

Kāvi Kale : The Beautiful Art of Goa and Coastal Karnataka*

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The rich art heritage we have inherited from our illustrious ancestors is so extraordinary that a few dedicated lifetimes are needed to do a thorough reconnaissance of our art heritage. In stark contrast, the scant respect that agencies as well as the common people, barring a miniscule percent, have for the heritage is contemptible.

Each state in India has such an extraordinary variety of art forms. The state of Karnataka too has done itself proud in fine arts as in the other fields. There are well known handicrafts, such as Sandalwood carvings, Ivory carvings, Inlay work, Bidarī work, extraordinary murals seen in the caves of Badami, the Mysore school of painting called Gesso work along with lesser or almost unknown works like *Cittara* from North Kanara (very similar to Warli art), Kinhala art from Raichur district and Kāvi from Dakṣiṇa Kannada. The list will get longer if I add the village and folk arts to this. In this paper I would like to introduce to the reader the very interesting art form called Kāvi. Kāvi is a local name for Indian red mud (*hurimunju***), which is the only colour used in this art form.

The coastal strip between the Western Ghats and the sea, including the state of Goa are Uttara Kannada (North Canara), Udupi and Dakṣiṇa Kannada (South Canara). This region is bounded on the east by the Western Ghats and on the west by the Arabian Sea. Kāvi art flourished in the Dakṣiṇa Kannada region after its disappearance from Goa.

Kāvi Kale is an elaborate form of wall mural etching and painting. It spread along the Konkan coast of Dakṣiṇa Kannada when the Hindus fled from Goa around 16th century and settled in this region. The constant persecution by the Portuguese and the conversion of the Hindus to Christianity in Goa compelled the very religious Sāraswata Brahmins to migrate with their deities (*kuladevatās*) to Uttara Kannada district. As most temples in this district were destroyed by the Portuguese, the

*Article is dedicated to Dr. Krishnanand Kamath.

**Early Marathi word *hurmunja*, means *geruā* or *bhagavā* ; so is the word *Kāva* standing for red clay/*gerū* – Editors.

migrants had to construct new temples. They used the art and architecture of their homeland that is Goa, and constructed Śrī Mahālasā Nārāyaṇī temple at Kumta, Śrī Rāmamandira at Honavar, and Śrī Lakṣmī Nārāyaṇa Mahāmāyā temple at Ankola. As the exodus from Goa increased, some people reached Dakṣiṇa Kannada district and constructed temples at Baindur, Kundapura, Mangalore and other places. It is very significant that all these temples have or had such murals, but their repair and renovation might have resulted in their total destruction.

Kāvī art form was seen in the form of murals, geometrical designs, as well as floral designs on the external walls of temples in churches and some ancestral homes in Goa. In temples, this art was used to depict mythological and historical themes on the exterior walls.

The renovation of these structures, churches, temples and heritage buildings across Goa and Karnataka, and the lack of interest in retaining the paintings spelt the death knell of this art form. Then, as well as now, there does not seem to be any great interest evinced either from the directorate of archives and archaeology, or any heritage institutions, in this beautiful art and preserving it for posterity. Thanks to the singular interest of Late Dr. Krishnanand Kamath took in writing about it, and his vociferous campaign for preservation of this art in some temples in and around the cities of Kumta and Honavar that we still have some extraordinary paintings preserved. This essay is therefore dedicated to Dr. Krishnanand Kamath on whose work I leant heavily and from which I have borrowed extensively (Fig.1).

