



## Archaeological Heritage and Traditional Decorations Depicted on Paper-Currency-Notes in Sri Lanka (From 1948 To 2018)

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### Abstract

The currency note is a piece of paper uses for officially maintain a flow of funds according to the financial principles of a country. Every state in the world prints currency notes and they include artistic designs as symbols of richness and power of the country. This article focuses on the currency notes in Sri Lanka while assessing archaeological heritage and traditional decorations depicted on them. This paper further aims to highlight the Sri Lankan archaeological heritage and traditional decorations depicted in connection with the categories of currency notes established by the Central Bank of Sri Lanka, and to describe reasons for depicting them on currency notes. The Central Bank of Sri Lanka issued eleven series of currency notes as of 2018 under different themes to illustrate Sri Lankan archaeological heritage. This study is based on a field survey that facilitated to obtain data and information. The currency notes available at the museum in the Central Bank of Sri Lanka were inspected, and each kind of currency notes printed from 1948 to the end of 2018 were studied. Published literature were critically reviewed. In addition, discussions with experts from the Central Bank and Bank Museum in Sri Lanka were undertaken. The use of features related to archaeological heritage and the use of traditional decorations on the notes can be considered as a prominent theme of Sri Lankan paper-currency-notes. Main reasons behind this choice coincide with the idea of representing the native heritage-identity, but not just as a medium of value exchange.

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## Original Article

### INTRODUCTION

Growing social complexity with the sedentism, trade, population growth and urbanism, raised the need for an exchange system. Transactions within an established economic system, that started with the barter system later developed the unit of value called money. Money is an exchange unit used by every society for official communication and publicity, for the worth of goods or services provided. Currency, the unit of money, are circulated in the world in exchange or other modes, is twofold: coins and paper notes. From the earliest times, the unit of value called money became an integral part of society.

According to the Oxford Dictionary (1989, p. 165), a paper currency is a negotiable document used instead of money escape banknotes, passing unquestioned formed hand to hand, more strictly, a paper currency, which by the law of the country represents money and is a legal tender. The free dictionary (Internet) has interpreted a paper currency issued by a government or central bank consisting of the printed paper that can circulate as a substitute for specie. The Lexico Oxford English and Spanish Dictionary explain the paper currency is money in the form of banknotes (Internet). Sri Sumangala Dictionary (Sabdakosaya, A Sinhalese- Sinhalese Dictionary, 1963, p. 782) depicts the currency note as a piece of paper used for money. Currency notes are paper money used officially to maintain the

flow of funds according to the financial principles of a country and it circulates for dealings of goods and services.

In contrast to coins made of metal, there is no inherent value of paper notes. But a larger amount of money can be represented by a piece of paper. Manufacturing paper was first introduced during the period of the genealogy of the Han Dynasty (206BC-220AD) (Somadeva, 2016, p. 177). Traders used bills for dealings of money during the first half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century in China (Hewiitt, 1998, p. 91) and during the period between 10 A.D. and 13 A.D. centuries, a paper money note was issued under the dynasty of Song (Somadeva, 2016, p. 178). Along with the confirmation of the use of paper money in China and the beginning of issuing currency notes by Mongolia in 1260 A.D., systems of currency notes began to spread throughout the world (Hewiitt, 1998, p. 91). China designed paper money first and used it efficiently (Hewiitt, 1998, p. 92). Later, by the middle of the twentieth century, printing currency notes became the norm around the world and they included artistic designs as symbols of elite and power, and representing the values of the issuing authority.

Until 1951, British currency notes were used in Sri Lanka. Coins issued by them were circulated until 1963. The Central Bank of Sri Lanka began to issue their currency notes in Sri Lanka from 1951 and these currency notes



## Original Article

were used up to 2018 under notes series 11. When issuing currency notes as series, they have used different themes for each note series. According to those themes, illustrations were imbibed on the Obverse (front) and Reverse (back) of the currency notes. Among them, some illustrations bearing Sri Lankan archaeological heritage were given considerable attention.

Heritage can be divided into two categories: natural heritage, and cultural heritage. Tradition, language, architectural constructions can be identified as a part of heritage. The archaeological heritage of the island, that speaks of the past prosperous economic endeavors, is considered with wonder and as a source of national pride of the inhabitants of the country. The inclusion of the aforesaid heritage in currency notes thus can be deemed as an important aspect of the paper currency.

It is common for the majority of the people of a country not to recognize the cultural heritage attached and represented by the currency notes in their country. People would often recognize the colour and the denoted worth at a glance but hardly would they stop and examine the illustrations. However, it is important to identify the represented identity of archaeological heritage from paper money, in addition to the value in it.

Mainly this study focuses on Sri Lankan cultural and archaeological

heritage depicted in currency notes and to uncover the reasons for depicting them on currency notes.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Only a limited number of research are available on paper currency notes of Sri Lanka. However, the pictures depicted on paper currency in Sri Lanka, apart from a cursory recognition, has not been paid much attention to.

In the study of paper money and coins, one of the clear qualities recognized is that they are powerful and unsuspected vehicles for propaganda and advertisement for the authority, and that, it is one of the easiest ways to send such messages to the masses (Hewitt, 1998). The subtleness of sending powerful messages to the people via such an inconspicuous but a glaring way is especially recognized as a part of the package of the use of paper money (Hewitt, 1998). Then, the use of a particular type of pictures specifically and repeatedly, is something noteworthy, in the sense that the paper money is used to convey a message.

