

**Folk and Minor Art in India**  
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**Lecture - 27**  
**Continuum of the Practice: Ancient Centers and**  
**Contemporary Scenario, Method, Material 3**

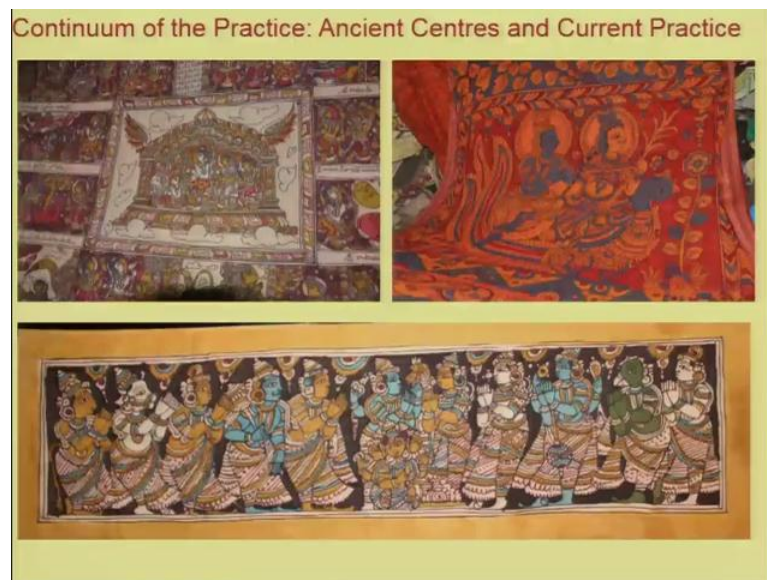
As we approach research from the empirical perspective we see that any kind of direct data that we observe that we collect and gather in the process of research findings is not just direct, but there are many other associations many other connections that we add to it and finally it builds up the story. And that takes us to the deeper root of that happening and it helps us to go further and learn from the existing knowledge. It helps us to preserve the knowledge and get benefited by the virtue of it.

However, we are using different traditional folk art practices as examples. Just to establish the thought process of the basic principle and the basic principle objectives that are connected to the topics related to Indian folk and minor art. And we are just speaking up different traditions and the creations the as examples to make it more enriched and without the example how could we establish that. And this is also true that when we look at one tradition though its direct and empirical as an research approach we try to find out the affinities, the similarities that are existing in the other traditions also which are almost analogous, so the different traditions that we take into count and try to understand the logic and the principles in the context.

So, in this module we are again like we not shifting from the focus of understanding the range of practice how well spread they are, how valid they are at the same time how well connected they are. There are also similarities and there fascinating to search and see. So, here we are going to talk about the temple traditions and I am taking it into the account two tradition which are analogous to it from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana that is Kalamkari from Kalahasti and Machilipattanam and also Cherial painting Cherial village that has a like that is also known as the Wadangal painting from the past. Those who are like very closely connected very closely associated because of their cultural root by their arts like differences also. When we look a Cherial painting it is quite amazing to know that how they connected to some of the stories that are collected in our

documentation from the local saying the local beliefs of Bengal. Only there are certain changes of the names and other things, but all those myths and facts are deeply connected.

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Let us see what we get out of it; Kalamkari painting of Srikalahasti Chittoor district Andhra Pradesh. The Deccan plateau of India is situated at the South of Vindhya and Sargura mountain that we know the mountain ranges in some isolation from the North causing some cultural difference due to the infrequent communication. The two rivers Godavari and Cauvery flowing down East towards to the Bay of Bengal that is fortifying the cultural endeavors in the banks of the two rivers overtime, also it stretched coastline with natural seaports provided openings for the cultural contacts through trades with the foreign countries. The interaction they share with forester and European market including Indonesia, Italy and China.

