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RAJPUT PAINTING AT BUNDI AND KOTA

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PAINTING AT BUNDI

> All the palaces in India, excepting the dead ones, like Amber, are full of eyes. In some, as has been said, the idea of being watched is stronger than in others. In Boondi Palace, it was overpowering – being far worse than in the green-shuttered corridors of Jodhpur. There were trap-doors at the tops of terraces, and windows veiled in foliage, and bulls'-eyes set low in unexpected walls, and many other peep-holes and places of vantage ... *Rudyard Kipling (1887)*[1]

The small Rajput kingdoms of Bundi and Kota, in southeastern Rajasthan, were ruled by cousins, different branches of the Hara clan. The history of the family, an offshoot of the prominent Chauhan dynasty, can be extended back to the eighth century, for its members were among those who defended the subcontinent against the first Muslim invaders. It seems only to have been in the mid-thirteenth century, however, that they seized the lands which were to become known as Bundi State. According to the English historian James Tod,[2] it was then that Rao Deva Hara defended a group of the tribal *minas* of the area from the molestations of his Rajput relative, Rao Gango Khichi, whose descendants eventually built their power on lands adjoining Bundi along the Chambal River, and whom we shall encounter later as patrons of painting. Deva's motives are suspect, however, for he himself subsequently slaughtered the *minas* and took their lands; while his grandson, Jait Singh, used similar tactics to extend the territories to include present-day Kota. Returning from a visit to the nearby village of Kaithun, he passed an encampment near the Chambal of another tribal group, the *bhils*, whom he attacked and destroyed, claiming their district and holding it semi-independently of Bundi. In such ways Rajput families built their power, for these lands remained the nucleus of the Hara patrimony. Jait Singh's son, Surjan Singh, erected the original defensive walls at Kota, and his son, in turn, excavated the large artificial lake, or tank, east of the town, providing both a major area for recreation, and the chief cause of Kota's notoriously malarious climate. The ouster of a later Kota chief, an opium addict, by two Muslim adventurers, and the return of Kota to direct Bundi control (where it remained until 1625); the rivalries of Rao Surajmal of Bundi and the Rana of Chitor, brothers-in-law, each of whom murdered the other; and the deposition of Rao Surtan, the devotee of a deity pacified only by human sacrifices, form colorful, if almost incredible, passages in Tod's marvellous *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*. It is under the rule

[1] Rudyard Kipling, *From Sea to Sea*, vol. i, p. 182.

[2] Much of the information about early Bundi history is derived from Tod, *The Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*. The dates given in that work are notoriously inaccurate, however, so that we have used the more recent and reliable chronologies of Mathura Lal Sharma and Jagdish Singh Gahlot for both Bundi and Kota. These often differ significantly from those of Tod and T. Holbein Hendley, and clarify chronological discrepencies in their texts.

of Rao Surjan II (r. 1554–85), however, that historical events are of immediate interest to our study of painting.

The Chunar RAGAMALA

As we noted in the Introduction, the Mughal Emperor Akbar succeeded has father Humayun in 1556, and quickly became the most powerful force in north India. He consolidated and extended his inheritance not by the imposition of an Islamic system on the predominantly Hindu country, but by alliances with the various regional leaders, secular and religious. Bundi, a state then of only modest political and economic pretensions, gave him its allegiance in 1569, with the forfeiture of the coveted Rinthambhor Fort, until the mid-eighteenth century a leading Mughal stronghold. In return, the Haras were granted suitable distinctive privileges: they could enter the imperial *darbar* (audience) fully armed, for example, and were exempt from the usual practice of sending a princess to the royal harem. The title *rao raja* was conferred upon Surjan Singh, as well as a residence in the holy city of Benares. Slightly later, in 1576, he was granted the district of Chunar, near Benares, as his *jagir* (land allotment),[3] a fact we must remember later. Tod wrote that Surjan "resided at his government of Benares, and by his piety, wisdom, and generosity, benefited the empire ... he beautified and ornamented the city, especially the quarter where he resided, and eighty-four edifices, for various purposes, and twenty baths, were constructed under his auspices. He died there ..."[4] Nothing remains in Benares that can be identified positively with these constructions, and Bundi *ghat*, the site of his palace, is now rubble. Nonetheless, he quite clearly participated in the enormous re-awakening of interest in the arts during Akbar's reign, and as a direct result of his place in the Mughal system.

