

## Pattchiran Of Orisha

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### **Abstract**

*Orisha is a rich heritage state of India, famous for its traditional art & folk culture which dates back to 5th BC, the paintings of the Palaeolithic age in the 'Kalahandi' district of Orisha. Artisans from Orisha innovated their style of 'Pattchitran' which refers to a painting which is done on 'Patta' manifested by rich, bright & Natural Colours, decorative motifs & borders, and simple figures on the same platform with flat colors, without any attempt of perspective along with the portrayal of mythological themes. Paintings depict stories of Indian deities. A few paintings are done inspiring by folktales of Jagannath, his brother Balabhadra and his sister Subhadra. The preparation of 'Patt' [Canvas] in Pattchitran is very impressive and calculates hard work in preparation. Colors are not ready-made but are prepared by artists and obtained from natural sources. Colors, also, imbibe symbolic effects such as 'Hasya' in white, 'Adbhut' in yellow, 'Raudra' in red etc. Krishna is painted in blue and black while gopis in light pink, purple and brown colors. Pattchitras is also done on palm leaves. When Artisans prepare 'Pattchitras' they observe some rituals and didn't have any type of non-veg food. The Pattchitra style is a combination of both folk and classified elements. Pattchitra paintings are also done on cotton, georgette and tussar silk saris. The main center of Pattchitra of Odisha is Raghurajpur. It is said that this village is a prime source of Pattchitran endorsed by the Ministry of Tourism and the United National Development program.*

Orisha is a rich heritage state of India, famous for its traditional art & folk culture which dates back to 5th BC, the paintings of the Palaeolithic age in the 'Kalahandi' district of Orisha. 'Pattchitra' is a type of traditional, folk art made on cloth that is very popular in west Bengal and the Eastern Indian part of Orissa. 'Pattchitra' evolved from the Sanskrit word 'Patta' means Canvas & 'Chitra' refers to a Picture. Artisans from Orisha innovated their style of 'Pattchitran' which refers to a painting which is done on 'Patta' manifested by rich, bright & Natural Colours, decorative motifs & borders, and simple figures on the same platform with flat colors, without any attempt of perspective along with the portrayal of mythological themes. Pattachitra of Orisha has its root completely in religion. The style flourished under the cult of Lord Jagannath at Puri in 12th Cen. A.D. Artisans of 'Pattchitra' belong to the 'Mahapatra' or 'Maharanas' caste and live across the various cities of Orisha. Pattchitra of Orisha is mainly devoted to the famous Jagannath temple which was built between the 5th CE to 15th CE by rulers of the Eastern Ganga dynasty who were lovers of Indian art and craft. The magnificent temple presents beautiful figures of gods & goddesses in carving style. Unlike idols of other temples, the image of Jagannath is made of wood and is replaced after every 12 years by a similar replica.

### **Themes**

Artisans of Pattchitra painted various themes. Scholars classified these themes as followings -Vaishnav Paintings [Bhagvat paintings, Ramayan, Jagannath], Saiva Paintings, Shakta Paintings, Legends, Ragacharitra, Bandhacharitra, Yampati&Yatripatas [sketches of temples Puri], Gajanan playing cards, Social paintings, The DasaAvtaras [ten divine incarnations] . Actually, Odisha Patchitras are based on Hindu mythological narratives. We can also view various scenes and episodes from the life of divine Gods along with elephants, horses, lions, peacocks etc. as well as different types of trees, leaves, flower motifs etc. In fact, paintings also depict stories



of Indian deities such as Radha, Krishna, and Durga. A few paintings are done inspiring by folktales of Jagannath, his brother Balabhadra and his sister Subhadra. On the full moon day of the Hindi month 'Jyestha,' [ Jyeshtha month –the birthday of Lord Jagannath] the divine God has a bath to stave off the summer heat. Thousands of devotees witness the 'Snan Yatra' when the idols of Jagannath his brother 'Balbhadra' and his sister are taken in a 'Yatra' for a ceremonial bath. As a result, the other deities are supposed to be sick for 15 days [first fortnight of the Hindi month 'Asadha' ]. <sup>(1)</sup> This duration is called 'Ansar' and the devotees were not allowed to worship their deities known as 'AnasarPati'. So during this period artisans are asked to display the 'Trinity' painting of Lord Jagannath

[Nilamadhava ], Lord Balbhadrā [Ananta ] and maa Shubhadra [bhūbneshvari ] so that devotees could worship. Jagannath is drawn in Padmasan Mudra with four hands holding Sankh, Chakra, Gada, and Padma as well as five main colors, known as Pancha-Tatva have relevance to prominent characters.

