Chitra

PARAMPARYAM



Volume 3

Pre historic Cave Paintings and Folk Paintings



STUDIO
PARASPARYAS

© Lakshmi Krishnamurthy, 2025
No 3, 3rd Cross Street
Dr. Radhakrishnan Nagar
Thiruvanmiyur
Chennai – 600041
India
lakkikris@gmail.com
www.artbylakki.com
All images and interpretations are the author's own, except those specifically credited otherwise.

Title Page: Narasimha Mask in papier Mache made for a dance drama on Dasavatar by Author

List of Chapters

Prologue

Chapter I Introduction

Chapter II Instinctive Bhimbetka

Chapter III Interactive Warli

Chapter IV Innovative Pithora

Chapter V Introduction of iconographic expressions- Chattisgarh and Phad

Chapter VI The flowering of other forms based on the climate, agriculture and geographical location

- Andhra - Kalamkari, Cheriyal paintings and dolls, Leather Puppets,
- Bengal - Pat, Kalighat, Bhil Tribes - Lost wax method in casting
- Bihar - Madhubani - Kayastha, Brahminical and Tattoo traditions
- Chattisgarh - Bastar Paintings and Media Kamba Paintings
- Gujarat - Painted scrolls of Garoda
- Himalayas - Pahari School of miniatures with their folk expressions
- Karnataka - Chittara and Leather puppets
- Kerala - All the costumes, masks etc, Kalamezhuthu (Pictures drawn on sanctified spaces with powders of natural colours made of leaves and flowers for worship and leather puppets.
- Madhya Pradesh - Mandana, Gudna (tattoo), Gond and more (in Chapters I and III)
- Maharashtra - Paithan, Chitrakathy
- North Eastern States - Not much painting due to abundant rain -. Weaving, pith dyed pink.
- Orissa - Patachitra, Palm leaf inscribed paintings, applique, soap stone carvings.
- Rajsthan - Phad paintings, puppets, terracotta figurines
- Tamil Nadu – Kolams (Rangoli), Kodali karuppu-Kalamkari Tradition of Marathas, Kurumbas, leather puppets, Ayyanar, Mariyamman (Village deities) worship, dolls of Banrutti and the *Thaliyatti* Bommai of Thanjavur (based on centre of gravity).
- Uttar Pradesh - Exclusive use of elephants as *vahanas* (Vehicles) for *Grama Devatas* (Village deities)

Epilogue

Volume 3

Pre historic Cave Paintings and Folk Paintings

Prologue

"Cold exactitude is not art; ingenious artifice when it pleases or
when it expresses is art itself" Eugene Delacroix

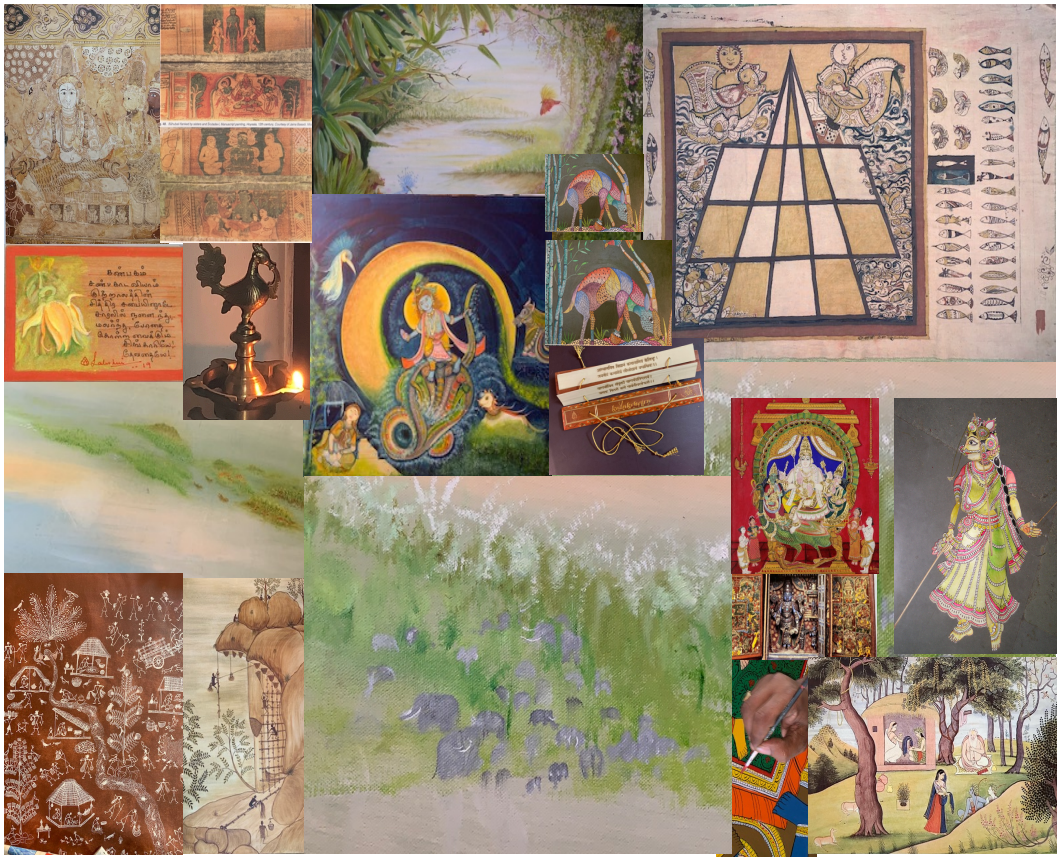
Art is recognition of talent. It awakens new insights and understanding of the inter-link, inter-dependency of different art forms like music, dance, drama, painting and sculpture that are very subtle yet vibrant. More so in India where art is intimately melded with religious, literary and mythological traditions. The flow of an uninterrupted heritage strung together by religious eclecticism can be traced from time immemorial.

The innumerable art forms can be broadly classified into folk, tribal or classical for clarity. As they were greatly influenced by the ruling dynasties (not the political divisions now), there is a lot of overlapping insofar as technique, concept and canvas are concerned that clear demarcation is not possible.

The term folk implies expressions that are participative and adaptable; tribal spontaneously correlated to tribal communities while classical relates to the urban and sophisticated. These are controlled by a multitude of stringent iconographic codes that minutely define each attitude, expression and gesture. But "Thy will is free and whole and upright and now it would be wrong to rein it in" (Dante "Divine Comedy).

The infinite variety of paintings available of the same concept (be it religious, secular or narrative) in different formats are generally influenced by the geographic location, locally available materials, communal requirements and customs. They are so intriguing and the omni-formal character of Indian Iconography is so awe inspiring that an in-depth research, training and exposition have become the need of the hour.

The actual background material for the study of the classical art forms has been available from well documented literary sources, collections of art objects (thanks to the wealthier patronage) and comparatively less perishable nature of the materials used. The study of folk and tribal often misrepresented as “minor” art has been mostly confined to oral traditions. To understand them, one has “to penetrate into the intentional fabric of painters living in cultures or periods remote from our own” (Michael Baxandal).



What is Pan-Indian?

Is it-

The Instinctiveness of Bhimbetka,

The Simplicity of Warli,

The Imagery in Pithora,

The Rhythm in Ajantha, Ellora, Pallava, and Pandya Murals,

The True Frescoes of Cholas,

The Sanctity of Manuscript Tradition,

The Renderings in Miniature,

The Focus in Thanjavur,

The Brush Works in Thangkas and Patachitras,

The Science of Colour in Vijayanagara - Nayak Tradition,

The Colour Fireworks in Kerala Murals,

The Realism in Ravi Varma Paintings,

The Lyricism of Bengal School ….!!!!

It is the proverbial Bottomless Treasure Trove yet to be fully explored.

The Beauty, Variety, Ingenuity and creativity has to be unearthed and cherished

To be the spring board to fly like Jonathan's Sea Gull.

An example

Traversing Through Eons. 60”x36” Tempera

‘A Creative Odyssey through Pan Indian Techniques’ (by author)

Like rolling stones gathering momentum,

Divine blessings beginning with the *Pashupathy* (Shiva)

Seal of Indus Valley travels through eons,

To Bhil tribe for their everlasting faith in life after death,

To the Palaghatta of Warli - wherein Devi is like a bundled-up haystack

Vertically placed with due reverence to nature,

To Pithora Devi dancing down from heaven on Her horse - mount to bless!

Brahma has been added to complete the presence of Trinity

To mark their continuous creation, preservation and destruction through eons

Focus is on Ras-Leela!

Time did not matter!

Zone did not matter!

Wealth did not matter!

Absolute surrender paving way for union of *Atma* with *Paramatma*

and bliss transcending time.

