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THE HISTORY OF MURAL PAINTINGS IN LAO PDR BETWEEN 2322- 2436 BE

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research article was to study the history and the development of the mural paintings in Lao PDR during the year 2322-2436 BE through the qualitative research process. The study was done on the mural paintings in Lao PDR that exist in Vientiane and Luang Prabang city. The tools used for this research were surveys, observation, interviews, and group discussions. The data was analyzed under theory and presented with descriptive analysis.

The research results show that the mural paintings in Lao PDR during 2322-2436 BE were created during the Lan Xang kingdom, which was under the suzerainty of Siam at the time. The paintings consist of 1) mural paintings in Sisaket temple, Vientiane 2) mural paintings in Long Khoun temple, Luang Prabang 3) mural paintings in Hat Siao Temple, Luang Prabang 4) Siphouthabat Temple, Luang Prabang and 5) Pa Huak Temple, Luang Prabang. The oldest mural paintings are the paintings inside the sim of Sisaket temple, Vientiane, in which King Anouvong ordered the paintings to be painted during the restoration of the temple during 2366-2367 BE. Later, the paintings also appeared in Luang Prabang in Long Khoun Temple, Hat Siao Temple, and Siphouthabat Temple, which were painted during the time of Chao Chantharath in the year 2396 BE. That last set of paintings are the paintings in Pa Huak Temple in Luang Prabang painted by Phraya Si Maha Nam during the time of Chao Chantharath in the year 2404 BE. Mural paintings from Lan Xang kingdom were influenced by the mural paintings of the Rattanakosin era of Siam. In the beginning, the paintings were adjusted to the Lan Xang culture by painting the story of Kalaked, which was popular in Lan Xang kingdom during the

time. The paintings were, later, adjusted to be about the way of life and the culture of Lan Xang, which reflects the identity of the mural paintings of the Lan Xang Kingdom, Lao PDR.

INTRODUCTION

“Lan Xang Kingdom” or what is known currently as “Lao People’s Democratic Republic” was an important kingdom within the Mekong region. It was a kingdom that flourished with arts, culture, and Buddhism. It was a city with a long history and relationship with other states within the region since the kingdom was established towards the end of the 19th Buddhist century, especially the relationship with Siam, or Thailand. There are pieces of evidence of the relationship dated back to the Sukhothai era, the Ayutthaya era, the Rattanakosin era, up until today. The relationship exists in all dimensions; politics, religion, ethnicity, society, economy, culture, and arts (Saising, 2012).

The conflict that happened since the year 2241 BE was the cause that broke Lan Xang kingdom into three kingdoms; Lan Xang Luang Prabang, Lan Xang Vieng Chan, and Lan Xang Champasak. This happened during the war and the expansion of the surrounding kingdoms, such as Burma kingdom, Siam Kingdom, and Annam Kingdom (Vietnam). This circumstance led to the invasion of the king of Thonburi, Siam in 2321 BE, and the conquered of Lan Xang by Siam during the year 2322-2436 BE. When Lan Xang was a suzerainty of Siam, it had to send tributes to the Siamese royal court, as well as sending their sons and daughters to study in Bangkok (Boonyasurat, 2004). The king of Siam also chose who would become the king of Lan Xang (Pailai, 1991). However, throughout the relationship between the two states, many social developments were evolved, especially in arts and culture. This led to the creation of different kinds of arts, such as Fok Kham arts, stained glass, and mural paintings (Potisan, 1991). These arts clearly reflect the social, cultural, and historical status of Lan Xang, especially within Vientiane and Luang Phra Bang (Bounthavong, 2001). Especially from the Siamese policies of receiving the royal families from Lan Xang to study in Bangkok, which pushed the diffusion of different kinds of arts into the Lan Xang kingdom. One of the outstanding and creative arts were the “mural paintings” that consist of the forms and content that show the significant relationship to the Siamese mural paintings that were painted at the same time (Saising, 2012).

