

## **Buddhist influence depicted in Sinhala Novels**

### **A study with special reference to the novels of Jayasena Jayakody**

#### **ABSTRACT**

Religion has a significant impact on oral and written literature in any country in the world. This is a common phenomenon in Sri Lanka too. The impact of Buddhism on literature can be witnessed, and dates back to the period of prose by Bentota Albert de Silva. It is evident that Piyadasa Sirisena and other novelists had the strong impact of a Buddhist social background in their literary work. Moreover, a special category of novels called the 'Buddhist novels' were added to the classification of Sinhalese novels subdivided as 'historical novels and psychological novels'. The lay society and the clergy were the subjects of such novels, several of which were based on the life of the Bōdhisathwa and the Lord Buddha. In developing the novels as an artistic mode, the clash of literary features with religious teaching and the concept of social wellbeing, was inevitable. This clash is seen in the Buddhist novels. This dissertation analytically observes the artistic modes of expression utilized by the writers and the areas covered by Buddhist novels written in Sinhala. The aim of this research is to observe as to what extent the Buddhist novels can be appreciated as artistic creations. Special attention is paid to the novels written by Jayasena Jayakody, who is considered a unique Sinhala Buddhist novelist.

**Keywords:** Buddhism, Buddhist novels