

# Reading past dress fashions: Tradition towards modernity

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## Abstract

*Fashion plays with time. It is the celebrated 'tigers leap' into the past in which the essence and relationship between fashion and modernity is identified. Fashion also represents the traditions which society followed. Traditions of a society reveal how things have changed. This paper studies past dress fashions described in poetic literature and recorded in several visual formats during the 16<sup>TH</sup> century Kotte period with a view to identifying salient dress features that have been assimilated by tradition and also seeks to investigate how it moved towards modernity with hybridization of several dress details and components In comparison to world dress fashions The study reveals that the Kotte period marked the culmination of an emerging novel fashion movement towards modernity. In addition to a deliberate attempt at design, the form and the structures were changed and organized by internal explicit design units such as pleating, knotting, folding, frilling, and tucking which made up a rich set of possible combinations. Data for this research was gathered from historical literary records, texts, and pictorial records from the two ivory caskets at present in the Munich Treasury, Germany, wood carvings from Rambawa Aludeniya temple, Gampola and two cloth paintings presently at the National Museum, Colombo. The qualitative research method was adopted for the study and a systematic sequence of observational studies was carried out to gather, sort and analyze data in a systematic manner. The research methods with procedure adopted, the research design, observation and procedure of data analysis have been included.*

Key Words : Tradition, Modernity, Past Dress fashion, Hybridization, Narrative of the past

## 1. Introduction

'Tradition' and 'modernity' are widely used as polar opposites in a linear theory of social change. This theory can be applied to examine the fashion language of dress in any social context. In Sri Lanka it was in the Kotte period that both traditional and the modernity form the basis of ideologies of the wearers (both royalty and the nobles) as a movement in the royal

male dress code. According to tradition the royal male dress was composed of an unstitched loose lower dress which formed a clinging draped cloth. The relationship between the two terms 'tradition' and 'modernity' do not necessarily involve displacement, conflict or exclusiveness. Modernity does not necessarily weaken tradition. The term modern impulse may be to think in terms of present day technology with its space exploration and nuclear power. But the common sense of the word 'modern' encompasses the whole era since the 18<sup>th</sup> century when inventions like the steam engine and the spinning jenny provided the initial technical basis for the industrialization of society. Accordingly the word 'modern' also evokes especially the deconstruction of inherited privilege and the declaration of equal rights of citizenship.

The term 'modern' has a long history, one which has been investigated by Hans Robert Jaus. The word 'modern' in its Latin form "modernus" was used for the first time in the late 5<sup>th</sup> century in order to distinguish the present, which had become officially Christian, from the Roman and Pagan past with varying content, the term 'modern' again and again expresses the consciousness of an epoch that relates itself to the past of antiquity, in order to view itself as the result of a transition from the old to the new.



It is understood that the concept of tradition is of utmost importance in every society. Tradition is subject to change from time to time with internal and external cultural, economic and political forces. Accordingly to Dissanayake (Dissanayake ,2005, p.15) the traditional notion of tradition stresses the idea of handing down of ideas, objects, practices, assumptions and values from generation to generation and at the same time tradition also implies reception by an active public, alert to both the imperatives of the past as well as the present. Tradition allows constructing a narrative of the past, the present and future on the basis of a certain present dealing with a certain past. Moreover the concept of tradition seeks to enforce certain values and assumptions and modes of behavior. It is also regarded as a transcendental phenomenon and seen to be endowed with certain timeless qualities.

The writings of Walter Benjamin (Benjamin, 1982, p.18) have underlined the importance of understanding tradition not as an ontological question but rather one of political endeavor. Moreover Eliot's statement (Eliot, 1975) is much discussed; he said that 'tradition is not only

solely, or even primarily, the maintenance of certain dogmatic beliefs; these beliefs have come to take their living in the course of the formation of tradition. What I mean by tradition involves all those habitual actions, habits and customs, from the most strange which represents the blood kinship of the same people living in the same place'. Eliot has emphasized the importance of inheriting a tradition by conscious effort. He says that it cannot be inherited passively and that one has to obtain it by great labor.

The German philosopher Hans George Gadamer's approach to tradition arises from his notion of hermeneutics as a dialogical conversation. The idea of a linguistically shaped and tradition – influenced community is at the heart of his thinking. For him tradition, language, and interpretation are vitally interlinked. Like Eliot but from a different theoretical angle, Gadamer establishes the importance of the notion of tradition as involving a process of creative assimilation. (Gadamer 1975 cited in Dissanayake 2005)

Coomaraswamy's work is pivotally concerned with the idea of tradition. For him tradition exercised a timeless and normative influence. He was of the opinion that tradition grew out of deep understandings of the nature of spirituality and its impact on human beings, whereas modernity signified a kind of amnesia of spiritual understanding and truth. He expressed that tradition creates and maintains a community of artists, patrons of the arts and consumers of art who are guided by the same impulses and norms.

