

SOUTH INDIAN PAINTING

In the previous lesson, we learnt about the Pahari painting. In this lesson, we will learn about the south Indian painting styles. Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamilnadu, Karnataka, Kerala and the rest of South India have various traditional painting styles that flourished under royal patronage. The best-known works of these styles are the Deccan miniature (Dakhini kalam) paintings rendered between the 16th and 19th centuries under the patronage of the Muslim rulers of Bijapur and Hyderabad.

The Tanjore paintings flourished under the patronage of the Nayakas of Thanjavur under the suzerainty of the Vijayanagara Rayas and the Maratha court of Thanjavur (1676 – 1855). The Mysore style developed under the Wadayar rulers of Mysore. Though all south Indian painting styles have their identities, the common thread that brings them together is their rich Vijayanagar ancestry. Kalamkari of Andhra Pradesh and the frescoes of Kerala are the other important painting styles of South India.



OBJECTIVES

After studying the lesson, the learner will be able to:

- explain the painting styles of South India;
- explain the rulers who patronized these painting styles;
- state the centres where these styles developed;
- describe the characteristics of Mysore styles;
- explain the theme of Decan miniature styles;
- identify the techniques of the different painting styles.



Notes

9.1 TANJORE STYLE

First, you need to know the style of Tanjore paintings.

Basic Information

This important style of painting is named after Tanjore (Tanjavur) in modern-day Tamilnadu, where it originated. Its golden period was between the 16th and the 18th centuries when it flourished under the patronage of the Nayak rulers under the suzerainty of the Vijayanagar Rayas and the Maratha court. The Raju community of Tanjavur and Trichy and the Naidu community of Madurai were instrumental in developing this style. The subject of these paintings is mainly Hindu gods and goddesses, royal personages and celestial beings. Since they were originally painted on fabric stuck on wooden planks, they were called ‘Palagai Padani’ (literally pictures painted on wood) in Tamil.



Fig. 9.1: Panchamukhi Anjaneya (The five-headed Hanuman)

Tanjore paintings are deeply rooted in religion, tradition and exude feelings of holiness and devotion. They are characterized by the use of precious and semi-precious stones, glass and gold foil in relief. The sophisticated use of flat vivid colours is a hallmark of the Tanjore style. These paintings made interiors come alive. Since the style originated during a period marked by prolific temple building in the region, gods and goddesses were the natural choice of theme. Skillful use of coloured precious stones over the basic drawing sets Tanjore paintings apart from other Indian painting styles. It gives them a three-dimensional effect. Generally used as icons, the faces in these paintings are round and have a divine glow. The pranks of the child Krishna are a favourite theme. Some paintings have also been rendered on glass panels. Materials used for painting include wooden board, white cotton fabric, chalk powder, gum, mineral colours, gold leaf, precious stones, and pieces of glass.

| | | |
|--------|---|---|
| Title | : | Panchamukhi Anjaneya (The five headed Hanuman) |
| Period | : | Contemporary |
| Artist | : | Unknown |
| Medium | : | Mineral colours, gold leaf and glass on wood and fabric |

General Description

This is a rendering of the five-headed Hanuman in the Tanjore style. The outline of the painting has been painted as a doorway. It is highlighted by the use of gold leaf, and the arch is ornamented with bits of red and green glass. The warrior God Hanuman is depicted in all his glory with five heads and ten arms. The face in the middle is the familiar monkey God's, faces to the right are the faces of Narsimha and Hayagreev, respectively, while those to the left are the faces of Veerbhadra and Varaha. All ten arms are depicted holding various arms and projectiles. The margins, crowns on the five heads, arms and projectiles are executed in relief and have been luxuriously covered with gold leaf. The skillful use of glass and gold leaf creates a relief effect and imparts a three-dimensional effect to work. Materials used for the painting include the wooden plank, white cotton fabric, chalk powder, gum, mineral colours, gold leaf, and pieces of glass. The work is executed in several stages:

1. Preparation of surface
2. Tracing the image
3. Painting the raised base
4. Painting and colouring

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5. Sticking gold leaf and bits of glass
6. Framing.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 9.1

Choose the most appropriate option.

1. What is the period of Tanjore painting?

| | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| (i) Contemporary | (ii) Ancient |
| (iii) Pre-historic | (iv) None of these |
2. Name anyone material used for Tanjore paintings.

| | |
|--------------|-------------|
| (i) Clay | (ii) Gold |
| (iii) Silver | (iv) Bronze |
3. What is the meaning of the word Panchamukhi.

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| (i) Four eyes | (ii) Four hands |
| (iii) Five headed | (iv) All of these |

9.2 MYSORE PAINTING

You have learnt Tanjore painting, now you will learn about the Mysore painting.

