

= Anuradhapura Kingdom =

The Anuradhapura Kingdom (Sinhala : ?????????? ?????????? , Tamil : ?????????? ????? ? ????? ?) , named for its capital city , was the first established kingdom in ancient Sri Lanka . Founded by King Pandukabhaya in 377 BC , the kingdom 's authority extended throughout the country , although several independent areas emerged from time to time , which grew more numerous towards the end of the kingdom . Nonetheless , the king of Anuradhapura was seen as the supreme ruler of the country throughout the Anuradhapura period . Buddhism played a strong role in the Anuradhapura period , influencing its culture , laws , and methods of governance . Society and culture were revolutionized when the faith was introduced during the reign of King Devanampiya Tissa ; this cultural change was further strengthened by the arrival of the Tooth Relic of the Buddha in Sri Lanka and the patronage extended by her rulers .

Invasions from South India were a constant threat throughout the Anuradhapura period . Rulers such as Dutthagamani , Valagamba , and Dhatusena are noted for defeating the South Indians and regaining control of the kingdom . Other rulers who are notable for military achievements include Gajabahu I , who launched an invasion against the invaders , and Sena II , who sent his armies to assist a Pandyan prince .

Because the kingdom was largely based on agriculture , the construction of irrigation works was a major achievement of the Anuradhapura Kingdom , ensuring water supply in the dry zone and helping the country grow mostly self @-@ sufficient . Several kings , most notably Vasabha and Mahasena , built large reservoirs and canals , which created a vast and complex irrigation network in the Rajarata area throughout the Anuradhapura period . These constructions are an indication of the advanced technical and engineering skills used to create them . The famous paintings and structures at Sigiriya ; the Ruwanwelisaya , Jetavana stupas , and other large stupas ; large buildings like the Lovamahapaya ; and religious works (like the numerous Buddha statues) are landmarks demonstrating the Anuradhapura period 's advancement in sculpting .

= = The city of Anuradhapura = =

In 543 BC , prince Vijaya (543 ? 505 BC) arrived in Sri Lanka , having been banished from his homeland in India . He eventually brought the island under his control and established himself as king . After this , his retinue established villages and colonies throughout the country . One of these was established by Anuradha , a minister of King Vijaya , on the banks of a stream called Kolon and was named Anuradhagama .

In 377 BC , King Pandukabhaya (437 ? 367 BC) made it his capital and developed it into a prosperous city . Anuradhapura (Anurapura) was named after the minister who first established the village and after a grandfather of Pandukabhaya who lived there . The name was also derived from the city 's establishment on the auspicious asterism called Anura . Anuradhapura was the capital of all the monarchs who ruled the country during in the Anuradhapura Kingdom , with the exception of Kashyapa I (473 ? 491) , who chose Sigiriya to be his capital . The city is also marked on Ptolemy 's world map .

= = History = =

King Pandukabhaya , the founder and first ruler of the Anuradhapura Kingdom , fixed village boundaries in the country and established an administration system by appointing village headmen . He constructed hermitages , houses for the poor , cemeteries , and irrigation tanks . He brought a large portion of the country under the control of the Anuradhapura Kingdom . However , it was not until the reign of Dutthagamani (161 ? 137 BC) that the whole country was unified under the Anuradhapura Kingdom . He defeated 32 rulers in different parts of the country before he killed Elara , the South Indian ruler who was occupying Anuradhapura , and ascended to the throne . The chronicle Mahavamsa describes his reign with much praise , and devotes 11 chapters out of 37 for his reign . He is described as both a warrior king and a devout Buddhist . After unifying the country ,

he helped establish Buddhism on a firm and secure base , and built several monasteries and shrines including the Ruwanweli Seya and Lovamahapaya .

