CHAPTER VI

Comparative study of Bundi and Kotah Paintings
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Kotah painting developed as an offshoot of Bundi style. When Kotah got separated from Bundi, some of the Bundi artists must have been migrated from Bundi to Kotah. The Distance of Bundi from Kotah is 20 miles that is near enough for the artist to discuss art. Therefore, it was obvious for Kotah School of painting to have similarities with Bundi School.

Kotah established itself as a separate entity. Many artists from different states were introduced to Kotah art studio’s by Kotah rulers. (The artist who is referred to as ‘Kotah Master’ was from Aurangabad and was introduced in Kotah by Jagat Singh¹. Joshi Hansraj, Gumani, Sheikh Taju and Joshi Hathuwa in the atelier of Maharao Umed Singh I was from Mewar². Other artists of Kotah court are : Niju, Gumani, Shevdar Gangeyaji, Bhim Sen, Akheyram Brahmin, Pandu garsi, Sitaram, Mussavir Chorpal,, Tikho, Kishandas, Lacchiram, Man, Imam Bux, Uday Bhan, Dalu³. With the help of these artists, a new style developed in Kotah which was different from Bundi in some respects. Both schools have similarities as well as dissimilarities.

Portrait painting was prevalent in both Kotah and Bundi schools. In both the schools, we find portraiture in profile. If we compare some early portraits of Kotah with Bundi, we find that whole of the composition is very much similar to Bundi style. But the portraits of Bundi style is of fine quality than the portraits of Kotah style, as can be seen in a portrait of Bhao Singh of Bundi of circa A.D 1680-82 from the National Museum of India, New Delhi (pl..13) and portrait of Madho Singh of Kotah in the Bada Mahal, Kotah, (pl.12). In both the pictures, the ruler is shown seated on a royal throne with high green coloured back. A dark complexioned attendant is standing behind him, holding a Marshal. An elderly figure is offering flower to the ruler. Decorative floor with floral design is depicted in both paintings; background colour is green with a stripe of sky and a yellow band above the sky. In the Kotah painting, we see an inscription on yellow band, which is not there in Bundi. The green colour used in the background in Kotah painting is brighter than Bundi. Treatment of clouds in the sky, and colours used in both the paintings are different. Decoration of floor is better painted in Bundi painting than Kotah
painting. Kotah Painting seems to be incomplete or must be deteriorated, as feet are not in colour. It is Interesting to note that the facial features of all three figures are same in both the painting. There is possibility that same artist must have painted both the paintings. Presenting of flowers symbolize honour and respect. Later portraits of Kotah are of fine quality as can be seen in Portrait of Maharao Ram Singh I, Portrait of Maharao Bhim Singh, Maharao Ram Singh Watching Dance Performance (pls 74, 75, 76).

In the Bada Mahal Kotah, there are a large number of portraits, both in miniature and murals depicting Kotah rulers, Bundi rulers, Rulers of other states, other royal persons, Mughals and Marathas, European portraits etc. In the portraits especially of Maharao Ram Singh II of Kotah in Darbar scenes and Processions etc. are very much different themes painted at Kotah, not touched by the Bundi artists. As we see that the Kotah artist excelled in depiction of Adbhut scenes as shown in Maharao Ram Singh II riding the Elephant on the canopy (pl.81).This painting shows Maharao seated on an Elephant, standing on a canopy, a place where, it was difficult to stand even by a human, a huge Elephant is standing. As mentioned earlier, this was not artist’s imagination, but a real event of Maharao Ram Singh II’s time captured and faithfully rendered in printing by an artist. In Bada Mahal, Kotah, a wall painting depicts a Portrait of Lady with Fan (pl.102), is more similar to Kishangarh painting in the depiction of eye but has its own unique and charming features of Kotah style.

