

Historical Journey of Kangra Art

Author: - Dr. Priyanka Saxena

Former Assistant Professor, School of Holistic Development, MIT ADT University,

Loni Kalbhor, Pune (Maharashtra)

Abstract-

The Kangra Art has a noteworthy journey of involvement within the Indian history. The last Mughal emperor Aurangzeb (in the 17th Century) did not administer the specified recognition for Mughal art to flourish. The skilled artists of Mughal reign had to explore different regions to pursue their talents. The artists fortunately at the identical time received a courtesy welcome from the king of Kashmir and Punjab to pursue their artistic talent. The artists received urban center of art to flourish their skill within the peaceful atmosphere of the Hills. They were also greatly influenced by the regional artists under the support of the Hill Rajas of Guler, Tira-Sujanpur and Nurpur. This great cross-cultural combination of the migrated artists from Mughal reign with the regional artists of hills within the Kangra valley of Himachal Pradesh gave life to one of the best works of art in Indian history –THE KANGRA ART. The Kangra Art's distinct & unique feature is that the theme of affection & sentiments that is expressed during a lyrical style stuffed with rhythm, grace and sweetness. The Kangra art reached its height during the reign of its great supporter Maharaja Sansar Chand Katoch(1776-1824).

Art is the essential part of our culture because it gives us an intense knowledge of feelings, emotions, self-awareness and far more. It's about natural way; we experience the world, which for several is an addition of personality. It is the imparting of close concepts that cannot be faithfully designed by words alone.

The purpose of artworks is also to transmit ideas, like in politics, spirituality, or philosophically motivated art; to make a way of beauty aesthetically; to explore the character of awareness; for pleasure; or to present rise intense feelings. The aim may additionally be seemingly non-available.

Art is the ideogram of the culture & every culture possesses its own technique of art, and one must know the culture to grasp its adolescence of art.

One such culture, style expressions, etc. led to the origination of one of the foremost famous art in the category of Miniature Painting – THE KANGRA ART, also referred to as the Kangra Valley Painting.

The Mughals were responsible for the revival of this art. Where Babar, Akbar, Jahangir and Shahjahan were great patrons of painting, but the last Mughal emperor (Aurangzeb), a bigoted Muslim, who dismissed all musicians and painters from his court. Therefore, the artists had to depart the Mughal court and seek support elsewhere. Its Hindu painters dispersed to Rajputana and therefore the Hill states of the Western Himalayas where they sought new patrons for their skill. Around the same time, the king of Kashmir and Punjab courtesy welcomed these artists. The newcomers intermixed with the regional artists and were deeply littered with the atmosphere of the hillsides.

The principle center of KANGRA ART was the Kangra valley of Himachal Pradesh where the artists worked together under the funding support of the Hill Rajas of Guler, Tira-Sujanpur and Nurpur. From here they relocated to the nearest states of Mandi, Suket, Kulu Tehri and Garhwal within the east and Chamba within the North. The art of those states was but an off shoot of the art of Kangra and also the most suitable name for the category of Rajput art is the 'Kangra Valley School of Painting'. Kangra painting is not a sudden development independently to the lifetime of northern India but is that the section of a spiritual and literary re-establishment of Hinduism.

Kangra's King Raja Sansar Chand (1775 to 1823AD) was an devotee of art who has provided a haven for the those migrated artists and thus Kangra Style prospered. Similarly, Gular's king Raja Govardhan Chand, Nurpur, s king Jagat Singh, and others king emulated the Mughal rulers and offered royal patronage to the artists.

All these kings were Hindu, therefore; Hindu religious themes got more importance in these miniature paintings.

In the first half of the 18th century, this great art derived from Guler State, a tiny low hill state which is situated in Lower Himalayas, when a family of some Kashmiri artists who were trained in Mughal painting Style desired shelter under the court of Raja Dalip Singh (r. 1695-1741) of Guler. The event of Guler Paintings began in what's spoken because the first phase of Kangra Kalam. The new appearances intermixed with the regional artists and were greatly influenced by the ambience of the hills. The artistes adopted painting the themes of eternal love between Radha and Krishna over conventional theme paintings of complimentary sketches of their masters & love scenes. The paintings were naturalistic and utilized painted cool, fresh colors. The colours were naturally derived from minerals, vegetables and possessed enamel-like luster. Lush greenery of the landscape, brooks, springs were the recurring sketches on the miniatures.

Nainsukh (1710-1778) was the younger son of the famous painter Pandit Seu and, like his older brother [Manaku of Guler](#), was the great Indian artist. He was succeeded by two generations of his family workshop, introduced a particular style which is intermixed Mughal elements with personal innovations. This unique style reached its peak throughout the time of Maharaja Sansar Chand Katoch (r. 1776-1824) who was an honest supporter of Kangra art. Being an independent supporter, the artists performing at studios received large commissions while others accepted a permanent settlement in the form of lands. Maharaja Sansar Chand was a great devotee of Krishna and used to commission artists to paint subjects supporting the love and lifetime of Krishna.

