

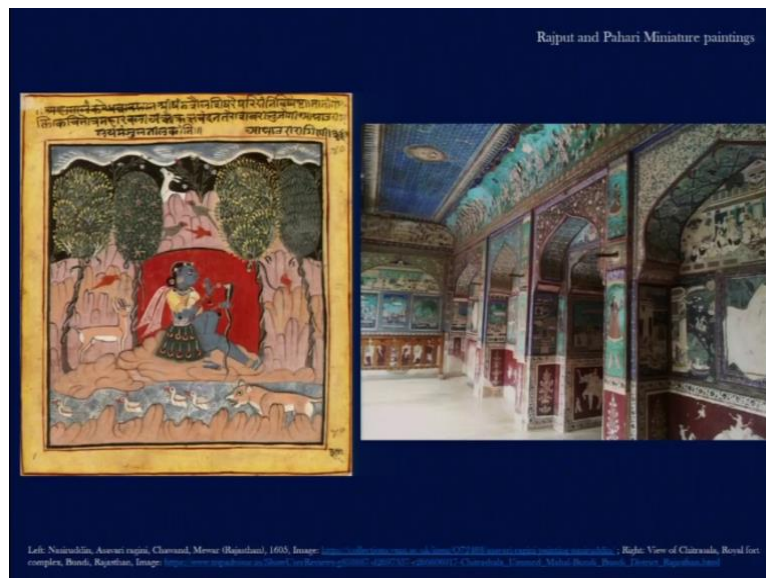
Indian Art: Materials, Techniques and Artistic Practices
Prof. Rajarshi Sengupta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology – Kanpur

Lecture – 34
Paper

Hello everyone. We are continuing on our week and module on paper and we have already looked at the aspects in Mughal miniature paintings, part of a Deccani miniatures and then of course the ones in the earlier stage for example, the Chaurapanchasika style and so on. So, today we will be discussing more on the Rajput and Pahari miniature paintings and then we will conclude the session with some of the more recent ones, for example the painting practices in Tanjore and Mysore.

So, starting with the Rajput and Pahari paintings, I will first touch upon the Rajput one. So, the Rajput paintings are the ones we know and those were produced by the courts which were ruled by the Rajput rulers and that is mostly the areas that we understand today in part of north western India and Rajasthan in western India, and we see that there have been many courts in this area.

(Refer Slide Time: 01:11)



So, these are the places which were ruled by the Rajputs. So, for example we have this very important court of Mewar then we have Bikaner and then Kota and so on. So, there have been many of these courts, the smaller kingdoms we find in this Rajput dominated areas and in many

times we found that they were not in agreement with the Mughals and that is the reason the Mughals and the Rajputs were in constant warfare.

We have seen the similar kind of thing even in the earlier times during the sultan period and all. So, some of the Rajput dominated these kingdoms will find them to have been under the dominance of the Mughals or the other, the sultanates or other kingdoms. However, some of the ones, for example Mewar and all we see them to be fiercely independent and they have been independent states until very late times.

So that kind of political changes or this specific political character of these states, they have also contributed towards the specificity or the individual approaches of these painting practices. So, when we are looking into the western India or like north western India, for example Rajasthan like the Rajput kingdoms, so this is not really that far from the places where we have seen the other kinds of painting practices.

For example the Jaina Kalpasutra and Kalakacharya katha, those manuscripts from Gujarat, from the central India, from Malwa and so on. And also the same time when we see the Chaurapanchasika style, so the Chaurapanchasika style in the central India, part of western India, even some of the Chaurapanchasika manuscripts were also produced in the places that we know today as Rajasthan, the Rajput dominated areas.

So, all of them have tremendous amount of influence on the way Rajput paintings have also shaped over the time. This approach towards painting, for example the angularity and then the application of flat colours and then an eye for detail when it comes to ornamentation, when it comes to depicting different motifs in a tree and so on, so these things that we have already seen to be established in the Chaurapanchasika style and the Jaina the manuscripts will find them to be also prevalent in the Rajput miniature paintings.

