CHAPTER-3

RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE UNDER HAIDER ALI AND TIPU SULTAN

Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan gave immense importance to religious architecture. Islamic architecture can be visualized by three kinds of structures.

I. Mosque
II. Dargah (Tomb)
III. Idgah

3.1 Mosque:

Mosque formulates the central aspects of religious architecture, which are the prayer halls. During the period of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan several mosques were built throughout their kingdom.

3.1.1 Mosque at Kolar

The mosque that is to the north of the mausoleum is now extended in front, as a result of which its appearance has changed completely. The original structure can be reconstructed through the drawings of the colonial period from the collection of the Salar Jung Museum.
The present drawing shows the mosque and the mausoleum in lush garden setting. The original mosque was entered from the east through three cusped arch entrances. Mihrab niches on the western wall are also visible in this drawing.

It appears as an elegant structure with ornate parapet and corner minarets. The building complex had a naqqar khana at the entrance where music was played in the evening. During the time of Haidar, food was distributed to the poor everyday.

The Karnataka Wakf board manages this complex. It is important to note that after the death of Haidar Ali, his body was kept at Kolar in the tomb of his father before it was transported to the capital Srirangapatna and buried in the exquisite mausoleum within Lal Bagh on the eastern end of the island.¹

3.1.2 Jumma Masjid or Masjid–e Ala at Srirangapatan:

¹ Mohibul Hasan, History of Tipu Sultan, Calcutta, 1971, p.22.
Jumam Maṣjid or Masjid-e Ala that dominates the urban space of Srirangapatna with its lofty minarets becomes intriguing when seen in the context of the other buildings of the reign of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan, as most of their buildings were modest in scale. The mosque was raised on the site, agreeably to a plan of the Mosque, built by Ali Adil Shah, at Bijapur, and brought from thence.

As, however, the regulation of the kingdom, the chastisement of the rebellious, such as the people of Kurg, the Mahrattas, and the Poligars were the first objects in the mind of the late Nawab – the work fell into delay for a time, but now, when from the blessing of God these difficulties had been removed, the work was resumed.\(^2\)

A chronogram on the western wall dates the building of this mosque at 1787. The mosque was completed in two years under the supervision of the Darogha, public building, and was named Masjid-e Ala.\(^3\)

An inscription engraved in the mosque says, “If Solomon in the past time, built a mosque and named it Aksa(highest) at Jerusalem; in these happy days the king of religion erected a mosque which was called by an angel, Ala(superior).”\(^4\)

The same inscription writes, “Each arch is – like the moon – unequalled in beauty. The pleasing wind which blows from it is spirit-like, enchanting and refreshing. This happy hall points to Mecca. The beautiful mihrab is just like Batha. As gold is sought so I made a search, a search for the date of the

\(^3\) Ibid., p.66.
\(^4\) Constance E. Parsons, Srirangapatam, Mysore, Oxford University Press, 1931, p. 92.
mosque; and a voice from heaven came saying, “Call it a secure place of worship” (= 1215 Hegiri). Another inscription gives the 99 names of Allah.”

Courtyard:

The mosque is within a rectangular enclosure measuring 62.50m x 51.30m with its entry being from the eastern side through a small and simple entrance constructed in post and lintel system. The severely plain enclosure wall has windows at regular intervals. Above the wall has windows at regular intervals. Above the wall, a series of brackets support the eaves or the chajja that is followed by the parapet.

The ornate is divided in two parts by plain projecting mouldings. The lower part has niches and the upper part is comprised of lattice work. There are series of Gildatas at regular intervals that divide the parapet in various vertical sections. The parapet above the entrance projects slightly from the wall and becomes semi-circular between the guldastas.
There is a stone enclosure that leads to its roof. From the eastern side of the roof, The mosque and the courtyard on the first floor can be clearly seen. On the northeast corner of the complex is a tank. The tank has three levels, each diminishing in size.

![Plan, Jumma Masjid or Masjid-e Ala, Srirangapatna.](image)

The mosque is a two-storied building which was a continuation of the early Deccani Islamic tradition of mosque building like, the Anda mosque at Bijapur(1608) where the lower storey is occupied by a walled sarai. Similarly, the first two storey at char Munar are part as the mosque.

**Entrance:**

The prayer chamber has five entrance doorways on the eastern side. The outer walls of the upper storey as well as the eaves or chajja and the parapet

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above it are plastered and are ornate. The walls are decorated with a series of cusped arches in relief. These arches are set within rectangular frames formed of floral tracery. The spandrels have flowers carved in relief. A string course separated the wall from a decorative frieze placed below an ornate cornice. This frieze has a series of square perforations meant for pigeons. Below the perforations of the frieze are elegant bowls. It is possible that the bowls may have been meant for the pigeons to perch upon and for food and water. The importance of pigeons in the communication system of Tipu is well known.

The prayer chamber is preceded by a verandah constructed in post and lintel system. Over the beam of the verandah are the chajja and the parapet. The design of this parapet is in harmony with that of the outer enclosure wall giving access to the mosque complex. The prayer chamber of the mosque is flanked by minars on its northern and southern sides. The prayer chamber and verandah face an open courtyard. In the centre of the parapet of the courtyard is a post topped by a clock. A similar clock is also seen at the mausoleum.

**Lower Storey:**

![Lower Storey, Masjid-e Ala](image)
The eastern side of the lower storey has an arcuated verandah approached by six arched openings resting on piers. The verandah is extended on the northern and southern sides. However, this extension is only two bays deep. Set within a rectangular frame, each arch is bordered by a series of miniature niches such niches are a common decorative feature of Tipu’s architecture. The verandah and the corridors of the enclosure wall are used as a madrasa. The verandah along with its extension covers roughly the front half the lower storey. It is flanked by staircase on the northern and southern side that lead to the courtyard of the mosque on the upper storey. The triangular balustrades of this staircase are simple. The floor of the verandah and the steps of the staircases are made of stone. The other parts are constructed of brick and mortar and are plastered. The rear part of the lower storey is built of stone. The middle of the western wall of the lower and upper storey also has a cubical projection. The projection intends to highlight the mihrab from outside.

