

## HORSE REMAINS FROM THE JETAVANA PILIMAGE EXCAVATION, CENTRAL CULTURAL FUND, ANURADHAPURA

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The *Jetavana Pilimage* Excavation (JPL/2002/II) was carried out in 2002 by the Jetavana CCF Project, headed by Prof. Sudharshan Seneviratne, the Archaeological Director of the project. The aim of this research was to gain knowledge of horse bones from the above excavation and attempt an interpretation on the occurrence of horses in Sri Lanka. Concerning the material, the site has yielded a total of nine (09) fragments of bones along with other animal bones.

The following zoo-archaeological methods were applied for research, namely quantitative methods (Grayson, 1984), metrical analysis (Boessneck and Driesch, 1978) and computer applications (Klein and Cruz-Urbe, 1984; Uerpman, 1978). Furthermore, morphological comparison was conducted with the help of modern horse skeletons placed at the Department of Preclinical Studies, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Science, University of Peradeniya and also referred to by Nickel et al, 1986, Hillson, S. 1986 and BökÖnyi, 1997.

The identified horse bones are represented by left and right mandibles, isolated molars and premolars, proximal end of radius and distal end of metatarsals. These bones can easily be identified as of species of the genus, *Equus* namely, *Equus asinus* (domestic donkey), *Equus hemione* (hemione or "half-ass"), *Equus przewalskii* (domestic horse relatives), *Equus africanus* (wild ass) and *Equus caballus* (domestic horse).

Considering the occlusal view of molars and premolars, the cingulum is not prominent. This nature can be seen in the teeth of half-ass and wild ass. Metrical data teeth from Jetavana, Anuradhapura Citadel, the Harappan site Surkotada modern horses were plotted in a computer scattered diagram for the confirmation of this identification. It appears that and the *Equus* species from Jetavana were in small size. According to the diagram, it is comparable with the Surkotada sample. Therefore, horse remains from Jetavana represent a small species of horse. The author believes that the animal belongs to *Equus hemione* (half-ass)

Furthermore, horse bones rarely occurred in the prehistoric sites in India. Well-dated horse bones were recorded from Jorwe Culture representing true horses, in India. Concerning the previous research at the Citadel of Anuradhapura, a few horse bones (less than 1%) were found. The earliest evidence of the horse at Anuradhapura goes back to 800 BC. The recent research on horses reveals several opinions concerning the origin of South Asian species; the wild form of horses did not exist in India during the Post-Pleistocene Period. Consequently, the horse could not be domesticated there. Afterwards, domesticated horses had to be introduced. It can be assumed that true horses and hybrid species were introduced to the Island and survived as hybrid species, adapting themselves to the Island environment.