Rodboon (2002) stated that the people of Lan Xang believed in Theravada Buddhism. The mural paintings they painted were mostly about the lives of the Buddha or the Pathom Somphōthikathā or different Chadok tales. Many of the old paintings no longer exist due to the destruction of the wars, natural disasters, and thefts. The paintings that are left were painted after the 24th Buddhist century, such as those in Sisaket temple during the time of King Anouvong. Prof. Dr. Sakchai Saising (2012) further explained that the mural paintings are normally found on the sims, the viharas, and other smaller buildings, such as in the Thai arts. Currently, not many traces of the Lan Xang paintings are found. The oldest paintings that are found are from the early Rattanakosin period. It is clear that the influence of the paintings was from the Rattanakosin arts, which was during the time when Lan Xang was under the Rattanakosin kingdom. This goes in line with the opinion of Dr. Praphat Chuwichian (2014), who further explained that most of the Lan Xang mural paintings were influenced by the

Rattakosin arts, which coincides with the historical incident. Especially during the year 2322 – 2436 B.E., which was the time when Lan Xang was a suzerain of Siam. From this political relationship, the research belief that this is the important factor that significantly affected different context of the mural paintings.

The above information had provided the knowledge on the mural paintings in Lao PDR. The field data also revealed that the form of the mural paintings in Lan Xang and Siam in the same time period are very similar, in the character of the paintings, the colors, the techniques, the content, as well as the location where the paintings are placed within the buildings. It was also found that some mural paintings that have not been studied before. If there are further studies on the related artistic context, as well as the social and cultural context of Lan Xang in relationship with the Siam kingdom, the researcher believes that they will help create a clearer knowledge of the history of mural paintings in Lao PDR.

The aim of this research article was to study the history and the development of mural paintings in Lao PDR during the year 2322-2436 BE. The researcher emphasized on the explanation of the historical background, the character of the arts and the content, as well as the form, the art and cultural influence, and the development within a certain time period. by focusing on the filed study to collect both the overview and detailed data, in conjunction with the historical data, the social and cultural context, as well as the relationship between the Lan Xang kingdom and the Siam kingdom, which will further provide educational benefits, as well as the integration of knowledhe for the benefit in the aspects of fine arts, aesthetic, tourism, or the creative economic development both in the national and international level.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of this research was to study the history and the development of mural paintings in Lao PDR during the year 2322-2436 BE.

Scope of the Study

1. Scope of the content

The research focuses on studying the history of mural paintings in Lao PDR during the year 2322-2436 BE.

2. The researcher chose the research area in Lao PDR that consists of important historical cities that had a relationship with Siam, which were Vientiane and Luang Prabang cities. The criteria in choosing the cities were (1) contain historical traces or academic works that were written during the year 2322-2436 BE (2) the conditions were in the level where data collection and studies were possible and (3) the experts approved of those areas.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Target Population

The research applied purposive sampling in choosing the population who were the experts, which consist of the academics from Lao PDR and Thailand and

the local wise men in Lao PDR, the practitioners which consist of the painters of the mural paintings in Lao PDR and in Thailand, as well as the related people which consist of the people in Lao PDR and foreign tourists.

The Research Tools

The tools that the researcher used within the research were the surveys, non-participant observations, interviews, and focus group discussions.

Data Collection

The following were the steps in collecting data:

Documentary research for both the theory and related documents such as academic documents, local documents, myths, and chronicles, both in Thailand and Lao PDR.

Field Studies Data which was the data collected from the field visits through surveys, observations, interviews, and group discussions.

Data Analysis which the researcher analyzed the data according to the objectives by compiling and analyzing the collected data from the documentary research and the field data.

Data Analysis

The researcher applied two types of data analysis:

The data from the documentary research were analyzed using the Method of Agreement. This method consists of verifying the information through concepts and theories by referring to documents from various sources to find the validity of the information.

