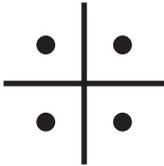


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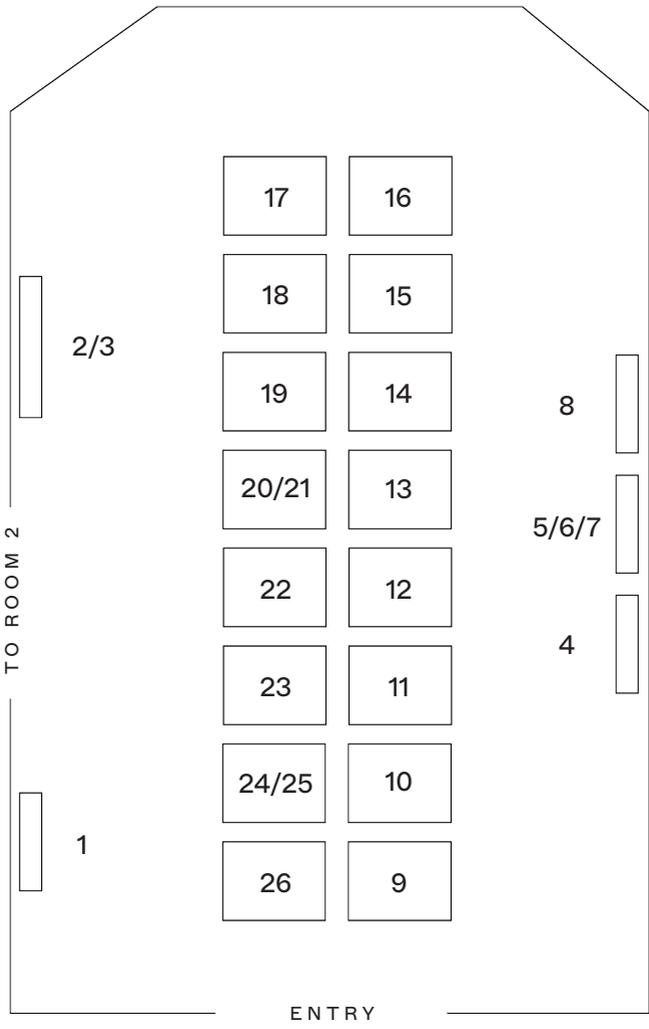
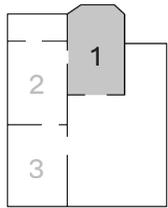
**The
Kalpasutra**

A supplement to the exhibition
"Being Jain: Art and Culture of an
Indian Religion"

English

J I N A

Room 1



1. Being the Jina: an introduction

The exhibition is devoted to West Indian miniature paintings of the Kalpasutra, which depict episodes from the life of Jina Mahavira and his predecessors.

The Kalpasutra is part of the canon of the Shvetambaras, one of the two main branches of Jainism, and was written during the first centuries A.D. In addition to the rules of conduct for Jain monks and nuns, it contains the most famous account of the life and work of Jina Mahavira, as well as a list of his most important disciples, who are also revered by the Jains.

Most of the Kalpasutra manuscripts were written in the 15th and 16th centuries and are illustrated by numerous miniatures. The exhibition shows illustrations from different manuscripts to narrate the Jina legend and to make the visual language of these paintings, which are among the oldest testimonies of Indian book art, accessible.

11 disciples of Mahavira take over the leadership of the community after his death.

2/3

Disciples of Mahavira

India, Gujarat, 15th c.

Pigment painting on paper

Museum Rietberg, RVI 818

Provenance: 1972, Collection Gitanjali

de Guevara, Caracas

Acquired with funds from the city of Zurich

4. Jina and Jina legends

Jina Mahavira is considered the founder of Jainism. Jain literature reports that he was the last in a series of 24 religious preachers who appear in each age to renew the Jain doctrine, which is believed to be eternal.

Nothing is known about his life. It seems that in the early days of Jainism, the life and personality of the teacher and founder of the

order meant little to the faithful. More important than his person was the doctrine he preached.

It was not until centuries after Mahavira's assumed lifetime that the legend was composed, elevating him to the status of a saint and recounting his life and work. That this narrative was written under the influence of the Buddha legend is evidenced by the great similarity of the life paths of both religious founders.

The life path of all Jinas is based on the Mahavira legend and thus follows a fixed pattern which can be understood as cosmic order or as world law.