The merchandise for trade included spices, muslin fabric, the muslin, cotton, silk, indigo, dye. Vijayanagar, established in 1336 in the banks of the river Tungabhadra, surfaced as a center for power in South India. Tamil kings were dethroned and a large boat of Tamil Nadu came under Telugu dominance and then later Tanjavur present Tanjore as a business capital under Maratha dominance coming to the scene. It is fascinating to see

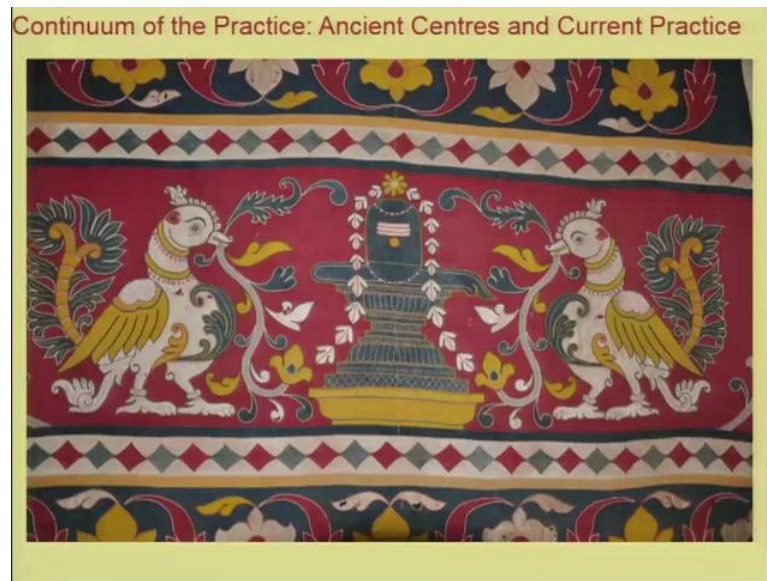
that the Maratha kings, the rulers from Maharashtra they were the great patrons for Tanjur painting and they played a very prominent role into the growth and flourishing of this tradition. Telugu was recognized as a state language and included all art forms. Kalamkari originated and grew under the patronage and considered the stimulus of Tamil, Telugu, and Maratha art and culture.

Kalamkari refers to the surface decoration on a readily woven fabric, unlike other fabrics that are dried and that woven and the pattern reveals while the process of waving is on like any other analogous activities that includes the viewing on textile. Kalamkari had a different root it, was mainly painted on cotton or silk all sort of organic materials are appropriate for it now it is their also painting them on grapes and other alternative sells the printing and its gone in a very different direction.

But in it is a tradition where more than textile tradition we can call it a painting tradition because of this reason, because you known it is either block printed or painted on cloth. So, the patterns are not simultaneously developed when the fabric is woven in a loom. There were two distinctive techniques that develop in the formative periods for Kalamkari; one is the decoration using the free hand drawing with a nib. The religious scroll paintings for use in temples that is based in Srikalahasti. And the decorative wood block printing which are printed the printed textile to be used as dress material or to use for the other fabrications that is based in another center called Machilipattanam.

So, I will read a quote from Shakuntala Ramani in this context that is the temple tradition of Kalamkari had a larger role to play than the mere marketing of pictures. The ceremonial requirements of the temple like savanagari, cannapias, cylindrical, thombise to be tied to the processional chariots; the banners and flags which were carried during the procession were all made by Kalamkari craftsmen. Ceremonial flags with auspicious figures like bull or hamsa, dathoranse known as Vasamalai; garlands for the door way where first painted in vibrant colors and then cut and stitched into appropriate shapes.

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These kinds of aplict cloths are still present in sikknikan pet in the Tanjur district close to the temples of Kumbakona and the Terupanadal mut, a Tamil sai white monastery. What we see in the image is another Kalamkari that we are familiar in today's term, but right now like what we see are some colored fabrics, the colored cloths they are like the patterns are drawn over it they are cut and stitched out in the form of a play that is very typical to pipli in Orissa. But the figuration the sensibilities carry the same aesthetic quality of the present Kalamkari tradition, so there our stylistic of affinity there.

So, let us get in to some very important data which will connect all this traditions and tell us more about it. So the ancient centers of Kalamkari that is our prime concern now, long before the Common Era Indian textile tradition of dying and printing textiles not only as the religious art but also as an industry with high demand on design motives and vegetable dye it was existing. Kalamkari that the name came during the Muslim rule because it was painted with kalam; its kalam kari the karya or the work done with pen so the pen work, that give it the name of Kalamkari.

