

MONASTIC ECONOMY IN THE KINGDOM OF ANURĀDHAPURA AS GLEANED FROM THE EPIGRAPHICAL EVIDENCES

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Abstract

This research paper aimed to gather facts that shed light on inscriptions on the monastic economy. The first kingdom of Sri Lanka was Anuradhapura, which prevailed from 5th B.E.C to 11th C.E and lasted nearly 15 centuries. After the introduction of Buddhism to Sri Lanka by the son of emperor Asoka, Mahinda thera caves became a safe dwelling place for the early brotherhood. The various philanthropists, professionals, and royal family members also patronaged these caves in diverse ways. As time passed, these caves expanded to complexes of monasteries. The wealth of the country drained to these monastic complexes. The authority to collect taxes was granted to the temples by the monarch. There are plenty of references in the inscriptions and the chronicles. Manumission is another outstanding feature that prevailed in the monastery. The descriptions which belong to some monasteries give testimony to the economic entity of the country. These monasteries evolve from simple to complex. Finally, it became a dominating center of the economy in the country. This paper is deemed to study all these aspects in this research paper.

Key words: monastery, economy, niyamatana, Anurādhapura, inscriptions

Introduction

Religion is the faculty of mind which enables a man to grasp the infinite, independent of sense and reason. Religion has its origin in human mind. Religion and religious pursuits are the part and parcel of human life from the ancient period. Of all the institutions, the most important one was the temple. In Pre historic times, the worship of images in the open possibly under the trees was prevalent. The temples, images, monasteries are vehicle of religion built for the fulfillment of the spiritual desire of people. It was a powerful social and economic entity and a source of religious aspiration of the people.

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In the early period monasteries are considered as a simple institution. It was not a wealthy and complex institution. Making gifts and grants to the monasteries became universal in the early 8th century C.E. The Hindus give more importance to danam (donations). It is ordained in the dharmasastras of the Hindus, that a portion of earnings of every man should be set apart and devoted to charity. Gifts were considered extremely efficacious.

The kingdom of Anurādhapura existed from the 5thB.C.E. to 11thC.E. in Sri Lanka. Many of the inscriptions shed light on the monastic economy that prevailed in that period. The wealth of the country is circulated or existed under the control of monastery. The royalty, laymen and women, professionals, administrative officers, monks, and nuns contributed to the wellbeing of the monastery in different way. The attention is basically paid on inscriptions. The prevalence of ancient banking system in Anurādhapurahas been discussed in the light of four important inscriptions found in various parts of the country. They are Tōnigala rock inscription, Labuātabāṇḍigala inscription, Kaludiyapokuṇa inscription and Eppāvala inscription. The interest which gain from the above institution had been donated to the maintenance and festivals to be conducted in the monasteries. The paper's primary goal is to examine grants and donations given to monasteries by various types of philanthropist and to analyze the status of economy in the kingdom of Anurādhapura. The methodology applied in this paper is both descriptive and analytical. Based on the data inferred from the inscriptions, facts are presented in a coherent manner in the paper. The hypothetical frame of the research paper is intended to reveal the role of charities and institutions-initiated endowments to the monasteries. The primary sources for the paper is consulted from the epigraphical evidences.

The Evidence from the Brahmi inscriptions

As noted in the earliest Brāhmī inscriptions in Sri Lanka, the monks have received caves as gifts from a variety of specialists. The majority of the caves among them were gifts from those who held the status of parumuka. In contrast to India, Sri Lankan women had more freedom to participate in religious activities. The Brāhmī inscriptions say that the ladies had the honor of giving the caves to the monks. Additionally, the nuns gave the Saṅgha caves. The two Brāhmī inscriptions from Mihintalē mention caves that two nuns donated, and there is ample proof for this. Another intriguing aspect is that the Brāhmaṇas gave the caves to Saṅgha as well. According to the Maha-Āḷagamuva inscription (IC 1970. vol. i. no. 228:18), a Brāhmaṇa gave the Saṅgha a cave. In several cases, the fraternity has received cave donations from the monks themselves. The majority of the monks who donated the caves are of higher status. One such example is the mention of a cave in the Kadurvāva Brāhmī inscription, which was dedicated by the senior Datta, a Vinaya scholar (IC 1970, vol. i, no. 1207:98).

