Cultural assimilationindicated in Sri Lankan Mosaic Art

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Abstract

This research paper principally attempts to explicate how the Sri Lankan mosaic art tradition indicates the cultural assimilation of Sri Lankan society and foreign societies. The methodology of this research paper consists of field research and library survey methods.A piece of art work created by placing colored segments of tiles, porcelain, glass, stones and coins in a pattern to create a picture is called a mosaic. The origin of the particular tradition of art can be traced to the period before Christ as seen in religious temples and cathedrals. This evolved through the course of time and space thematically and technically. In Sri Lanka the origin and the evolution of the tradition of mosaic art is of great artistic, archaeological and historical value. The spread of such a tradition in SriLanka can be traced back to the 19th century, despite significantly limited research in the area. Maduwanwela*Walawuwa*, KaragampitiyaSubodharamaya, Vijayananda temple and some other temples in the south can be identified as places with mosaic designs. Mosaic art provide proof of social, economic and culturalrelationships between Sri Lanka and other countries. The subject matter of the mosaics in Sri Lanka range from illustrations of floral designs, animal figures and geometrical designs to auspicious objects, domestic and other objects, English letters and digits. Such mosaic illustrations portray specific socio-cultural values of Sri Lankan and foreign societies. The objective of this research paper is to discuss foreign influences onmosaic designs, brief introduction about historical background, special features of Mosaic designs, present situation, reasons for weathering, detrimentalhuman activities and suggestions for the protection of the tradition of mosaic art in Sri Lanka.

*Key words:*Sri Lanka, Mosaic, cultural assimilation, art history, foreign influences