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Paper : **Art and Architecture of India**

Module : **Pre-Mughal Painting Traditions in India**


ज्ञानं विद्यानं विमुक्तये

 **पाठशाला**

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Component-I (B) – Description of module:

Subject Name	Indian Culture
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Objectives	To know about the Eastern Indian Miniatures, Jain Miniatures, Secular, Folk and Religious style of 15th and 16th century, Sultanate Painting
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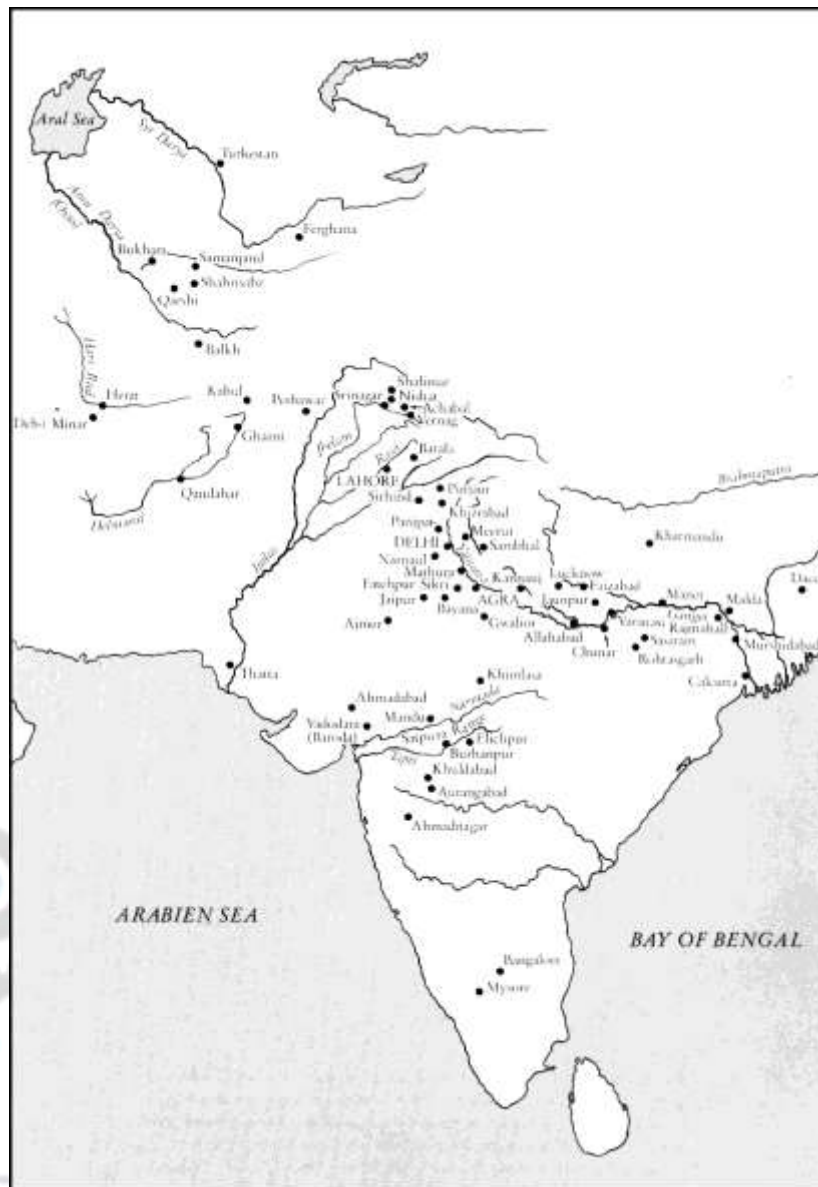
E-text (Quadrant-I) :**1. Introduction :**

This section will try to look at the different indigenous scenario in the field of painting that flourished in different independent areas of India prior to the advent of the Mughals. Before moving on to the detail of the painting in the different areas and its development it is important to look in to the socio historical development of the areas in which these painting styles flourished.

The art of calligraphy and illustration was very popular in Persia and it was essentially pursued to as a pious mission. The story of calligraphy and illustration in India also started in the hands of the Buddhist, Jain and to some extent the Hindus in the same way. It then moved on to certain secular fields as this gained popularity. The norm of book illustration of Iran in the 14th century was essentially influencing the whole of Asia and India was no exception. The artists in India were receptive enough to inculcate the new technique in to their own practice.

The advent of Islam in the political sphere brought India closer to the larger rubric of Islamic civilization. In spite of this fact India became the safe haven for people of West Asia and Central Asia who wanted to get a refuge from the neo-Islamists namely the Mongols first and then the Timurids. The turbulent time of Asia inculcated many changes within the socio economic cultural sphere of India which never had any uniform cultural code and was always exposed to different socio- political, cultural and religious upheavals in Asia. Thus the period has to be seen and understood on the basis of this understanding. Art and culture of the period also canvassed the above reality.

Map :North India: 14th -16th century



Courtesy: Koch Ebba, *Mughal Architecture*, OUP, New Delhi, 2002, pp-15

North India: end of twelfth to mid fourteenth century

North India: end of twelfth to mid fourteenth century

North India: mid fourteenth to mid sixteenth century:

The period of fifteenth century saw the weakening of the Delhi Sultanate and the rise of number of regional powers with strong local identity in north India. Irrespective of religion the local powers were able to establish political zones with very strong regional identity. The cultural ethos of these political zones had very strong local cultural fervor as a result of which regional languages and local art and architecture flourished with the rubric of the greater Islamic aesthetics.