Professionals who specialize in Brahmi inscriptions gave the caverns to the Saṅgha for their use. These professionals are Merchants(vanija) (IC 1970: no. 515, no. 585), Officer in Charge of Store House (badakarika) (IC 1970: no. 245, no. 629, no. 916), Mariner (nāvika) (IC 1970: no. 977a), Physician (veja) (IC 1970: no. 676, no. 1059, no. 1214), Accountant (gaṇaka) (IC 1970: no. 212, no. 576) Chief Accountant (mahagaṇaka)(IC 1970: no. 419), Weaver (pehekāra) (Pāli:

pesakāra, Skt: peśakara) (IC 1970: no. 931a, no. 1160), Lawyer (voharanakaha) (Skt: vyavahāra) (IC 1970: no. 1122), Painter (citakara) (IC 1970: no. 1119), Teacher (acariya) (Skt: ācāryya) (IC 1970: no. 229, no. 604), Astrologer (nakatika) (IC 1970: no. 941), Poet (kavi) (IC 1970: no. 1141), Architect (vaḍakara) (IC 1970: no. 634, no. 657), Dancer (naṭa or naḍa) (IC 1970: no. 910, no. 642), Body guard of the king (cavalryman) (añikatṭha) (Skt: anīkastha) (IC 1970: no. 77, no. 77), Trainer of horses (asāruya) (Pāli: assāroha, Skt: aśvāroha) (IC 1970: no. 355, no. 1158), Trainer of war elephants (ati-acariya) (Pāli: hatthācariya) (IC 1970: no. 112, no. 494, no. 993), Archers (danu-gaya or danu-ga) (Pāli: dhanuggāha, Skt: dhanurgrāha) (IC 1970: no. 925), Goldsmith (tuladara or taladara) (IC 1970: no. 80, no. 593), Coppersmith (tabalara) (Pāli: Tambakāra, Skt: tāmraakāra) (IC 1970: no. 350, no. 319, no. 351), tinsmith (topaśa) (IC 1970: no. 370), Lapidary (maṇikara) (IC 1970: no. 74) Ironsmith (kabara) (Skt: karmmāra, Pāli: kammāra) (IC 1970: no. 161d, no. 301), Potters (kubakara) (Skt. and Pāli: kumbhakāra) (IC 1970: no. 807), Worker in ivory (daṭika) (IC 1970: no. 807), Businessman (vāpara) (Skt: vyāpārin) (IC 1970: no. 1205, no. 1186), Dealer in tamarind (abala-vābara) (IC 1970: no. 1186), Record keeper (kaṇapedika) (IC 1970: no. 1202), Revenue collector (ayaka) (IC 1970: no. 429, no. 471), Maker of the bows (danukaya) (IC 1970: no. 1136), Stone mansion (śīla-paśaṇe) (IC 1970: no. 1089), Proprietor of the tanks (vapi-hamika) (IC 1970: no. 1129, no. 1130), charge of city affairs (pura-kamṭa) (IC 1970: no. 1002), Professor (Vinaya dara) (IC 1970: no. 1178, no. 1207), Superintendent of trade (paṇadaka) (IC 1970: no. 1128), Reciter (bāṇaka) (IC 1970: no. 1061), Superintend of the royal kitchen (Parumaka-batakaraka) (IC 1970: no. 507), Ferry keeper (toḍika) (IC 1970: no. 309, no. 860), Commander in chief (śenapatiparumaka) (IC 1970: no. 620, no. 665), Storekeeper (kotagarika) (IC 1970: no. 214, no. 215, no. 226), Minister (mataha) (IC 1970: no. 997, no. 1205), Burgomaster (nagara gutiya) (IC 1970: no. 230, no. 1219), Superintendent of the Mint (gapatirupadaka) (IC 1970: no. 940), Irrigation officer (aṇaṇika) (IC 1970: no. 846), Superintendent of Palanquins (śivikaadekaha) (IC 1970: no. 896a, no. 896b), Envoy (dutakaha) (IC 1970: no. 131, no. 259), Envoy mariner (dutanavikaha) (IC 1970: no. 1054, no. 1055), Superintendent of roads (pakara-adeka) (IC 1970: no. 69).

Donations of Paddy fields and villages to the Monastery

According to the BillāvegalaBrāhmī inscription, a lay devotee by the name of Tissa was given a portion of a field for the benefit of the monastery's caitya (IC 1970.vol. i.no.1118:88). According to the GalleṇaVihāraBrāhmī inscription, BakineyaMataya contributed one-half of a karisa of land (IC 1970, vol. 1, no. 1215:98). The giving of a field named Upala and eight karīsas to the monastery known as Utara-Mahā-Cēta is documented in the Jētavanārāma inscription that belonged to King Kanitta Tissa (164–192 C.E.) (EZ 1912. vol. i. 256: Lines 2-4). According to the Brāhmī inscription in Riṭigala Nāulpota, the leader Uba gave a cave and the settlement after giving ten thousand during the reign of the great king Tissa. When a cave was granted to a village alone, the hamlet's revenue was also provided for the upkeep of the cave or the monastery.