The analysis of the field data was the analysis of the data collected from all the research tools through three types of analysis: 1) Analytic Induction 2) The analysis of the data by categorizing the data using the theories and 3) The analysis of the data by comparing the data to find the conclusion based on the research objectives.

Presentation of the Result from the Analysis

This research was qualitative research that used the theory in the analysis. The researcher presented the information using descriptive-analytical results.

Results from the Study

Mural paintings in Lao PDR during the year 2322-2436 BE were found in two cities: Vientiane and Luang Prabang. The paintings were found in five different places: 1) mural paintings in Sisaket temple, Vientiane 2) mural paintings in Long Khoun temple, Luang Prabang 3) mural paintings in Hat Siao Temple, Luang Prabang 4) Siphouthabat Temple, Luang Prabang and 5) Pa Huak Temple, Luang Prabang. The paintings led to the following results:

The history of the mural paintings in Sisaket temple, Vientiane

Sisaket temple was built during the time of King Setthathirath in 2094 BE. The temple underwent a major restoration in 2361-2367 BE under King Anouvong. During the restoration, the temple received the influence of the Siamese architecture. Some of the painters were brought from Bangkok. A memo was found identifying the rate for hiring the painters from Bangkok to Vientiane "...to hire the painters to paint the walls of the temple and the surrounding area with stories by paying the painters with 2 tamleung fueangs, bia 5 vaens 15 nuay..." (Saising, 2012). The studied points were as follows:

1) Sisaket temple underwent a major restoration during the time of King Anouvong, which is during the reign of King Rama II of the Rattanakosin period, Thailand. The architectural characteristics of that time show that the architecture inside Sisaket temple is similar to the Siamese architecture at the time. The construction of the temple is similar to that of the chapel of Phra Si Rattana Satsadaram temple in Bangkok. The triangle niches are the same as the niches in the temples built in the Rattanakosin period, such as the main temple in the Paichayonponsep temple in Samut Prakan province, Thailand, built during the time of King Rama II in 2362 BE. There is, therefore, evidence with the consistency in the historical, arts, and the architectural relationship with the Siam Kingdom.

2) Currently, only some of the early mural paintings remain in Sisaket temples due to the damage of the buildings from natural disasters and wars. The painters had painted new paintings over the original ones many times. However, the researcher found that there are still traces of the original paintings, especially in the compositions of the paintings. The structure of the paintings consists of a terraced panoramic view. The composition was divided using Sinto lines. Each of the paintings contains an architecture as the main object of the painting. The early content consists of the story of the Buddha, chadoks, and the door-angels. When considering the paintings with the historical facts, the researcher believed that the mural paintings in Sisaket temple were related to those of the early Rattanakosin period in Siam, such as the paintings in Phutthai Sawan Throne Hall and Ratchasittharam Ratchaworawihan temple in Bangkok that were painted in the similar time period.

Therefore, the painters who painted the mural paintings in Sisaket temple, Vientiane, during 2361-2367 BE, under King Anouvong, also consisted of Thai painters.

The History of the Mural Paintings in Long Khoun Temple, Luang Prabang

Long Khoun temple was built in 2334-2360 BE, during the time of King Anourut, the same period as King Rama I of Rattanakosin, Siam. It was estimated that this temple was an important forest temple for the Royal Coronation ceremony of the kings of Lan Xang Luang Prabang since the 23rd Buddhist century (Rattavong et al, 2000) and had always been under the care of the Luang Prabang kings. This had helped all the arts to be well-maintained until today. The study points for this temple are as follows:

1) The Long Khoun temple sim was first built in 2334 BE during the time of King Anourut, which was the same period of time as King Rama I of Rattanakosin, Siam Kingdom. When the Lan Xang Luang Prabang kingdom was the suzerainty of Siam, the architecture of the sim did not show the influence of Siamese arts. The influence of Siamese arts can be seen in the additions to the original structure. For instance, the arch of the door to the main hall was decorated with the floral motif stucco, which was a mixed influence of the Chinese and the West. This pattern was popular during the time of King Rama III and IV, for example, the stucco on the door arch of the chapel at Phra Chetuphon Wimon Mangkhalaram Rajwaramahawihan temple, the window frames of the chapel at Ratcha Orasaram Ratchaworawihan temple, and the door frame of the sermon hall of Ratcha Natdaram Worawihan temple during King Rama III, or the window frame of the Bowonniwet Ratchawarawihan temple during King Rama IV of Siam. Therefore, it is possible that the additional structures with Siamese influence were built at the same time as when the mural paintings were painted in the sim.