### ***1.1 Objective and Significance of the Study***

The objective of the paper is to investigate in what ways the dress fashions of the past followed traditions of society and how it moved towards modernity with hybridization of several dress details and components.

The significance of the paper is identified as in comparison to the world dress fashions the Kotte period marked the culmination of an emerging novel fashion movement towards modernity with unique features rooted in Sri Lankan fashion culture. The performance of the dress fashion was visualized totally congruously within the documentary reality of the dress. It

is possible to read the earlier dress fashions and dressing etiquettes of Sri Lanka during a period that intensified Sri Lankan Indo Portuguese exchanges which depends a lot on uncovering some of the various impulses that energized dress traditions.

## **1.2 Approach**

### **1.2.1 Identification of Categories and Traditional Styles of Dresses**

There are four dress categories of the period identified. They are;

- The Royalty
- The Elite
- The Performing Artists
- The Common people.

However the dresses of the royalty show strong visual evidences that could be considered learning towards modern dresses in comparison with world dress trends.



**Fig.1**

**Udaaludeniya- Gampola, Wood carving**



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**Fig.2**

**Gadaladeniya- Gampola mural painting in the dome**



**Fig.3**

**Gadaladeniya-mural painting  
in the dome**



**Fig.4**

**Cloth painting Reg.no 85.133.1  
at the Colombo National Museum**



**Fig.5**



**Fig.6**

**Figure 1** Shows the king's lower dress carved at the Aludeniya "Rambawa" wooden door jamb. The lower dress is unique in form because it had a circular shaped dress feature. In fact the feature was depicted in a more pronounced manner during the sixteenth century king's dress. Even though this was mainly worn by the kings, elite of the court also seem to have adopted the feature in a different way. Pictorial evidences show that the feature evolved gradually throughout history with subtle adjustments in forming the shape of it.

**Figure 2** Shows the picture of a king from the dome of the Gadaladeniya temple. His lower dress seems very simple and confined by a waist band. In the front a fold seems to have a pointed edge.

**Figure 3** The lower dress shows a side fold which has a pointed edge. The fold on the left side of the waist developed in its size to a much greater extent during the last phase of the sixteenth century, evident in the dress of King Wimaladharmasooriya 1(1591-1604)

**Figure 4** The picture found in a cloth painting at the Colombo museum shows a developed form of a lower dress having a pointed fold attached to the waist.

**Figure 5** The king's lower dress is arranged by one piece of cloth wrapped around to give prominence to the designed hem line and a border. The fold around the waist would be thick and tucked at the left end of the waist.

**Figure 6** Shows the same waist band tucked at the right end of the waist and served as a pleated fall arranged much longer than the former, which falls to the middle of the lower dress. There is a border around the hem of the dress. This is remarkable because it gives insight to the weaving industry in the country.

During the Vijayanagar period (1336-1565 AD) the Kotte kingdom had close ties with the former in many ways. Codrington (Codrington, 1917, p.103) states that Sri Lanka paid taxes to the Vijayanagar king. "Nuniz records that the king of Ceylon paid tribute to *Devaraya of Vijayanagar* (1422-1447AD) whose minister *Lakkana Dandanayake* went on a voyage to the frontier of the island and an inscription dated 1438 AD referring to Devaraya states; 'who levied Taxes from Illam' a biruda also employed by his successors".

It can be assumed that the Kotte period would have influenced the textile designs which were popular during the Vijayanagar period. The textile designs appearing in the *Lepakshi* mural paintings at Vijayanagar show some similarities to the textile designs in the dresses of cloth paintings. There are scores of dress designs and borders in paintings at *Lepakshi*. Among these designs checks, stripes, flowers, dots, are often repeated. The colours of costumes in the mural paintings in the Vijayanagar period are white, black, green, black and brick red. In the contemporary literature kavi or brick, chengavi or red colour with the glow of fire appear to be very popular. (Kumari, 1995, p.35)

