General Studies Manual for UPSC and State Public Services Examinations 2014

Salient Features of Indian Culture
Module-1: Ancient and Medieval Indian Paintings

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Chapter 1. Prehistoric Paintings

Special features of the Pre-historic paintings in India

- The prehistoric art help us to find the gradual development of primitive man.
- This art **shows symbolism** and its shows that the primitive man took inspiration from the nature. At some places, we also find that a pinch of spirituality was added to the worldly things in some prehistoric paintings.
- Depiction of **limited and special subjects**.
- Most drawings are impressionistic.
- Human figure has been drawn only by four lines in many depictions. The **expression of ideas through very few lines** is the most important feature of the pre-historic art.
- To draw human figures, the diagonal and angular lines were used. We also find some geometrical patterns such as circle, triangle etc. Also depicted the swastika and Trishul.
- The primitive man used whatever color he could gather from nature. The paintings are in black, red, yellow or in white colors.
- Most dominant scenes: Hunting, depiction of human figures with bows and arrows
- Little depiction of birds, more depiction of mammals.

Johan Cockburn and Archibald Carlleyle
These were the names of two Britishers who can be given the credit of having traced the cave paintings in India. Both of them discovered the cave paintings of Camoor Hills in Vindhya Ranges near Mirzapur in 1880.

Bhimbaitaka Rock Shelters

The Bhimbaitaka site includes:

- ✓ 400 painted rock shelters in five clusters;
- ✓ Palaeolithic evidence from excavations within shelters indicating antiquity of human settlement;
- ✓ Stone and Iron Age walls and floors within the rock shelters;
- ✓ Evidence of a very long cultural continuity within many of the painted rock shelters;
- ✓ Indications of strong cultural links between the Bhimbetka paintings and the culture of local villages in the buffer zone;
- ✓ Forest areas around the rock paintings.

Bhimbaitaka Caves
Located between Hoshangabad and Bhopal, in the foothills of the Vindhyan Mountains on the southern edge of the central Indian plateau.
The painted caves are more than 400 in number and spread over an area often square kilometers. Most credit to discover the caves goes to Shri V. S. Vakankar (Head of the dept. of Archaeological Museum and Excavations, Vikram University)
Most paintings are from Mesolithic era.
The site includes five clusters of rock shelters which display persistent traditions of rock painting, spanning periods from the Mesolithic to the Historic. They also display a profusion, richness and variety of mural subjects and, as a collection, form one of the densest known concentrations of rock art.

Special Features of Bhimbaitaka Paintings

The *Bhimbaitka complex is a magnificent repository of rock paintings within natural rock shelters'*. Largely in white and red, the paintings are essentially a record of the varied animal life of the surrounding forest and of various facets – economic and social- of peoples' lives. Images include

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extinct fauna, mythical creatures; domesticated animals, carts and chariots; designs and patterns, inscriptions and also some symbols of the Historic period and along with pictorial narratives of events such as large processions of men on caparisoned horses and elephants, and battle scenes.

Some paintings contain a few images, while others have several hundred. Depictions vary from the realistic to the stylised, graphic, geometric or decorative. Sizes of the paintings range from five centimetres to an immense impression on a ceiling of an animal nearly five metres in length and two metres across. Stylistically the paintings are closely linked to a distinctive, regional Central Indian style of rock paintings, which is well documented. Many features are also typical of significant bodies of rock art around the world.

In at least one of the excavated shelters, continued occupation is demonstrable from 100,000 BCE (Late Acheulian) to 1000 AD. At the same time, the Bhimbetka rock art has not been directly dated (using AMS dating techniques). Evidence of early dates therefore has to come from associative material such as the presence of art in rock shelters with Pleistocene deposits, art pigments identified in Mesolithic sequences, and images in paintings associated with hunter gatherer and pre-agricultural societies.

Evidence for a long continuity of tradition comes from the *content of paintings and typological analyses, which have established broad cultural periods associated with pottery found elsewhere in the region.* Added to this are superimpositions or overlapping of painting of different styles and periods, observed in many shelters. Up to fifteen layers have been recorded.

On the basis of present knowledge, it is believed that the rock art dates from the Mesolithic period (around 10,000 years ago), through the Chalcolithic (Microlithic) and right into the Historic, Medieval and recent Historic period.

Chapter 2. Shadanga and Chitrasutra

Shadanga of Indian Paintings

Painting (*Alekhyam*) occupies the fourth place among the 64 Arts enumerated by Vatsyayana in his Kama Sutra. While concluding, Vatsyayana has written a Shloka which amply indicated that painting was fully developed during that period and the six limbs of Painting (Shadangas) enumerated in the Kama Sutra were already in vogue. These six limbs of Indian Paintings are:

- ✓ *Rupabheda*: The knowledge of appearances.
- ✓ *Pramanam*: Correct perception, measure and structure.
- ✓ *Bhava:* Action of feelings on forms.
- ✓ *Lavanya Yojanam*: Infusion of grace, artistic representation.
- ✓ *Sadrisyam:* Similitude.
- ✓ *Varnikabhanga:* Artistic manner of using the brush and colours.

Chitrasutra

Since early times, the art and technique of painting were carefully studied and put down in the Chitrasutra of the *Vishnudharmottara Purana*. This was **an oral tradition**, which was recorded on

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paper around the fifth century A.D. *It is the oldest known treatise on painting in the world*. As always, according to the ancient Indian tradition in which knowledge is considered sacred, this text is meant to be approached with reverence.

- ✓ Chitrasutra says that the paintings are the greatest treasure of mankind as they have a beneficial influence on the viewer. Chitrasutra contains the rules and suggestions on how to depict different themes effectively, the proportion of human figures, the use of colours to help in the communication of ideas, the fine details of movements and stances of the human body in different situations and in different moods, and so many other ideas and details to instruct the painter.
- ✓ These were carefully formulated, to be passed on from father to son over the centuries and through guilds of painters. The purpose of this documentation was to preserve the legacy of the collective understanding of the finest minds.

