

Folk and Minor Art in India
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Lecture - 07
Classification and Connections: Traditional Roots

We are going to discuss on the classification and different connections in order to find out the Traditional Roots for Indian Folk and Minor Art in our second Module.

What we doing to cover in this particular module are basically to understand what are the available literally sources that can help us out with us, though those recourses are very limited, very few text which is written on this topic. But still if we taken over view we see that there are certain very substantial word that has continued and they are mostly preserved in different museums and archives. Now, it is another question that how they can be accessed? And there are multiple roots to get that, but I will try to incorporate as many texts as possible and expose you with the different sources from where you can also independently go and find out the study material.

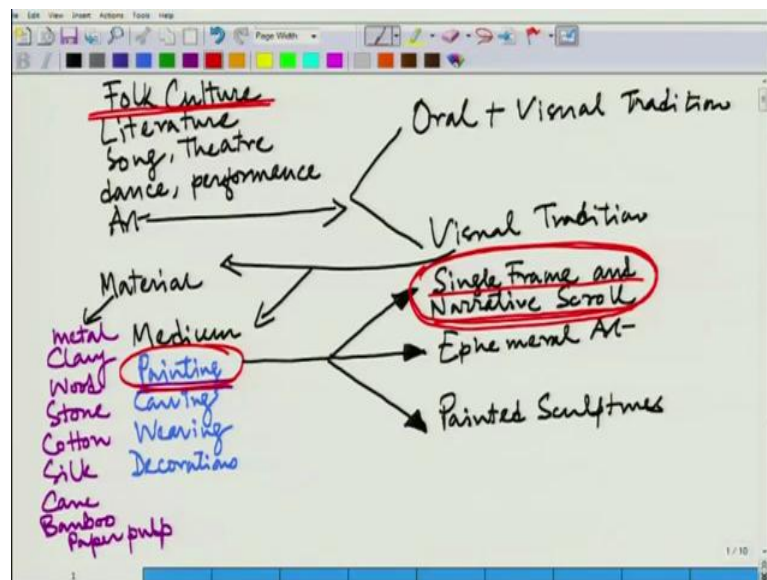
However, we are also trying to understand the another very important issue that how the make and facts got connected for this particular trend and that can also be very fascinating to understand than get exposed about. And then again the most important areas that we discussed we are going to link that with that the idea of nationalizing the context of folk and minor art of India and the idea of modernism as well. And then what that we are going to re realize the relevance of the art practice and they contemporary context.

When we said that many of the resources are connected to makes and facts and they are so well blended together that it is also sometimes gets into certain difficulty to separate the two. And that makes it slightly difficult to authenticise, but this is also true that there are this three constitutions that worked as operational factor for this whole practice for such a very long time. And as we can realize that it underwent they bare minimum patronage from anybody like they did not have any patronage from the viral court they just grew and moved as folk art grows.

But still like if we think about the constitution that operates art in general there are the three factors; one is perhaps the temple, the other one is of course trade and then court. Now this is very fascinating to understand that for the Indian folk and tribal art, trade and court this two factors and not basically coming into any picture. Because of the fact that they were not the art that it takes place in the royal court or they were also not made further trading purpose, they did have a market of their own. They just got connected to the temple tradition so many of the religious stories are connected to the temple connection. And the secondary secular things will also to generate modern stories, so these in the connection that we can figure out.

From there we would like to understand and this is like part of the course were we are trying to figure out how there categorizing how they can be categorized, just because the two scattered we need to focus on certain area and hence go deeper into that particular part. So, let us first understand how we can put these practices into certain category. We not including the entire practice, but we are using some regional practices as our example and will carry it further with those examples and their variable sources and the data's that we could collect in this whole course of time.

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To understand folk and minor art it is very important to understand folk culture. That has many different classifications it is; the folk literature, folk song, folk theater, folk dance, performances, and folk art. We are picking up art as our focal area. Folk art has

two major categories one is the oral tradition with the visual tradition, and the other one is visual tradition without the old tradition.

Visual tradition can be categorized into two different aeries. We have the considerations of material, then the medium. Medium involves painting, curving, weaving or other decorations. And the material needed for it are metal, baked clay or unbaked clay, wood, stone, cotton, silk, cane, bamboo, paper and paper pulp. From the medium we should also pick up painting as our focal area of interested.