**1.2.2 Varieties of Lower Body Dresses in Two Ivory Caskets**



**Fig.7**

**Casket inv.no.1241 ivory**

Right end of the gable



**Fig.8**

**Casket inv.no.1242 ivory**

Right end of the gable



**Fig.9**

**Casket inv.no.1241 ivory**

Rear view, top left of the lid



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**Fig.10**

**Casket inv.no.1242 ivory**

Rear view, top left of the lid




**Fig.11**

**Casket inv.no.1241 ivory**

Rear view, bottom right

**Figure 7** King Bhuwanekabahu VII (1521-1555 AD) is in the *Chitrakuta Mandape* at Jayewardenepura (Kotte). He is wearing a multi tiered crown of Lanka and holding a lotus flower, one of the five emblems of Lord Buddha (Jaffer and Schwabe, 1999, p.7) According to Austin Silva this scene refers to the king's Coronation ceremony. (Silva, 1974, p.51) There is a large stone slab which formed part of the Coronation Platform which could still be seen in the back yard of the residential quarters of the monks in the Parakumba Pirivena. An insight into the majesty, power and splendor which pervaded the palace ceremonies could be gleaned from Sannas No 1, 2, issued by Bhuwanekabahu VII of Kotte. According to Sannas No 1- "His majesty issued this sannas sitting in glory like *Indra* upon his Throne under the Makara Thorana and the white canopy, encircled by his Ministers in the *Chitrakuta*. In Sannas No 2- " his majesty sits upon his *Lion Throne* shining with variegated embellishments in his palace at Jayewardenepura Kotte in the midst of Mudaliyas of the city. (Alwis, 1976, p.17)

The King's Palace and the *Chitrakuta Mandape* was described by Pieris (Pieris, 1992, p.38)

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"The ambassador was escorted through the gaily decorated city within the narrow gates of the Chitakuta Mandape in front of the *Sumangala Prasada*, (the name of the Palace is given in the Saparagamuwa Sannas) The massive door frames of which elaborately carved in stone.... The crouching figures of the numerous courtiers filled the grater potion of the hall...right under the great Makara Thorana of stone and overshadowed by the white *chatra* of dominion, raised the Lion Throne of ivory on six stages covered with cloth and gold. Seated thereon was King *Dharma Parakramabahu, the Chakkawaththi* Lord of Lanka.

**Figure 8** The King is seated as the Buddhist king but wielding a sword.

**Figure 9** The king is participating in a ritual ceremony at the religious place in front of the four armed god Shiva. The god is riding on his bull, Nandi. (Silva, 1974, p.51)

**Figure 10** The king is receiving a visitor in the King's audience hall.

**Figure 11** The clear evidence of prince Dharmapala's attire found in ivory casket inv.no 1241 depicting scenes relating to the embassy to Lisbon must have been made after the envoy from Kotte returned home in 1543AD. (Amin and Schwabe 1999, p.1-14) On the front of the casket are scenes of the coronation of the effigy of *Dharmapala* and has rich gold mounts inset with



*cabochon rubies* and *sapphires*. The front right and left panels depict, respectively, the crowning by *Dom Joao 111* of the *effigy of Dharmapala* and swearing of an oath of loyalty to the Portuguese crown by the young prince. He is shown wearing a ceremonial dress exclusive to the Emperor such as the headband, the single necklace of pearls called *ekavali* and the *divine dagger* (*acchijja – cchurika*). This royal weapon was an unbreakable dagger. (Geiger, 1960, p.127) The lower dress comprises falling folds on both sides of the waist. This representation gives similarities to the traditional king's dress features of King' Buwanekabahu IV (1341-51 AD) of *Gampola*.

### 1.2.3 Inspirational Imagery Sources that support Circular Fold



**Fig.12**

Mural painting in Thivanka

Image house, Polonnaruwa



**Fig.13**

Chullawagga at the National Museum,, Colombo



**Fig.14**



**Fig.15**

**Figure 12** Shows evidence of the circular fold represented in the lower dress shown in mural painting in the Thivanka Image house at Polonnaruwa.

**Figure 13, 14, 15** Show another depiction of circular folds in the lower dresses of the dancers and a musician painted on the cover of the palm leaf manuscript "*Chullawagga*" presently at the Colombo museum. The work was done during the period of Dambadeniya (1272-1293 AD) in the reign of King Parakramabahu II. (1230- 70 AD) However the feature became prominent during the Kotte period (1411-1597 AD) and has been exquisitely carved and drawn in respect of male garment.



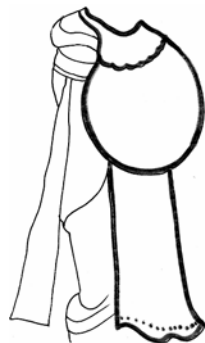
**Fig.16 South Indian architect** (Karanrisch, 1960, PL 56)

**Figure 16** Shows that the circular dress feature was popular during the sixteenth century in South Indian dresses. During the sixteenth century the King arranged the circular fold in a different way. It was refashioned in its form to a much greater extent by manipulation of the fabric in greater width and length. This feature was depicted only for the king's dress and could be seen during the Kotte period. However, also visible was a similar formation of arranging the fold in a circular manner practiced by some of the respective occupational ranks (**Fig. 17**) serving in the king's court. Through detailed observations it was proved that it was fixed in quite a different manner by the officials.



