

Design Resource

Wood Carving - Udupi

The Craft of Wood Carving

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral

NID Campus, Bengaluru

Source:

<https://dsource.in/resource/wood-carving-udupi>



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2. Location
3. Tools and Raw Materials
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Introduction

Wood carving is Karnataka's one of the oldest crafts and is well known for sandalwood carvings and many other varieties of wood. Since many parts of Karnataka are covered by dense forests and provide abundant raw materials i.e. jackfruit wood, sandalwood, teak wood, white wood and rosewood. Woodcarving is traditionally practiced in Karnataka from ancient times, from old temples to the present date temples. It is believed that the craft was developed in the ancient temples, and used in the making of huge Ratha (Chariot), Doorframes, Pillar works and huge Mantapas (Pergolas). Udupi is also well known for its wood engraving.

Place:

Udupi is the main Centre of the Udupi district in Karnataka. The name Udupi is derived from the Tulu language, which means the 'Lord of Stars'. The place Udupi is a hub for many traditional crafts like Woodcarving, Stone carving, Bhuta (Cult) figures and Metal Casting due to its historical background and also due to the famous temple of Lord Sri Krishna.

People:

The artisans of Udupi are popularly known as Gudigars. Though the technology has improved a lot, the artisans of woodcarving in Udupi have practiced in the traditional manner using manual tools to obtain enchanting design works without using any automated tools and machines. Engraved designs are inspired by the Hoysala (A Dynasty of Historical Karnataka) style of the sculptor. The craftspersons also engrave the woodworks, which are required for house decorative, furniture, mythological figures and also for architectural purposes.



Stages of wood take the beautiful shape of the Lotus motif.

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Skilled artisans engaged in marking, cutting and carving processes.



An overview of the huge pillar carving process.



Mastercraftsman with his artisans.



Huge pillars are intricately adorned in floral and geometrical patterns and used in temples.

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Traditional Padukas (Wooden Slippers)) basically offered to god.

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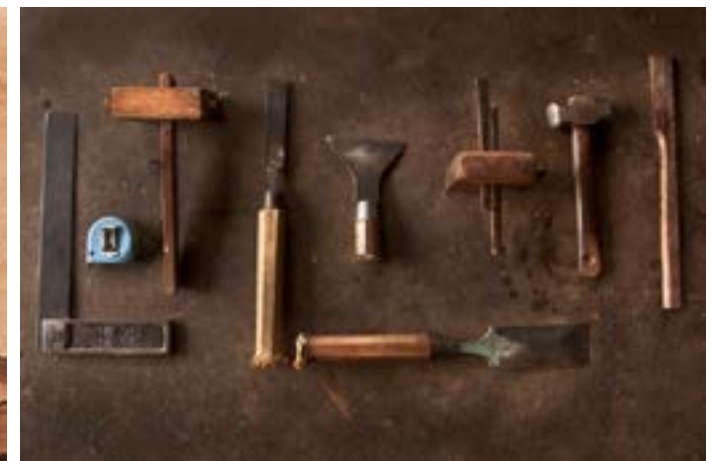
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Artisan engaged in making flower designs for door panels.



View of different types of tools.

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Logs are being marked to start carving.



Pillar carving orders are majorly for temples.



The Lotus motif is marked and kept for carving.

