

A Review On Paintings of Monasteries in The Anuradhapura Era as Illustrated in Buddhist Literature

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This study explores the political significance of ancient temple paintings in Anuradhapura through an examination of classical Buddhist literature. While ancient cave and temple paintings are acknowledged as a significant element in the history of Sri Lankan paintings, representing distinct traditions of art of different ages, the blossoming of Sri Lankan art is strongly associated with the Anuradhapura era. However, little is known of the sociocultural and political significance of the paintings of this time which influenced the different painting traditions. As archaeological factors alone are inadequate to identify such influences on ancient art, this study attempts to enrich this inquiry by examining written sources such as the Mahavamsa, Vamsathappakasini, Visuddhimargaya, Samanthapasadika, Thupavanshaya and Mahabodhivanshaya of the thero Fa-Hien.

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