

A Study of Continuity and Transformation of Archaeo-historical Context of *Sindurankanda* and its Hinterland

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The Central Highland region constitutes a significant area in the historical and archaeological landscape of Sri Lanka. It encompasses a rich tapestry of archaeological sites that span various techno-cultural phases, thereby offering invaluable insights into the historical evolution of the region. Particularly, the *Sindurankanda* area serves as a compelling locus for investigating the processes of cultural evolution, extending from the prehistoric era to the contemporary period. Employing diverse archaeological field survey methodologies, this study seeks to discern the patterns of cultural continuity and transformation of the area. Preliminary explorations in *Sindurankanda* have yielded a considerable number of quartz artefacts, which can be categorized into distinct groups, including waste materials, potential tools, and tools. The identification of Mesolithic implements is notably challenging, primarily due to the abundance of quartz waste, suggesting the possible existence of a quarrying site where the summit of the rock may have functioned as a communal gathering place. Numerous caves, some with *Brahmi* inscriptions, further affirm the human presence in the region, giving rise to a rich tapestry of folklore and narrative traditions, often intertwined with the legend of *Ravana*. Furthermore, archaeological findings provide compelling evidence of the inhabitants of the Kandy region engaging in long-distance trade as early as the 1st century BC. This assertion is substantiated by an inscription discovered in *Wegiriya*, located in *Udunuwara*, which attests to the multifaceted skills possessed by individuals in crafts such as lapidary work, pottery, and ivory craftsmanship. The research area is replete with a multitude of *Rajamahaviharas*, *Purana viharas*, temple villages, *Devalas*, and *Devala* villages, all dating back to the Gampola and Kandy periods. These entities assume profound significance in studying ancient built environments and the cultural landscapes associated with religious and sociocultural spaces. It is imperative to note that the entire landscape has undergone profound transformations, primarily due to coffee and tea plantation practices during the colonial era.

Keywords: Archaeo-historical, Cultural, Evolution, *Sindurankanda*, Transformation

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