On elevation, the lower storey consists of three parts. The lowest part forms the plinth which is comprised of plain mouldings. The plinth is followed by the wall which is topped by a projecting cornice followed by the upper storey.\(^7\)

**Upper Storey**

The staircases lead to the upper storey which has arched doorways. Running along the arch is a floral ornament which is crude in rendition. Like all other monuments of Tipu Sultan’s period, here too, stucco is used extensively to render ornamental motifs. Above the all of the entrance is a

\(^7\) Anupa Pande and Savita Kumare, The Heritage of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan, National Museum, pp.89-90.
chajja with its face decorated with lozenge diaper. The chajja is topped by a semicircular arch flanked by guldastas decorated with lattice work. Wooden doorways open to the courtyard.

Upper Storey, Masjid–e Ala

Mihrab:
The mosque consists of a prayer chamber facing east. It is comprised of fifteen bays and five aisles. Each bay is composed of four piers supporting cusped arches on the eastern and the western sides and a pointed arch of very flat appearance on the northern and the southern sides. There are pendentives at the junction that support the shallow domes. The soffits and the pendentives of the bays of the central aisle leading to the mihrab in the middle of the western wall are more ornate than the others. The interior of the prayer chamber painted in white lime appears austere.

However, like the mausoleum, it seems that the interior was originally painted in vibrant colors. The traces of paintings of tiger stripes can be seen at several places where the lime plaster has flaked off. Apart from painting stucco carving is another mode of decoration employed here. These are mainly restricted to the soffits of the shallow domes of each bay, pendentives, upper part of the mosque is the mihrab. The tall and narrow arched opening is set within several recessive brand of stucco decoration executed in relief. Due to the white wash, the decoration has lost its original charm. It opens to the octagonal mihrab.
Doom on mihrab, Masjid-e Ala

Above the mihrab, on the roof, is a small but elegant fluted dome that rests on an elongated octagonal drum. Above this drum, the beautiful dome emerges from a lotus flower. Each rib of this fluted dome is decorated with delicate floral and geometrical patterns replicating designs in lace. The dome is topped by a metal finial. If is composed of a kalasha resting on a base and crowned by a coconut placed over mango leaves is an auspicious motif used in South Indian rituals and festivals. It reflects the harmonious coexistence of two tradition.

Minars:

![Minar, Masjid-e Ala](image)

It is the two minars that are responsible for the majestic appearance of the Jumma Masjid of Tipu Sultan. Each minar rises to a height of 26.50m. and
consists of five superimposed, tapering shafts separated by boldly projecting mouldings. Except the lowest storey, which is square in plan, all the other storeys are octagonal in section. The walls of the lowest storey are plain. Above the wall, a projecting moulding is followed by an ornate entablature topped by a projecting chajja. Their soffit is composed of several projecting serrated leaves, also seen at the mausoleum. The chajja is topped by an ornate parapet with corner guldastas. It is followed by an octagonal section that gives the impression of the huge lotus flower. It is this moulding that makes the transition of plan, from square to octagon, subtle. An arched entrance leads to the interior of the minar.⁸

In the second storey, each face of the octagonal minar has a cusped arch set within a rectangular frame. A significant feature is a number of niches arranged diagonally. Apart from these, there are windows that allow light to penetrate to the interior of the minar. The third storey is relatively simple. The niches, arranged longitudinally, are the only decoration that relieves the severity of its plain surface. The fourth storey is encircled by a balcony with an ornate parapet. Each face of the encircled by a balcony with an ornate parapet. Each face of the parapet has an open niche set within delicately carved tracery.

The ornate guldastas in each of its eight corners are another element that enhances its graceful appearance. The fifth storey also has an ornate balcony that runs around the neck of the dome, the crowning element of the minars. The dome raises form a lotus flower and is highly ornamented. Its surface is enlivened with a chequered pattern. It is further crowned by a metal finial representing the kalasha supporting a coconut fruit over the foliage base.

3.1.3 Masjid-e Aksha

On the western part of the plinth of the mausoleum of Tipu Sultan is a mosque called Masjid-e Aksha mosques constructed during his reign. This is the best proportioned and most homogeneous in design. It is stylistically similar to the Masjid-e Ala built by him.

**Mihrab:**

It is rectangular in plan consists of seven aisles and is two bays deep the central aisle of the mosque leads to the mihrab niche that opens to an octagonal cavity set within a cubical chamber. The chamber projects outside. The prayer hall is preceded by a verandah constructed in post and lintel system. Each bay of the chamber comprises of four piers supporting the soffit of the shallow domes resting on arches and pendentives As in the Masjid-e Ala so also here the eastern and the western sides of the bays have cusped arches and the northern and the southern sides have pointed arches of very flat appearance.
The beauty of this mosque lies in its exquisite stucco ornamentation. It is richly decorated on the exterior walls, parapet, minarets, guldastas and dome above the prayer chamber as well as on the upper part of the piers pendentives soffit of the domes and along the mihrab in the interior. Unlike the Masjid-e Ala, the stucco ornamentation of this mosque is in a better state of preservation and speaks of the high quality of this art during the reigns of Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan. The pendentives are primarily decorated with lozenge diaper pattern and floral traceries of fine variety. The soffit consist of concentric bands of floral decoration executed both as mouldings and traceries. The use of solids and voids complements the fine ornamentation and enhances its splendor.

Mihrab, Masjid - e Aksha, Srirangapatna

The importance of the prayer niche is shown by the extensive ornamentation. There are seven pilasters in recession with ornamental entablatures which lead to the door of the prayer chamber. The placement of a
sword below a golden rectangular panel within the innermost cusped arch is interesting. Resting on two piers outside the prayer chamber are two inscriptional panels. The simplicity of the exterior walls of the prayer chamber is relieved by blind cusped arches framed in rectangular panels. The northern and the southern walls have three whereas the western wall has seven such arches. The central mihrab wall the upper part of the wall is decorated with a series of square perforation with bowls. Above term is the chajja resting on projecting floral brackets. The most ornate part of the exterior is the parapet divided into two horizontal registers by a floral band. The lower register is an arcade framed by delicate floral tracery, while the upper storey is conceived as cinquefoil cresting. The parapet in intercepted by lovely guldastas.

**Gumbaz above the prayer Nich**

![Gumbaz, Masjid-e Aksha, Srirangapatna](image)
The prayer chamber is highlighted by the elegant fluted dome resting on an elongated drum. It is similar to the dome over the prayer chamber at Masjid-e Ala. It rests on a lotus base and is crowned by the typical metal finial of the age. The corners of the eastern side of the parapet are occupied by slender turrets meant to enhance the aesthetics of the building. These turrets are decorated with graceful mouldings. These are akin to the mouldings of the turrets of the mausoleum. It should be noted that “From mid sixteenth century flanking minarets (turrets) were extensively used on mosque facades and gateways and nearly every mosque built in Bijapur has a pair”.  

