



The Development of the Fragmentary Kota School of Painting

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Kota School of painting is said to have its roots in the Bundi school of painting.¹ the beginning of kotah painting as a separate school¹ appears to belong to the reign of Rao Jagat Singh (A.D 1657-1684). The seated portrait of him with female attendants in the collections of Gopi-krishna kanoria of Patna.² When compared with dated and datable paintings from Bundi leads to one to ascribe it safely to the period A.D. 1660-70. The faces of the females are not yet stylized and some influence of Mughal painting is still apparent...

In the 1680 a collection of paintings called Ragini vilawal appeared to be a similar copy of Bundi's Ragini vilawal. The paintings during the era of Rao Ram Singh (1695-1707 A.D.) Breathe the truth that the main features were based on Bundi style but hence forth Kota painting had started to emerge with its originality. This fact is evident in the miniatures of the story of Rukamani presently preserved at Allahabad museum. The hunting scene of Mukund Garh (1696 A.D) has adopted the human figures of Bundi style. Whereas the nature has been depicted in different Kota style. Ever since Kota style emerged with thick forest, in male figure broad forehead, backward tightening hair, heavy chin, broad chest, pale shaped trousers called Jama etc. High and rounded rocks, thick bushes and high trees along with hunting sights are prevalent in the rustic vision of Kota as well as in the painting of the Kota style. Also the water ponds and the elephants and Horses along with a few people covering the animals at prey are normally illustrated in the miniatures and mural paintings alike. The women hunters are also depicted here. Earlier the swords and spears were painted as the weapons which in the later course were replaced by the modern guns.

A note about the painters

The authors have so far been able to identify eighteen artists by persuing the paintings and inscription written behind them and seeing the khakhas in the royal collection at kotah. A list of the names of these artists in appended at the end of this note. From the language written in quite a few of the inscriptions it goes to show that there was a link or a connection with neighbouring Mewar. They indicate quite clearly that several of these artists, especially some of the great master painters of Maharao Umed singh I's era(1770-1819A.D.) were either from

Mewar or they had come from there earlier, and had settled in kotah but still continued to write or speak in their own dialect of Mewari.

The list³ given below shows the names of the Chateras and period to which they belonged.

1. Niju :- A painting dated A.D. 1725 of two elephants fighting (Lucknow museum). He belonged to the atelier of Maharao Durjan Sal (A.D. 1723-1756)
2. Joshi Hansraj (Mewari) :- A painting dated A.D. 1774 .Atelier of Maharao Umed singh I (A.D. 1770-1819)
3. Gumani (Mewari) :- A painting dated A.D. 1778. Atelier of Maharao Umed singh I (A.D. 1770-1819)
4. Shevdar Gangeyaji :- (c.A.D. 1750-56) the reign of Durjan sal (A.D. 1723-56)
5. Bhimsen :- A painting dated A.D. 1781.
6. Sheikh Taju :- A painting dated A.D. 1780 Atelier of Maharao Umed singh I (A.D. 1770-1819). He has also painted a portrait of Maharao Amar Singh of Mewar which is now in the royal Collection kotah.
7. Akheyram Brahamin :- A painting dated A.D. 1781 Atelier of Maharao Umed Singh I (A.D. 1770-1819)
8. Joshi Hathoo or Hathuwa :- A painting dated A.D. 1784 Atelier of Maharao Umed singh I (A.D. 1770-1819)
9. Pandu Garsi :- His known works belongs to the period of Maharao Umed singh I's atelier but they may have painted even in a earlier period.
10. Sitaram :- A painting dated A.D. 1781 He was the son of Pandu Garsi. Atelier of Maharao Umed singh
11. Mussavir Ghorpal :- Belonged to the atelier of Maharao Umed singh I (A.D. 1770-1819).
12. Tikho :- He was the son of sitaram. He belonged to the atelier of Maharao Ram singh (A.D. 1827-1865) but it is conceivable he may painted in the atelier of an earlier ruler.
13. Kishandas :- He belonged to Maharao Ram singh's atelier. Its possible he may have painted in the atelier of an earlier ruler.
14. Lacchiram :- A painting dated A.D. 1831. He was the son of Kishandas. Atelier of Maharao Ram singh (A.D. 1827-1865)
15. Man :- He was the son of sheikh Taju. His inscribed work is illustrated in Mylo Beach.
16. Iman bux :- An undated khakha of Mahukar Gadh a fort twenty mile south of kotah in the Darah Range built by Rao Madho singh (A.D. 1624-1648).
17. Uday Bhan :- An undated khakha of a rather unusual looking hollow backed horse.
18. Dalu :- A dated Ragmala set of A.D. 1768.

