Religious Sects

The art of India is a product of her religion and philosophy. From the beginning of the historical period the religious sects of India find their profoundest expression in Architecture, Sculpture, Painting, Poetry and Music. According to Mulk Raj Anand, a great art critic, ‘The Hindu view of art is the Hindu view of life, life as interpreted by religion and philosophy¹. In the creation of all the artistic works a touch of divinity is observed through the depiction of Rāgā. In Indian art, Everything has a divine meaning and no element of life is treated for its own sake. The figures, the trees, the flowers, the birds are all taken from the conditions of natural life, but they are all removed into the realms of celestial life. Every little detail in a picture, on a statue, or on a pot is a symbol, a gesture to God that men see Him in everything a Divine significance².

Indian painting is inspired by the three great religions of India: Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism. These great religions with their sects and subsects have provided inexhaustable material for the artists. As in other arts so in painting too are found a number of themes of these religions illustrated from time to time.

Rāgamālā paintings though dealing with Rāgās and Rāginiśis have names and context of Hindu gods and goddesses e.g. Bhairava, Bhairavī, Nāṭṭa Nārāyaṇā

¹ Anand, Mulk Raj: Hindu view of Art, p. 1
² Ibid, p.2
The patrons of Rāgamālā paintings were Rajput rulers, who were devotees of Lord Śiva, hence Liṅga worship is predominantly depicted in the Rāgamālā paintings. With the impact of Puṣṭi Bhakti of Vallabhācārya, Vaiṣṇavism is also seen in the Rāgamālā paintings. Some rulers like Rāṇā Kumbha and Rāṇā Jagatsimha of Udaipur, Savai Pratāpsimha of Jaipur and Sāvantasisimha of Kisāṅgarh, were fervent devotees of Vallabhācārya. They patronized poets and painters in their courts. They were themselves poets and used to compose devotional songs.

From the detailed study of Rāgamālā paintings we can say that two major sects of Hinduism viz. Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism; the Svetāmbara and Digambara sects of Jainism are reflected in them. The Rāgās and Rāginiṣ is anthropomorphised as Hindu gods and goddesses e.g. Bhairava is Śiva, Vasaṅt is Kṛṣṇa, Nāṭṭa Nārāyaṇa is Viṣṇu, Śrī Rāga represents Brahmā, Bhairavi is Pārvati, Nāṭa is Śiva, etc.

The oldest Rāgamālā paintings are painted in the Kalpasūtra of the Devasa nopado, Ahmedabad. Kalpasūtra is an important text on Jainism. It is a canonical work of Śvetāmbara Jains. The subject matter of this work is Jina Carita or the lives of Tīrtaṅkaras. This first part contains large number of illustrations, the second part deals with Śthaviravali, rules of conduct for the Jain Śādhus and Śādhvīs. This part is less illustrated. The third part deals
with Samvatsari - Samachhari and deals with the rules of conduct for the Jain Sadhus and Sadhvis during the Paryuṣyaṇaparva. This third part contains very few illustrations. It is interesting to note that paintings of Rāgās and Rāginīs are present on both side margins, of the Kalpasūtra of Ca. 1475 A.D. (Pl. 1). There are six main Rāgās and 30 Rāginīs painted. The figures are totally Hindu and not Jain as questioned by Klaus Ebling3 for the following reasons. 1) Jain figures are never depicted with weapons in their hands because the whole religion is based on Ahirnā - non-violence. Jain thinkers have adopted Hindu gods and goddesses as Yaksas and Yakṣinīs and therefore we find Yakṣas and Yakṣinīs with many hands whereas Tīrthāṅkaras are always with two hands. There is a happy blending of Jainism and Hinduism. These Yakṣas are in Indian tradition regarded as the presiding spirits over wealth and therefore it is easy to see why Jains who represent a mercantile class specially endeared themselves to this cult and appropriated them especially among the class of their Duṇḍhidevas or highest divinities4. A Yakṣa is a devotee of Tīrthāṅkara so defines a liturgical text. According to the Jain belief, Indra appoints one Yakṣa and Yakṣī to serve, as attendents to each Thirthankaras. The Yakṣa would be on his right side and Yakṣinī on his left. Thus, they all came to be called Śasana Devātā or attendant spirits. According to Hemacandra, a Yakṣa origintes from a particular religious spirit of a Jina. Hence we can take, in all strong probability that the Yakṣa was the leader of the disciples and Yakṣinī was the first female convert. Yakṣas are traditionally known as demigods of wealth. Kubera their leader being a

