

Transport systems in the ancient society revealed through the Sri Lankan paintings

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Abstract

It is possible to understand how old society was, by studying paintings. The main purpose of this phenomenon is to study the transport methods used to travel in ancient society. Prehistoric paintings and paintings found in old Vihara Aramas are used for this purpose. Paintings can be used for the study of such places such as Kathaluwa, Thelwatte, Paramakanda, Hindagala, Dambawa, Dowa, Kottimulla, Walalgoda, Sooriyagoda, Hanguranketha, Dambulla and Kelaniya. From the prehistoric times man has used various means for his transportation. Often, ordinary people have traveled on foot and they had to face various hardships. Evidence of paintings shows depicts how prehistoric man had begun to travel on animals. In the later years, elite society had begun to travel on horses and elephants. In addition, people like kings, ministers, and elites had used "palanquins" to travel. Evidence also suggest that horse carriages and cattle were also used for transportation. Prehistoric paintings mark the beginning of transportation in Srilanka, and the paintings in the ancient Vihara Aramas depict the society at that time. The artist when portraying some of the scenes of Jathaka stories and Lord Buddha also revealed the transport systems used in the society at that time. Thus, from the beginning, ordinary people had used uncomfortable travel methods and elites had used a very comfortable transport system.

Key Word: *Prehistoric era, Vihara Arama, Paintings, Ancient society, Transport System*

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