Surjan was succeeded by his son, Bhoj Singh (r. 1585–1607), about whom historians have provided little information, but whose face is familiar through a group of later drawings, including hunting scenes inscribed with his name (e.g. *fig. 86*).[5] It is possible that he is portrayed as well in a dispersed *Ragamala* series *(figs. 1 and 2)*,[6] the first paintings we can confidently ascribe to a Hara patron. These are of great importance not only to the chronology of Bundi painting, but to our interpretation of Rajasthani, or even Indian, painting as a whole. Its connection with Bundi, first noted by Pramod Chandra,[7] is evident. The *Ragamala* text, a formally catalogued series of relationships between a man and woman, in origin metaphorical of the soul's relation to the divine, is the single most popular traditional subject for illustration in the various Rajput schools, and several distinctive series of compositions were developed in different workshops. The majority of artists within the Bundi-Kota sphere of influence simply copied and recopied one set of compositions, and their *Ragamalas* remained virtually unchanged in layout over a period of at least two hundred years. The earliest known formulation of these distinctive scenes, which are found unaltered in no other school, is seen in the *Ragamala* under discussion.

[3] *Maathir*, vol. ii, p. 918.

[4] Tod, vol. ii, p. 384.

[5] Several major works from Kota in the mid-eighteenth century are inscribed with the name of Rao Bhoj, or of his son, Hurda Narayan. The latter is found on a painting of a prince "rising from a well of flame", in the Stuart C. Welch Collection. Hurda Narayan may have been popular at Kota since, as Tod wrote, "he held Kota in a separate grant from the king during fifteen years" (Tod, vol. ii, p. 385, note 2). The popularity of Rao Bhoj is unexplained.

[6] References are given in GTP, p. 116, no. 5.

[7] *Bundi*, pp. 1–3.

It is the style of the series, however, that is most informative. Although it clearly anticipates mature Bundi paintings of about 1680 (e.g. *fig. 32*), the vertical format and the proportion of the pages, as well as the border decorations of arabasques and cartouches, directly reflect Mughal practice. Pre-Mughal *Ragamalas* are known, but these are exclusively of horizontal or squarish format,[8] as is the hitherto earliest unquestionably Rajasthani *Ragamala*, the famous and well-published set painted at Chawand, in Mewar, in 1605. The painters of the Bundi series were certainly aware of these earlier traditions, from which they drew the basic compositional relationships of their figures.[9] Yet around these they created illustrations of much greater complexity, and more evocative, in visual terms, of the related texts. The formal vocabulary and technical skills that allowed them to achieve this had been developed earlier by the painters of the Mughal workshops, to whose preoccupation with carefully observed details drawn from the natural world can be attributed this *Ragamala's* scenes of sunset or dawn, with naturalistically convincing skies; or the landscapes and forest scenes, with lush jungle vegetation and sympathetically drawn animal life. This alone instantly places the *Ragamala* heavily in the debt of the Mughals, by whom such interests were restored to the painting of north India; and we can further relate it to specific works.

It is similar, for example, to unpublished pages from a *Tuti-nama* manuscript, the greater part of which is in the Library of Sir Chester Beatty, Dublin, and the date of which has been generally accepted as circa 1580; common elements, first noted by Stuart C. Welch, include both compositions and figure types.[10] It is close as well to figures on a page from an imperial *Diwan* of Anwari, dated 1588, in the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University *(fig. 3)*,[11] and to those on selected folios of a *Ramayana* manuscript in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington. D.C.[12] This latter is dated by a colophon between 1589 and 1598, and was made by artists in the employ of 'Abdu-r Rahim, the Khan Khanan, the leading noble of Akbar's court. Folio 19 recto, reproduced in *fig. 4*, shows a group of singing girls attempting to entice the youth Rshyashringa and is among the few really marvellous pages. A comparison of details from it *(fig. 5)* and the *Ragamala (fig. 6)* show striking similarities: fattish faces of similar shape, with prominently modelled cheeks; the stance of the figures and their gestures; and the balloonlike breasts, decorated with concentric patterns painted in darker orange on the orange *cholis* (blouses). The latter is a specific characteristic of pre-Mughal Rajput painting,[13] the source as well of certain archaisms in the *Ragamala* figures which distinguish them readily from their counterparts in the Mughal manuscripts mentioned: the more angular profile and large, intense eye, as well as the strong outlining of both details. This type of figure, while common in early Mughal painting, which took it over directly from pre-Mughal schools, became increasingly less acceptable to the Emperor's more assured taste in the late sixteenth century. This was a time, as well, when painters who could not keep pace with the rapidly evolving Mughal style were released from the ateliers to seek work elsewhere.

