Chitra

PARAMPARYAM



Volume 4

Murals

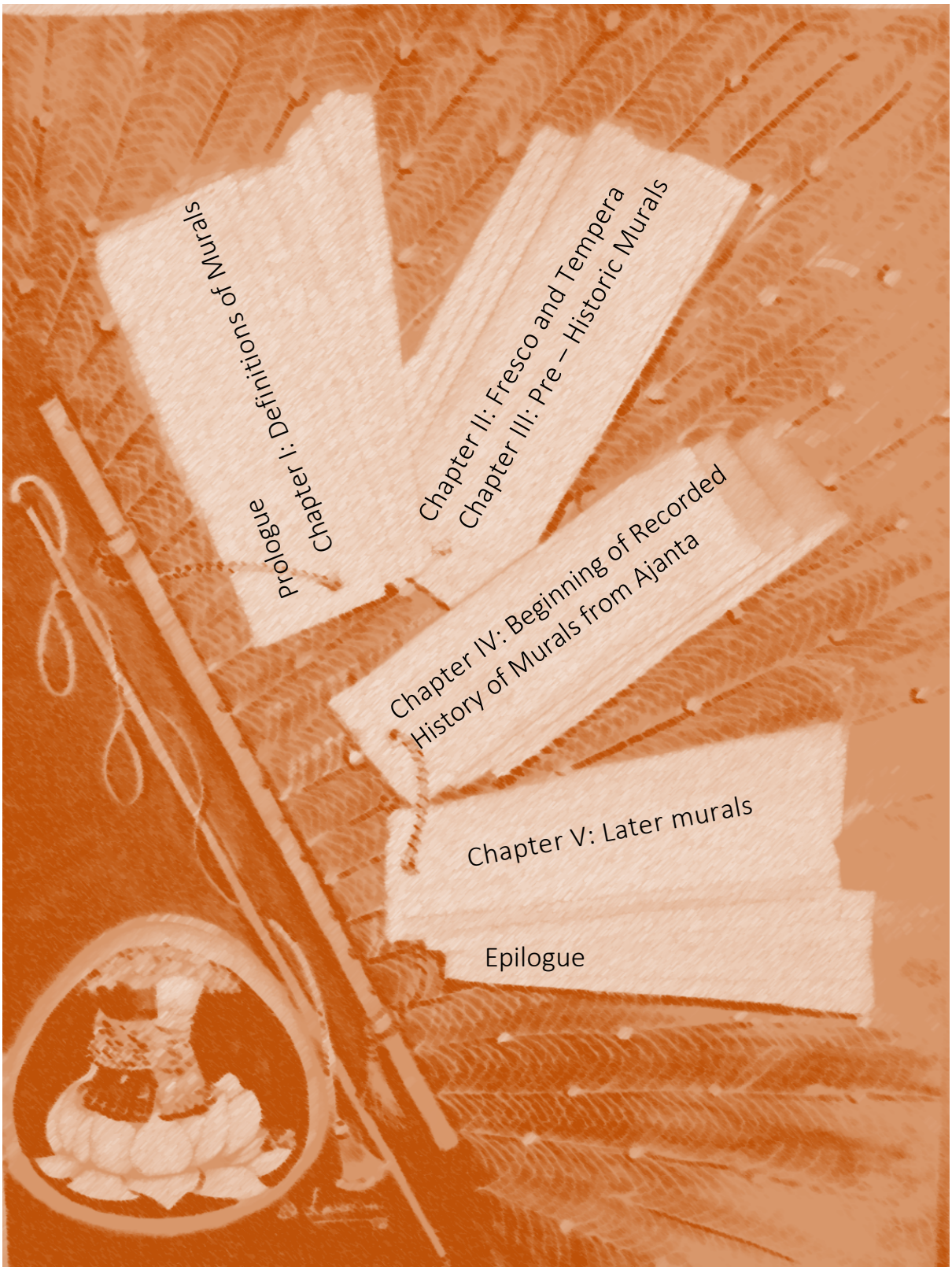


STUDIO
PARAMPARYAM

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Title Page 'Sambo Mahadeva' 24' x24' Kerala Mural with chunam and tender coconut water for base and natural colours.

List of Chapters



Murals

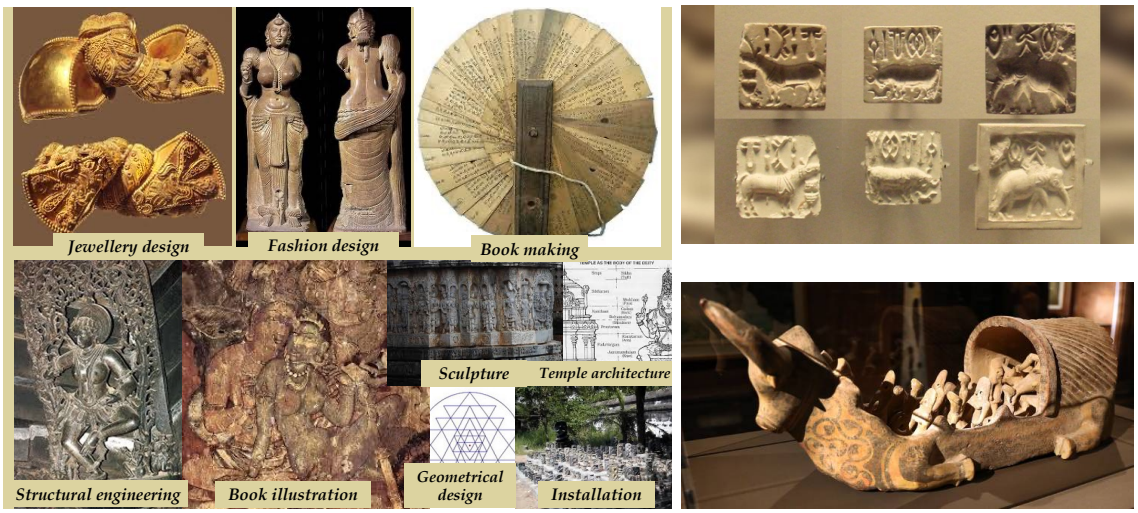
(With their Regal Splendor and Chosen mediums to suit the Soil with Graceful lines)

Prologue

History is like a torch, a beacon loaded with a wealth of experiences and explorations, an encyclopaedia in the making, a link, a heritage, a *parampara* to lead. As buildings would collapse without foundations, civilisations cannot march ahead without the awareness of heritage.

This volume would follow the historical path as much as possible. Most of the wall murals are deteriorating unfortunately.

A little introduction to the murals cannot begin without the mention of the prehistoric painting of a nude man - approximately 8.5'x4.9' in *Hirebenkal* hills of Karnataka, the largest in Asia, drawn in red ochre and filled with rendering (not traceable though) and Indus Valley Civilisation with all its artforms coming next with the unique urban civilisation shrouded still in mystery as the script has not been deciphered but full of ingenuity.



A few examples: All of these belonging to an earlier historical period still could serve as a nucleus to start a school of their own with their creative design and functionality

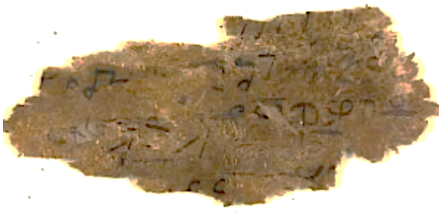
- Seals – precursor to print making
- Sculptures carved from chosen medium instead of available sources-technical expertise for their exclusiveness. (Terracotta boat in the shape of a bull, and female figurines. Kot Diji period).
- (c. 2800-2600 BC). Institution(Palazzo Fortune 2017 exhibition)
- Jewellery design as intricate, varied and dynamic as can be and designs so fine-tuned to start a school.
- Fashion design, showing how beautifully unstitched cloth could be draped with bejewelled-anchor.
- Book-making-All the palm leaf manuscripts tied up at one end – protection, purpose and economy of space
- Structural engineering – The bracket figures can all be unscrewed for any contingencies and reinstalled supporting the huge cupola in Belur Temple – Karnataka.
- Book illustration – All the wall murals are narrative. Vijayanagara - Nayak ones -probably the precursor to Amar Chitra Katha-as the story line is in-Telugu and Kannada or Telugu and Tamil - as part of their mural tradition.
- Hoysala temples-The stellate architecture opening up 3D sculptural representations is unique.
- Temple architecture – Corelated to human body and *Vastu* Sastra still valid is awesome
- Installation - The random placing of *naga* (snake) stones particularly in Rameswaram could be the most dynamic continuously evolving installations.

Vedic and Upanishadic Periods

Transition from nature worship to religion paved the way for the genesis of Hinduism with compilation of Vedas and Upanishads. The Divine revelations were passed on to a chosen few by oral tradition creating a ripple effect and later recorded in manuscript formats.

The birth of Buddha and Mahavira (6th century BCE.) and their philosophy of enlightenment and ahimsa respectively with the absence of ritualistic icon worships, drew attention of people from all walks of life.

Illustrated manuscripts became the revered Books for both Jainism and Buddhism.



"From the collections of British Museum from Google – fragment of birch bark manuscript, one of 29 Birch bark Scrolls in Kharosti,1st Century CE, from the ancient region of Gandhara - Shelfmark - Or14915 Featured in Discovering Sacred Texts."

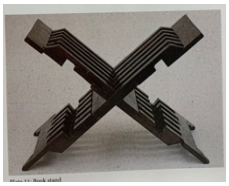
A Folio from Kalpasutra



Courtesy Painted Manuscripts of Saraswati Mahal Library Published by Director,

Thanjavur Maharaja Serfoji's Library, Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu







There is a lot of overlapping in so far as techniques, styles and canvasses used across the three books on Volumes 3, 4and 5 namely

- Volume 3 Pan Indian Techniques Part -1-PreHistoric Cave Paintings and Folk Paintings
- Volume 4 Pan Indian Techniques Part -2-Murals and
- Volume 5 Pan Indian Techniques Part -3-Other Canvasses

General Prelude has been incorporated for all Pan-Indian Paintings in Part 1 on Folk Painting and Sculptures.

Five Rathas ,Mahabalipuram Sketch by author

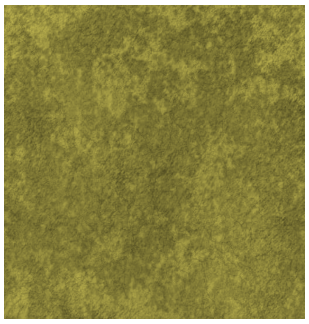


Chapter I

Definition of Murals

A little note on the nomenclature to understand the basic difference between Mural, Fresco and Tempera.

Mural paintings, dealing with the decoration of walls and ceilings, is organically connected with architecture and demands efficient use of colour, design and thematic treatment by experienced artists. The surface could range from plain stone walls (as in pre-historic cave paintings) or mud plastered (as in Warli, Pithora etc) to painstakingly prepared ones for frescoes using lime and sand/marble powder (as in Chola and Jaipur). Most of the Prehistoric and Folk and Tribal would also be wall murals but they have been dealt with in the previous book for their subjective content. Cartoons are sometimes prepared to solve technical and artistic problems prior to execution.



Mud and Cowdung plastered wall



Lime and sand or marble powder coated walls

The palette consists of ochres of red and yellow, *terraverte* (green), black from lamp- black and charcoal, lapis-lazuli and a few vegetables colour








Chapter II

Fresco and Tempera

Tempera and Fresco are the two mural painting techniques widely used in Indian wall paintings. In tempera, the pigments are ground in a medium miscible with water (like gum, egg white or yolk, gelatinous materials from animal hooves etc). The paintings have their distinctive qualities as do emulsions (an admixture of water based pigments with gum and oil from egg). They work like the modern day acrylic colours in that they get fixed, once dry. More detailed technique in Volume 9 - Repository of Painting Techniques.

Fresco is a method of painting on freshly applied, wet, lime plastered walls with chosen earth and mineral colours (alkali friendly) ground with fresh water. The colours dry and set with plaster and become a permanent part of the wall (Fresco Buono or True Fresco). In Fresco Secco the colours are applied on lime plastered walls without any adhesive. In both, the ground consists of two plasters, the rough plaster consisting of well slaked lime and sand or marble powder and the fine plaster is of well slaked lime. The ground appears smooth and the highly polished surface is of great advantage in the dust laden atmosphere. For detailed technique see Volume 9, 'Repository of Painting Techniques'.

First picture: Fresco palette with the visible sheen, Second: Tempera by author



Chapter III

Pre-Historic Murals

Pre- Historic Paintings

(Cross reference to Volume-3, Pan Indian Paintings-Part Folk Painting and Sculptures)
As the evolution of the painting scenario begun intuitively with Pre-historic cave paintings, has traversed through eons, along with the gradual movement of the cavemen onto agrarian pastures, they have all been grouped under the Folk Painting and Sculpures.

Paintings datable to Mesolithic, Chalcolithic and Neolithic periods are all grouped under pre-historic paintings, while those from Megalithic period onwards are ascribed to historic period. The primitive man was capable of only observation and could draw only moving objects.

Red line drawings on the outer surface of the rocks, gradually paved way to red line drawings with white colour fillers executed on the walls and ceilings inside the cave as can be seen in the Sattavarai Paintings in S. Arcot Dt, 1500 BCE. Drawings, showing communal activities at Kilvalai Paintings S. Arcot Dt, 100 BCE and Vettaikaran Hill Paintings Coimbatore Dt. gradually blossomed into paintings with religious intonations as found in the Masanakkadi Paintings, Nilgiris Dt. and Maharajakkadai Paintings, Krishnagiri Dt. 3 BCE. To crown the whole sequence a painted inscription in Tamil Brahmi script has been discovered near the Maharajakkadai Paintings 3 BCE (all in Tamil Nadu). Certain symbols used to ward off sickness and evil spirits ☬ are still being used for the same purpose in North and South Arcot districts.

Sangam Period

Based on literary references 2BCE-2 CE approx. (or as some say from 3BCE -3CE)
art like life, traditionally in India, is a matter of religious reflections, ritualised practices and a spirit of work manifesting in true craftsmanship. Even though comparatively little is known and nothing has survived of Sangam Period murals, literary references abound with such detailed information that the glorious paintings of Ajanta from 200 BCE could not have been a lone incident, but a part of a continuous and progressive tradition.

The story revolves around Chera, Chola and Pandya kingdoms of South India lying to the south of rivers Krishna and Tungabadra. With the entry of Kalabhras around 2nd or 3rd century CE, nothing much is known coincident with the name of the period – Dark Ages till 6th CE.