Another of the uses of paper money which is connected to being a subtle and a powerful messenger is that it is a favourite medium to project messages of national identity (Hewitt, 1998; Hewitt & Unwin, 2001). Galloy (2007) points out how the picture depictions in Mexican and Central American states, can be understood as a message of nationalism, national identity and



## Original Article

constructing that identity. It stands to mean that, not only the paper money presents what is accepted as an identity, but it can slowly, intricately, create and construct an identity a state wants to project. The colonial pasts, disentangling with colonial ties, class divisions and ethnic divisions are aspects that pictures of paper money have incorporated to send continuous and subtle messages to the masses (Galloy, 2007, P. 30-32). Lauer (2008) notes that the nation-state and the money are intricately connected to nation-building. The United States paper money has a role as a medium of mass communication. In devising the strategies to make the obvious worthiness of paper money in comparison to the metal coins, the legitimization of the paper money is attained through rationalization and mystification. The first is achieved by incorporating the documentary conventions associated with the formal politico-legal authority of the state, and the second through the use of iconography that is connected to the origins, history and images of the respected forefathers of the nation and these two types of depictions in paper money together have achieved the *national identity* (Lauer, 2008: 111). Gilbert and Helliener (1999) tracing the historical emergence of national currencies conclude how enmeshed the national state, its goals and national currencies are.

Studies of the connection between the state and the currency and the

messages the paper money can carry show its affinity to propose and consolidate the national identity the state wishes. The historical evolutions and the development and shifts of the nation-states over the world have experienced this connection. In Sri Lanka, the paper money came to exist with the British Administration. The symbols in the paper money were first introduced by them. Studies show that the depictions of natural beauty and promise of development and past glories did mark a shift very early in the paper money of Ceylon, starting well before the Independence in 1948. The shift from using only letters and numbers and the pictures of foreign places (Hewitt, 1998: 262) to the pictures of the heritage of the past marked the shift in the nation-state and the changing society. The use of heritage symbols from this first moment then stayed in Sri Lankan paper notes. Apart from a few variations, the archaeological heritage and traditional decorations have continued to be presented in paper notes of the island. However, this phenomenon has not been addressed to understand the reasons behind this use of archaeological heritage specifically.

Silva (2000) in describing the paper notes and pictures used in Sri Lanka, remarks that the coins and currency reflect the people and the independence of the country, but reasons behind the noted inclination to use the items are not made clear in his



## Original Article

study. One of the themes of the note series is recognized as 'signify the ancient heritage of Sri Lanka' (Central bank, 2013: 121), but the repeated and specific use of archaeological heritage and traditional decorations in note series has not been studied.

Hewitt (1998) in speaking of the pictures in paper money in general, states that it is about identity and implies that as a colony seeking independence, the start of Sri Lankan natural and archaeological heritage taking place in the paper notes was of such change and such seeking. However, the continuous use of the archaeological heritage and traditional decorations even long after the independence is not given sufficient attention.

It leads to some questions such as 'has the country decided to show the archaeological heritage and traditional decorations', and 'has this been done unconsciously or deliberately'. And if it is a message to the masses on identity, why archaeological heritage and traditional decorations were chosen specifically? Peskov (2014), in his analysis of paper currency use of World Heritage Sites, draws attention to the importance of archaeological heritage, specifically WHO sites, to a state. The objectives of tourist attraction, increasing the awareness of these sites among the people, and the consideration of these places as symbols of national identity are the reasons for depicting these sites in banknotes. Yet, it still leads to the

question of why they depict other archaeological heritage and traditional decorations in the paper notes.

The use of pictures of archaeological heritage and traditional decorations in paper currency has become the dominant feature of the Note series of Sri Lanka. It seems to be a pattern rather than a coincidence. It thus gives rise to some question such as 'why archaeological heritage and traditional decorations are depicted rather than prominent political figures of past or more on recent development projects?', and secondly, why has it become a pattern?

### AIMS AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

This study aims to assess the Sri Lankan archaeological heritage and traditional decorations depicted on the categories of currency notes issued after the establishment of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka and to uncover the reasons to depict them on currency notes. The study is based on a field survey. The currency notes available at the museum in the Central Bank of Sri Lanka were inspected and each kind of currency notes printed from 1948 to the end of 2018 was included in this. The journal articles, the literature published by the Central Bank were referred to. The conclusion was reached by analyzing data identified through the above methods.



## RESULTS AND FINDINGS

### History of the Use of Currency Notes in Sri Lanka

Currency notes were printed and circulated during the period when Sri Lanka was under colonial rule, first, during the reign of the Dutch. Until the last half of the reign of the Dutch, they made use of coins. But due to the increase of defence expenses of the Dutch by this time, the treasury was empty and currency notes were issued. Thus, the first currency note of Sri Lanka was issued by the Dutch governor Vander Graaf in 1785 named 'Rix Dollar' note with a nominal value (Hewitt, 1998, p. 255). Currency notes with values of 50, 100, 500 and 1000 Rix Dollar for the first series of Sri Lanka were issued and also currency notes with values of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 10 Rix Dollar were issued for various requirements (Silva, 2000, p. 93). A small diction in Dutch, Sinhala, and Tamil languages were inserted on these currency notes.

At the beginning of the British (1796 to 1844) rule, money was issued by the treasury (Satahana, 2016, p. 08). But the authority of issuing money was assigned to private banks from 1845 – 1884 (Satahana, 2016, p. 08). The independent banking system was implemented in many countries by that time. In the years to come, due to its infirmity, a monopoly of issuing money was given to the Bank of England by the Bank Act in 1844. But the authority of issuing money of colonies was entrusted only to

authorize private banks. That was under the Bank Authorizing Ordinance in 1844. Among the authorized banks, the Oriental Bank possessed the authority of issuing money first in Sri Lanka. Due to weaknesses in bank administration as well as drop-in revenue, this bank collapsed. Accordingly, to avoid the drop of economy, the Board of Commissioners of Currency was established under the Paper Currency Ordinance No.32 of 1884 (Silva, 2000, p. 125). Decisions regarding issuing money in this system were taken by the treasurer, colonial secretary, auditor general. Under this system currency notes in the denomination of 1, 2, 5, 10, 50, 100, 500, 1000 and 10,000 rupees were issued and the currency notes of 10,000 rupees were used only for dealings done among banks (Ibid). The main reason why currency notes emerged in Sri Lanka was due to the dearth of issuing coins.