Now, if we go with that, there are also some of the things in the later times when we see that some of the Rajput courts they have close correlation with the Mughals, so that time we will find that there are exchange of artisans between this courts and the artisans who are trained in the Mughal court they will travel to the Rajput courts and that is how we will find that how certain kind of exchange of influences, exchange of painterly practices they also made a huge impact on the way the Rajput paintings have shaped over time.

So going with the similarities and differences, we can see that this kind of issues, they appear to be the decisive factors for how Rajput paintings the way we perceive them today. Now another thing we also find that even though the Rajput paintings and the Mughal paintings we see them growing almost side by side, if we think about the areas which were under the Mughal rule and then of course some of the smaller kingdoms where the Rajput rule was established.

And in some cases when the Rajput rulers were also they were subordinate to the Mughals, so in all these cases we find that in the Mughal context we see the figurative miniature painting practices they were practiced, but the kind of murals that we see in some of the Mughal monuments, for example Akbar's tomb in Sikandra and then Itmad-ud-Daulah and places like that, so they are mostly floral and geometrical.

Whereas when we come to the Rajput mural making practices, we find some of the murals, for example the one we have on screen this entire pavilion that we find that is called Chitrashala that is there Royal fort complex of Bundi in Rajasthan. It is profusely painted and at the same time we also have narrative figurative scenes in the murals which is not present in the Mughal context. So, that also gives us a sense of this entire debate around representing figurative motifs in the Islamic context and how that is different perhaps for the Rajput rulers.

However, we should not be relying on too much of generalization, but as we can see the figurative motifs were celebrated in the Mughal manuscripts and miniature paintings, they were not preferred certainly for many reasons in the murals, whereas in the Rajput paintings we find that the murals and the miniatures both of them they had this tendency towards depicting high figurative narrations.

Now also that what were the thematic in which they have performed. So, we find that there were some of the thematic which were more common in the Rajput paintings than of the Mughal paintings and some of them, for example we find them to be like the Bhagavata Purana and then of course the Ragamala paintings. Now, on the left side of our screen we have one image from a Ragamala painting and what is Ragamala?

So, we have been touching upon this term from the early part of this week, but I saved this discussion until this time because Ragamala is a kind of painting, a very specific kind of

painting where we find that there are depictions of the musical notes. So, musical notes are the ragas as we know these very specific and highly specialized notes of music which is practiced mostly in the northern India.

And so the ragas; and of course there are also the ragas in Southern India, but usually the way we see the Ragamala paintings, most of the ragas, their notes and their timing and everything they are referred to the Hindustani music than of to the southern Indian music. So, what we have there that all the ragas and musical notes they have something to do with creating a particular kind of mood, so if they are creating a mood, then the receivers they experience the rasa.

So we find that different kinds of rasa is communicated by this musical notes and that is the reason we have different kinds of these ragas which evoke different kinds of rasa. And at the same time, we also find that they are related to particular seasons or time of the day, for example the Malhar or Megh Malhar, these are the ragas we find them to be associated with monsoon, whereas there are also different kinds of ragas and raginis is for example Vairava so that is the raga for morning.

So, this kind of this very specific temporalities which are associated with ragas, at the same time the kind of mood those are created by the ragas those things are celebrated in both Rajput and Pahari miniature paintings. To some extent we find them in the Deccani miniature paintings as well. But in the Rajput miniature paintings we see them to be, of course, both in Rajput and Pahari paintings we find them to be much more prevalent.

And here on the left side of the screen we have an image of the Asavari ragini. An Asavari ragini is a ragini which is usually considered to be depicted by a woman in the wilderness and she is dressed like a person who dwells in the forest and that is the reason in this image we find there is a dark skinned woman sitting at the centre stage and she wears peacock feathers which does not really look like someone from a court but someone who dwells in the forest.

