

Proto-historic Settlement Evidence Retrieved from the Archaeological Excavation at Janakapura Megalithic Burial

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Abstract

The Megalithic Burial Site of Janakapura is located in the Grama Niladhari Division namely, No: 05, Janakapura in Welioya Divisional Secretariat of Mulativu District and it is hydrologically imperative that this excavation site is belonged to lower Ma Oya watershed boundary area. In order to identify the type of the burial with a mortuary complex that expanded about 05 Acres, an exploration and a scientific excavation has been conducted by the Department of Archaeology and Heritage Management, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. Based on the retrieved data from a surface exploration, the mortuary complex was identified as a type of capstone burial associated with a large pot (*Maha Kumbha*) underneath and the exploration recorded 208 such burials in the site. After the exploration, the vertical excavation method has been applied for a 4m x 4m grid, under the site cord of RUSL/JP/EX01/2020 where 106 contexts revealed from the context recording system. According to the data yielded at present, this complex can be recognized as the largest capstone burial type in Sri Lanka. Many ceramic spheres comprising the Black and Red wares and Red Wares were revealed where the large pots associated with the cremated bones. Among the artifacts discovered from the excavation, the presence of more than fifty beads made using glass and quartz was prominent archaeological evidence. Metal fragments of a blade represent the metallurgy that existed during this period. This excavation and exploration led to study the cultural landscape of Janakapura and its peripheral region during the 4th B.C. – 5th B.C., in terms of architecture related with the burials, distribution of material culture in the extended region, environmental background, historical expansion of irrigation and social archaeology, the pattern and the relationship between the location of the proto-historic burials in the river valley basin.

Keywords: Megalithic Burials, Artifacts, Contexts, Black and Red Wares, Metal Blade

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