The Central Bank which is the central institute by which currency policies in Sri Lanka are put into practice was established based on the Monetary Law Act No. 58 of 1949 (Silva, 2000, p. 137). The Central Bank started its work on 28<sup>th</sup> August 1950 and the Board of Commissioners of Currency, which existed till then was abolished (Ibid). Under section 49 of the Currency Law Act, the authority of issuing money in Sri Lanka has been entrusted to the Central Bank. Since then Lanka Rupee became the standard currency unit. But the Sri Lankan Rupee and cent system started in 1872.



## Original Article

### Themes of the Series of Currency Notes in Sri Lanka

each note series and different illustrations were used.

Different themes were employed for

Table 1: Themes on currency notes in different series

(Source: Field Survey - 2018)

Note Series	Year	Theme	Denomination (LKR)
1	1951	King George VI	1, 10
2	1952	Queen Elizabeth II	1, 2, 5, 10, 50, 100
3	1956	Armorial Ensign of Ceylon	1, 2, 5, 10, 50, 100
4	1962	S W R D Bandaranaike Portrait	2, 5, 10, 50, 50, 100, 100
5	1965	King Parakramabahu the Great	2, 5, 10, 50, 100
6	1972	Armorial Ensign of Sri Lanka	50, 100
7	1979	The biodiversity of Sri Lanka (Fauna and Flora)	2, 5, 10, 20, 50, 100
8	1981	Historical and archaeological places	5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 500, 1000
9	1987	Historical and Development	500, 1000
10	1991	Sri Lankan heritage	10, 20, 50, 100, 500, 1000
	2006		2000
11	2011	Development, prosperity, and Sri Lankan dancers	20, 50, 100, 500, 1000, 5000
Commemorative notes	1998	50 <sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary of Sri Lanka	200
	2009	Ushering of peace and prosperity in Sri Lanka	1000
	2013	Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Sri Lanka	500

When considering the themes of the above series of the currency notes, it is clear that different themes were used for each currency note issued in each period. It is also clear that themes have incorporated, by way of illustrations, the special occasions which took place in those periods in the Lankan society.

Special happenings which took place in different periods of history or natural environmental features

endemic to Sri Lanka were used as depictions when printing currency notes. But in addition to the illustrations depicted above, the illustrations depicting ancient heritage, historical and archaeological places, and traditional decorations are the pictures seen mostly in currency notes. Architectural monuments, carvings, paintings, sculptures associated with archaeological places such as Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Sigiriya,



## Original Article

and Yapahuwa are depicted on currency notes, continuously.

### Currency Notes Depicting Archaeological Heritage and Traditional Decorations in Sri Lanka

Of the above series of printed currency notes, the archaeological heritage of Sri

Lanka and traditional decorations depicted on the obverse and reverse of series of currency notes and the categories of currency notes can be separated as follows.

Table 2: Archaeological heritage and traditional decorations of Sri Lanka depicted on the obverse and the reverse of currency notes (1951-2013)

(Source: Field Survey - 2018)

Note Series	Denomination (LKR)	Obverse	Reverse
1	1	Other	The entrance of the ancient buildings
	10	Swan Splice ( <i>Hansa Puttuwa</i> )	Guard Stone
2	1	Other	The entrance of the ancient buildings
	2	Other	<i>Vatadage</i> in Medirigiriya
	5	Other	King Parakramabahu the Great
	10	Swan Splice	Guard Stone
	50	Other	Moonstone
	100	Row of Swans	Sigiriya Frescoes
3	1	Other	The entrance of the ancient buildings
	2	Other	<i>Vatadage</i> in Medirigiriya
	5	Other	King Parakramabahu the Great
	10	Swan Splice	Guard Stone
	50	Other	Moonstone
	100	Row of Swans	Sigiriya Frescoes
4	2	Other	<i>Vatadage</i> in Medirigiriya
	5	Other	King Parakramabahu the Great
	10	Other	Guard stone
	100	Dragon	<i>Vatadage</i> in Polonnaruwa
5	2	King Parakramabahu the Great	<i>Vatadage</i> in Medirigiriya
	5	King Parakramabahu the Great	King Nissankamalla's Lion Throne
	10	King Parakramabahu the Great	Guard Stone
	50	King Parakramabahu the Great	Moonstone
	100	King Parakramabahu the	Sigiriya Frescoes



