

# A NEW DOMAIN OF PAHARI MINIATURE PAINTING STYLE OF BILASPUR SCHOOL

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## ABSTRACT

From the middle of the seventeenth century to the first quarters of the nineteenth century the Punjab Hill states nurtured an art to painting, marked by a lyrical style full of rhythm, grace and beauty Pahari painting as it is called, is the culmination of Indian tradition of painting.

The charm of Pahari miniature paintings always attracted the attention of various scholars, art historians and art connoisseurs from time to time. Most of the scholars discussed about The Nayak-Nayaka of Pahari miniature paintings, Kangra valley paintings on love, Basoli paintings, Guler paintings, Chamba paintings etc.

Among all the schools of Pahari miniature paintings, Bilaspur School of painting has its own individuality. The significant features of this school have not been discussed in detail in the context of school of Pahari miniature paintings. Therefore, this article has been taken up.

The main objective of present article is to make a study of Bilaspur school of painting and their style. Special emphasis is to be laid on the establishment of separate school entity of the Bilaspur School of painting in the domain of Pahari miniature paintings in India and also the comparison of the style of other school of Pahari miniature paintings on the basis of aesthetical analysis.

Research Method: Historical.

Significance of the Study: Among all the schools of Pahari miniature paintings, Bilaspur school of painting has its own individuality. The history of Bilaspur school has always been disregarded which is one of the reasons that the school seems abandoned as compared to the school of this art form. The significant features and style of this school discuss here in detail in the context of schools of painting miniature paintings.

Objective: To establish a separate stylistical entity of the Bilaspur school of painting in the domain of Pahari miniature paintings in India.

## KEYWORDS

Pahari Miniature Painting, Bilaspur School

## INTRODUCTION

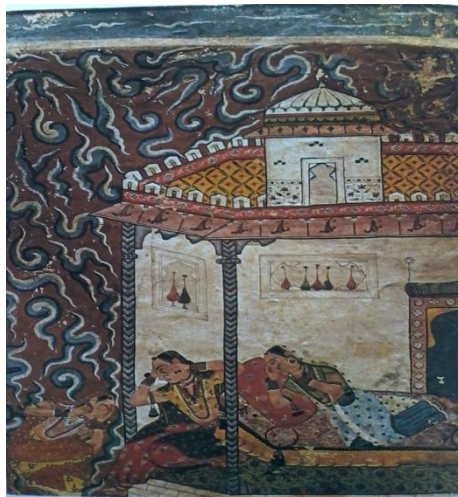
Coomaraswamy, and other writers after him, has classified Pahari painting on geographical basis. But according to Khandelwala, this classification has proved unsatisfactory and faulty. As the term Pahari is only generic, it becomes necessary to formulate a satisfactory classification of Pahari paintings which takes into account not only the traditions which exist in the Hills, but also any such wide difference of style that demanded separate consideration. Karl Khandelwala has simplified the classification into a number of Kalam named after each hill state where Pahari art flourished. These are the Basohli Kalam, The Kangra Kalam. The Kullu Kalam, The Mandi Kalam, The Bilaspur Kalam and also the pre Kangra Kalam. W.G.Archer in his book "Indian paintings from the Punjab Hill" has further simplified the same, by giving specific details of a painting to which school it belongs by identifying local schools with relevant evidences.

Bilaspur is situated on both banks of river Satlej. It is a small town but the state was a feudal overlord of various tiny states and linked by marriage to Kullu, Mandi and other kingdoms Raja Dip Chand (1650-67) Campaign for the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb, and welcomed Mughal painters to his Court.



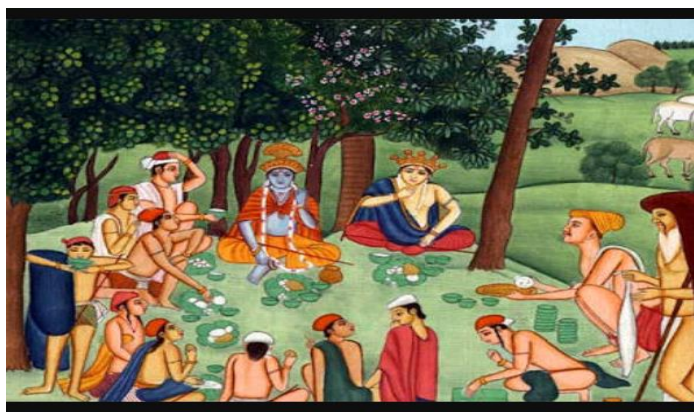
Portrait of Raja Dip Chand

A portrait of Raj Dip Chand, shows him sitting against a green background, a colour scheme favored by Mughal artist and others colours used in painting show a standard Basohli example. The facial type is heavier but more expressive human figures are shows in a single file, boldly designed carpet is another early characteristic of this school. The life depicted in the picture suggests that it is a contemporary likeness and could be a mid 17th century.



Ladies Frightened by Lightning (C.1695)

A lady is shows lying on bed in a pavilion to right of the picture, from the fleshed of lighting , two patterned pillars supporting the roof of the pavilion is another lady, also covering her eyes, the third lady possibly on attendant crouches in the foreground to the left of the picture, pavilion has a floral pattern on its floor. The background is dark brown against which curling wisps of blue representing lightning. All the top of the picture is a narrow horizontal panel of blue sky, separated from the brown background by a white band.



Krishna Eating with the Cowherds

Krishna eating with the cowherds. the huge gnarled tree, The cattle, the side licks of the seen are all typical Bilaspur painting. Although, here the men were loincloths, instead of the shorts usually depicted in miniatures of this area.

## CONCLUSION

In any case their ethos is unique: The western gates are opened wide. The arms of lovers are about each other's, necks, eye meets eye, the whispering Sakhis speak of nothing else but the course of krishna's flute and the elements stand still to hear the ragas and ragini.

Stylistically paintings in Bilaspur fall into two different phase on the basis of their general characteristics. The early phase is related to the decorative Basohli style, and later phase to that of the Guler, Kangra.

**Bilaspur Women** – Bilaspur women lack the delicacy of Kangra women are quite buxom.

**Bilaspur Man** – Men also have robust bodies with short necks and faces that just out slightly.

**Costumes** – Man wear shorts or in some cases, dhotis instead of pyjamas. The end of sash hangs, just a little above or below the knee and are decorated. The headdress is a sort of conical cap with a piece of cloth tied around the base. The cowherds carry blankets for protection against inclement weather in winter.

**Vegetation** – Gnarled and knotted tree trunks with grass at roots. Softly rounded hillocks and device of little dots fringing the foliage are all Bilaspur Characteristics.

**Cattles** – Seems to have been the main characteristic of the Bilaspur artist, nowhere do they appear in such numbers or are so painstakingly depicted as here. Their bodies are lovingly drawn and decorated with gold.

**Colours** – Red, orange, white, brown and green favorite colours.

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