It was in Umed Singh I reign (A.D. 1770-1819) that kotah painting made its astonishing contribution not only to the Rajput style, but for that matter, also to Indian miniature painting as well. It excels in scenes depicting outdoor action especially those of the shikar and episodes connected with it, showing a delicate sensivity which is unique and distinguished from all other school. One can clearly see the great relan and joidvivre that the ruler had for this sport. There is rhythm and movement mingled with glamour, as the artist skilfully fills the painting with poetic enchantment. Simplified forms and manginification of details are a special feature. Yet there is an overall oneness of composition and identity amongst the myriad forms of trees, shrubs, foliage, rock, and animal and human forms.

The sensitive expressions of the deer with their limpid glances , the owe-inspiring fierceness of brutal raw animal energy displayed of the great carnivora, the graceful fluid movement of the hunters on elephant or on horseback and the delicate treatment of the foliage and trees, closely massed yet ethereal is appearance, all go to make for the excellence of the kotah hunting scenes. The technique of applying subtle gradations of colour evidences a high degree of technical skill, while innovations such as the deliberate filling in of the painted surface with details betokens in ventiveness. But above all it is the pulsating rhythm and enthusiasm of the chase so remarkably pictorialised that mark out the kotah kalam as distinctive from all other Rajasthani schools ,both in orientation and technique. Later, kotah painting adopted a more standard type of pictorial exposition as seen in the Baramasa series. Some minatures from a Dhola-Maru series dated A.D. 1762 painted at Nandgaon.(the name given to kotah by Maharao Bhim Singh I) now in the collection of the Rajasthan Research Institute, Udaipur, and an extensive Bhagavata series with paintings of very small format in the Government Museum, kotah dated A.D. 1759 painted at Nandgaon, and also an illustrated M.S of Madhumalti dated A.D.1772 in the Heras Institute Bombay give us an indication ofr the dating of both kotah and Bundi miniatures of the so called “white period” as belonging to (A.D. 1760-70). This nomenclature was given by the late William Archer in his book on kotah painting in the Victoria and Albet Museum, London. A dating originally suggested by karl Khondalavala as a guideline for the period in the Bulletin of the Prince of wales Museum Bomboy No 3 pp25 -35⁴

The themes that appear mostly are the Ragmala ,Nayak-Nayika, Krishna-lila and scenes depicting the worship and adoration of the idols of the lord Shri Brijnath ji and other gods apart of course from a vast array of the inimitable kotah hunting scenes.The large number of khakhas dealing with these subjects, which exist in the royal collection all point to this fact.



Nayika- Arjun Mahal

The head-dress usually gives one a clue to the provenance of the painting. The pugri or the turban differed (as it continues to differ even today) from individual to individual though in a slight manner but in a more distinct way from region to region, its shape being evolved through the years. The kotah pugri of those days, as seen in the painting is generally shown sloping from the front to the rear in a flat manner. It is interesting to note that Maharao Umed Singh I, when he was a young lad, is shown in paintings as “Chota-lalji” meaning the young darling son wearing a Bundi type Khagdar pugri.⁵