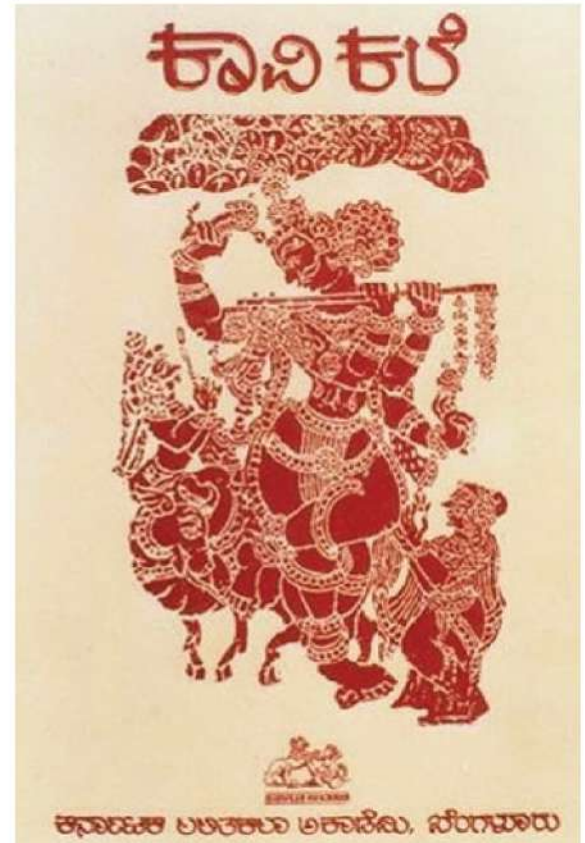


Fig.1 : The cover page of Dr. Krishnanand Kamath's Book in Kannada

Laterite

Laterite is not uniquely identified with any particular parent rock, geologic age, single method of formation, climate per se, or geographic location. It is a rock product that is a response to a set of physiochemical conditions, which include an iron-containing parent rock, a well-drained terrain, and abundant moisture for hydrolysis during weathering, relatively high oxidation potential, and persistence of these conditions over thousands of years.

Encyclopaedia Britannica says that most of laterite is gibbsite. The aluminium-rich representative of laterite is bauxite. That laterite is a soil layer that is rich in iron oxide and derived from a wide variety of rocks weathering under strongly oxidizing and leaching conditions. It forms in tropical and subtropical regions where the climate

is humid. Lateritic soils may contain clay minerals. Typical laterite is porous and clay-like. It contains iron oxide and minerals goethite, lepidocrocite, and hematite. It also contains titanium oxides and hydrated oxides of aluminium, in the most common variety.

Laterite surface is frequently pea like in appearance. Exposed surfaces are blackish-brown to reddish and have a lava-like appearance, commonly lighter in colour. It is (red, yellow & brown) where freshly broken, is generally soft when freshly quarried but hardens on exposure. This is a commonly used building material in the coastal areas because of its immense durability popular in Goa, Karnataka and Kerala where it rains very heavily from June to September. It is called *jambittige* in Karnataka (Fig.2).



Fig.2 : Laterite, the basic building material in Goa and coastal Karnataka

Composing a Kāvī painting

Temples and other buildings are made from cut-out laterite stones plastered with locally available materials. Monochrome is the preferred choice for it because the heavy rain in this region precludes the possibility of multiple colours. The walls of a particular building, whether it is a temple or a place of residence, have to be prepared in a particular manner to act as a canvas that receives the painting. Snow white lime, obtained by burning sea-shells and clean sand from river-bed, are mixed with jaggery and allowed to ferment for two weeks. The mixture is then hand pounded to obtain a homogeneous mass which gets hardened when applied to the wall and allowed to dry. Kāvī pictures are to be etched on these walls when they are still wet, as in fresco paintings.

A butter smooth mixture of lime and *hurimunju* (a mixture of maroon or Indian red coloured earth pigments and natural binding material) is hand pounded to make it homogenous and applied on the white base with a steel trowel to the predetermined area. After that it is applied on the wall. Then the figures are etched on the white lime surface with a pointed instrument, while the base is still wet. This allows correction of any mistake while drawing. Etching the red base reveals the white background which is the most striking feature of this art form. After the drawing is done it must be kept for a day and should be watered every four hours before polishing it with a smooth pebble to prevent it from cracking. This should be done for a week before the mural is finally ready. This art form is monochromatic because it has to withstand the torrential rains in this region and the humid weather.

To cover a larger area, a wooden float is also employed. After an hour of drying, engraving work is commenced well trained Kāvī art mason etches small murals without any aid. For geometrical designs he uses scales and compass and sometimes stencils. To make a stencil a flat wooden board or a slightly thicker cardboard, two feet by one or two

inches, is used. Circles, semi circles, arcs, even straight lines are perforated on it to make drawing easier. Large and complicated motifs are first drawn on a paper, perforated with pin holes and traced to the wall by dusting with dry lime. *Kāñṭā* (steel bodkins) of different sizes and dimensions are used for etching. At this stage, any deformity in the murals could be repaired with ease. After a day's initial drying, water is sprayed on the murals at



Fig.3 : The Kāvī facade of the Rāmacandra temple at Honavar

intervals of four hours and continued for a week. After each spray the murals are polished with smooth pebbles from river beds. These treatments prevent cracks and ensure that murals last as long as the building itself. An artistically drawn and well executed, red ochre mural, against sand-blasted white, is as attractive as multi-coloured painting (Fig.3).

