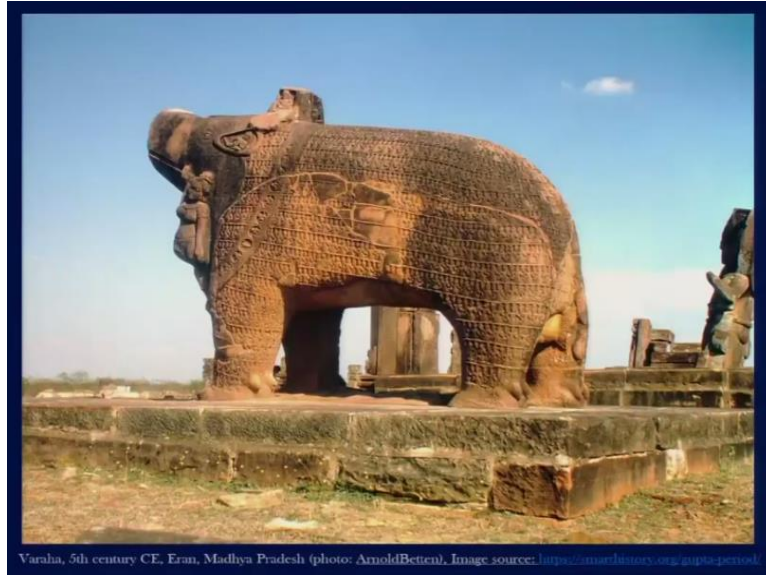


**Indian Art: Materials, Techniques and Artistic Practices**  
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**Lecture – 23**  
**Stone: Memorials, Architectural Remnants and Objects**

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Hello everyone, we are continuing our discussion on stone and we have already looked into some of the examples, for example we have looked into the Gupta period sculptures and how sandstone has been utilized. So, the way we see that I mean in the Buddhist context sandstone is utilized and here is another example in which we see that the Varaha avatara or the boar incarnation of Lord Vishnu who is a prominent Hindu god.

And see that how this representation of the Varaha is created out of this heavy block of sandstone. So, this is a sandstone sculpture. It is a freestanding sandstone sculpture that we find from Eran in Madhya Pradesh and definitely it is a place which is adjacent to other temple sites. So, this is not one just by its own where it is found, but what we see here in this particular sculpture is that this massive structure of this mighty boar.

The boar incarnation of Vishnu, who had rescued the earth goddess from this demon king, at the same time who is also considered to be have saved the earth goddess from this great flood. So, what we see here is this boar incarnation who had rescued the earth goddess in its

tusk and so here we see the tusk and here there is a representation of the earth goddess that we find for which reason the boar incarnation is also considered to be the Bhuvanaraha.

And so here what we have this is also during the same time period around like 5th century and it should technically come under the Gupta dynasty if we are thinking about the timeframe, also the region because it is not that far from Sarnath or from Mathura. So, it is in Madhya Pradesh in Eran. So, what we have here is how the same material sandstone, so this is not the grey sandstone of Chunar, this is not the red sandstone of Mathura.

But this is slightly yellowish, the yellow ochre sandstone which is also found from the similar region like from northern Indian Plains or from central India, so how this same material is now used here for conveying a very different idea. So, if we have looked into the serenity of the Buddhist sculptures and how the compassion of Bodhisattva is created in the red Mathura sandstone, so here we have the courage, the valour and then the strength of the boar incarnation who is this heroic figure, this massive figure.

So, that is the reason here we see the use of stone for making this sculpture is very different, even though all of these are made of sandstone. So, the kind of the mass of the stone here it is left and then the slight recesses those are created and then this uniform structure without much of the curves and then the abrupt lines on the body, the uniformity of the shape that had been created which also adds to the monumental presence of this boar, how all those things contribute to making this heroic figure of the boar incarnation.

And in that also we find that if there is this uniformity of the shape and then how all the different kinds of details of the body, the swelling of the muscles and then all the other details and everything are avoided, but then that is compensated by the details those are all like the ornamental details that we find they are created all over the body of this Varaha or the boar. So, here we find there are horizontal registers which sort of run across the body.

