

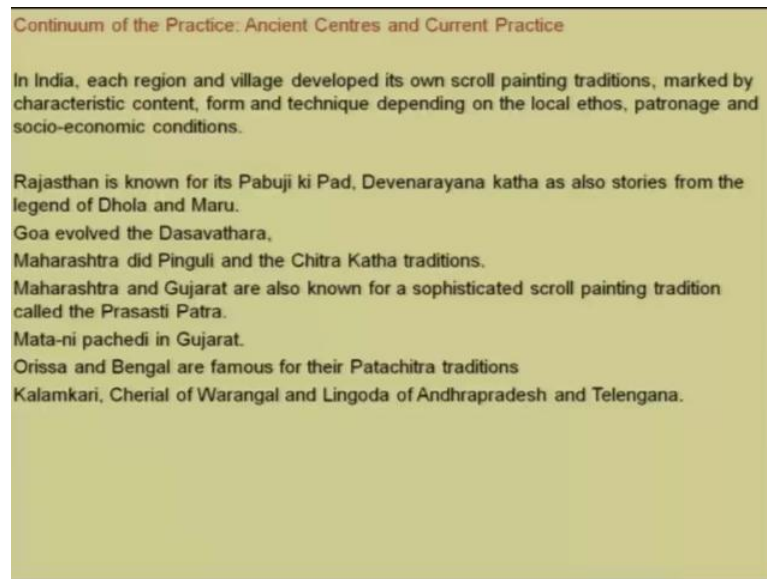
Folk and Minor Art in India
Prof. Shatarupa Thakurta Roy
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur

Lecture - 25
Continuum of the Practice: Ancient Centers and
Contemporary Scenario, Method, Material 1

In the 5th Module of lectures, we are going to focus on the Continuum of the Practice that is play the range how it spreads are, and that has been discussed earlier also but now we are discussing it with the special focus with the ancient centers in the current practices and it also is going to include the method material which are commonly used traditionally and also like paradise shift will be discussed in following lectures.

With that we also going to show you a few videos and case studies, the interview and you know how the live serve can be conducted. And which are the information like we can compile from variable resources and later we use it for our research and practice. So, that way we know that each villager perhaps in this country has a tradition of some ritualistic tradition and there are commonalities and varieties that we discussed in our previous topics. So, it developed in its own scroll painting tradition also which includes narrative scrolls and the stories myths in poetic formats supported by narrative illustration that.

(Refer Slide Time: 01:59)



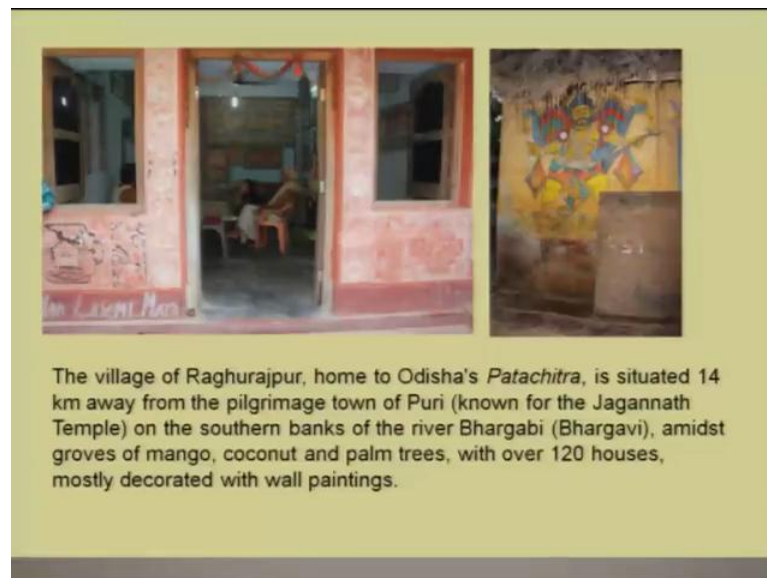
Are marked by the characteristic of content from the technique developed on the local ethos, the ideology, the principal available patronage, supports and that is like together they indicate the social economic condition that comes into some favor. So, we need to see which is the operating factor that is there. In that way there are quite a few major traditions that we are familiar with; one is if we go back to Rajasthan that is known for the Pabuji ki Pad, pad is another version of pat is canvas. Then we have there Narayana Katha again from Rajasthan, the stories of legend of Dola and Maru. Then we have seen another tradition of Dasavathara that has evolved in Goa.

