



# Nala and Damayanti

## A Great Series of Paintings of an Old Indian Romance

**B N Goswamy**

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- The remarkable series of paintings, covered in this book, tells the story of the intense love between King Nala and Princess Damayanti from one of the last great kavyas of Sanskrit literature
- The volume highlights the work of one of the most talented families of painters known to Indian art coming from a small principality of Guler in today's Himachal Pradesh
- Out of 110 paintings, and with the work interrupted for reasons unknown, 47 completed paintings are published here the remaining having survived only in the form of highly finished drawings

Three things come together in the series of paintings depicted in this book: a great text, a delectable old romance, and the work of one of the most talented families of painters.

The text is the 12th century Naishadhacharita of Sriharsha, one of the last great kavyas of Sanskrit literature; the story, told with the utmost delicacy, centres around the intense love that grew – mutual sights heard of, but yet unseen – between King Nala and Princess Damayanti. The painter family that produced this exquisitely painted series came from the small principality of Guler in the “Pahari” hills: today's Himachal Pradesh. The intent of the painter/s was to cover the story in close to 110 paintings, but only 47 paintings could be completed all of them now in the collection of the Amar Mahal Museum and Library at Jammu, and here published the remaining having survived only in the form of highly finished drawings.

B.N. Goswamy, a distinguished art historian, is Professor Emeritus of Art History at the Panjab University, Chandigarh. He has been the recipient of many honors, including the Jawaharlal Nehru Fellowship, the Rietberg Award for Outstanding Research in Art History, the Padma Shri (1998) and the Padma Bhushan (2008) from the President of India. Professor Goswamy has taught, as Visiting Professor, at several universities across the world. His work, especially in the area of Indian Painting, has influenced much thinking and he has authored close to 25 books.