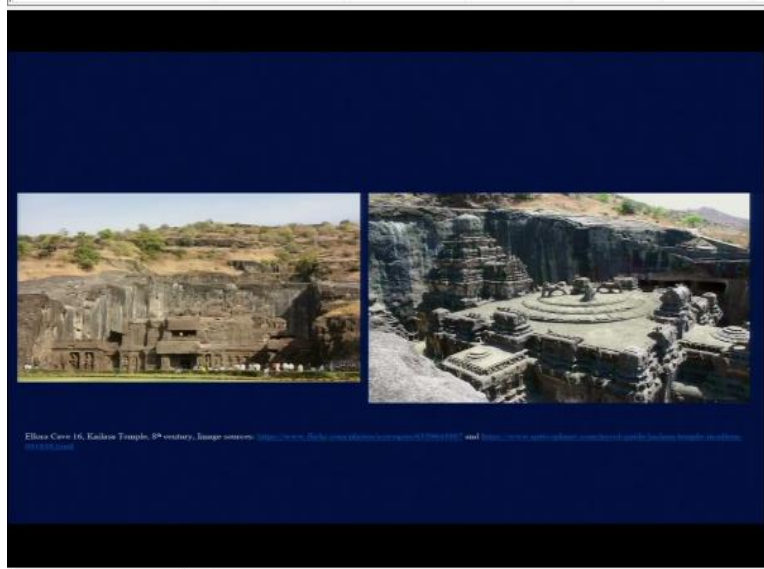


Indian Art: Materials, Techniques and Artistic Practices
Prof. Rajarshi Sengupta
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology-Kanpur

Lecture-14
Snap Through Stability Model and Model of Imperfect Geometry

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Hello everyone, we are continuing on our module 3 and that is on pigments and we have been looking into a range of material starting from the cave or the rock shelters of Bhimbetka to the cave of Ajanta and then we have also looked into Sittanavasal and so on. So, we will be continuing on our discussion on the use of pigments and today we will be starting our discussion with another site which is also a UNESCO world heritage site just like Ajanta and Bhimbetka that is Ellora.

So, Ellora is also situated in the same Aurangabad district as Ajanta is and but this two sides are almost in the distance of at 30 kilometers or 30 to 40 kilometers between each other. Now in Ellora we also see similar kind of programmatic that we have seen in Ajanta. For example how the living rock structures were excavated to make this rock shelters as well as these caves.

And this can also be compared to the ones we have seen in Sittanavasal as well as in Bagh and so on. So, here what we find that this Deccan basalt rock out of which this rock formations the plateau landscape is made. So, those rock formations have been carved and excavated and

through that the caves were produced. So, this caves we find there are around 34 caves in the site of Ellora which were being made from 600 A.D to 1000 A.D.

And during this time period we find that not only one religion, but 3 religions have flourished in this place. So, we find there are Jain caves, there are Buddhist caves as well as there are Hindu caves. Now the caves which we find there, so the 1 to 12 we find they are the ones which are the Buddhist caves and so the Buddhist caves are also the ones which have been the earliest ones in the entire group.

So, between 5th and 8th century A.D this caves were excavated and then we also find there are other caves for example the Brahminical caves or the Hindu caves, so those will be the ones from 13 to 29 and those are the ones we find that they have developed between 7th to 10th century A.D and then we also have the Jain caves or the Jaina caves and those will be the ones between like 30 to 34.

And the Jaina caves were developed between uh 9th to 10th century and it also went beyond. So, the time period of Ellora even though I say that between 600 A.D and 1000 A.D. That was the time when most of these developments were happening; however we can also see that some of the caves they were started being built before that and some of them also were built after this time period.

So, by 600 to 1000 this is the time period I mentioned which we can imagine as when most of the activities were concentrated in. Now what we see here in terms of the architecture that we also see similar kind of programmatic as I have said that there are a number of those prayer halls, the monasteries or like the Vihara structures and then there are temples. So, these are the kind of the arrangements which we have already seen in the context of Ajanta.