Maharashtra is involved in the tradition like Pinguli and Chitra Katha. There is also Prasasti Patra that is quite famous from the Western India again Maharashtra Gujarat. Then Mata-ni Pachedi of Gujarat that is also a very significant tradition. Where it had a different origin we are also going talk about all those ancient center. For this is also something we should know that this is the combination of block printed image with some color feeling in some part. So, that has given us the very different paradigm of executing those things on textiles.

So, we will the present condition of Mata-ni Pachedi because of different issues like all other tradition it has shifted from its previous center. So, we are going to slowly unfold

the knowledge like as much as we gather from all the sources. Then for this particular lecture we are going to focus on Orissa Bengal and Madhubani that we are being doing earlier also. So, Orissa is famous for Orissa and Bengal they are famous for the Patachitra tradition. Other than that there is another tradition which is well known in Andra Pradesh that is Kalamkari of Shree Kalahasti. Apart from that there are Cherial paintings which are almost a similar some analogous tradition that is the Warangal painting or Cherial paintings Lingoda and Warangal in Andra Pradesh and Telangana. So, we going to focus on all those things and carry out with our lectures.

(Refer Slide Time: 04:58)

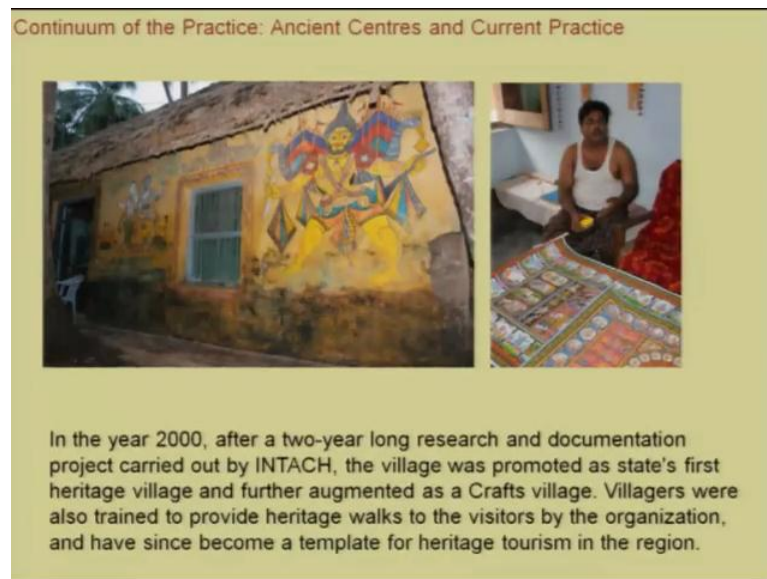


So, same in the picture are the images which are from the documentation that has been conducted by me in Raghurajpur home to Orissa's Patachitra that is situated 14 kilometers away from the pilgrimage town of Puri known for the Jagannath temple that attracts huge number of visitors. On the southern banks of the river Bhargavi that the source of water that they have, amidst the grooves of mango, coconut and palm trees with over 120 houses mostly decorated with wall painting.

As we see in the picture they have used colors like gheru or the Indian red that is oxide based color, and they have painted the images which are mostly decorative on it with fresh lime. And the other pictures we see that they have used various oxide colors they

are all water based and they also used some natural gloom as a binder for the pigment to stay together. And the paintings are done on the cemented wall which is like having the thatched roof condition. So, these are village houses and their painted which is connected to the ritualistic purposes and that is the common feature that we have been watching so far.