In Both, Bundi and Kotah schools, we find paintings on mythological themes such as, The Bhagavata Purana, Krishna legends, Shiva, Vishnu, Dasa-Avatara and The Ramayana. Both schools have depicted The Vishnu on Garuda (pl.25 and 25a), which show similarities as well as differences. In both the paintings sky is treated with different coloured patches of blue, orange and white and Vishnu is shown flying on his Vahana in the sky. Bundi painting depicts Garuda holding bows and arrow but Kotah figure of Garuda is shown holding Shankh and Gadha. In Bundi School, Vishnu is depicted wearing yellow dhoti and Kotah Vishnu is wearing a decorative dress. In Bundi, Vishnu is shown only with two arms, but in Kotah, he is depicted with eight arms and holding different attributes. In Kotah, the eyes of Vishnu and Garuda have been painted heavy like shells, a typical characteristic of Kotah painting. The treatment of Mukut and wings
in both the paintings are similar but in Kotah painting, the wings of Garuda and stripes in Mukut are more pointed than curved as seen in Bundi. The beak of Garuda of Kotah is more curved and stylish than the Bundi style painting.

The scenes painted by Kotah painter based on the Rukmani Parinaya, are not seen in Bundi paintings. Depiction of the Ramayana in Kotah of c.A.D.1700 is more crowded than Bundi Ramayana scenes as can be seen in Battle of Rama and Ravana (pl.55) and Hanuman Carrying Mountain.

Ladies worshipping Shiva-lingam (pl.48, 48a) has been painted in both Bundi and Kotah and are almost identical. In both the paintings (Bundi and Kotah) ladies are shown worshipping Shiva Linga, which is placed near a fruitful banana tree, a symbol of creation. A figure of lady may be a goddess – Adi Shakti of Shiva is delineated as coming out of a banana tree, to bless the ladies who are worshipping. Two Monkeys seem to be watching the women. Almost every thing in both of these miniatures, like compositional value, colour combination, depiction of trees, female figures etc. are similar. We can say that these paintings must have been painted by same artist from Bundi or Kotah or there is an influence of Bundi style on Kotah.

Krishna Lila themes also have been the favourite subject of both Kotah and Bundi artists. Kotah excelled in the depiction of Krishna Lila as exemplified in the Rasamandala (pl.50) of Kotah and Rasa Lila (pl.50a) of Bundi. The format for of composition in both the paintings remains the same, but the colours used in Kotah painting are more bright and appealing. Depiction of trees is also fine in Kotah painting when compared to Rasa Lila of Bundi. We find more clarity in Kotah depiction than Bundi.

Lila Hava is also painted in both the schools. But treatment of this theme is totally different in both the schools. Lila Hava of Bundi from the National Museum of India, New Delhi (Acc. No. 4919/62), depicts palace garden with pond having lotus buds and ducks in it and lush green trees. A boat is also depicted in the pond and two peacocks, symbol of union of lovers are also depicted. But Kotah artists depicts Radha and Krishna in an architectural setting (pl.52). Trees have been painted at the background. Both the lovers seem to be dancing in Kotah painting.
Kotah excelled Bundi and all other Rajasthani schools in the depiction of hunt. Hunting scenes from Kotah are the masterpieces of Indian art and are the classic depiction of Kotah style. The outstanding visual impact of Kotah hunting scenes requires no verbal emphasis as can be seen in, *An Elephant Hunt at a Water whole* (pl.85.a), *Umed Singh Hunting Boar* (pl.87), *Maharao Umed Singh Hunting Deer* (pl.88), *Umed Singh Hunting in a dense Forest* (pl.89), *Maharao Umed Singh I and Nobles Shooting Lions in Alnia* (pl. 89.b). In Kotah we find depiction of hunt in dense forest settings where local vegetation is very beautifully and stylistically rendered. But in Bundi, hunt is depicted against a plane background as can be seen in painting. *Rao Ummed Singh Hunting Wild Boar* from the National Museum of India, New Delhi collection (Acc. No. 5469/5). In both the schools we find paintings on hunting by ladies. Different styles of hunting can be seen in both the schools, like hunt by chase on Horse or Elephant, hunting from machan or trees. But in Kotah two different hunting techniques are found i.e. depiction of hunt with the help of pet animals like pet Panthers, can be seen in *Maharao Umed Singh Hunting Deer* (pl. 88) and Hunt with the support of Buffalo as can be seen in *Brijnath ji and Durjan Sal waiting for hunt* (pl.88b).