**Fig.17**

Casket inv.no 1242



**Fig.18**

Uda Aludeniya-Wood carving

Gampola



**Fig.19**

Cloth Painting Reg .no 85.133.1

National Museum, Colombo

#### 1.2.4 Material and Colours of the Traditional King's Dresses

Colours of the dress often speak their respective meanings. It is also a mysterious stimulus evoked suddenly in a person's mind according to deciphered meanings of certain objects. Dress is one of the objects that has colour with it and makes meaning that is decoded only by experience. (Barthes, 2006, p.50) Very often the white colour has been utilized for several purposes of the king's rituals. At the coronation ceremony the king should use white garments. Vijayantatantraya Ch 15 Verse 81 stipulates that "he (king) should divest himself of all ornaments already worn and the king put on *white garments* and mounts the auspicious seat and place his feet on the platform on which the ploughshares were placed". (Jayasooriya, 2001, p.261) It is also described that "when he is thus consecrated, the king attiring himself in clean white garments should put on the sixty four ornaments and crown.

Very often the King utilized *silk* material in terms of different purposes related to his dressing purposes. It is noted in "Vijayantatantraya" that when the king is crowned a length of *white silk* cloth is used to wrap the knot of hair on his head. (Jayasooriya, 2001, p.262, v 97) Its length should be 12 cubits. This ritualistic wrapping of the head by a white cloth is referred to in the contemporary literary work Kavyashekaraya. It mentions that the great grandfather of Parakramabahu VI (1411-1466 AD) of Kotte, Prince Sumithra of the lineage of king Dharmasoka, when he was appointed as the *Jayamala Mahipathi*, (Paranavithana, 1960, p.660) had his head wrapped with a *white cloth* when King Devanampiyathissa placed the crown on his head.

The ceremonial robe is said to be of three kinds in different lengths in cubits as 13, 9, or 7. The entire cloth should be draped around the king from left to right. He also used a *silk shawl* while he is presents at the Dharmashala or the religious place. Parakumba Siritha (verse 60) indicates that the king Parakramabahu VI was dressed in *silk cloth*. Sometimes, it mentioned the quality of the silk cloth that the King wore. He got a gift of fine *silk* from a foreign king. (Verse 151)

*Kapuru sandun muwa mada soda suwada ethi*

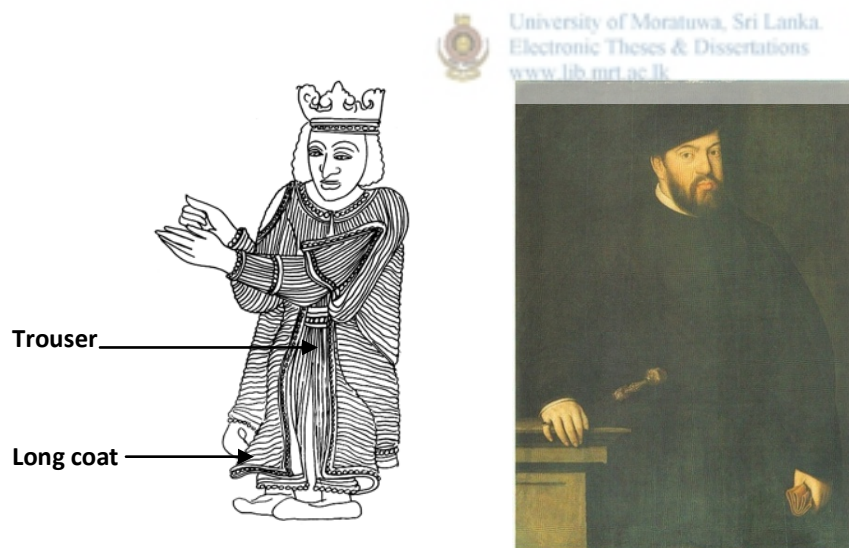
*Rusiru siumpata salu samaganan veni*

*Wathuru lesin gena nan desa nirindu nithi*

*Athuru nodi weda weda ehi sitithi*

Barbosa refers to *silk cloths of Pegu called Patola*. (Pieris, 1992) Sometimes the King used gold and silver as an added value to enhance the timeless quality of dresses and gave a cozy look to dresses. The description of Queyroz noted that the king long girt with *cloth of silver*, the king's Lion Throne of six stages was covered with *cloth and gold*. The king wore a *white cabaya*. (Pieris, 1992, 39)

### 1.2.5 Identification of Hybridization of Western Dress Styles by the Sinhalese Kings and producing novel combinations of Fashion Trend