(Refer Slide Time: 06:42)




So, in the year 2000 after a two year long research and documentation project carried out by INTACH, the village was promoted as states first heritage village and further augmented as a craft village. Villagers were also trained to provide heritage walks to the visitors by the organization and have since become a template for the heritage tourism in the region. So, what we see in the slides is again the village of Raghurajpur and eminent painter of our time in a very candid interview in his own residence is Bihu Maharana who is demonstrating his own works and explaining certain method and material he is holding a small bowl with some yellow color in his hand and telling us the methods of making those paints and how they apply it and what is the right time to apply it and so on.

So, visitors can always interact with the artist and artisans provided like they are available for a talk, but mostly it is an arrangement that is common for that particular village.

(Refer Slide Time: 08:21)

Continuum of the Practice: Ancient Centres and Current Practice



In the first half of 19th century the entire village was involved in the practice of painting *Patachitra*.

But now there are only eighteen odd families continuing the tradition. During the month of Jaishtha (May-June) the *Snanyatra*, an age-old customary ritual, is performed in the famous Jagannath Temple of Puri; the wooden idols of *Jagannatha*, *Balarama* and *Subhadra* are soaked and bathed continuously during the period as a part of the ritual.


In reliance to the custom, idols are then put away from common viewing for sometime under the pretense of health impairment (fever) caused due to a month long bath that is known as '*Anasar*'.

So let us go back to the ancient centers, how it all started and what had been the reason behind it. In the first half of the 19th century the entire village was involved in the practice of painting Patachitra. But now there are only eighteen odd families continuing the tradition. During the month of Jaishtha that is around May-June the Snanyatra an age old customary ritual that is performed in the famous Jagannath temple of Puri and the custom is like the wooden idols which are the painted wooden idols of Jagannatha Balarama and Subhadra are soaked and bathed continuously during the period as a part of the ritual.

As result what happens the paint gets washed off once in year. So, in reliance to the custom idols are then put away from the common viewing for sometime under the pretense of health impairment, like as we say that the idols they suffer from fever caused due to a month long bath that is known as '*Anasar*', so this paintings because of that is known as Anasar painting and will see how.

(Refer Slide Time: 09:57)

Continuum of the Practice: Ancient Centres and Current Practice



This act, washes off the paints from the idol's surfaces, hence necessitates that the idols be repainted.

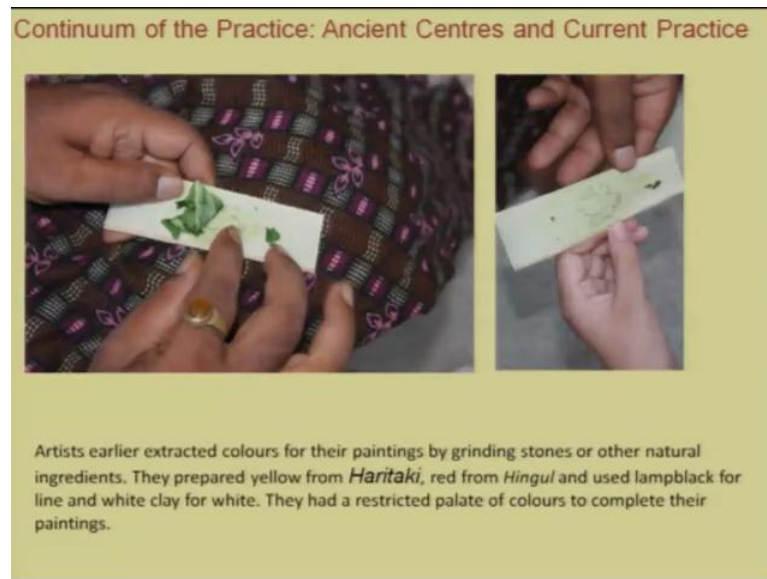
In the absence of idols, the local artists are commissioned to paint the images of *Jagannatha*, *Balarama* and *Subhadra* on *Patachitras* that temporarily replace the idols in the temple complex.

