

An Exploration into the Settlement of *Kala Oya* Valley Reveals Archaeological and Historical Sources

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Introduction

Kala Oya Valley is one of the major river valleys in the North Western and North Central dry zone of Sri Lanka. When we look at the settlement distribution of this valley, it is obvious that the Kala Oya valley region is not seeing the spread of settlements. Several factors may have contributed to the intensification of settlement in the valley. There is evidence that people resorted to these areas in search of resources for agricultural based economic activities. Their ability to find the resources and migrate to the interior areas of the dry zone waterways made it possible for them to easily access the resources and facilities they need from the Kala Oya valley. The natural landscape of the Kala Oya valley region has also been affected by this. The spread of settlements is associated with the associated water traffic pattern. The ancient irrigation industry is a major factor in the expansion of settlements in the region. Therefore, settlements were established in the early stages of settlement on the basis of natural water sources and terraces. The ancient inscriptions found in this valley are a very important source of history for this valley region. Without a thorough study of these inscriptions it is difficult to make history on the settlement of this valley. Therefore it is compulsory to pay special attention to the inscriptions of this region.

Objective

This research is expected to investigate the historical and archaeological evidence of ancient settlement expansion. It aims to uncover information on various sectors such as translation, technological development, resource utilization, and the movement of the religious establishment in the contemporary social, political and social sphere of the valley.

Methodology

The researcher, mainly used secondary data which has been collected through the literally sources and the experiences which have given trough the

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various experiments of Archaeology.

Review

The Aryans chose the Dry Zone as the most suitable ground for establishing their original settlements in Sri Lanka. The main factor was the availability of suitable physical and natural resources in the area. The specialty of the area is the lack of rain. As a result, the rivers and streams flowing through these areas for much of the year remain dry. As a result, it is very important for the people living in the dry zone to collect water for agriculture and other activities.

Kala Oya which is known as “Gona Nadee” in the historical sources can be seen as an important water source for the settlement of Sri Lanka since the early Anuradhapura Period. A number of megalithic cemeteries providing important information on archaeological evidence of Sri Lanka's proto-historic settlements have been found in the valley of Kala Oya, thus confirming the native settlements of the pre-Anuradhapura period. Megalithic cemeteries located at Pomparippu, Karambankulam, Rajanganaya, Ibbankattuwa, Anaktawa, Machchagama Yatigalpotta and Kelegama provide important information in this regard.

Historical settlement of the valley can be traced from the inscriptions on the Brahmi inscriptions found in several places from the lower Kala Oya valley to the upper Kala Oya valley. Galge, Weerangoda, Thumbullegala, Gallena Vihara, Radagama, Giribawa, Kuragahawewa, Rajanganaya, Pandipachchewa, Sasseruwa, Awukana, Perumamadukanda, Mahaelagamuwa, Murungahihikanda, Dambulla, Kandalama, Karagaswewa, Wanasinghe Viharaya, Budugehinna, Yangala, Embulambe, Ethabandiyawa example. In addition, inscriptions have been found from Thimbirivewa, Andaragollegala, Weragala, Halmillagala, Kiralagala, Nabadagala, Malasneagala, Aluthgal Vihara, Bilibewa, Eppawala, Aluthwewa, Thammannagala, Negama and Garnadigala. These inscriptions identify a number of local names in the valley.

Various designations found in the earlier Brahmi inscriptions identifying the valley of Kala Oya indicate an organized social pattern in the valley. It has the potential to reveal people who have been involved in various professions, from the royal affiliations revealed in the temples and the Gallena Vihara caves.

The lack of water in the area since ancient times was one of the main reasons for the construction of this river valley. Due to the incessant rains and the depth of the groundwater level, the water in the region was limited to agriculture and other purposes. Most of the paddy fields in the area have been supplied with rainwater for small tanks in the villages. Most fields may not be cultivated during the dry season. A number of irrigation works based on Kala Oya and the construction of the valley can be found in the inscriptions and inscriptions. Recognizing the

importance of the Kala Oya, the ancient rulers were interested in the construction of the associated irrigation systems. King Mahasen and King Dhatusena were the first rulers to notice this. Recognizing the need for a well-managed irrigation system, King Parakramabahu 1st created a well-developed irrigation system in the Kala Oya valley to meet the challenge of the uneven terrain.

Conclusion

In the case of the irrigation works in the Kala Oya valley, it is clear that the inscriptions found in the earlier Brahmi inscriptions clearly indicate that the first minor settlements in the valley were built. The natural location of the land has been chosen for that purpose. But as the capacity of the settlements gradually expanded, small-scale irrigation works were not sufficient, and it is probable that the most suitable of them were small tanks. Accordingly, irrigation patterns associated with small tanks and large tanks have developed in the Kala Oya valley. These factors are clear evidence of the steady and organized human settlement in the valley.

Keywords: Kala oya, Dry Zone, Brahmi Inscriptions, Irrigation, Archaeology

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