Miniature Paintings in the Jñāna-Pravāha Museum

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Jñāna-Pravāha - Centre for Cultural Studies & Research, founded by Smt. Bimla Poddar and Sri Suresh Neotia at Varanasi in 1996, draws attention of the visitors not only to its rich cultural activities and picturesque set-up, but also to its *Kalāmaṇḍapa* (Art Pavilion) inaugurated on November 19, 2002. It remains open for public everyday from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. except on Mondays. Comparatively smaller in size, this Museum houses some of the fine specimens of rare items and presents unique blend of art and craft reflecting multiple aspects of Indian Culture from the remote past. The objects on display in the Museum, collected by these glorious connoisseurs of India since last about fifty years, bespeak the skilled hands of their anonymous creators residing in darkness. These objects include miniature paintings, terracottas, stone sculptures, wooden and ivory figures, decorative art objects, copperplate, manuscripts, coins and textiles. Miniature paintings form a major part of the collection.

Indian Paintings

Painting is a silent medium of human expression and emotion, which speaks without words. Probably, this is the earliest form of art that the man got acquainted with. We do not really know if the Lower Palaeolihic man ever produced any art objects. But by the Upper Palaeolithic times, we see a proliferation of artistic activities. In India also, the earliest paintings in rock-shelters have been claimed to belong to the Upper Palaeolithic age[1] when the man was still nomadic. Later, paintings of various geometrical designs, symbols and figures rendered on potteries also reveal the natural inclination of man towards this art.

कलानां प्रवरं चित्रं धर्मकामार्थमोक्षदम्।
माङ्गल्यं परमं ह्येतद् गृहे यत्र प्रतिष्ठितम्।।[2]

'Of all arts, painting is the best that bestows dharma, kāma, artha and mokṣa. That house is auspcious, which contains painting.'

In order to pay homage to our Palaeolithic aborigines, who invented and handed down this fine art to us, the first gallery of the Jñāna-Pravāha Museum is dedicated to paintings, which range from circa thirteenth century to the early twentieth century. Beautifully manifested on paper, cloth, palm-leaves, wood, ivory and parchment, these miniature paintings present a bird's-eye view of almost all the major schools and substyles of India, viz. Mewar, Bikaner, Jodhpur, Kishangarh, Amber/Jaipur, Bundi,

Kota, Sirohi, Nathadwara, Malwa, Mughal, Pahari, Western India/Gujarat, Orissa, Tanjore, Company, Banaras, Nepal and Tibet (See Map).

Mewar Paintings

The earliest source of Rajasthani miniature paintings is obtained from Mewar in the form of illustrated Jaina manuscripts on palm-leaves created during the reign of Mahārāṇā Tej Singh (1255-1263)[3]. The folk style also continued abreast till the advent of the Mughals, but no paintings of the Mewar School are available that predate the early-seventeenth century. The ancestral fort of Chittor was captured by the Mughal Emperor Akbar in 1598 and the *Mahārāṇās* shifted their capital to Udaipur where the artists of this school continued to produce paintings under their patronage. Known artists of this school were Sahibdin, Manohar, Nisharadi, Kaviraj, Jagannath, Jugarashi, Kundanlal, etc. Among these, the most celebrated artist was Sahibdin (1628-1655) during the reign of Mahārāṇa Jagat Singh-I, who innovated his own style by blending the traditional and Mughal styles. His masterpiece creations on *Rasikapriyā* of Keshavdas and *Rāmāyaṇa* influenced not only his contemporaries but also the later painters of Udaipur till the middle of the eighteenth century. Beside folklores, *Rasikapriyā* and *Rāmāyaṇa,* the other favourite themes of the Mewari painters were - *Rāgamālā, Bhaktiratnāvalī, Bihārī Satsaī, Bhāgavata-Purāṇa, Gīta-Govinda, Viṣṇu-Sahasranāma, Pañcatantra,* court scenes, royal portraits, flora, fauna and others.

The Mewar paintings on display in the Museum are - Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā regard their reflection in mirror (99.29) [Fig.I], The anxious *nāyikā* (heroine) waiting for her lover (99.30), *Gopīs* welcoming Kṛṣṇa to the house (99.66), Conversation between *nāyaka* (hero) and *nāyikā* (99.65) and *Viṣṇu-Sahasranāma* - Two leaves (99.31 and 99.122).