[8] See Anand Krishna, "An Early *Ragamala* Series", *Ars Orientalis IV* (1961).
[9] E.g. compare ibid., fig. 14, with fig. 32 here, the latter based on the Chunar composition for "Vilaval Ragini".
[10] The manuscript was unfortunately not available for photography. References to published pages are given in *Heeramaneck*, p. 140, no. 193. See also: Stuart C. Welch, "Review: *Bundi Painting*", *Ars Orientalis V* (1963).
[11] Other pages from this manuscript have been published in Stuart C. Welch, *The Art of Mughal India*, plates 4 A–D.
[12] Richard Ettinghausen, *Paintings of the Sultans and Emperors of India*, plates 3 and 4, and accompanying text.
[13] See L. Shiveswarkar, *The Pictures of the Chaurapanchasika*, New Delhi: National Museum, 1967.

A further important work is in the Sangram Singh Collection, and portrays a royal couple being given homage by ladies of the *zenana (fig. 70)*. Comparisons of figure types, color, and architecture suggest that the painting should be dated contemporaneously with the Jagat Singh portrait of *fig. 68;* in addition, as in the National Museum portrait of that ruler, figures appear here more than once, a practice not otherwise common. We have not, unfortunately, been able to identify the scene, which may represent the festivities celebrating a marriage, or its participants. The male figure, despite a certain resemblance to Jagat Singh, appears to be a Mughal, for his '*jama* (coat) is tied on the right.[79]

Of far greater exuberance and energy than any painting we have yet discussed is the well-known illustration of a raja on an elephant hunting a rhinoceros *(fig. 71)*.[80] It is not inscribed, but has been tentatively identified as Ram Singh I of Kota on the basis of known portraits of that ruler, and the presumed date. A later drawing, compositionally identical with the exception of the now single rider, is in the same collection *(fig. 73)*, and such a work (presumably made from a tracing) may have been used to produce the third version *(fig. 74)*, on the walls of *Chattar Mahal*, a section of Kota Palace.

Figure 71, large and dynamic, previews the new interests which would henceforth dominate Kota painting. Unlike illustrations of traditional texts, which copied well-established compositions and developed by accentuating already prominent traits, hunting scenes and portraiture at Kota, at least initially, generated more artistic energy. Painters were encouraged to fill their works with innumerable, directly observed details: birds and animals, wounded and dying tigers and lions and boar, landscapes, and individualized portraiture. So much a part of the Kota tradition did such concerns become, that even in the mid-nineteenth century, after Kota artists' official work had become abbreviated and dry, portraits of wit and depth still appeared, although chiefly in simple sketches not meant to circulate beyond the artists' families.

The rhinoceros hunt of *fig. 71*, a bold image with an instant impact, is full of carefully observed detail as well: the different textures of the elephant's skin and that of his prey, for example. Its greatest effect, however, is in qualities transcending pure description, qualities we did not notice at all to the same degree in Bundi works, but which are here most intensely felt in the drawing structuring and modelling the elephant's head and ear, and which, in isolated detail, present us with a series of evocative, fantastic landscapes *(fig. 72)*. The same feeling is found in the drawing of two elephants fighting *(fig. 75)*, in the collection of Howard Hodgkin, London. The author of these two works must be the same, so identically conceived and drawn are the animals. The human figural formulae are slightly different, however. In the painting, they conform completely to the most standard Kota type of the early eighteenth century, while the Hodgkin drawing seems earlier: the heads are less square and the eyes seem not so formally preconceived. In addition, the rather heavy delineation of the eyelash, which would become a standard device by the 1750s, is absent in the drawing but present in the painting. These somewhat subtle points suggest that the rhinoceros hunt is slightly later than the elephant battle, although given earlier and later developments, we would expect them both to be of the period

[79] On the reverse of the painting is the seal of Raj Singh Rathor, identified by Kunvar Sangram Singh as Raj Singh, grandson of Mota Raja Udai Singh of Jodhpur, and founder of Junia, a Rathor state in Ajmer. The seal is dated equivalent to 1701 A.D.

