

MODULE - 2

HISTORICAL APPRECIATION OF INDIAN CONTEMPORARY AND MINIATURE ART

- 6. Medieval Period Painting**
- 7. Mughal Painting**
- 8. Pahari Painting**
- 9. South Indian Painting**
- 10. Company School of Painting**
- 11. Contemporary Art and Artist**

6

MEDIEVAL PERIOD PAINTING

In the previous lesson, we learnt Mauryan and Post Mauryan art. In this lesson, we will learn about the painting of the Medieval Period. After the decline of the Gupta dynasty and other powerful rulers in different regions of India, the condition during the 11th and 12th century AD was unstable. Nonetheless, this political enriched Indian art with the treasure of illustrated manuscripts. These belonged to different religious sects like Jainism, Buddhism and Hinduism. Buddhism and Jainism particularly spread to both the western and eastern parts of India. Rulers like the Palas in the east, Rajputs in the west and Cholas and Chalukyas in the south patronized art and architecture in this period. One of the most important contributions of medieval art of India is paintings on palm-leaf manuscripts of Buddhist and Jain religious texts.

Jain miniature painting was developed and was patronized in Gujarat and Buddhist manuscript illumination showed its brilliance in the regions of Bihar and Bengal. These paintings were done on palm leaves, which served as the surface for paintings and calligraphy. The painting style followed the tradition of wall paintings but with the clear signature of local folk art styles. The loose sheets of palm leaf were bound with thread and enclosed by wooden covers. The inner sides of these wooden covers were also beautifully painted.



OBJECTIVES

After studying the lesson, the learner will be able to:

- explain and background and evolution of miniature paintings;
- state the main features of these paintings;



- describe the basic information of Pala miniature painting;
- state the methods and materials used in miniature painting;
- explain the join palm leaf manuscript;
- identify the tempera technique.

6.1 PANCHARAKSHA TARA

In this lesson, you will understand the Pala miniature paintings.

Basic Information

The earliest examples of Pala miniature paintings are from palm leaf manuscripts of the Buddhist text ‘**Astahasrika-prajnaparamita**’ dated 10th CE, during the reign of Mahipala a follower of the Mahayana Buddhist cult. The illustrations in the texts are actually visual expressions of this cult like Jain paintings. These paintings are replicas of traditional compositions. All the features are defined by delicate outlines, with sensual expressions. These paintings were usually commissioned by laymen, monks or sometimes princes. They were meant as offerings to gain spiritual merits. The palm leaves were prepared through a long process. They were kept underwater for a month and later dried, then smoothened with conch shells and then cut into rectangular shapes. The earlier brittle leaves were replaced with durable palm leaves called **Shritada**. Some space was left on the leaf for paintings after five to seven lines were written on it. The technique of painting was very complicated. A background colour was laid before the preliminary drawing. The figures were then filled with colour. Shades and highlights were applied to achieve modelling. Finally, fine outlines were drawn in black or red colour.

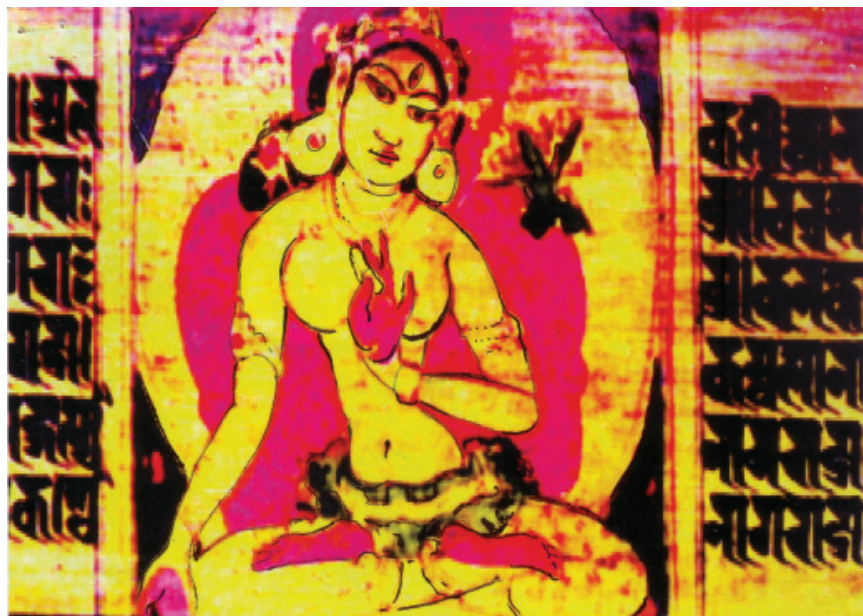


Fig. 6.1: Pancharaksha Tara

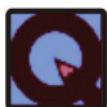
Medieval Period Painting

Colours generally used were yellow, chalk white, indigo, blue, black (from lamp soot), red from cinder and green by mixing yellow and blue.

