

ICSS/13/OP/309

## The role of the traders in monetary transactions in ancient Sri Lanka

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Hereby, attention is focused on the study of the monetary transactions in the *Anurādhapura* period which runs from the 6<sup>th</sup> B.C. to 1017 A.C. In order to understand the nature of the internal trade of the *Anuradhapura* period, the inscriptions are found from the places such as *Vilbavehera*, *Bambaragastalawa*, *Peripuliyinkulama*, *Situlpawwa*.

The best inscription that can be taken into consideration during the study of the nature of the internal trade of Sri Lanka is the *Badulla* pillar inscription, which belongs to the reign of king *III Udaya* or *IV Udaya*. This particular pillar inscription was found by, *Mr Jone Belli*, a deputy British agent in the year of 1857, within close proximity to the reservoir of *Sorabora*, which was around three miles from the East of the *Mihiyangana Dageba*. It has been inscribed that the trade had been practiced in a town by the name of "*Hopitigamuwa*". The prologue of the inscription states that the traders and the dwellers had submitted a petition on the malpractices done, to the king *Udaya*, during an official visit to the *Mahiyangana Dageba*. With reference to the *Badulla pillar inscription*, it is said, that those days the scales had been used in order to measure the grain. According to the *Badulla inscription*, it is understood that the bulls had been used for the transportation of goods. According to the *Moragoda inscription*, both buffalos and the bulls had been used.

It is believed that in the ancient Sri Lanka, there existed a system which is similar to that of the present day banking system in order to deposit money and grain, and this particular financial institution was introduced as "*Niyamatana*". The inscriptions of *Thonigala* and *Labuatabedigala* clearly provide with further information.

**Key words:** *Monetary system, Anuradhapura period, Internal trade, Inscriptions*