

## Highway system in Ancient Sri Lanka

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### Abstract

Historical information about the ancient road network of Sri Lanka is restricted to random records encountered in historical documents and information recorded as a result of research carried out during the British administration. This study is based on a recent research conducted with special attention towards the technical aspects of the ancient road system and its expansion over the island. An attempt is also made to reconstruct the road system that existed from the third century BC up to 13<sup>th</sup> century AD. Modern research techniques are applied in identifying technical aspects and the expansion of the road system that is in discussion. Political stability, strength of the ruling power, economic prosperity and the establishment, and the spared of religious institutions contributed to the sustainability and expansion of a developed road network during the period. Technical know-how and the expertise that had been applied and made use of in constructing road system in contemporary South Asian countries could be identified within the national road network in ancient Sri Lanka too. Geographically Sri Lanka being an island, it had maintained a close relationship with several international sea routes. Hence as an infrastructural facility, a road network connecting cities and urban areas to inward places had developed. Furthermore island had maintained a close relationship with long distance sea routes that facilitated an international trade. That helped the existence of a systematic road network expanding towards regional and peripheries from the main cities.

**Key Words:** *Roads, Infrastructure, Transport technology, Maintenance, Reconstruction*

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