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Arts

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND FEATURES OF ACHABAL GARDEN OF KASHMIR.

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ABSTRACT

The Valley of Kashmir has been called as the Paradise on earth, it's each and every corner is undoubtedly an example of natural beauty. Mughal Gardens like Achabal, Shalimar, Nishat, verinag etc are the most beautiful places of Kashmir, which was constructed by the able Engineers of Great Mughals and their Nobles. The Mughal Gardens of Kashmir are the famous and one of the beautiful tourist spots of Kashmir. The present Achabal Garden is a specimen of great Art and architecture. Achabal Garden is a famous tourist spot of Kashmir, in this Garden, thousands of Visitors visited a year. In Kashmir Garden Culture is very old, but the Islamic Char-bagh style Garden tradition started after Mughal Emperor Akbar Conquered Kashmir In 6 October 1586. Under Mughal Rule Kashmir has become a land of Gardens. Even today Most beautiful Gardens belong to Mughals. Jahangir and his son Shah-jahan are the real founders of Mughal Gardening culture in Kashmir

INTRODUCTION;

The Beloved wife of Mughal Emperor Jahangir was originally responsible for building the present Achabal Garden in 1620. This Garden was Named after her as Begumaabad. During the Mughal rule in Kashmir this Garden was known as Sahebabad. In the memory of the Mughal Emperor Jahangir. This Garden is built under a mountain known as the Achabal-thung, in local language Achabal-thung means mountain peak of Achabal. Like other Mughal Char-bagh style Gardens this Garden is also based on four terraces, these terraces are built in an ascending order. This Achabal Garden is purely based on the Model of Persian Islamic Char-bagh style.

Historical Background And Features Of Achabal Garden

Achabal Garden is located in the Shangus Tehsil of present Anantnag district of Jammu and Kashmir. Achabal lies in the south east side of Anantnag district and it is about six (6) kilometers away from the main Anantnag town. About the Anantnag city, Sir Walter Lawrence writes that it's a "place of countless springs". The longitude and latitude of Achabal is 75.17 and 33.41. Its about 64 kilometers away from the main Srinagar city, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir state. In the book the valley of Kashmir, Sir Walter Lawrence writes that the most beautiful of all Mughal Gardens is Achabal Garden, which originates from the Sosaanwar Hill, Jahangir use it for the service of beauty and pleasure. He also writes that the "bring river which disappears at Dewalgam in the fissures of the lime stone is the main source of the spring. This Achabal Garden is one of the important Persian style Mughal pleasure Garden. Nila, the writer of Nilmat-purana mentioned a spring in the present place of Achabal Garden, he called that Spring as Achabal-naag. The ancient name of Achabal Garden was probably "Akkshavalaa". Achabal bagh was famous as an orchard Garden under the Sultan period of Kashmir. Pandit Kalhan in Rajtarangani mentioned Aksavalaa as the name of Achabal village which was founded by the king Aksha.

The four terraces of Achabal Garden are placed in an ascending order, which also depicts Achabal Garden as a Charbagh style Garden. The Garden of Achabal is famous for its spring or for its stream. The spring water moves out from a hole of 18 inches high and about 12 inches in diameter.

There are various fountains in this Garden, Abul Fazal mentioned a fountain in his biography of Emperor Akbar, Ain-I - Akbari. According to him, the fountain in the bagh is so powerful that it pumps water up to heights and it is famous for its coolness and refreshing features and refreshing qualities. According to Stuart Achabal Garden is not only

famous for its ancient roots in Naga-cult of Kashmir, but it is a place where great rulers planted Chinars, Pines, flowers. Evergreen etc.

The author of Ain-e-akbari writes, ' by drinking the water of Achabal a sick person will feel fit,

When The Noor Jahan visited the Garden, was so impressed by the natural beauty that she not only laid a Garden but also constructed Hamam and pavilions. But the historian Bates in his Gazetteer says that it was made by Emperor Jahangir. Malik-haider says that During Mughal era Achabal was called as Bagamabaad or Shahii-abaad, which was built on the advice of Noor-jahan, above the Achabal spring. He also mentions that a Garden and a building was also built in it. Author Fida Hasnain explains, that Jahangir had breathed his last breath in the Garden of Achabal, but Noorjahan did not disclose the news of Jahangir's death, she secretly got removed the intestines and other organs of Jahangir and buried them at Chingus in Rajouri to preserve the body, Jahangir's body was later buried at Lahore.