In the depiction of *Ragamala* paintings, both Bundi and Kotah took *Chunar Ragamala* as a model. Earlier Kotah Ragamala paintings are very much similar to Bundi *Ragamala* miniature. When compared to *Raga Bhairava* (the main *Raga* which is meant to be sung late in the evening, (pl.105) of Victoria Albert Museum collection of Bundi to *Raga Bhairava* (pl.105a) of Kotah from the National Museum of India, New Delhi. We see that both the paintings not only have similar compositional formula but also have same selection of colours. In both the paintings *Shiva* is shown having dark complexion, seated on a lotus carpet. He is being attended by his consort *Parvati*, who is offering pan to him. In both the paintings, he is shown holding *vina* and his legs are tied in a *yoga-pat*. His hairs are shown tied in the form of knot above his head and are decorated by moon. In both the paintings females are shown wearing *Lehanga, Choli and Odhni*, a typical Rajasthani dress. But we find difference in both the miniatures as the facial features of Kotah *Raga Bhairava* shows the typical Kotah style. Here, *Shiva* is wearing ornaments whereas, *Shiva* in Bundi painting is shown wearing garland of skulls and snakes. The architectural setting is same in both the paintings but in Bundi, it is more decorative.
Stylistically, both the paintings are simple but effective compositions. Every element in both the pictures mirrors the movement of central figures. The maturity and refinement of the painting represents the high renaissance of Kotah and Bundi style. The reason for the similarity in both the Ragamala paintings is because both the schools took Chunar Ragamala as a model.

Another outstanding example of Ragamala miniature is Ragini Gunakali, painted in both the schools, is again based on Chunar Ragamala. Both the paintings of Ragini Gunakali from Kotah and Bundi (pl.106, 106.b) are very much similar, these seem to be the mirror images of each other. Like Raga Bhairava of Bundi, the architecture in Ragini Gunakali Bundi is more decorative. The floor of Kotah painting is shown decorated with floral design but in Bundi it is of plain orange colour. The Nayika is shown carrying flower petals in the plate. It seems that the Nayika while going forward is at once distracted by something and looks back. As the gaze of both, the Nayikas is fixed on the door; the Nayikas must have heard the voice of coming Nayaka. However, the facial features of both the paintings, belonging to Bundi and Kotah School differentiate the style.

The compositional formula of later Ragamala paintings of Kotah painted in the 19th century is very much different from Bundi in its selection of colours and depiction of figures and facial formula, as exemplified in the paintings ‘Raga Hindola’ (pl.69) and Ragini Gaur (pl.70). Both of these Paintings depict a pure Kotah style of 19th century.

Again we find similarities in the depiction of Baramasa themes of both Kotah and Bundi miniatures which is exemplified in Month of Ashad (pls.68 and 68.a) and Month of Jyestha (pls.65, 65.a). Month of Ashad in both of the schools is having similar compositions and figures. Both the paintings show scenes in four compartments, divided by lush green trees and pond. One scene depicts Radha and Krishna seated in the pavilion, in other compartment Radha is depicted wandering in the Jungle. A couple is shown sleeping in the pavilion in lotus pond. In the background, two devotees in front of a yogi have been depicted. But the forest in Kotah painting is more minutely painted. Kotah painter has shown trees laden with mangoes which are not present in Bundi painting. Bundi artist has depicted floral trees. Here, also both the schools can be identified from their facial features.
In Month of Jyestha (pls.65 and 65a) from both the schools, again we find almost similar composition with slight differences in the roof and fountain. However, colour scheme used in both the paintings is different. Kotah artist has used bright colours.

