

Pictorial Representation of Musical modes in Indian Miniature Paintings

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Abstract: Indian Miniatures were created in most schools of Indian painting, today named accordingly as Pahari Ragamala, Rajasthani or Rajput Ragamala, Deccan Ragamala and Mughal Ragamala. In these paintings, each raga is personified by a colour, mood, a verse describing a story of a hero and heroine (nayaka and nayika). It also elucidates the season and the time of day and night in which a particular raga is to be sung. The raga represents emotions and express sentiments or Bhavas as the ragaputras emerged from different emotional situations. The aspect of Shringara Rasa is an important one in Ragamala paintings. Various schools produced the paintings and they have followed texts of Narada, Harivallabha and Meshkaran along with their own innovations.

Keywords: The Development of Indian Miniatures, Ragmala Paintings, Rasas in Indian Miniatures, Delightful Description of Indian Art

The Indian subcontinent has long traditions of miniature Paintings. The Hindu Rajas of Rajasthan and Muslim kings of the Deccan and Malwa sponsored the growth of miniature painting throughout the Mughal era. Persian tradition was brought into Indian miniature paintings by the Mughals. They were frequently painted on perishable materials like paper, palm leaves and fabric for books or albums. This style of painting can be seen in both the eastern and western parts of the country. The development of Indian miniature paintings began around the 17th century in the Western Himalayas. The Thanjavur School is known for its unique decorative painting style. During the 18th century, they were patronised by the Maratha rulers. These paintings are distinct in that they are primarily made of glass and board rather than the traditional cloth and vellum used in north India. Ragamala paintings are a form of Indian miniature painting. A set of illustrative paintings of the *Ragamala* or "Garland of Ragas", depicting variations of the Indian musical modes are called ragas. They stand as a classical example of the amalgamation of art, poetry and classical music in medieval India.

Most of the works of Ragamala are from Deccan style, where Ibrahim Adil Shah II of Bijapur. He himself was also a fine painter and illustrator, though some Rajput style also exist of which the work of an artist of the 'Chawand' (a part of Mewar) school of painting, Sahibdin's Ragamala (musical modes) series dated 1628, are now in National Museum of India. Ragamala sets discovered in Odisha are in the Pattachitra style, based on the ragas of Odissi music and show distinct iconography and raga groups from other regions.

Ragamala paintings were created in most schools of Indian painting, today named accordingly as Pahari Ragamala, Rajasthan or Rajput Ragamala, Deccan Ragamala, and Mughal Ragamala. The Malwa school flourished between 1600 and 1700 century and is most representative of the Hindu Rajput courts. Rag Megha painted by Madho Das in 1680 depicting Radha Krishna dance and Mridang playing by a female instrumentalist can be seen in National Museum, New Delhi.

The custom of having portraits of artists is unique to the Bikaner School and most of them are inscribed with information regarding their ancestry. They are referred to as Ustad. Ruknuddin painted exquisite works in soft colour tones. Ibrahim's works have a misty dreamlike quality. His figures are dainty with heavily modelled faces. His studio appears to be most prolific as his name occurs on different sets of Baramasa, Ragamala and Rasikapriya. Accounts from the Bahis, royal archival day-to-day diaries, and numerous inscriptions on Bikaner paintings make it one of the best documented schools of painting. Krishna playing Flute surrounded by Cows (Bikaner, 1777) can also be seen in National Museum, New Delhi.

In Ragmala painting each raga is personified by a colour, mood, a verse describing a story of a hero and heroine (nayaka and nayika), it also elucidates the season and the time of day and night in which a particular raga is to be sung; and most paintings also demarcate the specific Hindu deities attached with the raga, like Bhairava or Bhairavi to Shiva, Sri to Devi etc. The paintings depict not just the Ragas, but also their wives - raginis, their numerous sons - ragaputra and daughters- ragaputri. The six principal ragas present in the Ragamala are Bhairava, Dipika, Sri, Malkaansa, Megha and Hindola and these are meant to be sung during the six seasons of the year – summer, monsoon, autumn, early winter, winter and spring. Chawand Ragamala has this historic set:

Todi Ragini of Raga Deepak: A forlorn heroine separated from her lover is seen with a musical instrument, deer seem her only company who are mesmerised with her music. She walks in a grove, her sakhī or companion seems to have come to meet her. When sung too, the raga depicts pathos though there is always a chance of exaltation towards its ending.

