Sacred Geographies, Nationalism, and Space: Negotiating Colonial Praxis and Nationalist Visions in the Planning of Anuradhapura's New Town

by

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Abstract

Postcolonial urban landscapes are not only shaped by colonialism but also by nationalism and people's spatial practices. The scholarship on colonial urban development and postcolonial urbanism is well established and has exposed the contested nature of postcolonial spatial experience. However, the relationship between nationalism and postcolonial planning, mainly how nationalism influences the formation of social spaces in these societies, remains unexplored. In this dissertation, I aim to address this gap in knowledge by delving into the creation of the first planned urban community in independent Ceylon (Sri Lanka since 1972) in Anuradhapura in 1949. Anuradhapura is a city that encompasses many spatial identities: a sacred city, a highly significant Buddhist pilgrimage destination, a historical site, the 2500-year-old original capital of the Sinhalese, a world heritage site, and the capital of an interior province. The development of a new planned town at Anuradhapura as the country became independent provides a unique lens through which to understand the intertwining of colonial praxis and nationalist politics.

The contemporary debate on Anuradhapura as a postcolonial urban community and a dominant cultural symbol can be identified in two distinct discourses: social and planning. While the "social discourse" asserts that Anuradhapura's cultural and religious centrality emerged in the 19th century because of the British colonial influence, the "planning discourse" focuses on the physical attributes of Anuradhapura's new town plan, ignoring its thinking and ideology. These discourses have not deciphered how the new town planning project rejuvenated the nationalist historical and religious consciousness of

Anuradhapura. Taking a social space perspective and contributing to the study of social space in Sri Lanka, this study addresses this knowledge gap between the social and physical, investigating the production of the Anuradhapura planning project and conceptualizing how nationalism is built into postcolonial spatial consciousness.

I examined Anuradhapura's new town planning initiative through archival and ethnographic fieldwork studies. My fieldwork during two immersive visits to Sri Lanka in 2017 and 2019 involved an extensive exploration of primary sources, including colonial government records, planning reports, and media coverage related to the planning project, primarily from Sri Lanka's National Archives. Additionally, I conducted extensive fieldwork, interviewing planners, administrators, and residents of Anuradhapura to gain valuable insights into how policies, practices, and ideas shaped the new town's planning scheme.

The study demonstrates that colonial institutional practices and Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism of the late 19th century have significantly influenced the modern representation of Anuradhapura. The British colonials saw Anuradhapura as a 'dead' place, with ruins that needed excavation and preservation. Through archeology and cartography, the British (re) historicized Anuradhapura, turning it into a regional capital of the colony and endowing it with historical significance by the end of the 19th century. The revivalists aimed to geographically separate the sacred from the secular, making the demand for a new town in Anuradhapura driven by the influential Buddhist revival movement led by Anagarika Dharmapala and Walisinha Harischandra. In the mid-20th century, emerging nationalist political leaders like S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike politicized the revivalists' demand for spatial

separation by removing non-Buddhist practices from the site. The new town planning initiative opted to materialize the Sinhala-Buddhist national-spatial consciousness on the colonial geography. The study shows how Anuradhapura became the center of the Sinhala Buddhist universe in the context of colonialism, of which the capital was in Colombo, and the pre-colonial local sacred center, Kandy. It demonstrates that postcolonial spatial claims, relations, and perceptions did not emerge from colonialism or pre-colonial history through the nationalists' struggle against and defeating colonial and Kandy's dominance. Planning had been a decisive tool in spatializing nationalism in the late colonial nation.

Preface

This dissertation is an original work by Sangapala Arachchige Don Dissanayake Pradeep Dissanayake. The dissertation I submitted is part of the research project approved by the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board. The project, titled "The Impact of Colonial and Nationalist Thoughts on the Postcolonial Spatial Thinking in Sri Lanka: The Planning and Building of Anuradhapura New City," was granted ethics approval twice under Pro00090029, once in March 2017 and once in May 2019.

Based on some discoveries in this dissertation's fourth chapter, a research paper titled "Spatializing Nationalism and Religion: The Production of Sinhala-Buddhist Imagination and the Centrality of Anuradhapura" has been published. The paper was a collaborative effort by Sangapala, P., and Perera, N., and can be found in *Space and Culture* (2023). https://doi.org/10.1177/12063312231210152. I gathered the archival data and composed the manuscript in this chapter and paper. The guidance and editorial expertise of committee member N. Perera were crucial in refining my argument and manuscript.

I have presented my findings and discoveries at multiple research conferences. The subsequent list comprises the primary research conferences I presented at.

1. Sangapala P. (2024) The spatialization of nationalism and justice from below. *Social Spatialisation and Spatial Justice*. Edmonton, Alberta. Mar. 27-28
2. Sangapala P. (2024) Spatializing Nationalism and Religion: The Production of Sinhala-Buddhist Imagination and the Centrality of Anuradhapura. *Earthbound Thought in the Age of Cynical Weaponization*. Edmonton, Alberta. Mar 23.

3. Sangapala, P. & Shields, R. (2023) “Nationalism, Place, and Postcolonial Planning.” *2023 American Association of Geographers Annual Meeting*, Denver, Colorado. Mar. 23-27.
4. Sangapala, P. & Agrawal, S. (2022) “Indigenizing Planning: Reflections on how colonial planning encountered the indigenous consciousness of space in postcolonial Sri Lanka.” *2022 Annual Conference of Association of Collegiate School of Planning*, Toronto, Ontario. Nov. 03-06.
5. Sangapala, P. (2022) “Colonial Production of Knowledge and Space.” *Taking Place and Making Place: Celebrating 25 years of Space and Culture*, Catholic University of Eichstaett-Ingolstadt, Bavaria. Jun. 23-25.
6. Sangapala, P. (2021) “The production of a new spatial consciousness of the Holy City in later-19th century British Colonial incorporation of Lanka.” 49*th Annual Conference on South Asia*, Madison, Wisconsin. Oct. 21-24.
7. Sangapala, P. (2021) “Terra Incognita to Anuradhapura: The production of a new spatial consciousness of the Holy City in later-19th century British Colonial incorporation of Lanka.” *White Rose South Asia Conference 2021: Space, Place and Temporalities*, University of Leeds, West Yorkshire. Apr.30.
8. Sangapala, P. (2021) “The production of a new spatial consciousness of the Sacred city of Anuradhapura in later-19th century British Colonial incorporation of Lanka.” *2021 American Association of Geographers Annual Meeting*, Seattle, Washington. Apr. 7 – 9.

9. Sangapala, P. & Agrawal, S. (2020) Understand the Genealogy of Planning and Spatial Expression in Postcolonial Sri Lanka. *2020 Annual Conference of Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning*, Toronto, Ontario. Nov. 05-08.
10. Sangapala, P. & Agrawal, S. (2019) Theorizing Nationalism, Place, and Planning in Postcolonial Sri Lanka. *2019 Annual Conference of Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning*, Greenville, South Carolina. Oct. 24-27.
11. Sangapala, P. (2019) Spatialization of Nationalism in Late Colonial Sri Lanka. *48th Annual Conference on South Asia*, Madison, Wisconsin. Oct. 17-20.
12. Sangapala, P. & Agrawal, S. (2018) Planning Nationalized or Nationalism Spatialized? The Planning of the Anuradhapura New-town 1949. *2018 Annual Conference of Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning*, Buffalo, New York. Oct. 25-28.
13. Sangapala, P. & Perera, N. (2018) Buddhism, Nationalism, and Space: The Role of Violence and Planning in the Production of Anuradhapura Holy City. *Interrogating Buddhism and Nationalism*, St. Antony's College, University of Oxford, Oxford. Jan. 27-28.
14. Sangapala, P. (2017) The Spatial Construction of Buddhism and Nationalism in Postcolonial Sri Lanka. *Sri Lanka Graduate Student Conference*, Cornell University, Ithaca. Oct. 13-14.
15. Sangapala, P. (2017) Whose Voice Got Staged? *"The Idea of Place," Space and Culture 20th Anniversary Conference*, University of Alberta, Edmonton. May 5-7.

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I may have authored this dissertation, but it was a collaborative endeavor. Many of you were crucial in making this research project a reality. Your collective support, guidance, and love have not only been instrumental in my journey but have also significantly shaped the outcome of this research. In this limited space, it is hard to convey my appreciation for all of you fully. However, I am deeply grateful to every one of you for your significant contributions, which have made a profound difference.

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Dedication To Amma and Thatha

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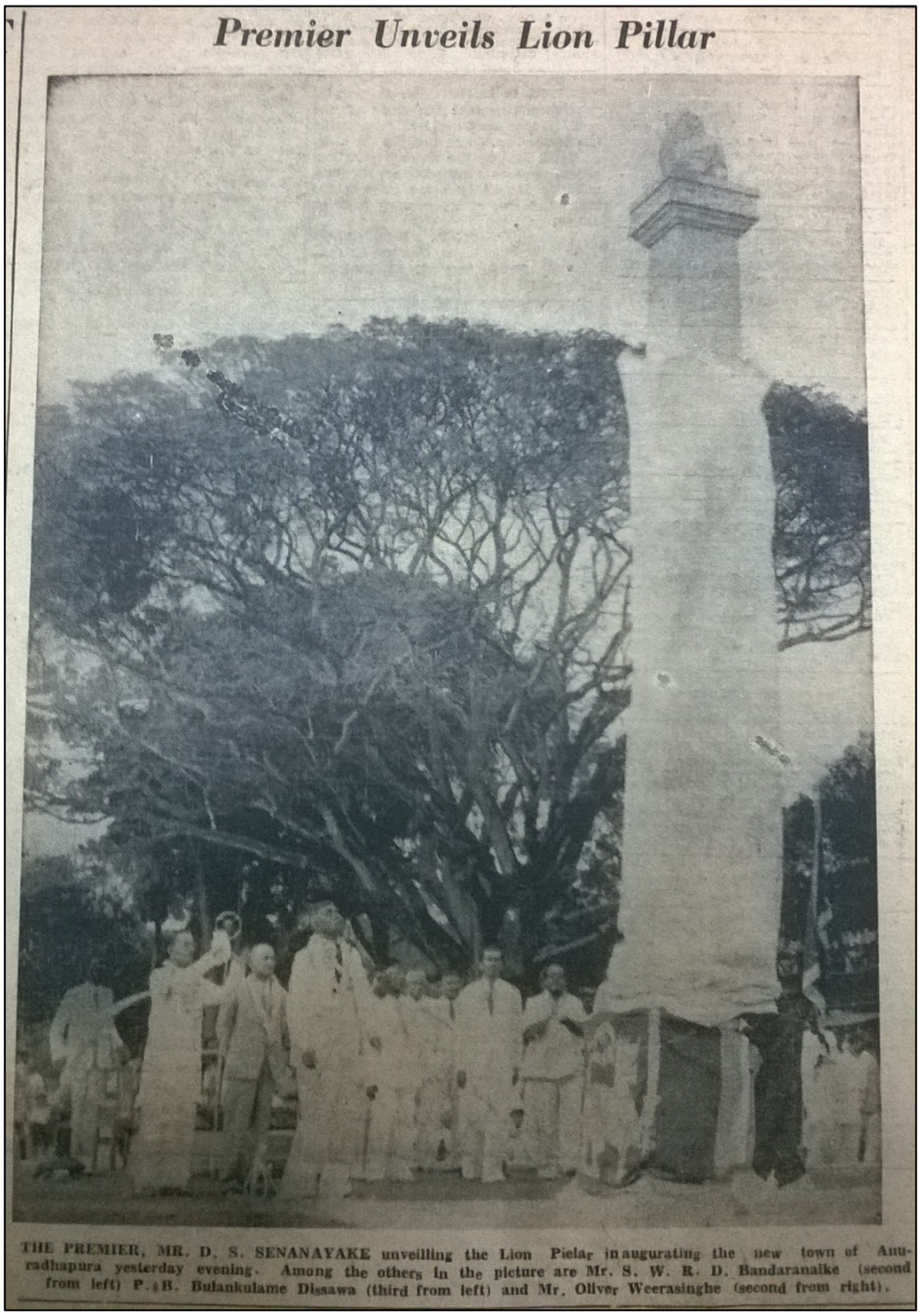
CHAPTER 1

Introduction

On February 13, 1949, a year after independence, the Ceylonese government inaugurated the building of Anuradhapura's new town at a grandiose ceremony. The presence of Don Stephen Senanayake, the first prime minister of independent Ceylon (Sri Lanka since 1972), and many prominent political leaders at the inauguration ceremony gave a powerful representation of the country's newly instituted government. "It was such a magnificent event," Rohana, 81, nostalgically recounted. His father accompanied Rohana, who was then a child, to the inauguration ceremony 70 years ago. Speaking to me in 2019, Rohana, one of the few participants still alive, recalled a vibrant procession of traditional performers to escort guests from the old town to the site designated to construct the future city. A grand stone pillar, known as the *Lion Pillar*, was erected at the ceremony ground to mark the inauguration of the new town. Decorated with traditional native engravings, the magnificent stone structure was crowned with a lion statue, a powerful representation of the Sinhalese people. Amidst the applause of the people, Senanayake unveiled the *Lion Pillar* (see Figure 1.1) at the chosen auspicious time and ceremoniously began the construction of the new town. The foundation for building the nation's first planned urban community was laid in Anuradhapura at that historical moment.



Premier Unveils Lion Pillar

THE PREMIER, MR. D. S. SENANAYAKE unveilling the Lion Pielar inaugurating the new town of Anuradhapura yesterday evening. Among the others in the picture are Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike (second from left) P. B. Bulankulame Dissawa (third from left) and Mr. Oliver Weerasinghe (second from right).

Figure 1.1 D. S. Senanayake (one from left in the front row) unveiled the Lion Pillar for the first time at the inauguration ceremony at Anuradhapura's new town. The Prime Minister was in the company of local and national political delegates and the Government Planner, Oliver Weerasinghe (second from right).

Photo Source: *Daily News*, Feb 14th, 1949.

Anuradhapura, which is 200 km away from the country's de facto capital, Colombo, is a destination that encompasses multiple representations (See Figure 1.2). Despite being known as the most ancient capital in historical Raja Rata – the land of (Sinhala) Kings – in the north-central plains, Anuradhapura is an archaeological site, a tourist destination, a Buddhist sacred city, regional administrative center, and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This Buddhist pilgrimage destination and capital of an interior province offers a unique opportunity to examine the interplay of British colonial rule, native historical narratives, and cultural and religious expressions that shape a sense of national identity through planning.

The call for a new town in Anuradhapura that would physically separate sacred areas from secular spaces first arose at the start of the 20th century. This demand was championed by leaders of the Sinhalese-Buddhist revival movement in Ceylon, particularly Anagarika Dharmapala (1864-1933) and Walisinghe Harischandra (1876-1913). This spatial separation reflects Buddhist revivalists' beliefs in their authority to control the sacred space by removing or moving the non-Buddhist practices from the site. The revivalists' demand for spatial separation and the stamping of the Sinhala-Buddhist will was politicized expressly by powerful politician and later Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike (1899- 1959), whose nascent political movement demanded Ceylon to be a Sinhalese-Buddhist state. The Anuradhapura new town planning project thus marks the location where the colonial planning discourse met the national consciousness.

The inauguration of the new township in 1949 unfolded one of the most decisive moments

in Ceylon's postcolonial spatial history: the commemoration of the quest of the newly formed nation, led by its own leaders, to define its own spatial identity. Planning and building a new Anuradhapura significantly transformed the spatial focus of the epoch's power dynamics. With the new Anuradhapura (See Figure 1.3), the focus of the discourse and practice of spatial planning moved from Colombo, the colonial capital, to a space in which citizens exercised agency. As the cornerstone of this transformation, Anuradhapura's new town planning project gave birth to spatial modernity in independent Ceylon. Here, I refer to the rupture of the planning and construction of Anuradhapura created in the nation's modern planning and spatial history. Until Anuradhapura, planning depended on imported knowledge and expertise from the West to design and shape the colonial capital, Colombo. The planning and building of the new Anuradhapura introduced a modern spatiality within a national spatial consciousness into colonial planning practice using native planning experts.

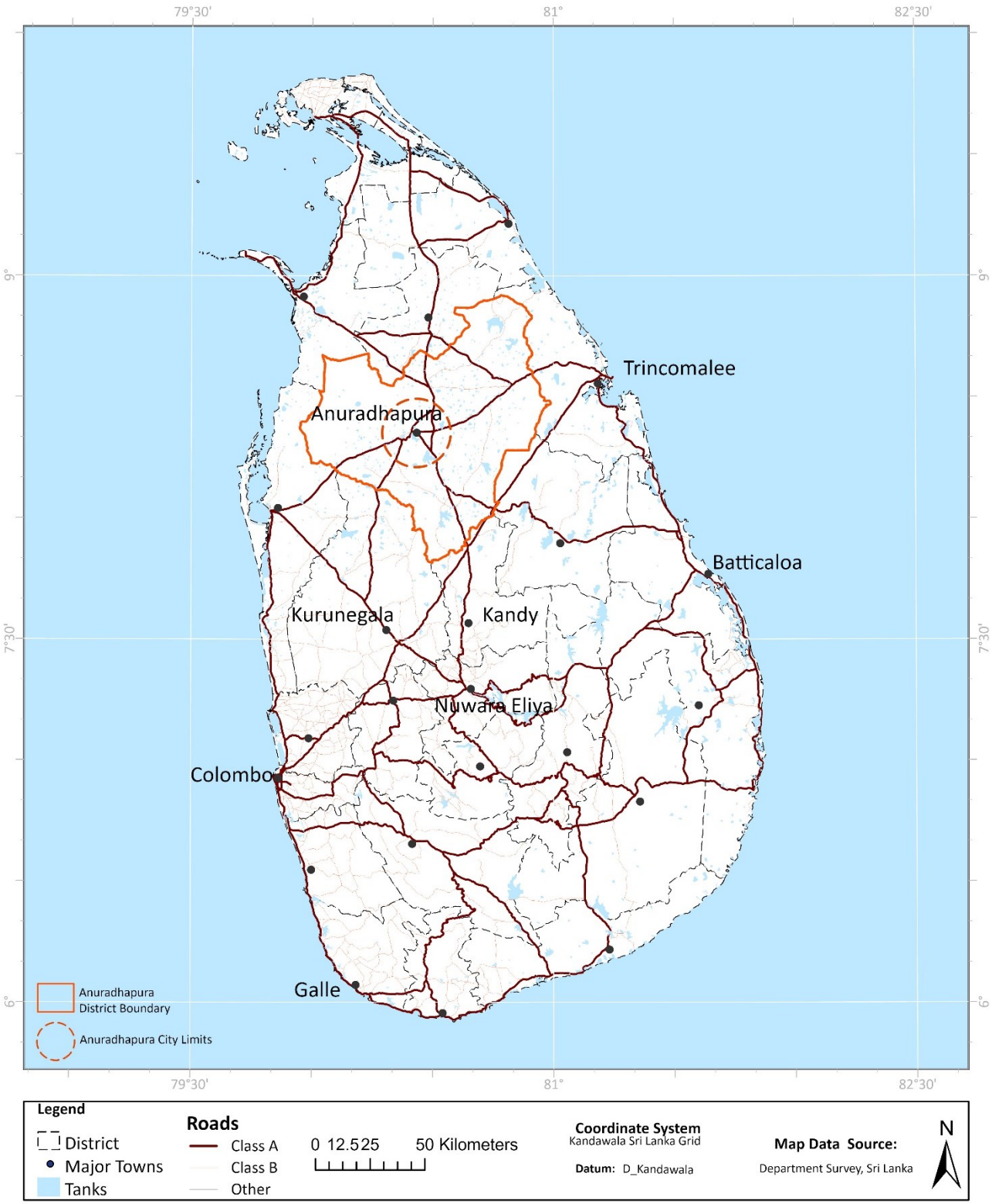


Figure 1.2 This is a location map, illustrating the geographical positioning of Anuradhapura in Sri Lanka Complied by Anuradha Kanchani

Figure 1.3: The geographical layout of Anuradhapura new town and the sacred city
Complied by the author.

This chapter maps out the research project and its principal aim, which is to comprehend the effect of colonialism and nationalism on the formation of postcolonial urban space. The chapter establishes the theoretical foundation of this dissertation by critically evaluating the notion of spatialization and how nationalist views shape the spatial realities of postcolonial communities. It demonstrates how modern social and political theories prioritize the nation-state as the central spatial representation of nationalism while neglecting the significance of 'place' in spatializing the people's national and local identity. The chapter continues by presenting the dissertation's primary case and the plan for the new Anuradhapura. Anuradhapura's new town planning project sits at the juncture of the Sinhalese national consciousness and the colonial planning discourse. It marks the spatialization of the Sinhalese national consciousness at its meeting point with the colonial planning discourse, laying the foundation for the nation's postcolonial spatial thinking.

1.1 Locating (the golden era of) Planning in Perspective

Sri Lanka gained independence from the British in 1948 and has undergone many changes in its political and economic systems, planning, and spatial practices. Like most newly independent societies, Sri Lanka confronted the challenge of constructing a national identity, shaping its own physical and social landscapes in the context of ongoing social, political, and economic struggles. Sinhala Buddhist nationalism, the most dominant ideological force behind the country's postcolonial identity, began to take shape long before independence, i.e., from the 1860s. Therefore, even though the plan for the new

town is postcolonial, planning process to preserve the ancient capital influenced the advent of the 1860s-80s Buddhist religious revivalism. The native political elites who emerged from an entangled process in the late 19th century further expanded the discussion and debates, generating the need and room for constructing a new urban space in Anuradhapura in the early 20th century. Involving the first indigenous planner, Oliver Weerasinghe, the Ceylonese government introduced a new town plan for Anuradhapura a year after the country's independence in 1948.

Ceylon's first postcolonial planning initiative was implemented at a specific time that signified urban planning entering a new era. Historian Hobsbawm (1994) contended that Western Europe and North American nations underwent a golden era in the 20th century, which lasted from 1950 to the early 1970s. He stated it was the most flourishing period for those nations, juxtaposed with the most challenging time due to two world wars and economic agitations in the first half of the century. However, the era's progress was not limited to economic development; urban planning in the West also underwent significant changes, as some planning scholars acknowledge. The period from the end of World War II to the early 1970s was also crucial for urban planning. For example, Batty and Marshall (2009, p. 560) argued that "the golden age of town and country planning began in the mid-twentieth century." Mainly referring to the development of planning practice and pedagogy in the United Kingdom, Tyler (1999) showed that the golden age of British planning was from 1945 to the late 1960s. The 1950s marked the apex of modern planning, with the state-centered, comprehensive approach becoming most prevalent. Anuradhapura's new town plan and the planning process were also considerably shaped by the comprehensive

planning approach, the most dominant form of planning during the mid-20th century, which we will explore in more depth below.

According to Hall (2014), the golden age of planning supposes the practitioners' freedom in planning, employing technical rationalities that were the primary methods of the era. He argued, "The planner, free from political interference, serenely sure of his technical capacities, was left to get on with the job" (2014, p. 390). In that case, we can infer that Hall's above interpretation of the golden planning era was understood from the planner's point of view. However, this interpretation evokes the question of whether a profession like planning can persist without political engagement. It is also uncertain whether such knowledge can comprehend planning on a global scale. In particular, most planning schemes during the mid-20th century, particularly in postcolonial nations, illustrate a different outcome. By critically analyzing some of the most distinguished modern urban planning initiatives in the mid-20th century, Holston (1989) and Scott (1998) contended that most adopted a state-centered approach from the top down. Such modernist planning initiatives were not immune to political interferences. Instead, planning became a governmental tool to prescribe spatial organization and to control populations in newly liberated countries.

Governments of most new nations during the mid-20th century were primarily composed of native elites, and Ceylon was no exception. New officials aimed to prove their worth as national leaders to their people and to create their own political identities. In the non-Western world, planning new cities and designing capitals as spatial expressions of

independence was significant in most newly established nations. Scott (1998) demonstrates that political leaders of emerging nation states, like Juscelino Kubitschek in Brazil and Jawaharlal Nehru in India, worked with a deep-rooted faith in modernizing their societies. They also wanted to introduce modern planning schemes to shape their nations' future cities and urban forms. While industrial development was acknowledged as the primary means of economic, political, and social success, it can be assumed that urban planning was significant in creating and reconstructing the new spatial order of emerging nations.