Taxes

The contributions made to the monastery known as Utara-Mahā-Ceta are documented in the Jētavanārāma inscription that belonged to king Kaniṭṭa Tissa (164–192 CE). In (EZ 1912. vol. i:256:Lines 1-2), it is stated that the monastery has been free from all legal taxes. On the profits gained from the water of the large tanks located in Majata-gamaṇa-kiriya, the same king gave tax-free privileges. Building repairs were made with the help of this cash. On the revenue received from the water of tank Viṣaḷagamika in Vihari-Bijakia and the AbhayagiriMahā-Vihāra, monarch Kaniṭṭa Tissa provided a tax-free facility (EZ 1912. vol. i. 256. Lines: 9–12). As an endowment for the upkeep of the magnificent Abhayagiri Monastery, the monarch has also provided the same facility on the money produced from the water and the income received by the bhōjika. Additionally, he has set aside two different sources of money to be used for building repairs (EZ 1912, vol. 1, lines 14–16). The provision of the water-tax to the monastery at Pahaṇabeṇa is mentioned in the Piligama rock inscription in the Uva Province (EZ 1984. vol. vii. no. 83,107-108).

The Brāhmī inscription that was discovered in the Nācciyārmalai in the Eastern Province indicates that the Saṅgha was granted a canal that the residents of Aba had built. (EZ 1984. vol. vii. no.44:69-70; IC 1970. vol. i.no.370:30). The king Dappula (924-935 C.E.) in his Vessagiri slab inscription no: 01 has granted 200 *kaḷaṇḍas* weight of gold to the Vīrāṇkurā monastery. The instructions are also given as to how the income from this endowment was to be utilized.

- i. At the conclusion of the "retreat" season [vassa], the twenty *kaḷaṇḍas* shall be designated for providing cakes to one monk annually on the two upōsatha days, and the gruel shall be put into the gruel vessel; that the same amount shall be deducted from this.
- ii. 'Ticket-rice' shall be the purpose of the sixty *kaḷaṇḍas*.
- iii. The twenty *kaḷaṇḍas*be were presented with the intention of providing garments to one of the monks receiving board and lodging on a permanent basis at the conclusion of the year.
- iv. The ten *kaḷaṇḍas*be are offered to the person who spends the night in the shrine as lamp oil.

On the upōsatha day in the middle of each month, one of those monks receiving permanent board and lodging should get one gold aka worth of jaggery and one of ghee from the twenty *kaḷaṇḍas* that have been laid up for this purpose (EZ 1912.vol. i:28).

As well as according to several Sinhalese vocabularies, a *kaḷaṇḍa* is the weight of twenty *mañjāḍi* and as each *mañjāḍi* weight about 4 grams. A *kaḷaṇḍa* will come up to 80 grams (EZ 1912. vol. i: 28). *Vasagis* a certain fixed quantity of food granted for the *vassa* season. These examples of the use age of *vasag* in connection with allowances, not only to the monks but also to the laymen. It means not nearly a 'cell' but a permanent residence with the fixed board. Further mean 'the receiver of such board and lodging'(EZ 1912. vol. i:29). Additionally, it has been said that directors of religious rituals who neglect to carry out any of these obligations at the appropriate time shall leave the monastery and forfeit their right to reside there or receive its benefits (EZ 1912.vol. i:29). The monastery, therefore, would have had to lend or invest the money on its own

initiative in a manner which would enable the fulfillment of the conditions laid down by the donor (Gunawardana R.A.L.H 1979:78). The inscription on a pillar fragment at the GonnāvaDēvāle, belonged to the 10th century mentions, that the shares of one *amuṇa* of paddy and the one *kiri* of field at each harvest, gathered be given to the inner Monastery of the Mahā- Vihāra (EZ 1934. vol. iv:190).

Manumission

The distinguished feature that can be seen after the 5th century C.E. is giving money to the monastery manumission. The Rock inscription at KoṭakandaĀtkaṇḍaVihāra inscription in the Anurādhapura district belonged to the 5th or the 6th C.E. mentions that two persons were freed from slavery having given a hundred *kahāpaṇa* by a carpenter (EZ 1991. vol.vi:122). The inscription speaks of the great king Sirisangabōdi. As mentioned in it, the king has given a hundred *kahāpaṇas* and Sīdhatha were freed from slavery (EZ 1965.vol. v:34). The inscriptions on the steps near ‘Burrows’ pavilion at Anurādhapuramentions that money was given by various obscure individuals to the AbhayagiriVihāra, for the maintenance of slaves.