And then she is in the middle of the wilderness and surrounded by a rocky landscape not really lush green vegetation or a pleasurable garden setting that we find and then what we also see that she is holding a snake and something that is also a very characteristic feature of the images of Asavari ragini. So, here in this image we find how it is also similar to the Mughal miniatures

and the earlier manuscript that the painting and writing practices they are continued side by side.

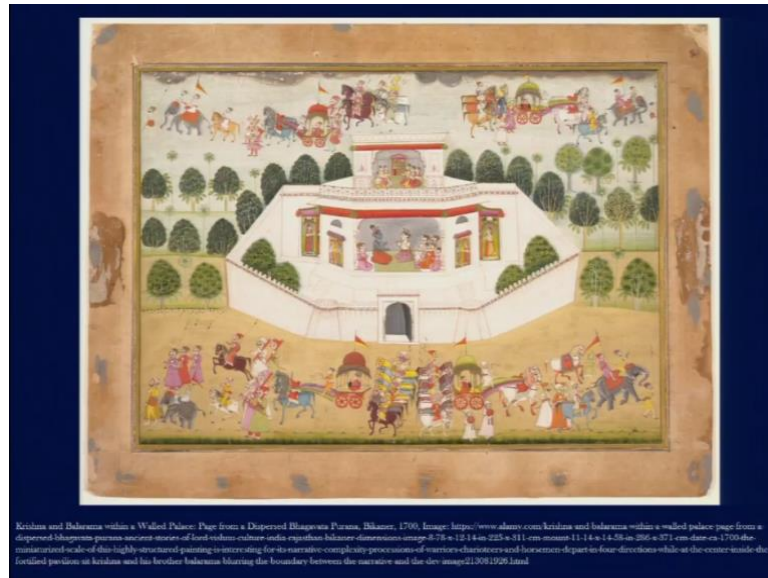
So, there is description, there are the written delineation of the ragas and raginis and then we have the visuals and well like the text and the visual they complement each other for us to have a much more fully developed sense of the prime characteristics of these ragas and raginis. And even in this one we find the area which shows the sky is only relegated to the top, this tiny, this thin register which shows the sky.

And rest of the area is the rocky landscape, the rocky terrain where there are different kinds of animals. If we see the kind of style which has been incorporated here, so this is very much like the Chaurapanchasika style where the angularity of the face and then the flat application of colour, the very clever and playful way of putting contrasting colours side by side, for example this red background against the main protagonist of this painting that is Asavari ragini.

So, that kind of contrasting colour, at the same time this flat application of colour and the dominance of lines and different kinds of ornamentation so those things are also something that we find them to be very much prevalent here, and we can see the lasting presence of the Chaurapanchasika style in these paintings here as well. So, this is an image which was painted by Nasiruddin.

So, Nasiruddin was a prominent painter in the Mewar court along with Sahibdin and so on and this is an image which was painted in Mewar perhaps around 1605, so that is the very early decade of the 17th century.

(Refer Slide Time: 12:16)



So, slowly, we find with the interaction with the Mughals and then also with the exposure to different kinds of art styles around northern and central India that Rajput style had also become refined and we see that there are many different kinds of experimentations those took place. So, for example the kind of space division we find in the Mughal context and similar kind of space division.

And then this multiple point of view which is all brought together in one painting to have these different narrative segments together, prime characteristic that we also find in the Mughal miniature paintings that is also there in the Rajput paintings here as well. So, this is an image that comes from Bhagavata Purana and that comes from the state of Bikaner and this is early 18th century 1700.

And this one here we find that there is a depiction of Krishna and Balarama, they come from the depiction of Bhagavata Purana and here we find there is a walled complex. So, this is a palace complex that we see that is situated at the centre stage of this painting and then we have like a depiction of landscape. There are registers of trees that sort of gives us a sense of this forest like landscape and then there are registers.

