



THE NATIONAL TRUST – SRI LANKA
THURSDAY 29TH APRIL 2021

Management & Functional Use of Mineral Resources in Ancient Sri Lanka:
Stone as a Building Material in Ancient Anuradhapura
Dr. Thusitha Wagalawatta

The 133rd Session of the Monthly Lecture Series of the National Trust will be delivered online on Thursday 29th April 2021 at 6.30 pm. by Dr. Thusitha Wagalawatta

LINK – <https://bit.ly/3qvqeth>

The ancient city of Anuradhapura, located in north-central Sri Lanka was the capital of the Sinhalese kingdom between the 4th century BCE and the 11th century CE. The slightly rolling landscape in the surrounding of the ancient city is structured by a linear rock outcrop line, which is located west of the city and the course of the River Malwathu Oya, flowing in northern direction and passing the city to the east.

The architecture of Anuradhapura is characterized by a mixed material tradition utilizing parallel burnt bricks, timber and stone blocks as construction materials. Remains of numerous ancient buildings and monuments occur throughout the entire settlement. The majority of foundations, floor areas, pillars and entrance units of the buildings consist of stone blocks and provide evidence that rocks were the primary building material used for the constructions of buildings. In general the availability of natural resources plays a pivotal role by sustaining the foundation and successive development of the (ancient) settlements.

This presentation is focusing to illustrate the availability and exploitation of bedrock as natural resource for construction material. The methodological approach applied encompasses a) a systematic survey of outcropping bedrocks in the surrounding of the ancient city of Anuradhapura in order to identify ancient quarries, b) a survey of remains of ancient building in the center of the ancient city to analyse the constructional contexts of different rock types, c) sampling of bedrock and building rocks to analyse whose petrographic, geochemical and mineralogical character and d) ethno-archaeological investigations to gain a better understanding of ancient stone quarrying techniques.



Dr. Thusitha Wagalawatta was graduated at the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, in the department of archaeology, and received his Doctor of Science degree on Landscape Archaeology and Architecture in Berlin Graduate School of Ancient Studies (BerGSAS) of Freie Universität Berlin.

Dr. Wagalawatta has been a Lecturer and Co-organizer on summer school program of Reconstructions of the prehistoric settlement landscape in the floodplain of the Malwathu Oya in the hinterlands of Anuradhapura, which was organized by in Department of Earth Science, Freie Universität Berlin and Department of Conservation and Restoration/ Field Archaeology, University of Applied Sciences Berlin, Germany. He has been a Lecturer in the Department of Geology, University of Peradeniya and his lecturing experience includes Tank cascade systems in the hinterland of Anuradhapura as traditional features of integrated watershed management, in Anuradhapura as well. He has a vast Archaeological Excavation experience in different fields such as Rescue Archaeological excavation, Pre-historic, Early historic and historical archaeological projects and he worked different regions in the island namely Yapahuwa, Thanthirimale, Wahalkada, Ritigala, Hiriwadunna-Habarana, Digavapiya-Ampara, Kantharode-Jaffna, Manikkampattiya-Polonaruwa, Citadel-Anuradhapura, Vilgam Vehera-Trincomalee, Fahiyana Gala, Mahadiulwewa, Warana-Gampaha, Halmillawetiya-Kebithigollewa, Mihinthale-Kaludiya Pokuna – Mihinthale, Sarwodaya Watta-Thissamaharama, as an Excavation Officer of the Department of Archaeology, Sri Lanka.

Dr. Wagalawatta has given numerous academic talks on the subject “Archaeological Heritage of Sri Lanka” in Sri Lanka and in other countries.

The National Trust – Sri Lanka conducts monthly lectures on the last Thursday of each month. The lectures are open to the members and the public. The HNB Sustainability Foundation is the principal sponsor of the events of the National Trust – Sri Lanka.

Further information can be obtained from the Trust Office Tel 2682730 / 0777397403.