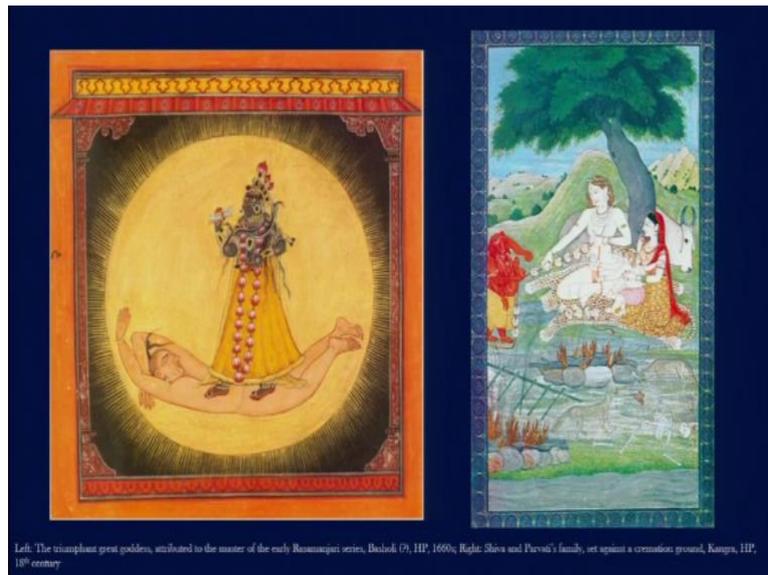


**Indian Art: Materials, Techniques and Artistic Practices**  
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**Lecture – 35**  
**Paper**

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Hello everyone. We are continuing our discussion on the Pahari paintings and here we are. So, we started talking about this specific characteristic of the Pahari paintings where we see the tantric philosophy and the veneration of the great goddess have been much more prominent than some of the other regions from where we find the manuscript and the miniature paintings.

So, the one we see here on screen, the one on the left side of the screen here is a depiction of the triumphant great goddess Bhadrakali and so this we find that was produced in the court of Basohli in the mid 17th century. And in this one, what we find that there is the depiction of the great goddess Bhadrakali and she is depicted as this dark skinned goddess who has prominent eyes and then she wears a garland of lotuses and then she is standing on a shava or a corpse.

So, this idea about like incorporating the dead bodies, the corpse and idea of shava and how on this horizontal way the shava lies on the ground and the way like the shakti or the great goddess, she is the one that stands vertically on the top of it and that is how life starts. So,

from the dead to the starting of the life how the energy of the great goddess is required, so all those ideas we find them to be celebrated in this Pahari miniature paintings.

It is not to say that in the other parts of the country, the Indian subcontinent, they did not explore these ideas, but in the Pahari miniature paintings, we do see them prominently explored and addressed. So, we see that Bhadrakali, she is here and she is someone who is fierce at the same time she is the one with the great knowledge and that is the reason in the upper right hand we find that she holds a manuscript.

So manuscript is a symbol of knowledge, of learning. So, it is something that we find how this idea of the shava or this corpse and bringing this fierce goddess there at the same picture plane with the shava and then also this indication of their relationship to intelligence. So, all these different layers of understanding and philosophy they come together in these paintings. And then we find the central figure is placed within this gleaming sun and the sun has perhaps been painted with gold colour.

So it is like a golden sun and that suggests the gleaming presence of Bhadrakali, the goddess. And we see that the entire image is framed within this architectural jharokha like window. So, this jharokha window that we have seen in the presence of how this particular kind of windows they are explored in the Rajput architecture and then was also adopted in the Mughal architecture, so they are also something we find them to be incorporated in the painted representations as well.

So, here the jharokha window is used as a pictorial frame to have the central deity at the centre. The other image here on the right side of the screen, we find this is an image of Shiva and Parvati is family and then we find the Shiva and Parvati's family are placed in a cremation ground where there is a corpse which is still burning and then there are jackals and other animals who sort of inhabit this cremation ground.