We have already seen similar kind of strategies being used for carving this living rock in Sittanavasal and here we see in Ellora as well. Now if on screen we are looking at the cave number 16 and that is the Kailasha temple then that is perhaps one of the most celebrated caves in the site of Ellora. However, and that was made in the 8th century A.D. Now we have not really gotten into the Hindu architecture.

And that is the reason I would not be touching upon the details of the temple building which we will be addressing in one of the later modules. So, but what we find here a very specific information about this particular temple is that the curving of the rock structures that started from the top of the temple. And then it sort of went downwards which is usually the opposite what happens in a temple building that we start from the base.

And then slowly like the towers the Shikhara and the other elements are added on the top of it. So, since this is a living rock structure that the entire structure is carved out of living rock and that is the reason perhaps, we find that there was a very different way of carving the temple that took place in this particular site which is not the usual case.

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Now going with the kind of images that we find then in some of the caves we have remains of the murals those were there in this cave sites. Now as we can imagine that there was not 1 but 3 religion was involved in the same side. So, we can imagine that there might have been a huge number of pilgrims and monks and aestheticians and nuns and so on. They were active part of this cave sites.

And that is the reason we also find that how a number of this caves were decorated with paintings, the interior mostly I am addressing here. Now here we find that there are some of the murals and we have 2 of the representation of the images here on screen. Now the one in the left side that we find here it is a Jaina mural and in this one we have one of the Tirthankaras as standing tall and of course in the central part of this image.

And in this particular image what we find that some of the iconographical traditions or the conventions that we have already studied so far they have also been carried forward in this images here as well. Now for example what we find here in this image and that this is Jaina monk or the Tirthankara that is projected at the center stage of at this image.

Here we find that I mean this Tirthankara has also been shown as with broad shoulder with the thin waist and of course with the long ear lobes. So, the long ear lobes are usually been associated with the intelligent ones as well as the enlightened ones who are not only just intelligent but they also have the ears to listen to people's sorrows and people's problems. And that is how it is a sign that the devotee's problems will be addressed by the deity.

So, these are some of those iconographical conventions that we find, they were already been established and those signs are also carried forward in the murals in Ellora. Now the dating of these murals that usually we find the ones we have on screen they are probably between 8th to 11th century A.D. Now what we also find here that there is already a prominence of the lines.

So, the lines have always been a very important and integral part of the murals and any other kind of painted images in India. And with time we find that the importance of line have manifested in many different ways. So, for example in the image that we have in the left side we see that it is not just the lines which will have the very prominent outlines as such. But these are the lines which have the calligraphic quality which a same line can be varied in their depth.

And that is how the depth of the body as well as some of the parts which are more important than the others, those things are emphasized and the other thing that we also find that how the modulation of the body that also happens around the contour lines. So, the entire body of this Jaina figure that that we find that the entire body is not really dimensional as such. However that the areas around the arms and the body, around the contour lines there we find the slight hint of shading or gradation the tonal variation.

And that is what that amplifies this three dimensional quality of the body. So, this is something that we find that it is not completely three dimensional but the hint of the rounded body has been projected here. And this rounded body this has been achieved by this highly skillful calligraphic lines as well as the selective shading or the tonal variation that had also been employed. Now we also find that there are some of the other characteristic features here.

For example the halo behind the head which also suggests the divinity of this figure and similar to the other images that we have seen in Ajanta and so on. Here are also some of the very lyrical as well as elegant attendant figures. So, for example if we see that there is a very elegant woman who we see that she is standing right beside the central figure and she has similar kind of elegance as well as the bends of the body they are also reminders of the ones we have seen in Ajanta.

Then we also see there are some of the other figures for example here the celestial beings. So, the ones who are above the ground level and that almost both these figures they appear from both sides of the image and they also direct the viewer's gaze towards the central part of this image. And they are the ones they are flying and the flying something that is suggested by their gesture, by their posture of their legs.

So, they are the ones who are flying on the sky, they are not walking or they are not running, so that is something that is suggested by the posture of their legs. So, there is no other wings or anything else is added to their body. But their position in the entire mural as well as the posture of their legs that is something those are the ones which are signifier of their status as the celestial beings or these divine beings.

