



PIONEERS YOUTH



DEPARTMENT OF  
CREATIVE ENGAGEMENT

# Anuradhapura

Map of Anuradhapura  
M.A.P.  
ANURADHAPURA  
Scale  
0 100 200  
Kilometers



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# AN INTRODUCTION TO TRILOGY

## A PROJECT ORGANIZED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF CREATIVE ENGAGEMENT

South Asia brings to mind conflicting images of the glamour of Bollywood and abject poverty. Yet, this vast geographical terrain has a long history of multivalent religious ideals, diverse creative expressions, sociocultural aspects its own unique blends of culture.

Trilogy is a project that dives into the rich history, culture, and developments of some of South Asia's most exotic regions, engaging volunteers who share a common passion to explore new places and exchange valuable knowledge and experiences.

Three teams of volunteers were randomly assigned regions within South Asia to work in. They were given the freedom to explore either the sociocultural aspects of the particular region or how the region has contributed to the economy of its respective country. Our volunteers gained valuable insight into some of South Asia's most popular regions and have compiled their research into booklets with fascinating highlights of each region that are certainly worth the read!

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# Introduction

Anuradhapura is a historic city located in the North Central Province of Sri Lanka. It was one of the ancient capitals of Sri Lanka and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The city is known for its rich cultural and religious heritage, with numerous well-preserved ruins, temples, and monasteries dating back over 2,300 years. Anuradhapura was a center of Buddhism and an important center of political power, with its kings and emperors ruling over Sri Lanka for many centuries. Today, Anuradhapura remains a popular tourist destination, attracting visitors from all over the world to explore its rich history and culture.





# **Religion of Anuradhapura**



## RUWANWELISAYA

- Buddhist stupa built by King Dutugemunu in the 2nd century BC
- Shaped like a Bubble
- One Dona of the Buddha's relics are enshrined in the stupa, making it the largest collection of his relics anywhere



## SRI MAHA BODHIYA

Oldest human-planted tree (2,300+ years)

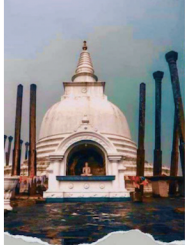
- Grown from cutting of original Bodhi tree under which Buddha attained enlightenment.
- Revered by Buddhists as sacred site of worship

## JETAVANARAMAYA

Largest stupa in the Sri Lanka

- Buddhist stupa built by King Mahasen in the 3rd century AD
- Has the shape of a paddy heap
- Over 120 meters in height, making it one of the tallest structures in the ancient world

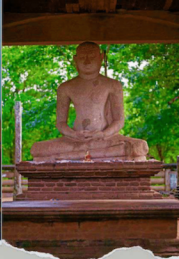




## THUPARAMAYA

First stupa in Sri Lanka

- Built during the reign of King Devanampiyatissa (247-207 BC)
- Located in the sacred Mahamevna Park
- Shaped like a Bell



## SAMADHI BUDDHA STATUE

- Sri Lanka's most famous and revered Buddha statue and it's located in Mahamevnawa Park
- It is considered one of the best sculptures of the Anuradhapura era

## ISURUMUNIYA RAJAMAHA VIHARAYA

Famous for its rock-cut temple, which features several well-preserved sculptures and carvings such as:

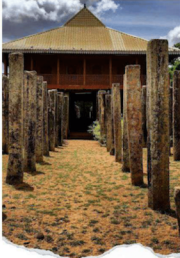
- Lovers of Isurumuniya
- Elephant Pond
- King and Queen
- Guardian Deities





## LANKARAMAYA

- Buddhist stupa Built by King Valagamba in 1st century BCE,
- The shape of the stupa is *Amalakara*(the shape of myrobalan fruit)
- It was destroyed and rebuilt several times over the centuries



## LOWAMAHAPAYA

Quadrilateral palace with nine stories

- Known as the Brazen Palace because the roof was covered with bronze tiles.
- Initially built by King Devamnampiyatissa on instructions of Mahinda Thero. A century later, King Dutugamunu built a massive structure(remains of which can be seen today)



## ATAMASTHANA

A GROUP OF EIGHT SACRED BUDDHIST SITES

the holiest and most important places in Buddhism

The Atamasthana in Sri Lanka includes the following eight sites:

- Mahamewna Park
- Sri Mahabodhi
- Thuparamaya
- Ruwanweliseya
- Abhayagiri Dagoba
- Jetavanaramaya
- Mirisaweti Dagoba
- Lankarama