Painting can be classified into three different categories; the single frame and narrative scroll, ephe meral art, and painted sculptures. Our discussion will primarily focused on the single frame and narrative scroll paintings through the examples of the single frame and narrative scroll paintings we will try to track the history and the culture which has (Refer Time: 10:06) important in the context of contemporary art of India.

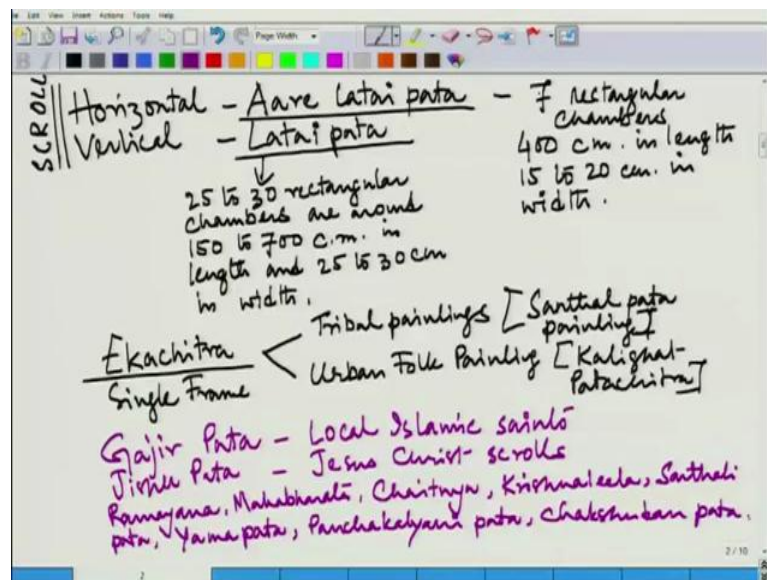
Theme base paintings can be further classified into two categories; dealing either with the religious themes or with the secular subject matters. And the same based classifications separates the narrative scrolls that is known as (Refer Time: 10:30) or the (Refer Time: 10:33). (Refer Time: 10:34) means the folded pattachitra or the pata is canvas and the (Refer Time: 10:41) means long pata long canvasses. From single frame painting what is known as ekachitra that the single frames and the frames can have different shapes like there are rectangular shapes, square, triangle and also there are circular shapes which is very popular.

In fact, there is a very well known tradition of dashavatar card for the playing cards, and they meet the avatars the ten incarnations of Vishnu in those cards and that was more will like a indoor game that towards there in our culture. And the images that are painted on those circular cards are amazingly interesting, but it is there in our personal connection with some like very few people they have collected all those things and they just preserve there and we get to see to what three in such example in some museums also. But the shapes are very important to tell you a story for example, when we talk about of the ekachitra; the single frame, the images are more symmetrical there and its theme based which are the themes are often very iconic and straight forward, whereas it when it becomes horizontal or vertically long and it has a symmetrical spread we feel

that the compositions are also becoming more asymmetrical and hence more dynamic, it does not have much symmetry and static quality, they are not iconic rather dynamic.

It involves a lot of connective stories and it gives continuity and it tells a story. So, the ekachitra or the single frame paintings are depiction of different images and those are more like a story of part of it where as the pattachitra which are like the dighal pata or the jorano pata they have a very different connotation, they tells us story that is continuous and long.

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So, narrative scrolls are either horizontal. The horizontal scrolls are known as Aare Latai pata in Bengal. The verticals are known as Latai pata. The horizontal scrolls are usually divided into 7 rectangular chambers. They are mostly 400 centimeter in length and 15 to 20 centimeter in width. Vertical scrolls with 25 to 30 rectangular chambers are around 150 to 700 centimeter in length and 25 to 20 centimeter in width. They are very tradition of scroll painting with narrative continuity in the depiction can be compared with the narrative scroll of Tibet, Nepal, China and Japan. Narrative dighal pata or jorano pata is often embedded with songs sung by the painters. The themes are generally centered on Gods and Goddesses.