[80] Illustrated in color in Sherman E. Lee, *Rajput Painting*, cover and p. 45.

of Ram Singh's rule. Thus if the former can be placed about 1705, since it seems relatively later than the Mukundgarh hunt, the Hodgkin drawing should be about 1695.

Several drawings add importantly to our knowledge of painting around 1700 at Kota, further proving it to be a period of almost unique vitality and creativeness in Rajasthan. Two battle scenes, possible portions of one large drawing, are known in Indian and American private collections *(fig. 76)*. Both were rapidly executed, and presumably represent only germinal developments of the theme; and while they do not form totally successful works as a whole, each has powerful passages. The Indian section bears an inscription above one of the warriors recording that he is Ram Singh, and this presents the possibility that the scene depicts his fatal battle on behalf of A'zam Shah at the death of Aurangzeb in 1707. The works are interesting in relation to a drawing of a feast *(fig. 77)*, which, while it was obviously drawn with complete spontaneity, shows perfect technical and artistic control. A fourth drawing, related in energy (if less "automatic" than the feast) and in some aspects of style again depicts a battle *(figs. 78 and 79)*. It is both larger and more complete than the previous works, and despite the minuteness of scale, the huge quantity of figures, and the lack of color (except for small areas of red to indicate the flow of blood), it is enormously satisfying both as a totality and in detail. Its ultimate source comes not from Rajput courts, but from the Mughals, who included battle scenes full of similar observations in their historical manuscripts. In style, it is clearly related to Kota, in fact the linework of the drawings mentioned above seems to be based on the type of execution seen here; and the rather lumpy definition of shoulders, in which the outline of an arm continues to define the backbone, is in particularly strong vogue both here and in many other Kota works of the early eighteenth century. The facial types, however, are not those customary at Kota. It is possible that they have evolved from styles developed in certain areas of Ajmer State, for Ajmer was one of the chief sub-capitals of the Mughal Empire, and seems to have supported painting of a provincial Mughal type throughout the seventeenth century. *Figure 80*, for example, may be the precursor of paintings known by inscription to be early eighteenth century works from Sawar, a *thikana* of Ajmer formed in the early seventeenth century under a grant from Jahangir. Here is a somewhat late survival of certain characteristics (color, loose composition, and vegetation types) found in the Kota Museum *Bhagavat*, and that manuscript must be very close to the type of sub-imperial painting popular in Ajmer during the earlier part of the seventeenth century. Sawar town is separated from Bundi by the Banas River, although its territories, which cross the river, adjoin those of both Bundi and Kota. Two drawings, one in the National Museum, New Delhi, the other in a private collection *(fig. 81)*, could thus also be attributed provisionally to a Sawar or related artist in the late seventeenth century. In common with Kota works is the drawing of shoulders, and the overall concept of the elephant, which, while less finely drawn than the elephant of the rhinoceros hunt *(fig. 71)*, shows in isolated detail much the same sense of abstract form.[81]

In any case, there is not yet enough information to make more than the most tentative suggestion concerning the source of the figural formulae, and thus perhaps the artist, of the battle scene *(figs. 78 and 79)*. The important point is that he evidently came to Kota from elsewhere, at a time when his style was mature. And it may have been largely due to the inspiration of his

[81] Important material on Sawar can be found in the collections of Kunvar Sangram Singh, and Gopi Krishna Kanoria.

personal talent, interests, and character (rather than simply the *milieu* in which he was trained) that Kota painters in the early eighteenth century were concerned with problems without precedent in Bundi, or elsewhere in Rajasthan; evolving a spontaneous, and enormously energetic style closely dependant on an intense perception of the natural world. These drawings brings us closer to the real interests and spirit of Kota artists, and this must have been recognized then by the court as well, for many of the best Kota works from these years are essentially colored drawings.