**Fig. 20 King João III (John III) of Portugal** Casket inv. no 1241ivory, front right panel



**Fig.21**

**Prince Dharmapala**

Casket inv.no 1241, front left panel



**Fig.22**

**King Mayadunne**

Casket inv.no 1241, left gable



**Fig.23**

**King Raigam Bandara**



**Fig.24**

**King Vimala Dharmasooriya I**

**Figure 20** shows that King Joao also wore a barrette cap and holds a handkerchief on the left hand. He wore a black long mantel or a cloak. There was a sword on his right side. **Figure 20 Hand sketch** depicted in the ivory casket is evident that the King wore long trousers as a lower body dress. These trousers were called *calcao* or *breeches*. (Silva, 1990, p. 490) He wore a pair of shoes with stockings. His shirt had long sleeves and he wore a long cloak.

“Breeches is a double plural known since 1205, from Old English (and before Old French) *brēc*, the plural of *brōc* "garment for the legs and trunk," At first *breeches* indicated a cloth worn as underwear by both men and women. In the latter sixteenth century, *breeches* began to replace *hose* (while the German *Hosen*, also a plural, ousted *Bruch*) as the general English term for men's lower outer garments, a usage that remained standard until knee-length breeches were replaced for everyday wear by long pantaloons or trousers. *Breeches* (pronounced "britches", "breeches") are an item of clothing covering the body from the waist down, with separate coverings for each leg, usually stopping just below the knee, though in some cases reaching to the ankles. The *breeches* were normally closed and fastened about the leg, along its open

seams at varied lengths, and to the knee, by either buttons or by a draw-string, or by one or more straps and buckle or brooches". (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Breeches>)

Dalgado (1988, p. 68) mentions breeches as '*Calcao* properly speaking signifiers in *Portuguese breeches*, but in the Indo Portuguese sense of trousers'

Almeida had worn *buskins* (*Caous* or *Kaus*) for the feet and covered up to the knee by a pair of stockings Feet socks known as *kal mes*. In Sinhala it is known as *mes*. (Dalgado, 1988, p.60) (*meia, meias*). He carries a stick called *basto*. *Basto* means staff or cane. *Bastamv*, in Sinhala it is known as *Bastamu*. (Dalgado, 1988, p.41). Over the short breeches he wore a long coat or *cabaia*. Pieris mentions that (1992, p.39)

"*Cabaya*, is a word originally Asiatic, received by the Portuguese from the Arabs and brought with them to India. It was applied to the long muslin Tunic worn by the better classes of India".

Perera stated that (1922-28, p.126)

"Gray in his notes on pyrard thinks that the word was introduced before the time of the Portuguese and remarks that *cabaya* in Ceylon means a *coat* or *jacket*. The word has been used by Castanheda (1551), Correa (1552), Fitch (1585). Fitch described "*cabie* made like a shirt tied with strings on one side. According to Linschoten (1598) it is "*a cotton linen gown called cabaia*."

Dalgado (1988, p.60) mentions that,

"*Cabaia* (long tunic with wide sleeves used in the East) in Tamil it is known as *Kabay*, a kind of tunic, in Marathi- *Kabay*, *Kabai*. In Sinhala it is called *Kabaya*. (Coat) In the Indo-Portuguese dialects of Ceylon *Cabaya*, *Cabai*, and *Cuobai* are used in the sense of a coat. *Gaba* adopted in Hindustani vesture, introduced into India by the Portuguese according to Yule and Burnell. Mathes derives it from the Persian *gabay*. Castanheda said it was a fitting garment. Agreement which they call *cabaya*, which the Moors commonly use in those parts, it has long sleeves is provided with a cincture and is open in front with one flap over another in the manner of the dress of the venetians".

Gaspar Correa said that,

"*Cabaya* is a garment such as the *Pelote* is analogous. (*Pelote* in Portuguese is the name of a robe with broad flaps, used in former times. They brought to the kings a costly

*cabaya*, which he with his own hands put on the governor and this was the highest honor which he could bestow on him according to the usages”.

The *Kabala* is a kind of white *designer gown* made of *cambrion* and furnished with *lace*. The complete outfit of a Malay woman is called *Sarong- Kabaia*. The existence of *Cabaia* in the Eastern parlance was prior to the Portuguese arrival, it being previously unknown to the Portuguese. *Cabayas* or native dresses of silk. *Kabaya* is still a common word in Ceylon for a *coat* or *jacket* worn by European natives.