Inscription no.1	One hundred kahavaṇas have been donated by the bricklayer SadevaGanaya for the upkeep of the Apahayagara monastery's slaves (EZ 1934.vol. iv:139-141).
Inscription no.2	A resident at Gutakadara has given one hundred <i>kahavaṇas</i> to the Apahayagara monastery for the maintenance of the slaves (EZ 1934. vol. iv:139-141).
Inscription no.3	Three people, called Pajana, Adasana, and Vasadevaya, residing in Mahadaragala have given two thousand <i>kahavaṇas</i> to the Apahayagara monastery for the maintenance of the slaves (EZ 1934. vol. iv:139-141).
Inscription no.4	GanaApa of Madararayanahas given one hundred <i>hūna-kahavaṇas</i> to the Apahayagara monastery for the maintenance of the slaves (EZ 1934. vol. iv:139-141).
Inscription no.5	Three people called Deva, Kala, and Savaya residing at Eraya have given one hundred <i>kahavaṇas</i> to the Apahayagara monastery (EZ 1934.vol. iv:139-141).
Inscription no.6	A resident in the village of marayu-mahapa has given one thousand <i>kahavaṇas</i> to the Apahayagara monastery (EZ 1934. vol. iv:139-141).
Inscription no.7	The GanaApa of Lava-arana has given one hundred <i>kahavaṇas</i> to the Apahayagara monastery for the maintenance of the slaves (EZ1934. vol. iv:139-141).
Inscription no.8	Five people called Paya-vāpara, vahana, Adasana, Varayana, and Ganaya of Nadanagumu have given one hundred <i>kahavaṇas</i> to the

Apahayagara monastery for the maintenance of the slaves (EZ 1934. vol. iv:139-141).

The rock inscription at Nilagama, a payment of one hundred *kahāpaṇas* was made for the needs of the slaves. The Nuvaravāva rock inscription mentions a donation of hundred *kahāpaṇas* to the GavarisaRajamahaVihāra. SirimalRanavālla has assigned this record to the sixth century C.E. (EZ 1991. vol. vi:171). On the basis of these records, we can assume that the rate existed during this period for the release of a slave was one hundred *kahāpaṇa*(EZ 1991. vol. vi:121). Dangollagama Rock inscription in the Kurunegala district mentions a person called Saman, a brick layer who lived in Vilaya, donated hundred *kahāpaṇas* to the Raja *Maha Vihāra* at Ganahavala, to purchase monastic meal tickets(EZ 1991.vol vi:173). The Nilagama rock inscription of the king Daḷa Mugalan or the Moggallāna III (618-623C.E.) mentions the hundred [*kahāpaṇas*] were granted to the great royal monastery called Tisa arami at Nilagama and he himself manumitted. Further, it is mentioned that in example, seven people have given hundred and got themselves freed from the slavery. They are Buyiperi Saba, Hilisela Sivigonahi, Bada Aba, Ddavi Aba, Cadiboya Aba, Sivi Aba and Baeli Siva.

Monastic Expenses and Discipline

The *Mahāvamsa* says that the king Aggabodhi VII (772 – 777 C.E.) enforce discipline among the priests hood according to the law. We are capable to prove this incident by the Jētavanārāma Sanskrit Inscription (EZ 1912.vol. i:4). The three monks who lived with two novices in Lahasika monastery had to look after the two villages called Lahasikā and Urulgōṇu. The villages had been set apart for the renewal of the robes of the monks. As mentioned in this inscription, the revenue of all these villages brought into the Vihāra by the respective householders. At the end of the year, the whole income and the expenditure, as well as the balance should be shown to the monks authorized by the monastery(EZ 1912. vol. i:6).There were some families which maintained the family income and book of expenditures in India too. *The Dhammasṅganippakaraṇaṭṭhakathā (Atthasālinī)* mentions about a Brāhmiṇa called Sumēdha in Amarāvathī. His minister of finance came to the Brahman and explained the family income book to him, following the death of his parents (*Dham. Atṭ* 2008:36).This shows us that there were financial maintenances for the rich families in India. The *Dhammasṅganippakaraṇaṭṭhakathā (Atthasālinī)* has been translated in to Pāli by BuddhagōṣaThēro in the 5th C.E. when he was translating the *Helatuwā* into Pāli in Sri Lanka.