## Original Article

		Great & Row of Swans	
6	100	Dragon	<i>Vatadage</i> in Polonnaruwa
8	5	<i>Vatadage</i> in Polonnaruwa	Guard Stone
	10	Octagon ( <i>Paththirippuwa</i> )	Kelaniya <i>Stupa</i>
		in Temple of Tooth Relic	
	20	Moonstone & Balustrade	Thuparama <i>Stupa</i>
	50	Kelaniya Temple	Lankathilaka <i>Vihara</i> in Polonnaruwa
	100	Balustrade with Lion	Other
	500	The Elephant in Temple of Tooth Relic	Abhayagiri <i>Stupa</i>
	1000	Pineapple Flower ( <i>Annasi Mala</i> )	Other
9	500	The Elephant in Temple of Tooth Relic	Abhayagiri <i>Stupa</i>
	1000	Pineapple Flower	Other
10	10	Lion Sculpture in Yapahuwa & Moonstone	Other
	20	Stylized floral motif ( <i>Liyawela</i> )	Other
	50	Guard stone & Moonstone	Thuparama <i>Stupa</i> , Jetawana <i>Stupa</i> , the handle of sword & Tray with carvings
	100	Ornamental containers & Moonstone	Other
	500	Moonstone & <i>Sri Maha Bodhi</i>	Ruwanweli <i>Stupa</i>
	1000	Swan Splice, Lion & Moonstone	Octagon ( <i>Paththirippuwa</i> ) in Temple of Tooth Relic
	2000	Sigiriya & <i>Sesath</i>	Sigiriya Frescoes
11	20	Other	Guard Stone with Pot of plenty ( <i>Punkalasa</i> ) & Stylized floral motif
	50	Nine Arch Bridge in Demodara	Guard Stone with pot of plenty & Stylized floral motif
	100	Other	Guard Stone with a <i>Naga</i> & Double floral design ( <i>Dvithva Liyawela</i> )
	500	Lankathilaka <i>Vihara</i> in Kandy	Guard Stone with <i>Padma</i> & Double floral design
	1000	Other	Guard Stone with Dwarf ( <i>Yaksha</i> ) & Double floral design
	5000	Other	Guard Stone & Floral design ( <i>Kalpavrksha Liyavela</i> )
Comm	200	Other	Temple of Tooth Relic



## Original Article

emo- rative notes	500  1000	Lankathilaka Kandy Full Vase	<i>Vihara</i> in Padma Guardstone & Double floral design Guard stone with Dwarf, Guardian Deity & Double floral design
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In the first series of currency notes issued by the Central Bank of Sri Lanka in 1951, even though the main theme of it was given to Britain, it shows the attempt made to mix the indigenous taste. On the front of the 10 Rupee currency note of the first series of currency notes, depicts the traditional carving design of swan splice small. The carvings of the staircase inscribed in a portico, moonstone and guard stone are depicted on one rupee currency notes and 10 rupee currency note illustrates a sculpture of a guard stone.

Even though all the currency notes printed in the second and third series depict archaeological heritage, traditional decorations such as the line of swans and swan splice are illustrated only on 10 rupees and 100 rupee currency notes. Archaeological heritage is depicted only on currency notes in denomination of 2, 5, 10, and 100 in the 4<sup>th</sup> series and a picture of a dragon is illustrated on 100 rupee currency notes. Illustrations of archaeological places, carvings and paintings emerge from in the 5<sup>th</sup> series issued, starting from a theme of the statue of the King Parakramabahu the Great. There, the row of swans is depicted on the 100 Rupee currency note. But *Vatadage* in Polonnaruwa and the picture of a dragon are illustrated

only on 100 Rupee currency note in the 6<sup>th</sup> series. The Biodiversity of Sri Lanka is the whole subject matter for the 7<sup>th</sup> series. Historical and archaeological places in the subject matter for the 8<sup>th</sup> series. The developmental projects of that period are illustrated only on 1000 rupees which was a newly introduced currency note under this series illustrating archaeological heritage and the traditional decorations of pineapple flower are illustrated on that currency note.

As only 500 Rupee and 1000 Rupee notes were issued under 9<sup>th</sup> series, of them, the main painting on the 500 Rupee currency note was *Abhayagiri Stupa* which was an archaeological place. Pineapple flower is depicted on 1000 Rupee currency notes. Currency notes of 10<sup>th</sup> series have several subject matters dedicated to ancient heritage and traditional decorations. How archaeological heritage is well painted on currency notes of denomination of 10, 50, 100, 1000 and 2000 can be identified. Swan splice and stylized floral motif design have been painted only on 20 rupees and 1000 rupee currency notes. The 11<sup>th</sup> series having the subject matter of prosperity and development was issued in 2011. Obverse and reverse of those currency notes were painted to suit that theme and had given a special place for the



## Original Article

archaeological heritage and traditional decorations in Sri Lanka. Three commemorative currency notes in denomination of 200, 500 and 1000 were printed in 1998, 2009 and 2013 with paintings depicting the archaeological heritage and traditional decorations.

In this study, main attention was paid to historical and archaeological sites and traditional decorations considered as ancient heritages in each series. How archaeological heritage and traditional decorations are used on the obverse and reverse of currency notes from 10 Rupees to 2000 Rupees in different series issued was focused.

## DISCUSSION

### Archaeological Heritage and Traditional Decorations Depicted in Currency Notes

Archaeological heritage, to depict the pride of Sri Lanka has been illustrated on different series of currency notes. It can be mainly categorized under two main points as archaeological heritage and traditional decorations. It can again be categorized as depictions of the archaeological heritage of religious and secular architectural monuments, paintings, carvings, sculptures, archaeological sites, and antiquities.

Archaeological heritage and types of traditional decorations depicted on a series of currency notes can be tabled as follows.

