

## Chapter - 6

### The Bengal School and Cultural Nationalism

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**Que 1. Collect a local newspaper of the past two weeks. Select images and text from these that you consider important in the life of modern democratic state of India. With the help of these visuals and texts, compile an album that narrates the story of an independent sovereign India in the contemporary world.**

**Ans.** Students can start collecting their local newspapers. The newspapers usually have an art or cultural section where they usually cover about many historical monuments and different art forms found in the city. Such pictures can be searched in detail on the internet a complete report can be made in the form of an album.

They should consider the importance of such images and text in the modern democratic state of India.

**Que 2. Comment on the importance of the Bengal School artists in the making of a national style of art?**

**Ans.**

- In 1886, Abanindranath Tagore started the movement to Indianise art education.
- This started in the Government Art School, Calcutta.
- Havell and Abanindranath Tagore developed a curriculum to promote the technique and themes in Indian art traditions.
- Abanindranath's *Journey's End* tells about the character of Mughal and Pahari miniatures, and his passion to create an Indian style in painting.
- An art historian Partha Mitter wrote, "The first generation of the students of Abanindranath engaged in recovering the lost language of Indian art."
- Mahatma Gandhi invited Rabindranath Tagore who was a student of Abanindranath Tagore to draw panels in an exhibition at the Congress session at Haripura in 1937.
- They were famously named as the 'Haripura Posters', because they illustrated the common rural people who were busy in different activities.

**Que 3. Write your view on any one painting by Abanindranath Tagore.**

**Ans.**

- One of the paintings which Abanindranath Tagore painted was the image of Bharat Mata in 1905.
- The painting describes a saffron-clad woman, clothed like a sadhvi, carrying a book, sheaves of paddy, a portion of white cloth a garland in her four hands.
- Bharat Mata was drawn during the Swadeshi movement.
- The painting's principal figure contains many items linked with Indian culture and the economy of India.

**Que 4. Which art traditions of India inspired the Bengal School artists?**

**Ans.**

- The Bengal school artists were highly influenced by the Ajanta style of painting, along with the Mughal, Rajasthani, and Pahari style of art.
- Raja Ravi Varma, who was a member of the Travancore Court in Kerala, has significant amount of contributions towards some of the best art traditions.
- He imitated the European art traditions, and used their style to draw scenes from historical epics such as the Ramayana and Mahabharata.
- It was also observed that the British art tradition of oil painting used a European medium to illustrate Indian subject matter which highly influenced the Indian artists.

**Que 5. What were the themes that Jamini Roy painted after he abandoned the academic style of painting?**

**Ans.**

- Jamini Roy was motivated by the pure, simple beauty of Kalighat paintings and moved his focus to rural India.
- Roy especially adopted the Santhal tribal culture of Bengal.
- He dropped the use of European paints in support of natural mineral and vegetable-based pigments made from alluvial mud, seeds, powdered rock, flowers, and indigo.
- Roy practiced using bold, sweeping brushstrokes while painting and restrained his palette to seven vibrant and earthy colors.
- In addition to this, many of Roy's paintings (including the theme of the famous 'Cat' series) induced inspiration from his boyhood days in the forested village of Beliapore in Bankura.