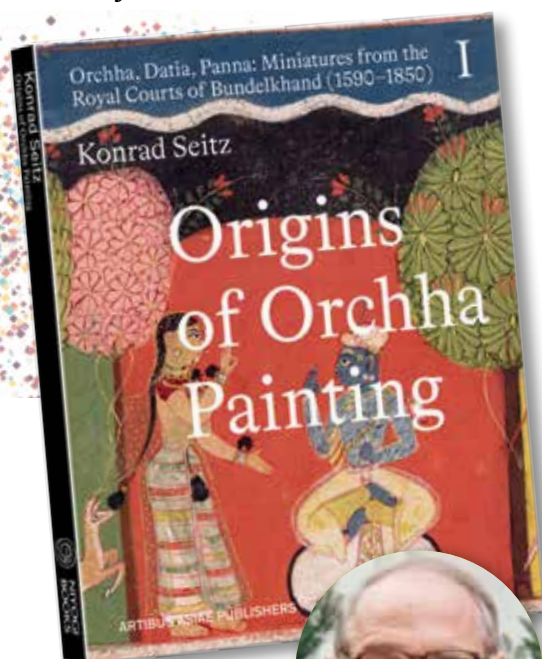
Translator
Sriparna Chatterjee

The Shaping of Modern Calcutta: The Lottery Committee Years, 1817–1830 focuses on the Calcutta Lottery Committee's phenomenal work from 1817 till about 1830 when, for all practical purposes, the functions of the committee relating to the improvement of the city ceased effectively. Thematically, this is a sequel to *A City in the Making: Aspects of Calcutta's Early Growth* (2016), which ended with the formation of the Lottery Committee in 1817; this book takes up the story from there. As with the earlier work, this book is wholly based on archival material available at the West Bengal State Archives.



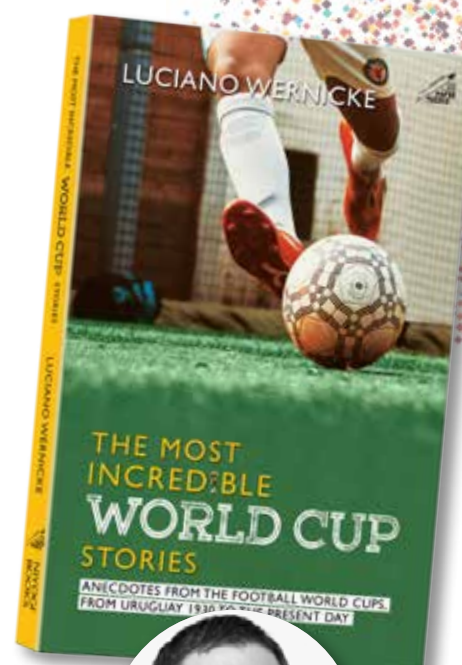
Author
Ranabir Ray Choudhury

The miniature school of Bundelkhand that first developed at Orchha was the earliest and most Indian of all the Rajput schools, and at the time of its founding, the only one to practice a purely indigenous style of painting, ‘untainted’ by the naturalism of imperial Mughal painting. *Origins of Orchha Painting* by Konrad Seitz, the first volume of the series ‘Orchha, Datia, Panna: Miniatures from the Royal Courts of Bundelkhand (1590–1850)’, deals with the founding period of Orchha painting, the years 1590–1605, and how it derived from pre-Mughal early Rajput painting, which flourished at the Tomar court of Gwalior from around 1460 until the downfall of the Hindu kingdom in 1518.



Author
Konrad Seitz

The Most Incredible World Cup Stories traces the exhilarating journey of the biggest sporting contest through time immemorial—from its genesis to its more recent glories—with tales of grit, spirit and heroics in every turn of its long-trodden path. Far from listing out the number-heavy statistics, this book aims at digging up the narratives that became eternal subtexts in this phenomenal journey, where a game became a political statement, prides got tamed, revenge proved sweet and humiliation often cherished.



Author
Luciano Wernicke



Book Launch of *Indian Railway Buildings* at IIC, Delhi.

L-R: Bikash De Niyogi, LK Gupta, Bibek Debroy, RN Singh & author Vinoo N Mathur

Book Launch of *Who is a Parsi?* at IIC, Delhi.