The Kāvī murals are painted on different parts of a temple such as *śukanāsī*, *mukhamanḍapa*, a niche in a corner, etc. They differ in size from two feet by three feet right up to by six feet by six feet. The top of the mural is usually semi-circular with features like *gopuras* and *kalaśas*. A plethora of geometrical shapes such as circles, semi circles, triangles and hexagons (Fig.4) are employed to enrich its artistic beauty. Delicate curlicues make it more intricate. The details are drawn and painted very meticulously. Flora and fauna of the region are amply depicted. Decorations, costumes and ornaments hold a mirror to the contemporary scenario.



Fig.4 : Geometrical designs popularly used for borders and fillers

These murals vary from place to place and cover the entire gamut of

mythological, historical and contemporary themes. The artist had to know not just the *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Mahābhārata* and *Bhāgavata* but also the Purāṇas and the Sthalapurāṇas (stories connected to the locale) too. For example, Fig.5 shows a small window of the Rāmacandra temple at Honnavar with two Kāvī pictures on either side. If the viewer does not know this story it will be just two nicely painted figures, but like any art, appreciation happens only when there is recognition by the viewer of the viewed. The two paintings are of Paraśurāma and Kārtavīryārjuna, a Kṣatriya king of the land of Haihyayas (Fig.5).

The story goes that, King Kārtavīryārjuna of the Haihyayas came upon the hermitage of Jamadagni. The visit happened at a time Paraśurāma was away in the forest gathering wooden offerings for the *yajña*, and although the king had a massive entourage, the ṛṣi was able to serve the king a grand feast. When Kārtavīrya asked him how he was able to do so, Jamadagni showed



Fig.5 : Kārtavīryārjuna and Paraśurāma

him the blessed Kāmadhenu cow, given to Jamadagni by Indra, which was able to grant wishes. Kārtavīrya was covetous and wanted the cow as his own. The ṛṣi refused and Kārtavīrya stole the sacred animal.

Returning home, Paraśurāma was infuriated and travelled to the royal palace. Brandishing his axe, he decimated its guards and killed the mighty King Kārtavīrya, retrieving the cow. When he returned home, his father was pleased, but seeing the blood stained axe of Paraśurāma, also concerned. He cautioned his son he must be aware of wrath and pride. Paraśurāma accepted the reprimand of his father and went on a pilgrimage to holy places for one year of penance.

Meanwhile, the sons of Kārtavīrya discovered their father at the palace and knew that only Paraśurāma could have killed him. In revenge, they went to the hermitage and murdered Jamadagni. They surrounded the ṛṣi and shot him to death with arrows like a stag. Afterwards, they decapitated his body and took his head with them.

To the cognoscenti, the two warring figures on either side of the latticed window cease to be mere paintings. They narrate a tale of great penance, greed and retribution to the person familiar with the Purāṇas. Their beauty becomes enhanced when viewed against that background.

In the painting of Govardhana Giridhara (Fig.6) I have to draw attention to the mountain which is on the little finger of Lord Kṛṣṇa (Fig.7). Apart from leaves and flowers the painting has a host of animals and birds, a peacock, a crow, parrots and a swan are seen along with a crocodile, a fox and a rabbit, etc. In his own way, the artist is trying to depict all the animal, bird and plant life on the mountain.

A lesser known anecdote from the *Padmapurāṇa* is the story of Ekādaśī. Viṣṇu manifests from his own form, the deity of the lunar day Ekādaśī. The lunar day of Ekādaśī, the 11th day is the form of the Supreme Lord, Viṣṇu, and the Super soul within the heart of the living entities. Śrī Ekādaśī is the utmost pious activity and is the most important form of all vows as it annihilates the Pāpapurūṣa, whose form was the embodiment of the worst kinds of sins. When the different sinful living entities followed the vow of Ekādaśī, they were elevated quickly to the abode of Vaikuṅṭha shows the personified forms of Ekādaśī and Pāpapurūṣa, a very rare episode depicted in Kāvī art and I have not spotted it in any other temple as yet. Here Durgā Mahiṣāsūramardīnī and Ekādaśī are painted side by side (Fig.8).