5 **Jina Rishabha**

6 **Ten Jinas**

7 **Ten Jinas**

India, Gujarat, 15th c.
Pigment painting on paper
Museum Rietberg, RVI 818
Provenance: until 1972, Gitanjali
de Guevara Collection, Caracas
Acquired with funds of the city of Zurich

8. The Kalpasutra

The most famous version of the Jina legend is handed down in the Kalpasutra. It relates how Mahavira was born as a human for the last time after many lives that his soul had passed through. He grew up as the son of a king and later became a mendicant monk to find salvation. According to Jain teachings, this is only possible in a human existence.

Since the 14th century, numerous illustrated manuscripts of the Kalpasutra have been produced in western India. The miniatures illustrate the text, but also contain numerous motifs from other versions of the Jina legend that are not part of the Kalpasutra. In this way, the illustrations tell their own version of the Jina legend, which includes episodes from later Jain works and motifs from popular lore. At the beginning of each manuscript, a Jina is depicted sitting on a throne and surrounded by accompanying figures. He is followed by other miniatures showing more Jinas, arranged in rows and represented more or less identical.

9. The dreams of the Brahmin Devananda

After an infinitely long stay in the heavens, Mahavira descended to earth for his last birth into the womb of the Brahmin Devananda, who lived in the village of Kundagrama. No sooner had he manifested himself as an embryo in her than the 14 dream images appeared to the Brahmin in her sleep. These announced the forthcoming birth of a Jina. The next morning, she immediately reported her dream to her husband, the Brahmin Rishabhadatta.

- 10 **Devananda sleeping on her couch**
India, Gujarat, 16th c.
Pigment painting on paper
Museum Rietberg, RVI 808
Provenance: until 1962, C.L. Bharany, New Delhi
Purchase with funds of the city of Zurich
- 11 **The 14 dream images appear to Devananda**
India, 16th c.
Pigment painting on paper
Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum Cologne, 68182
- 12 **Devananda tells her husband about the dreams**
Western India, 15th c.
Pigment painting on paper
Museum Rietberg, Alice Boner Collection, inv. no. RVI 1004
Provenance: until 1983, Alice Boner Collection
Bequest Alice Boner

13. The transfer of the embryo

When Shakra, the king of the gods, became aware of the impending birth of the future Jina, he rose from his throne and bowed in the direction of the village of Kundagrama. The next moment, however, he realized that Mahavira had manifested as an embryo in the body of a Brahmin. Since this was against the world order, according to which a Jina must be born into a royal family, he gave the order to the gazelle-headed god Harinaigameshin to remove the embryo from the body of the Brahmin and to place it in the queen Trishala.

- 14 **Shakra kneels in front of his throne and bows down**
India, 16th c.
Pigment painting on paper
Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum Cologne, 68183

- 15 **Harinaigameshin carries the embryo of Mahavira on his palm**
India, 15th c.
Pigment painting on paper
Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum Cologne, 68185
- 16 **Harinaigameshin brings the embryo of Mahavira to the sleeping queen Trishala**
India, 15th c.
Pigment painting on paper
Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum Cologne, 68194

17. The dreams of Trishala

As soon as Trishala carried the embryo of Mahavira in her body, the 14 dream images, which announced the birth of a Jina, also appeared to her. The next morning, she wanted to tell her husband about the auspicious dreams. King Siddhartha, however, first devoted himself to martial arts and the grooming of his body before he received his wife.

- ROOM 1
- 18 **The first two dream images appear to the sleeping Trishala**
India
Pigment painting on paper
Museum Rietberg, 2021.26
Provenance: 1990-2020, Dr. Leander Feiler, Munich
Acquired with funds from the Rietberg-Kreis
- 19 **The 14 dream images**
India, 17th c.
Pigment painting on paper
Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum Cologne, 68187b
- 20 **King Siddhartha (top right) doing martial arts**
Western India, 15th c.
Pigment painting on paper
Museum Rietberg, RVI 1007
Provenance: until 1983, collection Alice Boner
Bequest Alice Boner

21 **King Siddhartha (top left) watches his followers practicing martial arts**
India, Gujarat, 15th c.
Pigment painting on paper
Museum Rietberg, RVI 818
Provenance: 1972, Collection Gitanjali de Guevara, Caracas
Acquired with funds from the City of Zurich

22 **King Siddhartha grooming his body**
India, Gujarat, 15th c.
Pigment painting on paper
Museum Rietberg, RVI 807
Provenance: 9.7.1962, C.L. Bharany, New Delhi
Acquired with funds from the city of Zurich

23. The interpretation of the dreams

After his wife told him about the dreams, King Siddhartha summoned a group of knowledgeable Brahmins to interpret the dreams. Trishala attended the meeting, shielded by a curtain.

