



Worksheet No. 3

History of Indian Art Unit – I – (A) Six Limbs of Indian Painting ‘SADANGA

Art has had a very long life in India. It is still in its momentum. From the cave paintings of the pre-historic times to the contemporary creations of today, it has come a long way and matured gracefully.

The word “SADANGA” consists of two words, one is “Shad” means ‘Six’ & the other is “Anga” means ‘Part’. Sadanga consist of the six limbs, or canons of art, on which the whole art of painting depends. The Sadanga is an inevitable part of every great Indian masterpiece. For the ancient painting of Ajanta to those created by Raja Ravi Varma and M.F. Hussain today, we will observe that every notable artist has silently put to use all the six principles.

Now, India of the 1st century B.C. had seen the evolution of the ‘SADANGA” or the SIX LIMBS OF THE PAINTING’ which are considered as the principles of the art even today.

The Six Limbs are:

***“Roop Bhedah Pramanani Bhava-Lavanya-yojanam
Sadrishya Varnikabhang iti chitra Shadangam”***

1. Roopbheda
2. Pramana
3. Bhava
4. Lavanya-yojanam
5. Sadrishyam
6. Varnikabhangam

According to the couplet, ‘Six Limbs of Art’ have been described as followed:

1. RUPA-BHEDA

‘Roopa’ means the outer form or appearance of the subject. The perception is visual as well as mental. ‘Bheda,’ on the other hand, means difference. In other words, to create a painting, an artist needs to have a sound knowledge about the different forms that exist. He has to know how a form of life differs from a form of death. Both have their own characteristic features and sublimity.

Example: **Padmapani**, Cave No. 1, Ajanta, Maharashtra,

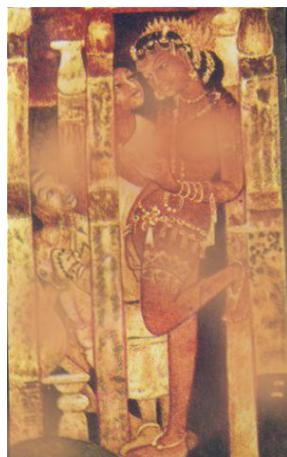


In the given painting of Padmapani from Ajanta cave No. 1, so many forms are visible. Padmapani a form of Buddha, holding a lotus, showcased like a youthful king with luxury and charm, standing along with the princess, attendants, musicians, kinnaras, animals like monkeys and birds. In Background with the architectural scene, trees and plants. And figures with different colour complexions, poses and performing actions.

2. PRAMANA

‘Pramana’ teaches us the exact measure, proportion and distance of the subjects. It provides an insight into the structural anatomy of objects, too. The Indian artists were guided more by the proportions than by absolute measurements. The proportions were often symbolic and suggestive.

Example: Maya Devi, Ajanta, Maharashtra, India



Maya Devi is standing in a very harmonious pose along with the servants with a support of a pillar. Because she is a queen she is different in colour complexion with Indian red and with a high proportion in size and rest of the figures with opposite colour scheme and smaller in size, which makes the difference in importance.

3. BHAVA

‘Bhava’ means an emotion, a feeling, an intention, or an idea. This aspect of art is depicted in the form of feelings expressed by the subject. It is the expression of the character which fulfils the meaning of the painting and the concept or the story behind.

Example: **Padmapani**, Cave No. 1, Ajanta, Maharashtra,

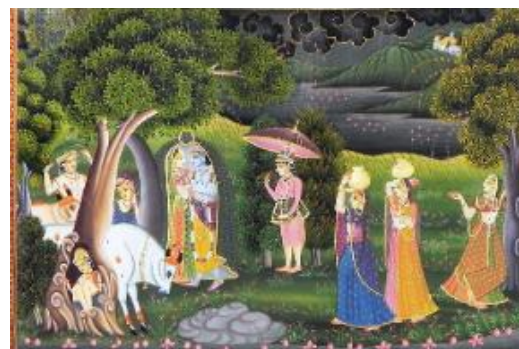


In padmapani, because he is Buddha the expression of the prince is peaceful, compassionate, subtle, and serene.

4. LAVANYA-YOJANAM

Your painting should be gracefully high in its artistic quality. The pramanani is for stringent proportions, and bhava is for expressing movement. But, lavanya yojanam is for controlling the over-expression of both. The motive is to bring about a sense of beauty in a dignified and organised manner. Infusion of grace, it is a planning to create a beautiful and graceful environment, along with the beauty of the character.

Example: **Radha & Krishna with gopis**, Pahari miniature, India



The beauty and charm is rendered in the Pahari painting of Bhagvata series where romance of Radha and Krishna flows in the woods and greens.

5. SADRISHYAM

This is perhaps the most challenging task of creating a painting. Sadrishya suggests the degree to which a depiction is similar to an artist's vision or the subject itself. In a way, it is also a way of depicting similitude.

It enhance the character of any individual and make him complete in itself. For example mriganayani (eyes like a deer eyes), nose should be like a parrot beak, waist should be like a elephant-trunk, thighs should be like a banana trunk, fingers like lotus petals, lips like fresh busted flower, etc.

EXAMPLE



Shoulders like elephant head



Eyes like a deer eyes



Waist like elephant trunk



Lotus like feet



Parrot like nose



Hand like a flower bud

6. VARNIKABHANGAM

It is an artistic way of making use of the brush and colours. The term translated means the way a subject is being drawn and coloured. So, obviously, there shall be the use of brush and pigments. What this principle focuses on, is the way the strokes are being applied to a canvas, and the knowledge of the artist about the different colours.