

Politics in Art

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Abstract

Politics started operating since Stone Ages which was related to communities and individual. This study is on mainly political depiction found in art. The aim of this study is to explore politics embed in arts in various form and styles. For fulfilling our aim we went through some literature works where we found politics both in art form and in theory. We also investigated work of arts, especially in theoretical works. After surveying data both in literature and works of art, we analyzed them into politics in Myanmar art and global art. Our main problem is to expose how artists depicted politics in works of arts through the help of literature and ideas. One can proposed hypothesis writings that politics was first depicted in arts even in prehistoric era. After that it has been clearly forming in both various literatures and practical life which means in daily work of politicians and writing of scholars on different politics which may be monarchy, oligarchy, aristocracy, socialist or democracy. Our findings are a king participating in wars, kings with his soldier marching battle field, kings' engagement in political economy which was vital for the development of the country, kings traveling to his oversea political domain and also kings who was sending off with state ceremony when his life span on this secular politics terminated.

Keywords: Politics, art, historiography

Introduction

Arts are products of both social beings and social community. The human are political animals that run different politics in different times and spaces. The social beings recorded and has been recording their politics in different art forms which are either may be in script, a kind of art in written form those might be on walls of ancient caves where they lived in and also on stone slabs on the surfaces. Orders of the kings were seen on lithic stones from Bagan Periods to Konbaung one. The politics mentioned on walls of caves was in primitive time. That politics can be identified on seeing scenes which are face to face fighting for servitude on each other. After that times politics in art became very clearly depicted either by sculpture or by painting that works were popular in Ancient Egyptians art in which one can be visible how these Egyptians had made their slaves in political carriers that to bring huge block stones in building constructions for ruling class or administrative one or toms that to Pyramid of Pharaohs. The kings in his kingdom war fair, participated, marched and fought for his citizen and in maintaining political domain. Such political attempts were depicted on the art scene of Mesopotamia. The meanings of politics in Europe, India, and Far East including Myanmar are to be visible in the art form. Scene of monarch engaged in war depicted in Sriksetra on stone slab. Royal activities such as coronation of monarch, regalias, and kings attending Hluttaw, kings counseling with their officials, staff and publics were visible in art form of Myanmar in different periods. King's meeting with his officials, staff in the time emergency is also seen in Indian art.

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Aims and Objectives

From primitive time to present day, there has been an artist stratum who have contributed and provided their functions in various forms either on economy or religion or tradition or social activities and then politics which were visible not only in Myanmar, but also in every part of the secular globe. The aim of this study is to ascertain politics depicted in the form of either visible art or painting or sculptural or written form of art. The objective is to explore any innovation embed in either through visible art or script in any part of Myanmar because we through our knowledge knew that artist left innovation which struck in their minds while they were working in ancient time.

The Sources and Materials

The politics in art can be studied in both sources which are mostly allegories relating to politics especially political theory and materials which are not only in sculptures, but also in painting and pictures from different works. As far as allegories are concerned, we consulted literatures as to both Myanmar and the World. In relation to the materials we researched those that are archaeological. Though some allegories on the view of scholars are multi themes from which we extracted that are related to politics. Even from materials to stone slabs written political matters were studied.

Methods

Scholars and artists left politics in their literary theories and works of their empirical works, from which we explored ideas on politics. In that sense, we applied political and imaginative methods.

Premise/ Hypothesis

The artists highlight their ideas, in sometime formula in various forms which are society, economy, religion and politics. One can propose hypothesis writings that politics was first depicted in arts even in prehistoric era which imagination coincided with reality while they were in hunting field. After that it has been clearly forming in both various literatures and practical life which means in daily work of politicians and writing of scholars on different politics which may be monarchy, oligarchy, aristocracy, socialist or democracy.

Problem

The artists while working reflected their minds from their environment including politics. Our main problem is to expose how artists depicted politics in works of the arts through the help of literature and ideas. What sorts of politics were depicted in art whether in Myanmar way of politics or global or both Myanmar and Global?