Ekachitra has two categories; they are the tribal paintings in Bengal the examples are Santhal pata and urban folk painting of Kalighat pata. Urban folk art includes subjects from daily life activities to floras and faunas, static pictures futurological portraitures,

social and historical theme based pictures, humorous and psychiatrist comedy and caricatures. Dighal patachitras he is preserved as a combination of some miniature paintings having a narrative continuity in their prevailing virtual style individual frames of the scroll are straightly larger in their skill (Refer Time: 17:57) nature painting, due to the purpose of public display and visibility during the performance that has to be made slightly larger.

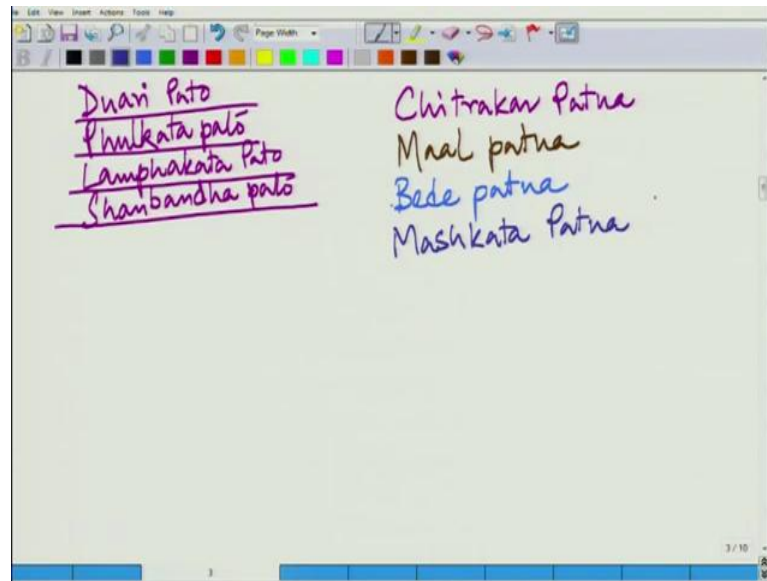
So, there are evidences of similar scroll paintings in the Shiva and Vishnu temples of Orissa and Assam also. They also resemble Thangka paintings that are preserved in the buddhist monastery sankeerths of Nepal and Tibet. Both ekachitra and dighal patachitras are derivatives of traditional miniature tradition. Pattachitra of Bengal, Orissa; mithila painting from Bihar, Rajasthan, pabuji ki phad jouminature of Gujarat; vorengal and benguda of Andhra Pradesh. Tanjore painting from Tamil Nadu can all we categorized in this two shape based formats.

Then there are gajir pata; painted along with the doctrines of the local Islamic saints - Jishu pata on the stories and images of Jesus Christ. Pattachitra based on Hindi mythological stories like Ramayan, Mahabharata, Chaitnya, Krishna leela, Santhali tribal pata, Yama pata depicting life after death pancha kalyani pata and chakshu kan pata are the other classifications.

By 18 Century the local rulers, the basic state rulers and also some merchants and other rich people they took interest in this kind of traditions. And they will all familiar with these things more over it got more popularized and it found some bit of a market where tamruk or tamralipta that was the ancient tamralipta which is the south west of Midnapore district in Bengal that became the state capital and because of that the when the train flourished. And from there the entire tradition it is speeded to the joining districts like Bankura Murshidabad and Birbhum. And they still on and there are other traditions also which were found in Hooghly and the other distracts, but there still not that much in to the work. But this is perhaps one reason that thumb look or the ancient tamralipta when it became the cultural capital collecting Orissa and Bengal, pattachitra tradition of joranopata and chaukapata are the squarish pattachitra vastly flourished from that particular centre.

Scroll painting tradition is most suggestive having a combination of narration form and content. Narrative being a painter and a singer at the same time; it is a synchronization of story poetic rhythm painted visual and duration. So, except for the painters from Kuduliya district all other painters of West Bengal that I mentioned they a particular status of being neither Hindu nor Muslim, they are divided into quite a few groups.

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Which are the Duari pato, Phulkata pato, Lamphakata pata and Shambandha pato which are known as the in different; they options they are the chitrakar patua who practiced them then we had the Maal patua, we had Bede patua and the Mashkata patuas.