# **Kingdom of Anuradhapura**

Capital of All the Monarchs, Who ruled the Country in  
Anuradhapura Kingdom, With the Exception of KASHYAPA 1

***CAPITAL OF ALL  
THE MONARCHS  
WHO RULED THE  
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KINGDOM,  
EXCEPT  
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*Sinhala Kingdom*

Abhayagiri Vihaya  
was first appointed  
custodianship of Pali  
Danta dhatuya, when  
it was brought to the  
island after the  
conflict of Kalinga



*Nissanka Wijeratne was the Government Agent of Anuradhapura District from 1958 to 1962.*

*This was the first time that the city of Anuradhapura was in a period of historic transition. The new town of Anuradhapura was being built, and the residents of the old town were being transferred to the new town.*





# **Monarchy & foreign bureaucracy**

THE MONARCHY IN ANURADHAPURA WAS A CENTRAL FIGURE IN THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE AND MAINTAINED RELATIONSHIPS WITH FOREIGN BUREAUCRATS THROUGH DIPLOMACY AND INTERMARRIAGE.



THE KINGS OF ANURADHAPURA SOUGHT TO MAINTAIN THEIR POWER AND AUTHORITY BY FORMING ALLIANCES WITH NEIGHBOURING STATES AND EXCHANGING AMBASSADORS. THEY ALSO OFTEN INTERMARRIED WITH FOREIGN

## 1) KING DUTTHAGAMANI (161 BCE - 137 BCE)

He is considered one of the greatest warriors in Sri Lankan history and is known for unifying the country by defeating the Tamil king, Elara. Dutugemunu also built the Ruwanwelisaya, one of the largest stupas in Anuradhapura, and is credited with spreading Buddhism throughout Sri Lanka. His reign marked a significant period of peace and prosperity in the Anuradhapura Kingdom.

King Dutugemunu is known for the following accomplishments:

1. Unifying Sri Lanka by defeating the Tamil king, Elara.
2. Building the Ruwanwelisaya, one of the largest stupas in Anuradhapura.
3. Promoting Buddhism throughout Sri Lanka.
4. Encouraging the construction of religious monuments and temples.
5. Supporting the growth of agriculture by building irrigation systems.



## 2) KING KASSAPA I (473 - 495 CE)

He was known for his military conquests, including the annexation of the Ruhuna kingdom. Kassapa I also promoted Buddhism and built many religious monuments, including the Thuparamaya stupa. His reign was marked by stability and prosperity, and he is remembered as a just and fair ruler.

1. Conquering the Ruhuna kingdom, expanding the Anuradhapura Kingdom.
2. Building the Thuparamaya stupa, one of the oldest stone structures in Sri Lanka.
3. Supporting Buddhism by promoting religious practices and building religious monuments.



# DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS OF THE ANURADHAPURA KINGDOM

THE ANURADHAPURA KINGDOM, LOCATED IN MODERN-DAY SRI LANKA, HAD A COMPLEX NETWORK OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONSHIPS WITH NEIGHBORING KINGDOMS AND COUNTRIES. THE KINGDOM MAINTAINED FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH OTHER KINGDOMS IN THE REGION AND ENGAGED IN TRADE AND COMMERCE. DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS WERE SENT TO ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES. FOR EXAMPLE, KING DEVANAMPPIYA TISSA SENT A DELEGATION TO EMPEROR ASOKA OF INDIA TO ESTABLISH FRIENDLY RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO KINGDOMS.



IN THE 5TH CENTURY CE, THE ANURADHAPURA KINGDOM FACED CHALLENGES FROM SOUTH INDIAN INVADERS, WHICH LED TO A DECLINE IN ITS POWER AND INFLUENCE. NEVERTHELESS, THE KINGDOM WAS ABLE TO MAINTAIN FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH OTHER KINGDOMS IN THE REGION, SUCH AS THE PANDYAN KINGDOM. KING MAHASENA, FOR EXAMPLE, IS KNOWN FOR HIS DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN PEACE WITH THE PANDYAN KINGDOM

**Culture,  
Marriage  
and cast system**

•Anuradhapura, located in the North Central Province of Sri Lanka, is a city with a rich cultural heritage and historical significance. Its customs and traditions, including dress, mannerisms, and marriage, are closely tied to the city's religious and social beliefs.