Sir Young husband in his book "Kashmir described" has described the Garden in the following lines; Garden's delicious and remarkable sight makes it worth to visit. It is a beautiful Garden. I have never seen such a beautiful camp that Maharaja has placed for the enjoyment of Lord-Minto. The waterfall and the running fountains gave a special effect to its environment. During the reign of Shah-jahan, Mughal Prince Dara Shikoh built a mosque in the Garden. Walter Lawrence in his book mentioned that, Kashmir is rich in springs, all associated with the quaint old snake-worship. The springs are useful auxiliaries to the mountain streams in irrigation, and are sometimes the sole source of water, as in the case of Achabal, Kokarnag and Verinag on the south and Arpal in the north.

The ancient of Hindus, Nilmatpurana mentioned that there is a spring in Achabal known as Aksha. Kalhan in his book Rajtarangani mentioned Achabal by the name of Aksavala, and he further said it was founded by the king Aksha. William Stuart in his Research said that Achabal was not only an ancient known belief of Naga people, but it is a beautiful place of kings who planted poplars, flower plants, and many other trees in it. In Kashmir, Achabal is famous for its finest spring, and it is supposed that river Bringhii is its original source. The water of the river disappears through a hole under a hill at the village waan-Dalgaam. About this source of Achabal it is said that once something was thrown in the Bring-river at waan-dalgaam, and the same thing was seen in the Achabal spring.

Achabal was originally a country House of the kings of Kashmir and then became the house of Mughals.²¹ The Royle Garden of Achabal Contains a number of fruit trees and chinar trees, nowadays it is under the Floriculture Department of Jammu and Kashmir, and it is now a Garden full of flowers and other trees. The water of the spring runs through the middle of Garden by a central channel, which is about sixty feet wide. The water was further divided into small canals of about six feet wide on each side. In the Garden Two water Tanks are built along the central canal which are about eight feet long and seventy four feet broad, in the central of these tanks a wooden pavilion of about eighteen feet square and it rests upon a platform of masonry, the lower Tank is about eighty feet square. In the lower end of the Garden there are three waterfalls, the largest one is in the middle of the Garden, which is about six feet wide and eight feet high. The Tanks and other watercourses are lined with the stones, and has a large number of fishes present in them, with a number of fountains erected in them.²² In the Ain-i-Akbari abul-fazl speaks of it "a fountain which shoots up the height of a cubit, and is scarce equalled for its coldness, transparent, and refreshing qualities. The sick that drink of it and persevere in a course of its waters, recover their health. Bernier mentioned that the beauty of the Garden is in its fountain which disperse themselves into a hundred canals around the Garden. No one can ignore this fountain in the garden. He also mentioned that the fountain comes out of the earth as if it is re-mounted and is boiling, He describes that it should be called as a river then a fountain. He said that its water is very good and is so cold that if someone will hold hand on within it could scarcely be borne. The Garden of Achabal is very beautiful and is laid-out in a good manner with various fruit trees and a pond with large quantities of fishes present in it. The lofty cascade is in form of a large sheet, thirty of forty paces in length, it produces a fine effect at night. This Garden has a number of lamps everywhere used for the lighting purpose and for decoration of the Garden, these lamps lighted under this sheet of water.²³

Unfortunately the Road has destroyed the lower terrace of Achabal Garden. The Royle Garden of Achabal is much smaller than it was during the times of Great-Mughals. Achabal is a beautiful natural site which is spoiled by the roads and by other selfish people. This Garden was fallen into decay was repaired a little-bit by the Gulab Singh, he opens a south wall where there is a large Harem building, and an old Hammam built by Mughals and a swimming tank for the women in the centre of the square.²⁴ A doorstep which is an entrance of the second terrace was built in the times of Maharaja Ranbir Singh. Maharaja Ranbir Singh repaired the barahdaris and pavilions. The ruins of the pavilion are remaining nowadays. This Garden does not have any sloping cascades, all the water falls are in vertical shape. The modern buildings of Achabal Garden are contemporaneous with the pavilions. The Hammam which was built by Jahangir was still in a good condition. The most notable thing found in this Garden is a piece of Timber in the compound, which probably belongs to Mughal times. The Earthen pipes supply water to the Garden are also notable ones.

CONCLUSION

The ancient name of Achabal Garden was probably *Akkshavalaa*. Achabal bagh was famous as an orchard Garden under the sultan period of Kashmir. Pandit Kalhan in Rajtarangani mentioned aksavalaa as the name of Achabal village which was founded by the king Aksha. The Achabal Garden is based on a four terraced system which are built in an ascending order. Like the other Mughal pleasure Gardens, Achabal Garden is also a charbagh style Garden. A spring is the main source of water to Achabal Garden, main canal carries the spring water and distributed it into many small canals. The Garden has been repaired from time to time, Maharaja Ranbir Singh repaired the barahdaris and pavilions of this Garden during his rule.

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