

# PAINTING STUDY MATERIAL FOR CLASS 12TH

## BASED ON NCERT

**RADHA KISHOR MONDAL**

**Date :21.08.21**

In the lower panel, both Radha and Krishna are sitting at different places under a tree in the foreground. An attendant of Radha is also shown in the painting. She has perhaps brought a message for Krishna. Here again Krishna is wearing tiara, garland and dupatta, but his dhoti is of yellow colour. Both Radha and Krishna are sitting on red carpets supported by pillows. Radha is wearing yellow coloured 'Ghaghra' and 'Choli'. The attendant standing in front of Krishna, is wearing a striped Ghaghra and Choli of light purple colour. Both the trees and a mound are in the background. The leaves of the trees are shown clearly in cluster of repetitive pattern. Each leaf of the tree reveals the artist's delight in rendering details. The mound is drawn in typical Rajasthani style.

The architecture shown in the painting is modern and sophisticated and he has successfully depicted the tonal variation and perspective. All the five figures are in profile. Colours used are bright and elegant. Lines are drawn in refined and precise manner.

**Kishangarh.** The state of Kishangarh was established by Kishan Singh, the eighth son of Rana Udai Singh of Jodhpur, 1609 A.D. It is a small state surrounded by Jodhpur, Jaipur, Shahpur and Ajmer. It rose into eminence during the reign of Raja Raj Singh because of the superb art and painting. The family had been the follower of the Vaisnava cult.

The credit of taking Kishangarh school to its greatest height goes to Raja Sawant Singh crowned as king in 1747. He was a scholar, a critic and a renowned poet and well-versed in Hindi, Sanskrit, Persian and under the pen-name of Nagri Das, wrote over fifty books. '*Rasachandrika*', '*Bihari Chandrika*', '*Utsavmala*', '*Padamuktavali*' and '*Rasik Ratnavali*' are some of his best books. He was a devotee of Krishna but carried in his heart throughout his life the love for 'Bani-Thani' a maid in his stepmother's household. The love was so deep that he started worshipping her as Radha. He called himself Nagri Das, the servant of Radha. Bani-Thani also remained his life partner till his death in sanyas in Vrindavan.

*Nihalchand* was the chief artist of the court, living with Raja Sawant Singh. Nihalchand continued as court painter for more than sixteen years after the death of Raja Sawant Singh.

There is a stamp of greatness in the new type of Radha and Krishna figures which are credited to Nihalchand. He is the creator of this distinct type with Bani-Thani as Radha and Sawant Singh as Krishna.

Subject matter of Kishangarh school is widely varied and includes hunting scene in the earlier paintings. Court scenes are also popular themes of earlier paintings painted in fine style. Portraits of Kings, Nawabs, Emperors and Saints have been beautifully painted by the painters of the Kishangarh school.

Apart from Radha and Krishna, the picture of romantic life of Radha and Krishna described in Geet-Govinda by Jaydev is one of the 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-Nayika-bheda 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 which is extraordinarily charming.

The chief attraction of Kishangarh School is the depiction of women. Nowhere in any Rajasthani School, the women have been so beautifully painted. The faces are soft without being heavy and dry. They have been painted slim, flexible and tall like creepers. 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. The long drawn eyes, curved upward in the shape of wagtail (Khanjan Pakshi) and bow like eyebrows have been beautifully painted. Long neck and long fingers enhance their aesthetic beauty. A lock of hair hanging near the ear is specially found in Kishangarh style only.

Mostly primary colours have been applied in this style without mixing red, yellow, blue and white colour as well as gold and silver colours are very deftly used. Nature in Kishangarh School has been very skilfully used to suit the emotional aspect of the figures. The realistic paintings of creepers and trees in the background add charm to the lovely postures of Radha and Krishna. At places even the horizon and the sky are replaced by creepers and foliages that have been so thickly painted that a romantic atmosphere is created.