Such paintings known as '*Anasar Patachitra*' are based on the theme of Lord Sri Krishna, the original form of *Jagannatha*.

This is the full picture done in long back by Panu Maharana he is no more. So, this act washes paints from the idol surfaces, hence necessitates that the idol be repainted. In the absence of idols the local artists are commissioned to paint the images of Jagannatha Balarama and Subhadra on Patachitra that temporarily replaces the idols in the temple complex such paintings known as Anasar Patachitra are based on the theme of Lord Sri Krishna the original form of Jagannatha. And what we see in the picture that was explained by his son and grandson, there had been very interesting border the use of this border with black and white is suggestive of the stone build structure of the temple itself.

So, there are references from the temple and that is perhaps the reason that this particular folk art style is very sophisticated because its coming from a temple tradition and the temple has been patronized by the local king over there who had interaction with Western Indian artists who came over and they were all the court painters. So, they and been some interaction between the court painters and the local artists there have been mutual training and exchanges of knowledge that took place and the outcome is something that we can see. And it has some level of perfection and its execution and we are going to talk about that and now.

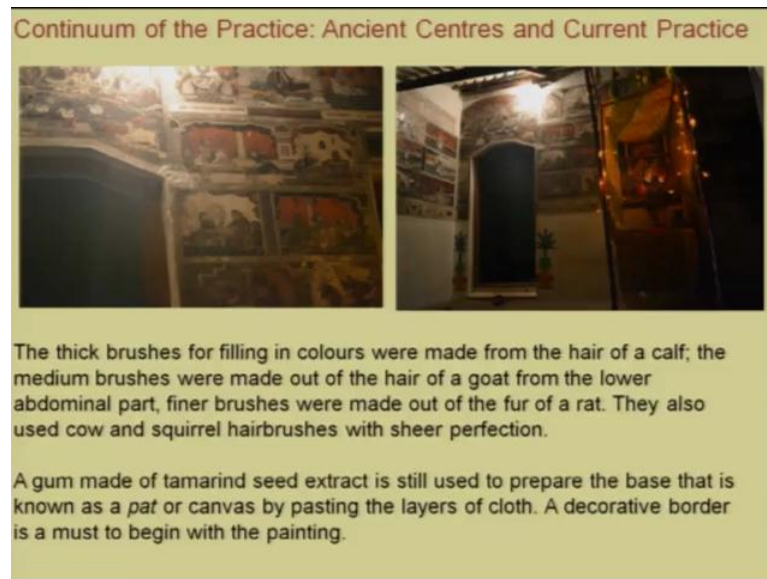
(Refer Slide Time: 11:57)



So, the artist earlier extracted colors from the painting by the grinding stones or other natural ingredient they prepared yellow from Haritaki, red from Hangul and used lampblack from line and white clay for white. They had a restricted palate of color to complete their paintings what we see in the picture is a very quick demonstration by Bihu Maharana who took the palm leaf and scratched out the image its aged out thing with the middle the image was drawn and it was not visible and they he picked up the leaf and rubbed it over the image, the pigment that is colored that has gone inside the aged areas the engraved lines and then he rubbed it of like a upper part was wiped off very neatly and then it resulted into a line drawing.

So, the line drawing are not direct and that gives it a very interesting character it does not look very stiff and mechanical because of different hand pressure with the needle the drawing has variation in line, like we cannot compare with the naturalistic variation in lines it has certain idolism into it there also decorative in its character. But you know this palm leaf art works that is like a parallel tradition that like goes on the same zone. We see that the figurations are very sophisticated with right variation of line that gives it monumental quality.