Chapter 3. Cave Paintings and Murals of India

Jogimara Cave Paintings

The paintings which were created before the Ajanta and Bagh Caves belong to Pre-Buddha caves. **The best example of the Pre-Buddha paintings** is the **Jogimara cave**, which is situated at Amarnath near the origin of Narmada, in Sarguja in Madhya Pradesh. The paintings of these caves have been dated from 300BC to as back as 1000BC. The roof of the cave has some seven paintings which include the human figures, fish and elephants. There are two layers of paintings in it. The Original paintings are of expert artists but the upper layer has been done by incompetent artists. *In true sense, the Jogimara Caves seem to be the first human endeavours as expert paintings.*

Ajanta Paintings

Ajanta is located about a hundred kilometres from Aurangabad, in the horse shoe shaped gorge of the Waghora River in the Sahyadari. The paintings of Ajanta are known to be the ***fountainhead of all the classic paintings of Asia***.

Murals, Miniatures and Frescoes

Murals are large works executed on the walls of solid structures, as in the Ajanta Caves and the Kailashnath temple. Miniature paintings are executed on a very small scale for books or albums on perishable material such as paper and cloth. Fresco is a technique of mural painting executed upon freshly laid lime plaster. This implies that the Fresco is done on wet plaster and that is why it is more durable work than Mural. Murals are painted on already dried surfaces.

The early murals of India were painted by guilds of painters. The themes were Buddhist, Jain and Hindu. However, the dharma or duty in life of the painters was to create their art: to continue the legacy of their ancestors and to present visions of life which looked beyond the veils of the material world, to the divinity which underlies the whole of creation.

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Ajanta Paintings: Murals or Frescoes

- ✓ The mural paintings of Ajanta are not all frescoes, as they are sometimes mistakenly described, for they were not painted on wet lime plaster. These murals were executed with the use of a binding medium of glue applied to a thin coat of dried lime wash. Below this surface wash were two layers of plaster covering the stone walls.
- ✓ The first was a rough, thick layer of mud, mixed with rock-grit, vegetable fibres, grass and other materials; the second was a finer coat consisting of mud, rock dust or sand and finer vegetable fibres, which provided a smooth surface for the lime wash on which the paintings were made.

The artist got his colours from the simple materials that were available in these hills. For his yellow and red he used ochre, for black he used lamp soot, for his white he used lime. Only for his blue he used lapis lazuli, which came from Afghanistan. These simple colours were blended to provide the numerous colours and subtle hues, which are seen in the Ajanta paintings.

The two clear-cut phases of Buddha paintings at Ajanta

The monument of Ajanta has 31 caves, which were excavated in the horse-shoe shaped gorge of the Waghora River in two phases. Ajanta caves can be classified into two phases namely the **Hinayana phase** (Uniconic) and the **Mahayana phase** (Iconic). Hinayana is the earlier phase **when symbols were used to worship Buddha** as compared to the later **Mahayana phase when he was worshipped in the physical form**. The first was around the 2nd century B.C. and the second was between the 4th and 6th centuries A.D.

Both phases of the excavation and the creation of art were patronised by Hindu kings, the Satavahanas in the early period and the Vakatakas in the latter period.

- ✓ Hinayana Buddhists did not believe in making any figure of the Buddha. Instead, they worshipped symbols, such as the stupa and the wheel.
- ✓ The large body of surviving, magnificent paintings were made during the 5th and 6th centuries. By then the Mahayana form of Buddhism had evolved, in which the Buddha is represented in human form and worshipped as a god. Mahayana Buddhism also believes in Bodhisattvas, beings who are on their way to enlightenment and who would help all of humanity to attain salvation.

> In the art of Asia, Ajanta owns a supreme and central position. There has been an unbroken tradition of painting in India, which began at Ajanta 2,200 years ago. The legacy of Ajanta moved along the trade routes to inspire painters in Afghanistan, Central Asia and China and from there to Korea and Japan. The paintings of Ajanta are one of the most valuable treasures of the art of the world as they enshrine a sublime and compassionate view of life.

- ✓ The paintings of the 5th and 6th centuries at Ajanta **mainly depict the Jataka tales**. These are the stories of the Buddha in his previous lives, when he was still on the path to enlightenment. These stories depict the qualities of a virtuous life and are told to serve as examples for the followers of the Buddha.

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- ✓ On the ceilings of the caves is the depiction of the teeming life of the world, its flowers and fruit, the animals of the world and mythical creatures.

Padmapani and Vajrapani

- ✓ The Padmapani, the Bearer of the Lotus. This gentle figure is one of the masterpieces of Indian art. Cave 1, Ajanta.
- ✓ The Vajrapani, the Bearer of the Thunderbolt. The glorious figure portrays the majesty of the spirit. Cave 1, Ajanta.

Other Cave Paintings in India

The creative impulse of Ajanta is seen in many other contemporary sites in India as follows:

Bagh

Located on the bank of Baghani river in the Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh. These rock cut caves posses the most amazing paintings known to be made by ancient man. Out of the initial 9 caves only 5 have been extant.

> The sophisticated style of art that is seen in the paintings of Ajanta is also found in surviving wall paintings and in fragments of murals in many parts of India. To the external world, Ajanta Caves are probably the only examples of Indian Murals. However it has been proved that the tradition which was started at Ajanta was actually started way back in ancient times. And it did not end with Ajanta but carried forward by people of different faiths at many parts of India.

The legend says that these caves were established by Buddhist monk **Dataka**. The caves were carved in late 4th century - 6th century AD.

Bagh Caves are known for Mural Paintings. The walls and ceilings were to be painted were covered with a thick mud plaster in brownish orange color. Over this plaster there was done lime-priming and then paintings were laid. This is also known as tempera technique, which refers to use of permanent fast-drying painting medium consisting of colored pigment mixed with a water-soluble binder media.

At the time of discovery of the Bagh caves, only Cave no. 3 and 4 had endured the ravages of time. Murals of Bagh certainly represent "golden age" of Indian classical art.

Armamalai Cave paintings

Located in Vellore district of Tamil Nadu, Armamalai Cave is known for a Jain temple with ancient paintings, Petroglyphs and rock art. The cave has three parts with walls of mud and adobe, turning it into complex of three shrines - *trikūta*. The cave belongs to 8th century AD. The ceiling and walls of the cave are covered with beautiful color paintings depicting the stories of Jainism, many of them don't survive to date. These paintings are similar to murals in Sittanavasal cave which is located 250 km south of Armamalai Cave. Western part of ceiling is adorned with floral designs with lotus as dominating motive - similar as in Sittanavasal.