The Abhayagiri slab inscription of Kassapa V (914-928 C.E.) mentions all the income and the expenditure have to be recorded and read out at the end of every year before the assembly of senior monks (EZ 1912. vol. i:55). One amuna of uncooked rice and four akas of gold will be given to those who are staying at the Maha Kapārā Piriveṇa each day for maintenance. The word “aka” is the weight of 2 ½ *māsakas* or twenty grains of rice in the husk (EZ 1912. vol. i:29). 1000 akas of gold must be provided at the end of the year to cover the cost of their robes.

The KukurumahanDamana pillar inscription, says that the king Kassapa V enforced the customary laws. As mentioned in this inscription there were some villages donated to the monastery by the king. The administration was under the monastery. Here the KukurumahanDamana pillar inscription strictly prohibited the entry of the following people. The village; headmen, the keepers of district records, the servants of the royal family, *melātti* (those who collect the tax of *melātti*), the tramps and vagrants, the holders of the management of two places of business. Finally it has been mentioned that those who have come for refuge shall not be arrested. Therefore, we can assume that there were lands under the control of the monastery (EZ 1912. vol. ii:24).

The Halbe pillar inscription of the Kassapa V (914-928 C.E.) mentions that the officers from the two fold treasury shall not enter the village (EZ 1965. vol. v:370). The fragmentary pillar inscription in the Colombo museum is said to have belonged to the period of Kassapa V. It says that the officers of the *de-ruvana* and *de-kam-tān* and the Royal messengers should not be entered into this village. Further it is mentioned that the one who has entered into this village, after committing a murder shall not be arrested but shall only be arrested after getting him ejected by the villagers. It is mentioned that the *heḷ-kuli* and *demeḷ-kuli* shall be taken as belongings by the proprietary rights of this village (EZ 1934. vol. iv:252).

The Vihāregama pillar inscription assigned to the first half of the tenth or the closing decades of the ninth, century (EZ 1934. vol. iv:55) belong most probably to the period of the king Kassapa V (914-928 C.E.) or king Sena V (972 –982 C.E.) mentions the two terms (Fig. 4.12). *heḷ-kulī* and *demeḷ-kulī* (EZ 1934. vol. iv:54). These two terms also occur in the Iripinniyāva pillar inscription (EZ 1912. vol. i: 168). Two kinds of impost, levied respectively on the Sinhalese and Tamil inhabitants of the county are probably to be understood by these two technical terms.

The Mahinda IV tablets at Mihintaleare, which date from 956 to 972 CE, contain the best documentation of a monastery's management. The salaries paid to the monks' employees are mentioned. One *kaḷaṇḍa* and four *aka* weights of gold are donated to cover the costs of the vassa season's opening ritual (EZ 1912.vol. i. 107:LI.1-3). One *Kaḷaṇḍa* of gold is provided for the clothing used for the joyous festival of the large Bōdhi tree. One *Kaḷaṇḍa* of gold has been offered as payment for the cost of the clothes worn during the Ruvanasum festival of the huge Bōdhi tree. Damiya has donated a *vasag* and two *paya* of land to a *perevāliya* of the SalamevanPavu monastery. The persons that worked in the monastery are listed here, along with the pay they received.

S.No	The people who worked in the Monastery	Wages given to them
1.	The monk who looks after the Nakā	One <i>nāḷiya</i> of raw rice daily
2.	The steward	Five <i>kiriya</i> of land