And there we find the happy family of Shiva and Parvati, they also inhabit the same place. So, it is a kind of a juxtaposition between different ideas about life and death and how these ideas are not really distinct from each other. So, those kinds of things are celebrated in the Pahari paintings. Now, in terms of the practice, we also find that the Pahari miniature paintings have also flourished side by side with mural making.

And for example, we have some of the painters Golu, very celebrated painter who held from Nurpur again in the Kangra region and then we find that he had painted the murals of the Brij Raj Swami temple in Nurpur fort. And at the same time, we also have miniature paintings which were painted by the same person. So, the person who was involved in making the mural paintings and here we have some written records that suggest the same person was involved in painting miniature paintings as well.

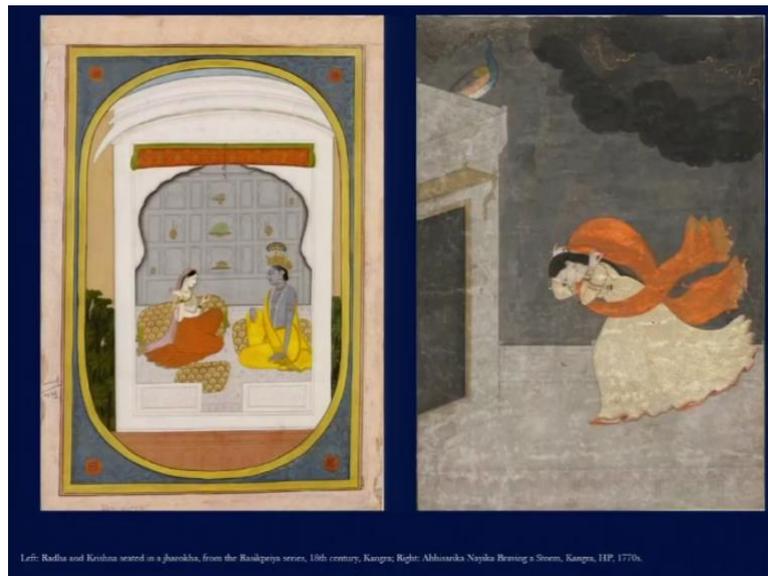
So that is how we know that there was a close correlation between mural making and miniature painting making. And in that time, we also find that the artisans from the Pahari region they have travelled to the mainland and also to the plains and also perhaps some of them got to learn about the practices of the Mughal miniature paintings and that is how we find that some of the sophistication, some of the ways in which we see that the very minute depiction of the natural elements around us.

And then being attentive to all possible details in the human bodies as well as the different objects in nature, the way we see them to have established in the Mughal miniatures. So those things we find them to be in the Pahari miniature paintings as well in the later times. So, for example we have pandit Seu who travelled to the plains and he practiced in the Guler area and then from there we find that his son who also sort of carried out that kind of practice.

Where this minute naturalistic depiction of the different flora and fauna, they were blended with the Pahari philosophy and this particular way of life where life and death are not really considered to be distinct from each other. So, we find that pandit Seu's son Nainsukh had also continued this line of thought and line of painting practice and he is someone who started his career in the court of Guler and then we find that he had moved to Kangra and later on with the rulers to other places.

So, that is how we find that these particular figures they have contributed immensely to the flourishing of this Pahari aesthetics. So as part of the Pahari aesthetics, except for the sinuous lines and this eye for detail and of course this philosophical take on life and death, apart from these things, we also find that the colour scheme is also something that is very subdued, not subdued, I should say subtle, and then that is also something that that gives a very distinctive presence as compared to the brighter colour palette of the Rajput miniature paintings.

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So in the later times in the 18th century, we find that there were also some of the themes which were celebrated. And these themes would include Rasamanjari and Rasikpriya. In Rasikpriya series we have there are some of those established depictions of Krishna and Radha and the nayaka and nayika series. And then there are also these poetic expressions on longing on the lovers and the different kinds of emotions they go through.

