

## **AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL STUDY OF PREHISTORIC PAINTINGS FOUND IN VEHERAYAYA**

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The reviewing of Prehistoric Paintings in Sri Lanka, in the context of distribution was carried out in this study, and the identified paintings can be classified into two types. These are: engravings on a surface of the rock and paintings on a rock surface. The engravings could be identified at *Dorawakakanda, Kondagala, Hakbelikanda and Maleeyadikanda*. The paintings depicted on rock surfaces have been found at *Adiyagala, Henanigala, Tantirimale, Alugalage, Hulan nuge, Kiripokuna* and other places. The Prehistoric paintings have been coloured as Monochrome and Polychrome. Red, gray, yellow, orange, white and black colours are common in paintings.

Depending on the area where the prehistoric paintings are located, the hill country and low land dry zone are more prominent. The low land rainforests zone can be identified as an attractive region of prehistoric maninhabitants. Nevertheless, prehistoric paintings can be identified to a small extent in the vicinity of the Ratnapura District. Concerning a new interpretation to the Sri Lankan prehistoric paintings of it is more important to provide an archaeological interpretation of prehistoric paintings in the Ratnapura district. District zone can be categorized into several stages prehistoric paintings, paintings of the Gampola period and paintings of the Kandy period. The prehistoric paintings of Ratnapura district are under the impression of many researchers. Physically they have received quantitative evidence of the paintings of the Gampola Period and Kandy Period. However, Archaeological data of the prehistoric painting is minority.

The prehistoric paintings that have been found in Ratnapura district have not been properly interpreted. Those at Veherayaya, Budugala, Sankpala and Rassagala are the main prehistoric paintings in Ratnapura District. Among

the prehistoric painting sites, the destruction and vandalization of the Veherayaya paintings were observed.

In the past, several archaeological research teams and the department of archeology have noted that this site had been observed, but there is no initial record of the paintings. At present, only Udeni Arunasiri has carried out archaeological research. According to the contents of the research, it is possible to identify a reference to the art and color of the paintings. Veherayaya, which has limited and minimal research, is the primary purpose of the study is to do formal reporting and to emphasize the coherent significance of Prehistoric paintings.

The Methodology included the sources of literature, field visits, interviews and map studies. The primary source and secondary source were used for the field. Explorations, such as photographs, field notes, geological maps, charts and measurements.

The Veherayaya archaeological site is located Weelioya gramaseva division, Sabarahamuwa province, Rratnapura. It was necessary to travel about 32 km towards Balangoda - Kaltota road and turn left at the Kaltota junction and went straight Kaltota - Welioya road about 13 km.

The location of the painting is identifiable on the rocky ground of the earth's surface as a rock shelter. The cave is facing the slippery slope. In the upper part of the cave roof, there is a Pre-Brahmi inscription. The distribution of paintings can be identified on the rock surface connecting to the bedrock. There is a 50 feet × 10 feet space in front of the rock shelter. Near the paintings, there is an inhabited house with smaller clay walls. The painted wall is about 30 feet × 45 feet in size, but the surface of the rock is slightly damaged by the flowing of water. Several species of lichens and leeches have grown on the rock surface due to the high humidity in the region. The paintings, which are completely open to the outside, are somewhat shrouded by caves up to 40 feet high. The rest of the pieces are shown that there were stylish paintings. However, present, clear and identifiable paintings can be seen only in the upper and lower parts of the rock surface. As the painting spreads it was possible to identify the distribution of the central part of the rock surface.

The contextual subject of paintings is possible to identify animal and human figures; and geometric shapes, those are hand-held human figures, elephant and deer figures. Human and elephant figures have been painted similarly. Human and elephant figures be observed on the prehistoric paintings of Sri Lanka. It can be used to identify some of the metaphors with a certain size, compared with other images. The elephants figure found is slightly larger compared to other paintings. A range of geometric line-formats can be seen on the surface of the paintings and shapes drawn on the rock surface. The lines of geometric have spread over other paintings. The geometric shapes of the drawings include horizontal, vertical dots, and line strips can be seen. Generally, in conjunction with paintings, human figures can be identified largely with long-sleeved body and legs.

With regard to pigments, red and white are commonly used. Colour usage is very low and white and grey commonly used for human figures and animal figures.

The Vewhereyaya where was carried out this research, can be identified as a unique place in the region, depicts prehistoric paintings. The possibility of comparison with the prehistoric paintings are in Sri Lanka and the features and objects that are characteristic of the paintings is implied the prehistoric significance of these paintings.

## **References**

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