Now they are the ones we also find that they are arriving to greet the central figure in this image something a similar kind of strategy that we have already seen in Ajanta as well. Now if these are some of the issues we find that there are some similarities and differences between similarities between Ajanta and the murals in Ellora. We find that the kind of the details or like the dedication towards the compositional arrangement as well as maintaining a narrative integrity that was there in Ajanta, some of the murals in Ellora might be responding to that.

But mostly we also find that they are moving slightly on a different paradigm with their image making practice. And those are the things that might happen because of different kind of interaction with the people who are the visual practitioners but that can also happen because of the modes of patronage, now an example of that will probably be the one the image that we have in the right side of the screen and that is Shiva Nataraja.

And of course; as you can imagine that this image will come from one of the Hindu caves. Now this is also a sign that some of the early images of Shiva Nataraja that shows that how the image of Nataraja was perceived and how the image was depicted in the two dimensional ground because we usually know the Nataraja image in the three dimensional form. However there are temple murals and murals in the caves as such which also display the two dimensional depiction.

Now what happens in this particular image that we find that the dynamism of this image has been given much more priority than the anatomy. So, for example we have the prominent face of Shiva and also like who's painted in this yellow, this bright yellow pigment. And we find that the face of Shiva which is also adorned by his Jatamukuta the crown he wears which is made out of matted locks and then this the earrings and so on.

And then we also see his large eyes and then we also see that how he is visual and heavily ornamented as opposed to being shown as an ascetic. However what we see here that his head is not really in the proportion of the body the way usually the Indian artistic anatomy works out. So, a kind of anatomy that we find in Ajanta and that perhaps also gave rise to the kind of Tala-Mana system or the system of measurement or iconography and iconometry.

So, those are the things we do not really see being implemented similarly in this image of Nataraja. What we find in this image of Nataraja? However is that how the hand gestures the movement of Shiva's eyes as well as the slight bent in his face. And then of course the way like all his hands and his feet they sort of covered the entire picture plane and they sort of reach out to the furthest ends of this picture.

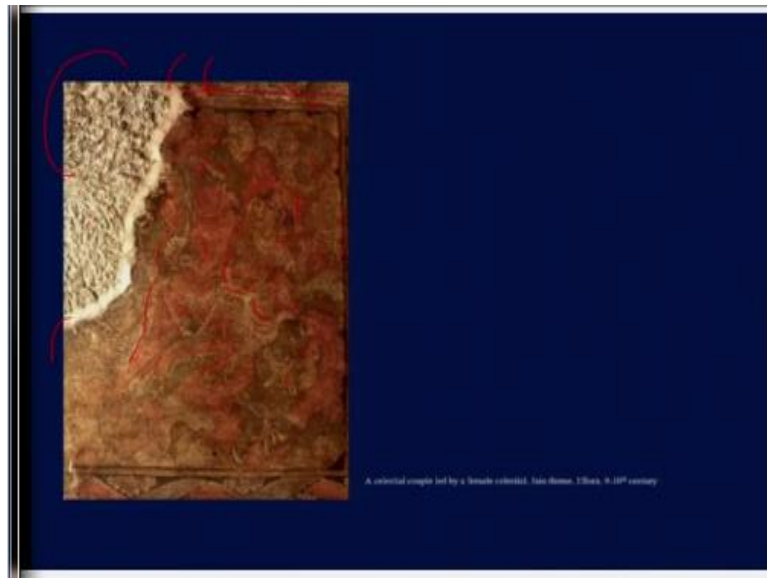
So, that sort of adds to the dynamism of this image and this is also something that we can imagine that how the idea of the dance or the Ananda Tandava that is the dance which Shiva is known to have performed. So, the essence of the dance has become much more important here, the dynamism, the movement and how his different limbs and how the colour variation and everything else.

They add to this dynamism that had given much more priority than maintaining this the anatomical proportions and so on. So, we are not really making here a value judgment of how

the Ajanta murals are different from this one. So, we are not saying the Ajanta murals are superior than the Ellora murals however we can see that there are certain degree of differences.

So, the differences are much more important than actually coming into a value judgment and saying that this is better and that is not.

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So, from there we also wanted to bring our attention towards the materiality of this paintings. And this one particular image I wanted to show here and this comes from one of the Jain caves and this was perhaps made between 9th and 10th century A.D. What we have here that a part of the image had been deteriorated and that is how we see that how the surface of the rock this basil surface has been revealed in the left side of the image.

