

Cultural Landscape in Ancient Southern Anuradhapura

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ABSTRACT

Archaeological researches in Anuradhapura reveal that the development of cultural landscape in Anuradhapura can be dated to some thousands years back. The material culture unearthed by excavations done in ancient inner city aid to build the sequence of cultural phasing from pre historic period to middle historic period. This sequence doesn't reveal the outer city in the same sequence yet, and present paper is an attempt to discuss the cultural landscape in Southern Anuradhapura.

After preliminary field work, *Vessagiriya* in Southern part of the ancient Anuradhapura city was selected as the research area. Few excavations were done in the site to gather the data. Excavations revealed three cultural layers. Lowest reddish brown earth layer contains some chert and clear quartz microlithic implements and ca. 6000 flakes which represent the first cultural phase and landscape with the habitation sites.

The second brownish grey layer contains Black and Red Ware shreds, and rim shreds. These remains belonging to the seventh century B.C. provided a new dimension to the beginning of proto historic settlements as the second cultural phase. The Early Brahmic inscriptions at the site represent the third cultural phase with Buddhist monks' habitation at the site and vicinity. These three phases can use to define the cultural landscape in ancient Southern Anuradhapura.

Keywords: Protohistory, Black and red ware, Stone implements