

PAHARI PAINTING

In the previous lesson, we learnt the Mughal painting. In this lesson, we will learn about Pahari painting. Pahari painting is a term used for miniature painting tradition that flourished in the hilly regions of Indian such as Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Tehri-Garhwal. This is a lyrical style of painting. It was patronized by the local Rajas of these regions between circa 1675 to 1823 CE. They were mainly Rajputs. In Pahari painting, both religious and secular subjects were painted. Fine paintings based on religious epics like Mahabharat and Ramayana, Puranas, Gita Govinda and Rasamanjari were frequently painted in Pahari style. Sanskrit and Hindi classics such as Rasikapriya, Baramasa and Bihari Satsai were other popular texts that found representation in Pahari painting.



OBJECTIVES

After Studying this lesson, the learner will be able to:

- describe in brief the Pahari miniature painting;
- describe the characteristic features of the Pahari paintings;
- identify the characteristics of Pahari paintings.
- differentiate between the paintings according to the physical and thematic features;
- mention the period of the piece of art.

Secular themes included a depiction of the day to day life, court scenes, portraits and love stories of Hira-Ranjha, Sohani-Mahiwal and Sassi-Punno, among others. Paintings of musical modes known as Ragamala were also seen in Pahari paintings. In Pahari paintings, generally bright colours were used in contrast. Depiction of nature formed an important component of the composition of Pahari painting. There are several schools of Pahari painting. They are known after the centres of



Notes

their origin, such as Kangra, Basohli, Mankot, Guler, Jammu, Mandi, Chamba, Bilaspur, Kulu and Garhwal etc. Among the famous patrons of Pahari painting, Kirpal Pal, Sansar Chand, and Ranjit Dev from Basohli, Kangra and Jammu, respectively had made a significant contribution in the development of this style of painting. Nainsukh, Manaku, Kushan Lal, Fattu and Ram Lal, Pupndit Seu and Purkhu were some of the famous Pahari painters. Many great writers, poets and philosophers were born during this period who contributed immensely towards the spreading of Vaishnavism and eventually to the development of an Art form in the 16th and 17th C.E. in which spiritual experience was symbolized by the relation of lover and beloved.

8.1 UNDER THE KADAMBA TREE, KANGRA STYLE

Dear learner, we will get to know the Kangra style.

Basic Information

The culture of Punjab and the Great Sikh Movement started by Guru Nanak also inspired Kangra artists. Under the Royal Patronage of Raja Sansar Chand, Kangra painting reached a great height in beautiful portrayal of human form and nature. The “Gita Govinda” of Jayadeva and “Ramayana” of Tulsidas have been illustrated in Kangra style. Sansar Chand commissioned many portraits of himself from his childhood to old age. The Sikh gurus have also been painted by the court artists of Kangra. Kangra art is a culmination of the spiritual and literary revival of Hinduism. Kangra paintings disregard perspective but focus on wonderful glowing colours and delicate line work. Almost all faces are drawn in profile. Kangra paintings can easily be identified by the delicacy of lines, brilliant colours and minuteness of decorative detail. Females with gazelle-like eyes, straight noses and beautifully chiselled faces are speciality of Kangra paintings. The paper used for making miniature painting were made by special technique. Thin layers of paper were joined layer by layer to make one thick paper called Wasli. This paper was then coated with glue of kikar plant mixed with white clay (Kharia Mitti) and also sometimes with egg white. A thin coat of the above-mentioned mixture is applied to the paper so that the pores in the paper get filled, and the paper becomes smooth. Colours are obtained from natural sources like red from Lahi (an insect) or beetroot, blue from Jamun or neel, yellow from turmeric, Ramraj (a stone) or Goguli (stone), Green-lapis Lazuli, boiling leaves, black from Kajal, golden colour from the peel of anar (Pomegranate).

1. Outline was either drawn or traced on Wasli paper.
2. Opaque colour was applied with a brush made with squirrel or horse hair.
3. Brushes of various thicknesses were used. Start with a very thin one or two hair brush.

4. Shading is done by the stippling method.
5. Gold and silver thin foils were used for jewellery.
6. Painting polished with smooth stone after it is finished.