The Eighteenth Century

The earliest inscriptionally dated pictures from Kota are a portrait of Maharao Chattar Sal (r. 1758–64), made in 1759, and a *Bhagavata Purana* manuscript in the same style, dated 1760 – both in the Museum at Kota. They can be immediately related to other undated portraits of Chattar Sal, including a spirited procession scene *(fig. 82)* in the Severance Millikan Collection, Cleveland, and to additional dispersed *Bhagavat* pages *(fig. 83)*, seemingly from the same manuscript. Together with portraits of Chattar Sal's predecessors, these form a group that provides us with means to begin defining the development of painting at Kota in the years following the reign of Ram Singh I.

The palette of these paintings is quite different from the earlier works. A blue-green color has become popular (especially for architecture and, in a darker hue, for backgrounds), as have several shades of purple. Also, such elements as the heavily shaded eye, or the solid, almost sculptural facial type have become more extreme. The face of the Maharao in *fig. 82*, in fact, with large eyes, beaklike nose and rounded forehead, quite recognizably different from the Ram Singh I period formulae, seems to be, at least partially, the result of the strongly self-assured, personal style of the painter. Prototypes, however, are known in three paintings, apparently portraits of one man. An example in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, shows a ruler viewing a horse, and is labelled on the reverse as Maharao Arjun Singh (r. 1720–23) *(fig. 84)*; the others are in the Kanoria and Welch Collections. It is possible that these are contemporary with the ruler they depict, for the style of all three – certainly by one artist – seems earlier than the illustrations datable to 1760, although no less eccentric, and probably attributable to the same painter. The color of the Arjun Singh portraits is basically that of the Ram Singh I period. Modelling is effected, as traditionally, in tones of reddish-brown (particularly striking against the blue skin of Krishna in the Kanoria picture), while by the Chattar Sal period black was more generally employed. Also, the more orthodox drawing of the attendant figure in the Boston work *(fig. 84)* is still very close to, for example, the attendant rider of the Welch rhinoceros hunt *(fig. 71)*.

A famous dispersed *Ragamala (fig. 85)*, pages from which are in many museums and private collections, must be included in this group, as a brief comparison of figure types will show. This series' palette, while basically that of earlier works, begins to use the colors we noted as being popular by the time of the dated paintings. A relative date of ca. 1740 thus seems likely. We also see that the architectural forms, like the figures, have developed their character mainly through accentuation of earlier traits. Shading is no longer indicated by thin, parallel lines which actually model the forms, but is simply a thick stripe of a darker hue, a decoratively attractive device,

but far removed from the intentionally naturalistic source of the earlier practice. Interestingly, this comes at a time when more "progressive" trends of Kota painting were rediscovering naturalism.

A colored drawing of a hunt, inscribed as showing Rao Bhoj Singh (r. 1585–1607) of Bundi *(fig. 86)*, who was an ancestor of both the Bundi and Kota houses and the possible patron of the Chunar *Ragamala*, is in the collection of Stuart C. Welch. It is the largest work we have yet discussed, measuring about 19 by 26 inches. The setting is a jungle, out of which peer the faces of the ruler's innumerable retinue, while the Rao shoots his arrow at one of two impossibly huge lions. In overall design and detail, the work has vastly more verve than the Mukundgarh hunt *(fig. 60)*, from which it derives the use of thin, wet washes for foliage. The faces are drawn according to no particular or exclusive formula, some are heavily, "manneristically" modelled, some merely briefly sketched; and while dominantly Kota in feeling, a few faces show a Bundi ancestry through their more rounded profiles. Rao Bhoj himself is generally of the same type as the beak-nosed depictions of Arjun Singh and Chattar Sal, and thus of about 1740. A second hunting scene, this time for boar, is in the Sangram Singh Collection; it is also labelled as Rao Bhoj, and is by the same artist. Both works attempt to create more accurate and sensitive characterizations by the manipulation of standard figural formulae in freer and more personal ways. And for this reason, they represent for their date the most advanced trend of Kota painting that we know, a trend far more experimental than the always arch-conservative *Ragamala* tradition.