**Figure 21** Shows Prince *Dharmapala* wearing a long coat over a long piece of cloth after he was crowned as being similar to that of the Portuguese king. He is swearing an oath of loyalty to the Portuguese crown. He was clad in an over-coat to resemble and obey the Portuguese crown. The edge of the coat is decorated with some beads. It was said that there was an exchange of *cabaya* and a type of a *headdress* of Portuguese dignitaries with the Sinhalese delegation. Before the coronation took place, “the Sinhalese delegation had to compliment the king’s gesture exchanging their usual costumes for crimson *cabaya* and white *toucas*. The word *touca* refer to the turban (Pieris, 1992, p.51). They entered a state coach in the company of the Marquises of Villa Real and Ferreyra and drove up to the palace. (Pieris, 1992, p. 88)

**Figure 22, 23** Left gabled side of the ivory casket<sup>1</sup> shows the coronation of King *Bhuwanekabahu* in the *Chitrakuta Mandape* at *Jayewardanepura Kotte*, with his two brothers *Raigam Bandara* on the left side and *Mayadunne* (Rambukwelle, 1996, p.43) on his right side. (Silva, 1974, p.71) (Schroeder, 1990, p.468) They wore long *sleeved jackets* for the upper body and wore *long cloths* with pointed edges for the lower body. Both jackets have simple *circular neck* line and open in front. They wore some heavy earrings and wore *turban* styled *headdresses*.

**Figure 24** The king *Vimaladharmasooriya I* (1592-1604 AD) is shown in full royal dress. The royal dress seemed to be changing from its conventional dress signs into more novel signs. His complete dress is described by Coomarasvamy (1956, p.330) as follows,

'The Sinhalese king wears a jeweled crown surmounted by a *trisula*, and having a Buddha figure in the front; a jacket and '*mante*' and a patterned *tuppotiya*, probably of muslin with gold or silver thread. He carries a sword hanging by a *bandolier* over the right shoulder. A *lotus flower* is in the left hand. The jewelry worn includes *earrings, two necklaces with jewelled pendants, armllets and anklets.*

Even though Prince Dharmapala first adopted the Portuguese style *cabaya* or *long coat* and introduced them to the kings also could be suggested that King Wimaladharmasooriya I introduced the *short jacket* as upper body dress for royalty. His long lower dress seems to be a development derived from the early Gampola period and sixteenth century lower dress depicted in the two cloth paintings at the Museum, Colombo.(Reg.No.85.133.1) The broad design on the front fold of the dress seems similar to the above mentioned sixteenth century lower dress. The side fold also shows gradual development of the dress feature. He wore jewelry including the necklaces, crown, earrings, armllets, bracelets, varieties of rings, and bandolier. His feet are adorned. The long necklace with a large pendant not seen in any photograph of king Wimaladharmasooriya, but on close scrutiny one can see a long pearl necklace with a large pendant with a large pearl in the centre. The other necklace is a "*derisana male*" similar to the one that belonged to King Keerthi Sri Rajasinghe, presently kept in the Temple of the Tooth Kandy. (Pieris, 1992, p.45)

When Prince Dharmapala adopted western dress, it was continued by the succeeding Kings Wimaladhramasooriya 1, Rajasingha 11, Keerthi Sri Rajasingha and Sri Wrickrama Rajasingha. If their dress was not accepted by the people of society, these dresses would not have existed in the society. Their upper body long sleeved jacket, roppillios (a vest worn by the Sinhalese) trousers (pantaloons), wambays (doublet) from the Portuguese fashion were followed by the elite of the court of Wimaladhramasooriya 1(Paranavithana, 1997, p.41)



## 1.2.6 Continuation of Modernization of the King's Dress



**Fig.25**

**King Vimala Dharmasooriya I**

(Paranavithana, 1997, 41)



**Fig.26**

**Rajasimha II**

(Knox 1966, 112)



**Fig.27**

**Keerthi Sri Rajasimha**

(Dambulla temple)



**Fig.28**

**Sri Wickrama Rajasimha**

(Davy 1821, 107)

Furthermore it is also revealed that the production and exchange of meanings of dress of the Sinhalese Kings are quite clearly similar to the meanings of the original Portuguese long sleeved jacket and given numerous interpretations by different Kings as cultural producers. It is understood by the examples below that the original Portuguese jacket ends up with a set of meanings different from those it began with. Prince Dharmapala wears a long sleeved long *cabaya* with a front opening, King Wimaladhramasooriya 1 wears a *Kameesa hettaya* or known as *Juan hettaya* with a *tippet* (a kind of collar) (Codrington, 1910) and with a front opening, King Rajasinghe 11 wears a long sleeved jacket with a sash crossed over the shoulder with buttoned front opening, Keerthi Sri Rajasingha wears a long sleeved jacket known as *Moja hettaya* with a broad *tippet*, and King Sri Wickrama Rajasingha wears a long sleeved jacket known as *Wata hettaya* or *Reli Kamise* with three layered frill (*manthe*) layered trimmings attached to a broad *tippet*.