(Refer Slide Time: 13:56)



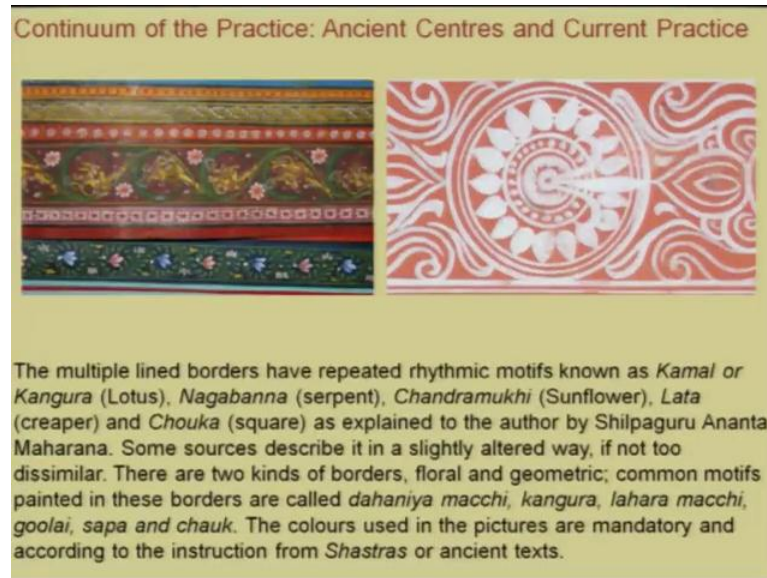
The thick brushes for filling in colors were made from the hair of calf traditionally. The medium brushes were made out of the hair of a goat from the lower abdominal part. Finer brushes were made out of the fur of a rat. They also used cow and squirrel hair brushes with sheer perfection. A gum made of tamarind seed extract is still used to prepare the base that is known as a *pat* or canvas by pasting the layers of cloth. A decorative border is a must to begin with painting.

So, there are two images from a dark interior of the house it is the frontal wall during a festival and what impression we get out of the pictures are they maintained straight colors skin throughout. And the space division is maintaining symmetry so that the frames are easily readable in sequences. So, what we see in the pictures are lots of symmetric images and some dynamic formation of different elements like at the corner left what we watching is the water body with lots of darks and other animals and in the river banks there are cows and. So, in there a combination of human figures, flowers, fruits, water birds all sort of flora and fauna.

And ultimately the brush work is given yet sophistication the background and foreground is very clearly I have distinguished. Also the use color which is very flat on the wall or on paper or whatever surface they are using they make sure that they are well contoured

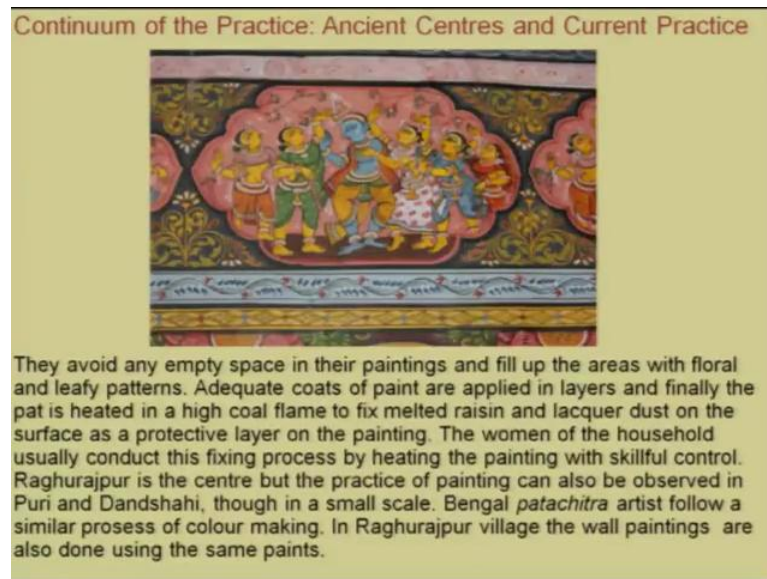
and very clearly identified. So there is a high contrast that is helping the images to get revealed. So that the story is very clear and has unambiguous as possible.