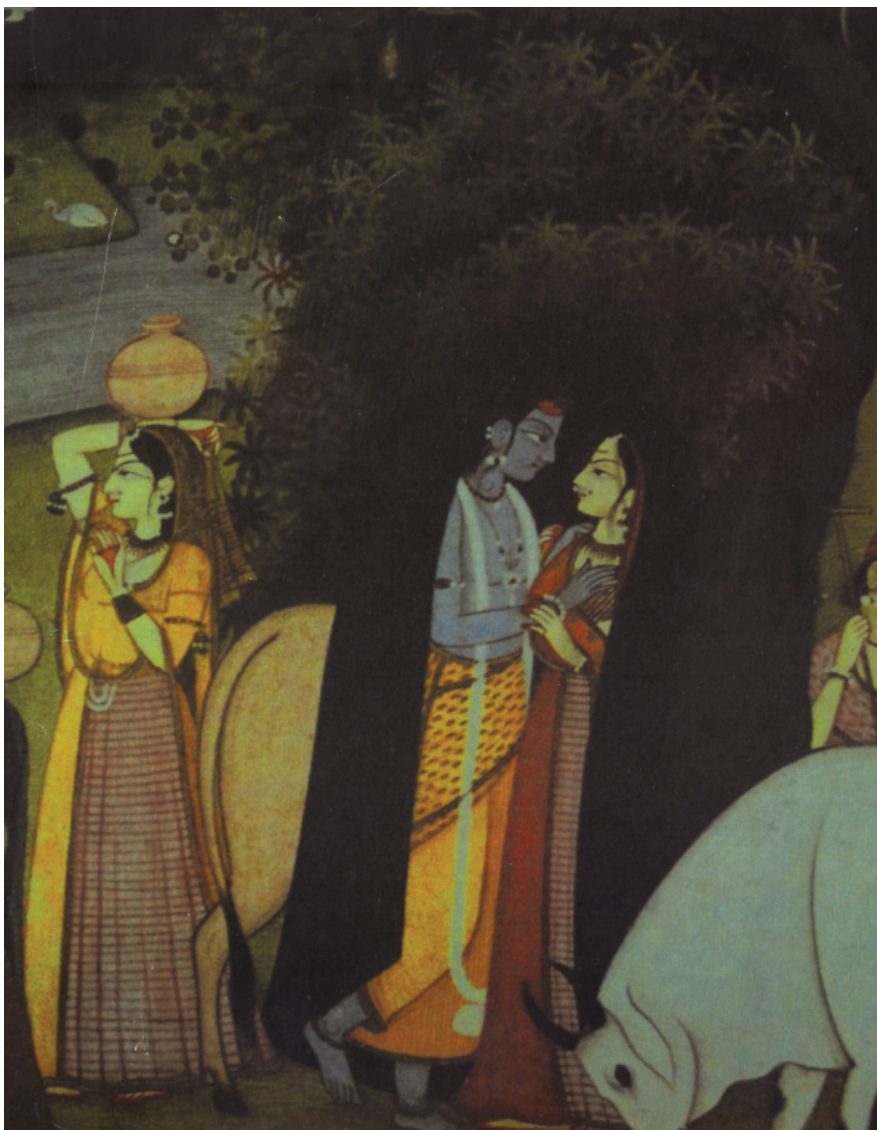


Fig. 8.1: Under the Kadamba Tree

8.1.1

- Title : **Under the Kadamba tree**
Time : 1820-30 C.E
Medium : Opaque watercolour on paper
Collection : Harsh D Dehejia collection



Notes



Notes

General Description

The central theme of Kangra painting is love, and its sentiments are expressed in a typical style that is full of rhythm, grace and beauty. Krishna is shown romancing Radha under the Kadamba tree in deep woods near the bank of Yamuna. Cowherds are seen with cows, while the Gopis carry pots on their heads. Inside the thick foliage of the Kadamba tree peacock, and other birds can be seen. Cranes and other birds fly to make the whole painting amazingly delightful. This painting expresses the Sringara Rasa, where Krishna and Radha are shown embracing each other. On awakening the other like the human soul awakened by the realization of God. It also depicts the coming together of two into one colours like blue, yellow and red also have been used in this painting along with other shades of colours.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 8.1

Choose the appropriate option.

1. The central theme of Kangra art is

(i) Love	(ii) Anger
(iii) Fear	(iv) Enjoy
2. Who were the pioneer of Vaishnava revival?

(i) Tulsidas	(ii) Ramanuja and Jaideva
(iii) Tulsidas and Jaideva	(iv) Krishnaraja and Tulsidas
3. How is love personified in Kangra painting?

(i) Ram and Sita	(ii) Lakshmi and Narayana
(iii) Radha and Krishna	(iv) Hira and Ranjha

8.2 THE RAINS, KANGRA STYLE

Now, let us learn another painting in Kangra style.

