Rajasthani painting of the Seventeenth Century assimilated all the artistic influences that the past traditions offered. The folk art of a lively people lent its colourful tone, to a developed technical skill. A mode of painting thus came into being, whose themes and composition reflected the life of the people around them. The sorrows of the simple village woman, the passions of a common youth, the religious fervour of the old, found a place in the arts. The medieval Rajputs found in the paintings of the Seventeenth Century a prism, whose colourful reflections lighted up their daily life.

This mode of painting did not limit itself to the geographical areas of Rajasthan, but spread to central India and Uttar Pradesh. The main schools of painting flourished in the courts of petty feudal chiefs like those of Bundi, Kotah, Kishengarh as well as in the palaces of important kings like that of Amber, Jaipur, Mewar etc. As the artistic pursuits increased, a number of sub-schools came into being. These, while remaining within the frame of a general artistic mode, showed slight variations. These changes were brought about by local demands as well as individual skill. Occasionally a painter is seen to leave his mark upon his work, which saved him from the general anonymity so characteristic of the period.

The study of Rajasthani painting has emerged in the field of serious pursuits, rather late. The discoveries of
treasures lying neglected in musty rooms of old palaces are constantly broadening the area of information. The romance of a treasure hunt still clings to the study of these paintings. But this has its disadvantages, as collectors often gain a priority before the scholar. Inspite of the inaccessibility of materials, Rajasthani painting attracted and is still drawing a large number of students to its charming world of love. For as Dr. Moti Chandra has aptly remarked it is love of the human and the divine' that is the main interest of Rajasthani painting.

Any study of the origin of Rajasthani painting as an artistic mode is the study of a problem. The questions were first raised with the discovery of a group of paintings now known as the 'Chaurapañchāsīka' group. A set of illustrated 'Chaurapañchāsīka' composed by the poet Bilhan, reserved in the collection of late Sri N.C. Mehta has given its name to the group. The problem centres round the questions of the provenance and the date. According to Dr. Moti Chandra and Mr. Khandalwala, this group constitutes a style which prevailed in the Delhi-Jaunpur area, and mainly flourished in the Uttar Pradesh from 1550 onwards. According to the second group of scholars led by Mr. Basil Gray, Mr. Edward Barret and Dr. Anand.
Krishna, these should be considered as pre-Akbari in date. They further consider it to be the beginning of a style which not only left its trace on Rajasthani painting but also helped to create the Mughal paintings of the Akbari period.

The problem has been discussed in a series of articles and books on Rajasthani painting. Recently Mrs. Leela Shiveswar-kar has published the whole series of the controversial 'Chaurapañchāśīkā' illustrations in 'The Pictures of the Chaurepauñchāśīkā A Sanskrit Love Lyric'. (New Delhi. 1967). Further in 1969, Mr. Khandalwala and Dr. Moti Chandra have published a detailed discussion of all the relevant documents which they consider important to clarify the problem of Sixteenth century painting in general, and the origin of the Rajasthani painting in particular. A survey of these opinions may serve as an introduction to Rajasthani painting of the Seventeenth century.

The Chaurapauñchāśīkā illustrations drew the notice of the art world in the Royal Academy Exhibition of the Art of India and Pakistan in Burlington House, London in 1947-48. It was different in style from the Western Indian Ms. illustrations then known, but bore a certain similarity to it. Traces of Mughal court art could also be noticed. It was to be found in the use of the 'Châkdâr Jâmah' (a six pointed transparent coat) supposed to be fashionable at Akbar's court. The scholars were thrown into a dilemma regarding their provenance and date.

Mr. Basil Gray published with reference to the 'Chaurapañchāśikā' illustration (in Rajput Painting. Faber 1956) a single Rāgini painting from the collection of Mr. J.C. French. This bore distinct stylistic similarity to the illustrated 'Chaurapañchāśikā'. The notice of the critics of medieval painting was attracted, a hunt followed. From different collections appeared paintings which definitely belonged to a common idiom, whatever may be its name. The paintings now known as belonging to this style are:

3. A Series of Bhāgavat Purāṇa, dispersed in various collections.
4. The Single Rāgini painting from J.C. French.
5. A Single miniature in the National Museum. Probably the front page of an illustrated Gītā-Govinda depicting an assembly of writers like Jaydeva, Dhyoyee, etc.
8. The Laur-Chandā series in the Lahore and Punjab-Government Museums, also other sets of the Laur-Chandā in the John Rylands Library, Manchester, and the Prince of Wales
Museum, Bombay. Finally Mrs. Leela Shiveswarkar mentions in her book — 'The Pictures of the Chaurapāṇchāśikā, a Sanskrit Love Lyric' (Pg. 5), two unpublished miniatures in the possession of Mr. Haridas of Bombay.

Before listing the arguments in the case of the 'Chaurapāṇchāśikā' group of paintings, it would be interesting to notice their stylistic characteristics. The colours applied in all the paintings are extremely bright. The juxtaposition of broad areas of brightly coloured spaces gives the paintings their main tones. The background is usually flat, and where trees or buildings are shown as in the case of the illustrated 'Chaurapāṇchāśikā', they become decorations to set off the central figures. The trees as in the Gīta-Govinda illustrations of the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay, and an illustration from the Bhāgavat Purāṇa at the National Museum are extremely stylised with ornamental leaves and flowers. The buildings in these paintings, as well as in the Chaurapāṇchāśikā sets are only pavilions supported mainly by two pillars. They are decorated with ornamental fringes or tassels.

The figures gain the main importance in these paintings. They also show interesting features. Generally squat, they are marked by their but well defined lines. The women have their waists and well developed breasts usually marked by two overlapping circles. The nipple is indicated by a design composed of dots in a circle with another dot in the centre. The eyes
are large and well opened. Often they stretch to the ears, but unlike the Western Indian Mss. illustrations, they never project outside the contours of the face. This latter feature is considered significant by most scholars.

The costumes are also interesting. The men in most of the paintings wear a turban with a slight top. This is known as the Kulādhār turban. The use of this turban by venerable men like Nanda (Bhāgavat Purāṇa, National Museum) and frolicsome Gods like Kāma while shooting an arrow (Gūḍa Govinda, Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay) appear rather funny. The 'Chākdār Jāmā', another feature of these paintings, is worn by all the men. Krishna and Balarām (Gūḍa Govinda, Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay) are not exempted from wearing this coat, though they are allowed to replace the Kulādhār turban by the more ornamental head dress of peacock feathers.

The women wear printed skirts of various colours. Particularly pleasing, is the contrasting coloured squares used in Champāvatī’s skirt. The ornamented prints of the skirts are also repeated in the cushions and the bedspreads. A striking feature of the women's dress is the transparent odāni. It stands round the head like a balloon, then falls straight without any folds. The end is decorated with ornamental tassels.

The paintings in most cases show very clear draughtsmanship, and a sure execution of details. This together with the eye for colour harmonisation, and conceptions of composition,
mark out a set of artists, who whatever be their date were certainly not novices in their art.

Analysing these paintings, Mr. Karl Khandalwala expressed his views in an article—'The Leaves from Rajasthan'. This raised a great deal of controversy. Reconsidering his opinions he stressed some of these again in another article —'The Problems of Rajasthani Painting'. He was supported in his views by Dr. Moti Chandra, Mr. P.L. Gupta and Mr. Promod Chandra. In a recently published book, these opinions have been re-assessed. Mr. Karl Khandalwala and Dr. Moti Chandra have taken as the beginning of their study, certain well known Western Indian Mss. illustrations. According to them, one of the most important document, which marks the evolution of the style culminating in Laur-Chanda Chaurapancasikā illustrations is the Jaunpur Kalpasūtra of 1465 A.D. Analysing the type of female figures in this Ms. the authors write — 'This is the type

