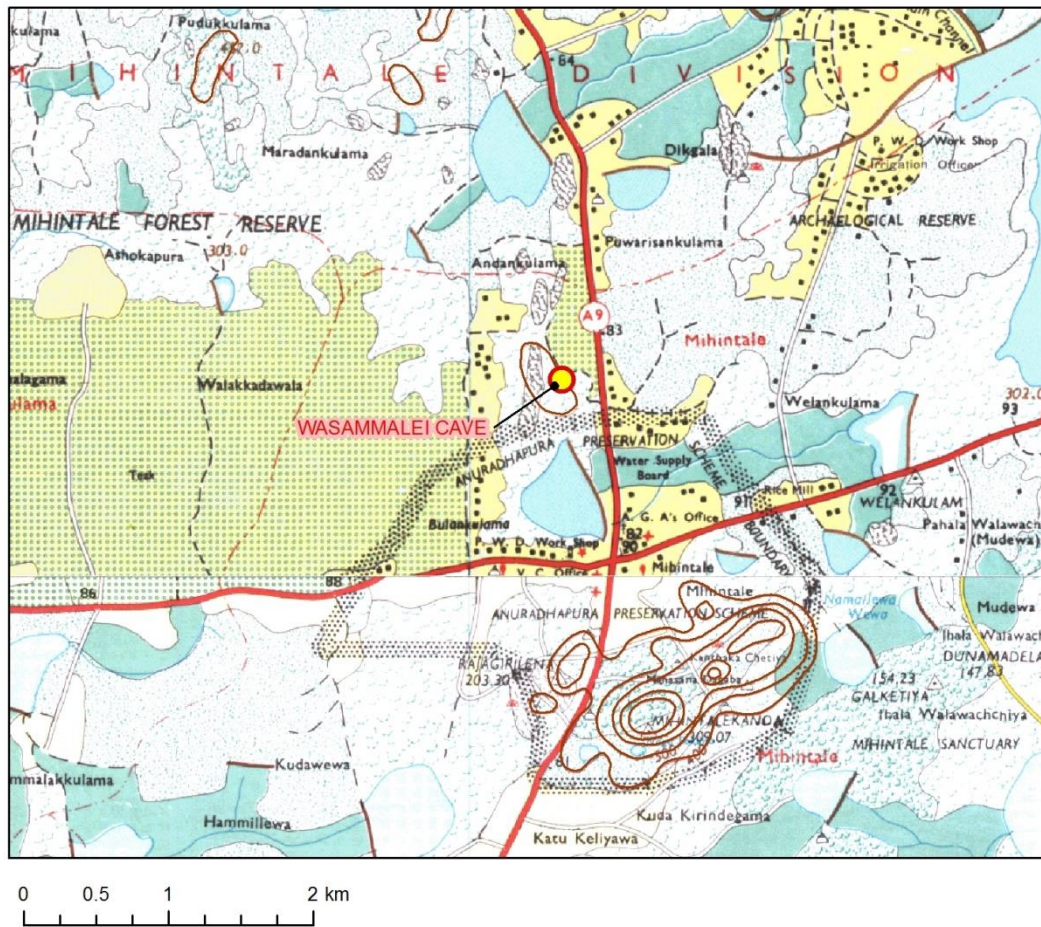




**Indigenized Nāga concepts: Study  
about wall paintings in *Wasammale***

R.D. Aruna Shantha



- Vasammale Mountain is located 573 Mihintale gramasewa division, Mihintale regional sectarian division, Anuradhapura district, North central province . In Kandy - Jaffna (A - 9) road, Mihintale junction towards 2km to Jaffna we meet University of Rajarata.
- The demonstrated place in this, Vasammale can be assumed as an archaeological site that historically connected to Mihintale. This advertence painting is located in a specific built environment in there.



Vasammale Mountain has formed with a natural rock outcrop that expands few kilometers towards North - South direction.



rock lebensraum with paintings



naturally formed coverts in Vasammale mountain have been adjusted & used as ponds.