Hunting Scene of Kanwarpada Dyodi

It was in Maharao Ram Singh's I reign that there was the second flowering of kotah painting. The depiction of the hunt continued to be the favourite subject but there were clear changes to be noticed from the work of the earlier period of Maharao Umed Singh I. Here we can see innovations and variations in the rendering of shikar scenes. One remarkable feature is the manner in which the clouds are shown this “flamboyant treatment” so to speak, makes them appear as gay floating banners with golden flashes of lightning in between the dark curling masses. As usual hunting scenes predominate but there is a change in the treatment of trees and foliage and in their colouring. The delicate ethereal quality of earlier times is no longer so pronounced. There is more exactness in treating nature especially the rocks. The resemblance of the scenes depicted in the painting with the actual sites where the shikar took place is quite striking. There is moreover now greater emphasis on ceremonial scenes, such as that of the durbar, the sowari and festival. Ram Singh I was a ruler who enjoyed life with a zest and ensured that episodes, however whimsical they may be, were all faithfully recorded by his artists. One sees such astonishing scenes as Ram Singh riding an elephant on a chhatari siding a horse on top of the roof of the kotah palace and going out in a procession with a dancing girl performing on a platform placed between the tusks of this royal elephant.⁶



Shrinath ji , Kanwarpada ki Dyodi

In the kanwarpada-ka-mahal in the City Palace , there is a line drawing done on polished White-plaster on the wall of a room, showing Rao Ram Singh (1695-1707 A.D.) hunting a giraffe in the hills near Ujjain with a fanciful lion attacking it. Another such panel shows Maharao Ram Singh II (1827-1865 A.D.) playing Holi, riding atop his state elephant in the streets of kotah with a horse pipe the coloured water of which pressured up by a mechanical bellows pump was sprayed by the ruler on his subjects. The scene is full of joy and life.⁷ One also sees a variety of faces in such scenes indicating that the ateliers were experimenting with realistic portraiture and were not content to limit faces to a single type. Natural details are more carefully exuberant as in earlier times it seems that a palette of blue-green hues dominates the paintings of the nineteenth century A.D. A number of animal studies, especially of the tiger exist in the khakhas belonging to Maharao Ram Singh's I period in the royal collection. But the most remarkable painting is the one in scroll form on cloth showing Maharao Ram Singh's state visit to the Red Fort of Delhi in A.D.1842. It measures 452.12259.08 cm² and depicts with remarkable clarity in a bird's eye view the city of Shahjahanabad and the Red Fort along with the Jam-i-Masjid and the busy bazaar of Chandani Chowk and life as it went on in those days. There are innumerable figures drawn with great care, details of architecture, life in the bazaar domestic animal, prancing monkeys and even an English couple kissing in the great courtyard of the big mosque. Maharao Ram Singh's visit to the durbar of Ajmer held A.D.1831 By lord William Bentinck. The Maharao presented one such scroll to the Governor General ,who wrote back expressing his grateful thanks. Similar scenes are also painted on the walls in the kanwarpada-ka-Mahal⁸



Govardhan Dharan - Chhatramahal

The murals in the Raj-Mahal, where the ruler held his formal durbars and all official functions and ceremonies, have scenes from the Krishna Lila hunting scenes and an interesting group of all the rulers of Kotah. In the Bada Mahal which was the ruler's bed chamber and private apartment, there are colourful murals showing processions, the Krishna Lila and hunting scenes. The pigments here are much fresher as this chamber has not suffered from sunlight. The verandah outside has a number of miniatures fixed on its walls and a white marble frieze showing some hunting scenes.⁹

The big wall panel in Chhatra Mahal full of animal and hunting scenes is another good example of the mural painting at Kotah. On another wall is shown the Raga-Vasant. On the inner room walls there are scenes from the life of the Lord Shri Krishna. They appear to have been drawn during the days of Maharao Umed Singh I (A.D. 1770-1819) but they have been painted over by artists in the late nineteenth century A.D. with some sort of oil based colours. The figures of the men show a strong Mughal influence, especially in their turbans, but the architectural details do not reflect this. The houses and other buildings shown in most of the Kotah painting bear a distinct resemblance to houses and buildings still to be seen in the towns and villages of Kotah.¹⁰

The Arjun Mahal and the Anand Mahal also have some fine murals but they are all of the post A.D. 1850 age and are mostly copies of old themes. They nevertheless do reflect the life and times of an earlier age.¹¹

In Maharao Shatru Sal II's time (A.D. 1865-1888) the portraiture is weak the style changes and becomes heavy and crude. Though there are still some interesting and lively paintings to be seen. An excellent hunting scene of this period exists in a niche in the Anand Mahal.¹²

This is evidenced by records and an illustration of this is to be found in an inscription behind a large and rather beautiful gold-filled hunting scene executed by Chhatra Akheyram in A.D. 1781.

