

Kuttampokuna

Twin Ponds| Architectural landscape

Kuttam Pokuna



Kuttam pokuna is just one of the Anuradhapura 's architectural landscapes to be discovered or travelled. Places like Kuttam Pokuna attract tourists to develop Sri lankan Tourism. The twin ponds so called as Kuttam Pokuna are in North Central province Sri Lanka .

It was supposed to be a swimming pool with terraces for the Monks. This dates back to the 8th and 10th centuries. Regarding this construction, it is unbelievable to construct such a place without the aid of modern technology at that time. It is yet another example for significant hydrological achievement in engineering and architecture. Archeologists say that the ponds were built around 8th and 10th centuries.

Northern pond is 91 feet long while the southern pond is 132 feet long. Therefore the ponds are varying from size. The larger pond was used over 5000 monks to sit and chat while the smaller pool was used by the senior monks. It seemed to be that the originator was compelled to connect them unexpectedly. By the way he has been succeeded in carving this giant granite rock smoothly and turning to a pool. Both ponds consist with a staged staircase which lasts to the bottom of the pool. Northern has 20 steps of 3 stages and the other 18 steps of 2 stages. Balustrades and punkalases (vases /pots) can be seen on the sides of both ponds.

This is an improved indication of ancient sri lankan Irrigation system. The pools were filled from the water which come through underground earthenware pipes from the man made reservoir, Basawakkulama. The water that fills to the Northern pond first flows into a filtering basin. When it has reached the enclosure limit automatically eastern one was filled through an underground pipe. This underground water supply can be seen at one end of the second bath. So that we can understand it was regulated water inflows and outflows.

After emptying the ponds the water was transferred to the Malwatu Oya. Thus there was a water filtration system too. The Naga statues recognized as the guardians of water (Statues showing a 5 headed sneak) can be found everywhere. A metal box was found at the bottom of the pond while the excavations done by the archeologists. It consisted of small statues of crabs and fishes deserved to be in water. It is said that the builder of twin ponds is still unknown. Today it is well conserved by the authorities for the travelers.



The smaller pond (the northern) one has been constructed first and the larger one at a later stage. They are connected through a pipeline at the bottom. The northern pond is 91 feet (28 meters) long and the other 132 feet (40 meters) .

Water to these ponds have been supplied through underground pipelines and the water is sent through several filtering chambers before it falls on the northern pond through a mouth of a dragon. The water from both ponds is drained from a small outlet in the smaller northern pond.

Though the underground pipelines are no more, you can see 4 levels of filtering of the water before it enters the ponds.

These swimming-pool-like ponds were likely used by monks from nearby Kaparamula residence hall. Water entered the larger pond through the mouth of a makara (a mythical hybrid beast featuring the body of a fish, the mouth of a crocodile and the trunk of an elephant) and then flowed to the smaller pond through an underground pipe. Note the five-headed cobra figure close to the makara and the nearby water-filter system, both at the northwestern end of the ponds.

Dimensions

A garden was landscaped which separates the two ponds which long is 18½ ft. The larger pool of the two is 132 ft by 51 ft, while the smaller pool is 91 ft by 51 ft. The depths of the two pools is 14 ft and 18 ft for the smaller pool and the larger pool respectively.

Construction

The faces of the pools were cut granite slabs which includes the bottom and the sides of the pool. A wall was also built around the pool which encloses the compound. Flights of steps are seen on both ends of the pool decorated with punkalas, or pots of abundance and scroll design. Embankments were constructed to enable monks to bathe using pots or other utensils. Water to the pools were transferred through underground ducts and filtered before flowing to the pool and in a similar fashion the water was emptied.

Dr. Senarath Paranavithana was actively involved in the restoration of the ponds, in which small figures of fish, a conch, a crab and a dancing woman were found in the bottom.

Photos before restoration



Kuttam Pokuna before restoration – photo taken on late 1800's or early 1900's



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