3 Ebling K., Rāgamālā painting , p.151

4 Bhattacharya B.C., Jain Iconography, p. 92
supreme deity of treasure. In Indian mythology Yakṣas are known as semi-divine gods. They are expected to serve gods and goddesses in heaven. Yakṣa tribe is originated in Kutchh. Males and females of Jakha tribe are robust and possess martial nature. The Yakṣinīs as much as the Yakṣas constitute a class of deified beings quite peculiar to the Jaina religion. The Yakṣinīs are the female attendents of Tīrthaṅkaras, being the leaders of the women converts. As they, however, appear on the Jain representation, they are endowed with semi-divine attributes and symbolism of various kinds. These in historical analysis may reveal mixed conceptions which explain how their well developed iconography arose. The names and symbols of some of the Śasana Devis such as Cakreśvari, Nirvāṇī Devi, and Aṁbikā, betray unmistakably original ideas of personalities fused with those of older Brahmanic goddesses. Of the Yakṣinīs a good number passes into an order of Jain female deities, called the Vidyādevis or goddesses of learning. These goddesses share in a great measure, forms of the Brāhmanic female deities. All these resemblances prove the fact with greater force, how the Yakṣinī representations underlie striking conceptions borrowed from Brāhmanic pantheon⁵.

The iconography of Hindu gods and goddesses depicted in the Rāgamālā paintings is an interesting source to know about the religious sects.

Brahmā Worship

Brahmā: He is considered Devādhideva i.e. God of all Gods in Hindu pantheon. The word Brahmā is derived from the Sanskrit root Brh, to expand, to grow, to spread. Brahmā manifests himself in all the animic and unanmic

⁵ Ibid, p., 120

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things of the whole universe. He himself is Svayaṁbhū i.e. self-originated. He has four faces from which he has created the four Vedas, the sum-mum-bonum of Hinduism.

He is depicted in all the Khambavati Rāgiṇīs of various schools though there are a few variations in the iconographies. In the Rāgamālā of Gujarat last quarter of the 16th century A.D. [5] Plate Khabhāvati Rāgiṇī depicts Brahmā. He has five faces and four arms. His upper right hands hold the Veda. In the upper left hand there is a lotus, in one of the lower hands, he holds the spoon for offering Ghee in the Agni. He has a golden Mukuṭa on his five heads. His moustache and black beard speak about his ascetic nature. The Nāyikā is seated in front of him on a blue cushion. In a picture of the same Rāgiṇī of Gujarat Ca. 1575 A.D. [4] (Pl. No. 6) Bhārat Kala Bhavan, depicts Brahmā with four heads and four hands but there is no Veda in any of his hands. He is depicted holding Padma in his left hand. The Nāyikā seated before him prays with Mudrās of fingers. In a bed chamber painted in this picture there is an inverted Cāmar, symbol of fire of love. Ducks have been depicted with lotuses in their beaks. In a Khabhāvati Rāgiṇī of Mewār Ca. 1650 A.D. [15] (Pl. No. 23) in the National Museum, New Delhi, Brahmā is depicted seated on a full-bloomed lotus, he has four faces and four hands. In one of his right hands he holds Veda and with the second he offers Ghee in the Agni. His left two hands are without attributes. The Nāyikā is depicted standing before him and offers Ghee in the Agni from the container in her hands. In the Khabvātī Rāgiṇī of Uniārā School Ca. 1770 A.D. National Museum, New Delhi (Pl. No. 23A) Brahmā is depicted with his four faces and four hands seated on a low decorated stool with red cushions. He has the
Veda in his right hand. His left hand holds wooden spoon to offer Ghee in the Agni while other hand is folded. The Nāyikā sits on a similar kind of a stool with a pink cushion, dressed in a blue Sārī, with head covered by the Pālav. She offers Śrīfala in the sacrificial fire. On the top of the terrace there are two shrines with Śikhara and Kalaśa. The Dhwaja of red colour suggests the sectarian mark of Brahmā worship.

