



Cosmic Dance in Stone

Ramu Katakam

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- A semi-philosophical, semi-aesthetic appreciation of the great stone structures of the past
- Boasts an abundance of color photographs

Stone is a material that takes many million years to form. As a result, it offers a sense of permanence. Craftsmen and designers of an earlier era were able to use it most effectively to produce masterpieces of art and architecture. The primordial aspect of stone is perhaps why we feel so full of energy when wandering in areas with an abundance of this material. Stone offers magnificent natural compositions in the vast expanses of the countryside, but man's intervention elevates stone constructions to a whole new level of beauty. The builders of Mahabalipuram, Ellora, Elephanta, Angkor Wat, Badami, and Hampi were concerned not only with creating shelter in harmony with the natural landscape, but also with the numinous sense of elation one experiences when confronted with the architecture of these places. There was a time when man respected the landscape, seeing it as a reflection of his devotion to the creator of this universe. These primordial men also practised a lifestyle that did not adversely affect the sustaining powers of the earth. *Cosmic Dance in Stone* is largely a collection of photographs and illustrations that show how their creations, wonderful landscapes of stone, have been devised to transcend space and time. It is an attempt to discover how the designers of the past envisaged structures that could link us to the stars and help us realise the nature of our existence.

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Ramu Katakam has been a practising architect for the last 40 years. For the past decade, he has been conducting research on the traditional architecture of India. His first book, *Glimpses of Architecture in Kerala: Temples and Palaces*, was published in 2006. After working and living in different parts of India, he is now settled in Goa. Clare Arni is a photographer based in Bangalore, India. Her work encompasses architecture, social documentary, and cultural heritage. She has contributed to magazines like *Tatler*, *Wallpaper*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *Harvard Design*, as well as many Indian publications. She has exhibited internationally at the Essl Museum in Vienna, Austria; Grosvenor Vadehra, London; Bose Pacia, New York; and Berkeley art museum, California, and is in the permanent collections of the Saatchi Gallery, London; the Freer/Sackler gallery of the Smithsonian Institute, Washington; and the Art Gallery of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia. Joginder Singh, an architect by training, specializes in architectural photography. Though he enjoys photographing modern Indian architecture, his interactions with architectural heritage leave him enchanted and enriched. Regional response, material expression, and spatial complexity coupled with an attention to detail form a part of his visual dialogue. His published works include *Glimpses of Architecture in Kerala* and *Forts and Palaces of India*.

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