2. Bengal:

On the eastern frontier, in Bengal, in the early thirteenth century Ikhtiyar-ud Din BakhtiyarKhalji was able to establish the power and introduced political Islam. Bengal was infested by thick jungles and traversed by rivers for which the Delhi Sultanate never found it congenial an area to be ruled. In the mid fourteenth century the Delhi Sultanate was overthrown by Shams ud -Din Ilyas Shah (1342-1357AD) and established the first independent dynasty of Bengal at the twin cities of Pandua and Gaur.

By the late fourteenth century the Husayn Shah dynasty (1493-1538AD), often viewed as the initiators of Bengal's golden age, came to fore, eventually making way for the establishment of Mughal authority. Interestingly unlike other parts of India the agrarian community especially in the areas east of the Ganges, by and large adopted Islam. Islamisation occurred in Bengal through massive land reclamation and rice cultivation on what was formerly jungle and swamp. The change of the course of river towards the east and the formation of Bengal delta also made land available.

The architecture of the Sultanate of Bengal proves that the Sultans imitated their northern counterparts when claiming legitimacy. Interesting part of it also lies in the fact that the Sufi trend was very strong in this architecture

3. Gujarat:

Gujarat in the western region took longer time to get out of the clutches of Delhi Sultanate. In 1407AD Zafar Khan assumed the title of Muzaffar Khan and claimed independence. Gujarat Sultanate came to be known after his grandson Ahmad Shah who founded the city of Ahmedabad in 1411AD and it lasted until the Mughals incorporated Gujarat as part of their ever expanding empire in 1573AD. The Sultanate of Gujarat had much of similar history of Bengal Sultanate only that its foes were more and had to be more alert. They had to combat Malwa Sultanate, Rajput Rajas of north Gujarat and Rajasthan and at the near end the Portuguese.

The sultanate architecture of Gujarat is deemed by many to be the most elegant of all pre-Mughal regional styles. They are very unique and has strong regional characteristic which later inspired Mughal architecture. The capital cities of Ahmedabad and Champaner as it exists today can claim high end planning which was unique.

The Sufi cult here also played a very important role in the social and cultural sphere of Gujarat. The multi-cultural ambience that was created by the Gujarat Sultanate was undoubtedly unique.

4. Jaunpur:

Jaunpur was another province of the Delhi Sultanate which broke official ties with it in 1396AD. It was the region between Delhi and Bengal and continued its hostility throughout its existence with Delhi. It deprived the Tughluqs, Sayyid and the Lodis of a large chunk of their crown land. The Jaunpur army entered Delhi twice but was ultimately crushed by Sikandar Lodi in 1494AD. The Sultanate of Jaunpur also known as the Sharqi rulers had to combat the power in Orissa. In spite of all this hostility Jaunpur became the cultural hub of

the Islamic world for a brief period attracting artists, masons, poets and intellectuals of all fields to its court. Jaunpur claimed its fame due to its superb architecture which was much copied by the Lodis in Delhi. The architecture of the time proved that the Sharqis were aware of both Indian and Islamic tradition when it came to designs.

The merchants essentially Jain also had their share of contribution to the cultural life of the region.

5. Malwa and Rajputana:

Malwa claimed its independence from the Tughluqs in the early fifteenth century. Malwa's biggest rivals were the Bahmani sultans of the Deccan, the sultans of Gujarat and the rulers of Mewar. The hill fort Mandu, embellished with palaces, mosques, tombs and gardens, was the capital of Malwa.

The Jain merchants played an essential role in the economic sphere as well as in the cultural sphere in Malwa.

The term Rajput is a broad label to the warrior clans of western India today whose presence in the medieval age was very much felt in the central and northern India along with west. The first major Rajput kingdom was Sisodiyas of Mewar.

Mewar is in the south eastern Rajasthan and receives more rainfall and has better soil than any other localities within the region. The Sisodiya base, Chitor fortress was situated on an isolated plateau rising abruptly above the surrounding plain and so was easily defensible. Under the Tomars it reached its pinnacle in cultural and architectural brilliance. Babur, the first Mughal ruler of India was very impressed by Raja Man Singh Tomars palace.

It could be rightly said that the period saw dynamism in politics and religion. This on the other hand had tremendous effect on the social life of all strata of people and their culture.

6. Earlier traditions or the Buddhist Paintings of Eastern Indian style of Bengal and Nepal:

The Earlier traditions or the Buddhist Paintings of Eastern Indian style of Bengal and Nepal as a term conveniently encompassed the style that originated in the eastern part of the subcontinent in the hand of the Buddhist monk. This style after the advent of the Muslims in Bengal region moved to Nepal and beyond.

The tradition of painting from its very early phase was inspired by the wall paintings and mural tradition. Thus within the smaller space of book format it tried to express the charm of the larger canvas. Buddhist culture of India affected a large section of the society.

The book culture was popular since it tried to keep intact the teachings of the religion within its monastic practices. The followers of this religion patronised the book culture as a pious practice and this further helped in the production of illustrated books. Unfortunately very few books survived the wrath of time and thus the history of the period even after much research remained shrouded in mystery.

The tradition moved from Eastern India to Nepal and Tibet and further south east and east Asia as the Buddhist religion shifted.

Bengal like its counterpart in west India also started with the palm leaf illustration and it is found evidently from 8th century. The period prior to that is not known.