Through the works of Kalia (1995, 1999) and Perera (2004), we can observe how nationalist pursuits and native bureaucratic involvements affected the planning of modern cities in postcolonial India. This scholarship demonstrates that local political leaders like Nehru had no reservations about summoning renowned European architects, recognized as authorities in the modernist planning paradigm, to plan and build new cities. In response, those "imported" professionals prepared plans and designed the most prominent urban centers in postcolonial states. Cities such as Brasília in Brazil, Bhubaneswar and Chandigarh in India, and Islamabad in Pakistan embody such planning initiatives. It is safe to assume that these are products of the modernist ideas developed before World War II and implemented on a large scale in the newly liberated countries. For example, in 1949, the Nehru administration invited Albert Meyer and Le Corbusier to plan the city of Chandigarh, the capital of the northern Indian state of Punjab; both were renowned experts who contributed to those planning projects in India (Kalia, 1994; Perera, 2004). Then, Otto Königsberger, a leading architect, was invited to design the modern city of

Bhubaneswar, the state capital of Odisha, formerly Orissa, in the late 1940s (Kalia, 1995; Koenigsberger, 1952; Lee & Rachel, 2012; Windsor Liscombe, 2006). The practice of importing foreign professionals to plan cities in postcolonial India was broad, yet this was not an isolated practice. Other new nations also imported professionals to shape their urban vision with the fusion of modernism. For instance, the independent government of Pakistan invited Constantinos Doxiadis, a well-known planner and architect, to design the master plan for the new national capital of Islamabad, which eventually replaced the former capital of Rawalpindi in 1960.

It was not just the planning professionals who were imported from the West; planning knowledge was also imported to the non-Western world, accommodating the inhabitants to these imported spatial imaginations. Vidyarthi (2013, 2015) examined the importation of Western planning models, such as the neighbourhood unit concept, to plan the cities in independent India. Scholars also argue how the inhabitants of these neighbourhoods have localized these spaces in their everyday practice (See also Perera, 2016). However, these new town-planning projects shared the common political desire to create national and cultural identities through modernist architecture and planning ideas. Although they may appear similar at first glance, postcolonial cities all have their own unique characteristics. Colonialism, nationalism, and people's spatial practices profoundly shaped postcolonial spaces (Perera, 2016). In postcolonial societies, the inhabitants' perception of space, which can be recognized as their spatial thinking, is deeply embedded in the colonial roots and nationalist manifestations of space. Continuing histories of imperialism and struggles for decolonization have further complicated

sociocultural relationships and their spatial dynamics (Myers, 2020; Perera, 1998; Prakash, 2010; Robinson, 2003; Roy, 2011).

Contemporary urban scholarship provides many specific insights into urban spaces. Some insights regard the physical representations and characteristics, structures and patterns, and cosmic or phenomenological existence. Going beyond the conventional understanding of space only through its physical existence, scholars argue that space is a social production. Instead of neutralizing social, economic, and political complexities, the social space scholarship discusses the influences of actors like the state and corporations and processes like capitalism and neoliberalism on space (Lefebvre, 1991). Scholars also discuss the relationships between the inhabitants of the city considering several social, cultural, and political concerns, such as social justice, the right to the city, migration, citizenship, and culture. However, it is questionable whether any of these perspectives could be used to understand (or adequately explain) the social and cultural dynamics of non-Western urban landscapes, especially in postcolonial nations (Huyssen, 2008; Perera & Tang, 2013; Roy, 2015). The conventional perspectives frame non-Western nations as underdeveloped, technologically, and economically backward (Escobar, 1995; Parnell & Oldfield, 2014; Roy, 2011; Simone, 2014), implying them together as a category of "Global South."

The mainstream urban planning scholarship that demonstrates the urban experiences in postcolonial states is limited, and the effect of nationalism on the production of social space in postcolonial societies is understudied. Most importantly, postcolonial urban

spaces are too distinct to be homogenized or reduced to any individual paradigm, such as "new towns in the Global South." Therefore, a more expansive theoretical perspective is necessary to fully comprehend spaces' cultural and political meanings in non-Western nations, especially in the context of postcolonial spatial transformations. This study will address this lack by investigating the production of modern Anuradhapura, an ancient capital raised to the status of national heritage in the late 19th century and the first planned urban community in postcolonial Sri Lanka. It presents how non-Western urban spaces, and their postcolonial trajectories can be researchable subjects. Instead of analyzing spaces through Western structures and models—for instance, the work of the Chicago School—this study contributes to a conceptual framework to understand and critique historically and culturally different non-Western urban spaces. It raises the need to critically question the Eurocentric knowledge of space to destabilize the Western domination of spatial knowledge production (see Perera 1999; Robinson 2003; Roy 2015).

1.2. Spatializing Nationalism and the Emergence of Postcolonial Place

"Spatializing nationalism" refers to how nationalist sentiments have developed into a spatially encompassing reality, which contemporary planning and spatial analysis have been unable to account for entirely. Instead of merely applying an existing theory on spatialization and nationalism to understand Anuradhapura, I aim to 'theorize' the planning and making of new Anuradhapura to understand the spatialization of nationalist politics. This is mostly absent in the contemporary studies of nationalism and its spatialization. The chapter introduces the conceptual tools currently used in the

discourses of ‘spatialization’ and ‘nationalism,’ i.e., how the nationalists’ claims for Anuradhapura were spatialized through the Anuradhapura New Town planning project. A conceptual framework will be developed through the critique to help understand and theorize this relationship.

Spatialization, i.e., bringing the social and spatial together to build knowledge of social space, has been addressed in geography, urban studies, and sociology. Foucault (2007) observes that the significance of ‘space’ has been reduced by the concept of ‘time’; unlike dynamic time, space had been considered a fixed and dead reality until recently. Based on the interpretations of thinkers like Isaac Newton, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, Immanuel Kant, René Descartes, and Albert Einstein, classical philosophy perceived space as empty, a fixed container to hold people and things, or a passive backdrop for action. Therefore, the classical understanding of space is deployed into absolute, real, and relational categories, which could be defined through Euclidian or Cartesian reason. Yet, this perspective ignores the associations of physical space with human activities and materials, which produce the meaning of space.

Moreover, the classical scholarship of urban studies also provides many significant avenues to understand urban space. Along with the classical intellectual domain established by the thinkers of the Chicago School, conventional urban studies have mostly regarded the function and form of the urban environment. Instead of providing a thorough analysis of the spatial organization of cities, they mainly focus on the physical attributes of cities, such as the structures and elements Lynch (1960, 1984) and patterns

and forms (Alexander et al., 1977). This scholarship helps us understand cities' physical order, form, and organization regarding function. However, it does not articulate the complex spatial relationships between the physical form and inhabitants of cities. Also, much of this "research" is normative, highlighting what cities ought to be rather than what it is.

In contrast to the intellectual impasse of the conventional spatial discourse, which looks at space only in regard to its physical existence, scholars of social space have begun to argue that space is a socially produced social relation. Thinkers like Lefebvre (1991) and Harvey (1973, 1985, 2006) highlighted the significance of the relationship between society and space and demonstrated that space is a social production. Space, according to Lefebvre (1991, p. 154), "Is never empty: it always embodies a meaning." He claimed that space is primarily a 'social product,' which is "… permeated with social relations; it is not only supported by social relations, but it also is producing and produced by social relations (Lefebvre, 2009)." Changing social relations continuously shape and reshape the meanings and narratives of places (Lefebvre, 1991), and these, in turn, transform the larger society. Notably, space facilitates the "appropriated places to the social relations of reproduction (ibid)," for numerous human activities, from the biophysical relations between humans, such as sex, to the relations of capital production, such as the division of labour. Therefore, people's events, activities, and behaviours regarding any site reflect the level of their interaction with space (Low, 2000, 2016; Perera, 2016; Shields, 1992, 2013; Simone, 2014).

Instead of neutralizing social, economic, and political complexities, political economists and cultural studies influenced scholars who began to pay attention to how space is discursively produced through multiple forms of social, political, economic, and institutional relationships. They analyze the politics of spatialization through negotiations, resistance, contestations, representations, behaviours, and activities of the human society, and the deployment of power, authority, and subjugation of space and individuals through various physical and spatial relationships.

1.2.1. Spatialization in Political Economy

Along with Lefebvre, since the 1970s, many Marxist thinkers have focused their attention to articulating social, political, and economic systems in transforming cities in response to capitalism. Harvey marked a new paradigm in Marxist geographical discourse. Harvey (1985, p. 141) perceived that the spatial issue of capitalist urbanization is neglected in '*all* social theory because its incorporation has a numbing effect upon the propositions of *any* corpus of social theory." Through his seminal work, *Social Justice and the City,* Harvey (1973) exposed the dialectical relationship between the associated problems of urban poverty and the capitalist urban form. He focused on how the relationship of lands and properties with urban uses determines the social practices in a city. In his later work, Harvey (1985, 2006) explored the crisis embedded in capitalist urban space and geography by theorizing about the historical geopolitics of capitalism. He suggested examining a replacement for the capitalist mode of production as an essential condition to overcoming the issue of capitalist space and human survival.

Contributing to neo-Marxist urban theory, Castells (1977) argued that space is a social construction reflecting the inhabitants' social, political, and economic conditions. Castells stated that cities, under capitalism, have become "spaces for collective consumption." Through the means of collective consumption, such as public housing and public transport, the state is involved in the reproduction of labour, which is required for the reproduction of the capitalist economic system. By investigating the association between state involvement in providing infrastructure and the mobilization of labour through consumption, he asserts that contemporary urban structures are nothing but the spatialization of advanced capitalism.

Like Harvey, Smith (2008) argued that capitalism not only produces space and shapes the spatial relationship of people but has also changed humans' relationships with nature. Analyzing the historical transformation of space under capitalism, Smith argued that "the production of space also implies the production of the meaning, concepts, and consciousness of space which are inseparably linked to its physical production" (2008, p. 107). Smith pointed out the spatialization of the 'uneven development' of capitalism. As capitalism is a system established through creating spatial inequalities, Smith suggested that the revolt against capitalism should itself be spatial, "planning something geographical" (2008, p. 237), instead of merely a social struggle.

Moving beyond the dialectic understanding of space based on the 'real' material world and the 'imagined' representations of spatiality, Soja (1989, 1996) introduced a new perspective to understand the 'multiplicity' of the real and imagined spaces. With the

inspiration of Lefebvre's *trialectic* relationship of space and Foucauldian concept of 'heterotopia,' Soja (1996) developed the concept of 'Thirdspace' to expand the geographical imaginations of space and [social] spatiality. As he argued, "Everything comes together in Thirdspace; subjectivity and objectivity, the abstract and the concrete, the real and the imagined, the knowable and the unimaginable, the repetitive and the differential, structure and agency, mind and body, consciousness and the unconscious, the disciplined and the transdisciplinary, everyday life and unending history" (1996, p. 56). Soja's work explicitly developed in the backdrop of his home city of Los Angeles. Also, it aimed to establish a consciousness of the spatiality of social life in the post-Fordist urban landscape in the US and other parts of the world. Unlike most other thinkers of spatiality, Soja's conceptualization of space allows one to understand the importance of both time and history, contemporary social relations, and spatial representation and construction of postmodern geographies.

1.2.2. Spatialization in Social Theory

The spatiality of social relations has also been explored in social theory. Although theorists like Foucault, Bourdieu, and de Certeau did not explicitly analyze the theme of spatialization, most of their seminal work provides the inseparable perception of spatial relationships. Notably, Foucault's historical examinations of the discursive formation of the modern institutional culture and scientific knowledge drew attention to the spatial relationships of power and the built environment (Low, 2016; Shields, 1992; Soja, 1989; West-Pavlov, 2009; Zieleniec, 2007). He depicted the spatiality of the modern institutional

culture and the spatialization of power and order by tracing the modern discourse of 'governmentality.' Foucault's (1994) analysis of modern medical practice and the medical gaze explained the role of space as a base for contemporary discourses on the objects of scientific studies. Regarding cultural and institutional complexities, the Foucauldian claim marks a decisive shift in the discourse on space.

Bourdieu (1977) theorized the association of socio-spatial structures and the behaviours and practices of individuals. Through the concept of '*habitus*,' he provided an understanding of the system of *dispositions* or generative principles, which produce spatial performance. Social structures are produced through the social conditions of the individuals encounter in their everyday lives. According to Bourdieu (1977), the socio-spatial order significantly impacts the everyday life of individuals. Therefore, he suggested that the individual's behaviour is determined not only by social class, as the classical Marxist formula claimed, but also by their location in social space.

However, de Certeau (1988) saw that most social science studies omit that people are not mere subjects of received spaces. While institutions like government, municipalities, and corporations and the structures of power 'produce' space through various 'strategies' such as planning, de Certeau argued that people also reappropriate these spaces through their 'own ways of operating' in everyday life. Although people do not literary 'produce' spaces, as the 'users' of space, they employ various 'tactics' to shape, reshape, and manipulate city spaces. He argued that people use their tactics to reproduce/redefine the spaces imposed by the institutions. People will not become passive subjects in their

spaces as the institutions can never fully anticipate the tactics.

1.2.3. Social and Cultural Spatialization

However, the themes of cultural formation and social spatialization are not adequately addressed in the social theories of spatialization by Marxist geographers or urban theorists. In this context, referring to Lefebvre, Shields (1999, p. 146) argued that spatializations "are not just physical arrangements of things but also spatial patterns of social action and routine as well as historical conceptions of space and the world." In his seminal work, where he crucially establishes the idea of 'social spatialization' Shields (1992) distinguished his position on spatialization from that of other thinkers. Unlike the pre-Lefebvrian philosophers, social theorists, and Marxist thinkers of space, Shields asserted that spatialization involves discursive and non-discursive everyday life practices, such as imagination, myths, alternative histories, and cultural representations of space.

Through her meticulous ethnographic studies in two plazas in Costa Rica, Low (1996, 2000) provided a fresh perspective to analyze the intersection of culture and space. By employing a wide range of materials from history, literature and personal narratives of the users of plazas in Costa Rica, she conceptualized the 'spatialization of culture': how culture shapes, reshapes, and constructs spaces. She wrote that "public spaces, such as the Costa Rican Plaza, are one of the last democratic forums for public dissent in civil society" (2000, p. 240). Questioning most scholars of spatialization, her 'inside-out' view of spatialization allows her to claim that plazas are not merely locations of consumption but spaces of political contestation and grounds for social movements.

Through subsequent theory building, the contemporary discourse of spatialization represents space's discursive and historical formation. This scholarship deeply explores spatiality by associating complex social relations, institutions, power structures, and people. Although it provides an intensive and broader perspective to understand spatialization in response to space's social, political, and economic relationships, it hardly addresses the 'spatial expression' of postcolonial nations, which went through colonialization over centuries. The abundant scholarship on spatialization has missed the spatializing of nationalism and its influence on planning. The influence of nationalism on the production of social space in postcolonial societies is still understudied. The next section of the chapter explores the theoretical reasoning behind the idea of nationalism and its spatial implications.

1.3. Conceptualizing Nationalism

The contemporary discourse of nation, nationality, and nationhood provides many insights into the influence and historical context of nationalism. This scholarship depicts 'nationalism' as a way of thinking about the nation. Based on collective socio-political values, such as culture, ethnicity, religion, and polity, nationalism holds the unity of the subjects of a nation. The formation of national subjectivity is closely connected with other societal ideologies like inclusion, exclusion, and identity. We can recognize two 'classical' avenues of thinking in this discourse, i.e., the *modernist* approach and the *primordial* view

of nationalism[1]. While the thinkers of the modernist or the 'constructivist' approach perceive nationalism as a product or construction of modernization and industrialization, the primordial view considers that the collective identities of people are inherited. According to primordialists, nations are given or *a priori* historical entities rather than the product of broader social, political, and economic transformation.

However, in the contemporary scholarship of nationalism, the primordial view has been significantly dismissed as "a long-dead horse that writers on ethnicity and nationalism continue to flog" (Brubaker, 1996, p. 15). Instead, most leading thinkers of nationalism explore how the advent of modernization and industrialization establish the nationalist sentiments of people. Modernist theorists like Anderson (1991), Gellner (1983, 1997), Hobsbawm (1992, 2000) have thoroughly articulated the relationship between capitalism and the formation of nation states, in contrast to the primordialists. The modernist perspective of nationalism asserted that the nation-state emerged in the wake of the nationalization of political space during the 17th century. This study also explores the modernist viewpoint on nationalism and examines the representations, connections, and mechanisms that give nationalism a spatial dimension.

Nationalism, as Giddens (1981) argued, played the role of a 'psychological phenomenon' in forming the modern nation-state. He asserted that nationalism affiliates the individuals "to a set of symbols and beliefs emphasizing commonality among the members of

[1] Coakley (2017),Gusfield (1996), Motyl (2002), and Piper (2004) well capture the debate between the primordial and modern views of nationalism and nation-states in their reviews of contemporary nationalism scholarship. Rambukwella (2018) substantially articulates the intellectual difference between the primordial and modernist debate on nationalism concerning the ethnic identities in postcolonial Sri Lanka.

political order" (p. 116). Besides capitalism, he identified several other forces, such as "the collection and storage of information to coordinate subject population, surveillance, control the means of violence, and most importantly, the 'industrialism'" also contributed to the formation of the modern nation-state. However, he does not reduce the significance of capitalism in forming nation states in Europe. Notably, Giddens argued that the association between the modern nation-state and capitalism is neither an accident of history nor has distinctive origins. Instead, they have evolved simultaneously by engaging each other.

Gellner (1983, 1997) stated that nationalism is a political principle. Nationalism emerged as a social condition due to the transformation from the feudal agrarian community to an industrialized urban social system during the 18th century. According to Gellner, the great transformation dissolved all traditional and remote social organizations. Moreover, it established the demand for a literary-based abstract community that could appreciate the high culture in the context of industrialization, modernization, and urbanization in Europe. The emerging social condition was addressed by establishing the nation. Therefore, he argued that nations are products of industrial capitalism, not from any pre-existing shared character, as primordialists believe. In other words, nations are essential for establishing cultural and political homogeneity, as social and political boundaries need to align with industrialism and modernism.

Hobsbawm (2000, 1992), too, refused the idea that a nation is a continuation of the *a priori* knowledge or pre-existing cultural homogeneity of the society. According to him, the

nation is not an entity inherited or exited before modernization but a recent invention. Therefore, he argued that not only the nation but also the knowledge associated with it was invented. For him, the nation is an artificial political entity produced through the collective recognition of the people who consider themselves part of it: Any "sufficiently large body of people whose members regard themselves as members of a 'nation' will be treated as such" (1990, p. 08). According to his argument, nationalism emerged before the formation of the nation. Hobsbawm (2000, P. 10) contended that "nations do not make states and nationalisms but the other way round," which clearly outlined his criticism of the idea of the nation's primordial existence.

Anderson (1991) offered the most prolific constructivist narrative of nationalism. He said the nation is an 'imagined community' because "the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (p. 6). Anderson stated that the nation has evolved as a self-governing 'spatial unit' because of the development of print capitalism. During the late 18th century, the intervention of capitalists who printed books and newspapers in 'vernacular languages' and the impact of nationalist movements on the language and social traditions produced the key sentiment of nationalism. That is the belongingness to a nation. Besides print media, standardization of language, and time—such as introducing a national calendar—individuals were conceived to belong to a sovereign community with shared values; this is the 'national experience.'

The 'belongingness' of the people to a particular spatial unit is one of the critical factors of

national formation. The function of a nation is based on the people who recognize themselves as members of that nation, i.e., before the state institutions. Above all, people must be willing to operate as a national community. Balibar (1991, p. 338) remarked that the history of national formation is "... always already presented to us in the form of a narrative." Notably, nationalism functions in an effective ideological form in our everyday life by constructing the people's collective imagination as part of the nation. Through collective narratives of the altered past of a national community, this process makes the imaginary narratives authentic. Therefore, Balibar recognized nationalism as the 'religion of modern times,' not the form of a universal religion, but as a process involving 'ideal signifiers' like 'fatherland.' Also, no nation inherits a natural ethnic base, as many nationalists claim, but 'national ethnicity' is produced through language. Education is the leading establishment that produces the "ethnicity as [a] linguistic community." Although there is no real relationship among individuals in a community, the 'national ideology' makes them believe they are inherited from the same ethnic group. Through ideological involvements, national identity is reproduced and continued, and the individuals feel that the nation they belong to is naturally inherited.

This scholarship provides many valuable insights to understanding the formation of the nation in the context of modernization and the rise of capitalism. It enables a comprehensive historical analysis of the construction of the national belongingness of the citizens through the involvement of capitalism and enlightenment in Europe. Also, it reveals how the people's faithfulness to the nation and state is 'continued' through state apparatuses, such as education.

1.3.1. Understanding Nationalism Beyond the Top-Down Perspective

The contemporary discourse of nationalism has encountered many critiques from within and beyond its intellectual domain regarding the ignorance of anti-colonial nation formation, overdetermination of modernization, the top-down nature of the discourse, and the pro-statist view of nationalism, i.e., methodological nationalism. Here, I investigate the existing critiques of the discourse to understand the intellectual impasses of the discourse of nationalism and the spatiality of nationalism when the state is overdetermined as a natural and fixed spatial reality.

Mainly, the modernist approach has significantly overlooked the impact of nationalism as a fundamental instrument of the anti-colonial independence movements in former colonies in Asia and Africa. According to Fanon's influential argument, decolonization revolves around anti-colonial nationalism. Against the backdrop of the French-Algerian liberation movement, Fanon (2009) observed nationalism as one of the primary instruments of decolonizing colonial subjects. He argued that the revolution against colonization is the only path to liberation for the oppressed. In this process, he trusted that nationalism could organize the material resistance of people against the colonial power. Ultimately, it drives to establish a national consciousness of people, which will eventually become an (independent) nation itself.

The modernist approach to nationalism fails to account for the role of nationalism in the anti-colonial independent struggles. Mainly referring to Anderson's thesis of 'imagined community,' Said (1994) and Chatterjee (1993, 1999) argued that Anderson had

oversimplified the historical complexities of forming the modern nation. According to Chatterjee (1993), the theoretical structures of the nationalism discourse formulated in Europe cannot adequately explain the anti-colonial nationalism developed in non-European regions. He questioned: “If nationalisms in the rest of the world have to choose their imagined community from certain ‘modular’ forms already made available to them by Europe and the Americas, what do they have left to imagine?” (1993, p. 05). Instead, he emphasized the historical and political complexities and cultural exceptions in non-European communities have been systematically neutralized by the severely Eurocentric knowledge of the nation. In other words, the standardization of language, time, and territory would apply to understanding European national formation. However, this knowledge will not adequately describe the existing social diversity, multiculturalism, multilingualism, and uneven power relations in the non-European communities, which had not been through industrialization and modernization as the communities in Europe. Critiquing the dominant culture of knowledge in the nation is significant in understanding the ideological and material implementations of nationalist politics in postcolonial nations like Sri Lanka. However, postcolonial critique has not substantially engaged space and the spatiality of nationalism rather than the enduring state as the central spatial unit of nationalism.

Besides the ignorance of anti-colonial nationalism, the modernist approach explores the formation of the nation and the articulation of nationalism through more top-down interventions. Unlike other thinkers of nationalism, Hobsbawm pointed out the issue of the modernist approach to nationalism. He argued that since most thinkers of nationalism

(such as Gellner) look at modernization from above, it is difficult for them "to pay adequate attention to the view from below" (1996, pp. 10-11). This discourse, using the top-down lenses of governments and bourgeois nationalists to understand the nation, has ignored the perspective of the working class. Therefore, people have become the objects of governments and nationalist movements, actions, and propaganda rather than the active subjects of national formation.

The lack of focus on nationalism 'from below' has ignored the involvement of people and the role of place in articulating national sentiments. The discourse widely recognizes the nation-state as the sole spatial representation of nationalism. It has not expressively addressed how nationalism is spatially produced and located in the 'absence' of the state. Therefore, on the one hand, the understanding of the spatialization of nationalism has been limited mainly to the spatiality of the nation-state. On the other hand, the spatiality of the nation-state has been 'overdetermined' as the prime representation of nationalism.

Lefebvre (1991) made a sharp observation of the spatiality of nationalism as neither a 'natural' reality nor an 'ideological' process, as many scholars have claimed. He dismissed the claim of the existence of a 'natural' or absolute form of nationalism when the bourgeoisie established a national state. In contrast, the theorists who argued that the state is merely an ideological construction "reduce national and regional questions to linguistic and cultural ones, [which ultimately] led to a kind of abstract internationalism" (1991, p. 112). According to Lefebvre, both approaches to nationalism "leave space out of the picture" (ibid). By moving beyond, he suggested that two specific movements, the

market – the "complex ensemble of commercial relations and communication networks" and the *violence* of the state have produced the national space. However, his view also endorses the same or a similar 'top-down' position that states are the central spatial representation of nationalism.