Starting with Phad influenced Radha and Krishna,

the Leela dances through

Ajanta Classicism to Lepakshi Idiom

to Colourful Miniature school to

the bouncing Punjabi Garba.

Dancing in gay abandon in the middle is the vision of the artist.

Nature swelling with pride with

borrowed influences from

tribal and classical Schools,

the whole composition is reaching out with aesthetic appeal

‘The Traversing through Eons’



India was an agricultural haven. Six months of intense agricultural activities freed them for the following six months for arts, crafts and celebrations be it folk, tribal or classical streams.

If it was chanting, mudras and agamic path for the classical, application of Kumkum (red colour powder derived from turmeric and used for sanctity), sandal paste and turmeric accompanied by spontaneous performing and visual arts is the norm for others with rituals going hand in hand with installation of painted folk sculptures.

Beauty was the ability, awareness and understanding in using the locally available materials. It is not about the finished work but each line is a masterstroke.

For example: Conch shell was used for white in Tamil Nadu, while marble powder was used in Rajasthan. Animal hair was used for brushes in Rajasthan, bamboo twigs and kusa grass in Kerala. For polishing while agate was used in Rajasthan, a smooth seed in tribal areas. The list is endless. All these factors are like Kadambam - different flowers strung together with a common thread. i.e.the Chitra Paramparyam, where the Living Traditions of India continue to evolve in their pristine splendour. The awareness, appreciation and acceptance would then be the stimuli, the beacons to illumine the path ahead.



Indian Art represents the apex of a complex social, cultural, religious and spiritual awakening that swept the subcontinent several thousand
years ago, through the trade routes

Map to show the trade routes. Geographical Map
from Google ©Conceptual Picturisation by author.



- The Silk Route from China to Rome or Greece as per the changing ruling dynasties.
- The *Uttarapatha*, connecting the hilly terrain of Afghanistan and beyond through

natural passes.

Fact: Sher Shah Suri improved it in the 16th Century. After conquering Punjab, Britishers restored and renamed it as the Grand Trunk Road!

Myth: Mahabharata relates to the *Uttarapatha*!

- *Dakshinapatha* – Below the Vindhya Mountain range.

  Fact: Ajanta caves were strategically planned below the *Dakshinapatha*.

  Myth: Ramayana is associated with *Dakshinapatha*. Tolkappier was supposed to have travelled from South to Takshashila (Taxila) to meet Panini, along the *Dakshinapatha.*

  Both *Uttharapatha* and *Dakshinapatha* were supposed to meet at Prayagraj - Benaras area.
- Sea Route – Maritime trade was prevalent with peninsular India providing ample seafaring Facilities from Rome / Greece / Egypt to Far Eastern shores. Reference – (letusdiscoverindia.com)

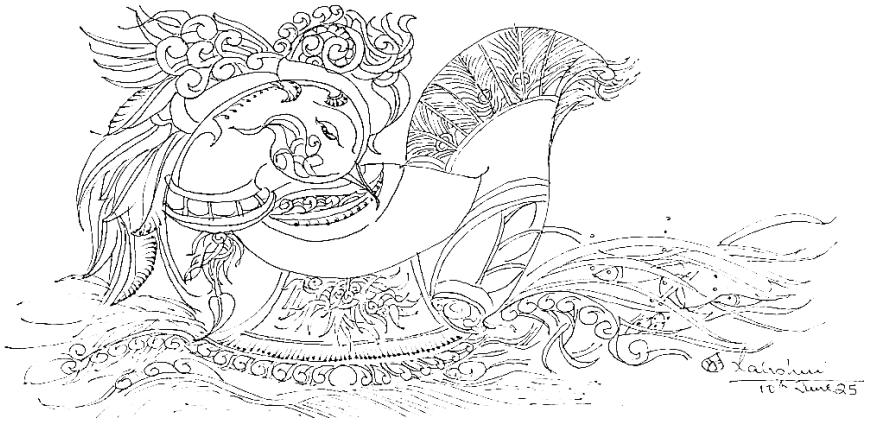
Like a DNA helix, art and history are so intertwined, sometimes overlapping, sometimes as apart as possible that they need to be addressed together.



None of the dynasties (not the invaders) spoilt the cultural wealth of the defeated kingdoms nor did they want to outweigh them. Each one excelled in newer concepts.

- The lyricism in the paintings of the early Ajanta, Pallava, Pandya and Chola murals gave way to more stylised ones in later Vijayanagar-Nayak and Maratha schools to enhance the Renaissance of Hinduism and educate the people after a period of darkness.
- If Chola bronzes reached the pinnacle, the Hoysala Architecture made its mark with intricate carvings on soap stone which would harden with exposure and age (Belur, Halebid and Somnathpur)
- The polish on the granite pillars of the Jain temple at Halebid (Karnataka) would put the Hall of Mirrors to shame.
- The rotating index pillar in the Belur temple (Karnataka) showcasing all the details of the entire temple complex is unique.

- The temple tank positioned away from the centre in Belur Temple marks the awareness of water gradient.
- In Angor Wat in Cambodia, the biggest Hindu temple in the whole world, distributing water bodies from moat inwards to help prevent swelling and cracking of clay soil is mind boggling.
- In Thirunageswaram in Tamil Nadu, when milk is poured over the Raghu sculpture, it turns blue neck downwards and becomes white from the feet, alchemy!
- *Rani ka vav* (Stepped Well) in Gujarat - So many levels radiating out with steps to cater to Gods, people and animals stands for ingenuity, compassion and practicality.
- In a village the temple gopuram will be the tallest with 5,7 or 9 *kalasams* (inverted pot style finials on the towers of Hindu Temples). They are filled with *Varahu* (kind of millet) which helps to dissipate lightning. This has to be replenished once in 12 years when *Kumbabishekam* (Temple Consecration) is conducted to synergise the mystic powers of the temple
- The same twelve-year cycle is used to celebrate the Kumbh mela in Prayagraj and Mahamaham in Kumbakonam to celebrate the synergism of sacred rivers. So many dynasties and so many laurels.



Chapter I

Introduction

Indian art melded with religious, mythological and literary traditions is broadly classified into folk or classical art. Both exist side by side like two concentric circles in motion.

The peripheral concept of evolution and dissolution of yugas at large and the intrinsic belief in rebirth seem almost like a genetic code, with the fear and reverence for unknown forces finding expressions of artistic creativity. Art is the expression of the wonder of life. An ordinary stone reverentially picked up could become an object of worship with the application of *Sindur* (Sacred red powder). Turmeric paste shaped into a cone, smeared with *Sindur* could represent Gowramma Devi in Andhra and Ganesa elsewhere. Sculpted clay, wood or metal objects could be deified. This universal trend vibrates through the entire length and breadth of India, manifesting in different forms but always associated with music, dance and painting, ending almost in a trance at all times with predictions! An all-inclusive play of Fine Arts indeed!!

The Dot that dances into a Rhythmic Crescendo is Art.
The emotive factor is also vibrant from the earliest rock paintings of Bhimbetka caves. Apart from the fighting scenes, there is a sketch of an elephant inside a deer's stomach. Humour!

To understand the often-misrepresented Minor Arts, one has "to penetrate into intentional fabric of painters living in cultures or periods remote from our own" Michel Baxandall.
"The exhilarating wonder of the number, variety, vitality and beauty" demands an odyssey into "India's heart, where tradition is often dynamic, continuous yet changing".

Quintessential Guidelines

- The force of line, Rekha, is the hallmark of Indian painting and symbolism its expression.
- They are written to fulfil the ritualistic, mythical and educational needs of the people and not for just art's sake
- It is a collective endeavour of the community, not an individualistic creation.
- The paintings are ephemeral and environmental images featuring diagrammatic and/or abstracted images. They are created only at auspicious times on consecrated spaces-floors, walls of houses and temples.
- The materials used for the paintings are very fragile and most of the times they may have to be recreated for ritualistic purposes keeping the need and tradition alive.
- Simplicity and sensitivity mark the deification of nature (Mother Goddess) to protect from natural calamities and animals from poaching (Tiger god for example).
- Total faith in the healing, curing, boon bestowing and protecting aura of the paintings consecrated has helped keep the folklore alive.



By author.

