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**VERNACULAR TRADITION;
AN EXAMINATION OF ITS PRINCIPLES AND QUALITATIVE
ATTRIBUTES IN CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE OF
SRI LANKA.**



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A Dissertation submitted to the University of Moratuwa as a Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in
Architecture.

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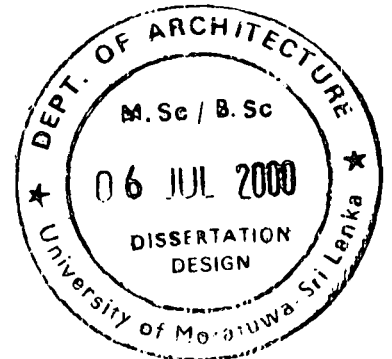
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ABSTRACT

As will be shown in the course of the present study, architecture can never be justified as an art unless it is generated in response to the intrinsic values and qualitative needs of people, i.e., and their cultural realm.

To put in other words, architecture (not buildings) never exist where it is regarded as something to be imposed upon people because it has no right to go against values and culture of people. Such attempts would stand alien to people and only result an inner conflict and suppression of them.

With reference to the contemporary sense of architecture in our country – Sri Lanka, it is questionable whether there exists an architecture that appropriately responds to our culture or qualitative needs of our people.

What is our choice? Should we return in a backward process to the past? Or should we go on with the present disorder of the transplanted alien forms? Of course, uncritical appeal to either of these trends or attempts to counterpoise the traditional and the modern as two entirely hostile categories won't make any fruitful contributions to solve the contemporary problem.

The obvious answer lies in the historic task of bringing about a national architectural transformation that appeals to the present context, with increasing global inter-links.

“ ...Let the genius of architects be in assimilating the relevant soul of the individual or of the collective client and full procession of this inner life breath out of the new creation... A type as

described of intrinsic and sincere understanding of the personality of the client and the architecture that blossoms out of each depth, is the purest form of ' National architecture'.

(Silva, Roland – 1978 :p 253)

In such an attempt, what is the contribution as such of vernacular architectural tradition of our country.

“ The history and culture (arts) of Sri Lanka was mostly seen in terms of some purely external aspects (usually the brilliant civilizations of India taken to be the source) or where we find greater interest in internal development, this is still heavily dependent on theories of seminal influence, from the ancient centers of civilization”.

(Bandaranayake, Senake – 1974 :p 9)

Hence the obvious fault of those who attempt to undermine the vernacular architecture is the failure to see the development of a country's architecture and arts primarily as an outcome of internal process of the people and their culture, which cannot be reduced to a classification of seminal form or concepts.

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