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9 Kirmani, p.1.
3.1.4 Mosque in Govindappan Bidi, Srirangapatan:

An urdu school runs in a building that seems to be a mosque of Tipu Sultan’s time. It is located in the Govindappan bidi of the fort. The mosque is small in size. On the western side, the plinth of the mosque has several mouldings resembling indigenous style. Above the walls is a chajja supported on brackets followed by the parapet, which is a later addition and is similar in style to the parapets constructed during Tipu’s time. The significant features that give this building its identity of a mosque are the minarets which were originally in all the four corners. The minaret on the southwest corner does not exist anymore. Each minaret has three section. Inside the mosque, there is a verandah that leads to a pillared room. The capitals of pillars support beams that in turn bear the weight of the ceiling. On the western wall can be discerned the mihrab niche. The interior is severely plain Modern renovations have altered its original fabric.
3.2.1 Mausoleum of Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan.

The most exquisite monument of the period of Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan is the Gumbaz or the mausoleum. It was planned during the lifetime of Haider Ali. However, as it was in the case of his other architectural projects, it was his son Tipu Sultan who completed it. As is known from the account of Mir Hussain Ali Khan Kirmani, the biographer of Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan, that Haider, “… also gave orders to form, or plant, the Lal Bagh or garden, to the southward of the town or suburb of Ganjam this side the river Kaveri, and also to build in that garden a Masjid which, in the time of Tipu Sultan, was, called Masjid Aksa. In front of the Masjid also, a mausoleum, covered by a Dome, was erected to superintend the building of which a Darogha was especially appointed. At the period of Hydar’s death this mausoleum was finished, and his body was therein deposited”.10

10Ibid.
This mausoleum was to act also as the last resting place for Tipu Sultan and for his mother Fakr-un-Nissa Seydani Begum, the beloved wife of Haider, Ali. The burial of Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan took place during unfavorable political climate. Haider Ali died near Chittoor on 6th December 1782 when Tipu was campaigning in Malabar. In order to avoid political upheaval, news of his death, writes Kirmani, was kept secret by the trustworthy officers of Haider Ali.\textsuperscript{11}

According to him, “at night, after the due discharge of the officers to the dead the coffin containing the body was filled with essences and perfumes, and dispatched, without the knowledge of any other persons, to Srirangapatam, and the servants who were acquainted with these transactions were seized, and confined separately each without knowledge of others, that they might not be divulged.”\textsuperscript{12} In the meantime, the unfortunate news was conveyed to Tipu Sultan who immediately returned to the capital and after customary demonstration of mourning, ascended the throne on a Saturday, in the commencement of the year 1197, Hijri i.e., 1783.

Tipu met his end while fighting against the British, on 4th May, 1799, Kirmani gives an interesting account of his last day. It reflects Tipu’s immense faith in astrology. Tipu used to take into consideration the calculations of astrologers in his routine work. On the final day of his life, the foretelling of the astrologers according to their calculations of the stars had determined that day to be unlucky and for seven Gharis (or near two hours) after, was a time extremely unpropitious to him, and also that a dark cloud overshadowed the fort during that period: that it would be advisable, therefore, that the Sultan

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., p. 126.
should remain with the army until the evening, and give alms in the name of God. This prediction of the astrologers did not please Sultan, still, however, in respect to the charitable donation which repel and dissipate misfortune, whether it be earthy or heavenly, he gave orders all should be made ready and after he had bathed and had left the bath, he presented as elephant with a black jhool, or caparison, and a quality of pearls, gold and silver tied up in each of the corners of the caparison to a Brahman, and a number of poor men and women being assembled, rupees and clothes being distributed among them.”

Though the foretelling of the astrologers forbade him to confront the enemy, and ultimately met his end while fighting the British.

News of his death remained secret till late in the evening when General Sir David Baird, along with the other English officers and the late killedar of the fort, found the body of the Sultan after a great search. “it (body) was placed in a palki and kept for the night in the treasury, the next morning the whole of his children, servants and friends having seen it for the last time and established its identity, the General gave leave for its interment, and it was deposited in the earth in Lal Bagh, in the Mausoleum of the deceased Nawab.”

He was given a royal burial. “All the preparations were directed by the chief Khazi, and every effort which the shortness of the time and the circumstances permitted was made to perform the ceremony with all the splendor and distinction which the religious observance of the Muhammadan

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13 Ibid., p.126.
14 Ibid., pp.127-128.
15 General Sir David Baird remained in prison at Srirangapatna for four years under Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan after the battle of Pollilur. As Major General, held the final attack on Srirangapatna.
16 Kirmani , op. cit., p.128.
rites and the military honor of European culture could bestow. The body wrapped in muslins and covered with a richly embroidered pall was taken in the state palanquin escorted by six companies of Europeans Abdul Khaliq, Tipu’s second son, was chief mourner others in the long procession were Colonel Wellesley, Meer-allum and the chiefs of the Nizam’s army the khazi and many palace attendants. At the gateway of the Gumbaz the grenadiers formed up in two lines, through which the palanquin-bier passed, and presented arms.”

The last Effort and Fall of Tippoo Sultan, engraving, 1800, after a painting by Henry Singleton, Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad.

Here, it would be significant to see how the death of Tipu Sultan, one of the most discussed personalties in modern Indian history, has been portrayed by different interest groups. If one analyses the paintings commissioned buy the British, the manipulation of events will be clear. In a painting titled the Last Effort and Fall of Tippoo Sultan, one of the most discussed personalties in modern Indian history, has been portrayed by different interest groups. If one analyses the paintings commissioned buy the British, the manipulation of events will be clear. In a painting titled the Last Effort and Fall of Tippoo Sultan, one of the most discussed personalties in modern Indian history, has been portrayed by different interest groups. If one analyses the paintings commissioned buy the British, the manipulation of events will be clear. In a painting titled the Last

\[\text{Parsons, Srirangapatam, p. 134.}\]
Attempt of Tipu Sultan, Tipu’s final combat with a British soldier is shown. Actually, Tipu was never killed in direct encounter. British soldiers discovered hid body after his death. However, in this painting he is shown without regal aura. His turban has fallen to the ground. In this context turban acquires symbolic significance. One may note that while the British soldiers is shown moving forcefully and dominantly towards Tipu, the latter is shown with his left hand on his chest and right hand holds the sword of Tipu Sultan. The artist further contrasts the helpless movements and expressions of the Tipu’s soldiers with the firm and purposeful gestures of the British soldiers.