Paintings at Badami

There are very little survives of the mural paintings in the caves of Badami in Karnataka. The paintings of Badami are among the earliest surviving in Hindu temples, just as the paintings at Ajanta and Sittannavasal are the earliest Buddhist and Jain murals. The caves at Vatapi were fully

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decorated with murals; many of them were inspired from Puranas. The most surviving murals include the paintings of Shiva and Parvathi as well as some other characters. The painting style is close with that in Ajanta. The Cave number 4 has a mural painting of *Adinath*a, the Jain tirthankara.

Pitalkhora

The caves of Pitalkhora are located near Ellora in Aurangabad district of Maharashtra. Pitalkhora Caves belonged to once upon largest temple complexes of Buddhists in India. Today it is known as largest group of Hinayana Buddhism monuments in India.

Bhaja & Kanheri Caves

The Buddhist caves of Bhaja and Kanheri in Maharashtra and those of Kerala were also painted profusely. Paintings from the 6th century to the 10th century are found at Ellora.

Bhaja Caves located at the Valley of Indrayani River, near Lonavala in Maharashtra has 22 rock-cut caves that were created approximately 2,200 years ago, circa 200 BC. These are one of the oldest surviving examples of rock cut architecture in India. These caves are known for their ornate facades. There is an impressive chaitya (Cave 12), though the most of the caves in Bhaja are *viharas*. Apart from the sculptural wonders, Bhaja Caves contain the paintings of Buddha. Due to the nearness to Karla caves, the Bhaja Caves are sometimes known as **Bhaja-Karla** caves.

Other Mural Paintings of India

Kancheepuram

The Kailasnatha temple at Kancheepuram has the remains of exquisite paintings of the 7th century. The Pallava kings of Tamil Nadu gave exuberant and glorious expression to **themes of Siva** in the temple of Panamalai and Kailasanatha in Kancheepuram. The walls of the *pradakshinapatha* (the outer ambulatory path) of the Kailasanatha temple were once covered with paintings of brilliant colours. Their traces are still discernible and provide us a view of the excellent art of that period.

Sittannavasal

The Jain caves at Sittannavasal in Tamil Nadu also have beautiful paintings of the 9th century.

Mural Paintings in Brihadeesvara temple, Thanjavur

The Brihadeesvara temple of the 10th century at Thanjavur has another exquisite body of work. There is a mural painting of King Rajaraja Chola and guru Karuvurar in the Brihadeesvara temple, Tamil Nadu, 11th century. This is the earliest royal portrait in Indian painting. In keeping with ancient traditions, the guru is given importance and the king is shown standing behind him.

Murals at Virupaksha Temple, Hampi

The ceiling of the great Virupaksha Temple at Hampi is covered with paintings of the 15th century. As in the paintings of the past, the themes are mainly religious. There is a deep intertwining of the story of the Vijaynagar Empire and its kings, with the stories of the gods they believed in. Along with epic themes, we see the procession of the revered sage Vidyaranya.

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Kuda Caves

Located in Raigad district of Maharashtra. Walls of caves were plastered with earth and rice-shaff. Several caves contain traces of paintings.

Lenyadri Caves

Lenyadri Caves are also known as **Ganesh Lena**. Located in Pune district of Maharashtra. Lenyadri contains nearly 40 rock-cut caves. Lenyadri caves have preserved traces of ancient cave paintings and inscriptions.

Chapter 4. Miniature Paintings in India

Basic Observations

- Miniature paintings are executed on a very small scale for books or albums on perishable material such as paper and cloth.
- In India, the Pala miniature paintings, which date back to 11th century, are the earliest evidences of miniature painting tradition. In due course of time, the different schools of miniature painting emerged in different geographical locations across the country.

Prajnaparamita

- The 10th century illustrated Buddhist text, **Prajnaparamita**, is the earliest known example of painting where a canvas of micro, or miniature size made its debut.
- However, the golden period for miniature paintings was the 16th century when various schools of paintings were provided patronage by the Mughals, rulers of Deccan and Malwa, and Hindu chieftains of Rajasthan. This led to the development of important schools of paintings such as Mughal, Rajput and Deccan schools.
- The Mughal paintings of India had included the elements of Hindu, Persian, and European styles. The Tuti-nama and Hamzanama was important works accomplished during the reign of Akbar. Jahangir is known to have focused on specialization and study of nature. Aurangzeb almost banned painting at his court. This forced Mughal artists to migrate to various provinces, where the Mughal art transformed into the provincial Mughal style.
- One of the most important reasons that so many artistic traditions flourished in India during the Mughal era was the political stability and vital social and economic structures.
- Rajasthan witnessed the development of several regional schools of painting during this time like Mewar, Bundi - Kota Kalam, Jaipur, Bikaner, Kishangarh and Marwar schools. The miniature paintings depicted themes such as court scenes, gardens, forests, palaces, hills and valleys, deserts, life of Lord Krishna, love scenes, hunting scenes, and animal fights. Other important components of Rajasthani miniatures are **Ragmala** (representing ragas in classical music), **Geeta Govinda**, **Ramayana**, and **Bhagvat Puran**.
- The Rajput paintings are known for having absorbed many elements of the Mughal style mainly due to the growing alliances between the Rajput kingdoms and Mughals.

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- Around the same time, the hill regions of Northern India including Basoli, Guler, Kangra, Bilaspur, Kullu, and Mandi saw the emergence of Pahari School. Then, the Kangra School of painting becoming noticeable in 18th century. The Kangra School though influenced by Rajasthani and Mughal miniatures; had developed its own distinctive style.

Pala School of Paintings

- Pala School represents the earliest examples of miniature painting in India.
- The Buddhist monasteries (mahaviharas) of Nalanda, Odantapuri, Vikramsila and Somarupa were great centres of Buddhist learning and art.
- The paintings are in the form a large number of manuscripts on palm-leaf relating to the Buddhist themes. The images of Buddhist deities at these centres which also had workshops for the casting of bronze images. Students and pilgrims from all over South-East Asia gathered there for education and religious instruction. They took back to their countries examples of Pala Buddhist art, in the form of bronzes and manuscripts which helped to carry the Pala style to Nepal, Tibet, Burma, Sri Lanka and Java etc.
- The extant illustrated manuscripts of Pala Empire mostly belong to the **Vajrayana School of Buddhism**.

Features of Paintings:

Pala style is naturalistic and resembles the ideal forms of contemporary bronze and stone sculpture, and reflects some feeling of the classical art of Ajanta. The best example is the manuscript of the Astasahasrika Prajnaparamita.

After the Muslim invasions, many of the monks and artists escaped and fled to Nepal, which helped in reinforcing the existing art traditions there.

