

Design Resource

## Idol Making - Kinnal, Koppal

Wood Carving Fine Art

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral and Sowmya B. N.

NID Campus, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/idol-making-kinnal-koppal>



1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
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## Introduction

Kinnal a tiny village in Koppal district has drawn international attention for its toys made up of wood and painted with a variety of colours. A community of artisans recognized as 'Chitragars' is involved in developing and cultivating the original form of art. Kinnal village is situated about 20 kilometres from Koppal. Kinnal was once a successful centre for crafts, with the artisans of the village mastering the fine art of wood carvings. The difficult carvings on the wooden chariot at Hampi, are said to be the work of the families of the Kinnal artisans of today.

Kinnal as commonly known is a small town in the Koppal district of north Karnataka. It is like any other village except for the fact that it dates back to the 13th century era of the great Vijayanagar Empire where the first forms of Kinnal art was practiced. Through the test of time this art has continued to survive and is still being carried out by people whose families have been practicing through generations. Annappa, a Kinnal artist belongs to one of the few families who continues to practice this rare art from struggling to keep the long heritage alive.

The Kinnal craft is a delicate and time consuming process. The objects have a light wooden base on which numerous layers of paste, made from tamarind and saw dust, are applied. Between every layer it has to be dried and then sanded down. At last it is finally smoothened and detailed with chalk paint before being painted. The idols were originally made for the royalty and very wealthy.

Mr. Annappa, a chitragar living in Kinnal village Koppal district. Mr. Annappa have been practicing this craft since past 20 year. His father Mr. Ekappa, a Chitragar awarded by Karnataka Chitrakala Parishat. Mr. Annappa learned this work from his father. This craft occurs from the period of Vijayanagar Empire.



Artisans with his family.



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Artisan carving the idol.



Artisan smoothing the idol.



Artisan shaping the basic details in the idol.



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Artisan detailing the eyes of the idol.



Artisan coloring the idol.

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## Tools and Raw Materials

Following are the tools and raw materials required for toy making:

- Wood: Main raw material used for making Kinnal toys.
- Saw: The tool is used to cut unwanted portion of the wooden piece and also used for marking.
- Chisels: Different types of chisels are used to cut and carve the wood.
- Files: Used to smoothen the surface of the toy.
- Pins, Nails and Glue: Used for joining the wooden parts together.
- Tamarind Paste: Mixture of tamarind seed, gum and saw dust. This paste is applied to increase the thickness of the wood. Is applied to the toy to give complete shape of the body.
- Cloth: This is used to make the layer over the model to prevent from crack.
- Sandpaper: It is used to smoothen the surface of the wood.
- Painting Brush: It is used to apply the color over the model.
- Colors: Natural colors are used.
- Wooden Hammer: Carving process of the wooden piece is done by using hammer.



Poster color.



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Wooden hammer.



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Chisel.



Flat File.



Carving tool.



Saw blade.



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Sculpting tool.



Cotton.



Chalk stone.



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Silver piece.

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## Making Process

Wooden core for each part of the toys are brought. Usually artisan select the lightweight wood such as Poniki. Artisan draw the rough sketch of required shape on the wooden piece using pencil. After finishing the rough sketch the extra wood is chopped off and shaped using saws, chisels and files. The unwanted wooden piece is cut out by using saw tool. The complete carving of the wooden piece is done by using chisel and hammer. Every part of the toy is done separately and attached all together by using adhesive, nails or pins.

Once the required model is obtained, artisan start to applying the tamarind paste over the wooden model. The Tamarind paste is also called as 'Kitta'. The tamarind paste is prepared by using tamarind seeds which are boiled until soft is mixed with gum and sawdust from off cuts or jute. The paste is applied to increase the thickness of the wood. This paste is pressed into shape using thumb. The paste is applied to build up facial features. This is an interactive process and it takes numerous improvements to create a perfect shape. Once this is completed the surface is finished using fine files and sandpapers.

The next stage is layer of cloth. Usually layer of cloth made from old sarees. Tamarind gum is pasted onto small patches of cloth before being placed on the figure, pulling and stretching it to ensure there are no wrinkles. This is applied to prevent cracks which might develop in the tamarind paste as it dries.

The jewellery part of the idol is made by using mixture of cotton, Chalk powder and white adhesive. This mixture is prepared by hammering properly. The tail and horn part of the idol is made by using metal wire.

To prepare the surface for painting it is primed firstly with tamarind gum followed by two coats of white chalk paint. After this is dried, the surface is finally sanded and made ready for painting. To provide finer details and embossing effect, thicker version of chalk powder paste is applied. First the whole model is painted with white primer and any gold or metallic details are covered with aluminium foil which appears as shiny silver.

Once the wooden toy is completely dry, the process of painting begins. One by one the other colors are painted. The choice of colour is based on tradition. Skin tones are usually blue, yellow and orange. A great level of detail is put into shading decorative pieces. The final finishing touch is to paint silver, gold and black lines to detail all the features.



