

Investigative Study on Synonyms used to describe women in Sigiri Graffiti

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Sigiri graffiti is one of the main archeological resources that shows that the Sinhalese have quite a long history of writing poems, going back to the 8th century. Paranavitana has discovered 685 graffiti on the mirror of wall. Many of those verses include advanced poetic features and specify that Sri Lankan people have been good at writing poems for long time. This research is not about discussing the Sigiri graffiti or the history of Sinhala poetics, but it is about the synonyms used by the authors to describe women. The objectives of the research are to find out the kind of words that were used by the poets to describe Sigiri women, their reasons to use different kind of words, and to examine how these words were formed. The research is based on literary resources. *Sigiri Padyavaliya* is used as the primary resource and some dictionaries and judgments of some scholars are used as secondary resources. Gorgeous Sigiri women were the main theme of most Sigiri graffiti. Thus, many words have been used to eulogize those women. According to the meaning, these words can be categorized into a few groups as follows:

Word that describe the beauty	Word that describe the	Word that describe the ages	Word that describe the status
සරසවත	මියෙලෙයි	අඹ	නිමබ්බයන්
දිවසරන්	මන්දිබ්බො	සසවනක	මිඛියන්
රන්වනැන්	අසර්බද	අම්බයුක්	පැවැසි
කක	ලිය	ගැහිනින්	
දිග්නෙන්	සිරි	උබයස්	
දිගැස්	සිරිලි	උබ	
නෙළිල්ලෙඹ	සබන්දිනි	ලඳන්	
මිලැස්න	පියබන්ද්	අළු	
වනිනි	වරගන්	අග්නන්	
යනදස්නෙ		යොවනන්	
නිලපල් ඇසන්			
සමවනක්			
නෙල්ල			
කලක්			
මල්බන්දි			

People from different social categories such as royalties, government officers, ordinary people, monks and nuns have written these poems expressing their personal views. According to the research, most of the ordinary people have loved to see Sigiri women aesthetically. In addition to this, everyone tended to label women according to the age and these words have been used by women, wives and monks in their writings. Words such as *ambu, abi, Ambuyuk, abuyui, gæhænin* indicate the meaning of ‘wife’ while the younger girls were identified as *ලඳුන්, යොවනුන්*. High class People, officers and reverends have discussed the characters of women while ordinary people indicated the status. Some of these words were formed with the influence of Pali and Sanskrit. Sigiri graffiti belong to a transitional period in the Sinhala language. So, many optional words have been used in Sigiri graffiti. In conclusion, it can be suggested that Sigiri poets have mentioned many words to describe Sigiri women according to their personal feelings and personal status. These words denote women’s beauty, characters, ages and status. Mother languages such as Pali and Sanskrit have affected some words when these were formed. And also, many optional words have been used for a word because of language evolution.