Another type of court level Kota painting is shown by a *Baramasa* series, one page of which was published by W. G. Archer and dated ca. 1720,[82] or in a familiar *Rasikapriya (fig. 88)*, much of which is in the National Museum of India. The latter has generally been attributed to Bundi,[83] although stylistically its dominant element is clearly of the type we identify with Kota. The figures are based on those of the Ram Singh I period in shape and proportion, rather than on those of the group just mentioned, although they are more smoothly painted. The majority of the illustrations, however, despite their lavishly royal character, are rather dry and academic, the vegetation stiff, and the animals drawn with little real sympathy. Others, such as *fig. 88*, betray a quite new attempt to render architecture three-dimensionally, although the modelling, to our eyes, produces only an effect of sootiness. Color, also, is used in a way that would become increasingly popular: strong colors are not placed edge to edge, but are isolated by large areas of white, so that the entire effect is cooler and less rich. In addition, such tones as the blue-green are introduced. This new color sense will reach maturity in an important dated painting of 1764 *(fig. 89)*, to be discussed below, in which the very smooth modelling we see attempted in the *Rasikapriya* is also mastered. The latter retains ties with the Ram Singh I period figure types which the dated work will break, however, suggesting that the *Rasikapriya* is earlier. A more exact date can be approached by comparison with an Udaipuri painting in the Museum at Chandigarh. This has an almost identical result to its attempts to model the architecture, and is dated 1754 A.D. In any case, the outcome of these new interests will be a group of works with more subtle, softer color and modelling, and, gradually, more sensitive portraiture – elements which developed at this time throughout Rajasthan and the Punjab Hill States; and

[82] *IPBK*, fig. 34.
[83] *Bundi*, plate 7, and *IPBK*, fig. 15.

the relation of which to the decline of the Mughal court and its artistic patronage is complex and uncertain.

By the reign of Maharao Chattar Sal, then, two extremes of Kota painting can be defined: the first typified by the Millikan Procession Scene *(fig. 82)*, and generally termed conservative; the second more refined, and more indebted to Mughal than to Rajput taste. This latter is best exemplified by a painting in the collection of Kunvar Sangram Singh of Nawalgarh, showing Maharao Chattar Sal and Kunvar Goman Singh with members of the court – including Raj Rana Zalim Singh, who presented the work to the ruler in 1764 *(figs. 89 and 90)*. The colors belong to the new, softer palette we have noted; and gold is brushed in with the colors of the costumes and bolsters of the leading figures to produce a particularly sumptuous effect. The faces are far more smoothly modelled than any we have so far been able to trace to Kota, and are released from automatic reference to Ram Singh I period prototypes (compare *figs. 90 and 67)*. The viewer is persuaded that he is seeing more accurate portraiture, with fewer of the sheerly personal eccentricities exhibited by, for example, the Bhoj Singh drawings *(figs. 86 and 87)*. A touch of "realism" found in the wrinkled face of the elderly courtier, also a favorite characterization of the hill schools beginning at the same time, becomes a well-hackneyed stereotype by the early nineteenth century (see also *fig. 94*).

It is interesting that the most conspicuously regal painting we have yet related to Kota, a work the style of which is quite new within the Kota context and yet extraordinarily influential well into the nineteenth century, is a portrait commissioned by Zalim Singh, the man most important to Kota's subsequent history. A portrait of him, extracted from *fig. 89*, is reproduced in *fig. 90*. (There is no reason, however, to connect this painting, or the development of the style generally with painters exclusively under his patronage; both wall-paintings and works on paper indicate that he and the rulers of Kota used the same group of artists.) Before Zalim Singh's appearance, there was little indication that Kota's fate or importance would be significantly different from that of Bundi or other Rajasthani states. We have recounted the involvement of Bundi and Kota with Jaipur and the Marathas during the early eighteenth century. In 1761, the Afghan Ahmad Shah Abdali defeated the Deccani troops at Panipat, yet while he made them too weak ever to reconstitute for themselves the now defunct Mughal Empire, they were sufficiently strong to drain from such Rajput states as Bundi and Kota whatever income was still forthcoming. By the accession of Maharao Umed Singh (r. 1770–1819) of Kota, the rulers' own control over both their lesser nobles and their subjects had also disintegrated to the extent that they were simply unable to gather sufficient money to fulfill the Marathas' demands. It was, however, singlehandedly due to Zalim Singh's machinations that the state survived. Soon after he presented the court scene to the Maharao in 1764, when he was only twenty-four years old, Zalim Singh was forced to leave Kota because of a successful romantic rivalry with Chattar Sal's brother and successor, Goman Singh (r. 1764–70).[84] Zalim Singh went to Udaipur, where he momentarily defeated the Marathas threatening that state, and was rewarded with a *jagir*, and the right to add *rana* to his hereditary title of *raja*. Later, however, he was captured by Maratha forces, and concocted an extraordinary plan to allow his return to Kota, where he had been invited by Maharao Umed Singh – coincidentally his nephew – to resume the position he