Basic Information

Mysore painting is an important style of classical South Indian painting. It was developed in the Mysore region of modern-day Karnataka in the 18th century and is named after its place of origin. Karnataka has an ancient history of the arts. Between the 14th and 16th centuries, the rulers and chiefs of the Vijayanagar empire made enormous contributions to the development of the arts and literature in this region which led to the Vijayanagar school of paintings finding a place uniquely their own in Indian art. The Mysore and Tanjore schools are two sub-branches of the Vijayanagar school. The themes of these paintings include Hindu Gods and Goddesses and scenes from Hindu mythology. A combination of grace, serenity and intricate detail are the hallmark of Mysore Paintings. Sreetatvanidhi, a 1500 leaf tome compiled during the reign of Mummadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar, has hundreds of Mysore paintings providing detailed depictions of *ragas*, deities, seasons, natural occurrences, flora and fauna. It is perhaps the single largest depository of the painting style. The tome also provides directions about principles of painting, composition, selection of colours and their impact on emotions.



Notes



Fig. 9.2: Matsyavatara (Ganjifa Card)

| | | |
|------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Title | : | Matsyavatara (Ganjifa Card) |
| Period | : | 20th Century |
| Artist | : | Unknown |
| Medium | : | Mineral colours on fabric |
| Collection | : | Crafts Museum, New Delhi |

General Description

Subsequent to the fall of the Vijayanagar empire the Wodeyar rulers of Mysore did much to revive the art of this region but the frescoes painted on temple and palace walls during the period were destroyed during Tipu Sultan's battles with the British in the 18th century. After Tipu's defeat at the hands of the British, Mummadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar ascended the throne of Mysore and the Mysore royals

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distinguished themselves as discerning patrons of the arts. The music, art and literature of Mysore rose to new heights. The beautiful frescoes at the Jaganmohan palace executed during Mummadi Krishnaraja's reign still bear testimony to the impact of the Wodeyar's patronage on Mysore painting.

Traditional Mysore painters prepared their art materials, including mineral and vegetable colours made from minerals and flowers-leaves-the bark of plants. Brushes were made with squirrel hair, camel hair, goat hair and special grass. The artist applied a paste of zinc oxide and Arabic gum, known as 'gesso paste' on a thick sheet of cartridge paper which gave the finished work a slightly raised effect of carving. Thin gold leaves and gems were then stuck on the raised parts.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 9.2

1. Why are Mysore paintings named so?
2. What is the period of the development of Mysore painting?
3. Which style of painting did Mysore painting develop from?
4. What is the hallmark of Mysore painting?



ACTIVITY

Visit a library in your locality and collect some photographs of Tanjore and Mysore paintings. Now you paste at least two photos of each style and write the differences between these two styles.

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9.3 DECCANI MINIATURE

So learner, let us learn about the Deccan miniature painting.

Basic Information

During the middle ages area of peninsular India covered by the principalities of Bijapur, Ahmednagar, Golconda and Hyderabad was known as the Deccan. Miniatures painted in this area are known as Deccani miniatures. The style of painting is marked by a mix of Turkish, Persian and Indian influences. Artists of the Deccani school took inspiration from the Mughal school of painting but developed a style uniquely their own. The Adilshahi, Nizamshahi and Qutubshahi rulers were patrons of the Deccani school, which continued to flourish between the 16th and 19th centuries. Art museums worldwide have splendid portraits of Ibrahim ‘Adil Shah II (1580-1627), who was passionately fond of music and the arts. These portraits highlight the peculiarities of the Deccan school-rich and bright colours, gentle grandeur and mystic background. The Deccani colour scheme is rich and makes much use of gold and white.

At its zenith, the Deccani school was more than equal to the Mughal school. It had a fine combination of Persian lyricality, the deep sensitivity of the Deccan and the discipline of European portraiture. The energetic composition, sensitive colours, fair complexioned, large-eyed, sharp-featured, passionate men and slender, delicate featured women create an aura of romance. The tasteful clothes and ornaments are a visual delight. Some important works of the Deccan school are- ‘The elephant’, ‘Chand Bibi’, ‘Elephant Fight’, ‘The Bird’, ‘The Falcon’. The earliest dated manuscript, the encyclopaedia *Nujum-ul-ulum* or “The Stars of the Sciences” (1570) contains 876 miniatures. Some Deccani frescoes can be seen in the Saatmanzila Mahal and Jalmahal at Kumatagi. The theme of Deccani miniatures is mainly royal personages and scenes from their life. The use of mineral and vegetable colours was the rule. The elongated human figures are possibly an influence of the Vijayanagar frescoes, while the floral sprigs in the background, the high horizons, and the general use of landscape show Persian influence. Deccani colours are rich and luminous. The use of gold and white comes from the Persian influence. The brilliant composition of elements, the refined finish and the harmony are the chief indicators of the Deccan miniature.