Śaivism:

This is an important sect of Hinduism. Śiva is the predominant deity in this sect. Dr. Bhandarkar finds origins of Śiva worship in the Ruḍra concept of the Vedas⁶. However, the archaeological remains prove that Śiva was worshipped as Paśupati and in the Liṅga form in the Harappan civilization. In the two great epics, Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata, his benevolent deeds are described. In the Purāṇic literature, particularly Śaiva Purāṇas stories of his glories are described elaborately. In Hindu Trinity he is a God of destruction. He is Svayamśbhū i.e. self-originated. He dwells in the Kailāsa peak of the Himālayas. He besmears himself with ashes. Snakes and scorpions are his ornaments. He wears deer's or tiger's skin. He holds Trisūla - trident - in his right hand which is a symbol of destruction and Dāmaru in his left hand, which is a symbol of creation. There is a crescent moon in his Jaṭā and the Ganges flows from the locks of his hair. There is a third eye on his forehead, symbolizing destruction of Kāmadeva. He is popularly known as Trinetri. His love episodes with Umā and Pārvati are very well described in the Purāṇas and Kumārasambava of Kālidāsa.

⁶ Bhandarkar, R.G.: Vaiśnavism, Śaivism and Minor Religious Systems, pp. 102-103
In Purāṇas and Taṁtras his two forms are described: Raudra and Saumya i.e. ferocious and benevolent. His Raudra forms are: Rudra, Bhairava, Bhava, Naṭarāja, Ugra, etc. and his Saumya forms are: Mahādeva, Isāna, Paśupati, Kedāra, etc. His Naṭarāja form is worshipped by all the artists before performance. In the musical tradition of India, five main Rāgās are supposed to be created from the five faces of Śiva.

