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## HUQQA IN METALLIC ART AND ITS DEPICTION IN PAINTING

Dr. Shailendra Kumar,<sup>a\*</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Assistant professor, Department of History of Art, MMV, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, U.p. (India).

### KEYWORDS

Huqqa, Metallic Art, Miniature Painting, Mughal Court, Rajput Art.

### ABSTRACT

The *huqqa*, a distinctive emblem of sociocultural refinement, occupies a significant position in India's artistic and material heritage. This study examines the *huqqa* both as an object of metallic craftsmanship and as a motif in painting, highlighting its dual existence as a functional artifact and a symbol of aesthetic and social identity. In the domain of metallic art, particularly in brass, copper, and silver, artisans transformed the *huqqa* into a canvas for exquisite repoussé, engraving, and inlay techniques. These ornamental forms not only display exceptional technical virtuosity but also reflect the opulence and cultural sophistication of Mughal and Rajput courts. Parallely, its representation in miniature paintings notably those from Mughal, Rajasthani, and Pahari traditions portrays the *huqqa* as a visual signifier of leisure, intimacy, and courtly decorum. Through a comparative analysis of material objects and visual depictions, this research explores how the *huqqa* transcended its utilitarian function to embody notions of luxury, status, and ritual sociability. It also investigates how its artistic portrayal facilitated the intersection of gender, power, and cultural exchange in early modern India. By situating the *huqqa* within the broader discourse of visual and material culture, the study contributes to understanding how artistic expressions shape, preserve, and reinterpret social practices and aesthetic values in the Indian cultural context.

Metal huqqas (smoking Potter Hubble -bubble) are widely known from paintings in its wide variety. The present paper is based on two exceptional examples from Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi collection as a base for variety of metal huqqas, their form and artistic expressions.

we are faced with the use of tobacco in India as psychological and sociological problem since huqqa is based on the use of tobacco, which came in use since the time of Jahangir when it was considered as harmful for community (vide Tuzuk-i-jahangiri).

Huqqa was less frequent in the 17th century painting, but become a symbol of court and high-society culture. Some time we find its use in strange situation like the Huqqa border or jogging huqqa bearer following the horse-riding king or prince. Huqqa was provided to the guests in private meetings. special men or women wear shown grasping the water filter pot of the patron's huqqa which was a prestigious post. In certain Rajasthani paintings (especially later 18th century Jodhpuri paintings), exceptionally long pipes of huqqa are shown as though it was a symbol of prestige. In

### >Corresponding author

\*E-mail: [shailendrabhu75@gmail.com](mailto:shailendrabhu75@gmail.com) (Dr. Shailendra Kumar).

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<https://orcid.org/0009-0007-8565-3850>



pahari painting, sometime junior members like minor courtiers are also shown using huqqa along with his patron Raja probable due to the local traditions in the Pahari region (Kashmir included) the feather himself introduce his adolescent so to huqqa. here we discuss metal huqqa from Bharat kala Bhavan collection with their respective technique and styles.

### **Silver Enamel Huqqa Base**

(19th century Bharat Kala Bhavan Collection)<sup>1</sup>

This particular example was primarily in Rai Krishna Das family, the founder of Bharat kala Bhavan. It is called in Persian fersi. The other components of this fersi are missing. It is an exceptional example of early 19th century silver enamel. The fersi is partially in skirt shape a little tallish, its skirt spreads out beautifully while the upper part is narrow, ultimately ending up into a tuber neck. It has a narrow relief band at the neck, the rest is covered with exclusive enamel work, as a shikargah or landscape.

A Narrow band of water on its bottom, in enlivened with aquatic beings, this edges the land with ornamental bush-like shrubs with a flourish as though they are tossed with pleasant breeze in its divergent vegetation, in different keys of verdure.

The intertwining space is creatively handled, tiny vegetation and ornamental animals studded in it.

Sky enlivened with group of flying bird as though they are in strong wind is shown on top. The familiar traditions chafulia bel borders the scene on the top and bottom.

### **Silver Enamelled Huqqa**

(19th century Bharat Kala Bhavan Varanasi studded with diamonds and ruby)<sup>2</sup>

This is again a fersi in skirt shape, it is totally distinguished from the previous examples, since this is highly decorative while other was pictorial. Reportedly, it was a object of the Rewa Maharaj households. Stylistically it corresponds with Jaipur enamel work as one finds from the floral or bird treatments. Similar representations are noticed in textiles of corresponding period. The floral band at the bottom also repeated over the neck belong to the popular chafulia bel (four petalled scroll) commonly known in painting, the number of petals vary for example six petals, in the present instance. A tendril emerges from the gomutrika design instance and is connected with the next flower, living space for a different ornament. In the present case parrot who attempts to kiss the emerging red Petal thinking it is a fruit. The background is deep blue while at other glacier the space is studded with white, red or green stones. over the body of the Hubble- bubble, we find eight – petalled flower within oval frames. The floral designs incline sideways with oval leaves. The main part shows a large size oval cartouche containing a flowering band with deep blue plain background. Here again we find the same type of birds, leaves and chafulia design as above. The empty spaces are filled up with similar small sized butas(dots).

