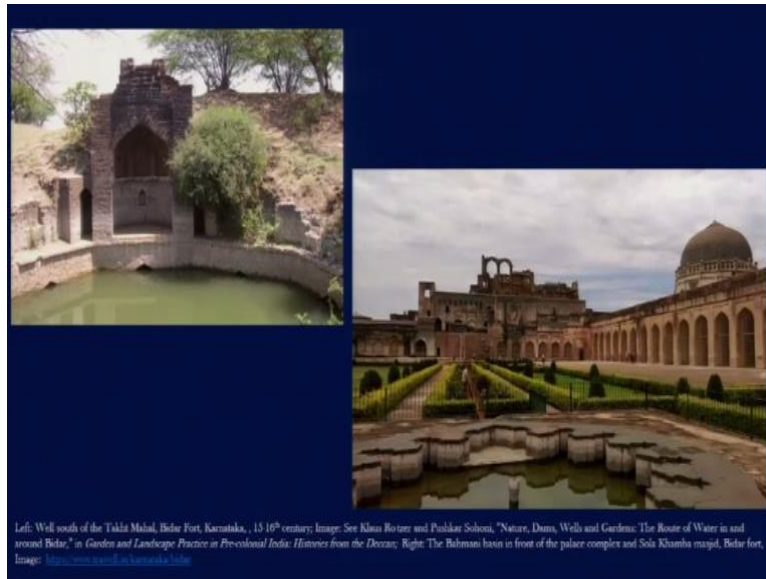


Indian Art: Materials, Techniques and Artistic Practices
Prof. Rajarshi Sengupta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology – Kanpur

Lecture – 30
Idea of Garden

(Refer Slide Time: 00:30)



Hello everyone. We have been continuing our discussion on the gardens and water structures, the reservoirs and everything else in the Deccan region of southern India. And here on screen there are a few examples. So, for example we have this well in the south of the Takhat Mahal in Bidar Fort in Karnataka and which was built sometime between 15th and 16th century. So, here what we have that how this octagonal shape that we have already found to be of high relevance.

And something that came up again and again in the tomb structures and even in the throne of the supreme god, how all those things have this octagonal orientation. So, we see that particular structure is also being repeated here as well. So, in this Bahmani structures here we find that this is one of these examples where we have this octagonal structure, this octagonal water tank and these wells are there as part of like how to nurture the gardens.

So, these wells will be rainfed or if there are groundwater sources, then they will also be fed by the groundwater. And then these wells were used for nurturing the gardens around them. So, of course today we do not really see any of the gardens they are existing here, but the textual

references, textual records they suggest how those wells were not really there in this abandoned space like the way we see it today, but they were in the middle of lush gardens within the palace complexes.

So, making these places lush like as we have already discussed that transforming a landscape that was also there when the first Mughal emperor Babur arrived in South Asia to transform this barren landscape or this plain landscape of the northern Indian plains, how those landscapes can be transformed into something much more pleasurable and useful. So, those things that we have already seen.

And of course, the aesthetics of those spaces they have also been very different after the gardens were cultivated. So, if those things we find that to be part of it, then here we see that similar kind of logic had also played out that the Bahmani sultans when the rulers when we find them, they were also in the process of transforming this land near Bidar and Gulbarga; these two cities that we have already addressed to be of prime importance during the Bahmani time period.

And that region, today both these cities they are situated in northern Karnataka is one of the driest regions in the entire Indian subcontinent today. And so if these are some of the things we find, so for them the challenge was to make use of the water and to implement it in such a way that they can serve transforming the landscape within the fort complexes as well as the serving some of the symbolic and metaphoric purposes as well.

So, for example here is another image from the Bidar Fort complex and here there is this octagonal basin, there is this Bahmani basin we have and this octagonal basin then is further sort of made complicated by making its edges as lotus petals. And so, all these projections that we find them here they are all uniform and they symbolize the petals have a full bloomed lotus and that is how the complexity of this octagonal basin had been enhanced.

And this stands in the centre of this palace complex and on the right side of this image we find the Sola Khamba Masjid and also here are the residential areas and other places for gathering but not for the public gathering. So, these spaces of water and then how they have also contributed to making gardens in front of this gigantic and these majestic structures.