5. Khandalwala Karl : 'Leaves from Rajasthan' in Marg. IV, No.3.
7. Khandalwala Karl, Chandra Moti, Chandra Promod, Gupta P.L. :
   'A new document of Indian Painting' in Lalitkala No.10, Pg.45.
8. Chandra Promod : 'An outline of Early Rajasthani Painting'
9. Chandra Moti, Khandalwala Karl : New Documents of Indian
   Painting — a reappraisal.
10. Ibid., Pg. 25.
from which the Chaurapāñchāśikā female type could well have developed." The depiction of the line of clouds and the turbanned musician — are also considered similar to the Chaurapāñchāśikā Laur-Chandā group of illustrations. On the basis of these evidences the authors come to the conclusion that the Rylands Library Laur-Chandā belonged in all probability to the Jaunpur area. A Buddhist palm leaf manuscript Kālacakratantra in the Cambridge University Library, is discovered to have been painted at Arrāh in Bihar. The evidence furnished by the colophon is very important. On the basis of these evidences Mr. Khandalwala and Dr. Moti Chandra conclude, that an independent school of painting sharing almost all the characteristics of the Western Indian or Gujarati school existed in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

Another important evidence, which is discussed in detail by the authors is — the Devasāṃśa Kalpaśutra which is dated to be about 1475 A.D. The illustrations of this Ms. are considered to bear traces of Persian influence specially in the border decoration and certain figures. Summing up the proofs gathered from the Kalpaśutra and the KālacakrāryaKathā the authors argue that — certain changes were taking place in the usual western Indian style illustrations. The incorporation of the Persian influences in the traditional hieratic art of the Jainas are reflected in the innovations discovered in the draughtsmanship and colours. The 'Śāhi' types of the fourteenth

11. Ibid. Pg. 27.
12. Ibid. Pgs. 30-42.
century, popular in the Kālkāchārya Kathā are important examples of the Persian influence. This finally led to the discarding of the usual 'furier eye' of Western Indian Painting in later years.

Variation in themes also had important results. The Digambar Mahāpuraṇa in the collection of Sri Digambar Nayā Mandir, Delhi is considered by the authors to show a contact with the Devasāna Gaṅa Kalpasūtra. The latter shows certain deviations from the Western Indian Ms. illustrations. An important point noticed in this Ms. by Mr. Karl Khandalwala and Dr. Moti Chandra in the absence of any foreign influence. Another important illustrated Ms. is the Vasanta Vilāsa which has a secular theme. It shows a loosening of the hieratic bonds of Jaina art. Describing a Durgā Pāta dated 1487 A.D. (Bharat Kala Bhavan) they write — that it reveals a new trend in folkish style and some scenes of battle may be found reflected in the scenes of the battle in a Bhāgavat illustration belonging to the Chaursa-Paṇḍhāṣikā mode of painting.

Thus Dr. Moti Chandra and Mr. Karl Khandalwala, after re-examining all the available evidences, have, to the conclusion that a degree of Persian influence can be noticed in Western Indian painting of the fourteenth century, due to innovations in

13. Ibid. Pg. 43.
14. Ibid. Pg. 43.
15. Ibid. Pg. 43.
technique and theme. Also that an independent school of painting existed in Bihar-Jaunpur area which bore the characteristics of the Western Indian School of painting. To both these styles, the Laur-Chandā Chaurā āpanchāśikā group seem to be indebted.

The foreign influence on Indian painting has always been an interesting subject. The danger lies in the attitude of over emphasising the elements which is considered foreign. Dr. Moti Chandra and Mr. Karl Khandalwala, in order to avoid this, have classified the Mss. illustrations into two groups. 

The late fifteenth century illustrated Persian classics in a mixed bourgeois style such as the Khamesh of Amir Khusrau, the Sikandar Nāmā, the Shāh Nāmā, and the Hamzā Nāmā; these, together with the Nimāl Nāmā and Miftāḥ-ul-Fuzalā which are based largely on the Turkoman style, may be considered as 'Sultanate Painting'. Within this group may be included the Prince of Wales Laur-Chandā and to some extent also the Rylands Library Laur-Chandā. The latter is however in a mixed style containing Persian, Turkish and Indian influences, all blended together.

Another group of paintings belonging to the sixteenth century which show certain stylistic innovations are considered to belong to a completely different source of inspiration altogether. This group consists of the dated paintings of the Āraṇyak Parvan of A.D. 1516 (Asiatic Society, Bombay) and the

16. Ibid. Pg. 90.
17. Ibid. Pg. 64.
the Mahāpurāṇa of A.D. 1540 (Delhi) along with the undated Mehta Chaurapañchāśīkā, the Laur-Chandā of Lahore and Punjab Museum, and the Gīta Govinda of the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay. To these paintings the application of the term 'Sultanate painting' would be a misnomer. Mr. Khandalwala while elaborating on this point writes —

"If the Chaurapañchāśīkā group is to be termed Sultanate painting, then there is no logical reason why the Vasant Vilāsa, the Devasanaśāstra Kalpaśūtra, the Māndu Kalpaśūtra of A.D. 1439 and the Jaunpur Kalpaśūtra of A.D. 1465 and other such manuscripts should not also be termed Sultanate painting." 18

Coming to the discussion of the Laur-Chandā Chaurapañchāśīkā group of paintings, Dr. Moti Chandra and Karl Khandalwala face the problems of provenance and date once again. About this they write —

"The discovery of the Āranyak Parvan dated A.D. 1516 painted in the Agra area in which a fairly well developed Chaurapañchāśīkā type of female figure appears and of the Mahāpurāṇa of A.D. 1540 painted in the Delhi area lends satisfactory support to our view-point that the Chaurapañchāśīkā group and the Laur-chandā manuscripts of the Prince of Wales Museum and Rylands Library all belong to a belt extending from Delhi to Jaunpur. The theory of a Rajasthani or Central Indian provenance must now be excluded from the arena of conflict." 19

About the date however, the authors reach no conclusion, and, mainly due to the preference of Mr. Khandalwala, allow the period between 1525-1570 to be considered as the date of the Chaurapañchāśīkā style. 20

18. Ibid. Pg. 64.
19. Ibid. Pg. 79.
20. Ibid. Pg. 79.
In reaching these conclusions, the earlier important arguments based on the costumes are once more repeated. The Chākdār Jāmāh and the Kulādhār turban remain important points in the discussion. The term Kuladhar group is also not discarded, though it is used infrequently.

Regarding the Mughal influence on Rajasthani painting, or reversely, the influence of the Chaurapañchāśikā group on Akbari painting, the authors state clear views.

"But one thing is certain that with the coming into being of Akbar's great atelier, the traditions evolved by the 'Chaurapañchāśikā' group very soon lost their identity. How far the Chaurapañchāśikā group influenced Rajasthani painting is again controversial, but if it did, the influence was maintained only through broken down motifs."

Though the work of Mr. Khandalwalā and Dr. Moti Chandra must be considered as impressive, it also becomes clear, that they have not completely changed their earlier points of view. Any student of art history must however be grateful to them for bringing together a vast mass of unpublished paintings which are generally inaccessible. The masterly analysis opens the field to further study which must always be considered welcome.

No unanimity being reached between scholars, the second group of opinion furthered by Dr. Anand Krishna, Mr. Barret and Mr. Gray still stand. Mrs. Leela Shiveshwarkar also echoes some of these views. Dr. Anand Krishna also echoes some of these views. Dr. Anand Krishna put forward his views in

21. Ibid. Pg. 11.
'Some Pre-Akbari Examples of Rajasthani illustrations'. In A Stylistic Study of Uttarādhyaṇa Sūtra Ms. 1591 he had refuted some of the arguments earlier expressed by Mr. Karl Khandalwala. Finally in 'The Malwa Painting' he has given a clear account of his views. According to him, the origin of the Rajasthani style is to be sought not in the Apabhṛṣṭa, i.e. the Western Indian Style of Ms. illustrations, but in the court paintings of the Sultanate period. The Mahāpurāṇa of 1540 from Palam, provides him with the greatest evidence. (It is interesting to note that earlier Mr. Promod Chandra and later Mr. Khandalwala have emphatically excluded this same Ms. from the group of Sultanate Painting).

Further basing his arguments, on the evidences gained from the painted arabesques on the ceiling of the palace of Man Singh Tomar (1487-1517) in the Gwalior Fort, he concludes that a similarity can be noticed between these paintings and the 'Mahāpurāṇa 1540', and Nāgavati of the Bharat Kala Bhavan. These illustrations in their turn are related stylistically to the Tubingen 'Hāṃzā-Nāmāh'. The Chaurapāṇḍavaśīkā style is simply a more evolved stage of the same group. The later sets of this group for example the 'Gītā-Govinda illustrations' of the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay almost seem to protrude into the Chāwand Rāgamālā set of 1606 A.D. The date of the Chaurapāṇḍavaśīkā group is therefore considered by him to belong to 1550-1580 A.D.