Table 3: Archaeological heritage and traditional decorations depicted on currency notes (1951-2013)

(Source: Field Survey - 2018)

Archaeological Heritage	Note Series	Denomination (LKR)
<b>Architectural Monuments (Non-secular)</b>		
<b>Stupa</b>		
Thuparama <i>Stupa</i>	08	20
	10	50
Abhayagiri <i>Stupa</i>	08	500
	09	500
Jetawana <i>Stupa</i>	10	50
Ruwanweli <i>Stupa</i>	10	500
Kelaniya <i>Stupa</i>	08	10
<b>Chethiyaghara</b>		
Vatadage in Polonnaruwa	04	100
	06	100
	08	05
Vatadage in Medirigiriya	02	02
	03	02
	04	02
	05	02
<b>Image House</b>		
Lankathilaka <i>Vihara</i> in Polonnaruwa	08	50



## Original Article

Lankathilaka <i>Vihara</i> in	11	500
Kandy	Commemorative note	500
Kelaniya Temple	08	50
<b>Others</b>		
Octagon ( <i>Paththirippuwa</i> )	08	10
in Temple of Tooth Relic	10	1000
Octagon ( <i>Paththirippuwa</i> )	Commemorative note	200
in Temple of Tooth Relic	note	
<b>Architectural Monuments (Secular)</b>		
Nine Arch Bridge in	11	50
Demodara		
<b>Paintings</b>		
Sigiriya Frescoes	02	100
	03	100
	05	100
	10	2000
<b>Carvings &amp; Sculptures</b>		
The Entrance of the	01	01
Ancient Buildings	02	01
	03	01
Ratnaprasada Guard	01	10
Stone	02	10
	03	10
	04	10
	05	10
	08	05
	10	50
	11	5000
Guard Stone with a <i>Naga</i>	11	100
Guard Stone with the	11	500
<i>Padma</i>	Commemorative note	500
Guard stone with Dwarf	11	1000
( <i>Yaksha</i> ), Guardian Deity		
Guard Stone with a pot	11	20,50
of plenty ( <i>Punkalasa</i> )		
Moonstone	02	50
	03	50
	05	50
	08	20
	10	10,50,100,500,1000
Balustrade	08	20,100
King Parakramabahu the	02	05
Great	03	05



## Original Article

	04	05
	05	02,05,10,50,100
Lion ( <i>Simha</i> )	10	1000
King Nissankamalla's Lion Throne	05	05
The Elephant in Temple of Tooth Relic	08 09	500 500
Lion Sculpture in Yapahuwa	10	10
<b>Archaeological Places</b>		
<i>Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi</i>	10	500
Sigiriya	10	2000
<b>Antiquities</b>		
Handle of Sword	10	50
Tray with Carvings	10	50
<i>Sesath</i>	10	2000
Ornamental Containers	10	100
<b>Traditional Decorations</b>		
Stylized floral motif	10	20
	11	20,50
Double floral design	11	100,500,1000
	Commemorative note	500
Swan Splice	01	10
	02	10
	03	10
	10	1000
Dragon ( <i>Makara</i> )	04	100
	06	100
Floral design ( <i>Kalpavruksha Liyavela</i> )	11	5000
Pineapple flower ( <i>Annasi Mala</i> )	08 09	1000 1000
Row of Swans	02	100
	03	100
	05	100
Pot of plenty ( <i>Punkalasa</i> )	Commemorative note	1000

In traditional decorations, included on all series of currency notes, several decorative drawings were used. When considering the Table 3, it is clear how swan splice, a row of swans, stylized

floral motifs, double floral designs, and double floral (*kalpavruksha liyavela*), pineapple flower, a pot of plenty, dragon as well as the picture of the lion are depicted frequently. Of the



## Original Article

archaeological heritage, the inclination seems to be to depict stone architecture and arts such as the guard stone, moonstone, balustrade, *stupas*, *Vatadage*, and image houses that are depicted in the currency notes.

Architectural monuments depicted on currency notes can be categorized into two types as religious and non-religious. The *stupa* is the prime feature depicted on currency notes considered under religious monuments. The *stupa* is an architectural monument made to place relics. It is clear through carvings of the pandal of the Sanchi *Stupa* in India to represent the Lord Buddha. Thuparama *stupa* which belongs to King Devanampiyatissa's reign (307-267 BC) is considered as the first *stupa* constructed in Sri Lanka and Jethawanarama *Stupa* which belongs to King Mahasen's reign (277-304 AD) is considered as the highest brick structure of the ancient world. These are two constructions depicted on currency notes. Also, Abhayagiri *stupa* constructed in King Walagamba's reign (103, 89-76 BC) considered as one of the largest *stupas* in the world and Ruwanweliseya constructed in the King Dutugemunu's reign (161 - 137 BC) identified as the *Mahatupa* and also the Kelaniya Vihara *Stupa* can be seen among currency notes.

The Temple of Tooth and Octagon (*Paththirippuwa*) is a place with a religious value under architectural monuments. The Kandyan period building in which it is believed that

the tooth relic of the Lord Buddha is kept is a place venerated by Buddhists of the island and outside alike.

Architectural creations with archaeological value, built during Polonnaruwa, Kandy, Colonial and Colombo periods are included onto currency notes as well. Among them, Polonnaruwa *Vatadage* and Medirigiriya *Vatadage* which are the famous architectural monuments depicting during the Polonnaruwa period have been painted on currency notes.

Polonnaruwa *Vatadage* is a construction depicting the highest condition of Sinhala architecture. *Vatadage*, at Medirigiriya Vihara built by *Malayaraja* during the reign of the king of Agghabodhi IV (677-683 AD) is an attractive creation of Buddhist architecture (Senevirathna, 1966, p. 46). These are some the creative and ingenious feats of engineering and arts of the Island.

Image-house is a structure built to place Buddha statues. It has been developed up to the present condition having gradually evolved from the Anuradhapura period to the Kandyan period. The largest Image-house called Lankathilaka Vihara in Polonnaruwa identified as an image house in *Gedige* tradition during the reign of King Parakramabahu I (1153-1186 AD) has appeared on currency notes. Even today, it is clear to see the factors that the inner walls have been painted beautifully with paintings. Lankathilaka Image-house in Kandy is



## Original Article

another such ancient building that has been added into the currency notes to present the ancient grandeur of the island.

