



Raja Kansa orders demons to harass members of the Yadu lineage

Not on display

Title/Description: Raja Kansa orders demons to harass members of the Yadu lineage

Born: 1540 c. - 1560 c.

Object Type: Drawing

Materials: Paper, Watercolour

Measurements: h 188 x w 245 mm (frame: 336 x 393 x 21 mm)

Accession Number: 540

Historic Period: 16th century

Production Place: Asia, India, Malwa, Mewar

School/Style: Indian Miniatures

Credit Line: Donated by Robert and Lisa Sainsbury, 1973

Some of the earliest Buddha sculptures were made at Mathura in the 1st century AD. Subsequently, it developed into an important centre for both sculptures and paintings illustrating scriptures from the Buddhist, Jain and Hindu religions.

This is the sixth page from a copy of the *Bhagavata Parana* made in the 16th century. This is indicated by the Sanskrit symbol for the number 6 in the top centre. From 500BC-500AD eighteen *Puranas* (meaning "old narrative") were written in Sanskrit. They tell the story of the Hindu view of creation of the world, its evolution and its gods. When the Krishna devotional cult swept India in medieval times the Krishna legend was told in illustrated books called *Bhagavata Purana*.

This picture therefore illustrates a famous Hindu legend and the style is almost entirely Indian. The wicked Kansa is seated with his courtiers on a carpet in the right of the painting. The background on this side is red. He hears of the birth of the god Krishna whom the legend says will destroy him, so he orders his demons to go to the village to kill the child. The demons have many forms and are shown on a tiled floor on the left of the painting against a yellow background. The colours are bold with an emphasis on orange/yellow and there is little attempt at perspective.

This picture was painted just before the Great Mughals established their studios in Delhi, and so there is no indication of their specific influence. The design of the carpet in the bottom right hand corner could be said to show Persian influence, presumably from pre-Mughal times.

Description taken from the 'Art From The Indian Sub-Continent In The Sainsbury Centre' catalogue by Margaret A. Willey (Sainsbury Centre, UEA, 1995).

Provenance

Donated to the Sainsbury Centre, University of East Anglia in 1973 as part of the original gift.