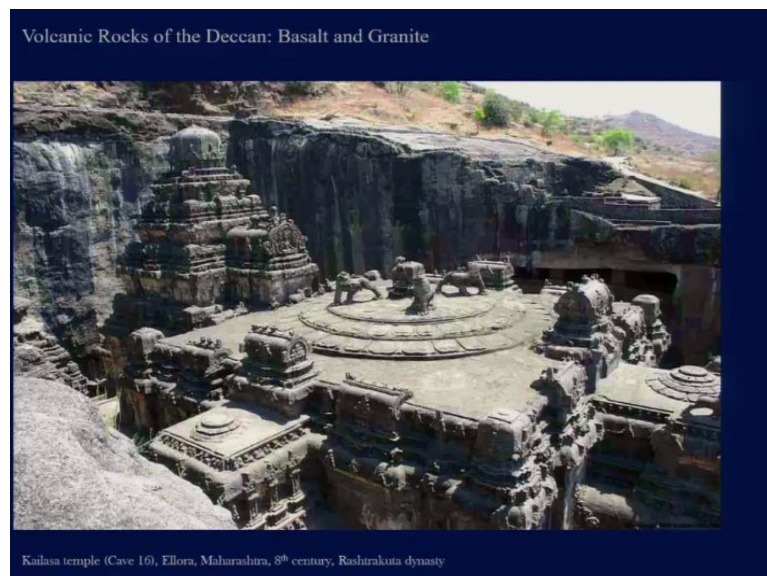
Which almost looks like a kind of covering, which will adorn the body of Varaha. And then in all these horizontal registers, what we find there are numerous images of devotees who are paying homage to Varaha avatara. And then here in the neck, we also have another piece of ornament and here even in this ornament, this ribbon like form which sort of runs in his neck, even in this one there are small medallion like forms in which there are devotee figures.

So, these are the ways in which we find that how the use of ornament is also something that is very contextual and it is not there for just to decorate a surface or just to populate a surface, but it serves a very significant purpose. So, in one hand we see this massive structure with the uniformly shaped legs and the body and with no other details of the muscles and so on. And then we find the numerous figures of the devotees.

They are carved onto the body of this great boar and they almost look like a kind of covering or a kind of robe that is put on the body of the great boar. So, these are the ways in which we find the some of the carving techniques which we already discussed like the use of low relief and then this particular figure which is made in high relief. So, all these techniques, we find them to be present and we can make a comparison in both the sculpture and in this Varaha sculpture.

In both cases, there is this a very careful use of these kind of details, but one can also see that with the similar kind of techniques, the overall result of them they turned out to be quite different from each other. So, in one hand we see this serene figure of Buddha, on the other hand we see this heroic figure of the boar. So, this is how the carving techniques and then we know the utilization of material, at the same time the vision for transforming the material into the sculpture, how all these things they contribute to the different identities of the sculptures.

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So, from there we will move on to talk about the other stones and those will be the basalt and granite. So, if we see the prevalence of the sandstone in the northern Indian plains and for

valid reason because of the sedimentation that happened in the northern Indian and central Indian plains which is not always the case when it comes to the Deccan India and southern India except for the coastal regions and the ones which are fed by the river.

So, in the large chunk of the Deccan India, what we have there are those volcanic rocks which are not the sedimented ones the way we have seen for the sandstone, but we have some of the hardest stones of the world and those will be the basalt and granite. So basalt and granite those are the volcanic rock we have and unlike the sandstone that we have, the grains they are pretty dense. And that is the reason we do not really see them to be easily penetrable.

So, the granite stone surfaces we see them that water does not penetrate through them like the way we can think about the porous sandstone surfaces being brittle. So, that is also the reason why we find that the basalt and granite to be much more stable, much more stronger than sandstone, but also makes it really hard to carve. And so even though we say that it is hard to carve, we have plenty of examples from the Deccan region in the Indian subcontinent.

Where we see that the people, they have made use of this locally available stone for making enormous structures. So here we have already looked into the site of Elora for its paintings and briefly we have touched upon the caves there. So, the Elora caves that we have basically it is like a basalt rock cliff face. And then like the cliff face we have in Elora those were the places which were carved.

And all those the caves, the Buddhist, the Hindu, the Jaina caves all of them were carved onto those cliff face in Elora and all of them are made of this living basalt rock. So, in this image where we have a view of the cave number 16 and that is Kailash temple or Kailashnatha temple. And here one can see that this is the surface where the living basalt rock is there and how these areas and then carved and ultimately this temple was created from this massive block of stone.

And so, this is a monolithic temple that we have the Kailashnatha temple and this is unusual as we have already discussed that how the temple building started from the top and then it went to the base instead of starting from the base and coming to the top. So, this is something that we find and in terms of its architecture that we have there is this vimana here and we see

this register, the kind of the pyramidal roof that we have in part of Southern India that is prevalent in this structure here as well.