To some extent the wall paintings in the kotah city palace, particularly those in the Jhala Haveli. Where Zalim Singh lived, inside the palace complex enable us to formulate the characteristics of kotah painting of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries A.D. A number of murals were painted on the walls of the Bada Mahal and the Chhatar Mahal.

These murals largely followed the tradition, style and pattern of the miniatures. In Rajrana's Haveli there are particularly fine murals, especially extensive hunting scene which is 670.5660.96 cm² executed in the finest manner of Maharao Umed Singh I's atelier. The other scenes depicted the Krishna lila, the life of the harem ladies, ladies dressed up in Portuguese attire Nayak-Nayika themes, court scenes, and the worship of the Lord Shri Brijnath ji. There are also cartouches depicting fights of all kinds-cock fights, elephant fights, antelope fights, Camel fights as well as Dragons and simurghs. A court scene shows Zalim Singh sitting in attendance in front of Maharao Umed Singh. But the finest of these murals is the hunting scene showing both the Maharao and his diwan hunting wild boar, tiger, wild buffalo and rhinoceros with attendants and retinue.¹³

Bhagvata depiction :- A Bhagvata has been painted in the government museum of kota. This one was painted by kanhaiya Brahmin at Nandgaon(kotah) in 1759 A.D. It has the usual folios of 42cm x 17.5cm. with illustrations painted on either ends on both the sides. There are 1100 folios each having four illustrations. thus there are approximately 4000 such illustration some have yellow borders, some with flowered borders. Not all folios have illustration. The figures inside have the typical kotah faces and characteristics. They resemble the Dhola-Maru series of A.D. 1762 with Palm trees, banana plants greenish horizon and reddish skies.

Plate I A hunting scene

Dated -A.D. 1784

Artist- Joshi Hathawa

Collection- Rao Madho Sing Museum trust city palace Kota

Size- 54 cms x 64 cms

This is a fine hunting scene by a master from the atelier of the Maharao Umed Singh I (1790 - 1819 A.D.)¹⁴ It shows a lion hunt in the Alnia Jungles.

The scene depicts lion country, for lions do not normally live in dense forests as tigers do. The jungle shown in the painting is sparse. A rope net enclosure often used in those days, is also seen in the qamargah fashion of the Mongols. A sloth bear is shown slipping away in the background adding realism to the picture. The ruler is accompanied by a large number of soldiers and armed Rajputs, some mounted on horses, and elephant with a mahout and two sandni sowars (camel riders) driving the game forward towards the Maharao who is the chief hunter. The artist has captured the movements of a lion as in an animated cartoon, namely, how it came, outburst its fury and lastly how it ran and was shot. Two small hares are seen with mousy faces quietly watching the proceedings in a rather quaint way. The most interesting part of the composition is the manner in which the artist has shown a stream, and the tentacles of trees growing alongside its edges meandering along from the top to the bottom of extreme left-hand side and all rendered without any attempt at perspective.

Plate II - A Hunting scene**Dated - A.D 1778****Artist - Gumani****Collection - M.K.Brijraj Singh of kotah****Size- 52.5cmx65.5cm**

A typical kotah hunting scene belonging to the period of the Maharao Umed Singh I (1790 - 1819 A.D.).¹⁵ This painting record two hunting incidents but of two separate years. It shows Umed Singh with his mamaji (Uncle) Rajarana Zalim Singh hunting a figerss in the Jungle of Moti Paj near Ghatoli and is dated Aghan(Margshirsh). Sudi 11V.S. 1835 i.e. 30th November A.D.1778. The text at the back of the painting says that in this hunt three wild-boars were also shot and the shooting camp was at Darah (Mukundarah). The second incident-recorded is when Umed singh wounded another tigress in the foot in the same jungles. This incident took place on Posh Sudi 4, V.S. 1835 i.e. 23 December A.D.1778.

