

Assessing the Crown of Men in Painted Narratives of the Rajput Style of the Mewar School

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Abstract

The liking for ornaments has always been prevalent in the women as it is known to the world from times immemorial. However, the liking for ornaments had been there evident in the men is as evident also. This as well can be seen in the sculptures, paintings, photographs of the men in the pages from history specifically from India, that apparently came from pre-historic times, to Indus Valley, Vedic times, to medieval time when sculptures, paintings and texts have spoken of men adorning ornaments. This perhaps then became the key feature other than fabrics to showcase the world, the economic status as well the status of divinity a man possessed in the moment unlike ladies that had emotional feature involved. Thus, men of the medieval times have been painted as royal and divine with much of the ornaments. In those ornaments the most obvious feature that reflected their status and factor had everything to do with headgears they were adorned. And the most important were crowns among head gears that made all the sense. Thus, the document here will analyse the crowns worn by men painted in the Rajput style, Mewar School of miniature.

Keywords: Crowns; Head gears; Indian ornaments; Lord Krishna; Mewar miniature paintings; Monarchs of India; *Mukut*; Rajput emperors; Rajput style.

Introduction

Men as has always been as one who possesses physical power and privilege, if they belonged to the imperial class. And if the men of India is analysed, they indeed had the power and privilege of the imperial class but they were also seen as divine being. For they apparently takes the

accountability of the wellness and being of their progeny, so they are honoured equal to the religious deities. Perhaps this is the reason the Bengal culture designated Goddess Durga as Thakur. And the Rajput clan; the worshippers of Vishnu or the followers of Vaishnavism designated their landowners, rulers, head of the family, Lord Krishna as *Thakurji*, which also means master or chief as they see their god as one who have bestowed their blessings on the devotees with all the favourable weather, wealth, health, money, atmospheric wellness and being in all the aspects of their respective lives, while fulfilling their desires time to time. That ultimately is synonymous to the head, King or a man of Imperial class who ruled the region and nurture their progeny.

Besides, the designation men here also have showcased their status through their possessions due to unavailability economical factor of to the locals of the region. The stuff that are among the list for high class men are the hand woven golden thread embroidered apparel, gold plaited precious stones embellished ornaments, silver utensils, enamelled stone inflated furniture, giant palaces of marbles and red sandstones, house helps, luxury of all sort as well as the court of the experts. Apart from these the most prominent feature had been seen and recognised can be the adornments like apparels and ornaments regardless to the male and female, as these adornments make the chief stand odd and easy to recognise by even a layman.

Value of Ornaments

If analysed specifically and in detail the creativity and variation in ornaments in Rajasthan, it varied by Geographical factor covering natural themes of flora, fauna, shells, water waves, rocks, sun, clouds, stars etc which gave initial inspiration for the ornaments. So as the astrological factor which states: precious and semi precious stones Nakshaktra; zodiac signs etc., The religious factor that covers the significance of deities, mythological aspects, and the social factor that's states variations on behalf of various festivals, fairs and lifestyles. Political factors like royal status, patronage, dynasty system etc, economic factors like cost, its availability and demand. Furthermore, the cultural factor, like the impact of foreign culture, inspiration and at last the artist factor that speaks of availability of skilful craftsman and designer (Agarwal and Tiwari).

Nevertheless, ornaments are more effective then apparels for they are more impactful, expensive, of absolute luxury and preserved for long time as well, are seen as ancestral assets. Furthermore, they hold special place

in the lives of the monarchs as well as Indian, for other reasons like, it resistant to nature and as it gets older it rises higher in price value, serving purpose of insurance. Thus, making ornaments and crowns of great importance in respect of its uniqueness, antique property as well symbolises the dictatorship. Keeping these factors in mind always, the preservation and presence have been recorded throughout the past time.

Since the ornaments have been mentioned in the texts along with the artefacts like paintings and sculptures for the long time; The ornaments the Rajput clans in the western part of India from state of Rajasthan had been known due to its technique to make a number of ornaments. Rajsthani ornaments or jewellery holds a great importance in its history to be precise for its lifestyle and culture had been rich enough. As the desire to adorn ornaments and its influence on the custodian, wearer and the onlooker is a matter of fact in the state. This has paved the origin to it adornment for each limb visible, covering, crown, forehead, back head, hair, nose, ears, neck, arms, hands, waist, ankles and toes. The ornaments have been made in respect to societal belief, customs, spirituality as well as psychologically. For the Indian belief states, any part of the body is adorned by jewellery becomes beautiful (Agarwal and Tiwari) . These jewellery since then have been carved and casted not for human beings but also for deities, and ceremonial animals as well. (Divyadarshan, Bibhudutta and Rakshitha)