Fig.6 : Giridhara Gopāla



Fig.7 : The details of the flora and fauna of the mountain

For etching the geometrical designs popularly used in Kāvī art, stencils were carved on thick cardboard or flat thin pieces of wood. Different simple designs, such as circles, half circles dots lines, crescent shapes were normally used. These stencils were placed on the Kāvī layer and with fine needles the designs were scratched on to the surface. A fine filigree type of design then emerged from the scratched surface. Because of the use of stencils, borders and repeated themes of wall decoration became easier and faster and the designs became symmetrical. The chief artisan could employ



Fig.8 : Durgā, the Śakti of Śiva, flings her trident and beheads Mahiṣāsura, finally killing him (Left). Ekādaśī, the feminine power of Lord Viṣṇu, defeats Mura in the fight and kills him after putting her leg on his chest and cutting his head (Right).

less talented people to do this work so that he could concentrate on the major works. In addition to all this Kāvī art was relatively cheap. *Maṭhas*, houses, auditoriums were all decorated with this beautiful, durable, and long lasting art.

One has to see the beautiful exterior of the Marikambā temple at Sirsi in Karnataka (Fig.17), to see how these geometrical designs are combined with the elegant rounded border forms. It is a three storied temple with

a roof made of Mangalore tiles. Apart from the main entrance door the temple has eight smaller doors and approximately twenty-six pillars and windows. All these are packed with Kāvī art. Circles, semicircles triangles, squares, hexagons and octagons are used in such a way that they create a mosaic impression on the viewer. It is surprising that no two designs are identical. This profusion gives the temple a permanent festive look.

Animals are also artistically included in the murals. A pair of parrots perching on a tree-top is symbolization of nature. Dancing peacocks, flying pigeons are some of favourite subjects. It seems a rural artist had difficulty in identifying his own depiction of quadruped. In murals like Govardhana-giridhārī, the artist has taken full liberty to depict different animals of the area. Elephants, tigers, deer, snakes, parrots and bees could be easily identified. At times an artist takes an opportunity to exhibit his mastery in engraving. Two monkeys are positioned in such way that they should look like four. Similarly, bull and elephant heads are so arranged that the former's hump should become the trunk of the latter. Many mythical figures like Gandharvas and Kinnarīs are meticulously engraved. Monkey god, Hanumān and eagle god, Garuḍa are represented in human form. A scorpion mythical bird and Kāmadhenu find their place in some of the murals (Fig.9).

The style adopted by urban artists was radically different from that of the rural artists. The murals of temples located in Honavar, Kumta and Sirsi (Fig.10) are very artistic, elaborate and sophisticated, whereas those that could be seen in the temples of Haladipur (Honavar tālukā), Bilgi (Siddapur tālukā) and Shetgeri (Ankola tālukā) are simple, straightforward and at times also crude. It is probable that the services of urban artists were not available in rural areas or the temples could not pay their fees and hence they are compelled to use local talent only. Thus, their murals are more

of a ritualistic nature than a piece of art. At times, it is even difficult to distinguish a male from a female character.

The Kāvī art on the column and on the altar is from the Church of The Lady of the Mount. The painting on the wall is from 'Our Lady of the Rosary'. One can



Fig.9 : Interesting fillers like scorpion, mṛgapuruṣa and others

see the symmetry in these paintings and appreciate the indigenous simple stencils that were employed (Figs.11&12). Both these churches are in Goa. A lot of building and painting activity was on in the year 2010 when I visited these churches and I sincerely hope and pray that these beautiful pieces are still preserved. Kāvī art is also seen in the dilapidated Sateri temple in Morjim, Goa. In the Goan village of Advapal is a Māruti temple. The very interesting image of Māruti holding the Sanjīvanī Mountain and standing on a slain demon has an extraordinary *prabhāvalī* of Kāvī art.