L-R: Prof. Nirmal Kanti Bhattacharjee, Ervad Yezad Kapadia, Kersi K Deboo & author Prochy N Mehta



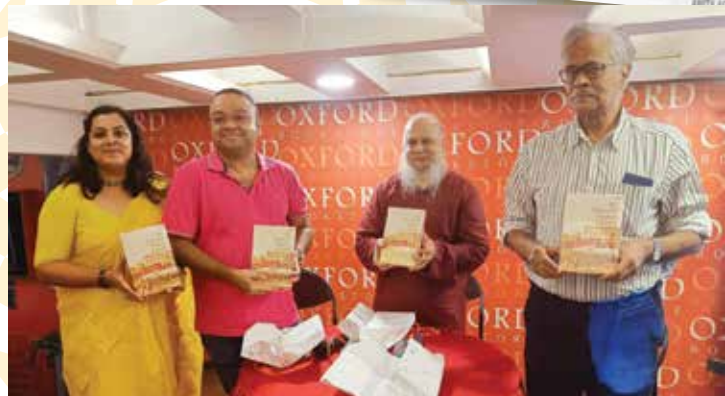
At the launch of *Indian Citizenship and Immigration Law* at IIC, New Delhi.

L-R: Dr A Didar Singh, Justice Madan Lokur, Jasleen Vohra & author Amish Tandon



At the Book Launch of *In Search of the Pitcher of Nectar*.

L-R: Translator of the book Nirmal Kanti Bhattacharjee, Anita Agnihotri & Sunit Tandon



At the launch of *The Shaping of Modern Calcutta* at Oxford Bookstore, Kolkata

L-R: Trisha De Niyogi, RJ Deep, Shuvaprasanna, & author Ranabir Ray Choudhury



At the launch of the series *Pioneers of Modern India* held at IIC, Delhi.

L-R: Nirmal Kanti Bhattacharjee, VR Devika, EP Unny, Amiya P Sen & Ashoke Mukhopadhyay

L-R: Trisha De Niyogi, Nirmal Kanti Bhattacharjee, Anuradha Ghosh, Som Kamei, HS Shivaprakash & Usham Rojio



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Book of the quarter



A Plate of White Marble, Nandini Guha's masterful translation of Bani Basu's 'Swet Patharar Thala' was nominated for the **Kalinga Literary Award** in 2021

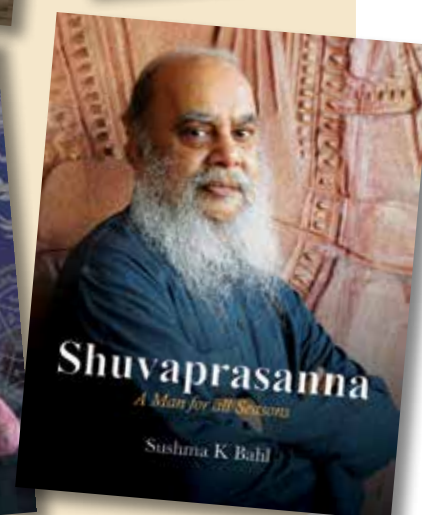
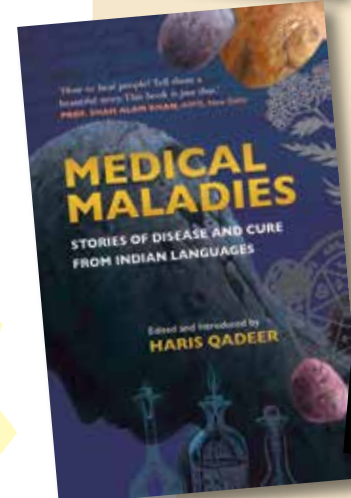
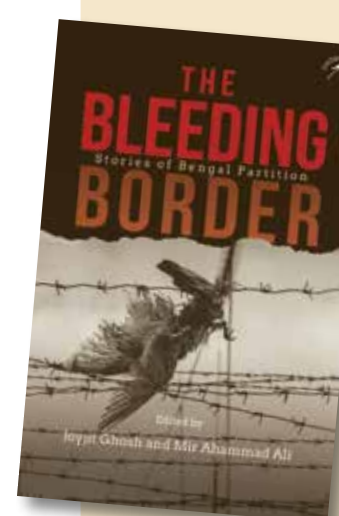


Author
Bani Basu



Translator
Nandini Guha

Forthcoming Books



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