And on the top of that we also have this stupika, the copula. And so, we have this very prominent vimana and here there is also a representation, this again barrel roof form that makes a projection from this vimana and it has an image of Shiva and that suggests that this entire temple is dedicated to Shiva. Then in the front of that we have the mandapa, the maha mandapa and then there are those adjoining mandapa.

And then of course there is this mighty entrance gateway through which one can enter this site. And by the temple in the three sides of the temple, we also have the covered corridors, so those sort of run by these areas what we cannot really see in this picture. So, there are those covered corridor in three sides of this temple and all of them are carved out of this living rock.

So, this is how one can see that even though in one hand, we are talking about basalt being almost impenetrable and then we can also see that how this locally available material was utilized, and not just utilized, they were masterfully crafted into this magnificent temple in this one. We will not only see all the different aspects of temple making, for example the architectural aspects, but also a range of sculptures which also proves the masterful execution or the skill, the masterly skill of the artisans who were involved in it.

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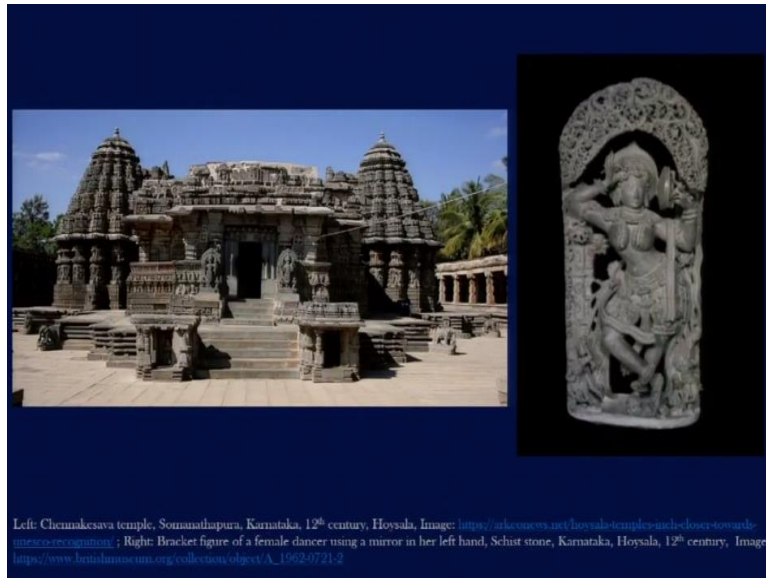
So, from there we see also that basalt has not only been utilized in Elora, but different other parts of the Deccan region as well as in southern India. So, here is another example of the use of basalt stone and we see here there is a mound of Shiva or Nandi that is there. And this one comes again from the Deccan region from 16th to 17th century. So here again, we can see that something we are doing in terms of understanding these different stone cultures and we are not really following a chronology, but we are jumping ahead in time.

So, it is kind of like we are doing back and forth in some ways. So here what we see in this particular Nandi sculpture that again it is carved out of one stone that this bull what we have here is a seated bull or Nandi who has usually been shown in a temple, who faces the Shiva Linga or whatever the image of Shiva is there. So here in this seated image of Nandi we have, this bull has one of its leg raised slightly and then it has its hump, this very characteristic hump.

And then it also touches its nostril with its tongue, so it like projects its tongue and then touches its nostril something that we find that the bulls and the cows or the kettles they usually do when we observe them. So, it is not necessary that it is part of the iconographical detail, but this is something that comes from the artisans, their daily observation of the kettles and the animals that they are revered in Hinduism.

So, these are some of the things that we find that how this small details also tell something about what we see around us and how that is related to religion, how that is related to divinity and this is then also matched with the availability of the locally found material, something that is around us. So, all those; the observation, the material, something those we are combining here from the locally available sources and then with that the image that is formed that is then considered divine.

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So, if that is one of the stone that we have in Southern India we find that to be prevalent, then the other stone that we also have seen in a very specific context of the Hoysala, the Hoysala dynasty who have ruled part of Karnataka today and we see them to be active between like 11th, 12th and 13th centuries. So, during that time period we find there is an extensive use of this particular stone that is schist and soapstone.

So, Schist is something that is considered to be much, it is a very soft stone and we have touched upon this this kind of stone when we looked into the image of this priest king in the Harappan in the in the Indus valley context in which we have this image of the priest King, it was perhaps carved from the soapstone and then it was fired and that is how it got much more stable. And here we also have the similar kind of Schist stone that is used.

And then the Hoysala temples what we have here that they follow the architectural structures that we have them. They also have the temples on the higher platform like the way we have spoken about. They also have a mantapa and then the entrance porch and then there is the garbhagriha or like multiple garbhagrihas that is how we find these Hoysala temples were created.