Nevertheless, scholars in fields such as geography, urban studies, political science, and sociology discursively present the limits of privileging 'state' as the sole spatial representation of nationalism (Adamson, 2016; Adamson & Demetriou, 2007; J. Agnew, 1994, 2010, 2017; Brenner, 2004; Wimmer & Schiller, 2002, 2006). They argue that the state can no longer be considered the critical spatial device of national belongingness, as its spatiality has already been significantly challenged by the flow of global capital, international migration, and transnationalism (Adamson, 2016; Adamson & Demetriou, 2007; J. Agnew, 1994, 2010, 2017; Brenner, 2004; Wimmer & Schiller, 2002, 2006). Neither pro-state nationalism nor its critique has thoroughly examined the spatial dynamics of nationalism from below. Even the critique on the territoriality of the state, which emerged with the rise of advanced social and economic relations, has now become an integral part of the discourse. Therefore, the pro-statist view and critique operate within the same discourse by becoming the custodians of discourse. Like the custodians, they hold the responsibility to protect 'things.' Both the proponents and the opponents of the dominant use of nationalism are to bring the masses under the state and deprive them of the fight from below.

The contemporary discourse of nationalism hardly addresses the impact of the nationalist

conceptualization of place on planning, designing, and shaping urban spaces in postcolonial nations. Even through the critique, the territoriality of the state has become overemphasized. While the significance of the state becomes overdetermined, the association between places and nationalist sentiments has been ignored. In other words, the importance of 'place' in the spatialization of nationalist thoughts is overlooked (see Güvenç, 2011). The primary focus of this research is to fill the void in understanding the relationship between social and physical elements by delving into the creation of the Anuradhapura planning project. In order to understand a nationalist conceptualization of place and how nationalism shapes postcolonial spatial expressions, this study will examine the plan for new Anuradhapura.

1.4. Towards a Postcolonial Spatial Knowledge

Colonial urban development is well explored. It has received substantial attention from scholars, including King (2010), Legg (2007), Perera (2005, 2008), and Yeoh (1996). King (2003, 2009) and Yeoh (2001) examined the idea of postcolonial cities, revealing the contested nature of space. They questioned the one-sided power-focused discourses of the past. This scholarship has considered the spatial expressions of postcolonial nations and explored the association of colonialism, imperialism, culture, religion, and nationalism in postcolonial space.

Select scholars have brought significant attention to the construction and transformation of space in postcolonial nations (Deshpande, 2000; Huyssen, 2008; Jacobs, 1996; Jazeel, 2019; King, 1976, 2009; Kusno, 2000a; Perera, 1998, 2016; Prakash, 2010; Raychaudhuri,

2001; Robinson, 2003; Roy, 2015; Roy & Ong, 2011; Sen, 2017; Sidaway, 2000; Vidyarthi, 2013; Vidyarthi et al., 2017; Yeoh, 2001). This emerging knowledge was first called "postcolonial urban studies" by Anthony King (2009) and Brenda Yeoh (2001), which generated enormously important and stimulating discussions on how postcolonial urban spaces and their decolonization trajectories are researchable subjects. While providing a conceptual framework to understand the historically and culturally different urban spaces, this scholarship convincingly raises the need to provincialize the Eurocentric knowledge of space to destabilize the Western domination of spatial knowledge production (see Perera 1999; Robinson 2003; Roy 2015).

Moreover, this scholarship discloses the historical construction of political and cultural complexities in contemporary spatial realities in the Global South through a more ground-up knowledge-building process. While questioning the universalization of specific spatial expressions by ignoring their different social contexts, this scholarship reminds us that "urban is not a universal form but a [specific] historical process" (Brenner & Schmid, 2014). Cities in postcolonial nations are deeply influenced by the historical processes of their colonial past, which consisted of both colonial impositions and anti-colonial resistances. Yeoh (2001, p. 460) pointed out, "The postcolonial city traces continuity rather than disjuncture from its colonial predecessor in the nature and quality of social encounter." Understanding the colonial past of these cities/spaces is significant because this past did not die at the end of colonial rule but has an umbilical connection with the present. Jacobs (1996, p. 16) wrote that it is "a past that is being nostalgically reworked and inventively adapted in the present." This past keeps influencing the presence of

postcolonial urban spaces. Also, Kusno (2000) exposed that independent nations' urban forms and architecture continue to 'dialogue' with their colonial pasts.

Besides history, the spatial transformation of postcolonial nations is also specific to the contexts (see King 2009). Instead of obsessively pursuing 'universal' urban theory, Andreas Huyssen (2008) emphasized the need for "[m]uch deeper knowledge about how modernity has historically evolved in the cities of the non-Western world" (p. 2). Huyssen referred to modernity that reflects the pre-existence of the colonial structures and the political and cultural ambiguity of the 'natives.' The postcolonial urban perspective suggests producing spatial knowledge by theorizing about non-Western spaces (Perera 2016; Perera and Tang 2013; Roy 2005, 2011; Simone 2014). It provides a theoretical framework to capture postcolonial urban spaces' cultural, political, and economic complexities. This framework helps scholars and professionals (i.e., planners and urban policymakers) understand the cultural and political complexities infused with colonial and nationalist thinking. While bringing the cultural and historical differences to the fore, it offers new lenses to understand nuanced and complex issues of representation, cultural identity, and heritage of postcolonial urban spaces.

Mainly led by Panditharatna (1963), Mendis (1981, 1983), and Gunaratna (1977, 2006), the conventional planning discourse (as well as the pedagogy) in Sri Lanka is primarily built upon a politically neutral, normative, and practice-orientated base. It mainly relies on the Chicago School paradigm but with later infusions of statistical and map analysis and cartographic modelling. By questioning the politics of this apolitical scholarship and

referring to the planning discourse in the early 20th century in Ceylon, Perera (1999, 2005) exposed the importing of the modern planning discourse, beginning with planning problems. This debate has initiated a broader discourse on the developments of social space in postcolonial Sri Lanka.

Beginning with Perera (1998, 2016), scholars have effectively articulated the planning discourse's colonial construction and postcolonial adaptation in Sri Lanka. Brun and Jazeel (2009), Hennayake (2006), and Pieris (2012) revealed the cultural politics and social power involved in the construction of social space, the historical development of spatial thinking in the country and the spatial narratives. The recent work of Pieris (2012) revealed the influence of colonial ideologies and the native bourgeois' self-fashioning desires in shaping the postcolonial identity of Sri Lankan-built forms. Perera (1999, 2009, 2015) took this literature deep into spaces produced by the weak and the subaltern.

However, the abundant scholarship on spatialization and its postcolonial shift has missed the spatialization of nationalism. For instance, how has the practice of planning, as a discipline imported to colonies (King, 1976; Perera, 2008), negotiated and been influenced by nationalist sentiments in the production of postcolonial space? The role of nationalism in shaping social spaces in postcolonial societies remains largely unexplored.

1.5. Anuradhapura: A Closer Examination of the Location

In our analysis, it is vital to consider the role of Anuradhapura as a place. The influence of places is not limited to their capacity to shape the lives of their occupants. They can

transform the spatial thinking of the people who encounter such places in tangible and intangible ways. As Calvino (1974) presented in *Invisible Cities*, certain places, like cities, have questions and answers for anyone who encounters them. His text depicted a fictional conversation between Emperor Kublai Khan and the great explorer of his time, Marco Polo. The emperor tried to enlighten Polo about how he should understand cities and how cities perceive their own standing.

> Cities also believe they are the work of the mind or of chance, but neither the one nor to other suffices to hold up their walls. You take delight, not in a city's seven or seventy wonders, but in the answer it gives to a question of yours. Or the question it asks you, forcing you to answer... (Calvino, 1974 p. 44)

Indeed, the conversation was imaginary. However, the spatial cues that emerged from it still hold significance. Through the discussion between the emperor and explorer, Calvino offers us an inside-out perspective of places. Places affect their users as inhabitants, visitors, pilgrims, or travellers. Certain places are still powerful regardless of whether they are functioning bodies or in ruins. They continually challenge their users' and makers' understanding, requiring them to provide answers as spatial expressions. Their spatial relationships evolve in these continuous queries and negotiations, transforming our perception of space. As elements of a narrative or destinations we physically explore, places shape how we perceive and comprehend space. Anuradhapura is a place that transforms the spatial thinking of the people who encounter it as they visit it or learn about it as the center of a narrative. Its multiple representations as a sacred city, world heritage site, pilgrim center, and planned urban center raise more questions than answers to its users, inhabitants, and explorers.

Before we move forward, acquiring a clear overview of Anuradhapura is essential. According to *Mahawamsa*, the most influential historical chronology of Sri Lanka that laid the base for Sinhalese mainstream history, Anuradhapura was the capital of the first kingdom of the Sinhalese. Naming it as the Kingdom of Anuradhapura signifies that the ancient Sinhalese followed the practice of naming their kingdoms after their capital cities. According to the works of historians like de Silva (2005), Karuṇananda (2006, 2015), and Wickramasinghe (2015), the Kingdom of Anuradhapura was one of the most accomplished in Sinhalese history. Gunawardana (1989) describes that the city of Anuradhapura as the capital lasted over 1500 years, from the fourth century BCE to the 10th century CE. By the 11th century, Anuradhapura had lost its centrality and relevance as it had failed to hold control against invasions, mainly from the ancient kingdoms in today's Southern India (de Silva 2005). De Silva (2005) states that once the capital was moved from Anuradhapura to a distant location over a hundred miles away, the glory of the former city remained as a memory. Perhaps because Buddhism became the central faith of Lanka in the days when Anuradhapura was the capital city, the city became a site for pilgrimage.

Sinhalese historical narratives presume that introducing the Theravada Buddhist tradition to Lanka was a defining moment of the Sinhalese civilization. *Mahawamsa* asserted that the Buddhist mission was led by Arahant Mahinda, son and emissary of Ashoka the Great, the emperor of the Maurya Dynasty, located northeast of today's India. Following Mahinda's success, his sibling, Buddhist nun Saṅghamittā, arrived in Lanka with a sapling of the sacred bodhi tree, believed to be the bodhi under which the Buddha attained

enlightenment (Figure 1.4). King Devānāmpiya Tissa, the ruler of Anuradhapura, majestically planted the bodhi tree at one of the most auspicious locations in the capital identified by Mahinda (Jayawardhana, 1991; Rāhula, 1956; Wickremeratne, 1987).

Figure 1.4 Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi, the historical sacred bodhi tree (Ficus religiosa) in Anuradhapura.

Referring to the planting of the bodhi tree, which is called *Shree Maha Bodhi* by the Buddhists, Venerable Rāhula (1956, p. 58) wrote, “The planting of the Bodhi-tree was symbolic of the establishment of Buddhism and Buddhist culture in the Island”. It is vital to note Rāhula’s spatial reference to the whole island; Buddhism had been established in Lanka as an extensive cultural values system instead of an isolated faith on the island. During the Anuradhapura period, Lanka received many materials associated with the Buddha, including some of the Buddha’s belongings, such as his rice bowl (see R. de Silva,

2005). The symbolic effect of the artifacts was significant in Buddhism's material and ideological establishment in Anuradhapura. Rāhula wrote that "The relics of the Buddha were regarded as representing the Buddha himself, and their enshrinement was as good as Buddha's residence in Lanka" (1956, p.58). Gunawardana (1979) has argued that Buddhism was institutionalized during the Anuradhapura period. As a religion, Buddhism was well organized and had a clear structure, with the establishment of monasteries and residential complexes for monks in the ancient capital. The remains of such constructions still stand as historical artifacts in Anuradhapura. Some evidence shows that the religious monuments constructed when Anuradhapura was a capital were significant to Buddhists even after the fall of the capital. For instance, Sukhothai Inscription II, which is considered the second inscription of the earliest Thai Script founded in Thailand, reveals the noble Buddhist monk Si Sattha's visit to Lanka from Thailand in the 14th century (Griswold & Nagara, 1992). He visited the ancient city of Anuradhapura and was involved in renovating a dilapidated stupa named Mahathupa. Hence, it is reasonable to assume that the Buddhist pilgrims had not completely forgotten about the place, but Anuradhapura remained a distant memory.

Nevertheless, the place that occasionally became important for pilgrims as a sacred site was not equated to "the Anuradhapura," which was abandoned as a capital city. No historical evidence or religious relationship can show Anuradhapura's historical continuity as a capital. Anuradhapura's existence as a pilgrim site does not suggest it reinstated its former significance as a political or economic center with its former glory. Instead, Buddhists considered Anuradhapura their place of worship. It is safe to assume those

pilgrims visited the abandoned city as it held various representations of Buddha. Therefore, no matter how different historical and literary narratives portray Anuradhapura today, we can assume that those who built, ruled, inhabited, or invaded Anuradhapura abandoned it.

The contemporary debate on modern representations of Anuradhapura as a postcolonial urban community and a dominant cultural symbol can be identified in two distinct discourses: social and planning. The social discourse was developed by cultural, anthropology, and religious studies scholars. They have produced a large body of work reproducing Anuradhapura as a dominant spiritual center and sacred space for establishing Sinhalese Buddhist authority (Jeganathan, 1995; Nissan, 1985, 1989; Sivasundaram, 2007, 2013). They assert that Anuradhapura's cultural and religious centrality is a modern construction created by the colonial historiographies of the natives and archaeological excavations of the 19th century. In contrast, the planning discourse on Anuradhapura focuses on the physical attributes of the new town plan: it is the beginning of modern planning in independent Sri Lanka (Gunaratna, 2006; Karunathilaka, 2011; Liyanage, 2003). However, planning studies ignore the social and cultural impact of the new town plan, especially the thinking and ideology behind it.

Despite the lack of empathy towards each other, these discourses have not deciphered how the new town planning project rejuvenated the nationalist historiography of Anuradhapura and how the plan negotiated the tensions between native religious and cultural sensibilities. Thus, there is no knowledge of the impact of social and political

concerns of the time on this planning project and the impact of the planning project on shaping the postcolonial spatial thinking of the new nation. My research will address this knowledge gap by investigating the Anuradhapura planning project and conceptualizing how nationalism is built into postcolonial spatial thinking in Sri Lanka. I will locate this research project at the intersection of colonial praxis and nationalist politics, which—hypothetically—shaped postcolonial spatial thinking in Sri Lanka.

1.6. Understanding How Nationalism Manifests in Space in Anuradhapura

Since its modern formation, the historical remains in Anuradhapura have been the central foci of various debates between natives and colonials. To construct the history of Anuradhapura, both colonialists and revivalists recognized that the historical artifacts and their size and positioning were of utmost importance. Moreover, the physical attributes of the past artifacts and buildings were significant to the British, as they were remnants of a bygone era (as outlined in Chapter 3). Dharmapala and Harischandra, two preeminent Buddhist leaders, brought life to the extant historical artifacts by investing them with social and cultural meanings (as explored in Chapter 4). However, as Dharmapala and Harischandra perceived, the residents of the sacred city posed a threat, as they jeopardized the sacredness of the space. Therefore, to preserve Anuradhapura as a Sinhalese Buddhist holy land, the revivalists' prime spatial strategy was to separate the sacred space from secular activities—their ambition was to construct an alternative new urban center for Anuradhapura.

The colonial world was defined by deep-seated separations and discrimination imprinted

in our memories about the categorized connections between individuals, societies, institutions, and territories[2]. Notably, the works of Glover (2007), King (1976), Mitchell (1991), Perera (2002), Raychaudhuri (2001), Sen (2010), and Yeoh (1996) demonstrated how such divisions established and continued in colonial urban environments. This scholarship reveals the chasm between native and colonial sectors in the cities, a central manifestation of colonial urbanization. Moreover, colonized minds and colonial spaces are both segmented. For instance, as Fanon (2004, p. 3) persuasively advocated in his work, "The colonial world is a compartmentalized world." He convincingly underlined this: "The colonized world is divided in two. The dividing line, the border, is represented by the barracks and the police stations. In the colonies, the official, legitimate agent, the spokesperson for the colonizer and the regime of oppression, is the police officer or the soldier (2004, p. 3)".

Like King in 1976, Fanon wrote that separating and categorizing the colonial and colonized parts of the city was essential for the colonizers who needed to maintain domination over the colonized "native other" in the city. If not, the segmentation of urban spaces was a tool of colonial control, creating a sense of division throughout the city. Fanon, therefore, argued, from a robust anti-colonial perspective, that decolonization is "… nothing less than demolishing the colonist's sector, burying it deep within the earth or banishing it from the territory" (2004, p. 6). Thus, it is apparent that effective decolonization of space cannot be accomplished only by reversing the colonial partitioning of territories. The

[2] Chapter 3 delves deeply into the colonial world's practice of segregating people, practices, as well as knowledge systems.

decolonization efforts must address the physical divisions and beyond. It is vital to eradicate the social and cultural distinctions shaped by the colonial knowledge of land and territories, creating a new spatial epistemology that could replicate the native concept of place, habitat, and environments.

The curious irony was that the religious revivalists in Anuradhapura started the idea of spatial separation, not the colonials, followed by the rising national political elites who sought to be the leaders of independent Ceylon. During the mid-1900s, with the sign of freedom from British rule and possibilities of political autonomy, most indigenous nationalist politicians endorsed Dharmapala and Harischandra's vision for Anuradhapura. The emerging political leaders had politicized the revivalists' claim to rescue Anuradhapura. The nationalist political movements of the mid-20th century attempted to turn the revivalists' assertion of eradicating all non-religious and secular activities from the sacred city into a reality while planning to construct the new town.

The emerging political leaders in Ceylon, particularly those who embodied the Sinhalese Buddhist ideals, ultimately attained the goal of constructing a new town in Anuradhapura. In the 1940s, the planning process was set in motion to rescue Anuradhapura's historical heritage from the repercussions of modernity's ongoing encroachment, along with building a new urban center to move the current inhabitants of the town. The Anuradhapura new town plan was the first postcolonial planning initiative in Sri Lanka; however, the planning of the new town began before Ceylon's independence. Consequently, Anuradhapura's postcolonial spatial reasoning underwent intense

discussions and alterations before the inception of the postcolonial state.

1.7. Organization

This dissertation is structured into six chapters, incorporating both the introduction and conclusion. While chapter 2 provides a detailed overview of my research method, chapter 3 to chapter 5 are organized in both thematically and chronologically to present how the colonial praxis and nationalists conceptualization of space met in Anuradhapura. These three chapters demonstrate how Anuradhapura was transformed from a historical significance and political entity under the British to a nationalists claim in the early 20th century until the new town plan was introduced. To obtain a brief overview of this historical trajectory, Figure 1.5 represents a diagram that corresponds with time, indicating some key events discussed in this dissertation.

Chapter 2 - Research Methodology: Learning from People and Understanding Histories and Archives

This chapter illustrates the efficacy of archival research and ethnographic field studies for comprehending the historical formation of the new town plan. It encompasses the material and data I obtained from my visits in Sri Lanka in 2017 and 2019. I searched through archival materials, primarily Sri Lanka's National Archives, to assemble primary sources, such as government papers, planning reports, and media coverage associated with the planning project. The fieldwork involved interviewing Anuradhapura's residents, planners, and city administrators to understand how the policies, practices, and ideas

were integral to the new town's planning. Along with the process, this chapter details the challenges I faced while completing this research project, especially in the field and when collecting information and writing the dissertation. It particularly points to the difficulty of extricating historical research from the nationalist narratives that are so prevalent in South Asia.

Chapter 3 - Colonial Spatialization and (Re)historicization of Anuradhapura

British colonialism had a substantial effect on shaping Anuradhapura's spatial expressions as a place and region. Its modern constructions as an archeological site, historical significance, tourist destination, and regional capital go back to the 19th century when colonial administrators controlled the area. The British reinvented Anuradhapura through its rehistoricization, familiarizing themselves with the unknown territory and its historical ruins and ancient artifacts. They incorporated Anuradhapura into the colonial governmental discourse in the late 19th century as a regional capital, establishing a new political and spatial consciousness. In this chapter, I outline the colonial transformation of Anuradhapura from an unknown locale to a historical significance in the 19th century and the development of a discourse incorporating it into the colonial discourse.

Chapter 4 - Creating the Sacred: Exploring Religion, Rioting, and Awakening Collectives

Chapter 4 demonstrates how Sinhalese Buddhist nationalists spatially claimed and produced new knowledge of Anuradhapura, alluding to a specific Sinhala Buddhist

historical and religious perception of it. As the 20th century approached, the nationalists stood for the need to define their sacred city by removing all secular activities from it. Their campaign went beyond agitation against the colonial state into hostility towards non-Buddhist faiths. Thus, focusing on space, this chapter examines how the nationalists spatially conceived and claimed Anuradhapura as part of the burgeoning national identity of Sinhala Buddhists. Finally, the chapter shows the emergence of Sinhala-Buddhist spatial consciousness that occurred when the nationalists' moved their struggle from the colonial capital of Colombo to Anuradhapura.

Chapter 5 - Nationalism, Planning, and Postcolonial Spatial Reason

Colonial and nationalist spatial expressions came together in the late 1940s Anuradhapura's new town plan, signifying the beginning of postcolonial planning in Sri Lanka. In Anuradhapura's planning, the colonial planning discourse met the national consciousness. Thus, Chapter 5 looks into the connection between the strategy of nationalist politics in independent Ceylon and the construction of Anuradhapura in the light of such a planning objective. The chapter delves into the plan itself while also exploring the development of Sinhalese Buddhist nationalist political elites and native bureaucrats in Ceylon as they took the place of colonial authority in the postcolonial nation. Examining Sinhala Buddhist nationalism, colonial planning discourse, and the Anuradhapura new town planning project, the chapter ultimately reveals how they all interacted to form a postcolonial representation of space.

Chapter 6 - Conclusion

In the concluding chapter, I summarize the project and the meaningful discoveries I made during my research. It asserts that place-making is a politically charged process that involves reconciling multiple subjectivities, feelings, and desires. In postcolonial societies, a plan can be a representation of power and oppression, a way to bridge cultural traditions and historical narratives, and a tool to express national pride through spatial organization. The chapter concludes by suggesting potential research directions to attain a more profound insight into the spatial consequences of postcolonialism and nationalism, which could benefit academic and non-academic communities.

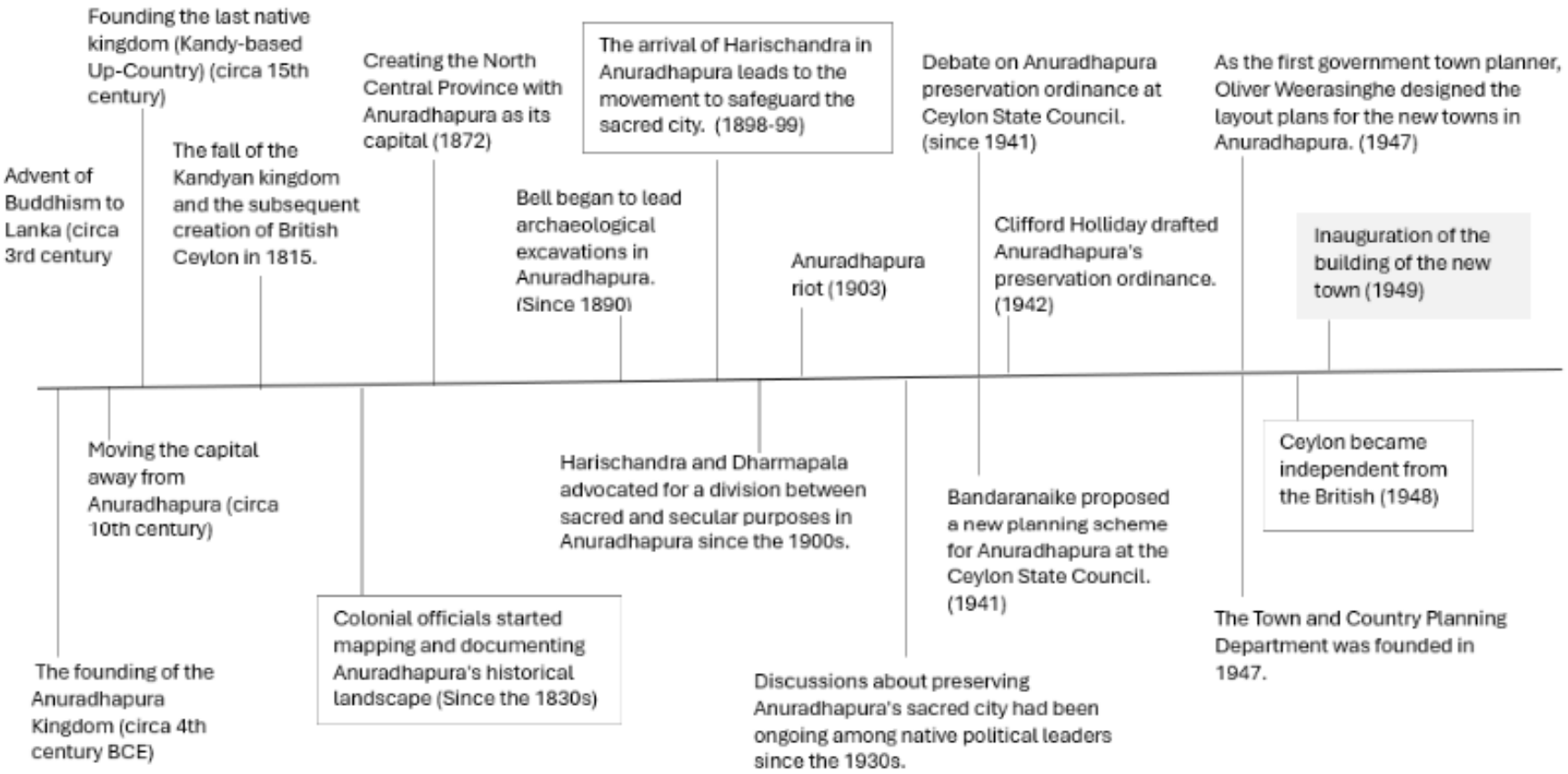


Figure 1.5. A brief overview of the key events discussed in the dissertation

Chapter 2

Research Method: Learning from People and Understanding Histories and Archives

This chapter focuses on my research journey and how I engaged with Anuradhapura, its new town plan, and the people who inhabit and visit it. I share the intellectual challenges I faced during this qualitative research and the approaches I adopted to address them. The chapter also outlines the materials I accessed and the strategies and conceptual equipment I deployed to examine the historical production of modern representations of Anuradhapura as the first planned city in independent Ceylon.