Title	:	Pancharaksha Tara
Medium	:	Tempera
Style	:	Pala
Date	:	1080 CE

General Description

In this painting, the Mahayana Buddhist deity is seated in Padmasana pose. One of her arms is on her thigh and the other is in Abhaya mudra. Her slim and curvaceous body is painted yellow. The red background is used to provide relief to the figure. The beautiful face with half-closed eyes is adorned with all kinds of jewellery like ear drops, a crown and a necklace. The eyes and eyebrows are doubly curved and the nose is sharp. The colours are bright, and the combination of bright pink and yellow is contrasting yet harmonious. In all of these colours there is a quality of luminous depth, the artist's sensitive appreciation of the resource of the medium. He undefined the plastic quality of the figure. One looks in vain for the natural form because of its highly stylized approach. It is the colour structure which creates the harmony of the composition with the help of fluent contour lines.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 6.1

Match the following:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. The period of Pala dynasty | (i) Tempera |
| 2. The medium used painting | (ii) Pala |
| 3. Mention the style of painting | (iii) 8th 13 CAD |

6.2 JAIN PALM LEAF MINIATURE PAINTING

You have learnt the pala miniature painting; now we will get to know about the Jain miniature art.

Basic Information

Jain palm leaf manuscript painting flourished in Gujarat, Rajasthan and some other regions from 10th Century CE to 14th Century CE. These paintings are actually illustrations of Jain sacred texts viz. 'Kalpasutra' and others. Some of these paintings were done on paper at a later phase. Jain paintings could be easily

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identified by typical features like an angular drawing of eyes beyond the outline of the face and bright colours. These pictures are painted on the rectangular space of the palm leaves. The space is allotted both for painting and calligraphy. The style of painting is one of pure draughtsmanship.



Fig. 6.2: Kalpasutra (Svetambara)

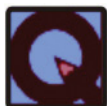
Title	:	Kalpasutra (Svetambara)
Medium	:	Tempera on palm leaf
Date	:	1509 CE
Size	:	8cm × 22cm

General Description

Kalpasutra is the Svetambara Jain account comprising a narrative on the lives of the Jinas, the revered holy men in Jain religion. The script is written in Ardha-Magadhiprakrit and attributed to Bhadrabahu. This painting is one of the panels from the leaves of Kalpasutra. The panel has two segments. The right side segment shows a deity with an animal head on a human body and carrying a baby. To the left is a queen mother on a bed with her newborn baby. The segments of the panel are the story of the birth of a Tirthankara.

The painting has all the features of a Jain miniature painting like an angular drawing of the figures placed on the background of red colour. Though the faces are in profile, both eyes are shown. These long eyes are extended beyond the outline of the face.

In spite of its general flatness of colour, the use of a darker tone in the boundary areas gives a sense of volume. The rhythmic linear patterns created through lines give the figures a feeling of movement.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 6.2

1. When and where did Jain miniature painting flourish?
2. What is Kalpasutra? Who is the author of this text?
3. What was the medium used in Jain miniature painting.

6.3 RAJASTHANI PAINTING

Ragamala painting is very popular artwork in Rajasthani style. Now we will know about the Rajasthani painting.

Basic Information

The Region of Rajasthan and Gujarat hold an important place in the history of Indian painting. The Rajasthani painting matured during 16th C.E. Early Rajasthani paintings show a typical style, protruding eyes and the use of contemporary costumes. The influence of miniature painting changed the style towards the end of 16th C.E. Many centres developed during this time, such as Mewar, Bundi, Kota, Pratapgarh, Kishangarh, Malwa and others. There are great varieties of themes to be found in Rajasthani paintings. These are religious, royal, secular and portraiture. Most popular of these themes was based on the poems of 'Geet Govinda', written by Jayadeva.