Basic Information

The salient feature of Kangra paintings, is the delicate lines with which the various forms and figures are rendered. Soft and subtle colours are used. Minute details and decorative qualities are very predominant. The beautiful eyes and chiselled face are special features. Colours are obtained from natural resources. The themes are mainly from Ramayana and Gita Govinda.



Notes

8.2.1

Title : **The Rains**
 Style : Kangra
 Time : 1800 C.E.
 Medium : Opaque water colour on paper



Fig. 8.2: The Rains

General Description

An aristocratic couple has been shown on a palace roof under a rain-filled sky. The twelve months of the year 'Baramasa' have delighted Hindu poets and painters. Kesavadas, a great poet, described the life of people during those seasons. These have been rendered into lines and colours by Kangra painters. This Painting was painted during the reign of Raja Sansar Chand; it shows a couple, in the form of Radha and Krishna, welcoming the rains with joy. The earth is covered with green grass. Elephants and leopards enjoy cool showers. Kangra painters were deeply in love with nature.

**Notes****INTEXT QUESTIONS 8.2**

1. What are the great works of literature that inspired Kangra paintings?
2. What are the key factors in the development of the Kangra school of painting?
3. What are the salient features of Kangra painting?
4. Name the sources to obtain colours.

8.3 KRISHNA ROMANCING RADHA WITH A LOTUS, BASOHLI STYLE

Hope you understood Kangra style; let us learn Basohli style.

Basic Information

Specimens of early paintings of the Basohli style can be found in all the hill states of Punjab. Basohli paintings are simple works full of strength and primitive vitality. The pattern is dominated by lines and colours. Basohli painters worked with fearless passion imparting energy and power to their works. Artists attained maximum expression with minimum means. Lush landscapes are special features of 17th-century Basohli paintings “Love Pavilion” are frequently seen set in these landscapes. Raja Kirpal was the ruler, and he developed a fondness for possessing



Fig. 8.3: Krishna Romance Radha with a Lotus



Notes

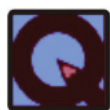
illustrated manuscripts on varieties of subjects. He was aware of the Mughal styles. Rasamanjari, Bhagwatpurana, and Gita Govinda were illustrated and “Krishna” had a prominent presence in all these manuscripts. Throughout the 18th century, Basohli leaders showed special fondness for Rasamanjari and this kingdom produced some finest illustrations of romantic text by Bhanudatta, painted by artist “Devidas” (1694-95). The Basohli style remains unique and is one of the finest artistic expressions in the miniature painting of the 17th and 18th C.E. with its characteristic ethnic types, bold colour schemes, wooden architectural motifs, large staring eyes, and robust figures.

8.3.1

Title	:	Krishna Romancing Radha with a Lotus
Period	:	1660-70 C.E.
Place	:	Basohli
Medium	:	Opaque watercolour on paper
Collection	:	Victoria Albert Museum, London

General Description

This celebrated painting from Rasamanjari shows courtly Krishna and Radha in two different segments. Unlike Kangra Krishna, we see that Basohli Krishna is urban and suave. Krishna resembles nobility and royalty more than the pastoral and prankish cowherd of the “Bhagwata”. This must have pleased the royal patrons of Basohli. Artist has drawn Radha and Krishna with great sensitivity, and courtly interpretation of the love of Krishna and Radha could be imitated by the Rajput court and courtiers and therefore, appropriate for the royal courts of that time. Radha is seen sitting in a pavilion, leaning against the pillow in a royal and confident manner. She is very different from the shy Radha of Kangra school. Her sensuous body and love larn eyes heightens the romantic mood of the painting. Dressed in an orange dhoti, the blue-bodied Krishna with a golden scarf is approaching Radha with a lotus flower. Behind him is the intricately rendered stylised tree. The brilliant yellow brightens the entire composition.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 8.3

Fill in the blanks:

- medium was used in this painting.
- Bhagawat Puran, and were illustrated and Krishna had a prominent presence in all these manuscripts.



Notes

8.4 KRISHNA ADDRESSING COURTIER, BASOHLI STYLE

Now, let us learn another painting in the Basohli style.

Basic Information

Basohli paintings are bold and simple compared to the Kangra paintings. The colours are also very bright and direct in comparison to the subtle tones of the Kangra style of paintings. Basohli style is characterised by large staring eyes, faces in profile and multiple perspective.



