

# Plants at the Dariya Daulat Bagh Palace

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**Abstract**—The palace Dariya Daulat Bagh was built at Srirangapattana, Karnataka, India during A.D. 1784. It was built by Tippu Sultan. The Palace is decorated with beautiful designs, war and aristocrats of his contemporary times. This Palace houses some of the most exquisite designs of floral motifs and designs. Rose plant with fully bloomed roses is one of the attractions of the palace. Usually these flowering plants are depicted as grown from a small vase like utensil. These ambitious plants represent the plant species that were favourite to Tippu Sultan. In fact it is evident at the entrance of the palace itself; the palace is surrounded by walls and entrance doors on all the four directions, at these corners there are pillars. To the one side of these pillars, the wall is decorated with flowering plants drawn in niches. However there is a lot similarities between the Vijayanagara traditions and this palace built with some western influences of using Corinthian leaves at the top of the pillars. This pillar may have personal meaning for Tippu Sultan. The similar kinds of pillars have been found in the bastions at Devanahalli fort where he was born. It is also important to notice that the plants and trees bind the figurative representations of noble men on the east wall into one frame. The each strip is a single representation. In this way the flowering plants, trees and grassland forms the thread woven to look at these paintings as a single frame. This paper will present the documentation that I have been doing in the palace.

## “1. Introduction”

Dariya Daulat Bagh Palace is situated 130 kilometers from Bangalore. The meaning of the word Dariya Daulat Bagh means “Wealth of the Sea”. The palace is constructed using teak wood. The palace was built by Tippu Sultan in A.D. 1784. The palace is located in Srirangapatana. Srirangapattana developed as a center for arts and crafts until the capital of Mysore province was shifted from Srirangapattana to Mysore. The palace is built in indo saracenic style. In this way, the indo saracenic style was introduced to Mysore region.

The palace murals are painted with eight types of themes [1], they are-

1. War procession of Haider Ali
2. War procession of Tippu Sultan
3. Procession of the Nizam of Hyderabad
4. Colonel Baillie’s defeat in the Pollilur Battle
5. Dancers and Musicians
6. Court scenes of Tippu Sultan
7. Paintings representing durbars of Tippu’s contemporaries
8. Geometric and floral designs

This paper will present the plants that are represented on the walls of the Dariya Daulat Bagh palace at Srirangapattana. The palace offers the viewer with immense number of plant and flower varieties. These are significant varieties of flora and fauna of those contemporary times.

The palace should be entered from south direction. The durbar is on the west side. This wooden palace is situated on a square platform base; on this the wooden construction stands resisting the climatic conditions. The palace is covered with mats to avoid direct contact of sun light and dust, these can harm the paintings. The wall at the entrance along the south direction and its opposite wall constructed in the north direction have very beautiful paintings of floral motifs. The wall facing the east and west directions have trees and plants painted in another schematic frame. This schematic frame will be explained later in the paper. These paintings will give an understanding to some of the species of plants and flowering plants that were grown two hundred years before, during eighteenth century in Mysore region.

## “2. Field work”

The field work is being conducted at Dariya Daulat Bagh palace at Srirangapattana. The permission was granted to photo document the ground floor of the palace only. The palace has two floors, the ground floor and first (upper) floor. All the parts of the palace is painted and decorated with wooden and plaster reliefs. The main attraction of the palace are the four walls facing the north, south, east and the west directions. The wall facing the east direction is significant for having representations of royal, noble and aristocratic personalities. The wall facing west direction is significant for having the representations of processions of royal personalities.

The upper floor is completely painted and well maintained. It is not permitted to visit the upper floor.

With these beautiful murals painted, the palace is surrounded by garden maintained by ASI.

The work is documenting the palace paintings. The work is involved with noting down of trees that are painted on walls at the palace and their identification.

### “3. The plants on palace walls at the four sides”

The entrance of the palace, viz. the wall facing the south is the main entrance to the palace. This wall has floral motifs in niches. These are sometimes real representation and other ways, an imagination to the tastes of ruler Tipu Sultan. A niche is a separate small roofed structure constructed for an deity or an image. The palace has number of these niches that houses the flowering plants on them. These are the south and the north walls. They are roses, daisies and other flowers in designs. There are about forty niches on each of the wall, for south and north directions. At the center of the wall is grand entrance for the interior of the palace. The canopies that forms to these entrances, have rose designs. These patterns of the roses are very carefully maintained. The colours are still fresh and glittering.



**Fig. 1: Daisies, of family *Bellis Perennis*, Dariya Daulat Bagh palace**

Similar plastered niches, as shown in the picture above can be seen on the south and north side of the palaces. The designs of the rest of the flowers have inheritance from Mughal and Golconda architectural patterns and traditions. The flower at the finial can be seen in all the niches and frames that are carved for the representation of flowers. The presumption is, this flower might be *Leucas Aspera*. This niche will be surrounded by curvy flowering patterns and designs. The plastered petals that form the boundaries to the niches in the Dariya Daulat Bagh palace became a major influence to carve them in wooden panels at the Tippu Sultan’s summer palace in Bangalore. The palace at Bangalore was started to be constructed by Tippu Sultan’s father Haider Ali in A.D. 1784 and later was finished by his son Tippu Sultan A.D. 1794. The Mughal influenced marble inlay that was done in wood was a major part in the construction of the later summer palace in Bangalore.

