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ABSTRACTS

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An Examination on the Script Communication in the Proto and Early Historic Period of Sri Lanka

W.M.T. Weerasekera¹ D.T. Mendis²

In the communication sector, script is a powerful media. According to the Sinhala dictionary, it has been explained as "Journalism is the art of writing." Even if there is no real decision taken about the origin of journalism, many believe that it evolved systematically from the Proto-historic period and that journalism has been identified as it was being transferred into a well organized language media in the early historic period. The Proto-historic period of Sri Lanka is identified as a formal period of history of the country. The settlements and grave yards belonging to this period are spread throughout Sri Lanka and from the research relating to those places, many non Brahmi symbols, written on blackish red clay and red clay pots have been identified.

From the common symbols, found from Anuradhapura, Tissamaharamaya, Akurugoda, Ridiyagama, Ibbankatuwa, Pinwewa, Galsohonakantta, Pomparippu and Kantarodaya it is clear that they were used for some communication. This has been verified by the Brahmi letters, written on the clay pots that were found from the inner city of Anuradhapura, dated to the period between 531-428 B.C.

Before Brahmi letters were developed as a communication media, symbols without formal letters have been discovered. It is clear from the symbols that could be seen on the blackish red clay pots and the grave stone lids, found in the above mentioned Proto-historic settlements and grave yards. This Brahmi "journalism" comes to light greatly, after the 3rd century B.C. Among the caves that were offered to the Buddhist monks, and below the drip-ledges of these caves, there are non-Brahmi symbols that are seen at the end of the inscriptions.

It can be assumed that, these symbols were used to indicate the state, profession and heredity of the donor. It is suggested that in the Proto and Early historic period, script communication had been started from the symbols and then transformed to letters to become a powerful communication media.

Keywords: Proto and Early historic period, Non-Brahmi symbols, Communication, inscriptions

1 Rajarata University of Sri Lanka
Email: weerasekaratissa@yahoo.com

2 Central Cultural Fund
Email: thus.mendis@gmail.com