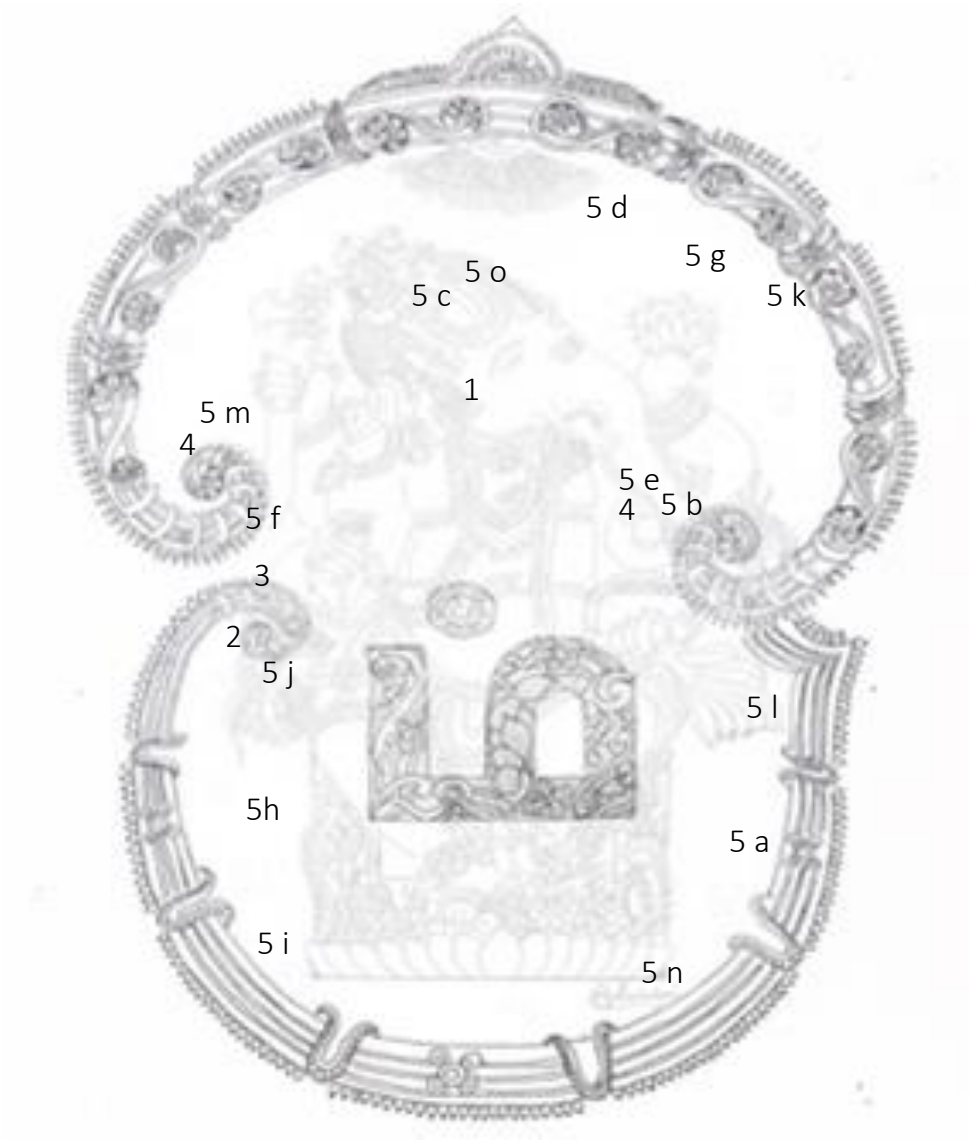
- The question of interpretation is the most crucial part in the study of these art forms. For example – In Thanjavur paintings, the gold work and the decoration may seem excessive but when placed in a puja room lit only with *kuthuvilakku* (lamps lit with oil and wick), the impact is that of glowing presence. The paintings made by the people, for the people are the real roots of the great flowering tree of great classical accomplishments.

In a nut shell, man's mind creates concepts and his hands objects - reflection of the cosmos. This is the nodal point of main cultural and spiritual expression.

I shall be using the Tamil Ohm to symbolize the Indian Sub - continent as it lends itself with top curve, representing the mountains above, the lower curve, the three seas and the two indentations on the left and right the Mouth of Ganges and Gulf of Cambay respectively. Elephant headed Ganesa in the middle stands for the fear which made the people worship, elephant, tiger, peacock etc. as Gods to protect.



Map -Location of Folk and Tribal Paintings and Sculptures by author.



1. Instinctive Bhimbetka
2. Interactive Warli
3. Intuitive Pithora
4. Introduction of iconographic expressions Phad and Chattisgarh

5. The flowering of other forms
   a. Andhra
   b. Bengal
   c. Bhil Tribes
   d. Bihar
   e. Chattisgarh
   f. Gujarath
   g. Himalayas
   h. Karnataka
   i. Kerala
   j. Maharashtra
   k. North Eastern States
   l. Orissa
   m. Rajsthan
   n. Tamil Nadu
   o. Uttarpradesh

Pre-Historic Paintings

From pre-historic cave paintings to folk and tribal arts to classical arts, the innovative and inspiring odyssey has been immortalized in prose, poetry and visual arts.

The abundant stone tools serve as a haunting pre-figuration of several millennia of artistic developments in the Indic regions. It was stone that served as the artistic medium for many of the gigantic temples, excavated caves and sculptures of later centuries. More than 1000 rock shelter paintings have been identified in India, over half of which are within a 150 km radius of Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. Twenty styles have been identified based on technique, pigment and subject matter.

A little introduction to the chronology of events to throw light on understanding of Pre-Historic Paintings based on the writings of Sri. V.S.Wakankar , who discovered the Bhimbetka Caves (Ref. The 'Stone Age Painting in India" by Robert Romano Ravi Broos and Vishnu. S. Wakankar, Yale University Press 1976,
Sri Chandramurthy,Asst.Director,Tamil Nadu Archaelogical Dept.,
and Archaelogical Society of India.)





By author

(Reference: 'The Stone Age Painting of India' by R.R.Brooks, Vishnu.S.Wakankar)

Key:
a, b, c, d, e, f: Mesolithic 8000 – 2500 BCE

g, h, i, j: Neolithic, Charcolithic and Early Iron 2500-3000BCE

k: Early Historic, Mauryan and Sunga 3000-1000 BCE

l, m: Kushan1000BCE –300CE

n, o: Gupta300-500 CE

p: Post Gupta 500 – 800CE

q: Early Medieval 600-1300 CE precursor to Pithora!

r, s: Late Medieval 1300-1600CE Double line precursor to Warli and later sculptures where the 2nd line is considered as Jiva-Rekha (Life giving line)!!!

Like an inverted triangle with the base extending from Chambal River Basin in the west to Varanasi, East, and the apex at Mysore, more than 1000 painted shelters have been identified (Wakankar-1976). With technological interventions, archaeological finds and their interpretations growing in leaps and bounds across the width and breath of India, more and more findings are coming to light.

Chapter II

Instinctive Bhimbetka

Paintings datable to Mesolithic, Chalcolithic and Neolithic periods are all grouped under pre-historic paintings, while those from Megalithic period onwards are attributed to historic period. The primitive man was capable of only observation and could draw only moving objects. When they moved from shelters to wattle huts, they continued painting on the walls coated with clay. When hunting became a collective activity, music, dance and magic rituals evolved as a disciplining practice, beautifully expressed in their paintings.

A lone incident of use of green pigments has been identified in Bhimbetka only in III-A-28 and been attributed to Paleolithic period, that is to say, even before 8000 BCE. The use of red hematite (iron oxide), yellow ochre and blue-black manganese have all been identified dating back from 5500 BCE

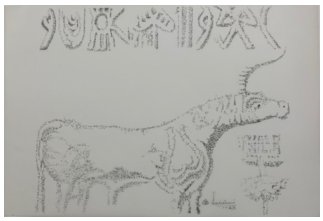
- The largest prehistoric painting of a nude man approximately 8.5'x9' in Hirabenkal Hills of Karnataka in rendering, and use of purple colour in cave paintings seem to take the creative odyssey to the next level.

Mention must be made of the elusive Indus Valley Civilisation with the unique urban civilisation still shrouded in mystery as the script has not been deciphered but full of ingenuity.

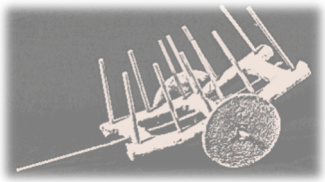
The artifacts lend themselves to be the forerunners of the different schools of art.