It is interesting to note here, that the date is now narrowed down by both groups of opinions to be between 1525-1580 A.D.

Regarding the provenance of the style Dr. Anand Krishna, echoes the views of Mr. Basil Gray and Mr. Barret expressed in the 'Painting of India' (Pg. 65) that the Chaurapāṇḍaśikā style originated in Mewar. Certain fragmentary wall paintings from Chitor seems to have given him important proof. (Mr. Khandalwala and Dr. Moti Chandra found very inadequate evidences in the same murals from Chitor and Gwalior.)

The scholars of both groups, seem to examine the same evidences of Mss. illustrations and murals, with contradictory conclusions. The difference therefore appears to be mainly of attitudes. A lively interchange, has made this subject a very interesting study and the difference in opinions are being narrowed down to details. At present the point of controversy revolves round provenance and the influence of the Chaurapāṇḍaśikā group in formulating, both the Rajasthani and the Mughal Schools of painting.

As it becomes evident, that any new discovery might still change considerably the views expressed so far, nothing conclusive can be stated. We still await further developments.
The published works so far, have recorded the following schools of Rajasthani painting in the Seventeenth Century — (1) Mewar, (2) Bundi, (3) Jaipur, (4) Marwar (including Jodhpur and Bikaner) and Malwa, which is considered to be influenced greatly by Rajasthani painting of the Seventeenth century, and can not be regarded as an isolated phenomena.

Certain new idioms gained prominence in the eighteenth century, these were mainly Nagaur and Kishangarh. The latter developed certain stylistic features which must be marked as original.

A number of folk reproductions, from most of these schools have been found. These reflect the artistic desire of the non-elite clientele to possess works of art. The production of these works depended upon the bazaar artists, whose skills are atoned for by their lively sense of colour. These works though not of high aesthetic merit reflect the artistic desires of the people more accurately.

Quite a large number of sub-schools like that of Pāli, Amber, Umarā are found in the catalogues of the various Rajasthani Museums, as well as in the collections of private individuals. Unfortunately no systematic study of these paintings have been made. The sub schools are therefore studied under the development of the main streams of Rajasthani painting and if noticed, they are marked as local variations only.
The kingdom of Mewar, ruled by the Sisodias, had become a symbol of Rajput valour during the medieval period. Ravaged by war, against the central power in Delhi the scene of Mewar was hardly suited to a profuse production of painting. Yet Mewar, like every other state gave refuge to artists, both in the royal court, and in the mansions of the smaller chieftains. The feudal society of the medieval Rajput needed its painters and dancers even during the war and it is this colourful world of contradictory charms that Mewari painting has brought before us.

1. Evolution of a Mewar School of Painting:

The illustrated Mss. from Mewar that have come before us present a fully developed art form, which reached its flowering period in the 17th century. The 'Western Indian Style' prevailed over the whole of Gujarat, and Rajputana in the 'Fifteenth Century'. The earliest dated Ms. of Mewar origin is considered to be a Saptakamam of the year 1423 (Sri Vijayaballa Suri Smarak Grantha, Bombay 1956). According to Dr. Moti Chandra this Ms. "affords clear proof of the composite culture of Gujarat and Rajasthan." 24

By the end of the Sixteenth century however, the changes occurring in the Western Indian School led to the birth of

24. Chandra, Moti : Mewar Painting in the 17th Century : Lalit Kala Academy, New Delhi, 1957 (Pg. 1.)
indigenous schools of Rajasthani painting. In Mewar too developed an original mode of painting. The birth of Rajasthani painting is still shrouded in mystery. Scholars are still holding a controversy regarding what should be considered as a 'Genre' group.

According to Dr. Noti Chandra, (the exponent of one particular set of views) —

"Till the advent of the Mughal School Mewar in common with other states, practiced the style of Western Indian School. But the impact of the new school brought about the changes, and Rajasthani Schools began to develop their own modes of expression by the closing years of the 16th century." 25

A contradiction to this view is offered by Mr. Barret and Mr. Gray — who consider the Chauranga group of paintings to belong to Mewar. Moreover according to them, this style is a development of the indigenous tradition of painting found in the Gujarat-Rajasthan area and owes little to the influences of Mughal paintings. This difference of opinion covers most of the discussion on Rajasthani painting and the characteristics of the Mewar School has to be judged in this context.

2. Influence of the Mughal Art:

The beginning of the Seventeenth Century saw the emergence of a proper Mewar School of art. (This is the view that is now held without dispute by all the Scholars.) In the new style can be traced elements of the older Western Indian tradition.

25. Ibid, Pg. 2.

According to Dr. Moti Chandra, —

"The beginning of the Mewar School at best as seen in 1605, verge on a folk style, in which all the expedients of careful draughtsmanship or perspective are held subser­vient to the joie de vivre of folk art. However with the passage of time, the art of Mewar became more sophisti­cated and though maintaining its early individuality it began to lean towards the Mughal style which had become widely diffused by the middle of the 17th century." 27.

The bright colours of the Western Indian School remained, but the sophisticated draughtsmanship so clear in the execution of minor details become completely absent. The emphasis fell on the juxtaposition of broad coloured spaces. This is probably due to the fact that painting in all aspects have derived their chief inspiration from the folk, and in Mewar painting, when trying to evolve a style of their own they turned first to their fundamental and basic source of visual inspiration.

The influence of the Mughal Court art on Mewar painting in the seventeenth century is now considered as an undisputed fact. Mr. Barret and Mr. Gray have however analysed this influence in the light of an original view, which must be con­sidered as relevant to the present discussion. According to these scholars the Newar artist was suddenly made conscious of a 'rich and magnificent court whose painting was directed towards ideals quite other than his own'. They write further that the Indian artist —

27. Chandra Moti : Mewar Painting in the 17th Century, Lalit Kala Academy, 1957, Pg. 3.
was not reducing with more or less success the range and complexity of a great court art to his simple formal needs. On the contrary he was reasserting his vision on a style to which he had made a contribution at its inception; and it is significant that it was the Akbar style he adapted to his simple formal needs and not at this moment the Jahangir style whose Flemish realism and finish were foreign to him and to which he had given nothing. 29

Based on these views, the paintings of Mewar have been classified by these scholars into three general groups — the first, which are \textit{mukha}\v{m}ukha copies of Mughal paintings, the second, where the mature vision is more evident, but has been adjusted to the draughtsmanship of Mughal art and the third where the native hand had completely reasserted itself.

A study of the well known illustrated Mss. of Mewar of the seventeenth century, helps us to understand the contentions of the different scholars.

The earliest important evidence of the Mewar School of painting is an incomplete set of Rāgamālah paintings found in the collection of Sri Gopi Krishna Kanoria. These paintings bear an inscription which gives the date to be 1605 A.D. and the place of origin is supposed to be Chawand (where Rana Pratap had shifted his capital after 1578 A.D.). Mr. G.K. Kanoria writes —

\textquote{\small\textit{on two examples of the set the verses at the top are in Rajasthani \doh\={a}s and not in Sanskrit slokas.}} 30

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29. Ibid. Pg. 137.
Other interesting points observed by Mr. G. K. Kanoria lie in the characteristics of the figures. They are depicted as wearing a turban found in Akbar's court, and resemble generally those figures in Akbari painting who are supposed to be Hindus.

This particular set of painting is considered by scholars, (and G.K. Kanoria is included among them) to be related to the N.C. Mehta Chaura Chanda group. According to Dr. Moti Chandra, even in these paintings a leaning is seen towards Mughal painting which later developed more fully in Mewar paintings. Mr. Barret and Mr. Gray have refuted this statement. According to them Nisardi was no Mughal painter as is supposed by some scholars) but a native Muslim painter of Mewar who executed the paintings. Moreover according to these scholars, the popular Mughal style did not develop earlier than 1610 or so, and therefore could not have influenced the Chawand Set.

The present state of our knowledge is such that it is difficult to come to any conclusion about the exact influences exerted on these paintings. From 1605 onwards however other dated paintings reveal that a trend was set in painting which bore a particular regional character and could be recognised as Mewar painting.