Bhairava Rāga stands as the head of the family and comes first in the Rāgamālā sets of all systems. This Rāga is visualised as Lord Śiva. Bhairava the fearsome image of Lord Śivā has been given an extremely different look here, though he differs in every folio of the Rāgamālā sets. In the Kalpasūtra Rāgamālā amongst the main five Rāgās is the Bhairava too, he is depicted of white skin against a Lapiz blue background in a seated posture, his Vāhana, a bull, is depicted near his feet while he wears a tiger skin. He has eight hands. In his left hands, he holds a Triśul (Trident), a Mālā (a Rosary) a Paśa (Gaud) a Khatvāṅga (Skull) and the lowest hand is in Varada Muḍrā while the right hand holds a serpent, a Viṇā , a fruit and lotus. His locks form a Jata Mukuṭa and flowing Ganga is depicted in strokes of lines from his head. Kuṇḍāla in his ears and serpents around the neck are observed. Bhairava of Āmer dated Ca. 1709 A.D. [23] Art Collection, Kankroli, depicts him as a Lord in blue black complexion. His Jaṭā Mukuṭa decorates a crescent moon. He wears Muṇḍamāla (necklace of skulls) and serpent arm bands. He has a third eye depicted. He sits on a tiger skin and a large golden coloured bolster at his back is depicted. A nude ascetic disciple is on his left, may be an ascetic of Nāṭha Saṁpradāya. A Nāyikā is seated next to him. The surrounding is enhanced by fountain, carpets, lush green trees and musicians. A totally different depiction
of Bhairava Rāga is in a romantic mood amidst five Rāginīs is observed in the
Bhairava Rāga of Mālwa Ca. 1650 A.D. Bhārat Kalā Bhavan [14]. Bhairava is
in a Śyāma Varṇa (blue black colour) wearing a Karaṇḍa Mukuta. His forehead
is completely besmeared with Bhasma, wearing plenty of beaded ornaments
in neck, armband, wrists. He is also wearing a pitambar, yellow dhoti. The
textile pattern is of resist dye possibly Bāndhani which is of similar colour,
similar textile pattern is seen on the Colī of one of the Rāginīs . He is seated
on a Diwan along with a Rāginī , the Diwan also has a large motif textile
pattern. The Nāyikās fan him, play music while he is in amorous dalliance
with one of them. In another Bhairava of Provincial Mughal Ca. 1620-25,
70.24/34 National Museum, New Delhi, Śiva is in a relaxed posture. He is
depicted in the Śyāma Varṇa and is in a Pralaṁbapādamudra. His locks of
hair tied are in a bun above the head. His third eye is depicted. He wears
the Muṇḍamālā and the tiger skin. He is seated against a printed bolster
and red cushion. He is seated in a verandah. There are five skulls placed in
front of him: Four Nāyikās attend to him. One grinds the sandalwood paste
while the other applies it to his body. He is depicted in a ferocious mood and
hence sandalwood paste is being applied to cool his anger. It is surprising the
costume of the Bhairava Rāga differs with his mood.

Bhairava Rāginī has an unchanging iconography. It depicts positively the
Nāyikā who is Gauri praying at the Śivaliṅga . In the Rāgamālā of Ca. 1575
Rāginī seated in a small shrine in front of Śivaliṅga . As per Dhyāṇamaṇtra
and the illustration the shrine is next to the water reservoir. The Nāyikā offers
Arghya to the Liṅga as per Dhyāṇamaṇtra though the picture depicts her with
The Bhairavi Rāgiṇī of the mid of the 16th century A.D. in Victoria and Albert Museum is a Rāgiṇī in the typical Caurapāṇcāśikā style [3] (Pl. No. 3). She is seated in front of a small shrine with a Śivalīṅga installed in it. The shrine as in other Bhairavi Rāgiṇīs is located beside a lotus lake. Lotus flowers are offered to the Liṅga which is known as Kamaḷapūja in the Śaiva and Śākta Taṅtrās. Beautifully printed curtains with black tassels are hung in the shrine. The Nayikā plays the cymbals while she prays. There is a subshrine above the main shrine with a Kalaśa and a Makaraketana is also depicted. It indicates intensity of love. A hand lamp is also observed.

The most beautiful and decorative picture observed, where the artist has taken tremendous interest in the subject adding every detail to the environment is the Bhairavi Rāgiṇī from Būṇḍī Ca. 1625 A.D. Allahabad Museum. Śivalīṅga is enclosed in a small shrine with a hemispherical Śikhara with an inverted lotus Amalaka and a golden Kalaśa. The inner part of the shrine is dadoed in red, it consists of a Śivalīṅga on a pedestal of blue stone. A number of flowers have been offered on the Liṅga and a full blossomed lotus is placed on the top. A hanging Jalādhārī is on the Liṅga. Jalādhārī has a hole below through which water is offered to the Liṅga. It symbolizes Gaṅgā. Utensils such as milk jug, a tray containing bowls for Abil and Gulal offered to Śiva are observed. The Nayikā prays while she plays Cymbals too. Bees hover around the lotuses on the Liṅga. The shrine is next to a water tank with lotuses, fishes, ducks, cranes of various kinds. On the left side of the shrine is a Liṅga in the open. On the terrace of the shrine, a peacock in a dancing mood is
depicted who is a vehicle of Karttikeya, son of Śiva and Pārvatī. A number of birds and animals decorate the scene. The whole environment with the blue sky suggests the month of Śravaṇa - a month for worshipping Śiva.