So, all these different things we find them that how the poetry, the literary works, they also served as point of reference for making these paintings. So, Rasikpriya series and those ones we find them to be much prevalent in the Pahari miniature paintings here as well. And here, we find that on the left side of the image, again this very subtle colour scheme, there is not really too much of contrast there.

And then the narrative elements we find them to be not too many things taking place at the same place. So, the narrative elements we find them to be sort of more concentrated towards the central figures and they are also framed within this jharokha window. So, framing the figures within the jharokha window as we have also seen in the earlier image of Bhadrakali, so similar kind of practices we find them to be also practiced in the later times as well.

So, we find that how the creation of the mood is something that was excelled and that that was something that was experimented with in the court of Kangra and Guler and the artisans they have certainly excelled this skill of depicting this mood and emotion and how those are

expressed by the bodily gestures and facial expressions in the central figures or the protagonists that we find them.

The other kind, I should not say the other kind, but I mean the other image that we have on the right side of the screen and in this one we have a depiction of an Abhiseka nayika. So Abhisarika is someone who goes out to meet her lover in the night and by going against different kinds of obstacles. So, the obstacles have usually been depicted in form of the wild animals, snakes.

And sometimes they have also been shown in form of the dark clouds, stormy nights, thunderstorm and rain and how the abhisarika nayika ignores or like avoids all of these things and then still she goes out to meet her lover. So, this is something that we also find that how the poetry those are written on these themes on love and longing and separation, so those things also have contributed immensely to the making of these kinds of paintings.

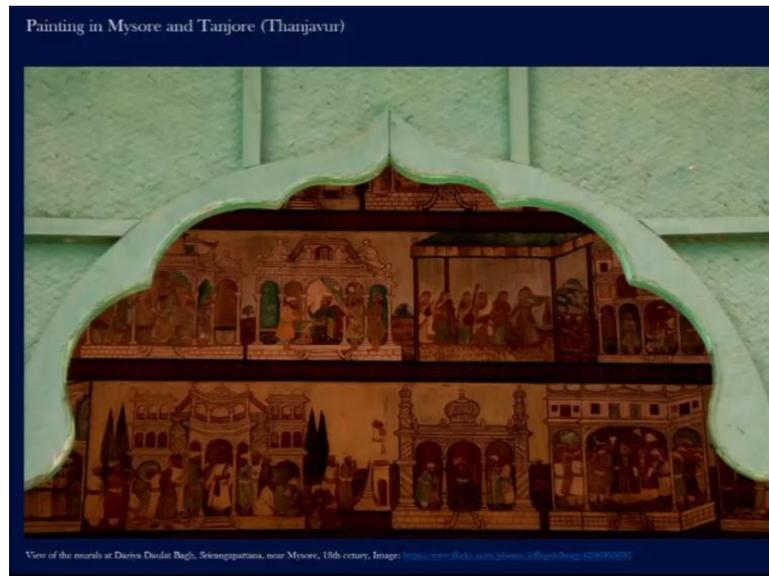
Now, on this painting what we find that there is a sense of movement that was created. So, the abhisarika nayika we find that she tries to cover her head with her dupatta or this scarf and then there are dark clouds in the sky and there are like the snake like forms in the dark clouds which are perhaps the depiction of a thunderstorm and then we find that there is a peacock which sits on the top of this marvel pavilion.

And so, the peacock is also a bird which is associated with the arrival of monsoon and then how that also says something about the particular season which is known for which holds much relevance for the lovers who are separated from each other. So, that is how the entire mood is created. And then the dynamism and the colour scheme everything, all of them they contribute towards the mood.

So, these are some of the characteristic features we find them to be in the 18th century Pahari miniature paintings. So, moving on from there, we are looking into the state which are there at the northern frontier of the Indian subcontinent and from there if we come towards the southern part, we find there was a very different kind of practice those were taking place. So, in the southern India and mostly in the courts of Mysore, in Thanjavur we find that there were already some of the painting practices those were established.