It is interesting to note that the jungles of the Darah Vallay so vividly painted here have by and large remained so till quite recently. It's curious to note that all the reddish trunk trees have scanty growth or no leaves. A hunting dog can be seen attacking a boar in the foreground as Rajputs on horseback get ready to spear it. A whole family of wild boar with little ones also can be seen just above the tiger in the centre. The tiger on the left-hand side is shown wounded and in a great fury chewing at a rock, a reaction which is not uncommon in such circumstances and is seen in several paintings. In the lower foreground is a sowari or procession with the kotah state flag bearing the garuda emblem on the Nishan ka Hathi or the standard bearing elephant, the Mahajan or the ruler's palanquin, a caparisoned elephant with the golden howdah and the royal horses and retainers? It is curious to note that for all Rajputs the symbol of bravery in the animal kingdom is the wild-boar and not the lion or the tiger.

PLATE III: A Reverie Scene**Circa A.D 1720-23****Collection :- M.k. Brijraj Singh of kotah****Size :- 32cm x 48.5cm**

A most outstanding early kotah painting of (A.D. 1720-23).¹⁶ It shows the Lord Brijnath ji, the tutelary deity of the royal House of Kotah, being adored by the Maharao Arjun Singh (A.D. 1720-1723) and an acolyte in the form of the goswamy all bearing the same facial features, namely those of Arjun singh.They are crossing on the river Chambal in the royal barge, with the famous 'Kerais' on high cliffs, lining the river which are shown in the background. The treatment of water is quite unusual. A kirtan mandli or singers of hymns accompany the barge in a separate boat. Bears are seen clambering on the rocks in the background while the hunters advance on them. In the water a stylized angry crocodile thrusts its snout from the water. A sea monster emerging from the waters and showing its fierce head is a device often seen in mughal painting and the kotah artist has obviously introduced this device in the present painting after seeing it in a Mughal miniature.Arjun singh had a very prominent Sharp nose and this is evident in all his portraits. The goswamy is dressed just like a Mugal courtier and wears a sword in scabbard. All the three principal occupants of the barge have white and gold halos set against their heads. Arjun sing is in the act of worshipping Brijnath ji with folded hands whereas the goswamy acts as a morchhal bearer. The barge is being propelled by two paddle-like ears, one oarsman being seated at the front and other standing at the rear. Though the royal barge dominates the painting, it is no way distracts

attention from the majesty of the rocky landscape and this feature is a tribute to the high skill of the artist. The typical reddish skyline, characteristic of kotah painting is to be seen in the present illustration.

One of the remarkable features of the coloring of this impressive painting is the manner in which accents of white are distributed over the entire composition. The present painting may be regarded as one of the most brilliant creations of the kotah kalam.

PLATE -IV :- A Krishna Abhisarika (Nayak-Nayika theme)

Circa A.D. 1750

Collection : Rao Madho singh Museum Trust City palace Kotah

Size : - 27cm x 16cm

This is one of the paintings from a charming Nayak-Nayika series the borders of which have remained unfinished. It shows the Nayika(Heroine) going to keep her tryst with her lover during the dark period of the moon despite the dangers of the night such as snakes crawling in the woodland one of which has coiled around her leg. The scene is set amidst a grove lush with vegetation with a small stream flowing by and a simply decorated pavilion with turrets looming through the darkness. The setting is strongly reminiscent of the Umed Ganj pleasure palace situated east of kotah. The tall khajur trees(Phonix Sylovestris) in the background, the light green leaved kadamb trees (mitragyna Parui Folia) on the left-hand side, the white stemmed Arjuna trees (Terminculai Arjun) , the Agariya bushes (Putranjiva Roxburghii) with their dark green leaves, the light coloured Jamun tree (Eugenia Jambolana) near the right of the Nayika the Papaya (carica Papaya) the Champa (Magnolia petro carapa) the Varna(crataevia Religosa) and the Molshri(Mimusope Elengi) bushes are some of the typical plants that grow in such gardens. The series is datable to (A.D. 1750¹⁷ on the basis of comparison with dated kith. sets such as the Dhola-Maru series of A.D. 1762.

In the Nayira painting the hero is usually a prince or a courtier but at times he is translated into Krishna. A brilliant compositional effect is the manner in which the vermilion coloured garments of the Heroine are contrasted with the vermilion gaddi on which Krishna is seated. While the Heroine gazes intently at the object of her nocturnal adventure, Krishan is gazing in another direction as if unaware of his approaching beloved and wondering why she has not yet reached his dwelling. There is a beautiful play of light and shade brought about by the contrast between the dark sky and the light foliage of several trees in the woodland surrounding. The hurried movement of the Heroine is clearly shown by the swing and sway of her orange ghagra as she strides over the dark pathways leading to her lover's dwelling.