The research involved significant historical materials. Reconstructing a comprehensive understanding of specific historical events and decisions made several decades ago is a formidable task, primarily due to the absence of the individuals who were instrumental in shaping them. Understanding the social and political motives behind the planning initiative for the new town in Anuradhapura was also difficult due to the absence of the town's creators, such as politicians, planners, and officials.Even though the crucial figures behind the planning and construction of Anuradhapura were not present, there were still existing archival records, documents, and descendants that connected their decisions. Hence, I employed two main approaches to collect information about Anuradhapura’s new town planning initiative in this study. First, I conducted an archival study examining multiple archival records and documents, which could offer an understanding of the social and

political context of the transformation of Anuradhapura. Second, I undertook ethnographic fieldwork that included interviewing and discussing with inhabitants in Anuradhapura.

Throughout my research, I made two separate visits to Sri Lanka, which significantly contributed to my knowledge and understanding of the planning project, the modern construction of the place, and its everyday practices. The first visit occurred between May and August 2017, while the second occurred from May to September 2019. Both visits included archival studies, mainly in Colombo, and ethnographic fieldwork in Anuradhapura. The chapter elaborates on the findings from these field visits and the effectiveness and usefulness of the methods I employed to learn about the case of Anuradhapura.

2.1. Exploring the Past through Archival Studies

Archival studies, which involve reviewing documents and obtaining information from various archival records, play a vital role in most social research. In line with Lerner's (2010) perspective, archival studies permit researchers to bring life to the past by "re-creating social worlds" and exploring the stories of the actors who preceded them. In this research, archival studies as a research method critically aided me in acquiring a compressive understanding of the historical contours of postcolonial planning in Sri Lanka. I reviewed multiple documents about Anuradhapura's administration and the evolution of the new-city-planning project from the late 19th century to the late 20th century. I visited the Sri Lanka National Archives (SLNA) in Colombo and major public libraries in 2017 and 2019.

The research involved archival studies, and crucial questions were about what archival materials are and how we can understand their position. According to Ricoeur (2004), researchers using archival records as a source of information should understand a critical fact about them—those materials' influential function in telling stories about the past. Archival materials are not neutral artifacts that sit passively in libraries. Instead, Ricoeur contends that such textual materials could be seen as "orphans" who have been separated from their original creators. As he emphasizes,

> The document sleeping in the archives is not just silent, it is an orphan. The testimonies it contains are detached from the authors who "gave birth" to them. They are handed over to the care of those who are competent to question them and hence to defend them, by giving them aid and assistance. In our historical culture, the archive has assumed authority over those who consult it (Ricoeur, 2004, p. 169).

Therefore, researchers should learn that archival records contain power and authority and can shape the narratives of the readers and writers who draw upon them. Working with archival materials had a substantial influence on my research. It extended my focus to the historical production of Anuradhapura under colonial rule, widening the initial objectives of my research.

While my study's findings were grounded in archival materials, I had a limited understanding of conducting an archival study. During my first visit in 2017, I visited the National Archives to explore Anuradhapura's new town planning project. I expected to find records to reveal how the new town was planned. However, in the first few days, I found no materials providing a substantive understanding of the new town planning project. As a result, I felt an overwhelming sense of exasperation. I doubted if I could collect adequate

information about the planning project before I completed the archival survey. At this point, I had doubts about continuing the study as the selected method could not serve the study's objective as anticipated. I was fortunate that the curator of the National Archives observed my anxiety and made a kind gesture by connecting me with a senior research coordinator.

In the next few days, the curator and another official became my teachers in conducting an archival study to explore the development of the planning project. They guided me with findings and sources of relevant information to get a clear overview of the historical and political context in which the new town plan emerged. I was instructed to review several documents from the colonial administration with the Anuradhapura plan, which was initially developed in the first half of the 20th century. Both officials felt these documents could provide valuable insight and give me a comprehensive perspective on the planning project's social, political, and historical background. While it was not part of my initial research plan, I decided to take the advice and investigate the abundant records of colonial Ceylon. I reviewed and analyzed certain archival records and documents during my initial visit to the National Archives. In 2019, I had the opportunity to revisit these documents and delve deeper into their analysis.

I. Hansard reports.

Hansard reports are the official records or the proceedings of the debates and discussions held in the Ceylon State Council. In Hansard, I discovered a significant political debate on making a new town in Anuradhapura during the first half of the 1940s. This discovery

enlightened me in many ways, showing how the political will of Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism entered the postcolonial spatial discourse in Sri Lanka. The debate in the Hansard reports helped me to understand who the actors who advocated for making a new town plan were and who opposed it on what grounds. Chapter 5 of this dissertation is based mainly on the findings from these debates and the findings from the ethnographic fieldwork I conducted in Anuradhapura.

II. Ceylon Sessional Papers, the reports and papers presented at the State Council to identify public administration and governance discussions.

III. Ceylon Administration reports to learn how different administrative institutions reported their progress each year.

IV. Reports of the Ceylon Public Works Department (PWD) to get an overview of the country's premier departments and institutes engaged in the planning, designing, constricting, and maintaining government assets.

V. Times collection

The Times collection in the national archives is its most notable photograph collection, specifically from the Times of Ceylon Press between 1946 and 1985.

Apart from the Department of National Archives, I utilized three other libraries: the National Library, the National Museum of Colombo Library, and the media archives at Lake House (Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Limited). The Institute of Town Planners Sri Lanka (ITPSL) allowed me to access documents and records that Oliver Weerasinghe's family had

donated to them. The significance of Weerasinghe's document collection for my research lies in his role as the first government town planner in Sri Lanka and his involvement in the Anuradhapura planning project during the 1940s. Through accessing the collection, I intended to learn how Weerasinghe negotiated as a planner with the era's nationalist politics when he planned Anuradhapura. I found his role was less acknowledged in Hansards and other government publications, except for his annual report as the government town planner for the Ceylon Administration reports and a few others. I had no other source to learn about his contribution to the first postcolonial planning project. At his library, however, I found writings from Weerasinghe that explained some details of the site selection for the new town. I also discovered that his role as planner was not limited to Ceylon, as he produced plans for other countries, such as a master plan for Addis Ababa and a plan implementation policy for Cyprus.

Archival studies show me that planning Anuradhapura was not an isolated event; it was one of several events of a historical moment in the country, i.e., independence. Moreover, parallel to the planning project, several other nationally significant events, projects, and debates occurred, such as the introduction of the free education policy, the debate on introducing a new language policy, and the growing interest among politicians in bringing national development to the country's internal regions.

2.1.2 Unpublished Archival Materials

Researchers can uncover unexpected and complicated findings during their exploration of archives. Explaining that uncertainty and complexity, Lerner wrote, "The histories that

emerge from archival research are also never simple, never complete. (2010; p. 203)." Instead, these histories are layered and multifaceted. He further reminded us that "people are very complex, and the records found in archives only hint at that complexity (ibid)." I experienced the complicated nature of archival research through my exposure to unpublished documents at the National Archives. The main reason was that I realized my research would be partial if I limited it to formally published materials, as printed materials comprise mere records of the colonial government, which served its political and administrative purposes. These records contained the stories of individuals or communities with the "privilege" of being subjects of history, my drive to understand the experiences of those less privileged led me to review "unpublished" materials as well. Therefore, I also delved into a wide range of correspondence, references, and similar materials used by the colonial administration in Anuradhapura from the early 1800s to 1948.

Most materials comprise the documents on File Number 41 and the pending files organized under the Anuradhapura Kachcheri (District Secretariat office now). They included the dispatches of government officials in Anuradhapura and the Colonial Secretariat in Colombo, official diaries of the government agents of Anuradhapura, records of the complaints of local people and the solutions given, records of issues related to lands in Anuradhapura and the North Central Province such as encroachments and trespassing on the crown lands, problems between Buddhist temples and the colonial administration regarding property ownership, and records of the crimes and social issues in the area such as thefts and disease. The unpublished colonial accounts were instrumental in helping me

gain insight into how colonial officials interacted with Anuradhapura, its historical landscape, and its people in the 19th century. These findings were especially relevant to the development of chapter 3 of my dissertation. In addition to other colonial publications from the 19th century by British officials like Thomas Skinner, the unpublished colonial records provide a strong foundation for the writing of chapter 3. This chapter focuses on Anuradhapura's colonial spatialization and (re)historicization.

Another fundamental discovery I made was the correspondence between religious revivalists, specifically Dharmapala and Harischandra, in the early 20th century. They discussed their efforts to safeguard their sacred spaces in Anuradhapura from non-Buddhist encroachment. In these letters, the nationalists emphasized the necessity of relocating all non-Buddhist activities to a different area, creating a separate urban center in Anuradhapura. This discovery was significant as it formed the basis of chapter 4 of my dissertation, which delves into the religious revivalists' claim for Anuradhapura.

2.1.3. Avoiding Validity Issues of Archival Sources

One crucial concern I wanted to prevent right from the beginning of this research was the overdependence on archival information, which could affect its validity. In order to avoid potential validity threats, I consider triangulation, especially collecting similar information from different sources and using various methods to collect information rather than depending on one method. I conducted interviews and field observations to clarify whether the information obtained from archival materials reflects reality. I was exposed to the ground level and shared the experiences of the citizens and planners who experience the

new town of Anuradhapura in their everyday lives. This triangulation approach helped to strengthen the accuracy of this research's evidence.

2.2. Field Studies and Learning from People

Beyond reviewing archival material, I interviewed and made participatory observations in Anuradhapura. During my stay in Anuradhapura, I attended meetings, events, and discussions about the area's historical and ongoing planning initiatives. I met with several people to learn about the Anuradhapura new town plan and its impact. While the findings of archival studies reveal certain historical events that construct the present, meetings and discussions were expected to fill the gaps in those archival materials. I organized these meetings under three categories: scholars and thinkers—researchers, faculties of universities, and political and social activists; professionals—senior planners and other professionals who are involved in urban development activities in Anuradhapura; and locals of Anuradhapura—both residents who live in and pilgrims who visit the town.

Sources, such as stories, memories, and narratives of the people, can be critical in understanding social histories. For example, Sen (2010) explained the importance of such sources can provide valuable and inspiring perspectives in research. Referring to the discourse of postcolonial studies, he emphasized how "unconventional sources such as popular memories, oral discourse, and other neglected sources (p. 206)" in helping subaltern scholars learn about India's colonial history from the perspective of the colonized. Besides, the work of Bauchspies (2007), Leslie (2013), and Raghuram & Madge (2006) showed us that researchers can include the stories and narratives of the

communities to understand the histories and perspectives of people who are not firmly represented by mainstream social or political systems. Therefore, beyond the archival data significant to the state and formal institutions, I included learning the transformation of Anuradhapura planning discourse from the inhabitants' and the users' perspectives.

I stayed in the Anuradhapura new town from July to early August 2017 and June to September 2019 to conduct my ethnographic fieldwork. During my stay, I engaged with many locals from Anuradhapura's new town to discuss the new town planning initiative. Notably, most of them agreed to record our discussions, with only a few instances where this was not feasible. I had the opportunity to record 34 in-depth, open-ended interviews with local residents and planners. I transcribed all the recorded interviews and discussions verbatim after the field visits were completed for future reference and analysis.

Let me provide more details on my fieldwork. In 2017, I conducted 21 in-depth interviews with a wide range of locals. These individuals included Buddhist monks, journalists, writers, educators, politicians from both local and provincial levels of government, retired government employees who remembered the new town's expansion from the mid-1960s, tourist guides, and street vendors. Sometimes, I visited the same individuals more than once to learn about their experiences. In my interviews and discussions with the communities of Anuradhapura, I did not limit the scope to the planning project but also explored the life experiences of the inhabitants. In addition to the locals, I had the opportunity to engage with 5 planners to discuss Anuradhapura. Four individuals were actively involved in urban planning in Anuradhapura's new town at the time of the

interviews. At the same time, the fifth, despite being retired, was a strong advocate for Anuradhapura's new town to become the country's political capital in the 1970s.

On my second visit in 2019, I recorded 7 comprehensive interviews with local residents to validate and further contextualize the knowledge I had acquired during my previous visit. Four of these interviews involved individuals in their late eighties who kindly shared their invaluable childhood recollections and experiences. Additionally, during this visit, I made a deliberate effort to reconnect with local community members and urban planners whom I had initially met during my 2017 visit. The purpose of these follow-up interactions was to collect any updated or new insights they might have been willing to share since our initial meetings. From these discussions, I learned that the building of the modern-day Anuradhapura is not just because of admirable kings from the past, British colonialists, native political elites who came after the colonizers, monks looking after sacred places, and bureaucrats with a primary role in the postcolonial state, like archaeologists and planners. Instead, the locals put their labour into the process, and it is not just a symbolic notion like that of the actors mentioned above. Therefore, through most of my meetings with the area’s inhabitants, I learned more about references in the present that could help me to understand the conditions, ideas, and actions that brought the modern spatial form in Anuradhapura during the middle of the 20th century.

I asked most residents to explain what changes they experienced and witnessed in Anuradhapura during their lifetimes and what those changes meant to their lives. Although it was a broad, open-ended question, it allowed me to make them comfortable to share

their stories and perspectives of the town. I interviewed the residents, especially the senior citizens who still remembered the first planning project, who immensely helped me learn their understanding of the city's transformation since independence. For example, I met Kamala, 45, who owns a small food outlet beside a street on land belonging to the sacred city. I was interested in how she could construct such an establishment without having any problems with the authorities, mainly the Department of Archaeology. Her response was simple, "I have been here for a few years. They [government officials and chief incumbents of the nearest temples] have seen my shop many times.

Nevertheless, no problem is aroused as no 'rocks' have been discovered around my shop." By the term rocks or, in her own words, "*gal*," Kamala referred to any archeologically valuable object or structure from ancient times. Of course, that could be anything generally made of rock, from pieces of guard stone or pillars of a place of worship to the foundation of a historic building complex. Still, Kamala was confident. Even though her shop is in the middle of a territory declared ancient and sacred, no historical materials have been discovered near her establishment. Kamala described, "My hotel is safe until someone discovers something [historical] nearby." In other words, she knew she was not identified as a potential menace to the place's historical significance. Therefore, at least in the short term, she was unlikely to get displaced.

During the interviews, most adults were nostalgic about their lives in the old town of Anuradhapura. They remembered the places and buildings where they lived, played, and hung out as kids, youths, and adults. According to them, *Sheree Maha Bodhi* was the

center of the old town. The central bus terminal was located at the main entrance of *Shree Maha Bodhi*. All the other establishments of the town – such as the powerhouse, cinemas, groceries, government buildings, and playgrounds – were scattered around the bodhi and the bus terminal. “It was full of life there, “Gamini, a 65-year-old male who grew up in the old town and owned a small tourist hotel in the new town, explained his life in the old town.

Besides the town’s evolution, most informants remember that the old town was a quiet public space home to different ethnic groups. For example, most properties and businesses in the old town belong to Tamils, who were initially from Jaffna. Most of the local politicians, doctors, lawyers, and teachers in the town were also Tamils. Unfortunately, most Tamils had to leave Anuradhapura during the late 1970s and early 1980s due to the ethnic riots[3] that took place in the country. Most Tamils had been severely affected during the riots, and Sinhalese crowds plundered their assets. However, I met one Tamil family who still wants to live in Anuradhapura. Their neighbours told me that that family owned most of Anuradhapura’s paddy fields and farmlands before the riots. Since the mid-1980s, Anuradhapura has converted into a predominantly Sinhalese town in the North Central Province. Despite losing most of the properties they used to own, the family members still believed they belonged to Anuradhapura forever. Anuradhapura was their home, and they hoped it would be again.

[3] In recent history, there were two main Anti-Tamil riots took place in Sri Lanka. In August 1977, a month after the United National Party came to power, a riot took place against Tamils, which ended with over 300 deaths, mostly Sri Lankan Tamils. In July 1983 –called *Black July*, another anti-Tamil movement killed over 3000 Sri Lankan Tamil and many more were displaced and became refugees.

Alongside the inhabitants, I met with researchers and scholars from various disciplines, such as urban planning, sociology, history, and linguistics, from universities and research institutions. I also met a few political activists and senior journalists to learn their perspectives on the social and political dynamics of the planning project. Although they represent diverse political and intellectual stances, they all share some common aspects in their work, i.e., Anuradhapura, nationalism, or the postcolonial politics in Sri Lanka. These meetings and discussions contributed to my thinking about the research project. I met with one planning educator and postcolonial planning theorist who explained that the ethnic separation of the nationalist movement did not occur until the nationalists got the consciousness of freedom. Also, he highly recommended that I stay in Anuradhapura for quite an extended period. He argued that the 'living in' experience in Anuradhapura is the most authentic learning approach, whether nationalism is explicit or implicit in religious spatial practice. At another meeting, an anthropologist and member of the subaltern studies movement encouraged me to examine Anuradhapura's critique of the limits of disciplinary historiography. He argued that the 'ancientness' of Anuradhapura is a modern construction that evolved in the mid-1800s with the invention of the Sinhalese chronicle *Mahavamsa*.

I must say that some interviews with researchers and scholars also facilitated my archival research. I met with a well-known historian who has substantially investigated Anuradhapura's social and political transformation during the British colonial era. He persuasively shared his three decades of experience in archival research and most of his publications on Anuradhapura, which provided me with significant guidance in finding

relevant archival sources. A linguist brought a different angle to my work: the formation and impact of the language purification movement in colonial Sri Lanka. As some nationalists argued that the presence of 'other' (non-Sinhalese Buddhist) religious and social practices would contaminate Anuradhapura, I was introduced to the nationalists' view on the contamination of the Sinhala language.

Most professionals I met in Sri Lanka were planners, from some senior planners—who had memories of the Anuradhapura planning project in 1949—to the young (junior) planners—who are currently engaged in urban planning in Anuradhapura. According to the senior planners, Weerasinghe, the first government planner, represented many vital movements of modern Sri Lankan history, i.e., more than any of his successors. They believe that Weerasinghe's education in the UK and elite social background permitted him to be a key player in many notable events, such as becoming the head of the first town planning project in independent Sri Lanka. However, most planners I met in Anuradhapura and Colombo had little knowledge of Weerasinghe's role in postcolonial planning practice instead of his reputation as the 'father' of Sri Lankan urban planning. All these ambiguities about the planning project demonstrate a considerable knowledge gap in forming the postcolonial planning discourse in Sri Lanka. Above all, these meetings, discussions, and events significantly influenced my understanding of Anuradhapura, especially how much I do not know about it.

Other than the interviews, I perceived two major religious festivals in Anuradhapura; each attracts over a million Buddhist pilgrims to the old town. The first event, the Poson festival,

was held on the first full moon day of every June to celebrate the arrival of Buddhism to Lanka in the third century BC. Poson, one of the most traditional Buddhist festivals in the country, is second only to the Vesak festival, which commemorates the birth, awakening, and death of Lord Buddha. The Poson festival brought a wave of Buddhist pilgrims from all corners of the country to Anuradhapura, where they gathered to pay homage to the revered religious sites.

The second religious festival, Pichcha Mal Pujawa*,* is an offering of jasmine flowers to the sacred bodhi tree and the great stupa of Ruwanweliseya and occurred in late July (See Figure 2.1). In contrast to the Poson festival, the latter is a relatively young event with only about twenty years of history. Although the event portrayed an invented tradition, I observed more participants in Anuradhapura for Pichcha Mal Poojawa than in the Poson festival. Similar to the Poson festival in June, the government provided a special train and public transport service for pilgrims during Pichcha Mal Pujawa. The arrival of thousands of individuals nationwide participating in traditional and most recent religious festivals indicates that Anuradhapura is still a relevant space in the Buddhist universe that plays a significant role in the Sinhalese Buddhists' lives.

Figure 2.1 Pilgrims crowd Anuradhapura during Pichcha Mal Pujawa

2.3. The Effect of the Field Studies on the Research and the Researcher

The findings of the fieldwork in Sri Lanka gave several new dimensions to my research; among other things, I found ways to use religion and nationalism to understand the politics of space. Based on this exposure, I have changed and expanded the direction and scope of the research to a certain extent. For example, in the proposal submitted for the candidacy exam, my central focus was on the impact of colonial and nationalist thoughts on the first formal planning project in independent Ceylon. I emphasized the importance of contextualizing the Anuradhapura planning projects among the planning projects undertaken by other regional independent nations. This goal remained unchanged. However, my findings from the archival studies and ethnographic fieldwork further

expanded the scope of the research. I eventually began to examine how nationalism entered and shaped the Sri Lankan planning discourse during the first half of the 20th century, i.e., by employing the Anuradhapura new town planning project.

The social history of Anuradhapura became a prominent focus of my research after my first visit to Sri Lanka. Some archival materials I found at the National Archives, mainly colonial administrative reports and official diary records of the colonial administrators in the 19th century, broadened my understanding of Anuradhapura, particularly its social and political transformation during the British colonial era. These documents revealed how Anuradhapura evolved into a significant historical site and a regional capital in Ceylon under British governance. Initially, I did not anticipate delving deeply into the colonial history of Anuradhapura. However, as I progressed with my research, I discovered significant findings that enabled me to formulate a theory about how the city was impacted and spatialized during the late 19th century. The findings of these explorations drive Chapter 3 of my dissertation.

Some unpublished archival materials also significantly contributed to this research as they showed me how the colonial polity incorporated local social structures to govern the region, my findings provided insights into Buddhist revivalists' strategies to save Anuradhapura from non-Buddhist uses. To illustrate, I came across a set of correspondences at the National Archives which showed a dialogue between two Buddhist leaders regarding the sanctity of Anuradhapura. By examining their response and concerns about Anuradhapura in the early 1900s, I could highlight the historical background of its

national recognition, which I incorporated into Chapter 4 of this dissertation. Through these findings, I could analyze why Anuradhapura became significant to the Sinhalese Buddhist revivalists in the early 1900s as a center of Sinhalese cultural identity, and how Anuradhapura became a Sinhalese Buddhist site by separating the sacred uses from secular activities. Understanding the revivalists' argument became crucial in grasping the role of Anuradhapura in the political strategies of nationalist leaders during the mid-1900s for the development of the new town.

Reviewing the debates at the State Council of Ceylon (the Parliament after independence in 1948) in the early 1940s, I found a substantial debate on building Anuradhapura new town among members. Throughout the debate, I found that the nationalists' demand for a new city in the early 20th century was politicized before decolonization. Further, I expect to discuss the formation of Anuradhapura's new town as a site of national political interest to Sinhalese Buddhist leaders by employing planning as the key (perhaps new) instrument. These political debates introduced me to the planning project from the early 1940s to the late 1950s. This project represented a significant shift in Sri Lankan spatial discourse, breaking away from history and ushering in a new era of modernity, which are the main foci of Chapter 5 of this research.

2.4. The Gaps I Encountered

I have come to understand through this study that research is a continuous process that can never be fully perfected. A principal difficulty during this study was the lack of sufficient information on the physical transformation of the new town plan. Most of the

archival materials I consulted provided valuable insights into the social history of Anuradhapura's transition into a planned postcolonial town. However, I struggled to find resources offering detailed information about the planning project. Most of the archival materials referring to the planning project also focus on the political debates and discussions surrounding the creation of the town and its impact on the community. I still noticed a significant lack of information regarding the actual details of the new town plan.