Findings/Results

The artists depict the themes either in connection with politics or other activities through imagination or by the reflection of their minds on their environment, which exists in reality. In this study we discovered artists' masterpieces of work as to politics which are war scenes in both Myanmar and other part outside Myanmar. Apart from kings' engagements in war which are royal coronation ceremony, ear boring, royal son's novitiation ceremony and the artist also depicted king's last destination, royal funeral ceremony as stated politics. Kings orders were found on the stone slabs not only in Bagan, but also in lithic art of other periods in Myanmar. The following is a scene relating to kings' coronation recorded as art form. Apart from these scenses, the kings attending Hluttaw and kings conselling with his officials and staffs were found too. The Indians' Monarchs had consulted immediately with his officials and gada guards as soon as strangers landed on the land of India that kind of political scene was

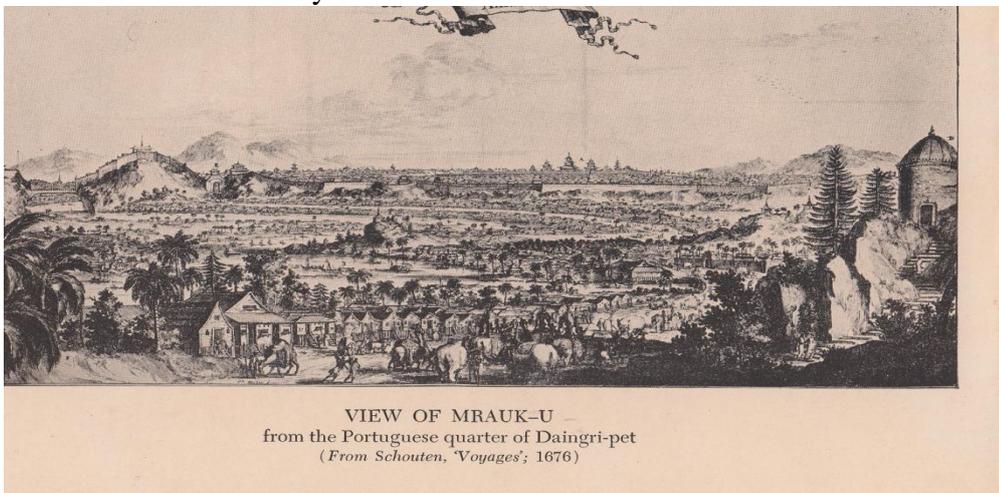
discovered in Indian art, in which it can be visible Vasco Dagama, an adventurer from the west, who was welcomed by Indian Monarch properly¹. Military formation and donation of Myanmar king were also visible.



Military formations (Elephantry)

Donation of king Mindon

In later part of Myauk-U order on war concerned with marching into foreign land were used to be written on stone slab popularly known as war orders in which found written that Kula atweik Sai Shey which means to march into the land of India (Bengala) .



Discussion

It is common in every part of globe in literary art that species in primitive period concentrated on security as a part of politics, especially creating thing to protect from their enemies either from natural enemies or from enemies from foreign region who intruded into their region for their survival, either scarcity of food or weather which had changed or made harmony for them. In this direction traces for this example are to be discovered scratch on the wall of natural caves where they had lived for a long time. The dwellings were to take shelter in protecting from either their natural enemies; danger of animal or from similar species stranger to them are to be found in both literary art and material art. A best example is in the writing of western scholars in Ayayawaddy region which can be visible on a stone slab².

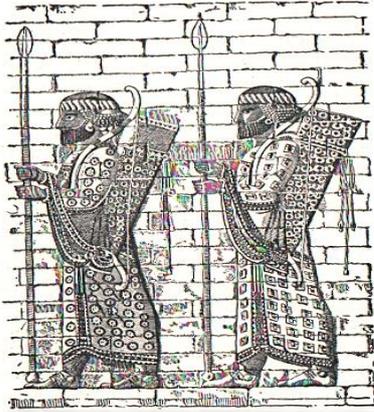
¹K.M,Panikkar,(1953),*Asia and Western Dominance,A Survey of Vasco Daga Ma Epoch of Asian History*,London,GeorgeAllen&Unwin Ltd,PL.IV

²H.A,Davies,(1957),*An Outline of History of the World*,London, Oxford University Press,Page.11

In Myanmar, at the earlier part of Pyu era either chief or kings as warriors were portrayed in the sculptural art especially in SriKsetra. This example is to be discovered in the historiography of scholars on ancient cities in Myanmar. Their research first of all traces sculpture on scene of politics which is a steel discovered from Sriksetra.

