



THE NATIONAL TRUST – SRI LANKA

“Koneswar Temple on Swami Rock, Trincomalee”

by

Angeline Ondaatjie

The Monthly Lecture Series No: 153 of the National Trust

Thursday 31st August 2023 at 6.00 pm

at the Auditorium of the College of Surgeons of Sri Lanka,

No. 6, Independence Avenue, Colombo 7.

(For those who join online: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81117103367>)

"Swami Rock" in Trincomalee holds immense significance as a sacred site with several names, including Konam, Makkonam, Konaparvatam, Trikutanilayam, and Dakshina Kailasam. It was among the five renowned Saiva shrines that fell victim to destruction during the Portuguese era. In July 1950, a groundbreaking discovery was made when workers excavated statues of Somaskanda Siva, the consort of Somaskanka Murthi Siva, and Chandrasekara while digging a well near Swami Rock. Additionally, statues of Ganesha, Parvati, a bird, and a Trisulum had also recently been unearthed in the vicinity. This remarkable find sparked an investigation into the origin of the statues, leading to a comprehensive exploration of the destruction of Koneswar in 1662-24 by Dr. Balendra. In 1953, Dr. Balendra delivered a captivating lecture to the RAS (Royal Asiatic Society), delving into the traditional and colonial records of Koneswar and shedding light on the temple's tragic past. Moreover, this presentation will delve into the intriguing inscription at the entrance to Fort Frederick, which played a pivotal role in the temple's reconstruction in 1952. By examining both historical and contemporary sources, the tale of Koneswar will be unveiled, highlighting its profound spiritual significance and the efforts made to preserve its heritage for future generations.



Angeline Ondaatjie is the Chairperson of Tangerine Tours (Pvt) Limited, Tangerine Beach Hotels PLC and Royal Palms Beach Hotels PLC. She has over 20 years of experience in tourism, financial services and manufacturing sectors. She holds a Masters Degree from the University of Texas in Austin, USA and a BSc Degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) USA. She is presently Vice President, Tourist Hotels Association, Country advisor Princeton in Asia and serves on the Education Council of MIT.

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.

Further information can be obtained from the Trust Office Tel.0112682730/ 0719566929