

TECHNIQUE ANALYSIS of Rumal Showing Scenes from the life of Krishna

Specimen: *Rumal* showing life scenes of Lord Krishna

Dated: Mid 18th century to early 19th century

Hand drawing: Black line drawing

Raw Material: Unbleached cotton, untwisted silk yarns

Filling stitch: Long and short darning stitch

Stitch direction: Vertical, horizontal and diagonal

Outline: Double running stitch in black

Colours: Tints and shades of yellow, blue, red, white and off white

Drawing: The embroidery is in miniature style where the drawing could have been commissioned from the professional artist. The line drawing is made with black colour as seen in crane where the embroidery is removed (figure 1). The profile faces are made whereas facial features are not very detailed usually seen in other classical style of embroidery, eyes are round in shape which is usually almond shape, fingers in hands and toes are not defined etc. The striped patterns in costumes are very fascinating, the textures in animal skin are also emphasized by use of two shades of same colour and change in stitch direction.



Fine black line drawing is visible from where the outline stitches have been removed.

Figure1 Line drawing in black in crane

Stitches: Traditionally artisans employed darning stitches and their variations to achieve the effect of needle painting. In this specimen, long and short darning stitches are used for filling in embroidery. It is worked like double darning in long and short stitches. The stitches were worked from bottom to top and moves from right to left (figure 2). The stitches are not taken from the same position in preceding rows. As a result, continuous rows of stitches are not formed. In the verso of elephant below, the long and short darning stitches are seen in vertical and horizontal direction (figure 3). The stitch size is small. The most fascinating feature of embroidery is that knots are not seen even in the back side of embroidery. The threads before beginning the embroidery and end are secured below the laid stitches.

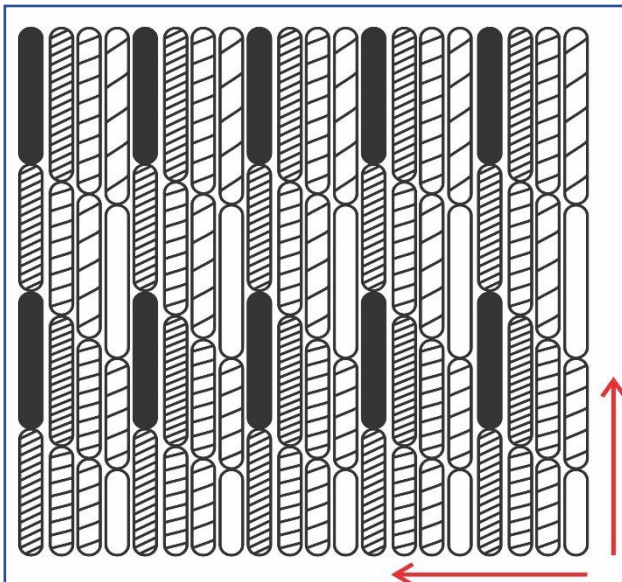


Figure 2 line drawing of long and short darning stitch



Figure 3 Embroidery specimen showing long and short darning stitch.

The motifs are outlined in double running stitch in black. In figures it defines the outer body shape and inner details in costumes, facial features and other accessories. The border on either side is enclosed by this stitch.

In embroidery, stitches were taken following the direction of yarns enclosed by a motif which can be vertical (*rask-length*), horizontal (*aada-width*) and slant or diagonal. In the embroidery the stitches are taken mindfully taken by the embroiderer in these directions. For example, in tiger, the main body is embroidered in yellow hue in lighter tint in vertical direction and the

stitches in lower abdomen, face and lower legs are taken in darker shade of yellow hue in horizontal direction (figure 4). Even the stripes in costumes of figures are differentiated by those in furnishings or body parts by taking stitches in different direction.



Figure 4 Tiger showing different stitch direction.

Colours: The main hues include yellow, blue, red, white and off white. Their tints and shade are skilfully used with stitch direction while embroidering the *rumal*. In the embroidery four or five tints and shades of red colour, two light and dark shades of yellow and blue are used. For example, in the Balrama figure below three different tints and shades of red can be seen in same figure as skin colour (figure 5). Similarly in tiger figure two shades of yellow are used. The colours do have a specific symbolism as generally Krishna is shown blue bodied adorning yellow (*pitamber*) costumes but in this specimen, it is not thoroughly followed as in some scenes he is shown in pink colour,



Figure 5 Balrama shown in tints and shades of red as skin colour.