So, this is like the name was coined during the Muslim invasion and the Muslim rule as the sultan of Golconda identified the artisans who painted on fabric with the kalam as the kalam kars that is the term they used. It has slowly lost the Islamic connection that added

many interesting motifs to this tradition it we go by those examples. And practice of this like you know which is slightly controversial, but it is say that tradition goes 3000 years back, because of the first Kalamkari cloth was supposedly to be found in Indus valley from the evidences of the Indus valley civilization from Mohenjo Daro.

So, the 3000 year old tradition of Andhra Pradesh was centralized in the two major places named Srikalahasti and Machilipattanam. So, Srikalahasti style is drawing on cloth using a handmade pen or with a dye inspired from the narrative relief panels on the walls of Hindu temples based on Hindu mythologies. And the Machilipattanam style on the other hand had the Muslim influence like to its principle. Visually they have lots temple motifs which are taken from the Hindu tradition, but a reason they shifted to block printing, the non figurative block printing where it is mostly dominated by the simplified natural motifs mostly taken from the local temples of Hindu Gods and Goddesses.

So, district like you know the Machilipattanam thing that has a distinct Islamic influence caused by the Kutubshahi rulers of that time. The style evolved drawing with a kalam or a pen as well as engraved wooden blocks with the non figurative patterns for printing on the fabric for daily use generally. So, Kutubshahi ruler was influenced strong trade connection with the Persian Shafa with dynasty rulers. And which ensured a regular purchase of Kalamkari textiles. So, they had a trade route from Iran and they had this middle Eastern connection for a very long time. The sultan of Golconda as well as the Mughal rulers diverts their practice to a large extent. The aesthetic created to the Dutch and British test and evolved accordingly.

Machilipattanam being a port town very close to the river and also they had been the connection through ships. Because of that it manage its production range to suit the demands of a particular religious test for a market tribing in the middle Eastern imageries included the floral butas, the meharab of the mosque, the cypress tree, depicting their traditional tree of life that is still a very rare and adorable motive in Kalamkari there are still quite a few painters who are painting a tree of life which is very rich in its pictorial quality and it is a distinctive feature of Kalamkari practice in India.

So, there are animals mentioned in Sufi literature and also in Quran, so not all animals that too get to see there. But any way by the time Islamic rule declined in Andhra Pradesh it indicated a down fall in the craft tradition of Andhra Pradesh for obvious reasons. So, cloth used for Kalamkari should be unbleached, the calico or silk duly soaked in cow dung.

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#### Continuum of the Practice: Ancient Centres and Current Practice

Cloth used for Kalamkari should be unbleached, calico or silk, duly soaked in cow dung, castor oil and bleaching soda to remove starch and glue (sizing) if there is any to make it fully penetrable. Myrobalam (nut family, harhar, hartaki) mixed with sticky buffalo milk is the solution that is used to prepare the ground for painting. The milk content prevents the colour from spreading and smudging. The drawing is then made using the *kalam*, typically made out of bamboo stick, sharply pointed at the end and tied by cotton threads that hold the liquid dye to be squeezed and dropped as the artists execute the images with a smooth and continuous flow.