General Sir David Baird discovering the body of the Sultan Tippoo Sab.1843. John Burnet after Sir David Wilkie, Anna Buddle.

In this context another paintings commissioned by the wife of general David Baird who commissioned a portrait by Sir David Wilkie in 1834. It was
entitled as General Sir David Baird Discovering the Body of Sultan Tippoo Sahib after having captured Seringapatam on the 4th May 1799. This painting became iconic and was hung in the Royal Academy, London.\textsuperscript{18}

The body of the Sultan is shown supported by two of his servants. It was natural for Baird’s wife to commission such a portrait where her husband is shown in his moment of triumph. The popularity of the paintings, however, reflects contemporary British agenda to glory their victory over Tipu Sultan. In reality, however, the victory over Tipu was a difficult task for the British and had been the only hurdle in establishing their superiority in South India. The British had to suffer a huge loss in this war against Tipu. In this context, the paintings may be seen as attempts to wipe out the memory of the huge losses suffered by the British, as also as an agenda of glorification.

To substantiate this point it would be significant to quote from Kirmani’s account, “He shed his blood for the sake of the religion of the true god”\textsuperscript{19} “Tipu lived in honour fifty five years and reigned seventeen. His heart was ever bent on religious warfare and at length he obtained the crown of martyrdom even as he desired.”\textsuperscript{20} The epitaph on the tomb of Tipu Sultan also declares him a martyr, “The light of Islam and the faith left this world. Tipu became a martyr for the faith of Muhammad. The sword was lost the offspring of Haider was a great martyr – by process called Abjad give 1213 the date of his death according to the Muhammad era of Hejira.”\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{19} Kirmani, op.cit., p. 128.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., p. 129.
The claims of the natives to portray Tipu as a martyr and a religious leader can also not be accepted. In fact he was an ambitious and shrewd politician. Kate Brittlebank\textsuperscript{22} has rightly cautioned while dealing with the sources pertaining to Tipu’s period when she compares the writings of Alexander Beatson and C. Hayavadana Rao regarding the funerary procession of Tipu Sultan Beatson writes “The Streets through which the procession passed were lined with inhabitants many of whom prostrated themselves themselves before. And expressed their grief by loud lamentations. On the other hand C. Hayavadana Rao has opined that the people never left. On their part, they owed any obedience to him The Tie of sovereign and subject was non-existent between him and the people of Mysore “Now it should be noted that Beaston was an eyewitness of the event whereas C. Hayavadana Rao, whose writings in his History of Mysore though a mine of information was an employer of the Maharaja of Mysore, a descendant of the family reinstalled by the British after the fall of Srirangapatna. This is not the only incident of contradictory information form contemporary sources regarding the death and burial of the Sultan.

\textbf{Gateway}

\textsuperscript{22} Kate Brittlebank, Tipu Sultan’s Search for Legitimacy, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1997, pp. 9-10.
The mausoleum is entered from north through an arched gateway. The gateway is rectangular in plan and comprises of outer and inner arched openings. These openings are connected through a narrow passage that is flanked on either side by chambers. On elevation the outer façade is divided into three sections and is two storied. The upper storey served as the naubat Khana the royal drum house or musicians gallery.\textsuperscript{23} The central section of the lower storey projects from the wall and is boarder than the flanking sections. The recessed arch opening set within a rectangular frame is executed in this projecting part. There are five levels of recession. The outer two are cusped arches seen together they form a double scalloped ornament. A similar kind of arch was seen as early as the mid-sixteenth century in Ali Shaid Pir’s mosque at Bijapur. The third and fourth are ogee arches. The fifth and the innermost arch is semi-circular and it leads to the interior of the gateway. The rectangular frame in which this outer archway is set has a single row of miniature niches. Such a treatment of the façade breaks the monotony of an otherwise plain structure. The walls flanking the central projection have blind arches set within rectangular frames. Like the central frame these too are decorated with miniature niches. A similar treatment of niches on the façade can be seen in the gateway of the Dargah of Gisu Daraj in Gulbarga. The great Bijapur minister Afzal Khan constructed it in the mid 17\textsuperscript{th} century.

A chajja divides the façade in tow storeys. The chajja however is not continuous. The one above the central projection is higher than those over the flanking chambers. The soffit of the chajja is provided with a leaf like motif. The central part of the upper storey also projects from the wall and is posited above the doorway it extends laterally only to half of the lower storey on either

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.
side. It is provided with the window of the naubat khana Miniature niches border the walls of the central and flanking wings. The chajja is further topped by the parapet with finials at regular intervals.

The outer arched opening leads to the interior of the gate which has as mentioned above a passage flanked by square chambers on a plinth. The inner arched opening that open to the garden of the mausoleum is a simple semi-circular arch. From the rear of this gateway on the eastern side is a stairway that leads to the naubat Khana. The treatment of the façade of the gateway from the rear is similar to that of the front. It is noteworthy that though this gateway reflects austerity. Its excellence lies in the fact that it elegantly frames the mausoleum and gives a full view of it.

Garden

A long path leads to the mausoleum This was originally planned within Lal Bagh a garden known in contemporary literature for its richness “He (Tipu) spent immense sums of money on the garden and lavishly planted it with fruit and ornamental tress from far Kabul and khandahar Mention is made in contemporary recorded of peaches from Persia in such abundance that no one could be found to take them away of rose apples and custard apples, mangoes, limes, pomegranates, mulberrie, oranges and apples the lacott and the pumplemose”\textsuperscript{24}

However at present the garden has lost its grandeur and its boundary is narrowed down by agrarian land. It is well known that laying out a garden acquired symbolic significance in Islamic architecture particulary mausoleum architecture. From the surviving evidence, it seems that most of the gardens

\textsuperscript{24} Parsons, Srirangapatam, p.128.
planned under the patronage of Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan were based on a charbagh pattern pioneered by the Mughals. In this form of a garden the plot was divided into four parts by narrow waterway that had symbolic significance. The gardens were associated with paradisical imagery and the flowing water in four channels symbolized four heavenly river of honey, milk, wine and water.

