

## ABSTRACT

### The Ayudhaya - Period Painting

Thai paintings of the Ayudhaya period began to capture great interest in 2501 B.E. and since then they have been continuously studied and investigated. From past study, the murals' artistic value and their age have been taken into consideration. Scholars have roughly defined the time in which these mural paintings were created into two periods: the first being from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century B.E. to the 20<sup>th</sup> century B.E.; the second beginning in the 22<sup>nd</sup> century B.E. till the end of the Ayudhaya period. However, the above assumption leaves out one period, which was from the 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> century B.E., when Siam was, at times, in disorder because of wars. As a result, artistic works during these troublesome times were rarely produced.

This research on Ayudhaya - period painting is intended to review what has been studied before and also to try to present more information derived from some new sources from both field work and documents.

The research emphasizes the influence of the subject matter and artistic style derived from other kingdoms, especially during the first half of the Ayudhaya period. It has an interesting trend towards the idea that the influence of Theravada

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Buddhism of the Mon kingdom in Lower Burma was another important source of inspiration. This should also be thoroughly studied in addition to those of Sukhothai and Ceylon which were the old Theravada Buddhist centers.

Also, another interesting aspect that should be mentioned here as well is the characteristics of local schools of painting. It was found that different schools of artists during the Ayudhaya period used some different characteristic details. However, the principal features that always appeared in similar murals are the style of composition and the Buddhist themes used as subjects of the Thai paintings. It was also found that the compositional characteristics are usually narrative themes from the Buddhist scriptures or literature. Therefore, the content and composition are closely related to each other and one cannot be separated from the other while the development of the Ayudhaya painting is being taken into consideration.

The content and compositional style at the beginning of the Ayudhaya period were similar to those of the preceding Sukhothai and Burmese mural paintings; the latter having been continually developed since the 17<sup>th</sup> century B.E. However, the similarities between Siamese paintings and the paintings of Ceylon and Khmer were not as distinctive as those of Burma. If the similarities between Siamese and Khmer paintings that might have existed could be clearly determined, it would then

lie in the type of religious themes derived from Mahayana Buddhism or Brahminism to delineate the two styles.

The mural content and composition have been gradually developed and transformed according to painting sources of inspiration since the beginning of the Ayudhaya period. This, therefore, enables us to divide the Ayudhaya paintings into three groups: the first commencing from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century B.E. to the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century B.E.; the second and the third being from the second half of the 22<sup>nd</sup> century B.E. to the beginning of the 24<sup>th</sup> century B.E. The period between the first and the second group is about 150 years, while the end of the second-group period overlaps with the beginning of the third group. The above divisions result from concentrating on the transformation of compositional characteristics and the content of the mural paintings.