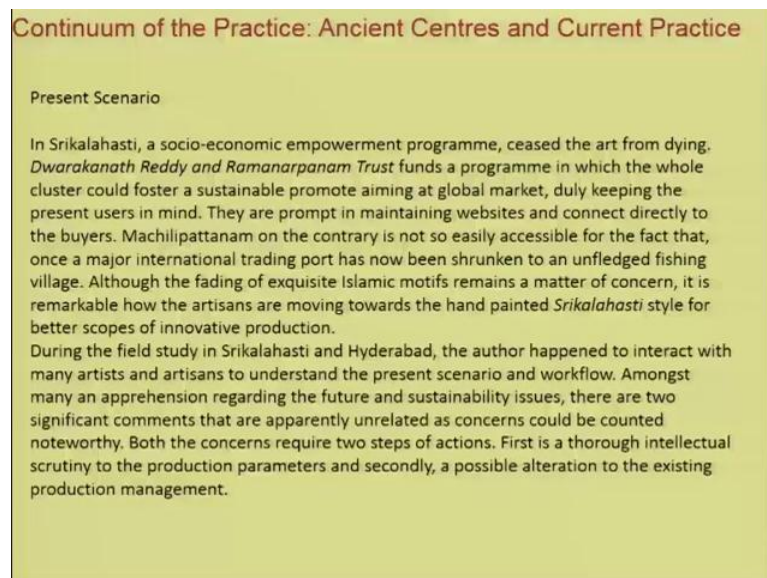
Myrobalam produces greenish yellow ochre, as the seeds are grinded into powder and made into a paste by diluting it. *Kaseem* is the black made out of iron scraps and jaggery solution brewed in claypots. Jaggery helps the fermentation process. Alum and salt are used to develop rest of the vegetable dyes and the process is often complex. Diluted alum produces an intense red while applied on myrobalam-dyed surface. Surulpattal for purplish brown, Manjishtha (rose madder), Thomachakka (branches for rust), yellow from *peori* (urine of cow that is fed mango leaves), pomrgranate seed, dried yeallow flowers of *dadup*, and Indigo blue, dried raw mango powder, *kathha* are used extensively. After the final development the painted clothes are washed in running river water and dried on the riverbank under Sun for permanence.

So, well also discuss a bit of a method and material that is involved to the ancient practice and also the current practice which is almost the same for Kalamkari. Cloth used for Kalamkari should be unbleached, calico, or silk, duly soaked, in cow dung, castor oil and bleaching soda to remove starch and glue which is used for sizing. If there is any to make it fully penetrable for the dyes to so that it penetrates well. Myrobalam from the nut family which is known as harhar or hartaki in Northern India; mixed with sticky buffalo milk is the solution that is used to prepare the ground for painting. The milk content prevents the color from spreading and smudging. The drawing is then made using a *kalam*, typically made out of bamboo stick sharply pointed at the end and tied by cotton threads that holds the liquid dye to be squeezed and dropped as the artist execute the images with a smooth and continuous flow.

Myrobalam produces greenish yellow ocher, that kind of a tint as the seeds are grinded into powder and made into a paste by diluting it. Kaseem is the black made out of iron scraps and jaggery solution brewed in clay pots. Jaggery helps the fermentation process. Alum and salt are used to develop rest of the vegetable dyes and the process is often complex. Diluted alum produces an intense red while applied on myrobalam-dyed surface. Surulpattal for purplish brown, Manjishtha a rose madder, Thomachakka the branches for rust, yellow from peori or the urine of cow that is fed mango leaves, pomegranate seed, dried yellow flowers of dadup, and indigo blue, dried raw mango powder, kathha are used extensively. After the final development and the painted clothes are washed in running river water and dried on the river bank under sun for permanence.

So, that is perhaps a reason why the tradition grew in places where they had been a river or permanent water body close by. But in Srikalahasti right now the supply of water is not so high but still there is a river and that takes care of the work mostly. So, it is a temple tradition and again we are trying to focus on the present scenario a little bit.

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**Continuum of the Practice: Ancient Centres and Current Practice**

**Present Scenario**

In Srikalahasti, a socio-economic empowerment programme, ceased the art from dying. *Dwarakanath Reddy and Ramanarpanam Trust* funds a programme in which the whole cluster could foster a sustainable promote aiming at global market, duly keeping the present users in mind. They are prompt in maintaining websites and connect directly to the buyers. Machilipattanam on the contrary is not so easily accessible for the fact that, once a major international trading port has now been shrunken to an unfledged fishing village. Although the fading of exquisite Islamic motifs remains a matter of concern, it is remarkable how the artisans are moving towards the hand painted *Srikalahasti* style for better scopes of innovative production.

During the field study in Srikalahasti and Hyderabad, the author happened to interact with many artists and artisans to understand the present scenario and workflow. Amongst many an apprehension regarding the future and sustainability issues, there are two significant comments that are apparently unrelated as concerns could be counted noteworthy. Both the concerns require two steps of actions. First is a thorough intellectual scrutiny to the production parameters and secondly, a possible alteration to the existing production management.