Bikaner Paintings

Bikaner was one of the foremost schools of painting in medieval India. Bika, the sixth son of Rao Jodha of Marwar, founded the state of Bikaner in north Rajasthan in 1488. The history of Bikaneri paintings prior to seventeenth century is quite obscure; and therefore, the art historians assigned mid-seventeenth century as the beginning of this school on the basis of available paintings. The kings of Bikanar had close relations with the Mughal emperors and held esteemed posts in their court. The marriage of Prince Salim (Jahangir) with the daughter of Raja Rai Singh (1574-1612) of Bikaner strengthens this view. It is, therefore, not surprising that the Mughal influence is clearly visible on early paintings of Bikaner since its inception. However, the Mughal elements gradually lost their ground with the decline of the Empire and traditional elements

started creeping in. Toward the closing years of eighteenth century, Bikaner work was increasingly assimilated into the more orthodox Rajasthani manner, but continued to preserve a comparative delicacy of line and colour[4]. The subjects dealt by the Bikaner artists are - *Rāgamālā, Rasikapriyā, Bhāgavata-Purāṇa,* royal portraiture, court scenes, hunting scenes, etc. Important artists of Bikaner School were Ali Raja, Nur Muhammad, Kasam, Abu, Ahamad, Mahamad, Gopal, Ruknuddion, Nuruddin, Ibrahim, etc.

The Bikaneri paintings adorning the Museum gallery are - Kaṁsa prepares to slay Devakī-Folio from *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* series (99.101), Kṛṣṇa rescues his friends from the demon Aghāsura - Folio from *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* series (99.110), *Rāga Bhairava* - Folio from *Rāgamālā* series (99.105), *Rāga Bhairava* - Folio from *Rāgamālā* series (99.102), Durgā slaying the demon in the form of a boar (99.103) [Fig.II), Kṛṣṇa disappears and is found once again by the *gopīs* - Folio from *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* series (99.111), Kṛṣṇa distraught at the absence of Rādhā - Folio from *Rasikapriyā* of Keshavdas series (99.113), Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma subduing the wrestlers of Kaṁsa - Folio from *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* series (99.114), Three women drinking wine (99.16), Ladies enjoying music on a moonlit night (99.108), The month of *Phāguna* (99.109), Paraśurāma slays the king Arjuna Kārtavīrya (99.8), Portrait of a bird (99.107), Kunvara Raj Singh on a hunt (99.115), Portrait of a nobleman (99.121) and Equestrian portrait of Prithvi Singh of Jaipur (99.120).

Jodhpur Paintings

Jodhpur, the capital of Marwar state in shouthwest of Rajasthan, was founded by Rao Jodha in 1459. However, the credit of consolidating Marwar is largely attributed to the ambitious king Rao Maladev (1532-1568) who even annexed the big state of Bikaner with his remarkable valour. The exact time of the commencement of paintings in this region of Rajasthan is uncertain, but the art historians assign the early-seventeenth century as the beginning of Jodhpur School of Painting. The *Ḍholā-Māru,* done under Raja Sura Singh (1595-1620), already shows the Jahangir style turban on the head of the warrior Dhola Rai, though the compartments in the picture are still the 'flashbacks' of the local primitive story pictures[5]. Later on, Raja Jaswant Singh (1638-1678) and his successors established good relations with the Mughal Court and paved way for the Mughal style to absorb the primitive elements prevailing in Jodhpur paintings. This is corroborated by some excellent productions of royal portraits and court scenes during the reign of Raja Ajit Singh (1707-1734), who has several poetic works like *Guṇasāgara, Durgāpāṭha Bhāṣā* and *Nirvāṇa Dohe* to his credit. Beside these, the other themes picked

up by the Jodhpur artists were the folklores, hunting, sporting, romance, stories from *Purāṇas, Rāgamālā, Bārahamāsā,* etc. just like any other school of Rajasthan. Curiously enough, the subject of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, so popular among the contemporary painters, has been handled very lightly by the painters of this school. The names of artists obtained from their works are - Birji, Narayanda, Bhati Amardas, Chajju Bhati, Kishandas, Devadas, Shivadas, Jitamal, Kala Ramu, etc. After Raja Takhat Singh (1843-1873), the Jodhpur style broke up completely under the impact of imported European art[6]. The following paintings of this school are on view in the Museum - Portrait of Maharaja Ajit Singh (2001.2), Raja Man Singh and queen enjoying music - Line Drawing (99.41) and Maharaja Takhat Singh and ladies on a Ferris wheel (99.128) [Fig. III).