24 **Trishala tells Siddhartha about her dream, with the curtain between them**

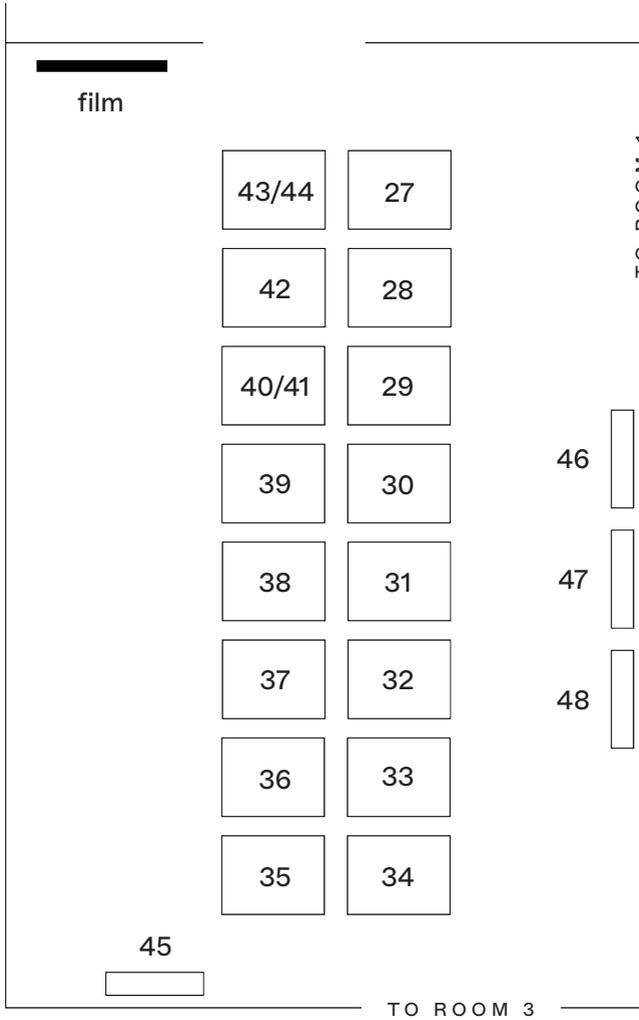
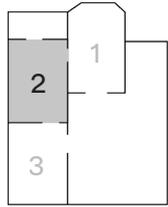
25 **King Siddhartha (upper right) and the dream interpreters at the stick oracle**

India, Gujarat, 15th c.
Pigment painting on paper
Museum Rietberg, RVI 818
Provenance: 1972, Collection Gitanjali de Guevara, Caracas
Acquired with funds from the city of Zurich

26 **The dream interpreters with manuscript and scroll**

Western India, 15th c.
Pigment painting on paper
Museum Rietberg, Alice Boner Collection, RVI 1006
Provenance: 1961-1983, Alice Boner Collection
Bequest Alice Boner

Room 2



27. Pregnancy and birth

The pregnancy weakened the queen. Mahavira felt the suffering of his mother and wanted to alleviate it. He kept very quiet in the womb as he did not want to cause pain to Trishala. The queen, however, feared the death of the child and fell into great grief. Thereupon Mahavira moved a toe and his mother felt that he was alive. This filled her with great joy. After nine months, the child was born and the birth ceremonies were held.

28 **Trishala's sorrow (left) and joy (right)**

29 **Mahavira's birth**

India, Gujarat, 15th c.
Pigment painting on paper
Museum Rietberg, RVI 818
Provenance: 1972, Collection Gitanjali
de Guevara, Caracas
Acquired with funds from the City of Zurich

30

Birth ceremonies

Western India, 15th c.
Pigment painting on paper
Museum Rietberg, Alice Boner Collection, RVI 1005
Provenance: 1961-1983, Alice Boner Collection
Bequest Alice Boner

31. Childhood

A few days after the birth of Mahavira, the god Shakra took the future Jina to the sacred Mount Meru. On the top of the mountain, the gods held a consecration ceremony. Shakra held the child on his knees while the gods sprinkled water on him. Mahavira grew up happy and sheltered in his parents' palace. Even as a child, he impressed his friends with his extraordinary power and strength, which enabled him to defeat even the gods. He was taught by the best teachers, and impressed them, too, with his knowledge and wisdom.

