

PRELIMINARY REPORT OF NON-HUMAN PRIMATE BONES DISCOVERED AT THE PREHISTORIC SIGIRIYA POTANA CAVE SITE IN SRI LANKA

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Recently we began an investigation on non-human primate bones excavated from the prehistoric Sigiriya Potana cave site situated in the intermediate climatic zone in Sri Lanka. This cave belongs to a complex of 12 caves located in the Central province about 5km from the road to Inamaluwa at 70m above sea level. In 1990 the site was declared a prehistoric site. An excavation was conducted between 1990 and 1991 by the Post Graduate Institute of Archaeology, Colombo. The cave deposits were dated at ca. 6000 BP and the calibrated age ranges from cumulative probability (one sigma) 3913 – 3727 BC (UA 5685) and 3913 – 3709 BC (UA 5686) using Carbon - 14 dating techniques. Non-human primate bones were found along with two complete human skeletons. The bones represent all three non-human primate species that can be seen at present; namely *Trachypithecus vetulus*, *Semnopithecus priam* and *Macaca sinica*. Total number of bones found were; 24 mandible fragments with teeth, 7 maxillary fragments with teeth, 8 proximal femurs, 6 distal femurs, 6 distal humerus, 3 proximal humerus, 6 proximal ulna, 5 proximal radius, 1 distal radius, 1 proximal tibia, 5 calcaneus bones, 5 talus, 3 patellas, 5 canines, 3 molars and 1 incisor. Most of the mandible fragments belonged to the purple-faced leaf langur. The number of gray langur and macaque bones are relatively small. It is likely that these material represent at least 8 individuals and were consumed by the cave's inhabitants.

Keywords: primate fossils, prehistoric cave site, 6000 BP, Macaca, Trachypithecus, Semnopithecus