“A description of the paradise promised to the Godway therein are streams of unstaling water and streams of milk unchanging in flavor, and streams of wine delicious to the driners, and streams of purified honey there will be for them every kind of fruit in it and forgiveness from the Lord”.

(The Qur’an 46.15, Surat Muhammed)

“Indeed Allah will admit those who have faith and do righteous deeds into gardens with streams running in them.”

**The Mausoleum**

Mausoleum of Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan

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The built area of the mausoleum is 8464 sq. m. The mausoleum is on a square plinth. An L-shaped cloister surrounds this plinth which forms an open arcade on the interior side (the side facing the mausoleum). The height (4m) is constant throughout the cloister. It is punctuated in the cardinal directions by walkways. The cloister is divided into several bays with vaulted roofs supported by piers. By making the cloister run around the four sides of plinth of the tomb, the architect clearly demarcated the sacred space formed by the mosque and mausoleum from other secular and domestic spaces which originally included the palace, pavilion and other part of Lal Bagh. Such structures have often been used as madrasas or the resting place for the visitors and pilgrims in Islamic building traditions. During the siege of 1792, it served as a hospital for the sick and wounded British troops. Many trees of the garden were cut down and a number of British soldiers were buried there. This enraged Tipu and later when he came in possession of the site, he dug up these corpses and threw them into the river. He repaired the mausoleum thoroughly and took every possible measure to eradicate the remnants of its late possessors.

The plinth of the mausoleum is approached by a flight of steps provided in the centre of all three sides except the west. A very low parapet runs around the plinth, it is interrupted in the middle of the northern southern and eastern sides to provide the steps. Miniature turrets, purely ornamental in character flank these steps. The tomb is in the centre of this large plinth. A mosque (28.35m x 18.00 m) known as Masjid-e Aksha occupies the western end of this

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26 South-east and South-west Cloister = 173 m. North-east and north-west cloister = 177m.
28 Parsons, Srirangapatam, p. 127.
plinth and is of great beauty. In fact, the mausoleum of Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan is a continuation of the Indo-Islamic architectural tradition of the Deccan. Here one may draw attention to the architectural tradition of the Adil Shahi Sultans of Bijapur and the Qutb Shahi Sultans of Golconda. The finest specimen of the Adil Shahi tombs is the tomb complex of Ibrahim Adil Shah II, also known as Ibrahim ka Rauza. The tomb building is on the eastern side of the high plinth. The western side of the plinth has a splendid mosque. There is a tank between the two structures. In such a plan both the mosque and tomb were given equal importance. However in the case of the Qutb Shahi rulers, the tomb occupies the centre and the mosque is on the western end. In fact it is interesting to note that in the case of the Qutb Shahi tradition of building, each tomb has a mosque attached to it. Also in terms of plan and elevation the tomb was given prominence the size of mosque varied from a single bay to multiple bays.

The mausoleum of Haider Ali and Tipu sultan borrows heavily from the Qutb Shahi tradition. He tomb of Abdullah Qutb Shah (d.1672) at Golconda and some other tombs of the dynasty are of this type. These double-storied tombs are square in plan and stand on a plinth. The lower storeys of these tombs are surrounded by arcaded verandahs topped by chajja which rest crenellated parapets. The turrets provided in the four corners of the parapets further enhance the aesthetic appeal of the Qutub shahi tombs. The walls of the upper storeys are generally divided into five sections by an arcade. Most of these tombs are crowned by bulbous domes emerging from lotus petals on a high drum. Around these drums runs a delicately carved parapet that balances the overall design of these tomb buildings.
Plan and Elevation of the Tomb Chamber.

The tomb of Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan is square in plan. It has entrances in the centre of all three sides except the north where the entrance is replaced by an exquisite tracery. Surrounding the chamber is a pillared verandah. On elevation the mausoleum has a box-like appearance and its walls are divided externally into two equal storeys topped by a dome. The lower storey is surrounded by a spacious verandah. Its roof is constructed in post and lintel system and is supported by black polished pillars. The two-storey box-like structure dome as well as ornamentation of the tomb of Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan are features that seem to be borrowed from the Qutb shahi tradition.
Lower Storey:

All four walls of the lower storey are divided into five sections. The entrances occupy the central section on each side except the northern. Here the entrance as mentioned above is replaced by a window with fine tracery. These cusped-arched entrances are set within rectangular frames adorned with lotus petal motif. The spandrels have round medallions decorated with floral motif and are attached to the frame by a stalk. The cusped arch emerges from the capital of thin pilasters forming the inner jambs of the doorframe finely executed stylized lotus petals serve as border for the arch. Above the entrance is the lintel and it projects outwards from the entrance. The lintel has in its centre a rectangular black register with a Persian inscription engraved in white. The black and white contrast adds to the beauty of the impressive entrance. On either side of this register is a floral motif. Flanking this register is floral motif. Flanking within niches. The inscription on the lintel of the southern door extols the diplomatic policy of Haider Ali. It can be translated as below Dar Mulk-e-Hajazaaz Ali Haider, Maf tooh shodeh naft Kila-e-Khaiber (line-1)
In the territory of Hijaz because of Ali Haider seven doors of Khaiber were opened. Because of the Deccani Haider ali the rules of Karnataka obeyed (him) and turned into one country. Zin Haidr Deccani duval karnatak, gashtand motie yak khedive kishvar (line-2)29

Door way Mausoleum of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan

Lord Dalhousie added the present double doors inlaid with ivory30 after the original started withering away. The manner in which these doors synchronize with the overall design suggests that it might have been inspired by the original design. The outer face is divided into four panels which are decorated by ivory inlay the vase motif a ubiquitous decorative ornament of Tipu’s art and architecture is seen here. A common feature of the vase and plant motif is the minimal scale for the vase. It could be conjectured that such a device in delineation of scale was probably to emphasize the significance of the

flowering plant or tree as a symbol of abundance and prosperity. There is fluidity of line especially in the rendition of leaf, stalk and flowers. The second panel of the door is conceived of as a garden of shrubs. The third panel is similar to the lower part in composition. The fourth and the topmost panel has a scalloped edge. It houses a pot from which emerges a floral plant with tendrils. The tender, undulating stalks of these tendrils form cartouches, each of which has a flower in the centre. The light colour of ivory used to render the decorative motif on the dark wooden doors is aesthetically very pleasing. Though all the doorways are stylistically similar, there are variations in the execution of the finer details of the months.

