

GARLAND OF MUSICAL PAINTINGS BILASPUR (KEHLOOR)

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ABSTRACT

Pahari the Hindi word for hilly, is the collective term describing a number of schools of painting which, in the 18th and 19th century's flourished in the Himalayas foothills from Jammu to Garwal. Among them, the school of Basohli, Kullu, Bilaspur, Garwal and Kangra produced sets of Ragamala Paintings. Ragamala paintings are unique to the Indian tradition and reflect a combination of three different arts: music, poetry and painting. A musical mode (a particular arrangement of four or five notes) is known as Raga and its variations for sub-modes as Ragini (wives of Ragas) and Ragaputra(sons) of ragas. 84 pieces Pahari Ragamala based on the system of Mesakarna, a 16th century court priest in Rewa. In his treatise, Ragamala he cites a visual and audio counterpart to each of the 6 Ragas, 31 Raginis and 49 Putras. The artists, in their turn, transformed there verses into paintings often adding the poet's imagination with their own. Rarely in the history of the world's culture has there been such a collaboration of the arts to express the collective vision of whole people, as there was at this time in northern India. Bilaspur, Ca. 1750 A.D. set of 72 folios in the Museum Für Indische Kunt, Berlin. This set is the visual counter parts, compare the music to a sound in nature in the house-hold Bilaspur Court painters found it much easier to portray the animals on activities whose voice or sounds are compared to the music. The main objective of presenting this article is the historical background of Ragamala Paintings of Pahari miniature schools. Special emphasis on the Ragamala painting of Bilaspur School of painting and musical sources and poetic influence on these paintings.

Keywords: Kehloor, Painting, Ragamala Painting, Ragini..

INTRODUCTION

Ragamala paintings are visual interpretations of Indian musical modes previously envisioned in divine or human form by musicians and poets. They show most frequently romantic or devotional situations in a somewhat stereotypes, aristocratic setting. These paintings were created in albums containing most often thirty-six or forty-two folios, Organized in a system of "families". Each "family" is headed by a (male) Raga and contains five or six Raginis (wives), sometimes also several Ragaputras (sons), even Ragaputris (daughters), and wives of sons.

All known surviving examples of this art were painted in the 16th through 19th centuries in Rajasthan in central India, in the Deccan, in the Ganges. Jamuna plains, or in the Pahari region. Only a very small number of paintings are actually dated and signed. Most can be placed with a high degree of certainty into particular periods and localities; the origins of others are more disputed and finally, a large number yield very few reliable clues to their province.

Ragamala paintings are idiosyncratic to the Indian tradition of painting and carried a combination of three different arts: music, poetry and painting. Both the musical and the poetic beginnings of Ragamala are many centuries older than the painted versions. The introduction of paper and a blooming of miniature painting in many parts of India, among Jains, Hindus and Muslims alike, brought with it the first illustrations of Ragamala poems or prayer formulas, probably between 1450 and 1550. A growing demand for copies of them, in the prevailing local fashion, developed during the next three hundred years.

Great admirers of painting, music and poetry, mostly Hindu and Muslims rulers and noblemen and their often polygamous families are the consumers of this production. It seems that the women were the major consumers, to judge from the ever recurring themes of love longing and love union, piety subservience and household activities. Oftentimes, the man appreciated other subjects much more, such as proud portraits and darbar scenes, daring hunts and fierce battles, and overtly erotic illustrations.

The contents of these paintings, each based on the personification or deification of a musical mode, were pregnant from their beginnings with iconographic raw material of various origins. Only the most obvious among them are:

- Religious and aristocratic imagery in the actions and appearances of human characters, an in architecture and paraphernalia.
- Poetic symbolism visualized.
- Nayaka-Nayika (love heroes and heroines) type casting as found in drama, poetry and dance.
- The rasa (emotional state) and the performance time of the musical mode.
- The patron's personal or religious preference.
- The painter's technical and stylistic limitations.
- The local character of fauna, flora and landscape.