(Refer Slide Time: 16:24)



So, talking about the borders which are very important for the Orissa Patachitra; the multiple line borders have repeated rhythmic motives known as Kamal or Kangura that is Lotus, Nagabanna that is a serpent or snake. Chandramuki a sunflower or Chandramallika that is another term Lata creeper and Chouka square as explained to the author that is to me by Shiplaguru Anntha Maharana. Some sources describe it in a slightly altered way if not too dissimilar. There are two kinds of borders floral and geometric, common motifs painted in this border are called dhaniya, macchi, kangura, lahari macchi, goolai, sapa and chouka; that we get to see in the image also that there is a serpent formation which is completely spiral at the top of the frame and then slowly it is coming to the flowers and the creeper the lata and choukas are the geometrical squares that are also there. The colors used in the picture are mandatory and according to instruction from Shastras and ancient texts.

(Refer Slide Time: 18:12)



Another very important observation that has to be made that they avoid any empty space in their painting they have this tendency to fill up everything and the reason perhaps is that they did not want any pictorial depth to be created that gives us a illusion of depth. Illusion of depth is common in European renaissance painting and the linearity is something which almost avoided in these pictures and wherever there is empty area they put some decoration to bring the entire frame in a single plane as much as possible. So, there is a background and foreground with the high contrast, but at the same time there is no illusion of depth that is created which is unusually deep.

So, adequate quotes of paints are applied in layers and finally the pat is heated in a high coal flame that is the raisin to fix the melted raisin; that is the raisin is like it also found from a natural source which is known as rojone and everybody known it as rojone in the like in the locality and lacquer, dust powdered lacquer or the surface as a protective layer on the painting. The women of the house hold usually conduct this fixing process by heating the painting with skill full control. It cannot be over heated it has to be control so that the raisin gets fixed, the raisin and the powder lacquer they are working as a fixative there. So, it melts on the heat and it burns if the heat is not controlled properly. So, it needs some practice like that is evident.

So, Raghurajpur is the center but the practice of painting can also be observed in Puri and Dandshahi, though in a small scale. So, it is not wide as Raghurajpur, but still there are practices and they sell the paintings if the paintings are available there and it is not only selling but they are ready for display. Bengal Patachitra artist follow a similar process of colors making which is not actually very different from it. In Raghurajpur village the wall paintings are also done using the same paints.

Interference by the middle men on the sales leading to exploitation enormously effected the painter community who reframe from taking up painting or traditional painting as profession that when on for a very long time and that was quite unfortunate and that was almost suggested a decline in this tradition, but it again got revived. So, I will tell you few data's that is very difficult not reveal, but there are very few authentic sources because these are all collected from the common statements made by the local people and we may just trust on that and develop a story. But of course we will have to use our research sense to understand them, but there is no harm understanding quite a few things and connecting them with the time lines because all these data's may get totally lost after a while.

So, around 1950s Celina Kelli an American visitor who was highly impressed by works of the painters from the (Refer Time: 21:31) that is the other center that I have been talking about. (Refer Time: 21:36) she visited there and there have been one painters who was very famous I showed one of his work of that (Refer Time: 22:47) painting in the previous slides, so he was Panu Maharana. So, Celina Kelli what shaded she purchased all his works and then she kept in her collection. So, it is not just buying something but this kind of a patronage. Also makes the artist realize how valuable their works are and it has some historical significance one cannot resist, but collecting the whole thing and keeping it for her own use. So, she was researcher and she also makes other the people aware of the significance of this kind of art works that this like I have just found from some local sources.

So, the legacy passed on through Atman Goorna Maharana to Panu Maharana to Ananta Maharana to Bihu Maharana. So the family was perhaps of the Rajasthani origin to have migrated to Orissa years back by like with some royal patronage. So, the maharana

family brought with them the Western Indian style of meticulous rendering to the Patachitra of Orissa. It has the sense of perfection similar to the paintings executed under the royal patronage. The folk painting of the Orissa represent any naive or primitive quality or something which is common on the other zones like Bengal, Bihar, and Jharkhand that like from the examples that we have gathered in our previous lectures.