Fig. 8.4: Krishna with a Companion

- Title : **Krishna with a Companion**
- Medium : Opaque watercolour on paper
- Period : 1660-70 C.E.
- Place : Victoria Albert Museum, London

General Description

Krishna, leaning against a pillow in a palace interior is shown in conversation with a companion. Bold colour schemes, a wooden architectural pavilion, large staring eyes and robust figures are typical of the Bashoti style. In this work, blue-bodied Krishna is shown wearing a deep yellow dhoti. He is expressing his loneliness to his companion as Radha is away. The absence of Radha is indicated by the empty bed. The companion is listening attentively to Krishna’s longing. His bare upper body has sandal marks indicating his Vaishnavite affiliation. His red conical turban is simple compared to the elaborate crown of Krishna decorated with lotus flowers.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 8.4

Choose the most appropriate option:

- Write the period of the painting 'Krishna with a Companion'.
 - 1665-70CE
 - 1660-70CE
 - 1560-70CE
 - 1760-70CE
- Which of the following is a special feature of the Basholi style of painting?
 - Colours were bright
 - Colours were light
 - Large eyes
 - Long hair style



Notes

8.5 VISHVARUPA I, CHAMBA STYLE

So learner, you have learnt Basholi style. Now you will get to know Chamba style.

Basic Information

Chamba school of painting flourished in a small hill town of Himachal Pradesh. This school made its mark on the painting history of the Pahari school. Inspired by



Fig. 8.5: Vishvarupa I

MODULE - 2

Historical Appreciation of
Indian Contemporary and
Miniature Art



Notes

Pahari Painting

the Krishna cult and Vaishnavism, the Chamba school of art presented one of the finest collection of paintings in the world. The main themes of Chamba paintings were (1) Dasavatara Series (1725-50 C.E.) (2) The Vishwarupa Series (18th C.E.) (3) Bhagvata Purana Series (1757 C.E.) and (4) Ramayana (1750-75 C.E.)

Papers used by the Chamba artists were Wasli. Natural and mineral colours were applied to it. Gold, silver and other materials were also applied, which were later polished with smooth stone from both sides.

The centre was influenced by Mughal miniature painters both in style and colour. In spite of that, it retained its local characteristics. The costumes of the men show similarities with the male figures in Mughal miniature paintings.

8.5.1

Title	:	Vishvarupa I
Place	:	Chamba
Medium	:	Opaque watercolour on paper
Size	:	30.2 cm × 23.8 cms.
Collection	:	New York

General Description

This is an unusual colourful Vishvarupa since the heads, arms, and legs have been painted in different colour red, green, grey, blue, yellow, and pink. Twenty-four arms are painted in the rounded formations of different hues holding various weapons as well as lotuses, a conch shell, a temple bell, possibly the Vedas and a snake. There are four layers of heads with four central heads and 23 profile heads on each layer, making them 52. The torso is covered in bark-like vegetation from which we see figures of Brahma, Shiva, Sun and Moon peeping out. There are two figures, one of a women the other one of a man, standing with folded hands. These figures are probably of King and Queen. There are also two small figures at the bottom of the composition that seems to be a princess. Interestingly, two squatting figures are also painted on the body of the deity.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 8.5

1. Which period do these paintings belong?
2. What are the characteristic features of Chamba Paintings?
3. What are the main themes of Chamba paintings?