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With this we are moving to another very interesting artifact from Warangal. This is quite old and kept in the Dakshinachitra museum close to Chennai. So, what we see is a shrine for the temple purposes with the image of like one single figure on top and a narrative that is going on. Interestingly like any other Pattichitra which are the narrative story. It

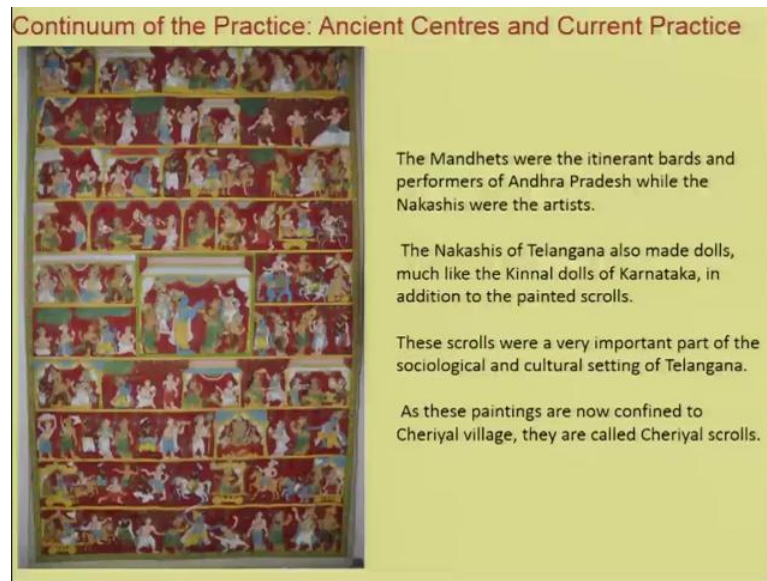


also has Indian red background that is almost flat and that is using as a contrast. The reason why I mentioning that is, this color red has a tendency to come to the foreground and because of that illusion of depth is not so prominent, it gives you a very two dimensional feel and that takes the narrative going it does not take us in and it is no visual portion pool that destruct us from flow of the story throughout. So that is quite favorable for story telling here.

In fact, it is said medieval India, when you know late 17th Century when Pattichitra tradition was thriving in all over India almost like we are yet to discuss another tradition from Gujarat that is Mata-ni-pachedi were they combine the block prints and the hand painted images in the same fabric. Although, the ancient center is lost now it has moved to the urban places and continuing with thing. But when see the new profile of it. But more or less everywhere when there is narrative Pattichitra tradition took placed from 17th to 19th 20 Century of like continuously. That was at one point was only mode of entertainment that everybody had and it caused a very crucial social change that though many of the people were illiterate in that time, but they cannot be marked as uneducated, because the education had nothing to do with literacy at that time.

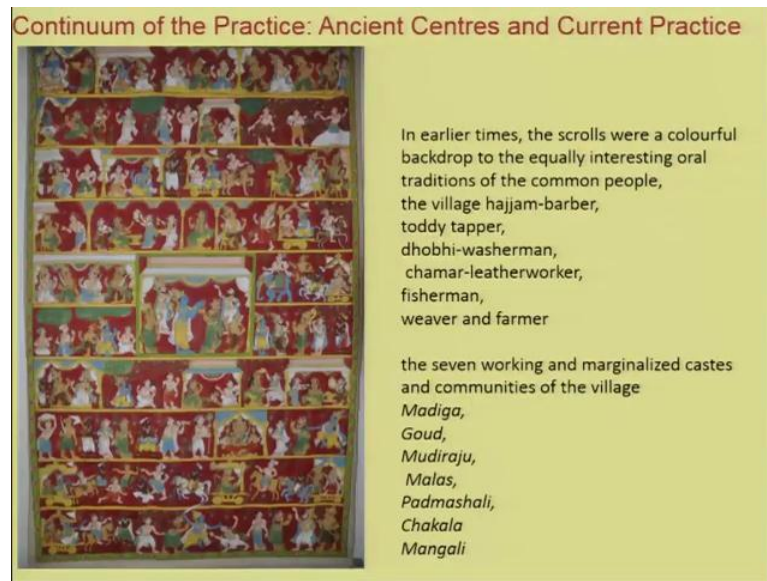
So, because of this Pattichitra and old traditions that existed in India people were very highly educated through the moral stories and stories from the epics, the sense of literature in the oral context was very rich for them. They were philosophically very fine and tuned. So, those are the social responsibilities that were very successfully taken care of by the people who painted the scrolls and told the stories wrote the oration in the form of poetry sang those songs. And I think I am repeating that quite a few time, let us see to support my statement some more examples.