Mughal School of Paintings

Important Features

Origin of Mughal School is a landmark in history of Indian paintings. The school originated in the reign of **Akbar**. The origin of Mughal style is was a result of synthesis of indigenous Indian style of painting and the Safavid school of Persian painting. Mughal paintings were a unique blend of Indian, Persian and Islamic styles. The major features of Mughal Schools are:

- Paintings based upon close observation of nature
- Fine and delicate drawing along with calligraphic text descriptions, generally on border.
- High aesthetic merit
- Primarily aristocratic
- Mostly Secular

Development of Mughal School of Paintings under Akbar

The reign of Akbar is known for the initial works of Mughal School done by Mir Sayyed Ali and Abdus Samad Khan. These two artists were originally employed by Humayun. Apart from this celebrated duo, more than a hundred painters were employed, most of whom were Hindus from Gujarat, Gwalior and Kashmir. The collected and constant efforts of these artists gave birth to a new

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school of painting, popularly known as the **Mughal School of miniature Paintings**. The two most celebrated works accomplished during the times of Akbar was ***Tuti-nama*** and ***Hamza Nama***.

Tuti-Nama

Tuti-nama seems to be the first work of the Mughal School. Tuti-Nama literally means the "Tales of a Parrot". It is an illustrated compilation of 52 stories in 250 miniature paintings. The work was commissioned by Akbar. The themes and stories are derived from the 12th century **Sanskrit anthology** titled Śukasaptati or "Seventy Tales of Parrot". The parrot tells the 52 stories in the consecutive 52 nights and in these stories he teaches some moral stories to his owner. The work was completed in a span of five years under Mir Sayyid Ali and Abdus Samad. The text was written by **Nakhshabi**, an ethnic Persian physician and a Sufi saint who had migrated to Badayun. It was wrote in Persian.

Hamza-nama

A more refined and developed work is the Hamza-nama, which contains the illustrations on cloth, originally consisting of 1400 leaves in seventeen volumes. Each leaf measured about 27"x20". These paintings were based upon a Persian *Hamzanama* or *Dastan-e-Amir Hamza*. Amir Hamza was the uncle of the prophet of Islam. Hamza nama was a extremely fanciful story, which was disliked by Babur but was so much enjoyed by his grandson Akbar that he commissioned the court workshop to create an illustrated manuscript on this fable, and that took 14 years to complete!

These illustrations went beyond the story-telling and brought into existence some dazzling images, glowing with jewel-like colours. The initial paintings show the Persian safavi style with Brilliant red, blue and green colours predominating. The later works show Indian tones.

Mughal School under Jahangir

Under Jahangir, the Mughal school paintings acquired greater charm, refinement and dignity. The emperor Jahangir had a great fascination for nature and took delight in the portraiture of birds, animals and flowers. The best example of this period is the portrait of Jahangir himself, who is shown holding a picture of the Virgin Mary in his right hand. Some other illustrated manuscripts of Jahangir's time are animal fable book titled Ayar-i-Danish, Anwar-i-sunavli. Most of the paintings created during the time of Jahangir depict the durbar scenes, portraits, bird, animal and flower studies.

Aqa Riza, Abul Hasan, Mansur, Bishan Das, Manohar, Goverdhan, Balchand, Daulat, Mukhlis, Bhim and Inayat were the famous painters in the court of Jahangir.

Ustad Mansur

Ustad Mansur was a court artist of Jehangir, who specialised in depicting plants and animals. He is best known for two paintings one of which was a siberian crane and another was of a Bengal Florican. He is also remembered for a famous painting on Dodo, the now extinct Bird.

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Bishandas

Out of the above mentioned painters, Bishandas was praised by the emperor as "unrivalled in the art of portraiture". In 1613, Bishandas was sent on a diplomatic mission to Persia, to paint the Shah's portrait. He remained there for seven years and returned happily with an elephant as gift.

Development of Provincial Mughal School

Inspired by their overlord, the Mughal courtiers and the provincial officers started patronizing the artists trained in the Mughal technique of painting. At the same time, we have been told that Jahangir had a passion for perfect artists. The artists with inferior merits lost their jobs and sought employment in the provinces. Thus, during those times, the artists who were employed in the Imperial Government were known as the first grade artists. The works accomplished by these first grade artists is known as the Imperial Mughal Painting.

But the artists available to the provinces were of inferior merit, thus, the works accomplished in the provinces was known as **'Popular Mughal'** or **'Provincial Mughal'** painting, which possessed all the important characteristics of the Imperial Mughal painting with some inferior quality. The example paintings of the provincial Mughal paintings are Razm-nama, Rasikapriya and Ramayana, all of which were created in the initial two decades of 17th century.

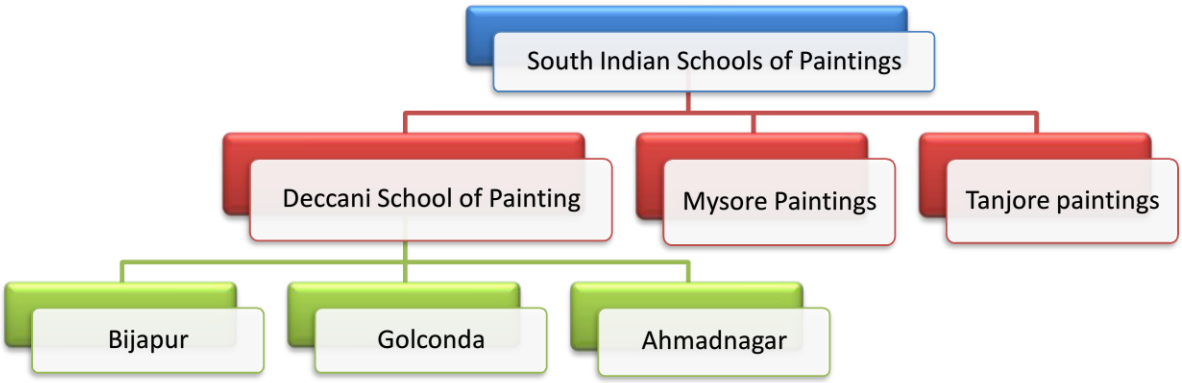
Mughal School of painting under the Shahjahan

The refined quality of the Mughal School was maintained under the reign of Shah Jahan. Importance was given to portraiture.