So, for example we have some of the mural practices in the Vijayanagara kingdom and after the Vijayanagara kingdom, after the fall of Hampi we find that there were smaller kingdoms which sort of came into prominence and then under the Nayaka rulers we find the painting practices have flourished.

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Now, in the 18th and later on in the 19th century, what we find that there was already a prominent presence of the British troops and at the same time there were already some of the British artist and British materials which were available there, not only just British, but also the French material, the Danish materials, art materials and different kinds of prints and everything those were available to them.

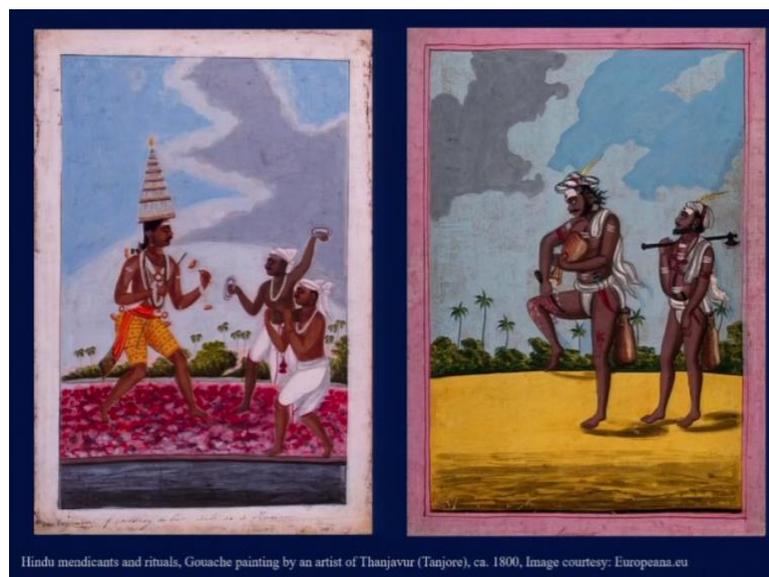
So, during this time, we find that there was a kind of amalgamation between the Western European aesthetics with the one that was prevalent in Southern India and those are the grounds on which we find that the schools of Mysore and Thanjavur have flourished. So, in Mysore, we have the Wodeyar kings who had their close alliance with the British and then after the fall of Tipu Sultan we find that the Wodeyars have managed to have their status as the princely state.

And then for those things, we find that there were many different kinds of influences which we can trace them to this exchange between the indigenous painting style or the painterly style a prominent in Southern India with the ones from Western Europe. So, for example the one will be definitely the perspectival view and then also the different kinds of depiction of the architecture which came into prominence only in the 18th century.

And then also like the detection of different kinds of figures and the colour scheme, all of those things have become a much more catering to this hybrid mode of picture making. So, this image that we have on screen that comes from the Dariya Daulat Bagh and that was the palace of Tipu Sultan and that is in Srirangapatna near Mysore. And so similar kinds of pictorial exercises we find them to be practiced on paper as well. And sometimes in the Mysore paintings, we also find that how additional material.

For example, like gold plate and different kinds of like semiprecious jewels and things like that they are added on the top of it to give this low relief like effect and that gives a three dimensionality in these images. So, the three dimensionality is something that we can imagine that how that was a response towards the earlier painting practices that persisted in southern India, at the same time that 3-D modulation of the bodies those are also prevalent in the Western European painting traditions.

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Hindu mendicants and rituals, Gouache painting by an artist of Thanjavur (Tanjore), ca. 1800, Image courtesy: Europeana.eu

So from there if we move on to the court of Tanjore or Thanjavur, so Tanjore is the anglicized version of the word Thanjavur. So, Thanjavur is the kingdom that we find the state of Thanjavur is there in the Kaveri Delta and that is today in the state of Tamil Nadu. And in Tamil Nadu we find that there were many paintings those are produced and for the Maratha rulers who ruled in these areas in the 18th and 19th century.