Kishangarh Paintings

Maharaja Kishan Singh, the eighth son of Mota Raja Udai Singh of Jodhpur, founded the state of Kishangarh in central Rajasthan in 1609. His nephew Maharaja Roop Singh occupied the throne in 1644 and the credit of laying foundation of the unique style of Kishangarh paintings is largely ascribed to him. He was a great devotee of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā that inspired his artists to create various types of frolics on paper. However, the Kishangarh School of Painting reached its culmination during the time of Maharaja Savant Singh (1748-1757). He too was an ardent devotee of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā; and after abdicating in 1757, he settled at Vrindavan and wrote devotional verses under the name of 'Nagaridas'. Earlier, Savant Singh fell in love with a beautiful woman at his stepmother's service. In due course, she became his mistress and was celebrated in his verses under the name of *Banī-Ṭhanī* - the Bewitching Lady of Fashion. After renouncement, both sifted to Vrindavan as their devotion was mutual and lasting. Savant Singh himself was a good artist and his two passions of life were responsible for the magnificent group of pictures painted at Kishangarh. Moreover, he was fortunate enough to have the most outstanding artist of the era Nihal Chand at his disposal. Though he commanded every trick of Mughal technique and presentation, Nihal Chand was able to create a perfect visual image of his master's lyrical passion. He invented a new and very beautiful type for divine lovers, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, which was perhaps based on the features of *Banī-Ṭhanī* herself[7].

Lyrical tenderness, refined draughtsmanship, soft colours, slender bodies, elongated faces, arched eyebrows and long lotus-petal eyes are some of the charming and unique features, which distinguish the Kishangarh paintings from other styles and make these easily identifiable at a single glance. Though other artists like Suradhvaj,

Dhanna, Chotu, Amir Chand, Bhanwar Lal, etc. found it difficult to maintain the exalted mood created by Nihal Chand, but this school continued to produce fairly attractive works right up to the mid-nineteenth century CE. The art was inspired by the old religious stories, myths, folklore and the *bhakti* mysticism as reflected in the works of poets like Jayadeva, Caṇḍīdāsa, Vidyāpati, Sūradasa and Mirābāī. It was also influenced by the political, social, religious and cultural life in the region and the environments surrounding the State[8]. The two Kishangarh paintings displayed in the Museum are - *Māninī - Nāyikā* (99.63) [Fig. IV] and Kṛṣṇa dragging Rādhā - Line drawing (99.135).

Amber/Jaipur Paintings

Like many other Rajasthani schools, the history of early paintings of Jaipur is also quite obscure. However, the seed of what we know as the Jaipur School of Painting was sown during the time of Raja Bharamal (1547-1573) of Amber who married his daughter Jodhabai to the Mughal Emperor Akbar in 1562. His son Raja Bhagwantadas (1573-1589) further strengthened this relation by marrying his daughter Manabai to Prince Salim (Jahangir). After his death, Maharaja Man Singh (1590-1614) succeeded the throne of Amber, who proved to be the ablest commander and close friend of Akbar. All these kings were great lovers and patrons of art. Having such intimate relationships with the Mughals, it was quite obvious that the Rajput and Mughal elements got intermingled, which can well be seen in the art and architecture of this era. This tradition continued in Amber till the accession of the last ruler Sawai Jai Singh (1700-1743), who laid foundation of a new capital nearby, Jaipur, in 1727. He was one of the most illustrious rulers of Rajasthan, and art and architecture met with new horizons under his reign. The Mughal elements from Jaipur miniature paintings began to fade away with the decreasing Mughal power and the Rajaput style started reviving from the time of Maharaja Madho Singh (1750-1768).

The Jaipur School was redefined during the reign of Sawai Pratap Singh (1778-1803) who appointed about fifty expert painters in his court providing them with all the facilities and emoluments. These painters created the series of paintings based on the manuscripts of *Mahābhārata, Rāmāyaṇa, Durgāpāṭha, Bhāgavata,* etc. The complete sets of *Rāgamāla* were also prepared[9]. *Bārahamāsā, Nāyikābheda, Ṣaḍṛtuvarṇana, Rasikapriyā,* stories from *Purāṇas,* court scenes, portraits, hunting scenes, flora and fauna were the other favourite topics chosen for execution on different surfaces. In fact, the entire nineteenth century was a period of great productivity, and though little of quality was produced, Jaipur paintings were exported all over North India. The Jaipur style

was also quite hardy, and was among the last of the traditional styles to succumb to the pressure of changing times[10]. Muhammadshah, Sahib Ram, Lal Chitara, Ramjidas, Govind, Hiranand, Trailokya, etc. are some of the known artists of this school. The Amber-Jaipur paintings displayed in the Museum are - *Rāginī Vasanta* - Kṛṣṇa playing Holī - Folio from *Rāgamālā* series (99.60) [Fig. V], *Rāga Hiṇḍola* - Folio from *Rāgamālā* series (99.42) and Two noblemen - A sketch on Parchment (99.51).

