

DVIVIDA DEVASTATES ĀNARTA

An Illustration to the Śrīmad Bhāgavata Purāṇa, Skandha X, Chapter 67

Guler–Kangra, Punjab Hills, circa 1795–1810

Circle of Nainsukh



Catalogue Entry

Title	Dvividā Devastates the city of Ānarta
Text	Śrīmad Bhāgavata Purāṇa, Skandha X, Chapter 67, especially verses 2–8
Attribution	Guler–Kangra, Punjab Hills, circa 1795–1810; Circle of Nainsukh
Medium	Opaque pigments heightened with gold on paper
Dimensions	Approximately 30 × 38 cm overall
Format	Horizontal narrative folio with dark floral inner border and broad pink-speckled outer margin
Subject	The ape Dvividā wreaking havoc in Ānarta in revenge for the death of Narakāśura

The present painting is an unusually ambitious and densely orchestrated Pahari narrative. At first sight its immense orange simian protagonist, burning city, frightened inhabitants, elephant, horse, palace architecture and blue-skinned divinity might suggest a familiar episode such as the burning of Lāṅkā or an episode involving Narasiṃha. Close reading, however, points elsewhere. The combination of a gigantic ape, deliberate conflagration of inhabited settlements, the presence of Hari within the threatened territory, human captives or casualties, water at the edge of the composition, and the repeated visualisation of the ape at different scales corresponds with remarkable precision to the opening movement of Bhāgavata Purāṇa X.67: the depredations of Dvividā before his fatal encounter with Balarāma.

The painting is therefore best understood not as the illustration of a single instantaneous action but as a continuous narrative: several successive acts are compressed into one panoramic field. The painter turns a short sequence of Sanskrit ślokaś into a teeming visual world. The result is at once violent and exquisitely controlled—an image in which destruction is narrated through extraordinarily fine workmanship.

Visual Description

A walled and terraced city occupies most of the pictorial field. White pavilions, brick-faced walls, dark recessed doorways, balconies, cusped openings, towers and projecting chattri-like roofs rise against a cool blue sky. Architecture does not merely provide a setting. It partitions the story into zones, allowing simultaneous episodes to unfold within rooms, courtyards, terraces, gateways and open ground.

At the centre strides the extraordinary orange figure of Dvividā. His scale is deliberately superhuman. He towers over architecture, animals and men, one leg extended across the ground while the other passes over or beside the elephant. His long simian muzzle, reddish-orange skin, powerful limbs, ornaments, and finely articulated mane immediately distinguish him from the human population. A long implement or branch is raised above him. Smaller orange simian forms appear around his legs. These are best read

through the convention of continuous narration: the protagonist may be represented more than once within a single field, each manifestation recording another stage or action.

Everywhere the city is under assault. Red-orange tongues and streaks rise against walls, doors, roofs and patches of ground. Their repetition makes their function unmistakable: they are not decorative markings but fire. The conflagration spreads across architectural boundaries, visually binding the separate episodes into one catastrophe. A black elephant and a brown horse are caught within the turmoil. Men gesture, kneel, flee, plead or look on. Women appear in protected or threatened interiors. At lower right, a pale recumbent human form lies within or beneath a rectangular pale mass crossed by red strokes; nearby figures gesture in alarm. At the extreme lower edge a dark band of water or flooded ground creates a striking diagonal boundary.

The upper-left palace chamber provides a crucial counterpoint. A blue-grey crowned divinity, almost certainly Krishna/Hari, sits enthroned in yellow, surrounded by attendants and courtiers. The refinement of this chamber—the cushion pattern, jewellery, fly-whisk, architectural panelling and differentiated human responses—contrasts with the violence outside. It is a narrative anchor: the land under attack is the land in which Hari dwells.

The Story of Dvidida

Dvidida is a fascinatingly anomalous figure in the later books of the Bhāgavata. He is a vānara, an ape-being of immense strength, and is introduced not as an anonymous demon but through relationships: he is the friend of Naraka (Narakāsura or Bhaumāsura), brother of Mainda, and associated with Sugriva. His violence is therefore motivated. Krishna has killed Naraka; Dvidida undertakes a campaign of revenge.

