

Design Resource

## Temple Stone Carving - Karnataka

Dravidian Art and Architecture

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Divyadarshan C. S. and

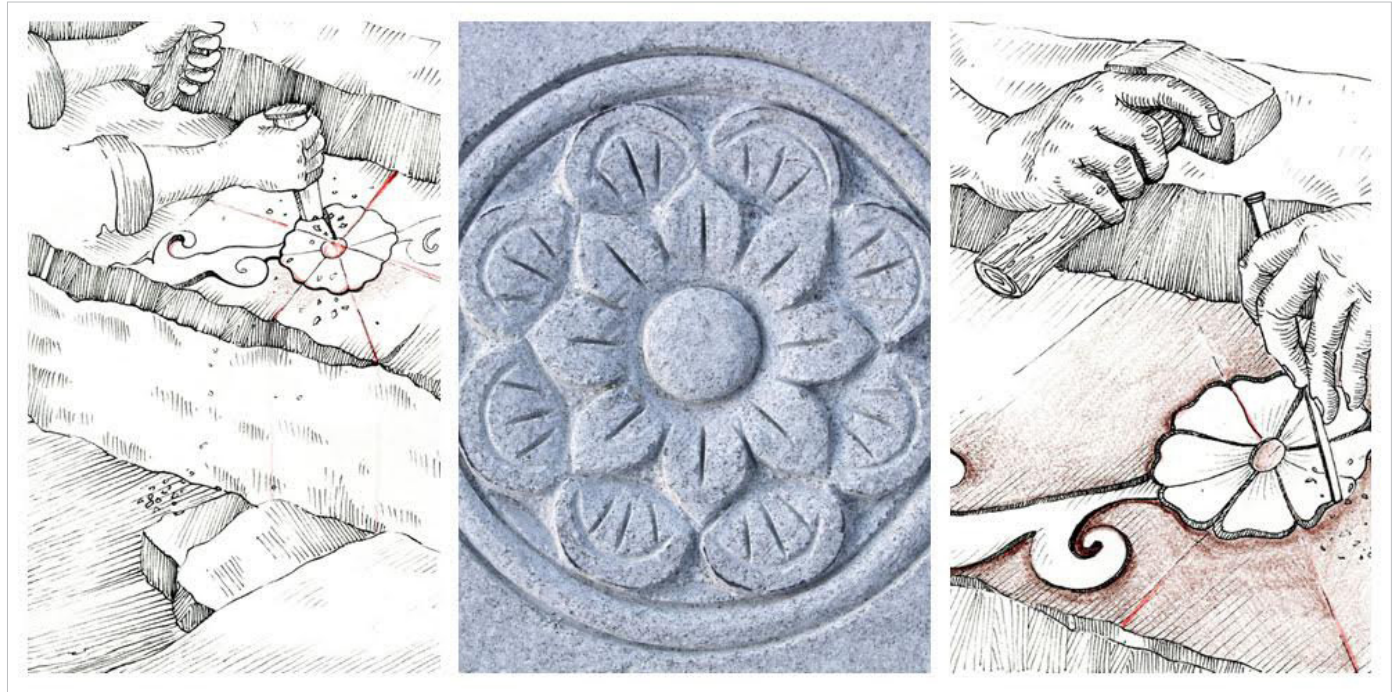
Manmi Dutta

NID Campus, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/temple-stone-carving-karnataka>

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2. Tools and Raw Materials
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## Introduction

Hindu history is geographically diverse and culturally varied. Countless variations can be seen in temple forms, based on the region, the date it was constructed and the resources used for its creation. Karnataka is a state in the southern part of India which was originally known as the State of Mysore. Over the centuries, architectural monuments within the region has displayed a diversity of inspirations, often spreading much about the inventive trends of the rulers of twelve different empires. One of the earliest ruling empires in the history of south India was the Chola dynasty. Cholas together with the Chera Dynasty and the Pandyan Dynasty were together known as the three Crowned Kings, which formed the three main Tamil dynasties of Iron Age India. The period of the Chola dynasty was the phase of improvements and modification of the Dravidian Art and architecture. The Chola artists and artisans described their inspirations and raised the Dravidian temple designs to refined structures. Their huge fortune earned through widespread victories were applied in structure long-lasting temples of stone and bronze structures. The Chola kings constructed several temples in their territory, which generally included the Cauvery plains, Central and Northern Tamil Nadu and also connecting parts of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. The history of Chola art and structural design began with the marvelous temples. In the Chola period several Shaivite and Vaishnavite temples were constructed.