The walls of the lower storey are faced with granite stone each wall on either side of the central entrance is divided into two sections. Each section has two cusped blind arches. The arches are set in rectangular frames the frames are adorned with thick meandering tendrils forming crouches ornamented by flowers. On the western side flanking the door on either side are two inscriptions. The left panel recorded the martyrdom of Tipu-sultan and also refers to the fall of Srirangapatna.
It can be translated as
Bismillah IrrehamanNirrahim
Rabbe-arham- e s- Siltan alkarim(Line 1)
“God who is merciful and a great leader.”(Line 1 : translation)

Tipu sultan shahid shod nagah,
Khune khud rikhta fi sabilallah(Line 2)
Tipu Sultan suddenly became a martyr he poured his own blood in the path of
God. .”(Line : translation)

Bud Ziqadeh bist va hashtum an,
Shodeh dar ruz shabeh hashr eyan(Line 3)
It was the 28th of the month of Ziqa’deh, because on that Saturday was seen the
Day of judgment Mir spoke of the year of the martyr with ah the light of Islam
and that of religion departed from the world. .”(Line 3 : translation)

Mir salash beh neem’ah’ beguft,
Nur-e-Islam va din za duniya raft(Line 4)
Mir spoke of the year of the martyr with ‘ah’ the light of Islam and that of
religion departed from the world(Line 4 : Translation)

Tarikh gasht kushatan Sultan-e- Haidari,
Bevajehe din-e-Muhammad shahid shod(Line 5)
History recorded the killing of Haideri Sultan (Tipu), because of the faith of
Muhammad he became a martyr.

Cho an mard-e-maidan nehan shod za dunya,
Yal-i-goft tarikh shamshir gumshod(Line 6)
Since that man of battle disappeared form the world , a warrior said that sword is lost to history.

Ruhe Qodsi arsh goft ke ah, nasl Haider shahid akbar(Line 7)
A divine soul of the heaven said ‘ah’ a great martyrdom of the generation of Haider.
Saal va tarikh (shahir(d)]) begoft,
Hami din shah zemane beraft (Line 10)
The date and the year of the matrydom of him (Tipu), the supporter of the religion, the king of the period departed.

The verandah is constructed in post and lintel system There are thirty-six pillars nine on each side to support the ceiling. The base of the pillar is square it is topped by an inverted lotus, above which rests an octagonal section that
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gives rise to a fluted shaft The basal mouldings are repeated for the capital in a reverse order. The crowning element is partially tarangita (wavy) and supports the ceiling. There are cenotaphs of other members of Tipu’s family on the south and southeast corner of the verandah as well as on the plinth.

Tracery, Mausoleum of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan

As mentioned earlier, the walls of the mausoleum on each of its four sides, except the north, have entrances. A window with exquisite reticulated tracery (jali) closes the northern side. It is set in a rectangular frame with several bands. The outer band is plain. A band adorned with lotus petals follows it the third band is the cusped arch that frames the jali comprised of floral and geometrical latticework. The spandrels of the arch are decorated with floral medallions with a stalk.
Upper Storey:

The upper storey of the mausoleum has an arcade of five cusped blind arches within rectangular frames in each of its four sides arches and projects from the wall. Its spandrel is more elaborate than those of the flanking arches. It has delicately carved floral motifs in stucco. In fact, the mausoleum of Tipu Sultan is one of the best specimens of stucco carving in India. Ornate rectangular panels crown these blind arches. Such registers are a common decorative motif in the architecture patronized by Tipu Sultan. Each wall is topped by a chajja supported on small but elegantly carved stucco brackets. Three decorative bands precede the brackets. The ornaments include lotus petals, creepers of flowers with four petals and diamond motif. From the chajja hang metal lotus buds which compliment the chajja hang metal lotus buds which compliment the delicate and intricate stucco carving.

It should be noted that Mysore was a centre of ivory carving and the region was also influenced by Hoysala art. The exquisite stucco carving may
be seen as continuation of the prevalent tradition of the region. The designers of the building managed to create a serene rhythm in the overall treatment of the wall. The ornate parapet of the terrace has primarily three parts. The lowest part is relatively simple in appearance. The middle and the broadest section displays finely rendered floral motifs in which are embedded open niches in rectangular frames. The top section has fluid cinquefoil cresting. The parapet is interrupted at regular intervals by elaborate finials or guldastas. Each finial has a perforated shaft topped by a torus moulding from this emerges a lotus flower with a dome crowned by a lotus bud. The parapet is slightly taller and projecting at the corners. At these junctions, the parapet is divided into two sections. The lower part represents an arcade. The upper part is solid with al floral pattern executed in low relief.

Above the parapet at all four corners are turrets that are surrounded by small finials or guldastas. Each turret has an octagonal shaft divided into three parts the lowest part displays a blind arcade. It is separated from the middle part by a projecting octagonal band decorated with leaf motif. The middle part has floral design as its lower constituent and a thin band with geometrical motif as its upper constituent the middle part is separated from the top section by projecting band of acanthus leaf-like motif. It is followed by a guilloche band. A square abacus crowns the shaft it has plain sides which are bordered by fillets of geometrical pattern. This abacus is crowned by a domical capital emerging from a lotus flower and is decorated with floral and geometrical motif while lotus bud crowns it. At the four corners of the abacus are small finials similar to those on the base of the shaft.\(^{31}\)

\(^{31}\) Anupa Pandey and Savita Kumari, The Heritage of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan, p.121-128.
Parapet Around the Dome

Above the chajja of the upper storey and running around the neck of the dome is an exquisite parapet with turrets at its corners. The parapet is composed of different parts, each distinguished by its ornament. The broadest part is the most exquisite. By making the tracery frame the niche and the niche frame the tracery in this part the designer managed to fuse simplicity and rich ornamentation.

Finally the parapet is framed by a beautiful floral cresting intercepted by four exquisite guldastas or finials of the four guldastas the central guldastas have octagonal shafts with beautifully rendered floral tracery with emphasis on verticality. These are crowned by a fluted dome topped by a lotus bud. The guldastas flanking the central ones are square in section with shaft decorated flanking the central ones are square in section with shaft decorated with floral

Parapet, Mausoleum of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan
tracery in which are embedded two framed arched nices one above the other. The crowing domes of these guldastas are plain. There are turrets at the four corners of the parapet which balance the bulbous dome. The shaft of these turrest up to the level of creasting of the parapet is merely implied. Above the parapet the shaft varies from square to octagonal and finally to a circular oblong floriated dome that in turn is crowned by a kalasha. The other ornamental motifs include lozenge pattern, lotus petal bands double –lily motif, six petalled flowers and plamettes.