The chronological history of Mewar, shows the hazards faced by art in a war-ridden country. From the reign of Rāṇā Sāngī to the reign of Rāṇā Pratāp, continuous war was waged, and troubles continued till the submission by Rāṇā Amar Singh. From 1614 A.D., onwards building activities were once more resumed in Mewar, and undivided attention could be given to the cultural prosperity of the country. It is from the reign of Rana Jagat Singh that a large number of Illustrated Ms. have come to our notice. This period can well be said to have witnessed the flowering of Mewar painting.

One of the most important Ms. of his reign is an Illustrated Bhagavat from Udaipur (published by K. Khandalwala, *Marg.*, Vol. 4, No. 3). This is painted by a Muslim painter called Sahabadi. Messrs. Barret and Gray have also mentioned a set of Rāgamālā supposed to be painted by Sahabadi to be in the collection of Mr. Moti Chand Khajanchi, Bikaner. This set is supposed to be painted in Udaipur in the reign of Jagat Singh and is compared by the scholars to the Chawand Rāgamālā of 1605.

Another set of paintings mentioned by Barret and Gray are a Nayaka-Nayika series in the collection of G.K. Kanoria, which the authors remarks, — to be characterised by refined drawing, an enriched palette and very clear designs. Two other

33. Ibid. Pg. 137.
34. Ibid. Pg. 137.
35. Chandra Moti: Mewar Painting in the 16th Century, Lalit Kala Academy, 1957, Pg. 3.
illustrated Bhāgavats are mentioned by Dr. Moti Chandra, one is in the collection of the Maharaja of Jodhpur, and the other in the Kotah Library.

Two important illustrated Rāmāyana Mss. are mentioned by Dr. Moti Chandra of 1649 and 1651. The first is reserved in the 'Prince of Wales Museum' and painted by Manohar. The second was reserved in 'Saraswati Bhandar', but now it is transferred to the 'Prachya Vidya Pratishtan, Udaipur'. This was written at Chitor and probably illustrated there.

Profs. Barret and Gray mention another important set of the illustrations of the Yuddha-Kānda Rāmāyana of the same series now reserved in the British Museum.

Other important Mss. of the period mentioned by different scholars are the Gem Palace Rāgamālā (in the National Museum, New Delhi) a Gīta Govinda, with inscriptions in a mixed Mewari and Gujarati dialect in the Prince of Wales Museum (of about 1650 A.D., mentioned by Dr. Moti Chandra). Another set, slightly later in date is found in the collection of Kumar Sangram Singh of Nawalgarh. An interesting illustration of Sur Sāgar of the blind poet Surdās is found in the collection of Gopi Krishna Kanoria and is considered by Dr. Moti Chandra to be about 1650-51 A.D.

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36. Ibid, Pg. 3.
37. Barret and Gray: Painting of India, Cleveland, 1963, Pg. 137.
38. Chandra Moti: Mewar Painting in the Seventeenth Century, Pg. 3.
From the large body of dated paintings, it becomes quite evident that Mewar was a flourishing centre of art right down to the nineteenth century. From the end of the seventeenth century, however, that liveliness starts to wane, and repetitions follow. Probably the political changes after the reign of Jagat Singh were responsible to an extent for this decline.

Raj Singh (1652-81) the next ruler who succeeded Jagat Singh erected a number of buildings and Mewar saw a great deal of prosperity. But he was drawn in a war against Aurangzeb and became the main figure round whom the Rajputs began their struggle against the Delhi empire. This Rajput revival was to an extent responsible for the downfall of the Central rule in Delhi but, this in turn also seriously hampered cultural activities in Mewar.

The characteristics of Mewar Painting in its golden age, show certain Mughal peculiarities mainly in the depiction of clothes. The turbans, and the Jāmās are mainly costumes of the Jahangir and Shahjahan periods. The simple architecture of the buildings depicted show close resemblance to architectural remains of the same period. Apart from the Mughal influence, the figures are in general stylised with typical features. Women are mainly short, but sometimes a tall variety is also noticed. Trees and landscape are very colourful and extremely stylised. Water is usually indicated by a criscross design and the birds and animals retain the resemblance to Western Indian paintings.
The most interesting feature of the paintings lie in the cases of colours. Bright contrasting colours are used, reflecting the general happy tonal varieties that the Rajput found in everyday life around him.

Mewar painting is very much the reflection of the contemporary medieval culture. The isolation and individuality that characterised Mewar and kept her away from the courtly culture of the Mughals is partly reflected in the style. The difference lies mainly in the subjects of the paintings. The themes are essentially Hindu. Unfortunately following the dictates of a feudal taste the Mewar painter did succumb to certain courtly techniques of art which were removed from his basic artistic experience. But he could not be removed from that fundamental inspiration of religious mysticism which in this period swept the bourgeois along with the aristocrats and the common people. The Mewar paintings thus merely portray the life and beliefs of its people, adapting the expression to the technique which was readily available.

IV

Bundi:

The school of painting ascribed to Bundi, is only a regional variation in the general trend of Rajasthani painting of the seventeenth century. Though the earliest known Bundi paintings are considered by scholars like Promod Chandra, Douglas Barret and Basil Gray to be of the sixteenth century, the flowering
of the school occurred in the seventeenth. Bundi and Kotah till this period, both politically and culturally formed a single unit. The paintings as such belonged to a common idiom.

Ruled by the Hara group of Rajputs, Bundi during the seventeenth century supported the Mughal emperors in the rebellion of Prince Khurram. Mewar supported the rebel, with a vain hope of crushing or weakening the central power. During the reign of Shahjahan, it was expected that Bundi might fall into difficulties. But evidently the imperial powers recognised the principle of loyalty to the central authority, and the Hara chief of Bundi Chattar Sal3 was appointed the governor of the Capital, Delhi. His successor Bhao Singh and then Aniruddha Singh, also spent most of their time in the Imperial Capital and the Court. But this close alliance with the Mughal Court did not exclude the cultural trait of the general Rajput, the themes of the paintings show in a clear manner, the common basis of the inspiration that underlay Rajasthani painting.

The eighteenth century saw a change in the peaceful socio-political pattern of Bundi. With the death of Aurangzeb, the whole of India was drawn into the turmoil of succession. The stronger states threw off the yoke of servitude. Bundi was however divided into two, following the quarrel among its kin. Art also declined and static imitation followed, the life and joy slowly evaporated away.
The earliest known examples of Bundi painting are two paintings from a fragmentary Rāgamālā set. Mr. Promod Chandra mentions the two paintings — a Rāga Dipak in the Bharat Kala Bhavan, Benaras, and another Rāga Bhairavi in the Municipal Museum, Allahabad. About these paintings he writes —

"Looking to the stylistic features it seems probable that the Rāginī Bhairavi was done about 1625 A.D. though the relatively advanced technique may indicate an earlier origin." 39

On the basis of these paintings Mr. Promod Chandra reaches the important conclusion that the Bundi School came into existence about the first quarter of the seventeenth century.

It is interesting to note that three different dates have been found for this single painting. Mr. Promod Chandra has ascribed the date 1625 A.D. and following him Mr. Barret and Gray have arrived at the same conclusion. During my visit to the Benaras American Academy, I noticed in the archives that the same painting was dated 1600 A.D. In the Municipal Museum, Allahabad and also in a published catalogue of this Museum the same Bhairavi Rāginī is dated by Mr. Kala to be 1630 A.D. This controversy in the date has not yet been discussed by any scholar, but it seems important in the face of the fact that the Bundi School is ascribed to have come into existence as a vigorous offshoot of early Mewar School, and this during the first quarter of the seventeenth century. Moreover, with reference to

39. Chandra Promod: Bundi Painting, Lalit Kala Academy, New Delhi, 1959, Pg. 2.
the difference of opinion raging about the pre and post Mughal
origin of Rajasthani painting, these two paintings, and their
dates might have important bearings on the subject. Unfortu-
nately no definite conclusion is still possible.

The paintings show rudimentary use of architecture,
simple but striking colour juxtapositions, the Akbari costume
of Chākādār jāmā and heavy featured, larger faced figures. The
Bhairavi Rāginī in particular shows, a heavy face, a double
chin and podol shaped eyes, which is considered by Mr. Promod
Chandra to be similar to Mewar painting of the Seventeenth
Century. Mr. Promod Chandra discusses a set of Rāgamālā draw-
ings found in the National Museum to be extremely similar in
drawing to the Rāga Bhairavi and Rāga Dīpak.