.

a. Indus Seals could be precursor to print making. Depiction of Bull – Important land mark heralding the Pasupata or Shiva worship
b. Jewellery designs so fine could ignite passion to start a school
c. Sculptures carving from chosen medium instead of available sources could help highlight their technical expertise and their exclusiveness.
d. The casual stance of the lady is so much as we do now! To quote a twelve-year-old said “She looks as though she has lost her CELLPHONE”.
e. The geometrical designs in terracotta and clay medium could be the introductory lessons for students,
f. Technical excellence with wheeled carts etc
g. Yakshi Fashion Design (from C.Sivaramamurti).



a



f



b



d



g

Chapter III

Interactive Warli

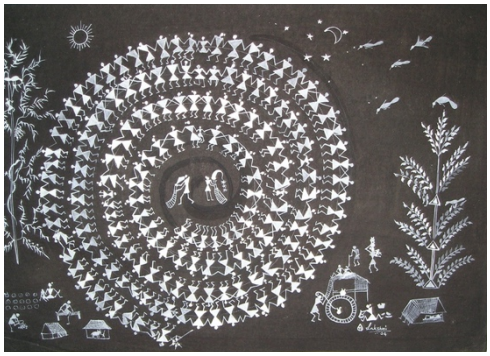
(Maharashtra Thane District)

Inasmuch as we would not want our Gods and Goddesses or faith be deconsecrated for commercial purposes, the folk artists would also like us to refrain from using the inclusion of their stylized interpretations of their Gods and Goddesses when using their illustrations for commercial purposes.

I have included a list of them in detail in the tables based on the interaction with the respective artists when I was asked to submit research papers, curate and exhibit their works for 150th year of the Government Museum, Chennai, 50th Year of Ford Foundation in India and the 5th year of National Folk Lore Support Centre in Chennai.

The tribal paintings of Maharashtra stand aloof from the mainstream as they do not relate to the epics or mythologies of Hinduism. As an extension of Bhimbetka paintings, they seem to be portrayed as a communal interactive activity.

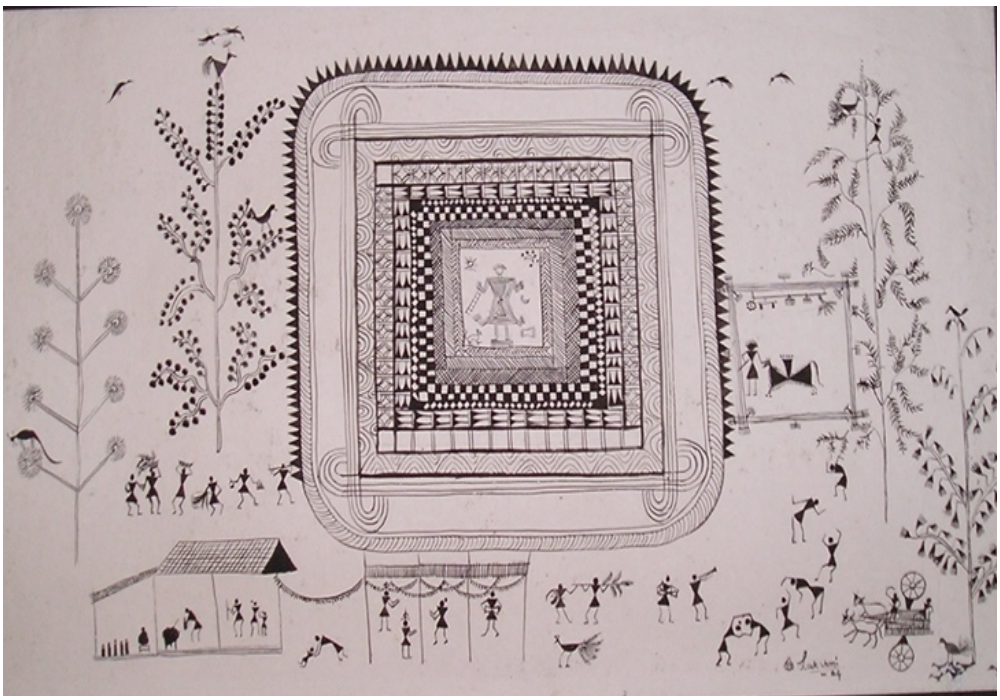
A sense of movement permeates the paintings. Their belief in life after death, seeing death not as an end but as a beginning to a new cycle has given rise to spiral movements in their pictures and a sculpted wooden plank as the embodiment of ancestor at the backyard of the house.



Therpa (Harvest) Dance 22'x28' opaque water colour

Warlis were originally hunters and their veneration of the tiger as a god to protect their animals and now being agriculturalists, dependence on seasons had given rise to the worship of several gods for several purposes.

Name	Purpose	Depiction	Associated Details	Calendar
Narana Deva	God of rain	Round stone smeared with *sindur*	*Kansari* Dance	During Diwali all the four (1-4) are bathed and put back in fresh corn baskets and stored in the kitchen attic. Only men are allowed to handle. Represented as 4 baskets hung inside the *caulk*
Hirva		Silver piece coated with *sindur* and placed inside peacock feathers	Always accompanied by *Paradhi* (hunter)	
Jhoting	To guard *Hirva*	Bamboo stick to hold the feathers		
Himai	Cow goddess	She is represented as seated on a horse in brass		
Palaghata (Pal - plants *Ghata* - pots)	Mother goddess	She is always portrayed inside a square *cauk* bordered with geometric designs- jewellery	Overflowing pot – purna kalasa concept – to denote abundance. The portrayal varies from north to south and east to west.	She is the most important goddess. Marriages cannot be solemnized without her presence.
Pancairiya	Guardian God/ vahana		Always portrayed next to *Palalghata* in *Devacauk*	
	Tiger god		Tiger god is always painted with wooden images of ancestors	Rituals followed by the paintings involve the narration of the story of tiger god and prayed to for protection of cattle and includes ancestral worship.



Cauks 22'x28' opaque water colour by author

Two intersecting triangles denote human beings while for deities the triangles do not intersect. Vertically placed haystack with multiple hands symbolizes Goddess in Her *Palaghata* The geometrical lines around the *Cauk* are her ornaments! The horizontal one depicts Her vahana in the *Devaghatta* Cauk with the squiggles hanging on top representing Gods mentioned in Devaghatta Cauk and *Palaghata Cauk*. Women are distinct with their topknot. Flora and fauna and all their activities are shown in stylized geometrical patterns.

After the plastered walls (especially the kitchen walls considered sacred) are coated with red mud and textured by hand, the paintings are done with ground rice paste.



The fertile power of the dead is symbolized by the wooden statue of dead 'Vira' installed at the backyard as a wooden plank with 2 large disks for eyes denoting all seeing wisdom. Warlis consult the Vira in all important occasions and include him in their wall paintings.

Chapter IV

Innovative Pithora

(Central Gujarat extending up to Madhya Pradesh)

Painting more ritualistic than artistic is practiced in the central Gujarat village of Tejgadh by several tribes. The Rathwas are the main proponents of Pithora paintings.

The characteristic feature of this art form is the innumerable number of horses. Having a painting executed of the marriage of Pithori Devi to Pithora Baba, either to thank God or ask for a boon is very sacred. The walls are coated with cow dung and white chalk powder.





By author

The innovative creativity can be perceived

- in the sacred enclosures marked by elaborate borders,
- in the wavy geometrical line like a rainbow cutting diagonally across the canvas dividing the world of Gods from the marriage procession below,
- in the Creation of Myth occupying the lower half,
- in the painted horses on all the side walls with white horses denoting witches and ancestors,
- in the colour coding of the horses for their gods

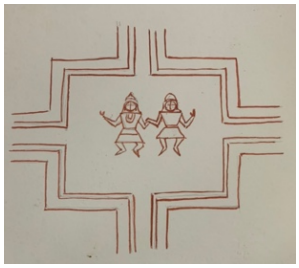
  The orange dot finishes the picture. As with Warli, the painting is accompanied by songs, with the *Badwas* (priests) performing the rituals and the mythology not based on popular epics.

Name	Purpose	Description
Pithoro	Marriage scene of Pithoro and Pithori are painted on the walls for a boon bestowed or to bless	Riding a red or orange horse Upper garment checked/striped shirt or coat Torso and limbs drawn in red Wears a crown. Carries either a bow & arrow or a parrot and flower or whip reins
Pithori		Rides a red horse next to Pithoro Wears long flowing hair or veil Wears neck, head and waist ornaments Carries comb and flower, a parrot and hand fan
Rani Kajol	Worshipped for begetting children	Foster mother of Pithoro Rides a red horse Wears a yellow skirt and top Carries a parrot and fan
Situ Ran		Foster father of Pithoro Rides a red horse Wears a crown, long coat and sword
Babo Ind	Agriculture	Maternal uncle of Pithoro
Danthi Varo	Flag bearer	Riding a horse
Wangari Nisani	Drummer	Riding a horse
Kali Koyal		Shown as a black cuckoo

Chapter V

Introduction of Iconographic expressions Chattisgarh and Phad

Portrayal of Lakshmi and Vishnu within a square with four entrances like in a religious mandala without the iconographic convention in Bastar Paintings of Chattisgarh and the seating of Papuji and Devji within a special enclosure to show their elevated status as incarnation of Vishnu in Phad paintings, seem to herald the iconographic expressions.