3.	The Vihāra secretary	Five <i>kiriya</i> of land
4.	The list of coffins	Five <i>kiriya</i> of land
5.	The keeper of caskets	Five <i>kiriya</i> of land
6.	The almoner	Five <i>kiriya</i> worth of land
7.	The lay warden	One <i>kiriya</i> and two <i>paya</i> of land together with two <i>aḍmanā</i> of raw rice given daily
8.	The watchman	Daily gifts include two <i>paya</i> of land and one <i>aḍmanā</i> of uncooked rice.
9.	The festival master	A <i>vasag</i> and one <i>kiriya</i> of land from <i>Damiya</i>
10.	A personal assistant who helps in calf rearing	A <i>vasag</i> and one <i>kiriya</i> of land from <i>Damiya</i>
11.	The source of the alms bowls	Each day, one <i>paya</i> of land and two <i>pata</i> of raw rice are distributed.
12.	The person in charge of outside affairs and the servant who deals with issues related to the royal family	Every day, two <i>aḍmanā</i> of raw rice and one <i>kiriya</i> and two <i>paya</i> of land are supplied.
13.	The lead artist	A <i>vasag</i> and two <i>paya</i> of land from <i>Damiya</i>
14.	Others who paint. There are eleven artists in all.	A <i>vasag</i> and two <i>paya</i> of land from <i>Damiya</i>
15.	To each of the four paymaster's employees	Daily serving of one <i>aḍmanā</i> of raw rice and two <i>paya</i> of land for life
16.	The granary's chief caretaker	The two <i>paya</i> of land with an <i>aḍmanā</i> and a <i>pata</i> of raw rice per day
17.	An je-mava	Daily gifts of two <i>paya</i> of land and one <i>aḍmanā</i> of raw rice have been made.
18.	To the refectory's warden	One <i>paya</i> of land producing two <i>pata</i> of raw rice per day and one <i>aḍmanā</i> .
19.	To the one who commands <i>mīṇḍi</i>	One <i>paya</i> of land producing everyday one <i>aḍmanā</i> and two <i>patas</i> of raw rice
20.	To each of the twenty four hired <i>mīṇḍi</i> servants	A plot of two <i>pays</i>
21.	For a servant who handles issues that come up in the <i>saṅgvālla</i>	Every day one <i>kiriya</i> of land and one <i>aḍmanā</i> of raw rice
22.	To each of the twelve cooks who serve as servants	Two <i>paya</i> and one <i>kiriya</i> of land from the <i>Taḷola</i> -game village
23.	These slaves' master is	Every day one <i>aḍmanā</i> and one <i>pata</i> of rice

24.	To a servant who gets firewood and prepares meals	Three <i>aḍmanāof</i> - rice per day
25.	To a cook who just provides firewood, as well as to a servant who runs errands	Two <i>aḍamanā</i> of rice per person each day
26.	To a maid who only prepares firewood that has been retrieved by others	A single guy of rice.
27.	To the head of the monastery's thatches	One <i>aḍmanā</i> and one pata of rice are produced everyday on two <i>pataof</i> land.
28.	To each of the monastery's eleven thatchers	Every day two <i>payaof</i> land and one <i>aḍmanā</i> of rice
29.	Five earthen pots are delivered daily by each of the five potters.	One <i>Kiriya</i> of land
30.	To an alms-bowl manufacturer who provides ten alms-bowls and ten water pots each month	Every day, two <i>kiriya</i> of land and two <i>aḍmanā</i> of rice.
31.	To the person who provides a water strainer each month	Two <i>payaof</i> and one <i>kiriya</i> of land
32.	To a doctor	A <i>vasag</i> from <i>Damiya</i> and a <i>niya-pāliyā</i> from <i>Detisāseṇa</i>
33.	To a doctor who uses leeches	A <i>vasag</i> and two <i>paya</i> of land from <i>Damiya</i>
34.	To a maṇḍovuva	Land and <i>avasag</i> from <i>Damiya</i> , one <i>kiriya</i> and two <i>payaof</i>
35.	To an astrologer	From <i>Damiya</i> , two <i>kiriyaof</i> land and a <i>vasag</i>
36.	To a barber	A <i>vasag</i> and one <i>kiriya</i> of land from <i>Damiya</i>
37.	To the 'relic-house' caretaker	Four <i>vasag</i> from <i>Damiya</i>
38.	The registrar of shrines,	
39.	The three superintendents of service by turns	
40.	Dum-mal-assam; Those who supply fragrance air.	
41.	To the two florists who decorate the relic home with white lotus blossoms	From this village's <i>krandāgama</i> , two <i>kiriya</i> of land, and one <i>vasag</i> each from <i>Damiya</i>
42.	To a keeper of blue water lilies who provides 120 blooms monthly	Land from <i>Sapugamiya</i> two <i>kiriya</i>
43.	To an artist	Two <i>kiriya</i>

44	To the district chief who maintains the museum of artifacts	One <i>naḷiya</i> of rice every day
45	The colossal Buddha statue is housed in the temple's florist.	A <i>vasag</i> from <i>Damiya</i> , two <i>paya</i> of land from this village
46	To this village's dum-mal-assam	Two <i>vasag</i> from <i>Damiya</i>
47	To a <i>pūṇākāmiya</i>	Two <i>paya</i> of land with two <i>pata</i> of rice every day and one <i>aḍmanā</i>
48	To those who provides a cup in which to take oil	A daily yield of two <i>aḍmanā</i> of rice from one <i>kiriya</i> and two <i>paya</i> of land
49	The Boṇḍ-Vehaera guild of artisans (which includes two master craftsmen, eight carvers, and two brick layers)	The village <i>VaḍuDevāgama</i>
50	To the respective master-lapidaries	Three <i>kiriya</i> of land
51	To the two blacksmiths individually	One <i>kiriya</i> of land
52	As about the lime burners	The village <i>SunuboḷDevāgama</i>
53	To the six cart men	The village <i>Dunumugama</i>
54	To the manager of employees	One <i>kiriya</i> of land with daily production of one <i>aḍmanā</i> and one <i>pata</i> of rice
55	To each of the three warders of the <i>dāgābasNavaguṇamaha-sāya</i> , <i>Nāṭeviyamahāsāya</i> and <i>Ambulu – dāgāba</i>	Two <i>paya</i> of land
56	Those who sweep, thank you everyone	One <i>vasag</i> from <i>Damiya</i>
57	To the male employees of the relic house	In the town of <i>Magulāva</i> , three <i>kiriya</i> of land.
	Two laundrymen	