Since the Emperors of Mewar that had the use of gold extensively for its spiritual, societal values. This ornamentation further flourished with the welcoming of foreign culture of invaders that resulted in making of the Kundan, Meenakari to stone and bead works. *Kundan Keshari*, as name suggests means, the highly heated to refine and get the purest form of gold melted, to set the uncut precious stones. Not only worn by women but extensively used as ornament of men especially the head ornaments like *Sarpech*, *Sarpatti*, *Kalangi* that is worn with feather on turban and also in the crown is decorated with larger precious stones and detailing. This kind of work that is found in Kundan is covered with floral motifs and fauna patterns from behind. Such kind of ornaments and patterns are celebrated even today. Meenakari (enamelling) is work done on metal. The root of the work comes from Persia.

Tradition of Ornaments of Men in Rajasthan

The tradition of ornaments in men especially in the state of Rajasthan is quite common and easily visible. However the number of ornaments

worn varies from man to man depending upon their economical factor. That is if the Emperor is wearing ornaments he would be adored all the ornaments covering, head, ear, neck, arms, waist and feet. Whereas if the person is below the position of king, he would adore although similar ornaments but not crown or heavily beaded and precious stoned gold plaited ornaments rather he would be adorned with ornaments beaded with semi precious stone though, lesser in number. The same factor is then seen visible to even lower positioned persons in the Rajput society. However, the locals may be visible in basic Rajput ornaments like; *Kadha*, *Bunda* worn on daily basis. With the influence of societal factor the adornments by the Rajput man were similar to the king which means on the occasions like wedding and other ceremonies they were adorned with ornaments from head to toe.

This was their real life culture and values. In the context of the paintings that were made in the state in its various regions have depicted similar features. In case of Mewar one can spot much of the variations, apparently because the Mewar school of miniature isn't just the oldest but also has the richest culture that for the longest time in history that resisted the invasions of Mughals in its culture and value.

Types of Ornaments for Men in Mewar Miniature Paintings

The artists have painted male figures as graceful as they had painted women. These figures are also well ornamented. The ornaments worn by the men can be categorised according to the organs of body parts on which they were adorned.

- i) Ornaments for Head: the head gear worn by men in the paintings are usually, *Turban*, *Pagadi*, *Sarpech*, *Sarpatti*, *Giga*, *Kalangi* and *Mukut* (crown).
- ii) Ornaments for Neck: *Haans*, *Kantha*, *Sattlada haar*, *Tilada haar*, *Mukhtahaar*, *Pendant / Tabiz* and *Jaumala*.
- iii) Ornaments for Ears: *Bunda*, *Bali* and *Karnabali*
- iv) Ornaments for Arms: *Bajubandh*, *Bajubandh with Tassel*, *Kadha*, *Dasti*, *Bracelet*, and *Rings*.
- v) Ornaments for waist: *Kataar* (Knife), *Talwaar* (Sword), *Kamarbandh*, *Crossbelt*

vi) Ornaments for feet: *Kadha* and *Saanthi*.

Although, the ornaments were in large number worn by the royal monarchs and men of Mewar but the paper had to highlight the detail about the head ornament. That is *Mukut*.

Ornament for Head

Hindu culture and values is enriched with manuscripts of religious values and full of, divine consciousness. And after hearing and reading about various attires of Rajput values and the impact of the invasion on culture, it seems Hindu culture has given importance to apparels and ornaments very much.

Turban: The major part of ornaments for it has given the origin to *Sarpech*, *Sarpatti* that was worn by the kings of the Rajput clans. The importance of turban can be assumed to be worn for not just geographical factor, cultural factor but also for spiritual factor. This spiritual factor describes turban worn to assist the accumulation of *Saativik* waves in the body. It assists the development of pure intellect; the turban increases the presence of the *Karya-shakti* in the body. Furthermore, these turbans that were worn by the monarchs and divine figures in the paintings had been coloured as well that does not just speak of their status, colour palette, coordination, companionship but also in regard of the symbolism of the each colour. For instance, the colour orange was worn not only for the spiritual factor but to indicate the inculcating virtues of modesty and humbleness on the other hand it also symbolises the feature of red and yellow colour; red speaks of radiance of warrior and yellow states radiance of *Bhraman*. That was yet again what kings always wanted to project through their image to their progeny.