Gunakari Ragini of Raga Malkaus: This Ragamala depicts a woman plucking leaves as she waits for her beloved. She has made some garlands and hung them on the trees. Her companion watches her. An ewer, peacocks on the roof of a pavilion, and swans are part of the composition. The ragini represents passion and anticipation in the painting.

Maru Ragini of Raga Malkaus: The depiction is from the love story of Dhola-Maru. Both are seen on a camel. There is an attendant and two pet dogs in the painting, as they cross the floral landscape. This Ragamala composition captures the final escape and union of Marwar Prince Dhola and Princess Maru on a flying camel, a story which is part of Rajasthani folklore. The ragini depicts passion, longing and victory of love.

Asavari Ragini of Shri Raga: This composition shows a woman in the wilderness, probably a tribal woman in a peacock-feather skirt feeding flowers to a snake in a rocky landscape with a backdrop of flowering trees. The raga is representative of a woman who can charm snakes with music or dance, a lone figure, a 'yogini' who follows the ascetic path owing to a lover who has abandoned her. The ragini depicts pathos and longing.

The Kangra School came into being in the 1780s. Under the patronage of Raja Sansar Chand (1775–1823), the Kangra school of Pahari painting flourished. The capital town of Tira Sujanpur, situated on the banks of river Beas, emerged as the most prolific centre of Pahari painting under his patronage. Soon it spread to Garhwal in the east and Kashmir in the west. An earlier phase of Kangra Kalam painting was witnessed in Alampur and the most mature paintings were painted at Nadaun. The Kangra school of painting is some of the most poetic and lyrical of Indian styles and has made its mark for its eloquence and delicate detail. The most distinctive defining features of the Kangra school are delicacy of line, brilliance of colour and minuteness of decorative details. Most popular Themes: Gita Govinda, Bhagavata Purana, Bihari Satsai, Nala Damayanti, Ragamala and Baramasa. The famed illustration of 'Ashta Nayikas' or eight heroines is one of the most painted themes in Kangra school of painting, involving the depiction of women in various dispositions and emotive states. To mention a few — Utka is the one who is anticipating the arrival of her beloved and patiently waits for him, Svadhinpatika is the one whose husband is subject to her will, Vasaksajja awaits her beloved's return from a voyage and decorates the bed with flowers in a welcoming gesture and Kalahantarita is the one who resists her beloved when he seeks to soften her pride and repents when he comes late.

Gita Govinda is Manaku's most outstanding set of works. As mentioned earlier, composed by Jayadeva, Gita Govinda begins with the description of how Radha and Krishna fall in love on the banks of river Yamuna. A delightful description of spring follows and the poet describes the sports of Krishna with other gopis. Ignored by Krishna, heartbroken Radha sulks in a bower as her friend, sakhi, describes how Krishna continues to wander with the pretty cowherd girls. After sometime, Krishna feels remorseful and starts looking for Radha and on not finding her, laments for her. The messenger goes to Radha and tells her of the longing of Krishna for her. Ultimately, she persuades her to meet him and what follows is the mystic union. Though the characters are divine and enact the play at a philosophical plane, where Radha is a devotee or soul, and Krishna, the cosmic power, in whom she is to be drowned. The love sport played here is rather human. The series of Bhagvata Purana paintings is one of the greatest achievements of Kangra artists. It is remarkable for its effortless naturalism, deft and vivid rendering of figures in unusual poses that crisply portray dramatic scenes.