The Guler-Kangra art is the art of drawing and also the drawing is accurate and fluid, rhythmical and naturalistic. In these techniques the faces are well sketched and shaded so nicely that they possess almost porcelain-like delicacy.



Figure -1, Sansar Chand (c. 1765-1823), an early patron of the Kangra Style

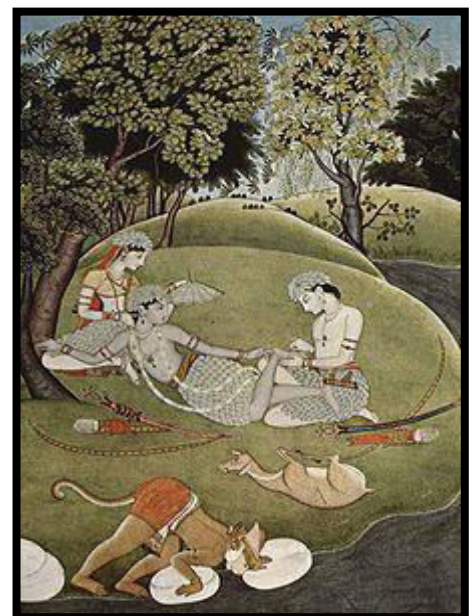


Figure 2, Rama and Sita in the forest, 1780

Theme of Kangra Painting-

The main subject of Kangra Painting is love, and its emotions are expressed in an original style which is stuffed with rhythm, grace and sweetness. Because of the influence of the Vaishnava cult of the 5th century, several pictures were made with themes of 'Radha- Krishna. 'Bhagvata Purana', 'Krishnaleela', and also the love rhymes of 'Gita Govind' by Jayadev were the foremost popular subjects handling with the tales and therefore the romantic plays of Radha and Krishna representing spiritually devotion to God. Besides many situational pictures were produced about Shivapurana, Mahabharata, Ramayana etc. There was a repetition of such a giant number of subjects of the Rajasthani style. Raagragini, Naayikabheda, Baramasa and Rituchakra were also certain subjects on which drawings were made.

The Kangra Style is a fine mixture of the Rajasthani and therefore the Mughal styles. This is often thanks to the flaws of the Rajasthani genre are reduced and also the grossness of the Mughal style has vanished. Therefore, Kangra style proved to be a high caliber and supreme in conveying expressive feelings.

Features of Kangra painting-

One of the most attractive characteristic of Kangra paintings is that the lush greenery, it portrays a unique way of life and magnificence. The technique is naturalistic, and great attention is acquired for detailing work. The greenery portrayed is huge and extensive. This is often made more attractive by using different types of reminder of green. The most prominent attribute in Kangra paintings flowering plants and creepers, leafless trees, small streams and brooks.

The Kangra artists accepted diverse shades of the primary colors and used graceful and fresher hues. For an example, they often used a light pink on the upper hills to specify the gap.

Kangra paintings portray the womanly charm in an exceedingly very stylish & unique manner. Facial expressions are very soft, delicate and clarified. The feminine figures are uncommonly beautiful.

Later Kangra paintings also portrayed gloomy scenes, and storms and lightening. The paintings were often vast and had complex compositions of the various figures and detailed landscapes. Small towns and houses bunches were often portrayed within the background very beautifully.



Figure 3, A Majestic figure seated on a throne, Pahari School

The Kangra artists used natural colors made of vegetable and mineral extracts. They utilized cool and fresh primary colors and used graceful and fresher hues. Kangra paintings are known for the melodic blending of form and color very softly and gracefully. For example, they coloured a light pink on the upper hills to specify the gap. The topics seen in Kangra painting manifest the taste and the traits of the way of life of that times society. The romance of Radha Krishna was the most important source of spiritual experience, which was also the bottom for the visual appearance. The favourite themes were Gita Govinda by Jayadeva and BhagavataPurana. Womanly figures are portrayed very gracefully in these paintings with soft and pure facial characteristics.

The NGO named, The Kangra Arts Promotion Society, is presently working in Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh for the promotion of this art which is almost disappear nowadays, is playing a really unique role to introduce new ones about this art and encourage them to live it. This NGO is running a school to promote young boys and girls during this art. This NGO also runs a studio where proper unique form of this art is introduced on handmade paper by using only natural vegetable extracted colours which supplies a renewal to the present art and livelihood for brand spanking new young artists.

Kangra is that the art of miniature paintings. Various faces of cosmetics are well-known. Radha-Krishna or Shiva Shivaratri is the main figures of every film. The foremost important thing for the Kangra artist is feminine interaction. This painter prefers the sweetness of female organs. All of them are minor. Nature's imagery is additionally a mirrored image or enhancement of female beauty. During this sense art is not even in India for the art of Kangra. Even so, this painting does not have a way of profanity beyond dignity. Archer believes that only a some of the symbols of sexual attraction have been used.