- 32 **God Shakra holding Mahavira during the divine consecration ceremony**
 India, Gujarat, 15th c.
 Pigment painting on paper
 Museum Rietberg, RVI 818
 Provenance: 1972, Gitanjali de Guevara Collection, Caracas
 Acquired with funds from the city of Zurich
- 33 **God Shakra holding Mahavira during the divine consecration ceremony** (left miniature)
A monk visits the mountain world animated by animals (right miniature)
 India, Gujarat or Rajasthan, 16th c.
 Pigment painting on paper
 Museum Rietberg, RVI 1875b
 Provenance: Sotheby's, London
 Gift Barbara Fischer and Neeta Premchand
- 34 **Mahavira proves his strength and defeats a god** (upper register)
Mahavira rides an elephant to see his teacher (lower register)
 India, Gujarat, 15th c.
 Pigment painting on paper
 Museum Rietberg, RVI 818
 Provenance: 1972, Collection Gitanjali de Guevara, Caracas
 Acquired with funds from the city of Zurich

35. Retreat from worldly life

When Mahavira was twenty-nine years old, his parents died. He then asked his brother for permission to leave the palace and henceforth lead the life of a mendicant monk. At a great feast, Mahavira gave away all his riches to the people. He was then brought outside the city walls in a palanquin. Under a large tree he received the monk's ordination. He plucked out his hair in five tufts, which were collected by God Shakra.

- 36 **Mahavira gives away his wealth**
- 37 **Mahavira is carried in the palanquin
in front of the city walls**
- 38 **Mahavira receives monk ordination
and pulls out his hair**

India, Gujarat, 15th c.
 Pigment painting on paper
 Museum Rietberg, RVI 818
 Provenance: 1972, Collection Gitanjali
 de Guevara, Caracas
 Acquired with funds from the city of Zurich

39. Teaching and wandering

For many years Mahavira wandered the land as a mendicant monk and finally attained omniscience. He was now a Jina who knew the way to salvation. The gods built a magnificent assembly hall. In it the fourfold congregation, consisting of monks and nuns as well as male and female laymen, gathered to hear the first sermon of the Jina. Even the animals came and listened to his sermon. In the years that followed, Mahavira travelled the country preaching and the number of his followers grew steadily. At the age of seventy-two, Mahavira died. His soul rose to the place of the redeemed at the apex of the universe.

- 40 **Mahavira's first sermon**
- 41 **The fourfold congregation listens
to Mahavira's first sermon**
- India, Gujarat, 15th c.
 Pigment painting on paper
 Museum Rietberg, RVI 818
 Provenance: 1972, Collection Gitanjali
 de Guevara, Caracas
 Acquired with funds from the city of Zurich
- 42 **Mahavira preaching to his congregation**
 India, Gujarat, dated V.S. 1541 (= 1483-84 A.D.)
 Pigment painting with gold on paper
 Museum Rietberg, RVI 1911
 Provenance: November 1980, Kunsthaus
 Lempertz, Cologne; November 1980-Summer
 2001: Collection Horst Metzger, Grünstadt
 Gift Horst Metzger

- 43 **Mahavira at the place of the redeemed souls**
India, Gujarat, 15th c.
Pigment painting on paper
Museum Rietberg, RVI 818
Provenance: 1972, Gitanjali de Guevara
Collection, Caracas
Acquired with funds from the city of Zurich
- 44 **Mahavira's Sermon** (upper register) **and Mahavira**
at the Place of the Redeemed Souls (lower register)
India, Rajasthan (?), 15th c.
Pigment painting on paper
Museum Rietberg, RVI 1872a
Provenance: 05.10.1998, Terence McNerney
Fine Arts Ltd., New York
Gift Hans and Jolan Tobler

45. Jain book art

For centuries, in medieval India manuscripts made of palm leaf or paper were an essential means of collecting knowledge and recording it over long periods. Jain manuscripts, produced in western India since the 11th century, are among the oldest evidence of Indian book art. Together with the East Indian painting schools, where only Buddhist manuscripts were produced, the painting schools of Gujarat and Rajasthan represent the beginning of Indian miniature painting. Here, predominantly Jain manuscripts were produced, which were donated by members of wealthy Jain families and used for the recitation of the Kalpasutra during the “festival of the rainy season” in August/September. The miniatures were shown during the recitation.

