



# MUSEUM STUDIES

## **Igor Kotin**

Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera) of the RAS  
Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation  
ORCID: 0000-0001-5751-7703  
E-mail: igorkotin@mail.ru

## **Olga Merenkova**

Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera) of the RAS  
Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation  
ORCID: 0000-0002-2771-9862  
E-mail: onyx@kunstkamera.ru

## **Elena Soboleva**

Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera) of the RAS  
Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation  
ORCID: 0000-0001-6137-0476  
E-mail: soboleva@kunstkamera.ru

## **Nikolaevsky Hall: Peoples of South Asia (Collections and Collectors)**

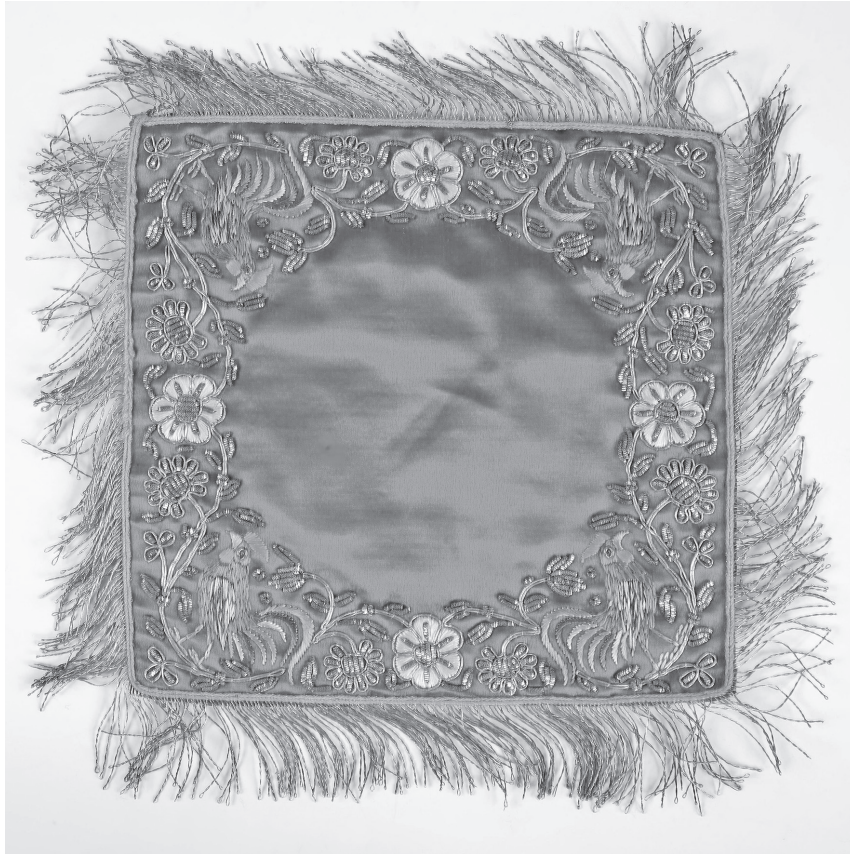
**ABSTRACT.** The permanent exhibition “Peoples of South Asia” (2024) presented in the Nikolaevsky Hall of the MAE (Kunstkamera) RAS is dedicated to the peoples of India (Bh rat), Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. The exhibition maintains continuity from the first permanent exhibition “India” (1925), but offers a greater variety of objects and contains information about the prominent collectors (Tsesarevich Nikolai Alexandrovich, A. M. and L. A. Meerwarth, I. P. Minaev, A. A. Staël von Holstein, N. I. Vorobyov, M. S. Andreev, A. N. Krasnov, A. F. Jagor, C. P. Clark, etc.). The concept of the new exhibition “Peoples of South Asia” traces back to the first hall “India” (1925). The permanent exhibition retains some items that are favorite with visitors, but in most cases the items and illustrative materials presented have not been exhibited before. The new permanent exhibition presents in more detailed way religions of the Indian subcontinent, local crafts, both those that still exist and those that have become part of history: ancient weapons, clothing, jewelry, pottery, metal and wooden products, children’s toys. Today, certain handicrafts, especially textile artifacts, are regarded in India as the regional cultural heritage and are subjects to special attention and conservation. An important dominant feature of the permanent exhibition remains the carved portico of the palace terrace from Nasik, purchased by M. S. Andreev specially for the MAE RAS. Local theatrical traditions of South Asia are represented by the masks of Kolam theatre and the costumed characters of Kathakali theatre.

**KEY WORDS:** peoples of South Asia, ethnography, exhibition, collectors, Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera) of the Russian Academy of Sciences

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*Fig. 1.* Fringed napkin. MAE No. 1776-1. Indians, India. Late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Silk, cotton, silk thread, gold and silver threads. Decorative sewing, embroidery



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*Fig. 2.* Temple panel depicting the churning of the world ocean by gods and demons. MAE No. 6849-57. Indians, Madras, India. Early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Textile, paint. Weaving, painting



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