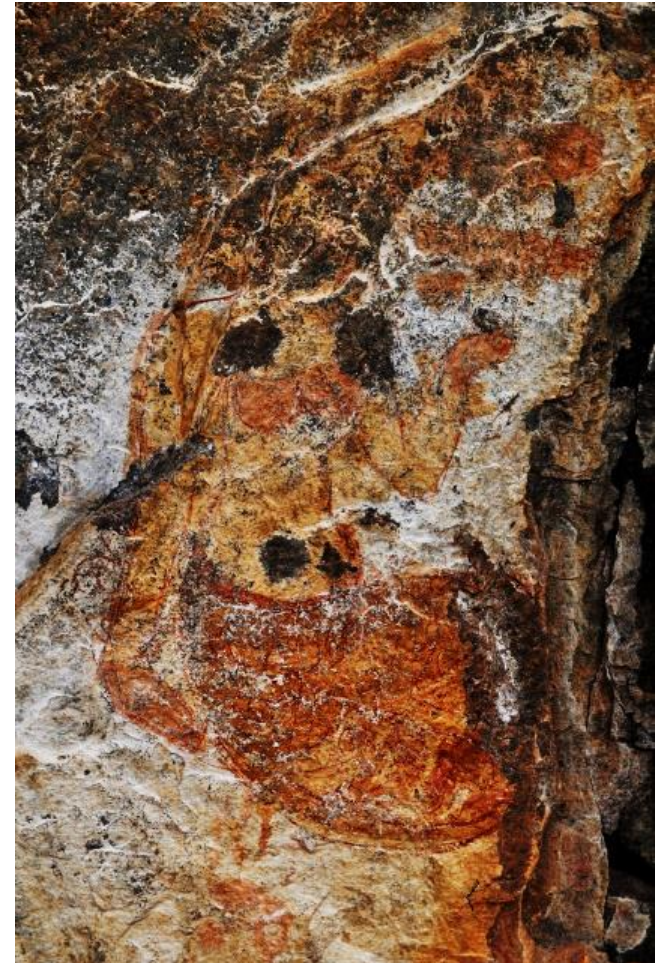
large *nāga* figure with seven froths



large *nāga* figure and *nāgini*



*nāga* froths



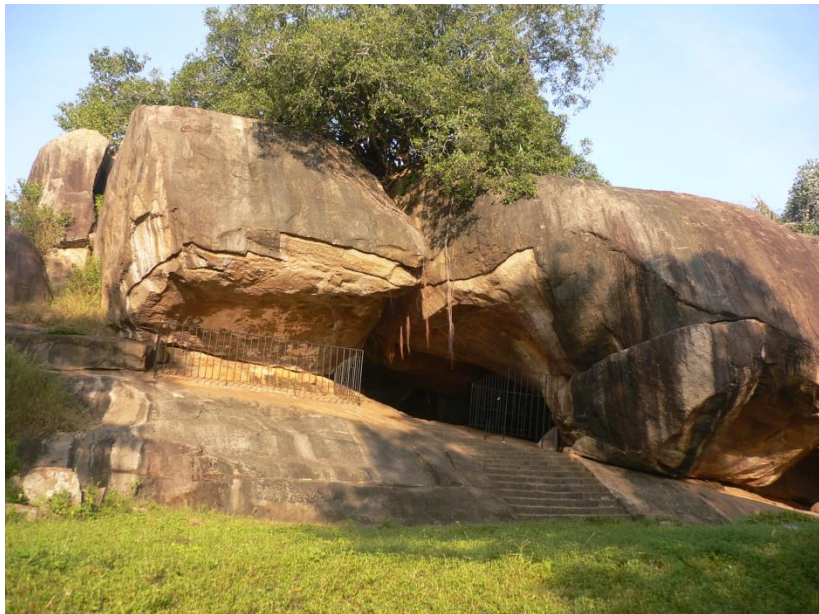