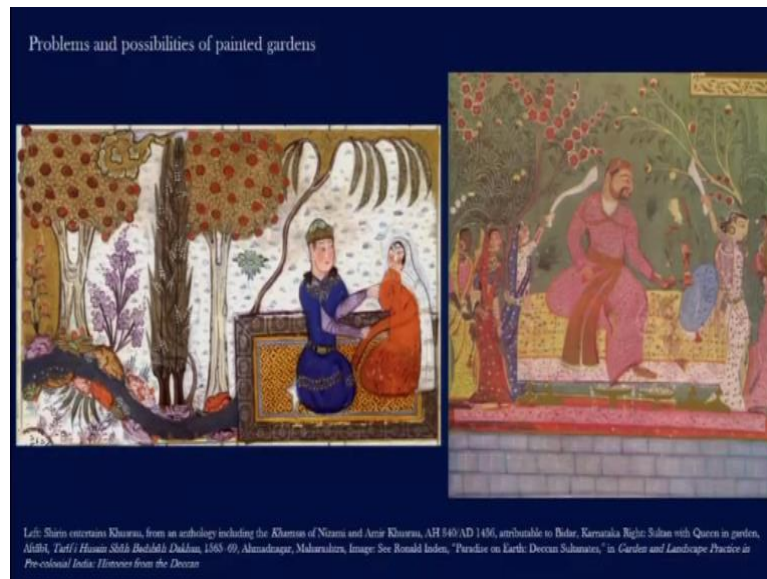
So, we find them that the use of this very calculative and selective use of water, their implementation in this garden plannings they have been done very carefully so that no water is wasted in this area where water is always in scarcity and also how this landscape within the complex can be transformed. Now another reconstruction and that had been suggested in Klaus Rotzer's, Pushkar Sohoni's work, we find that how there have also been different aspirations.

So, for example in Ronald Inden's work we also find that how there was this octagonal basin in front of the Dewan-e-Aam within this Bidar Fort complex. So, the Dewan-e-Aam area is not really situated within this Sola Khamba and this residential complex that we have on screen, but in the other part of the fort, and in front of that there was this another octagonal basin and keeping an octagonal basin in front of the emperor.

That also makes us speculate whether there was a way in which the Dewan-e-Aam that space where the public is looking into the emperor or the king, whether there was a deliberate push towards comparing the king with the supreme God because the place which is considered to be the seat of the God that was also octagonal in the paradise and in front of the god there will be this paradisiacal garden.

So, for those reasons we find that there are some of the subtle hints in which the architecture might have also played an important role for bringing this kind of overlapping between what is there in the philosophy or what is there in the Islamic doctrines and from there to something that that had happened in the 15th-16th century Bidar. So, the political, social, and religious all those aspects are brought together by this kind of these basins and water bodies and also with the implementation of the garden in the spaces.

(Refer Slide Time: 07:45)



Now, if there are problems or if there are possibilities of looking into the images of the gardens and thinking about how they might have been in the past, but there are also problems we find that how there can be both this issues that we cannot really take any of the images, which were produced perhaps in the 15th-16th century and later on. So, we cannot take those images in the face value to understand how those gardens might have been.

So, for example here we find that there are two representations of different kinds of gardens. And the first one here, we find that there are representation of Shirin and Khusrau and those are that comes from the *Khamsa* of Nizami and Amir Khusrau and so this one has perhaps been painted in Bidar and it was in the late or in the mid 15th century, so one of the earliest paintings that was obtained from the Bidar fort or from Bidar area.

Now, here if we look into the depiction of this entire space, we find that at the at this right corner there is this pavilion like space where both Shirin and Khusrau are situated. However, in the rest of the area there is a depiction of a pleasure garden. So, here there is the stream perhaps and then here we also have there is a depiction of the land and then there is a tree which also sort of canopies on the top of these protagonists.

Now, some of the other characteristic features, for example if we look into the depiction of this tree where there are fruits and flowers, so the idea of this blossoming garden is very much present here as well like the way we have already seen in the Mughal context. And if we look into the kind of the arrangement of this garden, it looks nothing like the *chaharbagh* planning that we have studied so far.

However, some of these characteristic features of a blossoming tree and then this very important cypress tree motif, which is a very important motif in Islamic art, not only in South Asia but also in Middle East and other parts of the world, and that is because of its vertical growth which points towards the heaven. So, that is the reason the cypress trees have been of high importance in the Islamic belief and philosophy.

So, if we see that there are those elements, these different trees and this blossoming tree, the water channels and so on, those things to be similar between this painting and the one that we have seen in the Mughal context, but the arrangement of this space do not really look anything like the chaharbagh planning. But in the description, we know that there were particular kinds of arrangements that those have perhaps also been carried out in the gardens in the Deccan.