It is much earlier than the Western Indian Style. The early Bengal paintings were all done by the Buddhists. The paintings of Nepal during this period also belong to the same genre. The execution of these miniatures is very simple. The tradition of wall painting of this genre goes back much earlier though the maximum of it did not survive from the rage of time.

The lines are drawn in black or red. The colours used were simple as white, indigo, blue, red, yellow, black and green [obtained from the mixture of orpiment and indigo]. Colour modeling and linear technique are both followed. Landscape is reduced to minimum. The central deity gets the maximum attention and is portrayed large. The other areas are filled with minor deities, vegetation, ornamental and architectural motifs.

It is difficult to grasp the evolution of this painting style and thus there is not much difference between the style of Bengal and Nepal.

The book illustration of Bengal also reveals that the miniatures do not come within the scope of a distinctive mode of expression as it developed with time in Western Indian Painting style. The illustration is no way related to the text as we find in case of Persian or Mughal miniatures. The Buddhist miniatures have this distinct sacred devotional and magical character.

The palm leaf manuscripts are important iconographic records of the Vajrayana Buddhism prevalent in eastern Bengal and Nepal. In some of the manuscripts the miniatures are labeled.

The depiction of monuments is very interesting. It seems that the painters may have visited the original monasteries or the pilgrims had a liaison with the painters who gave them detail. The manuscripts of the Pala period and from Nalanda reveal that iconography was of primary interest to the painters.

From 12th century paper was also used for the illustrations.

The Nepalese and Bengal miniatures could be enlarged to frescos without distortion. This was a very distinguishing feature of this style. The artists were skilled also in the technique of wall painting. **(Fig 1)**



Fig 1: *Prajnaparamita*, Sumstek Chapel, Alchi Monastery, Ladakh, Mural Painting on plaster, 1200AD, Courtesy, John Guy, 'Mahavihara Master', in *Masters of Indian Painting, 1100-1650*, edited by Milo C Beach, Eberhard Fischer, B N Goswamy, Project Director-Jorrit Britschgi, Zurich: Artibus Asiae Publishers, 2011

The book cover painting of this group gave an idea of the extensive painting style that existed in this region. Keeping well with the iconographic nature the book covers from Nepal were much superior. The book covers also revealed how the Chinese tradition influenced the artistic tradition of the time. The book cover painting gave us the glimpse of the wall painting and scroll painting of the time. They were a kind of lost link with the ancient times.

From this period apart from iconography the artists were taking liberation in colours for just the sheer charm of it. Unnecessary detail was eliminated at times with decorative motifs.

The Brahmanical miniatures from Nepal were of much later date. The illustration of Hindu manuscripts continued in the 14th century as well. The draughtmanship of the period was linear. The further eye was a common feature with its western part and the traits of colour modeling survived.

The manuscripts of this region had very few information about the artist or their background or even their patrons. The movement of this format from the eastern region to Nepal may be one of the reasons for the scarcity of evidence. The devastations of the important Mahaviharas in the Bengal region completed the task of wiping the surviving evidences.

During the period of Ramapala [1082AD-1130AD] the Pala painting style reached new heights as depicted in the *Ashtasahasrika Prajnaparamita* of 116AD [probable](Fig 2).



Fig 2: Book covers and illustrated folios from a *Ashtasahasrika Prajnaapramita Sutra* from Bengal, late 11th century, opaque water colour on wood and palm leave, Formerly preserved at the KeruLakhang monastery. Tsethang, now Yarlung Museum, Tsethang, Lhoka District, Tibet, Courtesy, John Guy, 'Mahavihara Master', in *Masters of Indian Painting, 1100-1650*, edited by Milo C Beach, Eberhard Fischer, B N Goswamy, Project Director-Jorrit Britschgi, Zurich: Artibus Asiae Publishers, 2011

The artists were able to prove their excellence through the sensuous flexing of the body profile. The sensitivity of brushwork, and schematized palette within the limits of 6X7cm was remarkable and it achieved what was possible for the mural painting depiction.

The *tankas* were another means of painting prevalent in Eastern India along with Nepal. The *mandalas* depicted here improved on workmanship in the 12th and 13th century in Magadha and Nepal. The iconography was same as in the miniature painting and in the book covers. In the later stage larger figures gained importance.

The mandalas of this period combined the technique of linear draughtmanship and colour modeling. This form of painting gave the idea of painting style that existed in the region and added to the knowledge of the painting style that existed in the Eastern India prior to the advent of the Mughals.

7. Secular, Folk and Religious style of 15th and 16th century:

The secular and folk and religious manuscripts of 15th and 16th century completely changed the scenario of the Painting styles of India. The Jaina Painting style brought in some minor adjustments in the conservative format. A small group of Hindu Painting also called the Early Rajput style brought some significant change and became the marker of this period. The dates and provenance of this group had always been an issue of dispute among the scholars.

Wall Painting continued though evidence has not survived. The traces found in some parts of palaces at Gwalior, Chitor and later Fatehpur Sikri hold proof to this claim. The Vijaynagar temple at Lepakshi proves that Hindu painting style also continued.

The Hindu manuscripts were termed sometime as the *Chaurapanchasika* group or the *Kulahdar* group. The recent term used for them was the Early Rajput style. The attempt towards projection of full profile that was started by the Western Indian style was completed with the appearance of these early Rajput style paintings. The projecting eye was now absent but the format of the legs and hips facing the same direction as the head remained intact. The garments had these interesting projecting ends.