In the register at the bottom register, at the top where we find that there are different sets of people who are moving towards different directions. So, this is something that we find that how the narrative and its relationship to the central characters, how all those things play out in this small pictorial plane of the miniature paintings. And apart from that we also find that how certain kinds of things, for example the foreshortening.

That the figures that we see them to be in the front or at the centre, they are depicted in a bigger scale than the ones which are in the back. And here the foreshortening is not only just dependent on this point of view, but also about the hierarchy that who are the people who are of more importance than the others. So those two things we find them to be seamlessly merged in these paintings here.

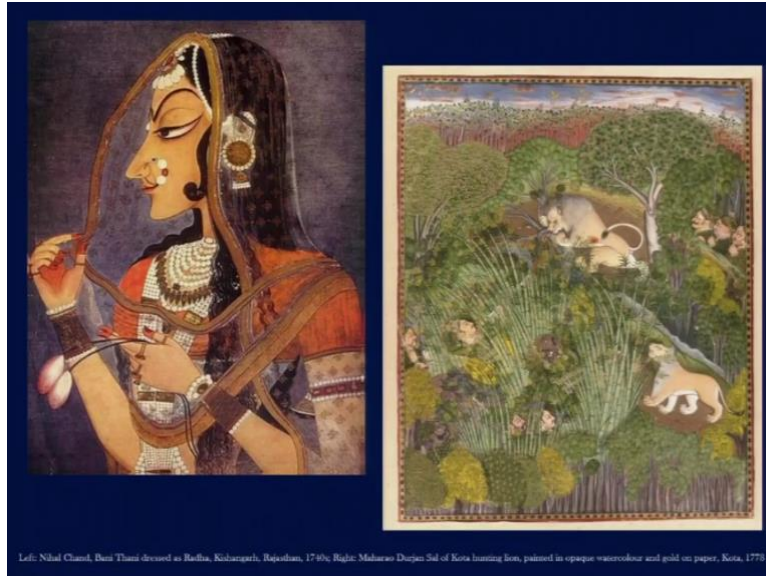
And that is the reason there is the single point perspectival view which perhaps has been also brought by the Europeans and during the time of Shah Jahan we find that in the Mughal miniature paintings that left a big influence and that kind of perspectival view which is more evident in the way the receding lines of this palace complex is shown. And that is something that also gives us a sense of this single point perspectival view.

And how; for architecture and everything around it, they need to be adjusted according to their distance from the point of view of the artisans, right. So, those are the things we find that some of these European perspectival views which were perhaps first studied by the Mughal court artisans and then those were transported to the Rajput court. So if those things are there, but at the same time there are certain sensibility towards depicting the subject matter.

At the same time the hierarchy of the figures that who is more important than someone else so those things which were more indigenous practices, they are also seamlessly merged with this newly found interventions. At the same time if we also see the colour scheme, the colour scheme we find that to be much more subdued, the contrast here is much less and much more sort of subtle compared to the other image that we have seen from Mewar the Asavari ragini.

And that also perhaps happened because of as we see that in Bikaner we find that the more painters from this court, they had more close correlation with the Mughal court because of their close alliances and that is perhaps also a reason what we find that the paintings produced in Bikaner they had this distinctive sort of this subtlety and the refinement, which can be closely related to the ones which were produced in the Mughal court.

(Refer Slide Time: 16:44)



Now with time, we find that two kinds of themes have also been prominent in the Rajput paintings and that is if we think about it, one will be the bhakti related themes and the other is courage or valour. And so in terms of bhakti, we find that in the fort of Chittorgarh this legendary singer and saint Mira Bai, she was a very influential one for the bhakti movement not only in the places which are ruled by the Rajput, but all over northern India.

So that is the reason we find the bhakti related the themes they have flourished significantly in the courts of Rajasthan. And at the same time, the Rajputs for their close relationship to warfare, hunting and everything else, we find that there are images which depict hunting scenes and elaborate war scenes and so on. So with time, we find that in the 18th century, these two examples that we have here in the slide side by side.