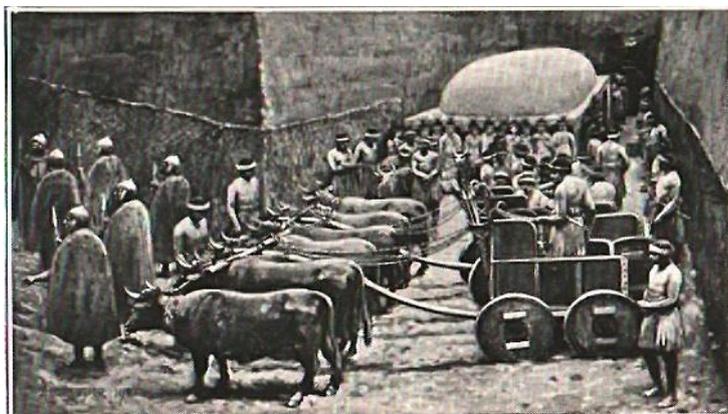


To prove it in comparisons they worked hard through their prediction on relationship between sample on politics on art of Sriksetra and other region most possible. It is reward worthy for their finding somewhat similar to in the form of art and full idea in the idea of politics which is from Andradesa. In this sample one can read the mind of the ruling group of kings whose concentration on security which lacked by their predecessors in the city state, Beikthano which was deteriorated before the advent of Sriksetra because of lack of political security. A new generation ruling in this space ascertained necessity of security formed warrior group which was noted by the artists either from guild or schools. The example logically stated the importance of bodyguard for kings. For that consideration the artist depicted two guards each on either side of the king who is portrayed holding sword with valiant act. Even today battle field which was led by either Major or captain are guarding by surgeons in the time of fighting because as stakeholder in either in political sector or offices are essential the stakeholders who are Major or Captains are very much given care by the surgeons with soldiers. In ancient time, while battle was facing in his country the king with his followers followed by column of soldiers used to solve the problem confronting his country. The tools was employed in Sriksetra, there were swords with long handles like axe and gada while in the scene of Mesopotamia, it can be seen that the forces are holding several kinds of tools like maces, bow and arrow as well swords. The example in Andradesa depicted the king with turban looking preparing toward the field where people were engaging in war in forces from ruling class might be participated. This was the tradition of king himself waging war participating in the emergence time. However ruling class in Mesopotamia either with heroes or armed forces holding different tools in the hands of different person used to march to warring place with brave and brilliant manners to submerge its enemies who either invade or intrude into their political domain. In a sample with war scene in which the king with his forces marched to annihilate their enemies is depicted in the art of Mesopotamia. This scene shows victory of Mesopotamians with the leadership of their king, heroes and warriors with the coalition capacities of its people. This kind of tradition that is king engaged in the war was continued in Persia. A sample of king participating in war with soldiers was depicted in the art of Persia. This sort of illustration of men armed with bows can be found in the literature of Myanmar history relating to kings' service in Rakhine who was popularly known as Kaman.