The important features of Chola sculptures then was that the earlier Chola temples consisted of comparatively smaller structures, which were made with bricks when compared to the huge monumental structures of the later Cholas. The significant Chola sculptures adorns the temple walls in South India. Most of the temples were dedicated to lord Shiva or lord Vishnu. The main architectural elements that are to be found in the temples of Chola dynasty are garbhagriha, vimana and circumambulatory corridor. These magnificent structures were built according to temple Vastu Shastra. Chola Dynasty produce some of the best stone architectural marvels in the world. Majestic grandeur is a characteristics of Chola art. They sustained a style of beautifying the structures with small sculptures, and carving these structures involved immense manual labour and assets. People were portrayed with round faces and certain poses became very common during the late Chola period, and torsos were depicted with intricate details. The figures were carved with images of Gods and goddesses sculpture, animal descriptions etc. The elegance and the splendour of these temples are impressive beyond doubt. Chola sculpture displayed sophistication, musical movement and elegance in the 11th and 12th century. Stone pillars, gopurams and fine carved sculptures are the main characteristics of the Chola temple. One of the finest examples of Chola sculpture is that of the Nataraj, the Lord of the Dance in Chidambaram.

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Temple pillar is carved with the image of God Hanuman and the shankha symbol of Lord Vishnu.

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Pillars are aligned in a manner and then carved to obtain proper proportion.



The base of temple is been built with beautifully carved pillars and walls.



Stone pillars of an old temple carved with remarkable themes of god and goddesses.

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## Tools and Raw Materials

Following are the tools and raw materials used for the process of temple stone carving:

- Stone (Koirā): Huge Chunks of Koirā stones are used for carving temples.
- Chisels: Various Chisels are used for shaping and roughing the stone.
- Electric Grinder: Electric Grinder helps in grinding out the rough surface into a smooth finish.
- Diamond Blade Electric Cutter: Electric cutter helps in cutting out the unwanted stone parts from the block of stone.
- Stencils: Cut out design parts used for outlines and drawings on the stone.
- Adhesive: Adhesives are used in filling of the few parts which separates from the structure.
- Square Head Hammer: Hammers are used for hammering out the unwanted parts of the stone and forming the intended design.
- L Shaped Scales: It helps the sculptor to draw straight lines along the right angles.
- Red Oxide Solution/Pencils: Both help in outlining the patterns or stencils on the stone for carving.
- Brush: It is used in brushing out the tiny scraped off particles in the carvings.



Pencil is used to draw the design on the stone.

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Koira stone is used for carving the pillars and walls of the temple.



Diamond blades are fixed in the machine to cut the stone.



Electric stone cutter is used to cut the stone to the necessary length and shape.

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Hammer and chisel is used to carve out the design on the stone.



L shape ruler is used to measure the stone to a required length and cut.



Different sizes of chisels are used according to the shape and thickness of the design.

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Design stencil is used as a reference to the design to be carved onto the stone.



Marker is used to darken the lines of the drawn design for proper visibility while carving.



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## Making Process

Temples are of various shapes and sizes according to the region and its culture. First of all a suitable land is allotted for the temple. The allotted land is dug and the unwanted and undesired things if found any are separated from the land, which is further purified by sprinkling water and the Vastu Puja is organised to purify the land. The rectangular block of stone is firstly shaped into a desired size and thickness with the help of electric grinder and pointed chisels. The rough stone is first hammered with chisel by moderately unskilled workers. The foundation of the temple is laid down. The stone is first shaped to a certain degree, before being lifted into position and further carving. Every block of stone involves a series of steps where reduction of the rectangular block transforms into a form. Columns and beams supports the roofs of porches and mandapas and consists of slabs spanning directly from beam to beam, or later of diagonal arrangements of piled up slabs or corbelled domes. Large chunks of stones are transported in Lorries and trucks from Devanahalli, Karnataka. Craftsmen of this area prefers working on the Koira stone because it is available in enormous shapes and sizes ranging from 10 feet to 60 feet and is ideal for carving. The process begins with the selection of a fine stone suitable for carving large motifs and structures along with pillars. The sculptor begins by roughing out the proportions required for the temple. Designs and motifs are inlaid as per customers' orders. The carving is started by creating a sketch in the form of the statue on paper or drawing a general outline of the stencil or design on the stone with the help of pencils and again darkened by the marker.