So the one on the left that was produced in the court of Kishangarh and perhaps it was painted by Nihal Chand, the court artists of Savant Singh and then what we find in the court of Kishangarh is that they were the worshipers of Krishna and Radha and that is how Savant Singh and his consort Bani Thani they were perceived as manifestations of Krishna and Radha and that is how we find how the portraits which were made of these royals, they almost look ethereal.

They did not look like someone who is there as part of the physical reality, but they are more a part of the spiritual realm. So, the artisans during this time, for example the master artisans as Nihal Chand, we find them to base their paintings on the observation of these royal characters as Savant Singh and Bani Thani, but they have also managed to take these

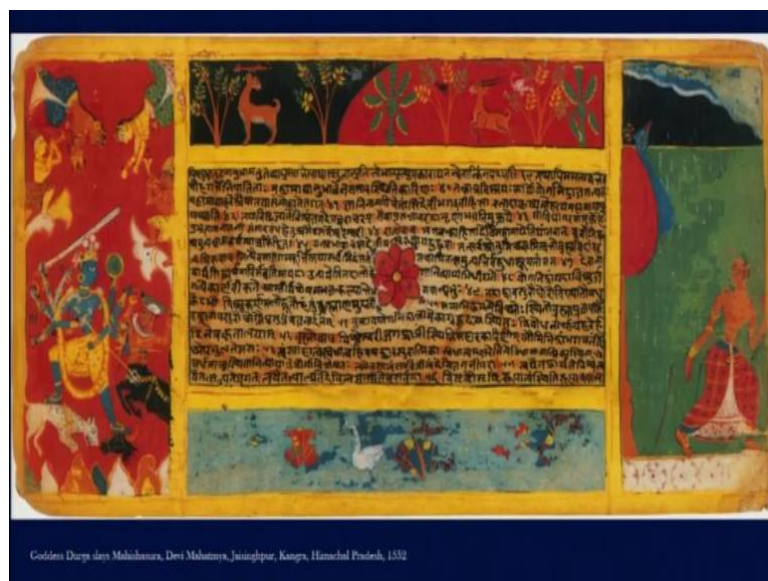
observations to the realm of the spirituality and that is how the characters of the figures we find.

For example, this lotus like eyes, this slight smile in the face, and this particular kind of stylization which suggests that they are no ordinary beings but perhaps they are semi divine beings. So that kind of character was imbibed in these paintings. So, if this is one set of painting that we find which deal with the bhakti related themes, on the other hand we also find images, for example here the one we have on the right side of the screen and here we have a hunting scene from the kingdom of Kota.

So, Kota paintings are also celebrated for their themes related to hunting and this elaborate scenes in which we find there is forest setting and with elaborate and minute depiction of the flora and then we have the hunting scenes where we do not really just see the characters, the royals who are hunting, but also different kinds of moves and expressions and dynamism in the bodies of both the animals and the human beings.

So that way we find the hunting scene specifically in Kota which talks about the Rajput bravery and courage and valour. So, those ones we also find that to be highly expressive and dynamic in their depiction. Also here please note the use of this particular register which shows the sky, so the sky is again like relegated to the upper part of the image and it is not really given much space in the pictorial plane.

(Refer Slide Time: 20:36)



So, from there we will move on to talk about the paintings in the Pahari region and when I say Pahari region that basically means the Punjab hills, so the areas today we understand as part of Himachal Pradesh, part of Northern Punjab and so on. And so those are the areas in which we also find there were some of those smaller kingdoms and there we find that the painting practices have also flourished. So, in the Pahari region, perhaps the most important state will perhaps be of Kangra.

And Kangra there is this fort, perhaps one of the oldest surviving forts in the Indian subcontinent that comes from 8th century AD. The Kangra fort has been a centre of power struggles for more than a millennium now. So for that reason, we find that for its prominence in this Pahari region for Kangra fort, the rulers and the struggle for dominance over this Kangra fort, the entire Kangra state had been very active in terms of different kinds of literary and visual expressions and different kinds of building projects as well.

