

8

Rajasthani School of Painting

8.0 INTRODUCTION

Rajasthani painting flourished from 16th C.A.D to 19th C.A.D. It was inspired and influenced by Jain manuscript painting of Gujarat. This painting style matured during 17th C.A.D. Its popularity spread all over Rajasthan and attained the appreciation of the common man and the royal court equally. Though the technique and style remained basically the same as that of mural of the classical period, but it borrowed few things from Mughal painting in the later period.

Rajasthani painting can be divided in four groups as Rajasthani School, Bundelkhand School, Pahari School and Sikh School. There are many centres in these regions, which are famous for these miniature paintings. Some of these centres are, Jaipur, Mewar, Malwa, Nathdwara, Udaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Kota, Bundi, Kishengarh etc.

Themes of these paintings are mainly Puranic or Epic. Krishna-Leela is the most popular theme along with some stories of the Mahabharata and Ramayana. Folk lore of Rajasthan like Dhola-Maru and Roopmati and Baajbahadur are also illustrated in these paintings.

Characteristic Features

There is a lot of variety in the style of Rajasthani School in handling the natural scene, architectural structure and human figures.

Faces are generally shown in profile. Both the male and female figures show suppleness and emotion in their large eyes. The influence of the Mughal court is very clear in the dress and costumes. Same influence is notable in the drawings of building and palaces in these paintings during the later period.

8.1 OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson, learner will be able to:

- describe the background, region, religious movements and influence of literature on the painting style;
- describe the enlisted art works with appreciation;
- differentiate the different styles of Pahari and Rajasthani School of painting;
- explain the characteristic features of these paintings;
- know about the medium, technique and style of the miniature paintings;
- know about the artists of these paintings and their names.



8.2 MERU RAGINI

<i>Title</i>	-	<i>Meru Ragini or Maru Ragini</i>
<i>Medium</i>	-	<i>Tempera on hand made paper</i>
<i>Date</i>	-	<i>Circa 1650 A.D</i>
<i>Size</i>	-	<i>6"X8"</i>
<i>Theme</i>	-	<i>Story of Dhola Maru</i>
<i>Artist</i>	-	<i>Sahibdin</i>
<i>Collection</i>	-	<i>National Museum, New Delhi</i>

General Description

The love Story of Dhola Maru is very popular in Rajasthan and is narrated both in Murals and miniature paintings.

The composition of this painting is divided into two parts. Dhola and Maru are shown seated under a yellow canopy with a red curtain in the upper part of the composition. Dhola is dressed in typical aristocratic attire complete with weapons like sword and shield, facing his lover Maru in Rajasthani costume. The lower part of the composition shows Maru caressing her pet camel. Both the figures are prominent against a green background dotted with flower motifs. Stylised motifs of three trees are bringing a unity in the composition.

IN TEXT QUESTIONS (8.2)

Choose the right answer:-

- (a) The story of Dhola-Marua is popular in _____.
- Bengal
 - Punjab
 - Bihar
 - Rajasthan
- (b) The date of this painting is _____.
- 1880A.D
 - 1710 A.D
 - 1650 A.D
- (c) The composition of this painting is divided in _____.
- Two parts
 - three parts
 - four parts



Radha and Krishna (offering betel leaf to each other)

8.3 Radha and Krisna Offering betel leaf to each other

Title	-	Radha and Krishna
Medium	-	Tempra on hand made paper
Date	-	Between 1735 A.D to 1750 A.D
Size	-	42X25 cm.
Theme	-	Paan Mehphil.
Artist	-	Nihalchand
Collection	-	National Museum, New Delhi

General Description

Radha and Krishna are ^{sitting} dancing on a bed covered with a white sheet and offering *paan* (betel) to each other. They are attended by ~~maid servants~~ or *Gopinis*. There are some musicians to entertain them.

The painting is rendered in traditional Kishangarh style, which is particularly noticeable in the drawing of the eyes, nose and costume. The painting is one of the master pieces by famous painter Nihalchand. The colourful dresses of the figures are admirably set off by the chalky whiteness of the buildings in the background beyond the vast panorama of the lake. The suggestion of hills and jungles in the foreground gives a sense of depth in the space.

INTEXT QUESTION (8.3)

Fill up the blanks:-

- The painting is rendered in _____ style.
- This is a masterpiece by famous painter _____.
- The theme of the painting is _____.