The detailing on the works of art like the head decorations, ornaments, blouse and sārī designs are engraved in such minute details that one can use the painting to study dresses and ornaments from that period. The common people of that time are represented in some of the murals. The *dvārapālas* are wearing long turbans, side shirts (a.k.a. *bagal bandī*) and knee-high *dhotīs* (Fig.13). They are carrying cudgels, maces or country-made guns. A nobleman is shown as welcoming visitors with folded hands. To suit his taste, status and dignity, he is wearing a beautifully embroidered turban, a long



Fig.10 : Kinnarīs, Rāmacandra temple, Honavar



Fig.11 : Lady of the Mount, 2010

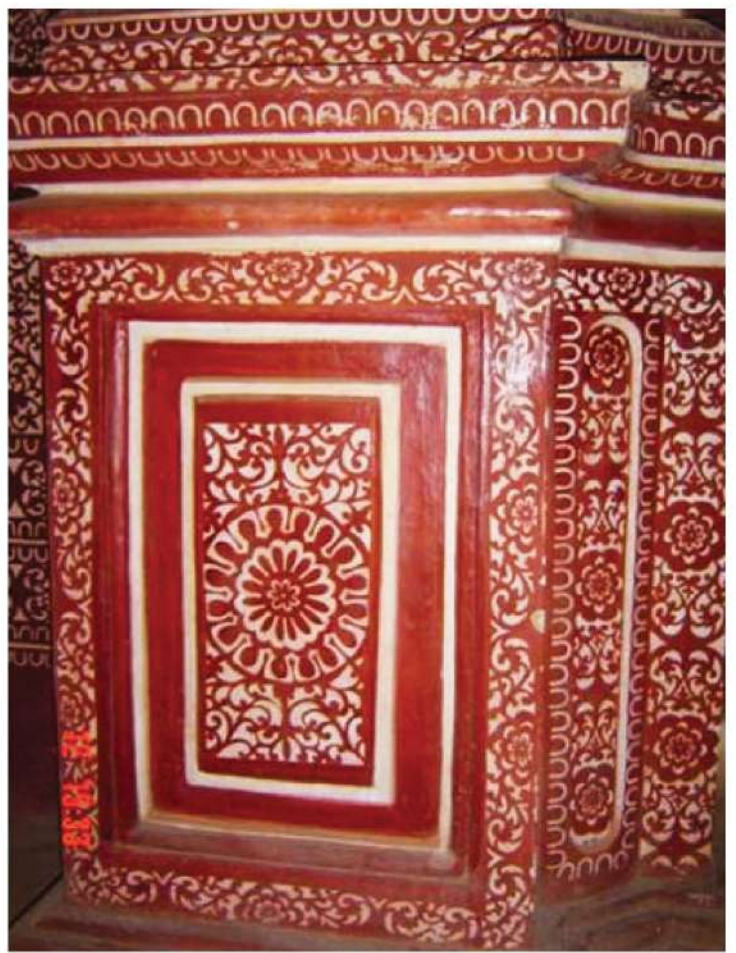


Fig.12 : A column in the Lady of the Mount

coat and a *dhoti*. Some nobles are in western costumes, such as shirts, trousers and boots. However, the women are always shown in typical coastal Konkaṇī women's costumes. A nose ornament in the form of *mugabottu* and nine yard *sārī* worn with back *kacche* (a pleat of *sārī* going between legs and tucked at the waist from behind) are some of the characteristics of the typical attire of these women. It is significant that the female characters of mythology such as Lakṣmī, Saraswatī, Mohinī and Nāgakanyās (snake women) are also depicted in this dress. The themes selected mainly depend upon the main deity of a given temple. Different artists select the same subject but employ entirely different depictions. Murals of Kāliya-*mardana* and Govardhana-*giridhara* are two very good examples of this. Both



Fig.13 : Dvārapālas (Guards)

legendary and contemporary personalities, such as Vyāsa Muni and Madhvācārya, are depicted in some of the temples.

Sgraffito art form

Sgraffito, an art form very similar to Kāvī art, seems to have flourished in parts of Europe. Sgraffito is a painting technique in which a surface layer is scratched to expose the colour or colours underneath. This style of painting is typically used on wall decor or ceramic works of art. Everyone from artists to home builders made use of the unique mode of artistic layering. The technique has a rich and diverse history, centred mostly in Italy and immensely popular during the 16th century. Sgraffito's roots, however, stretch much further back than the Italian Renaissance. There is evidence of this type of work on many ancient African artefacts. The technique was often used by artists during the Art Nouveau period of the late 19th and early 20th centuries and it remained consistently popular and widely employed. The name is derived from the Italian word *sgraffire*, which means 'to scratch'. The Italian term is derived from the Greek word *graphien*, meaning 'to write'.