Bundi and Kota Paintings

The history of Hara clan, an offshoot of the prominent Chauhan dynasty, can be extended back to the eighth century, for its members were among those who defended the subcontinent against the first Muslim invaders. It seems only to have been in the mid-thirteenth century that they seized the lands, which were to become known as Bundi State[11]. It was in 1631, when the Mughal Emperor Shahjahan separated Kota from Bundi and appointed Madho Singh as its head, that an independent state of Kota came into being. No wonder that the Kota School of Painting developed under the Bundi influence. After the acceptance of Mughal suzerainty in 1569, all the rulers of Bundi, and later Kota also, coordinated with the mighty Sultanate; and therefore, strong Mughal influence can be seen on early Bundi paintings. A distinctive Bundi style slowly began to develop from 1630 onwards with ducks sporting in the pools, ladies strolling in lush groves, hillsides studded with flowering plants, trees laden with heavy blossoms, minutely painted banana trees as some of the unique characteristics of this school.

In Rajput states, artists often treated members of the ruling house as models of masculine charm, and at Bundi this was to prove a standard practice until the nineteenth century, which was adopted by Kota artists as well. The kings of Bundi were great lovers of hunting and this interest in animals filtered into Kota style also and gradually became the most charming subject for the painters as well as their patrons. Kota, with its vast stretches of jungle filled with small twisted trees topped by bands of mauve rock, has a wilder, more romantic look; and in Kota painting, it is the jungle, quite as much as the animals in it, which provides the main theme[12]. Being sister states, the subjects selected by the painters of Bundi and Kota were more or less the same, such as - royal portraits, court scenes, forest and hunting scenes, adventures of Kṛṣṇa, stories from *Purāṇas, Rāgamālā, Rasikapriyā, Nāyikābheda, Bārahamāsā,* etc. The paintings on view in the Museum are - Kṛṣṇa watches a Gaṇagaura procession - Bundi (99.64), *Rāginī Vasanta* - Kṛṣṇa dancing with *gopīs* - Kota (99.55) [Fig. VI] and Animals in the forest - Kota (99.243).

Sirohi Paintings

Raja Pratap Singh and his son Lumba of Chauhan clan defeated the Paramara rulers around 1275 and conquered the region of Abu along with the capital Chandravati in the southwest of Rajasthan. Later, Raja Shivabhana of the same clan shifted his capital to the newly constructed Sirohi on the Saranava mountains in 1405. During the reign of Raja Lakha (1451-1483), Maharana Kumbha of Mewar captured Abu and built a fort at Vasantagargh. This great king himself was a poet, musician and lover of art. In fact, the Sirohi style of paintings are not obtained directly from Sirohi, but from Vasantagarh, which developed as a big centre of artistic activities in this part of Rajasthan[13]. Maharaja Man Singh of Jodhpur conquered Sirohi in 1804. Sirohi, in fact, had been continuously on target of either Mewar or Marwar rulers throughout its history; and this is the reason that both the schools made impression on its art creations. According to Pramod Chandra - 'Not unexpectedly, the school shares features derived from both Mewar and Marwar, but tends to be more conservative than either'[14]. *Durgāpaṭha, Rāgamālā* and *Kṛṣṇalīlā* were the most preferred themes of Sirohi painters. The Museum exhibits two paintings of Sirohi School - *Durgāpāṭha* (99.124) and *Rāga Dīpaka* - Folio from *Rāgamālā* series (99.53).

Nathadwara Paintings

Sinhara, a small village near Udaipur beside the Banas river in southern part of Rajasthan, was insignificant until 1671. It was due to the iconoclastic destruction of temples at Mathura by Aurangzeb that the Goswami of Vallabha sect somehow managed to save the image of Srī Nāthajī and escaped. Maharana Raj Singh (1652-1680) of Mewar assured him protection and also installed the image at Sinhara[15]. Because of Śrī Nāthajī's stay and favourable royal allegiance, this place rapidly grew into a thriving pilgrim centre under the new name of Nathadwara, meaning 'Gateway to Lord'. In a short span of time, because of heavy influx of pilgrims, various types of craftsmen came and settled down to serve the Lord, as well as to earn their bread. Painting was one of the most important of such crafts and it swiftly headed to create a distinctive place for itself in the history of Indian paintings.

The cloth painting produced for hanging in the temple, known as *Pichhavai,* is a marvellous innovation of Nathadwara School; and this has kept the traditional Indian painting alive and more active than any other place in India. The subject mater of these cloth paintings varies according to the particular ceremonies for which they are intended and they are made in sets so that every item in the

decoration of the shrine is appropriate for the occasion of its use[16]. Goswami Dauji Maharaja (1797-1826) is remembered with reverence in the Vallabha sect for his huge contribution in erecting public utility buildings for the temple and organizing special ceremonies and festivals for Srī Nāthajī. He was, thus, often painted performing rituals in the *pichhavais* and miniature paintings of Nathadwara. The Museum exhibits a portrait of Dauji Maharaja in a garden (99.137) [Fig. VII].

