



Gond tribal paintings from India

India is a land of myriad cultures and people. Almost 10% of India's population belongs to the tribal groups. After Africa, India, with 250 tribal groups, has the largest population of Adivasis or indigenous people.

The three main predominant tribes are the Bhils, the Gonds and the Santhals.

The largest population of tribals is found in Central and Eastern India (Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand)

The Gonds constitute the most important group of Indian tribes. Historical records show that in the 14th century they were the ruling class in many parts of Central India.

They built palaces, forts, tanks, lakes... Gond rajahs, or kings, ruled until they were conquered by Muslim armies and were forced to flee into the thick jungles. In the forests, they survived mainly by farming, hunting, and eating the fruits of the forest.

The Gonds believe in a high God whom they call "Bara Deo," the "Great God." In the Gond belief system, besides Bara Deo, there also exist deities and spirits that personify various natural features. Every hill, river, lake, tree, and rock is inhabited by a spirit and therefore sacred.

Like most tribals, the Gonds are artistically gifted: they paint their house walls with artistic designs... Gond paintings reflect man's relationship with Nature. In Gond art, horses, stags, tigers, birds, gods and people are painted in several bright colours and filled with dots, lines or other geometrical patterns to give a texture.

The Gond paintings bear a resemblance to Australian aboriginal art.

To make your Gond painting, you will need...

- acrylic or poster paints
- brushes
- barbecue sticks



* Draw an animal in its most simplistic form.

* Make large stripes and fill with colours (use two or three matching shades).

* Dip the end of a small barbecue stick or the wooden end of a paint brush or a cotton bud in paint and print rows of dots while following a regular pattern.