The narrative begins not with Dvidida's death but with social and cosmic disorder. He burns cities, villages, mines and cowherd settlements; uproots mountains and devastates the province of Ānarta; churns the sea and floods coastal lands; destroys the hermitages of sages and desecrates sacrificial fires; seizes men and women and seals them in mountain caves; and violates women of respectable households. Only after this catalogue of transgressions does he hear singing from Mount Raivataka and encounter Balarāma. His mockery escalates into combat. He uproots trees and hurls rocks; Balarāma eventually kills him with a crushing blow. Order is restored.

The significance of the present painting lies in its decision to illustrate the prelude—the world being turned upside down—rather than the climactic duel. That choice gives the painter scope for one of the great pleasures of Pahari narrative painting: multiplicity. A single sheet can contain courtly life, panic, architecture, animals, landscape, fire, water, violence and devotion.

The Sanskrit Text: Bhāgavata Purāṇa X.67

Verse 2: the identity of Dvidida

श्रीशुक उवाच ।

नरकस्य सखा कश्चिद् द्विविदो नाम वानरः ।

सुग्रीवसचिवः सोऽथ भ्राता मैन्दस्य वीर्यवान् ॥ २ ॥

*śrī-śuka uvāca / narakasya sakhā kaścīd dvivido nāma vānaraḥ / sugrīva-sacivaḥ so 'tha bhrātā
maindasya vīryavān //*

Śuka said: there was an ape named Dvivida, a friend of Naraka, associated with Sugrīva, the powerful brother of Mainda.

This verse supplies the protagonist. The painting's central creature is emphatically a vānara rather than a leonine Narasiṃha. The long muzzle, simian physiognomy and repeated monkey forms are decisive.

Verse 3: cities and settlements set on fire

सख्युः सोऽपचितिं कुर्वन् वानरो राष्ट्रविप्लवम् ।
पुरग्रामाकरान् घोषान् अदहद् वह्निमुत्सृजन् ॥ ३ ॥

*sakhyuḥ so 'pacitiṃ kurvan vānaro rāṣṭra-viplavam / pura-grāmākarān ghoṣān adahad vahnim utsrjan
//*

Avenging his friend, the ape brought upheaval to the realm, burning cities, villages, mines and cowherd settlements by spreading fire.

This is the painting's strongest textual match. The artist has made fire the leitmotif of the composition. It rises from buildings, runs across walls and punctuates the green ground. The city is not accidentally ablaze; the spreading conflagration is the subject.

Verse 4: the devastation of Ānarta, where Hari dwells

क्वचित् स शैलानुत्पात्य तैर्देशान् समचूर्णयत् ।
आनर्तान् सुतरामेव यत्रास्ते मित्रहा हरिः ॥ ४ ॥

kvacit sa śailān utpātya tair deśān samacūrṇayat / ānartān sutarām eva yatrāste mitra-hā hariḥ //

At times he uprooted mountains and devastated the lands with them, especially Ānarta, where Hari—the slayer of his friend—dwelt.

The enthroned blue divinity in the palace is therefore iconographically meaningful. The text itself identifies Ānarta by Hari's residence there. Rather than depicting Krishna in combat with Dvivida, the painter places Hari within the city whose destruction motivates the episode. This is sophisticated textual visualisation.

Verse 5: the sea and the flooded coast

क्वचित् समुद्रमध्यस्थो दोर्भ्यामुत्क्षिप्य तज्जलम् ।
देशान् नागायुतप्राणो वेलाकूले न्यमज्जयत् ॥ ५ ॥

*kvacit samudra-madhyastho dorbhyām utkṣipy taj-jalam / deśān nāgāyuta-prāṇo velā-kūle
nyamajjayat //*

At another time, standing in the sea and possessed of the strength of ten thousand elephants, he hurled up its waters with his arms and submerged the coastal lands.

