

PAINTING STUDY MATERIAL FOR CLASS 12TH BASED ON NCERT

RADHA KISHOR MONDAL

Date :02.09.21

received training in arts by Khwaja Abdus Samad in his childhood. Once on the throne, he built up the great imperial atelier (studio) with the best equipment and recruited the best among the Hindu painters like Baswan, Jagannath (Jagan), Mukund, Miskin, Mahesh and Madhav singled out as master painters by Abul Fazal in his '*Ain-i-Akbari*'. There were other equally important Hindu painters in Akbari Taswikhana (atelier). Of them Anant, Dharmadas and Manohar became favourite and important painters in Jahangir's Taswikhana. Thus hundreds of Hindu artists worked under the guidance of Persian masters Mir Sayyid Ali and Abdus Samad.

In the workshop, no painting was done by a single person but was a collective effort of two to five persons. The headman gave out the various orders while the chief artist did the actual layout, after that the lesser artists did the figure and painted the background and so on till the painting was finished. Thus it looked more like a craft than fine art. According to some art critics the preliminary drawing was done in red on a varnished paper and after necessary correction it was finally drawn in black. Afterwards a thin white pigment was applied on the paper. Over this the actual miniature was painted either with gouache or tempera method.

The first series of illustrations for '*Dastan-i-Amir-Hamza*' (Hamza Nama) which began in Humayun's time in 1550 (or 1556) took twenty five years to finish in 1575 (or 1582). All the 1375 paintings in the twelve unsewn folios show a consistency in style because Mir Sayyid Ali had planned out the whole work in the Safavid or Persian style though he was assisted by a number of Indian painters. These early illustrations show the dominance of Persian style, a two-dimensional decorative painting without shading or perspective. It has wonderful line drawings and brilliant enamel like colours. Hilly landscapes, from the background of the painting with the sky were painted either in gold or blue, enlarged flowers as found in the design of carpet were profusely used in the painting and human figures often in stereotyped poses were shown in three quarter profile in these paintings.

These paintings were unusually large, over two feet high and proportionately broad. These were too much large for miniature painting. The word miniature which came from the Italian word *Miniatura* or the Latin *Miniare*, means a picture with small dimension. The Rajput and the Mughal paintings were often large but still called miniatures as they were based on manuscripts, and portraits, figurative drawing, illustrating certain incidents from ancient manuscripts.

The Mughal miniatures were painted for the albums according to the descriptions of Persian manuscripts like Hamza Nama, Sadi's Gulistan (moral tales), Hafiz's Diwan or the Persian version of Mahabharata (*Razm Nama*) or Ramayana. In the same manner, Rajput paintings were based on Sanskrit manuscript of Geet-Govinda, Bhagvat Puran, Ramayana, Mahabharata and Panchatantra.

Although the Persian style greatly boosted the birth of the Mughal style, its influence did not last. The Indian painters in Akbar's Taswikhana learned the use of brilliant colours and refinement of lines, but their indigenous gift and intimate knowledge came out with all its brilliance in the animals painting which the Mughals liked.

With the leaving of Mir Sayyid Ali in 1574, there is a distinct change in the Later Hamza Nama paintings, supervised by Abdus Samad, show more dynamism and resemble mural painting. Thus a new style took shape under his direction.

In 1580, Akbar received a copy of the Bible with Flemish engravings. It interested Akbar and soon he brought many European paintings to his atelier and got them copied. The Mughal artists learned to use perspective and shading the colours to bring out the depth of the painting. They learned to show horizon and colouring the sky and cloud more realistically.

By 1595, Mughal painters seemed to have assimilated Western techniques and drawing three-dimensional paintings by means of shading and limited use of perspective. It was a great leap forward in Mughal miniature painting.

The illustration of historical manuscripts is a distinct contribution by Akbar's Taswirkhana. These include 'Tarik-i-Alfi' (history of the world), 'Jami-al-Tawarikh' (history of Mongoles), 'Darab Nama', 'Shah Nama', 'Taimur Nama', 'Babur Nama'. There were mostly Indian painters and a Persian painter Farukh Beg who brought Mongolian and Chinese flavour into the paintings.

In spite of Western influences in figures and shading, the colours remain enamel like and do not blend softly as seen in the painting **'Akbar receiving news of Salim's birth'** where strong colours adjoin each other.

The sphere of spiritual works of Akbar's reign include 'Yogavashist' (Hindu Vedant philosopher) and 'Nafihat-ul-uns' (breaths of fellowship) the book on Sufi-saints. Some of the paintings illustrated in the book represent lively pictures of Indian villages, life and customs.

Another important feature of Akbar's Mughal paintings is the portraiture, which had never been done before. Except very few individual persons pictured from memory at Ajanta, Indian artists had always depicted types and characters. Under Akbar's orders artists depicted the likeness of all the personages in his court with superb expertness. This exerted a great influence on later Rajput painting.

Mughal miniature painting is male dominated in character. The noble ladies observed strict purdah and never came out in public without their 'Burkha'. So their portraits were drawn mostly from imagination. Though the pictures of professional singers and dancers had been shown in Akbar Nama.

Akbar was very fond of animal fables. The 'Tutinama' (the parrot tales) and 'Anwari Suhaili' show each birds and animals with detailed realism and rendered with keen perception of their anatomy and movements. He was not happy with the Persian version of 'Al-Kashifi' (Panchatantra by Vishnu Sharma). He got a simple version by Abul Fazal in 1588 and had a larger miniature volume of 164 paintings done towards the end of his reign.

Thus Akbar can be called the true founder of the Mughal School of Miniature Painting. Akbar had left more than 2400 illustrated manuscripts in his library. He showed equal respect to both the Islamic and the Hindu religious text.

The painting **'Krishna lifting the mount Govardhana'** is an exquisite piece from Akbar's atelier. It shows Krishna holding the mount Govardhana on his little finger. The mountain has been made to appear realistic by painting massive rocks, large trees, and innumerable animals like deers and monkeys. Shrubs and grassy pastures are painted between rocky ridges.

To be continues.....