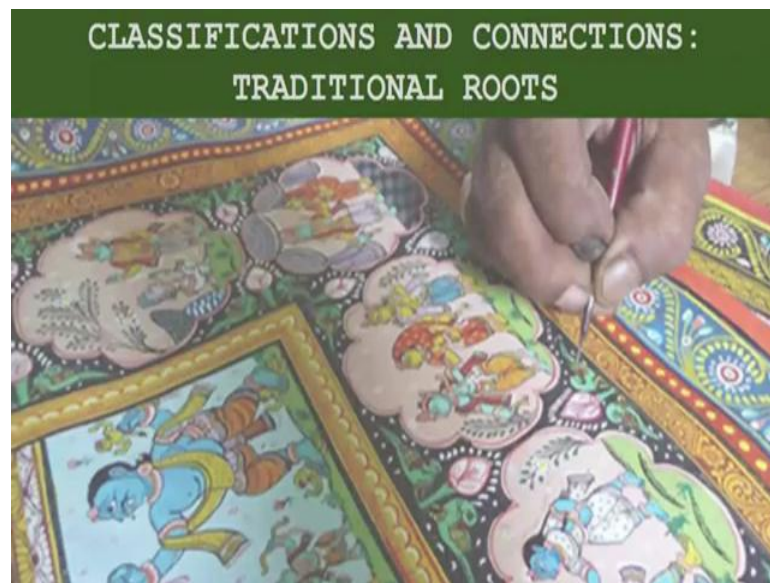
So, all these pattachitras never had any special depth and the European or if we think in terms of the renaissance perspective of from the renaissance esthetic point of view that there is no special depth that was shown with a help of 1.0 to 2.0 perspective, it was mostly overlapping that too overlapping was very rare, but by using the vertical location that the images are of the same scale but the images which are in the lower part of the painting and the upper part of the painting that gives you a sense of vertical location that those who which are placed straightly upper they seem to be going deeper into the frame. But more or less they maintain the two dimensional quality in to it.

So, it is more like it was dividing into three-four different backgrounds those were layered. It was more like making a background to show the contents where the figures are standing in and showing the middle ground to show the depth of space to the bare

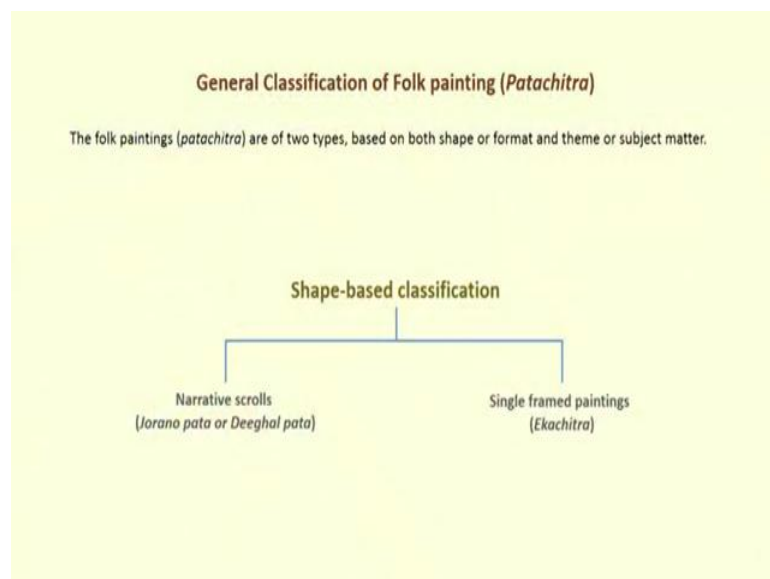
minimum and showing a foreground and having some focal interests by using different scales and the space deviations.

But that was perhaps the intention from the artist to make it as simple as possible, because there had been a purpose that was connected to it and we are coming to that in our following lectures.

