



The Great Mysore Bhagavata

Complete Study of a Manuscript from the Binney Collection, San Diego Museum

B. N. Goswamy

Contributions by Robert J Del Bontà

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- An in-depth analysis of the great and sacred text, the Bhagavata Purana
- This work focuses on the second half of the Tenth Book of the Purana
- Includes over 200 images of the exquisite paintings in this splendid manuscript

This book from Mysore, stands out, not only because of the splendour of its illustrations but also because it engages with that great and sacred text, the Bhagavata Purana, in a manner that is completely different from almost anything else that one sees.

There are leaps of imagination here that take one's breath away, and the episodes picked up by its great but unnamed illustrators are explored in dense, brilliant detail. At each step the painters seem to have been aware of the importance of the text itself. For the Purana they were engaging with has a very special place in the heart of devotees, there being the belief that the Bhagavata 'is equal in status to the Veda'.

The scope of the volume is restricted to the second half of the Tenth Book of the Purana. Here the city of Dwarka is founded, a fierce contest with the bear king Jambavana is fought; the Khandava forest is burnt down, the great fortress of Narakasura is vanquished, the city of Hastinapura is dragged to the waters, great pilgrimages are undertaken, hordes of enslaved princes are freed, Shishupala is slain, Jarasandha is riven. Wide-eyed, one sees wonders piling upon majestic wonders.

B.N. Goswamy, India's leading and much-honored art historian, is currently Professor Emeritus of Art History at the Panjab University, Chandigarh. His work covers a wide range and is regarded, especially in the area of Indian painting, as having influenced much thinking. Professor Goswamy has taught as Visiting Professor at different universities in Europe and the US. Among his most widely followed works have been: *Pahari Painting: The Family as the Basis of Style*; *Pahari Masters: Court Painters of Northern India (with Eberhard Fischer)*; *Nainsukh of Guler: A great Indian Painter from a small Hill State*. **Robert J. Del Bontà**, PhD has been loosely affiliated with the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco since 1978 where he taught courses and curated many shows. **Dr Caleb Simmons** is an Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Arizona. His first book, *Devotional Sovereignty: Kingship and Religion in India, 1782-1868*, focuses on the Mysore court.