| | | |
|------------|---|----------------------------|
| Title | : | Chand Bibi Hawking |
| Period | : | 16th Century |
| Artist | : | Unknown |
| Medium | : | Mineral colours on Vasali |
| Collection | : | National Museum, New Delhi |



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Fig. 9.3: Chand Bibi Hawking

General Description

This painting is a fine example of a theme popular in Deccani paintings. Chand Bibi, the widow of Ali Adil Shah, was the queen of Ahmadnagar who ruled from 1580 till her death in 1599. In this miniature, she is seen riding a horse with a hawk perched on her right wrist. The hunting dog in the foreground is lively and dynamic. Following the Persian tradition, the background has blossoming trees, and there are two grand buildings in the receding background. The format, composition and colour scheme confirm the Deccani tradition. The saddle and Chand Bibi's robe and jewellery have been highlighted in gold. The figure of the horse in movement is skillfully executed.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 9.3

Fill in the blanks:

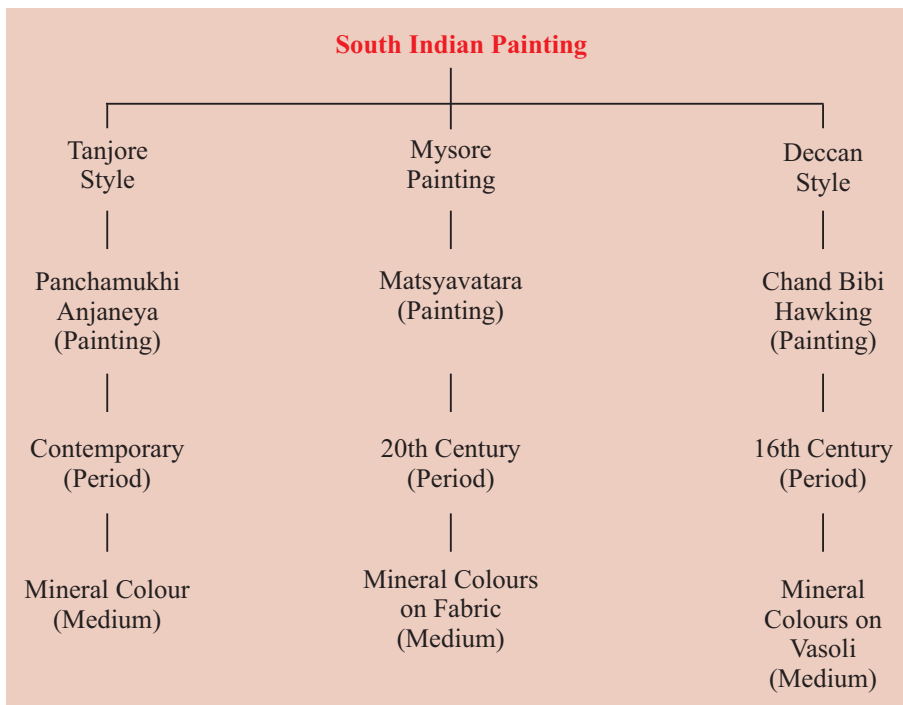
1. The period of the Deccan miniature is
2. The main of the Deccani miniature is
3. The Deccani colours are rich and
4. Artists of the Deccani school took inspiration from



Notes



WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT



LEARNING OUTCOMES

The learner

- can explain the technique of Mysore style on their own;
- can recognise Tanjore style and Deccan style of any other South Indian style.



Notes



TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Describe the traditional painting styles of South India.
2. Write about the development of Tanjore painting?
3. What are the themes of Tanjore paintings and in which medium are they executed?
4. What are the characteristics of Tanjore painting?
5. Explain why Mysore paintings are named so?
6. What is the period of the development of Mysore painting? Which ruler made a stellar contribution to the revival and development of Mysore painting?
7. What is the hallmark of Mysore painting? What are its themes?
8. Name the principalities which constituted the Deccan. What is the period of the Deccan miniature?
9. What were the main influences on the Deccan miniature, and its key characteristics?
10. What are the main themes of the Deccan miniatures?
11. Describe the colour scheme of the Deccan miniature?



ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

9.1

1. (i) Contemporary
2. (ii) Gold
3. (iii) Five-headed

9.2

1. Mysore painting is named so after its place of origin.
2. Mysore painting developed in the Mysore region of modern-day Karnataka in the 18th century.
3. Mysore painting is a sub-branch/offshoot of the Vijayanagar school.
4. A combination of grace, serenity and intricate detail are the hallmark of Mysore Paintings.

9.3

1. Between the 16th and 17th centuries
2. Royal personages
3. Luminous
4. Mughal school



Notes

GLOSSARY

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Cartridge paper | grain surfaced drawing paper |
| Mineral colours | colours obtain from mineral like lapis lazuli, vermilion, gold, silver etc. |
| Vegetable colours | colour obtain from vegetables like flowers, leaps fruits, etc. |