Another notable king of the Anuradhapura Kingdom is Valagamba (103 , 89 ? 77 BC) , also known as Vatthagamani Abhaya , who was overthrown by five invaders from South India . He regained his throne after defeating these invaders one by one and unified the country again under his rule . Saddha Tissa (137 ? 119 BC) , Mahaculi Mahatissa (77 ? 63 BC) , Vasabha (67 ? 111) , Gajabahu I (114 ? 136) , Dhatusena (455 ? 473) , Aggabodhi I (571 ? 604) and Aggabodhi II (604 ? 614) were among the rulers who held sway over the entire country after Dutthagamani and Valagamba . Rulers from Kutakanna Tissa (44 ? 22 BC) to Amandagamani (29 ? 19 BC) also managed to keep the whole country under the rule of the Anuradhapura Kingdom . Other rulers could not maintain their rule over the whole island , and independent regions often existed in Ruhuna and Malayarata (hill country) for limited periods . During the final years of the Anuradhapura Kingdom , rebellions sprang up and the authority of the kings gradually declined . By the time of Mahinda V (982 ? 1017) , the last king of the Anuradhapura Kingdom , the rule of the king had become so weak that he could not even properly organize the collection of taxes .

During the times of Vasabha , Mahasena (274 ? 301) and Dhatusena , the construction of large irrigation tanks and canals was given priority . Vasabha constructed 11 tanks and 12 canals , Mahasena constructed 16 tanks and a large canal , and Dhatusena built 18 tanks . Most of the other kings have also built irrigation tanks throughout Rajarata , the area around Anuradhapura . By the end of the Anuradhapura Kingdom , a large and intricate irrigation network was available throughout Rajarata to support the agriculture of the country .

= = = Arrival of Buddhism = = =

One of the most notable events during the Anuradhapura Kingdom was the introduction of Buddhism to the country . A strong alliance existed between Devanampiya Tissa (250 ? 210 BC) and Ashoka of India , who sent Arahat Mahinda , four monks , and a novice being sent to Sri Lanka . They encountered Devanampiya Tissa at Mihintale . After this meeting , Devanampiya Tissa embraced Buddhism the order of monks was established in the country . Devanampiya Tissa , guided by Arahat Mahinda , took steps to firmly establish Buddhism in the country .

Soon afterwards , the bhikkhuni Sanghamitta arrived from India in order to establish the Bhikkhuni sasana (order of nuns) in the country . She brought along with her a sapling from the Sri Maha Bodhi , the tree under which the Buddha attained enlightenment , which was then planted in Anuradhapura . Devanampiya Tissa bestowed on his kingdom the newly planted Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi . Thus this is the establishment of Buddhism in Sri Lanka

= = = Arrival of the Sacred Tooth Relic = = =

During the reign of Kithsirimevan (301 ? 328) , Sudatta , the sub king of Kalinga , and Hemamala brought the Tooth Relic of the Buddha to Sri Lanka because of unrest in their country . Kithsirimevan carried it in procession and placed the relic in a mansion named Datadhatughara . He ordered this procession to be held annually , and this is still done as a tradition in the country . The Tooth Relic of the Buddha soon became one of the most sacred objects in the country , and a symbol of kingship . The person who was in possession of the Tooth Relic would be the rightful ruler of the country . Therefore , it was often enshrined within the royal palace itself .

= = = Invasions = = =

Several invasions have been made against the Anuradhapura Kingdom , all of which were launched from South India . The first invasion recorded in the history of the country is during the reign of Suratissa (247 ? 237 BC) , where he was overthrown by two horse dealers from South India named Sena and Guththika . After ruling the country for 22 years , they were defeated by Asela (215 ? 205 BC) , who was in turn overthrown by another invasion led by a Chola prince

named Elara (205 ? 161 BC) . Elara ruled for 44 years before being defeated by Dutthagamani . However , the Mahavamsa records that these foreign kings ruled the country fairly and lawfully .

