



Unit – II (A) Deccan School of Miniature Painting

The origin and development of Deccan Art

The Deccan (Deccani) School of Miniature Painting had its beginning in 1560 A.D. When Mughal School had its existence, the Deccani School was already in existence. When the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb threw out Mughal artists from Mughal Empire, several artists migrated to Deccan and sought patronage there. Origin and Development Deccan art denotes broadly the miniatures rendered from 16th to 19th centuries A.D. at Bijapur, Ahmednagar, Golkonda and Hyderabad. These independent states have their own distinct geographical and historical identity known as Deccan.

Deccan had its own distinction in art, culture, dramatics, linguistics, social values, costumes, religious beliefs, thoughts and ideas. The style and themes in Deccan miniatures are an amalgamation (*combination*) of various art elements and influences especially the elements of early indigenous (local) art traditions of the Deccan and Islamic idiom of Iran, Persia, Turkey. So the origin and development of Deccani School of art have left a special landmark in the history of art.

Phases of Deccan Art

Early phases evolved at the Adil Shahi court of Bijapur, where several Irani, Persian and Turkish painters, calligraphers, scholars came to Bijapur. Skilled in Islamic Art style, these artists rendered paintings on pure Islamic themes and in a pure Islamic idiom.

The second phase started when the later generations of Muslim rulers of Deccan states, Bijapur, Golkonda, Ahmednagar and Hyderabad had their roots on Indian soil. They were inclined to Indian Mysticism. Besides, the artists they had were mostly local or local descendants of earlier immigrants who came from Iran, Persia and Turkey.

The third phase initiated in the 18th century at Hyderabad when another form of Deccan art came into existence. It blended with the romantic passion of the former Golkonda School as well as the stylistic elements and the refinement of the Mughal art.

Visible styles of Deccan Art:

- The rhythmic delicacy of Persia.
- The lush sensuality of the Deccan.
- Three dimensional aspects of European Art which can be clearly seen in the delineation of buildings.
- Tall, fair complexioned and emotionally charged males and sensuous looking females.

The people are endowed with lovely faces, large wide-open eyes, bold features, broad foreheads, high necks, triangularly slanting waists a neatly carved figure, each one characterised by excitement, vigour, moods, sentiments and dramatic intensity infused into its being.

The Main Features of Deccan School of Miniature Painting

- **Colour Scheme:** Brilliant and beautiful colours have been used in Deccani paintings. They are different from the colour of the northern painting style. Golden colour has been used largely in the paintings where architecture is shown and also in the costumes, jewellery, utensils etc.
- **Persian Influence:** High horizon, lavish use of golden colour, the landscape, golden sky, some flowering plants and arabesques on the top of the throne etc. all have a Persian influence on them.
- **Mughal Influence:** In the later phase Deccani style, the Mughal influence was at its peak. Mughal influence was due to migration of several Mughal painters to the Deccan during downfall of the Mughal School of Painting.
- **Decorative Paintings:** Deccani paintings were mostly decorative especially Hyderabad painting like the flowerbeds, costumes, rich and brilliant colours, facial features etc.
- **Bold Drawing and Shading Techniques:** Bold drawing, shading techniques and use of rich, pure and brilliant colours flourished at Tanjore.