Several authentic sources in the area stated by the Celina Kelli the American art connoisseur was informed about Raghurajpur being the center of the painting tradition from the shopkeeper like you know who was a source in the Chandanpur that is also a joining village. So, following a visit to the place she actively involved herself to the cause for the improving the condition of the painters. The leaving condition and working condition and all and there by ensure the continuance of the age old practices so that they get supported sufficient and continue with their practice peacefully, because it was needed.

So, she just made some arrangement that her bit, she organized the competition to encourage the painters who are already disappointed and appearance about the growth of this tradition. There also stories that there are people like Aagadu Maharana, I just got the name from a interview that I conduct. He was selected as the first prize winner in that competition arranged by Celina Kelli who was an American visitor, and later they found out that the painting was not entirely done by him or maybe like he took some reference from the Panu Maharana. Whatever it is Panu Maharana for their opinion was the one who deserved it, but he did not get it. So, there have been some senses of you known in justice that took place and let to some disturbances.

And finally there have been another artist who as Jagannath Mahapatra who was of that particular name is of a great importance in the history of the evolution. This person was very interesting he was entirely artistic he knew all rule area and norms of from tradition he was the master mind of the many of the art works that was common there he knew how to do and he was great teacher. But his thing was he was a very peaceful person he dint participated in that competition in the beginning, and he was quite reputed as a painter but in the day time he worked as a mansion and in the evening he used to work with folk place the local folk theater. So, he was an actor a multi talented person.

So, the painter community of the Raghurajpur village decided to go to him with sense of injustice that they were carrying with them, so they met him and describe whole dissatisfaction lead by the competition and all. So, the painter community they know they explained all the incidence in detail. And this opened a new chapter to the history of the Orissa Patachitra as on his incineration like Jagannath Mahapatra he initiated several competitions and he organized similar things because as a visionary could find that the there has been some importance of holding this kind of competitions so that it encourages the local painters to improve their quality come up with something that stands out and the tradition goes on. And it show that this something like Patachitra tradition that is there, that is going on its still running.

So, the painter community a what they did organized this kind of events with the help of Jagannath Mahapatra, and Jagannath Mahapatra became exponent pioneer for the growth and survival of the Patachitra tradition there amongst many other people. It also generated some kind of the dissatisfaction eventually which was very unfortunate and reasons are not clear, but many people say that Jagannath Mahapatra was not able to put up with so much of envy and jealousy all around him that was somehow affecting him his creation and the inner joy that is very important for those kind of art works for their creation.

So, what he did he actually left home for a while and then he was slightly troubled and this made. So jagannath, he left home only to return in 1959 to start Gurukul Ashram in Raghurajpur that is still there, so the government then rewarded him with the doctoral degree. And in the year 1965 he started training the Patuwas the local Patuwas the apprentices are the college of craft. So, Shantha Mahapatra son of Jagannath Mahapatra is the practicing artist who readily demonstrates the works of his father to the visitors till now.

Now, I will just go back and explain another documentation. As I said that we are trying to connect and tell a story with the available resources. So there is another very interesting thing that I found out from one of the description, of course I could not find the references of the image is somewhere and I am yet to see them and document them. So, the search must go on and I can also transfer for that to you people if you find please

try and see. And they are predicted, the bunch of paintings I am going to talk about that might have been the source of the earlier influences that Orissa Patachitra had been getting. So, let us understand it like the source is by the Guru Prasad Gosh in a preview of a collection of painting of Orissa that is preserved in Ashutosh Sangrahashala in Calcutta University throws light on the probable stylistic influences that has shipped up the tradition of past three decades.

His finding is based on the collection comprising of more than 250 chronicles colored paintings from Orissa reportedly kept in the chronological order. The first painting that was described in the book which is approximately 18 by 7 inch in size is the part of the larger painting collection from Ranpur it is code seen demonstrating a dazzling assembly hall. Where the king of Orissa make a Islamic messenger except for one hubsy guard the other guards in the picture are drawn in profile. This assumed to be an illustration of some significant historical fact related to the description of the messenger from the Golkunda the court of Orissa as mentioned in the in (Refer Time: 32:51).