Profs. Barret and Gray, agreeing with Mr. Promod Chandra
have pointed out the strongly marked influence of Mughal painting
of the late Akbari period on these paintings. According to them
the pallette is also reminiscent of the brilliance of the
Deccani miniatures.

If all these suggestions are traced, it can be seen
that Bundi painting even at its earliest stage had incorporated
diverse elements of Mewar, Mughal and Deccani modes. Inter-
marrige with the Mewar prince of a Hara princess at this time,
points to the close Socio-cultural contact between the two groups
of Rajputs. The continued loyalty, and presence of the Haras

40. Ibid. Pg. 2.
of Bundi at the Mughal court through generations also explains the Mughal influence. The political contact of the Hare rulers with Deccan from the time of Rao Ratan Singh (1607 A.D.) to Aniruddha Singh (1681-1695 and even later) explains, the particular traits in the early paintings.

"According to Mr. Promod Chandra, this period saw the development of certain stylistic features in Bundi painting which continued in the later years and helped to create a definite mode.—

"The typically lavish yet careful attention to landscape, the technique of depicting water in eddying swirls the tinting of the sky with strong red are already notable in Rāgini Bhairavi. In Rāga Dīpak the technique of placing the white domes of a palace against a starry blue sky is strongly reminiscent of similar treatment in Bundi painting of a later date." 41

Mr. Promod Chandra's observations, leave little room for controversy. The development of the mode however, takes on a more finished and delicate draughtsmanship than seen, in the contemporary schools. Right through the seventeenth century, we see the strong Mewar influence on the architectural setting, and on the faces of women, slightly heavy and large featured. The colours are also the lacquer reds and bright oranges. Even the armpit shadow derived by the Mewari artist from the Mughals is retained in the Bundi mode of painting. But inspite of this the difference is clear, and this is not only limited to the costume (Bundi painting show completely different turbans) but in the delicate brush-work, and the tonal harmony in the colours,

41. Ibid, Pg. 2.
which do not offer the same sharp contrast as in Mewari painting. Moreover, a reddish brown, outdoor complexion are adopted in Bundi painting for its men and women. The women in Bundi painting are shown to be a special type with smooth faces and prim mouths. Definitely more dainty than her other contemporaries in different Rajasthani schools of painting. Another feature of Bundi painting mentioned by Mr. Archer is the Bahamani ducks which he considers to be the 'signature tune' of Bundi painting. Though, whether they made such a clear appearance in the seventeenth century Bundi painting is yet to be decided by new finds.

The eighteenth century shows interesting development in the first half of the period. There is a preference for elaborate composition, colourful effects, and the technique is also sophisticated. But the second quarter shows the healthy vigour replaced by jerky tense movements, the red-brown gives place to a sickly pink. Colours show a profusion of red-blue and gold and as Mr. Promod Chandra mentions, in many paintings are to be noticed a pale shadow round the profile to give it an effect of shade by separating it from the background. This used repeatedly becomes jarring in effect.

During this period, a sub style is noticed in Bundi. This is less sophisticated in draughtsmanship and slightly amateur in execution. According to the scholars this originated due to the

demands of those who could not afford to pay for the better executed works and satisfied their aesthetic hunger with these cheaper works.

The paintings which must be mentioned as a special landmark of the Bundi style are the illustrations of Bhāgavat Purāṇa reserved in the Kotah Museum of about 1640 A.D. Messrs.Barret and Gray consider this to be one of the best rendering of this sacred literary work. According to them this work is often mistaken for a work of the Mewar school because it is so different in style from the Jagat Singh style and superior to Sahibdin's atelier. In these illustrated version of the Bhāgavat, the Scholars have discovered an artist who used the Mughal technique and the influences of different Rajput schools, to his own needs of picture making and transformed it by his own genius.

Said to be belonging to about 1660 are two fragmentary sets of Rāgamālā paintings mentioned by Messrs. Barret and Gray. One leaf belongs to the collection of Mrs.Madhuri Desai while the others belong to Mr.G.K. Kanoria. Both these sets show a very good grip on composition where landscape, and background are related to the central figures. The draughtsmanship appears to be excellent.

Another remarkable painting mentioned by Mr.Promod Chandra, as well as by Messrs.Barret and Gray is a picture of

43. Barret and Gray : Painting of India, Pg. 140.
44. Ibid. Pg. 140.
two lovers in a pavillion. This is in the collection of Sri C.D. Gujarati. This is one of the earliest dated paintings of the Bundi School. The short inscription at the back is interpreted to mean that it was either presented or painted by a certain Dandia in V.S. 1739/1682 A.D.

A group of paintings published by Mr. Karl Khandalwala dated 1680 (Bulletin of the Prince of Wales Museum, No.5, '55-57) a painting in the 'Bharat Kala Bhavan' of 'a noble man and his lady watching pet pegeons' dated 1662 and a small group of paintings in the Prince of Wales Museum of ladies whiting away love sick hours in flowered gardens (mentioned by Messrs. Barret and Gray) show that the Bundi atlier was rather active in producing paintings of a particular type all through the seventeenth century.

Thematically, sacred literature of the epics, the loves of Krishna and the sports of the Gopis, the nayakas and nāyikāś in their many moods of love and the Rāgas and Rāginīś continued from the beginning till the nineteenth century in Bundi. But the joy and the devotional basis of inspiration gave place to mechanical draughtsmanship.

In Kotah however in the eighteenth century onwards, a type of 'hunting scenes' appear in painting which is quite different in style and theme from the earlier paintings of the Bundi and Kotah school.
Jaipur:

The history of 'Jaipur' affords great interest to the student of medieval Indian studies. Ruled by the Kachhwaha Rajputs, it is known as the ideal city planned mainly by the scholar king Swai Jai Singh. The Jaipur school of painting however covers a wider artistic territory.

The Kachhwaha Rajputs were the earliest to forge a bridge with the central power in Delhi. Matrimonial alliance with the Mughal emperor gave rise to a great deal of reaction in the Rajpur Society. But this friendship was later forced on the whole of Rajputana, even on the stiff necked Mewar. The Kachhwaha princes gained the much wanted advantage of continuing their cultural pattern undisturbed in the hill fortress of Amber. Later as Mughal cultural contact swept the whole region, they emerged as ready patrons, to the artistic mode not so unfamiliar to the Kachhwahas. According to H. Goetz, the Hindu elements in Mughal painting came from Amber:—

"That these Hindu elements in Akbari-Mughal painting come from Ambar can be proved by the fact that the earlier figures of Hindu ladies therein wear the same costume as those of the ladies of Maryam-az-Zamani household, whereas later figures (since c. 1600 A.D.) often shows a different type, i.e. the Jodhpur costume of the retinue of Jahangir's first wife Jodh Bai." 45

Patronage to the arts, followed easily among the Kachhwahas. In fact the peace and prosperity enjoyed by them in the

early days of Mughal rule made it a place of refuge for the artists.

The illustrated materials yielded from Jaipur are rather varied and interesting in character. There is an illustrated Razm-Mama (now in the palace collection of the Maharaja of Jaipur) which was supposed to have been painted for, and executed at Akbar's studio. Though painted in pure Mughal style, it contains Indian elements in the dress and costumes which point to a tradition of mixed influences. Mr. H. Goetz mentions, a Bhāgavat Purāṇa set in the Lālgarh collection's Bikaner. According to him —

"It is not quite uniform in style, one group of miniatures probably still of Akbar's later years, the other, in the same tradition of Jehangir's later reign." 46 He further mentions a 'smaller set of the Ushā charita; and some military scenes of the same collections.' 47 The features which interest the student of art history in these paintings lie in their indebtedness to Mughal painting. But despite of this influence exerted by Mughal court art, they are saved from being merely 'provincial Mughals' by certain characteristics of their own. The composition is much simpler, the tonal varieties of light and shadow are only minimum. In general the paintings are flat and two dimensional in character. These latter elements group it along with early Rajasthani paintings and give it an original character.