Treatise

Concept – Religious
Hinduism – பரிபாடல் 19 48 – 53
இரதி காமன் இவள் இவன் எனாஅ
விரகியர் வினவ வினாவிறுப் போரும்'
இந்திரன் பூசை இவளகலிகை யிவள்
சென்ற கவுதமன் சினனுறுக் கல்லுரு
ஒன்றிய படியிதென் றுரை செய்வோரும்
இன்ன பலபல எழுத்து நில மண்டபம்
(Poet Nappannanar describes the paintings of Eluttunilai Mantapam at Tirupparamkunram)

Jainism மதுரைக்காஞ்சி 475 – 487
வண்டு படப் பழுநிய தேனார் தோற்றத்துப்
பூவும் புகையுஞ் சாவகர் பழிச்சச்
சென்ற காலமும் வரூஉ மமயமும்
இன்றிவண் தோன்றிய ஒழுக்கமொரு நன்குணர்ந்து.
வானமு நிலனுத் தாமுழுதுணருஞ்
சான்ற கொள்கைச் சாயா யாக்கை
ஆன்றடங் கறிஞர் செறிந்தனர் நோன்மார்

கல்பொளிந்தன்ன விட்டுவாய்க் கரண்டைப்
பல்புரிச் சிமிலி நாற்றி நல்குவரக்
கயங்கண் டன்ன வயங்குடை நகரத்துச்
செம்பியன் நன்ன செஞ்சுவர் புனைந்து
நோக்கு விசை தவிர்ப்ப பேக்குயர்ந்தோங்கி
இறும்பூது சான்ற நறும்பூஞ்சேக்கையும்
Mankulimarutanar describes the paintings in Tamil Monastery

Buddhism மணிமேகலை
Secular பரிபாடல் *18 27 – 29*
நின் குன்றத்து
எழுதெழில் அம்பலங் காமவேன் அம்பிள்
தொழில் வீற்றிருந்த நகர்
பரிபாடல் *10 45 – 47*
எழின் மாடத்துக்
கைபுனை கிளர் வேங்கை காணிய வெருவுற்று
மையுரை மடப்பிடி மடநல்லார் விதிர்ப்புற

Nature சிறுபாணாற்றுப்படை *68 – 73*
நறுநீர்ப் பொய்கை அடைகரை நிவந்த
துறுநீர்க் கடம்பின் துணையார் கோதை
ஒலத்தன்ன உண்டுறை மருங்கிற்
கோவத்தன்ன கொங்குசேர் புறைத்தலின்
வருமுலை யன்ன வண்முகை யுடைந்து
திருமுகம் அவிழ்ந்த தெய்வத் தாமரை

Technique Fresco நெடுநல்லாடை *110 – 115*
வெள்ளியன்ன விளங்குஞ் சுதையுரீஇ
மணிகண்டன்ன மாத்திரட்டிண் காழ்ச்
செம்யன் றன்ன செய்வுறு நெடுஞ்சுவ
ருருவப் பல்பூவொருகொடி வளை இக்
கருவொடு பெயரிய காண்பினல்லில்

Waxed Textile நெடுநல்லாடை *157 – 163*

நுண்சேறு வழித்த நோன்நிலைத் திரள்கால்
ஊரு வறுமுலை கொளீஇய காறிருத்திப்
புதுவதியன்ற மெழுகுசெய் படமிசைத்
திண்ணிலை மருப்பி னாடுதலை யாக
விண்ணூர்பு திரிதரும் லீங்கு செலன் மாண்டிலத்து
முரண்மிகு சிறப்பிற் செல்வனொடு நிலஇய
ஒரோகிணி நினைவனள் நோக்கி நெடிதுயிரா

Toyyil (Figures drawn on breasts and shoulders using sandal wood paste)
கலித்தொகை 76 14 – 15
வணங்கிறை யவன் பற்றித்
தெரிவெய்த் தோட் கரும்பெழுதித் தொய்யில் செய்
தனைத்தற்கோ.

Sand பரிபாடல் 7 25-26
மாதர் மட நல்லார் மணலி னெழுதிய
பாலை சிதைத்த தெனவழ வொருசார்.

Textile சிலப்பதிகாரம்
புன்னை கிழல் புதுமணல் பரப்பில் ஒவிய எழினி சூழ உடன் போக்கு.

Beginning of Recorded History of Classical Murals and Later murals



a. Ajanta, Badami, Bagh, Ellora
b. Pallava- Pandya- 7-9 AD
c. Chola
d. Hoysala Murals
e. Kakatiya
f. Vijayanagara 1336 - 1646
g. Nayak Murals
h. Maratha Murals (Jamoda Jaina)
i. Karnataka
j. Andhra
k. Kerala
l. Rajasthan Schools
m. Muslim influence
n. Bamini Sultanate
o. Moghul Murals
p. Ladakh - Buddhist Paintings

Chapter IV

Beginning of Recorded History of Murals from Ajanta

The artist in ancient India had elaborate canon of criticisms for the understanding and appraisal of merits and defects in pictures. Excellent delineation achieved with minimum of drawing was the norm.

Mural paintings are visual counterparts of myth, legend, gods, deities, demons and saints of the religious dictum on one hand and the contemporary faiths of the literary world on the other. The ceiling was always filled with flora, fauna and designs, while the walls were filled with religious

A panel from Srirangam temple for the clarity of colours and line work



undertones The palette consisted of ochres of red and yellow, *Terraverte* (green), black from lamp-black and charcoal, lapis-lazuli and a few vegetable colours.

With yogic concentration, under stipulated iconographic codes and artistic canons, the infinite variety of paintings available of the same concept, be it religious, narrative or secular, over the centuries speaks volumes of the expertise in delineation with dedication and devotion of the artists and the flow of an uninterrupted classical heritage strung together by religious eclecticism.

Ajanta, Badami, Bagh and Ellora

Out of the 1200 cave temples in India, only 100 shrines were of Hindus while the Buddhist shrines numbered around 900 and the rest Jain. After Ajanta, very few sites with paintings have survived.

Ajanta The paintings are the torch bearers to the visual art scenario of the Indian sub-continent spanning 800 years from 2nd BCE to 6th CE, falling in line with the rise and fall of different dynasties (Vakatakas and Satavahanas of Andhra). The idyllic location precipitated the use of vegetable, earth and mineral colours in tempera. In many places, sculptures were also plastered and painted, stucco.

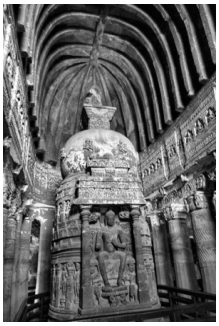
From ASI Aurangabad Circle Aurangabad





Shadangas can effectively be used for evaluating the Ajanta Murals (reference in Book 2 on Shadangas).

- Rupabheda - Form-Chaitya Griha and the Mahaparinirvana Buddha extending for 7 meters – cave26.





- Pramanani - Correct perception,



- Bhava -Action of feelings on forms – Cave -1 Mahajanka Jataka



- Sadrisyam – Similitude – cave -2 to convey the feeling of heavenly abode



- Varnika Bhanga - Artistic manner of using the brush and colours



- Lavanya Yojanam - Infusion of grace, artistic representation of Padmapani and Vajrapani





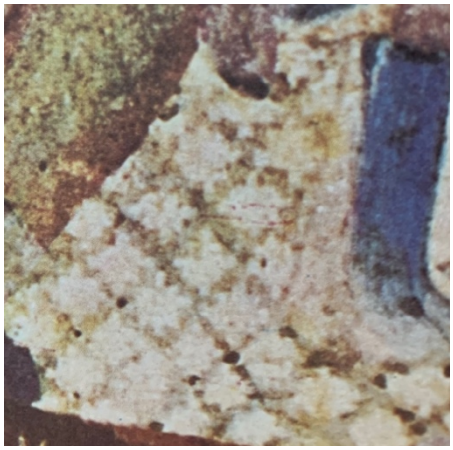




- The elephant face part of the murals on the wall with an impish smile has also set the trend for late Chitrakathi Paintings and then the leather puppets of Karnataka.

- The ikat design on their dresses seem to be the forerunner to the Gujarati tradition!! The use of strands of pearl stands them apart from later murals.





- Some paintings to show the presence of foreigners and decline




Ajantha-Badami-Chola-Vjayanagar-Nayak -Maratha







The lyricism in the Ajanta paintings continue till the Chola frescoes in Brahadeeswarar temple. Painting scenario came back in highly stylised form during Vijayanagara-Nayak period, to transform with the focus, on the main subject being portrayed bigger than the other during Maratha Period.

Badami

Rock cut cave shrines of Badami heralds the onset of monolithic shrines of Vedic tradition. Established by Jayasimha in 500 AD the Chalukyan kingdom reached its zenith under Pulikesin II. The caves built by Mangalesa around the Agastya Lake stand as mute witnesses for both the introduction of Hindu shrines and the continuous proclamation of religious tolerance with the Jain *Tirthankara* caves.

The paintings dealing with both religious and secular themes seem to be an extension of the Ajanta mural painting tradition. From the inscriptions the date of the period between 578 – 579 CE and the Vaishnava leanings of the patron could be surmised. While the 1st cave focusses on Siva, 2nd and 3rd caves focus on Vishnu. While the sculptures are all big, the portrayal of Vishnu on coiled serpent and other avatars are mammoth in size.

Highlights.

- Cave No. 3 also known as the Vishnu Cave with the depiction of different *avatars* (incarnations) of Vishnu has a sculpture of the *Varaha avatar* - to highlight the fact that as *Varaha*, redeemed the earth, the king takes pride in shouldering the responsibilities of his kingdom. *Varaha* was even used as their symbol.
- The use of paintings and sculpture to highlight the identification of the king with the qualities of their *kulanayagam* (Family God) probably began with this temple.
- Kirtivarman, the elder brother of Mangalesa is portrayed as paying his eternal obeisance to Varaha in Indra-Sabha in the painting, next to the main shrine emphasising both the belief in after life and identification with the Kulanayagam
- Paintings depict palace scenes. A painting shows Kirtivarman seated in the palace and watching a dance scene with his wife and feudatories.

- The faces of the king and queen are reminiscent of the modelling seen in Ajanta, with their eye-sockets large, eyes half-closed , protruding lips and faces rounder.
- The portrayal of king and queen and their crowns are very different, probably the influence of local fervour!
- These artists of the 6th century CE were able to create volume by contouring different parts of the face to create protruding structures of the face itself.





Bagh



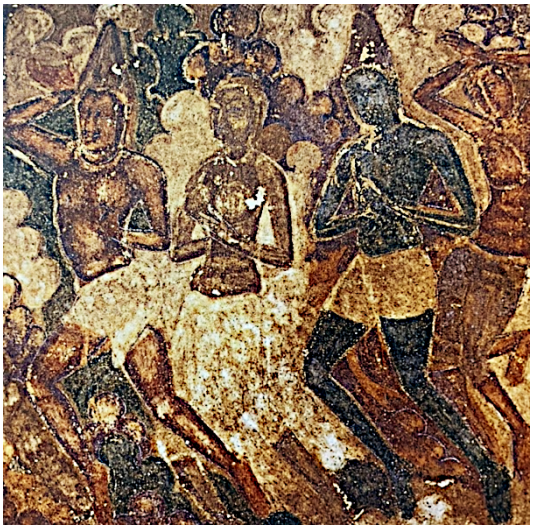
The cave paintings contemporary to Ajanta Caves were carved in 5-6th CE during Satavahana rule, a late Buddhist period in India on the banks of the Bhagini River. These caves are a fine example of the rock-cut architecture of India that probably began with Barabar caves in Bihar. Bagh painters used the tempera technique, which uses a lime coating on top of a mud and vegetable fibre layer that covers the rock face. The same technique and similar colours have been used as in Ajanta. A rust-red tone dominates the Bagh paintings.




From Indian Express May 21st 2021 Before and After digital restoration by Benoy Behl

Ellora: A beauty that is forever and ever! Built by Krishna I of Rashtrakutas, feudatories of Chalukyas who came to power in753 CE. A mammoth monolithic stone, rather a mountain, carved from top downwards to house the Pantheon of Hindu gods in such size and scale set in huge temple complexes, to proclaim religious harmony with the shrines for Buddhist and Jain Pantheons, and to have embellished them all with murals is an unsolved mystery till today. Declared as one of the World Heritage Sites by UNESCO, it is also one of the world's largest rock-cut Hindu cave temple complexes. (From timestravels Nov14th 2022).





From Jain Caves in Ellora

The tall and sinewy character of the Jain People seem to traverse through time to continue in the Jain murals at Thirupparuthikunram near Kanchipuram Tamil Nadu -7th century.





Source Facebook: Indian Heritage Ark

Pallava Pandya

Pallava-Pandya 7-9 (Painting photographs with kind Courtesy of Sri M.Chandramurthy, Retired Deputy Director, Tamil Nadu Archaelogy Department)

The Pallava king Mahendra Varman introduced rock cut architecture to South India. The oldest surviving paintings are preserved in cave temples built by Pallavas and Pandyas at Panamalai, Mandagapattu and Kanchipuram amongst others. An inscription at Mandagapattu mention king Mahendravarman I with several titles such as Vichitrachitta (curious- minded), Chaityakari (temple-builder) and Chitrakara Puli (tiger among artists) showing his interest in artistic activities.



Pandya Prince – Chiitannavasal and Vishnu Kailasanathar Temple – Kanchipuram



The layout of paintings in such temples are as follows: The carpet canopy covers the ceiling with colour designs of flowers, birds, animals and other objects, the walls are painted in religious themes and the pillars and beams are embellished.

The technique used was Fresco Secco and Stucco. The pigments used are carbon, lime, terraverte, red and yellow ochres.

Traces of Pallava Murals are seen at Cave temples of Mamandur, rock cut temples of Tiruchirapalli, Mamallapuram, Sittannavasal and Armamalai, while remnants of paintings are extant in Kailasanatha temple at Kanchipuram and Panamalai.

Highlights - Religious tolerance and interdependence of different forms of fine art permeates. Force of line is the hall mark of Indian Art. Among the surviving panels of the Kailasanatha Temple, the Somaskanda Shiva panel expounds an expression of divine motherhood, a popular concept of the Pallavas expressed for the first time in painting. Even though the colours have disappeared, the red ochre outline validating the argument stands tall proving the mastery of the artists. With the focus on Trinity (the religious affability), and in the two *Kinnara* Mithunas (a pair of part human and part bird), the blend of rhythm and art in the restrained use of colours with great aesthetic effect can be perceived.





In Panamalai, only one painting of Parvati witnessing the *Samasta SamharaTandava* (Dance of total devastation) with a parasol over her head has survived - a poem in mood, textile design and dexterity.

Armamalai paintings of the *Samasvarana* concept of Jain Philosophy and of *the Ashta-Dik-Palakas* are the lone examples of the admixture of Pallava, Chalukya, Rashtrakuta and Chola art.

Pandya Murals

Recent discoveries of prehistoric cave paintings in Sirumalai in Madurai Dt. by Dr.Vijaya Venugopal predate the available data to 3 BCE.

Traces of later paintings 9 CE are seen at Kilavalavu, Kilakuilkudi, Ananuralai, Tirumalaipuram, Sittannaavasal and Sithaiyan Kottai.

The paintings discovered by Jouveau-Dubreuil at Sittannavasal executed under the patronage of Sri Mara Sri Vallabha, by a Jain monk Ilam Gouthaman set the style for the lyrical decorative qualities that were to reappear in the Chola period.

The theme is religious, setting natural and the treatment is fresco secco. The pigments used are the same as in Pallava murals with the addition of lapis lazuli for blue.

The use of paintings as a visual medium to explain the ethical nuances of religious philosophy has been developed to a quintessential quality by the Jain monks.



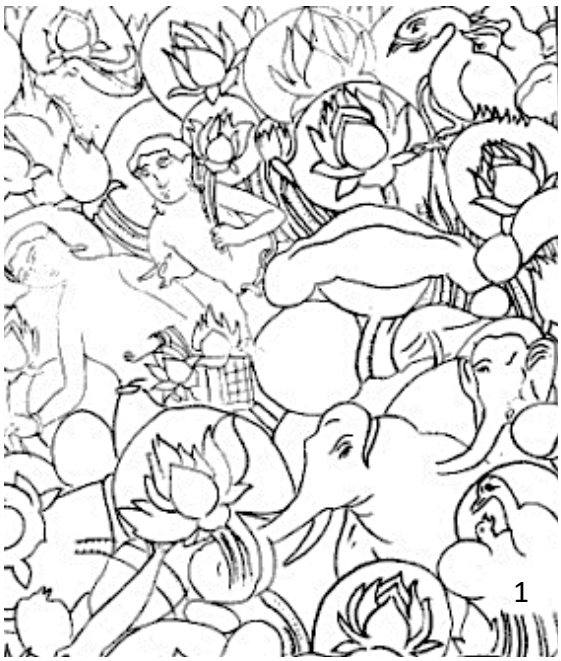
For Exampe – Painting lotus against dark leaf background







Khatika bhumi or Lotus Pond.