The new forms of kings' dresses developed during the latter part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. When Prince Dharmapala adopted the western long coat as his upper body dress with a long piece of cloth, new meanings were attached by the social context. He adopted the same styled long coat which was worn by the Portuguese King. In the social context of the long coat emerging signified royalty with a combination of long trousers. But in our social context the signification of 'royal' first emerged with a long piece of cloth and then it moved from that social context to another (Kandy period) and flourished as a new style for the Kings. The new dress style of the King's attire existed until the end of the last kingdom of Sri Lanka; the Kandyan period (last king of Kandy also wore a long sleeved jacket and trousers)

### **Reinvented novel fashion trend by the elite of the 20th century**



**Fig.29 Headman in Down South Sri Lanka**

(<http://lankapura.com/2009/07/government-official-with-the-local-headman/>)

It is also identified that the elite or the high rankers of the administrative society during the early twentieth century in the south of Sri Lanka wore long coats with a long cloth up to the ankle and wore long trousers beneath the cloth. What is noticeable here is that instead of Prince Dharmapala's long coat and long lower piece of cloth a new dress form, a trouser worn beneath the cloth emerged. This new fashion brought an interesting dress composition and elaborated the perception of the perceivers of that society. The mode of the new dress composition signified 'smart gentleman'. It seems that with the passage of time the elite male has ignored the lower cloth and practiced wearing a long coat and trousers. In this way it seems that people in the society could continuously convey dress signifiers according to their wish. However it is apparent that the culture of the society had ignored some dress forms and re-formed and adopted another dress for elite males in the middle phase of the twentieth century in Sri Lanka.

### **Results: Summary**



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The study has revealed that there was a unique methodology of arranging the long lower cloth to the body without any single stitching by emphasizing body curves. It was evident that the structure, design and form of the lower dress developed through a dynamic process that kept evolving with traditions. In addition to a deliberate attempt at design, the form and the structures were changed and organized by internal explicit design units as pleating, knotting, folding, frilling, and tucking (visible in the upper body coats; the form of the sleeve, shape of the collar and other design units) which made up a rich set of possible combinations and consequently for an authentic individuation of an outfit. It is also understood that royalty appropriated the trousers as a means of injecting novelty into male fashion as a means of transgressing moral and social codes, and as a means of redefining an ideal masculinity. Furthermore they focused their "westernized gaze on the Portuguese robe or coat and western pantaloons. The kings who adopted hybrid forms of fashion dresses have wished to characterize themselves as resistant, rebellious, or simply contrarian adopted coats and pantaloons as a sign of their refusal to meet societal expectations. It is noticeable that fashion is a system of

differences, reshuffled and confused, continually re-established and reinvented. Vintage fluctuates between past and future, served from the present. However much fashion may be depending on the present moment it is also fundamentally free from it. By denying tradition, it reinvents the classical and harbingers the new. By denying the present fashion trends, it reinvents it to its liking, so that it can experiment with fresh fashion identities. We dress to communicate and communicate by dressing.

### **1.1 Research Methods**

#### 1.2 Research procedure adopted

A qualitative method has been adopted for this research. The method offers several traditions for human and social sciences. Smith (1987 cited in Creswell 1994) categorized qualitative research into an interpretative approach, artistic approach, systematic and theory driven approaches. The research is concerned primarily with process rather than outcomes or products. Furthermore the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Data is mediated through this human instrument, rather than thought inventories, questionnaires or machines. The research involves field work. The researcher physically went to the sites, to observe and record findings in its natural setting (recording most of the temple paintings and sculptures). The research is descriptive in process, meaning and understanding gained through pictorial references. The process of the research is inductive, in that the researcher builds abstractions, concepts and theories from details.

Selecting an appropriate research setting → selecting an objective → choosing a proper method → gathering information → Coding and categorizing (process of memoing) concept mapping → analysis → assertion of concepts and process → Future application.

### 1.3 Research Design

The characteristics of the research design includes

- Various data collection procedures
- Different data analysis processes
- Reporting information.

To identify the parameters for the data collection is an important aspect of a qualitative research. The idea of qualitative research is to purposefully select documents or visual materials or both types which will provide best answers to the research question. No attempt is made to randomly select documents or and other visual materials. The four parameters included 'the setting'. It informs where the research will take place. For this research the setting is identified as the period of Kotte, during the fifteenth, sixteenth, and early seventeenth centuries.

The data collection is the most vital part in the research and it followed specific steps. The steps involve, Creswell (1994, p.148)



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- Setting the boundaries for the study,
- Multiple collection of information or data through observations, interviews, and documents and visual materials such as photographs, sculptures, and mural paintings
- Establishing a protocol for recording information.