The iconographies fall roughly into three groups, of which the first two enjoy greater popularity when measured on a quantitative basis. They portray divine or aristocratic lords and their wives in two states of love, namely, Sringara, love fulfilled in union, and vipralambha love longing in separation. Both states are expressed in subtle and often symbolic compositions, avoiding overtly erotic representations not otherwise uncommon in India painting and sculpture. The third group of iconographies portrays various other country or household activities common to the life of the patrons.

The composition of a Ragamala or as O.C. Gangloy called it, the classification of Ragas and competitions of a single Ragamala painting and equally bound by consistent and lasting rules of the craft. These rules are gathered and reconstructed under the terms "Systems", "iconographies" and "iconographic traditions". Certain of these rulers changed from school to school. Considered in connection with stylistic factors, they can give us valuable clues as to province and date, and they assist us in the understanding and identification of Ragamla paintings. Among the approximately 400 paintings of this act form following system of sequence is unused in about 50 % of all inscribed cases.

Its origin is obscure and cannot be traced to any musical or literary authority of old, as can be done with some other system. Ravi Kuman in his book Ragamala painting called it the painters systems.

The painter's system-table

BHAIRAVA	Bhairavi	Nat	Malasri	Patmanjari	Lalit
MALKOS	Gauri	Khambhavati	Malavi	Ramakali	Gunakali
HINDOL	Bilaval	Todi	Desakh	Devchandhari	Madhumadhavi
DIPAK	Dhanasri	Vasant	Kanada	Bairadi	Desvarati or purvi
MEGHA	Gujari	Gormalar	Kakubha	Vibhasa	Bangal
SRI	Pancham	Kamod or Kamodani	Setmalar	Asavari	Kadari

A second system, used in approximately two dozen still existing Ragamalas, is attributed to the ancient musical author Hanuman. It is headed by the same major Ragas and includes 23 or 24 of the Raginis of the painters system.

Hanuman's system-table

BHAIRAVA	Madhyamadi or Madhunadhavi	Bhairavi	Bangali	Varati	Saindhavi
MALKOS	Todi	Khambhavati	Gauri	Gunakri	Kakubha
HINDOL	Vilaval	Ramakari	Desakh	Patmangari	Lalita
DIPAK	Kedari	Kanada	Desi	Kamodi	Nat
SRI	Vasant	Maru or Malavi	Malasri	Dhanasika	Asavari
MEGHA	Mallar	Desakari	Bhupali	Gurjari	Tanka

A third system used virtually throughout the few known Pahari Ragamalas, but rarely in Rajput and Deccani Ragamalas, features also eight sons (putra) in each family. According to Mesakerna's in a manuscript of 1576 A.D. this system is composed as follows.

Mesakerna's System- table

- Raga-Bhairava Raginis Vangali, Bhairavi, Velavali, Panyaki, Snehaki
- Putras-Vangala, Pancham, Madhu, Harsa, Desakh, Lalit, Velaval, Madhava
- Malakousika Raginis-Gundagri, Gandhari, Srihathi, Andheyaki, Dhanasri
- Ragputra Maru, Mevada, Varvali, Mistanga, Chandrakaya, Bhramara, Nandna, Khokhara
- Hindola Raginis- Tilaji, Devagiri, Vasanti, Sindhuri, Abhiri
- Putras- Mangala, Chandravimva, Subhrang, Ananda, Vibhasa, Vardhana, Vinoda, Vasanta
- Dipaka Raginis- Kamodani, Palmanjari, Todi, Gujjari, Kaheli
- Putras- Kamala, kusuma, Rama, Kuntala, Kalinga, Vahula, Champaka, Hemala
- Sri Raginis- Vairati, Karnatika, Saveri, Goudi, Ramagiri, Saindhavi
- Putras- Sindhava, Malava, Gouda, Dambhira, Ganasagara, Vigada, Kalyana, Kumbha, Agada
- Raga Megha Raginis- Mallari, Sorathi, Suhavi, Asavari, Kokani
- Putras- Nata, Kanara, Saranga, Kedara, Gundamallara, Gunda, Jalandhara, Sankara

THE PAHARI REGION

The Pahari region, the foot foothills of the Himalayas, included the states of Basoil, Kulu, Bilaspur, Kangra and Tehri-Garhwasl, the nestled into valleys between high mountain ranges. The origins of the pahari schools of miniature painting are disputed, but it is assumed that in two separate period, during Aurangzeb's reign in the 17th century, and between the Persian sack of Delhi by Nadir Shah, 1739, and the Afghan invasion of 1747, a large number of painters emigrated from Delhi into the hill and mixed their talent with existing folk tradition. Local school of painting in these states produced a few 84 folio Ragamala whose iconographies have nothing in common with the older and more wide spread Rajasthani tradition of plains Mesakerna System.

