



ANALYSIS OF KAAVI ART: GOA'S GIFT TO THE WORLD

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ABSTRACT

Kaavi is only used to decorate and demarcate holy places. The most auspicious color was provided by Goa's kaav, or red soil. Kaavi may be used for more than just decoration and defining sacred space. Another potential use of kaavi is revealed by oral history. Residents of Panaji (formerly Pangim or Panjim), Goa's capital city, remember how lamani tribal women would sell medicinal red soil in tins at the weekly market. This medicinal red soil was once thought to have skin-healing powers. It's likely that traces of the mineral selenite, also known as SeO₃, found in red soil had medicinal value. For stomach problems, Ayurveda suggests mixing small amounts of red soil with tempered ghee (clarified butter). This elevates kaavi art to a whole new level. Is kaavi's use a reminder of the medicinal properties of Goa's native red soil, tambdi maati, and an emotive focus of much sociocultural literary and artistic expression?

Keywords:

Kaavi Art, Goa's Capital City, Art, Temple Art, Indian Red and White Strings.



INTRODUCTION

Goa has made a significant contribution to the worlds of art and design. Every visitor to Goa is moved by the Baroque churches that dot the countryside, beautiful houses that stand on village paths, freshwater springs, large swaths of rice fields, and white sand beaches.

The beautiful Catholic-owned houses in Goa are right on the road, with their quaint and sometimes amusing gatepost finials of lions, dogs, porcupines, and soldiers. Old Goa's churches are grouped together, their majestic facades and Italianate architecture serving as a reminder of the state's Christian heritage. Ponda's relatively new temples are a riot of color, with a mix of Islamic, Hindu, and Catholic architectural styles that represent the city's multicultural past.

Away from the spotlight, however, there is another Goan treasure hidden in remote Goan villages. The ancient architectural art of kaavi is the treasure. Kaavi is an inlay work that is done on the walls of temples and houses to describe sacred space. The hot climate of Goa, with its 90% humidity and 150 inches of rain during the monsoon, is unsuitable for painting. Goans had to come up with more inventive materials and techniques to decorate walls and define sacred spaces.

For this, Goans learned to etch or inlay using the cheapest and most easily available materials they could find. This is known as kaavi art, and it is Goa's gift to Maharashtra and Karnataka, as well as the rest of the world. The wall is plastered first in this architectural art. Then it's healed with water every four hours for two days. A steel bodkin was used to etch a pattern, which was then scratched away. The cavities are then filled with kaav, a mixture of fine red soil and charcoal, as well as the extract of a milky plant known locally as paal kudi (or milk sap creeper) or liana.

Kaavi art

Kaavi art is a type of fresco found in the Konkan region, particularly in Goa's temples and parts of coastal Maharashtra and Karnataka. Kaavi frescoes can also be found in old houses, small temples, and the Roman Catholic Church's walls.

If Kaavi art is not revived and promoted, it will become a footnote in history. Heta Pandit, a heritage activist and author of books including Houses of Goa (co-authored with architect Annabel Mascarenhas) and Dust and Other Short Stories from Goa, was preparing to deliver this message to the audience gathered at Gallery Gitanjali in Panaji.

'I first saw kaavi at the Deshprabhu house in 1998,' says Ms Pandit. I went to the Deshprabhu house on a Homi Bhabha fellowship... It intrigued me back then, and it continues to fascinate me now.' Kaavi is a unique art form that originated in Goa and was given to Maharashtra and Karnataka as a gift. This art form has the wisdom of the ages, having withstood the test of time, weather, and other adversities.

Ms Pandit demonstrated an ordinary Goan house (the Boraskar house in Poinguinim) to the audience, explaining that while some houses have external embellishments such as dogs, lions, and soldiers seen at gate posts and finials to increase the house's prominence, most houses are devoid of images or any kind of external embellishments. When you walk into the home, however, you are greeted by beautiful kaavi art on the walls. 'Once you reach the Goan house, you see magic!' she says. The kaavi art is often accompanied by a story. Its aim is to demarcate the sacred space in a home.





