



# Origins of Orchha Painting

**Orchha, Datia, Panna: Miniatures from the Royal Courts of Bundelkhand (1590–1850) Vol. 1**

**Konrad Seitz**

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- Explores the unique features of the initial period of Orchha painting (1590–1605)
- Features over 100 images of exquisite miniature paintings from this school

This book about miniature painting at the Bundelkhand royal courts of Orchha, Datia, and Panna is the first to admit an understanding of the works that two fatal misconceptions regarding their time and place of origin have hitherto thwarted. The miniature school of Bundelkhand that first developed at Orchha was the earliest and most Indian of all the Rajput schools and at the time of its founding the only one to practice a purely indigenous style of painting, “untainted” by the naturalism of imperial Mughal painting. The author’s interpretations and stylistic analyses of over 240 paintings from his collection, many of them published here for the first time, shed light on the school’s development from the late 16th century to the early days of British rule.

The book also introduces readers to the conceptual world of Rajput miniature painting and the *rasa* aesthetic that anticipates the modern reception aesthetic. **Origins of Orchha Painting**, the first volume of the series *Orchha, Datia, Panna: Miniatures from the Royal Courts of Bundelkhand (1590–1850)*, deals with the founding period of Orchha painting, the years 1590–1605, and how it derived from pre-Mughal Early Rajput painting, which flourished at the Tomar court of Gwalior from around 1460 until the downfall of the Hindu kingdom in 1518. The subsequent volumes, *Stylistic Trends in Bundelkhand Painting*, analyze how this Rajput school developed during the period 1605–1635 and spread to Datia after the disintegration of Orchha in 1635 and later to Panna, the Bundela state of Chattrasal, in the 1680s. Bundelkhand painting ended with Chattrasal’s death in 1731, and it was only after a long interruption, in the beginning of the 19th century, that the school experienced an Indian summer at the court of Datia during the period of British suzerainty.

The author, **Dr Phil. Konrad Seitz**, lived in India for many years, including from 1987–1990 as a German ambassador. He and his wife, Eva Seitz, rank among the most important private collectors of Indian miniature paintings worldwide. Their readiness to share their collection with art lovers all over the world both in publications like this one and through major donations to museums has done much to enhance our appreciation of the marvels of Indian painting.