Chattisgarh *Garh likhana* (Jagar paintings) are of religious themes, executed for good harvest, after 11 days of singing and chanting. The wedding of Raja and Rani (The local version of Vishnu and Lakshmi) is performed on the 11th day. The painting begun as the procession leaves the house, has to be finished as it returns to be sanctified and worshipped.

Rajasthan *Phad* paintings of Rajasthan: (More under Rajasthan)

In the twilight of understanding/ presentation of mythological scenario, the great epics are modified to suit the local dictum for which there has not been any literary evidence except locally.



Devji

Papuji



Phad paintings are done on large canvasses and convey the epic lives of local hero gods *Devji* and *Pabuji* (considered incarnations of Vishnu). The hero gods *Pabuji* and *Devji* are painted right in the

middle, larger than other figures densely portrayed with very little architectural or natural elements in the background. The iconography is greatly influenced by the Shekawati Murals.

With the lineage stretching back to the Mother Goddess of Harappa (2500 BCE) Molela potters make images of male and female deities in anthropomorphic forms - individually in half relief or as big narrative panels. Whether it is sculpture or painting the deductive, divinatory and documentary characters in installation, consecration and disposal seem to follow a set pattern of creation preservation and destruction - ultimate expression of Trinity.



Molela Terracotta

Chapter VI

The Flowering of Other Forms based on the climate, agriculture and geographical location

Andhra Pradesh

The proud torch bearers of recorded Indian painting history, from 2nd BCE, through their immortal Ajanta Murals (Satavahanas), have made equal foray into folk and tribal art forms.

Kalamkari

The painted calicoes of South India are called *Kalamkari*, as they are produced with a kalam(pen). This technique has been in use for over 3,000 years in India and Persia. The renaissance of Hinduism, under Krishna Deva Raya, brought about an extensive temple building activity with an abundance of 100, and 1,000-pillared halls covered with Lepakshi murals. The hallmark of these murals, the intricate textile designs and the *thombai* (thoran made of cloth) influenced by the earlier Kalamkaris, help create a resurgence of the same into highly figurative and narrative idiom. A need for two kalams, one to delineate and the other to fill up colours evolved.

There are two schools,







Rathapani of Kalahasthi

This school specialising in mythological concepts, produced the profound philosophies of Hinduism, in the oldest colour scheme of black and red, while the newer ones are being executed in multicolours.

Adakkan of Machilippattinam



This school is famous for the flower chintzes printed with blocks.
The use of *Kalamkari* in folk life: The goddesses *Gangamma* of *Nunnas* and *Mathamma* of *Madigas* are invoked in their *Kalamkaris* during the annual festivals. Renovation of the older ones or making new ones, keep the artists in reverence and in job.

The Sculptures – *Cheriyal Mandaheccu* is a very unusual concept of narrative art in Cheriyal, Andhra Pradesh. 53 sculpted images created by the *Nakasis* (Traditional artists of Telengana), are used for the purificatory or the funeral rites. The stories sung are part of the oral epic called *Katamarajukatha.* The visual colours, treatment and delineations create demarcation of different characters.



The Cheriyal Scroll Paintings

The exclusiveness of Andhra school continues in their scroll paintings with the delineations akin to Vijayanagar-Nayak school. There are specific scroll/scrolls for enacting, by specific group, on specific occasions.



Stories	Performers	Audience	Vocation
Markandeya and *Bhavana Rishi Purana*	*Padmasalis*	*Konnapulis*	Weavers
Virataparva, Dakshayagna and *Virabadra*	*Kakipadgilus* *Pandavulus* *Ganjikotulus*	*Kanbis &Bhois* Dhobis	Agriculturists Dhobis
Jambavanta Purana *Goud Purana* *Katamaraju*[only with dolls]	*Dakkalavadus* *Gauda* *Mandahecu*	*Madigas* *Gaudas* *Dhangars* or *Gollas*	Sudras Chettiars Shepherd

Leather puppets

Other sculptures and/or narrative mediums are Kondapalli toys, Tirupathi portable shrines and leather puppets produced during the Vijayanagar-Nayak periods that covered almost the entire South India – modern States of Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Telangana – are prevalent with a local idiom in all the places. While the leather puppets of Tamil Nadu, Andhra and Telangana have kalamkari influences, those of Maharashtra, Goa and Karnataka are influenced by *Chitrakathi* Paintings. In Kerala, the colour spectrum is minimal.

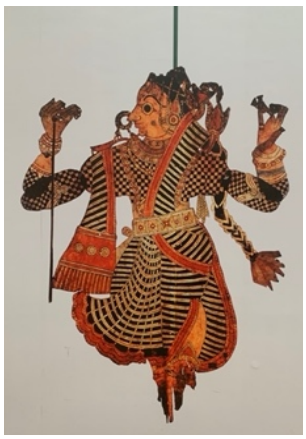
Ajanta
Google
Photos





Courtesy

Chitra Kala Parishad, Karnataka.



Chitrakathi-Balaji

Srinivasan Chennai)



Tamil Nadu Leather
Puppet
by author

Bengal Patas

Bengal, the cultural and intellectual milieu extending from the foothills of Himalayas to the Bay of Bengal on the eastern part of India, crisscrossed by the tributaries of Ganges and Brahmaputra is the home of the *Patuas*, the narrators, sculptors and painters.

The Sculptures

Patuas, the *Chitrakars* specialise in making terracotta plaques similar to the relief sculptures and idols of the native brick temples of Bishnupur. These are made for specific festivals to worship and to be immersed in the rivers after use, thus creating a continuous demand and sustenance.

The Paintings

The *Patas* are paintings created by the *Patuas* for educating, entertaining and enlightening the agricultural peasants. There are three kinds of *Patas* and they are the *Chaukas*, the *Jerano* scrolls and the *Jadu* patas.



The *Chaukas* – the Vertical Patas-

Paintings of one particular deity executed in a square or a rectangular format is the precursor to the Kalighat style of paintings prevalent around the Kali temple in Calcutta.

Jerano or *Gutano* Scrolls –

are narrative vertical scrolls 1'-2' in width and 25'-40' in length with paintings on mythological or secular themes, with an elaborate floral border separating the sequences.



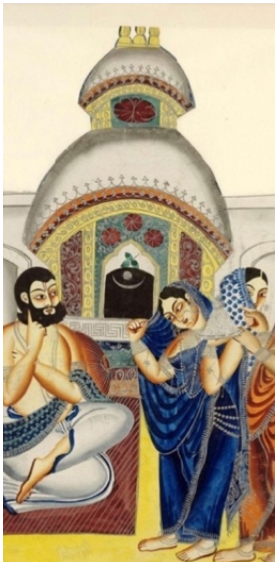


Jadu Patas of *Santal* and *Bhumij* – Exclusive to *Patuas*, these paintings executed primarily on themes on life after death, belongs to three different schools:

- The *Tamluk-Kalighat-Tribeni-Samajik* school including Midnapore deals with traditional and contemporary themes.
- The *Birbhum – Kandi - Katwa –Samjik* School concentrates only on traditional works.
- The *Berhampur-Murshidabad* school has a profound Islamic influence with the rendering akin to miniature paintings.

The *patas* are predominantly of yellow, orange, blue and green colours. Figures are shown with three quarter view of the face, front shoulders and torso and puffy chest with capriciously attached arms and legs. Kalighat as the name signifies is one of the venerated Sakthi *Peetas* (51 Holy shrines dedicated to Sakthi worship), situated on the banks of river Ganges in Hubli. *Patuas* started creating souvenir paintings in small formats for the visitors instead of long narrative ones and set the mood for the evolution of Kalighat Paintings. By the 19th Century, the paintings became bold with minimal background details as can be seen in the pictures. V&A Museum in England has a collection of a considerable number of Kalighat paintings.

Influence of domed architecture and Popular theme





The Bhil Tribes (Sons of the forest)

The *vanaputras* (Forest dwellers) live in Western India from the Aravalli mountains in Rajasthan to the Vindhya range in the Central India.



The importance given to the funeral rites and the total faith in life after death can be perceived from the ingenious ways of making the *The Gothriz Parvez* - Spirit Rider (ancestor of the clan) and a figurine of cows for the *Nutko* rite (the rites of the dead) by lost wax method from copper anklets of the wife of the deceased man. The transient abode of the dead - the cow figurine is discarded while the figurine of the spiritual leader is installed at the puja area to protect. Votive offerings of terracotta images to protect, propitiate and bless are constantly being made.