Fig 3: AranyakaParvan, Delhi- Agra region. 1516AD. Courtesy Karl Khandalavala and Moti Chandra, *An Illustrated AranyakaParvana in the Asiatic Society of Bombay, The Asiatic Society of Bombay, 1974*

The late 15th and 16th century saw the advent of a new group of illustrations of which the *Chaurapanchasika* stands out to become the marker of the age. It was a secular tale of Champavati and Bilhana a very popular tale of North India. The next to importance is the Freer Gallery cotton scroll of Gujarati poem *Vasantavilasa* of 1451 from Ahmadabad.

The 1516AD *AranyakaParvan* and an undated *Mrigavat* in Kaithi probably from Jaunpur or Bihar moves from the style of *Vasantavilasa* and the further eye comes to an end with a rooted strict profile style. The *Mrigavat* can well be dated to 1510AD.

The debate about which of these illustrations appeared before the other continues among the scholars. The concern here is that they all existed before the advent of the Mughals. Most of them are not royal in nature. They were mostly done for the middle tier merchants and thus are to some extent crude in their execution.

The treatment of figures, landscape and flora fauna is much natural and removed from the Jaina rigidity.

The provenance of this group of painting was surely large. The whole belt of Gujarat, Delhi, Jaunpur, Mandu, Gwalior and Mewar fall into the ambit of this style. Obviously the Mughal atelier used the artist of this region in their atelier.

The four pointed *jama* of the *Chaurapanchasika* style is well used in the early Mughal painting too. The profile of Champavati with the square face, pointed chin and huge eyes. The *orhni* or the free flowing scarf of *Chaurapanchasika* was found also in the 1465AD Jaina manuscript.

The most important manuscript of the period was *Chaurapanchasika* preserved mostly at the N.C Mehta Collection at Ahmadabad (Fig 4).



Fig 4: *Chaurapanchasika*, Courtesy Bharat Kala Bhavan, Benaras Hindu University, Varanasi

The repetitive nature of the text was responsible for its restricted composition. This was a manuscript which saw technical revolution where the heads were turned full profile so that that the character conversed with each other. The erotic aesthetic mood of the lovers portrayed as Bilhana and Champavati was itself something new in the depiction. The fine lines defined the silhouetted body and the strict profile.

Chaurāpanchāsikā therefore became the landmark of the period and all the contemporary manuscript came to be compared by the scholars with this manuscript. This style did not definitely evolve in a day.

There are other *manuscripts* also from Gwalior which has similar trends. Thus Gwalior again enters in the name of the claimant of origin for *Chaurapanchasika* style though it is very difficult to draw such conclusion.

7.1 Aranyakaparvan

The illustrated *Aranyakaparvan* at the Asiatic Society of Bombay, Mumbai was the third book of the epic Mahabharata. It is pothi style and had a full colophon. It was copied by Bhavanidas, *Kayastha* by caste from the region of Bengal for a Vaisnava patron BhanadasChaudhuri of Chandrapuri in 1516AD. Motichandra and Khandalavala identified the region very close to the river Yamuna. The manuscript was prepared during the time of the Lodi rule which stretched from Delhi to Jaunpur. The manuscript used Jaina symbols, red medallion in the verso margins along with other Jaina formats.

The style of the miniatures was in close proximity to the *Chaurapanchasika* group though the whole format was not same. The composition was not done for any royal patron. The draughtmanship was weak.

A trait of Jaina distortions like the projection of chest was still visible. Two figures had projecting eyes as a marker of divinity perhaps. The characters were identified by their names like the *Chaurapanchasika*. The landscape was not well treated.

The manuscript may be forerunner to the *Chaurapanchasika* or may be contemporary.

7.2 Mrigavat:

Illustrated manuscript of *Mrigavat*, the prose composed by Shaikh Qutban originally had two hundred and fifty three illustrations with *Kaithi* script (Fig 5 &6).



Fig 5: *Mrigavat*, Courtesy Bharat Kala Bhavan, Benaras Hindu University, Varanasi



Fig 6: *Mrigavat*, Courtesy Bharat Kala Bhavan, Benaras Hindu University, Varanasi

It is preserved at the BharatKalaBhavan at Benaras Hindu University, Varanasi. Originally the illustration was done along the texts.

No colophon was found. The illustrations were full page and were of approximate size of 15x15cm. The date of this manuscript should be 1525-1570AD. It was a folk romance of Jaunpur and it hinted at the *Sharqi* literary activity of Jaunpur.

If the folk aspect of the manuscript be kept aside then it could be claimed that the manuscript essentially imbibed most of the characteristics of the *Chaurapanchasika* style including the depiction of landscape. The layout of the pages was in close proximity to the *AranyakaParvana* of 1516.

The illustrations and writing of the text was perhaps done by the same member of the family. The illustration had a strong folk flavor and was definitely done for an upper class patron and not for anyone from the royal family. The male and female figures had close proximity with the figures in *AranyakaParvana* of 1516AD. This manuscript was also an important social document. The depiction of the figures and their dress code strictly followed the class composition of the time.

7.3 Chandayana:

The Awadhi manuscript of *Chandayana* in Lahore and Chandigarh Museum also belonged to this group (Fig 7).



Fig 7: *Chandayana*. Courtesy, The Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh, India

Three more *Chandayanas* from pre Mughal time in different style had survived which is to be discussed later in the section of Sultanate Painting. Like *BhagavataPurana* it adopted separate register to cover the page. Twenty four pages survived of which ten in Chandigarh and fourteen shared between Museums at Lahore and Karachi.