1 – Line drawing to show how it would have been.

2 – Painting to show how it would have been.

High lights

- The most important painting of the period is that of the Khatika bhumi (Lotus Pond) found on the ceiling of the front mandapa at Sittannavasal
- Even though different interpretations have been attributed to this mural, the most popular theory is that of the *Samavasarana*, the divine preaching hall of Tirthankara. The *bhavyas* (bathers), the good people who have the good fortune to attend the discourses have to pass through *Khatika-bhumi*, which according to Sripurana (a work on *Digambara* Jain Iconography) is the Lotus Pond Teaming with flora and Fauna. The *bhavyas* after their ablutions are shown

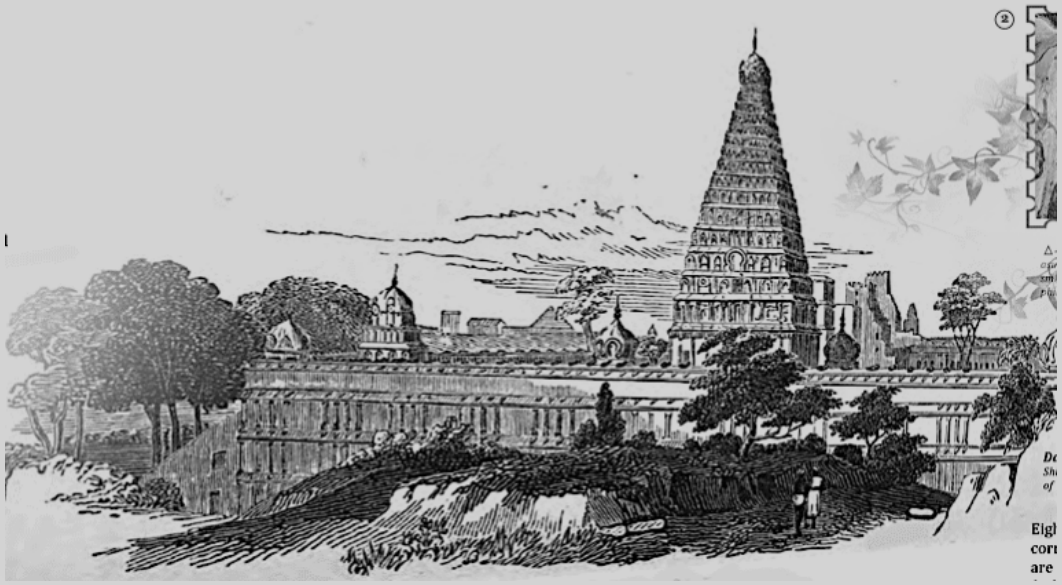


plucking flowers (full bloom set against the dark leaf - symbol of purity) to offer to Gods. The meaningful portrayal of mythological *Chakravahas* (akin to Brahminical *Ducks*) to imply discrimination of good and evil, *saras* (Cranes) for eternal love, ducks for musical notes and the buffaloes for the complacence, in their natural habitats with the underlying intonations is the true character of these paintings. In other-words exegetic use of known circumstances to explain the unknown in the watermark of the period. *(Sadrisyam* or Similitude in Shadangas)
- Paintings are seen on the ceilings of the shrine, in verandas and on the brackets.
- Dancing figures of celestial nymphs are seen.
- Contours are in vermillion red and the bodies are painted yellow. Dancers have expressions on their faces and show supple limbs. Their eyes are elongated and sometimes protrude off the face. This is a distinctive feature seen in many later paintings in the Deccan and South India

Most of these treasures are unfortunately disappearing!!

Chola Murals 9 -13 CE.

The Cholas were at the height of their power in the 11th century CE. Temples built during the reign of Rajaraja Chola and his son Rajendra Chola - Brihadeswara Temple, Gangaikonda Cholapuram, and Darasuram - have all been befittingly declared as World Heritage Monuments by UNESCO.



Rajarajeswaram, Brihadeeswarar Temple or *Periya Koil* (Big Temple) – enjoyed being acclaimed as having the tallest gopuram over the Sanctum Sanctorum in the whole of Asia from the time it was built for a few centuries and still continues to have the distinction as one of the few tall gopurams.

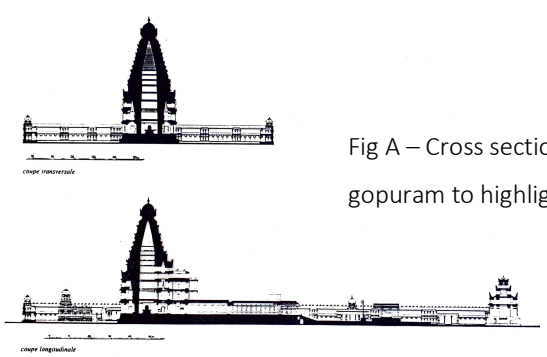


Fig A – Cross section to show the hollow space within the gopuram to highlight the corbelling arch style in architecture.

Fig – B To highlight the two levelled enclosures divided by *Talas* (mezzanine floor) around the *garbagriha* (Sanctum Sanctorum) housing the macro cosmic Linga.

Tala-1 (Lower) has the Paintings.

Tala-2 (Upper)has the sculptures as Siva dancing with four arms with His *Ganas* portraying the karnas of Dance. Inside the *devakoshtas* outside at this level Tripurantaka sculptures are placed probably in corroboration with the three crowns of Rajaraja - Sri Lanka, Chera and Pandya. In iconographic code only 8 different forms are mentioned. Worth a research study by itself!!!

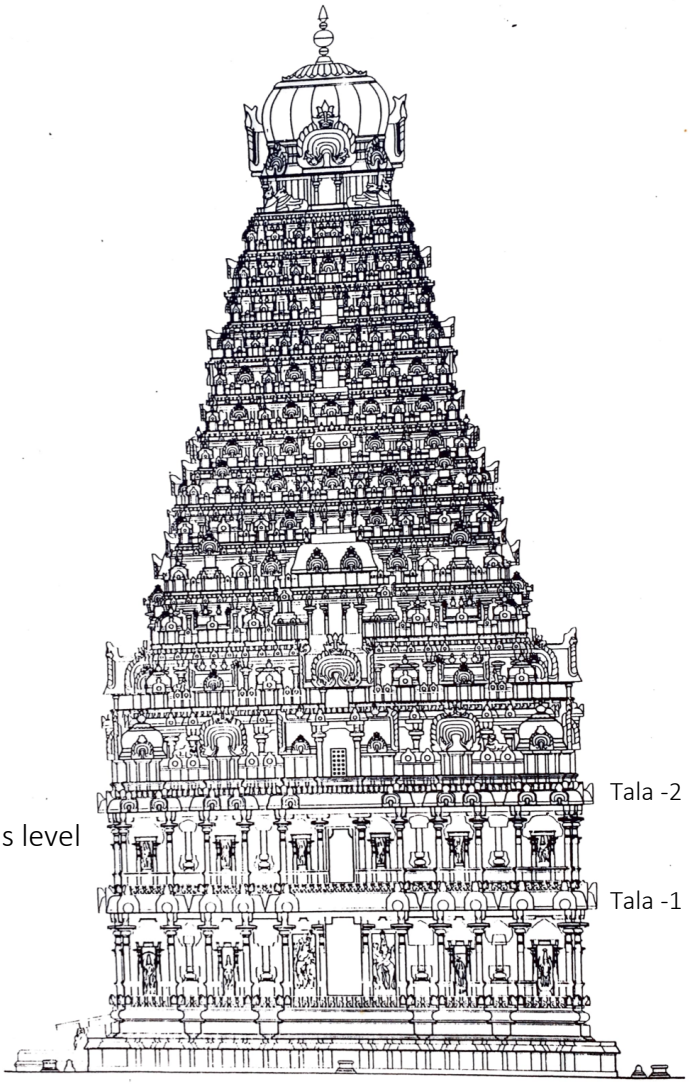


Fig B - Tripurantaka Images

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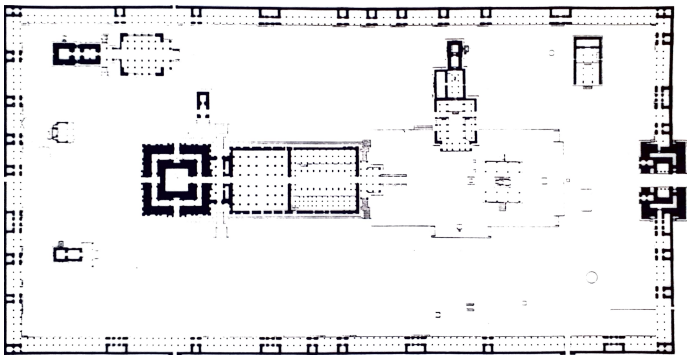


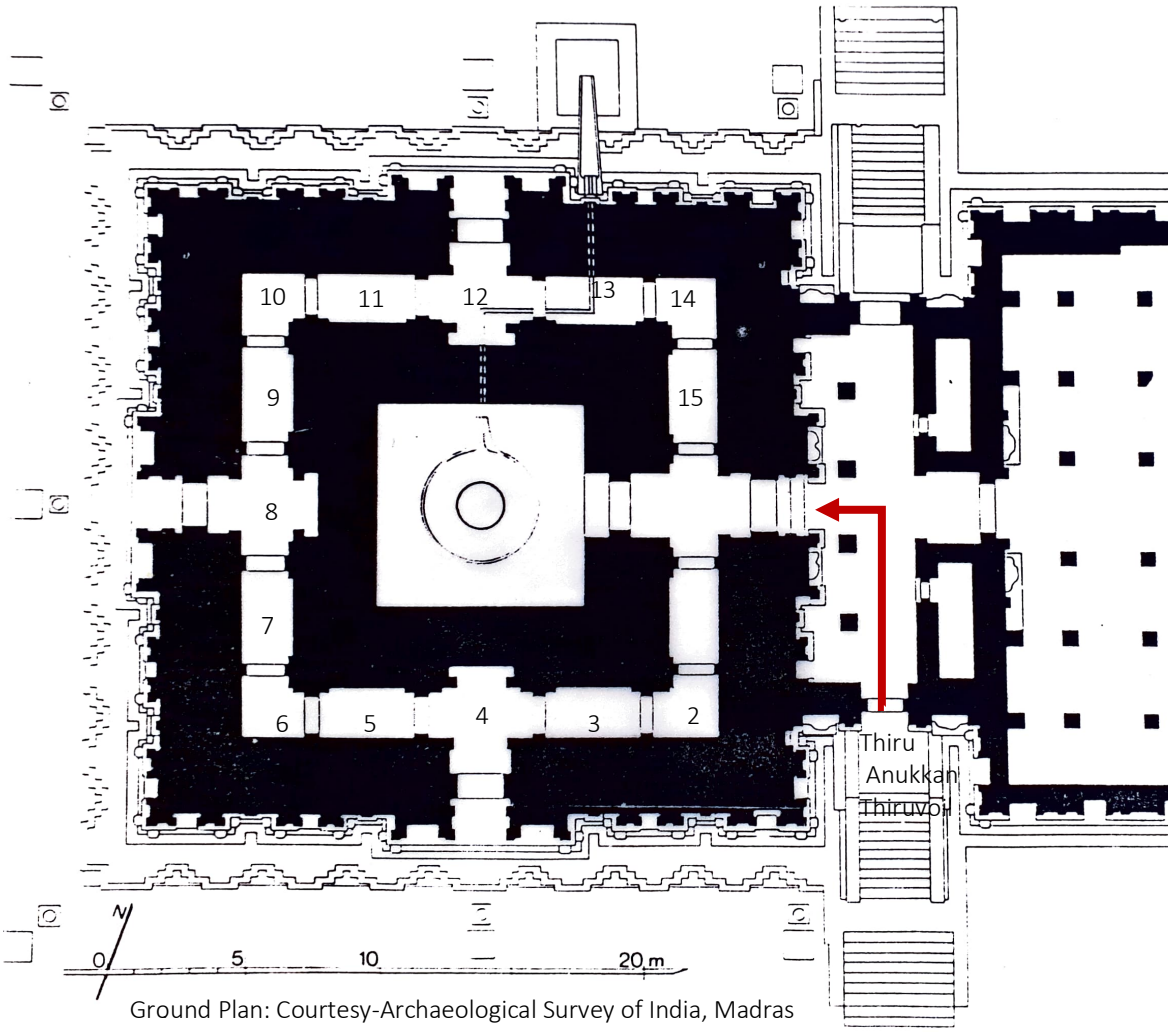
Fig - C

The floor plan to highlight that the *Garbagriha* is right in the middle of the second half of the rectangle and the vimana is *Sarvatobhadra* type (with openings in all four directions providing light and ventilation for the inner chambers).

Wonder why these have to be closed and artificial lights need be used. Could easily have a slanting thick glass so that rain water would flow out and the paintings and could be viewed in natural light as planned originally???

The paintings discovered by S.K. Govindaswamy in 1930 around the main cell in the dark passage in the Brihadeeswarar temple are in two layers, the Nayak Period on top, revealing an earlier one below, a true Chola painting.

In executing true Fresco, Indian craftsmanship has reached its zenith during the Golden age of Cholas under Rajaraja, the Great as could be seen in the Brihadeeswarar Temple at Thanjavur, comparable only to Cretan technique (3rd Millennium BCE). It is the forerunner of the frescoes at Fatehpur Sikri and Jaipur in 16CE when Michelangelo was executing masterpieces in Rome.
(Paramasivan)



Ground Plan: Courtesy-Archaeological Survey of India, Madras

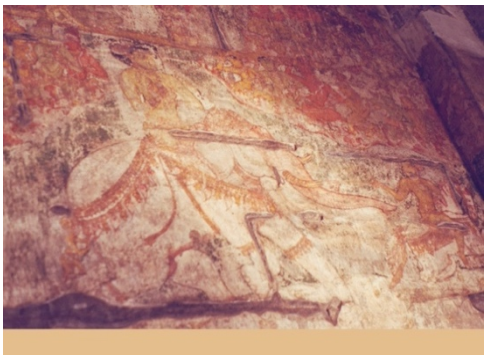
- The chambers around the *Garbagriha* marked to show the location of Paintings.
- Marked in red, *Thiru Anukkan Thiruvoil* (Entrance nearer to *Garbagriha*) instead of the frontal normal entrance.

All the architectural drawings-Courtesy-Archaeological Survey of India, Madras

Highlights

Every panel is important, as these murals are the first of their kind in India by virtue of the difficult fresco technique.

The theme is religious. During 7, 8 and 9 CE *Bhakthi* (Devotion) movement brought out the shift of emphasis in literature from heroism to devotional ethos of this genre. The very first mammoth expression is the painting of the life history of Sundara, one of the four Saivite Saints, drawn from the hagiology which was later worked up into *Periapuranam*, on the western wall of the 7thchamber. There is no comparable depiction either in visualisation or in execution to this masterpiece in India. Saint Sundarar's life beginning on earth transcends the sky and reaches heaven. In the picturisation, there is no delineation. The whole treatment starts from the bottom of



the wall, travels upward resulting in one harmonious composition within the narrow confines of the perambulatory passage. The impact is spectacular.



- The wonderful qualities of Rajaraja, which made him great, found their expressions in sculptures, paintings and bronzes.
- *Sivapada Sekhara's* reverence to *Adavallan* in the painting on the east wall and jamb of Chamber 9 of Rajaraja and his three queens worshipping Lord Nataraja.





Diplomacy of Mummudi Chola immortalised on the south face of Chamber 11, in the Tripurantaka panel.



Karur Thevar on the inner jamb facing north in Chamber 10. The list is endless.

There are fragments of early Chola painting, at Narthamalai and Malayadipatti, and of late Chola in Tirumalai (Jain murals) which mark the slow transition from Chola to Vijayanagar style.