Bhairavi Rāginī of Mālwa Ca. 1680 A.D. [18] (Pl. 27) Bhārat Kalā Bhavan is worth mentioning here. As other Bhairavi Rāginīs this picture also consists of a small shrine with a striped dome, and a Padma. The inner walls of the shrine are in red colour and instead of a Śivaliṅga there is a sculpture of a Garuda, a vehicle of Lord Viṣṇu. In this picture he is worshipped by the Nāyikā as a symbol of Lord Viṣṇu. Image of Garuḍa is depicted in an extremely few Bhairavi Rāginīs. He has a green body and a golden crown. The Rāginī takes the Ārti of Garuḍa, a small metal bell, Kumkum container etc. are also observed. The Rāginī plays Cymbals while the other two play the Dholaka and Jhālar. We find here an assimilation of two opposite sects of Hinduism i.e. Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism. It is interesting to note that on the top of the Śikara there is an Amlaka, inverted lotus followed by a Padma instead of a Kālaśa. The Padma is observed as one of the four attributes in Lord Viṣṇu’s hands, it also suggests that it is a Vaiṣṇav shrine and not a Śaiva shrine. The shrine is in front of a lotus pond full of lotuses. The Bhairavi of Mālwa II Ca. 1650 A.D. Bhārat Kalā Bhavan [14] depicts a marble white shrine against a deep blue background. Here there is a Garbhagṛha and a Sabhāmanḍapa. The Sabhāmanḍapa has a triangular Śikhara while the Garbagrūha has a hemispherical dome with a Śikhara, the Sabhāgrha has a yellow Dhwaja, with red hanging pompons. It is a symbol of Śaiva sect. Pink lotuses are offered on the Liṅga and are also observed in the lotus pond. The Nāyikā plays the Cymbals while she prays and the lady behind blows the Śaṅkha - conch.
Vaiśṇavism:

It originally began with the worship of the gracious Ṛgvedic Sun God. Viṣṇu is the second important God of Hindu pantheon. As a Lord of Laxmī, he nourishes the whole world. The word Viṣṇu is derived from the Sanskrit root Viṣ to enter. Thus Viṣṇu means one who nourishes the universe by entering into it. Various incarnations of Lord Viṣṇu are described in the Vaiṣṇava Purāṇas. There are 24 incarnations of Viṣṇu, of these Kṛṣṇa is the 12th incarnation. For Rāgamalā painters Kṛṣṇa is a favourite hero. Viṣṇu is known as Nārāyaṇa in the Mahābhārata. Nārāyaṇa means the resting place or goal of Nāra or a collection of Nāras. In the Nārāyaṇīya Parva of Mahābhārata (XII.341), Keśava or Hari says to Arjuna that he is known as the resting place or goal of men. The word Nṛ or Nara is also used to denote gods as many persons, especially in the Vedas so the Nārāyaṇa may be construed as a resting place or goal of gods.

In the Kalpasūtra paintings we have a picture of Nāṭṭa Nārāyaṇa (Pl. 1). The colour of Nāṭṭa Nārāyaṇa is green. He has six hands. In his upper right hand he holds Gada - mace, in the middle right hand a fruit and in the lower right hand a Viṇā, in his upper left hand he holds a Śankha (conch), and his lower left hand is in a Vāradamudrā. He wears a Pitāmbara and red colour scarf. He is highly ornamented. His vehicle Garuḍa is also depicted.