It is not written in *pothi* format but in the vertical codex format of Islamic books in Awadhi with *Naskhi* script in black between 1525AD-1550AD. The text is in the verso. It belonged to the *Chaurapanchasika* group. It depicted the social life of the contemporary people without losing its connection with the text.

The size of the text is 23X15cm.

The illustrations were able to keep intact the Sufi culture of simplistic relation between God and man and world in the form of erotic desires. The manuscript was an important evidence of Hindu Muslim society and its composite culture.

Keeping to the format of the time the illustration depicted the male figures in *kulhadar* turbans, *jama*, *patka* but the ethos remained Hindu. The women were necessarily dressed in the Hindu format of *ghagra* and *orhni*. This manuscript was perhaps commissioned by a Muslim patron and executed by a Hindu painter. The provenance was difficult to envisage.

Strong flat colour was used for the background. The division of the picture surface into neat rectangular panels. The register was very unique and superbly controlled. There was near complete absence of depth.

The *Laurachanda* has one figure in grey beard in short turban worn round a flat turban with raised centre or *kulahin* every illustrated folio sitting crossed leg with a rosary and reading from a pseudo Arabic book which rested on a low *rehal*. The word *Allah* is interestingly visible. He may have been MullaDaud. It is gratitude of the painter to the poet. This is also common in *AranyakaParvan*. He shares space with the listener.

7.5 *BhagavataPurana*:

The *BhagavataPurana* manuscript is another noteworthy manuscript to be mentioned here (Fig 8).



Fig 8: *BhagavataPurana*, Courtesy, Daniel Ehn bom, 'The Masters of the Dispersed BhagavataPurana' in *Masters of Indian Painting, 1100-1650*, edited by Milo C Beach, Eberhard Fischer, B N Goswamy, Zurich, ArtiburAsiae Publishers, 2011

The manuscript was possibly painted in a workshop by a number of painters as evident from the illustrations in the Pre-Mughal Delhi-Agra region of Mathura around 1520-30AD. It is the earliest surviving illustration of the life of Krishna according to the tenth book of *BhagavataPurana*. It belonged to the *Chaurapanchasika* group and was an important text stylistically in the Pre Mughal period. It was also an important predecessor to the Rajput style of Mewar. It paved the way for the iconography of the late *Bhagavata* manuscript series.

The text was in chaste Sanskrit. The conventional style of the *Chaurapanchasika* group was clearly evident.

The royal patronage may not be the case for this *Purana* but it was definitely illustrated in a workshop. Robert Skelton was of opinion that this was illustrated in Mathura. According to Andrew Topsfield it was done in Mewar.

7.6 GitaGovinda:

The *GitaGovinda*, the illustrated poem of Jayadeva at the Chhatrapati Shivaji MaharajVastuSangrahalay, Mumbai survived with a dozen of illustrations (Fig 9).



Fig 9: GitaGovinda, CourtesyMoti Chandra and Karl Khandalavala, *New Documents of Indian Painting, a Reappraisal, Bombay,1969*

The figural stylization was a bit different here. The landscape was treated with new life. These manuscripts were all in Sanskrit. The illustrations had very close proximity to the *Chaurapanchasika* style but the tone of the colour was very different and had a peculiar folk element. The figures distinctly portray the mood of the characters and the illustrations had certain movement. The treatment was definitely unique. This manuscript had close proximity in its format with the early paintings of Mewar.

8. Provenance:

Opinions differ among the scholars regarding the provenance and date of these manuscripts. The Indian scholars place these manuscripts in the period of 1525AD to 1570AD and executed at the region of Delhi-Jaunpur area based on the language of the *Chandayana* and the early two manuscripts.

The western scholars divided them into aristocratic manuscripts and the provincial manuscripts. The former group was linked to the court of Gwalior and Chitor which had artistic and literary legacy. The date chosen for *BhagavataPurana* was 1525AD-1550AD, others in the 1550s and *GitaGovinda* as the last in this series in 1550AD-1560AD. These dates are later to the likely patrons as Raja Man Singh Tomar of Gwalior (1468AD-1517AD) and Rana Sanga of Mewar (1509AD-1527AD). J P Losty argues that these manuscripts could well be placed in the earlier period. This was not an accepted view though.

These above manuscripts hold the key to the Indian stylistic influence to the early Mughal painting. The Painting style of the period moved on to give birth to the much acclaimed Rajasthani Painting School too. This painting school from the very start imbibed in it the pre Akbari painting formats along with Mughal techniques and local folk style.

In this context mention can be made of a series of Rajasthani Raga Painting published by W. Norman Brown (**Fig 10**).



Fig 10: Ragamala

The paintings were not as restricted as the early Western Indian Painting but simple and lively. The faces are shown in full profile like the Rajasthani Paintings. Costume is delicate and men wear a turban with a conical cap. The architectural setting and landscape is close to the 17th century Rajasthani style.

The importance of these manuscript lay in the fact that before and during the advent of the Mughals the manuscripts proved that the Indian scenario had changed from its past archaic practices and was moving rapidly towards grasping reality in the form of movement, emotion and depiction of flora and fauna.

9. Sultanate Painting:

For the convenience of expression Sultanate painting as a term refers to the paintings or illustrations done for the Muslims in India prior to the Mughals. They appear as a regional offshoot otherwise unimportant in the context of Persian painting but in the context of India it has tremendous importance.