•In terms of dress, the traditional attire for men in Anuradhapura is a sarong or a lungi, worn with a shirt or a traditional upper garment. Women usually wear a saree or a long skirt with a blouse. The attire is simple and modest, reflecting the conservative nature of the people.



Mannerisms in Anuradhapura are characterized by politeness and respect. The people place a strong emphasis on traditional values and follow customs and traditions that have been passed down from generation to generation. Hospitality is an important aspect of their culture, and guests are always treated with warmth and generosity.





Marriage is an important rite of passage in Anuradhapura and is typically arranged by the families of the bride and groom. The wedding ceremony is elaborate and involves several traditional customs and rituals.

One of the most significant rituals is the exchange of vows, where the bride and groom pledge their commitment to each other in front of their families and the community. Another important ritual is the Kanya Daan, where the father of the bride gives her hand in marriage to the groom.



# **Irrigation system and Agriculture**

# Irrigation And Agriculture In Anuradhapura

The development of the irrigation system is intertwined and influenced by paddy cultivation.

agriculture in antient anuradhapura

Goda Govithana

Mada Govithana

Agriculture based on rain-water

- mostly consists of vegetables and fruits
- Doesn't require much watering

Agriculture that requires water all the time

- Requires a constant flow of water to keep the crops alive
- Mostly only paddy is cultivated this way in Sri Lanka

the first reservoirs

Dawn of the inland oceans

pinnacle of ancient ingenuity

## How our ancestors got there

Archeological evidence proves that people have been building small scale reservoirs by placing obstacles like rocks in the way of the current and making the water pool up and rise.

Due to the long drought seasons and the overall dry climate the people living around Anuradhapura had to scale it up. so everyone in the village came together to build barriers across the water stream. Little did they know they were the real pioneers of the marvels of engineering our ancestors left behind.

With the rise of kingdoms the necessary coordination and resources were put into the construction of the first big scale dams in ancient Sri Lanka.

# The cultivation of paddy in Anuradhapura

- It is believed paddy cultivation in Sri Lanka was started around 161 B.C
- They mainly cultivated 2 times per year. From May → August and September → March (the seasons coincide with the regional monsoons)
- And all the heavy work was done using buffaloes and plows



The "Niyara" is made by compacting loose dirt. It's used as a walk way to get around the paddy field without getting all muddy

**Liyadi**

**Niyara**

The "Niyara" is made by compacting loose dirt. It's used as a walk way to get around the paddy field without getting all muddy

The farmers were self sufficient and had enough to feed entire villages

3 tonnes could be harvested annually with just one hectare worth of paddy field

**Vakkada**

This is a gap left in the reservoir so that water can flow underneath it



## How agriculture influenced the construction of reservoirs

- Somewhere in the 5th century our country's first kingdom, kingdom Anuradhapura was born under the rule of king Phandukhabaya.
- With the growing population the food consumption increased. It increased till storage and regulation of water had to be implemented

# The irrigation system in Anuradhapura

With the growing population the food consumption increased. It increased till storage and regulation of water had to be implemented

For 1500 years the kings that ruled Anuradhapura have all collectively contributed to the perfection of dam building

And as a result the dams that were built hundreds of years ago still stand and serve / the one purpose they were built for, to offset the unpredictability of seasonal monsoons

And as a result the kingdom in its golden age could support 2 million people year around

This is what new green earth of dams look like



"Bamma" (dam) (Bamma gate)



"Sorowwa" (sluice gate) (sluice gate)



"Bisokotuwa" (valve-pit) (valve-pit)

## Bamma (dam)

They have been built by compressing dirt, thus making it dense and strong enough to withstand the water pressure

## Sorowwa (Sluice gate)

These gates can be opened and closed to regulate water flow by using slabs of stone

## Bisokotuwa (valve-pit)

It is designed to take the turbulence and pressure out of the water before it enters the sluice gates. Thus protecting the gates longevity

## Ralapana (Riprap)

It protects the banks from erosion

# Conclusion

Anuradhapura is a city with a rich cultural heritage and unique traditions. Its customs and traditions, including dress, mannerisms, marriage, and the caste system, provide an insight into the cultural and historical significance of the city. Understanding the traditional marriage rituals, such as the exchange of vows, the Kanya Daan, and the different castes and their roles in the community helps to better appreciate the complexities of the cultural fabric of Anuradhapura.