

## **A Study of Ancient Buddhist Paintings in Sri Lanka**

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Buddhist Painting is very famous in Sri Lanka. The roots of painting of Sri Lanka dates back to prehistoric era, but the professional way of world famous painting system has been begun in 3<sup>rd</sup> B.C after the arrival of Arahath Mahinda. After that, in different phase of times, with the firm contribution of kings and divisional rulers, the ancient paintings originated on the basis of Buddhist Monasteries. The research question of this study is to identify the evolution of the ancient painting of Sri Lanka. The research methodology of study is field observation and data were collected as primary data. Previous researches were also referred as a secondary data for this study. It has been revealed that the classical painting system of Sri Lanka can be seen from 3 B.C to 19<sup>th</sup> century. The paintings from 3 B.C to 12<sup>th</sup> century shows a gradual sequence. There are numerous of evidence regarding this matter in many places in Sri Lanka such as Wessagiriya, Ruwanweli Stupa, Mihinthala Stupa, Mahiyangana Stupa, Kambaragala, Mirisawetiya Stupa, Thiwanka Pilimageya and Galwiharaya. From 12<sup>th</sup> century to 16<sup>th</sup> century there are no evidence of painting in Sri Lanka but, from 16<sup>th</sup> century to 19<sup>th</sup> century the paintings were totally differ from the other paintings ironically and technically. The painting of this era as known as Kandian paintings. Ancient Dambulla Buddhist temple, Degaldoruwa and Medawala temple are the best examples which represent the paintings in this caliber. At the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century the painting system in Sri Lanka gets the influence of European painting. These painting were more romantic while the ancient Buddhist paintings were more religious. These kinds of painting can be seen in Kelaniya, and Bellanwila.

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