46. Ibid. Pg. 53.
47. Ibid. Pg. 53.
In later years however, as the influence of Mughal painting became more common, and therefore more sweeping over the whole of Rajasthan, painting in Jaipur under Jai Singh's reign also followed this mode. Mr. H. Goetz mentions an illustrated Ms. of the 'Satsai of Jai Singh's court poet Bihāri Lal, 'Amber' 'Samvat 1703-5' (A.D. 1647-1649) in the collection of Sri Mandhatta Singhji Bikaner. According to Mr. Goetz, these illustrations show,

"a purely Rajput composition and drawing technique, but the illumination, the shadowing, colouring, sky effects etc. are purely Mughal, yet there is no organic fusion between both, the Mughal decoration is laid merely superficially over a Rajput composition following quite different principles. Also the psychological atmosphere is further toned down; it is rather the torpor of a court where heart and soul are suffocating, behind the masks of luxury, etiquette and dissimulation." 48

These observations of H. Goetz point to a definite decline of the School. But a 'Rāgamālā Series' of the Jaipur School supposed to belong to the late Seventeenth Century, now reserved in Rana Pratap Sangrahalay, Udaipur (Size 6" x 8½") seems to be a very interesting piece of work. This series shows extremely delicate colouring, fine shadowing and an interesting use of gold. The draughtsmanship is also clear and well executed. Moreover H. Goetz himself mentions a charming Rāgamālā Series now reserved in the 'Baroda State Museum', which he dates to be about 1692-99 A.D. Into the early years of Jai Singh II's rule he also places

48. Ibid., Rgs. 54-55.
49. Ibid., Pgs. 54-55.
a 'Rāgamālā' set reserved in the British Museum. In this series, he observes that the Mughal tradition is clearly marked but it is integrated and the Rajput characteristics are also clear. These evidences show that though influenced mainly by Mughal paintings, the School of art was not totally submerged in imitation. Fine craftsmanship could occasionally be noticed.

From the late seventeenth to the mid 18th century follows a period of confusion. The political turmoil is perhaps responsible for the lack of the production of paintings. During this period Mr. H. Goetz mentions a few paintings which he groups to be 'pseudo-Jaipur' as they show different local attributes. Under Jai Singh's reign began a revival of painting and this continued right down the eighteenth century.

According to Mr. Goetz the Jaipur style underwent a complete change and entered upon its last grand phase in the reign of Swai Pratap Singh II (1778 A.D. - 1803 A.D.) which continued through the reign of his successors. During this period, Mughal influence completely disappeared, and power centred in the hands of local chiefs. The small courts of these feudal overlords turned their back on the general miseries sweeping through Rajasthan and their escapist attitude is expressed in the glittering paintings. But removed from real experience, they became

50. Ibid., Pgs. 54-55.
51. Ibid., Pg. 54.
52. Ibid., Pg. 55.
soulless and artificial. The gloss and brightness appeared at best, as mere decoration.

Though the style of the Jaipur idiom, was indebted greatly to Mughal court art, the themes in common with other Rajput centres of art were totally indigenous in spirit. The Hindi literature, of the period supplied a great deal of inspiration as is evidenced by the popularity of the 'Rasikpriyā' illustration. The other illustrations of common popularity were the 'Rāgamālās', the 'Bhāgavat Purāṇas' etc. A number of portraits testify to the importance given to the patronage of artists, and their residence at the court of the Kachhwahas.

VI

Marwar:

Marwar, as it is known today was ruled by the Rathor clan. The clan divided itself into various branches, and each ruled over different sections of their ancestral territory. Thus Bikaner, Jodhpur etc. were all ruled by Rathors, and became centres of art whose patrons sprang from a common origin.

The earliest painting that has a bearing on the Marwar idiom is considered by scholars to be a dated series of 'Rāgamālā' painted at 'Pali' by a person called 'Pandit Virji'. This set is reserved in the collection of Kumar Sangram Singh of Nawalgarh. In a published article Kumar Sangram Singh writes

53. "The Rāgamālā Ms. . . . was painted at the court

53. Kumar Sangram Singh of Nawalgarh. 'An Early Rāgamālā Ms. from Pali (Marwar School)', in Lalit Kala, No.7, 1960, Pgs. 76-79.
of one of the most important and chivalrous thikendars namely Bithal Das of Pali. . . . The inscription is in incorrect Sanskrit while describing the qualities and specialities of that Ragini, but the rest of the description is in mixed language (Rajasthani and Sanskrit).

It is dated Samvat 1630, i.e. 1623 A.D. He further writes —

"The Rāgamālā set under study has similarities with Gujarati Painting". "The entire work of the artist is in a local folk style. The figures have Marwari features which are seen even in paintings of 1700 A.D. The male figures are shown with Jahangiri style turbans and jāmās with four or six points."54.

The whole set of paintings, though dated Seventeenth century, bears the characteristic of early Rajasthani painting, as close (किताब में कहा जा सकता है) to folk art. The treatment of the colours, (which are not very loud) yet show a transparency not seen in the later works where paints are applied in a thicker and smoother texture. Moreover though, the influence of Mughal painting is apparent, in the use of courtly garments, still the general tone of the paintings do not reflect the courtly manner. This is a remarkable set of paintings. Its discovery has definitely thrown a flood of light on the beginning of the Marwar school, which hitherto produced as its early paintings only those painted in the 'Western Indian' Style. The importance of these paintings have also been acknowledged by scholars like Barret and Gray in the 'Painting of India' (Pg.152).

Messrs. Barret and Gray have further pointed out the possibility of a continued style by the finding of a manuscript

54. Ibid., Pgs. 76-79.
55. Barret & Gray : Painting of India, Pg. 152-154.
in the Moti Chand Khajanchi collection, which is dated 1634 A.D.

'Prof. H. Goetz has mentioned a single miniature in the Baroda Museum, whose provenance according to him is north Marwar, while the date is surmised (mainly on the basis of the costumes) to be — A.D. 1595-1620. This miniature is derived from the illustrations to a 'Dhola Maru'.

According to Prof. H. Goetz —

56. 'Marwar — with some paintings from Jodhpur in the collection of Kumar Sangram Singh' in Marx XI, No. 2, Pg. 42.
57. Ibid., Pg. 43.
58. Ibid. Pg. 43.
59. Ibid., Pg. 43.
The Jodhpur Court after the early stages of painting moved towards the influence of Mughal court art. About this Prof. H. Goetz writes —

"Thus the Marwar School of Rajput painting is in reality formed by two successive groups. The first developed probably under Maldeo, by the middle of the 16th century reached its zenith, under Akbar's later reign, under the Rajas Udai and Sur Singh, and reigned on as a provincial art until in consequence of Aurangzeb's invasion the artists emigrated to Udaipur. It corresponds to the earlier Amber style which flourished in the Kachhwaha raj from Bhagwandās to Mān Singh. The Second style was introduced by Sur, Gaj and Jaswant Singh, Semi-Mughal like the Amber style under Mirza Rājā Jai Singh I and survived the occupation of Marwar by Mughals." 60

— Of the second style, some portraits are found, for example the portrait of Ajit Singh (Baroda Museum). Painting continued at Jodhpur even in the nineteenth century. By the end of the eighteenth century, an exaggerated drawing and colour scheme became prevalent which Prof. Goetz has termed — "rakish extravagence and reckless lust for life." In the nineteenth century, the older themes continued for the illustrated sets, mentioned by Prof. Goetz and others are namely the 'Gajendra Moksha', 'Pancha-tantra', 'Kāma-Sūtra', 'Dholā Marwar ki Bāt', and 'Nāgamālās'. Wall paintings, wall hangings and murals with almost life size figures are found in the later period.

VII

Bikaner:

Bikaner should be included within the general group of Marwar art. It was founded as a separate state in 1485 by a

60. Ibid., Pg. 49.
61. Ibid., Pg. 46.
Rathor prince from Jodhpur. During the early period of Akbar's dominance over Delhi, Kalyan Singh, the ruler of Rathor paid him homage, and offered a daughter in marriage. From this followed the close association with the Mughal court. Messrs. Barret and Gray mention a painting of Vishnu and Lakshmi reserved in the Motichand Khajanchi collection to have been painted by Ali Raza of Delhi Court about 1650 A.D. at the request of Karan Singh of Bikaner. According to Messrs. Barret and Gray, "at first glance this picture is merely a good example of the late Shah Jahan style decorative of superlative craftsmanship and negligible content. Something however in the subject or in the local atmosphere, gives it the edge over the thing it was copying. The green and mauve grounds pull the picture together, so that the design is a little stronger than it would have been in the original, and the symmetrically grouped women adoring the god have a sort of wistful prettiness outside the Mughal range of taste."  