[84] See Malcolm, *A Memoir of Central India*, vol. i, pp. 487 ff.

ception can be judged as a whole, although the colors have faded beyond recognition and much of the surface has peeled off, as the view reproduced indicates. Around the top of the room at the right is a continuous hunting scene in the style of about 1780, similar to that of *fig. 111* in the *Bada Mahal;* while below, mainly in niches, are a series of paintings of stock subjects centering around women at leisure. Similar scenes are found in a second room *(fig. 113)*.

A third complex of wall-paintings, probably of a slightly earlier period, is in the pavilion reportedly called *Chattar Mahal*, again in the Palace proper. One wall of this room is covered with an enormous hunting scene *(figs. 114 and 115)*, much of which is simply composed of individual combat scenes roughly united by the landscape. Among these is the almost exact adaptation of the rhinoceros hunt which we have mentioned *(fig. 74)*. The scene is different in several ways from the Umed Singh hunts: tree types are freer, compositions less consciously rhythmic, and facial types more traditional, squarer and heavier. This is true as well of scenes of Krishna worship on a second wall *(fig. 116)*.

Probably of the Chattar Singh period, as that ruler is the last depicted in a family tree included in the composition, are the wall-paintings in the *Raj Mahal*, the Maharao's *darbar* hall in Kota Palace, and in a nearby closed room where the pigments have remained absolutely fresh. The *Raj Mahal* scenes are drawn both from legend and history *(fig. 117)*, and include, for example, an illustration of the clocktower in the main *chowk* of Kota town. The strongest section shows a forest of trees, a late equivalent for the trees of the Umed Singh period hunting scenes. An open interior room behind the *darbar* hall proper is decorated with scenes which seem relatively modern repaintings (or recolorings) of older compositions. The formal gardens and pavilions remind one of seventeenth century work.

One further aspect of Kota painting has not yet been mentioned: the paintings of the Brijnath Temple in Kota Palace. This is the Maharao's personal place of worship; and, with Kishangarh, is one of the main centers for followers of the devotional sect established by Vallabhacarya in the late fifteenth century. The parent temple, at Nathadvara, north of Udaipur, is known to have fostered an enormous number of artists, whose task was to turn out icons of Krishna in the form of Nathji, for pilgrims to buy and set up in their homes. In addition, some artists painted large banners *(pichchhawai)*, often with human figures, to hang around the image of the god housed in the temple. Because of the rather strict format of the various paintings, it has always been assumed that they were all executed at Nathadvara. In fact, they can also be attributed to several other centers, including both Kishangarh and Kota. A typical Kota example is shown in *fig. 118*, where the provenance is clear because of the style and which can be dated to Ram Singh II's reign. There are similar paintings within the sanctuary of the Brijnath Temple, but they are inaccessible to close examination by the visitor; while in the *Bada Mahal*, besides an enormous quantity of paintings on paper depicting worshippers at the shrine of Nathji (a stock design seen also in wall-paintings at Jhala House), there are wall-paintings in which two unidentified men appear, in both religious and secular contexts. They are shown together in a niche painting in the outer room, and riding on an elephant, the most important personages in a large processional scene in the inner room *(fig. 119)*. In each case, one of the figures is clearly subservient to the other and in attendance on him. The same man appears in many paintings on paper attributable to Kota as the Brahmin worshipping Nathji, while his superior is found in *pichchhawais* depicting the hereditary successors to the priestship of Na-

Fig. 71 Ram Singh I (?) of Kota pursuing a rhinoceros. Kota, ca. 1705 A. D. *Private Collection*

Fig. 72 Detail of Figure 71.

Fig. 73 Raja pursuing a rhinoceros. Drawing based on Figure 71. Kota, ca. 1750 A.D. *Private Collection.*

Fig. 74 Raja pursuing a rhinoceros. Wall-painting in *Chattar Mahal, Kota Palace*, based on Figure 71. Ca. 1750 A.D.