2) The mural paintings in Long Khoun temple were about the Thotsachat Chadok and the lives of the Buddha. The techniques used were powder coatings mixed with glue. The paintings of peoples were idealistic. The composition of the paintings was a mix between terraced view and panoramic view, and no Sintao lines were used. The colors were chosen to be closer to natural colors. This kind of paintings was popular during the time of King Rama IV, such as the mural paintings in the sermon hall of Choeng Tha temple, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya province.

The researcher assumed that the mural paintings in the Long Khoun temple sim were painted afterward in the time of King Anourut. When considering the forms of the mural paintings and the decorative arts that were influenced by the Siamese kingdom, it can be assumed that the mural paintings on the walls of Long Khoun temple were painted during the time of King Rama IV of Siam.

The History of the Mural Paintings in Hat Siao Temple, Luang Prabang

There was no evidence when the Hat Siao temple in Luang Prabang was built. However, considering the location and the art forms of the temple, it can be estimated that the temple was built at a similar time as Long Khoun temple, which is in the same area. The unique character of the mural paintings in Hat Siao temples that were studied are as follows:

1) The sim of Hat Siao temple was built with masonry in the Lan Xang Luang Prabang style. The sim is similar to the sim at Long Khoun temple in the same area. This was how the researcher determined the age of the mural paintings in Hat Siao temple.

2) There are two parts to the mural paintings in the sim at Hat Siao temple. The mural paintings on the outer wall were about the “lives of the Buddha,” and the paintings in the interior wall were of the “Kalaked tale.” The technique that was used was powder coatings mixed with glue. The paintings of peoples were idealistic. The composition of the paintings was a mix between terraced view and panoramic view, and no Sintao lines were used. The colors were chosen to be closer to natural colors. This kind of paintings was popular during the time of King Rama III to King Rama IV.

3) Mural paintings of Kalaked tale does not exist in the central region of Siam, but it was popular in Lan Xang kingdom. There was a piece of evidence of King Anouvong ordered the story of Kalaked to be painted along the cloister of Sisaket temple, Vientiane. There is a possibility that the mural paintings of Kalaked received the model from Sisaket temple that was destroyed during the war and painted at Hat Siao temple, Luang Prabang.

4) The mural paintings on the outside wall might have received the influence from the Lan Xang style sim, which was if there was limited space on the wall for all the popular Buddhist content, the paintings were done on both the outside and inside wall.

Therefore, the researcher estimated that the mural paintings in Hat Siao temple were painted at a similar time as those of the Long Khoun temple during the time of King Rama IV of Siam.

The History of the Mural Paintings in Siphouthabat Temple, Luang Prabang

Phouthabat temple situates in Choeng Phu Si, built during the time of Chao Chantharath in 2396 BE, which was during the second year under King Rama IV reign of Rattanakosin, Siam. The temple was renovated in 2510 and 2512 BE. Currently, the name was changed to Siphouthabat temple (Boonyasurat, 2004). The studied points were as follows:

1) The form of the sim at Siphouthabat temple is built with masonry, influenced by Siam. The sim is rather big with thick and high walls. Since the walls were thick and high, it was possible that the stucco and the stained glass were done by the builders from Siam, which includes the mural paintings.

