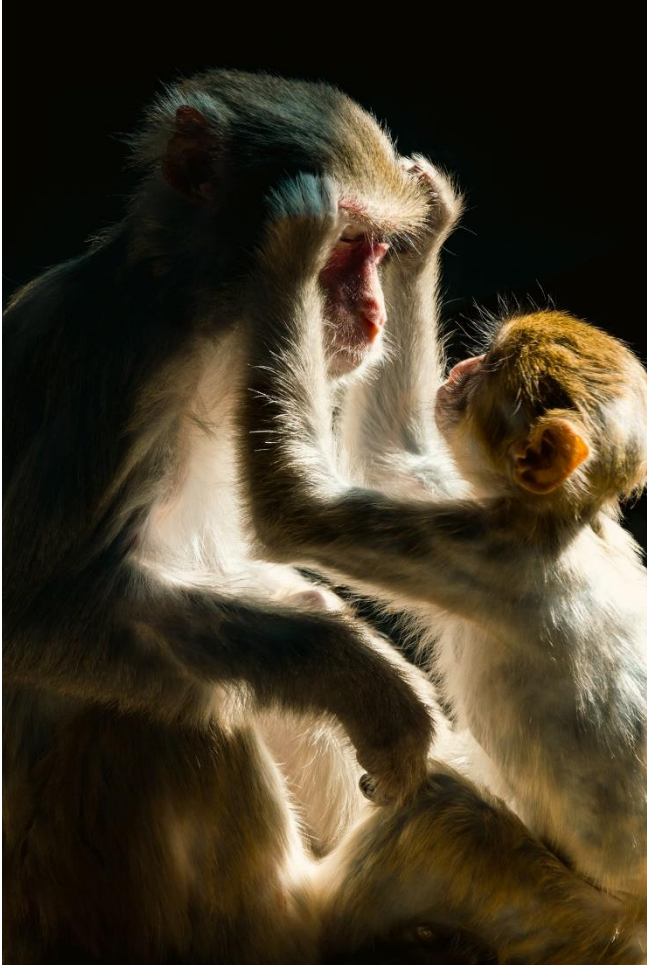


THE ANCIENT CITY OF ANURADHAPURA



The ancient city of Anuradhapura.

Anuradhapura is an ancient capital of Sri Lanka. This is the first kingdom and the first capital of Sri Lanka. The city of Anuradhapura has now been declared a UNESCO World Heritage City.

Anuradhapura is located at a height of about 295 feet above sea level in the northern plains of Sri Lanka. Today it is the last city in the North Central Province. Anuradhapura is located on the banks of the Malwathu Oya in the North Central Province, about 205 kilometers north of the current capital city of Colombo. Anuradhapura is the longest kingdom in Sri Lanka. From the 4th century BC to the 11th century AD, Anuradhapura was the capital of the Sinhalese kingdom. During that time there was a very powerful and stable and lasting political regime and people life in South Asia. And it was a great civilization with a very rich and invincible culture. The ancient city of Anuradhapura, which is currently about 40 square kilometers and surrounded by a large number of temples, occupies a very important and sacred place in Buddhist Sri Lanka. The ancient city of Anuradhapura can be introduced as one of the major archaeological sites in Sri Lanka.

Anuradhapura was the capital of the Kingdom of Anuradhapura from the 4th century AD until the 11th century. Considered to be the most stable and enduring center of political power and urban life in South Asia during this period. Anuradhapura is a city spread over 16 square miles.

➤ Beginning

The plan of Anuradhapura is described in the Mahavamsa as follows.



It is said that Anuradhapura was made the capital by King Pandukabhaya in the 4th century BC, and the city and its suburbs were established according to a well-organized plan. "Abhaya Vapi" or Abhaya Veva was also made by him. Temples were also built for the demons Kalavela and Chittaraja. An idol in the form of Velambaka for the goddess Chetiya was built in the royal palace premises and annual sacrifices were made for all these demon-deities. He also specified the places where the cemetery of the city, the land of Wadaka, the temple of the western queen, the banyan tree dedicated to Vessavan, the palm tree for Vyadhadev, the dwelling place for the Yonas, the house of soul sacrifice, etc. should be established. Tasks to be performed by slaves or

Chandalas were prescribed and a village was allotted for them. Residences were built for the Nighantas, the vagrants, the Ajivas and the Brahmins. Village boundaries were also decided. Making Anuradhapura the last city, the tradition created by King Pandukabhaya as far back as the 4th century BC is very important.

The sanitary and administrative arrangements made for the city and the sacred places show that the city was developed according to some centralized plan for a period of time. After the death of King Pandukabhaya, his son Mutasiva became the king. During his reign of sixty years, the city of Anuradhapura continued to be the capital, and the "Mahameghavana Garden" (or Mahamewuna Uyana) was established at the same time, which played an important role in the early years when Buddhism was introduced to the island. 236 years after the passing away of Lord Buddha, the era of Buddhism was introduced to Sri Lanka during the reign of King Mutasiva's son Devanampiyathissa. Emperor Ashoka who lived in India was a contemporary of King Devanampiyatissa. This period is between 250 - 210 BC. This period marks the beginning of Sri

Lanka's statehood and the beginning of a civilization based on Buddhism, one of the greatest religions in Asia.

➤ **Buddhism and Anuradhapura**



With the introduction of Buddhism, this city gained great prominence and an era of great construction began. Mahavamsa says that King Kutakanna Tissa built the first wall with a wall seven cubits high in front of a water ditch. Later, King Vasabha raised this from 11 cubits to 18 cubits and made it more powerful. Also, the king built strong gatehouses and vassal shops, the ruins of which can still be seen today. The Mahavamsa further says that they were consulted by omen tellers and Vastu Vidhus during the construction.

According to the reports of the famous Fahian Thero who participated in the expedition, he was extremely surprised to see the plan and construction of this city. According to him, the area inhabited by the people of the city was mainly divided into two parts. One part for the traders and the other part for the common people dependent on agriculture. More details about these vendors are available from other sources. The houses of the merchants mentioned here were in

very good condition and could be considered as houses of the rich class. Some of the traders were foreigners and can be identified as South Indian, Mediterranean and Persian.

As mentioned in the Mahavamsa, King Devanampiya Tissa completed the semamalaka etc. required for the Uposatha Karmas of the Sangha. He firmly believed that the king and the people should live based on the philosophy of Lord Buddha. King Devanampiya Tissa marked the boundaries of the Mahamegha Garden to start the construction of the Buddhist Vihararama Prasada Mandir.

➤ **Anuradhapura Pooja City and Anuradhapura New City**

Nishanka Wijayaratne served as the District Governor of Anuradhapura from 1958 to 1962. That was the turbulent period when the new city of Anuradhapura was being built. Mr. Vijayaratne, who was the chairman of the Anuradhapura Conservation Board, worked to reorganize the Pooja City. Pooja took steps to build the religious buildings that had been built in the city by moving them away from it through negotiation. Residents of the ruined sacrificial grounds settled in the new city and created the environment for free worship within the sacrificial grounds. Therefore, even today, the devotees who go to Anuradhapura to worship the Atamasthana have been allowed to perform the rituals without any obstruction.

Moreover, he also worked to expand the new city plan for 100,000 people, which was planned for 25,000 people. Built two bridges to enter Anuradhapura. He also fulfilled the responsibility of building Anuradhapura Airport despite some objections.

