

CONSERVATION OF WALL PAINTINGS IN INDIA.. ACHIEVEMENTS AND PROBLEMS



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Preface

It is very well recognised that wall paintings form a very important part of the cultural heritage of India, and there is a continuity of the painting tradition from prehistoric times to the present. Unfortunately, there have not been many studies, particularly scientific, to understand the nature of wall paintings and the various problems related to their conservation. A very important question which is often asked, but to which there is no ready answer, concerns retouching, or what is often known as 'reintegration' in modern parlance. In different countries, there are varying policies on reintegration but in India there is as yet no firm policy.

Then there is the lack of understanding of the present status of conservation of wall paintings.

Various types of materials, natural as well as synthetic, are available and are being used, abroad for conservation of murals. In India we do not seem to have a real understanding of the materials and their properties.

Although several problems remain outstanding, there are some achievements also. Conservation of wall paintings has been done in the country by different institutions at various sites. Scientific analysis of several wall paintings has also been carried out.

The survey of wall paintings being carried out in various states under the auspices of INTACH is important.

It was with of this background in mind that INTACH organised a three-days National Seminar on "Conservation of Wall Paintings - Achievements and Problems" from the 22nd to 24th October, 1994, coinciding with the Foundation Day of Indian Conservation Institute on the 22nd October. Eminent

conservators, archaeologists and scientists participated in the seminar and presented a number of papers.

Conscious of the problems in this area, INTACH has launched a major project for the study and conservation of wall paintings. In this endeavour we are being supported very generously by INTACH (U.K.) Trust, to whom we are extremely beholden. This seminar is part of this major effort. We hope that the deliberations will result in some rethinking and greater effort in this area.

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