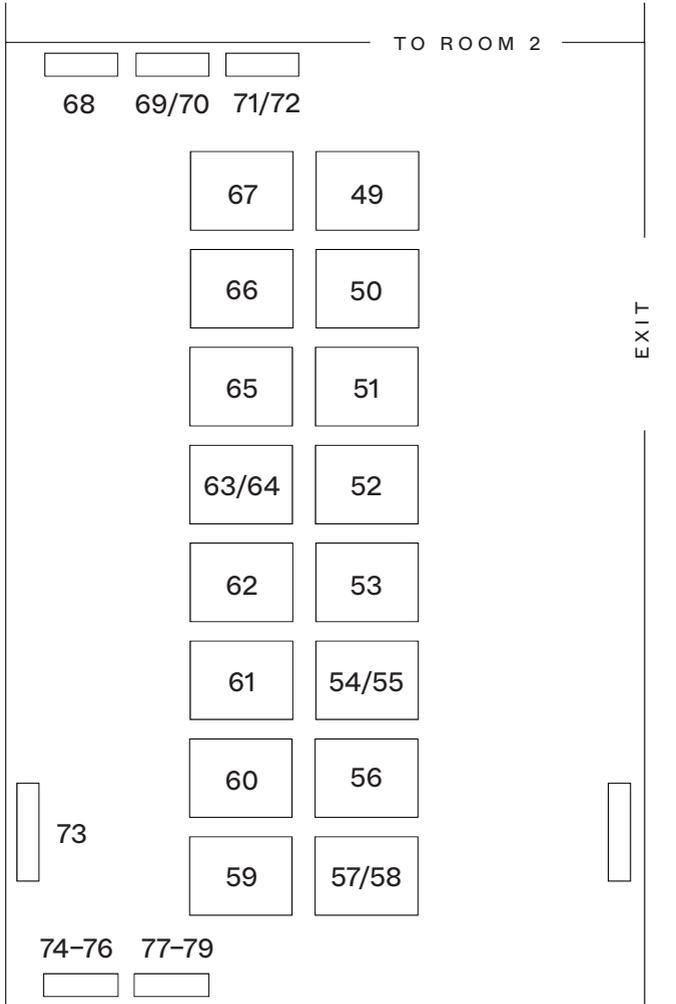
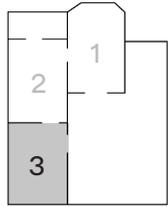
46. Manuscript production

In the 15th and 16th centuries, Jain manuscripts were produced in large numbers. The format of the leaves and the execution of text and illustration were uniform and followed fixed rules. Common to all manuscripts is the horizontal format, which can be traced back to the older palm-leaf manuscripts. While the natural growth of the palm leaves dictated a long, narrow form for the individual pages, the retention of a landscape format - albeit modified - after the transition to paper is probably due to the long tradition. The individual pages were not bound into a book, but lay loosely on top of each other. Wide lines separate the areas of the page: on the one hand, the text field from the blank strips on the narrow sides, which are grip margins and protection against damage at the same time, and on the other hand, the areas that were intended for the miniatures. Often the manuscripts contained an annotation, which was placed in reduced type around the main text. The red dots in the middle of the leaves are reminiscent of the palm-leaf manuscripts, which were perforated at this point.

48. Painting style

The miniatures are painted in the so-called “West Indian style”. Since the 13th century, a red background is predominant. Around the turn of the 15th century, this red background is expanded in some places to include areas of blue color, before it is finally fully replaced by a blue background. The figures do not bear any individual traits and are to be understood as a kind of ideal image of man. The gods are mostly depicted with four arms, and the monks and nuns can be distinguished from the laity by their white robes, which in the case of nuns are supplemented by an implied veil. Fixed pictorial formulas were used to locate the scenery either in the open air or inside a building. For example, a splendidly decorated canopy, occasionally supplemented by architectural elements, stands for an action in a building, while rock formations, trees, or a narrow horizon at the upper edge of the picture suggest a scene in the open air.

Room 3



49. The Parshva legend

Following the life of Mahavira, the legend of his predecessor Parshva is told in the Kalpasutra.

The life of Parshva is very similar to the biography of Mahavira, but in the illustration cycle some episodes are added which are not part of the text and were taken from a later narrative tradition. This concerns mainly the story of Parshva and Kamatha, who meet and fight each other repeatedly over several lifetimes.

