

CHAPTER -4

Landscape of the Soul

Q.01 Understanding the text (page 18)

1. (i) Contrast the Chinese view of art with the European view with examples.

Ans:- The Chinese paintings are based on an imaginative, inner or spiritual approach whereas the European paintings reproduce an actual view, of an external or real object. The paintings of Wu Daozi and master painters of Europe illustrate the difference.

(ii) Explain the concept of 'shanshui'.

Ans:- 'Shanshui' represents two complementary poles of the universe: 'yang' and 'yin'. Literally 'shansui' means 'mountain – water'. Mountain is 'yang' – the vertical stable, warm and dry element. Water is 'yin' horizon resting on earth, fluid and cool. The interaction of yin i.e. the receptive female aspect of universal energy and 'yang' – the active and masculine energy creates the images.

2. (i) What do you understand by the terms 'outsider art' & 'art brut' or 'raw art'?

Ans:- 'Outsider art' refers to the art of those who have no right to be artists as they have received no formal training yet show talent and artistic insight. 'Art brut' or 'raw art' are the works of art in their raw state as regards cultural and artistic influences.

(ii) Who was the 'untutored genius who created a paradise' and what is the nature of his contribution to art?

Ans:- The 'untutored genius who created a paradise' is Sh. Nek Chand who created Rock Garden at Chandigarh. He has sculpted a garden with stone and recycled material. His art is recognized as India's biggest contribution to 'outsider art'.

Q.2 "The emperor may rule over the territory he has conquered, but only the artist knows the way within."

Ans:- The Emperor is a symbol of authority and power. His will prevails in the land under his rule. His word is law for the people spread over the territory he rules. The emperor may get the services of talented persons and master artists. The acquisition of power, pelf and physical objects does not make him superior to the artists. The artist has a spiritual insight into the nature of things. He understands the workings of the mysterious ways of the universe. His spiritual enlightenment and vision can help the emperor to attain the goal of life i.e., the liberation of the soul from the framework of body. It is only the artist who knows the way within the territory the emperor has conquered. The way here means both the path and the method. His approach, is purely spiritual which persons, burdened with materialistic approach fail to acquire and appreciate.

Q.03 "The landscape is an inner one, a spiritual and conceptual space."

Ans:- A classical Chinese landscape is not meant to reproduce an actual view as would a Western figurative painting. The European painter aims to create illusionary likeness whereas the Asian artists try to capture the essence of inner life and spirit. For the Chinese painter, the landscape is not a 'real' one. He does not choose a single viewpoint. Hence his landscape can be viewed from different angles. One can enter it from any point and then travel in it. The Chinese artist creates a path for our eyes to travel up and down and then travel in again, in a leisurely movement. These paintings require the active participation of the viewer. This participation is physical as well as mental. We must try not only to see the painting but enter the mind of the painter as well. It is only by understanding the ideals that motivate the painter, that we can understand the true import or the essence. It is because his landscape is an inner one, a spiritual and conceptual space.

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