Ornaments like *Kalgi*, *Sarpech* and *Sarpatti* in this context was made to accessorise the turban/ *Pagdi*. This particular feature in the ornament was inspired of Mughal culture. As the Mughals were the one who came with the culture of turban as ornament. Thus, paintings of the Mewar school

that depict Turban as ornament comes from later years of Mewar school.

i : Kalgi: In the plate-1 this ornament has the real heron feather that forms a plume on an ornament crafted with diamonds and precious gemstones. Soon under the influence mughal this Kalgi took bigger shape and became grander enough to take a shape of Sarpech.



ii: Sarpech: In Plate -2 a head ornament made of uncut diamonds and elongated emerald drops prominently. It is topped by a paisley crest. On the back side of the *Jadau* work one can encounter the enamel work that is *Meenakari* of floral patterns of green and red colour in the Jaipur style, and pink coloured lotus on the Mewar style work. It can be assumed that this kind of head ornament was prevalent even before the foreign influence caused by the Mughals. For the similar pattern of ornament is spotted in the paintings of Ajanta murals, specifically in the tiaras of the royal ladies there.



iii: Sarpatti: in plate - 3, it is a piece of jewellery usually found in the shape of a plume placed in the centre of a horizontal band of gold. This ornament is also worn on turban and also known as *Jigha*. These ornaments were made for monarchs and divinities in the Mewar school of miniature paintings.



Crown: In plate - 4 This particular ornament is what seen worn much worn by the men the women in the miniature paintings of Rajput schools of paintings. For this reason man-centric society as well as women was seen as the pride of the society thus were kept adorned with maximum body ornaments but not the crown. However the deities of the Hindu culture are painted wearing crowns irrespective of being male or female.

Thus, these ideals in paintings adorned the crown that not only symbolised their standard but also their economical factor, cultural factor, spiritual factor but not geographical factor. The economical factor spoke of their financial strength, cultural factor about Hinduism; the spiritual factor spoke that crowns were made to project pressure at the energy point on the head. Accordingly, the crown was worn to create equal pressure on the different points on head around the crown chakra on the head that attracted the *Shakti-tattava* that would intensify the Fire principle in the person who adorns the crown. This would assist in keeping the rulers alert and active through the medium of the sun's channel. (Men's Jewellery; the Crown)

These crowns were mainly made of the gold and painted of yellow colour or the gold leaf. For the reason that the metal has its own importance as it not only represents status and it is adorned on the upper part of the body in specific, it is resistant to nature's force, prevention from any sort of black magic, insertion of divine consciousness in the body as well as spiritual healing. Moreover, it is a symbol of mental and social status. The gold purifies the chakra of crown while widening it up. Besides all of these, it denotes the prosperity, royalty and brings luck to wearer. In the context of astrology the use of gold, it suits to one and all.

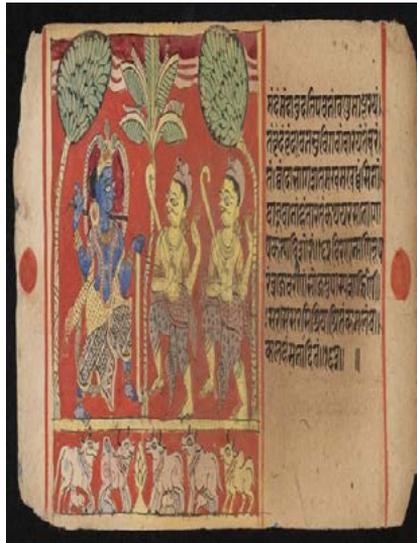
Depiction of Crown in Mewar Miniature Paintings

Crown around the world had been known for its significance. It has been representation of the power, glory, immortality, royalty and sovereignty. That is often made of precious metal stones and may be feathers. Such

kind of work is observed in the paintings of Early Mewar.