The last encounter takes place while the brahmin Kamatha is practicing the five-fire asceticism, in which four fires are lit around him and the sun burns down as the fifth fire. In the process, Parshva rescues a snake that had hidden itself in one of the burning branches. Kamatha finally attains salvation with Parshva's help.

50 **Birth of Parshva** (upper register) **and divine consecration ceremony** (lower register)

51 **Standing Parshva in asceticism** (upper register) **and the brahmin Kamatha during the five-fire asceticism** (lower register)

52 **Kamatha practicing five-fire asceticism**

India, Gujarat, 15th c.
Pigment painting on paper
Museum Rietberg, RVI 818
Provenance: 1972, Collection Gitanjali de Guevara, Caracas
Acquired with funds from the City of Zurich

53. The legend of Aristanemi

The life story of Parshva is followed by the legends about the Jina Arishtanemi. His mythological significance lies in his kinship with the god Krishna. The latter feared that the stronger Arishtanemi could deprive him of his throne and challenged him to a trial of strength. However, the legends about Arishtanemi focus on the event that caused the world renunciation of this Jina. Arishtanemi, who was also born into a royal family, went to see the princess Rajimati, to whom his parents wanted to marry him, when he noticed a large number of animals in an enclosure outside the palace, screaming

and bellowing in fear. The prince asked his charioteer about the animals and the charioteer replied that these animals were for the wedding feast. Arishtanemi was filled with compassion for the suffering animals, abandoned the wedding plans, and became a mendicant monk.

- 54 **Arishtanemi's birth** (upper register) **and**
divine consecration ceremony (lower register)
- 55 **Worship of Krishna's conch**, (upper register)
and announcement of marriage by Aristanemi's
father (lower register)
- India, Gujarat, 15th c.
Pigment painting on paper
Museum Rietberg, RVI 818
Provenance: 1972, Gitanjali de Guevara
Collection, Caracas
Acquired with funds from the City of Zurich
- 56 **Arishtanemi proves his strength by blowing**
Krishna's conch (upper register); **Arishtanemi**
proves his strength by holding Krishna by his
outstretched arm (lower register)
- India, Gujarat, 15th c.
Pigment painting on paper
Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum Cologne, 68194
- 57 **Aristanemi on the way to Rajimati's palace**
(upper register) **and in front of the animal**
enclosure (lower register)
- India, Gujarat, 15th c.
Pigment painting on paper
Museum Rietberg, RVI 818
Provenance: 1972, Collection Gitanjali
de Guevara, Caracas
Acquired with funds from the city of Zurich
- 58 **Arishtanemi riding an elephant to the palace**
of Rajimati and leaving in a carriage
- India, 16th c.
Pigment painting on paper
Museum Rietberg, RVI 929
Provenance: 17.05.1984, George P. Bickford,
Cleveland
Acquired with funds from the staff
of the Museum Rietberg

59. The Legend of Rishabha

Like all other Jinas, Rishabha came from a royal family. As the first Jina of the present age, he is considered the progenitor and founder of culture. Realizing that the power of the mythical wishing trees which had supplied people in the golden age was waning, he instructed the people of his kingdom in the various arts. He taught them crafts and gave them writing and mathematics. As a monk, Rishabha fasted for a long time. Only after a thousand years did he resume eating food, which he received from his great-grandson.

60

Rishabha as a mendicant monk

Western India, 15th c.

Pigment painting on paper

Museum Rietberg, Alice Boner Collection, RVI 1008

Provenance: until 1961-1983, Alice Boner Collection

Bequest Alice Boner

61. The Legend of Sthulabhadra

Sthulabhadra had seven sisters who, like him, had joined the Jain ascetic order. One day they visited their brother. Sthulabhadra transformed himself into a lion and believed to please his sisters through this miracle.

Before his monastic ordination, Sthulabhadra had lived with the courtesan Kosha at the royal court. Kosha was later promised to a charioteer of the king, who tried to impress her with the art of archery. Kosha responded by explaining that any skill could be learned through constant practice and was therefore nothing out of the ordinary. Later, both entered the Jain ascetic order.

62

Sthulabhadra and his sisters

India, Gujarat, 15th c.