The parapet with its elegant turrets runs around the neck of the dome of the mausoleum. The dome is plain it emerges from a lotus flower and is capped by this ornament also. Finally one may see the kalasha crowned by a crescent the pristine simplicity of the dome when seen in contrast with the intricate and fine stucco carving of the mausoleum as a whole has a remarkable effect.

**Interior**

Cenotaphs, Mausoleum of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan
There are three cenotaphs housed in the mausoleum the central one is that of Haider Ali. The cenotaph of his beloved consort Fakr-un-Nissa Seydani Begum rests on the east and that of Tipu Sultan on the west. According to Constance E. Parsons who wrote in 1931, “The tombs are covered with shawls, usually red for Tipu as one who died a martyr for the faith, black or purple for Haidar and pink for Seydani Begum. But the clothes and colours vary. The most magnificent coverings thickly embroidered in gold are kept in the adjoining treasury and are rarely used or shown except when very distinguished guests visit the tombs. They were presented by prince Ghulam Muhammad Tipu’s eighth son.”

“At the foot of each tomb are bunches of peacocks feathers to indicate royalty and on the graves rose petals for remembrance are strewn.”

Unlike the exterior where the design executed in white stucco gives a sense of order, symmetry, and serenity, the interior appears exuberant, bright, and brilliant. It seems that the bubri motifs are executed with a free hand, though a careful examination points red-yellow interior of the mausoleum is lavishly embellished with painting and stucco carving. The colours used to paint the interior are primarily red and yellow with occasional highlights of black, white, and green. The pristine white of the exterior contrasts with the vividly coloured interior, what seems to the remote and frozen from outside suddenly come to life inside probably to suggest the living presence of the Sultan even in his martyrdom.

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32 Parsons, Srirangapatam, p. 132.
33 Ibid., p. 133.
The tiger stripe motif dominates the interior decoration along with other floral and geometrical motifs. Tipu utilized the tiger motif as an emblem in several forms, one of these being the tiger stripe. It is commonly referred to as bubri, from babr meaning tiger the interior walls of his tomb are entirely covered with this pattern These are rendered in red colour with a thin back outline. Their execution on a bright yellow ground further enhances the brilliant effect These are either in a group of three forming a sort of three row coming form different direction to merge in the centre to form an ‘A’-shaped motif.

Lion motifs Bala Hisar Darwaza of Gulconda Fort.
Tipu was not the first Muslim ruler of south India to use the tiger motif. Prior to him the sun and tiger emblem can be seen in the Bahmani monuments. One such brilliant example of the sun and tiger emblem comes from the spandrels of the entrance gateway to the royal chamber of Takht Mahal at Bidar. Originally this motif done on tiles was in brilliant colours. However not much has survived no Lion motif executed in stucco can be seen between the arch and lintel of Bala Hisar Darwaza of Gulconda Fort. The tiger symbolises strength and valour in this context its association with royalty is obvious.

Tipu. Overpowering wild animals Sibi, Tumkur

It would be interesting to note that the Sultan’s perception of himself as a tiger was accepted and cherished by his subjects as courtiers. A good example which testifies this fact come from a mural of Narsimha Swamy
temple. At Sibi located at a distance of 20 km north of Tumkur (Karnataka) where in one of the paintings he is shown fighting with a tiger in a majestic manner. The temple saw its commencement in 1795 and completion in 1811.  

It should be noted that even though the temple was not funded by royalty yet it depicts a splendid representation of Tipu. Overpowering wild animals.

One of the reasons for depiction of this theme could be that Tipu frequently visited Sibi for hunting as during his time the region was a forest area. However the manner in which he is shown subjugating three wild creatures is definitely an attempt of the main temple.

Coming back to the mausoleum of Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan the interior walls on the southern, eastern and western sides are divided into three vertical sections ornamented by blind arches and interrupted by entrances. The only exception is the northern side. Instead of an entrance it has a window with an exquisite tracery or jali. The light filtering inside the chamber through this jali and three entrances infuse a mystic atomosphere inside the interior “it (light) is related to the divine presence and the cosmic intelligence which also shines within man and is the means by virtue of which man is able to realize the One Through the ingenious use of light the Ilamic architectural spaces are integrated with each other and into a unity which transcends the experience of ordinary and profane space”.

36 Ibid., p.13.
37 Ibid., p.56.
38 Nasr, op. cit., p.55.
The upper part of the wall has a beautiful trefoil cresting. Above this both squinches and kite-shaped pendentives are used to transform the plan from square into a star-shaped section that gradually becomes circular. The space between the star-shaped and circular section is occupied by a vibrant and dynamic, alternating small and large floral motif. Above the circular section rests an ornate cylindrical drum that serves as base for the dome. The soffit of the dome is shallow. Each component of the architecture has a specific symbolism. “The dome, while creating a ceiling which protects from both heat and cold, is also the symbol of the heavenly vault and its centre the axis mundi which relates all levels of cosmic existence to the one. The octagonal base of the dome symbolizes the Throne and pedestal and also the angelic world the square or rectangular base the corporeal world on the earth. The stalactite or muqarnas structures represent reflection here below of the supernal archetypes the descent of the heavenly abode towards the earth and crystallization of the celestial substance or ether in terrestrial forms. The external form of the Dome
symbolizes the aspect of the Divine Beauty or jamal and the vertical divine majesty or jalal”  

The special attention given to each part of the mausoleum indicates its importance for the patron. An inscription on the western wall of the mausoleum composed in 1782 the year of Haider’s death describes the dome in a splendid manner C Hayavadan Rao translates it thus.

Marvellous is the dome which from the loftiness of its construction has made the firmament low in height. As you will you may call it either the moon or the sun and the firmament finds itself put to shame on account of envy. The pinnacle of dome is light of the firmament’s eye from which the moon has borrowed its light. The fountain of mercy has gushed out from the earth and the cherub angles have surrounded it “  

Apparently Kirmani composed the elegant epitaph of the mausoleum.