Under Aurangzeb and later Mughals

Puritan King Aurangzeb did not encourage art and thus much of the quality of the Mughal painting was lost. This was the time of mass migration of court artists to provinces. Later, Bahadur shah tried to revive the art, but after him, the school became lifeless and worthless much like the later mughals.

Deccani Schools of Paintings



The turbulent medieval times saw an exodus of artists to the South. These artists were patronized by the regal houses over there and gradually, three distinct schools of art developed viz. **Deccani, Mysore and Tanjore**. The miniature painting style, which flourished initially in the Bahmani court

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and later in the courts of Ahmadnagar, Bijapur and Golkonda, is popularly known as the **Deccan school of Painting.**

Evolution of the Deccani Paintings

- The Deccani painting initially absorbed influences of the northern tradition of the **pre-Mughal painting** of Malwa, and of the southern tradition of the **Vijayanagar School of painting** *(this school was rather known for Murals and Frescoes and not the miniatures and it also influenced the Mysore and Tanjore Schools, which is discussed later in this module)*. These influences are evident in the treatment of female types and costumes in the earliest deccani paintings.
- The above statement also implies that the Deccani school developed independent of the Mughal style in the beginning, but later, as the mughal artists started migrating to down south, the schools of deccan show the influence of Mughal style.
- Influence of the Mughal painters who migrated to the Deccan during the period of Aurangzeb was responsible for the development of various other centres of paintings in Deccan such as Hyderabad.
- Tradition of the early Deccani painting continued long after the extinction of the Deccan Sultanates of Ahmednagar, Bijapur and Golconda.

Main features

- The colors of the Deccani schools paintings are rich and brilliant and are different from those of the northern painting.
- Distinctive features of the Deccani paintings of the 18th and 19th centuries are observed in the treatment of the ethnic types, costumes, jewellery, flora, fauna, landscape and colours.

Notable Works

- **Ahmednagar painting:** This school was patronized by Hussain Nizam Shah I of Ahmednagar. The important illustrated manuscript is "*Tarif-i-Hussain Shahi*".
- **Bijapur Paintings:** This school was patronized by Ali Adil Shah I (1558-80 A.D.) and his successor Ibrahim II (1580-1627 A.D.). Important and notable work is *Najum-al-ulum* (Stars of Sciences), which has as many as 400 miniature illustrations. The court of Sultan Ali Adil Shah I had Persian artists and that is why these paintings show profuse use of gold colour, some flowering plants and arabesques on the top of the throne, derived from the Persian tradition. The maximum number of miniature paintings was produced during the times of Sultan Ibrahim Adil Shah II. It's worth note that some paintings of Bijapur show influence of Lepakshi temple Murals, particularly in the depiction of the women.
- **Golconda Paintings:** The patrons of the Golconda paintings were the Qutb Shahi rulers. The first important work was accomplished during the times of Muhammad Quli Qutab Shah (1580-1611). These paintings show the dancing girls entertaining the VIPs. The Qutb Shahi rulers had employed many Persian artists and so there is a profound impact of Iranian art on

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the Golconda miniature paintings. Two more notable paintings are the "Lady with the Myna bird" and the "Lady smoking Hooka".

- **Hyderabad Style:** The paintings in Hyderabad style developed after the foundation of Asafjahi dynasty by Chin Qulick Khan, Nizam-ul-Mulk in 1724. One example is a painting of "princes in the company of maids". Typical characteristics of the Hyderabad painting like the rich colours, the Deccani facial types and costumes can be observed in the miniature. It belongs to the third quarter of the 18th century.

Mysore Paintings

The two schools of miniature paintings of south India viz. the **Mysore Paintings** and **Tanjore Paintings** are offshoots of the earlier Vijayanagar School of Painting. The Vijaynagar School was basically known for Frescoes & murals of the various mythological themes of Hindu deities on the temple walls and ceilings, and was itself inspired by Ajanta. Vijayanagar art includes wall-paintings of the Dashavatara (The Ten Avatars of Vishnu) and the Girijakalyana (marriage of Parvati) at the Virupaksha Temple at Hampi.

As soon as the Vijaynagar Empire fell, the painters started migrating to Thanjavur, Mysore, Shahapur and Surpur. Those who migrated to Tanjavur and Mysore came under the heavy influence of other styles and thus, these two developed as two distinct styles of Paintings.

Salient Features of Mysore Paintings

Out of them Mysore paintings generally depict the Hindu gods and goddesses and scenes from Hindu mythology. This style is also known for the **Gesso Work**. Gesso refers to a paste of white lead powder, gambose and glue and is used as an embossing material covered with Gold foils. *Gesso work is found in both the Mysore as well as the Tanjore paintings*. In Mysore paintings, the work is low in relief and intricate, while in Tanjore school, the Gesso work is little thicker.

Gesso Work

- Gesso was used in Mysore painting for depicting intricate designs of clothes, jewellery and architectural details on pillars and arches that usually framed the deities. The work was taken up in the morning when the base of the gold work on the painting was still moist so as to hold the gold foil firmly. After allowing the painting to dry, glazing was carried out by covering the painting with thin paper and rubbing over it with a soft glazing stone known as *kaslupada kallu*. When the thin paper was removed the painting shone brightly and looked resplendent with the combination of gold and a variety of colours. (wikipedia)

Sritattvanidhi

The famous example of Mysore school painting is a manuscript called **Sritattvanidhi**. This is a pictorial digest of 1500 pages and contains illustrations of gods, goddesses and mythological figures. Thus, we conclude that Hindu Mythology is the dominant theme in the Mysore paintings.

Thanjore Paintings

The patrons of this art were the Nayakas of Tanjore. This school, as mentioned above was an offshoot of the **Vijayanagar School** and is known for vibrant colors, opulent surface and **immense use of Gold foils**. The dominant themes are Hindu gods, goddesses, and saints. These paintings are created on wooden plank, so also known as *palagai padam* (palagai-wooden plank, padam-picture) in local parlance.