Bihar Madhubani

Extending from the foothills of the Himalayas in the north to the river Ganges in the south is the land of *Madhubani*, the heartland of Mithila. The invisible vine covered mud houses, an evergreen canopy formed by the trees, dotted with colourful birds and the sunlight 'dancing through the gurgling streams and rivers provides the idyllic setting for the music, sculpture and painting that developed in 'the forest of honey'. Age-old association with the Hindu, Jain, Buddhist philosophies and Tantric cult can be felt in their intuitive expressionism, while scenes from Ramayana are very common, being the birth place of Sita.

The Sculptures

Sculptures in bronze, stone and ivory have been unearthed from ruins of temples and palaces. This folk art is a living tradition. Plethora of artifacts are still being made - such as carved wooden articles, delicate silver miniatures, terracotta images for the folk stories, educative puppets and religious and secular paintings.

The Paintings

The paintings adorn the *Aripan* (floor), the *Kobharghar* (nuptial chamber walls), the *Gosain Ghar* 'family shrine', and the kitchen walls. Their expressions are intuitive, the hereditary art ritualistic and the painted areas consecrated.

There are three different schools -The *Kayastha* tradition, the *Brahmin* tradition and the *Tattoo* tradition.

The Kayastha Tradition

The *Kayastha* tradition is characterised by the line works in red and black colours. A typical example is the *Kobharghar* paintings. The pictograph executed by suvasini women (married women whose husbands are alive) represents the *Purna* kalash concept of fertility.



Symbolic Version of *Kobargarh* 28"x22" Handmade paper coated with cowdung in opaque water colour

The symbolism

The lotus-The female *Khobar*

The bans or bamboo grove- groom

The crisscross lines–Prolific growth

Lalpatia suga-A pair of parrots, *Nagnagin*-entwined cobras, tortoises, fishes, sun and moon- Fertility

Bidh bidhata - Birds of destiny

Naina Jogin-Goddesses with magical powers who are painted on the four corners of the bedchamber to ward off evil spirits.

The Brahmin Tradition

Access to and awareness of iconography and mythology from mother to daughter has brought about an intrinsic expression of tantric and religious intonation into their colourful paintings. Probably the earlier Janakan rule has imbibed all the knowledge system genetically!! A painting of Dasavatars for instance painted with colour coordinated iconographic details makes one wonder, who is the scholar, the urban graduate or the so-called tribal artist!



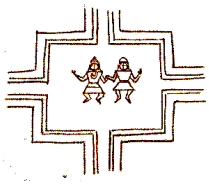


The Tattoo Tradition The legend of Raja Salesh created by a serial replication of stylised images with the colours of the Brahmin tradition and the delicate lines of the *Kayastha* tradition is the hallmark of the Tattoo Tradition. Fig – The retinue of Raja Salesh Probably the beginning of Block Printing!

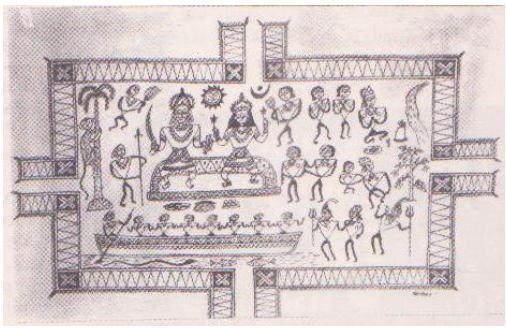
Chattisgarh Bastar Paintings

Influence or common inheritance of detailed border paintings of Odisha, narrative elements of Patuas, ritualistic treatment of Madhubani and triangles of Warli can all be seen in the Bastar paintings of Chattisgarh, a new state sandwiched between Madya Pradesh and Odisha.

The Paintings



by author



Courtesy

The Bastar paintings are divided into,

- *Jagar* paintings (*Garh likhana*) are of religious themes, executed for good harvest, after 11 days of singing and chanting. The wedding of *Raja* and *Lakhi* (Vishnu of and Lakshmi) is performed on the 11th day. The painting begun as the procession leaves the house, has to be finished as it returns to be sanctified and worshipped.
- *Ghotul* paintings are individual expressions of young people.
- *Media Khamba* paintings are biographical sketches of dead people. These are sometimes transferred to stone or wood to be carved into sculptures.

Gujarat Painted Scrolls of Garoda

The painted scrolls of the Garodas unlike *Phad* and *Patuas* depict many legends in a single scroll. The picture scrolls, known as *tipanu* in Gujarati, meaning "recording" or "remark", are usually more than 3 m long and 35 cm broad and generally depict scenes from the epics and local legends. Narrative scrolls almost always begin with a triple domed shrine considered a temple with *Purnakalas* with human eyes painted inside.



Amli-pipli (local version of catching game) played by Pandavas and Gauravas (Craft Museum New Delhi) wherein Bhima is portrayed (illustrated) painted in two colours red and aluminium to help highlight the creative ingeniousness of the so called folk!
(Courtesy Craft Museum, New Delhi).

Himalayas The Sculptures

The general belief is that the peaks are the abode of gods who bestow on the pious, the fulfilment of their wishes. The names of the tribes also resound with similar names such as *Devas, Nagas, Yakshas, Gandharvas* and *Kinnaras.*

In Malana, the oldest parliament in the world, *Jamlu Devta*, a form of rishi Jamdagni, is worshipped in the form of a *Khanda* (a single or double-edged sword and a disk like pommel with a point). The eighteen images of gods symbolic representation the world of gods, he was carrying, got scattered all over the Beas valley by a gush of wind, each one becoming the God of that area. *Jamlu Devta* is the Lord of the assembly of the gods, communicating through *gur* (his disciple who explains through trances). The whole community contributes a share of their income to the treasury. A gold statue donated by Akbar is still in the treasury.

Amidst the Shiva worshippers nomadic *guddis*, the gypsies, the *Gujjars*, *Mangoloid Lehaulis* and the others in the Himalayan peaks, worship of sculpted deities, belief in the presence of benevolent and malevolent fairies, demons, witches, spirits etc., and a natural instinct for music, dance and colours manifest during the various rituals. Influence of Tantric Lamaism and Hinduism exist side by side.

Probably the locale closer to the mystic clouds and mesmerizing snow-capped mountains help bringing the tribes together in faith and communalism. Felling of trees and creating new waterways

are almost taboo. The enforcement of the environmental awareness with the intrinsic knowledge of medicinal herbs and the importance of the eco system is their way of life, emphasizing the need for togetherness at the unapproachable reaches of the Himalayan settlements.

The repetitive inscribing, chiselling of *Ohm Mani Padme Hum* whether in prayer wheels or the metallic sheets and stones used in votive offerings or the stones used to build walls around the shrines is a communal endeavour as much as the carving in half relief on sand stone or black stone, to decorate the reservoir of water and natural springs in the hills especially around Chamba, Udhampur and Jammu. The themes are of gods, local deities, water nymphs, mermaids, flora, fauna and geometric designs.

The nature worship seems to have reached its zenith in the slabs decorating the interior springs. They are three tiered, 3' in length and 2.5' in breadth, conical in shape, tapering to a pointed apex. The upper panel has a carving of winged nymph showering water. The second panel has a queen seated inside a palanquin carried by pole bearers and followed by a rider. She is shown peeping through the curtain (as queens were instrumental in the installations with the showering of lotus petals to the recitation of the Vedic hymns). The third panel is a carving of birds. The recurring image of *Nag Devta* is a common occurrence.

Chamunda Devi temple in Dhad village near Dharmasthala, Baijnath temple near the ridges overlooking the snow-clad ranges of Dhauladhar, Hidimbadevi temple under the rock shelter in the deodar groves of Dhoongri near Manali stand as mute witnesses to the flowering of the sculptural tribal mother goddess traditions.

Bhali Mahadev temple at Mathana 9000' above Kulu, is famous for a strange phenomenon. Every year lightning was striking the same area causing devastation. The inhabitants prayed to Lord Shiva for protection. He promised to help them and offered to endure all the consequences of his Rudra aspect on Himself in the Linga form, provided the villagers agree to provide the healing touch to the Lingam. Even now, the lightning strikes once in 12 years shattering the Linga with no destruction

otherwise and the shattered Lingam is restored by the application of freshly churned butter with reverence and sincerity by the local people. Butter at its freezing point naturally binds the pieces and the stone becomes one!!

Their knowledge of alchemy is astounding as could also be seen in Thirunageswaram near Kumbakonam in Tamil Nadu, wherein when milk is poured over the *Ketu* idol it remains white over the head, turns blue over the body and turns white over the feet.

The Paintings -
The variety and the quality of the Pahari school of Miniatures, Chamba Murals and Rumals (Reference in Miniatures) in both classical and folk themes run parallel to their idolisation of nature in stone and wooden sculptures.