PLATE V - A scene from Rukmini painting series

Cire A.D. 1700

Collection - Rao Madho singh museum Trust, city palace kotah.

Size 30cm x 22cm.

This splendid painting from a series of thirty two miniatures depict a scene most probably from the version of the epic story written by Maharaj Prithviraj of Bikaner.¹⁸ The legendary scene shown in plate V depicts a king paying homage to a hermit seated on a bagchhal (tiger skin) with paras pipul (ficus cordi folia) and Banyan (ficus Behgalensis) trees in the Background and re flowering cannas and Ark kel bushes nearby. A stream issues forth

from a cheerful lion's mouth while below are lotus flowers and leaves. Vishnu, Saraswati on a hansa (Swan) and Vishnu's Vehicle garuda are in the background. Dark stemmed Dhok tree (Anogeissus Pendula) form the skyline on the hill, with a cluster of jamun trees (Eugenia Operculate) just below the serpent while a couple of mango trees (Mangifera Indica) and some GvarPatha (Aloe Indica) plants are sun growing here and there. The series is an early example of the kotah kalam and is not likely to be later than c.A.D 1700. This series establishes the presence at the kotah court of highly individualistic artists and the Mugal influence of the Aurangzeb period is very apparent. The great respect shown by rulers to holy men can be sensed in this painting though it deals with a mythological theme. The vivid sky developed in later kotah painting into masses of turbulent clouds. Another striking compositional feature is the manner in which the artist has balanced the white swan in the upper part of the painting against the white kutir (hut) lower down in the picture in front of which the holy man is seated. The rock formations are a simplification of the cliffs that skirt the Chambal.

PLATE VI - A scene from rukmini parinaya series

(A.D. 1700)

Collection - Rao Madho singh Museum Trust City Palace Kota.

Size - 30cm x 22cm.

A splendid composition from the same series. It shows the lord Krishna carrying away Rukmini in his chariot, with his army all around the battlements and his mounted escorts.¹⁹ A scene of the attendants playing with their angavastrama (Body cloths) besides a sleeping guard, is one of a curious nature. Inside the fort can be seen ladies praying in front of a temple and red flowering cannas and bananas in bloom. In the foreground are red flowers which appear to be red poppies.

The painting is divided into two separate parts, in the upper register in the scene of Rukmini going to the temple and in the lower register Krishna is seen in his chariot about to elope with her. The separation of the two registers is cleverly achieved by the lower wall of the fort extended across the composition. One of the Characteristics of Rajasthani paintings in general seen also in the present illustration is that the stories of the epics and the puranas are cast in a contemporary mould.

The men and women the horse and the chariots the elephant and the architecture all belong to the period of the painting itself. Hence it has been said Rajasthani miniature painting is not only an aesthetic achievement but a great social document.

PLATE VII The month of Tenth. A leaf from a Baramasa series.

A.D. 1770

Collection Rao Madho Singh museum Trust City palace kotah.

Size 32cm x 17cm.

The Baramasa means the twelve months of the year. The theme is frequently illustrated in Indian miniature painting. The poetic description of the sizzling hot summer month of Jeth²⁰ is rendered herein in the traditional manner. It graphically shows that in a period of extreme heat, even mutual foes forgetting their animosities take refuge together from the burning sun. A serpent seeks refuge under the shade of a peacock and a tiger does the same under the shade of an elephant. Two jack can be seen seeking shade just above them. While the hot yellow sun

shines fiercely, the royal Lord and his lady find cool comfort in the shade of a pavilion with maids fanning them with hand-held punkhas (fans) Way side travellers also seek shelter under the shade of a mango tree, as does the black buck, while the elephant finds a shade under a red flowering Ashoka tree (*Polyallthia longifolia*). In the courtyard can be seen mango, Jamun and Banana trees and a pool on which birds are afloat amidst flowering Champa bushes.