A compendium of data collection procedure drawing on all four types mentioned above is presented in the following table.

<b>Data collection type</b>	<b>options within types</b>	<b>Advantages of the type</b>
Observation (direct)	Observer as participant	Researcher can record information as it is represented in the actual site. Visited many sites and selected specimens from 10

		sites.
Interviews	Face to face, one on one in person to person interview	Useful when information cannot be directly observed
	Interview by telephone	Can get historical information
	Group of people	Allows more than one person to present ideas
Books Documents	Publication documents such as minutes of meetings, news papers Private documents as journals,	Can be accessed at a time; an unobtrusive source of information
Visual materials Photographs Mural paintings Sculptures Carvings Objects( jewelry)	Unobtrusive method of collecting data Provides an opportunity for researcher to share directly her reality with the objects. Creative in that it captures attention visually.	

Design and advance protocols for collecting information/ data

### 1.3.1 Observation

In the research many multiple observations were carried out. A protocol or a particular system for recording information is needed to note observations on the field. Therefore observations were recorded as *descriptive notes with multiple descriptive sketches*. Descriptive notes included description of physical setting, important features of the painting, or sculpture, several

series of sketches of distinctive details, parts, features, forms and shapes of observed dresses and personalities. Demographic information was also included with dates, names of the places and field settings.

### 1.3.2 Interviews

Informal interviews were conducted with most of the high priests of the temples, Head masters of the school in the villages, special persons engaged in special activities such as dancers, craftsmen and people who were aware of the sites or history about the findings were also interviewed.

### 1.3.3 Collection of Data

Primary material sources and secondary data sources were used for collection of data. Primary data are those data collected firsthand and not collected earlier. Data was collected by interviews. Visual data was collected by photographs and sketches which were done during the field visits. Secondary data are those data which have already been published. The published sources of secondary data were as follows; books, magazines, research journals, and research articles.

## 1.4 Procedure of Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted as an activity simultaneously with data collection, data interpretation and writing narrative sub topics. There were several simultaneous activities involved in the research process.

- Collecting data from the field and from the documents
- Sorting the information into categories
- Formatting the information into a story or picture

The analysis is based on reduction (de- contextualizing) and interpretation (re- contextualizing).

#### 1.4.1 Reduction (de- contextualizing) by Coding Procedures

Sequencing the data into categories is the basis for the emerging story. This process is called segmenting the information.

#### 1.4.2 Process of Memoing

Memos are the theorizing write-up of ideas about substantive codes and their theoretically coded relationships. Memos are more familiar with things which are written with personal knowledge and experience. Memos are also important in the early phase of the research which leads to interpreting the data.

### 1.5 Verification Steps

#### 1.5.1 Triangulation of Data

Triangulation is a “method of cross-checking data from multiple sources to search for regularities in the research data such as temple murals, interviews and literature. It gives a more detailed and balanced picture of the situation.

#### 1.5.2 Methodological Triangulation

It involves using more than one method to gather data such as interviews, observations, and published documents.

#### 1.5.3 Theory Triangulation: Conformability

This also involves using more than one theoretical scheme in the interpretation of the phenomenon. Theories of Roland Barthes, Ferdinand de Saussure, and Susan B. Kaiser were used.



## 1.6 Validity

'Validity' is claimed either by viewing it as resident in a particular stage of the research process, or as combinations of certain stages. Maxwell (1992, p.285) identifies five typologies of 'validity' as they relate to various stages of the research

### 1.6.1 Descriptive Validity

Descriptive 'validity' is that concerned with the initial stage of research, usually involving data gathering. The central issue is factual accuracy in the informational statements that describe what was observed and experienced.


### 1.6.2 Internal Validity

Internal validity relates to whether the findings or results of the research relate to and are caused by the phenomena under investigation and not other unaccounted for influences. This was done within three steps.

1. Prolonged engagement of the researcher: Three years (full time)
2. Feedbacks received from various presentations and publications done by the researcher.
3. The researcher collaborated with eminent scholars: Prof. Nimal De Silva, Supervisor, Prof. Desmond Mallikarachchi (Professor of Philosophy, Dept. of Philosophy, Faculty of Arts, University of Peradeniya), Prof. B.D. Nandadeva (Research Methodology) Dept of Fine Arts, University of Kelaniya.

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**Karunaratne. Medagedara. Virajini. Priyanka. 2013 *Fashion traditions: Reading the hybridization of dress in Sri Lanka*. International Conference on Asian Art, Culture and Heritage 21st – 23rd August 2013  
(Published in proceedings)**

<http://www.archaeology.lk/conferences/international-conference-on-asian-art-culture-and-heritage-21st-23rd-august-2013-programme/>



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