

Mughal Court Scenes (Akbar to Shahjahan)

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Abstract

The purpose of the study explores the painting which was created by the Mughal emperors. This study is related to the development of painting specially court scenes, their living style splendor of their court scenes.

I tried to study about the discipline of Mughal court; how the courtiers are raised side by side in a slant way, but the importance has been given to the emperor's portraiture and feudalism .How stylistic changes have come in Akbar, Jahangir and Shahjahan style of art. On these bases artist creates the court scenes with the help of water color on paper and got success to show splendor of Mughal court.

Materials

The paper has been prepared after studying many books of Mughal miniatures, journals and manuscripts, and translations of emperor's biography.

Introduction

Through Mughal paintings, we get a clear glimpse of the geographical, social and cultural life of India in the medieval period .Apart from the autobiographies written by emperors and princes and by the paintings of Mughal period we got the information of the upper class, the middle class and the lower class.

From these Paintings, we also get information about the period, musical instruments and court scenes. There can be no doubt that the motto of Mughal emperors has been due to the victory of them in wars, but in the history of painting Court scenes are an important part of Mughal paintings. Almost all paintings look like in terms of structure, in which the emperor is always shown sitting on throne to give importance to feudalism. The main thing is that in the whole painting the portrait of the emperor is done with great attention. It is shown that the courtiers are standing around him. Right side the servant is standing taking a royal umbrella, especially when the emperor welcomes an ambassador then he created bigger than other figures so that the dignity of his position remains. Courtiers are raised side by side in a slant way, but the focus of all towards the emperor. In

paintings of Akbar period splendor has shown by the architecture ,windows tents and royal carpets and geometrical patrons but in Jahangir's period Paintings are less crowded than Akbar's period paintings. Figures has created more realistic. European influence can be seen clearly.

As compared to Akbar Period's paintings, the paintings of Jahangir periods have been created more organized, balanced and well-groomed style. This style was more developed during Shajahan's period because Shah Jahajahan had observed everything with minute observation. As compared to Jahangir era in the paintings of Shajahan's period paintings we can saw few selected nobles. In his court scenes nobles were stands according to their posts. If a man used to stand in the wrong place then he ordered to change the whole picture.

In Shajahan's period to artists show royalty threw carpets and use of golden and silver colour in decoration .In architecture white marble pillars and window, decorated brackets which show the interest of Shahjahan in architecture .These pillars had been created on wood in Jahangir period but in Shajahan's period it was converted in to the marble .

Rana Suraj Singh Hada submitted the keys of

Ranteh pur fort to Akbar

Composition-Miskin

Illustration - Bhura

Translation - Beverages, Akbar Nama, Volume II-1590

Historical background

After occupying the huge fort like Chittor Garh, on 21 December 1568, Akbar tried to conquer the fort of Ranteh Pur, it is situated on a hill, the real name of this fort is Ranteh Pur, Ran is the name of that huge hill where this fort situated.

At that time Surjan Singh Hada was the commander of this fort, he had strengthened the fort in many ways, prepared the fort with food, arms and armors

According to Akbar nama- Akbar came out from his camp, climbed the hill, saw the fort and understood what measures should be taken to win it. Akbar kept the fort operation in his hands and started attacking the fort aggressively. Walking through the bullets and guns, many walls fell into the streets and many houses were collapses. "On March 19, Akbar said," If the rug guard will not come to reveal the preservation, then the next day the fort will become ours.¹

Although Surjan Singh Hada was a brave warrior but it was impossible to face Akbar's vast army. Therefore being constrained he made a treaty in front of Akbar and handed over the key to Raiteh Pur fort. He sent his two sons Duda and Bhoj to Akbar's court. They met to the emperor and apologize for his father's crimes. Rana Surjan prays to Akbar to protect his reputation. Akbar ordered to Hussein Quli that he bring to Rana with full respect in

his the court. *According to Akbar Nama - "When Hussein Qali reached near to fort, Surjan Singh welcomed him and he took him to his residence. On March 22, Surjan Singh came out from the fort and came to the imperial court and handed over the keys made of gold and silver to Emperor Akbar. Grace was done with Surjan Singh and he felt himself safe. With this a new chapter of friendship was started Akbar's with Rajput. 2*

Description –

This painting is different from the Chittor garh event. In the painting Surjan Singh Hada leaning and performed Sajda to Akbar. Akbar has been sitting on the throne, and both sides the courtiers are standing. Surjan Singh has been submitted the key to Ranteh Pur fort to Akbar .

All courtiers are standing behind Surjan Singh and carefully observing this incident. The splendor of Akbar's court been shown by the beautiful carpets. In the background hills have been created in Persian style. Many gifts and two great horses, an elephant have been given by Surjan Singh. In the lower part a falcon has been sitting on the arms of a man which is the Persian influence. In this painting the bright colors has been used and importance has been given to the main figure.