Kaavi Kale, Temple Art in Indian Red and White Strings

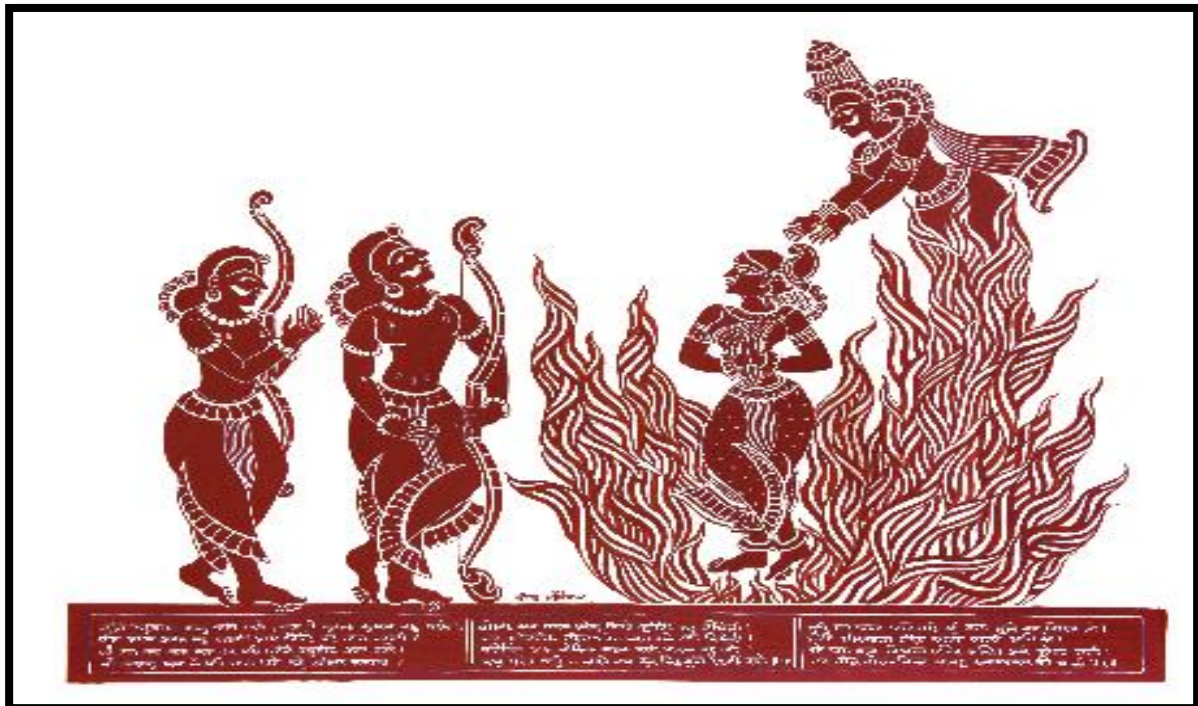
The narrative is the contrast between the Indo-Portuguese houses we see and this one, where the embellishment is done within. There is no plot in the embellishments outside the home. But there is a plot, a tale here,' Ms Pandit clarifies. Acrobats and a bhatkar (landlord) are depicted in the Boraskar house's kaavi. Another image shows a bhatkar, this time seated in a chair and wearing a Western-style coat with his small finger's nail grown too long to demonstrate his status and the fact that he does no manual labor. According to Ms Pandit, the red cap or tambdi topi he wears has historical significance. 'The Portuguese government realized the economy was struggling as people emigrated outside of Goa due to religious persecution or better prospects. As a result, they welcomed Hindu businessmen and traders to return. When they returned, they wore this red hat. I'm not sure whether they were required to wear it or volunteered to wear it, but the tambdi topi was worn by everyone who returned.'



Kaavi art is similar to frescoes in that it is created on wet plaster. The plaster is made by smelting seashells in a pit and combining them with riverbed sand and jaggery. This mixture is fermented for a few weeks before being pounded into a blended product. This is added to the wall after being slaked with water. Water is used to cure the plaster every four hours. After the plaster has hardened, the outline is cut out with a steel bodkin. The name Kaavi comes from kaav, a red pigment contained in laterite soil that is used to produce the vivid images on the plaster's snow-white background. The kaav is mixed with charcoal and a plant's milky sap. The only color used in kaavi art is red. This kaav blend is used to fill in the carved plaster.

Ms Pandit laments the slow death the art is dying in Goa when it is doing relatively better in Maharashtra and Karnataka which have temples beautifully adorned with kaavi. The ignorance of the Goan people with regard to kaavi is apparent in its approaching demise. Vetal Temple in





Kaavi Kale, Temple Art in Indian Red and White Strings

The interiors of Canacona include kaavi. The Maruti Temple in Advalpale has a round geometric design infilled with small petals, which was most likely drawn with a compass. Serpent heads can be seen in the detail. 'As a recurring theme, I've seen a lot of snake heads.' I'm not sure why. Perhaps it has something to do with Vishnu... the Shesh-Vishnu bond. 'A big kaavi with Shesh Vishnu, a beautiful seven-headed serpent with Vishnu reclining on its lap, can be found at the Rani house in Sanquelim,' says Ms Pandit.

Many of the kaavi temples are owned by families who are poor or have moved to metropolitan areas and are unable to restore these dilapidated temples. The Goa Heritage Action Group, with the support of Fundação Oriente and some private donors, restored Janardhan Mayenkar's family temple in Pernem in 2009.



The Brahmini Maya Temple, which the Goa Heritage Action Group visited because of its kaavi art, was demolished shortly after and replaced with a new structure. Despite the fact that the village had trained residents, the group's appeal to save the heritage site and conserve the kaavi art there fell on deaf ears. The villagers expected the group to put pressure on the government to stop any destruction and rebuilding at the site, so they went ahead with their work without regard for the temple's historical significance.

Kshetrapal Temple in Agarvaddo, as well as Venkatesh and Parashuram in South Goa, have kaavi art. 'This isn't to claim that Goa is just home to six kaavi art temples. There have to be a lot more. We need to investigate them, record them, film them, and bring them back to life. We've made it available to the rest of the world! How do we let it suffocate here?!' Ms. Pandit expresses herself passionately.