South India – Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra
The common inheritance swaying to the tunes of changing political climate, has created a plethora of similar folk traditions both in sculpture and ideologies.
The progression from the pre-historic nomadic wanderings to pastoral settlements, around the water holes, has precipitated nature worship both in veneration and in fear, leading to a need for a communal plan to protect, survive and prosper. The village unit was formed.

Karnataka



The same tempo and mood permeate through Karnataka. The Ayyanar concept (worshipped in Tamil Nadu) is almost not there. The importance of the village goddess with Chamundy as the tutelary deity of the kings and the bull worship has attained more mammoth proportions.

Yaksha Gana, an oral narrative with highly stylised head gears, masks and props has kept the inherent talents of the artists alive as much as the leather puppets. The stylization of the former reminds one of kathakali and the latter to Maratha and Andhra puppets emphasizing the interlinks.



Courtesy Dakshina Chitra, Chennai

Kerala

Apart from the village deities, kula devatas and allied factors, the matriarchal society and tantric rituals mark the influence the Kerala tradition. Insulated by the Western Ghats on one-side, and the Arabian Sea on the other, whatever passed through the Palghat pass got modified and absorbed into the mainstream. The exclusive *Kalamezhuthu*, Kathakali, Mohiniattam, wooden architecture both at folk and classical levels with greater emphasis on herbal and exercise-oriented philosophies to maintain good physique, have created such an awareness of plant sources both as therapeutic and decorative elements that the colour palette is not only of mineral origin but also of vegetable sources.

The leather puppets used for shadow play has a different characterisation akin to Mohiniattam than to Karnataka, Andhra, Tamil Nadu or Paithan schools.

The key verse and interpretation, illustrate the puppet play's reconciliation between two great

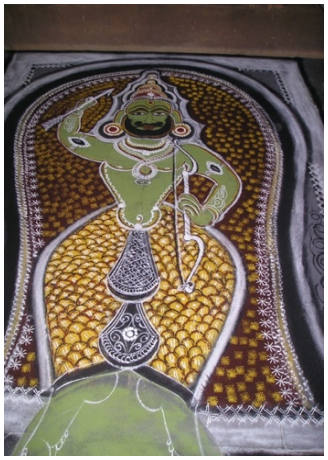
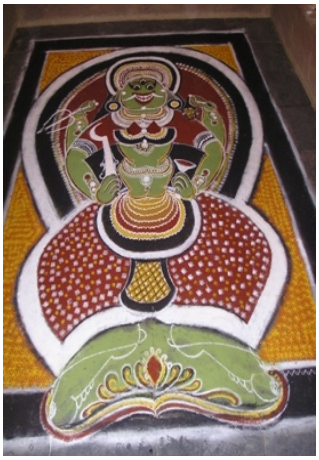


streams of bhakthi (devotionalism) and folk religion. Emotional bhakti shares the behavioural features with folk religion such as intense, personal communication with Gods and Goddesses including ecstatic song and possession. Converging practices and diverging theologies probably add to the characteristic verve to folk tradition.

For instance, in the performance of *Kunnumpalli*, the puppeteers first pay obeisance to Bhagavathi and gurus. The prominence of Goddess and Siva in the puppet play exposes a thin layer of Rama

Bhakti in South India expounding Rama as a bhakta of Siva (Rameswaram). Their ambivalent accommodations could be seen in all the folk narratives or ballads.

Kalamezhuthu is a ritualistic rangoli done on floor for agamic worship of Bhairavi and Veerabhadra) Green is from powdered leaves, red from kumkum, yellow turmeric and white is from rice flour!

By author

Madhya Pradesh

Mandana, Gudna (tattoo), Gond and more in

Chapters I and III and Vol 11.



Ref -Upadhyaya, A., and Wadhwa, V. (2023). Development of Painting in Madhya Pradesh. ShodhKosh: Journal of Visual and Performing Arts, 4(1), 523–536. doi: 10.29121/shodhkosh.v4.i1.2023.366

A storehouse of prehistoric cave paintings with more than 500 rock paintings executed in different techniques and concepts is always a painter's delight to explore. Apart from Bhimbetka, Pachmarhi (Mahadev mountain area), Hoshianghabad (Adamgarh) and Chhatarpur area rock paintings near Bakswaha village of Bundelkhand, also known as Dhimarkhuwa (Prof S.K.Chhari) are full of intrigue.

Gonds, spread across Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Odisha and Telangana, are one of the largest tribes in India. Strong faith in the communion between man and nature has precipitated a whole new expression in their artforms with slight variations to suit the local dictum. They are supposed to be enshrined with secret codes to navigate the difficult terrain. The *ber* (Indian *Jejube* or Indian plum) tree is widely represented and worshipped as the Trinity with the leaves appearing among three lobes. The mount Meru used for churning the ocean according to them was filled with *ber.* (Indian trees. Myth and faith continue to feed the born creators with newer interpretations aplenty with dots, lines and colour dominating.

From SCRIBD.com Google
Night life of Trees by Bhaijju Shyam, Durga Bai and Ram Singh Urveti,
Tara Books





Mandana, a highly systemized and elaborate tribal art form with symbolic undertones, practised by *Sahariya* tribes is highly specific for different ceremonies.



Gudna a form of tattoo practised by Gonds and Bhils, is done by injecting juice of lamp soot and *harsinger* (night jasmine, *Parijat*) flower and then with *kumkum* with a needle to add colour to ward off evils and for good crop etc!!!

Bharat Bhawan and Madhya Pradesh Tribal Museum in Bhopal are adding wings to the existing scenario on the arts of Madhya Pradesh.

Maharashtra Paithan

Paithan painters are nomads of Maratha origin. Their chief occupation is in exhibiting pictures of gods and heroes and narrating their stories in song and verse. Sometimes wooden dolls are also exhibited and used for complementing the narration. Only the climax of an episode is delineated leaving the task of elaboration to the narrator.

Vibrant paintings reflect the common lineage of Gujarat, Karnataka and Andhra paintings/ leather puppets are based on a set of formulae common to all painters.

The majority of these paintings are laid out horizontally. Geometrical visual partitions like use of a diagonal line to interpret anger, circular enclosures to freeze the moment horizontal lines to





Courtesy Balaji Sreenivasan

Courtesy Raja Dinkar Kelkar Museum Pune



enhance movement to impart the mood of the narrative, is characteristic to this school. These paintings are again made in sets to illustrate different puranas, using different colour scheme for each set.

North Eastern states Assam, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh etc

(Refer for Illustrated Manuscripts on Vaishnavism in Volume 5 Other Canvasses).

Wall paintings are conspicuously absent as the houses are built of bamboo. Soaking the pith gives an overall soft tone to their paintings for decorative purposes. Dragon painting on wood, adoration of sculpted Manasa [the Snake goddess] to protect from snakebites and other poisonous insects and worshipping of other tutelary deities of Buddhism bring them closer to the tribes of the great Himalayan Range.



Photograph taken at the Bangalore Domestic Departure Terminal by author: Manasa Devi painted on soaked and sculpted pith from Assam

Odisha

Located on the east coast of India, with the Bay of Bengal forming its eastern and southern limits, insulated from invasions and internal conflicts, Odisha has remained *Utkala* – the land of exquisite arts. The amalgamation / fusion of sculptures and paintings in its most revered form is palpable in the *Nava Kalevaza* – making of the new body ceremony of Lord Jagannath, which takes place once in 12 years (akin to the *Kumbabhishekam* in temples of South India and the Kumbhmela/Mahamaham once in 12 years).

The wooden images, sculpted in secrecy, are covered with ropes. *Srikapada* (the holy cloth) is affixed with a special gum (a paste prepared by cooking resin, camphor and *gugula*). *Chitrakars* consider the *Daru* (wood) as bone, the *Swalgi* (paste) as flesh and the *Srikapada* as skin. The painted idols are infused with soul *Atman*. Clean-shaven coconuts are painted with stone and earth colours for worship. during Ganesh Chathurthy and Saraswathi Puja. The paintings and Puri Jagannath temple rituals are so intertwined, that the paintings are worshipped when in *Ansarghar,* until *Rath yatra.*

The *Nara-Narayana concept* has precipitated a series of erotic pata forging a separate school- Puri Jagannath Pats.













The form, colour coding and detailing of the paintings are very similar to the Odissi dance decor. The use of tassur and palm leaf as canvasses and elaborate border designs stand them apart from other schools.