The first quarter of the eighteenth century saw a complete transformation in the Basohli style, initiating the Guler–Kangra phase. This phase first appeared in Guler, a high-ranking branch of the Kangra royal family under the patronage of Raja Govardhan Chand (1744–1773). Guler artist Pandit Seu with his sons Manak and Nainsukh are attributed with changing the course of painting around 1730–40 to a new style as the pre–Kangra or Guler–Kangra kalam. This style is more refined, subdued and elegant compared to the bold vitality of the Basohli style. Though initiated by Manaku, his brother Nainsukh, who became the court painter of Raja Balwant Singh of Jasrota, is responsible for shaping the Guler School emphatically. The most matured version of this style entered Kangra during the 1780s, thus, developing into the Kangra School while the offshoots of Basohli continued in Chamba and Kullu, India. Various schools produced Ragamala paintings and they have followed texts of Narada, Harivallabha and Meshkaran along with their own innovations. The Deccan style had bolder colours and decorative character. The colours used in the image is used to create the ambience of the melody conveyed through the raga. The raga represents emotions and express sentiments or Bhavas as mentioned; the ragaputras emerged from different emotional situations. The aspect of shringara is an important one in Ragamala paintings. Shringara includes love and beauty. It is one of the nine rasas. It is well depicted in Malkauns ragini, Sri, Gandhari, Dhanasri, Ragaputra Sarang and Kumbha, Bilaval and Harsha. The various ragas stand for the language of the soul, the anguish of deep sorrow, joyousness, the tumult of passion, the thrill of expectation under the throes of love longing, the pangs of separation and the joys of union. The ragini Lalita depicts the sorrow of separation from one's beloved, Todi represents a surrender to animal life through the beauty of music and nature. Nata is a symbol of the martial aspect in human beings. The dhyana formulae vide the Sanskrit verses, Hindi dohas and chaupais signify the devata-maya-rupa, the image form of the ragas and raginis, the basis of the pictorial image of raga through the Ragamala paintings which began being made in the 16th century. Vasant Ragini in Deccani style with inscription on top- A Raja and Rani enjoying music, celebrating Holi festival in the courtyard, some other ladies are also taking part. Two ladies on right, three on left are playing their musical instruments. Two ladies are standing closely in front, one is holding a syringe in her hands and the other placing her left hand on her cheek. In this composition a pitcher, jar and tray in front, tree and sky in the background, flower plants and a passage in the foreground present melodious atmosphere.

Malwa pioneered the art of miniature painting in Central India. Mandu is its earliest seat and the Kalpa-Sutra illustrations the earliest examples of its miniature paintings. Large protruding eyes, angular faces, men and women of moderate height, abundance of motifs and profusion of gold characterise these Kalpa-Sutra paintings. The Malwa art style had its other centres at Dhar, Ujjain and Narsinghgarh. Malwa inclined to narrative rendering of its themes. The Mandu Ragmala and Ramayana illustrations of 1634 A.D. not only depict the initial style of Indian miniature painting but are also excellent in execution, draughtsmanship, colour-scheme

and stylistic merit. Malwa has rendered the legends of Bhagavata-Purana and the known Sanskrit love-lore of Amru-Shataka with great thematic thrust, accuracy of details and great elaboration. A small canvas often compartmentalised, each compartment housing one episode independently, bright basic colours, blend of folk elements and highly charged faces are the other attributes of miniatures. The Raghogarh dynasty had relations with Rajasthani royalty. Obviously, Raghogarh had its inspiration for art from Rajasthan. Raghogarh, however, developed its own different art-idiom and attained a distinction in art-style. Here artists portrayed not only royal personages, the princes and princesses, but also their horses and other pets and the distinguished guests visiting Raghogarh. Themes like Ragamala, legends of love like Usha-Aniruddha, myths and legends from the Bhagavata Purana and historical events have been largely rendered at Raghogarh

Conclusion: The miniature works of painting evocatively express the poetry and music in Indian art. The unifying subject of a ragamala is love, which is evoked as a range of specific emotions (rasa) that have a corresponding musical form. Comprising a set of miniature paintings, the art depicts the visualised forms of six ragas or melodies of Indian classical music as well as their derivatives or raginis.

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A large, light blue watermark logo is centered on the page. It features a stylized lightbulb shape with a circular top and a semi-circular base. Inside the top circle, there are three vertical lines of varying heights, each ending in a small circle, resembling a musical staff or a decorative element. The letters 'IJRTI' are printed in a bold, white, sans-serif font across the middle of the lightbulb's body.

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