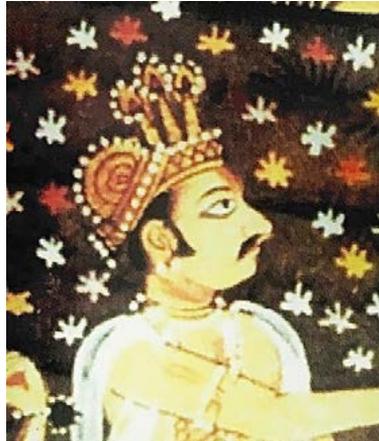
Crowns from Mewar Miniature paintings :

Plate -5 the depiction of Krishna in *Balgopal-stuti* painted in 1435, can be counted as one of the examples to say about the earliest representation of crown in minimal colours and feeble drawing. It is firstly the folk oriented as well has the influence of the *Apabhransha school* from Jain manuscripts in the matter of the facial features as well as colour palate. Whereas, in the context of ornaments, the crown is drawn in shape of upside down shape of a betel leaf in the centre and the band style covering the crown of the head, painted with lighter shade of yellow and ochre colour depicting the metal gold from of which the crown is made. The upper edges of betel leaf bears the three roughly sketched circles with hatching like details in vermilion green colour indicating the peacock feathers on it (as Kalgi of Heron feather are attached in the Mughal crowns). One can assume by the colour (the peacock feather) as well as the tales of Krishna also suggest the adornment of peacock feather by Krishna.



Another work illustrated in Plate – 6 comes from the *Ramayana* made in 1550-75, Udaipur, here Raja Janaka is seen wearing beautiful and absolutely rich crown, though it seems to be inspired from the crown as represented in the previous work of miniature paintings and manuscripts. The artists had made it far much more attractive through his developing

sketching. The art at this point has shown the surrealism in the ornaments for they have groomed a lot in context of design and detailing. The crown has basic design that covers the crown of the scalp well like a *Pagdi/Turban* would, the half circled dome like cap on the back head is made to appear like it is covering the crown as well as its golden appearance, the cone like shaped sticks appear like *Sarpech* here on the front side of the crown right above the forehead which has attached pendant of betel shape at the top end. The shape of the dome, *Sarpech*, Pendant as well as crown here is further highlighted by the white dots that indicate the studded pearls on the edge. However the pearls are added only at one side of the golden headband. In between to the border the golden plait like flat surface of headband is seen with inbuilt patterns like that of zig-zag pattern. The shading created by tints and tones of yellow is adding beauty to headgear by making crown of gold appear shining.



The next plate - 7 showcases the crown from the *Jaur's Gita-Govinda*, illustration folio 9, this was painted in the 1575 AD. The painting depicts Krishna adorning the bright yellow head gear; this also had similar shape like that of the crown from the *Baalgopal-stuti*, However, in this crown the peacock feathers are missing. Hence, it can be claimed that artist focused more upon the depiction of the verse and not detailing of apparels and ornaments. Thus ornaments in the illustration including crown are quite flat as well as painted with minimal geometrical shape like circles, lines and dots. Here the crown in this context appears to be made of the gold entirely with no studded stones and enamel. This work here indicates that the artwork features were inclined towards folk style colour palate.



Here in the plate – 8 Krishna is painted dancing with gopis from folio of *Bhagavat Puran*, c.1650-60. Over here the crown of the Krishna holds the place of great regards. The reason is that painting is made in written manuscripts which are why the painting is even tinier in comparison to the above mentioned figures. Precisely it is made on surface of 17.5cm x 34.4cm. The crown appears to be slim gold band like a ring that has a pendant holding four peacock feathers on the back head of the crown while in the centre of the scalp, right above the crown, three peacock feathers are attached on *Sarpech*. The drawing of peacock feather appears to be an effort to imitate the real life feather. The embedded stone isn't visible or probably not painted here due to heavy work on the peacock feather. Convincingly the artist is showing skill to paint real life inspired objects when painted feather and ring like crown.



In the plate - 9 comes from *The sage Vidyapati and the king's sons, Panchtantra* series c. 1680-90, Udaipur. Here the king is seen worried by the behaviour of his sons and entrusts them to the sage Vidhyapati. He is the one, who teaches them life lessons and values. The painting showcases the king sitting in the pavilion. Besides that king can be traced or recognised by his attire here as well as the crown that he adorns. His crown here is painted all of the gold having variation in shape from the crowns that are painted on divine being. The crown here has the shape of dome right over the crown part of the scalp, also the dome of the crown has the betel shape *pendant* on top of the dome. The belt of gold metal is triangular in appearance right above the forehead and visor like shaped upside down on the back of the crown. The dot like drawing with colours suggests the use of studded gemstones apparently. Rest of the figures in the image if analysed, resembles the turbans from Mughal School. This fact is said by the 1680 AD artist who had initiated fully the imitation from the Mughal culture and art.