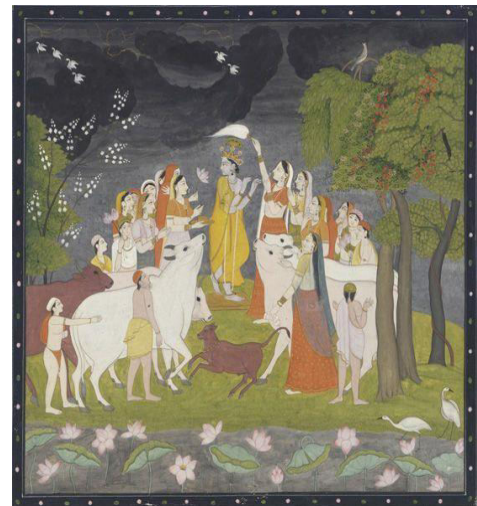


Figure 4, Krishna with flute

Impression is another special feature of Kangra Painting artist. The Himalayas, the lifetime of the hills is difficult.

This difficult life portrayal is portrayed in all

Kangra films. The artist of Kangra is particularly fascinated by nature. The Beas River valley, hill, which is incredibly familiar to him, has umbrella trees on them, mango groves, huts, snowflakes, and also the beast – all of which are truly depicted. Bhagavata, myth, and song, the introduction of works like Baramasa is nice for the artist. There is a special interest within the depiction of the heroes there. There are eight styles of heroines found within the poetry of Hindi poet Keshavadasa, The extracurricular octa are vivakshayya, abhinandita, kandi, prositapatika, vipralabda, abhisarika etc., the extravagant, human, Radhakrishna is implicitly depicted within the tunes for those seasons. The ragamala films of music are rich during this style.

Another interesting thing that Kangra's painter loves is Krishna Tale. He is also curious about drawing gopis that are sunk into Krishna's flute. Koliyamaradana, Govardhanagiriari, GopikaVastapaharana are many of those paintings.

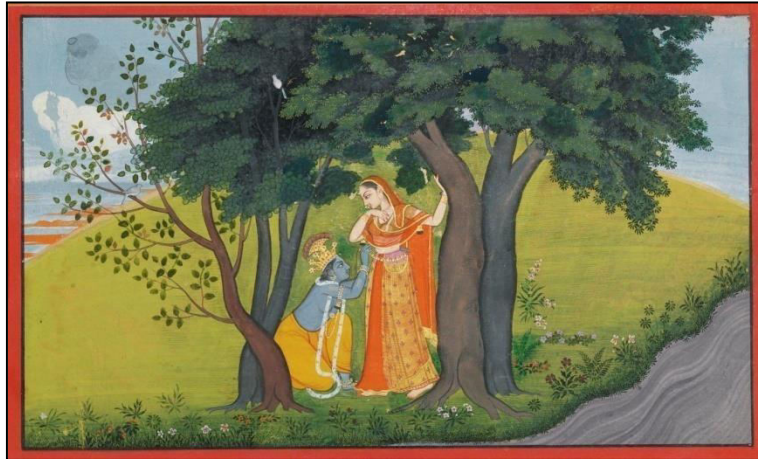


Figure 4, Kangra Painting

Kangra Painting became widespread with the decline of the Basholi School of painting within the mid of the 18th century and really shortly manufactured such an superb scope in paintings, both in content moreover volume, that the Pahari painting school, came to be introduce itself as a reputation of Kangra paintings.

Conclusion- During this style, the emphasis of the image diminished because the embellishment was more important than the emotion during this style. At that point, its patron saint began to decline. Thus, the Kangra paintings survives only in artworks and palaces.

Reference pictures-

Figure -1, Sansar Chand (c. 1765-1823), an early patron of the Kangra Style

Figure -2, Rama and Sita in the forest, 1780

Figure -3, A Magestic figure seated on a throne, Pahari School

Figure -5, Krishna with flute

References-

- 1- M.S.Randhawa: Kangra Valley Painting 750/19 published by theDirector,
Publication, ministry of Information &Broadcasting,
Government of India, Old Secretariat, Delhi 8

- 2- Roma Bradnock: Kangra school of Painting
- 3- Kangra school of painting *Footprint India*, by Roma Bradnock. Published by Footprint Travel Guides, 2004. [ISBN 1-904777-00-7](#). Page 512.
- 4- [Kangrapainting](#) *Britannica.com*.
- 5- [Pahari centres](#) *Arts of India: Architecture, Sculpture, Painting, Music, Dance and Handicraft*, by Krishna Chaitanya. Published by Abhinav Publications, 1987. [ISBN 81-7017-209-8](#). Page 62.
- 6- *"Chandigarh Museum - Kangra paintings"*. Archived from [the original](#) on 15 June 2006. Retrieved 12 March 2009.

Thank You