What is Niyamatana (nigama)

According to the *Kāma sūtra Niddēsa Vaṇṇanā* in *Mahāniddēsaṭṭhakatā*, "nigama" refers to a market's location (Nid.A 2008:17). The term "gāma" gave rise to the words "nigama" and "nagara" (Vina.A 2009:286). According to numismatic evidence, a type of urban corporate entity known as a "nigama" held sway (Ray 1994:20). The merchant guild "nikama" (<Pkt. nigama) was located at *veḷ-arai* (*Vellārai*), which is now known as the village of *Vellarippaṭṭi* close to *Mānguḷam*, according to two inscriptions found at *Mānguḷam* in South India (nos. 3 and 6, ca. 2nd century B.C.E.) (Mahadevan 2003:141). A pottery inscription found in *Koḍumaṇal*, indicates that merchant guilds were established at various individuals and trading centers of ancient Tamil country and there was center for manufacturing of gems, steal and beads (Mahadevan 2003:141). The name "Niyama" comes from the Pāli word "nigama," which denotes a market town or guild. *Tana* refers to *stana*, a location, or it might stand for the Sanskrit word *asthāna*.

Interest gained from the ancient banks

The third-year inscription on the Tōṇigala rock, which dates to the reign of King Śrīmeghavarṇṇa (303–331 C.E.), the son of King Mahasēnacontents, important details regarding the country's economic situation at the time. It states that a certain minister gave some grain and bean deposits to a guild in the city's northern district under the condition that the money be kept in reserve and the interest be used to feed the Yahisapavata monastery's monks during the vassa season each year. In this inscription, the interest on the amount of grain placed is specifically indicated.

Devaya the son of Sivaya, a member of the Council of Ministers, who lived in the village of Kaḍubala, is also mentioned as having deposited two hakaas (cartloads) and ten amaṇas of paddy, six amaas of udi, and ten amaṇas of beans with the assembly of the merchants' guild at Kaḷahumana, which is located in the northern part of the city. These were granted for the purpose of conducting the holy vassa at Yahisapavaya's brand-new monastery (Amravasathera K. 2017: 139). Three separate harvesting seasons throughout the year are required to collect the interest for paddy. According to the inscription, the harvesting seasons were piṭadaḍa-hasa, akala-hasa, and made- hasa. Twenty-five amaṇas of paddy were recorded in the inscription along with the aforesaid two hakaḍas, ten amaṇas, interest at the primary harvest (piṭadaḍa hasa), interest at the secondary harvest, and interest at the intermediate harvest. The interest is one amaṇas and two pekaḍas of beans out of the aforementioned six amaṇas of udi. The document also lists the many kinds of food that must be provided to feed the monks, and it was traditional to provide them the best food that was readily available.

S. Paranavithana mentions in his work about the inscription, that this practice of depositing grain and getting interest, existed in Ceylon earlier than the time period for which South Indian sources of evidence are accessible. This market town called kaḷahumanawas located in the north of Anurādhapura. Perhaps, there were such nigamas, in the West and South of the City. In ancient India, at the capital city seems to have had four nigamas or market towns close to the four principal gates. In the MahāUmmagga Jataka, it is said, that the city of Mithila had four such suburbs in four directions. The dvaragamas, mentioned in the tenth chapter of the Mahavamsa, seem to have been similar.

Nearly 1.5 miles northeast of Moravāva, a village in the Kalpē Kōraḷē of the North Central Province, is where you'll find the Labuāṭabāṇḍigala inscription. According to S. Paranavithana, it dates to the fifth century or close to it. Compared to the Tōṇigala rock inscription from the third year of Śrīmeghavarṇṇa (EZ 1933, vol. iii:248), the script demonstrates a later level of development. Therefore, the current record should be dated between the reigns of King SSir Mēghavarṇṇa and King Mahānāma, or between the 4th C.E to the 5th C.E. The text states that a specific person by the name of Sirinakayi made a deposit of one hundred kahāpaṇas, with the intention of giving the monks of the Devagiri monastery the interest earned from that deposit to help cover the costs associated with the vassa celebration.

