

Inscriptional evidence discovered from the Upper Malwatu Oya region

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Archaeological and chronicle evidence indicates that the Malwatu Oya region was inhabited from the 6th c. BC onward. The aim of this research paper is to discuss the inscriptions discovered from surveys in this area.

The inscriptions which are found in cave shelters, pillars, rock faces etc indicate that they belong to the time period 3 BC to 1 AD. In addition post-Brahmi inscriptions belonging to 8- 10 AD have also been discovered. The 227 inscriptions discovered from this area so far are documented in *Inscriptions of Ceylon, Epigraphia Zeylanica* volumes.

These inscriptions reveal that the various social stratifications of Anuradhapura society as well as donatives scripts proclaiming the gift of land, waterways etc to the Buddhist order. The inscriptions also indicate the extent of settlements. These inscriptions also reveal the administrative state of the hinterland area.

Key words: Inscriptions, Social strata, Anuradhapura hinterland

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