Fig. Narthamalai



Hoysala Murals

Hoysalas 11-13 CE (Karnataka)

The shift from harder sandstone to fine textured soapstone (Chlorite Schist), soft to work with but which hardens on exposure, brought about intense temple building activities with intrinsic carvings as could be seen in Belur, Halebid and Somnathpur temples. They almost obliterated the mural painting scenario but for the ones at the Srirangam temple in Tamil Nadu The index pillar at Belur, the location of the temple tank in accordance to the water table, the polish on the pillars of the Jain temple in Halebid comparable only to the later date Hall of Mirrors are some of the silent witnesses to the scientific knowledge of the period.

The illustrated Manuscripts Paintings are the only paintings available preserved in the Moodbidri



Jain Library. They are painted on unusually large palm leaves using only ochres and green colours. They are beautifully proportioned with geometrical borders and scroll designs.

When converted from Jainism to Hinduism by Ramanuja, Vishnuvardhana became a staunch Vaishnavite and his wife Santala remained a Jain. Religious tolerance characteristic of Hindu kings precipitated harmonious expressions of religious faiths simultaneously.

Courtesy Jaina Basadi Moodbidri

The paintings discovered by the Archaeological Department in the Venugopala Shrine of Srirangam Temple Complex are the only surviving example of Hoysala Murals.

The technique is Fresco Secco. The palette is similar to the earlier period. The concept is religious but the treatment is different more akin to Lepakshi Murals than to the earlier school.

Highlight is the painting of Venugopala on the ceiling with the whole retinue of birds and animals (especially cows) mesmerised by the divine music, which became a very popular theme for later schools. Unfortunately, not much could be perceived as it has been covered is covered with soot over the centuries.

Kakatiyas of Warangal11-13 CE(Andhra)

Kakatiyas, feudatories of Western Chalukyas, when they became independent rulers, followed the art traditions of Kalyani Chalukyas.

Their intense devotion to Siva brought about building of great monumental temples at Warangal, Palampet, Anamkonda, Tripurantakam, Macharla and other places.

With the entire mandapa and ceiling painted, the large temple, *Tripurantakam* is a very important monument of the Kakatiya period.

Highlights:

The legacy of *Amrithamanthana* (churning of ocean) concept handed down from the Gupta period through Western Chalukyas and later Eastern Chalukyas finds expression in sculptural panels in Kakatiya monuments. The first medieval expression of this in painting occurs at Pillalamarri temple.

The devas on one side and the asuras on the other are churning the milky ocean with Vasuki as a rope tied around the Meru – as churning stick – to obtain *amritha*, the elixir.



Similar expressions are extant in Cambodia.

Chapter **V**

Later Murals

Vijayanagar Empire
Andhra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Maharashtra and Orissa

(Suggestive position of the Empire based on Google references by author)





(Ref image from Vijayanagara Paintings by C.Sivaramamurthi

Publications Division,1907)

Towards the end of the 14th Century CE, the supremacy of the Hoysalas was eclipsed by the Deccan Muslims. But for the *Panca-Pandava* heroes of the Vijayanagara (Harihara and his brothers of the Sangama dynasty), the entire region would have been proselytised to Islam. With the blessings of the sage Vidyatheertha (portrayed in the wall mural at Hampi), they heralded the renaissance of Hinduism, which reached its zenith during the reign of Krishna Deva Raya.

A new impetus was given to temple buildings in the vast empire embracing Andhra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Maharashtra and Orissa. Gopurams and many pillared halls were added to existing temple complexes. Sangeetha Mandapam and/or Chitra Mandapam were created as an easel for artists. The walls were all painted with stories of *Sthalapuranam*, Ramayanam, Mahabharatam, *Devimahatmyam* etc. The list is endless, executed more or less in Illustrated Manuscript format, with the story narrated in Telugu and Kannada or Tamil depending on the area. The Amar Chitra Katha publishers are probably following their footsteps!! The Kalamkari tradition infused delicate textile designs aplenty, enriched by the basecoat of white stucco.

The emphasis was to propagate religion and educate people with picturisation, attuned more towards Telugu cultures and customs as could be seen in the Ramayana panel in the Venugopala Parthasarathy temple at Chengam discovered by Sri M. Chandramurthy.

Even though there was a slow decadence in the art, technique and process of painting, as compared to the earlier schools, the volume and meaningful emphasis in the former brought in adulations from travellers like Paes (Portuguese).



The technique used was fresco secco, the pigments similar to Chola frescoes. A new technique of gilding had been introduced, which was even painted over at times.

(Travelling temples – Cross ref to Volume 5, Forerunner to Thanjavur School of Painting).



The conical cap of Vijayanagar, sharp features, prominent buttocks, closely tucked in under garments, fan shaped ending of sarees and dhoties, side profile, and beautiful decorative textile designs (influence of Kalamkari) seem to be the watermark of the period.

Line drawing and painting to highlight the renderings in Lepakshi Murals.







Natural colours on lime wash



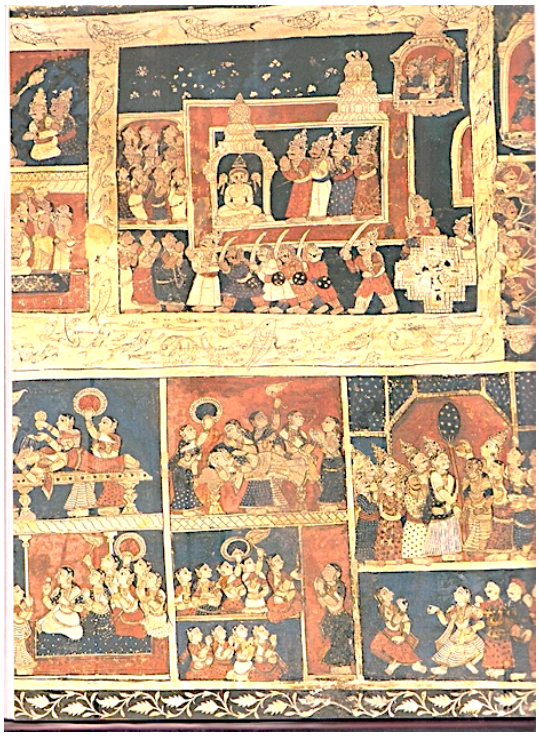


Iintermingling of cultures, ideologies and concepts precipitated a variety of schools, characterised by multiplicity of genre, form, style and technique, sharing a common character “A pattern emerging out of overlapping circles of a constantly moving spiral, where the bottom can be the top and vice versa and yet there is centre and axis, an identifiable rhythm and tempo” (Kapila Vatsyayan, The Arts of Kerala Kshetram).

The portrayal of religious hegemony is seen in most of their murals.

- The introduction of *Bhikshadana* concept (Siva as *Bhikshadana* and Vishnu as Mohini) in painting, portrayal of *Sankaranarayana* (half Siva and half Vishnu) or elaboration of Krishna theme in Siva temples (as in Thiruveezhimilalai), to name only a few, serve as archival evidence for the practice of religious eclecticism





Highlights – Paintings of the early phase of the Vijayanagar seen in the Sangeetha mandapa of Vardamana temple at Tirupparuttikkunram show the transition from Chola to Vijayanagar periods. The themes are chosen from the life of Vardamana. The Nativity scenes seem to be the precursor to Madurai (Nayak) and Kerala murals a few centuries later.

Virupaksha temple, Hampi, Karnataka

The entire ceiling of the large mandapa has a magnificent series of paintings. Unlike the earlier Deccan paintings, the ceiling is not just covered by decorative floral and scroll designs but with portrait, icon and narrative paintings. Stylisation changes incorporating a moustache for Siva in the Tripurantaka panel to make Him valiant and forceful. Even the colour coding like red for Brahma to signify rajas and white for Siva for Sattva etc., departures from norms – is not to challenge traditional values but only to give regional accents and artistic freedom.
The two important paintings of 15CE are –



Tripurantaka panel –Of all the murals at the Virupaksha temple in Hampi (14th Century), Tripurantaka painting requires special attention, according to R.N.Salatore, as the whole episode has been explicitly portrayed to the minutest detail with spirit and accuracy.

The arrow is made up of a row of celestials as per the Yajurveda *Taittriya Samhiti*. The Tripuras are shown as three circles with the Asuras fighting with Narasimha, Vayu and Agni respectively. Sun and moon depicting the wheels of the chariot are humanised sporting a moustache to denote a scene of fury. Whole panel bespeaks the devastation of evil.

The introduction of *Rati* and *Manmatha* for the first time in sculpture and painting is also attributed to the same period as can be seen at the Virupaksha Murals. Madantaka is loaded with emotive expressions. Serene young *Madana* is shown riding a chariot drawn by parrots accompanied by *Rati*. In contrast Shiva with His *jatabhara*, *yogapatta* and *raudra* eyes enough to turn *Madana* into

ashes is shown with smiling countenance. Parvathy and Nandi are shown stunned. Close affinity between theatrical arts and painting come to the fore.

In Lepakshi, Ananthapur District, Andhra Pradesh, a shrine of Siva faces Vishnu with the Veerabadhra shrine further back at the centre, creating a triangle and the ceiling has one of the largest paintings of Asia in the Veerabhadra panel (the other is Vishnu in Aavudaiyar Koil). The paintings discovered by A.H. Longhurst in 1912-1913CE, come alive with drama and movement in Shaivite themes. The temple, second only to Ajanta in the rich heritage of Andhra artistry, is filled with paintings of Hindu pantheon in an encyclopaedic magnitude.

'Kirata-Arjuna' Panel: A scene from Mahabharatha depicting the little anecdote between Shiva and Arjuna before the gift of Pashupatastra. (Shiva disguised as *Kirata*, mountaindwelling hunter)



As per the Shadangas Virupanna and Veeranna have been portrayed in *Uttamatala* and *Madyamatala*

Parvathi getting ready for marriage





Virupanna and Veeranna

As per the Shadangas Viruppanna and Veeranna have been portrayed in Uttamatala and *Madyamatala*

Mukha Mandapa has eight panels

1	60'x3'6"	Episode of Manuneedhi Chola
2	17'x5'4"	Siva as Bhairava and Draupadi's marriage
3	37'x5'9"	Vatapatrasayee, Portraits of Viruppanna and Viranna Veerabadra Anugrahamurthy
4	37'x5'	Ashta-Dik-Palakas
5	E-W 37' N-S25'	Continuous panel running around the central panel of Kritarjunyam
6		Bhukailash
7		Siva's Durbar
8		Ramayana

Artha-Mandapa- has portrayals of different manifestations of Siva and one of Devi

Sayanagriha – Repetitive portrayals of Uma-Maheswara Murthy

Raghunathalaya – 7 Avatars of Vishnu (Very differently portrayed).

Garbagriha – The awe-inspiring painting of Vira Bhadra 25'x14'at a height of15'6" painted mostly in grey and befittingly termed "A Symphony in Grey" serves as a precursor to later portable icon paintings of Thanjavur and Mysore Schools. The very technique singles out this painting from the whole school of Vijayanagar Paintings. The drawing is forceful, the colours subdued creating an aura of floating in the air dominating the whole sky , illumination achieved by the *varthanas-Patra, Raikika* and *Binduja* (cross hatching, line shading and stripling).The characteristic smaller portrayal of Veeranna and Virupanna paying obeisance, show the respect the votaries had for their Kulanayagam (Family Deity).As Krishna deva Raya had Tripuranthaka as his lord supreme, then his savants chose Veerabhadra an emanation from Siva as their Kulanayagam.

Other examples:

- Hampi – As Tripuranthaka, his *Kulanayagam* has won over the three cities, Krishnadeva Raya has won laurels and hence the identity. Influences can be seen from earlier schools such as the mural and the multiple versisions of Tripuranthka sculptures in the upper-tier devakoshtas of the vimana of the Big Temple. Thanajavur.
- Mahabalipuram – In Varaha temple, the portrait sculptures of both Simhavishnu and Mahendravarman (Pallava Kings) with their queens have been carved next to the Varaha
- Tirupathy – Bronze images of Krishnadevaraya and his queens inside the temple and many many more.

A very rare specimen of multi-armed Nataraja portrayed as dancing on the five headed Vasuki, highlighted by a dark blue background while the others are in off white background at Thiruvalanjuli, near Kumbakonam is a piece justificative of the total commitment of the artists based on the in-depth knowledge of Agamas and Puranas.

By author A painting in
oil based on the concept at Thiruvalanjuli
incorporating *Tarukavan* Episode.



Kancheepuram Varadaraja Temple (Source Lavanya Padmanabhan Face book)

Theertha Waterbo *Vishnu Vriksha Tree*







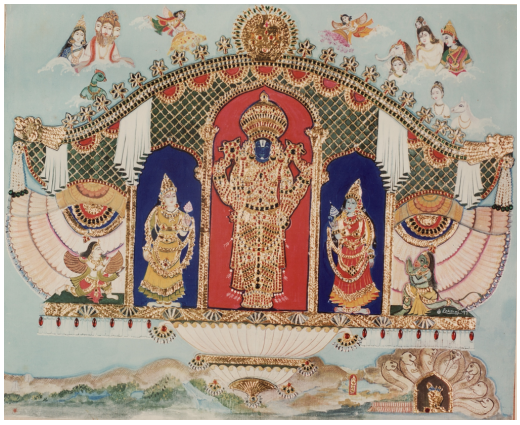
To sum up, we see the transformation of myth into history, in the portrayal of the wedding scenes of the divinities at Eluttu Mandapam of Tiruvannamalai, the encyclopedic portrayal of the 108 Divya Desas in the Varadaraja temple at Kanchipuram with their respective theertha, sthalavriksha and the deities, the skillful portrayal of Sukriva pattabishekam and that of Hanuman entering the mouth of the demon as a dwarf and coming out in His Viswarupa to quote a few examples.

One each of the paintings of a series of four on Pilgrimage Centres of India by author:

Srirangam

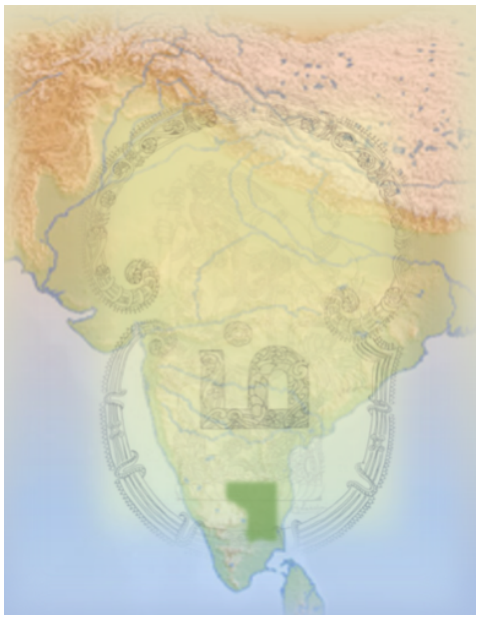


Tirupathi



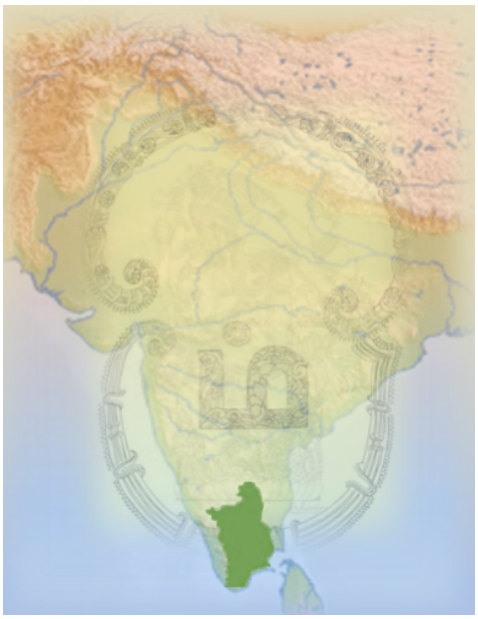
Nayak Murals

(Based on google maps ©Lakshmi Krishnamurthy)



(Approximate map of the extant of the Empire)

Thanjavur Nayaks



(Approximate map of the extant of the Empire)

Madurai Nayaks

After the fall of Vijayanagara empire, the Nayaks, their feudatories took over the reins and started ruling from Madurai, Thanjavur and Gingee and other places. The *Viswakarmas* of the Great Vijayanagara Empire with their names ending in Raja or Raju moved over to these areas and continued their artistry. The influence of Vijayanagara School spreads from Maharashtra to Kanyakumari in the South to such an extent that even the Paithan school influences could be seen in Cuddappah and Karnataka schools.