Malwa Paintings

Although the ancestry of Malwa School of Painting is unknown to us, but the prominent influence of Mewar style on the paintings of this region and the identical themes common in most schools of Rajasthan tempted the art historians earlier to regard this to be one of the Rajasthani Schools. However, the later evidences and deeper probing forced the scholars to ascribe a separate identity to Malwa School, which developed indigenously in this part of Central India under the influence of Pathans, Mughals, Rajaputs and Marathas from time to time. The earliest examples of Malwa School, like *Rasikapriyā, Amarū-Śataka* and *Rāgamālā* belong to the second quarter of the seventeenth century. All of these are done in a conservative manner, the compositions divided into registers and panels, and filled with monochrome patches of colour against which are painted the rather flat and abstract figures. This distinctive style apparently came to an end towards the close of the seventeenth century. During the course of its development in the eighteenth century, it appears to have cast off the archaistic mannerisms and to parallel more closely developments in other parts of Rajasthan[17].

Under the strong influence of prolific Malwa School, several sub-styles sprang up in Central India in the region of Bundelkhand, viz. Datia, Raghogarh, Orchha, Ratlam, Gwalior, Dhar, Indergarh, Rajgarh, Sitamou, Chhatarpur, etc. in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. *Kalpasūtra, Rāgamālā, Rasikapriyā, Amarū-Śataka, Niyāmatanāmā, Kavipriyā, Laura-Candā, Caurapañcāśikā, Bhāgavata-Purāṇa, Rāmāyaṇa,* etc. were the main themes of the painters of this school and sub-styles. The following paintings of Malwa School are exhibited in the Museum - Hero conversing with the heroine - Folio from *Amarū-Śataka* series (99.123) [Fig. VIII], Sakhī conversing with the heroine - Folio from *Rasikapriyā* series (99.33), Sītā entering the earth - Folio from *Rāmāyaṇa* series (99.116), Rāginī Gurjarī - Folio from Rāgamālā series (99.34), Rāginī Gaurī - Folio from Rāgamālā series (99.35), *Rāginī Mālaśrī* - Folio from *Rāgamālā* series (99.58), *Rāginī Kedāra* - Folio from *Rāgamālā* series

(99.136), King facing an elephant rider - Rāghogarh (99.132) and Kṛṣṇa with *gopas* and *gopīs* in the forest - Datiā (99.27).

Mughal Paintings

Mughal style of paintings occupies a distinct place in the history of Indian art. It developed as the confluence of Persian and Indian styles. The first two rulers of this dynasty in India, i.e. Babur and Humayun could not do much, as they remained busy throughout their life in establishing foothold in this country. However, while on their way to India, the former carried a copy of illustrated *Shahnama* and the latter brought two painters from Persia, namely, Khwaja Abdus Samad and Mir Sayyid Ali[18]. It was the third Mughal Emperor, Akbar - who stood responsible for introducing, patronizing and promoting all forms of art and craft in India. It was under his able stewardship that the Mughal School of Painting was born, nourished and flourished with its own flavour and style. Artists in his atelier came in close contacts with those in other parts of India and they adopted each other's technique and style to produce what we now know as Mughal Art, which was a combination of Persian and Indian styles. This mutual interaction can be witnessed in the paintings of Rajasthani Schools and the Mughal School between sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. Beside Persian subjects, the Mughal artists also produced paintings on Indian epics and stories, historical events and various other themes, although their stress had been on court portraiture.

The next emperor Jahangir continued to patronize the artists and some of the best Mughal miniature paintings were produced under his patronage. Though his successor Shahjahan did not let the art die, but his inclination was more towards architecture instead of paintings. But the history after that marks the gradual downfall of Mughal Art, as rest of the emperors, including Aurangazeb, were not interested much and this style disappeared from Delhi court soon after, although it did continue for sometime with the Rajasthani style before meeting its end. The two Mughal paintings on display in the Jñāna-Pravāha Museum are - Prince carousing in a garden - Folio from *Shahnama* series (99.49) and Jahangir attempts to save a follower from lion (99.59).

Pahari Paintings

After Jahangir, the Mughal School of Painting received a severe setback and the situation became worse during Aurangzeb's reign. The Mughal artists, due to unavailability of required patronage, were forced to leave the royal court in search of livelihood. These deserted Mughal artists were actually responsible for establishing another great school of Indian painting, i.e. Pahari[19], previously known as Punjab Hills