The dark water at lower right may be more than a conventional foreground device. In a composition otherwise closely keyed to verses 3–8, its conspicuous presence invites association with the flooding of the coast. The elephant beneath Dvivida is equally suggestive, though it should not be pressed into literal

illustration: the Sanskrit describes Dvividā as possessing the strength of ten thousand elephants. The painter's manipulation of scale makes an actual elephant appear almost subordinate to him.

Verse 6: violation of hermitages and sacred fires

आश्रमान् ऋषिमुख्यानां कृत्वा भग्नवनस्पतीन् ।
अदूषयच्छकृन्मूत्रैरग्नीन् वैतानिकान् खलः ॥ ६ ॥

āśramān ṛṣi-mukhyānām kṛtvā bhagna-vanaspatīn / adūṣayac chakṛn-mūtrair agnīn vai tānikān khalaḥ
//

The wicked ape broke the trees in the hermitages of eminent sages and polluted their sacrificial fires.

Some kneeling and gesturing men appear near a conspicuous fire-like enclosure. Their identity cannot be proved as sages from dress alone, but the possibility that this vignette abbreviates the desecration of ritual space should remain open.

Verse 7: men and women imprisoned in caves

पुरुषान् योषितो दृप्तः क्ष्माभृद्द्रोणीगुहासु सः ।
निक्षिप्य चाप्यधाच्छैलैः पेशष्कारीव कीटकम् ॥ ७ ॥

puruṣān yoṣito dṛptaḥ kṣmābhṛd-droṇī-guhāsu saḥ / nikṣipyā cāpyadhāc chailaiḥ peśaṣkāriḥ kīṭakam //

Arrogantly he cast men and women into caves in mountain valleys and sealed them with rocks, like a wasp imprisoning an insect.

The numerous dark openings and enclosed figures in the painting acquire a new resonance when read beside this verse. They may still be architectural windows and doorways rather than literal caves, and caution is required. Yet the painter's habit of converting textual motifs into urban equivalents may explain the repeated motif of threatened people within enclosed spaces. The pale recumbent or enclosed figure at lower right deserves particular technical examination before it is identified as a corpse: it may represent a casualty of fire, a captive, or another compressed reference to the catastrophe.

Verse 8: continuing devastation and the transition to Raivataka

एवं देशान् विप्रकुर्वन् दूषयंश्च कुलस्त्रियः ।
श्रुत्वा सुललितं गीतं गिरिं रैवतकं ययौ ॥ ८ ॥

evaṁ deśān viprakurvan dūṣayaṁś ca kula-striyaḥ / śrutvā su-lalitaṁ gītaṁ girim raivatakaṁ yayau //

Thus ravaging the lands and violating women of respectable families, he heard beautiful singing and went to Mount Raivataka.

The present folio seems to stop before the Raivataka encounter. Its subject is the catalogue of depredations. This explains why Balarāma need not appear: the climactic fight belongs to the next narrative movement.

Continuous Narrative and the Problem of the Repeated Ape

Indian painting has long used continuous narration, in which the same protagonist appears more than once within a single pictorial field. The smaller orange simian figures near Dvividā's legs are therefore

better understood as repeated manifestations of Dvidida than as otherwise unexplained subordinate demons. The giant figure establishes his overwhelming presence; the smaller repetitions register successive actions. Scale here is expressive rather than optical.

This also helps explain the extraordinary density of the sheet. It is not an overfilled composition by an uncertain hand. It is a deliberately encyclopaedic image designed to absorb several ślokaś. The painter has solved the problem by using architecture as punctuation: chambers, walls, courtyards, windows and terraces create a visual syntax through which simultaneous actions can be read.

Quality of Execution

Seen in close-up, the painting is demonstrably the work of a highly accomplished hand. The faces are not mechanically repeated types. Beards, moustaches, profiles, eyes, turbans and gestures distinguish one individual from another. Even minor figures receive attention. This naturalistic differentiation is especially important in relation to the legacy of Nainsukh, whose influence on the next generations lay not merely in a softer palette but in acute observation, psychologically differentiated figures, and the integration of human action with setting.