In my field studies, I encountered a similar problem—the lack of individuals who could recall the history of the new town. To gather firsthand accounts of current residents' experiences, I conducted interviews in Anuradhapura. However, I found that only a few elderly residents still had memories of the town's initial construction. One of the main challenges I encountered was to rescue this study from the nationalist historical narrative of Sri Lanka.

Gender is another critical element I could not incorporate into this study because of the limited availability of sources. I was not ignorant of this issue. I often asked myself why Anuradhapura's new town planning was patriarchal. I also had the question of why the making of Anuradhapura's modern representations lacked women. Although I have met women in historical texts, colonial records, and fieldwork, colonial and nationalist narratives of Anuradhapura were dominated by stories of men. Throughout this study, I encountered women in a few central moments, such as Sanghamitta, a daughter of Emperor Ashoka, who arrived in Anuradhapura with the saplings of the sacred bodhi tree.

In its modern formation, however, I could not find sufficient details of the participation of women in making Anuradhapura's modern history. Although I encountered women as pilgrims in some colonial records, I could not find a substantial reference to the impact of women on the city or its planning. Analyzing Anuradhapura's trajectory from the colonial transformation of the place, the building of new historical awareness about the place, and the revivalists' resistance to planning hardly shows the role of women in that journey. The planning discourse was no exception: it was firmly dominated by native men. So, I believe that one of the essential perspectives that this study requires further expansion on is gender. In addition to colonialism and nationalism, the impact of gender on the planning of the new town Anuradhapura and postcolonial spatial consciousness in Sri Lanka should be considered.

Summary

Understanding an experience from a different time of history is always intricate. To overcome this challenge, I employed a qualitative research approach with two distinct methods: archival and ethnographic field studies.

Archival studies involved reviewing documents and archival records at the Sri Lanka National Archives, National Library, Library at the National Museum of Colombo, media archives at Lake House, and the Institute of Town Planners Sri Lanka. In this research, I consulted both the published and unpublished documents and records to obtain a comprehensive overview of the social and spatial transformation of Anurahdpaura's new town. The findings from these studies revealed that the planning of Anuradhapura was not

an isolated event but rather one of several significant events that occurred around the time of Sri Lanka's independence. The documents also show the impact of colonialism and Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism in shaping post-independence Sri Lanka's first planning project.

Beyond the written history, this study involved the findings from ethnographic field studies I conducted in Anuradhapura. During the field study, I explored the transformation of the new town over the last few decades and how the locals witnessed it in their everyday lives. I spent a month in Anuradhapura to learn their perspectives on the changes in the new town during their lifetime. Besides, I conducted interviews and discussions with planners, scholars, researchers, political activists, and journalists to learn and contextualize the relevant social and political dynamics of the making of Anuradhapura's new town. The fieldwork was not limited to the meetings and discussions with the locals; it also included participating in religious festivals like Poson and Pichcha Mal Pujawa to understand the role of Anuradhapura in contemporary religious practices.

The next chapter explores how Anuradhapura became a historically significant and regional political center of colonial rule during the late 19th century. It explores the colonial rehistoricization of Anuradhapura and how the British interpreted the natives' history as they witnessed it in Anuradhapura using their own worldviews and colonial intellectual instruments, such as archeology.

CHAPTER 3

Colonial Spatialization and (Re)historicization of Anuradhapura

British colonialism had a substantial effect on shaping Anuradhapura's spatial expressions as a place and region. Its modern constructions as an archeological site, tourist destination, and regional capital go back to the 19th century when British officials controlled the area. The British reinvented Anuradhapura through its rehistoricization, familiarizing themselves with the unknown territory, ruins, and ancient artifacts. Furthermore, they incorporated Anuradhapura into the colonial governmental discourse in the late 19th century as a regional capital,[4] establishing a new political and spatial consciousness. In this chapter, I outline the colonial transformation of Anuradhapura from an unknown locale to a historically significant political entity in the 19th century and the development of a discourse incorporating it into the colonial discourse.

The impact of British colonialism on shaping Anuradhapura's historical importance has been well debated. I will open with the debate of contemporary scholars on the influence of the British on Anuradhapura's modern historical representations. Jeganathan (1995) and Nissan (1985, 1988, 1989) have mainly addressed the British colonial influence on constructing the historic-religious representation of Anuradhapura in the 19th century. Nissan (1988) observed that the 'centrality' of the Buddhist community and Sinhala

[4] See Perera (1998) for the British organization of the island-colony in terms of provinces and districts via an infrastructure that connects and subjugates provincial and district capitals to Colombo. Here I focus on the consciousness.

nationhood have been attributed to Anuradhapura, a place parallel to Jerusalem, the "national" heartland of the Jews. She observed that the colonial administrators who went to Anuradhapura, like engineers and surveyors, discovered objects and structures in and around Anuradhapura that belonged to the ancient Sinhalese civilization (Nissan 1985, 1988). These include highly prominent ruins of large stupas. Around the same time, she highlighted those oriental scholars translated native historical texts, like *Mahavamsa,* into English. These historical narratives offered a framework for the British to understand the historical meanings of the materials they found in Anuradhapura. She observed that encountering historical materials in Anuradhapura and translating native historical texts were independent events and argued in 1988 that the 'congruence' of these two bodies of knowledge produced Anuradhapura's modern representation as the heartland of the Sinhala Buddhist nation in the late 19th century.

Jeganathan (1995) also accepted that Anuradhapura's historical and religious representations were 19th-century creations[5]. However, he denied the reasoning behind Nissan's understanding of the 'congruence' between colonial knowledge and practice. Employing Foucault's theorization of "regimes of truth" and "disciplinary formations," Jeganathan argued that "the authoritative epistemology of Anuradhapura, that is, the field of power and knowledge within which it is located today, was created in a radical rupture in the 19th century" (1995, p. 107). Thus, the discovery of Anuradhapura's historical

[5] While juxtaposing two perceptions, I want to acknowledge the distinction between the two studies regarding their scale. Nissan's (1985, 1988, 1989) contribution to the scholarship on colonialism's effect on Anuradhapura is based on her Ph.D. dissertation on Anuradhapura, and Jeganathan's (1995) argument is from his master's thesis.

monuments and the translation of Sinhalese historical chronologies were not involuntary but discursively produced consequences of colonial power relations. So, Jeganathan (1995) argued that making modern Anuradhapura was not coincidental; it was an anticipated event of the colonial project.

Despite the dissimilarities in their theoretical reasonings, Nissan and Jeganathan acknowledged that Anuradhapura's present-day representations as (Buddhist) sacred and (Sinhala) national symbol are not organically evolved notions or a continuation of Sinhalese Buddhists' historical relationship with the place. They share a similar position that Anuradhapura was not a critical location for the local communities. It was merely a hidden site of ruins in the wilderness until the British rediscovered it in the 19th century. However, neither Nissan nor Jeganathan could identify the colonial subject's contribution to shaping the colonists' experience of Anuradhapura. As a result, they do not clarify whether the colonizer was able to produce a new historical significance for Anuradhapura without any substantial participation of the colonized.

Sivasundaram (2007, 2013) offered a new avenue of thinking about the colonial production of Anuradhapura's historical and cultural prominence. He pushed the date even further; for him, Anuradhapura was significant to the locals even before the arrival of the British. He argued that Nissan and Jeganathan had not sufficiently reviewed 18th-century Sri Lanka history before arriving at their conclusions, i.e., today's significance of Anuradhapura is a colonial product of the 19th century. Therefore, neither author could capture the meaning and position of Anuradhapura for the locals before it was (re)discovered by the British.

Sivasundaram convincingly argued that Anuradhapura was not a mere site hidden in the forest but a critical location for the locals even before the arrival of Britons. He showed that some Kandyans, people of the Sinhalese last independent Kingdom of Kandy, were concerned with Anuradhapura's historical and religious meaning. Sivasundaram's perception is vital to understanding the relationships between the locals and Anuradhapura before the advent of the British. Sivasundaram (2009, 2013) observed that Anuradhapura had become a central location in the first Sinhalese anti-colonial insurgency against the British. The colonial government encountered native uprises during 1817-1818, immediately after obtaining power in 1815, as a resistance to the colonial subjugation of Kandy. When we turn to the insurgents' relationship with space, Anuradhapura was a site where they gained legitimacy in their movement. Sivasundaram (2013) showed that the rebellions deemed that Anuradhapura shared a critical cultural identity and historical association with the Sinhalese Buddhists. Thus, Anuradhapura was not an arbitrary location in the middle of the forest; instead, it was a site with a cultural attachment to the insurgents.

However, the scholars who delved into the colonial influence over Anuradhapura have not focused on the spatiality of colonial constructions in the 19th century. This scholarship overlooks how the British transformed its physicality and constituted a new spatial sensibility of Anuradhapura, making it a place of its historical and political identity by the end of the century. In other words, the production of the new historical consciousness of Anuradhapura was not separate from creating a new space. Hence, the lack of spatial perspective to understand the colonial transformation is a significant gap in this

knowledge. Addressing this gap, this chapter focuses on the colonial transformation of Anuradhapura from an "unknown" locale to one with historical significance and the administrative center of the North Central Province in the 19th century.

The critical point is that the colonial creation of modern political and historical representations of Anuradhapura was primarily spatial. In other words, making Anuradhapura historically significant was a consequence of the colonial spatialization of Anuradhapura. The chapter demonstrates how the ancient city had become an archive for the British to (re)interpret the colonial subjects' past in their own way, mobilizing a new spatial sensibility of Anuradhapura. Furthermore, the chapter raises critical questions about the British construction of the modern historical sense of Anuradhapura in regard to its spatial and epistemological formation in the 19th century: How did the colonial knowledge of the once unknown land evolve, establishing historical centrality to Anuradhapura? What practices, tools, and mechanisms did the British employ? How did they produce Anuradhapura's modern representations? Addressing these questions is significant to theorizing Anuradhapura's colonial production of historical time and space in the 19th century. Finally, the chapter demonstrates that the production of history and space in Anuradhapura were not separate occurrences but dialectically responsive.

3.1. Approaching the Unknown and Making Knowledge

Early British authors like Knox (1681), Davy (1821), and D'Oyly (1917), who wrote about Lanka before the fall of the Kandyan kingdom, assumed Anuradhapura as a somewhat less

significant site in the region of Nuwarakalawiya[6] in the Kandyan domain. However, the level of knowledge of these authors cannot be verified. Instead of geographies or indexes of social and political events, these authors presented more exotic histories of places and people they encountered as outsiders to society. As evident in their texts, they had no concrete knowledge of Anuradhapura's social and spatial dynamics for most of the 19th century besides mere familiarity.

Once the British formed Ceylon and organized it around five provinces, diminishing Kandy's centrality by the 1830s (Perera, 1998), Anuradhapura remained unknown. For the earlier generations of British administrators, it was uncharted territory in the far-flung district of Nuwarakalawiya on the edge of Northern Province, "almost beyond the control of the Authorities in the interior.[7]" Lieutenant (later Major) Skinner depicted, referring to his first encounter with the ancient city of Anuradhapura in 1832, "...no one that I could ever hear of had traveled through it, not even a government agent, and from the fact of its being so completely a *terra incognita"* (Skinner, 189, p. 162). Skinner's emphasis reminds us of the Latin roots of the notion of "*terra incognita*," i.e., 'unknown land,' a frequently found phrase in pre-modern cartography. However, Anuradhapura was not destined to be an unknown

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[6] The kingdom of Kandy was established at the end of the 15th century. Its domain was divided into 21 administrative divisions (Cordrington, 1926; De Silva, 1953; Pieris, 1956) . Twelve of these administrative provinces were *disavas*, governed by the official called *Disavas*. The 12 disavas of the kingdom were the Seven Korales, the Four Korales, Uva, Matale, Sabaragamuwa, the Three Korales, Valapane, Udapalata, Nuwarakalawiya, Wellassa, Bintenna, and Tamankaduwa. In the Kandyan administrative order, Anuradhapura belonged to the regulatory region of Nuwarakalawiya. Nuwarakalawiya; however, it was not considered a part of the core territory of the Kandyan kingdom.

[7] Cited in Ian Barrow (2008) , *Surveying and Mapping in Colonial Sri Lanka: 1800-1900*, p, 66.

land under the British for long. Instead, the ancient city had become an archive for colonial officials who arrived in Anuradhapura to (re)interpret the natives' history in their own way, following all the books written about the local society and culture (Perera, 1998). As a result, they produced a systematic understanding of Anuradhapura and its historical connotation, as well as how they familiarized themselves with the site and its meaning in the 19th century.

According to Cohn (1997), Dirks (2001), Mitchell (1991), Perera (1998), and Said (1994) a systematic comprehension of newly dominated territories, which included geography, population, social organization, and environment, was central to colonialism. They critically acclaimed that European colonial conquest is not limited to the military conquest of another territory and economic incorporation of colonies using sheer power and domination. Colonialism has been sustained by establishing a cultural process of political proficiency over subjects' minds. Perera (1998, p. 9) argued that colonialism controlled both bodies and minds, infusing the colonists' ways of thinking into colonial subjects' minds, such as social moralities and political ideologies. Although the discourses of modernization and capitalism always dominate the conventional debate on colonialism, Dirks (2001, p. 9) argued, "Colonialism was itself a cultural project of control ." Therefore, he said, knowledge-building is a significant aspect of the colonial project to control and dominate the colonized. He further contended, "colonial knowledge both enabled conquest and was produced by it; in certain important ways, knowledge was what colonialism was all about (2001, p. 9)." Thus, knowledge of the colony was central to the colonizer's power over the colonized. The hegemony for the colonial knowledge about the

colonized, among the colonized, is central to shaping colonial subjects and establishing the colonial order.

Then again, Perera (1998) demonstrated that colonial understanding was neither complete nor static. It was transforming. Colonial scholars expanded their knowledge with the European encounter and "discovery" of geography, history, culture, and social relations. They built on the same for their imperial purposes, studied the colonizers' reasoning and understanding, and justified the cultural and social differences between them and the colonized. That knowledge and its production process shaped both the colonizer's and colonized's imaginations, worldviews, and cognitive orientations. We might also consider Thomas Skinner, an engineer in the royal military and a self-taught surveyor who became a pioneer in discovering Anuradhapura, who became notable for his contribution to improving the colonial infrastructure on main thoroughfares in Ceylon in the 19th century. In 1832, Skinner was sent to the Northern Province to trace a new road to connect Anuradhapura with Arippu Fort in Mannar on the island's western shore. Making new thoroughfares was expected to improve the accessibility and connectivity of the colony's internal territories. Perera (1998) would argue that such work further subjugated areas to the colonial administration centered in Colombo.

Nevertheless, Skinner did not limit himself to the primary intent of his visit, i.e., constructing a road. He became passionate about Anuradhapura. His initial encounter with it gave him a new desire to explore the land, transforming his identity from an engineer to

an adventurer. This is not new as many colonial officers were inquisitive of Ceylon and had written about it. Skinner's *Account of Ceylon* shows his initial reaction to Anuradhapura:

> In the latest maps of the island then published, this district [Nuwarakalawiya] was described as a mountainous unknown country, so to ascertain its position, I had to survey it in the first place. My astonishment, therefore, was the greater when I reached the place [Anuradhapura], to find extensive ruins, large dagobas, magnificent tanks of colossal dimensions, and instead of the "mountainous country" represented in the so-called maps, I found a thickly populated district, with evidence of its having been, at some remote date, the granary of the country (1891, p. 162).

Even the latest maps prepared by the colonial surveyors were fundamentally inaccurate[8]. As a result, instead of an "unknown mountainous region," Skinner found himself in a plain terrain with historical artifacts of an ancient civilization in Anuradhapura. But most importantly, he was not agitated by the absence of knowledge of the colony's internal geography. Skinner, in contrast, described that he experienced "an unusual interest" in exploring the area (1891, p. 162). Skinner assumed his presence would "matter" more to the empire as an explorer than an engineer. We need to remember that colonization was carried out within a limited worldview. The colonial knowledge and its creators were also imperfect. In Skinner's case, the incompleteness of the territory's historical content and colonial perception brought a new purpose for him to become an explorer and to complete himself.

Officials who served as civil servants, engineers, and revenue officials in Ceylon delved into the colony's social organization, culture, history, ecological components, and natural

[8] In later writings Emerson Tennent described that Skinner used a map prepared by the then Surveyor General of Ceylon.

systems in the 19th century. Most of them were members of the Royal Asiatic Society of Ceylon, too, established in 1845 in association with the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland. For example, Hugh Nevill (1848-1897) and James Emerson Tennent (1804-1869) were two individuals who played a prominent role in developing a more comprehensive awareness of the colony. Like them, many officials contributed to the colonial discourse of Ceylon. However, I must clarify that not every official contributed, published books, or presented the findings at the Royal Asiatic Society's assemblies. Instead, their contributions remained in administrative correspondence, mainly in reports and letters. Still, they were all creators and contributors to the expanding colonial understanding of the colonized in the 19th century.

While performing their duties as colonial administrators, these officials interpreted what they observed and witnessed through their own frameworks, paving the way for (colonial) modern knowledge about the colony's social, cultural, natural, and geographical aspects. Likewise, the knowledge they built was not independent of these authors' social experiences; the time they acted, their personal and professional backgrounds, positions, and assigned tasks influenced their understanding and the substance of the knowledge they created. Therefore, understanding colonial knowledge is a process of acknowledging the historical and cross-cultural dynamics of the individuals who produced that knowledge.

The British comprehended Anuradhapura as they could relate it to the colonial political system and economic order. Most importantly, the colonial understating of the native

culture was modified in the process. Their understanding of Anuradhapura developed through conducting explorations and employing their own methods, such as cartography, archeological excavation, and surveys.

The British position in understanding colonized societies was ambiguous because they were neither insiders nor outsiders in their colonies, but rather "inside outsiders" of those territories. The British had "become" insiders on the island by subjugating native communities and creating the new political territory of Ceylon. In contrast to other European colonials, i.e., the Portuguese and Dutch, the British conquered the *Kande Uda Rata*, formally known as the Kandyan Kingdom, and made themselves the sole authority of the island. At the same time, the British were also outsiders in their colony. The British did not inherit (or acquire) the social and cultural identities and, especially, worldviews of local inhabitants. Instead, the British were foreign invaders who viciously took control of their territory.

Moreover, as outsiders, the British were unaware of the fundamentals of the natives' socio and cultural relationships. Nor could the British acknowledge any social relations among native communities due to their paternalistic attitude towards the natives. Therefore, it is safe to assume that the British were disconnected from the substance of the natives' social expressions, cultural constructions, and historical relationships with their sacred city that was developed within the community. The British lacked an "inside-out" perspective of Anuradhapura. Instead, colonial knowledge evolved from an "outside-in" perspective of Anuradhapura and its social, cultural, and historical connotations.

As inside outsiders, the British were privileged to establish new social, cultural, and historical meanings in the colonized society[9], including their social and cultural organizations, historical relations, and the colony's natural and geographical attributes. In the making of knowledge, what the British could understand of the natives' social and spatial associations had become relevant to them, and what they could not understand had become irrelevant. In Anuradhapura, along with building objective knowledge, the British established a new sense of time in the 19th century to determine what spatial practices and relationships belonged to the past and present. In so doing, the British created a "new reality" of Anuradhapura, consisting of a new meaning of time and space that they could relate to and control by the end of the century.

3.2. Colonial (Re)historicization and Objectification of Space

For the British, encountering the ruins and artifacts of the natives' history in Anuradhapura was both exciting and challenging. The encounter was unexpected, and they were unprepared to understand histories other than their own. The European colonials, including the British, assumed that non-European communities had no "authentic" histories like most European nations (see Hegel, 2004). As subaltern studies scholars, mainly Chakrabarty, (2000), Chatterjee (1995), and Guha (2003) , argue, Europeans preconceived that non-Europeans had no enduring traditions of documenting their histories. Instead, from a Eurocentric perspective, non-Europeans' histories were mere

[9] For further knowledge, read Ashis Nandy (2004). In the *Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under In Colonialism*, Nandy elaborates on how colonialism introduced new cultural priorities to the colonized culture.

parochial stories of the triumphs of their past monarchs, myths of their heroic gods, and various religious devotions. For most of the 1800s, Lanka and its inhabitants were not immune to these prejudices[10].

However, the British discovery of the classic Sinhalese historiography, the *Great Chronicle of Mahavamsa,* written circa the sixth century AD, changed their perception of their subjects' lack of authentic history. In 1836, George Turnour (1799-1843), a British civil servant, historian, and scholar in oriental studies, translated *Mahavamsa* from its original language of Pali to English. Turnour uncovered knowledge that the Portuguese and Dutch could not locate about the natives' own historiography, providing the British a meaningful entry into the Sinhalese mainstream history. We also cannot overlook the relevance of *Mahavamsa* to the British in understanding the natives' past. Unlike most native manuscripts discovered in other colonies, such as *Puranas* in India, which follow the poetic imagination of time and space, *Mahavamsa* presents a narrative that in the distant past, there had been a grand society where people used to be more sophisticated[11].

Once *Mahavamsa* ended, that heroic era and culture had been through worse social and political conditions. Preassembly, the British could more objectively comprehend *Mahavamsa's* chronological order based on the genealogies of native kings who ruled the

[10] British authors like Chapman (1833, 1852), Davy (1821), and Percival (1803) described that their European predecessors considered that the natives of Lanka did not bear a practice of composing historiographies. Tennent (1860) stated that the central issue was that those early European writers were unfamiliar with the native languages. Therefore, they could not access the natives' own historiographies and believed that the Lankans had no tradition of recording their history.

[11] I acknowledge Pradeep Jeganathan for exposing me to the Puranas in India during a conversation at Colombo in the summer of 2017.

kingdom of Anuradhapura. *Mahavamsa* contained a linear narrative, providing an origin story of the natives, mainly the Sinhalese race. That is, the British could ideally incorporate the evolving knowledge of the Western conceptualization of social progress, which claimed every human society has a beginning and end, as the European nations. Thus, the British could justify colonialism's violent nature, normalizing that a community with a history would eventually end up in the hands of the British as an unavoidable circumstance of social progress.

Likewise, discovering the subjects' past had been crucial to the British, mainly to signify that they had occupied not any group of people but an entire civilization with historically evolved social and cultural values. In the introduction, Turnour wrote that the colony's former chief justice's views had encouraged him to translate *Mahavamsa*. The colonials perceived the natives' historical narratives as connected with their moral ethics and social order. The knowledge of history became an effective device for them to gain a broader insight into their subjects' ethnic and cultural identities, which could be influential in controlling the colonial subjects. Moreover, the reappropriation of the natives' history was also significant to the British in introducing the abstract principles of colonial law and justice. Therefore, understanding and reproducing the native history was a crucial ideological intervention to discipline colonial social and spatial relationships.

In this context, the British epistemologically "re-historicized" Anuradhapura in the 19th century. The colonial administrators, explorers, and burgeoning archaeologists had become the creators of Anuradhapura's modern historical representations. The British

introduced a new conceptual framework to comprehend their subjects' past, mainly centered on the materiality of the ancient objects and the chronicle they discovered. Their narratives, interpretations, and accounts of these objects established a new historical sense of Anuradhapura, reconceptualizing the meaning of the remaining ancient artifacts, structures, and the historical landscape. In the colonial rehistoricization, the historic materials represented the natives' past leftovers. The natives' past was dead and had no relation to the modernity established by the British.

If the British re-historized Anuradhapura, then we need to ask how the hegemony of colonial knowledge redefined its social and spatial relations and dominated its historical narrative. Pratt (2008) critically analyzed the impact of colonial knowledge-building on establishing a new awareness of the colonized. The colonials established a Eurocentered consciousness of the world and, by totalizing the order of knowledge they produced, they displaced and marginalized "other" knowledge systems. Therefore, taking the European classification of "nature" in African and Latin American colonies, Pratt contended that,

> The eighteenth-century systematizing of nature as a European knowledge-building project that created a new kind of Eurocentered planetary consciousness. Blanketing the surface of the globe, it specified plants and animals in visual terms as discrete entities, subsuming and reassembling them in a finite, totalizing order of European making. (2008, p. 57)

The new colonial knowledge displaced the vernacular understanding of nature that sustained for generations among native communities. In regard to Anuradhapura, unlike the locals' knowledge of their sacred city, which we could assume was fundamental to

their ancestral traditions, memories, faith, and beliefs, the colonial sense of the natives' history evolved on rationality and reasoning. The colonial rehistoricization was made within the bounds of scientific objectivity, transforming Anuradhapura into a historical entity that exhibited the natives' past glory, which became the hegemonic understanding of the place's history by the end of the 19th century.