Stitching up two fragile palm leaves, painting on top and bottom leaf with two different narrations and the line drawing of Navakunjara - Horse made up of women in different poses in strong line work show their artistry

Rajasthan. Phad



Par paintings probably the largest narrative scrolls on large canvasses 24'x6' convey the epic lives of local hero gods *Papuji or Devji* (considered incarnation of Vishnu). The cattle rearing hero Pabuji is worshipped by nomadic Rebari herders and served by Bhopas from Nayak community while the clan avenging Devji is worshipped by Gujjar caste with the Bhopas also from the same community.. The events are not portrayed sequentially but topographically. The pars are stretched on poles and the Bhopas narrates the ballads while Bhoni (his wife) illuminates the panels related to the narration with the setting sun creating a dramatic background amidst the wide open desert sands. The iconography is greatly influenced by the Shekawati Murals.

Sculptures:

With antiquity relating to Harappan civilization, the technique evolved in fine sculpting details is very unique. No paper or any stuffing is included to enhance the relief work but is worked hollow with the dancing fingers.



Whether it is sculpture or painting, the deductive, divinatory and documentary characters in installation, consecration and disposal seem to follow a set pattern of creation preservation and destruction - ultimate expression of Trinity.

Tamil Nadu



There was / is always a male deity Ayyanar, guardian of the village with a horse mount accompanied by Karuppan- the dark god and other equestrians in one end of the village. Symbolically he could be worshipped as a sindhur-smeared stone under a tree or a full-scale terracotta sculpture, regally painted, 10' tall with a retinue of 500 horses offered to him as mounts for his nocturnal rides. The potter priest gives him the basic form, greatly influenced by the Vijayanagara tradition as could be seen at the horse-court at Srirangam. The size, shape and form have taken a mammoth form especially around Madurai as Madurai-veeran. Open-air sanctuaries are created for the Goddess in her Durga aspect, at the other end of the village. She is called Mariamman to protect from smallpox or Ellaiyamman to protect the boundaries and so on. Saptamatrikas, a retinue of seven sisters, who are the tutelary deities of rivers and ponds with their male attendants, who always accompany her. Viswakarmas create them, with the sanctified clay identified by shamanistic possession, to protect the particular village.





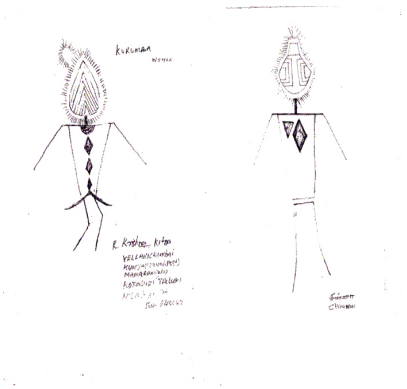
The continuous votive offerings, creation of new idols for different festivals, replacing the older ones with new ones, without discarding the older ones accumulate a whole array of clay figurines

under the canopy of a bodhi, banyan or neem tree creating an aura of ethereal splendour tinged with devotion, faith and total surrender, almost akin to modern day installations.
The ecstasy of rituals, the silence of withdrawal, the use of bright reds and yellows against dark green foliage fading into shades of grey in the twilight hours are all a continuous reminder of the sarguna- nirguna and the rupa-arupa concept of the Divine. This probably helped the discovery of zero too!

The *naga* (Snake) worship and associated installations of the stones big and small under a bodhi or a neem tree especially in and around Rameswaram is a remarkable sight and is probably a forerunner to the modern concept of installations!

The folk and classical worship, practised by all the people belonging to a particular village continues side by side. The traveling icons of the folk gods and goddesses made of brass, bronze or silver are even stored at the Brahminical temples in the middle of the village.

From the pre-historic cave paintings (cross ref. to murals of Tamil Nadu) still being discovered, to the true frescoes of Cholas, to the modern movement of Madras school, Tamil Nadu has been a birth place to a variety of techniques. Neither the brush nor the canvas was ever a limiting factor.



A kurumba painting with tea decoction



Kurumbas – a tribal community, living at the borders of Tamilnadu, Kerala and Karnataka (descendants of Pallava) tried to emphasise the brain power through a drawing similar to an electric bulb!

An awareness of red colour as an insecticide and giving it a fillip of sanctity, the neem, turmeric and mango as an antidote for many ailments and treating it as a necessary ingredient for all rituals, ascribing a flower, an animal and a tree as special to a particular temple and imbibing an awareness of eco-balance and decorating both the front and the back of the house with kolam (Designs drawn on floors for aesthetic and religious purposes) have all been executed as an act of yogic meditation and tranquility. The awareness more as a way of life than compartmentalized codices is astounding.

The painted dolls of Thanjavur with their emphasis on centre of gravity, the navarathri dolls of Banruti for their colours and creativity, the kalamkaris of now revived Kodali Karuppur, the leather puppets and the theatrical narration of epics demanding design and execution of colorful costumes and back-drops, all speak of a pan-Indian inheritance to suit the climate and availability of materials.









Revival of *Kodali Karuppu* at Kalakshetra (Curated by the Author)

- Display of Blocks
- Finished saree -Jamdani brocade with block prints made to suit the woven patterns.
- Saree draped around a lamp with the herbs and roots used for dyeing, as a rangoli.



Ayynar and Mariamman Temple construction in Tamil Nadu

Few of the terracotta images of gods and goddesses, that were made and fired in the Visual Arts Department of Rukmini Devi College of Fine Arts, Kalakshetra Foundation, Chennai, Tamil Nadu after firing.

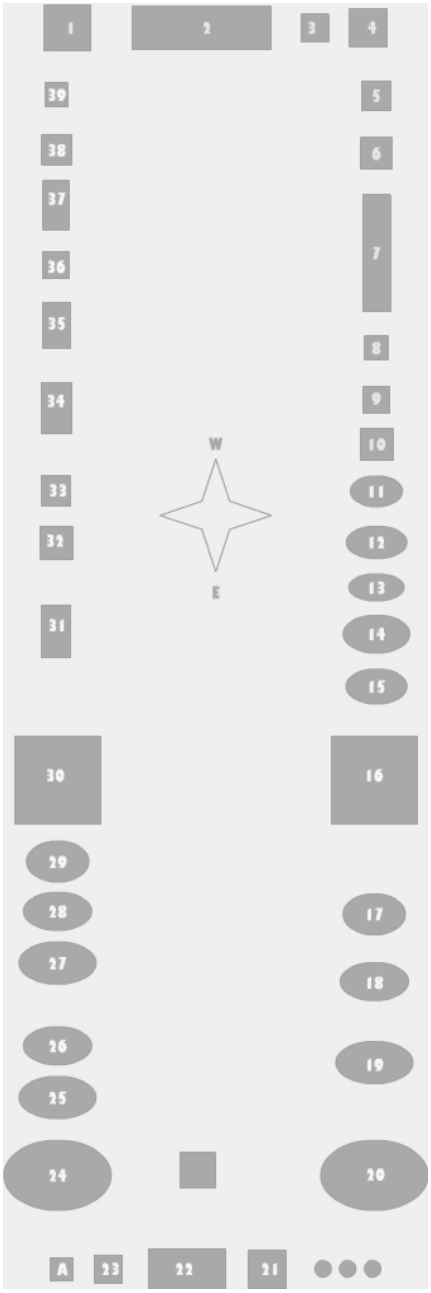
The sacred space with both Ayyanar temple and the Mariamman Temple in one place as against the normal practice of placing them at two opposite ends of the village is a standing visual treat for the Unity in Diversity of Folk Arts of India.

After firing all the sculptures were placed as per the agamas as shown below, with Ganapati, Murugan and the main deity Ayyanar with his two wives facing east.





,



Courtesy Natasha

1	Ganesh
2	Ayyanar
3	Nagamugam
4	Karttikeya
5	Sanyasi
6	Vardamal
7	Saptha kannigal
8	Aalathikkari
9	Bhairavar
10	Magudikaran
11	Elephant
12	Horse
13	Bull
14	Horse
15	Bull
16	Muneeswaran
17	Bull
18	Horse
19	Horse
20	Horse
21	Nondikarupar
22	Karuppar
23	Samban

24	Horse
25	Horse
26	Bull
27	Horse
28	Elephant
29	Bull
30	Muneeswaran
31	Kali
32	Aalathikkari
33	Ucchikaruppar
34	Adaikalam kaatthaan
35	Chinnakaruppar
36	Periakaruppar
37	Sanglikaruppar
38	Asuramugam
39	Kattavan
40	Tulsimadam



Uttar Pradesh

As the walls are painted with red mud paintings are done in black and white. The vehicle for the grama devatas are elephants as against the prevalence of horses in other parts of India.

Epilogue

Indian folk art is like a garland of flowers of many hues and fragrances continuously being strung together by a common thread presenting a picture of totality with occasional thrusts of individuality.

Kalyan Joshi with his miniature treatment with gilding in phad or Ganga Devi with her USA inspired Madhubani series or the Patachitra with thangka influenced cloud treatment etc. to quote a few.