Dvidida's mane and body hair are handled with minute strokes. Jewellery is articulated bead by bead. The elephant's head, curled trunk and eye are carefully observed; the horse is given a poised, nervous stance. Architectural ornament is sustained across an unusually large field without collapsing into shorthand. Cushions, textiles, wall panels, cornices, parapets and miniature floral bands remain legible even in secondary areas.

The labour represented by the border is itself substantial. Gold tendrils and leaves travel across the dark ground while repeated pale flower clusters punctuate the vine. The design is neither perfunctory nor merely framing: it is an integral component of the luxurious object.

The Border as Evidence

The border is one of the most diagnostically useful features of the sheet. Immediately around the image runs a narrow, very dark blue-black band carrying scrolling gold foliage and repeated white or silver-white floral clusters. Fine red rules separate this from the broad outer margin, which is pink to salmon and densely speckled or brushed with darker red.

This combination belongs to a recognisable late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century Pahari vocabulary. Elaborate arabesque borders were already employed by painters of the generation after Manaku and Nainsukh. Around and after 1800, narrow bands of gold scrolling with pale flowers on a dark ground, surrounded by red rulings and pink-speckled margins, recur with particular frequency. The present border corresponds closely to that description.

Borders cannot identify a painter by themselves. They may be applied by specialist hands, repeated within workshops, or added when folios were mounted or reorganised. But in series painting they can function like codicological evidence. When border structure coincides with format, paper, palette, figure type, architectural vocabulary and narrative method, its evidentiary value rises sharply.

The broad pink-speckled margin also connects the sheet visually to a wider family of Guler–Kangra narrative works. It should be read alongside, not instead of, the painting proper. The dark floral band distinguishes this Dvidida sheet from the plainer border system of the Uṣā–Aniruddha painting discussed in parallel research; the two need not belong to the same manuscript to emerge from the same broad artistic culture.

Guler, Kangra and the Legacy of Nainsukh

The transformation of Pahari painting in the eighteenth century is inseparable from the family of Pandit Seu of Guler and, above all, his sons Manaku and Nainsukh. Nainsukh's achievement introduced an extraordinary degree of observational subtlety, spatial intelligence and psychological specificity into hill painting. His sons, nephews and later followers carried these habits across the courts of the Punjab Hills. By the later eighteenth century a family-derived idiom had become one of the principal foundations of what is now called the Guler–Kangra style.

The term 'Circle of Nainsukh' is useful here precisely because it acknowledges both proximity and uncertainty. The present painting should not, on current evidence, be assigned to Nainsukh himself. Nor is there yet enough evidence to name one of his sons or nephews. But its refined figure drawing, differentiated physiognomies, carefully observed animals, architecture functioning as narrative space, cool and balanced palette, sophisticated continuous narration, and border vocabulary place it convincingly within the extended artistic world shaped by Nainsukh and his descendants.

This formulation is preferable to a generic 'Kangra, nineteenth century.' It locates the work historically and stylistically while preserving the distinction between direct authorship and circle attribution.

Comparisons with Major Bhagavata and Family-Workshop Series

The 'Large' Guler–Basohli Bhāgavata Purāṇa

The celebrated dispersed 'Large' Guler–Basohli Bhāgavata Purāṇa, dated around 1760–65 and associated with the first generation after Manaku and Nainsukh, provides an important earlier benchmark. Archer called it the 'Large' Guler–Basohli or 'Fifth' Basohli Bhāgavata. Later scholarship has emphasised the family style rather than a single place of manufacture, and has often connected the series with Fattu, Manaku's son, while recognising Nainsukh's influence.