Title	:	Todi Ragini
Medium	:	Tempera on palm leaf
Style	:	Pratapgarh
Date	:	1710 C.E



**Fig. 6.3: Todi Ragini****General Description**

This is one of the paintings from the Ragamala series. The Ragamala paintings are depictions of Ragas and Raaginis, which depict various classical musical modes of India. Todi Ragini is playing a musical instrument. Two deer are attracted by the music and seem to be mesmerized by its tune.

The composition is well-balanced. In spite of the flatness of the background, a sense of depth is achieved and the painter has been successful in creating the blissful natural atmosphere of a garden. The colours are bright, and the effect is heightened by using colourful dots, both on the costumes of the lady and the trees. The human and animal figures are full of movement and expression. The painting stands as a classic example of the synthesis of poetry and music.

It has a poetic lyricism. The figure is expressive of mood and sentiment.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 6.3

1. What are the general features of Rajasthani paintings?
2. Name some of the famous schools of Rajasthani painting?
3. Mention the title of the poetry and its author that inspired Rajasthani painters the most.



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ACTIVITY

Draw any one style of miniature painting and also write the main features of the style.

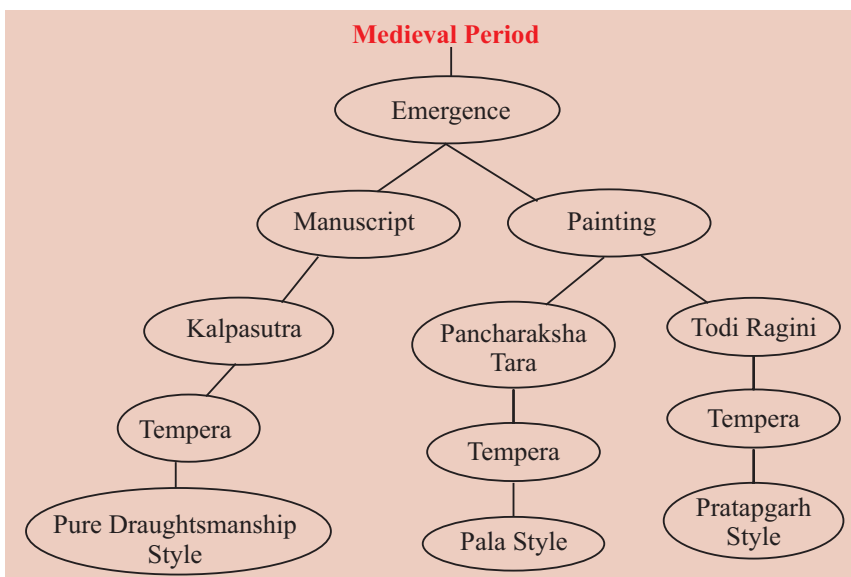
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WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT



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LEARNING OUTCOMES

The learner can

- create a different type of miniature forms on their own;
- illustrate calligraphy on various surface.



TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Explain briefly the background and evolution of the medieval period and miniature paintings.
2. Write a short note on how palm leaves were prepared and painted.
3. Write about the salient features of Jain palm leaf manuscript paintings.
4. Write in detail about Todi Ragini.
5. What is Ragmala?
6. How does Ragini Todi appear in the enlisted paintings?
7. Describe the features of the Jain style.
9. What does the enlisted picture Kalpasutra show?



ANSWERS OF INTEXT QUESTIONS

6.1

1. 8th C.E to 13th C.E.
2. Tempera
3. Pala

6.2

1. In Gujarat, Rajasthan and some other regions in 10th C.E.
2. **A Kalpasutra is a** Svetambara Jain account of the lives of the Jinas. Author was Bhadrabahu.
3. Tempera on palm leaf.

6.3

1. Protruding eyes, use of contemporary costumes.
2. Mewar, Bundi, Kota, Pratapgarh, Kishangarh, Malwa.
3. Geet Govinda by Jayadeva.



Notes

GLOSSARY

Medieval Period	900 CE to 1400 CE in Indian History
Illuminated Manuscript	decorated handwritten manuscript
Calligraphy	decorative handwriting
Mahayana	a sect of Buddhism that believes in image worship
Padmasana	a sitting posture with folded knees
Draughtsmanship	technical skill
Synthesis	combination of different elements
Poetics	written in poems (kavya)
Svetambara	a sect of Jains who wear only white clothes