Paintings like '**Krishna presenting flowers to Radha**' and '**Krishna gathering Lotuses in lake**' show the main figures generally small, set within a large area with wide expanse of water, in an architectural setting. The silvery grey of the water and the lacy white of marble terraces enhance the unique enchantment of these paintings. In another painting 'Goverdhan Dharan' there are innumerable figures, men and women on both side of Lord Krishna holding the mountain on his one finger. But the beauty is that each face is beautifully executed and painting is so balanced.

#### **Features of Kishangarh Paintings**

1. Subject matter of Kishangarh School is widely varied. Hunting scenes, court scenes, portraits of kings, Nawabs, Emperors and Saints have been beautifully painted. The picture of romantic life of Radha and Krishna described in 'Geet-Govinda', stories from 'Bhagvat Puran', scenes from 'Bihari Chandrika' and 'Nayak-Nayika Bheda' are the main subjects of Kishangarh paintings.
2. Female figures have been painted slim, flexible and tall like creepers. Faces are long with high and sloping foreheads. Pointed long nose, bulging out well-cut-lips, long chins, the long drawn eyes curved upward in the shape of Khanjan pakshi and bow like eyebrows have been beautifully painted. Long neck, long fingers, a lock of hair hanging near the ear enhance their aesthetic beauty.
3. Primary colours have been applied. Horizon and the sky are replaced by creepers and foliages.



**'Radha' (Bani-Thani)** is one of the most well known painting from the small state of Kishangarh. Nihalchand's fame rests on this painting of Bani-Thani which is a highly stylised portrait of Radha. Her face is elongated, receding forehead. She has sharp pointed nose and chin with long wagtailed eyes (Khanjan Pakshi) slightly tinged with pink, arch like eyebrows and thin red lips. Her long black curly hair flows down her shoulder to her waist and wisp of hair partly falling on her cheek. Her long tapering fingers of the left hand is holding two lotus buds. The left hand is so exquisitely drawn that it can fairly be compared with the right hand of Monalisa. She is delicately holding the edge of her odhni with her right hand, palm slightly tinged with red. Her odhni is decorated with golden motif and her dress and jewellery reflect the taste and costumes of contemporary Rajput royalty. Radha's odhni is painted to look transparent to reveal the whiteness of her marble white skin. The background is painted in dark blue.

Her smile is supposedly enigmatic, her eyes reflect the ideal feminine beauty of classical Sanskrit Literature. She is painted as an ideal of Indian womanhood and can easily be compared to Monalisa supposed to epitomise the ideal of womanhood.

Radha (Bani-Thani) has been taken as the best painting of Rajasthan. A Postal stamp was issued by the Govt. of India on which 'Radha of Kishangarh' was shown.

**Jaipur.** Jaipur was founded by Sawai Jai Singh, who ruled Jaipur from 1693-1743. He had the palace of Amber built in the indigenous Rajput style. Rajput architecture greatly influenced early Mughal architecture at Fatehpur Sikri and Agra. But in the field of painting, it was the other way round where the Mughal influence was overwhelmingly flourishing school of court painters, patronised the Jaipur school and pictures of pomp and splendour and royal portraits were commissioned under Mughal style.

Maharaja Iswar Singh successor of Jai Singh, was also a lover of art and some imaginary paintings of different carriages and elephants fight were commissioned. Jaipur painting reached its climax during the rule of Maharana Pratap Singh upto 1780. It was during his reign when Mughal influence was thrown off and a genuine Jaipur style emerged. Pratap Singh himself was a devotee of Krishna and a large number of paintings devoted to Krishna themes were painted. Over fifty artists worked under him. Raga and Ragini and scenes from different seasons (Baramasa) were also beautifully painted. The proper use of colour and beautiful line drawing gave these paintings a distinction.

After him Raja Ram Singh gave some modernism to painting of his time. In his time paintings of Radha and Krishna were painted in Mughal style. The impact of Jaipur style is clearly visible in the paintings of the states surrounding Jaipur.