Both, Kotah and Bundi have painted love legends such as Madhavanala Kama Kandala, Laila Majnu and Bai-Bahadur and Rupmati. In Kotah, we also find series of paintings and love story of Dhola – Maru (pl.71) and Madhu – Malti (pl.72). Both of these themes are not seen in the Bundi paintings.

Bundi artist has not given much attention in the depiction of festivals such as Holi and Gangaur, which are not much impressive in comparison with the Kotah depiction of Holi as can be seen in (pls. 40a, 40b) and Gangaur (pl. 41). Maharao Ram Singh II of Kotah depicted in the Gangaur Festival (pl.100) and Hathion ki Holi which was famous in Kotah is depicted beautifully on the wall of the Lakshmi Bhandar, City Palace, Kotah. We also find beautiful depictions of Dusshera events such as, Maharao Ram Singh II Hunting Buffalo (pl.90). As mentioned earlier that the Maharaos of Kotah used to hunt Buffalo, which was to be offered to Devi Durga on Navami. Maharao Ram Singh Going to Dushera Ground (pl.99) shows procession of Maharao going towards the Dushera ground to burn the effigies of Ravana, Kumbhakarana, and Meghnatha. Maharao Arjun Singh Celebrating Janamashtami depicts the celebration of Krishna’s birthday in his darbar. Nauka Vihar (pl.98) shows the procession in boats on the occasion of Diwali. Various festivals related to Vallab Sampradaya such as, Flower Swing Festival Festival of Water Sports, Festival for religious merit ,Bathing Festival , Festival Of Awakening Ceremony during Brijnathji’s Throne Festival and many more have been depicted in Kotah school, which are not found in Bundi paintings.

Like Bundi, the Kotah miniatures are also excellent and innovative in depiction of Harem life in which royal ladies are shown listening music (pl.44), Toilet (pl.19). A beautiful depiction of Bada Mahal, Kotah, shows a royal lady seated on the chair under a canopy, watching a drama of a fainted yogi, who seems to be a musician as vina appears to be placed on the tilled floor. A beautiful delineation of Rao Jagat Singh of Kotah in harem (pl.73) in which, he is shown standing in the harem. Two women are shown cleaning his shoes. Maharao Ram Singh Watching Dance Performance (pl.76) is also among the beautiful harem scenes painted at Kotah.
We also find the depiction of court scenes in Kotah Paintings, like *Maharao Kishore Singh in his Darbar* (pl.16), *Maharao Ram Singh II in his Darbar* (pl.34) etc. show court discipline and splendour which is very rare in Bundi miniatures. In the darbar scenes of Kotah, one can feel a typical atmosphere of strict discipline even in the gathering for pleasure. In Kotah, we also find depiction of Historical events as can be seen in *Maharao Ram Singh Riding an Elephant on Canopy* (pl.81), *Maharao Ram Singh Riding a Horse on City Palace* (pl.82), *Maharao Ram Singh II being Welcomed by Lord William Bentick* (pl.8) etc. are not painted at Bundi.

In both Kotah and Bundi paintings, the depiction of beauty, charm and various emotional situations are highly sensuous. Both the schools have depicted *Lady Yearning for Her Lover* (pl.107, 107a) in almost similar way. In both the paintings it appears that the heroine is writhing in pain, and is not ready to be consoled by her attendants or confidante. The pair of birds represents her desire to meet her lover. Depiction of Peacock in Kotah Painting is the symbol of loneliness. Bundi artist has depicted two birds flittering in the sky instead of a peacock to represent the pain of lady.