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Difference between Mysore Paintings and Tanjor Paintings

Difference	Mysore	Tanjore
Gesso work	Low in relief & intricate	Thick gold relief
Preparation of Gesso	Gesso is prepared by mixing white lead powder, gamboges and glue.	Raw lime powder is used along with a paste made of powdered tamarind seed for Gesso work
Base	Paper on Cloth and wood	Cloth with wood as base *(palagai padam)*
Weight	Lighter	Heavier
Emphasis	More emphasis on emphasis is on fine lines and delicate detail, especially on corner scroll designs, clothing and other decorative elements.	Lesser emphasis
	Has no gem settings and glass embellishments	Has gem settings and glass embellishments
Example		

Current state of Mysore and Tanjore Paintings

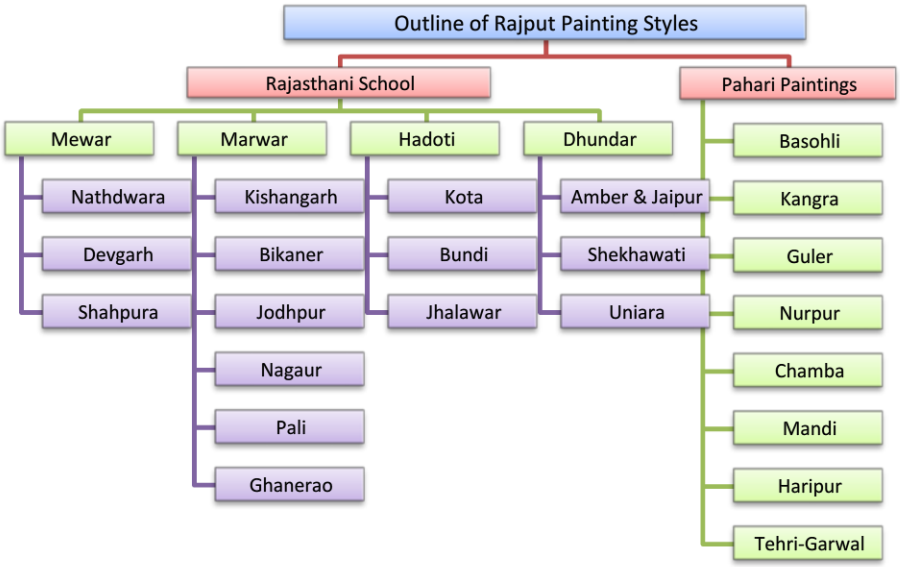
Both the Tanjore and Mysore school of paintings have a flourishing market in India today and these paintings are loved by souvenir collectors as part of one's collectibles, the investment angle not withstanding.

The themes in Mysore and Tanjore Paintings

Stylised modelling of characters chosen from mythology mainly formed the subject matter. Encompassed in numerous epic tales, Lord Krishna has always remained every Tanjore and Mysore artist's delight apart from other deities.

Chapter 5. Rajput Paintings

Rajput painting is one of the brightest chapters in the history of Indian Miniature Painting. These paintings are known for their high quality and finer details. Some call them Rajasthani Paintings also, but this nomenclature has varied opinions.



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In 1916, the famous Ceylonese historian **Anand Coomarswamy** did the first remarkable scholar work on the classification and nomenclature of Indian Paintings. He concluded that the theme of the Rajput paintings is related to Rajputana as well as the hill state of Punjab (of that time). Thus, he divided the Rajput Paintings in two parts viz. Rajasthani (concerning to Rajputana) and Pahari (concerned to *Jammu, Kangra, Garhwal, Basholi and Chamba*). Since the rulers of these states were Rajputs, he used the term Rajput Paintings for all of them. Thus, here we find two different schools under the Rajput Paintings as:

- **Rajasthani School of Paintings:** It covers the areas of Mewar (later Udaipur), Jaipur, Bundi, Kota. Kishangarh, Jodhpur, Bikaner etc.
- **Pahari Paintings:** It includes paintings of Basohli, Kangra, Guler, Nurpur, Chamba, Mandi, Haripur and Tehri-Garwal. Each of the schools is a complete unit comprising many sub-schools.

Rajasthani School of Painting

Though there been some example of Pre-Mughal paintings of this school, yet this school took a definite shape only by the turn of the 17th century. The **Maru-Gurjar painting is** one term which collectively denotes all the paintings in Rajasthan. The earliest form of this Maru-Gurjar painting is the Western Indian painting style that started taking shape in 8th century. Under the Royal patronage, various styles of paintings developed, cultivated, and practiced in Rajasthan. In the 13th century, a Mewar Jain painting style developed in the form of small illustrations of the **Jain Tirthankaras** and some themes from the Kalpasutras. This was followed by a various transformations in the Maru-Gurjar paintings finally, we have the four principle schools of Rajasthani paintings.

The Rajasthani Paintings are broadly of two type viz. **Courtly** and **Literary.** The paintings of **courtly** type include the portraits of the rulers holding different states of Rajputana. Most of these rulers have been depicted either as holding the courts or doing some past time such as hunting. The literary paintings on the other hand show the intimate connection with the poetry. These are the illustrated versions of some of the important literary works such as *Amar-Sataka, Sur Sagara, Rasamanjari, Rasikpriya* etc.

Factors leading to development

Two major factors contributed greatly to the development of Rajasthani Paintings. First, the commercial community of Rajputana was economically prosperous. Second, the revival of 'Vaisnavism' and the growth of Bhakti cult provided a direction to the development of a distinct school. The influence of poets and seers like Ramanuja (worshipper of Vishnu) in the 14th century and writers like Jaydev (worshipper of Krishna) greatly influenced thinking, spiritual awakening and art of the people of large parts of India. The Rajasthani School, akin to many others, was influenced greatly by the advent of Ramananda, Tulsidas, Kabir, Raidasa etc. This is how the subjects of the Rajput paintings included the Sri Ram Charit Manas, Geet-Govinda, the divine love of

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Radha and Krishna, ancient tales, lives of saints, Baramasa (monthly festivities of the year) and Ragamala (*Rag-Raginis*) and religious texts such as the Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bhagvat Purana, Krishna Lila and Devi Mahatmyam.

The four principal schools under the Rajasthani paintings are as follows:

- **Mewar school :** It included Nathdwara, Devgarh and Shahpura sub-styles
- **Marwar school :** It included Kishangarh, Bikaner, Jodhpur, Nagaur, Pali and Ghanerao styles
- **Hadoti school:** It included Kota, Bundi and Jhalawar styles
- **Dhundar school:** It included Amber, Jaipur, Shekhawati and Uniara styles

The above four schools were greatly shaped by the Mughal connection, which started when Raja Bharmal of Amber gave his daughter Jodha to Akbar in 1562. The matrimonial alliances of the Rajputs with mughals brought about the interesting and important changes in the various styles of paintings. These changes were visible in the dress designs, architectural details, art motifs, landscape patterns and the choice of subject matter. However, the ratio of this influence was unequal; for example, the Bikaner school showed more influence of Mughals in comparison to the Bundi and Amber schools.