In the later part, it is seen in a stray form that to kings' patronages in Buddhism in art and architectural form. In Bagan period, different sorts of politics in arts like soldiers on the back of elephants marching toward battle field, king with his accompanies touring around the environment of the country, performers undertaking the performances for royal persons, soldiers on the back of elephants waging face to face fighting, kings attending religious ceremonies, royal patronage on Buddhists that to Buddha seated with his attendances each on either side of him, Buddha in His Mahaparinivana are to be discovered in different temple in different parts of Bagan. Many scenes on politics such as marching on land towards places aimed to reach by columns or by waterway on boats or kings counseling or scenes maintaining the creeds adopted royal families with majorities of public etc., are to be seen in the art of different temple established in different places of Bagan. There is a fantastic and aesthetic scene in respect to kings with his navel troops marching depicted on a wall of MyingabaGupyaukgyi temple in Bagan, in that the king who assured the King Anawrath with bodyguards around him can be visible seating on the centre of the war boat with long length in measure. The boat looked like naga in the front side. There were three sorts of boats employed in Myanmar. They were naga boats, Karaweik boats and crocodile boats, exercising these boats, Myanmar kings with their important followers and troops used to travel to the destination aimed either for touring or royal purposes or in the time of emergency towards insurgency regions or for laying foundation in building religious buildings in which on land travelling was inaccessible. The scene Anawrattha with his bodyguards on boats perhaps the king was marching to the battle field or returning from westward regions extended by his and public desirability. It was also possible that Anawrattha with forces as one of the attributes taking touring to Malaya regions in extremity of south of Myanmar which became under the sovereignty of Bagan Kingdom because the boats on which Anawrattha seating big war boat and beyond its are two small boats each on either side of the main war boat. On all the boats were to be seen tremendous forces and on the waters on which the boats flowing are big, big fishes which suggest that the boats were not confluence of the stream, which look like either Ocean or River that indicating they all were participating capacitating entity of Bagan kingdom. Synoptically this scene indicates the boundaries toward the extreme south of Bagan kingdom. What is similar between the scene on wars of Mesopotamia and Bagan kingdom in idealism, which is king's participating with his followers on the safeguarding and extending as well as protecting the political domain of respective realm. In here, we would like to describe a theme on politics in both literatures which are to be seen in Myanmar Royal Order and a scene from art in Mesopotamia. The theme is ceremony of state funeral. Since royal order of Bagan to Kongbaung this theme vividly portrays. As to that theme arrangement in which should be led and what should be performed in which manners were already explained. The cost and expenditure in position wise are to be observed. The cost submitted for a state funeral if which was higher than same one in same position had to be investigated through audit and allowed by

adjusting. The day which to be appropriate had to be assigned for royal funeral¹. In Myanmar this sort of ceremony is called Du Mingala². This episode concerned with King Mindon's funeral was mentioned by W.S Desai by his writing where he stated the event from beginning to end³. Though our investigation such sort of sample that to state funeral with forces proceeding is not yet found a sample in connection with state funeral with forces proceeding is discovered depicted in the art of Mesopotamia.



This sample is from western Asia: Babylonia where people keeping on a culture relating to their dead king or princes as who ruled in this world for the welfare of people should be king in his spiritual life. There he must ruled in the way he administered in this world seeking mechanism for the development of the country and prosperity of the human. Therefore, dead of king was used to bury grandly with ceremony. Especially this funeral ceremony was used to lead by heir apparent or any prince from the region around as the custom of that day. In this sample shows a prince looking the dead body bring by royal authorities and persons accountable. The prince used to wait at the tomb where the dead were used to bring through proceeding. As at that time wheel chariots with buffaloes were employed as funeral vehicle, in this sample we can see that the dead was brought toward the tomb by the chariot drag by buffaloes or oxen in proceeding⁴.

Conclusion

Politics as pragmatic functions were recorded through literature or by art as product of societies participating political aid which is important in demonstrating political works in the art form. Politics appeared into the picture of Myanmar since Stone Age, which are Matriarchal form of activities of Governments and Patriarchal system of governments those can be discovered in art form in caves and by imagination or through literature. The vivid understandings of politics in art in Myanmar are produced by artists since Pyu era which was city state period. This tradition continued later periods in Myanmar both in literature and art. This tradition either kings with his soldiers engaged in fighting or marching toward battle fields were common in art of West Asia especially art of Mesopotamia and Persia and Greece. What is interesting in this study is depicting on dead of king sending off with state ceremony can be seen in the art of Babylon and in literary form in Myanmar.

¹ Than Tun, Dr. (1982-1990) "The Royal Orders of Burma (Myanmar), A.D 1598-1885", in 10 Volumes, Kyoto University, the Center for Southeast Asian Studies

² Kiti Pa Gaing Tauk Sayadaw, Yara Theingahadipani, Myanmar Mui Min Kintaw Sartan Mya, Yangon, New Ya Mu Sarpay, p.21

³ W.S. Desai, (1961) "King Mindon's Funeral", Burma Research Society Fiftieth Anniversary Publication No.1, Yangon, Sarpay Beikman Press, pp.27-31

⁴ Jame Henry Breasted, (1944) (Ancient Times, A History of the Early World, An Introduction to the Study of Ancient History and the Career of Early Man, Second edition, USA, Ginn and Company, Fig.88, Page, 151

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