The country was invaded again in 103 BC by five Dravidian chiefs , Pulahatta , Bahiya , Panya Mara , Pilaya Mara and Dathika , who ruled until 89 BC when they were defeated by Valagamba . Another invasion occurred in 433 , and the country fell under the control of six rulers from South India . These were Pandu , Parinda , Khudda Parinda , Tiritara , Dathiya and Pithiya , who were defeated by Dhathusena who regained power in 459 . More invasions and raids from South India occurred during the reigns of Sena I (833 ? 853) and Udaya III (935 ? 938) . The final invasion during the Anuradhapura Kingdom , which ended the kingdom and left the country under the rule of the Cholas , took place during the reign of Mahinda V.

However , none of these invaders could extend their rule to Ruhuna , the southern part of the country , and Sri Lankan rulers and their heirs always organized their armies from this area and managed to regain their throne . Throughout the history of Sri Lanka , Ruhuna served as a base for resistance movements .

= = = End of the kingdom = = =

In 993 , the Chola Emperor Rajaraja I invaded Sri Lanka , forcing the then Sri Lankan ruler Mahinda V to flee to the southern part of the country . The Mahavamsa describes the rule of Mahinda V as weak , and the country was suffering from poverty by this time . It further mentions that his army rose against him due to lack of wages . Taking advantage of this situation , Rajendra I son of Rajaraja I , launched a large invasion in 1017 . Mahinda V was captured and taken to India , and the Cholas sacked the city of Anuradhapura . They moved the capital to Polonnaruwa and subsequent Sri Lankan rulers who came into power after the Chola reign continued to use Polonnaruwa as the capital , thus ending the Anuradhapura Kingdom .

= = Administration = =

The kingdom was under the rule of a king . The consecration ceremonies and rituals associated with kingship began during the reign of Devanampiya Tissa , under the influence of Ashoka of India . The whole country was brought under the rule of a single monarch by Dutthagamani for the first time . Before this , it had several principalities independent of the Anuradhapura Kingdom . The succession of the throne was patrilineal , or if that cannot be the case , inherited by the eldest brother of the previous king . The king of Anuradhapura was seen as the supreme ruler throughout the island , even at times when he did not have absolute control over it .

Four dynasties have ruled the kingdom from its founding to its ending . The rulers from Vijaya to Subharaja (60 ? 67) are generally considered as the Vijayan dynasty . Pandukabhaya was the first ruler of the Anuradhapura Kingdom belonging to this dynasty . The Vijayan dynasty existed until Vasabha of the Lambakanna clan seized power in 66 AD . His ascension to the throne saw the start of the first Lambakanna dynasty , which ruled the country for more than three centuries . A new dynasty began with Dhatusena in 455 . Named the Moriya dynasty , the origins of this line are uncertain although some historians trace them to Shakya princes who accompanied the sapling of the Sri Maha Bodhi to Sri Lanka . The last dynasty of the Anuradhapura period , the second Lambakanna dynasty , started with Manavamma (684 ? 718) seizing the throne in 684 and continued till the last ruler of Anuradhapura , Mahinda V.

= = = Officials and governing = = =

Royal officials were divided into three categories ; officials attached to the palace , officials of central administration and officials of provincial administration . One of the most important positions was the purohita , the advisor of the king . The king also had a board of ministers called amati paheja . In central administration , senapati (Commander @-@ in @-@ Chief of the Army) was a position second only to the king , and held by a member of nobility . This position , and also the

positions of yuvaraja (sub king) , administrative positions in the country 's provinces and major ports and provinces , were often held by relatives of the king .

The kingdom was often divided into sections or provinces and governed separately . Rajarata , the area around the capital , was under the direct administration of the king , while the Ruhuna (southern part of the country) and the Malaya Rata (hill country) were governed by officials called apa and mapa . These administrative units were further divided into smaller units called rata . Officials called ratiya or ratika were in charge of these . The smallest administrative unit was the gama (village) , under a village chief known as gamika or gamladda .