ACTIVITY

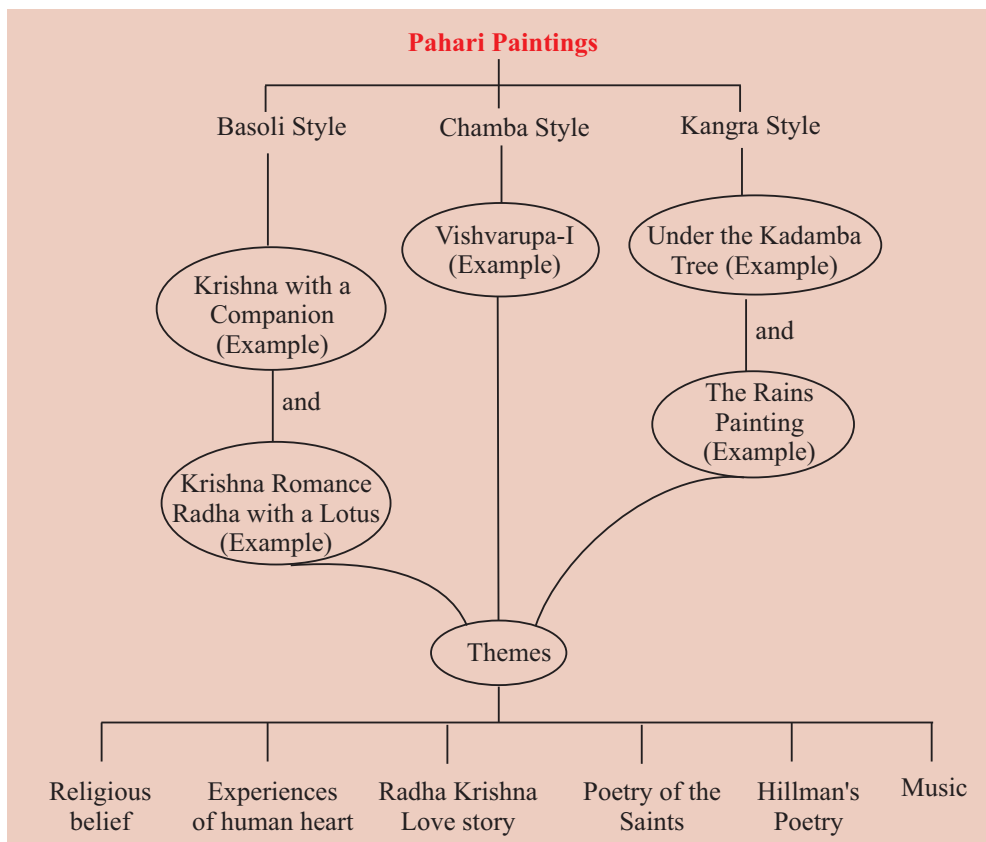
Visit a library in your locality and collect photographs of Pahari paintings. Now make a collage by using these paintings properly.



Notes



WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT



MODULE - 2

Historical Appreciation of
Indian Contemporary and
Miniature Art



Notes

Pahari Painting

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The learner will

- create the tones by locally available materials;
- draw the Pahari paintings using household materials.



TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. Write the central theme of Kangra art.
2. How is love personified in Kangra paintings?
3. What is the contribution of religious leaders, poets, and philosophers of the 16th and 17th centuries?
4. What is the uniqueness of Basholi style?
5. What is the difference between Krishna and Radha figures of Basholi and Kangra - style?
6. What are the characteristic features of Chamba paintings?
7. What is the medium used for painting miniatures?
8. How did Jayadeva's Gitagovinda inspire the Pahari Artists?
9. Write a few lines about the symbolic use of colours
10. What did the Vaishnava cult symbolize?
11. What are the themes of Basholi paintings?
12. What is the uniqueness of Basholi style?
13. What is the difference between Krishna and Radha in "Basholi" and "Kangra" styles?



ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

8.1

1. (i) Love
2. (iii) Ramanuja and Jaideva
3. (ii) Radha and Krishna



Notes

8.2

1. Gitagovinda by Jayadeva, Ramayana of Tulsidas
2. Vaishnava revival of the 11th and 12th centuries. Ramanuja popularized worship of Vishnu 'Gita Govinda' of Jyadeva became a favourite for love song based on the divine love of Krishna and Radha. The culture of Punjab and the Great Sikh movement started by Guru Nank also inspired the Kangra artist. The cult of Bhakti was, however, its driving force.
3. Delicate lines with various forms and figures rendered soft and subtle colours are used. Minute details and decorative qualities are very predominant.
4. From Natural resources.

8.3

1. Opaque watercolour on paper.
2. Rasamanjari, Gita Govinda

8.4

1. (ii) 1660-70CE
2. (i) Colours were bright

8.5

1. 18th Century
2. Style-Indigenous, inspired by Krishna cult, liberal use of bright flat colours, complicated symbolic representation.
3. Vishvarupa series (18th Century) AD
Bhagwata Purana (1757A.D)
Ramayana (1750-75A.D.)
Dasavatara Series (1725-50 A.D.)

GLOSSARY

Ethnic	Connected with particular race of people
Courtly	A style which is typical of Court
Torso	Mid part of the body
Conch	A shell used for religious purposes, one of the main attributes of Lord Vishnu

MODULE - 2

Historical Appreciation of
Indian Contemporary and
Miniature Art



Notes

Pahari Painting

ripening	Completely grown and mature
Rustic	Village background
Divine	Something related to God or Godly.
Conjugal	Couple in closeness
Illustrated	Visual representative (a picture or diagram) that is used to make as subject more pleasing is easier to understand.
Nobility	People of Kings Courts
Royalty	Majestic
Awakening	To wake up
Foliage	Trees, leaves etc.
Vitality	Youthful energy
Fierce	Almost aggressive, passion
Vigour	Youthful passion
Indigenous	Something which belongs completely to the land or its people.