2) The mural paintings within the sim was a story of the “Ramayana.” The techniques used were powder coatings mixed with glue. The paintings of peoples were idealistic, according to the characters of the story. The composition of the paintings was a mix between terraced view and panoramic view, and no Sintao lines were used. The colors were chosen to be closer to natural colors. This kind of paintings was popular during the time of King Rama IV. The story was painted along the length of the wall. The storyline was similar to the mural paintings along the cloister at Phra Si Rattana Satsadaram temple in Bangkok. This similarity helped the researcher to see the relationship between the paintings in both places.

3) The story of Ramayana on the mural paintings of Siphouthabat temple relate to the story of Ramayana in the Siam Kingdom. The storyline and the composition in the pictures were remarkably similar to those at the cloisters of Phra Si Rattana Satsadaram temple. Ramayana is a lengthy and incredibly detailed story. Each character has their uniqueness, which required that painters with both high knowledge and skills to paint the story correctly. This led the researcher to believe that the paintings of Ramayana in the sim of Siphouthabat temple would need to involve the painters from Siam or the builders from Luang Prabang, who went to study in Siam being part of the painting process.

Therefore, the mural paintings in the sim of Siphouthabat temple were painted during the time of Chao Chantharat in 2396 BE, which was during the second year under the reign of King Rama IV of Rattanakosin, Siam.

The history of the Mural Paintings in Pa Huak Temple, Luang Prabang

Pa Huak temple was built in 2404 BE by Phraya Si Maha Nam during the time of Chao Chantharath. The year was the tenth year under the reign of King Rama IV of Rattanakosin, Siam. The sim of Pa Huak temple was very similar to the sim of Siphouthabat temple, which was the influence of Siam. The study points were as follows:

- 1) The sim of Pa Huak temple was built with masonry in Siamese style. The walls were thick and high. The roof is a wooden roof from the front part to the back part of the sim. The stucco decorating the door frame is similar to the floral motif mixed with the western influence that was popular during the time of King Rama IV of Siam, such as the window frame of the sermon hall of Pathum Wanaram temple and Bowonniwet Ratchawarawihan temple in Bangkok.
- 2) The mural paintings in the sim at Pa Huak temple was the story of King Chombhubadee meeting with the Lord Buddha (Suksamran, 2013). The technique used was powder coating mixed with glue. The people drawn were idealistic. The of the view was done in a terraced panoramic view, and Sin Tao lines were used. The colors were not of natural colors. Most of the decorative components were idealistic styles.
- 3) Mural paintings about the story of King Chombhubadee meeting with the Lord Buddha were the suttas outside of the Tripitaka. It was assumed to be written in Southeast Asia, with the manuscript in Lanna, Ayutthaya, Lan Xang, Rattanakosin, and Cambodia. In Siam, it was found that the mural painting about King Chombhubadee meeting with the Lord Buddha was found at the chapel of Ratchaburana temple, Bangkok (currently, all the paintings were all destroyed along with the chapel itself during World War II). Apart from this, the painting was also found on the walls of the Phutthai Sawan Throne Hall at the National Museum. Especially the mural paintings at the chapel at Nang Nong temple, Bangkok, which was painted in 2375 BE during the time of King Rama III of Rattanakosin period. Many parts of the detail and the components were similar to the mural paintings in the sim at Pa Huak temple, Luang Prabang, such as the paintings of King Chombhubadee fighting with Indara or the paintings of Chinese aristocrats. The researcher assumed that the mural paintings if Pa Huak temple in Luang Prabang received the influence from the mural paintings of King Chombhubadee meeting with the Lord Buddha at Nang Nong temple, Bangkok.
- 4) The special characteristics of the mural paintings at Pa Huak temple were the paintings of the way of life and the contemporary culture of the people in Luang Prabang, which was the kind of content that never clearly existed before.

Therefore, the mural paintings at Pa Huak temple was created along with the construction of the temple in 2404 by Phraya Si Maha Nam during the time of Chao Chantharath, which was the tenth year under the reign of King Rama IV of Rattanakosin of Siam. The paintings received the influence from the mural paintings of King Chombhubadee meeting with the Lord Buddha at Nang Nong temple, Bangkok. The major development of the paintings was the story about

the way of life, society, and the Lan Xang contemporary culture in the mural paintings.

