

The lost bridge! *An untold story...*

Have you ever noticed a bridge between Sri Lanka and India? May be you would, if you see the google map in clearly. This bridge is not a new thing to reveal for the Hindu people as they believe it is a creation of the Hanuman's monkey army. The story tells in the Hindu's great epic "Ramayana" which enhance the value of the place and the secret behind the well preservation of the place, Adam's Bridge. It was not exactly proven, there was a bridge between these two countries. But there are about seventeen small islands which half of the islands range belongs to Sri Lanka and rest goes India. The middle one is remarkable with no owner and kind of prohibited place for both nations. Yes! Your thought is right! The place is matter of politiques.

But, I am not telling the political story today.



Adam's Bridge is identified as a sand bar in the Palk strait which an another geological feature in the coastal areas. The sand can be accumulated with the water currents and the storms and tidal action cause to the creation of the sand bars. Some scientist are saying that Adam's bridge is the largest tombolo of the ancient world. However, evidence of the past sea level rising may have connection with the creation of Adam's bridge and the fail rifting event which occurred between Sri Lanka and India during the breaking and

drifting of Great Gondwanaland. This phenomena might be a reason to make a shallow area between two lands cause to slower the water current and accumulation of the sand.

I was fortunate to visit the Adam's bridge as a member of the marine biological research team of university of Ruhuna in five year ago. We had to pass 451.5 km from south coast to North coast of Sri Lanka to reach our dream destination. We were warmly welcomed by SL NAVY, the guardian of the Adam's bridge and our guiders to the place from the Mannar jetty. The small motor engine boat, called "Dingi Boat" was provided to sail the sand bars. The rays and fishes were common vicinity during the journey. The sound of the terns and waves of the Palk Strait were the sailing songs. We arrived to the first island which is the largest one of the island range.

The trees and bushes with sand dune vegetations are the leaders and owners of the island. Remarkably there were few mangrove trees, which are the hope of the fertilization of the land. Then we moved to the next island *by foot* ! Yes, the shallow area between the islands allowed us to walk from first to second. The second island which was not much differ from the largest in composition but there were huge tidal flat. The Salicornia in red and green were welcomed us to the land. We were in the highest peak of curiosity to see the third island, which is famous for the migratory



View of an island

birds. Alas! We were disappointed and happy simultaneously with the words of the Naval officer "Sorry, this island is not allowed to land because of the great diversity and density of the



Historical figure of making Adam's bridge



Tidal pool in an island

migratory birds except in the special permission. It ensure the nesting and breeding of the birds without any disturbance”. There are three main flying routes of the migratory birds from cold countries to Sri Lanka. The western and eastern Indian routes are directly go on the Adam’s bridge would be the main reason to make an excellent location of great diversity of birds.

The fourth was our resting place as it contains the small Naval campaign from the Northern naval base. Same as the other islands it contained vegetations and small dunes

but the density of the flora had been decreased. The mangrove plants could be seen in the edges of the tidal pools. While the sand pipers and the seagulls were feeding, the carcasses of a green turtle was degrading on the beach. The second part of the journey began after the resting time. It was conspicuous observation that the vegetation cover was decreasing with the distance which is a good example for the island dispersal theory. After the fifth island we could not see any vegetation and it was an ideal sea desert. But there were huge tidal pools which contains different fish species. The coral pieces and the seagrass leaves on the beach proved there is a seagrass meadow and coral reef nearby. But it was not the time to dive and find the place as the sea was in monsoon condition. The thousands of sea shells decorated the coastal margin of the every island like a necklace. We could find the precious artefact; a black coral which flushed on to the sea shore from its originator.

We were arrived to the final island of the sand bar belongs to Sri Lanka. No more mobile signals to our phone and roaming had been activated from India. There we could see the tower in “Danushkodi”, a city in south India. We were on the maritime boarder and end of our journey. Adam’s bridge is a remarkable place which is less known and hidden from the world.



Turtle's dead body on the sea shore

The religious belief and the national security make it a well preserved place without human foot prints. The Adam’s bridge had to be vanished from the world map if “Sethu samudam” shipping canal project proposed in 1997 by Indian government was initiated. But fortunately, the Indian government had to abolished the project due to the opposition of the religious leaders and the followers. However, it is it time to reveal the colonization process of islands and the diversity of flora and fauna of the Adam’s bridge and proximate ocean by ensuring the protection of the place.