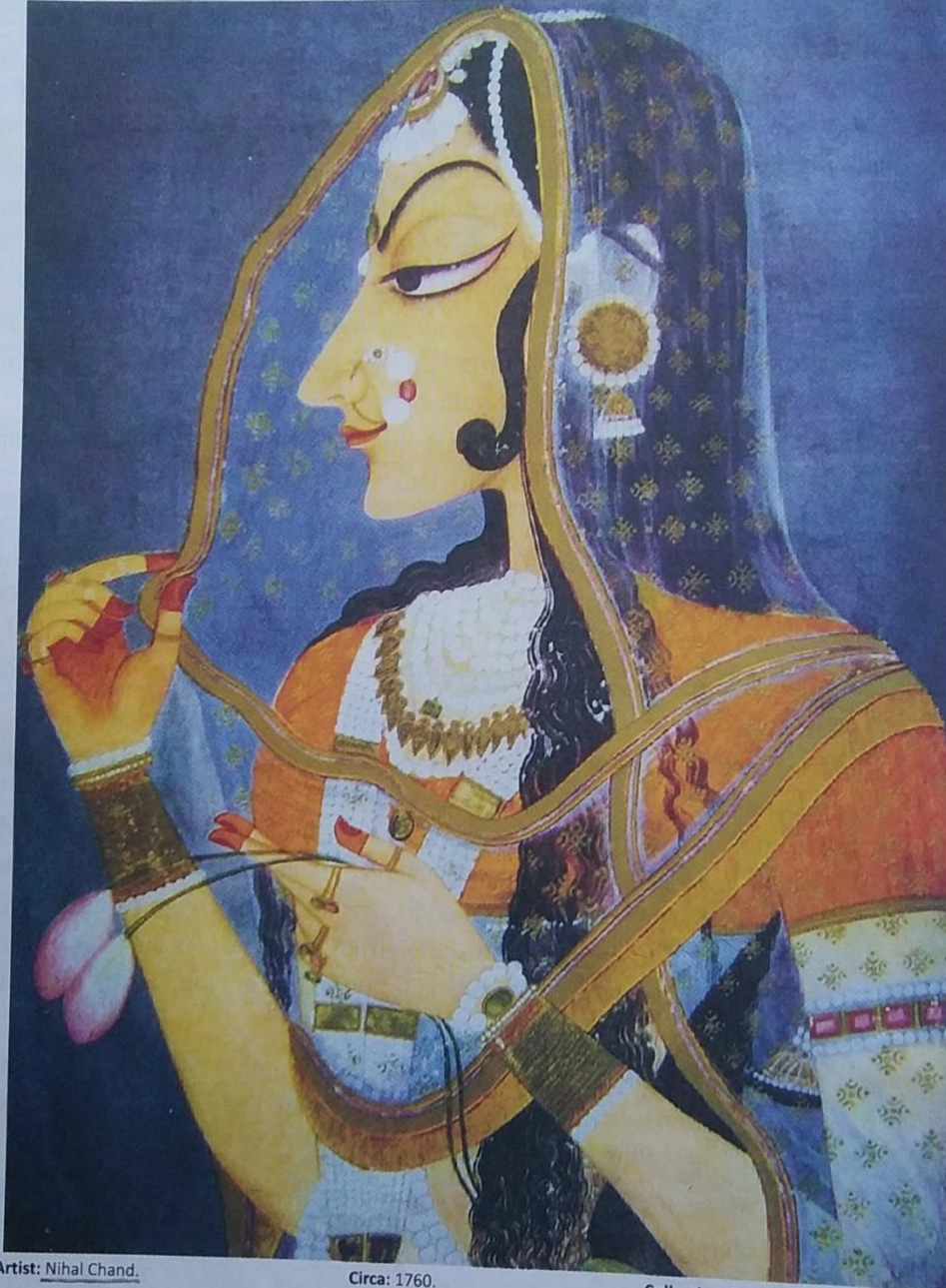
Painter Sahibram painted a full figure portrait of Maharaja Iswar Singh. Lal Chitara was an expert in bird painting, a large number of birds and animals, cows, elephants, horses and peacocks were painted mostly by Chitara.



## Radha (Bani-Thani)

Medium: Water colour in tempera on handmade paper.

Sub-school: Kishangarh.



Artist: Nihal Chand.

Circa: 1760.

Collection: National Museum, New Delhi.

History of Indian Art-XII

**To be continues.....**