And these are some of the images that we find those paintings were actually produced for the officials, for the British officials, for the Western European officials and the way these

paintings we see them here, they actually mark a difference from the kind of images those are produced for manuscript for the folios which are used by the rulers of the states. So, these kinds of paintings, we find those were perhaps commissioned by the company officials, the British East India company officials.

And here what we find that they were interested to have visual depiction of different kinds of caste, occupation and different kinds of practices in the Indian subcontinent which were alien to them and that is how we find that how there were the images in Thanjavur they came and those have perhaps been produced by the indigenous artisans and how they marked a stark difference from the kind of painting practices in the southern Indian courts as well as in other parts of the Indian subcontinent.

So, if we go with the aesthetics of this image, so you can see that how the sky is actually taking over a large part of the image here and that is something that is a very distinctively Western European influence. And then we find that there are only few figures, they are depicted in the foreground of these images. For example, here we find that there are those Hindu mendicants and the ascetics who perform different kinds of practices for like the self harm.

So, here we find that all these figures, they are actually walking on coal and the coal is burning and one can see that how these devotees still walking on the top of it. So that kind of practices which the Western Europeans were unaware of, so those things were documented in these paintings. Similarly, here is also another image on the right side of the page where there are other two figures in which we find that how this one figure who is sort of harming his own skin and that is also part of their practice to show their veneration towards their deities.

So those kinds of things instead of depicting the royals or someone who is very prominent in the state, the way we have seen in the miniature paintings mostly, here we find that there is a shift in terms of the aesthetics, also the use of the sky, then the mode of narration and also the people who are represented. So, this company officials they were interested more in terms of the depiction of the different kinds of caste groups, different kinds of occupation, the peculiar things which were not really evident to them earlier.

So those things became the subject matter of these paintings and these paintings we can clearly say how they served more kind of a documentative purpose than of the way we see how the miniature paintings or the manuscript paintings have persisted and were perceived by the rulers as well as the audience for centuries.

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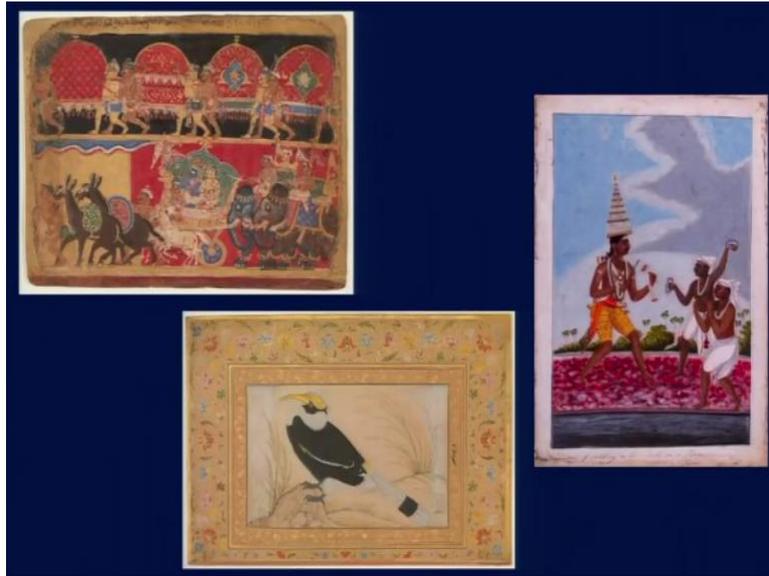


This is another image which shows a Hindu mendicant again and there is a woman who has been dressed in this shalwar kameez like attire. And another thing that we find that how these two figures for the textiles that they wear and then the peculiarity in their attire, their ornaments and everything, all those things are celebrated in this painting. At the same time, we also find there is a depiction of the shadow.