= = = Buddhist priesthood = = =

A close link existed between the ruler and the Sangha (Buddhist priesthood) since the introduction of Buddhism to the country . This relationship was further strengthened during Dutthagamani 's reign . The monks often advised and even guided the king on decisions . This association was initially with the Mahavihara sect , but by the middle of the 1st century BC , the Abhayagiri sect had also begun to have a close link to the ruling of the country . By the end of the 3rd century AD , the Jetavana sect had also become close to the ruler . Estrangements between the ruler and the priesthood often weakened the government , as happened during the reign of Lanjatissa . Even Valagamba 's resistance movement was initially hampered because of a rift with the Mahavihara , and he succeeded only after a reconciliation was effected . Some rulers patronized only one sect , but this often led to unrest in the country and most rulers equally supported all sects . Despite this , religious establishments were often plundered during times of internal strife by the rulers themselves , such as during the reigns of Dathopatisa I (639 ? 650) and Kashyapa II (650 ? 659) .

= = = Law = = =

Customs , traditions and moral principles based on Buddhism were used as the bases of law . Specific laws were eventually developed and adopted . Samantapasadika , a 5th @-@ century commentary , gives details of complex regulations on the theft of fish . The chief judicial officer was known as vinicayamacca and there were several judicial officers under him , known as vinicchayaka . Apart from them , village headmen and provincial governors were also given the power to issue judgments . The king was the final judge in legal disputes , and all cases against members of the royal family and high dignitaries of the state were judged by him . However , the king had to exercise this power with care and after consulting with his advisers . Udaya I recorded judgments that were regarded as important precedents in the royal library in order to maintain uniformity in judicial decisions .

Initially , the administration of justice at village level was the responsibility of village assemblies , which usually consisted of the elders of the village . However , towards the end of the Anuradhapura Kingdom a group of ten villages , known as dasagam , was responsible for upholding justice in that area . The laws and legal measures to be followed by them were proclaimed by the king . Several rock inscriptions that record these proclamations have been found in archaeological excavations . Punishments differed from ruler to ruler . Some kings , such as Sanghabodhi (247 ? 249) and Voharika Tissa (209 ? 231) were lenient in this aspect , while rulers like Ilanaga (33 ? 43) and Jetthatissa I (263 ? 273) were harsher . However , crimes such as treason , murder and slaughter of cattle were generally punishable by death .

= = = Economy = = =

The economy of the Anuradhapura Kingdom was based mainly on agriculture . The main agricultural product was rice , the cultivation of which was supported by an intricate irrigation network . Rice cultivation began around the Malvatu oya , Deduru oya and Mahaweli river and spread throughout the country . Shifting cultivation was also done during the rainy seasons . Rice was produced in two main seasons named Yala and Maha . Due to the extensive production of rice ,

the country was mostly self @-@ sufficient . Cotton was grown extensively to meet the requirements of cloth . Sugarcane and Sesame were also grown and there are frequent references in classical literature to these agricultural products . Finger millet was grown as a substitute for rice , particularly in the dry zone of the country . Surpluses of these products , mainly rice , were exported .

The primary goods exported during the Anuradhapura period are gemstones , spices , pearls and elephants , while ceramic ware , silks , perfumes and wines were imported from other countries . Foreign merchants , mainly Arabs , often acted as middlemen in these imports and exports . Luxury cloth was also imported from Eastern India and China . A stone inscription in Anuradhapura implies that the market or bazaar was an important functionality in the city . Trade was limited in villages since they were mostly self @-@ sufficient , but essential commodities such as salt and metal had to be obtained from outside . The country 's position in the Indian Ocean and its natural bays made it a centre of international trade transit . Ports such as Mahatittha (Mannar) and Gokanna (Trincomalee) were used as trading ports during the Anuradhapura Kingdom .

Currency was often used for settling judicial fines , taxes and payments for goods or services . However , remuneration for services to the king , officials and temples were often made in the form of land revenue . The oldest coins found at Anuradhapura date up to 200 BC . These earliest coins were punch marked rectangular pieces of silver known as kahavanu . These eventually became circular in shape , which were in turn followed by die struck coins . Uncoined metals , particularly gold and silver , were used for trading as well . Patterns of elephants , horses , swastika and Dharmacakra were commonly imprinted on the coins of this period .