Pigment painting on paper

Museum Rietberg, RVI 818

Provenance: 1972, Gitanjali de Guevara

Collection, Caracas

Acquired with funds from the city of Zurich

63 **Sthulabhadra and his sisters** (upper register)
and Sthulabhadra and Kosha (lower register)
India, Gujarat, 16th c.
Pigment on paper
Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum Cologne, 68186

64 **Sthulabhadra and Kosha and
the consecration of a Jina**
India, 17th c.
Pigment painting on paper
Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum Cologne, 68036

65. The Legend of Vajrasvamin

Vajrasvamin wanted to become a monk already at the time of his birth. After his father joined the monastic order, Vajrasvamin was educated in an order of nuns by his mother. As the head of the order, he saved his community from famine by providing them with food that he created through magic.

66 **Vajrasvamins childhood. His mother watches him
in the cradle** (upper register). **Two nuns who raise
Vajraswamin** (lower register)
India, 15th c.
Pigment painting on paper
Rautenstrauch-Joest Museum Cologne, 68194

67 **Vajrasvamin produces food by magic** (lower register)
and provides it to his community (upper register).
India, 15th/16th c.
Pigment painting on paper
Rautenstrauch-Joest-Museum Cologne, 68184

68. The Kalaka legend

The Kalaka legend probably originated in the late 10th century and has survived in several versions. The story describes the adventures of the Jain monk Kalaka. The latter was a prince who joined the ascetic order after meeting a Jain monk. The first episode of the story tells how Kalaka's sister was kidnapped and held captive by the king of Ujjain. With the help of the foreign Shahi princes and their armies, Kalaka managed to free his sister.

Another episode narrates how Shakra, the king of the gods, took the form of a brahmin to test Kalaka's knowledge.

- 69 **Kalaka meets a monk**
India, Gujarat, 15th/16th c.
Pigment painting on paper
Museum Rietberg, RVI 885
Provenance: 1978, collection L. Eling, Bernau
Gift L. Eling
- 70 **Kalaka and the Shahi king**
Western India, 15th c.
Pigment painting on paper
Museum Rietberg, Collection Alice Boner, RVI 1012
Provenance: until 1983, Alice Boner Collection
Bequest Alice Boner
- 71/72 **Two folios with Kalaka and Shakra**
Western India, 15th c.
Pigment painting on paper
Museum Rietberg, Collection Alice Boner,
RVI 1011, RVI 1010
Provenance: until 1983, Alice Boner Collection
Bequest Alice Boner

73. A Tradition Lives On: The Production of Jain Manuscripts in Contemporary India

In preparation for the exhibition, Harsha Vinay's team researched the production of Jain manuscripts in contemporary India. To do so, they visited numerous libraries, museums, and institutes some of which were the home of thousands of manuscripts. They talked to librarians, heads of institutions, researchers, and scholars to better understand the production, distribution, and preservation of manuscripts in contemporary India.

They found that today there are concerted efforts to preserve manuscripts in many Indian states, especially Gujarat. Ancient illustrated manuscripts on palm leaves and paper are being extensively digitized and preserved to provide better access to the information they contain. There is also an active dissemination of information, research, publications, and translations of manuscripts through a large network of libraries.

In Ahmedabad and Surendranagar (both located in the Indian state of Gujarat), they documented two workshops where Jain manuscripts are still produced and where the art of manuscript production is taught, maintaining some of the traditional methods of manuscript production.

- 74 Artisans and students making Jain manuscripts.
A wooden storage box for manuscripts can be seen
in the foreground.
Sabarmati Gurukulam, Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India 2022
- 75 The traditional material for making manuscripts
consists of palm leaves, paper, minerals for pigments,
inks, wooden blocks with lines for writing, and tools.
Gold ink on black polished handmade paper.
Sabarmati Gurukulam, Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India 2022

- 76 The son of (deceased) Yunis Usman Sheikh, a well-known maker of Jainist manuscripts, continues the family tradition. Gold ink on handmade paper.
Workshop of Yasin Usman Sheikh, Surendranagar, Gujarat, India, 2022
- 77 Ramnik Sonda Shihora writes a Jain chant in gold ink on handmade paper.
Workshop of Yasin Usman Sheikh, Surendranagar, Gujarat, India, 2022
- 78 A collection of tools, natural colors and materials used in manuscript production.
Sabarmati Gurukulam, Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India, 2022.
- 79 Ramnik Sonda Shihora shows a finished page of a manuscript. Gold ink on handmade paper.
Workshop of Yasin Usman Sheikh, Surendranagar, Gujarat, India, 2022