An assessment of the stylistic characteristics of the Bikaner idiom of Marwari painting, show its close affinity on one hand to the Mughal and on the other to the Deccan. The association of the Rajput princes with the Delhi Court, to a great extent modified the taste and desire of the patrons to possess copies of the courtly art. As a counter pull however, other local centres with important developing art modes laid their

63. Ibid., Pgs. 154-155.
Influences on the provincial Rajasthani Schools. According to Messrs. Barret and Gray the influence of Deccani painting was due to Anup Singh's long period of service in that region.

"Mr. H. Goetz writes about the changes in the style —

"It is also interesting to observe the transition from the Rajput to the Mughal Style, and vice versa. The first is a superposition of Mughal decorations on a Rajput composition; the latter an aesthetic interpretation of a Mughal work in a Rajput spirit by simplification and rhythmization of lines and of colour harmonies." 64

Two important artists of the Bikaner idiom are known to be Ruknuddin, and his son Shahdin. 65 Messrs. Barret and Gray mention a painting of 'Krishna' holding up 'mount Govardhan', which is now reserved in the British Museum. According to them, this painting by Ruknuddin, —

"derives most of its qualities, fine drawings and colour, landscapes and rustic detail not from Delhi but from late Seventeenth century painting at Golconda in the Deccan." 65

The elaborateness, expressed both in colour composition and in the brittle movements set the Marwari paintings a little apart from the indigenous folk tradition of Rajasthan. The general characteristics are however submerged in the influence of the courtly Mughal art. Apart from Mewar, every other Rajput state from the Seventeenth century onwards fell within the cultural influence of an urban and courtly life which drew them away from their rustic and homely pleasures. The dispersal of the

64. H. Goetz: Bikaner in *Marg XI*, No.2, Pg. 62.
artists from the Mughal court further added to the change in taste. The court painters sought refuge in the provinces. The appointment of an Imperial court painter, added to the prestige of the local ruler. Thus culturally a change took place after the accession of Aurangzeb, and the decline of art in Delhi. This is reflected in the work of art centres in Rajasthan which sprang up a little late. In Marwar, specially in Bikaner there was no exception to this general pattern.

VIII

Malwa:

Geographically Malwa does not fall strictly within Rajasthan. The school of painting that flourished in this region was probably common to southern Rajasthan, Malwa and Bundelkhand. The name for this new idiom of painting came to be called Malwa or Central Indian. Traditionally it is so closely related to Rajasthani painting that it would be erroneous to treat it as an isolated phenomena.

Malwa had a very interesting artistic past. Centre of Jaina art, it also became the traditional base of Sultanate painting during the days of its Muslim rulers. According to Dr. Anand Krishna, the artists of the Sultanate tradition were recruited by Akbar's court and continued to flourish in other living traditional centres of art and culture. Such artists must have popularised the Sultanate painting.
The earliest available painting belonging definitely to a Malwa idiom is found in the seventeenth century. The artistic consciousness reflected through the compositions and themes is found to be rooted in the Sultanate period. The subject matters of illustrations were mainly the Krishna Leela, the Nāyikabheda, the Rāgamālās, etc. These were popular even in the earlier period, and one of the earliest painting of the Malwa idiom is now considered to be a Rāgamālā series reserved in the Bharat Kala Bhavan, Benaras. It is approximately dated as C.A.1600 A.D. or still earlier by Dr. Anand Krishna.

A large number of paintings supposed to be belonging to the Malwa school have been found from different collections. Recently the treasures yielded by the Datia Palace have thrown new light on the stylistic development of the Malwa schools of painting. The questions of origin and provenance have not yet been decided upon, though conjectures continue, basing their arguments on the analysis of style.

Chronology: The earliest painting of the Malwa School is the Bharat Kala Bhavan Rāgamālā Series (dated approximately C.A. 1600 A.D.). (This series is considered by Dr. Anand Krishna in his 'Malwa Painting' [to be an extension of the Sultanate tradition including the Chaura-Pañchāśikā style') The next important document of Malwa painting is the 1634 A.D. Ms. of

Rasikpriyā now dispersed among various collections. It is a definite document and helps to determine certain characteristics of the style. The relationship with the earlier tradition also becomes clear through this set of illustrated Ms.

Almost within a decade, Malwa painting became a mature mode and quite a large number of paintings have been found. Of these the most important are some 'Rāmāyaṇa illustrations' belonging to G.K. Kanoria, and Bharat Kala Bhavan. These were meant for a queen of Pahar Singh of Cōrcha, the 'Hirā rāni'. The dates are thus surmised to be 1640-62 A.D.

Similar in style are a set of Bhāgavat illustrations mentioned by Dr. Anand Krishna in his 'Malwa Painting'. These are dated C.A. 1650 A.D. According to the scholars, the similarity in the Hindi texts accompanying both the illustrations of the Bhāgavat and the Rāmāyaṇa a point to the possibility of a common patron. A series of Rasikpriyā illustrations (1660 A.D.) have also come to light. This set is also similar in style to the Hirā rāni Rāmāyaṇa Series. A number of Paintings originally belonged to the Datia palace collection and may reveal more important information on the problems connected with datings and regional attribution.

From C. 1650 A.D. onwards Malwa painting divided itself into a number of sub-varieties, or sub-styles. This indicates the spread of its popularity in other regions. Evidently the regional variations that appeared in the general Malwa style,
came to be grouped into two broad divisions. The two sub-schools however developed side by side influencing each other and often adopting the same forms.

The twenty-five years representing the third quarter of the Seventeenth century were not very fruitful in Malwa painting. Only a few illustrated sets are extant. The explanation lies in the disturbed condition of Malwa following the quick change in succession on the Imperial throne at Delhi. The decline in the power of the Mughals cast their shadows over the whole country. The provinces were thrown into a turmoil, and Malwa between 1660-1680 A.D. could not have been a prosperous centre of art and culture. With the return of peace, painting once again flourished. The period of temporary silence might have contributed to the artistic maturity, which became prominent in the illustrations of 1680 A.D. and later works.

From 1680 A.D. onwards a new wave seemed to have swept the Malwa school, at this time a prolific production of paintings seems to have taken place. The most significant achievement of this period belongs to a certain Madho Dasa, who is known by an inscription on a Rāgamālā series of 1680 A.D. This is reserved in the National Museum collection, New Delhi. Two more sets — one Rāgamālā Series in the Bharat Kala Bhavan, and another Amaru/Sataka illustrations in the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay, may be attributed to this group.
In 1688 A.D., two parts of an illustrated Bhagavat, distributed between H.P. Poddar and G.K. Kanoria collections, constitute another landmark in Malwa painting. Dr. Anand Krishna writes —

"Referring to the Bhagavata manuscript of 1688 A.D. . . . one can not forget to mention that it represents the last flicker of the grand traditions of the Malwa Style (School 'A')." 67

The profuse production in the third quarter of the Seventeenth century suggests a new revival. About this Dr. Anand Krishna writes —

"Although following the traditions as laid down in School 'A' paintings this group represents more or less a sub-type, rather an independent group characterised by the use of different colour tones and the frequent employment of blues, greens, and whites. It is probable that these were produced in a different centre under a new patronage." 68

According to him the last important production, before the style was swallowed up in deterioration is another set of Bhagavat illustrations scattered in several collections.

After 1710, it becomes clear that the main stream of the Malwa painting had dried up. Though a few sub-varieties and sub-types continued, in the different regions, Malwa idiom as a definite art mode seriously declined in the early parts of the eighteenth century.

67. Ibid. P. 28

68. Ibid. P. 28.
Stylistic variations and developments: The earliest attention to Malwa painting was drawn by a group of paintings, discovered by Ananda K. Coomarswami showing 'archaic aspects'. The place of their production was considered to be Narsayang Sahar, or Nusaratgarh. It was surmised by scholars that 'Narsayang Sahar' and the modern Narsinghgarh in Malwa might be the same. But this view is not universally accepted. In fact it is difficult to assess exactly where and when the Malwa school originated. A set of Rāgamālās which the scholars have named the 'primitive Rāgamālā' have definite stylistic affinity with an Amaru Sataka and Rasikpriyā illustrations of the Malwa school. The rich finds from the Datia palace also point to the presence of the Malwa idiom in these regions. Thus Bundelkhand, Orchha, Datia, Malwa and its surrounding regions, and later the whole of modern U.P. came under the stylistic influences evidenced in the 'Primitive Rāgamālā' illustrations. The most important point to be remembered about the place of origin of the Malwa School is, that it covered a much wider region than is demarked by its geographical name.