*nāgini* figure with five froths



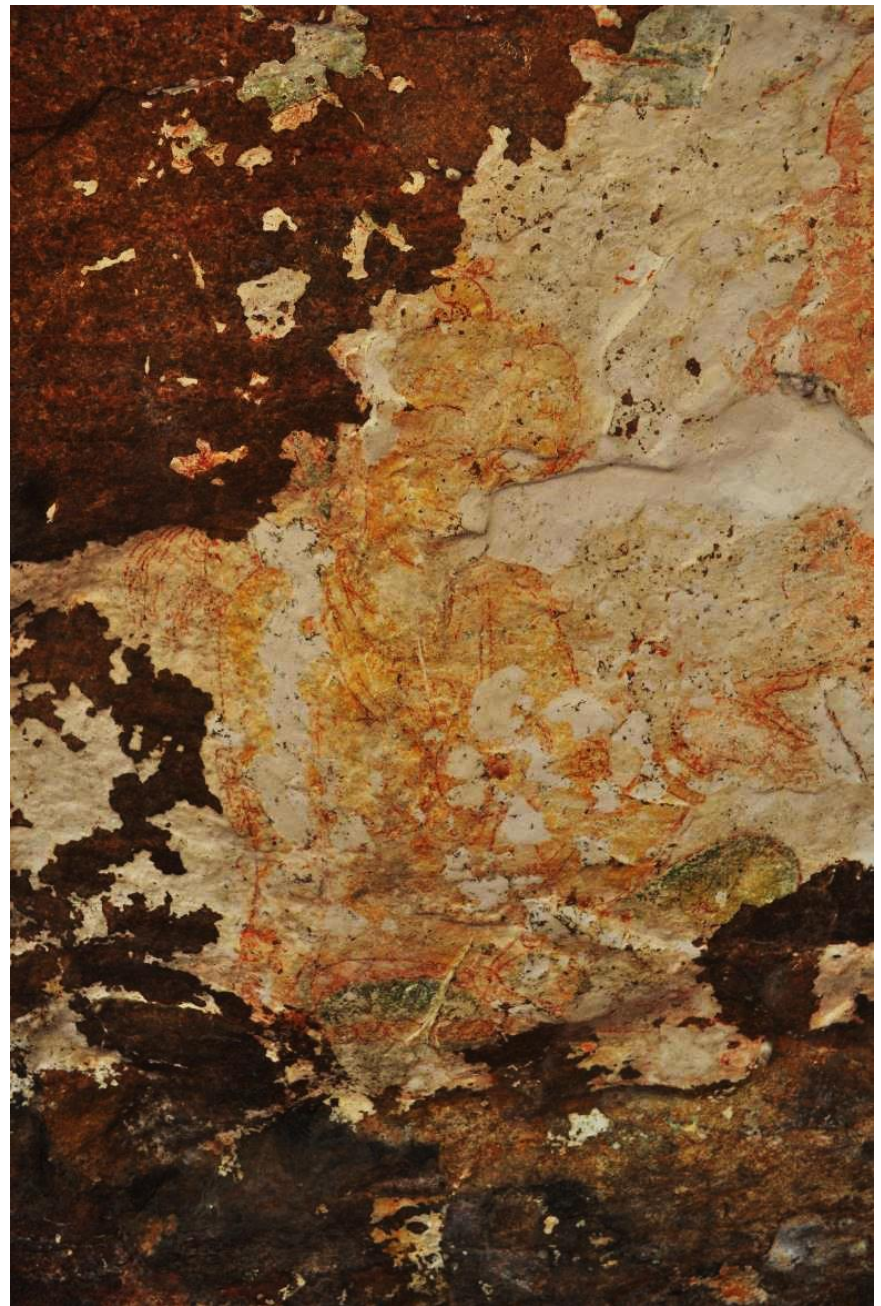
very similar to very rare two slab sculptures in  
Colombo national museum