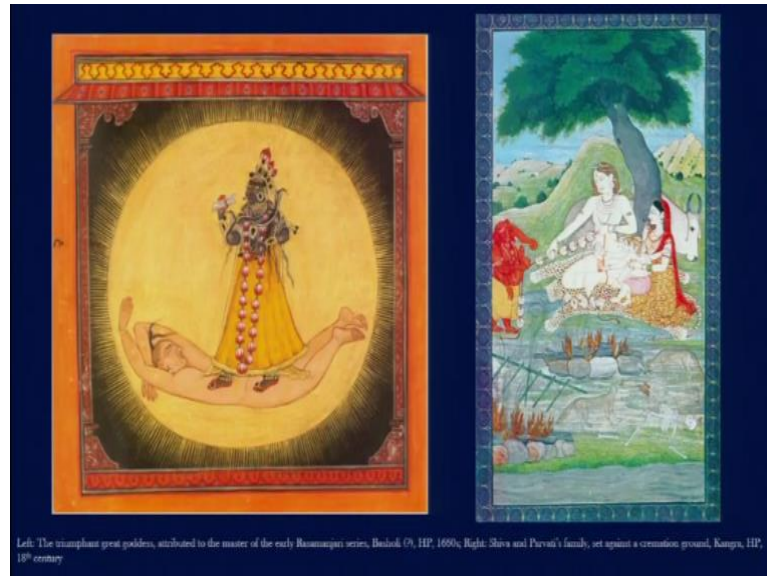
Now, this is perhaps one of the earliest surviving paintings or like the manuscript that we find from the Pahari region and this is the depiction of Devi Mahatmya, and Devi Mahatmya that came from Jaisinghpur in Kangra and this was produced perhaps around the time 1552, so it is mid 16th century that we find. And as I have said that this is perhaps the one of the earliest surviving Pahari manuscripts that we have with us.

So what we have here is a very characteristic kind of horizontal this pothi like format, the manuscript like format, and in which there is a space for which where the written inscriptions and the narration that is there and this narration that is framed by the visual narratives. On the left side, we have a depiction of Mahishasura Mardini and where we see the blue skinned goddess, she is slaying the buffalo demon.

And then there are angelic figures, the divine figures we find they are showering flowers and they are greeting the goddess for this heroic deed. And here on the right side we have there is this other figure, we find perhaps a depiction of monsoon and for that reason there is a depiction of this dark clouds, a peacock and the raindrops. So, in this one we also find there is a very distinctive essence of the Chaurapanchasika style that was prevalent in the central India and also in western India.

So we know that how this Chaurapanchasika style that had emerged in 15th century and that had been such an influential style in various parts of northern central western India, so this one is also not an exception from that.

(Refer Slide Time: 23:47)



So in the Pahari miniature paintings, we find that there are also something distinctive in terms of their approach. So, we have that in this region, the Pahari customs, the Hindu customs that also grew very closely with the Vajrayana Buddhist customs. And here we find that there are different modes of worshipping the great goddess or devi that had been prevalent. So, some of the tantric ideas that we find, those have not really been significantly explored in the Rajasthani miniature paintings and Deccan.

So those things we find them to be in the Pahari miniatures and that is the reason there are many manuscripts and many miniature paintings in which we find there are different deeds of the great goddess and her manifestation in form of Mahishasura Mardini or Bhadrakali and different other forms where the female power is celebrated. And so that also perhaps shaped the ideas about life and death because many of the tantric practices they also evolve.

They also include a lot of practices which requires a sound understanding of the material body and its relationship to the spiritual realm. So those are the reasons we find that those guiding ideas have also contributed to the making of these paintings. We will get more on these images and the description of these paintings in the next lecture. Thank you.