A distinct variation in the execution of painting from the earliest known documents, point to the presence of several 'sub-types' or groups of styles in Malwa painting. Dr. Anand Krishna while discussing the chronology of the Paintings in his 'Malwa Paintings (Part I)' takes the C. 1634 A.D. Rasikpriyā illustrations (scattered in various collections) to be a definite example, and marks it as the earliest evidence of the group 'A' sub-style.
The Bharat Kala Bhavan Rāgamalā Series (about c. 1600 A.D.) he considers to be the beginning of Group 'B'. (Malwa Painting. Pg. 15)

The variations in the two styles though marked shows an interdependence and the dual tradition fully matured itself in the paintings of Madho Dasa. This painter is rescued from obscurity by an important inscription on a Rāgamala Series of 1680 A.D. now reserved in the National Museum. Two more sets are now attributed by scholars to this group — the Rāgamalā series in the Bharat Kala Bhavan, and the Amaru Sataka illustrations in the Prince of Wales Museum.

In conclusion it must be said, that the Malwa idiom has proved to be extremely profuse in production of paintings. Thematically it touches all branches of Hindi literature. The epics, and the religious themes are also fully illustrated. In most illustrations, there is a touch of original interpretation. The appeal of an individual imagination becomes clearly marked in illustrated versions of the Amaru Satakas, the Rāgamālās, and a special mention must be made of a set illustrating Puhkara's 'Rasabeli' now reserved in the National Museum. A survey of the rich production of the Malwa painting leads us to surmise that Rajasthani painting would definitely be a looser if the Malwa idiom is considered as a separate artistic mode altogether.
In a distinct style, clearly marked separate from the general run of Rajasthani paintings are the miniatures discovered at Kishangarh court. The late Eric Dickenson has given an interesting account of his discovery of some 'Krishna Leela' miniatures. The discovery of these paintings drew the notice of art lovers to a new idiom of Rajasthani painting, where a completely new human form and special facial types emerged. The 'Radha' of Kishangarh differs in a striking manner from the other Rajasthani Schools of painting.

The small state of Kishangarh lies between Amber and Ajmer. It was founded in the 17th century by Raja Udaí Singh of Jodhpur, who held an important place in Jahangir's army. He is responsible for the beginning of the construction of the fort and town. During the seventeenth century, Kishangarh did not excel as a centre of art. It was in the eighteenth century that painting developed in this area. The inspiration came from two persons — a poet prince Swant Singh, and a brahmin painter 'Nihal Chand'. Apart from a few portraits, the bulk of painting belonging to the Kishangarh School that have been found, illustrate the poetry of a certain 'Nagari Dās'. This poet is no other than Swant Singh himself.

Mr. Eric Dickenson writes about this prince — “Sawant Singh was the eighth in descent from the founder of Kishangarh State.” He was born in 1699 and ascended to the throne in 1728. But he abdicated and retired to Brindaban. The romantic story that lies behind this strange action, is his love for a woman called 'Bani Thani'. It is also assumed that Nihal Chand modelled his 'Radha' on the beautiful features of the prince's mistress. Actually the strange facial type introduced by Nihal Chand continued even after Swant Singh's death. The artist who gained great prestige in this court remained as a court painter to successive generation of princes even after the death of his first master.

Stylistically the Kishangarh paintings have contributed, two important features to Rajasthani painting. The Radha and Krishna figures here have gained an idealised form, unique in painting. The most interesting features of the form lie in the shaping of the eyes and the torso of Krishna and Radha. Radha becomes literally lotus eyed. While the torso of Krishna is shaped like a 'pepul leaf'. Broad at the shoulders and tapering to a thin point at the waist, Mr. Dickenson writes that a certain convention was created by the Kishangarh paintings which can be noticed in the other Rajasthani idioms.

"It may be that the type encouraged a vogue for Dr. Herman Goetz, ... discovered an identical Radha

71. Ibid., Pg. 61.
in a Bundi fresco. In the Baroda State Museums two large paintings on cloth again reveal the same type."

The basic composition of these paintings are also remarkable. A strong sense of perspective is noticed. Amidst tall groves, and large buildings, play the small figures of Gopis and Krishna. The whole composition gives a sense of space, rarely found in miniature painting. The co-mingling of groves, sky and water gives an enchantment to the paintings. Here nothing is crowded, man and nature both are accorded, their proper places.

In the very stylisation of the Kishangarh paintings lie their originality. It is remarkable that when the rest of Rajasthani Schools in the eighteenth century, were slowly succumbing to the influences of Mughal court art, Kishangarh should produce paintings so different in tone and content. The reason behind this stylisation lies according to Mr. Eric Dickenson in the skill of Nihal Chand alone.

"I for one believe, it may not be unreasonable to assume that the Kishangarh artists in order to acquire a sufficiently distinctive note of separation from their affluent and powerful neighbouring cities Jaipur and Jodhpur decided that in the Krishnaite Subjects they must be at least endowed with original and striking identity and recognisable anywhere immediately on sight. Only a master artist could be entrusted with such a bold inception. Evidence before me suggests that the master artist with this task was Nihal Chand and no other." 72

"As new materials are being unearthed, variations in the idioms of Rajasthani painting are coming to the notice of the

72. Ibid., Pg. 61.
art-critics. Kishangarh is also one such example. In theme and spirit the paintings are absolutely Rajput. Technically these are indebted to Mughal court painting. The significance of Kishangarh paintings lie, in contributing an individual note of beauty, in a period of imitation and general decadence.

X

The Nagaur School of painting:

The Nagaur school of painting, mentioned by Mr. H. Goetz is another example of Rajasthani painting in the eighteenth century. Nagaur lying approximately between Jodhpur and Bikaner, was an obscure province. It was created into a state by Shajahan to accommodate the disinherited heir to the throne of Jodhpur, Amar Singh in 1634 A.D. From then onwards, Nagaur became a centre of petty intrigues and strife.

The paintings discovered from Nagaur can be divided into two groups. The first belong to the walls of the Nagaur palace. The paintings are found mainly on the walls of the Zenana mahal. The subject of these paintings are mainly mythological. Mr. Goetz describes the depiction of women in the paintings, to be derived from both Mughal painting and Indian sculptural tradition of 'Shālbhanjikās'. The Common in technique, and theme with other Rajasthani palace decorations of this century, these have

73. H. Goetz: 'The Nagaur School of Rajput Painting (18th century)' in Artibus Asiae. Vol. XII, Pg. 89.
74. Ibid., Pg. 92.
the distinction of being "in an intermediary stage between 'Mughal-Rajput art' and 'Rajput art' proper."

Mr. H. Goetz discovers in these paintings certain definite attributes, 'distinctive' in character. Apart from the palace frescoes, Mr. Goetz mentions certain miniatures —

75. There are two Rāgamālās in the Johnson collection of the India Office, London, especially the wonderful album No. 37, and the Album No. 43. Others in the Government art Gallery, Calcutta and in some other collections which express the same aesthetic ideals as the Nagaur frescoes." 75

The materials under study are not large enough to assess the importance of this new idiom of painting. It does not appear as striking as the Kishangarh School, nor so aesthetically satisfying. Mr. Goetz writes about this School —

76. "However during the quarter century of its life, the Nagaur School had grown important enough to become the Avante-garde of the later Rajput style of painting." 76

At a time when the later 'Rajput Style' as it is termed was mainly a projection of the declining Mughal Court Art of Delhi, it is difficult to realise the importance that can be accorded to the Nagaur School. In fact as more private collections of the feudal lords are thrown on the market, the emergence of Schools and sub-schools will change the pattern of study in Rajasthani painting. Till then it will be best to consider these regional variations of Rajput painting as the general product of the eighteenth century.

75. Ibid., Pg. 95.
76. Ibid., Pg. 98.
After the eighteenth century, miniature painting gained fresh life in other geographical areas. The paintings in the Punjab hill states drew away the attentions of art lovers from the later Rajasthani schools. It must be concluded that the seventeenth century saw the greatest vigour in the production of paintings in Rajasthan.