The comparison is not an argument that the present Dvidida belongs to that 1760s manuscript. It almost certainly does not: the border, palette and architectural handling point later. What matters is the continuity of artistic method. In the Large Bhāgavata, naturalistic portraiture, differentiated subsidiary figures, carefully arranged groups and the fusion of Manaku's narrative force with Nainsukh's observational delicacy are repeatedly noted. The Dvidida sheet inherits precisely that problem: how to make a crowded sacred history both legible and alive.

A Sotheby's catalogue of a Kamsa scene from the Large series specifically emphasises the variety of facial types and expressions and the careful placement of subsidiary groups as marks of Nainsukh's manner. Those same characteristics are unusually conspicuous here.

The Modi Bhāgavata, Tehri–Garhwal Gīta Govinda and related cycles

The later religious series associated with the first generation after Manaku and Nainsukh—the so-called Modi Bhāgavata, Tehri–Garhwal or Second Guler Gīta Govinda, and Bharany Rāmāyaṇa—represent the maturation of the family idiom. Scholarship has praised their integration of figures with landscape, delicate drawing, spatial coherence and increasingly lyrical palette.

The present painting is more violent and urban than the celebrated lyrical sheets from those cycles, but the underlying intelligence is related. Architecture is active rather than passive. The high viewpoint allows the spectator to see simultaneously into rooms, across terraces and over open ground. The story is distributed through space instead of being staged against a neutral backdrop.

Chandigarh and dispersed late-eighteenth-century Bhagavata material

The Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh preserves important dispersed Bhāgavata material attributed to artists of the first generation after Manaku and Nainsukh, including sheets around 27 × 35 cm and drawings approaching 28 × 39 cm. Their survival is a reminder that large-format Pahari religious series were widely dispersed, and that many sister leaves entered public and private collections independently. A missing exact companion to the present painting may therefore exist in a museum store, an older illustrated catalogue, or a private collection without an online record.

This is why failure to find an exact online sister sheet should not be treated as negative evidence. The history of Pahari manuscripts is a history of dispersal.

Other Representations of Dvidida

Dvidida is much rarer in the market and museum canon than Krishna's childhood exploits, the Gīta Govinda, Rāgamālā or romantic nayaka–nayika imagery. Yet he does appear in illustrated Bhāgavata cycles. The 1688 Malwa Bhāgavata in the Kanoria Collection, for example, allocates one folio to the 'Gorilla demon Dvidida' and the following folio to 'Balarama kills Dvidida.' This is important iconographically: it proves that artists could separate Dvidida's depredations from his death and devote an independent image to the former.

The present sheet follows the same narrative logic while doing so with the expansive resources of late Pahari painting. It is therefore not anomalous that Balarāma is absent. The subject is not 'Balarāma kills Dvidida' but 'Dvidida devastates the land.'

This distinction also explains the auction house's original misidentification as Narasiṃha. A giant orange supernatural being amid a palace catastrophe can superficially suggest a better-known avatāra. But Narasiṃha iconography requires the man-lion form and normally the killing of Hiraṇyakaśipu; the present protagonist is unmistakably simian, repeated, and embedded in a city-wide conflagration. The Sanskrit of X.67 resolves the puzzle far more economically.

Architecture as Narrative

The architecture deserves separate emphasis because it is one of the strongest arguments for a sophisticated Guler–Kangra attribution. The painter understands buildings as narrative machines. A throne room frames Hari; terraces hold observers; doorways conceal or expose threatened inhabitants;

parapets and walls create changes of level; the open ground becomes the stage for Dvidida's gigantic stride.

The buildings combine idealised North Indian court architecture with painterly invention. White plaster, salmon brick, dark grey doors, delicate floral friezes and small domed or pyramidal elements create a coherent urban environment. The high viewpoint is essential: without it the painter could not show both interiors and exteriors at once. This is closely aligned with the spatial strategies developed in the Guler family tradition and carried into Kangra narrative painting.