and now in Himachal Pradesh, in the eighteenth century. The area of Punjab Hills comprised of several feudal states, like Basohli, Kullu, Kangra, Nurpur, Garhwal, Chamba, Shangri, Mandi, Nalagarh, Guler, etc., each with a feudal Rajaput ruler paying tributes to Mughal court. Until the first half of the seventeenth century, no painting seems to have existed in any of the Rajaput states of the Punjab Hills. The art of painting might have reached the Rajaput courts of Punjab Hills from the Mughal court. Certain types of painting such as portraiture may well have developed as a result of the arrival of outside artists trained in Mughal methods. But the great majority of pictures would seem to have been done by the local artists. There is no evidence that painting was practised at village level or that primitive or folk art provided lively models. Indeed, it is as if the great schools of Punjab Hill painting developed in the seventeenth century almost out of nowhere[20]. The Rajasthani elements, already existing in Mughal style, were carried through to Pahari style as well. The wide range of subjects beautifully manifested by the Pahari painters reveal that there was no theme in human life that remained untouched by these glorious painters and they did justice to any subject they picked up for execution. Known painters of this school were - Nainsukh, Pandit Seu, Manaku, Puttu, Chetu, Kushan Lal, Dokhu, Padma, Molaram, Sajnu, Devidas, etc.

The Museum has the following Pahari paintings on display - Seated Raja Shamsher Sen of Mandī (99.54), 'Who is it that can resist the Call of his Flute?' Folio from *Satsaī* series (99.61) [Fig. IX], Rāma performs the *śrāddha* ceremony in exile - Folio from *Rāmāyaṇa* series (99.134), King Daśaratha approaches a sage - Folio from *Bahu - Śāngrī Rāmāyaṇa* series (99.239), *Nāyikābheda* (99.44) and Rāma takes on the army of Khara - Folio from *Rāmāyaṇa* series (99.138).

Western India/Gujarati Paintings

The earliest miniature paintings of India are known from Western India in form of illustrated and unillustrated manuscripts done on palm-leaves and paper since twelfth century. The themes are taken from the Śvetāmbara Jaina myths. As they were mostly painted in Gujarat, or in the areas of Rajaputana near Gujarat, they have been grouped under 'Gujarati Painting' by N.C. Mehta. Later, they have been called 'Western Indian Miniature Paintings' by Moti Chandra[21]. *Śāstradāna* (bestowal of canonical literature) in Jainism was considered to be a pious duty; hence, it received a substantial support from the kings, queens, ministers and merchants, and numerous manuscripts were created under their patronage. Consequently, the number grew so large that a number of Jaina *bhaṇḍāras* and libraries were established for their storage. Beside the most popular themes of *Devasānopāḍo Kalpasūtra* and *Kālakācāryakathā,*

Uttarādhyāyanasūtra, Upadeśamālā, Saṅgrahaṇīsūtra, etc. were also painted and distributed all over western India. Initially primitive in style and depiction with sharp angular features, these highly decorated manuscripts with bold colours, were later influenced by Persian, Sultanate and Mughal arts, respectively. In spite of such influences, predominantly occurring in costume types, the Western Indian or Gujarati School retained elements of that style and continued to flourish throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, illustrations of canonical and non-canonical literature continuing to be the favourite medium of expression[22]. The Western Indian/ Gujarati paintings exhibited in the Museum gallery are - Jaina *Tīrthaṅkara* enshrined and celestial dancers - Folio from *Devasānopāḍo Kalpasūtra* and *Kālakācāryakathā* (99.130), King on horseback and warriors - Folio from *Devasānopāḍo Kalpasūtra* and *Kālakācāryakathā* (99.126), Kālaka converts bricks to gold and Gardhabhilla's camp - Folio from *Devasānopāḍo Kalpasūtra* and *Kālakācāryakathā* (99.127), Indra surrounded by his courtesans - Folio from *Saṅgrahaṇīsūtra* (99.57) and Fourteen jewels of the Cakravartin - Folio from *Saṅgrahaṇīsūtra* (99.125).

Orissan Paintings

Wall paintings in Orissa have a long tradition, but it is difficult to assign a definite date to the beginning of miniature paintings in this part of the country. However, the availability of earliest illustrated manuscripts belonging to the sixteenth century can take the history of Orissan miniatures well back by a few centuries, i.e. eleventh-twelfth centuries. Like in Western India or Gujarat, Orissan miniature paintings also started as illustrations on palm-leaf manuscripts along with their painted wooden covers; paper followed afterwards. The themes selected for illustrations in this East Indian province were mostly associated with the adventures of Kṛṣṇa. It is well known that the text of *Bhāgavata* has been translated into the vernacular of Orissa but the original Sanskrit text was assiduously studied and illustrated copies were frequently made for rich patrons[23]. Interestingly, even in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when palm-leaf manuscripts had largely disappeared from most parts of India, the Orissan artist and scribe continued to use it as a favoured medium[24]. A showcase in the Museum exhibits Orissan paintings of nineteenth century CE on two different surfaces. viz. *Kṛṣṇalīlā* scenes on four palm-leaves (99.140 a-b-c-d) and Vaiṣṇava themes painted on all sides of a wooden box (99.146).