**Gumchi or the Tomb of Mir Ghulam Ali Khan at Srirangapatna.**

About a kilometer from the bus stand of Srirangapatna is a tomb popularly known as Gumchi. It was built for Mir Ghulam Ali Khan. Tipu reposed great confidence in him and admired his diplomatic skills. When Tipu surrendered two of his sons as part of the treaty of 1792 to Lord Cornwallis, Ghulam Ali Khan was sent along with them. In 1799 he was present on the occasion of the installation of the child Raja in Mysore.  

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41 Parsons, Srirangapatam, p.151.
Later on, he Shifted to Vellore and was assigned the responsibility of taking care of Tipu’s sons.\textsuperscript{42}

However he did come back to Srirangapatna. In 1809 colonel Kirkpatrick notes that Ghulam Ali Khan was still living in Srirangapatam, and he and colonel beaston both assert that Mir Suddur had been granted a pension of 3,000 stat pagodas per annum by the Brirish.\textsuperscript{43} According to Constance E. Parsons, he spent his last days at Vellore and was never buried in the tomb commemorated for him as the two grave inside the chamber and the one in the westerner verandah were those of women in their present state. The graves are dilapidated and cannot be identified.

\textbf{Tomb of Mir Gulam Ali Khan Sri Rangapatna}

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., pp.151-160.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.p. 151.
The tomb is also in a dilapidated condition and soon may be lost forever. The debris of the tomb lies at the site. It is made of brick and mortar and is plastered. Its significance lies in the fact that it is stylistically similar to the mausoleum of Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan. The tomb is square in plan and appears two storied from outside. Both the storeys are of equal height and between them appears to be a stringcourse. The lower storey is surrounded by a covered verandah which rests on pillars supporting cusped arches in this regard the tomb follows the Golconda tradition. Above these arches rests a chajja which in turn was originally topped by an elaborate parapet which has survived at a few place. At each corner of this parapet exist small finials. Another similar ornate parapet rests above the chajja of the upper storey. The dome above the tomb chamber emerges from a lotus flower and is crowned by a finial.

From inside the plan transforms from square to octagonal to circular with squinches and pendentives. The circular band is quite board and is adorned with lucid floral pattern. A similar design is seen in the tomb of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan. Above this runs a narrow band of lotus petals. In the centre of the soffit of the dome is a flower motif.

**Mausoleum or Tomb at Kolar:**

The makbara or the tomb of Fathe Muhammad, father of Haidar Ali, is one of the important early buildings in Kolar and is located at a distance of about 68kms from Bangalore. It is still maintained by endowments. Fateh Muhammad served as a military officer of the Maharaja of Mysore and was
killed near Kolar. After coming to power, Haidar Ali erected a handsome mausoleum, a mosque, a madrasa and a well.\textsuperscript{44}

![Tomb of Fathe Muhammad, Kolar](image)

All these buildings were planned within a garden. Apart from his father, there are graves of other family members within this mausoleum. There are a total of twelve graves, including the grave of the first wife of Haidar Ali. The original fabric of this comply is much altered. The total surviving area is about 15 acres.

The mausoleum is rectangular in plan and faces east. A simple arched entrance on the right side of its eastern wall leads to the interior. It is a simple structure but has an elegant parapet with minarets in the treatment of this parapet is stylistically similar to the other buildings of the period at Srirangapatna.

\textsuperscript{44} Francis Buchanan, A Journey From Madras through the countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar, Madras, 1870, p.31.
3.3 Idgah

Hyder Ali constructed Idga at Kolar, Arohalli, and Devenehalli

Idgh built by Hyder ali at Kolar

3.4 Temples and Mathas

The numerous charities and endowments Tipu made to several Hindus and Hindu institutions can be listed.

Tipu followed the policy of tolerance and this is further reflected in the grants and donations he made to various temples such as Sarada Devi temple at Laxmi Kanta temple at Kalale, Sri Sidalingeshwara temple at Yediyur and others.45

1782(i) An order directing Haridasayy, amildar of the Baramahal Territory to resume for the Sarkar all the lands and franchises, except Devadayam to and Brhamadayam

1791-99 Letters to Sringeri Mutt.1.(1792) Suppy of men and money necessary for the reconstruction of the Saraswati idol pulled out during the Mahratta raid on Mysore

1782-92 Directing that 1/64 of the grant made to Anandabhatt Gopalbhat of Ananyampettah must be used for the maintance of Lakshminarasimha Pagoda of that village.

(ii) Presentation of a Dutch bell to the Venkataramana Temple of Nagar.

(iii) Presentation of a silver jeweled cup to the Srikanteswara Temple at Nanjangud.

(iv) A proverb in vogue in Kanakala of south Canara District- “Tipu sultan Ale Ruppe”, referring to the silver jewels that Tipu presented to Veera Hanuman Temple of Karnataka.

(v) In Tipu’s time, the idol was installed in the Prasanna Venkateshwara temple in Uratur in Kommaditima and provision was made for the expenses of daily worship and inam lands was granted to the Archakars and others servants of the temple.

Dr. A.K. Shastry’s The records of the Sringeri Dharmasansthana, describes that for over 10 years Tipu remained in constant touch with the Shankaracharya and even the last recorded letter written in 1798 request the Swami to offer worship, three times a day to Lord Isvara and perform the
Chandihavana, a special oblation, for the destruction of enemies and the prosperity of the government. The Sringeri Shankaracharya was not the only Hindu leader who received Tipu’s patronage, but he was surely Tipu’s most important Hindu spiritual guide. The acharya would also have had a soft corner for Tipu as it was the latter who granted an amount of 400 rahatis, a special gold coin, for the restoration of the temple and the reinstallation of the presiding deity, Sri Saradamba, in 1791 A.D. after the temple had been desecrated and pillaged during the Maratha invasion of Mysore.

Of particular interest to the subject of the ring is a letter from Tipu to the Shankaracharya dated November 15, 1793 where he offers his salutation to the Guru and acknowledges receipt of jewellery from the Guru, a Sirapecha, Kalgi (both turban ornaments) and a pair of shawl. So we now know that exchange of gifts was not just from Tipu Sultan to the Guru but also the other way round. Such a gift as this inscribed ring from the Guru would be treasured by the Sultan and kept as an auspicious token among his dearest possessions. Lord Rama is also called as ‘Maryada Purushottam Rama’; Maryada meaning ‘epitome of ethical behaviour’ and Purushottam meaning ‘first among men’. Rama was a God and the Sultan but a man. If the Sringeri Shankaracharya did send this ring to Tipu, perhaps he was only pointing to Tipu an ideal that an earthly monarch should aspire for.