Vessagiriya



rock shelter with paintings in  
Vessagiriya



the female figural painting in Vessagiriya

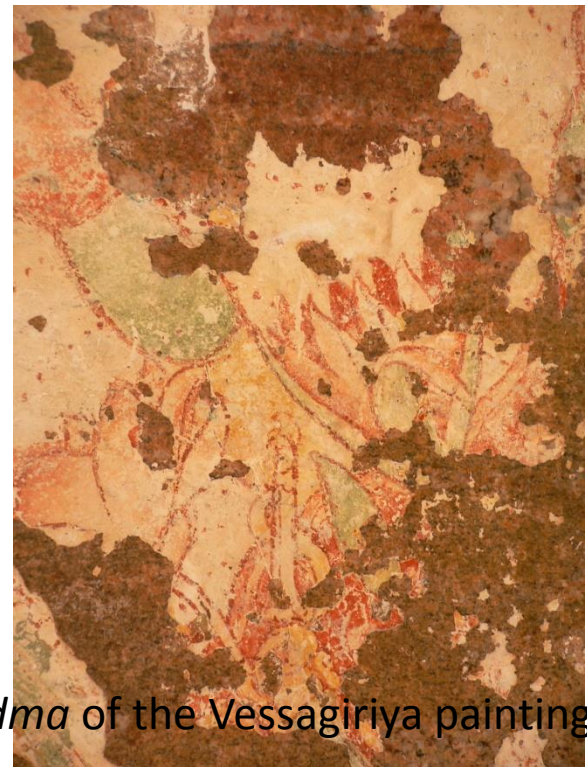


the complete painting in Vessagiriya





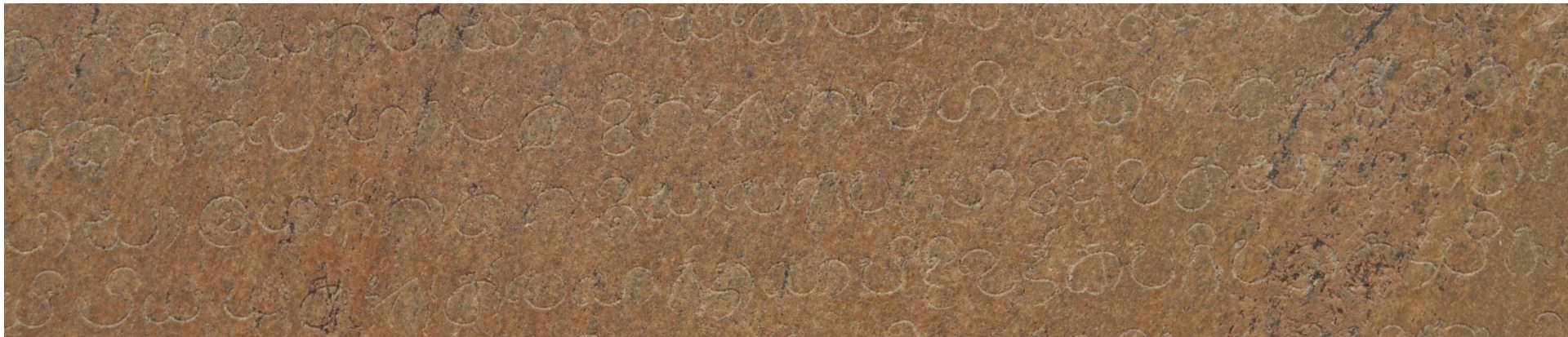
middle part of the Vessagiriya painting



*Padma* of the Vessagiriya painting



Mihintale slab inscription of King Mihindu IV



*Manināl devdu* house means mansion that belonged to *manināl devñ ge*. According to Parnavitana *manināl* means is a synonym for denominating *Tara* goddess, who is considered as strength of *Avalokitesvara* bodhisattva. Furthermore, he emphasized that denominating of *Avalokitesvara* as *Naindu avalokitesvara* might be the cause for naming his strength as that name. But Gunawardhana didn't accept that opinion & he tried to prove that Parnavitana's factor wasn't logical in linguistically. Parnavitana thought that *Nāgendra* was derived from a Sanskrit word that used as an epithet for *Lokanātha* bodhisattva. But that kind of usage cannot be recognized in any Sinhala literature. Sinhala derive of *Nathendra* is called as *Nathidu*. Otherwise, *manināl* hasn't been used as an epithet for denominating *Tara* goddess in any written source

Whatever, our opinion is that high probability of being this middle figure as a *nāgini* & relevant built environment would be *manināl devdu* house which has been mentioned in Mihintala slab inscription. Most of mentioned donated places for their preservations could be able to identify from adjacent area, but still *manināl devdu* house haven't been recognized. Also, anyone couldn't be able to establish an identity for Vasammale archaeological site which is located in Mihintale lateral zone. So, according to the relevant context this place could be *manināl devdu* house which has been mentioned in Mihintala slab inscription & middle figure of the painting was a figure of *nāgini* can be mentioned as justifiable assumptions. If it would be a *nāgini* figure, it exactly should be *manināl*. The right side female figure & left side assumed female figure should be her maids. According to relevant portrayal this painting could be belonged to 8 - 9 century AD alias last half of Anuradhapura period. Considering about artistic characteristics though main figure shows classical aspects, it cannot be seen from other female figure. It might be a later addition.

This assumed place that could be *maninal dev du* house which has been mentioned in Mihintale slab inscription or a place for naga worship can be clearly recognized as an isolated place from main religious monuments in Mihintale religious area. Because of locating inside of Buddhist religious area with Buddhist identity, this couldn't be able to implement as none befitted place to Buddhism or respecting for other religious cult. Mostly its administration would agree with central administration of main monastery. If this was maninal dev du house its needed expenditure has been issued by central fund of main monastery. So, as a whole, Vasammale can be praised as a rare place with wall painting that emphasizes unknown historical context also demonstrates folk religious cults in ancient Sri Lanka