Tanjore Paintings

The school of miniature paintings in Thanjavur or Tanjore in Tamilnadu owes its foundation to the Maratha rulers of Tanjore around mid-eighteenth century. Prior to

that, the paintings in this South Indian province were patronized by the viceroys, known as *Nāyakas,* of the Vijayanagara kingdom. The painters of Vijayanagara migrated to Tanjore and Mysore after its downfall in 1565, where they produced paintings as per instructions and interests of their patrons. The themes were mostly selected from the Hindu canonical/mythological literature and royal courts. Later, this state was taken over by the Marathas; and it was under Sarabhoji (1798-1832) that all types of art and craft made considerable progress and earned distinguished name and fame for itself, even-though the British administration was already established since 1773 and he was just a pensioned nobleman of Tanjore. Sarabhoji was particularly interested in painting and on good terms with the British[25]. Naturally, the European elements also found place in Tanjore paintings, but a number of painters still continued to produce paintings as per Maratha conventions. The Tanjore painting of 1850 on display in the Museum depicts a popular theme of the marriage of Rāma and Sītā (99.62).

Company Paintings

The Company style of paintings started in India with the increasing power of the British in the nineteenth century. This style, brought from the West, affected almost all the Indian painting schools and their sub-styles, and artists adjusted their work to the needs of the time. Because of its association with the rising power of the East India Company, the Company style gained momentum and spread rapidly to other parts of India under British control, including the South[26]. This style continued throughout the nineteenth century and gradually spread to such areas a Burma, Nepal and Sri Lanka, once these countries had been brought under British administration. Company paintings are now seen as an important part of Indian history since they provide a record of social phenomena, especially of costume, castes and a way of life that have largely passed away. They are important also as a record of buildings and monuments that have been destroyed[27]. The two Company style paintings displayed in the Museum gallery are - Portrait of a Fakir (99.48) and Portrait of Seth Ghanashyamdas Poddar (99.133).

Banaras Paintings

Banaras, also known as Kashi or Varanasi, has been a pilgrimage spot since time immemorial. Beside pilgrims, this city has been a centre of attraction for the kings and queens of various dynasties of different eras, sages, seers, educationists, artists, administrative officers of varied ranks, military officials, noblemen, merchants, etc. People of all castes and creed have been thronging in from all directions. Hence, it developed as a city of mixed culture due to intensive interactions of various cultures. People from North to South and from East to West left their imprints on the city with

their commendable contributions in the field of architecture, crafts, performing arts and visual arts. As far as the miniature painting tradition of Banaras is concerned, the earliest evidences are obtained from the mid-eighteenth century in the form of two paintings, viz. a portrait of Seth Gwaladas Sahu and a scene of Subedar Mir Rustam Ali Playing Holī, both housed in the Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras Hindu University[28].

By the nineteenth century, Banaras became a centre that produced almost all types of paintings incorporating elements from Rajasthani, Mughal and Company styles. These were done on walls, paper, ivory and even on glass, reflecting almost all the aspects of social and cultural life of the city[29]. During the British rule, paintings on mica became a favourite tourist attraction in Banaras and hundreds of examples reached England[30]. A showcase in the Museum contains the earliest illustrated manuscript of Banaras on paper known as *Haricarita* (99.147), datable to 1736 CE and containing 423 pages. The other paintings are - Portrait of Gaṅgā on paper (2001.1), Artist's sketchbook of royal items (2002.1) and Portrait of Bhuvaneśvarī on ivory (2002.28).

Nepalese Paintings

Religion was the primary inspiring force behind most of the paintings created by the artists of Nepal. The tenets of the two major religions, Hinduism and Buddhism were imported from India, but the two faiths did develop peculiarities, which are distinctly local. The mythology and pantheon of both the religions provided the artists with the themes for their paintings[31]. During the Malla period (1200-1769), Nepali artists were in great demand in Tibet and there is ample reason to believe that much of the murals seen in Tibetan monasteries were rendered by Nepali artists[32]. The earliest examples of miniature paintings of Nepal belong to the eleventh century and are obtained in the form of illustrations on palm-leaf manuscripts and their wooden covers. Later, paper and cloth were also adopted. King Raghavadev of Licchavi dynasty introduced a new era, *Newari Saṁvat* in 879 CE and the artists and their creations also came to be known as Newari. Among the Hindu themes chosen for painting, Vaiṣṇavism predominated, with Śaivism, Śāktism, *Purāṇas, Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata* being the other preferred subjects. However, the Newari artists did not restrict themselves only to religion, but they picked up a wide variety of other social themes as well. This can be experienced in one of the wooden covers in the Jñāna-Pravāha Museum where scenes from the celebrated Sanskrit poet Kālidāsa's *Abhijñāna-Śākuntalam* have been executed (99.145). The other Newari paintings in the Museum are - A pair of manuscript covers with Buddhist scenes - Wood (99.143 a-b), *Sādhanamālā* - Artist's sketchbook by Jivarama painted in Tibet in 1435 - Paper

(99.139), A *Tāntrika goddess* - Cloth (99.119), Awakening of *kuṇḍalinī* - Cloth (2002.133), Goddess Tārā - Palm-leaf with inverted text (99.148), Three palm-leaves with Buddhist scenes (99.149 a-b-c) and *Durgā-Pāṭha* - Palm-leaf (99.50).

