



## Colours of Devotion

### The Legendary Paintings and Textiles of the Vallabha Sampradaya, 1500–1900

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- Explains the philosophical concepts of Shri Vallabhacharya and how these were expressed in beautiful artworks
- Describes the history of the Pushti Marg faith and the role of some of its prominent members
- Features stunning images of paintings, pichvais and artefacts created for personal worship and the shrines of the deity, Shrinathji

Indian art is deeply inspired by philosophical and religious thought. In this original and extensively researched work, the author explores the history of the Pushti Marg community. She explains the spiritual beliefs as laid down by the saint and founder Shri Vallabhacharya, which inspired the art that was created for use in the religious practices of the Vallabha Sampradaya.

This book first delves into the core of Pushti Marg — Vallabhacharya's philosophy and theology of Shrinathji (a form of Krishna); secondly, it explores how his system of beliefs was expressed in an organized religion and rituals that resulted in the production of sacred objects, mainly paintings, pichvais and shrine textiles. Finally it discusses the influence of Pushti Marg on the social and cultural aspects that carried these traditions forward. While doing so, the book showcases many rare paintings and textiles created for the personal and public shrines of the faith. The book reveals the provenance of the most important pre-Mughal manuscript, Palam Dispersed Bhagavad Puran, and that of Golden and Kalamkari pichvais. The fact that many of the beautiful artefacts, depicting aspects of the worship of Shrinathji, were created by Muslim artisans is a remarkable example of the syncretic culture of India.

The author has analyzed the influence of the Vallabha Sampradaya on Indian paintings in minute detail. As a member of a family that has devotedly followed the tenets of Pushti Marg across many generations, she is uniquely placed to offer an insider's view of its philosophy, an in-depth understanding of its practices, and a museologist's perspective on the exquisite artefacts inspired by this faith, which are now displayed in collections worldwide.

**Anita Bharat Shah** obtained her PhD from Osmania University, in 1994. She has been active in the Museology Committee (ICOFOM) of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) since 1987, and served many years on its Executive Board. Dr Shah has taught at several universities abroad as a visiting faculty of Museology. She has previously authored *Visitors to South Indian Museums: Museological Context and Visitor Study* as well as published extensively in the museological journal ICOFOM Study Series. She has conducted extensive research on Kalamkari, Deccani and Rajasthani paintings and pichvais from 2013 to 2022. An avid collector of Indian textiles and art objects, she has organized many exhibitions, including a special display of Ancient Indian Textiles for Queen Elizabeth during her visit to Hyderabad in 1983. She and her husband Bharat Shah, creators of the AABHA collection, organized an exhibition titled *Threads of Devotion* showcasing embroidered pichvais from Kutch and Rajasthan of the early 19th to mid-20th centuries at the Nirmala Birla Modern Art Museum, Hyderabad, in 2021. She lives with her family in Hyderabad.