From the seventeenth century onward the Rajas of Bilaspur became distinct patrons of pahari miniature painting. In order to re-orient one's insight of the development of this art in this state, it is desirable to narrate here the history of the growth of this cultural movement in relation to the miniature art of the Mughals and to that of Rajasthan followed by pahari painting of which Bilaspur kalam was an integral part.

In Bilaspur state, Raja Devi Chand (1741-78), a great patron of art and literature. Many artisans and merchants from the plains came and settled at Bilaspur during Devi Chand's reign. Bilaspur, Ca. 1750 A. D. a set of 72 folios in the Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin is one of the great examples of Pahari Ragamal paintings, produced by Raja Deavi Chand's court painters. This Ragamal set based on the system of Meskarna. 6 Ragas, 31 Raginis and 49 Ragaputras are painted in this set of paintings. Ragamal paintings are unique combination of three different arts. Music, poetry and painting. In this particular time Musicians poets and painters share studio with each other that is the reason of musical and poetical knowledge of the painters which helped them to produce musical notes and poetry through their brushes.

MUSICAL SOURCE OF RAGAMALA PAINTING

Indian music devolved in a slow process since the first millennium B. C. from folk songs into what is now called classical music. Music was considered to be of divine origin and capable of evoking a certain state of mind or mood (rasa) in the listener as well as in the musician. The concept of rasa plays a similar role in Indian dance, dramas, poetry and painting. To capture and comprehend the divine qualities of music, its practitioners believed each melody to have beside a sound-form also a personified or deified form. The term "Raga" from the Sanskrit word ranga or color, is used in Matanga's *Brhaddeśi*, between the 5th and the 7th centuries. Term "Ragini" (meaning at first female raga, then wife of Raga) appears for the first time, as far as it is known, in Narada's *panchamasara*, *Sambita*, probably written between the 7th and 11th centuries. The concept of ragas evolved from the necessity of accommodating additional melodies in systems which are composed of male and female ragas. The actual designation "putra" occurs first in *Measakarma*. Sarangadeva established a firm list of associations between ragas and their deities and patron saints. He also associated the cries of certain animals with the sound of the individual seven notes of the musical scales and of human activities and sound of house-hold activities.

POETIC INFLUENCES

In all these treatises and compilation musical qualities are verbalized in order to express their divine character, to yield technical information, and to define the evoked rasa. It is only natural that poetry, in whose medium this verbalization took place, did not remain a mere hand maiden of music poetry in whose medium changed the

dhyanas of the musicians to an emphasis on human qualities, foibles and emotions. Krishnalila was one such subject. Its source is Bhakti, the growing religious movement of Krishna worship which explains divine love very persuasively in terms, of human love. Another subject was Nayikabheda, a classification of heroes and heroines of love according to their mood and the circumstances of the continuous rhythm of love longing (vipralambha) and love (sringara). In the Ragamala sets Krishna is often the happy lover who dances with the maidens in raginivasanta (a melody of spring) on in Megha raga (a melody of the rainy season) he is the errant lover who returns at dawn in raging Lalita The ragalmala theme has been effectively handled by painters of Bilaspur school.

COLORATION OF RAGAMALA PAINTINGS

The miniatures themselves are hardly damaged. Sometimes, the color is slightly rubbed or peeled off, sporadically it has somewhat changed under the influence of time and moisture. The coloring of the distance has a certain significance in so far as the same text is used for the distance with each member of each of the six Raga families.

- Family I (Bhairava) olive green
- Family II (Malakausa) a pale bluish green (Chrysocolla)
- Family III (Hindola) ivory-white
- Family IV (Dipaka) a sombre livid
- Family V (Sriraga) pea-green
- Family VI (Megha) a light chocolate brown.