Beautiful depiction of nature is found in both the schools. However, in Kotah we find more naturalistic and varied depiction of trees, bushes and grass as compared to Bundi. Kotah artist has depicted most of the trees, found in nearby jungles, surrounding Kotah. Nature depiction of Kotah established its own stylistic identity and artistic interest with its stylish decorative trees waving like a rivulet. Depiction of dense forests as found in Kotah is not seen in Bundi School and any other Rajasthani Schools.

Kotah artist has taken keen interest in the depiction of animals especially Elephants, Lions and Tigers in different postures. These animal studies are very much expressive as can be seen in various hunting scenes such as , *A sight of Loin family, Elephant Hunt at a Waterhole, Maharao Umed Singh Hunting Boar, Maharao Umed Singh hunting Deer, A coloured Khaka of a Panther Hunt, Umed Singh I and Nobles Shooting Lions* (pls.. 85, 85ba, 87,88, 88a, 89a)etc. The figures of the Horses, Tigers and Elephants etc. show a powerful expression of energy and strength. This expression in animal portraiture is not found in Bundi paintings.
Like Bundi in Kotah, we find the symbolic depiction of birds to express the sentiments of love-lorn ladies which can be seen in Baramasa and Ragamala paintings. Depiction of peacock is beautiful in Kotah as can be seen in Krishan Lila (pl.51).

Like Bundi in Kotah, also we find bold expressive lines full of movement and rhythm. The Pardaz technique of shading has been used in both the schools to giving roundness to the figures and giving three-dimensional effect. Similarities can also be seen in the depiction of garments and jewellery in the works of both the schools as ladies are shown bejewelled with pearl jewellery. Ladies wearing thick vails (dupattas) is seen only in Kotah paintings not in Bundi.

We find similar type of compositions in both the schools. Some paintings seem to be the mirror images of one another like Raga Bhairava (pls.105 a, 105 b), Ragini Gunakali (pls.106, 106 a) of both the schools. Some paintings of both the schools are divided into compartments by introducing trees, water bodies etc. as can be seen in Month of Ashad (pls. 68, 68a). The Borders of both the schools have been painted flat with few exceptions, where we find floral motifs. In both the schools mostly red colour is used for painting the borders.

In spite of having so much similarity in Bundi and Kotah School and impact of Mughal, Mewar and European art on some paintings, Kotah paintings have its own unique and distinctive charm and style which has left a mark of its own in Rajasthani art. Its depiction of hunt is unparallel.
REFERENCES

3. Ibid., 23, 24.
4. Dr Jiwan Sodhi, “Bundi School of Painting”, pl. 31.
Plate No. 13
*Portrait of Bhao Singh*
Bundi, c. A.D. 1680
National Museum, New Delhi
Plate No. 40a
_Rasa Lila,_
Bundi, 18th century
National Museum New Delhi
Plate No. 48a
Ladies Worshipping Shiva Lingam
Bundi, 1760-70
National Museum, New Delhi
Plate No. 50a
*Rasa Lila*
Bundi, 18th century
National Museum New Delhi
Plate No. 65a

Month of Jyeshtha (May/June)
Bundi, 18th century
National Museum, New Delhi
Plate No. 68a
Detail of the Month of Ashada
Bundi, c. A.D. 1725-50
National Museum, New Delhi
Plate No. 95
*Ladies Hunting Tigers*
Bundi, Mid 18th century
National Museum, New Delhi
Plate No. 105
*Raga Bhairava*
Kotah, 1660-70
National Museum, New Delhi

Plate: 105a
*Raga Bhairava*
Bundi, 1650-60
Victoria Albert Museum, London
Plate No. 106
Ragini Gunakali
Kotah, c. A.D. 1660-70
National Museum New Delhi
Plate No. 106a
Ragini Gunakali
Bundi, c.A.D. 1750-1775
National Museum, New Delhi
Plate No. 107.
*Yearning Lady*
Kotah, late 18th century
National Museum, New Delhi
Plate No. 107a
_Yearning Lady_
Bundi, c. A.D. 1750-70
National Museum, New Delhi