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What we see in the picture is one example of Cheriya painting from Warangal. It has connection to Warangal and Lingoda tradition of the Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, and the images there in Dakshinchitra museum. The Mandhets, were the itinerant bards and performers of Andhra Pradesh while the Nakashis were artists. The Nakashis of Telangana also made dolls, much like the Kinnal dolls of Karnataka, in addition to the painted scrolls. These scrolls were very important part of the sociological and cultural settings of Telangana. As these painting are now confined to Cheriya village they are called Cheriya scrolls, these are collected from Wikipedia sources.

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In earlier times the scrolls were a colorful backdrop to the equally interesting oral traditions of the common people; the village hajjam-barber, toddy-tapper, Dhobhi-washerman, chamar-leather worker, fisherman, weaver and farmer. The seven working and marginalized castes and communities of the village were very very powerful, they are; the Madiga's, Goud, Madiraju, Malas, Padmashali, Chakala, and mangali.

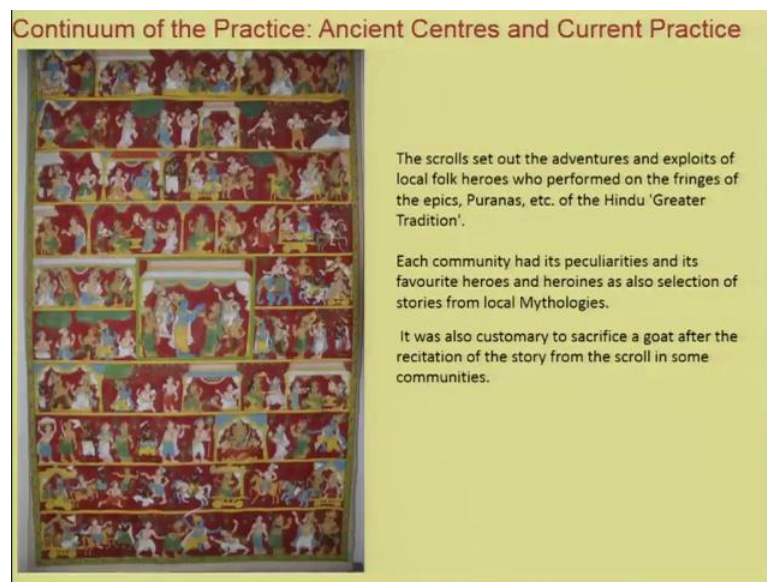
This is very interesting to see that most of the scrolls tells a story which is quite familiar with the story of Pattichitra curves of Bengal. There the story was like the master craftsmen the gouds of craftsmen Vishwakarma he fell love with an Urvashi named grethachi and they gave birth to 10 children and they all were from the craftsmen community. Here, in the Cheriyal scrolls they tell us a similar story with slight different paint were we will see from the pictures; the story usually starts with the image of Ganesha at the right top to begin with and it has direction it goes from left to right and the visual.

So, we see Ganesha being offered with some prasad and we see the three gods Bramha, Vishnu and Maheshwar they are coming to visit Ganesha. And then Bramha starts perspiring which leads to some disaster, and then comes the character who takes shelter and from the sweats of Bramha takes birth the ten sons of another Gandharva and all

those ten sons get into all this professions like, somebody is the barber, the other men is a washerman. the one is the leather worker, fisherman, weaver and farmer.

So, that is very interesting to see. Again the background is flat and there are characters who are placed in a narrative formation and it also has the Western Indian influence that is quite prominent Odisha Pattichitra, but we can clearly make out that this is a tradition which is visually very different from Kalamkari or Odisha or Bengal Pattichitra with lots of stylistic affinity, but the identity is very very prominent and distinctive here.

