CHAPTER – VIII
PAINTINGS

Allahabad Manuscript:

The growth and development of paintings depend on the aesthetic sense of the Emperors. There were a number of painters in court of Akbar and Jahangir. But due to the lack of detailed information it is difficult to say that any of them belonged to the Subah. Or any particular centre flourishing in this region.

This is prince Salim who established his studio in Allahabad during the days of his rebellion. Here, he entrenched himself in the strong fortress and styled himself, Shah (King). He settled down as a semi-independent ruler for some time except a brief reconciliation in 1603 A.D. As Shah Salim issued Farmans, Jagirs, appointed governors and living reckless, irresponsible, flamboyant and dissolute life.¹

For his atelier, recruited more painters, many of them were trained and previously employed in the Akbari atelier as minor artists. The important painters of his studio were; Aqa Riza, an established artist trained in Heart School of Iran. Who entered in Jahangirs employ by at least 997 AH/1588-89 AD, used to style himself Murid-i-Padshah Salim. He was also

appointed by Salim to supervise the Mausoleum of Shah Begum. (Who committed suicide in 1604 A.D, buried in Khusro Bagh, Allahabad.) \(^2\) A garden designed by the painter and decorated with calligraphic inscriptions by the noted inscribe Mir Abdullah *Katib*. The name of Aqa Riza is mentioned in the inscription on the main gate. \(^3\) Many reliably signed works by Aqa Riza show him to have been a precise painter making carefully balanced, highly decorative composition. He was the main artist working at Allahabad. \(^4\)

Abul Hasan was son and disciple of Aqa Riza. His figures has a weight and density that coupled with his extraordinary perception of personality traits convinces both its reality and its individuality. \(^5\) Abul Hasan was far innovative painter than his father and his attitude to the human figure provides the best comparison. Therefore, he was more receptive to the new ideas and concerns for naturalistic observation. He was also aware European works by this time. A drawing of the figure of St. Jhon derived from the crucification (fig. \(3\)) of the small engraved passion of Albrecht


\(^3\) IHC, (proceeding), 1930, vol. Allahabad.


\(^5\) M.C. Beach, *op.cit.*, p.3.
Durer, was made in 1600-1601, when the artist was at twelve. The drawing was probably made Allahabad. Artists primary concern was the use of light and shadow to create physical bulk and a sense of texture.

Another important painter was Mirza Ghulam also a disciple of Aqa Riza, served in his atelier. The work of Mirza Ghulam is strong and idiosyncratic when composed to paintings by other artists. He manipulates landscape into forms that respond to him rather than to nature and presents us with figures that scowl and appear angry as if immersed in a private world. He negates natural space by the use of decorative gold background which he created in Anwar-i-Suheli.⁶

The dating of the Ghulam portrait of a courtier to Jahangir’s patronage as a prince is strengthened by a glance at the Diwan of Amir Hasan Dihlawi manuscript copied at Allahabad in 1602.⁷

The exact number of Mss. Prepared at Allahabad is not known. The three works, still survive and are in good conditions probably undertaken in Salim studio are; Diwan of Amir Hasan Dihlawi is a full-size volume with fourteen delightful miniatures. None of these miniature is signed by the

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⁶ Ibid., p.117.
⁷ Ibid.
The other Mss. produced in the Salim studio is a sumptuous copy of Raj Kanwar, a prose romance popular all over north India.⁹

The Anwar-i-Suheli MS. started in 1604 at Allahabad but the change in political set up the little studio was wounded up and preparation of Ms. suspended for a while. Later on completed in 1610 AD. The miniature of Anwar-i-Suheli are of variable qualities. As golden sky, stylized multi coloured piled-up rocks, trees with drive up.¹⁰ Beside these a number of interesting miniatures were painted in his studio. Most of the work produced at Allahabad have small sign as “Shah Salim” on leaf.

Salim’s interest was more in the living world of nature than in speculation of the spirit. He was more interested in the persons moving around him, birds a beast. Female got a more prominent position in social a cultural life as well as in art. He became actively involved in search for rose a unusual paintings a studio flourished with new trends. Few paintings produced at Allahabad are as follows:

1. Prince Salim catching Cheetah at Allahabad: (C.1600) by Aqa Riza:

The prince kneels on the ground to lift the blindfolded cheetah by the head, two assistants taking it by the feet, so that it can be placed in a

⁸ A.K.Das, op.cit., pp.43,55,
⁹ Ibid., pp.49, 60.
¹⁰ Ibid., 54,55,58; M.C. Beach, op.cit., p.118.
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carrying fold prior to being caged; men bring the cage. The town of Allahabad is visible on the horizon. Drawing with gouache and gold: signed: “Bandah Aqa Riza Shah Salim” (the slave Aqa Riza in the service of Shah Salim). (See Plate No. 30).

Good condition. A narrow strip has been added at the bottom of miniature.

Drawing 31.1X19.4 cm Page 38.8X27.4 cm

2. Prince Salim hunting rhinoceros c. 1600-05 Artist Unknown:

This painting is by unknown artist in the style of Mansur. A close examination of the painting shows that it is not depicting a single event of rhinoceros hunt. It showed prince Salims outdoor life in general four different events. At the top left hand side the picture shows five dead blackbucks, two more being carried by hunters. Towards the middle upper right-hand side of the painting there are three dead Cheetah. The centre portion shows prince salim shooting a female rhinoceros which has attacked the male elephant the bottom left corner shows a Cheetah which has run down a black buck and a hunt who approaches it with knife to perform Halal. (See Plate No. 31).

Drawing 19.8 X 11.9 cm.
Preserved Victoria Memorial Hall, Calcutta.

3. Prince Salim in the Polo Field at Allahabad on 27 Muharram 1011 A.H.

= 1602 AD Painter – unknown
Prince Salim engaged in his favorite game of Polo while five other players continue the Game, the prince has stopped to have a cup of wine offered by a retainer. Chauri and sword bearers. Sahnai and Naqqara players, a Bhishtiwala, a noble man and two attendant complete the scene.

Drawing 31.9 X 20.3 Walters Art Gallery Baltimore, No. W. 650. (See Plate No.-32).

4. Portrait of a Courtier, Allahabad- C. 1600-05 Artist Mirza Ghutam:

The composition of the portrait of a courtier is derived from Iranian sources. Artist express his dependence on its patron, Prince Salim by the term uses himself Ghulam. The presence of the name Shah Salim on the surface of the work, just above the tarban.

Drawing 9.8 X 5.4 cm.

The verses above and below, reads: “we have seen a reflection of our beloved’s face in the cup, O [you who are] unaware of the pleasure we have in drinking constantly”. [Translated by w. Thackston] (See Plat No.33).

5. Neptune riding on a water-horse

Signed; Murid-i-Padshah Salim Date (1602-03) J.P. Goenka Collection

(See Plate-34).


Oxford No. 2597.( See Plate No.35).