### **Preparing The Canvas**

The preparation of ‘Patt’ [Canvas } in Pattchitran is very impressive and calculates hard work in preparation. Artisans take a few old well-washed saris to prepare a canvas. These saris are spread over the floor or cot .tamarind seeds are crushed and soaked for 4-5 days to become soft. After they become soft they are boiled in water and made into glue. Then Artisans apply this glue /paste over the cloth and before the glue dries up, another cloth is placed on it, again a fresh layer of glue is coated over it to stick the layers of cloth. Then the ground is allowed to dry under the sun. After the cloth dried, a mixture of white stone powder and crushed tamarind seed paste was mixed in accurate proportion, then heated to produce a white paste and applied on both sides. Once the canvas is smooth, the canvas is rubbed with ‘chikan’ stone to bring shine. After the complete ‘Patt’ is dried, the required size of the painting is cut into pieces. Then ‘Patta’ is ready to draw forms and figures.

Colors are not ready-made but are prepared by artists and obtained from natural sources such as lamp soot and powdered conch shells. Lampblack { ...a finely powered black soot deposited in incomplete combustion of carbonaceous materials and used chiefly as a pigment [as in paints, enamels and printmaking inks] –Merriam } is soot that can be prepared by burning oil or gas in a lamp. Mainly the fine natural colors Hingula, Harital, Kala, Sankha, and Geru, are used by Artisans to prepare Pattchitras which are prepared by artisans themselves White color is prepared from conch-shell. First of all, Artisans grind it and make powder. Then boil it by adding water as required. In the next process, they strain and filter the paste. Hingula is a red sulfide of mercury also known as cinnabar found in Europe, China, Japan, America, Iran and India. Artisans prepared red color from ‘Hingula’ stone which is found in hills in Odisha. Black color is made with ‘kajal’ after burning ‘Diya’ overnight. <sup>(2)</sup>Hartala is used to prepare yellow color. Green is prepared either from green stone or green plant, Haritala, an indigenous stone, found in Orisha, is used to prepare yellow, as well as blue from the stone ‘Khandaneela’. Various colors can be prepared out of basic colors. Artisans, usually, mix all these colors in a coconut shell with the help of ‘kaitha’[wood apple] gum which works as a fixative and prevents the ‘citrus’ from decaying. Colors,also, imbibe symbolic effects such as ‘Hasya “ in white, ‘Adbhut’ in yellow, ‘Raudra’ in red etc. Krishna is painted in blue and black while gopis in light pink, purple and brown colors. A well-known artist of Pattchitran explains, “All colors have their meaning Black & Blue colors are used to fill the figures of Krishna and green color for Rama. These colors are fixed, No one can change them. Ornaments

have their own style, too.” These colors are applied with the help of different varieties of brushes. Fine brushes are made out of mongoose or squirrel hair but course quality is made out of buffalo hair which is kept in a bamboo container. Coconut shell, called ‘Sadhei’ is used for mixing these natural pigments while pebble stone ‘ghasapathar’ is used for grinding. So the stages of Pattchitran are as follows -Tipana, Hingulabanaka , Ranga banaka , Alankarlagi , Motakala , Sarukala , Ranga lekha, Sankhapatqa , Bageiba&Dhadikana , jausala.<sup>(2)</sup>

Pattchitras is also done on palm leaves. Palm leaf engraving is made using an iron stylus on dried palm leaves, first of all, palm leaves are taken from the trees & left for a few days so that they could turn hard. Then these leaves are sown together to prepare a canvas that can be folded, unlike canvas. The figures are traced with the help of black or white ink. After the painting is done, these leaves are delicately strung together with threads.

When Artisans prepare ‘Pattchitras’ they observe some rituals and didn’t have any type of non-veg food. They ought to sleep on the grounds. They usually wear a pure new dress while painting. After they finish the artwork a ‘Mahasnan’ is arranged through chanting. It is popular about the temple that a famous ritual in the temple is related to Lord Jagannath.