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7 Bhandarkar, R.G.: Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and Minor Religious Systems, p. 30
Incarnations of Viṣṇu have been depicted in the Rāgamālā paintings but Viṣṇu himself is rarely depicted as far as present knowledge is concerned but in the Rāgamālā set of Būndī Kōṭā Ca. 1725 A.D. Collection Daris Weiner [25] (Pl. 36). Viṣṇu is depicted on the front piece in Padmāsanamudrā seated on a blossomed lotus. Around him six other Rāgās in the form of devotees are depicted. They are playing with the musical instruments. The figure of Viṣṇu is larger and dominating than the other six figures. He has Pitāṁbara as his lower garment. He wears a Kirīṭa Mukutā. There is a Vaiṣṇavtilak on his forehead and there is Kaustubha jewel in the middle of his chest. The long flowery garland is a symbol of his divinity. He is frontally depicted which is rare in the miniature paintings while all the rest six figures are in profile.

A beautiful depiction of Viṣṇu is seen in a picture of Sāraṅga Rāgaputra in the Radhanpur Rāgamālā set of Gujarat dated 1839 A.D. [31] (Pl. 39). Viṣṇu seated on a Garuḍa visits Laxmi. Viṣṇu is in Śyāmavarna, he wears a Kirīṭa Mukutā with peacock feather. In his four hands are observed the Śankha (Conch) Cakra (Disc), Gadā (Mace) and a Dhanuṣ (Bow). A Vaiṣṇav Tilak decorates his forehead. He wears a number of ornaments and a Pitāṁbara. It is interesting to note that Garuḍa - Viṣṇu's vehicle is depicted in a human form. He wears a pink Dhotī and a Mukutā on his head. He wears a number of ornaments and the Dhoti of Garuḍa and the Pitāṁbara of Viṣṇu have golden borders. Laxmi is depicted very beautifully, fair complexioned - Gauravarna and wears a red Sārī with golden brocade and red short Colī. She wears plenty of ornaments of pearls and gold. A golden halo decorates her head. She
Kṛṣṇa:

In the Rāgamalā paintings Kṛṣṇa is the most popular Nāyakā for the painters. There are fascinating legends about his life, which have been the source of inspiration to the Rāgamalā painters. Kṛṣṇa means supreme power and Nākārā means joy or bliss. Thus Kṛṣṇa means eternal joy. He is described as Raso Vai Sah. He is the embodiment of love, beauty and eternal joy. In Rajasthan, poets like Mīra, Bihārī and Keśavādasa have sung the glories of Kṛṣṇa’s charming personality and amorous gestures with Rādhā. Rādhā means Kṛṣṇena Āradhyate i.e. propitiated by Kṛṣṇa is Rādhā. Vallabhācārya, the founder of the Śuddhādvaita Vedānta theory and Puṣṭi sect, popularised Kṛṣṇa Bhakti in Rajasthan through Śrīnathaji cult. The Aṣṭachhāpa poets of Vallābhācārya’s sect also played an important role in spreading Kṛṣṇa cult in Rajasthan and other parts of western India. In the 16th century A.D. Braj, the region around Mathurā was associated with Rajasthan. This region also became a home of the school of Aṣṭachhāpa poets of Vallabha sect.

In the Rāgamalā paintings Kṛṣṇa is beautifully depicted in the pictures of Vāsahta, Hīṅḍolā, Megha, Kanadā, Vibhāsa, Śrī, Sāraṅga, Paṅcama, Asāvarī, Māru, Gujarī, Mālakausa. In Rāgini Vāsaṇṭa, Kṛṣṇa is often depicted with a number of Nāyikās usually dancing and also in some as playing with colours. In Vāsaṇṭa Rāgini of Mewār Ca. 1650 A.D. [15] National Museum, New Delhi (Pl. 21) Kṛṣṇa is depicted in Śyāma Vāraṇa wearing a yellow skirt and striped pyjamas and a transparent white Dupattā. He wears a large garland and beaded ornaments. His turban is decorated with three peacock
feathers while he dances, he also plays the Bañsuri. Women play to the duff and the cymbals while a third sprays colour. Colour pots and vessels are observed in the foreground. The red colour of Mewār miniatures brightens the background, lush green vegetation with flowers and peacocks adds to the delight.