So, when we compare those with the images that we have, we cannot really find a direct correlation between them, but the direct correlation might not be there, it is not because that there was no organized garden in the Deccan but it might also be in the making of this kind of images was a deliberate choice of the artisans or the painters. So, making the garden plays, the making an image of a garden with picking different motifs, the established motif.

For example the cypress motif, the blossoming tree, and the plants and trees with fruits and so on. So, those motifs, we find that they were incorporated by the painters or the artisans, however, for the sake of this composition, for the compositional arrangement, they might have abandoned the more organized kind of garden setting. So, for that reason we cannot really be very sure that whether all the gardens in the Deccan were unorganized or they were deliberately changed in this painted representation to serve different purposes.

Similar things we can also say about the image that we have on the right side of the screen and that that comes from Ahmednagar and there where we see that there is a representation of the sultan and then there was also the queen's image which was removed from this painting. So, in this one also we find that there is representation of this stone walls, which one can see in the photo of Ahmednagar even today.

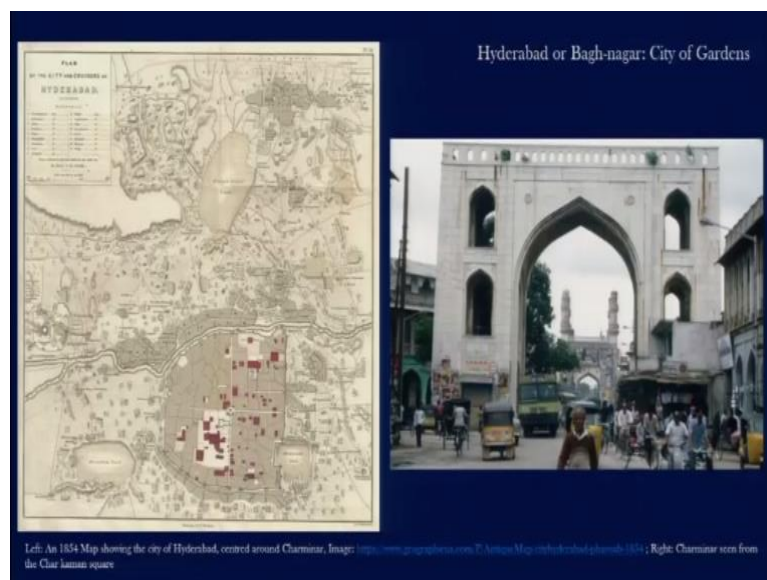
And then on the top of that, there is this lush green garden and with again this some of the established motifs, for example the blossoming trees and in some of the other images, we also

find that there are plants bearing fruits and so on. So, some of the scholars have also speculated whether this wall in the bottom of this image whether that says something about a garden, which is on the upper registers of a building or upper registers of a fort.

But also similarly one can argue how these kinds of walls and part of the fort walls are also used as framing pictures. So, in terms of this visual representation, we do not really know whether the position of the wall here, the location of the wall here, whether that actually suggest that there was actually a wall there or not because we see that in many cases the artisans, they have deliberately picked up certain motifs from the gardens and they have played around with it in these images.

So, for that reason we cannot be completely sure whether this is an exact representation of the space of the Ahmednagar fort complex or not.

(Refer Slide Time: 14:39)



So, similarly if we go with this, we find that there were other gardens in the entire Deccan region. So, for example Amin Khan's tomb which is very close to the city of Hyderabad today in Patancheru and there the Amin Khan's tomb was known for being a garden, which was not used by the elite but it was meant to be used by the people in the state.

And so the inscription records as well as the written records they suggest that Amin Khan's tomb that had trees like mango, jackfruit and various kinds of medicinal plants which were used for feeding the poor as well as curing the poor. So, that kind of gestures of extending their

help to the community those were also part of making the gardens in the Deccan. And that also pushes the idea of a garden, which is pleasure space, which is a space for pleasure.

And from there we can see what were this other significance of the garden or the significance of the garden for the community life in a state. So, from there if we also see that how this idea of the garden or this chaharbagh planning had also played out a very important role in terms of not just making certain parts of the city, but also like the entire city, how it is built on this chaharbagh planning and there are no better examples than to see the city of Hyderabad.

