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Sri Lankan hybrid cultural remarks, revivals, and colonialism: based on Sri Lankan southern province temples' murals

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ABSTRACT

Sri Lanka has been an independent nation since ancient times. Historical sources attest to the fact that Sri Lanka was mainly inhabited by the Sinhala Buddhists and the Hindus under the political and economic conditions inherent in the country have changed due to the British occupation of the country. It had profound effect on the cultural and religious conditions, especially the customs and traditions that promoted the local identity. It can be seen that the local people have been in a lots of trouble as upper class people of this country who had worked with foreigners. The temple murals can be identified as an opportunity for the oppressed people of this country, led by the monks, to stand up against it, and through the visual media to show the oppression of the people and the catastrophic situation in the governing body. This research explores the challenges posed to local culture through the art of temple murals. It will be very important to be able to control the present adverse conditions by finding solutions through history to the problems that are especially affecting the Buddhist Culture.

Keywords: Sri Lanka, Buddhist Culture, Murals, Sinhala

1. INTRODUCTION

Adventure of the Buddhism in 3rd century B.C, Buddhism was not only the main religion in Sri Lanka but also the advisor to the ruler of the state. In 19th century, Sri Lanka was under the grip of British colonialism and it posed a serious threat to Sri Lankan Buddhist culture. The British rulers used their political power to propagate their religion, Christianity and missionary education to the Sri Lankan. This led to the disintegration of the inseparable link between Buddhism and Buddhist culture which had become the indigenous religion. When people used various media to propagate their views against this tyrannical rule of the British. Accordingly, the most powerful medium of communication used in the lowland (coastal areas) was the temple mural art.

It is understandable that in this period, art has become a medium of communication used in the development of human values rather than the enjoyment of art. There, steps were taken to revive the Buddhist culture, from the western invaders to the decline of the country, to the negative impact on local Buddhist culture.

Ceylon came under colonial rule after the Portuguese conquered, the coastal areas of Ceylon during the period 1505-1796 and the British invasion of the upcountry in 1815. The English ruled differently than the Portuguese and Dutch regimes. The British accepted the task of protecting Buddhism in accordance with the agreements between the Sri Lankans and them. However, in the face of the missionary agitation, the British intention to absolve themselves of that responsibility was successful and as a result, the Buddhist culture associated with the Sri Lankan people deteriorated. The Sri Lankan Economy, Society and Customs are different from those of the West. According to Buddhist thought immorality is rejected and the British considered it as moral. Sinhala Buddhists living around the end of the 19th century were cunningly persuaded by missionaries to convert to Christianity. They attacked Buddhist culture by lecturing, publishing and expanding missionary education in the Sinhala Language. As a result, the Bible was translated into Sinhala realizing the devastation to Sri Lankan Buddhist culture, the Sri Lankan bhikkhu community began to use art, a form of Buddhist communication, as a means of overcoming it. The way in which the Bhikkhu has always defended Buddhism from the time immemorial was to do so in this case as well, realizing that it was their responsibility. Weliwita Sri Saranankara Sangharaja Thero and his followers made a great contribution to the preservation of Buddhism and Buddhist culture.

The purpose of this research is to find the challenges faced by Sri Lankan Buddhist culture through temple murals in the Southern Province. Such challenges include obstacles to the construction of Buddhist temples, the inability of Buddhists to visit temples, the opposition of the rulers to the provision destruction of Buddhist temples and the conservation of Buddhist customs from Sinhala Buddhists.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research is being done on a qualitative basis, especially in association with temple in the Southern Province of Greece, such as Karagampitiya Subodharamaya, Klutara Ashokaramaya, Kathaluwa Purvaramaya, Misissssa Samudragiri Viharaya and Mulgirigala Viharaya. This research has been conducted through observation and the uses of literacy sources has also been utilized.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From advent of Buddhism to 1948, the state was not ruled by Buddhists themselves. They tried to convert their religion to Christianity and to Sri Lankans. Therefore, the Sri Lankan Buddhist culture was challenged from time to time. When studying the frescoes of the temples in the Southern Province, one can identify the paintings in those temples which show the challenges to the Buddhist culture.