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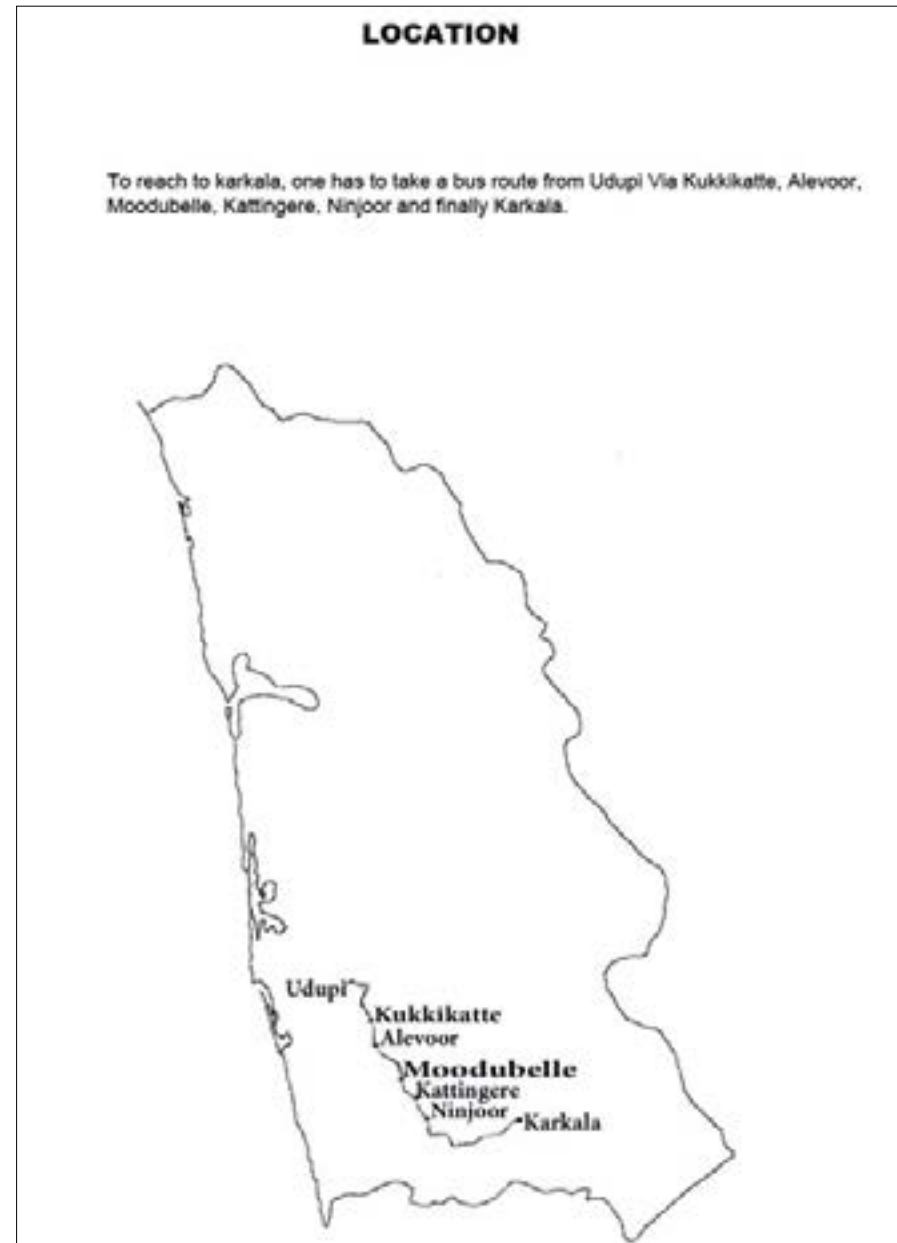
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Location



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Tools and Raw Materials

Different types of tools are used to engrave big logs of wood into beautiful objects. The wood is procured from Sagara, Subramanya, and Siddhapura of Karnataka. Various types of wood like Sagavalli, Jackfruit are used in carving.

- **Chisels:** These are used to make minute ornamentation work on the wood idol.
- **L shaped Scale or Right-Angle:** The scale helps in measuring and scaling.
- **Hammer:** Hammer benefits in the cutting of the large and excess wood.
- **V-Parting Tool:** Tool used to carve on the wood to create depth.
- **Wood Cutting Machine:** It is used to cut the wood and to make the surface smooth.
- **Wooden Mallets:** Used for beating accompanied by chisel during the carving process.
- **Gouge:** Tool used to cut the design into hallows and round shapes.
- **Sand Paper:** Helps in removing the smaller unwanted pieces and makes the surface smooth.

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Wood is the main raw material.



Design sketch reference.

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Paper is cut into flower, leaf and petal motifs.



Buffing machine for multipurpose.



Chisel and hammer were used for carving and also to create designs on the wooden surface.

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Measuring tools.



Types of chisels.

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Right angle, compass and other chisels.



Few typical tools are used for creating a design.

