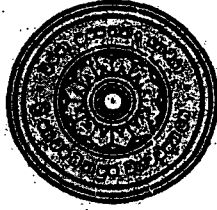
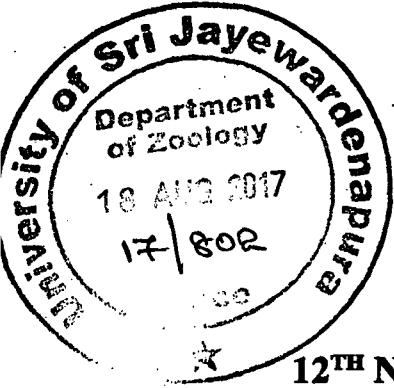




Dr. W. B. A. Urthayana. 

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**Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies
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the three perspectives, treating it as a meditative dwelling, as an attribute of objects, and as a type of awareness release. Therefore "emptiness" is not only a Mahayana teaching, and found in early Buddhism too.

Keywords

Suññata, Early Buddhism, Theravada, Madyamika, Dharma, Anatta

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Buddhist Literature in Kōlam Theatre

W.B.A.Vitharana¹

Introduction

According to Sinhala and Tamil lexicons the term Kōlam denotes various meanings. Charles Carter in his Sinhalese-English dictionary gives the following meanings. "Masquerade, fancy-Ball; fantastic appearance, gazing-stock, disguise". Sinhala-English dictionary of B. Clough defines Kōlam as something, which human and supernatural characters are brought forth, a masquerade. Due to our research programme our special attention would be focused on the Kōlam theatre. It would, therefore, be useful to have a glimpse of the background to this popular theatre. Kōlam is the only theatre in Sri Lanka, which uses masks specially wrought for the purpose. It is a form of folk theatre that is closely associated with the Low-country dance tradition, which is prevalent along the southern coastal belt and Colombo, Gampaha and Kalutara districts of the Western Province of Sri Lanka. Even during the mid-twentieth Century Kōlam was popular in the coastal areas

1. Senior Lecturer, Dept. of Languages, Cultural Studies and Performing Arts, University of Sri Jayewardenepura'

of Western and Southern Provinces of Sri Lanka, but now it is slowly disappearing even from these areas. The Kōlam theatre which was presented normally for the entertainment of the village folk satirized all weaknesses in the operation of the contemporary administrative machinery. In general, Kōlam performance began at night and continued till the following morning.

Objectives

1. To inspect the Buddhist Literature in Kōlam theatre.
2. To analyze Jātaka tales related in Kōlam theatre.
3. To examine the influence of Buddhist feature to the Kōlam theatre

Methodology

Method of this study is qualitative approach and data analysis on content analyzing method as well as thematic approach. There were ten Jātaka tales analyzed in thematic approach.

Discussion

In a study of the literary background of the Kōlam theatre, attention should be paid to the various literary sources that have been used for the creation of Kōlam. The stories on which Kōlam plays have been based and the literary sources utilized for creating different characters can be mainly divided into the eight groups. There are Jātaka stories, Mythical literature, Classical literature, Folklore, Chronicles, Contemporary political and social events, Anecdotes and Fiction. Among the above

sources the Jātaka tales that have exercised the greatest influence on the main story of the Kōlam theatre. The Jātaka tales constitute the life stories of the former births of the Bodhisattvas. The following are the Jātaka tales that have been utilized as sources for the plot of the Kōlam theatre. Culla-dhanuggaha, Vidura. Chanda-kinnara, Ummagga-Jātaka, Andhabhuta, Sirikalakanni-Jātaka, Mahapaduma, Sankapāla, Cullapaduma and Darmapala. It needs to be discussed the Jātaka tales chosen for themes of the Kōlam theatre and the manner in which they have been adapted for the theatre.

In almost all the existing scripts of Kōlam plays, the story of Prince Maname appears to be the most popular. This story has been adapted from the Chulladhanuggaha Jātaka in the Jātaka book.

The Sandakinduru (Chandakinnara) Kōlama is also a common story in the Kōlam repertoire. It has been based on the Candakinnara Jātaka occurring in the Jataka Book. The Andhabhutha Jātaka may be considered as another Kōlam plot based on the Jātaka literature. This story was told by the Buddha while at Jētavana, for the sake of a passion tosh monk. The lesson taught in this story is that women cannot be awarded how much hard you guard them. The story of Mahapaduma Jātaka too belongs to the repertoire of the Kōlam theatre. This story was told by the Buddha while dwelling in Jetavana, about Ciñchimānavikā.

The Cullapaduma Jātaka too has been used for Kōlam theatre themes. The Buddha preached this Jātaka while living in jētavana for the sake of a monk who was enamored of women.

After the presentation of several Raksasa and Yaksa characters following the purvaranga in Kolam theatre (the dramatic preliminaries) comes an episode concerning a demon called Purnaka. This story is based on a Jātaka occurring in the Jātaka book. This Jātaka was preached by the Buddha to explain the Perfection of Wisdom or Prajnaparamita.

And also, in fashioning the story of Pinguttara belonging to the repertoire of the Kōlam theatre the Kōlam artist appears to have used two Jātaka tales, Sirikalakanni Jātaka and the Maha Ummagga Jātaka. In addition to these, the Dharmapala Jātaka and Sankhapala Jātaka too seem to have been used by the Kōlam artist for writing scripts for the Kōlam theater. One thing therefore is clear. The Kōlam artist in writing scripts for the Kōlam theatre has received more inspiration from the Jātaka tales.

Findings and Conclusion

This is also shown by the fact that most of the Kōlam artists has been more inclined to use themes illustrating Buddhist ideals in order give a message to the society as well as to guide the people for a better life through religious edification. By including such stories in the Kōlam theatre repertoire, the Kōlam artist has attempted to inculcate religious ideals in the masses and to give them healthy advice to live a virtuous life.

Keywords

Buddhist literature, Kolam Theatre, Jataka Stories, Coastal areas.

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