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Transport system in ancient Sri Lanka

Gangani Kumari Ranasinghe¹, Nadeeka Kumudini Singhabahu² and Sudarma Premasiri²

Transport was an important aspect of the day to day life of the ancient Sri Lankans. Various transport facilities were used and available for the king, higher officers and the general public too.

What was important is that, since transport was very important to the state, information and facts pertaining to transport was documented. Because of this, information regarding ancient transport system can be found in various primary sources. This research is focused on such documents pertaining to the period starting from the reign of King Devanampiyatissa to the end of the Anuradhapura Period of the history of Sri Lanka.

The main objective of this research was to identify the main modes of transportation during the Anuradhapura Period. The secondary objective was to answer the question, 'Who benefited from the transportation system in ancient times? The occasions for which transportation was used was also examined.

In order to collect data both primary and secondary sources were used, including texts such as the Mahavamsa, Deepavamsa, and Vamsattappakisini.

It is evident from these sources, that the king as the head of the state enjoyed the highest of privileges, in terms of transportation. It is also clear that, transport facilities have been used in the Anuradhapura Period for religious, military and commercial activities in addition to transporting the general public in their day to day activities.

It can be concluded that, a highly developed transport system existed during the Anuradhapura Period. And almost all the sections of the society used various modes of transport for their day to day activities.

Key words: *Anuradhapura Period, Transport, Primary sources, Devanampiyatissa*