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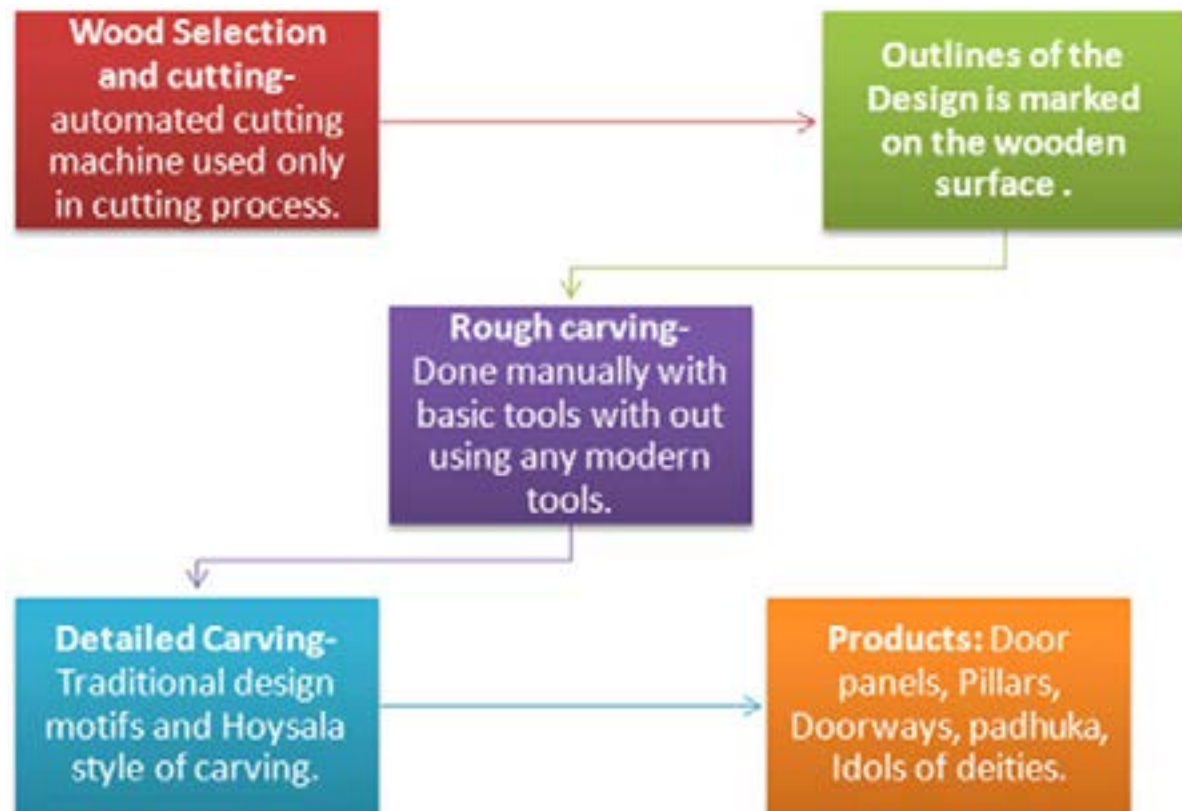
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Making Process

The process of wood carving starts with the selection of the wood as per the required size of the products to be made. There are two qualities of wood, softer and harder woods. Softer wood is chosen when intricate designs have to be carved. Harder wood is used for making furniture and other household items.

After the selection of wood, the design reference sheet (which has the sketch of the final product) is placed on the wood and the designs are outlined. Based on the outlines, hammering is done using a chisel to engrave the marked design. Initially, rough carvings are done by chiselling to reveal the rough idol. Later fine detailing and minute ornamentation are made on the idol which is inspired by the Hoysala Style (A dynasty of the historical Karnataka) of art. After the carving process, polishing is done with sandpaper to smoothen the outer surface of the wood. Once the product is completed the artisans apply a natural oil to protect it from dirt, dust, moisture, weather, termites, water and finally worms and insect attacks.



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The traditional design of the door panel is being marked on the wood panel.



Artisan makes sure to trace accurate measurements using tools.



A curved floral design is being sketched on the wooden surface.

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Longer wooden blocks are marked by experienced artisans.



The piece of wood is partially shaped in circular motifs.



Compass is used to mark the designs at equal lengths.



The wooden piece is being fixed to the tool of the lathe machine.

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Smoothening is done using the lathe machine.



Petal designs are being marked.



The Lotus flower design is marked and kept ready for further carving.

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Artisan carving geometrical pattern on the pillar.



Line patterns were done to enhance the traditional look of a pillar.

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Panel decorated with combinational motifs.

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Products

The senior wood artisans of Udupi are specialized in creating classic stylized motifs that are inspired by nature, epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata, great legends, flowers, creepers, birds and animals. Skilled and experienced artisans follow the rules of Silpa Sastra which has rules and guidelines for traditional art.

The decorative wood art style is inspired by Hoysala (A dynasty of Historical Karnataka) which is well known for its finest ornamentation work and for graceful sculptures. The themes of doorways, door panels, and archways can be seen portraying nature life with birds, animals, lotus flowers, buds and creepers. Adorning Bas-Relief work done on the pillars represents their passionate artistic aspect. Few pillars are carved beautifully with combinational geometrical patterns to obtain an embossed diamond effect. Attractive doors with curving stems and leaf designs, wooden Paduka- sandals, sacred idols of gods and goddesses include in the product collection.



Door panel in sophisticated peacock and creeper designs.



A chariot for ritual purposes.

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Bloomed lotus for door and wall panels.



Creepers and curved leaf patterns worked on doorways.

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Stylized petals in floral form.



Carved idol of goddess Durga.

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A carved doorway of a traditional house.

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