Typically applied to paint and plaster, Sgraffito can be executed on any number of surfaces. After applying the top layer, an artisan uses a simple tool - which can be anything from the handle end of a standard paintbrush to a sharp painting knife - to create a series of scratches through the exterior. The resulting cracks reveal the colours and surface of the layer concealed by the top coat. In combination with ornamental decoration these techniques formed an alternative to the prevailing painting of walls. Of late there has been an unmistakable growing interest in this old technique. During the 16th century Renaissance in Italy, wall art, painting palace facades and pottery in Sgraffito became famous in Rome and other cities (Fig.14). Most of such works have now weathered away. One of the reasons the Italian potters used Sgraffito technique was that they wanted a nice white surface to decorate, just like porcelain, but the only white clay they had wasn't strong enough to produce ceramics. So they made their plates and bowls from the readily available red clay, and coated it with white slip (liquid clay) to get the prized white surface to decorate. Sgraffito was a logical extension to this practice.

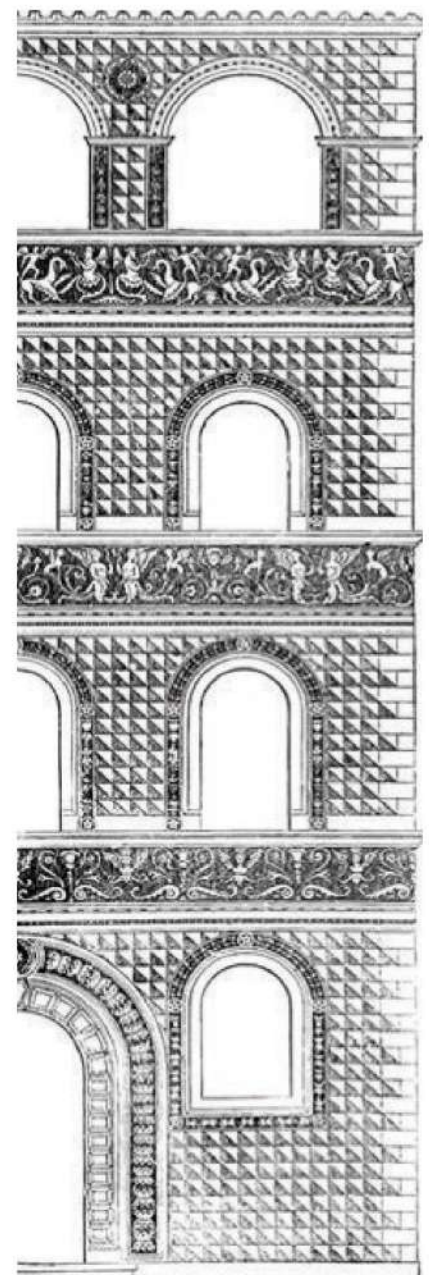


Fig.14 : A drawing of Sgraffito in Rome

During the 16th century the technique was brought to Germany by the master builders of the Renaissance

and taken up with enthusiasm. In Germany, the technique was most predominant in Bavaria. Combined with ornamental decoration, Sgraffito provides a great alternative to the simple painting of walls. The beautiful results of Sgraffito have contributed to the growing interest in this old-world technique, turning plain walls into pieces of art. It's not just limited to walls either. The use of Sgraffito was common in the creation of housing facades for the purposes of advertising too.

In the Spanish region ofv Extremadura the memory of the Augustine recollects remains alive because of the decorative technique of the Sgraffito preserved in one of their ancient convents, the convent of Valdefuentes, popularly known as the 'Escorial Chico' (Fig.15). The community tried to use the decorative technique, Sgraffito on other buildings of the area too. The Municipality of Valdefuentes, has even tried to have Escorial Chico recognized as the regional

capital of the Sgraffito. The Sgraffito rendering, is very similar to stucco, but with a finish which is normally based on the play of colours produced by two superposed coats of lime mortar. The last coat is applied according to a design which leaves the undercoat on view. There are two aspects to the decorative function of Sgraffito. Firstly, the relief created by working with two coats, leading to its characteristic interplay of light and shadow.