Ms Pandit speculates that the arrival of the Portuguese in 1510 may have prompted the spread of this art to Maharashtra and Karnataka. It was specifically created as a coastal art since no other painting could withstand the humidity, fog, and salinity of the coastal Konkan, but it gradually moved inland.

The Vetal Temple's Kaavi can be found on the walls, corners, borders, and pillars. The windows in the Desai house become part of the artwork. Figurative patterns, column boundaries, and geometric patterns are the three types of patterns used in kaavi. In kaavi art, the wave pattern is also popular.

Graffito should not be confused with kaavi sculpture, which can be seen at the Chapel of Our Lady of Monte in Old Goa. The panel in graffito is made of red soil and charcoal, the etched pattern is filled with plaster, and the motifs are Catholic. Hindu motifs are used exclusively in kaavi. Graffiti, unlike kaavi, does not have a religious connotation.

One of the challenges in restoring this art in temples and homes is that no one in Goa practices it anymore. We'd have to bring in craftspeople from Karnataka and Maharashtra. Aside from that, there is the larger financial hurdle of repairing the buildings before the kaavi can be restored. A difficult job, but the Goa Heritage Action Group has resolved to raise awareness among the general public and the government in order to prevent kaavi architectural art from becoming extinct in Goa.

Materials. (Материалы)

In Konkani, the word Kaav Devanagari refers to the Indian red pigment extracted from lateritic soils, which is the only color used in this painting. Reddish brown murals on white backgrounds, expertly drawn and executed, are sandblasted dishes, Kaavi art. Burned seashells and washed sand from riverbeds were combined with jaggery and fermented for two weeks. After that, the mixture is manually pounded into a homogeneous paste that hardens when applied to walls.

Kaavi designs are divided into three categories: Wave or lotus bud patterns run along the boundaries. There are half-open lotus shapes in the corners, as well as animals crammed into them. Figures of dwarfpalas or temple door guardians were borrowed from the Yakshagana School of drama (1900s) from neighboring Karnataka in figurative sculpture. The few Yakshagana figures on display seem to be from the Badagutitu or Badaguthitu Yakshagana type. When comparing the Yakshagana figure from the Shri Maruti Temple in Advalpale, Bicholim in Goa to the raja veshha or king's costume worn during the Dashavatara performance, the kireeta or headgear, as well as the mace and sword, are strikingly similar. It's also likely that the kaavi artist worked as a background painter or costume designer in the Yakshagana theatre and took some of his knowledge back to Goa.

Technique. (Техника)

A buttery smooth mixture of lime and uramunji is applied with a steel trowel to wet walls on which Kaavi images are to be engraved. A wooden float may also be used to cover wider areas. After an hour, the engraving will begin. Kaavi artists are well-trained and can etch a small mural without assistance. He uses a ruler and compasses to create geometrical designs. Large and complex motifs are first drawn on paper, then perforated with a pin and then painted on the wall with dry lime dusting. Etching is done with kanthas, or steel blades of various sizes and dimensions. Rows of spirals, spades, semi-circles, and curves adorn the ridges, platforms, and niches. The two pseudo-columns are made up of V-shaped parallel strips.



Reduction. (Сокращение)

Kaavi art is on the verge of extinction, and there are no plans to revive it. One of the key reasons for the demise of this art form is the repair and rebuilding of temples. Murals painted specifically for Kaavi art, a common art form in Karnataka's coastal Konkan region. The top Kolam in this now-extinct art form appears brighter and more well-finished. Kaavi, or brick red powder, is used as an outline for kolams, particularly on special occasions and sheets. The Kaavi art depicting Dashavatars of Mahavishnu, Ganapati, Saraswati, and Hanumatha on the walls and pillars of Garbhagudi are contributing to the Kolam art form becoming a central part of South India's contemporary art scene. Limestone and red brick are used for special occasions. Luostarinmaki, Turku Seurasari Open-Air Museum, Helsinki Telkkamaki Heritage Farm, Kaavi Turkansaari, Oulu Musee de plein-air des maisons comtoises, Nancray, Doubs, Luostarinmaki, Turku Seurasari Open-Air Museum, Helsinki Telkkamaki Heritage Farm, Kaavi Turkansaari, Oulu Musee de plein-air des maisons comtoises.

CONCLUSION

In kaavi sculpture, the circular medallion is also fascinating. Although most kaavi is done freehand by the artist or mason, this appears to have been done with two bodkins and a compass string. After the circle has been drawn, a variety of cobra heads and bodies emerge from the central axis. The first cobra appears, followed by the second. The cobras' spectacles are the most visible aspect of this arrangement. It's also difficult to say how many cobras are in the pattern because they're so fused. Snakes are often seen in Goan homes. On Nag Panchami day, we see cobras made in clay for worship. Outside temples and houses, we see them at the foot of tulsi vrindavans. More research is required on the circle with the lotus or the medallion with the cobras. They may be a yantra or tantric representation of manifestation, infinity and continuity, the circle of life and birth, or the birth and rebirth cycle.



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