Rana Surjan Sing Hada submitted the key of Renteh pur fort to aAbbar,

Composition- Mukund,,colouring-shankar.Akbarnama 1590,Victoria and Albert Museum ,London

He gave military training to Akbar and gave him full support in making the rightful ruler. Akbar used to call Ghazi Baba with love.

Akbar welcome child Abdurraheem in his court

Colouring - Anant

Translation – S. B evraj, Akbar Nama ,vol.II

Historical background

Barium Khan was the base pillar of the Mughal Empire, who gave his of strength and support to Akbar and made true heir of the Mughal Empire. He was a light beacon of the Mughal Empire whose love and compassion become source of inspiration for Akbar.

According to Akbar Namah –“When the emperor got news of the death of Bairam Khan, he was deeply grieved and ordered that the son of Bairam Khan Abdurrahim to be present in his service. In September 1,st 1561, emperor appeared his kindness in front of the spectacular like Babaii Zuboor and Yadgar Hussein .He kissed on the forehead of Abdurraheem and nutured him. He married Salima begum (widow of Bairam khan) and after some time Abdurraheem was awarded the title of ‘Mirza. Khan ’’³

Description:

This painting was painted after thirty years of writing Akbar Nama. In this painting Akbar sitting on his knees as a young man and welcoming to child Abdurraheem in his court. A minister has kept him behind that who is probably Shamsuddin. On all sides courtier are standing and watching this scene carefully. In this picture splendor has been shown with beautiful carpet and decoration of the Mughal court. In background architecture has been shown white and brown colour. The presence of horses and a tiger in the middle part of the painting indicates that this animal were involved in the routine life. A falcon is sitting on the right hand of a man, which is the center of attraction of the painting. This painting is depicted in a magnificent view of Akbar's court. In lower part some people are gossiping and the folds of the drapery are much realistic.



Akbar welcome child Abdurraheem in his court

Artist anath Akbar Nama victoria and Albert museum London

Noor jahan welcome to Jahangir and shahjahan

This picture is unique in the history of the Mughal painting. In the last days of Jahangir's period Noor was a powerful politician. He had gained enormous power over the strength of her intelligence

and ability. Due to her strength she sent her step son Khurram to conquer Mandu by the order of Jahangir. After winning the state of Maharana's Udaipur, Jahangir left from Ajmer to Mewar. By then khurram (shahjahan) had won over Merwar. After Mewar, he won the victory of Decan which made Jahangir happy. Jahangir describe this incident in his auto biography *Tujuk e Jahangiri like this – 'He kept sajda on the ground and performed salaam , I called him in the window (jharokha) and embraced him. I gave him a beautiful rose and a lot of love. In the lifetime of this victory, I gave him title of "Shah e Jahan"'*⁴

*At the same time, Queen Noorjahan was also not behind and she held a big feast on the occasion of victory of ShahJahan. Which is described by Jehangir in Tuzuk e jahangir " on Thursday 27th March, Noorjahan Begun honored her son Shahjahan . On this occasion she gifted a gem-based turban on which flowers were made, a famous Elephant named Sarang" and two saddles which were given by Adil Shah of Bijapur and an ornament box were also gifted. Besides this, 20 thousand zat and 10,000 riders were also given to shahjahan*⁵

DESCRIPTION

Noor jahan organized this feast in a huge garden, which was decorated very well. In that respect, all things provided in terms of service and entertainment. In the middle part of the painting Noorjahan is giving a glass of wine to Jahangir. Prince Khurram is sitting near Jahangir and watching carefully to this scene. Jahangir wore a hallo which is a European influence. A carpet is laid on the ground designed with Chinese dragon. It means that in Jahangir period European influence had started to come.

The best quality of this painting is Artist Manohar create the portraits of Noor jahan realistically who is famous for her beauty in history. In this painting Nurjahan has been shown wearing the shalwar kurta for the first time, while in other Mughal paintings women have been depicted in lengha and kuruti, which is considered to be the beginning of a new tradition. The main attraction of the picture is a beautiful painting of Lord Jesus and Mother Mary on the back wall of the garden. The realistic depiction of birds and animal shows the interest of Jahangir about birds and animals and show artist's skill.