In the study of this, it is important to first examine the foreign features depicted through the drawings which is special about this place can be seen the richness of the art tradition centered on the temples in the areas where European invasions were prevalent. Temples in the upcountry and coastal areas. Its paintings give the comrade a unique concept. The temple paintings of this period can be identified as an attack through the Dhamma against the missionaries who isolated the monk and tried to break the lay-clergy link. The life of the people in this country, which was influenced by the Western nations, was unknowingly accustomed to the modern customs, leaving aside the traditional customs. There is also a depiction of what you often hear and see. It is well revealed among the paintings in the Shailabimbaramaya in Dodanduwa. There are also lacking chronologies an understanding of the time period in which he lives and the period in which the painting relates. Accordingly, the depiction of children dressed in western-style gowns on their way to the Kimbulwathpura after the birth of the Siduhath prince, its castles in the depiction of occasions related to the kings of Kosala, and the depiction of European furniture such as avana, flower pots, wall lamps, chairs, and canopies what is being done is the existence of foreign customs beyond the localism of the society at that time.

It is clear from the Dodanduwa Shailabimbaramaya built according to Dutch architecture that even European architecture has invaded into Sri Lankan temples. The English coat of arms and the image of the Queen can also be seen on Buddhist temples' walls. The European influence on the temples of the time is further confirmed by the creation of the image of Queen Victoria and the coat of arms on the Kathaluwa Purvaramaya.

The artist portrays the pro-foreigners in the aristocracy and the way in which monarchy has transcended Sri Lankanism and made it foreign in a very strange way. In the temples of Kathaluwa Purvaramaya, Mirissa Samudragiri Viharaya, Mulgirigala Viharaya, the royal attire of the courtiers, as well as the European robes and the European style of painting depict the kings and nobles accepting European culture and civilization from the top of their heads. Another option is to use European-style blankets, even in the decoration of empty spaces.

In this way, although the foreign influence is depicted through the paintings, the situation that becomes clear is the way in which the action was taken to provide understanding to the comrade through it. It can be mentioned here that the social reform work that was to take place during that period was carried out by the artist through the hands of the artist on the initiative of the monk.

When asked about doing it through a painting, one realizes that the subject matter selection for the drawings is done strategically. During this period, the theme of the temple paintings that flourished in the Buddhist temples of our country was the character of the Buddha and the popular. Jataka news coming in the Five Hundred and forty seven in Jataka book. In addition, there were images of the eighty great disciples, and so on. It is evident that the selection of the subjects, especially in the paintings of the low country temples, was aimed at showcasing its futility by depicting foreign hybrid customs that were detrimental to the national culture, and the restoration of Buddhist values. Thotagamu Viharaya, Dodanduwa Shailabimbaramaya, Kathaluwe Purvaramaya, Mirisse Samudragiri Viharaya, Mulgirigala temples are among the places where the above idea is strongly affirmed.

In the 19th century, painting gave man a different tastes than other arts through the Jataka stories, it can be seen the causal relationship between the realities of the society, the realization of the merits and demerits, the blessings of heaven and the sufferings of hell. It looks like a sack that encloses with a drawstring. It also acknowledges the interrelationship between spiritual enlightenment in the subject of moral development and the directing of the Buddha to wisdom by faith.

Seeing the destruction of the people due to the deteriorating Buddhist morals at that time, the monks painted hell through artists and worked to understand the results of the deeds of the people. As in the upcountry, the description of almsgiving aside, the Thelapaththa Jataka, the Lohakumbha Jataka, the Kurudharma Jataka, the story of the Mahadhana Situwaraya, the Revathi story Vidura Jataka, etc., were powerfully painted for the betterment of Buddhist culture. It provided much needed guidance for people who were involved in immoral activities such as adultery and eating meat. Thus, the Thelapaththa Jataka to point out the origins of European fashion, the Vidura Jataka to speak out against the missionary education system, and the Revathi Vimana object to highlight the importance of personal character development by understanding the origins of barren fashions. At that time, missionary education was understood to have been done with positional wisdom to illustrate the need for the propagation of King Asoka's Dhamma in order to explain the need for the propagation of local tax religion over through the Thelapaththa Jataka, further European features are displayed, not to show that it should be highly valued, but to emphasize the need to line up for the protection of Sri Lankan civilization.

It was not until the religious renaissance that the artists began to realize the need to decorate the temple with the Dhamma, not to decorate the temple with paintings.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The study of Buddhist history in Ceylon is especially important in the study of physical history. The foreign government that came to power in the country adversely affected all the religious, cultural, political and economic conditions of the local people. For that, the local people took steps to exert various influences. It is clear that under the British domination and missionary activities, lay-clergy Sri Lankans sometimes used their intellect as well as their physical strength to defend their culture. The people of this country took art as their power in an environment where there was no opportunity for intelligence. Art in particular not only gives pleasure to the offspring of the individual, but also conveys the social reality of the individual's life as well. The findings of this research show that temple painting in the Southern Province of Sri Lanka is a strategic approach used to preserve Buddhist culture in the face of the current social climate.

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