Another Vasaṅta Rāgini of Āmer Ca. 1700 A.D. in the Sangramasinīha collection depicts Kṛṣṇa in the centre of the composition. He is standing on a low stool and wears a long Jāmā and a Mukuta. His Vaṇṇa is Śyāma. A number of Gopis surround him, some play with colours and some play music. It gives a clear and natural feeling of Vasaṅta - the Holi festival. Kṛṣṇa with two coloured syringes in the hand sprays colour on them, a lady hands him a pot of Amramaṇjari.

The Vasaṅta Rāgini of Būndī Ca. 18th century A.D. in the collection of H.K. Swali depicts Kṛṣṇa in Śyāma Vaṇṇa wearing an extremely interesting outfit. He wears the yellow Pyjāmā, a red Jāmā whose upper portion is red with golden motifs while the skirt part forms three frills at the waist followed by the skirt of the Jāmā which is long, transparent and has a slit in the centre. He holds the Viṇā and the pot of Amramaṇjari. He has Padma buds and flowers studded in the crown. Padma is one of the attributes of Lord Viṣṇu hence identifies it to be a Vaiṣṇavite picture. Kṛṣṇa also has a white halo around his head. The Gopis play music and dance along with him. The whole atmosphere is in blooms with lush vegetation and colourful flowers. The lake is full of lotuses and ducks.

In the Hiṅḍola Rāga, he is depicted on a swing in amorous dalliance with
Radhā while the Gopis are playing music. In one of the Rāgas he is standing on a swing with the Nāyikā and swinging in full force. In one of the Hindola Rāgas, British Museum 21934 bears signature of Bahadur Singh. The Nāyakā here depicted is not Lord Kṛṣṇa but a prince. He is observed fallen from the swing and is being uplifted by his lady companion. Hindola pretending to be giddy and to have over balanced himself in fun. It is a very rare picture not later found anywhere.

In the Rāga Hindola of Uniārā Ca. 1770 A.D. in the National Museum, New Delhi, he sits on a beautiful swing with cushions and bolsters, eight Gopis attend to him who carry the musical instruments, the flywisk of Yak’s tail and also a large fan. Kṛṣṇa wears a crown with Padma flowers. The vegetation is in full bloom, a peacock dances on the top of the swing, while two female peacocks seated on both of his sides watch him. The lotus lake has no lotuses but leaves of lotuses and ducks are present. Bees hover over the Nāyakā.

Kṛṣṇa in his heroic mood is observed in Kāṇadā Rāga. The name itself suggests Kṛṣṇa and Kāṇadā is one of the names of Lord Kṛṣṇa. The slaying of an elephant and the captives is depicted in this picture while Kṛṣṇa holds the tusk and club and is being honoured.

In Megha: Mallār Rāga Kṛṣṇa is depicted either in amorous dalliance or dancing away with the Gopis while peacock cry depicts Ālaṁbanabhāva. Gopis play the musical instruments. In the Megha Rāga of Sīrōhī Ca. 1690 A.D. [20] collection Sangrāmasīrinha of Nawalgarh depicts Kṛṣṇa in the centre of the composition in amorous dalliance with a Nāyikā while he also holds a garland in the other hand. He is in Śyāma Varṇa and wears a turban with a
plume. Nayikās play the musical instruments while peacocks with open beaks take in the drops of rain (Pl. 32).

Vibhāsā Rāgiṇī depicts Kṛṣṇa as the Kāmadeva holding or shooting the Padmaśara. Detailed explanation has been given in Chapter 10.

Śrī Rāga also depicts Kṛṣṇa. He is seated with the Nayikā and listening to music played by Kinnara and Gaṇḍharva e.g. Śrī Rāga of Jaipur 19th century A.D. private collection, where Kṛṣṇa has put in a long Jāmā which touches the toes and a golden Paṭkā. Kṛṣṇa and the Nayikā which is Rādha are depicted with a halo are hearing music played by Kinnara and Gandharva.

