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**THE EAST AND THE WEST :
AN EXAMINATION OF THE DIFFERENCES
IN THE THOUGHT PROCESS,
AS IT PERTAINS
TO ART AND ARCHITECTURE**

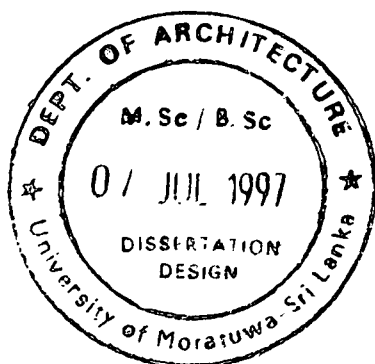
A DISSERTATION PRESENTED
TO THE FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE OF
 UNIVERSITY OF MORATUWA
FOR THE M.Sc. (ARCHITECTURE) EXAMINATION

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Abstract

Due to various reasons, the thinking of man differ from each other. East and west are two streams of thought which clearly shows the differences between each other. Many scholars have expressed various ideas about these differences. An attempt is made in this study to clarify the difference, between eastern and western thinking in association with those contradictory ideas.

Art is a medium, which has been employed to fulfil the necessities of man, from time immemorial. Artistic creations come in to being in accordance with ones way of thinking, therefore the way of thinking of a man is reflected through his work of art.

Architecture too is a medium of art. Therefore by studying the products of architecture, the underlying thought process, which helped to create the product can be identified. Therefore differences between the eastern and the western thinking can be identified by studying the products of architecture.

To create a better built environment suitable to particular community, it should be compatible with the inherent thinking of that particular community. Therefore it is important to study how, the conceptions, attitudes, beliefs etc. Were reflected in a built environment and how they can be reflected in it.

Therefore in this study the manner how the differences between the eastern and western thinking is reflected in the art is studied under some aspects related to art. As architecture is also a form of art this difference is studied under same aspects which are related to art.

Subsequently how these said differences are reflected in architecture will be examined citing examples from some architectural instances in Sri Lanka.



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Introduction

INTRODUCTION

0.1 Topic Explanation

From the beginning of the civilization man intended to live in groups. As a group he had attempted to understand the world around him for his existence in comfort and prosperity. As a result he gained knowledge of the world around him that could be captured with his five senses and developed through his cognition.

The cognition is brought up by the living environment that consisted of not only of climatic conditions, physical atmosphere etc., but also of religious political ideologies interactions within the group and with other societies etc. These societies look at the world in relation to their exclusive wealth of knowledge acquired.

As the senses of human beings differ, while the cognition differ at a larger degree. Therefore the knowledge gained by members of different groups, varied to a large extent. In other words the acquired knowledge of cultural groups are relative to each other.

Therefore human knowledge is not absolute; it is relative to the sense faculty, the mind and the culture; it is something created by man throughout the ages in various societies, and it is not extraneous to man. It is not something to be invented by man (Nalin Silva, 1991,iv)

Due to this fact the acquired knowledge of people living in different societies, with different cultural values differ from each other.

Among the enormous differences that can be observed in the thinking of different groups, a major classification can be made by studying the main aspects of thinking, as East and West. The names of the classification is not necessarily understood in terms of geography.

The new thought born after the 15th century, in Europe and developed in association with ancient Greek Roman wisdom and which differs from medieval religious thought can be called as the Western thought. (Sudath Rohana, 1994,80)

Having spread throughout the world and at last remained in the eastern region is called Eastern thought.

The attitudes of these people who hold the views of eastern and western thinking respectively can be identified by their activities, traits, ideologies and artistic creations. For example the attitude of a easterner and the Westerner towards the 'god' differs.

Art and architecture have a very close relationship with man, as they were factors of utility from the time they started civilizing themselves; and they are part and parcel of their lives. But the people who cherished Western thought and the people who cherished Eastern thought hold a different attitude towards art and architecture. This factor is clearly revealed in their Artistic / architectural creations.

0.2 Importance of the Study

The ways of living, behavior patterns, environmental responses and the products of different groups differ according to the way of thinking.

Art and Architecture as a direct response to situations also differ, according to the thought processes of different groups. Therefore to admire the best experience of art and architecture of a particular place, it is important to understand and be aware of the roots of their origin. The study of human thinking, in this context, is important to architects to admire the excellence in these products.

0.3 Aim of the Study

The aim of this dissertation is to study and illustrate how the differences in the ways of thinking of the people of different groups and how they are reflected in the architecture as an art.

The study is carried out on the grounds, that architecture is a mode in which the aspirations and benefits of people are reflected.

The objective is to establish that an architectural design must suit the way of thinking of people who will be the real users of it, as the way of thinking is the major factor that decides the birth and the existence of a work of Architecture.

0.4 Scope and Limitations

There may be minor differences as well as similarities, which are not considered, among these two as two extremes. As it has been stated before, this study categorizes the ways of thinking as in two main streams, East and West. The study will select only the elementary differences between the eastern and western ways of thinking as to identify how they are reflected in the activities of Art.

In the process of study the available sources of India and Sri Lanka are mostly used, while the way of thinking existed in China and Japan are not discussed here in detail. Although the ways of thinking categorized into two main groups Eastern and Western, it should be considered that these two ways are inter-related in a very complex manner. Therefore it is not attempted to make a distinct definition for the two ways of thinking.

0.5 Method of Work

The elemental differences of the ways of thinking are identified as Eastern and Western.

The identified elements of thinking of those people, who cherished them, are discussed and how this thinking is reflected in the activities of the people, is theoretically illustrated.

The art, being an essential component of every society with whatever type of thinking, is discussed, for which, that can be identified.

As Architecture is a form of art, it is discussed how thinking affected architecture, of the people with these two ways of thinking.

The said differences in ways of thinking are then identified with a few realistic examples found in Sri Lanka.



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