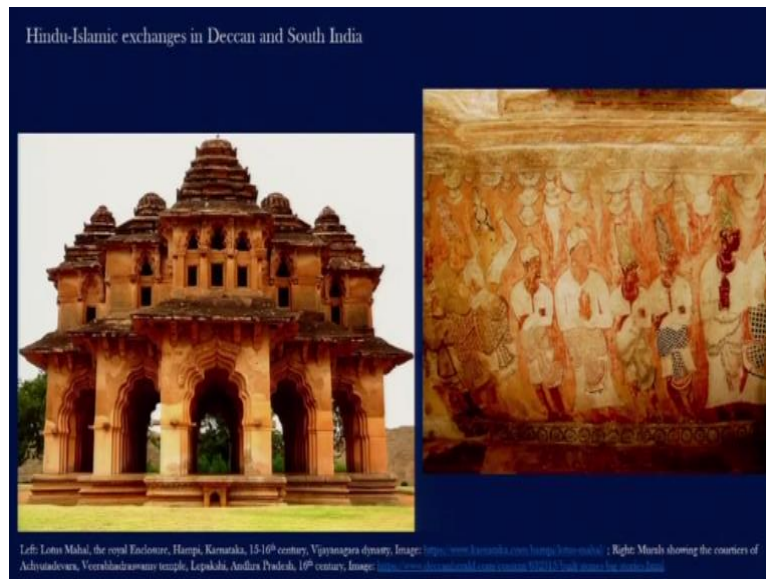
So, in the late 16th century, we find that the kingdom of Golconda they have moved their capital from the hillock of Golconda to the plains of Hyderabad, which is situated right beside the river Musi and that also happened for the scarcity of water in the Golconda hillock. And then what we find this newly founded city by the Qutb Shahi kings in the Golkonda region, they planned this new city on the plains on the basis of this kind of this east west and north south orientation.

So, what we find here that how this chaharbagh, this four part garden motif, or also like in how to have this cardinal directions acknowledged in a city plan for a better organization, all those things have come together in the city of Hyderabad. So, this part of the city that we are looking at in the map today that will be now the old city of Hyderabad, which was initially being built by the Qutb Shahi kings.

Now, at the centre of the city what we find that there is this imposing monument which is today known as Charminar. And so, Charminar marked the space which was at the centre of the at the intersection of the east west and north south axis. And then this city, within the city and outside of the perimeters of the city, there have been many gardens. Those gardens were established by the elite, the royals, the rulers of this city of Hyderabad.

And that is the reason in the subsequent time Hyderabad came to be known as Bhag Nagar which basically means a garden city. So, we see that there are these lingering references towards garden that had flowed all along in the various city plannings, fort plannings and many different places in the Deccan.

(Refer Slide Time: 18:18)



So, if we think about that if there are some of the ways in which these many different ways of knowledge production, at the same time if we also think about some of the ways in which the cultural exchanges and exchanges between different linguistic religious groups that had taken place in the Deccan, then something like that we have looked into in the Mughal architecture, for example when in the Mughal architecture there are elements from the Hindu architecture as well.

So, similarly in the Southern India, we also find that in Vijayanagara, of course in the Bahmani sultanate in the Golconda and the other parts of the Deccan, we also find abundant amounts of examples which show this kind of the intermingling of different cultural motifs and different cultural aspects from both the Hindus as well as the Muslims and many other religions. So, those kinds of things we have also found in the city of Hampi or Vijayanagara in the kingdom of Vijayanagara in the southern Deccan.

So, the Vijayanagara as I have already mentioned, the Vijayanagara rulers were predominantly Hindus and that is how they have been considered that they were opposed to the Bahmani sultanate who are Muslims, but in the architecture and even in the paintings we find quite contrary evidences. So for example, there is this Lotus Mahal in the royal enclosure in Hampi today and that is the city of Vijayanagara.

And in this particular structure, which initially was thought to be as part of a zenana or a private quarter of the ladies, but then it was also considered that it might not have been a private quarter but a place for political gatherings between the nobles and the royals. So, for this reason we

find that this very important monument and the architecture of this monument also brought together different aspects of both Hindu and Islamic architecture.

So, in this particular architecture, what we find that there is this very characteristic cusped arch gateway which was also celebrated in the Mughal architecture. And then on the top of that, we find a shikara like structure or the superstructure that comes on the top of the temples. So, those kinds of aspects we find that they were used and they were seamlessly merged in the architectural as well as the lexicon of art making in the Deccan, both in the Bahmani sultanate as well as in the Vijayanagara art.

And similarly, we also find that in the murals or in the paintings of the Vijayanagara, for example the one we have here on the right side of the screen from Veerabhadra Swamy temple in Lepakshi, Andhra Pradesh, there we find this kulai like cap which was used in the Persian context and also in other parts of the Middle East. And then kabai or this long white robe which down until the ankles.