Then begins the roughing out stage where usually the unwanted parts are removed by knocking few portions of the stone with the use of electric grinder. Artisans make their own decision for using the right size of tool which influences the excellence of the object. The intended design is roughed out with the help of several chisels, few electric grinders and a square head hammer. Pillars and roofs are designed and intricately carved as per the order and motifs already specified. The stone is shaped out to its form by using different sizes and shapes of chisels. The figure is carved according to the traditional rules on the proportions, decorations, armaments, posture etc. The sides are assured for being planned properly by putting a previously planned stone over the current one. An outline is first marked on the stone after it has been cut to the suitable size. The chisels are then used to scrape off the unwanted material to give the stone an uneven shape of the intended figure or motif. The dust collected on the object is cleaned with a thick brush. Chiseling followed by detailing process is again started to give the final shape to the object. If some piece of stone breaks out while carving it is attached with adhesive. Each part of the temple is separately made and intricately carved. After finishing the carving process all the separate parts are joined and the structure of the temple is formed. Likewise the block of stone is converted into a whole temple.

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Koira stone cut into huge rectangle blocks to make the pillars for the temple.



Measurements are marked on stone to cut it to a required shape.



Using an electric stone cutter excess part of the stone is removed.



The design is drawn on the stone with the help of a stencil.

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The design is outlined using a marker for better visibility while carving.

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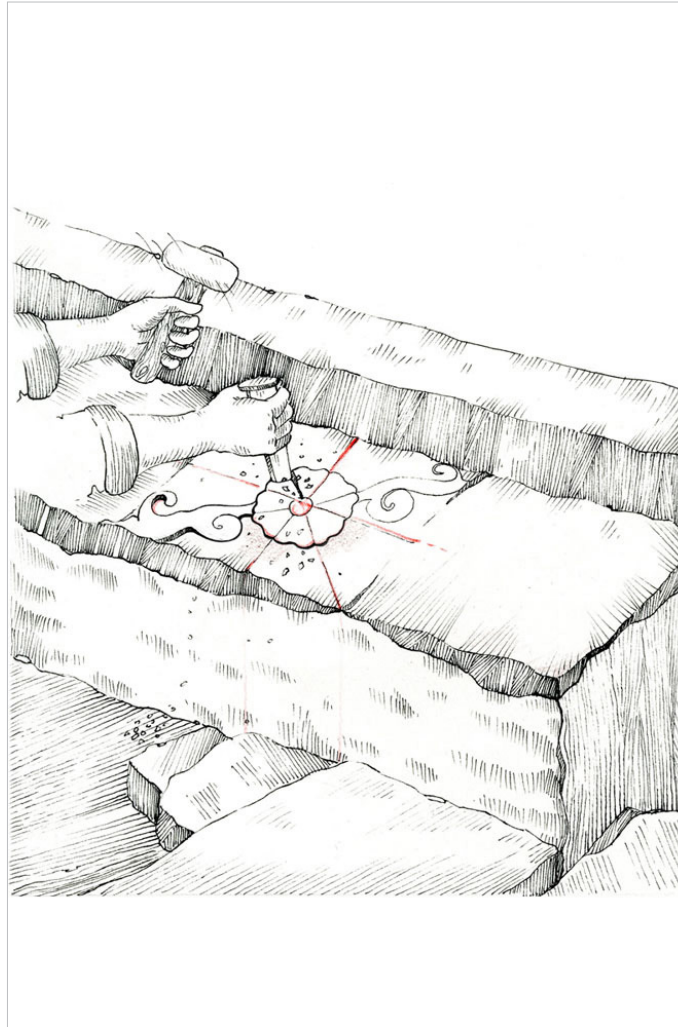
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Stone is been carved according to the design drawn on it.



After obtaining a basic shape the designs are chiseled further to give an embossed effect.

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Big and small chisels are used for carving the respective design pattern.



With the help of stone cutter carved edges of the design are leveled and smoothed.



Carved pillars are later placed in the respective areas of the temple.

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## Products

The products are prepared according to the orders given by the purchasers or customers. Although there are few products which are commonly used in every temple.

### Custom Made:

A particular design or pattern of a temple is ordered by the customer. By completing the customized design these products are appreciated. Full body deity or half faces are created as decorative temple products. Exquisitely made deity are made as sculptures for the temple. Customized Pillars are made for the temples.



Design of a guardian is carved on the stone pillar along with floral design.



Carving of a floral design made on one of the stone pillar.



Carving of the symbol of chakra and shankha representing lord Vishnu or his another form Venkateswara.

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## Contact Details

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You can get in touch with

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You could write to the following address regarding suggestions and clarifications:

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