



THE NATIONAL TRUST – SRI LANKA

The Discovery of Early Human Habitation (4000 BP): Southern Coast of Sri Lanka

By

Samanti Kulatilake, PhD.

The Monthly Lecture Series No: 144 of the National Trust

Thursday 29th September 2022 at 6.00 pm, online

Link to join the Zoom meeting:

<https://zoom.us/j/92434423524?pwd=YTdTanlvVzJiUWZCRkZmeUxZeTVGdz09>

(Meeting ID: 924 3442 3524, Passcode: 0144)

The archaeological endeavour and the reconstruction of our past is often limited to glimpses from and narratives of more recent historic times. Historic archaeological treasures of Lanka subsumed under the term “heritage” are linked to the hydraulic civilization and agrarian populations. However, rare bioarchaeological remains associated with people who lived in the intersection between the prehistoric and historic periods of Lanka are also treasure troves of information that provide valuable insights into our past. The focus of this lecture is on the aquatic foragers who lived and thrived about 4000 years ago in the coastal regions of Lanka. Mini-athiliya is a mid-Holocene shell midden site in southern Sri Lanka, which was occupied by aquatic foragers also known as hunter-gatherer-fisher people. From the archaeological rescue operation conducted from 2007 to 2008 at Mini-athiliya, the bioarchaeological treasures that include human skeletal and dental remains, faunal remains, microlithic implements and contextual information on the cultural and symbolic aspects of these people were recovered. Through these finds, we gain insights into the lives and lifeways of these people to develop a more comprehensive understanding of our past.



[Samanti Kulatilake](#) is an Associate Professor of Biological Anthropology at Mount Royal University, Canada. She holds a BA in Anthropology from the University of Manitoba and an MPhil and PhD in Biological Anthropology from the University of Cambridge, UK. For over 20 years, Kulatilake has researched the evolutionary history of South Asians and has established herself as an international scholar in her field. Her publications in [English and Sinhala](#) have made a global impact. She is a past pupil of Bishop’s College, Colombo, former researcher at PGIAR and former faculty member of the Department of Anthropology, University of Sri Jayewardenepura. Kulatilake is involved in on-going research on human skeletal remains and genetic information, conducted through national and international collaborations. She is also actively involved in scholarly educational initiatives in Sri Lanka.

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

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