Mewar School of Painting

Udaipur, as we know it today, is the former principality of Mewar. In the ancient as well as medieval times, Mewar was known to be a great centre of artistic and cultural activities.

The oldest manuscripts of Mewar painting include the '*Supasanachariyam*' and '*Suparsanatham*' painted in about 1423 AD. These show the traces of ***Apabhransa*** style, which can be identified with projecting eyes. The Mewar style as a distinct school emerged only by the end of 16th century.

During the medieval era, Mewar passed through a turbulent period of political unrest, yet, the Rajput kings went on patronising the art and in fact helped it to grow up into distinct style.

The two rulers viz. Rana Kumbha (1433-1464) and Rana Sanga (1509-1539) were great patrons of art. Udai Singh and Rana Pratap are also known to have given refuge to the artisans and craftsmen. Pratap's son Amar Singh produced a remarkable set of **Ragamala** painted with the help of these artists. This ragamala was the earliest-dated example of Mewar School and it was painted at Chavand.

> Ragmala Paintings
> Ragmala paintings are a distinct feature of Rajput miniature paintings. These are pictorial representation of Indian Ragas and Raginis. The mode and time of Raga is expressed through brilliant colours and colourfully dressed Nayak and Nayikas. They are usually dressed in contemporary royal fashion.

The real beginning of a polished style of Mewar painting started in 1571 AD. By that time, it fully replaced the 'Apabhransa'. One immediate reason of development of this school was that a large number of artists migrated from Mandu to Mewar after Baj Bahadur, the ruler of Mandu was defeated by Mughals in 1570. Thus, we can conclude that the new Mewar style originated as an offshoot to the Central Indian painting.

The times of Jagat Singh (1628-1652) , the Mewar painting reached its highest glory.

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Important Features of Mewar Paintings

- In these paintings, bright and brilliant red, orange, green, bright-blue colours have been profusely used.
- Male and female figures have long noses, oval shaped faces, elongated fish-like eyes. This is the influence of the Apbhramsa style.
- The female figures have been drawn relatively smaller than the male.
- The males use loose fitting garments embroidered Patka and Turbans and the females usc loose long skirts, choli and transparent odhnis (veils).
- The paintings of the birds, animals and trees are ornate, the flowers drawn in bunches, and the Hills and Mountains depicted in Persian style. Small hillocks and mounds have been inserted into the paintings.

Sub-styles of Mewar

The Nathdwara sub-style, Devgarh Sub-style and the Shahpura sub-style have developed from the Mewar style.

Nathdwara Paintings

Nathdwara, as most of you may know is a place near Udaipur, where the famous Shrinath Ji temple of 17th century is located. Shrinathji is a 14th-century, 7-year-old "infant" incarnation of Krishna. The idol was originally worshipped at Mathura but was shifted in 1672 from Govardhan hill, near Mathura and retained at Agra for almost six months, in order to protect it from the men of Aurangzeb. Obviously, there was an amalgamation of the cultural traditions of the Braj and Mewar and that reflects in the Nathdwara school of paintings.

Here, a notable point is that the **Pichhwai paintings** are a type of the wall paintings of Nathdwara style. The main theme of the Nathdwara style is Krishna and his *leelas*.

Marwar School of Paintings

The paintings developed in the royal families of Kishangarh, Bikaner, Jodhpur, Nagaur, Pali and Ghanerao are called Marwar School collectively. The important & relevant features of this school are as follows:

Jodhpur Style

The Jodhpur style originated taking clue from the art of the Mandore Gate. Mandore, as we know was a 13th century capital of the Rathors, who later founded Jodhpur in 1459 as their new capital. These paintings have a lots of sand dunes depicted along with thorny bushes, deer, camel, crow and horses. These paintings have a folk character and are relatively lesser influenced by the Mughal traditions.

Bikaner Style

Bikaner style has more mughal features than any other style of the Rajasthani school of paintings. This was mainly because, many of the mughal artists were employed at Bikaner. The subject matters are portraits, baramasa, Ragamala, Bhagwavt Purana and Krishnalilas.

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Kishangarh Style (Kishangarh School of Painting)

Kishangarh was a very small state but a very different type of artistic development took place here. This insignificant state was founded by Kishan Singh in the initial years of 17th century. The tremendous development of art took place under the local ruler **Sawant Singh**, a scholar, a critic and a renowned poet and well versed in Hindi, Sanskrit, Persian; who himself was a poet and used to write with a pen name **Nagari Das**. Over fifty books including the '*Rasachandrika*', *'Bihari Chandrika'*, '*Utsavmala*', '*Padamuktavali*' and *'Rasik Ratnavali' are* some of the literary works accomplished by Nagari Das aka. Sawant Singh.

The story of Nagari Das's life is also very interesting. He sat on the local throne at the age of 49 years. He was an ardent devotee of Krishna but carried in his heart the love for 'Bani Thani' a maid in his step-mother's household. The love was so deep that he started worshipping her as Radha. This is how he called himself ***Nagri Das***, literally *servant of Radha*.

Nagari Das took his poetic inspirations from a painter in the town called **Nihal Chand**, who was inimitable master in depicting the Radha and Krishna. Nihal Chand was the court painter of Nagri Das. He painted the celebrated Bani Thani. Sawant Singh was so deeply fell in love with his imaginary lover that he abdicated the throne within a span of 9 years to take recourse in Brindavan and worship his lover Radha as **Bani Thani** and himself live like his lord Krishna. He remained as a hermit in Brindavan until his death. Nihal Chand remained a painter even after his death for at least 16 years.

Main features of the Kishangarh Style:

- Subject matter of Kishangarh school is widely varied and includes hunting scenes, Court scenes, Portraits of Kings, Nawabs, Emperors and Saints .
- The romantic life of Radha and Krishna, influenced by the Geet-Govinda of Jaydev is one of favourite subjects of the Kishangarh painters.
- Stories from the Bhagvat Puran and scenes from Bihari Chandrika by Nagri Das were also subject for the Kishangarh artists.
- The most common theme in Rajasthani and Pahari School, ***Nayak-Nayikabheda*** has been most beautifully depicted in Kishangarh. Here, mostly Nayak is Krishna and Nayika is Radha. They have been shown as lovers in beautiful natural setting.
- The chief attraction of Kishangarh School is the depiction of women. No where in any Rajasthani School, the women have been so beautifully painted. The faces are soft without being heavy and dry. Their faces are long with high and sloping foreheads, pointed long nose, bulging out well-cut-lips and long chins.
- The eyes have got a special place in Kishangarh School. A lock of hair hanging near the ear is specially found in Kishangarh style only.