Kelaniya Vihara and Sri Maha Bodhi are two important places of Buddhist heritage and have been depicted on currency notes to mark the historical value.

Demodara Nine-Arc bridge, a part of secular construction under the architectural monument is depicted on currency notes which nod towards the bridge technology and transport in Sri Lanka in the colonial period.

*Sri Maha Bodhi* is a sacred tree that has been illustrated on currency notes. Today it is one of the most sacred places of the Buddhists in Sri Lanka and respected by Buddhists all over the world. Sigiriya built by King Kasyapa (473-491 AD) is a fortress-palace and royal park constructed in 600 feet high rising rock from the ground by making use of the rock and the surrounding environment. Use of this creation, that highlights the combined culmination of sustainable use of the physical environment, aesthetics, technology, and artistic skill, in one setting, is a clear indication to show national pride.

Well-known Apsara frescoes of Sigiriya get a dominant place in the paintings in the history of Sri Lanka. These world-famous fresco art of the divine nymphs zigzag paintings speculated as King Kasyapa's harems and female servants and also his

daughters are among the illustrations depicted in the currency notes.

Carvings and sculptures have been given prominence in categories of currency notes. Building doors and creation to such can be seen on various currency notes. Features of creations such as Moonstone, Guard stone, Balustrade, and Staircase separately and together with doors, have been painted on currency notes. As these features of creations are enhancing the aesthetic state in a combination of the engineering feats of the whole building technology, the depiction of them in currency notes reflects those aesthetic and technological achievements of the past.

Creating a beautiful staircase in relation to doors of every religious place was an accepted tradition from Anuradhapura to Kandyan period. The staircase consisted of moonstone, guard stone, and balustrade. The balustrade is the part build as the hand-rail on either side of the staircase. Later, it was built with a decoration of the design of a dragon. At the edge of either side of the balustrade, there are two pictures of doorkeepers (Guard stone). Staircases of places identified as *Mahasen* palace and *Biso* palace in Anuradhapura and the staircase of *Vatadage* at Polonnaruwa have been decorated with dwarf carvings. Guard stone has been used to make concepts about dignity, completeness, beauty, and security of religious and secular buildings (Wikramagama, 1998).



## Original Article

Evolution of the guard stone in the past is shown in the currency notes. One occasion can be shown where Pot of plenty (*Punkalasa*) placed at the door of festive occasions was added to the guard stone as an expansion of guard stone. Pot of plenty, placed at the door of festive occasions which symbolizes prosperity, completeness, and victory is considered up to the present days as a prosperous symbol of Sri Lankan culture. Even according to Buddhist Literature, as it is obvious that the pot of plenty placed at the door of festive occasions had possessed a permanent place traditionally, it has been illustrated on currency notes. And also dwarf (*Padma Nidhi*) has taken place in a pot of plenty. The dwarf, who is recognized as a wealth protector, may have been used as a guard of wealth. Among the guard stones, guard stone of *Rathnaprasada* at *Abhayagiri Vihara* at *Anuradhapura* is considered as the most artistic and highest in finish among the guard stones in Sri Lanka. Guard stone with the pictures of territory controller and *Nagaraja* guard stone can also be seen on many currency notes.

Moonstone is a creation which shows the creative skill of the stone carver of Sri Lanka and hence the best example to showcase the perfection of Sri Lankan consequently, they are depicted on currency notes. The moonstone that can be seen at *Biso* palace, *Anuradhapura* is considered as the best rendition of artistic talents and standard by artists. An illustration of

that moonstone can be seen on currency notes.

Some other symbolic and noteworthy sculptures of the past have been used in the currency notes. The male statue scripted from stone connected to a small rock boulder near *Parakrama\_Samudra* which depicts excellence in sculpture is generally considered as the statue of King *Parakramabahu the Great*. Why this statue has been included in currency notes can be argued connected to the interpretations of the statue itself. It is generally believed that it reflects greatness and spiritual power. This statue of King *Parakramabahu* is depicted in two different ways on currency notes i.e. as a whole statue and bust of the statue. In addition, the picture of the lion in the Council Chamber of the King *Nissankamalla* (1187-1196 AD) who reigned in the *Polonnaruwa* period and the lion sculpture at *Yapahuwa* can be seen among the currency notes.

Splice of swans, rows of swans, stylized floral motifs and double floral design as well as ancient trays, old sword handles and old ornamental containers can be seen depicted among some currency notes. Swan, considered as a mark of fortune can be seen everywhere in the art of Hindu and Sinhala decorations. Splice of swans created by two swans is also included in many carvings. The lion is a design used mostly in Sri Lankan arts. Lion is the primitive man of Sinhalese mythical stories and the



## Original Article

symbol (Coomaraswamy, 1979, p. 86). Floral design (fabulous tree) yielding everything desired in heaven is called *Kalpavrksha*. In Sinhalese ornament *vela* or *liya vela* has the technical meaning of vegetable ornament, consisting not of single flowers or leaves, but of a continuous stem with rhythmically disposed of floral or foliar elements (Coomaraswamy, 1979, p. 98).

56 currency notes have been issued under 11 series issued by the Central Bank from 1950 to 2018. In addition to that, 3 commemorative currency notes have been issued in 1998, 2009 and 2013. Accordingly, the number of currency notes issued so far is 59. Of them, 46% has been dedicated to painting archaeological heritage and traditional decorations in obverse and reverse on the currency notes. Space, where the archaeological heritage and traditional decorations have occupied the minor stage, is at 20%.