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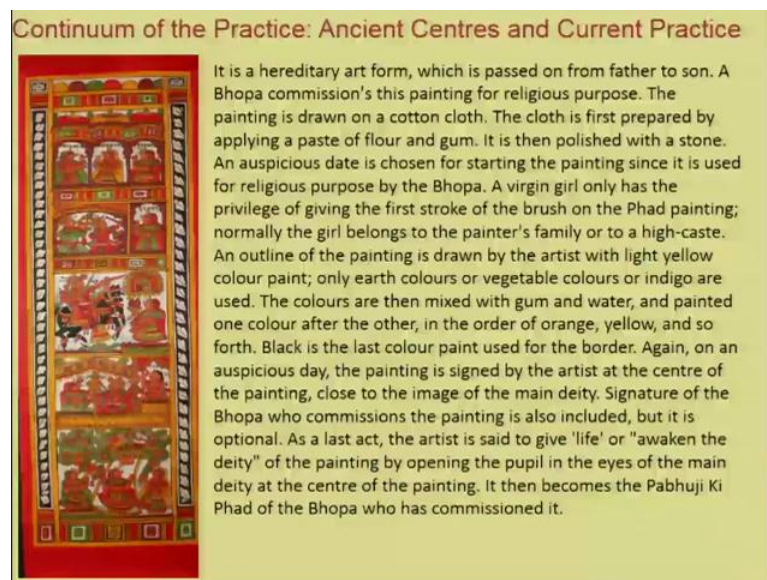


So, the scrolls set out the adventures and exploits of local folk heroes who performed on the fringes of the epics, Puranas, etcetera, of the Hindu Greater Tradition. Each community had its peculiarities and its favorite heroes and heroines as also selection of stories from local mythologies. It was also customary to sacrifice a goat after the recitation of the story from the scroll in some communities.

As we discussed many such narrative traditions throughout the fifth module to realize the continuum of the practice considering the ancient center, the current practice we also discussed the method materials how much our authentic and taken from the available sources. And also quite a few exponent patterns that let the tradition grow and flourish.

In that context we cannot lay another tradition, and I will briefly describe the art work of the Phad paintings from Rajasthan. Phad is a word that has the similar meaning of pad or the canvas, the surface. And two-dimensionality and the narrative that is there in that connection also. So let us see one example which is a very humble example there enormous screens that they produce and whole thing comes with a lively performance were dance, music and narrations with playing very interesting folk instruments. And that takes place in the desert get people enlivened with stories of Pabhuji that is Pabhuji ki Phad of Rajasthan.

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Pabhuji ki Phad it is a hereditary art form, which is passed on from father to son. A Bhopa commissions this painting for religious purpose. The painting is drawn on a cotton cloth. The cloth is first prepared by applying a paste of flour and gum. It is then polished with a stone. An auspicious date is chosen for starting the painting since it is used for religious purpose by the Bhopa.


A virgin girl only has the privilege to giving the first stroke of the brush on the Phad painting. Normally the girl belongs to the painter's family or to a higher caste an outline of the painting is drawn by the artist with light yellow color paint; only earth colors or vegetable colors or indigo are allowed to be used. The colors are then mixed with gum

and water and painted one color after the other, in the order of orange yellow and so forth. Black is the last color paint used for the border. Again, on an auspicious day the painting is signed by the artist at the center of the painting, close to the image of the main deity. Signature of the Bhopa who commissions the painting is also included, but it is optional.

As a last act the artist is said to give 'life' or "awaken the deity" of the painting by opening the pupil in the eyes of the main deity at the center of the painting. It then becomes the Pabhuji ki Phad of the Bhopa who has commissioned it.

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**Continuum of the Practice: Ancient Centres and Current Practice**



The Phad canvas is usually of 15 ft x 5 ft sheet cloth, on which are painted (or sewn) miniature scenes depicting the life of Pabuji and his adventures.

The Phad or Par represents, in its painting, the court of Pabuji (as a historical true Rajput chief who sacrifices his life for protection of others), his palace and his divine character as an incarnation of Lakshmana, brother of the Rama of the Ramayana Hindu epic story, the forts in which he lived as well as the sanctum of his goddess Deval.

The back drop of such narrations is invariably in the desert villages of Rajasthan. The images in the painting are arranged logically, also showing revengeful exploits of his nephew on his enemy, Jindrav Khici. However, iconographically it is considered as "extremely complex and intricate"

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