



## **Woven Masterpieces of Sikh Heritage**

### **The Stylistic Development of the Kashmir Shawl under Maharaja Ranjit 1780-1839**

**Frank Ames**

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- While there are many books and articles on the Kashmir shawl, covering its history and manufacture, until now very little has been written on what is perhaps the most important historical period of the shawl's stylistic evolution
- *Woven Masterpieces* is based on new research, sourcing primary as well as secondary archival material. It is also based on the author's thirty year involvement with the best and rarest examples of the Kashmir shawl

**In this** new, ground-breaking work, *Woven Masterpieces of Sikh Heritage*, Frank Ames' unique passion for the subject reveals the events and ideas that transpired within this *Khalsa* (Sikh Brotherhood) movement, transforming the Kashmir shawl to one of powerful ethnic proportions. During this era of Punjab's colourful history a variety of complex and enigmatic patterns emerged, some purely geometric, others symbolic, which have long eluded textiles experts. Maharaja Runjit Singh's takeover of Kashmir in 1819 had an extraordinary impact on the fashion of the legendary Kashmir shawl, giving rise to "a major artistic expression in the subcontinent". Through the exploration of miniature painting of Northern India and the hill states, Kashmiri manuscripts, the Sikh Holy Scriptures of the Sri Adi Granth and Janam Sakhis, and illustrations of unique shawls from world collections, Ames describes with his usual penchant for exacting detail the nature and source of these enigmatic patterns that define the Sikh period. In addition, textile enthusiasts will discover new material in chapters devoted to the Mughal period, lacquer painting and Indo-Persian shawl influences and trade.

**Frank Ames** is an antiques dealer with 30 years experience specialising in rare textiles and Oriental rugs, in Paris and New York. He has written extensively on the subject of the Kashmir shawl; his publications include *The Kashmir Shawl and its Indo-French Influence* for the Antique Collectors' Club.