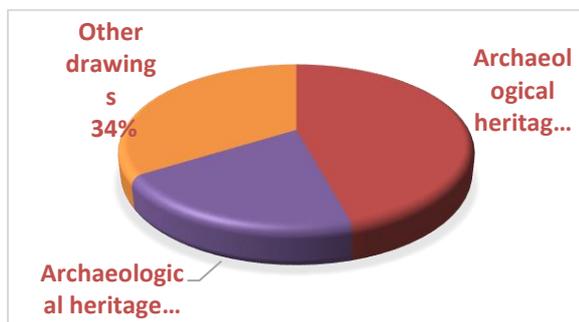


Figure 01: Archaeological heritage and traditional decorations depicted on 59 paper currency notes (Source: Field Survey - 2018)

The number of notes with archaeological heritage and traditional decorations marked is 39% completely

and 19% partly. Other drawings shown on obverse and reverse of currency notes are at 42%. This can be shown in statistical analysis as shown below.

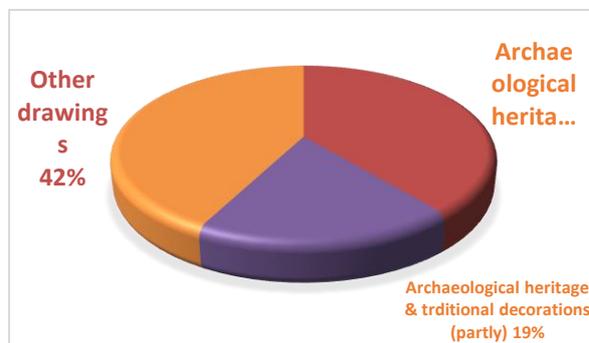


Figure 02: Archaeological heritage and traditional decorations depicted on 11 series of paper currency notes (Source: Field Survey - 2018)

There are archaeological heritage and traditional decorations marked on 12 types of currency notes from one rupee to 5000 rupees issued under 11 series of currency notes and commemorative currency notes. These are mostly seen on the type of 100 rupee currency notes. For a lesser degree, it has been most marked on currency notes in the denomination of 10, 50, 500 and 1000 Rupees. But archaeological heritage and traditional decoration and other illustrations are equally used on currency notes in the denomination of 1, 2, 20 and 200 Rupees. 2000 Rupee note is fully set apart for archaeological heritage and traditional decorations. Therefore, most of these notes have been allocated to represent the archaeological heritage as shown in the graph below.



**Original Article**

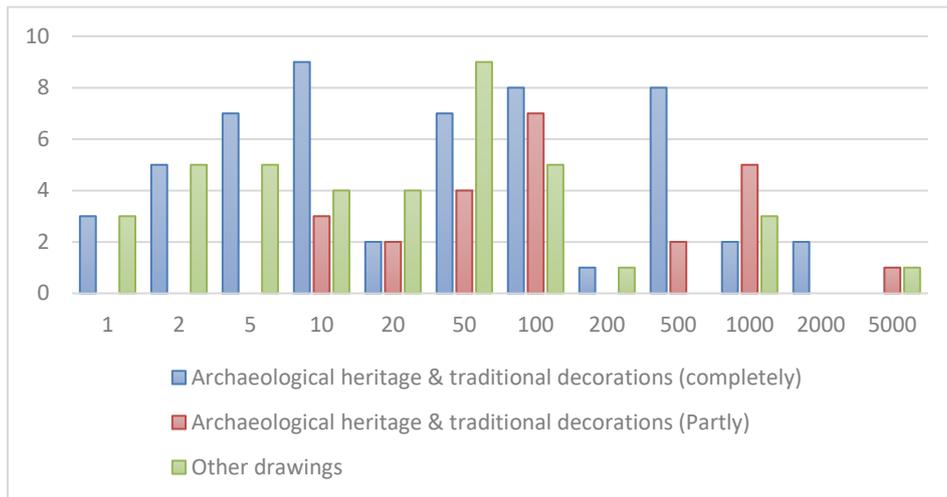


Figure 03: Total usage of Archaeological heritage and traditional decorations in paper currency notes

(Source: Field Survey - 2018)

And also, the classification of archaeological heritage and traditional decorations depicted on currency notes and commemorative currency notes issued can be shown in the graph below. Accordingly, 44% of carvings and sculptures, 35% and 19% religious architectural monuments and traditional decorations have been marked in back and front sides on currency notes. 3% of paintings and antiquities and 2% of archaeological

places have been shown. And also 1% of secular architectural monuments have been shown. Accordingly, the designs used for the Sri Lankan currency notes have given rise to places of archaeological value such as the guard stone, moonstone, balustrade included in gateway structures and religious architectural monuments such as *stupas*, *Chethiyaghara*, and image houses.

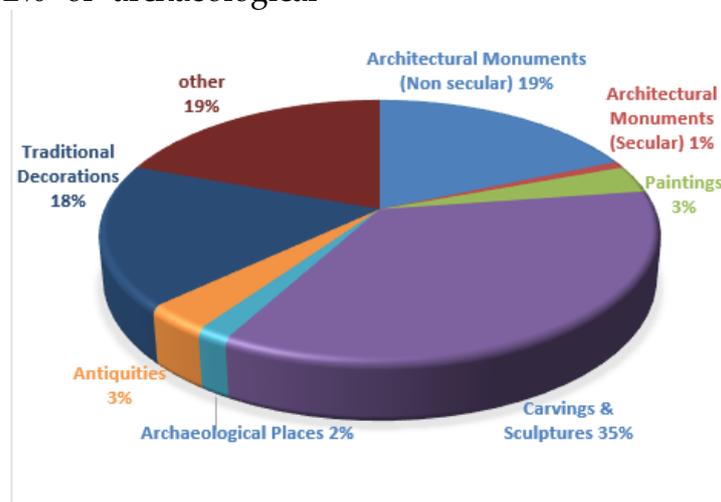


Figure 04: Classification of Archaeological heritage and traditional decorations depicted on paper currency notes

(Source: Field Survey - 2018)



## Original Article

### Reasons for Using Archaeological Heritage and Traditional Decorations on Currency Notes

It is necessary to identify the values of each feature, to inquire whether there are specific reasons to depict archaeological heritage and traditional decorations bearing those values in currency notes circulated mostly in Sri Lanka. As it was pointed out, a majority of the currency notes are decorated with pictures considered as archaeological heritage and traditional decorations of the island. And, the use of pictures depicting these two forms is the most popular and regular occurring in the currency notes. There are several reasons we understood as to why these forms are presented in currency notes.