The primary tax of this period was named bojakapati (grain tax) and charged for land used for cultivation . A water tax , named dakapati was also charged for the water used from reservoirs . Customs duties were also imposed in ports . Those unable to pay these taxes in cash were expected to take part in services such as repairing reservoirs . The administration of taxes was the duty of Badagaraika , the king 's treasurer .

= = Culture = =

Culture in the Anuradhapura Kingdom was largely based on Buddhism with the slaughter of animals for food considered low and unclean . As a result , animal husbandry , except for the rearing of buffalo and cattle , was uncommon . Elephants and horses were prestige symbols , and could only be afforded by the nobility . The skills needed to train and care for these animals were highly regarded . Cattle and buffalo were used for ploughing and preparing paddy fields . Dairy products formed an important part of people 's diets while Pali and Sinhala literature often refer to five products obtained from the cow : milk , curd , buttermilk , ghee and butter . Bullocks and bullock carts were also used for transport .

Metalwork was an important and well @-@ developed craft , and metal tools such as axes , mammoities and hoes were widely used . Weapons and tools of iron and steel were produced in large scale for the military . A good indication of the development of metalwork of this period is the Lovamahapaya , which had been roofed entirely with copper .

Villages were usually concentrated around irrigation reservoirs to enable easy access to water for agriculture . Houses stood immediately below the reservoir embankment , between the water and the paddy fields below . This facilitated easy control of the water supply to the fields and also supported maintenance of domestic gardens for fruit and vegetable production . A village typically consisted of a cluster of dwellings , paddy fields , a reservoir , a grazing ground , shift crop reserves and a village forest . In areas of high rainfall , a perennial watercourse often took the place of the reservoir . Inland fishing was widespread during the Anuradhapura Kingdom period because of the numerous reservoirs . Although not entirely absent , sea fishing was not common during this period mainly because of the rudimentary nature of transporting sea fish to cities which were located far inland .

Women appear to have been allowed considerable freedom and independence during this period . Dutthagamani frequently sought his mother 's advice during his military campaign . Rock inscriptions show that women donated caves and temples for the use of the sangha . However , there are no

records of women holding any administrative posts . It is not clear if women were given equal footing with men , but they did have complete freedom in religious matters .

= = = Religion = = =

After the introduction of Buddhism to Sri Lanka during the reign of Devanampiya Tissa , it spread throughout the country under his patronage . After this , the rulers were expected to be the protectors of Buddhism in the country and it became a legitimizing factor of royal authority . Three fraternities of Buddhism had come into existence by the end of the Anuradhapura Kingdom ; Mahavihara , Abhayagiri and Jetavana . Mahavihara was established immediately after the introduction of Buddhism to the country . Representing the Theravada teachings , it remained strictly conventional throughout the Anuradhapura Kingdom . The Abhayagiri fraternity , established after Abhayagiriya was built , represented several schools of Buddhist thought . It did not restrict itself to Theravada and accepted Mahayana and Tantric ideas as well . Little evidence exists on the Jetavana fraternity which was established after the Jetavanaramaya was built , later than the other two . However , it too was receptive to new and more liberal views regarding Buddhism .

Rulers sponsored Theravada and often took steps to stop the spreading of Mahayana beliefs . Rulers such as Aggabodhi I , Kashyapa V (914 ? 923) and Mahinda IV (956 ? 972) promulgated disciplinary rules for the proper conduct of the Sangha . Voharika Tissa and Gothabhaya (249 ? 262) expelled several monks from the order for supporting such views . A change in this occurred when Mahasena embraced Mahayana teachings and acted against Theravada institutions . However , he too accommodated Theravada teachings after the population rebelled against him . As the kingdom and the authority of kings declined , Mahayana and Tantric doctrines again began to spread , however , Theravada remained the main and most widespread doctrine .