To quote Sri.C Sivaramamurthy" The paintings produced during the times of Nawabs in the South in 18th century like those of Cuddapah, Kurnool, Arcot and Mysore are only an extension of

Vijayanagara-Nayaka style with the Deccan influence of the Bijapur, Golkonda, Hyderabad Schools that are themselves tinged by the Moghul Style"



Wall Murals became almost non-existent in Andhra – Cuddapah, Kurnool. Bijapur, Golkonda and Hyderabad schools during the 18th Century. but extensive miniature paintings executed are available in collections in India and abroad.

Madurai (Thirumalai Nayak -1623-59) and Thanjavur are more renowned for their artistic explorations. Paintings of this period continued the tradition of Vijayanagar idioms.

Highlights- While the Kalyana Sundaranar Panel in the Madurai Meenakshi temple is highlighted for the religious significance, the panel, where the Goddess is seated on a throne, with a priest receiving the sceptre from Her epitomises the total surrender of the ruler to their kulanayagam.



The Deity, the Saints and the Place have all been eulogised at Srirangam by the picturisation of Vishnu Purana around the shrine, by the portrayal of the lives of Alwars in the Ramanuja shrine and the narration of sthalapuranam.

The descriptive categorical depiction of the Nine Vibishana Shrines with their deities at Alwarthirunagar and the painting of the sculpture at the Sanctum Sanctorum at the Vasantha Mandapam of Alagarkoil enable the votaries to have a leisurely Darshan.

As the Thanjavur Nayaks stood by the Vijayanagara Rulers, their art is closer to Hampi School and are extant in Thiruvalanjuli, Palaiyari, Tiruvarur, Thanjavur, Kumbakonam, Patteeswaram etc.

Amman Shrine Thanjavur Brahadeeswarar Temple – Mural on Devi Mahatmiyam





Muchukunda Puranam -Thiruvarur



(Approximate extant of Maratha Empire based on Googgle reference). By author

From Ajanta, Bagh, Ellora, Badami, Pallava, Vijayanagar, the unbroken chain of murals with their characteristics, varying in response to the chronology and maintaining enough resemblance to earlier works-so as to speak of a continuous tradition-sparked off a new movement in the wake of Maratha rule called Maratha School, an amalgamation of Gujarat, Delhi and Deccan Schools.

Both architecture and painting drew heavily on Persian inspirations, models and techniques. Admixture of loose elements such as the light and curvilinear arches and domes, indigenous heavy brackets and cornices, large wall spaces receiving direct or indirect natural light (ideal for painting) etc., executed by the Dravidian Craftsmen were found all over the land of the period.



A chance rediscovery of threw open a glimpseimage of the

great Maratha,Lakhuji Jadhavrao Ref -Live History India

The cultural seat of Thanjavur, nurtured by the Cholas, consolidated under the Vijayanagar Renaissance, flourished under the Nayaks was ready to receive the Marathas. The arrival of European traders imparted a new dimension to techniques.

The real founder of the Marathas as a power, was Shivaji Bhonsle (1627-1680), the Chatrapathi. He gradually succeeded in compelling the independent chiefs to acknowledge his sovereignty, subdued much of the territory of the emperor of Delhi and held sway over the Bamini Sultanates, thus bringing about another renaissance of Hinduism.

Towards the end of the 17th century A.D. when the Nayak power became weak, the constant feuds between Thanjavur and Madurai Nayak paved the way for Maratha rule. Sivaji gave total control of Bangalore in Deccan and Thanjavur and Gingee in Tamil Kingdom to his half- brother Venkoji.

When Serfoji, was made a titular king by the English trading Company, it seemed a blessing in disguise. Being a great scholar and a patron of scholars, he was able to devote his time in pursuit of arts, music, literature and in compiling all the information from India and abroad. A wonderful repository called Saraswathi Mahal Library was formed. (Sarasvati Mahal Library: A Historical Repository of Indian Manuscripts and Art is included in Volume-5 Pan Indian Art, Other Canvasses)

In short, a fusion of some of the artistic and religious trends in Indian History emerged. Intrinsic design sensibilities of the Moghuls and Bhamini Sultans, with use of geometrical designs and nature study in their concepts blending with that of the western inputs and complimented with

Vijayanagar-Nayak renaissance of Hinduism precipitated a whole new art form as could be seen in the walls of the Amman Shrine in the Thanjavur Big Temple.

Even though Northern and Western India have not preserved any example of mural art, elaborate mural decorations are extant in sub-Himalayan ranges from 17th to 18th century A.D. The movement continued from Malwa to the whole of Rajasthan. Resurgence of classical tradition brought forth extensive painting activities in the form of miniature paintings, murals and illustrated manuscripts. The common theme was always religious with space fillers.

Oneness of God is the essence of the Vedas – this mood extended to other religions also. They were all executed on mud plaster with lime wash. Using deep crimson background, the figures were drawn in white, yellow or green. Perspective in the modern sense was absent and so was shading to suggest mass.

Jamoda Jaina murals exhibit all these peculiarities and there is a close correspondence between facial features and costumes to Rajasthan works. The infusion of local colour could be perceived in the later Nasik Ragamala series.

Short figures with slightly bigger heads, attired in 18th century Maratha costume move in and out of the buildings. Even though the technique and colour scheme are similar to Jamoda Jaina Murals, the use of ultramarine (influence of Nayak tradition) in an emphatic manner marks some of the paintings.

During the time of the Marathas, there was great encouragement of the fine arts. The amalgamations of concepts (the Maratha school) enriched by Nayak tradition (a continuation of Vijayanagara idiom) precipitated a new school called the Thanjavur School (Refer Thanjavur Paintings).

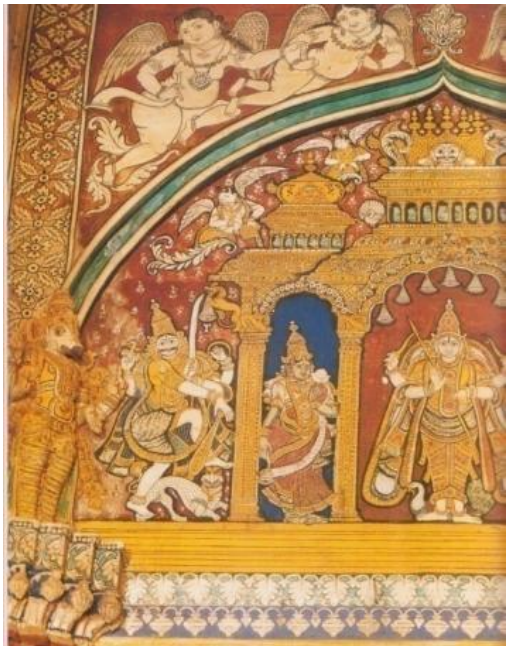
There were three different kinds of paintings executed – Wall murals, Palagai padams and Illustrated manuscripts.

Maratha murals are extant at

- Brihadiswarar temple – Tiru-c-curru maligai – Narrative
- Brihadiswarar temple – Subrahmanya Shrine – Portraits



- Palace – Thanjavur Durbar Hall – Iconic – Vishnu and Panduranga



- Brihadiswarar temple – Amman Shrine – *Devi Mahatmyam* and wedding scenes



- Vennartangari – Iconic – Saraswathi portrayed with typical Thanjavur Veena
- Kurichi – Narrative- Ramayana.

The pioneer work stated by Jouveau Dubreil, Govindasamy, J.A.Gopinath, Stella Kramrisch and others in the earlier part of the twentieth century is being carried out extensively by the archaeologists and art historians like Nagasamy , Natana Kasinathan , K.V.Raman, Chandra Murthy and others that more and more information are coming forth.

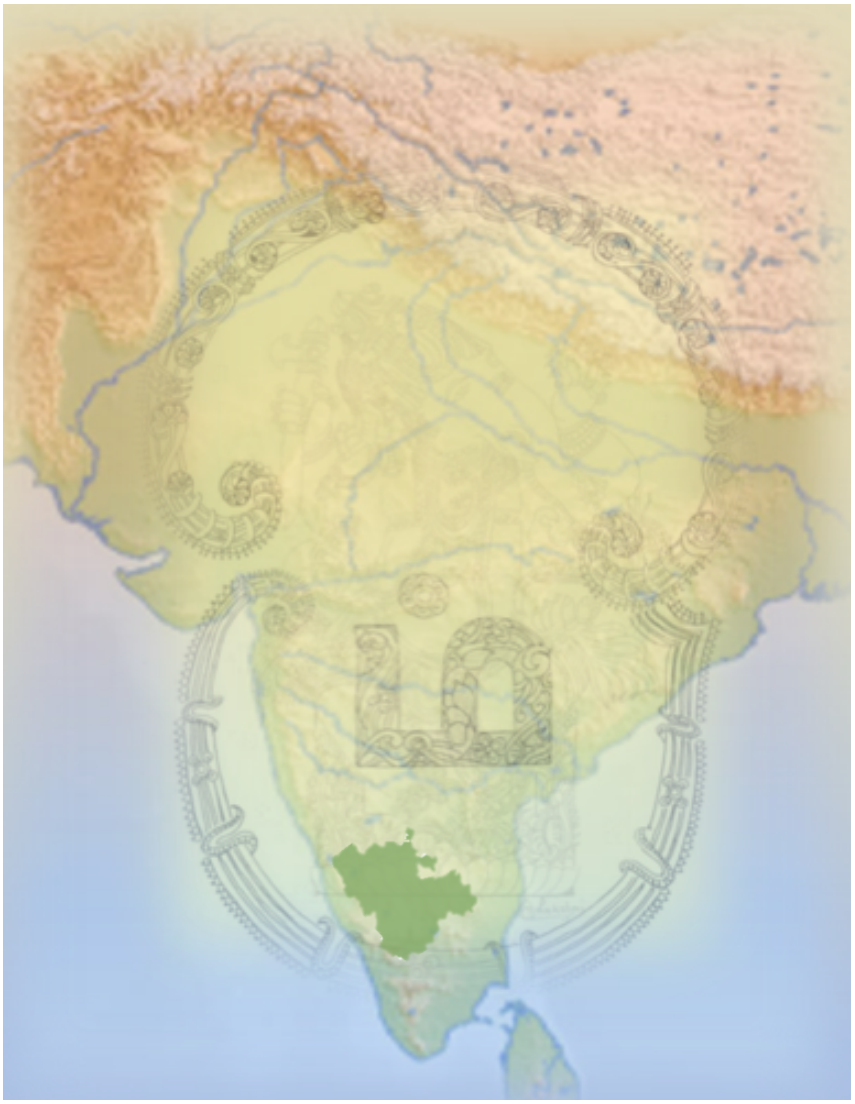
According to C.Sivaramamurthy, the paintings more than amply fulfil the dictum of Vishnu Dharmotthara. The colours are subdued, the lines firm and sinewy, the expression true to life and ornamentation in profusion.

There is a huge mural of Venkatachalapathi in Thanjavur technique in the pradhikshnapatha around the sanctum sanctorum in Srirangam.

Karnataka

(Approximate extant of Karnataka Empire Map based on Googgle references©Lakshmi Krishnamurthy

Hyder Ali, Tipu Sultan and Wadiyars 16-17 CE.



After the defeat of Tipu Sultan, the Wadiyar who came to power was a titular head like Serfoji. This was a blessing in disguise as they were able to devote time for scholarly pursuits and patronise the best of talents. The paintings at Jagan Mohan Palace are resonating with the works that were the best of the period, executed in tempera. Most of them were done by Sri.Subrahmanya Raju who had the distinction of having painted under the patronage of Wadiyars, later under the British rule and after Independence with Indian administrators. He had painted every panel in such great detail. It is almost like a documentation, as he has taken pains to paint the exact background buildings, the insignia and the colours of each of the cavalry/ elephant/soldier regiment as the parade passes through. Every panel was painted in great detail in a long paper scroll.

Mysore Palace – Dasara -Wall murals

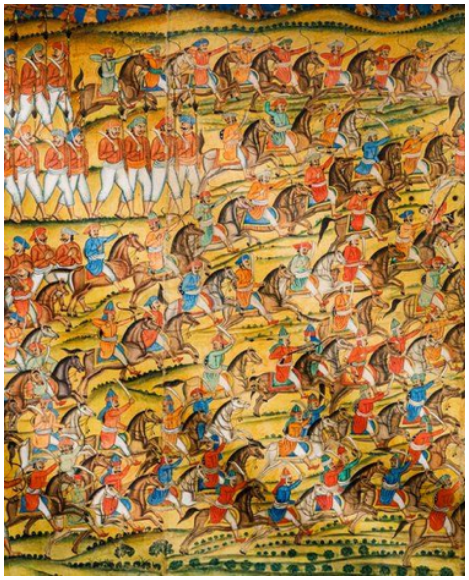


A list of the important Murals-

Serial no.	Place	Murals
1	Anantha Padmanabaswamy temple at Karkala-16AD	Murals are of Vaishnava concept with realistic rendering of human and animal figures
2	Tirumalleshvara Temple –Hiriyur16AD	Shiva
3	Mallikarjuna temple – Mudukuthore16AD	Shiva leela
4	Walls of the Math at Sravana Belgola-18AD	Jainism past and present birth of Parsvanatha – akin to Ajanthan Jataka Tales A dark king on a palanquin – Similar to the Vidyateertha Panel Marriage of King Ashvasen with Vama – Similar to Rama Kalyan of Lepakshi and Meenakshi Kalyan at Madurai Could easily be perceived as the off shots of Vijayanagara Tradition

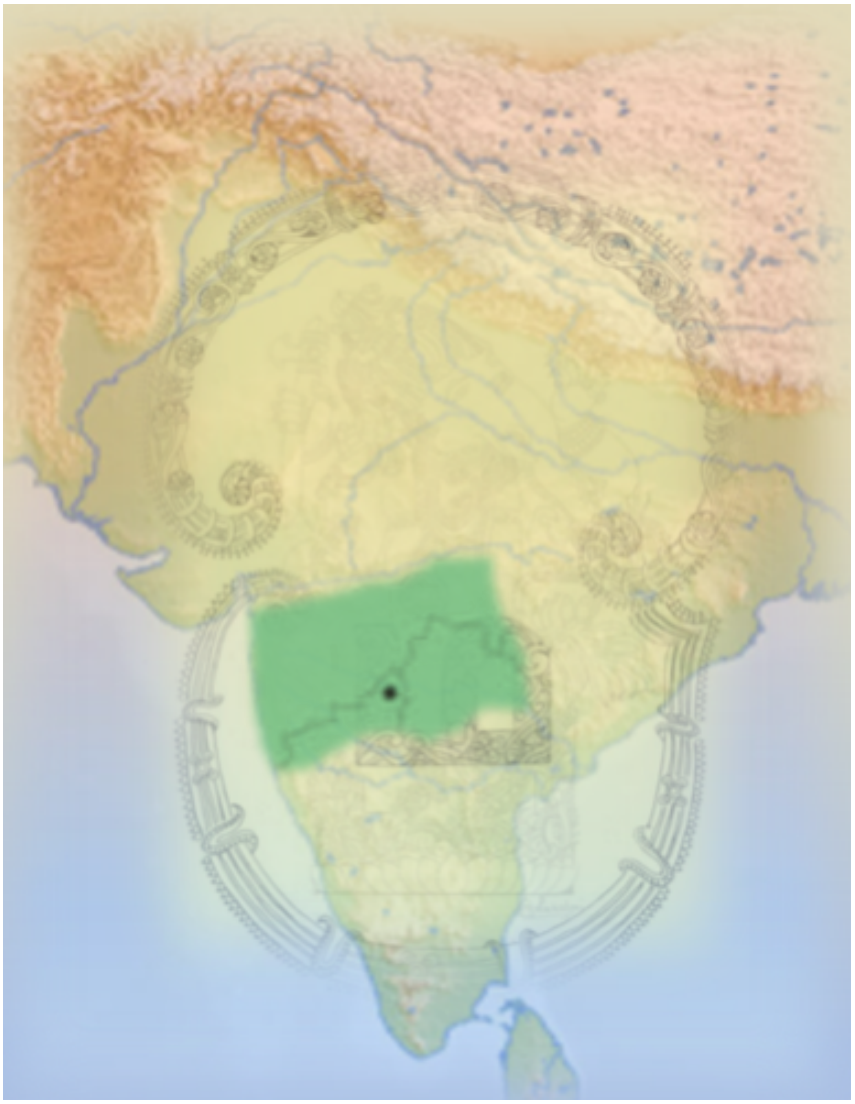
5	Wall Murals at Nasagunda	Siva-Vishnu Mythology
6	Wall Murals at Sibi	Similar to Kerala Murals
7	Darya-Daulat at Sri Rangapattinam-Tipusultan The Gumbaz Mausoleum of Hyder Ali and Tip u Sultan	The walls, pillars and arches are profusely painted like the Sethupathy School with portraiture, battle scenes,Durbar scenes and scenery. The influence of Deccan Kalam could be seen in the use of variegated colours highlighted with liberal use of red and gold. The interior is painted with tiger stripes!