PLATE VIII A Coloured Khakha of a Panther Hunt

A.D. 1725

Collection Rao Madho Singh museum Trust City palace kotah.

Size 24.5cm x 47cm.

In this painting a kotah elephant in the finest style of the early eighteenth century is depicted with verve & sure flowing draught manship. One can literally feel the great papyrus pulsating with massive strength and energy. The scene records Maharao Durjan Shal (A.D 1723-1756)²¹ riding atop his elephant "Ann Prasad" which is fighting with a panther and has curled his trunk around the beast. The study of the ruler's face is in the best traditions of the kotah School. Curiously he wields a golden ankush (elephant god) in his left hand. It is mystifying to note that the elephant's forelegs are chained together which is most unusual.

The immense strength of the great infuriated elephant is wonderfully emphasized by the manner in which he has lifted the panther as though this ferocious creature was only a puny denizen of the forest.

PLATE - IX Three ladies in front of the camel (Dhola-Maru MS)

Dated 1762 A.D.

Collection - Raj Research Inst. Udaipur

Size 12cm x 19.5cm

This plate depicts the incident when Dhola reaches pungal.²² He overhears the gossiping Rebaranas at the well. As his camel was very tired, Dhola got down the quench his own thirst and that of his camel. Someone struck the camel with a cane which caused the camel to leap and upon that one of the Rebaranas watched it minutely and could recognize that it was the same she camel which was given in dowry to Marawani at the time of her marriage. She whispered what she had discovered to the other Rebaranas. Marawani who was also as her husband. She left for her home with her friends. One of the Rebaranas informed the king of pungal thereupon sent his courtiers to welcome Dhola. The group of females shown are the friends of Marawani assembled at the feeding stall. One to them is holding the royal insignia (adani) indicating the presence of Marawani. Dhola is standing with his She-camel which is shown being fed green fodder, more likely leaves of the acacia and khejdi (*Prosopis cineraria*) trees. It's interesting to note that the camel is shown ready with a double seated saddle indicating that all is ready for the journey home to Narwar. It accordingly provides a firm basis for the stylistic features of kotah painting in the third quarter of the eighteenth century. Many of the miniatures of the Dhola Maru have a characteristic vermilion sky as seen herein. In the painting the camel is shown richly adorned with the typical ghorbund tied around its neck & Body.

PLATE X - A folio from the Madhu-malti.

Dated 1772 A.D.

Collection : Heras Ins. Bombay

Size-12cm x 19.5cm.

The scene depicted in the illustration shows Malti along with Jaitmala. She is seen consulting Jaitmala her chief maid servant and confidante when all her efforts to win the heart of Madhu had failed. Jaitmala suggested to Malti to employ the incantations of allurements the empty cage denotes the Vasikaran mantra given by Jaitmala to Malti with the help of which she could capture the parrot "Madhu"(a metaphor). The scene is on the banks of Ramasarovar. The painting is typical of the Kotah kalam of the period C.A.D 1760-1775.²³

CHIEF CHARACTERISTICS

1. Lining :- The linings are natural and give a solid look to the shapes. The speed, force, rhythm are maintained by the accurate linings here.

2. Colours :- In mural paintings the grey colour is quite full of life. The orange and green colours blending with grey colour illustrate an original script of Kota painting. The contrast colours enhance the beauty of figures. Somewhere the colours are gifted with transparency and somewhere they are in transparent. The soft green colour has been blended with yellow, blue, brown pink red to produce an exciting style.

3. Symbolism: - The symbolic and psychological objects have been shaped quite beautiful. The variety of flower different coloured blocked in the background of nature and religious symbols are picturesque in view.

4. Light and Shadow :- The hot colours are used in natural way. The different shades of green colour depicted here are matchless in beauty.²⁴ The shadow and light have been depicted in an impressive manner.

5. Figure :- The original looks of faces and figures have found an expression here. The balcony, the plants and trees and the shades of houses have been pictures naturally. The costumes, the eyes, nose, lips and different parts of human body are painted in the tuning of posture of Body. The imagination in expressions has replaced the geometrical figures found elsewhere.

6. Composition: - The paintings are composed in two sided and multi-view-points.²⁵ The different scenes of a story have been painted in small blocks but are composed on a similar background to express its uniqueness.