Followers of Hinduism were also present to some extent during the Anuradhapura Kingdom . There were a number of them in Rajarata during Elara 's reign . Mahasena destroyed several Hindu temples during his reign in the 2nd century . Particularly Indian merchant communities living near ports such as Mahatittha and Gokanna were followers of Hinduism and Hindu temples were constructed in these areas . By the end of the Anuradhapura Kingdom , large Hindu temples such as the Koneswaram temple had been constructed . Historical sources indicate that there were also Jains in Anuradhapura during the reign of Valagamba .

= = = Literature = = =

from the 3rd century BC to 3rd century AD , inscriptions are recorded in the Brahmi script . This gradually developed into the modern Sinhala script , but this was not complete by the end of the Anuradhapura Kingdom . The first reference in historical sources to any written work is about 80 BC , but both Sinhala and Pali literature existed even two centuries before this , if not earlier . The oldest Sinhala literature is found at Sigiriya . Poems written from the 6th century to the end of the Anuradhapura kingdom are found among the graffiti on the mirror wall at Sigiriya . Most of these verses are describing or even addressed to the female figures depicted in the frescoes of Sigiriya . The majority of these poems have been written between the 8th and 10th centuries .

Only three Sinhala books survive from the Anuradhapura period . One of them , Siyabasalakara , was written in the 9th or 10th century on the art of poetry and is based on the Sanskrit Kavyadarsha . Dampiya Atuva Gatapadaya is another , and is a glossary for the Pali Dhammapadam . The third book is Mula Sikha Ha Sikhavalanda , a set of disciplinary rules for Buddhist monks . Both these have been written during the last two centuries of the Anuradhapura period .

During the reign of Valagamba , the Pali Tripitaka was written in palm leaves . Several commentaries on Buddhism , known as Atthakatha have also been written during the reign of Mahanama (406 ? 428) . Pali chronicles such as Dipavamsa and Mahavamsa have been written during the Anuradhapura Kingdom , and are still useful as resources for studying the history of the country .

== = Art == =

The Sigiriya Frescoes found at Sigiriya , Sri Lanka were painted during the reign of King Kashyapa I (ruled 477 ? 495 AD) . Depicting female figures carrying flowers , they are the oldest surviving paintings of the Anuradhapura period . Various theories exist as to who are shown in these paintings . Some suggest that they are apsaras (celestial nymphs) , others suggest that they are the ladies of the king 's court or even a representation of lightning and rain clouds . Although they bear some similarity to the paintings of Ajanta in India , there are significant differences in style and composition suggesting that these are examples of a distinctive Sri Lankan school of art .

Paintings from a cave at Hindagala date back to the late Anuradhapura period , and may even belong to the same period as the Sigiriya paintings . The paintings of Sigiriya and Hindagala are the only surviving specimens of art of the Anuradhapura Kingdom . However , remnants of paintings indicate that walls and ceilings of some buildings and the inside walls of stupas and vahalkadas were also painted . Saddhatissa had employed painters to decorate the Ruwanweli Seya when his brother Dutthagamani wanted to see it on his death bed .

Statue making , most noticeably statues of the Buddha , was an art perfected by the Sri Lankan sculptors during the Anuradhapura Kingdom . The earliest Buddha statues belonging to the Anuradhapura period date back to the 1st century AD . Standard postures such as Abhaya Mudra , Dhyana Mudra , Vitarka Mudra and Kataka Mudra were used when making these statues . The Samadhi statue in Anuradhapura , considered one of the finest examples of ancient Sri Lankan art , shows the Buddha in a seated position in deep meditation , and is sculpted from dolomite marble and is datable to the 4th century . The Tolvila statue is similar to this , and dates to the later stages of the Anuradhapura Kingdom . Notable standing Buddha statues dating from the Anuradhapura period include the ones at Avukana , Maligavila and Buduruvagala . The Buduruvagala statue is the tallest in the country , standing at 50 feet (15 m) . All these statues are carved out of rock .

