

AMIR MOHTASHEMI



Rama, Sita and Lakshman at the Sage Atri's Ashram

From the Ayodhya Kanda, book 2 of the Ramayana

Punjab Hills, Himachal Pradesh, Kangra, circa 1800

Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper

Folio 23.5cm x 36.5cm

Provenance: Private European Collection

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Rama, Sita and Lakshman visited the ashram of the great sage Atri and the rishi's wife Anasayu. In continuous narration, the three appear twice. Taking their leave they first meet with a group of rishis at the right and at their departure the rishis perform oblations into a sacred fire in the centre, pouring water from shankhas, usually called conches in English but actually a different shell altogether. The main rishi, Atri, sits to the left along with his wife Anasuya in front of a rustic hut. The whole takes place in a lush landscape of rolling hills and a variety of trees, each carefully rendered with leaves in a range of colours. Contrary to our expectations the rishis all wear rather elaborate jewellery while Atri has an animal skin draped over his shoulder.