The money, as mentioned, is an easy method of projecting a message to the masses. The representations depicted in paper currency are pictures a majority of a population would see daily, even without consciously recognizing. It stands to mean that, these images become a common phenomenon that is connected to the people and their daily life. As evident in the above analysis, the number of representations of heritage and traditional items in paper money far exceeds any other sort of representations, and it is clear that, if there is any sort of intended message via paper currency, the underlying theme of that then could mostly be connected to a theme of heritage and traditional pieces.

A regular and an intended message of any national level, the state-controlled occurrence can be related to the identity a state wants to present to the international arena and to rally the people. The sense of belonging and pride produced by a cultural identity is the most prominent form of identity seeking that is common to most societies and more so for the post-colonial new States, and paper money is a huge stage to broadcast that message.

The idea of heritage is that it does not have to be an accurate portrayal of archaeological facts or historical research, it could be what the contemporary society needs to feel like their identity and consider worthy (Lowenthal 1986). Identity means, being different from some other thing, being distinct. The national currency is one great medium of mass communication for the state, had assumed this role to convey a message of national identity based on the past glories free of colonial rule and later troubling times for the island. Sri Lankan paper notes near the independence had started the trend of depicting the archaeological heritage (Hewitt 1998) and it clearly showed the change in the then political and national arena. This trend seems to have continued and after the independence, the need to assert the national identity through the past that was free of colonial rule. It is clear that the need for being distinct, and to have something inspiring and outstanding as the foundation of that distinction



## Original Article

seems to be the use of archaeological heritage and traditional decorations which are some of the unique markers recognized in the Sri Lankan society and culture. This need for asserting identity through the heritage has continued throughout the post-independence as well. Especially, in the recent decades, the insurgency in the North, and the aftermath of the wartime, seems to have called for a renewed and invigorated need for the national identity to be represented through the archaeological heritage, as currency notes of the last three decades and after 2009, have presented several features of archaeological heritage.

The features belonging to archaeological heritage and the traditional decorations in the paper money are amongst the most popular and prominent features the present society recognizes as the heritage. The *Stupas*, *Vatadages*, *Gaurdstones* *moonstones*, image houses, Sigiri frescoes, ancient reservoirs, depicted palaces and even the image of the statue considered as King Parakramabahu's are well known as vestiges of the independent, prosperous past of the island. Thus, these known symbols of heritage are often enough to inspire the feelings of pride and belonging and can be a ready theme for the national identity to the masses easily.

The national identity presented through the images in the notes is based on two factors; power and

prosperity. The images selected for the notes are the features of archaeological heritage and the traditional decorations that are perceived to have these two qualities. As pointed out in the discussion, the architectural creations are vestiges of some of the most powerful and richest periods of the island's history. The great brick stupas and stone-built image houses and palaces and planned landscape wonders of Sigiriya are some of the most notable and naturally standing out features when thinking of the power and prosperity of the past. The traditional decorations of a pot of plenty, swans, floral design and flower designs are all considered as marks of prosperity. The artefacts and structures, that belonged to ancient Sri Lankan culture, and their symbolism so clearly connected to the wealth, must have been put in the currency notes to illustrate the ancient culture and the prevailing beliefs of symbols of wealth.

While the main reason for depicting the archaeological heritage and the traditional decorations is national identity, there are other expected and inadvertent outcomes of it. The tourism industry is one of the main income sources of the island and these presentations draw the eye of any traveller to these sites. The other outcome is the protection and awareness of heritage sites. Even apart from the idea of national identity, the pictures nudge the populace, especially, the young, to be conscious of the archaeological heritage.



## Original Article

As this continued preference for archaeological heritage and traditional decorations as the face of national identity, whether this was done consciously or as an ingrained rule was another question we have tried to answer. The interviews and literature survey did not reveal any official decision denoting that archaeological heritage and national decorations should be the main theme of the national currency. It was rather an unspoken rule and something that was never given any thought to. It stands to mean that, while the decision to portray the archaeological heritage and the traditional decorations as the national identity, whether a conscious or an unconscious decision, the overlapping of national identity and the archaeological heritage and traditional decorations as one, has succeeded, as hardly anyone questions these depictions or think twice about it.

### CONCLUSION

Paper currency notes are quiet but powerful mediums of mass communication tools the state has at its disposal. Generally, presenting the national identity to the people is the expectation of depicting images in currency notes. In Sri Lanka, the same objective has been achieved through the paper currency. The obvious presence of the heritage and traditional items, which far exceeds any other type of picture in the paper notes, amidst the daily life of the

present time, can convey this message to the people. Heritage, in itself, is a medium that shows the outstanding dignity of the country. They build up a unique reflection of the country to the world. Another plus point of the inclusion of them in the currency notes is that it invariably makes people aware of the heritage which would lead to the better protection of the heritage. The depiction of Sri Lankan traditional heritage on currency notes thus is a creative and memorable way of recording the heritage, securing the public attraction of heritage nationally and internationally.

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