Srirangapatna – Battle scenes highlighting the red and gold colour scheme.



Bhamini Sultanate

(Approximate extant based on google maps by author)



Despite repeated invasions and later even after establishing the Sultanate in Delhi, the Islamic rulers were not able to defeat the Hindu rulers of Deccan. It was the officers of Thuklak, under the leadership of the General Zafar Khan who revolted and established a New Bhamini Sultanate, the first Islamic Kingdom in South India. The descendants, Bhamanids ruled from Gulbarga and later from Bidar.

"The Deccan plateau of south-central India was home to a succession of highly cultured Muslim kingdoms with a rich artistic heritage. Under their patronage in the 16th and 17th centuries, foreign influences – notably from Iran, Turkey, eastern Africa, and Europe – combined with ancient and prevailing Indian traditions helped create a distinctive Indo-Islamic art and culture.

The population of the region, by the 16th century, included immigrants from Central Asia and Iran, African military slaves, native-born Muslim nobles, and European missionaries, merchants, and mercenaries. As a result, it boasted one of the most cosmopolitan societies of the early modern world." Asian Art - Sultans of the Deccan: India -1500 - 1700, dated June 3rd 2015"

Around the 15th century, the Sultanate broke into five different States - Bijapur, Golkonda, Ahmed Nagar, Bidar and Berar.

Although the founders of the Five Sultanates were all Muslims,

- the Ahmednagar Sultanate was of Hindu- Brahmin origin.
- the Berar Sultanate, a Kannadiga Hindu convert,
- the Bidar and Bijapur Sultanate, Georgian slaves and
- the Golconda Sultanate a Turkman origin.

They were all followers of Shiism of Persia unlike the Sunnism of Delhi Sultanate.

The art, poetry, music more influenced by the West and spiced up with local fervour/colour stood them apart till the Moghul impact was felt in the 16th Century in Ahmednagar.

Highlights:

o Sultan Ibrahim Adil Shah of Bijapur was a great patron of Arts. The Gol- Kumbaz, the Mausoleum built for Adil Shah was the biggest freestanding dome with a diameter of around 50 meters at that time. He attracted scholars and Artists and Bijapur became the nerve centre of Visual

Arts.” Masterpieces in painting by the leading court artist Farrukh Husain demonstrates the refined and lyrical style that influenced much of Deccan art. Ahmadnagar’s African nobility included the legendary Abyssinian Malik Ambar (1548-1628), whose portraits are included among other rare surviving works” Asian Art

o Closeness of the Qutub Shahis of Golkonda with Safavids of Iran and the patronising of Indian talent precipitated unique style of painting as in Kulliyat - an Illustrated Manuscript of Urdu Verses by Quli Qutub Shah.

o The Illustrated History titled Tarf-i-Husain Shahi celebrating the victory over the Vijaya Nagar rulers marks the patronage of Nizam Shahis of Ahmednagar.

o Style – As in Moghul paintings, the exquisite detailing of the frame with pure Deccan foliage stood them apart

1. The potpourri of cultures precipitated an admixture of rare hybrid art forms.
2. Shringara rasa dominated the royal portraiture.
3. The Illumination of the miniature paintings had an elaborate bright coloured border

Al Buraq - originating from the word ‘Barq’ in Arabic meaning lightning. Al Buraq is the creature that can travel across space and time with the speed of light. The creature was also the mount of the Prophet on his journey to the abode of God, also known as the Ascension. The Buraq is depicted here as a composite of several other creatures like a dragon for its tail, face of a woman, fishes and lions as legs, elephants and fawns form its body.



Navakunjara of Orissan Patachitra, a combination of nine animals/birds symbolising Vishnu is



comparable to this concept with a head of a rooster, neck of a peacock, the back or hump of a bull, waist of a lion, tail of a serpent standing on three legs-of an elephant, tiger and deer or horse.

After the first siege of Golconda by Aurangzeb Alamgir, who was still the Viceroy of the Deccan under his father Shah Jahan's reign, Abdullah Qutb Shah was forced to accept the Mughal suzerainty over the Kingdom of Golconda. One of the conditions for the peace treaty was that Abdullah Qutb Shah's daughter be wedded to the Mughal prince Muhammad Sultan and be the successor to his father-in-law upon the latter's demise. The temporary respite afforded by Aurangzeb's return to Hindustan did not deceive Abdullah Qutb Shah, who perceived that his dynasty was tottering to its fall and when Aurangzeb would ascend the throne of Delhi, he would come back to the Deccan Sultanates.

Abdullah had a new phrase inserted in his seal - "ختم بالخير والسعادة" which meant "it has come to a good and auspicious conclusion" referring to his empire, that he hoped would peacefully transition from him to his son-in-law, the Mughal prince Muhammad Sultan. The motto is usually referred to his prescience of the fall of Golconda, but it appears that he was comforting himself with the idea that the kingdom would fall into the hands of the Mughals by peaceful succession, and not by conquest. This hope was not destined to be fulfilled, for Muhammad Sultan predeceased Abdullah.

Kerala Murals

As per Sri. C.Sivaramamurti “paintings beyond Rashtrakuta are lost or have not yet been found north of the Deccan, except the stylised murals of the thirteenth century CE, in the temple of Vishnu at Madanpor in the Lalitpur District of Uttar Pradesh” (C.Sivaramamurthy -Indian painting - National Book Trust of India) .

The proximity of Vijayanagar to Bahmani Sultanates precipitated an intercultural dialogue in art, while the conquest of Orissa by Krishna Deva Raya precipitated amalgamation of Orissa art. With all these admixtures the art form from Vijayanagar period (14th to 17th century), Nayak (17th to 18th Century), Kerala (16th to 18th Century), Marathas, Bahmani Sultanate, Rajasthan, Moghul and Nepal Ladakh and Bhutan Buddhism were all potpourris with local fervour.

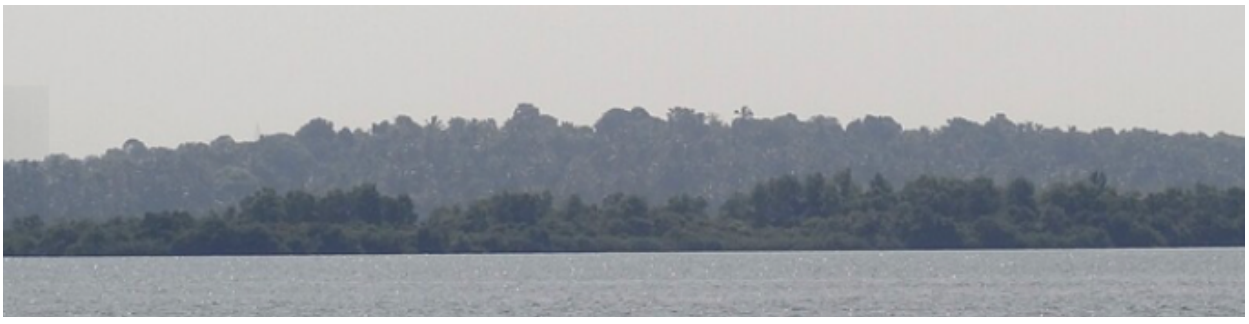


The emerald green carpet and canopy embracing the whole of the chartreuse space, blessed with an abundance of transient blue ponds in every household, rivers, back waters and water falls with a brownish ochre wooden architecture to blend in with its beautiful carvings and sloping roof are all like a huge theatrical backdrop to the bright and colourful palette used in all of their fine arts.

The women with their heavy bosom and cascading thick black hair, men with their typical top knots all clad in white *mundus* or dhoti are weaving in and out, while their Gods and Goddesses with squat and robust physique, rich ornamentation and crowns with a peculiar halo true to iconographic conventions and /or to the narrative epics, are seated in sanctified areas whether it is a performing or visual arts.



Insulated by Arabian sea on one side and the Western Ghats on the other, the *Chera* country had maintained their individuality despite the influence of the changing dynasties. Similar colour scheme and details prevail through *Theyyam, Tholpavaikoothu, Kalmezhuthu, Kathakali, Mohiniattam* and the Murals.



Highlights:

- Using tender coconut water from freshly plucked coconut without the development of the inner kernel, to fix lime for painting is exclusive to this school. Brush just sweeps across in multiple layers-25-30 coats – to create the crystal ivory background. Natural colours in spot shading help bring alive the tonal depth.
- Even though mural tradition in Kerala is traced to 8th century CE, the earliest is supposed to be the ones from Thirunandikara Temple.
- Most of the murals are from 14th Century CE only.
- More than 150 temples have mural paintings.
- Just as *Kumbabishekam* is done for temples elsewhere, restoration, preservation and additions are executed to the wooden architecture and the murals periodically.
- Even though the initial paintings were influenced by nature, later ones were influenced by *Bhakti* Movement.
- The gradual evolution from face painting to tattoo to floor patterns to Onam floral *Kolams* to *Kalamezhuthu* to wall murals is palpable even now.
- *Kathakali* costumes and makeup seem to have great influence on the murals.



- Largest mural painting is *Gajendra moksham (*15.75’ x 9.8’= 9154 sq.Feet) at Krishnapuram, Kayankulam, Kerala built in 18th Century by Anizham Thirunal Marthanda Varma of Trivancore Kingdom.

Gajendra moksham at Krishnapuram, Kayankulam



and the vision of Ajithan Puthumanna



- Most extensive paintings covering almost 500 sq. kilo- meters are seen in the Mattancherry Palace in Cochin.

Author's study "Annalum Nokkinan Avalum Nokkinal'' based on Mattancherry muralsmurals



- Befitting the codes, in Mattancherry Palace, Ramayana Panels are in Durbar halls and Krishna Leela paintings are in bedchambers.

- When the Murals in Guruvayur temple were damaged in a fire accident, a Mural Training School was opened under the tutelage of Mammiyoor Krishnankutty Nair, which brought to light the Mural tradition.
- While the women in Padmanabhapuram palace murals have long faces and well built bodies, the ones in Mattancherry Palace have rounded faces and bulky appearance – the influence of local fervour.
- Ettumanoor - Ancient Siva Temple, steeped in mythological connotations such as that the Pandavas and Vyasa had worshipped there and an Asura by name Kharasura who was supposed to have received three lingas from Shiva Himself, has installed one there and so on. The present temple renovated in 1542 has an enormous Ananda Padmanabha Swamy mural probably second only to the Gajendra Moksham at Krishnapuram-approx – 19' x 8'(152 Sq.Feet)

(All the pictures are © Ajithan Puthumanna)

Aghora Murthy mural



Anandapadmanabha Mural



Famous Nataraja Mural at Ettumanoor and Ajitha Puthumanna’s vision







Rajasthan



Oneness of God is the essence of Vedas. Oneness of purpose towards that goal is the underlying principle of all Indian Paintings. A visual expression through symbolism, where the human form becomes the image and the background landscape of the mind, interpreting instantaneously and simultaneously the entire wealth of thoughts, feelings and knowledge of scriptures - a living tradition.

Enchanting world of miniatures spanning 1000 years, encompasses almost the whole of Northern India. (Bengal, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Punjab, Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh).

They are collectively termed Rajasthani Miniatures and Allied schools and came to fruition from 11 AD - 19 CE.

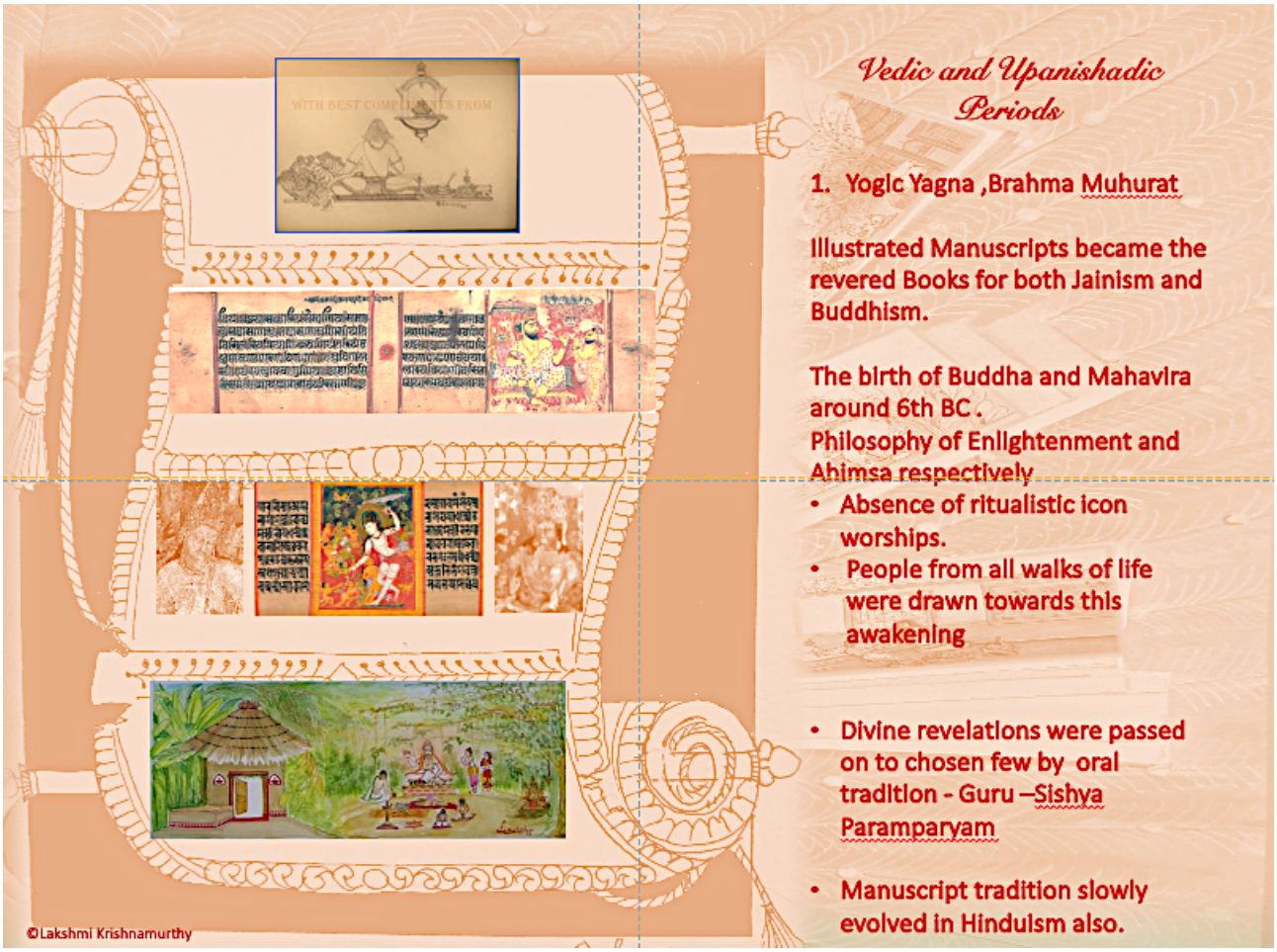
To pinpoint the origin and development of Miniature painting is rather difficult. Metamorphically speaking it is almost like sourcing the natural streams meandering to join the mighty rivers on their journey toward the sea.