9.1 Importance of Koran:

Gwalior, Gujarat, Delhi and Jaunpur were centers for Koran illustration. The crude form of *Naskhi* gave rise to the script of *Behari*, a long horizontal pattern of writing with short vertical

space. The earliest known Koran in this script is dated 1399AD from Gwalior. The Koran interestingly used motif from Persia and India.

The production of Koran was very popular among the Muslim gentry. The popularity of scripts like *Thuluth* in the 15th century was noteworthy. The *Il Khanid* style lost its popularity with the downfall of Delhi. The regional variations developed in its place. The *Il Khanid* style paved its way to the *Behari* script Koran of 1520AD.

Thuluth in Iran as a script was used for chapter headings and was essentially static in nature in Persia. Bengal, Deccan and Malwa must have had produced their own form of Koran too but there was no evidence to prove such claim.

Painting as a form of art may have been popular in the court of Delhi Sultanate as evident from the literary sources. The evidence of this form of expression was very little though.

10. Literary Reference to Painting:

The earliest reference to painting during Delhi Sultanate appears in the *Qasida* of Tajuddin Reza in praise of Iltutmish the second independent emperor of Delhi Sultanate. *Tabaqat i-Nasiri* has also mentioned this *Qasida*.

A century and a quarter later *Isami* in *Futuh us-Salatin* refers that Chinese painters were among the immigrants to Delhi during the time of Iltutmish.

Tarikh i FirozShahi of Afif categorically speaks of the figural painting during Delhi Sultanate as a culture in continuity from the time of the Ghaznavid. More elaborate reference of painting was found in the writing of Ahmad Dubir, a member of the chancellery of Ghiyathu'ddin Tughluq. The vivid similes in the *Mathnavi, Duval Rani Khizir Khan* by Amir Khusrau refers to painting too.

The royal *karkhanas* also produced *munaqqash*, or painted clothes which had a popular market during Delhi Sultanate. The reference of portrait in reference to Delhi Sultanate was also found in the writings of the *Maithili* poet Vidyapati.

Thus the notion of absence of painting culture during Delhi Sultanate due to Islamic conservatism or otherwise does not hold true.

11. The various Sultanate Painting Styles:

Sultanate painting that survived the time is divided into three groups by J P Losty. This strict segregation is difficult to maintain always.

The three groups:

The first group is in basic Iranian style. The earlier versions of this group belong to the mid 15th century and are Persian classics in Provincial Timurid style.

The second type in this group has Indian characteristic and securely linked to Mandu, Bengal and Golconda. The second group does not belong to any court but was essentially

done for other patrons. They exhibit Inju and Mamluk styles as well as medieval Indian characteristics. They date from mid 15th century.

The third group belongs to the 16th century. The two manuscripts of *Chandayana* belong to this group. Persian and Indian forms were well synthesized in this group.

The first group of Indian Sultanate painting was essentially very simple in its look. These 15th century paintings did not have any provenance which adds to its confusion.

The manuscripts of this type belonged to the period of 1420-1450AD. Delhi failed to prove its provenance and the provincial sultans belonged to much later period. The 1531AD *Sharafnama* of Bengal had stylistic similarity with the 15th century Timurid style with Mongol archaism. This at least proved that Bengal in the 16th century had a Timurid school.

The colour compositions also do not follow the Timurid norm but rather has a dramatic appeal and reminder of the later Rajasthani Painting. Certain furniture, accessories, landscape and architecture do not have any Persian counterpart. Sometimes Persian imitations were done inappropriately. Sometimes Persian rocks were portrayed with peculiar angularity like the Jain miniatures.



Fig 11: 'An Illustrated from the Shah Nama, Jaunpur, 1501, New York Public Library, New York, USA. Courtesy, Karl Khandalavala and Narendra Nath, *An Age of Splendour : Islamic Art in India*, Bombay: Marg Publications, 1983

The Berlin *Hamza-nāma* had this peculiar carpet like decorative band which was not a Persian norm and definitely a style imbibed by the Western Indian Painting format of the 15th-16th century (**Fig 12**).



Fig 12: 'Hamza meeting the water carrier', *Hamzanama*, Berlin. Courtesy, S.C Welch, *India, Art and Culture, 1300-1900*, New York, Metropolitan Museum, 1985

Mandu was one of the leading centers of these type manuscript illustrations evident from the four manuscripts available from this area. Mandu manuscripts of late 15th and early 16th century gives a clear picture of the scenario of Muslim royal patronage to art in the provinces. The new style of Turkman and Shiraz is evident from the manuscript of this period proving that the artists must have visited this place and the local artist were trying to cope with the art form of the distant land due to its popularity among the patrons.

The first was a lectionary with one hundred and seventy nine miniatures in the Turkman style of Shiraz done by an artist from Mandu probably in 1490-1500AD known as the *Miftāh ul-Fuzāla* (Fig 13).



Fig 13: *Miftah ul-Fuzala*. Courtesy, Ahsan Jan Qaisar and Som Prakash Verma, *Art and Culture: Felicitation Volume in Honour of Professor s. NurulHasan*, Publication Scheme, Jaipur, 1983

The *Nimat-nama*, a cookery book at the British Museum belonging to the early 16th century proved that a Persian artist used his own hand along with two Indian artists to illustrate this book (Fig 14).