But then if we also see the shikara, the shikara or the superstructure on the top of the temple, they do not really fall either into this very characteristic Dravida terraces which will have like this pyramidal kind of superstructure and a stupika on the top of it and then it also does not really follow strictly the northern Indian or the Nagara temples, like the ones we have seen in Khajuraho in Bhubaneswar and so on.

So, this is something that we have a very characteristic in the Deccan, which is also sometimes that is referred as the Vesara style of architecture. Now, what we have here is that then apart from the making the architecture, the ground plan and the elevation of it, we also have tremendous amount of detail in these temples. So here one can see that all the details are there in the temple in the freezes in all the individual sculptures, the guardian figures like here we have the guardian figures and then all these elaborately decorated pillars.

So those things were created out of the Schist stone. So, the Schist stone sculpture we also have an example here as well and this is also from Hoysala time period and this one is created in the 12th century. So, what we have here this gives us a sense of the tremendous amount of detail that had gone into making this sculpture. So, here we have this one nayika figure or a female dancer and who has a mirror in her hand.

And as we know that who has a mirror and she also sort of either applies kajal in her eyes or she sort of fixes her hair. So, as we can see this hand is like right here by her forehead. So, what we have here is this tremendous amount of detail which also follows some of the poetic and literary traditions in different parts of the Indian subcontinent. And these iconographical details, the references to the poetry and literature, they are established in this sculpture.

And then on the top of that, we have tremendous amount of ornamentation, which we do not find in the other stone sculptures and that had happened only because of the very characteristic of the stone. So, like this place which is a stylized version of a tree. In this tree, we find the perforated areas where there are like very clear these openings in these areas, which is not really very easy to be done in sandstone or in granite or basalt.

So, this is something that the soapstone or the Schist stone that allows the artisans of the sculptures to do which is not the same in terms of handling sandstone or granite. So, these are the things one needs to remember that how the quality of the stone and then the softness, how they can be manipulated, the extent in which they can be manipulated. All these different kinds of material characteristics they affect the making of these sculptures.

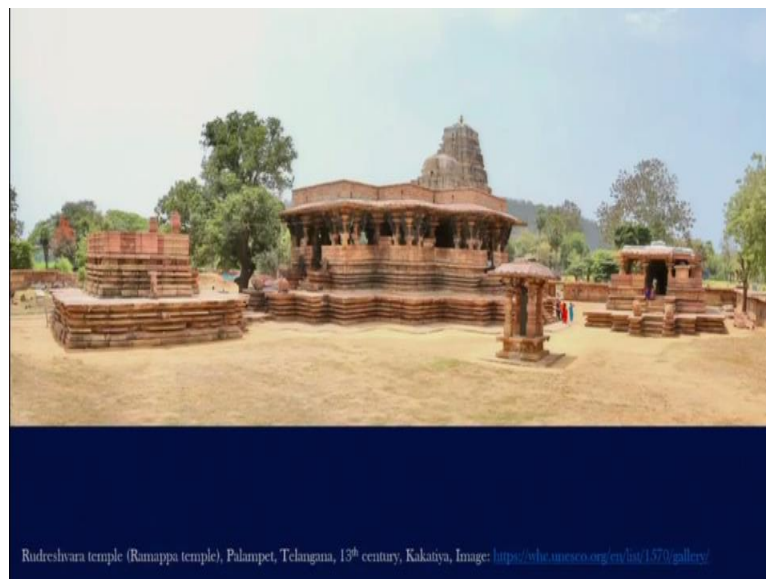
So today, as we know the Hoysala sculptures they are celebrated for this tremendous amount of details, sometimes they are also considered to have the extravaganza in terms of their



ornamentation. If we think that, then that is also something that was possible because of the kind of stone they have utilized. So, this very careful choice of stone in the temples they have built.

For example, this particular temple that is Chennakesava temple in Somanathapura in Karnataka or the other temples that we find which were constructed during the Hoysala period. So, the utilization of this particular kind of stone that also becomes very important for pursuing this work and executing this desired result that they look for.

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Now, talking about the use of stone and coming back to something that is also that was looking at the availability of different kinds of stones in the Deccan region. So here we have the Rudreswara temple or Ramappa temple from Palampet in Telangana. And this is a temple which has recently been awarded to be included as part of the UNESCO World Heritage site list. So in this temple, we have two different kinds of stones that is used, one is granite and the other one is basalt.

