The study and preservation of Rattanakosin era murals in Lampang

Conduct Research and Conservation of Rattanakosin mural paintings in Lampang

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Abstract

The study and research have the purpose of studying the history of the origin of mural paintings, the arrangement of artistic elements, and conservation. The researcher collected field data using observation methods, photography, and sketch drawing, then presented the results of the study using descriptive and analytical methods.

The study was conducted at 7 temples located in Lampang City, namely: Buanyay Wat, Kaew Valugararam, Phra Kaew Don Tia Samarataram, Nalom Wat, Chang Pho District, Um Song and Mae Tang District, Chalerm Damri Temple, which is the back of the main temple, and on the east side, it is painted with scenes of the Buddha on the heavenly court. The sky was painted in the middle of the temple, the western side at the back of the main temple, and the east side on the wall of the city, with the height reduced to reduce the space. The scene was drawn according to the observer's eye level.

In the parts that are drawn, such as walls, doors, and other places, the natural scenery is drawn, focusing on water colors, particularly white colors, and the sky in the sky, with rapid drawing on the pastel colors. The arrangement of paintings is divided into two types, continuous stories and framed paintings in two parts, as Thai mural paintings even in the central region are not easy to find, along with studying the methods of care and management in the management of the community, government, and businesses to cooperate and care for the long term.

Keywords: Identity, Conservation, Rattanakosin mural paintings.
Abstract

This research aims to study the history of mural painting along with mural composition and preservation guidelines. The data were collected from seven temples: Wat Bunyawat Viharn, Wat Koh Walugaram, Wat Phra Kaeo Don Tao, Wat Nham Lom, Wat Chang Phuak, Wat Um Long and Wat Ta Haen. The data were gathered from field studies and included observation, photography and drawing. The results of the research are presented through descriptive analysis.

The research shows that most mural paintings in the temples were painted in tempera. The most popular stories inspiring the murals are taken from the Jataka tales which relate the former lives of the Buddha, with the last ten incarnations of the Buddha being particularly important. Some temples have murals illustrating a selection of the Jataka tales whilst others focus on the Vessantara Jataka, a story of a compassionate prince who gave away everything he owned. These murals were painted on the wall, between the windows and the walls of the ordination hall. The murals depicting the Buddha’s lives are painted above the window frames of the ordination hall starting from the right of the hall, passing the back of the main Buddha statue placed in the centre of the hall, and continuing to the other side of the hall. The murals depicting the attack on the Buddha by Mara are painted on the western side of the wall, behind the Buddha statue. The eastern side of the wall depicts the story of the Buddha’s visit to his mother Sirmimahamaya in heaven as well as showing traditional beliefs concerning paying respect to the chedi, which was believed to contain the Buddha’s hair. In this, horizon lines have been lowered to give a better view of the sky. The murals also display realist techniques, especially with regard to light and shadow on the city walls, palace entrance and fortresses. The paintings of landscapes emphasize the perspective of color and the downsizing of subjects to create visual depth and an authentic atmosphere. Popular colouring techniques involve the use of white or bright colors against dark backgrounds scattered around trees, rocks and clouds. There are two types of composition. One focuses on the flow of the story, the other divides the story into different frames. These are all examples of mural paintings from the Rattanakosin era, which are difficult to find even in central Thailand.

The study also examines the preservation of the paintings and the participation of various groups including government, private agencies and local communities to help to realize the importance of the paintings and to preserve them effectively.