Rāgiṇī Sarāṅga of Mewār dated 1628 A.D. [12] Bhārat Kalā Bhavan depicts Kṛṣṇa and his consort under a tree. The Mewāri red background is observed in this folio. He wears a Pitāmbara and is closely seated with Rādhā and is eating a betal leaf held in his right hand. An attendant standing behind holds a flywhisk. They are enjoying music played by Nārada. Sarāṅga is depicted in Śyāma Varna - blue black colour in the form of Kṛṣṇa. Nature is very well depicted in these paintings.

Sarāṅga Rāgaputra also depicts Kṛṣṇa in the Būṇḍī / Kōṭā [25] Ca. 1725 A.D. in the collection of Doris Weiner. He is depicted playing a peculiar kind of a Sarāṅgi. He sits near a lotus pond. He is depicted in Śyāma Vaṇṭa - blue black colour and wearing a Pitāmbara.

Pañcama Rāgaputra of Mārwār Ca. 1640 A.D. National Museum, New Delhi, also depicts Kṛṣṇa in Śyāma Vaṇṭa - black colour and Pitāmbara seated on a low stool in the centre of the composition. Here he has four hands. The
attributes in his hands are not very clear. He wears a Kirīṭa Mukuṭa decorated with pearls. Vaiśṇava Tilaka on his forehead is significant which symbolises Viṣṇupāda (feet of Lord Viṣṇu). He wears a white floral garland which symbolizes his divine qualities. The composition has carpets and tiles, alcoves with jugs and vases decorate the walls. The figure is centrally composed.

Gaṇeśa:

This is a presiding deity of good omen and destroyer of the Vighnas. He is a son of Śiva and Pārvatī. He is a symbol of Oṃkāra. His icon or picture is a composite figure of elephant’s head and human body. In his one hand he holds a Pāśa - axe and in the other Aṅkuśa - controlling goud. His third hand is in Abhaya Mudrā and he holds a sweet ball in his fourth hand. In Hindu scriptures he is described as an endower of knowledge, wealth and success. His two weapons - Pāśa and Aṅkuśa symbolize will and knowledge. His Vāhana is Mūṣaka - mouse - symbol of sensibility. He is described as the best player of mṛḍaṅga. He is worshipped before taking up any work and also worshipped as the foremost deity in all religious ceremonies.

A seated figure of Gaṇeśa is observed on the cover of the Mālwa Rāgamalā Ca. 1650 A.D. Bhārat Kalā Bhavan. The cover is of paper mache board and has Gaṇeśa on the front cover and Śiva on the back cover. Gaṇeśa has four hands with attributes. He wears a serpent, coiled around his waist. His Vāhana the mouse is observed on the right a symbol of sensibility. The sky is shown as a curtain device. He wears the crescent moon on his forehead. A peculiarity observed in the Gaṇeśa is a nose and a trunk, hence the face looks very odd in appearance.
Depiction of Tilaka denoting Sectarian Mark

Tilaka mark depicted on the foreheads of males and females discriminates religious sects in the Rāgamālā paintings. Vaiṣṇavas generally use the Urdhvapūṇḍra, symbolising Viṣṇupāda i.e. footprint of Viṣṇu. It consists of two upright lines which is generally of red colour. The worshipper of Śiva has three horizontal streaks on his forehead, which is generally of white colour.

By depiction of the above Gods, one surmises that in Gujarat, Rajasthan and Central India, impact of Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism was more than any other minor sects of Hinduism. The painters of Rāgamālā paintings were more attracted in depicting various episodes of Lord Kṛṣṇa with his consort Rādhā. Depiction of Kṛṣṇa theme has added Bhakti Śrīgāra to the Vaiṣṇava sect which became more popular among the masses as well as classes. Rāgamālā paintings prove that religious sects of Hinduism have encouraged poetry, painting and music.