CONCLUSION FROM THE STUDY

Mural paintings in Lao PDR painted between 2322-2436 BE, the time when Lan Xang kingdom was the suzerainty of the Siam Kingdom, was influenced by the paintings of the Rattanakosin period, Siam. The influence of Siam on the mural paintings in Lan Xang can be seen in two major cities, Vientiane and Luang Prabang. The history of the paintings is as follows:

The oldest mural paintings are the paintings in the sim in Sisaket temple, Vientiane, which was painted during the year 2361-2367 by King Anouvong. The paintings were the result of the familiarity that King Anouvong had towards Siamese arts, where he lived when he was young. In addition to the fact that Siam had a more advanced technique and constructing methods that were more stable and stronger. He also wanted to express a good relationship he had with Siam, especially when Siam was about to establish a new king for the Lan Xang kingdom. Therefore, he requested the “builders from Siam,” which also included the mural paintings painters. That was why the mural paintings within Sisaket temple were influenced by the mural paintings from Rattanakosin. The paintings were painted with the techniques of using powder coatings mixed with glue. The component of the paintings consists of viharas as the main component. The composition of the paintings was a terraced view. Sintao lines were used to outline the main component. The paintings were focused on being idealistic, not based on natural reality. This is close to the mural paintings that were popular in the early Rattanakosin period, such as the mural paintings in Phutthai Sawan Throne Hall, the national museum, and the chapel in Ratchasittharam temple, Bangkok.

However, the result of the war between the Siam kingdom and the army of King Anouvong led to the decision to destroy Vientiane city. Apart from Sisaket temple, the mural paintings were not found anywhere else in Vientiane city.

The importance of Luang Prabang city grew as the capital of the Lan Xang kingdom. The reason for this was due to the support of Siam, who wanted to create unity in the governing. The royal members who would become king were the crown princes who used to stay and studied in Siam. This was why the mural paintings in Luang Prabang had clear influence from the Siamese kingdom. In 2396 BE, Chao Chantharath ordered Siphouthabat Temple to be built and the story of Ramayana to be painted within the sim. Mural paintings also existed in the sims in other temples, such as Long Khoun temple that contains mural paintings about the lives of the Buddha and Thotsachat Chadok and Hat Siao temple that contains the mural paintings on the lives of the Buddha and Kalaked tale. All the paintings have the following characteristics in common; the paintings were painted using the technique of powder coatings mixed with glue, the paintings of people were idealistic paintings which was influenced by Siam. The arrangement of the paintings used an architectural structure as the main component, and the compositions were a terraced panoramic view by imitating different natural distant views. Most of the paintings were painted with idealistic styles but started to shift to a more realistic nature. Sin Tao lines were not used

in the paintings. These types of paintings were clearly related to the mural paintings developed during the time of King Rama IV of Rattanakosin from 2394-2411 BE when realism paintings started to become more popular, such as the mural paintings at the sermon hall of Choeng Tha temple, Phra Nakhon Si Ayuttaya province and at Noar Phutthangkul temple in Suphan Buri province. Additionally, the mural paintings of the Ramayana at Siphoutthabat Temple, where the story was painted horizontally from left to right, was similar to the Ramayana mural paintings on the walls of the cloister of Phra Si Rattana Satsadaram temple in Bangkok.

Later on in 2404, Phraya Si Maha Nam, under the reign of Chao Chantharath, built Pa Huak temple. The sim within the temple contains the mural paintings of King Chombhubadee meeting with the Lord Buddha. The paintings were painted using the technique of powder coatings mixed with glue; the paintings of people were idealistic paintings which was influenced by Siam. The arrangement of the paintings used an architectural structure as the main component, and the compositions were a terraced panoramic view. Most details of the paintings were painted with idealistic styles with the use of Sin Tao lines. The outstanding characteristic of the mural paintings in Pa Huak temple is that the paintings were about the way of life of the Luang Prabang people that were related to the Lan Xang social and cultural aspects; such as the occupations, paintings of foreigners, lovers, music, and arts, as well as the way of life of the foreigners scattered throughout the paintings.