Fig.15 : Escorial Chico

Secondly, the contrast caused by the difference of colour between the outer and the undercoat, and the different treatment given to the surface of the coats (scraped interiors, smooth exteriors) is very fascinating. There are several Sgraffito techniques, but despite slight differences in execution, once the coats which form the rendering are applied, there is a general proceeding, which is common to them all and which is described below. The Sgraffito process: When the top coat has been superposed, while the rendered surface is still soft, the drawing to be scratched onto the wall is undertaken. There are two techniques used to do this: paper stencilling and rigid templates. Once the drawing has been transferred onto the surface, its outline is marked by cutting through the mortar to the undercoat, using punches or engravers and making sure that the cut is bevelled. Then the areas where the colour beneath should show through are removed. Using the appropriate tool (flat blades such as knives for a smooth finish and scrapers or saws for a rough finish), the top mortar is scraped away to reveal the desired colour. Finally, to achieve a smooth surface,

the scraped areas are compacted with a spatula or similar tool or, if preferred, they are left rough.

In Portugal this art is seen mostly in towns bordering Spain. Churches, monasteries and chapels still have some old Sgraffito left and much like in India a dedicated group of architects are trying to preserve this heritage. In England too some examples of Sgraffito, of the 19th century can be seen on the walls of St. Peter's church at Somerset. The decoration includes representations of Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah and the Annunciation. The technique is attributed to the Arts and Crafts Movement and, at Hornblotton, it has been created by cutting away the upper coat of white cement and leaving exposed the strawberry coloured undercoat of plaster including terracotta patterns of sunflowers and leaves (Fig.16).

Sgraffito reached its height of perfection in the 17th century at the potteries of Beauvais in France. It was used for ornamental decoration although in the south-west of England, the tradition of Sgraffito continued well into the 19th century in the potteries of North Devon.



Fig.16 : Sgraffito in Somerset

The fundamental difference between Kāvi/Sgraffito and the other forms of decorative plasterwork is that it makes its chief demand upon the skill of the artist, architect or craftsman rather than the modeller to produce and carry out the designs. It is an art in which the management of lines and the ordering of them into suitable patterns or motifs are of special importance. The technique unites both drawing and painting

skills, but it also requires the artist to have the precision of an expert plasterer in the application, layering and final finish of the materials. As with all plasters, its durability as a finish relies on the application of the correct plaster mixes in the right conditions. When used externally, Kāvi/Sgraffito are weather resistant forms of ornamentation capable of withstanding heat and rain because it is a very hard surface and much less porous than stone or bricks.

Dr. Kamath is of the opinion that Kāvi is an indigenous art of Goa and Karnataka but, after having examined that very similar works of art existed many centuries before Kāvi in various different countries of Africa and Europe, I am of the opinion that the art of painting might have been learnt by our artists from the various artisans

of other nations who were a part of the entourage of the traders who settled down in Goa. Having learnt the technique the inherent talent of the artists must have led to experimenting with local themes and completely localised it. The taking over of Goa by the Portuguese and constant harassment from them pushed the local Hindu community, mainly the Konkaṇīs further into the neighbouring state, Karnataka, where they settled, made it their own and contributed in many ways to the prosperity of the coastal belt of Karnataka. This art from Goa, Kāvī, bloomed in the many temples this community built but was restricted to a very small area.

Kāvī artists have not left their identity anywhere. However, the themes of the murals are indicated in Devanāgarī script inside the panel itself. In addition to Devanāgarī, Kannada, sometimes Tamil alphabets are also used for this purpose. On the basis of these Kannada characters, it could be said that these panels are 400 to 450 years old. In a few cases, the records are available indicating the year in which the temple and its Kāvī art work were completed. Śrī Mahālasā Nārāyaṇī temple of Kumta was constructed in CE 1565. Śrī Rāma temple of Honavar was erected four centuries ago. Śrī Marikambā Devī temple of Sirsi was completed in CE 1689 (Fig.17). One dilapidated building in Madhukeśvara temple complex of Banavāsī (Sirsi tālukā), which possesses two Kāvī *dvārapālas* must be at least six hundred years old (Fig.13). No temple constructed in the past half a century contains any Kāvī art that is worth mentioning.

