

9

Pahari School of Miniature Painting

9.0 INTRODUCTION

A new style that was developed in the Himalaya foot-hills of Punjab, Garhwal and Jammu is known as "Pahari Qualam" or Pahari school of painting. The local folk art form of this area was influenced by painters of Mughal court when they took shelter in the Hindu states of this area due to the invasion of Nadir Shah. Pahari Qualam is a beautiful combination of natural beauty of this region and the glamour of Mughal court of Delhi. Under the patronage of the small kings of the hill-states, it spread through Jammu to Tehri and Pathankot to Kullu. The painters maintained the indigenous style in spite of the Mughal influence. The Pahari school narrates Indian Mythological and religious stories. Portrait paintings were also very popular among the patrons of this school. Though the characters are from Hindu religious stories, they are sometimes shown in Mughal costumes. The artists of Jammu, Kangra and Guler combined the best aspects of Mughal and Rajasthan styles. The main centres of Pahari school were Basholi, Guler, Kangra, Chamba, Mandi, Kullu, Bilaspur, Jammu, Nalagarh, Garhwal, Kashmir, Dharamshala etc.

Themes of Pahari miniature paintings are influenced by classical literature, music and local cultures. The painters are masters in expressing the beauty of nature and women.

These paintings are done on handmade paper, which is made of bamboo, cotton and other materials. These are popularly known as "Sialkoti paper". After the lines are drawn on the paper, it is given a coat of white colour. The surface of the paper is polished by rubbing a smooth stone on it and colours are applied on this surface. The painters also used stencils to reproduce more copies of the painting.

Pahari school began to decline in the 19th C.A.D., not before it achieved excellence in the art of miniature painting. The school is characterised by its tender colouring, sensitive and emotional style and more convincing use of perspective and foreshortening.

9.1 OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson the learner will be able to -

- describe the background, region, contribution of Mughal court, religions and literature;
- describe the enlisted art-works with appreciation;
- differentiate between the styles of Rajasthani school and Pahari school;
- explain the characteristic features of these paintings;
- identify the medium, technique and style of Pahari school painting;
- state of the names of painter's and their paintings.



9.2 KRISHNA WAITING FOR RADHA

| | | |
|------------|---|---|
| Title | - | <i>Krishna waiting for Radha</i> |
| Medium | - | <i>Tempera on Sialkoti paper</i> |
| Period | - | <i>1730 A.D.</i> |
| Size | - | <i>12.2"x8.1"</i> |
| Theme | - | <i>A very popular theme of Krisna Leela</i> |
| Style | - | <i>Basholi</i> |
| Artist | - | <i>Manku</i> |
| Technique | - | <i>Tempera</i> |
| Collection | - | <i>National Museum New Delhi</i> |

General Description

"Geet Govinda" was written by Bengali poet Jaidev on 'Krisna-Leela' during 11th C.A.D. and became very popular all over India. The painters of Basholi were influenced by poetic descriptions of "Krisna-Leela" and used these most romantically in their paintings. This painting is one of those, in which Krisna, Radha and her friends are shown. The allegorical presentation of Krisna and Radha as *Paramatma* (Supreme being) and *Atma* (human being) respectively and the Gopinis (friends) as '*Guru*' (Preceptor), elevate the theme to a spiritual level. The *Guru* persuades a person to meet "*Paramatma*", as Gopinis are trying to convince Radha to meet waiting Krishna.

Basholi paintings are characteristic by flat backgrounds with simplified forms of trees. Faces are in profile and colour are warm and bright.

INTEXT QUESTIONS (9.2)

Choose the right answer

- (a) This painting belong to the style of
 - (i) Kishan garh
 - (ii) Basholi
 - (iii) Chamba
- (b) The painter was inspired by the following book
 - (i) Shri Madbhagavat
 - (ii) Mahabharata
 - (iii) Geeta-Govinda
- (c) Match the following

| | |
|--------------|-----------------|
| (i) Radha | (i) Atma |
| (ii) Krisna | (ii) Guru |
| (iii) Gopini | (iii) Paramatma |



King of Chamba Jit Singh and King of Kangra Sansar Chand

9.3 KING OF CHAMBA JIT SINGH AND KING OF KANGRA SANSAR CHAND

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| <i>Title</i> | - <i>King of Chamba and king of Kangra</i> |
| <i>Medium</i> | - <i>Water colours</i> |
| <i>Period</i> | - <i>Circa 1800 A.D</i> |
| <i>Size</i> | - <i>28.5 X 22cm.</i> |
| <i>Theme</i> | - <i>Chamba king Jeet Sing and Kangra king Sansar Chand in a courtesy meeting</i> |
| <i>Technique</i> | - <i>Tempra</i> |
| <i>Material</i> | - <i>Paper (hand made)</i> |
| <i>Artist</i> | - <i>NainSukh</i> |
| <i>Collection</i> | - <i>National Museum, New Delhi</i> |

General Description

Raja Sansar Chand was a great admirer and patron of art. His time was a golden age of Indian painting of the pahari school. The painting documents the friendship of two rulers of Pahari States and art-lovers. Raja Jeet Singh of Chamba and Raja Sansar Chand are relaxing and smoking from Hukka. In a background of yellow space and blue sky, the Royal costumes appear very colourful. The kings are flanked by attendants. This is a very good example of portraiture of pahari school of Kangra.

INTEXT QUESTIONS: (9.3)

Fill up the blanks

- This painting is painted by _____.
- This painting belongs to _____ school.
- The enlisted painting is a good example of _____ Pahari School.

9.4 SUMMARY

Pahari School of painting is quite distinct from Rajasthani school. This region was more exposed to different religious beliefs and Mughal influence. The school is famous for beautiful flowing lines and brilliant colours. The court painting of portraits become popular along with literary, mythical and secular themes. The painters of Pahari School were great lovers of nature and depicted nature with care and love in their paintings.

9.5 ANSWER OF INTEXT QUESTIONS

- 9.2 (a) (ii) Basholi
 (b) (iii) Geeta Govinda
 (c) Radha - Atma
 Krisna - Paramatma
 Gopini - Guru
- 9.3. (a) NainSukh
 (b) Pahari School
 (c) Portraiture

9.6 MODEL QUESTIONS

1. Describe the main theme of Pahari painting.
2. What do you know about the characteristic features of Pahari painting.
3. Describe the painting "Krisna is waiting for Radha".
4. Throw some light on the technique of Pahari miniature painting.

9.7 GLOSSARY

- | | | |
|---------------|---|---|
| Krishna-Leela | - | Different stories about Krishna |
| Allegorical | - | 1. Symbolic narration 2. Picture reverting a hidden meaning |
| Secular | - | Non religious subjects |
| Foreshorten | - | 1. Represent as having less depth or distance than reality, so as to convey an effect of perspective. 2. Shorten or reduce in time or scale. |