Later, the role of mural paintings in Lan Xang kingdom began to decline when the French gained more influence within the region (Champaphan, 2015). The French influence had caused more tension in the relationship between Siam kingdom, Lan Xang kingdom, and the West, especially the French, and led to the end of the power that Siam had over Lan Xang in 2436 BE.

DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH RESULT

The mural paintings in Lao PDR from 2322-2436 BE started during the time when Lan Xang kingdom had the status of the suzerainty of the Siam kingdom, which was the reason for the influence of the Rattanakosin mural paintings of the Siam kingdom existing in the Lan Xang kingdom.

The oldest paintings are the paintings in Sisaket temple, Vientiane, which King Anouvong ordered painted during the restoration of the temple from 2366-2367 BE, with the help of Siamese painters. The paintings were stories about the lives of the Buddha, Chadoks, and a popular Lan Xang tale called Kalaked. However, from the war in 2370, Vientiane was destroyed to the point where there are no other mural paintings left.

The mural paintings emerged again in Luang Prabang during the time of Chao Chantharath in 2396 BE, which came from the need of Siam that wants Luang Prabang to become the capital of the Lan Xang kingdom. The paintings were the story of the Ramayana in the sim at Siphoutthabat Temple, the lives of the Buddha and Chadoks in the sim at Long Khoun temple, and the painting about the Kalaked tale at Hat Siao temple in Luang Prabang. All the paintings showed the influence of the mural paintings in Siam.

Later in 2404, Phraya Si Maha Nam, under the reign of Chao Chantharath, built Pa Huak temple and ordered the mural paintings to be painted about the meeting between King Chombhubadee and Lord Buddha. Although the paintings still show the influence in the forms and the content from Siam, the development were that the paintings were also about the way of life of Lan Xang people in the social and cultural aspects, which had never existed before.

The points mentioned above confirmed the fact that the mural paintings received the influence according to the cultural diffusion theory, especially the influence from Siam to Lan Xang, Farnz Boas explained further using the diffusion theory that “the diffusion of culture is a process in which the main characteristics of one culture diffused into another culture and adapted itself to the new culture.” (Pikulstri & Nesusin, 2013). In other words, when the mural paintings of Siam came to Lan Xang kingdom, the early stage still showed a clear influence of Rattanakosin, Siam. However, the paintings were adapted to the Lan Xang culture through the painting of Kalaked tale, which was a popular tale of Lan Xang. The tale was painted into the paintings at Sisaket temple in Vientiane and Hat Siao temple in Luang Prabang. Later, the paintings evolved to be unique by depicting stories related to the way of life of the people of Lan Xang, which can be seen at Pa Huak temple, Luang Prabang. The changes reflect the cultural adjustment to the new culture, which goes in line with the cultural diffusion theory.

The mural paintings in Lao PDR., between 2322-2436 B.E. reflected the relationship between the Lan Xang Kingdom and the Siam Kingdom. The creation of the arts was influenced by the politics and culture and later merged with their own society and culture until they were able to create the unique form and content of Lan Xang mural paintings.

Suggestions

1. Suggestions for the application of the research
 - 1.1. The educational institution both within Lao PDR and Thailand can use the data to further the study of the mural paintings in Lao PDR.
 - 1.2. Tourism organizations can provide information for the guides when talking about mural paintings in Lao PDR and maintaining the relationship between Lao PDR and Thailand.
2. Suggestions for future research
 - 2.1. Study the mural paintings in Lao PDR in other periods.
 - 2.2. Study the mural paintings in Lao PDR in creative ways that can lead to the design of cultural products or souvenirs that are unique to Lao PDR.

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