The colonial rehistoricization does not imply that the British created an entirely alien history for Anuradhapura by wiping out the natives' religious and cultural associations. Instead, the British reinterpreted Anuradhapura's past and existing history for their own understanding within their time. The most critical aspect of colonial rehistoricization is that a new conceptual language was introduced to interpret and homogenize the meaning and relationship with the historical artifacts and structures they discovered in Anuradhapura. However, the British reduced the natives' social, cultural, and religious associations with their sacred city to the single category of "pilgrimage."

As mentioned above, the natives in Lanka had not entirely erased the memory of their former capital from their minds. Even after the fall of the Anuradhapura kingdom, sites like Sri Maha Bodhi and structures like Ruwanweliseya were still important for the local pilgrims. In 1833, Skinner witnessed thousands of "pilgrims" at Anuradhapura. The colonial administrators had first assumed that the locals were preparing for an anti-colonial riot. Therefore, a group of British officials, including Skinner, visited "the ruins of the old city" and observed that "it was perfectly alive with people" (1833, p. 188). The team thus understood that people were not anti-colonial rioters. Skinner explained: "The cause of

whose presence there in such numbers it was not easy to divine, as it might just as well have been for a treasonable purpose as for a religious pilgrimage" (ibid. p. 188).

Like Skinner, Forbes, another fellow official who arrived in Anuradhapura during the same decade, observed the natives' association with their sacred city. During his stay, Forbes (1840, p. 213) observed that the premises of the holy Bodhi tree was cleared for the "numerous pilgrims who annually visit Anuradhapura". These observations reveal that although the nature of the natives' relationship with their former capital when the British arrived is ambiguous, Anuradhapura has not escaped the natives' imagination. Whether people's relationship with these sacred sites continued from the Anuradhapura period or was reinvented sometime after Anuradhapura was abandoned is hard to say. Nonetheless, the place had been significant to them even before it was "discovered" by the British.

3.3. Death of the Place and History

Colonial rehistoricization defined what was past and present in Anuradhapura. Like the natives' history, Anuradhapura was a "dead" place in the colonial eyes. As the assistant government agent of Nuwarakalawiya District, Liesching, (1870, p. 107) pointed out that "Anuradhapura is emphatically a city of the dead." The space's death allowed him to glamorize the remaining materials as artifacts of a distant time in history.

> Scarce a step can be taken, but the eye falls upon some memorial of the past. *The mounds one carelessly passes are the sepulchers of kings*; the bricks that the foot strikes are the remains of palaces. Clear where one will, and pillars, doorsteps, figures of janitors, carved in stone, are disclosed. Amidst a silence as profound as that of the grave, rise the colossal remains of a city whose wall, sixty-four miles in circumference, once echoed with the

> merry voices of children, while processions of kings and priests wound along the broad pavements of the now deserted courts, and prostrated themselves before the richly endowed shrines. (1870, p. 107)

Early colonial officials like Skinner and Captain I.J. Chapman visited Anuradhapura and discovered a land covered with ancient relics that no existing proficiency could describe completely. Yet, for them, Anuradhapura was not the dead place Liesching characterized decades later. Instead, for Skinner, natives had a religious and cultural attachment to their ancient sacred city. But then, Anuradhapura "died" in colonial thinking as their knowledge about its past and present accentuated. Liesching was definitive: the site had no life. The site was dead. The death of the place was essential in positioning its past behind. Liesching made another critical observation that the natives' primary religion, Buddhism, could not successfully survive. The local Buddhists' prime faith, which gave cultural and religious centrality to Anuradhapura, had failed to protect the place from its current fate. Thus, for Liesching and his fellow officials, the ancient capital's glory was no more than a vanishing memory, except for the sacred bodhi tree and the Buddhist pilgrims who visited Anuradhapura annually to worship some ruined temples.

Although many colonial records had identified Anuradhapura as a crucial holy space and spotted many natives visiting it, the British still could not give deeper attention to the locals' attachment to the place. Likewise, the natives' relationships beyond the pilgrimage were unimportant to the colonials. In other words, natives' historical connections, religious activities, and spiritual relationships with the site were insignificant to the British. Nor were such associations "visible" to most colonial administrators within the colonial historical

reasons they were building. Regardless of what the historical monuments meant to the natives and how firmly the local Buddhists were connected with them, the colonial knowledge and practice made them timeless objects of history.

The British began with physical observations and employed their own interpretations to familiarize themselves with local environments. The locals' interpretations and the worldviews within which they were perceived were not considered (Holston, 1989; Perera, 2016). In relation to the colonial development of modern Lahore during the British Raj, Glover (2007, p. 29) argued that the "effective administration in colonial India hinged, critically, on the systematic observation and analysis of material phenomena on the ground in an effort to render them useful to a discourse on the proper distribution of objects in space." Thus, knowledge production had not been a benign attempt to understand unknown territories and their contents. Nor was it meant to develop an amicable relationship with the colonized, but as a crucial preparation instrument for societies and spaces in the colonizers' way of reasoning. The British prioritized the ancient objects' materiality over spirituality in Anuradhapura.

For the British, the physical aspects of the historical monuments and sites, like the form and magnitude, mattered more than the natives' religious and cultural relationships with them and their own interpretations and the worldviews within which they were perceived. According to Chapman, British military personnel and officials recognized nine locations in the historic city, which were still hosting action. So, he was "genuinely interested" in learning about the locals' associations with Anuradhapura and what it was to them.

However, the most revered location for native Buddhists was the Sacred Bodhi tree and its temple.

Chapman systemically recorded the historical material and local narratives about them. His report also included detailed sketches of some of his discoveries, providing a complete visual account. These drawings also indicate how the colonial gaze of the historical monuments in Anuradhapura evolved from a spatial dimension. Most importantly, they objectified Anuradhapura's past and signified that even if these monuments were colossal constructions, the British could still capture them within a single frame as a separate entity, out of their original context. These illustrations were not mere technical drawings; they represented how the British encountered another civilization's glory.

Skinner's knowledge as a surveyor heavily determined his method of making sense of Anuradhapura's historical landscape. He employed cartographic apparatus to create a more comprehensive understanding of Anuradhapura, producing a map of the sacred city in the 1830s. Through the map, Skinner introduced how different monuments, structures, and places, such as the sacred Bodhi tree, stupas, and reservoirs, were physically distributed (See Figure 3.1), laying the foundation for a new spatial realization to recognize Anuradhapura's history. Skinner was the first British official to provide "any description of the [then] modern state of Anuradhapura" in the 19th century (Ievers 1899, p. 244).

By reckoning the physical scale of historical objects and structures according to Western standards, Skinner invented the modern spatial representation of Anuradhapura. His map provided a new spatial framework to understand the physical distribution of the historic

structures and objects in the ancient city. He introduced a new spatial perspective and a mode of interpretation of unknown historical relations in a way the British could understand. In building the modern sense of Anuradhapura, Skinner systematically evaluated most historical structures he discovered, preparing an inventory of their physical dimensions like length, width, and height. Besides, Skinner linked his findings with the locals' understanding—as he understood it—of Anuradhapura. He included the locals' traditional names of different objects and structures in his layout plan of the sacred city, making a modern spatial representation of Anuradhapura.

The British found inventories of ancient monuments, including their shape and size, were important, especially to validate the temporalities of the colonized history. Continuing the discourse, Turnour included Skinner's detailed inventories of the historical figures as an annotation to his translation of *Mahavamsa*. Associating Skinner's discoveries with the English version of the Pali chronicle was no coincidence. Anuradhapura, the central spatial reference of *Mahavamsa's* narrative, provided necessary spatial and material evidence to establish the colonial's knowledge of their subjects' history. In that case, Turnour integrated the evolving understanding of the spatial consciousness of Anuradhapura with *Mahavamsa's* narrative, rehistoricizing the natives' history within their own history. By engaging the emerging colonial perception of the spatial attributes of the historic landscape of Anuradhapura with the temporal narrative of the natives' history, Turnour rationalized the colonial rehistoricization and, thereby, colonization.

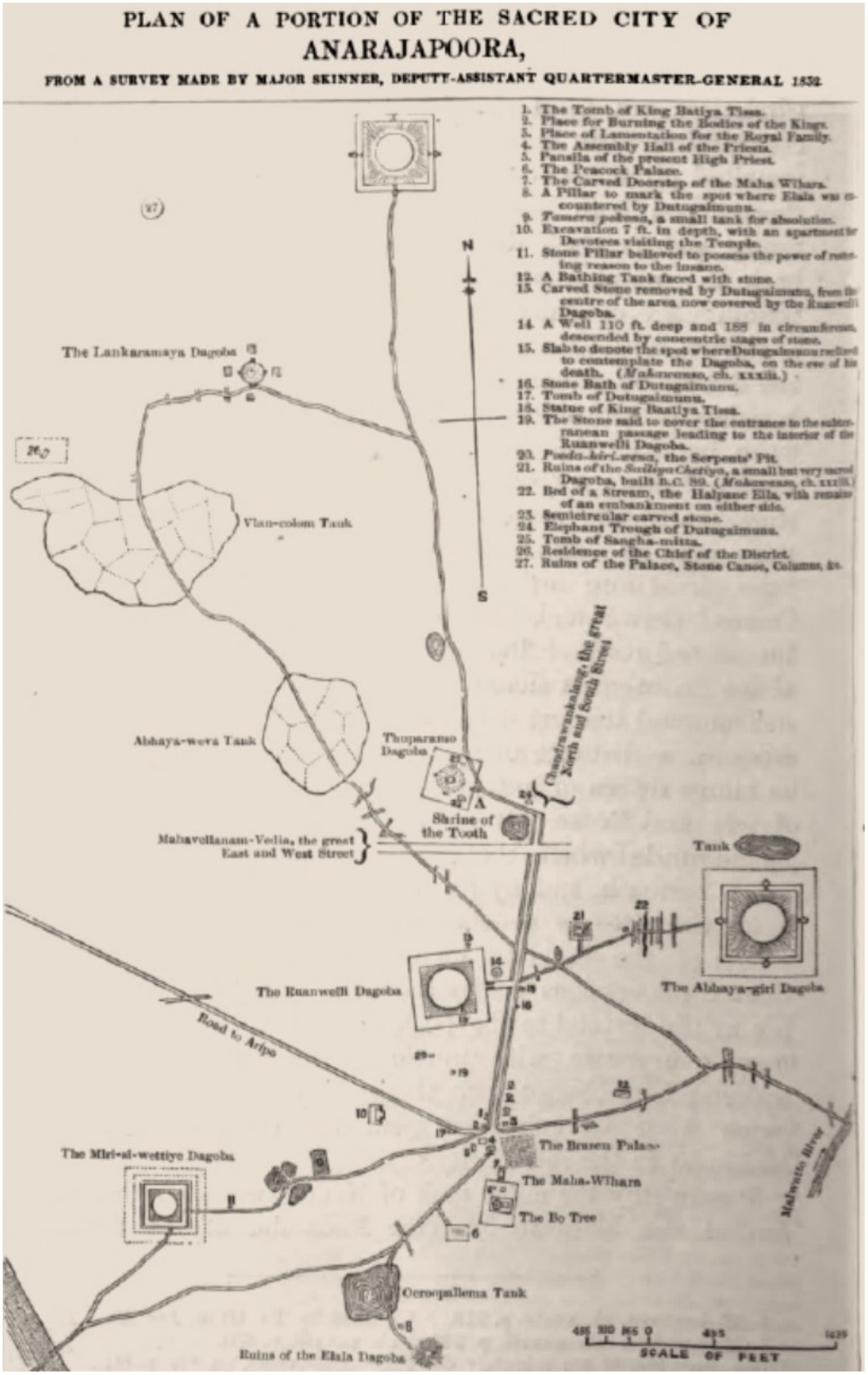

Figure 3.1: Map of the sacred city of Anuradhapura prepared by Major Skinner
Source: Tennent (1860: 610) *Ceylon: An Account of the Island, Physical, Historical, and Topographical with Notices of its Natural History, Antiquities and Productions*.

3.4. Birth of New Space and Spatial Practices

The British's interest was not limited to exploring historical monuments' physical distribution. In the late 19th century, the colonial government introduced archaeology and historic preservation to take care of the historically significant elements in Ceylon. William Gregory, governor of Ceylon from 1872 to 1877, was crucial in institutionalizing historic preservation for the conservation of the colony's ancient artifacts in Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa. Gregory stumbled upon Anuradhapura's historical landscape during his visit to the Northern Province circa 1872. In his autobiography, Gregory described his first encounter with the historic landscape,

> I was immensely struck with its picturesque appearance. The huge dagobas rose above the forest, and as we advanced, the remains of its former magnificence were apparent. The ground was strewn with broken pillars; in some places, the columns stood erect, with richly carved capitals (1894. p. 306).

Indeed, he had been fascinated by seeing Anuradhapura. The skyline of the historic city, defined by ancient dagobas (stupa) and a plethora of stone pillars, was a visual impression. For Gregory, Anuradhapura had been a significant destination in reinventing his enthusiasm toward the history of colonial subjects. Moreover, the records indicate that he acknowledged the natives' historical associations with their sacred city, supporting their efforts to renovate the dilapidated edifices in Anuradhapura[12]. Yet, his desire to

[12] For instance, he made a substantial financial donation to succeed Naranwita Sumanasara Thero's mission to reestablish the great stupa of Ruwanweliseya in 1873 (Harischandra, 1908).

methodologically study and preserve them was not coincidental. Instead, Bastiampillai (1968) and Blackburn (2010, 2011) describe that the antiquity of the colonies in the empire had mattered to Gregory before he became governor of Ceylon. For instance, as a member of the British parliament, Gregory contributed to the empire's historical conservations and presided over the British Museum's parliamentary committee in 1860. He was a trustee of the National Gallery in 1867[13]. Thus, Gregory's involvement in history was not merely determined by the colonial political and economic ideology, but his social experience supported his practice.

Unlike Skinner, who unexpectedly confronted a land full of relics and began exploring it, Gregory visited Anuradhapura with an awareness of its historical significance. However, Gregory's encounter with the ancient city was not substantially different from Skinner's; even several decades after the formation of Ceylon, Anuradhapura was still an exotic land in the colony to the British. Gregory's approach to historical materials was not significantly different from Skinner's. Instead, Gregory brought perfection to Skinner's way of understanding natives' history by assigning James George Smither, the chief architect of the Ceylon Public Work Department, to conduct a complete and detailed survey of all the historic structures and artifacts in Anuradhapura. The only knowledge that mattered to Skinner and his predecessors, including Gregory, had been the knowledge that could be measured. Thus, the nature of the natives' spiritual promise and sentimental relationships

[13] See also Blackburn's *William H. Gregory: Beauty, History, and Heritage* (2010), which offers a comprehensive account of Gregory's contribution to the early historical preservations in Ceylon before the establishment of the Ceylon Archaeological Department in 1890.

with Anuradhapura was not significantly subject to the colonials. In 1894, almost two years after Gregory's passing, Smither published the book *Architectural remains: Anuradhapura, Ceylon, comprising the Dagabas and certain other ancient ruined structures*, presenting a complete account of his discoveries from the years-long survey in Anuradhapura.

Unlike the place's historical significance, its 'present' social and economic status was brutally depressing to the colonials. As Davy described in 1821, Anuradhapura "...is now a small mean village, in the midst of a desert. A large tank, numerous stone pillars, [and] two or three immense tumuli are its principal remains. It is still considered a sacred spot and is a place of pilgrimage" (p. 302). According to the colonial officials, Anuradhapura and the entire district of Nuwarakalawiya was an economically backward region, "consequently, hitherto unproductive to the revenue," with an impoverished community. It was hard for the past virtue to prevail over the place's present misery, including low living conditions and the inadequate economic potential of the area.

From the colonial perspective, most inhabitants of Anuradhapura and its surroundings were in poor health. According to the British, these miseries were mainly caused by inadequate access to nutrition and to basic amenities like water and health care. All the social concerns of colonialism in the native communities were merely reduced to health issues. Instead of the violence and oppression caused by colonialism over native communities for centuries, the colonials blamed malnutrition as the great source of evil that devastated the native communities. For example, Skinner wrote a letter to Governor of Ceylon Sir Robert Wilmot Horton, in 1833, pointing out that adequate water provision for

the people was the most pressing need for Anuradhapura. He overstressed, “Water, water, water, give these people water, and you may make anything of them, but without a proper, wholesome supply of it, they must die out” (1891 p. 167). In the 1891 letter, Skinner further mentioned,

> The country, I am sorry to say, is rapidly becoming depopulated by disease and drought; it is distressing to behold the fearful objects which constantly meet the eye. By opening up the country, its further deterioration may be arrested, and the Government will be redeemed from the reproach of receiving for its grain tax a commutation of Id. a bushel” (p. 165).

As an immediate response to the so-called social and economic backwardness of Nuwarakalawiya, Skinner emphasized the need to link the area with the rest of the colony. As Perera (1998) has argued, such links amount to the subjugation of Colombo’s authority. Skinner (1891, p. 165) raised the question, “can a greater stigma attach to any Government than that it has districts so inaccessible that their produce is almost unsaleable (*sic*)?” Therefore, the existence of an inaccessible area like Nuwarakalawiya in Ceylon was embarrassing for the British government. Along with the lack of accessibility, the scarcity of basic amenities had significantly caused the area’s ill social and economic conditions. Therefore, the improvement of the living standards of the inhabitants and economic potential in Nuwarakalawiya had been an unavoidable liability for the colonial government.

During his visit in the early 1870s, Gregory found that many locals in Anuradhapura were suffering from a disease identified as ‘parangi fever.’ He also assumed the inadequacy of clean water, healthy food, and fundamental sanitary issues as the root causes of the

disease. Meanwhile, the resident medical officer requested Gregory to provide clean water, food, air, and better health facilities. As Gregory explains his conversation with Dr. Kynsey, "You are the proper doctor," said he to me; "give these poor wretches good water, good air, by clearing the jungle round the villages, and good food by abundant rice crops, and you will perform a greater cure than all the doctors and hospitals in Ceylon can ever effect" (1894, p. 307).

Due to its reputation for unhealthy standing, extreme environment, and low living conditions, Nuwarakalawiya was not the desired station for most colonial bureaucrats. Thus, the British altered their administrative mechanism's inevitable aspects to rule regions like Nuwarakalawiya. For example, most individuals who became government agents were senior military members with colonial administrative service experience. They were supposed to understand the colony more deeply before their appointment. Still, the British had 'compromised' these terms when they assigned assistant government agents for Nuwarakalawiya (Karuṇananda, 2006). Leiching emphasized that the colonial government considered appointing young junior officials to Nuwarakalawiya[14] instead of experienced senior administrators as they could more manageably adapt to the extreme living inconveniences in the area. The younger officials were likely to stay at their station for a more extended time—the ability to survive was prioritized over expertise when administrating Anuradhapura.

[14] Letter from L.E. Leiching, AGA of Nuwarakalawiya to W.C. Twynam, GA, NP 26 July 1869: SLNA 41/181, No.62

In addition, the colonial government experienced the difficulty and ineffectiveness of governing Nuwarakalawiya from Jaffna. In particular, the Northern Province's government agent had undergone challenges in handling Nuwarakalawiya from his station in Jaffna due to the great distance and absence of proper accessibility. Gregory visited Anuradhapura amid these concerns. He expected a spatial solution for these challenges along with his attraction to Anurahdapura's historical landscape and sympathy toward the vulnerable communities. Gregory described,

> Before leaving Anaradhapura (*sic*), I had thoroughly made up my mind that the great Kandian (*sic*) district of Nuwarakalawiya, of which that village is the capital and which formed a large portion of the Northern Province, should be removed from it and formed into a separate province. (1894, p. 309)

Consequently, the British altered the colony's administrative spatial order. In 1873, the colonial government created the North Central Province as the seventh administrative region[15] of Ceylon by combining two districts (Figure 3.2): Nuwarakalawiya from the Northern Province and Thamankaduwa from the Eastern Province.

Referring to the unique and prominent contribution of the colonial capital of Colombo in the making of Ceylon's modern spatial order, Perera (1999, p. 38) argued that "it was Colombo that made Ceylon and not Ceylon (nor Lanka) that made Colombo." Likewise, Anuradhapura was the central spatial reference for the British in forming the North Central

[15] After establishing the five provinces in 1833, the British reevaluated their administrative structure and the boundaries of the provinces in the following decades. They eventually created four new provinces: North Western Province (1845), North Central Province (1873), Uva Province (1886), and Sabaragamuwa Province (1889).

Province. As Ceylon was produced around Colombo, the North Central province was created as a single spatial and political entity around Anuradhapura, not vice versa. Thereby, the new spatial centrality of Anuradhapura was a modern construction of British colonialism, not a continuation of the ancient Sinhalese capital of Anuradhapura that existed two millennia ago.

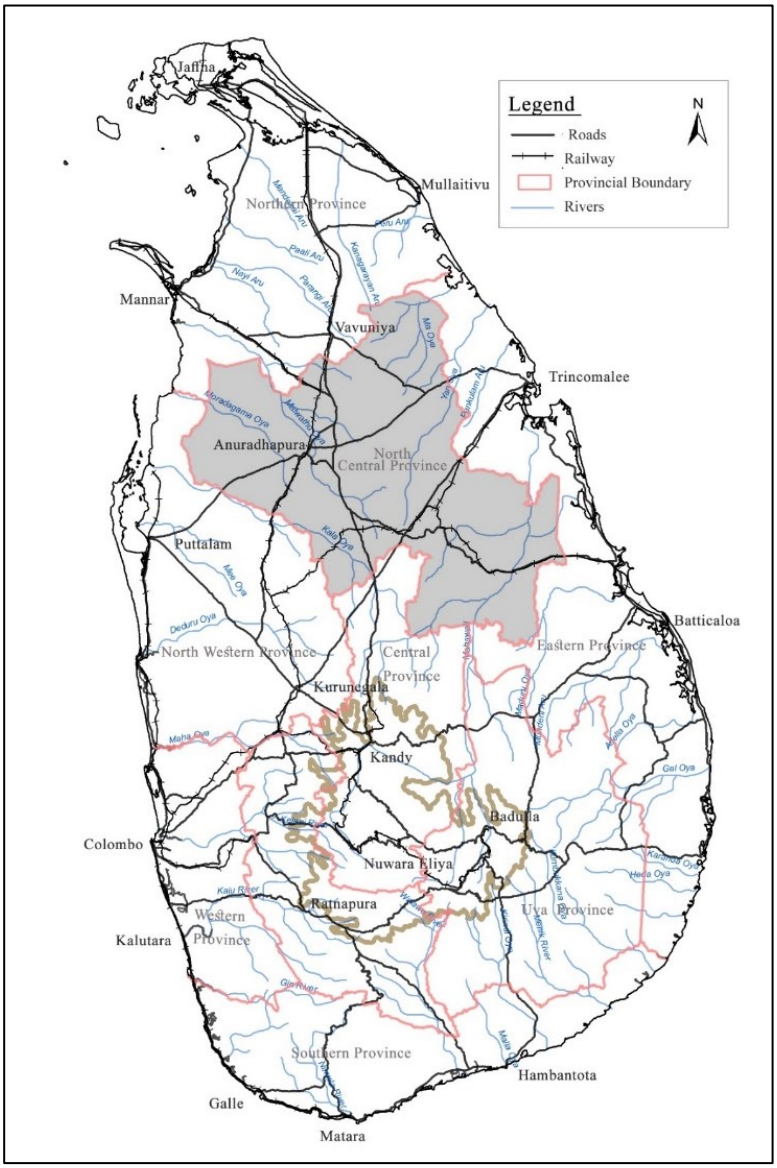

Figure 3.2 North Central Province

Complied by Hasintha Nawod Kalpana

By turning it into the capital of the new province, the British made Anuradhapura a political entity. As a result, the ancient city and its environs underwent a dramatic shift, and a new political and spatial identity was acquired in the late 19th century. In the following decades, many modern structures were constructed around the sacred Bodhi to serve colonial administration purposes, including the buildings that served the colonial governmental order, such as the government agent's office, courthouse, prison, and several official residences for the colonial government employees. In addition, a newly built form emerged to serve the everyday routines of the inhabitants, such as dispensaries, hospitals, markets, schools, and shops.

The British expected the new regional center to grow on and around the remaining materials of the ancient civilization. Yet, the colonials did not reject the native's spatial practices in creating the new town. Instead, they integrated the existing spatial relations to form the modern town. Accordingly, the most popular destination among the natives, the holy bodhi tree, as the British observed since their arrival, had also become the central location of the emerging colonial city. Thus, the new capital's modern built form was scattered around the sacred bodhi tree. Besides its historical significance, Anuradhapura became a regional center of colonial administration by the end of the century.