### **Raja chhattar Singh of Chamba smoking Huqqa**

(Chamba style, 17th century, Goenka Collection, Kolkata)<sup>3</sup>

Here King Chhattar Singh is surrounded by courtiers. We find one distinguished member placing his Palm over the fersi. The study of paintings indicates that a distinguished person was

given this privilege in the paintings of which we have examples from different styles.

The present painting is interesting as here the huqqa base is in pot(lota) shape and is embellished by strident plain gold bands in bold relief to form the melon shape (kharbujia) although the plain surface background in this case is plain metal producing ganga- Jamuni effect. A decorative tube supporting an open chillum (container for tobacco and fire embers) may be seen painted in the painting.

### **Women smoking Hoqqa**

(Hyderabad style, 2nd half of 18th century, Raza library, Rampur collection)<sup>4</sup>

Here appears damsel puffing the huqqa. Most likely it is conceptual painting of a courtesan as is suggested by her designing and specially the cup she wears. The material of the Huqqa base is black material.

### **A princess with her confidants in the Garden**

(Mandi style, 18th century, Goenka Collection, Kolkata)<sup>5</sup>

The Princess is painted smoking huqqa. The huqqa is held by her maid. It shows grandeur of the princess.

### **Two Courtiers with Huqqa**

(Guler style late 18th century)<sup>6</sup>

The Huqqa base is turtle shaped (tortoise form). This is a morning scene and suggests the commonly people started smoking quite early.

### **Prince with Nayika**

(Pahari style early 19th century Goenka Collection, Kolkata)<sup>7</sup>

Here an enamel golden huqqa appear in the foreground, show pomp. The scene is based on

Keshava das's Rasikpriya.

### **Maharana Amar Singh's Procession**

(Mewar style, 1697 C.E. Melborn Museum Australia)<sup>8</sup>

A Huqqa bearer walks in front of the Maharana and looks back at the patron while the Maharana gallops. This is symbolic since it was impractical that a huqqa bearer could race with the galloping horse but this is only to show pomp.

### **A Rajput horse Rider**

(Chamba style 17th century)<sup>9</sup>

Equestrian Rajput followed by a teenager huqqa bearer, here the pipe is shown long and flexible.

### **Raja Budha Singh on Horse**

(19th century, Jodhpur style, Suresh Neotia Collection, Varanasi)<sup>10</sup>

A Huqqa bearer follows the Raja. The huqqa base is ganga -Jamuni and takes Ghaghara (skirt) like form. The cover of the tobacco pots umbrella shaped. The curling top of the pipe shows an elephant fight scene while at its top it is seated peacock.

### **Music concert**

(Pahari style, early 19th century, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi)<sup>11</sup>

A nayika is playing on the Vina. A long huqqa pipe in gold lies before her bearing enamel work. The huqqa base is in bottle shape and rests on an enamelled plate. possibly it suggests that the nayika would take a puff between the vina numbers.

### **The court of Nawab Hassan Ali Khan**

(Hyderabad style, mid-18th century, Raza library, Rampur)<sup>12</sup>

Some of the courtier sit accordingly to their ranks,

here it is noteworthy that except the Nawab nobody is smoking huqqa. The huqqa Bay base is decorative and in post shape, A Muslim lady (begum) seated in an Opulent sitting is also shown with a huqqa by her side. The spout of her huqqa takes the form of a peacock head and neck. This illustration is important because it provides a complete reproduction of huqqa. It appears that there is an enamelled gold sheath below the spout to protect the tender figures of the young lady from heated pipe. The huqqa base is round enamelled ground with parrot embellishment.

### **Conclusion**

We come to certain conclusion that huqqa is less represented in 17th century painting but it is sparingly used in the 18th century to express authority and pomp, the painter shows the apex person with his huqqa in the royal assemblies of sometimes people of ranks in successive order, sometimes women with the huqqa. The privileged female singers and dancers wear shown with huqqa

as a prerogative in the Rajput - Mughal dominated region as in the Pahari paintings, we find people of different status levels enjoying huqqa in small gatherings.

Here is a short account of huqqa shown in the Rajput- Mughal paintings.

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