### **Style**

The Pattchitra style is a combination of both folk and classified elements. The style also is influenced by Mughal paintings, especially in garment design. No doubt, most of the gestures and postures have been confined to a few well-defined figures. These human figures are drawn mostly in the front pose but legs are shown sidewise. Figures bear side faces while the elongated eyes are drawn from the front side. The long beak-like nose is sharp and the



chins are round. Ornaments, facial expressions, clothing, hairstyle, beards & mustaches differentiate the personalities of the king, minister, sage, priest or layman etc. Artisans emphasize on the expression of the face which is, usually, the center of attraction of the painting. Artisans use a simple background with no critical composition. All the figures are drawn on the same platform. Artisans do not try to use any type of architecture, landscape, trees, perspective, or distant views as regularly used by their contemporary artists of other states of India while borders with bright colors are prepared with decorative motifs like Mughals. While Borders are not related to the rest of the painting but they are uniformly connected to the entire painting. Decorated flowers and foliage are mostly

painted side by figures on a red background. Lines, we can say, are angular if drawn by pen but rhythmic if drawn with the help of a soft brush. Colors are Naturally bright, bold, and in contrast.

Pattchitra paintings are also done on cotton, georgette and tussar silk saris. Bright hues like yellow, pink, red, purple green etc. are used to adorn these saris. Other forms of 'Pattchitran' art include paintings on a coconut shell and betel nut, toys, wall hangings, paper Mache masks, bottles etc.

### **Prominent Centre**

The main center of Pattchitra of Odisha is Raghurajpur, a heritage craft village, on the bank of river Bhargavi about 12 km from the pilgrimage center of Jagannath Puri and 52 km away from the capital Bhubaneswar. Approximately 130 families lived here in artistic houses with a studio and Art gallery in their houses. The economic & social life of Raghurajpur revolves around crafts with at least one member engaged in this art in each family. All members work together the women, soaked seeds or grindstones to turn into powder, boil them, make paste prepare canvas while the men work on a painting. BijayBariki, a National Awardee artist from Odisha explains that they are preserving this Heritage Art which they received from their ancestors, following the traditional way. In his way, this art doesn't need more promotion nationally or internationally. It is said that this village is a prime source of Pattchitran endorsed by the Ministry of Tourism and the United National Development program. After two years of Research Projects from 1998 to 2000 by INTACH, the village has selected as the first heritage village of Odisha after Raghurajpur was continuously flourishing its Crafts over the country. The families of Chitrakarars are always ready to cooperate with scholars and students who visit Raghurajpur for their projects or assignments. Basically, we can here refer to the special attempt of Jagannath Vallabha Vedic Research Raghurajpur. A famous artist from Raghurajpur is Raghunath Mohapatra who is felicitated with the highest Honour in India. Vishal Dev, Principal Secretary, of the Department of Tourism presents his views that Traditional Art, Crafts and Handloom are a priority for the State Government. To promote them, they regularly organize national-level trade fairs. This provides the Odiya artists with a platform to directly promote the art outside the state as well as through the state government. When I met an artist at a craft fair 15 years ago he explains to me the technique of 'Pattchitra', I bought a painting made on 'tadapattra' while in my latest meeting with folk artisans, I realized that various folk artisans are using ready-made colors easily available in the market.

### **References**

1. मशहूर कलाकार के शब्दों में, "जगन्नाथ जी को जब बुखार हो जाता है, जगन्नाथ जी के उस टाइम कोई दर्शन नहीं कर पाता। स्नानपुण्य में 108 लोटा पानी में जगन्नाथ जी नहा लेते हैं। नहाने के बाद, क्या होता है न, जगन्नाथ जी बुखार में पड़ जाते हैं। बुखार होने के बाद क्या

होता है ना, कोई जगन्नाथ जी के दर्शन नहीं करता है, मुँह पर कपड़ा डाल दिया जाता है, मुँह पर कपड़ा डालने के बाद क्या होता है ना जगन्नाथ के रूप में हम पट चित्र में विष्णु, बालभद्र के रूप में शिव, सुभद्रा माता भुवनेश्वरी रूप में तीनों पट चित्र हम यहीं से वाइट कपड़े से ऐसे घिरा के लेके जाते हैं। मंदिर में तीनों स्थापित होते हैं। जो लोग दर्शन करने जाते हैं, उसी को दर्शन करते हैं। आभार यूट्यूब।

2. All earth, stone and mineral colours are used to paint the patas. Nowadays powder colours are being introduced which give a very destructive result. Basically primary colour is used in patta paintings like sankha (white), Hingula (yellow), Deepa kala (black), Dhau (brown), and Neela (indigo) the other mixed colours are prepared from the above pigments the gum is used with colours which obtained From Kapitha tree (wood apple) and mixed with a coconut shell. <http://www.rabindraart.com/how-to-do-pattachitra.html>