Because of lack of recognition and patronage, the Kāvī art is on the verge of becoming extinct. The old masters still live in the coastal Karnataka but nobody utilizes their services. The murals in private buildings are the first to disappear when attempts are made to give a modern look to old constructions with the help of cement, oil paints, varnishes and distempers. The temple managements are following this trend by collecting donations from the devotees for renovations or new constructions. In their plans for (*jīrṇoddhāra*) renovation there is no room to preserve these centuries old Kāvī murals. In the last five years, at least fifty small and large temples have lost their Kāvī murals. Thus, beautiful murals from the temples of Gerasoppe, Honavar, Kumta and Aghanashini have breathed their last without leaving any trace to posterity. The old photographs of Devī temple of Gudde-angadi (Kumta tālukā) and Basappa temple of Ulavi stand testimony to indicate that these temples had beautiful Kāvī murals decorating their walls. A few temples had retained these murals, but under the pretext of giving a face lift, got them retouched with deep red enamel paint and in the process completely ruined them. Śrī Marikambā Devī Temple of Sirsi (Fig.17) was almost like a treasure house of this art, but when the contract was given for redrawing these panels to a contractor, he made a mess of it. Similarly, murals in the temples of Shirali (Bhatkal tālukā), Gokarna (Kumta tālukā) and Aversa (Ankola tālukā) are ruined in the process of redrawing. Therefore, there is an urgent need of preserving these murals in the form of tracings, colour or black and white photographs. If such a work cannot be undertaken by any Government agencies, some private organizations may be requested to do this work on war-footing, before it is too late.

Hoysala kings had employed large number of sculptors for the construction of temples and these artisans came to be known as *Gudigaras* (*Gudi+Kararu*) temple-makers. When temple-building activity declined these artisans migrated to Sorab, Sagar, Honavar, Kumta, Sirsi and other places from the Hoysala kingdom. In Uttara Kannada they might have been employed by the Konkani people to construct their



Fig.17 : Marikambā temple in Sirsi

temples according to the traditions followed in Goa. Thus, some of the *Gudigaras* might have acquired new art of Kāvi murals. Even today, some of these *Gudigaras* design panels at the time of annual car festival which very much resemble to the Kāvi panels. Thus, Kāvi art is a product of Goan style adopted by the Kannada artists.

In European countries, the art of Sgraffito is alive and flourishing as the art of Sgraffito has been employed by pottery makers. One gets to see extraordinary beautiful pots and plates made using the original Sgraffito style. Yes it is abominal that this art is dying in Goa and coastal Karnataka but we could wake up to the fact that Kāvi artists do not always have to make divine pictures and panels. They could be given an alternative canvas to portray their art. Plaques, pots mugs or gift articles could be an alternative, used to keep the original art from dying. Handicraft industries, both private and Government could evince some interest in it and revive it like they did to the Channapattana wooden toys.

Endnotes

1. Krishnanand Kamath, *Kaavi Kale* (Kannada), Revised edition, Pragati Graphics, Bangalore, 2012.
2. Rangacharya Vedamurti Joshi, *Bhagvata Mahapurānam* (Kannada), 9th canto, 13th chapter, Saraswati Pustaka Bhandara, Belagavi, 1984, pp.665-668.
3. *Padmapurāṇa*, 14th chapter, Kriya Sagara Sara, Story of Ekādaśī.
4. Saloma Sofia & Jose Aguiar, *Sgraffito in Portugal - A contribution to its study and preservation*, a paper presented at Lisbon University, in <http://dspace.uevora.pt/rdpc/handle/10174/4084>.

5. Encyclopaedia Britannica, *Sgraffito*, (Italian: 'scratched'), in the visual arts, a technique used in painting, pottery and glass, which consists of putting down a preliminary surface, covering it with another and then scratching the superficial layer in such a way that the pattern or shape that emerges is of the lower colour.

Photo Courtesy:

Churches of Goa – Dr. Anna Dallapiccola & Jyoti Sudhakar, Sgraffito photographs – The internet, Temple photographs – Purnima Srikrishna & Ashwin Naik