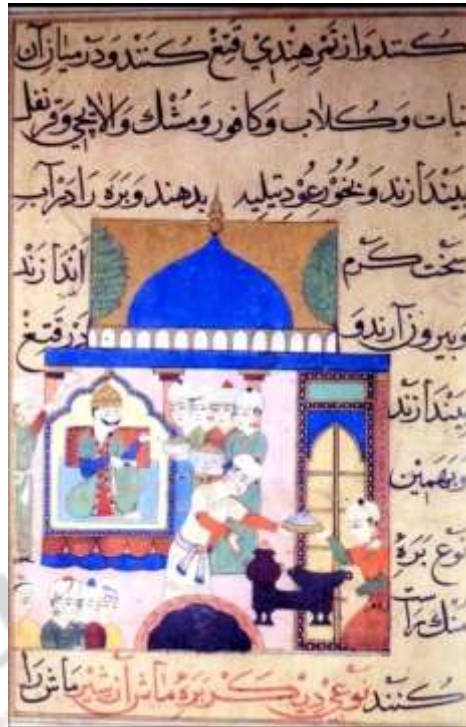


Fig 14: *Nimat-nama*. Courtesy, Norah M Titley, Translated, *theNimatnama Manuscript of the Sultans of Mandu, The Sultans Book of Delights*, Routledge Curzon, 2005

This book may have had been completed in the year 1500AD-1510AD. It was devoted to cooking in the reign of Ghiyath al-Din Shah Khaljis son Nasir al-Din Shah Khalji. It was written in simple Persian prose with *Prakrit* names for dishes and their ingredients. The royal copy was written in large bold *Naskhi*. *Nimat-nama* was done on the basis of the simple Turkman form available as it suited the Indian artists living in this remote area from Persia.

Of the two artist the second somewhat was inferior to the other. The first artist definitely had more efficiency in Turkman style. He may have been recruited from the family of the Indian artists living in Mandu. The second artist was less conversant in Persian style and had certain difficulty in even grasping the Persian format.

The work was disarranged. The work was brought to completion during the time of Nasir al-'Din Shah Khalji and could therefore be dated in 1495AD-1505AD.

The next work which was equally interesting and mention worthy is a *Bustan of Sadi* now preserved at the National Museum, New Delhi (Fig 15).



Fig 15: *Bustan i Sadi*, Courtesy National Museum, New Delhi

This *Bustan of Sadi* of 1500AD-1502AD, at the National Museum, New Delhi in Herati style in fine *Nasta'liq* also used two artists for its illustration. The name of the painter appeared in the first folio verso as Haji Mahmud. The colophon at the end mentioned the scribe as Shahsuwar. Forty three miniatures were illustrated in the manuscript. It was simple in its look and reminded the style practiced in late 15th and early 16th century Herat. The actions were less expressive though the approach was realistic. Compared to the Persian prototype the landscape and architecture had less scope. These features gave the manuscript a provincial appearance. This limited approach was perhaps the limitation of the artist himself and not because it was executed in Mandu.

The last of the four manuscripts was *Ajaib us-Sanai*, a Persian translation of Arabic automata gives a hint to the origin of the Deccani styles (**fig 16**).



Fig 36: *Ajaib us-Sanai*, Courtesy Jeremiah P. Losty, *The Art of the Book in India*, The British Library, London, 1982

All these four manuscripts proved that Mandu was recently exposed to the illustrations of Persia and it appreciated the art form and imbibed the tradition in its own way.

The section will remain incomplete without the discussion of the *Shahnama* discussed elaborately by B N Goswamy(Fig 17)



Fig 17: Jainesque Shahnama. Courtesy B N Goswamy, 'Master of the Laura Chanda Series' in Masters of Indian Painting, 1100-1650, edited by Milo C Beach, Eberhard Fischer, B N Goswamy, Project Director-JorritBritschgi, ArtiburAsiae Publishers, 2011

The manuscript was probably done in the middle of the 15th century. The name of the painter or provenance or its patron was not known.

Paintings were sixty six in number. The paintings were horizontal in format. The paintings stretched over the whole page. The text in four columns was only a part of it. The painter thus was still thinking in the format of *pothi* of Western India which was very popular in contemporary India.

This was a 'Jainesque' work and not a painting done by a provincial painter for a Muslim patron who incorporated certain Indian elements with which he was familiar. 'It is a "bridge-work" that raised questions wholly relevant to the disparity that existed between style and subject matter'.

The *Sharafnāma* of 1531AD was a manuscript from Bengal in Shirazi style with Mongol types of rock of the previous century marked the end of a style that evolved in Bengal before the advent of the Mughals (Fig 18 & 19). The form never developed into an independent school but gave a regional variation.

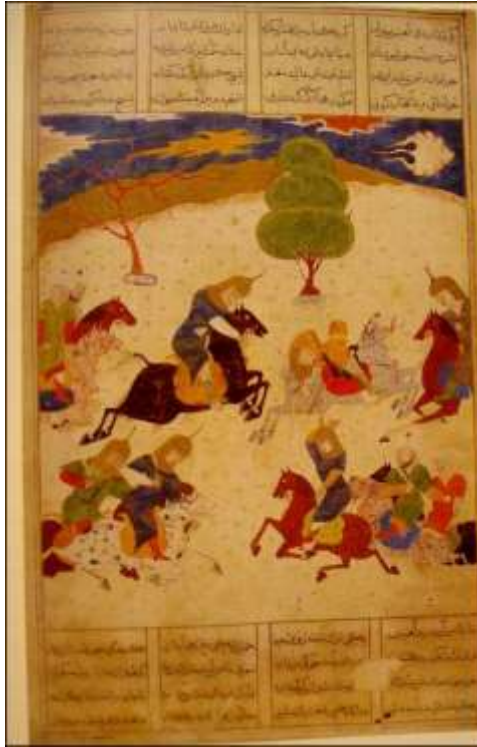


Fig 18: *Iskandernama or Sharafnama*. Courtesy, Robert Skelton, *The Iskander Nama of Nusrat Shah* in Anthony Welch and Stuart Carey Welch, *Art of the Islamic Book. The Collection of Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan*, London-Ithaca: Cornell University Press-Asiatic Society, 1982

