

Restoration of Indian Art

— some case studies

Vol I



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PREFACE

Establishment of the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage was an event which gave rise to many expectations for the conservation of Indian cultural property. There are several government institutions, at the National and at the State levels to restore objects of art and archaeology. But, the task is so enormous that a helping hand, particularly when it comes from a voluntary organisation, devoted to the cause of conservation, is always welcome.

Some of us have always been feeling that if India's cultural heritage is to be preserved properly, there ought to be more facilities for conservation. Therefore, when we were asked by Shri B.K. Thapar and Shri Martand Singh, Secretaries, Intach as to how Intach could help in the work of preservation of art materials, our immediate reaction was "By setting up a conservation laboratory at a high level". The proposal was immediately accepted and the result was the birth of the INTACH Conservation Centre at Lucknow. Starting with one person and facilities in a nucleus form, today it has all the modern facilities for examination and conservation, and has several restorers on its staff. Its help and advice is sought for by several institutions and private collectors. The Centre is concentrating to specialise in certain areas like restoration of miniature paintings, scroll paintings, *than-kas*, manuscripts, panel paintings, etc.

The Indian art has its own characteristics and specialities, not only in content but also in the physical form. The different types of materials that form the objects of Indian art have been amply demonstrated in O.P. Agrawal's book "Conservation of Manuscripts and Paintings of Southeast Asia" published in 1984 by Butterworths, London. The principles described in this publication have been used by us with modifications to suit individual needs.

A large number of object of varying nature was received for restoration at the Centre. A selection out of the work done is presented here describing the techniques employed and the results obtained. It is hoped that the case-studies included in this publication, which is the first in the series — will be of benefit to all those who are engaged in the restoration of art objects and to museum personnel every where.

In the task of building up the Centre, we have received encouragements from the INTACH's Vice Executive Chairman, Smt. Pupul Jayakar. We will

like to express our grateful thanks to her. The support of Shri B.K. Thapar and Shri Martand Singh has always been available for all the programmes. Valuable advice has been received by us from time to time from Shri H.S. Jassal, Coordinator, Intach, we will like to express our thanks to all of them.

The strength of any institution lies in the experties of the members of its staff. The Centre is fortunate to have a devoted band of workers who are enthusiastic and ever eager to learn. We have great hopes from all of them who have put up their best for the restoration of Indian art.

Lucknow.

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