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Bundi style of Painting

Bundi style developed during the times of Rao Surjan Singh. The location of Bundi was such that it favoured immigration of the artists from all sides.

These paintings exhibit pointed nose, thick chubby cheeks, small stature and use of brilliant red and yellow colors. The main subjects of these paintings are Krishna Leela, Rama Leela, Baramasa, hunting scenes, scenes of court, festivals , elephant, horses, battle scenes, horse race, flowers, trees etc. The best example of Bundi paintings is the Chitrashala made during the times of Maharao Ummed Singh.

Kota Style of Paintings

Kota is located only a few miles away from Bundi, yet it developed a different tradition of paintings in the medieval history. The subject matters were though same as that of Bundi.

Jaipur style of Paintings

Jaipur and nearby area including the Shekhawati region of Rajasthan is known as Dhundad region. The Jaipur style of painting started in 17th century. The subject matters of this style are Ragamala, Bhagvat Puran, Durga Mahatmya etc.

Mālwa paintings

By Malwa paintings, we generally refer to the 17th-century paintings centred largely in Mālwa and Bundelkhand. The term Central Indian painting is also used for the same. It was an offshoot of the Rajasthani School. The paintings include a series of the Rasikapriya, Amara Sataka and Ragamala.

Phad Paintings

Phad Paintings are a folk painting style from Rajasthan. Phad refers to a long piece of cloth, which contain the narratives of the folk deities of Rajasthan, such as Pabuji and Devnarayan. These Phads are carried by the Bhopas (priest-singers) so that they serve as the mobile temples of the folk deities. The phads of Pabuji are normally about 15 feet in length, while the phads of Devnarayan are normally about 30 feet long. Traditionally the phads are painted with vegetable colors.

A series of these paintings represent a folk epic narrative and every available inch of the canvas is crowded with figures. While the figures are harmoniously distributed all over the area, the scale of figure depends on the social status of the character they represent and the roles they play in the story. These paintings thus accommodate numerous episodes of the complex stories.

Chapter 6. Pahari Schools of Paintings

The Pahari region comprises the present State of Himachal Pradesh, some adjoining areas of the Punjab, the area of Jammu in the Jammu and Kashmir State and Garhwal in Uttar Pradesh. The whole of this area was divided into small States ruled by the Rajput princes and were often engaged in welfare. These States were centers of great artistic activity from the latter half of the 17th to nearly the middle of the 19th century. The various schools are discussed here.

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Basholi Painting

- Basholi or Bashohli is located in Kathua district of Jammu & Kashmir. It is founded by Raja Bhupat Pal in circa. 1635 AD. It was known for magnificent places which are now in ruins and miniatures paintings of **Basholi style**. This style developed under the patronage of Raja Kripal Pal. Under Kripal Pal, an artist named Devidasa executed miniatures in the form of the Rasamanjari illustrations in 1694 AD.
- Its main features are use of strong and contrasting colors, monochrome background, large eyes, bold drawing, use of beetles wings for showing diamonds in ornaments, narrow sky and the red border are observable in this miniature also. Basholi style of painting is characterized by vigorous and bold line and strong glowing colors.

Guler Painting

- Guler has the longest tradition in the art of painting and is also **known as birthplace of Kangra paintings**.
- In fact, the Guler style of paintings is the early phase of Kangra Kalam. About the middle of the eighteenth century some Hindu artists trained in Mughal style sought the patronage of the Rajas of Guler in the Kangra Valley. There they developed a style of painting which has a delicacy and a spirituality of feeling. The Guler artists had the colors of the dawn and the rainbow on their palette.
- Guler painting is marked by liquid grace and delicacy. The drawing is delicate and precise. Subject matter of these miniature paintings are *Bhagavata*, the *Gita Govinda*, the *Bihari Satasai*, the *Baramasa* and the *Ragamala.* The style of these paintings is naturalistic, delicate and lyrical. The female type in these paintings is particularly delicate with well-modeled faces, small and slightly upturned nose and the hair done minutely.

Kangra Paintings

- Guler style was followed by the third phase of Pahari paintings i.e. Kangra style. It developed in the last quarter of the 18th century. The Kangra style possesses the main characteristics of the Guler style, like the delicacy of drawing and quality of naturalism.
- The name Kangra style is given to this group of painting for the reason that they are identical in style to the portraits of Raja Sansar Chand of Kangra. In these paintings, the faces of women in profile have the nose almost in line with the forehead, the eyes are long and narrow and the chin is sharp.

Features of Kangra painting

- Kangra Paintings depict verdant greenery. Naturalistic style is followed and a great attention is paid to detailing. The depiction of flora is made noticeable by the use of multiple shades of green. The Kangra artists adopted various shades of the primary colors and used delicate and fresher hues.

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- Shringar (the erotic sentiment) is considered as the Focal theme of Kangra paintings. The subjects seen in Kangra painting exhibit the taste and the traits of the life style of the society. The love story of Radha and Krishna was the main source of spiritual experience, which was also the base for the visual expression. The other popular themes were *Gita Govinda* by Jayadeva and *Bhagavata Purana*. Feminine figures are depicted very beautifully in these paintings with soft and refined facial features.
- Kangra paintings are known for the lyrical blending of form and color. Colors made of vegetable and mineral extracts are used by the artists.

Kulu Mandi Style of Painting

Along with the naturalistic Kangra style in the Pahari region, there also flourished a folk style of painting in the Kulu-Mandi area, mainly inspired by the local tradition. The style is marked by bold drawing and the use of dark and dull colors.

Difference between Mughal Paintings and Rajput Paintings

Mughal Paintings	Rajput Paintings
Aristocratic	Democratic
Realistic , Materialistic	Mystic, Spiritual
Secular	Religion is integral part
Confined to Imperial courts, so mainly depicts the Mughal splendour and pomp	It was art of the people, so had popular and familiar themes
Isolated from Folk Art	Influenced by Folk Art
Many a times, deals with materialistic aspect of animal life such as hunting of deers, fighting of animals such as elephants	Many a times deals with the religious as well as aesthetic aspect of animal life, depicts animals as deities and also as increasing beauty in the paintings

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