Another plate - 10 that is *Rama, Sita and Lakshman reaches the hermitage of Bhardwaj*, comes from folio 79 of *Ramayan* series c.1710-20, Mewar depicts the divine brothers in the crown. The very first fact of analysis here is that the as per the script the divine beings didn't carry any riches with them to the exile. The artist indeed utilised surrealism here and painted the crown, inspired by the crowns of the Mewar Monarchs, crown has the shape of dome, right over the crown part of the scalp, also the dome of the crown had the betel shaped *pendant* on top of the dome of the crown. The belt of gold metal in appearance right above the forehead and visor like shaped upside down on the back of the crown. The dot like drawing with colours suggests the use of studded gemstones apparently. The big-

ger dot like drawing from colours suggests the use of studded gemstones in larger size depicting not just the richness but over here actually the spiritual factor and psychological factor seems much more evident actually.



In this plate - 11, the image is of the half human half bird, *Garuda* from the booklet of the *Maharana Jagat Singh II worships his household deities c. 1740-45*. The image of Garuda is shown sitting at feet of Lord Vishnu and goddess Lakshmi. The crown of the deity here is undeniably graceful and much modified version of crown depicted in plate 9-10. The crown here has the shape of dome, right over the crown part of the scalp, also the dome of the crown had the betel shaped *pendant* on top of the dome. The frontal part of the crown is triangular in appearance right above the forehead and has *Tika* like pattern with hanging white pearl on the forehead and visor like shaped upside down on the back of the crown. The dot like drawing with various colours suggests the use of studded gemstones apparently. The detailing on the crown is quite prevalent here, the inbuilt pattern is depicting by the scribbling like pattern in between the studded rubies and emeralds. While surrounded by the pearls all over the crown. The crown appears rich, royal, projecting luck and devotion here.



while the plate - 12 shows the image taken from the *Maharana Jagat Singh II worships his household deities'* c. 1740-45, that depicts lord Vishnu, sitting with his companion goddess lakshmi, on the lotus flower. The artist have made incredible pattern of the crown here. The shape here remains similar to what had been there in the past few years, that has the golden belt, triangular shaped frontal part, visor at back. However, the crown over here is not showing dome like appearance rather the illusion assists in claiming the *Sarpench* here attached on the crown belt, on frontal part as well as triangular broadness of belt resembles another *Sarpech* that is attached to the *Sarpatti*, which has the four pearls of drop shape hanging on the forehead. Also, the inbuilt pattern is depicting the scribbling like pattern in between the studded rubies, emeralds and other precious stones surrounded by the pearls. All over the crown of various sizes. The halo (aura) behind the face depicts the divine being for sure, The pattern in the crown suggests that he does not own but bestows the prosperity, luck, abundance of health and wealth in the life of the worshipper.



Last plate - 13 shows another divinity who is well worshipped by the all the Rajput clans who are followers of Shaktism, Shaivism, and Vaishnavism. The elephant headed, Ganesha as respected by the Hindus. The image comes from the booklet of the portrayal of divinities from the *Maharana Jagat Singh II worships his household deities* c. 1740-45, the crown of the deity here is among all the plates shows the heaviest jewelled and grandeur. The crown though possesses all the similar features like that of the crowns from previous four plates. In addition it has beautifully portrayed the number of betel shaped pendants on the top of the dome and visor in the crown with pearl tassels hanging on the frontal part on the head, heavily embellished pearls and bigger precious stones studded

on the body of the crown, around the entire body of the crown. While, *Sarpech* with *Sarpatti* separately is placed right between the eyes like a *Maangtika* covering his Ajana chakra, perhaps to symbolise the activated energy chakra that would enhance his third eye here. The crown and other head ornament is portrayed here in the finest form.

Conclusion

Post observing and analysing, the paintings from early times of Mewar paintings began to surface to the early eighteenth century. The paintings have indeed progressed in an impeccable way. The Rajput style as well as the Mughal style has got the best features in the list to paints the themes in the technique of the painted narratives. This fact is evident much in the crowns that were painted in the paintings. Through the journey of centuries in the Mewar school, the work has grown to higher level only. The artists also either from ancestral lineage or courts of Emperors have shown all their efforts to beautify and enhance the features in the paintings. Evidently for this is the detailing of the ornaments, specifically of the crowns. These crowns had been modified only to beautify the paintings and fulfil the demand of factors that were meant to be portrayed, be it a factor of economic condition, spirituality, societal, cultural or artistic, the crowns successfully depicted them. Moreover, in the late 17th century, the use of crown was minimised and use of turban was praised ornamented by *Sarpech* and *Sarpatti* evidently, for the prominent reason was the impact and influence of the Mughal culture and values on the art of Rajputana.

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