

PAINTING STUDY MATERIAL FOR CLASS 12TH BASED ON NCERT

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Pahari School of Miniature Painting

Origin & Development. The painting style developed in the hill states of Punjab and Jammu within and around the five tributaries of the river Indus (Sindhu) is known as Pahari Miniature Painting.

It is a hybrid and mixed style of Gujarat miniature painting, the Mughal style of Aurangzeb's time of 1658-1707 and Rajasthani school of the first half of the 17th century. With Aurangzeb's prohibition of art in the first half of the 17th century and the destruction of the Mughal empire by the middle of the 18th century, artists from the Mughal Court as well as from courts of Hindu nobles found it to their advantage to seek refuge in the smaller hilly states of the Himalayas like Chamba, Nurpur, Basohli, Guler, Kangra, Mandi, Kulu, Garwal etc. It is through them, the Pahari style of painting was born in the 18th century. In these Himalayan states an indigenous art form based on folk art was already in existence. The first known specimen from Basohli, discovered in about 1650 was already stylistically matured. The Mughal and Rajput painters who sought refuge here, created the new Pahari style in fusion with the local folk art. The artists here though were under the patronage of the Kings, were not forced by them to draw on subject matter chosen by them. The freedom was enjoyed by the artists and the wonderful natural beauty around them awakened their soul and inspired them to leave behind the lifeless, insipid Mughal style and gave new expressions to their theme. They tempered the primitivism of Basohli and the softness of Guler with finer drawing and mellower colour.

After the sacking of Delhi in 1739, some of the migrating artists from Delhi brought to the hills, elements of realism and craftsmanship of the Mughal, which helped significantly in the development of Pahari style. The growth of hill style accelerated from them and ultimately flowered in India's last vital Hindu art form before the effect of Western Civilisation neutralised it.

Basohli. According to the majority of the scholars, a small state Basohli in Jammu territory of the present Jammu and Kashmir state is now accepted as the cradle of Pahari style of painting, a unique form of miniature painting which emerged late in the 17th century and spread to other states.

The Basohli style resulted from the fusion of a deeply religious art rooted in the folk tradition with basic elements of Mughal technique of realism and boldness of lines.

In 1916, A.K. Coomarswamy accepted Pahari painting of two distinct styles, the first is Kangra, the second he named as Dogra or Jammu. The second style is now accepted by all as the Basohli style.

During Raja Sangram Pal's reign (1635-73), the ruling family adopted **Vaishnavism** and through his influence, the **Shaivism** of the folk art gradually transformed into Vaishnavism. A major series of '*Rasamanjari*' is a secular work of love where the hero is identified as **Krishna**, **Radha** gradually became the heroine replacing Parvati.

The first identifiable Pahari style, the Basohli style is characterised by a flat use of bold intense colour and a distinctive aggressive profile. A Basohli painting now in London illustrates a scene of '*Rasamanjari*' of Bhanudatta and shows the characteristics of the style. The regally dressed hero and heroine in the guise of Radha and Krishna are displayed against the flat red background and profusely decorated pavilion. The painting's rich colour scheme has an almost enamel like sheen. **Another feature of this school is clarity of design and lines and intensity of feeling** which is achieved by the use of colours like gold and bright red against the cooler tones of olive green, blue and chalk white enhancing this feeling of intensity. Wonderful effect is created by the mixture of blue and yellow, red and blue and grey and brown colours which enhanced the beauty of the paintings.

Almost all the paintings are based on Hindu religion. There are vivid illustrations of the ten incarnations of Vishnu, the themes from Ramayana and Mahabharata and also romantic themes of Nayak-Nayika-bheda. '*Geet-Govinda*', '*Rasikpriya*', '*Behari Satsai*', '*Bhagvat Puran*' gave a great inspiration to Pahari artists.

In womenswear, tight half sleeved bodies, the full skirts hanging from below waistline and head covered with transparent veils and abundance of ornaments over the body enhance the charm of these paintings. Transparent '*dupatta*' or veil has been shown by some heroines.

In menswear, tight pyjama, embroidered wrapper over the body, various types of '*pagri*' or headdress, ornaments on hand, leg, ears and neck were common.

Features of Basohli Paintings

1. In Basohli, use of strong brilliant colours reinforces (bright red, yellow, green etc.) its spirited approach to the subject matter.

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