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ABSTRACT

The historical paintings of ancient Sri Lanka consist of a compendium of paintings belonging to several traditions. According to the present knowledge, the compandium of these paintings have been intermixed with the traditional influences and modern technical advances. Therefore the variagated nature of the historical paintings has been emerged due to the above-said intermixture, of ancient and modern features of paintings. Hence within the spectrum of the paintings of Kandyan period depict a special style. The aim of this research is to investigate the origin of the art of paintings, its traditional foundation, and the strongly influenced traditional features of the paintings.

In this research I have made an attempt to analyse " the paintings of the Kandyan period and its major traditional features." I have directed my attention to the tradition painting as a whole. In conducting my research I have described my methodology in the introductory chapter. The data that has been utilised for my research, was mainly from the evidence I have collected by visiting various sites. Apart from this, in documenting the measurements of figure forms, classification and analysis of them, I have employed statistical data tables and charts. In my exploration of the temple paintings I have selected, the earliest paintings of four temples in Kandy for my case study. From the figure forms contained in these four temples I have been able to identify some of the major characteristics of this painting tradition.

It was important to have a fair knowledge of Kandyan paintings to achieve my research objectives. It is difficult to define the periods of paintings in ancient Sri Lanka. Therefore I had to study the entire history

of paintings in Sri Lanka from the prehistoric period up to the Kandyan period. In this process I could gain an understanding of the various periods and traditions of the Sri Lankan paintings. Besides, I was able to understand the links and associations of various art traditions. I have also, mentioned the opinions and views expressed by various scholars and art historians.

The first chapter has been devoted to the earlier research, introduction, and historical background of painting traditions. In the second chapter the creative features and the islandwide expansion of Kandyan paintings are analysed. Moreover the sources, provincial expansion, salient features in the tradition and the technical specialities of these paintings are detailed in this chapter.

The third chapter gives a detailed description of the exploration of the paintings of seventy temples. The main aim of this exploration was to select four temples which would represent the Kandyan painting traditions. Accordingly the Medavala Raja Maha Viharaya, Sooriyagoda Raja Maha Viharaya, Gangarama Raja Maha Viharaya, and Degaldoruva Raja Maha Viharaya have been selected for my research study. This chapter also contains the main figure forms and historical analysis of the temple paintings.

In the fourth chapter selected basic samples have been analysed in order to fulfil the objectives of my research. This chapter includes a summary of representative figures. I have utilised statistical tables and charts for this classification and figure measurements.

The fifth chapter contains important generalizations and conclusions pertaining to the material in the second, third and fourth chapters. The emphasis has been laid on highlighting significant characteristics of the painting traditions. Besides that, the distribution pattern of the temples, and the possible courses of the pattern of distribution have been discussed. And I have analysed most of the factors that led to its pattern of distribution.

Sixth chapter includes the conclusions of my research. The basic factors utilised and the problems cropped-up in conducting my research have also been inserted into this chapter. Moreover a short review of my research study is also included in this chapter. Finally a classification of figure forms in various painting panels and further I have introduced a typology of figure forms found in Kandyan painting traditions. Several suggestions and conclusions stemmed from my research are also included.

Appendix One contains a list of Raja Maha Viharas in Kanda Uda Pas Rata..

Appendix Two contains a list of Viharās in Kandyan district according to their geographical distribution.