No man is an island of itself. Comingling of different cultures from the dawn of civilization is unavoidable. When dynasties shrink or expand the artists and scholars also move in or out, out of fear or adulation, influencing, interacting precipitating a transformation. When the Jain Monks were struck by an epidemic, copying the scriptures as illustrated manuscripts began with such feverish activity to conserve. (Chalukyan King Kumarapala 12th AD, who ruled Gujarat, Malwa and Rajasthan Is credited with distributing hundreds of copies of Kalpasutras and founding 21 Bhandars or Monastic Libraries.)

Similarly with the political disturbance with Moghul Occupation, the arrival the European traders and later the colonialism precipitated the transfer of the Manuscripts and the sacred objects to

Malwa in Rajasthan sowing the seeds for manuscript traditions in both on different canvasses and as wall murals.

The iconoclastic degradations caused by Muslim invasions compelled the monks and painters of Eastern Pala Kingdom to flee to Nepal and Himalayas setting up the tradition for both manuscript and mural traditions on Buddhism in a large scale.



In the Naradapancharatra, ascribed to the 16th century CE, references are mentioned to the palace of Siva at Kailasa, adorned with pictures of Krishna – Leela, while in Soundaryalahari the slokas were supposed to have been inscribed on the walls of Kailash. This indicates that such paintings were commonly found on the gates and walls of exquisite palaces. Rajasthani painting continued the tradition with deep roots, remaining relatively uninfluenced by external forces, except for some subtle Mughal influence in later stages.

Although the miniatures that epitomize this school, found in various art galleries across India and the world, are often associated with miniature art, it is intriguing to note that they originated as mural art. Palaces in Jaipur, Bundi (the Centre piece of Badal Mahal-Palace of Clouds- is the ceiling of the Taragarh Fort's topmost chamber called " Rajasthan's Sistine chapel "- Deccan Chronicle Feb 9th 2019), Udaipur and later Shekawati Frescoes – "the largest open air art gallery in the world"-
feature wall paintings that showcase the exceptional skills of the Rajasthani painters in creating large murals. These murals often depicted the Ras-Leela , the love story of Radha and Krishna, a joyful and frequently depicted theme and all the local festivals

The *Barahmasas* (twelve months)scenes, portraying the changing seasons and the Ragamala Series ascribing a *nayaka* (hero), *nayaki* (heroine), *ragaputras* (sons), *ragaputris* (daughters), seasons and presiding deities etc to each raga, exemplify the artistic prowess of Rajasthani painters in depicting recurring themes with creative innovation. Artists of this era seldom signed their works, as the themes were more significant than the individual artist's identity.

Based on the studies of Prince of Nawalgarh , the Rajasthani School could be broadly divided into five groups:

- The Mewar School exhibiting a relatively untainted early Rajasthani mode, reminiscent of Gujarat manuscripts and the early Rajasthani School comprising of Mewar, Bundi, Jaipur, Udaipur, Bikaner, Jodhpur and Jaisalmer with distinct characteristics.
- The Kishangarh School, with its distinctive portrayal of Radha and Krishna based on the live models - Raja Savant Singh and Bani Thani.
- The Pahari branch including the Kangra, Guler, Chamba, Nurpur, Garhwal each showcasing a strong folk element, particularly in the Kulu and Basholi Schools
- The Kashmir/ Jammu School,
- The Punjab School.

This period also witnessed a renaissance in vernacular literature, with poets like Kabir, Vidyapati, Chandidas, and Tulsidas holding significant influence. Their works, such as Tulsidas's Ramayana and

Kesavadasa's *Rasikapriya*, served as sources for the themes depicted in the unsophisticated yet charming folk art of this period. This *prakrita* vernacular art contrasted with the classical *samskrita* art that accompanied earlier classical Sanskrit literature while *Pushtimarg* of Vallabacharya Influenced both the rituals and fine arts of Srinathji in Nathadwara of Udaipur.

Wall murals are found in

- Bundi Palace and Chitrasala 17-18th Century.
- Hawa Mahal, Jaipur.
- Karauli City Palace, Rajasthan 1348 Foundation stone laid by Yaduvanshis.
- Nawalgarh, Shekhawati Region 18thCE.
- Mandawa, Shekhawati Region18thCE.
- Alsisar Haveli, Jaipur 18th CE.
- Samode Palace, Chomu 475 years old Palace.
- City Palace, Jaipur, Diwan-e-Khas Hall of the City Palace in Jaipur.
- Pundrikji-ki-Haveli in Jaipur.

Some of the existing murals in different places in Rajasthan, Pahari, Jammu- Kashmir and Punjab seem to have been executed when the royal houses have become Watan Jagirs and treated honourably or Mansabdhars under Moghul Rule during 18-19th centuries.



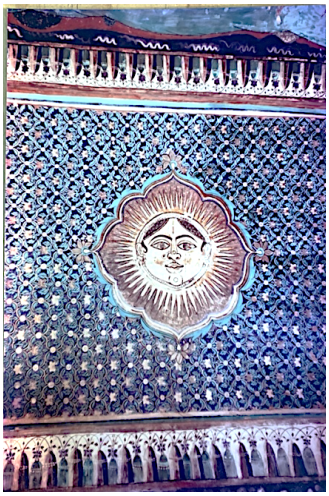


Kalamandir at Banasthali Vidyapeeth – Renaissance of Frescoes by Sri. Deokii Nandan Sharma (1919-2005)

Bundi celebrated as "Rajasthan's Sistine Chapel" is a veritable treasure trove of the miniature school with abundant paintings on hunting scenes along with romantic love stories on Krishna Leela and other narratives on epics and festivals. Both the Badal Mahal (Palace of Clouds) and

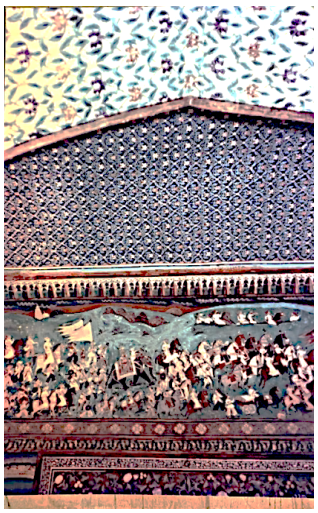
Chithrashala were not opened to visitors till recently. The frescoes has retained their purity .As descendants of Suryavanshi (Solar Dynasty), the sun painted in gold in full splendour with blue from lapis-lazuli weaving a tapestry around is stunning.

Bundi Chitrashala (Photos by Author) Ceiling













Jaipur Frescoes: Pundrikji-ki-Haveli (residence of Royal Purohit under Sawai Jai Singh) has the maximum number of frescoes on court scenes, processions, Holi, Gangaur and other festivals. (Reference photos from Hitesh Pathak)





Flower Hazes, The Famous Art of Block Print is somewhere inspired through this



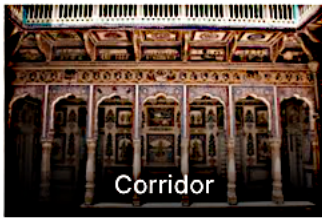
Pundrikji-ki-Haveli Frescoes











Chamba Murals -Devi Kothi Temple

References courtesy - Vijay Sharma and Sarang Sharma

Chamba Murals belonging to mid 17th century is one of the Pahari Schools of Painting with specific stylisation all its own, greatly influenced by an admixture of local tradition and the Moghul school, precipitated by the painter families from different backgrounds working in one workshop bringing about amalgamation of painting styles. The painters were mainly from Gujarati Manikanth family who had migrated from the Moghul Royal courts after the fall of Aurangzeb. Laharu, an eminent painter of the family had set the trend for Chamba Murals.

Extensive paintings are in Devi Kothi Temple built by Raja Umed Singh in 1754 CE. Located at a strategic point – *Chura* (Four Paths) houses the beautiful narrative murals of Goddess Chamunda Devi, based on 'Devi Mahatmya' portraying her triumph over demons and the resultant adoration by the other Gods and Goddesses. The popular Krishna themes influenced by Vaishnavite Bhakti Movement across the Northern India also finds expression in the Eastern wall of the temple.

- Stylisation - A thematic as well as a stylistic reinterpretation of miniature paintings now housed at the Bhuri Singh Museum, inspired by Laharu's Bhagavata paintings, seems to be the hall mark of Chamba Murals.

"Laharu's work focuses on the male and female physiognomy and shows utter disregard for the background, which always has a stage set-like appearance. Two of his famous works are the Bhagawata Purana set painted in 1758 for Mian Samsher Singh (the younger brother and Wazir of Umed Singh) and the murals at the Devi Kothi temple.

In the Devi Kothi murals, for example, Laharu emphasised on the outer architecture of the buildings even though the stories unfold in the inner chambers. He systematically arranged around the narrative elements such as erect minarets of marble, grids of red bricks and angular pillars. The perpendicular appearance of the buildings enhances their monumental charm, which is evident in the houses and palaces that Laharu painted".

"His positioning of elements is reminiscent of the paintings during Akbar's rule, especially the folios of *Akbarnama* with the chambers placed on hexagonal planes". Sarang Sharma.

Indian painting perspective has been used but are flat and lacks the finesse. They are rather stark but help bring the focus alive. Primary colours only were used with black outline.

A few of the murals on Bhagavata Purana illustrated are listed with kind permission of Vijay Sharma and Sarang Sharma.



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8

1. Killing of demoness *Bhudaki*
2. Musical instruments attire of the musicians a blend of Moghul and Indian Traditions
3. Moghul architectural elements
4. Birth of *Yogamaya*
5. Killing of *Dhenukasur*
6. Hexagonal positioning of chambers influenced from the paintings in Akbarnama
7. *Yogamaya* showing Her *Viswarupa*
8. Yashoda with Krishna after the killing of *Bhudaki*

Shekhawati Murals

Even though, this school of murals do not fit in with the time frame of the research paper “Chitra Paramparyam” a little note on Shekawati Murals has been included as is termed “the largest open air art gallery in the world” belonging to 18-19th CE in Rajasthan.

During the 19th century, Shekhawati became a hub for cross-desert trade, attracting merchants from the Middle East, China, and India, dealing in opium, cotton, and spices. The Marwaris, a prominent Indian business community, gained immense wealth and used it to commission the artistic expressions that embellish Shekhawati's walls dating back to the time preceding the advent of railways with traditional Hindu themes and decorative motifs.







Eventually, as the British shifted their focus to Bombay and Calcutta, the trading route's significance waned. Despite this, the Marwaris continued to thrive, migrated to Mumbai and Kolkata to seek their fortunes, interacted with the British and absorbed modern urban and industrial influences. Their increasing prosperity and social status are reflected in the grandeur of the havelis, contributing to the development of Shekhawati's architecture and art resulting in the exuberant frescoes that adorn the walls of their grand homes portraying early British officials, military scene and the novel modes of transportation of the early colonial period, including hot-air balloons and trains.





More details of Rajasthan murals are included In Volume -11 Appendices:

Murals through Muslim Invasions (900-1707 CE) *and Moghul Occupation* (1526-1858CE)

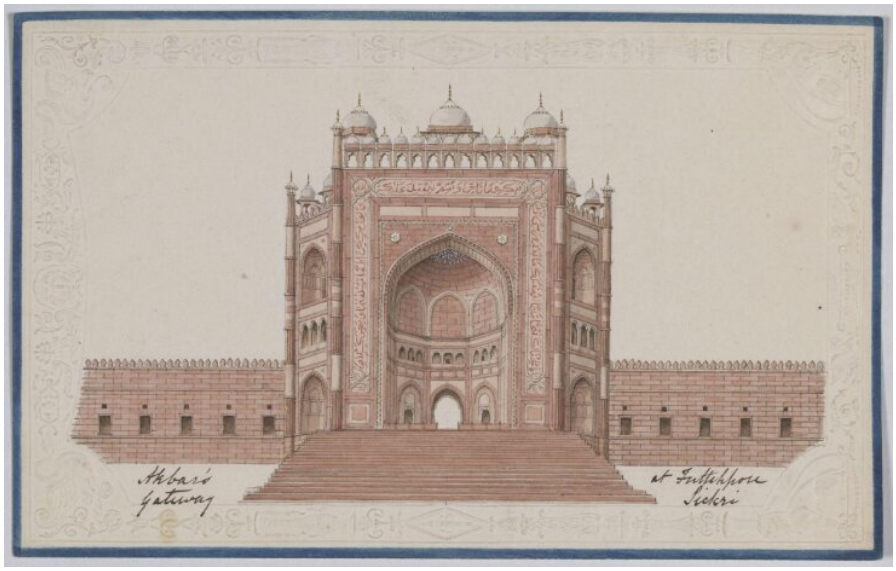
If any decoration was needed, it was the words of God, beautifully written or carved in the walls or around the domes". Calligraphy evolved as a replacement of imagery into a major artistic idiom. The inscriptions of the Quran on the entrance of Taj Mahal taking into consideration the laws of perspective with the letters gradually increasing in size stands tall as a totem.

The flood of miniature paintings of both Rajasthani and Moghul schools in museums the world over has precipitated a concept, that they were confined mainly to book illustration and to the production of individual miniatures.

Wall murals are as old as the genesis of mankind continuously evolving from cavemen till today. It is then natural to expect frescoes and murals to have adorned the Moghul palaces and mosques.as much as *Arayash* did in Rajasthan or Michelangelo's frescoes in Vatican with their love for decorations.

Water colour painting of Fatehpur Sikri in Victoria and Albert Museum Collections highlighting the grandeur of architecture

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Highlights:

Works of Ilacooper, Dr.Ebba Coach , ASI, Taj Mahal standing tall as one of the Seven Wonders of the World and the accreditation given to Fatehpur Sikri as an UNESCO Heritage site have all contributed to the unravelling of the mystiques.

To quote Ilacooper "in 1992, my Shekhawati mural research yielded funding for two winters' work in Pakistan. There, Dr Ebba Koch had identified murals uncovered from whitewash in Lahore Fort's *Kala Burj* (Black Bastion) as from Jahangir's reign (1605-27), the finest era of Mughal painting. She described their similarity to contemporary murals, also emerged from whitewash, in buildings at Rambagh, a garden in Agra. I discover more such paintings in Lahore Fort, including Christian saints in the *Sehdari* ('Three Doors'), and drew attention to angelic outlines in Kala Burj, yet to be uncovered from whitewash".