And depiction of shadow is something that we do not really see in the Indian paintings, the paintings in the Indian subcontinent before the arrival of the Europeans. So, this is something we find that is to be unique characteristic features of these paintings those are produced in this time. And of course, we can also think about the use of this open clear sky and the sky almost becomes a background so that there is no other narrative element.

Nothing to restrict the viewers eyes from appreciating or observing the main figures those are depicted in the foreground of these paintings. So, the nature of these paintings for its documentative purpose and at the same time a blend of the southern Indian aesthetics with the Western European picture making conventions, those things we find that to be prevalent and also celebrated in these images.

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So, to wrap up the session, I would say that there are many different ways in which we can see that how these painting practices on paper have flourished in the Indian subcontinent. So, we started talking about some of the earliest surviving examples on paper, for example the one from Gujarat, the Kalpasutra manuscript, and there we have seen how this new arrival of paper was incorporated in making these manuscripts which were earlier produced on palm leaf.

And that is how the format of making this manuscript on the palm leaf that stayed and then some of the marks which were made for punching the palm leaf and so on they were translated into the decorative motifs on paper. And from there, we have also seen some of the things, for example the Bhagavata series in which we see that some of the characteristics of making these pictures.

For example the use of flat colours and then how to make contrast between the different colours and then also that how the figures in profile they can be utilized for continuing a narration. So, if there is a frontal figure, usually the frontal figures we find them to be only as part of depicting the divine figures or if one devotee is seeking blessing from a deity, then only we find that there are frontal figures of the gods, usually the gods and the goddesses.

But usually for depicting a narrative scene and even for the royals we find the portraits are done from profile and that is how these images actually animate a story. So, we are talking about a time when definitely like the digital technologies were not present. And so, the idea

of animation, we find that they were activated through the depiction of these figures in profile, also the way in which the gestures of hand and body.

And then the expression in their face and at the same time the movement of the other elements in the picture, how all those things contributed towards animating these images and making these narratives more close to live, the way we see that in this Bhagavata series in which like there is a procession we find which is moving towards the city of Dwarka. The other characteristic we have also studied in these images and that is to do with the use of scripture, the use of inscription and the images.

So, there are the calligraphers will be the ones who will be working on making the scriptures and making the inscriptions by the images and then like there are the dedicated painters who would be involved in painting the visual narratives. So, this is a way in which we find that these paintings from the very early times they were produced as a collaborative gesture, it was not really something that one person is a completely responsible for completing one particular work.

But it was one paper would go around in the entire workshop and that is how like one image would be produced. And if it is part of a manuscript, then one can imagine that it is not just the people who are involved in painting, but also the calligraphers and so on they will also be involved in it, and this is something we have also studied in the context of the Mughal miniature making practices.

In the karkhana practice in which we have this workshop setting where the master artisans will be involved in teaching the apprentices how things are done. And then the teaching is also something that entails understanding of different kinds of paper, how to make paper, how to paste one paper with the other and then this particular way of making this handmade paper called wasli and then the way in which pigment is produced for painting, for calligraphy.

How ink is produced; all those things would be part of painting. So, understanding paper, understanding painting and also that how they can be incorporated for expressing certain ideas, expressing the literary works, at the same time some of the contemporary socio-

political events, all those things required for a sound understanding of how the materials work and how to make use of this material for painting on to them.

So, apart from these things, we have also seen in the later segment of this lecture that with the arrival of the Western European aesthetics, even though that was also there in some of the paintings in Mughal court or in the courts of Deccan, but a much more direct patronage by the company officials we find that how that also gave a very different kind of visual language to the subject matter which were there in Southern India.

For example, the Hindu mendicants and the aesthetics that we have seen as part of the paintings produced in Thanjavur or Tanjore. So, this is how we find that the varied expressions starting with like the manuscripts to the folios to these paintings which were made for documentative purpose, so the range is really wide when we understand the use of paper in the Indian subcontinent.

And how those were very differently handled and this to serve different purposes were practiced and explored and that is how we find this rich diversity of the Indian paintings today. Thank you.