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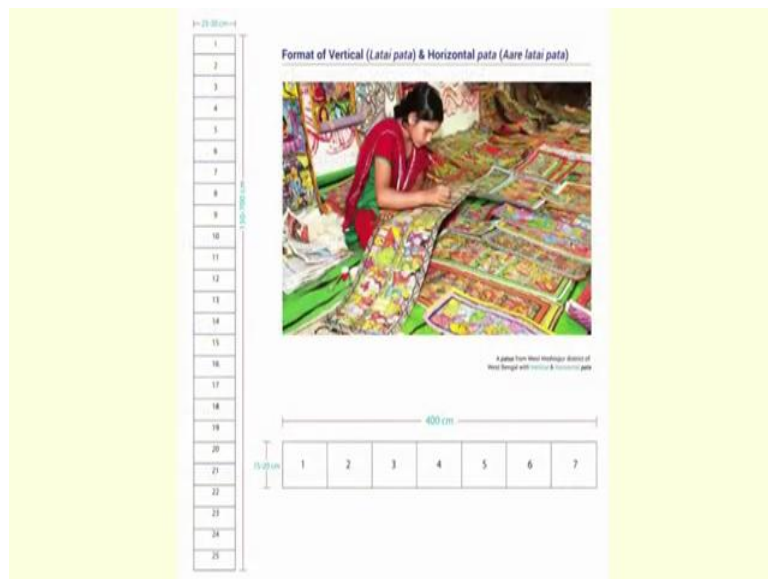
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- Narrative scrolls are either **vertical** or **horizontal** in format. The **vertical pata** is called *Latai pata* and the **horizontal pata** is called *Aare latai pata*.
- **Vertical scrolls** are divided into 25 or 30 rectangular chambers and are around 150-700 cm in length and 25-30 cm in width.
- **Horizontal scrolls** are divided into 7 rectangular chambers and are mostly 400 cm in length and 15-20 cm in width.
- This tradition of narrative scroll painting can be compared with the narrative scrolls of **Tibet, Nepal, China & Japan**.
- The narrative scrolls are often shown along with songs sung by the painters.
- The themes are generally religious and mythological.

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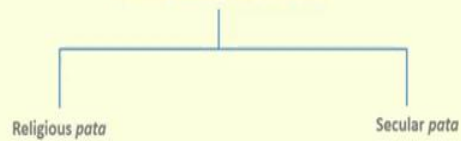
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Single framed paintings (*Ekachitra* or *Choukapata*) are of two categories:

1. Tribal painting such as *Santal pata*.
2. Urban folk painting such as *Kalighat pata*.

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Theme-based classification




- *Religious pata* contains mythological subjects and the images of Gods and Goddesses.
- *Secular pata* contains non-religious socio-political contemporary subject matters.

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Traditional connection



Portrait of Akbar, Mughal period during the reign of the Emperor Akbar (1556-1605 A.D.)



Lord Krishna, Vishnu Dashavatar patachitra, Orissa, Recent time

- *Patachitras* continue the age old tradition of Miniature paintings of the country.
- Single framed paintings (*Ekachitra* or *Choukapata*), especially those of Orissa, resemble with Mughal and Rajput miniature paintings in format and sometimes in compositional patterns and decorations.


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Traditional connection

- *Jain patachitras'* similarity to the *Jain manuscript paintings* in style, remind us the ancient tradition of manuscript miniatures. It seems that the old tradition is carried on by the contemporary folk painters.

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Traditional connection



- Ancient **Tamralipta** in south-west Midnapur of undivided Bengal, presently **Tamluk** in East Medinipur district of West Bengal, was the cultural capital of Odisha and Bengal. *Jorano pata* (scroll painting) and *Choukapata* (Single framed painting) was vastly flourished in **Tamralipta** and latter the tradition spread to the neighbouring districts of Bankura, Murshidabad and Birbhum.

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Traditional connection

- It is claimed, based on the literary resources and sayings, that the **painting scrolls** have been widely used to deliver moral education to the common folks from the **ancient periods**.
- It was in practice long days before, even in the **time of Buddha** as literature reveals. They were *Mashkari*, who were appointed to do such jobs during this time.
- Many early literary texts mentioned of *patachitra* practice and viewing, which proves the ancientness of this tradition.
- The cave paintings of Ajanta from the 1st & 2nd Century B.C., also have some stylistic reminiscence, depicting stories from *Jataka* display a similar formation of continuous narration.
- Narrative scroll paintings are reminiscence of Sanchi stupa's narrative panels of miniature carvings.