

**Sub-Styles in Buddhist temple paintings in the modern-transitional period of Sri Lanka  
(A.D.1800-1900)**

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The modern transitional period of Sri Lankan Buddhist art is one of the most crucial periods in which many rapid and important changes, particularly in style, occurred. One of the most noteworthy features of this period is the emergence of a variety of sub-styles marking the gradual stylistic transformation of temple paintings from traditional stylized form into Western naturalism. Therefore, the intention of this study is to identify and categorize the sub-styles in chronological order, based on stylistic changes, appearing in Buddhist temple paintings during the modern-transitional period.

The most important monastic works done in this period are found in the low-country region, particularly in the maritime areas. Fifty temples in the low-country and its neighboring regions were selected for the present study, and data were gathered through site-observation. Stylistic changes were considered based on visual elements such as use of line, method of applying colour and its tonal values, depiction of pictorial mass and depth, stylized or naturalistic features of the figures, utilization of human proportions, depictions of backgrounds and their objects, use of space filling decorations, organization of sequences, utilization of perspective effects, and overall composition of painted panels, etc.

It was possible to identify six sub-styles in the modern-transitional period that could be placed between the 'Central Kandyan School' and Modern temple painting style, commenced by M. Sarlis and his successors. It was also found that the loss of royal patronage for temples, change of caste-based work culture of artisans, emergence of new fraternities, Western colonization, emergence of new temple patrons, expansion of Western education, the influence of the works of Western painters, and interference of the bourgeoisie of Sri Lanka, resulted in stylistic changes in the Buddhist mural tradition.

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