So, these are the sources that is predicted by Devi Prasad gosh the researcher very eminent researcher in the folk culture and for (Refer Time: 33:02). And what he saying that (Refer Time: 33:05) has the reference of the visit of the muslin messenger to the court and it was the significant instance. Like it is important enough to be documented in form of the painting and in that painting they used as they say there have been one face that was in profile the rest of the thing were frontal.

So, we can make out that these series of painting impacted the local traditional paintings to a large extent, because there are some liabilities in the description. So the predicted time line of the painting is later part of 17th century a d when Patachitra paintings were in its pinnacle. So, the painting explicitly demonstrates the influence of the Mughal the Indian and South Indian style in it.

That particular painting, the painting as per the Devi Prasad Gosh's description idols to a pallet of red yellow and green it also has rust and orange unlike Mughal painting the main character is not pleased on a high pedestal its blended, the figure are energetic, lively and active that slight tilted head to give it some kind of a movement that just

indicates the participation that they are speaking with the tilted head. All placed in a zigzag linear formation just to accommodate more people to emphasize on the crowd it is an assembly and many people are present there. So, it has zigzag linear formation with stretched body gestures their hands raised in various postures which is very expressive. With fine curvature of their source, flags and rods having some alert expression in the face, so we can make out that emphasizing on the person expression there and also there are mentioning that you are wearing some decorated and brightly colored costumes which are intricate which have some intricate patterns embroidered into it or may be its painted or printed over it, but they are very rich.

So, these are the royal costume that was very meticulously painted. And that we get to see the similar kind of thing in the present art works of Orissa also that they are filled up with intricate patterns a very rich and it is all very closely connected the many event many figures happening in the single frame. So, that is another formation which supports the narrative and it was there. So, there are connections that are can be assumed through it. However, I am going through it going back to the description of it that as we say the alert facial expression wearing intricately decorated and brightly colored costumes a white dot in eye ball enlightens the expression that is still there in Orissa Patachitra which is highly individualistic and not archetypical and repetitive.

So, the scheme of color is reminiscent of Mughal painting, of course over decorativeness typically of Orissa's existing art work detailing in the reprisal similar to the to the Southern Western style may be the Kalankari and other block print tradition that was there and also the (Refer Time: 37:09) and other things we can may out because that was the local costume of that time after the Muslim invasion. As compare to the (Refer Time: 37:18) of the figuration the quotations of Jahangir and Shah Jahan's assembly from the pure Mughal painting look more antic and assertive dolls of Rasalila ceremony so that was the observation.

So, it more like what we see in the paintings we can figure out that was more like a formulation of the local style and with the royal influence. So, when they becomes too formal so this painting were something which was in between so they worked as a transition or perhaps it was a parallel tradition what we see there is like if we compare

them from the painting of Jahangir or Shah Jahan's times whether the quotations were there other scenes royal court scenes seem they seem to be much more formal stiff and in fact to his description there were more archaic in their expressions, whereas this series painting were more lively because perhaps the local influences were also there.

In that way added a very new quality unlike Rasalila dolls some which are expressionless. So, the folk painting of Orissa are much more refined and balanced as compared to the other folk traditions so that reasons perhaps in reference to the sophisticated, but then that is not only criteria to praise the art works. But right now we are trying to see and appreciate the tradition when we compare we feel that this level of sophistication was much higher because of this royal patronage, but that can also be said that affects the Purity of the folk aesthetics that is even quite well appreciated throughout.

So, that subject matter of the Patachitra can be broadly divided into six categories. So, the pictures of Lord Jagannath episodes from Hindu epics, themes from folk legends and farewells, ritualistic themes which are connected to the regular worship and other rituals they have been patterns and symbolic images which are connected to that. And then like that is connected to worshipping different God and Goddesses, sometimes local Gods and Goddess, animal's birds and erotic things.