The carvings at Isurumuniya are some of the best examples of the stone carving art of the Anuradhapura Kingdom . Skill in arts was a respected and valued trait during this period and artists were well rewarded by the rulers . The Mahavamsa records that Jetthatissa II (328 ? 337) was himself skilled in stone and ivory carving .

== = Architecture == =

The construction of stupas was noticeable not only during the Anuradhapura Kingdom but throughout the history of Sri Lanka . Stupas were built enshrining an object of worship . The stupa of Thuparamaya , built by Devanampiya Tissa , is one of the earliest built and was constructed immediately after the arrival of Buddhism . The construction of large stupas was begun by King Dutthagamani with the construction of the Ruwanweli Seya , standing 300 feet (91 m) high with a circumference of 298 feet (91 m) .

The Anuradhapura dagabas which date from the early centuries of the Anuradhapura period , are of such colossal proportions that they constitute the largest structures of their type anywhere in the Buddhist World , even rivaling the Pyramids of Egypt in size .

The Abhayagiri stupa in the Abhayagiriya monastic complex is another large stupa of the Anuradhapura period the original height of which was 350 feet (110 m) . The Jetavana stupa , constructed by Mahasen , is the largest in the country . Stupas had deep and well constructed foundations , and the builders were clearly aware of the attributes of the materials used for construction . Suitable methods for each type of material have been used to lay foundations on a firm basis .

All buildings have been adorned with elaborate carvings and sculptures and were supported by large stone columns . These stone columns can be seen in several buildings such as the Lovamahapaya (brazen palace) . Drainage systems of these buildings are also well planned , and terra cotta pipes were used to carry water to drainage pits . Large ponds were attached to some monasteries , such as the Kuttam Pokuna (twin pond) . Hospital complexes have also been found

close to monasteries . Buildings were constructed using timber , bricks and stones . Stones were used for foundations and columns , while brick were used for walls . Lime mortar was used for plastering walls .

= = Irrigation and water management = =

Rainfall in the dry zone of Sri Lanka is limited to 50 @-@ 75 inches . Under these conditions , rain fed cultivation was difficult , forcing early settlers to develop means to store water in order to maintain a constant supply of water for their cultivations . Small irrigation tanks were constructed at village level , to support the cultivations of that village . The earliest medium @-@ scale irrigation tank is the Basawakkulama reservoir built by King Pandukabhaya . Nuwara wewa and Tissa Wewa reservoirs were constructed a century later . These reservoirs were enlarged in subsequent years by various rulers .

Construction of large scale reservoirs began in the 1st century AD under the direction of Vasabha . The Alahara canal , constructed by damming the Amban river to divert water to the west for 30 miles (48 km) , was constructed during this period . Among the reservoirs constructed during the reign of Vasabha , Mahavilacchiya and Nocchipotana reservoirs both have circumferences of about 2 miles (3 @. @ 2 km) . During the reign of Mahasen , the Alahara canal was widened and lengthened to supply water to the newly constructed Minneriya tank , which covered 4 @, @ 670 acres (18 @. @ 9 km²) and had a 1 @. @ 25 miles (2 @. @ 01 km) long and 44 feet (13 m) high embankment . He was named Minneri Deiyo (god of Minneriya) for this construction and is still referred to as such by the people in that area . The Kavudulu reservoir , Pabbatanta canal and Hurulu reservoir were among the large irrigation constructions carried out during this period . These constructions contributed immensely to the improvement of agriculture in the northern and eastern parts of the dry zone . Reservoirs were also constructed using tributaries of the Daduru Oya during this period , thereby supplying water to the south western part of the dry zone . This conservation and distribution of water resources ensured that the water supply was sufficient throughout the dry zone . James Emerson Tennent described the ancient irrigation network as :

... there seems every reason to believe that from their own subsequent experience and the prodigious extent to which they occupied themselves in the formulation of works of this kind , they attained a facility unsurpassed by the people of any other country .

