

# REGIONAL SCHOOL OF PAINTINGS

FOLK PAINTINGS

RAJASTHANI STYLE

PAHARI STYLE

SOUTH INDIA STYLE

# THE PAHARI SCHOOLS

BASOHLI

GULER

KANGRA

KULU - MANDL

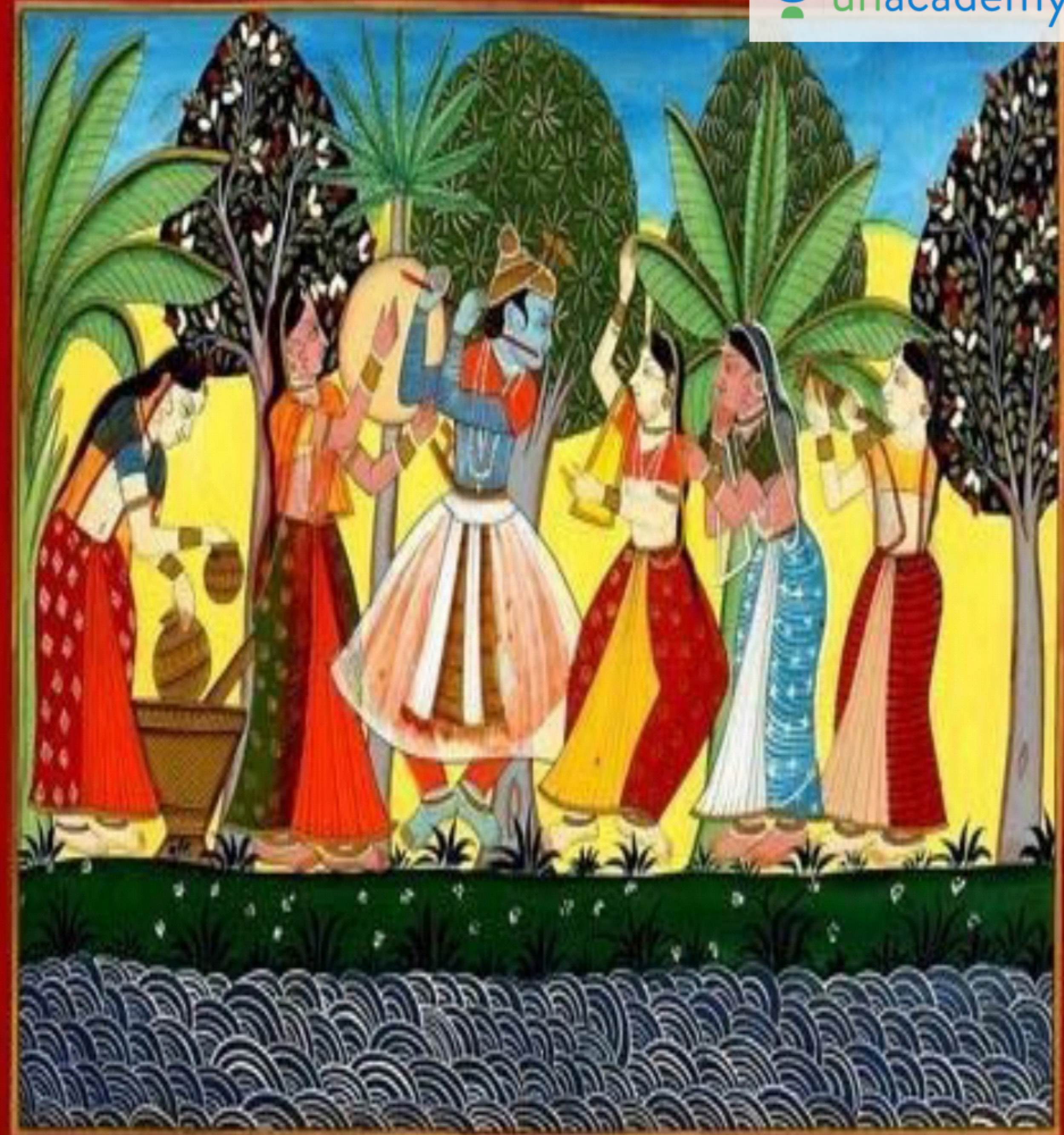
# Pahari Styles of Painting

- The Pahari region comprises the present State of Himachal Pradesh, some adjoining areas of the Punjab, the area of Jammu in the Jammu and Kashmir State and Garhwal in uttrakhand .
- The whole of this area was divided into small States ruled by the Rajput princes and were often engaged in welfare.
- These States were centres of great artistic activity from the latter half of the 17th to nearly the middle of the 19th century.

