



VIPRALABDHA NAYIKA (■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■), A FORLORN HEROINE

Kangra, India, c. 1820-1830

Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper

20.2cm high, 14.8cm wide

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*Vipralabdha Nayika* is the seventh in the *Ashta Nayikas* or eight types of heroines. These eight *Nayikas* represent eight different states or *Avasthas* in relation to her hero or *Nayaka*. *Vipralabdha Nayika* is a beautiful heroine who waited all night for her lover to meet her, only for him to have not turned up. She is dejected, disappointed, and forlorn. In this painting, standing in a forest by a river, covered from head to toe in white with gold borders and elaborate jewellery – earrings, a large nath, rings, layers of pearl necklaces, bangles, *maang teekas*, and armlets – is our heroine. The *nayika* can be seen throwing away her jewellery on to a pile of leaves on the ground. It is possible these are jewels her lover has given her and she no longer wants them on her body, though in some versions, it is said that her lover's absence makes them burn her body and she must shed both the ornaments and her disappointment in him. Often the poetry associated with this *nayika* also mentions food losing taste and flowers their perfume.

This setting of this painting, on a beautiful hill by a river with a variety of trees with delicately painted leaves would have been a perfect place for a tryst with her lover, highlighting her earlier feelings of anticipation and now frustration. However, in the quiet, early hours of the morning the grey skies and emptiness surrounding her further drives home the point to the viewer of the nayika's feelings. Whilst even the moon has its reflection in the still water, the *nayika* stands alone.

A similar depiction of *Vipralabdha Nayika* as well as a similar border can be seen at the Harvard Art Museum ([1974.110](#)). This theme is also seen in the [Salar Jung Museum](#) and Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya ([catalogue no. 149](#)).