Tibetan Paintings

There are three types of Tibetan paintings - (i) Ṭhaṇkā - a religious painting usually done on cotton or linen, rarely on silk; (ii) Illustrations for handmade paper manuscripts and their wooden covers and (iii) Murals. The Tibetan art closely follows the ancient Indian traditions. Many iconographical types of the Buddhist pantheon in Tibet can be traced back to Gandhāra[33]. The subject matter of Tibetan paintings is essentially religious and Tibetans are among the most indefatigable translators of sacred texts the world has ever known. The books themselves are regarded as the speech of the Buddha and reading the sacred books is an essential part of monk's daily routine[34]. Tibet was a country where for a long time a large portion of the population was nomadic. Groups of monks moved over the country, pitching camps in the highlands in summer and in the lowlands in winter. They carried with them everything necessary for a full-scale religious establishment. Portable shrines were brought and full ritual paraphernalia, so that what amounted to complete monasteries could be set up in the tents. Ṭhaṅkās, being portable, were used instead of frescoes. The nomadic monasticism was a fundamental part of Tibetan spiritual life[35]. Important Tibetan schools that were engaged in producing Ṭhaṅkās and other paintings are - Ngor, Guge, Sakyapa, Kagyupa, Talung, Kham, Karma Gardri, Menri, Kadam, etc. The Tibetan paintings were influenced first by the Indian, then Nepalese, Chinese and Persian styles in eleventh-twelfth centuries as the monasteries frequently invited and employed expert artists from these countries. Complex iconography, rich decoration, bright and varied colour schemes are the salient features of Tibetan paintings. The Museum houses two profusely painted Ṭhaṅkās of the sixteenth century - Four *maṅḍalas* of the *Vajrāvalī* and *Tantra-samuccaya* (99.151) and Preaching Lama - Portrait of the Abbot Dkon mchog lhun grub (99.150).

In addition to the paintings mentioned, there is a showcase exhibiting two more paintings from Rajasthan, specific schools of which are not known. One is a rectangular piece of wood painted with Goddess Sarasvatī of Jaina tradition who is flanked by two fly-whisk bearers datable to 1750 (99.144), while the other is a Wooden *takhtī* (writing board) painted on both sides with various deities datable to early-twentieth century. Thus, the gallery of Jñāna-Pravāha Museum offers its viewers a concise glimpse of almost all the major schools and sub-styles of Indian painting for comprehensive understanding of the development and characteristic features of each. These paintings

throw ample light on the social, religious, political and cultural ups and downs of the society that have been playing role down through the modern times. The illustrious painters have skilfully captured these moments on various surfaces for our record.

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PAINTING SCHOOLS OF INDIA

(Various Schools whose paintings are present in J.P.Museum)

Fig. 1. Mewar

Fig. 2. Bikaner

Fig. 3. Jodhpur

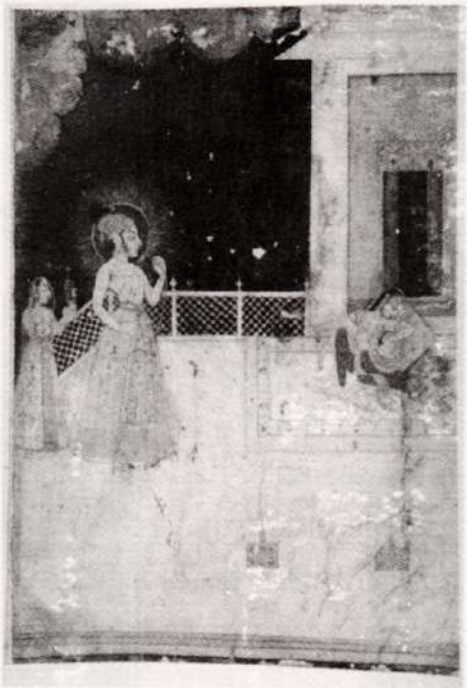

Fig. 4. Kishangarh

Fig. 5. Amber-Jaipur

Fig. 6. Kota

Fig. 7. Nathadwara

Fig. 8. Malwa

Fig. 9. Pahari