So that kind of dresses were also adopted by the Hindu royals in the court. So, that kind of exchanges that also makes us think about these encounters between different cultures and different religions and how they made a prominent presence in the Deccan.

(Refer Slide Time: 22:01)



Left: The 8th degree of Scorpio, someone who is making the ground muddy and is giving water to the vine. / Ali 'Adil Shah, Nizam of Bidar, c.1550-1560. Bidar, Karnataka. Image: Emma Rice, "Heavenly Gardens" in Gardens and Landscape Practice. Right: A Kolhapuri Palm-leaf manuscript showing the tree of life, 17-18th century, Coimbatore region, Andhra Pradesh. Image courtesy: Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto

And then if we think about it, what were some of the other aspects of garden or some of the ways in which we can understand the relevance of different kinds of plants and gardening and cultivation as such, so we see that two other examples I can show here. One will be from this,

very celebrated book called Nujum-ul-Ulum and that was made in the 17th century in Bijapur perhaps during the time period of Ali Adil Shah.

And this book was full of astrological information and in which we find that this particular page here it shows like some of the zodiac signs and which is a good time for planting a seed in the soil and like if there are particular days and particular time in the month and also considering the movement of the moon and the sun. So, in considering all of them, which is the most favourable time for planting a seed and for the growth of the plants.

And how that can also make a huge deal of impact on the well-being of the state as well as the well-being of the people. So, there are many talismanic power, they have also been associated with this kind of cultivation and nurturing of plants and seeds and things like that. So, we can see that the idea of the garden is not just there in terms of philosophy in the state politics and so on, but here it also reaches to a different realm altogether where there are talismanic power and things which are not explained very easily.

They are also tried to be accounted for in this very interesting manuscript that we find from 17th century Bijapur. The other depiction of garden will probably be this highly impressive Kalamkari hangings in which we find this tree of life motif and the kalamkaris were made in the Coromandel Coast region and also perhaps in a few other parts in the Deccan. And so in those ones, for example the one we have on the right side of the screen.

And here we find that the tree of life which had been very relevant, both in the Islamic belief as well as in the Hindu belief, that that came to be as a central motif in many of those imposing this large scale hangings and these hangings and different kinds of textiles in which we find that how different elements from different trees and different other animals and different beings they were all brought together to compose this composite form of tree of life.

Which at the same time represents certain aspects of the Deccani landscape, but it goes beyond the naturalistic representation of garden or plants, but it perhaps makes a correlation between something that is possible, something that is not possible, something that is in nature and something that is supernatural. So, those kinds of different ideas we find them to be nurtured in exercising the idea of garden or idea of plant in the arts of Deccan.

So, in this entire module what we have looked at that these different ideas in which garden had manifested both in the art and architecture of Mughals as well as the Deccani sultanates. And in this one, we started with the discussion of this chaharbagh planning and the Hasht-behest plan and then how those plans are implemented in organizing a space cultivating life within a given space like which is understood as garden.

And then we have also looked into this idea that this is not just relevant in the Islamic philosophy as a representation of the garden of paradise on earth, but it also becomes very much important in terms of the various ruler's idea about transforming a land under their rule. So this is philosophical, political, social, cultural and artistic at the same time. So, there are different aspects in which we can find how this idea of the garden.

Garden planning, different kinds of plants, their representation and all of them they have made a huge deal of impact on the art and architecture. And then also how they were not only just relegated to making the garden spaces, but also how they have a huge deal of impact in terms of informing the ground plan of this large fort complexes and an extension of that, we can also say that how they were also implemented in the city plans.

And so, those kinds of things we find them to be there. And in some of the other examples, for example we have looked into the painted representations of the garden where there is always this ambiguity about how much of the real gardens are actually represented there. Perhaps there are motifs which were taken from the contemporary gardens, and then they were made into these paintings from the artist's point of view.

But we do not know that how much of that we can actually take them for the face value. So, we have looked into the possibilities as well as the problems of relying too much on to the visual material for taking a reference of how the gardens might have been. And then we have also looked into this idea of cultivating life and its relationship to the talismanic power as well as the well-being of people, the well-being of the state as we have looked into this manuscript Nujum-ul-Ulum.

And then also how the idea of the garden, this flowering plant that had manifested in many different ways in the Indian art, for example this tree of life in Kalamkari. Thank you.