Meeting of Rama and Bharata at Chitrakoot

8.4 MEETING OF RAMA AND BHARATA AT CHITRAKOOT

<i>Title</i>	-	<i>Bharat Milap</i>
<i>Medium</i>	-	<i>Tempera on hand made paper</i>
<i>Date</i>	-	<i>1740 A.D</i>
<i>Style</i>	-	<i>Jaipur School</i>
<i>Theme</i>	-	<i>Rama meets Bharata at Chitrakoot</i>
<i>Artist's Name</i>	-	<i>Guman</i>
<i>Collection</i>	-	<i>National Museum, New Delhi</i>

General Description

This one is a very popular episode of Ramayana, largely known as 'Bharat-Milap'. The painting depicts the emotional moment when Bharat, the younger brother of Rama is trying to take him back home. The whole incident is taking place at the jungle of Chitrakoot where Rama stayed for few days. The artist has created a perfect atmosphere of hermitage with a small hut and different kinds of plants and trees. The serenity and simplicity of the landscape enhances the mood of the painting.

INTEXT QUESTIONS (8.4)

Fill up the blanks -

- The date of this painting is _____.
- The painting belongs to _____ school.
- This painting is painted by _____.

Vani Thani of Kishangarh School



BANI THANI OF KISHANGARH SCHOOL

<i>Title</i>	-	<i>Bani Thani</i>
<i>Date</i>	-	<i>1750 A.D</i>
<i>Medium</i>	-	<i>Tempera on hand made paper</i>
<i>Size</i>	-	<i>19 cm x 25 cm</i>
<i>Style</i>	-	<i>Kishangarh school</i>
<i>Artist's name</i>	-	<i>Nihal Chand</i>
<i>Collection :</i>	-	<i>National Museum, New Delhi</i>

General Description

This painting by Nihalchand of Kishangarh of Rajsthani School has a special place in the treasure of Indian miniature painting. The style is characterized by emphatic lengthening of the eyes and nose. Faces are mostly in profile with a very stylized eye brow and smile on the lips. The painter was inspired by the poem of Raja Sawant Singh, who describes the beauty of a lady called "Vani Thani" in his poem. The beauty of this woman is symbolically used to describe the beauty of Sri Radha. As a master painter Nihalchand could go beyond the mundane to the spiritual in this portrait. The smile of Vani Thani is often compared with the smile of Mona Lisa.

INTEXT QUESTIONS: (8.5)

Fill up the blanks

- The date of the painting Vanithani is _____.
- The artist of this painting is _____.
- This painting is painted in _____ style.

8.6 SUMMARY

Rajasthani painting flourished from the 16th-19th centuries in the areas like Rajwara, Rajasthan, Rajputana etc. The Rajasthani miniature painters assimilated different styles and techniques both from the old school like, Ajanta, Gujrati palm-leaf painting and contemporary styles of Persia, Mughal and even European art. The early Rajasthani painting schools like Mewar, Bundi, Malwa, Bikaner, Kishangarh and other small city-states became prolific centres of this style. Various themes were used by these painters, which included Ramayana, Mahabharata, Geeta-Govindam, life of common people and local love-stories.

8.7 MODEL QUESTIONS

1. Mention the themes of Rajasthani painting.
2. Name the important centres of Rajasthani paintings.
3. Describe the painting on the story of Dhola-Maru.
4. Describe the characteristic features of the painting "Vani-thani".

8.8 ANSWERS OF INTEXT QUESTIONS

- 8.2 (a) Rajasthan (b) Circa 1650 A.D (c) Two parts
- 8.3 (a) Kishangarh style (b) Nihalchand (c) Radha and Krishna are offering *paan* to each other.
- 8.4 (a) 1740 A.D (b) Jaipur (c) Guman
- 8.5 (a) 1750 A.D (b) Nihalchand (c) Kishangarh style

8.9 GLOSSARY

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| 1. Mural | - Wall painting |
| 2. Miniature painting | - small size painting. |
| 3. Tempera | - painting with pigments mixed with egg on other binder. Opaque in nature. |
| 4. Manuscript | - book written by the hand. |
| 5. Profile | - sideface |
| 6. Ragini | - Indian form of music |
| 7. Fore ground | - front part of the space |
| 8. panorama | - a wide view |