While interpreting the word, niyamatanahi S. Paranavithana says it as a term denoting a territorial division in which Devagiri Vihara was situated in Mahatabaka. He further says, “the

territorial division which included Devagiri Vihara could not have been in the city.” If we adopt this interpretation of the word, we have to take that the Kahāpaṇas in question were deposited with monks of the vihara and not with a mercantile guild. Nevertheless, one can assume most probably this might be the institution of Niyamatana administered by merchants, and this was located on the Eastern side of the city.

Another ancient document from the same time period that was discovered in the Labuātabāṇḍigala informs us that Niṭalaviṭṭiya Sivayi, the son of Raiya Sumanaya, donated twenty *kaḥāpaṇas* to the Devagiri vihāra for the purpose of holding the holy *vassa* celebration. The name of the place where twenty kaḥāpaṇas were deposited, and the interest rate has not been mentioned in the inscription.

The Kaludiyapokuṇa Inscription is situated in the Vagapaṇaha Pallēsiya Pattu in the Mātale district, in the southern-eastern corner of Kumbukkandanvala . It is dated back to the eighth year of king Sirsaṅgbo. It is not possible to identify this monarch. As S. Paranavithan points out on paleographical grounds, that this inscription may be ascribed to the reign of either Sena II or Kasspa IV and most probably belongs to the predecessors of the above two monarch (EZ 1933. vol. iii: 253).

This clarifies the presents given by various people in order to feed the monks that reside in the Dakiṇigiri monastery. The primary focus of the record is the donation made by a man by the name of Daḷana (Dāṭhānāga), who contributed twenty-third of gold in exchange for a daily supply of two of rice and one of curd. The donor's requirement that the rice be sent uncooked. In case of disagreement among the monks, it is further stipulated that food meant for them shall be tossed at birds and dogs. Evidently, Daḷanā believed that if the sangha members fought among themselves, they were no more deserving of the sacrifices of the devout than were such animals.

The Eppāvala inscription was found in the village namely Eppāvala in the North Central province. It was recently discovered in the grounds of Anurādhapura Archaeological Commissioner. This text was written in the second part of the tenth century. The writing is illegible (EZ 1933, vol. iii: 189).

According to the measuring methods revealed in the inscription, terminology like "capacity," "amua," and "yāla" are utilized as land measurements. The document relates to the documentation of a gift made by a donor going by the name of UkuṇuhusuKottā to the Pamagulu Monastery's image house and Bo tree. After depositing de kaḷandak and dasakaḷandak gold, paddy has benefited from interest. The altar where flowers are presented has been refurbished after two additional kaḷandas of gold have been deposited. The phrase "saṅgun vāpārayan pavatvanu koṭ isā" at the conclusion of the inscription indicates that the merchants and order members should sustain these charities. This revealed that the businessmen or vāpārayan had some form of power over how the monastery was run. Most likely, these vāpārayan were charitable individuals who wanted the monastery to prosper and grow.

Conclusion

It is clear that the monasteries needed a notable income to cover their expenses such as the essential requirements for the fellow brotherhood, performances of its rituals and maintenances of the monastic buildings. The inscriptions are the good testimonies to study about the monastic economy. The inscriptions give informative data than the chronicles. The monasteries played a prominent role in the ancient economy of the kingdom of Anurādhapura.

Grants and gifts were made to promote Buddhist religion and to develop the resources of monasteries for ceding the monks. It acted as a cultural, educational, and economic organization in addition to pursuing society's religious interests. Monasteries became a centre of socio-cultural festivities and a place of philosophical discourses.

Monasteries seem to have been well placed because of the grants granted by monarchs, members of the royal family, chiefs, and bureaucrats, corporate bodies, rich and poor individuals. Many of the inscriptions on the period speak about the multiple times when making grants to the monasteries. The circumstances in which the royal lady, chiefs, bureaucrats, and others make grants groups are also found in inscriptional records. The other occasions for making grants to monasteries and charitable institutions by the the desire of people to atone for their sins, personal victory in battle, healing from disease, and other reasons led them to begin charitable deeds. Thus, the monasteries had received enormous wealth from all sections of the society, which gave the monastery a having a stable and autonomous financial foundation allowed the numerous operations of the kingdom of Anurādhapura.

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