Colour, Fire and the Vividness of the Image

The vividness of the painting does not depend on saturated colour alone. It comes from controlled contrast. Dvidida's orange body is set against broad green ground and cool blue sky; the black elephant anchors the centre; white architecture catches and reflects the repeated red flames. The dark floral border then compresses the entire scene before releasing it into the broad pink margin.

Fire is represented economically—often by narrow vertical or branching red-orange strokes—yet because the motif repeats across walls, ground and architecture, the eye reads the whole city as burning. This is an excellent example of Pahari pictorial shorthand: a few marks, repeated rhythmically, create an atmospheric condition across a very large field.

The image is therefore vivid in two senses. It is chromatically vivid, but it is also narratively vivid: every corner contains a reaction. Some figures plead, others watch, others recoil. Animals are caught in the disorder. Hari remains composed. Dvidida strides through all of it. The emotional variety prevents the composition from becoming merely decorative.

The Recto, Verso and Material Object

The verso shows the fibrous, layered character expected of an Indian paper support and bears evidence of historical handling and local repairs. The object should be examined unframed under raking and transmitted light before any conservation treatment. Fibre structure, sheet joins, pigment penetration, old adhesives, repair papers and the relationship between the painted field and outer border could all refine the dating and determine whether the border was conceived with the image or added at an early stage.

No invasive testing is necessary as a first step. High-resolution macrophotography, infrared examination, ultraviolet fluorescence, XRF spot analysis of selected pigments, and microscopic study of gold and white/silver border elements would provide a useful technical fingerprint for comparison with securely attributed Guler–Kangra sheets.

Attribution: Guler–Kangra, circa 1795–1810, Circle of Nainsukh

Taken cumulatively, the evidence supports an attribution to Guler–Kangra around 1795–1810. No single feature is decisive. The attribution rests on convergence: format, late-eighteenth-century figure types, Nainsukh-derived individualisation, controlled naturalism, high-viewpoint architecture, sophisticated

continuous narration, palette, paper format, and above all the distinctive relationship between dark floral inner border, red rules and pink-speckled outer margin.

The date range is intentionally narrow but not absolute. A slightly earlier or later placement remains possible pending technical comparison. The work feels later than the robust 1760s Large Guler–Basohli Bhāgavata and belongs more naturally to the moment when the Guler family idiom had flowed into the mature Kangra world under and around the patronage networks of the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

The designation 'Circle of Nainsukh' should be understood in the art-historical sense: a work by an artist closely shaped by the style propagated by Nainsukh, his sons, nephews and associated ateliers, without claiming Nainsukh's own hand. The quality is fully compatible with such a context. Indeed, the close-ups argue strongly against treating the sheet as routine nineteenth-century workshop production.

Assessment of Significance

Three features make this painting especially compelling. First is the rarity and specificity of the subject. Dvidida's depredations are far less commonly encountered than the canonical Krishna episodes. Second is the sophistication with which the painter converts verses 3–8 into a single continuous panorama. Third is the unusually high level of finish maintained across a composition crowded with figures, architecture, animals, ornament and destructive action.

The painting rewards both distant and close viewing. From across a room, the enormous orange ape and burning city dominate. At close range, the eye discovers individual faces, jewellery, textile patterns, hair, architectural ornament and tiny gestures. That dual register—monumental narrative at distance, miniature precision at proximity—is one of its chief artistic achievements.

The auction description as a nineteenth-century Kangra illustration of Narasiṃha therefore substantially understates the work. The corrected iconography places it securely within Bhāgavata X.67; the stylistic evidence points toward an earlier and more distinguished Guler–Kangra context; and the workmanship justifies further comparison with the extended Nainsukh family tradition.

Proposed Catalogue Description

DVIDIDA DEVASTATES ĀNARTA

An illustration to the Śrīmad Bhāgavata Purāṇa, Skandha X, Chapter 67

Guler–Kangra, Punjab Hills, circa 1795–1810

Circle of Nainsukh

Opaque pigments and gold on paper; approximately 30 × 38 cm overall.