So, Basalt is something that we have already looked into that how this is a volcanic rock and this is one of the hardest stones to be carved. And then granite is also similarly very hard and how they are very durable. So, in this particular temple what we find that there is this really heightened sense of utilizing these different kinds of stones, different kinds of materials. So, this temple is also known for using the sandbox technology in its base so where we see this raised platform.

So on this raised platform, what we have in the base of this temple there are those sandboxes which were buried on the ground and that is something that was made there to give stability to this temple so that it does not get affected during earthquakes and stuff. So, this is something we find it is not just stone which is used for giving stability to the temple, but different kinds of material like a sandbox is something that is that went into its base.

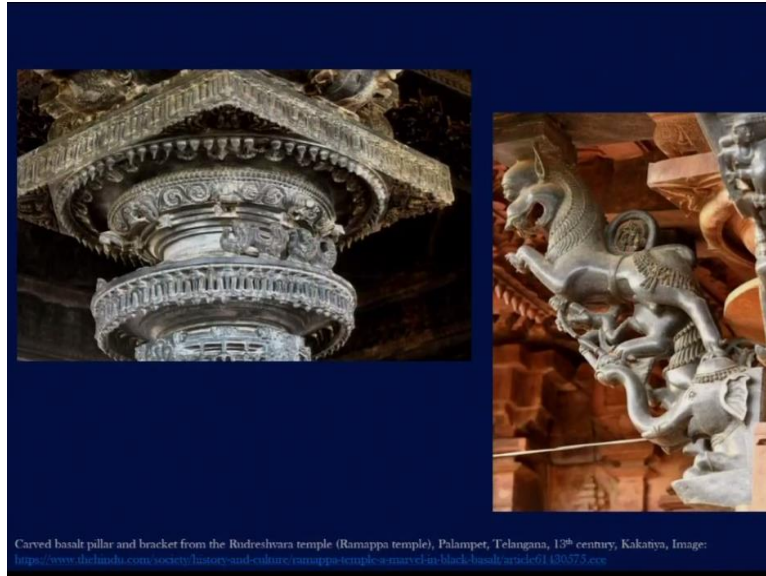
And then the body of the temple, we find that there was amalgamation of or like a combination of both granite and basalt. Then on the top of that, we have this superstructure, the vimana, the superstructure on the top of the vimana and then this superstructure is not created of any stone but that is created of brick and this particular kind of brick which is now being researched upon is considered to be this floating brick which is really lightweight.

And that is how the superstructure is created so that it does not put too much pressure on the base of this temple. So, these are the different ways in which we find that even though this locally available granite and basalt rock are used for the mandapa and the pillars and everything of this temple, but it is not something that is used in its shikara and its base. So, there is a heightened sense of what kind of stone is used where and what all other material that needs to be used for giving balance to the overall structure.

And this is something that we find that all this sensibility towards material that helped the artisans for making this temple. So, this particular temple which is considered the Rudreswara temple. So, this Rudreswara temple was perhaps been created by one of the generals of the Kakatiya dynasty that is Recharla Rudra and Rudreswara temple is also known today as Ramappa temple and perhaps one of the very few temples in India which is known after its main sculptor.

So, Ramappa was the main sculptor, the person who was responsible for erecting this temple. So, that is how we see how the name of the sculptor became inseparable with this particular temple, which is not the case for most of the temples that we see in India.

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And here are some of the more details of this temple what we see here and this elaborately carved pillars and this pillar is carved out of the basalt rock. So, basalt rock as I have already mentioned that is one of the hardest materials to carve. And so, this elaborately carved pillars that we have all over in this temple, which holds the roof. So in one hand, we see that how the locally available basalt rock is used here for holding the roof that has, perhaps one can imagine that is one of the best purposes that this kind of heavy stone can serve.

And then on the other hand, we see this tremendous skill to manipulate this heavy and almost impenetrable stone and then we see the amount of details those are created on the top of it. And the same goes with the brackets, the brackets that we have on the right side of the screen, how these brackets they also hold the roof. The projections of the roof which sort of go outward and how the brackets with this mythical vyali figures and the elephant figures they also hold the roof in the similar way.

So, this is something we see this is happening during the 13th century in Telangana and then we have already looked into the Hoysala temples which were constructed in the 12th - 13th centuries. So, it is almost the same time period that we have, but the thing is one can see that how different kinds of stones were utilized, it is not really like one time they used one particular kind of stone and then later on there was a different style.

Simultaneously different kinds of stones were utilized, different kinds of skills were explored and that is the reason it does not really follow a strict chronology. But what happens here is one needs to understand that how these two practices are contextual in their own way, so they

need to be studied for their own context and not for a chronological flow. So, thank you. We will continue the discussion on the stones in the next lectures.