Noorjahan welcome to jhangir & Shahjahan .
Artist-Manohar, Jahangir Nama ,1617, freer art
gallery ,Washington
Shahjahan welcome his three sons
and Asaf Khan at the time of
Throne accession

Artist-Vichitr & Ramdas
Incident-Agra Diwan e Aam ,1628
Collection- Windsor Royal library
Historical background

After the death of Jahangir in 1627, Shah Jahan was enthroned .After one month of accession ShahJahan welcomed his three sons and Asaf khan in Agra's fort. This painting was painted extremely expressively in Padshahnama,. *'According to Padshah Nama -"With full splendor prince Mohammed Daraishikoh, Mohammed Shash Shuja, Mohammed Aurangzeb, chief Amir Yaminuddin Asaf Khan were brought to Akbarabad (Agra).From Akbarabad, he landed with full glory at Sikandra. Queen Mumtaz Mahal came to welcome her sons with her daughter Jahan and other entities. Tents for the event were organized on the road. Queen Mumtaz Mahal was watching her sons after a long interlude. This movement of happiness cannot be shown in any picture according to emotion. All day parents kept exploring their children. The next day on Thursday*

Emperor ordered to call prince and all the employees in court. First of all, Mohamad Dara Shikoh performed salam and 1500 rupees given as glance (nazrana) after that Shah Shuja performed salam and 100 rupees were given as glance . Emperor kissed on the forehead of prince shah shuja after that Yameenuddaul AsafKhan performed salam and In a saucer, precious stones and 100 pounds were gifted. The king gave his assurance of shelter by keeping his hand on the head of this great servant who cared for his sons. Asaf Khan was extremely happy with king's affection. On this occasion the Emperor gave to Asaf Khan a diamond-shaped dagger, a furnished sword which was won during Ahmad Nagar Victory.⁶

Description

This painting has taken from Windsor manuscript. After one month of accession Asaf Khan brought his three sons from Lahore to Agra, which was celebrated with joy in the entire state. With this Shajahan's period has considered of happiness and prosperity of the Mughal period. In this Painting artist Vichitr has shown the emperor in Diwan e Aam of Agra. In the painting the emperor is hugging his older son Dara shikoh. shah shuja , Aurangzeb are standing with their grandfather Asaf khan and waiting for their meeting .

All though the depiction of jhaorkha in Akbar and Jahangir period have made similar but stylistic features of shajahan period appear clearly. Artist Vichitr has painted Jharkha with such an artistic manner that many other artists have followed him. Beautiful human figures, architectural elements and depiction of flora fauna that can be found in this painting do not get anywhere else.

The illustration of the window (jharokha) appears to be very lively. The roof of which is decorated with red curtains, and the pillars of it have been made of white marble floral design have also been adorned on the back wall. The court courtesan has been depicted in the triangle. The name of important personalities has been written on their garments. On the Jharkha back wall behind the Shahjahan, the portrait of Prince Murad Baksh has been created.

At the bottom of the window Mohabbat Khan, Alam Shah and Mukrram Khan, are standing behind them, in the third line, Khan e jahan Barha and Riza Bahadur are standing. In the lower row important deities like Dilawar Khan and

Ratan singh Hada stands.

In this painting artist has used of Foreshortening in the creation of figures. He focused of all the people's attention towards the emperor. A painting has been created on the lower wall of the jharokha.

In the middle part of the Painting two saints are standing on the glob . Jahangir period's a gold chain which is the symbol of justice has been shown. On the both sides of the globe, lions and lamb have been created which is considered to be the symbol of happiness and peace. The imagination of these animals is European, but it has given Indian look. In this painting of the accession Vichar has beautifully depicted the military arrangement of Shajahan. In this Padshah Nama's painting Shahjahan was first time shown as King. The artist got success in the depiction of beautiful portraits of human, animals and their emotions.



Arz e Muqarar (Stool on which the king climbs to the throne) has been made in front of the throne. On top of the window (jharokha) is a golden colour panel has been created where **Shadow of Sun & Shadow of Moon** has written. In the double-page painting, there is a **Nobat khana** where musicians are performing music in the Balcony. On the back wall of Noabat khan beautiful tile work can be seen which reflect Shajahan's interest and his love for the architecture. Bright colour clothes, decorated patke, beautiful carpets and courtiers represent the splendour of Shahjahan's court. Due to the attractive use of light and dark colors and beautiful expression of human figures the paintings of Shahjahan's court a remarkable.

Conclusion

In this way we can say that Mughal painting developed into the patronage Mughal emperor's .It included different styles but its soul was completely Indian. In the Mughal painting the glimpse of Indian culture can be seen. Although in Mughal painting several elements specially Persian, European and Indian can be seen but its form is Indian and they seem to be a part of Indian of art. Feudalism has been given prominence in the courts scenes but these paintings reveal the stylistic change and glory between Akbar, Jahangir and Shahjahan's period. These paintings are created on paper by the

watercolors. Hope this paper will be beneficial for the students of history of arts.

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- 4 .Tuzuk e Jahangiri –Translation by Bevraj,vol. 1 ,page 399,400
- 5 Tuzuk e Jahangiri –Translation by Bevraj,vol. 1 ,page 396,397
6. Padshahnama –Translation by willor Thakston ,Page177

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