And then we see there are the layers of the lime plaster that is also revealed in this image and then on the top of that there are the applications of pigment based paints and that is how the images are executed. Now there are certain kind of features of the entire murals which needs to be addressed. And that is that we can see how the rock surfaces are built.

So, each of these steps in making these murals are very important for sustaining them as well as making them stay on the wall. And that I mean here we see the walls the way they are carved it is not really even but it is very abrupt and uneven. And this has been done for a very particular reason that if the walls are very smooth then it becomes difficult for it to have the thick lime plasters to hold on to them.

So, it requires this uneven surface to make the friction, so that the lime plaster this thick layer of the lime plaster which is applied on the top of it can stay on to it. So, that is the reason we find that each and every steps which are associated and which are involved in making these images are crucial. So, from there what we also find that the lime plaster which is added on the top of it.

It also must have followed a similar kind of strategy as the ones we have seen in Ajanta that the lime plaster was completely dried before the painting practice had actually begun. So, afterwards we find that on the lime plaster the images were drawn and perhaps some kind of like iron oxide or charcoal those kinds of materials were used for drawing the initial images. So, for example we usually find that how the contour lines are usually drawn at the beginning and then of course like the contour lines of the figures.

So, the ones we find to be the central figures here, so their contour lines, the images which are also associated there. So, they are the ones also been drawn first, the outlines of the contour lines. And then slowly on the top of that we find the application of the pigment based paint take place. So, usually in a painting like this; what we will find that the colours which are on the lighter tone will be applied first.

So, here if we see that there is a combination of this earthy red and brown and slightly darker towards black and a greenish tone, these are the ones which are applied here. Then perhaps at the beginning this earthy red was applied first on the bodies. And then we see that the slight hint of modulation might have also been added with a slightly darker tone of the same colour or it might have been mixed with a little bit of brown. And then we also see that how the other colours are been added by the sides.

And there is a tremendous importance of the colour balance, so that is the reason what we find that how the use of red is complemented by the use of brown and green. So, in the entire scene; the balances between these colours have been maintained superbly. And then after the application of these initial patches of colour or like filling the bodies and so on then the ornaments.

The ornaments we find here and here and so on, and the crown and so on, these are the ones which are added afterwards. And for adding the ornaments we find usually that how a colour

which will be much more in a lighter tone. For example, yellow mixed with white or red mixed with white and so on, those are the ones which are used there. So, with these things what we also find that in this case is this tonal variation that is the tonal variation between this central figure and the ones who are the adjoining ones.

Those are enhanced by the use of this ornaments as well as how this touches of these lighter tones, they punctuate the importance of certain figures more than the others. So, afterwards we find that perhaps towards the end the darker tones and so on those are the ones which are added. And then at the end either the highlights in the ornaments they are added or like the highlights of the ornaments are added before application of the most darkest stone.

So, these are the kind of like processes we find them to be employed in making these murals. And this is something we find not only prevalent in these murals in Ellora but in a number of the places. However this is just a basic description of how this colour strategy and the scheme works out but it is not like that. There are no back and forth it is also not like that there are no other ways to apply the colours. So, but this is usually the way like from the light tone to the dark tone usually like the painting process progresses.

And at the end or towards the end the ornaments and the places where the highlights have been drawn, they are added. Now one other thing that we must also remember that this particular way of painting or this particular way in which all the details are added those are also been possible because of the opacity of the colours. So, as I have already mentioned in the earlier lectures that the colours were opaque in their nature.

So, they are pretty thick we are not talking about water colours which are really light and the patches of the water colour are just very light patches of water colour are applied onto either walls or paper. But we are talking about that how a thick, layers of the colours are applied onto the surfaces. So that the; opacity of the figures as well as the objects and all the other elements can be enhanced.

And that is something we find in most of the mural paintings in India and that is not something that just started in Ajanta or in Ellora or Sittanavasal. But this particular way of application of the colours that started from the second century B.C. At least from Ajanta we see them to be continued in the medieval times, early modern times and even in the later times.