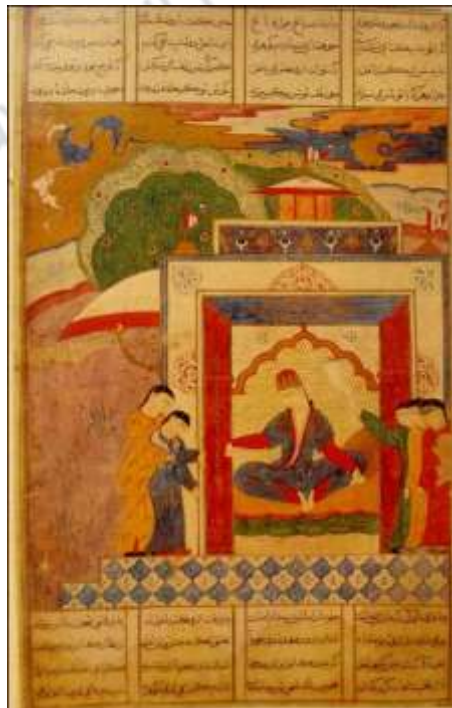


Fig 19: *Iskandernama or Sharafnama*. Courtesy, Robert Skelton, *The Iskander Nama of Nusrat Shah* in Anthony Welch and Stuart Carey Welch, *Art of the Islamic Book. The*

Collection of Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan , London-Ithaca: Cornell University Press-Asiatic Society,1982

Sharafnama was patronized by the sultan of Gaur, Sultan Nusrat Shah. *Sharafnama* was the first part of the 12th century epic story of *Sikandernama* written by Mizami Ganjwi. Written in four columns *Naskhi* style Persian and contained seventy eight pages.

The illustrations were perhaps done by three artists. The first artist illustrated the most brilliant work for the first two illustrations. The fifth was done by the second artist. Rest of the illustrations had been done by the third artist who definitely lacked the liveliness of the other two artists. The last illustration was to some extent incomplete. Gold had been used profusely.

The work also gave an idea about the architecture of Gaur. The illustrated copy of *Sharafnama* spoke loads about the art activity of Gaur. The elite class was aware of the Persian painting and it was definitely available in the market and had patrons who would invest in such illustrated copies. It must have had artist community who catered to the need of the patrons.

The second group of painting which was also termed as the 'bourgeois' was a crude version of the Persian format of horizontal view point. In this group fall the dispersed *Amir Khusrau* manuscript (Fig 20), the Berlin *Hamza-nāma*, the lost *Sikandernāma* and the Berlin *Chādayānā*.



Fig 20: Khamsa of Amir Khasrau Dihlavi. Courtesy, Richard Ettinghausen, Paintings of the Sultans and Emperors of India In American Collections, Lalit Kala Akademi, India, 1961

The first manuscript though was different from the rest. The first had strong Mamluk connection and very little or no Indian style. The script was in the *Nastaliq* and the manuscript could belong to the mid 15th century. The other three manuscript of this period had strong connection with the Jaina painting style.

The third group of sultanate Painting comprises of the two *Chandayana* at the Chhatrapati Sivaji MaharajVastuSangrahalay, Mumbai (**Fig 21**) and at John Rylands Library, Manchester (**Fig 22**).



Fig 21: *Chandayana*, Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay. Courtesy Moti Chandra and Karl Khandalavala, *New Documents of Indian Painting, a Reappraisal*, Bombay,1969



Fig 22: *Chandayana*, John Rylands Library, Manchester. Courtesy, Douglas Barrett and Basil Gray, *Painting of India*, Skira 1973

Both were able to incorporate the independent Jaina, Iranian, Hindu and Sultanate style. The synchronization of all the elements was perhaps the real achievement of the period of 16th century India before the establishment of the Mughal studio.

The time gap between the former and the last was about a quarter of a century. There were several styles of *Chandayana* illustration ranging from the primitive Jaina style to the sophisticated style of the Muslim court as revealed in the Ryland and Mumbai manuscripts respectively to that of the Hindu style as revealed in the Lahore-Chandigarh manuscript discussed earlier. All the styles could not have been originated in Jaunpur, the original land where *Chandayana* was written in Awadhi.

The Mumbai *Chandayana* had much similarity in colour combination with the *Nimat-nama* from Mandu and thus this could be linked to Mandu in the period of 1520AD-1530AD.

The Berlin manuscript belonged to a later period when Mandu was ruled by BazBahadur the last independent ruler of Mandu before its fall to the Mughals in 1561AD. Thus this style did not spread like the earlier one.

In the *Hamzanama* at Berlin the depiction of men in three quarter profile was very similar to the Shahi figure of the Jaina *Kalpasutra*.

12. Summary :

The lack of information regarding the provenance and date of the above mentioned manuscripts may create confusion in the chronological study of these manuscripts. The purpose of mentioning these manuscripts and to some extent analysing them was to understand and grasp the scenario of the indigenous practices of painting in the land where the Mughals skillfully had built up their atelier. The concept of wandering artist in search of work or rich patrons appreciating art therefore was not a new trend in India.