The mighty ape Dvidida, friend of the slain demon Narakāśura, strides through the province of Ānarta in a panoramic visualisation of Bhāgavata Purāṇa X.67.3–8. Avenging Naraka's death at the hands of Krishna, Dvidida burns cities and settlements, devastates the countryside, floods coastal lands and terrorises their inhabitants. The painter compresses these successive acts into a continuous narrative: the gigantic orange vānara dominates the centre while smaller repetitions register further actions; flames rise throughout the city; inhabitants plead, flee and watch; an elephant and horse are caught in the upheaval; and Krishna/Hari appears enthroned within the very territory targeted by Dvidida.

The painting is distinguished by its exceptionally dense yet controlled composition, individually differentiated faces, finely observed animals, elaborate architecture and luxurious border of gold scrolling foliage and pale floral clusters on a dark ground, enclosed by red rules and a broad pink-speckled margin. These characteristics, together with the sophisticated integration of architecture and narrative, support an attribution to Guler–Kangra around 1795–1810, in the circle of Nainsukh.

Comparative Evidence Matrix

Feature	Present painting	Comparative tradition	Weight
Subject	Bhāgavata X.67, Dvividā's depredations	Independent Dvividā folios known in illustrated Bhāgavata cycles	High
Narrative method	Several actions compressed into one field	Continuous narrative common in major Pahari religious series	High
Figures	Individually differentiated faces and gestures	Nainsukh-derived observational naturalism; noted in first-generation family works	High
Architecture	High viewpoint; rooms and terraces partition episodes	Architecture integrated into narrative in Guler-family and Kangra cycles	High
Border	Dark ground, gold vine, pale flowers, red rules, pink-speckled margin	Recurrent late Pahari border vocabulary around/after 1800	High but not unique
Palette	Cool blue, green, white architecture, orange-red accents	Compatible with mature Guler–Kangra idiom	Medium
Scale/format	Large horizontal folio, c.30 × 38 cm	Comparable large-format dispersed Pahari narrative sheets survive at Chandigarh and elsewhere	Medium–High
Quality	Minute hair, jewellery, textiles, animals and architecture	Consistent with accomplished court atelier rather than routine workshop	High

What Would Make the Attribution Firmer?

The strongest next step would be the identification of one or more sister leaves sharing not merely a pink margin but the same sequence of border elements, dimensions, architectural conventions, physiognomic types and—ideally—paper and verso hand. A securely attributed sister folio would move the case from stylistic attribution toward series attribution.

Technical comparison could then test whether the same pigments, paper preparation, gold application and border materials were used. Until such a sister leaf is located, 'Guler–Kangra, circa 1795–1810, Circle of Nainsukh' is a strong but appropriately qualified formulation.

Selected Bibliography and Comparative Sources

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- Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh: dispersed Bhāgavata Purāṇa material associated with the first generation after Manaku and Nainsukh.
- Kanoria Collection, 1688 Malwa Bhāgavata Purāṇa, folios 61–62: Dvidida and Balarāma kills Dvidida.
- Śrīmad Bhāgavata Purāṇa, Skandha X, Chapter 67.

Research Note on Sources

For the textual identification, the decisive primary evidence is Bhāgavata Purāṇa X.67.2–8. For comparative attribution, the most relevant published frameworks are Archer's classification of the Large Guler–Basohli Bhāgavata, Goswamy and Fischer's reconstruction of the Seu–Manaku–Nainsukh family and its first generation, later series studies by Losty, museum material at Chandigarh and the Chester Beatty Library, and auction catalogues that reproduce dispersed leaves and summarise current scholarship. These comparators establish a family style and a chronology; they do not, by themselves, prove that the present folio belongs to a named manuscript.

Accordingly, the catalogue attribution deliberately separates three levels of certainty: the iconography—Dvīda devastating Ānarta—is very strong; the regional and chronological placement—Guler–Kangra, c.1795–1810—is strongly supported stylistically; the narrower designation—Circle of Nainsukh—is a reasoned attribution that should remain qualified until a sister folio or technical match is identified.