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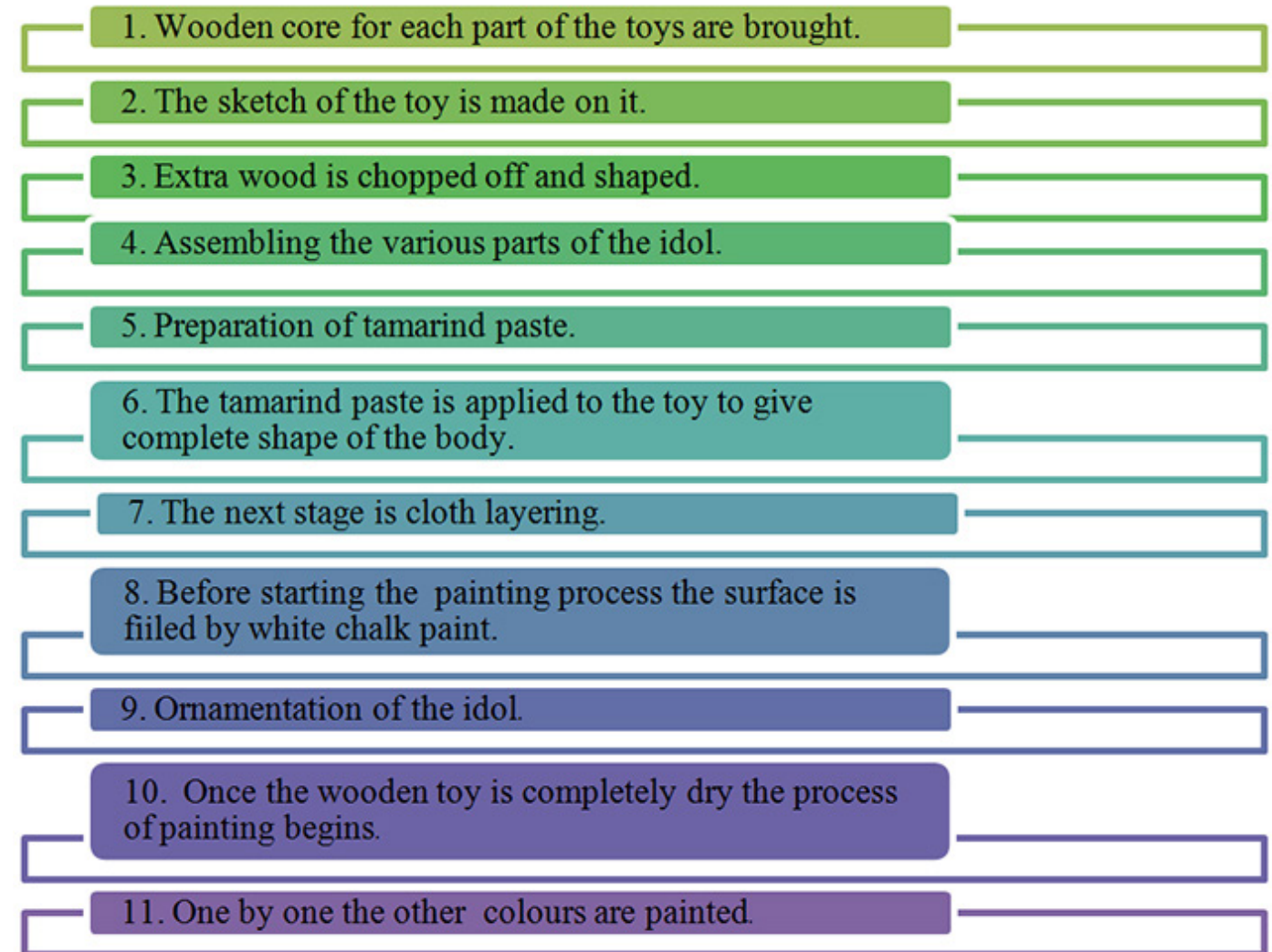
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Flow Chart:



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Sketching the basic details.



Artisan cutting the wood for basic shape.



Artisan carving the wood.



Artisan creating the anatomic shape of face with the help of chisel.

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Artisan smoothing the face of idol.



Mixing of adhesive with jute.



Tamarind seed powder, water and natural adhesive are mixed with hot boiling water.



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Applying the adhesive on the idol after mixing with jute.



After applied the idol kept under the sunlight.



Artisan inserting the metal wire into the idol, which forms the tail of the animal.

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Saw dust mixed with the adhesive to apply for the next layer of idol.



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Artisan rolling the chalk powder mixture.



Applying the chalk powder paste over the idol and carving the paste as an ornament.



Paste is applied to idol of the face for complete details.

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Carving the other ornamental parts of the idol.



Working on the facial details of the idol.



Decorating the horn part and hair part of the idol with chalk powder mixture.

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Artisan displaying the final product of the idol.



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## Products

The idols for worship as temple divinities and decoration, photo frames with difficult carvings and paintings, stools for placing the idols, fruit bowls, birds, cradles for children and variety of toys. Typical Kinnal arts are large wooden idols and murals for temples.

Typical pictures used for making the craft traditionally are Kaamarupi, 10 avatar of Vishnu, Scenes from the Ramayana and other prehistoric texts. Local divinities like Maamma, Garuda, the vehicle of lord Vishnu, Kaamadhenu, the cows who grants wishes.

The price depends on the size of the product, the range starts from INR.1000 to INR.25000. Idols of the god and goddess will last for hundreds of years, whereas lifespan of toys are approximately 25 years.



Idol of God.



Idol of Kamadhenu.

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## Video



Idol Making - Kinnal, Koppal - Part 1



Idol Making - Kinnal, Koppal - Part 2

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## Contact Details

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You can get in touch with

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