The wall facing the north direction is built in similar fashion. Like in the front, this wall does not have an entrance but suggests an exit to the outer parts of the central part of the palace. The central part of the palace has these paintings alongside a corridor resting below a roof on top of it. This roof that forms the shelter to the corridor is also decorated. The designs and patters made of repeating motifs is made on a cloth and then pasted to the wooden plant, forming the ceiling of the palace.

The flowering creepers that run on the corners of the frame covering the niches show a lot of influence from Mughals. But it never developed into an ivory inlay at the palace even though art and precision work in ivory was flourishing at that time. Ivory inlay became very much practiced during the later Wodeyars rule in Mysore region.



**Fig. 2: South Wall Entrance, Dariya Daulat Bagh palace**

The above entrance on the south wall shows the use of rose plant as a design to decorate the entrance. At the bottom of these walls are flowering plants beautifully shown blossomed from a very small vessel form of utensil. The force that a plant exerts on the vessel to push itself up and grow is beautifully represented.

The walls facing the east and the west are schematically planned and executed. They have trees that are grown in landscape. These landscapes include war field, places around royal enclosures and palace like buildings. There is a sharp cut from the walls facing the south and north to the walls facing the east and west. The bottom parts of the walls facing the east and west have flowering plants designed in very peculiar way. It may be over ambitious to assume that these designs were inspired by the *Chamundi Hills*. The big trees on top the *Chamundi Hills* have certain design element to them. The Wodeyars later shifted their capital from Srirangapattana to Mysore. After the death of Tippu Sultan in A.D. 1799, Srirangapattana was completely ransacked. Krishnaraja Wodeyar III became the ruler of Mysore province soon after Tippu Sultan’s death. He was having two main responsibilities, 1. To maintain the artistic activities of Mysore kingdom and 2. To give revenue to British Empire.

The east wall has all the aristocrats and royal personalities painted. The panel is designed in five strips. Above these five strips on both the walls facing east and the west, are two strips of Nobel men painted that invokes the Vijayanagara mural traditions under royal patronage at Hampi. At the center of the east wall at Dariya Daulat Bagh palace there is an entrance to the rooms inside the palace. This divides the panel into two parts. On the both side the balance is maintained by using five strips to narrate the political situation. Many of the parts of the paintings were destroyed during the siege in A.D. 1799 by

British soldiers and were later painted by the royal patronage of Krishnaraja Wodeyar III.

### “3.1. East Wall”

The east wall has ninety seven various royal personalities painted on the wall. As said before the wall is divided into five strips to paint the ninety seven royal personalities. For a sudden glance there is an assumption that all are separate. The narration is woven into a single strip using the backdrop of plants and trees. Without these plants and trees the representations of these personalities look separate from each other. For the specificity of the subject of proceeding the plants and trees become significant, for without them the human figures cannot be held in single frame.

This wall has almost two dozen of plants painted. Towards the south side buildings are almost clustered while coming towards the north side the drawing is much more sophisticated and well planned. The most common plants are painted; they are *cocos nucifera* and *polyalthia longifolia*. These two trees are documented to be grown in Mysore University in the key for the flowering plants at Mysore University Campus, Mysore [2].

### “3.2 West Wall”

The wall facing the west has paintings of Battle of Pollilur, Procession of Haider Ali, Nizam and Tipu Sultan. The main narration happens at the top of the panel, while the representation of plants and trees are shown at the bottom of these paintings. These trees include palm and *cocos nucifera*. These palm and coconut trees form a major staple in paintings of Tipu Sultan the portrait picture of Tipu Sultan painted by John Zoffany in the year 1780 displayed at Dariya Daulat Bagh palace has palm and coconut trees as the background.

## “4. The Devanahalli Connection”

The long pillars on the four corners of the Dariya Daulat Bagh palace are inspired by the pillars at the Devanahalli fort near Bangalore where Tipu Sultan was born. The pillars at Devanahalli are smaller in size when compared to the ones in the palace. They are found near the bastions of the fort. Tipu Sultan built similar pillars on the corners decorated with Corinthian leaves and is painted. These pillars are made of single teak wood log. These pillars stand tall reclining to the walls of the palace.

These pillars were later used at the Tipu Sultan’s summer palace in Bangalore. The summer palace in Bangalore is constructed in teak wood completely. This palace was destroyed during the war in 1799. Later during the Wodeyars of Mysore renovated the wooden construction.

These pillars at the four corners with Corinthian leaves decorating the top, bind the walls the palace together. There is very beautiful connection between the walls facing the opposite direction, while these pillars face diagonally to each other. The walls facing north and south directions have floral motifs. The walls facing the east and west directions have royal personalities painted. The pillars at their diagonal position have painted flowers to the left and the royal personalities painted on the other side. There is a strong influence from the pillars at the Devanahalli fort near the bastions.

## “5. References”

- [1] Pande, A., Kumari, S., ‘The Heritage of Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan’, National Museum Institute, Aryan Books International, 2012, pp. 184-185.
- [2] Rao, R. R., Razi, B. A., ‘Flowering plants of the Mysore University Campus’, University of Mysore, 1974, pp. 6, 11.