

SARPECH

Comprehension: Reading exercise

For age 11- 15

From the collection of Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia

Gold and Enamel Turban Ornament Set with Gemstones

When India was under the ruled of Mughal Empire, jewellery making was given the utmost importance. Among the popular ones are studded with gemstones and enamelled into floral designs. Wearing these jewellery pieces marked one's position and their high ranks. Among the jewelleries pieces that they wear is turban ornament.

Sarpech or turban ornament was regarded as symbol of power and prestige. This Sarpech on the right is in our collection located in the Jewellery Gallery, Level 2. It is made from gemstones that are coiled in gold foil.

This is also known as the *Kundan* technique. The word *sar* means head or front and *pech* translated as fastener. The word brings upon the meaning Sarpech as this piece of jewellery is fastened onto the front (of the turban). The structure of the Sarpech is mainly consist of three main parts, the first one is the *jigha*. The *jigha* is the vertical part of a Sarpech. The second part which is the *Sarpati*; the horizontal base of the Sarpech and the third part is the flat base that is known as the *hamwar*. This form of turban ornaments was an important part of Mughal court headdresses.



There are many features of Mughal art that diverge from the Islamic mainstream. The most obvious of these is a delight in portraiture. The enduring fascination with these miniature paintings is partly due to their elegance, and also to the insights they provide into life as it was lived in these lavish times. Miniatures from this era are filled with images of rulers, courtiers and horses, along with a useful scenes of fashion and interior design.

In India Gallery, we have a vast collection of miniature paintings. This miniature painting on the left shows an officer gifted with a Sarpech. This play a big role in the royal courts of the Mughal Empire. When a person is gifted with a Sarpech, it is an honour and as an appreciation of the Emperor to his courts. In this miniature painting, you can see that Emperor Aurangzeb is sitting on a gem-set cloth canopy. He is presenting a Sarpech to the officer before him, witnessed by another officer holding a document case.




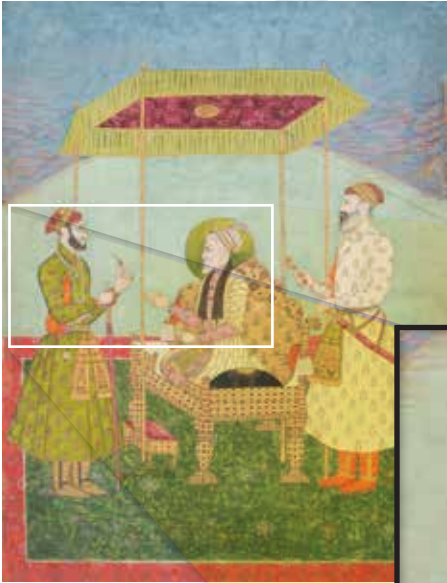
Group Discussion

Suggested number of people in a group: 4


Look at these two questions box below and try your best to answer it.

Instruction: Teacher should encourage their students to take turns and describe what they see in these paintings.

Take a look at this painting. What do you think is going on?
 What is an officer in green ceremonial clothing holding onto? How do you describe the shape and design? Do you see it other similar item in the painting as well? What shape do you think this object is similar to in the nature? Can you think of its purpose?

There are different groups of people in the scene, can you determine these groups and how are they different from each other? Are they different on status, background or lifestyles? What made you think so?






The Mughals' Support for the Arts.

The Mughals' patronage of artisans began to flourish when Jahangir, Shah Jahan's father-Jahangir took the throne specifically when he married a supporter to this craftsmanship, Nur Jahan. Jahangir was recognised for his love of gemstones and pearls, where he would wear it extravagantly. Pearls were highly valued as well. The Mughal emperors preferred round pearls. Despite their passion for pearls, Shah Jahan treasured richly coloured emeralds even more. These beautiful gemstones were often carved with Islamic inscription and floral motifs.

With a reference to the three miniature paintings, you may try design your own Sarpech. You may do it in the box below and then colour your Sarpech using colours that represent the colour of the gemstones that were usually used and they are emerald, rubies, gold and pearls.

*Green for emerald, red for rubies, yellow for gold and white for pearls.