# BASOHLI

- The earliest centre of painting in the Pahari region was Basohli where under the patronage of Raja Kripal Pal, an artist named Devidasa executed miniatures in the form of the Rasamanjari illustrations in 1694 A.D.
- There is one more series of the Rasamanjari miniatures painted in the same style and almost of the same period but appears to be in a different hand.
- The illustrations of the two Rasamanjari series are scattered in a number of Indian and foreign museums.
- The Basohli style of painting is characterised by vigorous and bold line and strong glowing colours.
- The Basohli style spread to the various neighbouring states and continued till the middle of the 18th century.

- An illustration from a series of Gita Govinda painted by artist Manaku in 1730 A.D. shows further development of the Basohli style.
- The miniature which is in the collection of the National Museum, depicts Krishna in the company of gopis in a grove on the bank of a river.
- There is a change in the facial type which becomes a little heavier and also in the tree forms which assume a somewhat naturalistic character, which may be due to the influence of the Mughal painting.
- Otherwise, the general features of the Basohli style like the use of strong and contrasting colours, monochrome background, large eyes, bold drawing, use of beetles wings for showing diamonds in ornaments, narrow sky and the red border are observable in this miniature also.



# Guler School of paintings

- The last phase of the Basohli style was closely followed by the Jammu group of paintings.
- Mainly consisting of portraits of **Raja Balwant Singh of Jasrota** (a small place near Jammu) by Nainsukh,
- Nainsukh was an artist who originally belonged to **Guler but had settled at Jasrota.**
- He worked both at Jasrota and at Guler.
- These paintings are in a new naturalistic and delicate style marking a change from the earlier traditions of the Basohli art.
- The colours used are **soft.**
- The style appears to have been **inspired by** the **naturalistic style** of the Mughal painting of the **Muhammad Shah period.**

- The finest group of miniatures done in the Pahari region is represented by the famous series of the **Bhagavata, the Gita Govinda, the Bihari Satasai, the Baramasa and the Ragamala**, painted in 1760-70 A.D.
- The exact place of origin of these series of painting is not known.
- They might have been painted either at Guler or Kangra or any other nearby centre.
- The Guler portraits together with the Bhagavata and the other series have been grouped under a common title of "Guler Style" on the basis of the style of the Guler portraits.
- The style of these paintings is naturalistic, delicate and lyrical.
- The female type in these paintings is particularly delicate with **well-modelled faces, small and slightly upturned nose and the hair done minutely**.
- It is very likely that these paintings are in the hand of the master-artist **Nainsukh** himself or by one of his competent associates.



# Kangra School of Paintings

- The Guler style was followed by another style of painting termed as the "Kangra style", representing the 3<sup>rd</sup> phase of the Pahari painting in the last quarter of the 18th century.
- The Kangra style developed out of the Guler style.
- It possesses the main characteristics of the latter style, like the delicacy of drawing and quality of naturalism.
- The name Kangra style is given to this group of painting for the reason that they are identical in style to the portraits of Raja Sansar Chand of Kangra.
- In these paintings, the faces of women in profile have the nose almost in line with the forehead,
- The eyes are long and narrow and the chin is sharp.

- The Kangra style continued to flourish at various places namely Kangra, Guler, Basohli, Chamba, Jammu, Nurpur and Garhwal etc.
- Paintings of the Kangra style are attributed mainly to the **Nainsukh family**.
- Some of the Pahari painters found patronage in the Punjab under Maharaja Ranjit Singh and the Sikh nobility in the beginning of the 19th century and executed portraits and other miniatures **in a modified version of the Kangra style** which continued till the middle of the 19th century.



## Kulu & Mandi school of paintings

- Along with the naturalistic Kangra style in the Pahari region, there also flourished a folk style of painting in the Kulu-Mandi area, mainly inspired by the local tradition.
- The style is marked by bold drawing and the use of dark and dull colours. Though influence of the Kangra style is observed in certain cases yet the style maintains its distinct folkish character.
- A large number of portraits of the Kulu and Mandi rulers and miniatures on other themes are available in this style.
- A miniature from the series of the Bhagavata in the collection of the National Museum was painted by Shri Bhagwan in 1794 A.D.

- Illustrations show **Krishna lifting the Goverdhana mountain** on his little finger to save the people of Gokula from the wrath of Indra who has let loose heavy rains.
- The dark clouds and rain in the form of **white dotted lines** are shown in the background.
- The drawing of figures is bold though rather stiff.
- The painting has a **yellow floral border**.
- Another example of the Kulu painting is of **two girls flying kites**.
- The miniature is in the folk style of the late 18th century and is marked by **bold drawing and dark and dull colour scheme**.

- The background colour is **dull blue**.
- The girls are wearing the **typical costumes and ornaments which prevailed in the Kulu region** in that period.
- Two **flying parrots** indicate sky in a symbolic manner.
- The miniature belongs to the collection of the National Museum.