3.5. The Advent of Archaeology and the Connection Between Time and Space

The colonial influence on historical excavations and preservations in colonies like India and Ceylon grew from the mid-19th century (see Blackburn, 2011; Singh, 2016). However, the rise of colonial interest in their subjects' history during the latter half of the century was

neither isolated from nor emerging from the desires of sympathizers like Gregory. In contrast, Gregory operated in a time when the British more precisely focused on their subjects' history and society. As Perera (1998) pointed out, after the mid- century, the British developed a consciousness that their colonized 'others' were not merely uncivilized communities but also inherited cultural and historical traditions and social institutions like the Europeans. By then, the British had successfully established their imperial order, defeating all major anticolonial challenges, and anticipated no significant threat against the colonial power. Thus, the British could be determinedly involved in understanding their subjects' history and social organization. As a result, colonial historical preservation attempts became more organized and methodological with the advent of colonial archeology in the latter half of the century.

Colonial archeology was not limited to measuring and studying historical remains on their surface. Instead, the British introduced a novel approach to exploring native history by unearthing and excavating historical sites. Using archeological methods, the British objectified the natives' history, disconnecting the past from the present. But most importantly, colonial archeological practices delivered an important role of regulating historical assessments and institutionalizing preservation activities in colonies across the empire. In this process, delving into history had no longer been a task of the Public Works Department. Instead, the British established archeological departments as specific government units in colonies like India and Ceylon and administrative positions like archeological commissioner were created to oversee investigations on antiques. The

production of knowledge about the colonized history had been subjected to the supervision of the head of the government's archaeological division.

Unlike in the first half of the century, when random officials explored and interpreted the natives' past for their own interests, in the second, the head of the archaeological department was mandated to examine and conserve the antiques and historic sites in the colony. In other words, the British monopolized the production of knowledge and scholarship on colonized history. In India, Alexander Cunningham (1814-1893), its first director-general of the Archaeological Survey, dominated Indian archeological investigations from the 1860s to the 1880s. He marked the two decades in which he was most involved in the "Cunningham era" of Indian archeology (Singh, 2016). Likewise, Harry Charles Purvis Bell (1851-1937), usually known as HCP Bell, led archaeological studies and surveys in Ceylon. Bell was a British civil servant who became the founding commissioner of the Ceylon Archeological Department in 1890 (B. N. Bell & Bell, 1993; H. M. Bell, 1992; R. de Silva, 2005).

Bell significantly impacted Anuradhapura's modern historical formation between the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Colonial archeological preservations in Anuradhapura expanded the division between the natives and "their" monuments. Bell did not stop the locals from accessing and worshiping the ancient monuments in Anuradhapura. However, from his perspective, the sites and objects as evidence of the past must be preserved as archeological artifacts. Colonial preservation and archeology emerged within the discourse that the remaining ancient structures were dead. Thus, the British formulated a

materialist, objective sense of ancient materials as objects—disconnected from the natives' culture and religion—that could be observed and analyzed.

Around the same time, Anuradhapura was not the only historical spot that experienced radical transformation under colonialism—the British making of modern Egypt in the 19th century was a compelling instance well illustrated in Mitchell (1991). According to him, the British entirely re-ordered colonial Egypt, drastically shifting social, spatial, and historical affairs. Examining the objective of the colonial regime, the British transformed Egypt to fit into the colonial political and economic conditions. Mitchell demonstrated how the colonial government reconceptualized the Egyptian past and remaining elements like the pyramids to fulfill the Europeans' curiosity about the oriental culture and history to serve the Western project of global hegemony. Mitchell (1991, p. 33) further argued that "the colonial process would try and re-order Egypt to appear as a world enframed. Egypt was to be ordered up as something object-like. In other words, it was to be made picture-like and legible, rendered available to political and economic calculation" to fit into the colonial understanding of the world. He theorized this transformation as the colonial "enframing" of Egypt under the British, which signified "the country to become readable, like a book, in our own sense of such a term" (ibid.). While the locals were not entirely associated with the modern organized presence of their country, the colonial knowledge convinced them that they were in chaos before Egypt was introduced to the colonial social and spatial order.

Although there are parallels between the colonial transformation of space and objectification of history in both cases, and it was enframed in many ways, the making of

Anuradhapura was not equivalent to that of modern Egypt. Primarily, the locals' relationships with each ancient civilization when the British arrived in the 19th century was significantly different. Mitchell (1991) wrote that the pyramids did not matter to the local communities in Egypt until the British reconceptualized them as important symbols. Perhaps most of the society devoted to Islam was not interested in the structures built for another religious faith. However, the locals' relationship with the sacred sites and monuments in Anuradhapura was different. Mainly, Anuradhapura was not a dead space for them. Nor was Buddhism entirely disconnected from their sacred city in their imagination. Therefore, from the local Buddhist's point of view, archaeological excavations in Anuradhapura desecrated their holy city's sacredness, unearthing the historic structures and objects to a fundamental aspect of archaeological knowledge production condescending to their religious and spiritual association with them. It caused one of the central conflicts between the colonial and native understanding of Anuradhapura, which was discussed in depth in chapter four of this dissertation.

As colonialism and knowledge production constituted a planetary consciousness of human existence, the colonial understanding of native history was incorporated into establishing a universal sense of history, which advocates that every human society, irrespective of social and cultural uniqueness, shares the same linear historical time. That is a knowledge that the British could be analogous to Western social progress and civilization principles. Unlike in the first half of the 19th century, preserving the natives' history was significant for the British to make their discoveries into elements of a universal history created within the European hegemony. A site like Anuradhapura with material

evidence of the ancient glory that could relate to the natives' chronologies, like *Mahavamsa*, preferably fits into the universal history narrative.

By the end of the century, the colonial rehistoricization established consistency between the modern colonial political establishments and the natives' past. For instance, in the twilight of the century, the colonial government published the *Manual of the North-Central Province* (the *Manual* hereafter) in 1899, providing a comprehensive understanding of the colony's largest province by territory and the lowest by inhabitants. The *Manual* was structured into 16 chapters consisting of a wide range of information about the province's physical, social, and historical aspects that evolved and contested in different contexts into a single text. Each chapter of the *Manual* was a category descriptively captured as a significant feature of the province. The categories include climate, economy, geography, history and archeology, flora and fauna, inhabitants' social organization, and religious and ethnic composition. By compiling the *Manual*, the author, R.W. Ievers marked the culmination of the British attempt to produce a systematic understanding of the region, which pertained to the colonial economic reasons and political order.

In the *Manual*, Ievers introduces three fundamental classifications of the North Central Province: ancient, modern, and political. Although the North Central province did not exist until the latter half of the 19th century, Ievers describes the province's "ancient history," which began with the rise of the Anuradhapura kingdom two millennia ago. It continued until the fall of the Kandyan kingdom in 1815. Then, with the British becoming the colony's new rulers, the region entered its "modern" era and endured until the creation of the North

Central Province by combining the District of Nuwarakalawiya and Thamankaduwa in 1873. Finally, in the "political history," Ieveres primarily focused on how Anuradhapura became a regional capital and political center. One thing is apparent in Iveres's account: it offers a linear historical depiction of the North Central Province and constitutes a sense of past continuity. Eventually, Anuradhapura's ancient legacy, produced in the 1800s, dominated the province's historical narrative.

The different categories of history in the *Manual* were various episodes that show the linear progression toward the modern state of the colony. Therefore, Anuradhapura, the original capital two millennia ago, did not grow into a provincial capital. Yet, the Anuradhapura, the capital of the North Central province, relates to the ancient capital through the colonial making of episodic history. In other words, Ieveres described Anuradhapura's history to the extent that the users of the *Manual* could experience the North Central Province as a political entity with a longstanding tradition. The British conceived Anuradhapura's history to give authenticity to the colonial political entity of the North Central Province. Therefore, in the end, Anuradhapura's past has become the province's history.

3.6. Summary

This chapter examined how British colonialism impacted Anuradhapura's spatial expressions, transforming the place's historical significance and political and cultural identity. The contemporary intellectual discussions about Anuradhapura, led by Jeganathan (1995) and Nissan (1988, 1989), shed light on creating a modern 'social consciousness' regarding Anuradhapura under the British. Both authors articulated that

the British colonial project significantly shaped Anuradhapura's modern social and religious representations and identities. In contrast, Sivasundaram (2009, 2013) argued that Anuradhapura remained an essential place in the natives' minds even before the British properly discovered the place, emphasizing the role of Anuradhapura in the early Sinhalese anti-colonial moments.

Although Anuradhapura was a dead space in their understanding, it became a significant location for the colonists to learn about the cultural and religious contents and the colonized's historical connotations. The so-called 'ruins' in Anuradhapura became shreds of evidence of the ancient indigenous civilization for the colonial administrators who visited the area in the early 19th century. Most officials who initially examined historical materials were not primarily historians or archeologists but civil servants, surveyors, engineers, and military officials who found themselves significantly involved in producing a new historical consciousness of the place. The British reconstructed the historical narrative of Anuradhapura by understanding the natives' historical connections in their own manner.

However, the colonial gaze of Anuradhapura emerged from the outside in perspective about the place and its history. While using multiple spatial practices, such as mapping, surveying, and archeological excavations, the British prioritized the materiality of the ancient moments over the natives' understanding of the place. While the British established Anuradhapura as the capital of the region, they also incorporated the site's historical narrative into the broader historical context of the area.

In the upcoming chapter, I will explore the encounter between the colonial conceptualization of Anuradhapura's history and the attention it received from Sinhalese Buddhist revivalists in the early 20th century. The chapter will examine how the colonial rehistoricization and spatialization of Anuradhapura were subjected to critical questioning by the pioneers of the Sinhalese Buddhist nationalist movement.

Chapter 4

Creating the Sacred: Exploring Religion, Rioting, and Awakening Collectives

In the early 20th century, Anuradhapura and its past image, mainly the symbolic depiction of the ancient Sinhalese civilization, appeared significantly on the radars of the Sinhalese Buddhist religious revivalists. How the revival leaders attempted to salvage Anuradhapura's sacredness from colonial alteration demonstrates how their sentiments of space encountered colonial spatial practices. In this chapter, I explore how Anuradhapura, the sacred city of Sinhala-Buddhists, was spatially conceived and claimed by the religious revivalists as part of their own burgeoning "national" identity. I examine how Anuradhapura became crucial for the Sinhalese Buddhist leaders and how the revivalist struggle moved from Colombo to Anuradhapura.

Let me begin with a classic folktale I learned from the locals in Anuradhapura about an anxious pilgrim who visited the sacred city. An exhausted pilgrim who visited Anuradhapura opted to stay the night in the sacred city. Before falling asleep, he felt his feet pointing towards Ruwanveliseya. As a devout Buddhist, he worried that facing his feet toward sacred monuments would defile the place's virtue. Thus, he quickly turned his feet away from the stupa, but found something sacred in every direction. There was no single corner in the city where the feet could be placed without disrespecting a significant monument or structure. Ultimately, the pilgrim chose to stand on the ground but spotted that his feet were directed at the legendary realm of the *naga*s, serpentine deities, who aided the legendary Sinhalese rulers in building significant Buddhist establishments in Anuradhapura

below the earth. Ultimately, the pilgrim inverted his body, pointing his feet to the sky, noting that his feet were facing the noble gods above him. So, the pilgrim remained awake overnight, relentlessly shifting his feet and struggling to find the most inoffensive posture to lie down in the sacred city.

Although no one ever met the 'real' pilgrim in the tale, the locals believe the story was based on actual events. The story represents how someone's admiration for the sacred city becomes an obsession. Nevertheless, one fact is evident: The objects and structures in the sacred city were not merely relics to the pilgrim. Nor were they fragments of another time that he did not belong to. Unlike the colonial conceptualization of Anuradhapura as a place covered with relics of the natives' dead past, the pilgrim approached them with great honor (see Chapter 3). For the pilgrim, those structures contained meanings and values that had shaped his past and present. The story shows us that the natives' understanding of Anuradhapura as a sacred space was contrary to the colonial's view of Anuradhapura as a "dead space." The pilgrim became anxious not because he feared being observed by an external force or a god. Instead, it was the moment he was exposed to the reality, in his own mind, that the virtue of Anuradhapura's religious and historical landscape was not external; rather, it was located within himself. He was agitated to learn he could not escape from his understanding of Anuradhapura.

The pilgrim's tale provides critical insights into how Anuradhapura's historical landscape and cultural meanings affect individuals' spatial reasoning. Through its depiction of the contrasting relationship between the natives' perceptions of Anuradhapura and the

knowledge influenced by colonial practices, the story sheds light on the social dynamics involved in the creation of spatial connections. The scholarly discourse on the social production of space is rich. Agnew (2014), Lefebvre (1991), Massey (2005), and Shields (2013) demonstrated in their works that sense and perception of places and spaces are socially produced. The individuals' and collective spatial associations and meanings are discursively created and contested realities in specific political, cultural, and historical contexts (Goswami, 2004; Low, 2016; Simone, 2014; Yeoh, 1996). Anuradhapura is no exception; the sacred and historical city of Anuradhapura is a discursive product. Not only the pilgrim, but also the revivalists' view of the sacred city showed that, for them, Anuradhapura was not simply a place of ruins. Instead, Anuradhapura was a landscape of the most prominent ancient civilization of the Sinhalese.

The debate between the British and the Buddhist religious revivalists over the meaning and the use of the place in the early 1900s-represents a conflict between the two knowledge systems of Anuradhapura these actors represent. Like the British in the 19th century, the Sinhala-Buddhist leaders, too, produced a new knowledge of Anuradhapura based on their own observations, alluding to a specific historical and religious understanding. This struggle was led by Sinhalese-Buddhist activists, mainly Anagarika Dharmapala (1864-1933) and Walisinghe Harischandra (1876-1913). Their claim was based on their assertion that the Sinhala-Buddhists were the island's original inhabitants. So, they believed that Anuradhapura is and has been culturally, religiously, and historically significant for Buddhists; thereby, it exclusively belongs to Buddhists. The construction of the collective identity of Sinhalese and their association with Buddhism (Geiger, 1960; Gunawardana,

1979; Obeyesekere, 1997) allowed Sinhala-Buddhists to claim that they are the sole rightful residents of Sri Lanka. The revivalists' claim for Anuradhapura also reflects their authority to control the sacred space by removing or moving non-Buddhist practices from the site. They not only resisted the colonial transformation but also demanded the spatial separation of sacred from worldly. Their demand was to remove all structures linked to the colonial administration and the daily routines of the locals, such as schools, markets, shops, offices, and non-Buddhist religious places. They wanted a new town to be created in Anuradhapura.

Focusing on Kandy, the metropolitical center of the last Lankan kingdom on the island, Duncan (2004) demonstrated that the meanings of landscapes are produced and reproduced along with culture, following and creating landscape models. In Anuradhapura, the revivalists' actions speak to their apprehension about losing their (and Buddhists') hold on a sacred site due to the presence of non-Buddhist objects and potentially competing religious practices, such as the Roman Catholic church and mosque. For them, the existence of non-Buddhist activities is a significant disturbance to the authenticity of the Buddhists' sacred sites. Eventually, some followers of the religious leadership practiced (or supported) violence, and their claim for Anuradhapura became the primary social relation over 'other' spatial claims.

In spatial contestations, 'spatial strategies' are considered the primary vehicles for converting imagined spaces into physical realities (Deshpande, 2000; Oza, 2007). Deshpande (2000, p. 170) reminds us that "spatial strategies can be seen as [articulations

of] physical-material and mental-imaginative aspects of social space." Therefore, "successful spatial strategies are able to link, in a durable and ideologically credible way, abstract (imagined) spaces to concrete (physical) places (ibid)." However, the revivalists' approach from a dominant point of view within which Anuradhapura is a Sinhala-Buddhist land and the ethnic and religious others are mere 'foreigners' on it. Therefore, their fight was against a loss. Also, the purpose was to reproduce the Sinhala-Buddhist authority over their land and the landscape.

The revivalists were not nationalists in the conventional sense. They did not refer to a particular land and a people living in it, but a particular (majority) ethno-religious group within the colony. They neither fought to liberate Ceylon as nationalists would do later nor strove to make Anuradhapura its capital. Instead, Harischandra and Dharmapala demanded the ancient civilization's monuments be separated from "non-Buddhist" purposes. In separating non-Buddhist activities, they wished to cleanse the "sacred city" of other objects, activities, and people. The strategy was separation. Both Dharmapala and Harischandra relied on the British to recover the sacredness of Anuradhapura for Sinhala-Buddhists by building a separate "secular city" and relocating everything that did not belong in it, including the British administrative institutions, non-Sinhala-Buddhist activities, and everyone who lived there.

4.1. The Religious Revivalism and Revivalists

Anuradhapura emerged as the spiritual center of the Low Country Sinhalese in the early 1900s as part of the process through which elites gained political and economic power in

"postcolonial" Ceylon. It began with the Buddhist revivalist movement that emerged in the late 19th century in response to the decline of Buddhism under colonialism. Understanding Dharmapala, one of the most influential leaders of the revivalist movement, is key to the contemporary association between Anuradhapura and the constructions of the modern Sinhala-Buddhist identity. Dharmapala and his protégé Harischandra claimed Anuradhapura for the Sinhala-Buddhists, which was a decisive moment in the confluence of nationalist and Buddhist consciousnesses and the development of its spatial expression.

However, the Buddhist claim to Anuradhapura appeared when Buddhism encountered the latest threat of disappearance from the island in the 19th century. The British committed to protecting Buddhism when they signed the Kandyan Convention with the native chieftains in 1815. However, the Buddhist community did not receive the expected level of fulfillment of these assurances. According to the report by the Buddhist Committee of Inquiry, which was formed in 1954 to investigate the state of Buddhism in Ceylon post-independence, Buddhism was largely neglected during colonial rule in favor of Christian values (*The Betrayal of Buddhism*,1956). Furthermore, Blackburn (2010), Bond (1988), Gombrich & Obeyesekere (1988), Malalgoda (1976), and Seneviratne (1999) have extensively addressed the emerging Buddhist leaders' responses to the decline of their religion under colonialism. They also examine the cultural and religious authority of the Buddhists within the current and contextualized political environment and the incorporation of Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism in the formation of modern Buddhist identity. Yet, this literature hardly sheds light on the spaces of religious politics. With my interest in social space and the

establishment of modern (sacred) Anuradhapura, I focus on its conceptualization by the leaders of the Buddhist revival movement in this chapter.

As the Buddhist revival movement did not receive much support from the Up Country, the Low Country Buddhist leaders and the burgeoning elite fought against both colonial and Up Country values (Jayawardena, 2003; Perera, 1998; M. Roberts, 1982, 1997). When they were looked down upon, the Low Country Buddhist activists also fought against the caste power of the Up Country Buddhist establishments, creating new *nikaya*s (sects) that enabled people from Low Country castes to become Buddhist monks. As we can observe, all the leading Buddhist monks who were at the forefront of the movement, for example, Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala (1827-1911), Mohottivatte Gunananada (1823-1890), Valane Siddharta (1811-1868), and Ratmalane Sri Dharmaloka (1828-1885), were based in southwestern Sri Lanka, the 'Low Country' at large.

The most contentious weapon of the revivalists was public debates with Christian religious leaders and scholars. The Buddhist monks questioned Christianity's core beliefs and ideologies and established that Buddhism contained many superiorities over the religious faiths introduced by Western colonizers. As the most persuasive orator, Gunananda launched a series of debates, named "Great Debates," with Christian priests and pastors, challenging the Christian faith and revealing the greatness of Buddhism. Gunananda's success, especially at the final debate in Panadura in 1873, drew global attention, notably from the Theosophical Society in the United States. The Theosophists accepted the significance of the achievements made by the "West" through modernization (Moritz, 2016)

Click or tap here to enter text.. As a result, the pioneers of the Theosophical Society, Helena Blavatsky (1831-1891) and Colonel Henry Steel Olcott (1832-1907), arrived in Ceylon, established a branch of the society, and supported Buddhist revivalists.

The impact of the arrival of Theosophists on the Sinhalese Buddhist community in Ceylon was massive; Buddhism revived (Gombrich & Obeyesekere, 1988; Obeyesekere, 1970; Perera, 1999). As it rejuvenated through 'a protest against Christianity and its associated Western political dominance before independence,' this "new" Buddhism was inspired by select 'norms and organizational forms' of Protestant Christianity (Obeyesekere, 1970). It positioned traditional Theravada Buddhism within a modern organizational structure adapted from protestant religious institutions.

Dharmapala was the son of a wealthy timber and furniture businessman from southern Ceylon, the heart of the Low Country. The business was both supported by and supported by the rise of the Low Country elite. Dharmapala eventually became one of the enthusiastic members of the revivalist movement in the late 19th century. The association with the revivalist movement significantly changed Dharmapala's persona. First, he changed his birth name from David to Dharmapala, 'the guardian of *dhamma*.' Then, by giving up worldly possessions, Dharmapala became Anagarika, i.e., a lay renunciant, and by being celibate, he became *brahmachari*, a sort of a bodhisattva. Finally, wearing an ochre robe, Dharmapala located himself in a 'transferential space' of lay and monkshood and dedicated his life to Buddhism's protection and well-being.

During the early 20th century, Dharmapala significantly contributed to the reestablishment of Buddhism as the prime religion in Ceylon. He had the firm conviction that the Sinhalese were a group of people which had "deteriorated after the arrival of the Europeans" (1965). Besides, he was convinced that the longstanding association between the Sinhalese community and Buddhism had made the Sinhalese one of the most significant ethnic groups/ races in the world. Despite its colonial reinvention, Dharmapala based his claim on *Mahavamsa*. While glorifying the past, saying, "no nation in the world had a more brilliant history than ours" (1965), Dharmapala harshly criticized the Sinhalese who followed colonial habits such as the consumption of alcohol and meat.

In their conceptualization of Anuradhapura, the revivalists reinvented its past, establishing Sinhalese Buddhist domination over the place's historical narrative. Before delving into the revivalists' production of Anuradhapura's modern history, it is crucial to understand the conceptual distinctions between the notions of the past and history. Although both concepts are about the past, their position in the present is different. Here I bring Trouillot who argued in 2015 that past and present are not distinctive phenomena but intimately connected, "past does not exist independently from the present" (p. 15). He expounded, "the past has no content. [Instead] the past… or more accurately, pastness … is a position" (ibid, p. 15). So, it is the past that has no-autonomous existence without reference to the present. Nor does the past encompass substance or archives of holding a concealed truth—instead, the past is a position shaped by dynamic economic, political, and cultural present experiences; thus, as Trouillot argued, we cannot "identify the past as past" (ibid). In this vein, the past and history are not equivalent but distinguished.

However, most importantly, Trouillot (2015, p. 2) stated that "history is not the fixed past." Instead, history is a "social process," and therefore, "human beings participate in history both as actors and as narrators" (ibid). As a social process, he noted, "...history does not belong only to its narrators, professional or amateur. While some of us debate what history is or was, others take it into their own hands" (2015, p. 153). Therefore, people construct history as they participate in events and contribute to historical narratives. Yet, history is not limited to the narrator's and participants' knowledge nor controlled by the political and economic ideologies they followed or the cultural institutions they founded. Instead, history is open to innovation, interpretation, and reproduction. It ultimately expands both the narrators' and participants' experiences of the past and the present.

In Anuradhapura, the revivalist leaders had become the narrators and creators of history. The Sinhala-Buddhist dominance in history was important to Dharmapala. As the British colonials who produced their own interpretation of Anurahdapura's history, the nationalists—especially the leaders—also constructed a history through their claim to the sacred city.

Unlike his contemporary nationalists such as Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, mainly in the neighbouring Indian subcontinent, the idea of self-rule was not a significant desire or claim of Dharmapala. In contrast, he believed that the government is merely a lay organization, but the virtue of dhamma is more critical for the Sinhalese. Kemper (2015) observed that the moral reforms of the people were more vital for Dharmapala than political independence. Thus, Dharmapala expected the Sinhalese-Buddhists to 'return' to

the utmost 'righteousness' rooted in the virtues of Theravada Buddhism which they inherited from their ancestors. He thus launched a campaign to "awaken" the Sinhalese by educating them about the wisdom of the noble dhamma and encouraging them to repudiate all the habits they learned from the colonials. As superiors of moral authority, he anticipated that Buddhist monks would assume the leadership of this cultural transformation (see Seneviratne, 1999). As he became the most influential leader of the Buddhist revival movement, Dharmapala laid the foundation for the modern Sinhalese Buddhist identity in Sri Lanka.

Dharmapala's vision did not focus on Ceylon as a unit of space. Along with producing a modern political and social identity for Sinhalese Buddhists, (Amunugama, 1985, 2016; Obeyesekere, 1975, 1997) Dharmapala's vision was "global." It included places significant in the Buddha's life. He led a campaign to liberate historical Buddhist sites in India, especially Bodh Gaya, where the Buddha attained awakening. Dharmapala reclaimed it for the Buddhists from the "Hindus" who had occupied the site.