7. The Specification of Elephants :- The artists of Kotah excelled in drawing and painting the elephants. Their remarkable ability in this behalf has never been surpassed. The favorite theme seems to be draw paint great bull elephants straining against and breaking their chains. The dynamism and draughtmanship seen in the dated paintings of elephants referred to above, seem to have continued with unabated vigor and perfection for over a century and a half, well passed the A.D. 1850 till the end of Maharao Ram Singh's reign. Several such Khakhas of elephants studies exist in the royal collection, all of which display the exceptionally fine quality of line, which is emphasized by the fact that such Khakhas are uncoloured. It must not be forgotten that the elephants were a royal prerogative in this age.²⁶

8. Effect of Ballabhkul Sampradaya :- Two important features which are to be seen throughout the evolution of Kotah kalam, trace their origin to the reign of Maharao Bhim Singh I. The first was the conversion of the Maharao to the Ballabhkul Sampradaya and the second following from this was the adoption of Garuda as the state emblem. Contrary to the belief that several paintings depicting Garuda usually with Vishnu-Lakshmi belong to the Bundi school, it

may be pointed out these are all kotah paintings. As already mentioned, it was in kotah and not in Bundi that the garuda was given great significance and was adopted as an emblem on the royal standard as can be seen from the wall-paintings of the Bada-Mahal in kotah and in several miniatures as well. In the inner mahals at the Bundi palace, however, it is the katar or jamdhar that is seen as the emblem on their state standard and not garuda.²⁷

9. Form and content :- The subjectivity of paintings is unique in form. The Triangular shapes and the co-ordination of active and passive objects are superb.²⁸

10. Margins :- The margins are usually formed by creepers to enhance the radiant beauty of figures²⁹. The gaps and distance have been maintained with the expression of reality. Some of the paintings are in rectangular shapes. Some mural paintings do have gaps due to the architectural designs.

11. Female Figure :- The female faces are round shaped having long eyes like almond whereas the forehead is raised and there are a few hairs on the cheeks. The trimmed waist and not much heavy breast along with short height are the peculiarities which raise the beauty of female character.³⁰

12. Dresses :- The royal personalities are shown wearing long jama, pyjama and a patka around the waist. A diamond studded turban was also a specific feature. A transparent dupatta, short lehnga and the ornamented choli are the peculiarities of women.

Key Words

1. Kotah- Kota State it was founded in medieval period. It was known as Nandgaon.

Foot Note

1. Milo Beach-Rajput Painting at Bundi and Kota pp 30
Dr. Badri Singh Verma- Kota Chitrakanl Parampara
2. M.K. Brijraj Singh- The kingdom that was kotah pp98
3. Ibid pp-23
4. Ibid pp-18
5. Ibid pp-18
6. Ibid pp-19-20
7. Ibid pp-20
8. Ibid pp-20
9. Ibid pp-21
10. Ibid pp-21
11. Ibid pp-21
12. Ibid pp-21
13. Ibid pp-20
14. Ibid pp-28
15. Ibid pp-28
16. Ibid pp-32

17. Ibid pp-36
18. Ibid pp-40
19. Ibid pp-42
20. Ibid pp-44
21. Ibid pp-46
22. Ibid pp-52
23. Ibid pp-54
24. Dr. B.N. Verma – Kota Bhatti chitramkam parampara pp 100
25. Ibid pp 101
26. M.K. Brijvaj Singh-The kingdom that was Kotah pp-14
27. Ibid pp14
28. Dr. B.N. Verma- Kota Bhatti chitramkam parampara pp 83-84
29. Ibid pp84
30. Dr. Mrs Shweta marwar-A cultural & social study of the mural paintings in the Garh palace of kota. pp31

Reference Books

1. Milo Beach-Rajput Painting at Bundi and Kota
2. Dr. Badri Singh Verma- Kota Chitrakan Parampara
3. M.K. Brijraj Singh- The kingdom that was Kotah
4. Dr. B.N. Verma- Kota Bhatti chitramkam parampara
5. Dr. Mrs Shweta marwar-A cultural & social study of the mural paintings in the Garh palace of Kota