The water resources of the dry zone were further exploited during the times of Upatissa I and Dhatusena . The construction of the Kala wewa , covering an area of 6 @, @ 380 acres (25 @. @ 8 km²) with an embankment 3 @. @ 75 miles (6 @. @ 04 km) long and 40 feet (12 m) high , was done during Dhatusena 's reign . A 54 miles (87 km) canal named the Jayaganga carries water from the Kala wewa to the Tissa Wewa and feeds a network of smaller canals . The construction of this network is also attributed to Dhatusena . The Jayaganga supplied water to 180 square kilometres of paddy fields . By the end of the 5th century , two major irrigation networks , one supported by the Mahaweli river and the other by Malvatu Oya and Kala Oya , were covering the Rajarata area . The Mahavamsa records that many other rulers constructed a number of irrigation tanks , some of which have not yet been identified . By the 8th century , large tanks such as Padaviya , Naccaduva , Kantale and Giritale had come into existence , further expanding the irrigation network . However , from the 8th century to the end of the Anuradhapura Kingdom , there wasn 't much activity in construction of irrigation works .

= = = Technology = = =

Advanced technology was required for the planning and construction of large reservoirs and canals . When constructing reservoirs , the gaps between low ridges in the dry zone plains were used for damming water courses . Two different techniques were used in construction ; one method involved making an embankment using natural rock formations across a valley and the other involved diverting water courses through constructed canals to reservoirs . All the reservoirs and canals in an area were interconnected by an intricate network , so that excess water from one will flow into the

other . The locations of these constructions indicate that the ancient engineers were aware of geological formations in the sites as well , and made effective use of them . Underground conduits have also been constructed to supply water to and from artificial ponds , such as in the Kuttam Pokuna and the ponds at Sigiriya .

The 54 miles (87 km) long Jayaganga has a gradient of six inches to the mile , which indicates that the builders had expert knowledge and accurate measuring devices to achieve the minimum gradient in the water flow . The construction of Bisokotuva , a cistern sluice used to control the outward flow of water in reservoirs , indicates a major advancement in irrigation technology . Since the 3rd century , these sluices , made of brick and stone , were placed at various levels in the embankments of reservoirs .

= = Military = =

During the early stages , the Anuradhapura Kingdom did not have a strong regular army except for a small body of soldiers . These were assigned for guarding the capital and the royal palace . The King had the right to demand an able bodied son for military service from every family in his kingdom . In times of war , a larger army was formed using this method . An army consisted of four main divisions ; an elephant corps , cavalry , chariots and infantry . This combination was called Chaturangani Sena (fourfold army) . However , the majority of the army was infantry composed of swordsmen , spearmen and archers .

When such an army was prepared , it was commanded by several generals . The Commander @-@ in @-@ Chief of the army was usually a member of nobility . The King and his generals led the army from the front during battles , mounted on elephants . The major cities of the kingdom were defended with defensive walls and moats . Sieges , often lasting several months , were common during warfare . Single combat between the opposing kings or commanders , mounted on elephants , often decided the outcome of the battle .

South Indian mercenaries were often employed in the armies of the Anuradhapura Kingdom during its latter stages . Manavamma and Moggallana I (491 ? 508) obtained the assistance of the Pallavas during succession disputes to secure the throne . However , the Anuradhapura kingdom appears to have had strong armies during some periods , such as when Sena II sent his armies to South India against the Pandyan king . Gajabahu I also launched an invasion against South India to rescue 12 @,@ 000 captives , and brought back 12 @,@ 000 prisoners as well as the freed captives . Surprisingly however , a navy was not considered important during the Anuradhapura Kingdom , and one was rarely maintained . This would have been the first line of defence for the island nation and would also have been helpful in dealing with invasions from South India .