The name of Ragas and Raginis are based on seasons. Such as Megha or Vasanta; some got their name from flowers such as Malti (jasmine), Kaumidi (Lily), etc. while others were based on geographical names such as Malva (central India) purvi (Eastern India), Desh (Northern India), etc. Each mode is described in a poetic verse that delineates the appropriate mood and feeling of devotion, Tranquility, loneliness, heroism, eroticism, etc. and supposed to be sung during a specific season at a specific time of the day or night.

Ragini Todi



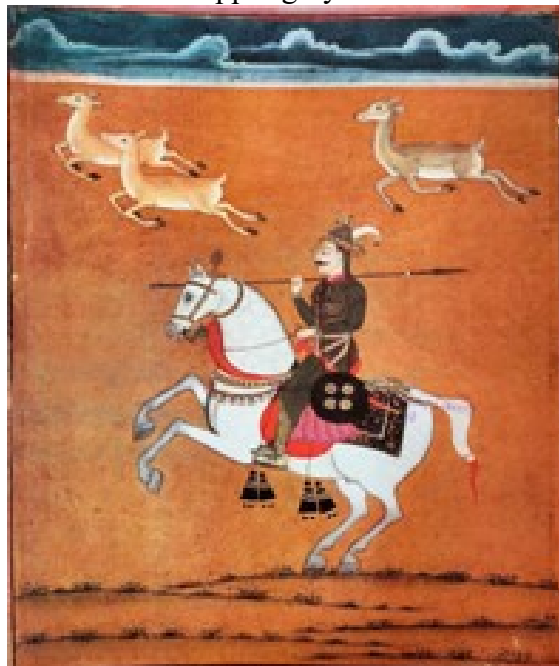
Lahula Ragaputra Bilaspur School



Suhavi, Ragini A lady teaching a tame bird; a female attendant



Nata Ragaputra
Armoured horseman on a dapple-grey horse overhead three gazelles



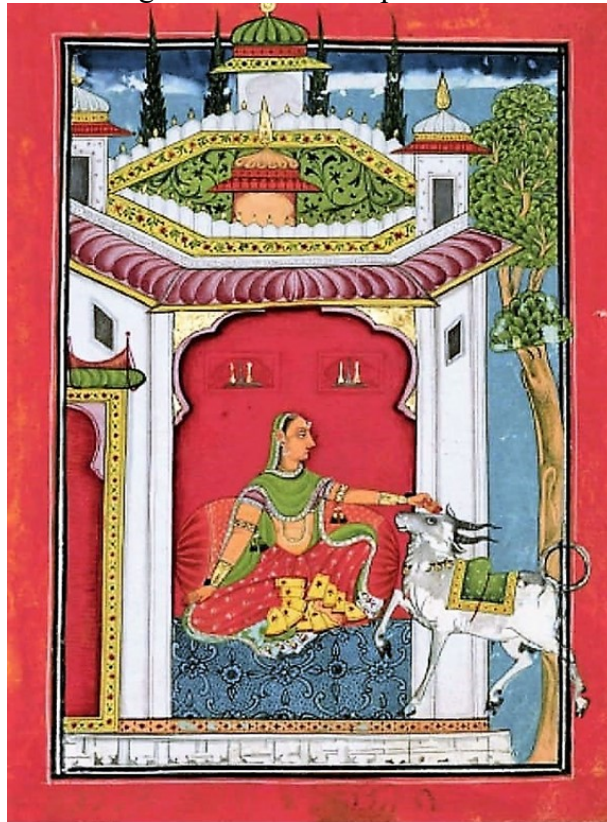
Vivach, Ragaputra of Hindola Bilaspur School



Kamod Raga Bilaspur School



Ragini Bhairavi Bilaspur School



Household Work



Kumbha Ragaputra

Saranga (Gunasagara) Ragaputra

Bhaskara (Vibhasa) Ragaputra

Human Activities



Jaladhara (Jalamdhara), Ragaputra

Vaigrala Raagaputra

COMBINATION OF MUSIC, POETRY AND PAINTING

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