Rambagh: Between swagged curtains a woman reads a letter It is a European scene with books beside her.



Rambagh: A simurgh captures a duck in one of the squinches of the painted ceiling

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Rambagh: In a moulded ceiling star an artist. has overpainted a crane with chestnut thrush perhaps Jahangir's preference

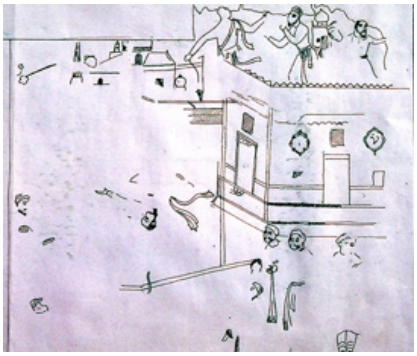
The Archaeological Survey of India is restoring 20 painting on the roof and the arches in Chhatta Bazaar which was once the Meena Bazaar.(Abhinav Saha)



By the north window of the *Khwabgah* a painting shows smashed idols A beardless youth (upper left) with a nimbus indicates an idol My sketch of the same image West side of the *Khwabgah's* north window recess Perhaps *Hamza* (left) shows the destruction of idols at the Prophet's birth



Drawing of a *Khwabgah* dado shows a falling man a detail overlooked by Smith'team”





One of the Seven Wonders of the World Taj Mahal – a classic example of Moghul Architecture

The elegance of Mughal-era structures restored ASI



This probably is only the tip of the ice -berg! If their manuscripts are something to go by, exotic murals should be coming out to light!

Buddhism



As Buddhism declined around 10th century CE in India and traversed to North, North Eastern and Far Eastern shores, a need to analyse the intercultural evolution in the technique, interpretation and presentation of Thangka Murals and Paintings has become mandatory.

While Mahayana Buddhism was followed in Arunachal Pradesh, Ladakh, Tibet, Nepal, China and Japan, Hinayana Buddhism also termed *Theravada* spread to far eastern shores precipitating intermingling of local religion and culture adding to the variations in expressions and concept as could be seen in the earlier murals and the gradual evolution of Thangkas.

Standing Maithreya – 3rd Century, Gandhara, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varnasi, India

Religious Iconography

Upon the death of Gautama Buddha , Buddhism gradually evolved into two sects, aniconic - Hinayana (Small Vehicle)and Iconic – Mahayana(Great Vehicle).

Aniconic phase

The earliest phase the Hinayana in accordance with Buddha's teachings did not believe in icon worship that disfavoured representations of even Himself after his *Parinirvana*. Also termed *Theravada* (way of the elders)It stressed on individual salvation through self-discipline with meditation. Only divine symbols like Foot Print, Bodhi Tree, Empty Throne, the Wheel of Dharma etc, were depicted.



Iconic Phase

The Mahayana sect on the other hand believed in the divinity of the Buddha. The sect encouraged idol worship in Buddhism and was greatly influenced by Hindu iconography with extensive pantheon of Buddha figures, Bodhisattvas ('Buddhas to be'), minor and major male and female deities, including protector ones, as well as, later, semi-divine teacher figures. All of these divine and semi-divine characters are recognisable with given attributes based

on iconographical codes. Influence of Gandhara Art could be perceived from the wavy hair, drapery covering both the shoulders, shoes and sandals , acanthus leaf decorations.

Tibetan Buddhism, a form of Vajrayana or Tantric Buddhism, derived from Mahayana Buddhism is further characterised by esoteric texts and rituals that require the guidance and interpretation of a teacher, leading to the cult of the lama or monk.

Seated Buddha, Kushan Period, Gandhara, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varnasi India.



Alchi

Oldest Monastery in Ladakh



Alchi Monastery (Alchi *Gompa*) known more as a monastic complex of temples, with four separate settlements with monuments dated to different periods is a Tibetan Buddhist monastery built by the great known translator Guru Rinchen Zangpo between 958 and 1055 CE.
Dukhang or Assembly Hall and the Main Temple, which is a three-storied temple called the *Sumtseg,* are built in Kashmiri style as seen in many monasteries. The third temple is called the Manjushri Temple. Chortens are also an important part of the complex. A lot of apricot trees can be seen in the complex.

Housing huge statues of the Buddha , elaborate wood carvings and art-work comparable to the baroque style, Alchi monastery complex located on the banks of Indus river seem to be silently proclaiming the continuity of cultural heritage.

The artistic and spiritual details of both Buddhism and the Hindu kings of that time in Kashmir are reflected in the wall paintings in the monastery. There are some of the oldest surviving paintings in Ladakh. References to Yoga Tantra popular in the western Tibetan regions, and the pantheon and themes from it are represented in the clay sculptures and mural paintings of the Alchi Group.

The system of Yoga Tantra represented as a mandala has Vairochana who is associated with the historical Buddha Shakyamuni. Seated in the middle with four other Buddhas in four cardinal directions -

- Red Amitabha in the west,
- Blue Akshobhaya inthe east,
- Green Amoghasiddhi in the north
- and the Yellow Ratnasambhava in the south.
- These five Buddhas known as the Tathagata Buddhas have a family that includes counterpart goddesses and Bodhisattvas akin to the Ragamala Series of Miniatures.



- Tibetan religious art, of which the art of the Alchi Group is a manifestation, serves to illustrate complex Buddhist philosophies and as a tool in contemplation and meditation.

Although the *Dukhang* contains some of the most important historical scenes. the *Sumtsek* is, arguably, painted with the most interesting mural paintings. Indeed, such is the skill with which they were painted that, to date, they gleam brightly within the dim interiors of the temple. The entrance wall above the door is often painted in Tibetan Buddhist temples with fierce protector deities that symbolically purify and protect these spaces. In the Sumtsek, this role is performed by Mahakala—blue-black in colour, having three eyes and two fangs, holding a chopper and a skullcap, wearing a tiger-skin loin cloth, decorated with skulls and snakes, and treading a corpse (Fig. 15). Mahakala is only one of many Buddhist deities adapted from the Hindu pantheon, the god Shiva in this case.

Maha Kala





The Avalokiteshvara’s dhoti is painted with palaces, Buddhist and Shaiva shrines, and even hunting scenes.

The tall temple is dominated by three huge clay statues of Bodhisattvas Avalokiteshvara the Bodhisattva of compassion, Maitreya, the future Buddha, and Manjushri, the Bodhisattva of wisdom. Measuring at least four metres.

The presence of four hands makes it an unusual representation for the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas with intricately patterned dhotis ,the designs serving a thematic purpose. Elaborately coiffured and bejewelled six-armed *Shyamatara* or Green Tara (the 'saviouress' goddess) is considered the most beautiful painting.

Shyamatara or Green Tara



The dhoti of the red-coloured figure of Maithreya in the next alcove is painted with scenes from the Life of the Buddha as he is considered to be the successor of Shakyamuni Buddha.

Entrance wall



The style in the Alchi paintings seems to be greatly influenced by wider 'Kashmiri' tradition.7th to 12th Century. They include the trefoil arch and pyramidal roof under which deities are placed, as well as the thrones on which they sit, often incorporating lions and load-bearing characters.

Ceiling of the Sumtsek is painted with panels made to resemble strips of textiles



Trefoil arch within a pediment, Lakshana temple Brahmaur, Chamba, ninth century

Devi



Alchi



All the figures in the Alchi Group paintings wear colourful clothes painted with incredibly fine details. Like the later-period Buddhas in the Kashmiri style, the Buddha figures among the Alchi Group paintings wear pleated robes.

Alchi - Historical Paintings Royal messenger with falcon





With Ladakh-Zanskar and Kinnaur-Spiti (in modern India), and Guge-Purang (in the Tibetan Autonomous Region or TAR in China), collectively known as the western Tibetan regions, the exponential evolution of the art form evolving with subtle regional variations stands tall as an example for the cannons of art.

Analysis through a comparative studies:

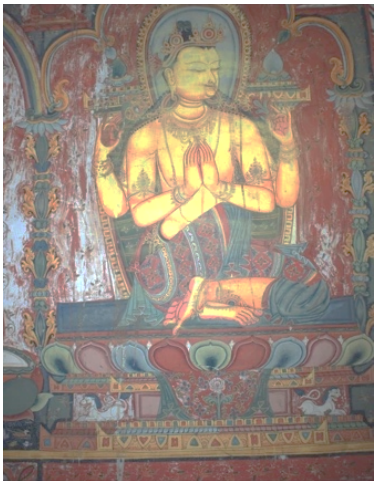
Highlights

- Slow transformation from the earlier Ajanta school to Tibetan could be perceived.
- The unobtrusive dominant red colour continues to proclaim the sanctity (*Varnika Bangha*-Science of Colour)
- Despite the elaborate details in the background focus on the main deity has been effectively brought about with the luminescent treatment.
- *Rekha* (line), the hall mark of Indian Art has been taken to different dimensions.
- Horse shoe kind of aureole at the back of the main deity heralds the elaboration in the *Rupabheda* (form).
- The canonical portrayals of different deities are epitome of "*Bhava, Lavanya Yojanam*" (Emotion and Compositional Excellence) of the *Shadangas*.
- *Sadrisyam* (similitude) is more apparent in Tharavad Buddhism

Lost Arts of Nepal

Ref-Lost Arts of Nepal's Post on Face Book,20th Sep.2019"Lost Mural Traditions of Nepal"

Most of the Murals were destroyed in Nepal after repeated earthquakes. Thanks to the compilation of them by Newar artist living in Tibet preserved in Shalu Monastery near Shigatse , Tibet built in 1040 CE. a glimpse into the past has been made possible.





Pagoda kind of architecture.







The horse-shoe aureole and the stylisation of the head gear.





Bodhi Tree







Murals on Buddhism are religious paintings originally executed on walls of Monasteries and temples and later as Thangkas - paintings on silk, paper and later appliques / embroideries (as the *Chamba Rumals*) are miniature embroideries) and appliques- portable as scrolls.



Goddess Tara: Ref from :Dr Vishi Upadhyay -Virtual Museum of Images and Sounds
https://aims.vmis.in>exhibition>tara-go...

A comparative progressive analysis/appreciation of Tara through the ages would not come amiss, as Her portrayals might facilitate understanding the evolution of painting scenario over a period of time. With her 21 different connotations, she has been beautifully painted time and again.

The earliest painting in Alchi Monasteries of Ladakh is of Tara as a personification of beauty, compassion and benevolence. Conceived during the 7th-12th century in India, she has a different appearance in Hinduism and Buddhism (as a yogini among the ten Mahavidyas in Hindu Tantra (*Shaktism*), and Tara as a female Buddha in Buddhism (*Vajrayana*).







Alchi





She protects from eight kinds of fears in her *Ashatmahabhaya* form: Lion (pride), wild elephants (delusion/ignorance), fires (hatred and anger), snakes (jealousy), bandit and thieves (wrong views), bondage (avarice and miserliness), floods (desire and attachment) and evil spirits and demons (deluded doubts).

Tara

Tara dispensing boons, opaque watercolour on palm leaf; from a folio of an Ashtasahsrika Prajnaparamita palm leaf manuscript. 12th century, Bengal.
Metropolitan Museum of Art.
Word press.com.





The John.c. and Susan L. Huntington Collection from Christies.Rare Painting of Tara from a Palpung Tara Set.
1700-1774”echoes the typical blue and green of Chinese landscapes. … Minimalist compared to Central Tibetan school…. Possibly belongs to the 21 Tara paintings from the lineage of Suryagupta of Kashmir. (from the essay of Tristan Bruck of Christies)

Radiating lines heralding radiating effulgence makes the appearance





Portrayal of 21 different Taras -Ref :



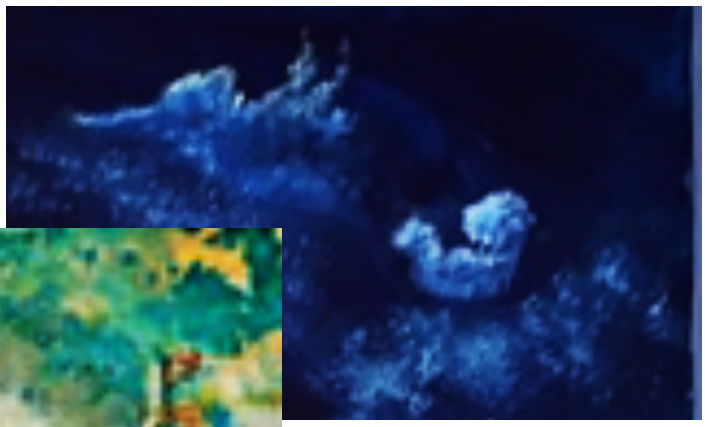


Photo by Auhor



Ref from -Th Encyclopedia of Tibetan Symbols and Motifs
By Robert Beer, Serindia Publications,Chicago and London

Sadrisyam – Similitude Inspired by cloud formation







Tara from
Goddesses of the Celestial Gallery by
Romeo Shreshtha
Mandala PublicationsSan Rafael, California

Traversing Through Eons -Tempera 5’ x3’
Sangamam (Confluence) of the Shadangas by author



‘Burgeoning Bliss’ Tempera.2’ x2’ by author



Epilogue

From the prehistoric cavemen till now there is a constant evolution of murals.

Canvas changes

Concept changes

Colours Changes

With technological innovations

Aspirations explode

Archaelogical treasures explode

Assimilations and Analysis

Precipitates whole new

Awarenesses

Awaiting, anticipating with bated breath!!!

Painting titled Hope-24" x18" Tempera



Recorded literary and archaeological evidences show that once in about 500 years, tsunami has struck the Eastern coast of the Peninsular India, which has been a busy sea faring country. On the left side of the painting *Lemuria*, the highly civilized continent that supposed to have existed is shown under deluge (around 3000BC)

The second incidence is narrated to show the repeated attacks on the harbors of the East Coast(2500BC)
The third incidence portrays the inundation in areas around Nagapattinam, Tranquebar and Kerala(1200-1300AD)

Emphasis is on the latest Tsunami 26th Dec 2004, on the right side of the painting. With the destruction came 'Hope' in the form of a float with seated Buddha, all the way from Myanmar to the shores of Mahabalipuram (Tamilnadu).
The painting titled 'Hope' is taken for discussion on Shadangas as it depicts that Tsunami is not always destructive.
With the destruction came the hope in the form of a float with seated Buddha all the way from Myanmar to the shores of Mahabalipuram

- Caught the speed but not the destruction.
- spreading messages of peace and tranquility.
- Lending itself to myriads of expressions.

Rekha - Line The hallmark of Indian Art – the lines were influenced by *Thangka* and Miniature Traditions. The forceful lines flattening out towards the right side enhances the picturization.

1. Rupa - Form The aureole at the back of Buddha and the lotus seat help defining the form.
2. Pramanani - Proportion.The comparative sizes of the monks at the back and the Buddha in front helps keep the focus.
3. Bhava - Emotions. The deluge – References for all the boats painted to be under water were taken from the line drawings compiled from literary and sculptural references by Sri. Chandarmurthy of Tamilnadu Archaelogical Department in Poompuhar Museum. Kind Curtesy of Sri. Chandramurthy
4. Sadrisyam - Similitude By showing the shore temples and the small out crop of a Durga shrine - explaining that the location is Mahabalipuram
5. Varnika Bhanga - Science of colour- Use of analogous and Complimentary colours befitting the solemnity of the occasion
6. Lavanya Yojanam – Tsunami in its wake brought about an awesome amount of awareness

In essence, murals are like the rolling stones gaining momentum in their journey, may glide, jump, shatter, but reappear with different dimensions in motion, a continuous journey in the making exploring newer concepts and materials and evolving into newer perspectives. There are ever so many avenues yet to be explored, this is almost like just opening the vaults and letting in the light to slowly illuminate and awaiting with bated breath.