The materializatoin of Buddhist places involved the making of sites exclusively Buddhist by removing non-Buddhists and their practices. He established the Maha Bodhi Society for fundraising and carrying out legal negotiations to release sacred sites from those who held them (Amunugama, 2016; Barua, 1935; Geary, 2017) . Dharmapala expected Bodh Gaya in British Raj to be an international Buddhist center open to pilgrims from all corners of the world. In Ceylon,the same movement brought Anuradhapura to the center of Buddhist consciousness.

In regard to the means, the leaders, including Dharmapala and the monks who pioneered the Buddhist revival, were primarily non-violent. As described, the most aggressive activity of the movement was public debates. Yet, claiming Buddhists' rights did not involve direct violence or organized attacks. For instance, the clash between the Buddhists and Christians in Kotahena in 1883 occurred when the Buddhist procession of the Dipaduttararma Vihara contacted those who celebrated Easter at the nearby St. Lucia's Cathedral (K. M. de Silva, 2005; Rogers, 1997; Wickramasinghe, 2015) . Another clash occurred in the late-1890s when the Buddhists protested the colonial state's attempt to remove a shrine and bodhi tree in Kalutara, 43 km south of Colombo (Rogers, 1997). The conflicts during this time were spontaneous, with no organized violence involved or any retaliation. The nature of disputes changed with the century, especially with Dharmapala's adherent Harischandra adopting the leadership in Anuradhapura.

4.2. Anuradhapura as the Protégé's Universe

When Dharmapala became active, the most sacred Buddhist city in the colony was Kandy. It was the home of the most sacred Buddhist temple: the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic of the Buddha. For Buddhists, the sacred tooth is a living representation of the Buddha. Yet *Dalada Maligawa*, as it is called, was in the heart of Up Country. As a member of a Low Country caste, Dharmapala did not have access to Up Country, which is discussed below. In this context, Anuradhapura, which had many ruins then, provided alternative spaces for Dharmapala. For him, the city and its vicinity were authentic symbols of the glorious

Sinhalese past, a spatial representation of the superior Sinhalese civilization from two and half millennia ago.

While Dharmapala's activities were mainly centered in Colombo and in India's Bodh Gaya, his protégé Harischandra struggled to establish Anuradhapura as the most sacred city of the Sinhala-Buddhists. Named Edward de Silva at birth, Harischandra was born to a business family in Negombo. Dharmapala's leadership inspired Harischandra, who became a key activist and reformist. After completing his primary education in Negombo, Edward was sent to a leading missionary school in Colombo to learn English. Although his family wanted him to be a lawyer, teenage Edward dropped his education and became a follower of Dharmapala. Like the leader, the disciple gave up his foreign name and followed a brahmacharya lifestyle for the rest of his life. As one of the close associates of Dharmapala, Harischandra was first elected as the deputy secretary at the Maha Bodhi Society in 1898 and became the chief secretary in 1899.

Harischandra arrived in Anuradhapura in the late 1890s and acted more forcefully than his compatriots in other parts of the country. He thoroughly believed Anuradhapura to be an authentic possession of the Sinhala-Buddhists. For Harischandra, "there is *no other City upon the universe* that has maintained its position as a Sacred City, replete with sacred objects of diverse kind, for 2,200 years, except this City, the property of the *Buddhasasana*, built and maintained by the Sinhalese nation" (1908; preface, italics added). He claimed that Anuradhapura had become the most significant spatial entity of 'his' universe infused with the supremacy of Buddhist moralities. Therefore, any circumstance, perception, or

ideology that could challenge his worldview would be perceived as a significant threat to Buddhism.

Dharmapala wrote, “Anuradhapura is like Benares and Mecca and Jerusalem sacred, and therefore it must be maintained as a sacred shrine” (*sic*).[16] As mentioned above, Anuradhapura is comprised of many significant ‘sacred objects’ for Buddhists. The main one was the sacred bodhi tree that sprouted from a sapling of the bodhi tree, under which the Buddha attained awakening to Anuradhapura by Saṅghamittā, a daughter of the Mauryan emperor Ashoka. In addition, the city also has many stupas that are believed to house Buddha’s relics. By emphasizing the significance of Anuradhapura, Dharmapala asked Harischandra to learn about Anuradhapura by referring to books and material such as the travel records of Faxian (aka Fa-Hien).

The revivalists’ discourse on Anuradhapura’s sacredness primarily focused on the site’s physical artifacts. In other words, there is no evidence to suggest that the environment, nature, and existing social practices in the city were significant for the revivalists’ view of sacred Anuradhapura. Besides the sacred bodhi tree, none of the natural and ecological components of the site, such as forests, rivers, and ecosystems, or social structures, such as local castes, were considered significant elements of the sacred place.

In contrast, Dharmapala and Harischandra viewed the remains of Buddhist monasteries and other sacred monuments as the intimate connections between the Sinhalese and

[16] Letter from Dharmapala to Harischandra, July 26, 1900. L/11/U/C/42, SLNA.

Buddhism. Anuradhapura was a living testimony of the greatness of the ancient Sinhalese civilization. The issue arose from witnessing non-Sinhala-Buddhists occupying the sacred city under the British. The colonial administration had not prevented people from settling amongst the historical monuments. Instead, the government encouraged people from all over the colony to come and settle in Anuradhapura, where the population was low. Besides, the colonial government planned to sell (commodify) most land in the sacred city under the rubric of crown lands. Furthermore, British officials carried out archaeological excavations in and around Buddhist pilgrimage sites. Both leaders believed that the habitation of people, the colonial archaeological excavations, and many colonial establishments in Anuradhapura would destroy the meaning of the place.

Not limiting to conserving its meaning, Dharmapala considered it essential that "the sanctity of the holy city must be revived."[17] Thus, it was necessary for all the actions and elements that could violate the purity of the sacred space to be removed. Once the governor of Ceylon mentioned that he received a 'violent letter' from Dharmapala in which he made "a most extravagant, impossible claim that the whole of Anuradhapura should be handed over to the Buddhists and that all other religions, as he called it, should be expelled from the place" (Harischandra 1908, p. 103). As people lived around significant Buddhist monuments, their dwellings were supplemented with the amenities they needed. For the revivalists, these amenities, especially the tavern, butcher's stalls, and non-Buddhist

[17] Letter from Dharmapala to Harischandra, August 29, 1901. L/11/U/C/42, SLNA.

religious places such as the Catholic church, were 'contaminating' the purity of the sacred place. See Figure 4.1 for the physical distribution of activities in Anuradhapura in 1903.

From the perspective of the colonial state, Harischandra's work represented an extreme form of activism that would not even tolerate secular practices, let alone other religions, in Anuradhapura. In relation to the actions of the revivalists, the government agent of the North-Central Province described the emergence of an extreme form of Buddhism:

> There is an extreme section of the Buddhists who would, if they had their way, turn secular Government out of Anuradhapura and keep it for themselves alone as an exclusive religious centre ahich [which] nothing but Buddhism and the practices peculiar to that religion should be tolerated.[18]

Dharmapala's intention in Anuradhapura was clear. He strongly emphasized: "We must have the liquor shop and the slaughterhouses removed from the sacred limits [*sic*]. There should be no church, [or] Christian school within these limits. ...We must ask for the removal of Govt [government] offices – Prisons etc."[19] Thus, Dharmapala imagined his sacred Anuradhapura as a pure and straightforward Buddhist pilgrimage center that did not tolerate the existence of others, whether tangible or intangible.

Most importantly, neither *guru* nor protégé attempted to capture political authority in the colony nor to wage an anti-colonial struggle against the British rule. Instead, both leaders demanded the monuments of the ancient civilization be separated from 'secular uses' and 'non-Buddhist' purposes. In separating non-Buddhist activities, they wished to cleanse the 'sacred city' of other objects and people. Both Dharmapala and Harischandra expected the

[18] Diary, Government Agent, North Central Province, October 1901: L/ 41/499/SLNA
[19] Letter Dharmapala to Harischandra, December 23, 1901. L/11/U/C/42, SLNA.

British to establish this ‘sacred city’ for the Sinhalese Buddhists by building a separate ‘secular city’ for the administration and non-Sinhalese Buddhists away from the sacred city.

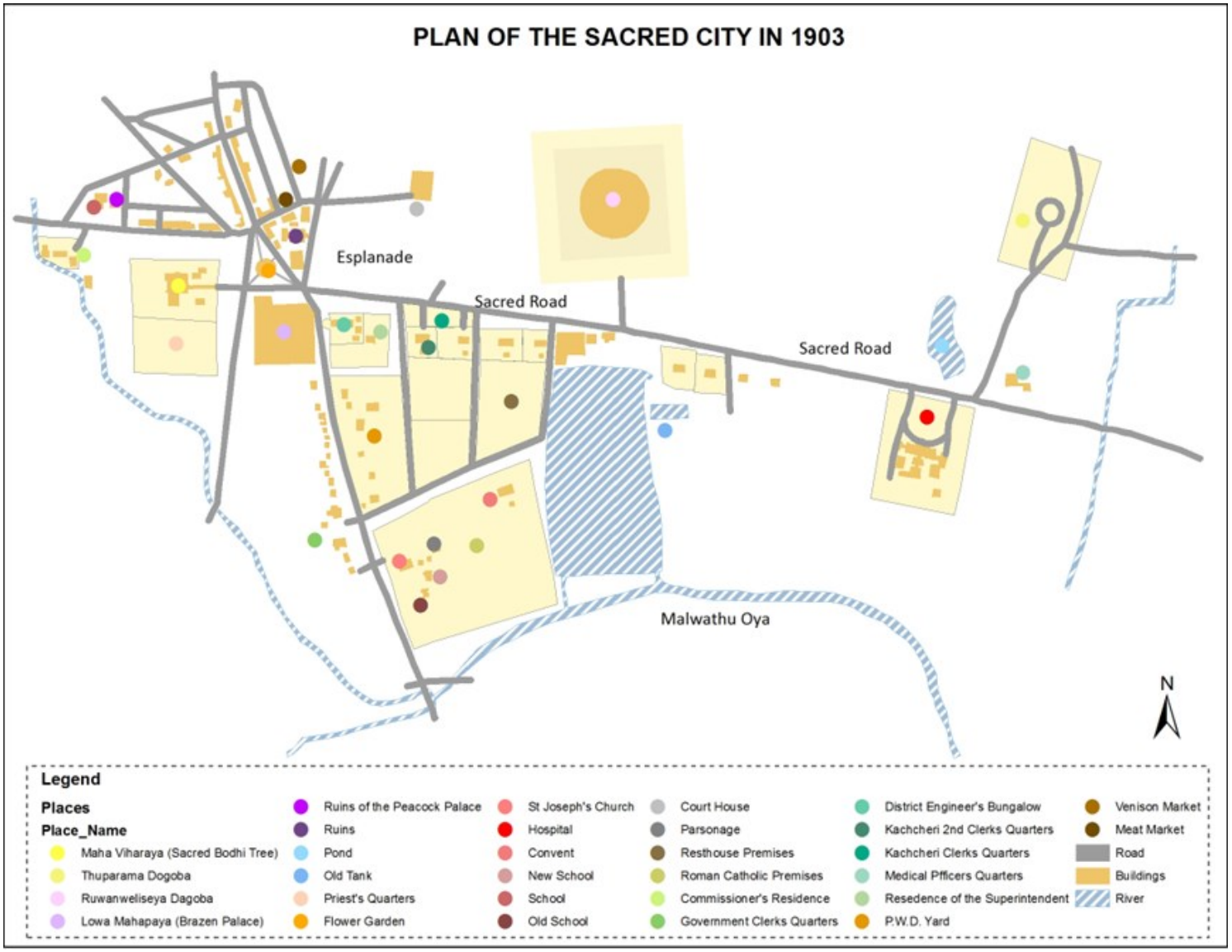

Figure 4.1 Layout plan of Anuradhapura Sacred City in 1903. Reproduced based on the map presented in Alles's *(1989) Famous Criminal Cases of Sri Lanka: The Trial of Walisinghe Harischandra and Others*. Compiled by Anuradha Kanchani.

In 1901, Harischandra launched his mission to reclaim Anuradhapura by establishing a branch of the Maha Bodhi Society in the area. As he created the new branch, Harschandra linked with the local elites in Anuradhapura, such as L.B. Bulankulame, giving them official positions in the Society (Karuṇananda, 2003). Harischandra also created the Buddhist Defense Committee in Anuradhapura the same year. The committee was headed by Venerable Medhankara, the high priest of *atamasthana*and the North Central Province, as the president and Harschandra as the secretary.

Later, the members of the Buddhist Defence Committee launched a protest against the building of a new Christian church in Anuradhapura (Karuṇananda 2001, 2003; Kariyawasam 1973; Alles 1989). In sending guidance to Harischandra in Anuradhapura, Dharmapala called Christians a major threat to Buddhism and the Buddhists. He asserted: "one Christian is enough to bring all trouble to thousand Buddhists[20]." Although the Sinhala-Buddhists were the majority, the revivalists were afraid of either being dominated by minority Christians or their potential ability to inflict damage.

Farmer (1965) and Tambiah (1986) observe that the Sinhalese are 'a majority with a minority complex.' 'The leaders of the revivalist movement also recognized the minor ethnic and religious groups as a danger to the moral and spatial purity of Sinhala-Buddhists. This was indeed the time of building a postcolonial Sinhala-Buddhist identity, for the first time

[20] Letter from Dharmapala to Harischandra, March 6, 1899. L/11/U/C/42, SLNA.

believing in themselves and in the potential of coming out of colonialism othered the others but by defining them as a threat.

Although it is hard to understand the social unit they adopted, especially with a fault line between the Up Country and Low Country, the revivalist leaders too identified smaller ethnic and religious groups as a threat to Sinhala-Buddhists' moral and spatial purity in Anuradhapura. In contrast, the Sinhala-Buddhist leaders took a more defensive and protective stance, defining the non-Sinhalese Buddhists as something to be afraid of.

This mindset resonates with that described in Appadurai's (1998) "Dead Certainty" in which Rwanda's mobs were dead certain about which individuals they should eliminate. They could doubtlessly think: "Let me kill you before you kill me" (Appadurai, 1998, p. 244). The revivalists, too, were certain of the threat the evolving land uses and practices around the ancient city posed to the 'authenticity' of the sacred territory belonging to Sinhala-Buddhists. Thus, at the turn of the 20th century, the leaders of the Buddhist-revival movement saw the need to define and protect the sacred area by removing all secular activities from it. Their campaign went beyond agitation against the state and the strategies of the leaders into using violence against other religious groups and colonial spatial practices.

Harischandra began to document and map sacred sites to identify the Sinhala-Buddhist inheritance in Anuradhapura. Like his *guru*, he was also fighting for the continuation of Sinhala history and Buddhist heritage of over 2,200 years. This perception, however, conflicted with the British concept of historic preservation, especially the archaeological

excavation of ruins in Anuradhapura. Both Dharmapala and Harischandra saw the colonial excavations to unearth the past and allow new constructions around the ruins as disrupting the sacred order of the city and/or rewriting it. Therefore, the two leaders stood against archaeological excavations and the erection of new buildings in the sacred city (area) of Anuradhapura.

These ideas were operationalized by the Buddhist Defence Committee, first by sending a petition to the colonial governor. The petition included the following claim which involved both historical and transnational appeals:

> The usurpation … by non-Buddhists, [of] which has been in continuous possession of the Buddhists for over 2200 years would be the means of injuring the loyal feelings of the Buddhists of the whole island as well as those in Burmah [now Myanmar], Siam [now Thailand] and who hold the city of Anuradhapura as a central Shrine.[21]

The keyword is "usurpation" of what is "ours" by non-Buddhists. Thus, both leaders opted to reclaim the space they saw as the Buddhist holy land.

In the same petition, the committee requested the colonial government to stop all forms of archaeological excavations in Anuradhapura. The petitioners were clear; "Experimental exploration of the shrines may be tolerated if Buddhism is a *dead* religion" (emphasis mine). The revivalists firmly believed that Buddhism was not a dead faith but a living religion that could be killed by external interventions. Therefore, the environment and

[21] Petition to the Governor by the Anuradhapura Buddhist Defence Committee. Sgd. Rev. Medankara (President) & Harischandra (Secretory). March 10, 1902: Sri Lanka National Archives, Colombo, lot 41/499

practices could be killed by external interventions such as the excavation of "archaeological remains" which imposed the order of the archeologist and Western archeological thinking.

In Anuradhapura, the archaeological surveys carried out by H.C.P. Bell and his team saved the archaeological artifacts to teach the British about the colony's ancient cultures. Also, the British permitted the Public Work Department to use the artifacts they presumed as archaeologically 'less important' items, such as stone pillars without any carvings. The department utilized such artifacts from the "archaeological quarry" for the construction of new roads and bridges. Under Harischandra's leadership, the Defence Committee critically questioned this practice. They were mainly opposed to using "any piece of stone" from these ancient sites as 'metal' for constructing roads and bridges in the town just because they were condemned as historically insignificant by Bell and other colonial archaeologists. Reinforcing the revivalist discourse, Harischandra noted that the British employed "Tamil coolies with sledgehammers to crush the stone pillars constructed by the heroic Sinhalese in the past."[22] He expected the Sinhala-Buddhists across the island to stand against the vandalism of Sinhalese-Buddhist heritage. He was thus building a national consciousness around the destruction of Sinhala-Buddhist history and the need to reclaim Anuradhapura.

[22] Walisinhe Harischandra, "Don't Buddhist need the great site of Anuradhapura", June 3, 1903. L/11/U/C/42, SLNA.

Harischandra insisted that Buddhism was not dead. In his speeches and publications on the significance of Anuradhapura as a critical cultural space for Buddhists, he denied the colonial archeologists' approach that historical artifacts did not belong to the present time. Then he displaced the British's discourse that Anuradhapura was a dead space. Although the remaining structures were not in their best shape or delivering their original functions as they were made two millennia ago, they were still relevant and alive in both leaders' imaginations. For Harischandra, the historical materials—considered ruins by colonial sensibilities—in Anuradhapura were not merely lifeless and timeless structures of an ancient civilization but material elements of Buddhism. Therefore, as Buddhism was not dead, the materials related to the religion were also alive. In so determining, Harischandra initiated a new discourse to appreciate the archaeological artifacts as essential cultural components that belonged to the present.

4.3. Agitation, Imagination, and Violence

Harischandra encountered many challenges from the colonial state. First, he was asked to remove the signboard of the Maha Bodhi Society, which was located on state land, i.e. the road reservation just in front of the society office (Alles, 1989; Karunananda, 2003). As he declined to move the sign, the provincial engineer of the PWD North-Central Province sent workers to remove the board. When Harischandra showed up with a group of people, the workers backed out. Then the engineer himself, a Britisher, took on the task. Harischandra let him remove the sign with no resistance but told him that he would replace the board

soon.[23] Harischandra was also charged for cutting down trees to construct a Buddhist temple and for trespassing on state land in Anuradhapura.

In this sense, Harsichandra-went much further than merely resisting Christianity and colonialism as defined in Gombrich & Obeyesekere (1988). The concept of "Protestantization of Buddhism" cannot fully explain the revivalists' actions and activities in Anuradhapura. Approaching this era from the subjects' perspective, in *People's Spaces*, Perera (2016) demonstrated how ordinary people familiarize spaces provided or imposed on them by employing their transformative capacity. The revivalists were subjects of colonial rule who negotiated space for new Buddhist institutions and practices, redefining extant colonial spaces. In contrast to European thinking, the revivalists considered the historical sites as "living spaces," still in practice, and not dead archeological material that could be excavated, examined, and classified by non-Buddhists. In redefining what the British saw as ruins belonging to the past, and defending the representational space so created, Harischandra first negotiated accommodation within the colonial context for continuing renewed Buddhist practices in Anuradhapura.

The revivalists were redefining extant colonial space including what the British called "archaeological remains" as living monuments, creating institutions. They created space for Sinhala-Buddhism beginning from erecting name boards where needed. Moreover, they demanded the state to facilitate their process of producing new institutions and spaces by

[23] From the Provincial Engineer N.C.P. to the Director of Public Works, May 24, 1902: Sri Lanka National Archives, Colombo, lot 41/499

creating a new place for secular activities away from the sacred area, thus (re)moving the former. In this, the revivalists and their followers had a representational space that they were both defending and creating. Thus, they were not only redefining colonial spaces and creating their own but were also putting the colonial administration on the defensive, making it negotiate its own space.

In regard to the means, Harischandra's resistance varied according to the opponent and the nature of their act. He showed greater antagonism towards the Ceylonese others such as Christians and Tamils but less hostility towards British officials. His writings referred to Tamil coolies "as foreign to the history of Anuradhapura" (Harischandra, 1908). While showing hostility toward non-Sinhala-Buddhists and lower-rank officials of the colonial state in Anuradhapura, both leaders observed loyalty toward the superiors of the colonial state. Also, they had some trust in the British justice system and even wrote to the British monarch regarding the unreasonable behaviours of some government officials in Anuradhapura.

In 1903, Dharmapala wrote to King Edward VII, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain, stressing that "the ignorant officials of Your Majesty's Government in Ceylon are responsible for disturbing that spirit of loyalty of nearly two million Sinhalese Buddhists" (Harischandra, 1908). He further emphasized that "it is not wise neither is it just to satisfy a few hundred Muhamedan [Muslims] immigrants and Jesuitical Christians, that the imperishable associations of the Holy City hallowed for 2,200 years should be violated and disturbed (*sic*)" (ibid, p. 80). His reaction suggests that, in his role as a Buddhist leader, he

saw himself as the rightful representative of the Sinhala-Buddhists in the colony, giving him the ability to speak on their behalf.

In response to the state's resistance to Harischandra's involvements in Anuradhapura, Dharmapala suggested that "we have to ask the Government to show their right to the land[24]." Simultaneously, Dharmapala wanted Harischandra to collect 'statistics' about Buddhist pilgrims to Anuradhapura. He wanted to build a case for separating the sacred area for Buddhists using Western logic and data. In this, Dharmapala's tactic can be seen as a form of "*Empire Writes Back*"(Ashcroft et al., 2002) . Here, the revivalists employed their "postcolonial" transformative capacity. They did not directly read the data from a formal (British) vantage point but translated colonial 'facts' including statistics, maps, and historiographies, into elements of faith in their representational space. This indicates his interest in using both intellectual and non-violent means of convincing the colonial authorities rather than applying force. Dharmapala told Harischandra: "For at least 20 years we must give the statistics. G.A.'s yearly Reports (*sic*) may give the number[s][25]". Although the nationalists intended to regain the authenticity of religion, race, and space, the movement employed colonial knowledge and data sources. In so doing, the revivalists instrumentalized and weaponized information from colonial sources to form a patriotic knowledge of space.

[24]Letter from Dharmapala to Harischandra, January 29, 1901, L/11/U/C/42, SLNA
[25] Letter from Dharmapala to Harischandra, January 29, 1901, L/11/U/C/42, SLNA

However, Dharmapala's spatial representation of the sacred city was based on the model of colonial cantonments in India. He highlighted the spatial models that inspired his imagination of the sacred city:

> There should be two towns, Anuradhapura city and Anuradhapura cantonment. One for the Buddhists and the other for non-Buddosts [non-Buddhists] – just as in India. – Viz, Benares city, Benares Canton [now Varanasi]; Muttara City, Muttra Cant [now Mathura]; Meerut City, Meerut Cant, Umballa City, Umballa Cant [now Ambala][26].

These cities share some longstanding histories and are highly sacred to the Hindus, although Ambala might be less significant than others. Moreover, they all comprise cantonments to serve the British military.

Dharmapala's thoughts were not fundamentalist. In imagining the separation, he employed the spatial model of the British raj. He suggested a cantonment in Anuradhapura for all non-Buddhist activities. He was not encouraging any form of ethnic or religious cleansing. Instead, the vision Dharmapala and Harischandra shared for Anuradhapura was clear: there was space for the other, but only outside of the sacred area. Dharmapala thus incorporated British and other knowledges in developing a hybrid knowledge for his purpose.

At the same time, it was a monumental task to hold the support of Sinhala-Buddhists to claim Anuradhapura while being loyal (or political neutral) to the colonial authority. If the British are not ready to release the sacred sites for the Buddhists, Dharmapala suggested, "we must begin the agitation. All over the island, public meetings should be held protesting

[26] Letter from Dharmapala to Harischandra, December 23, 1901. L/11/U/C/42/ SLNA.

against the usurpation of the sacred land"[27]. Harischandra was encouraged to find masses to 'occupy' all sacred sites in Anuradhapura. When petitions and appeals to the colonial state were insufficient to make substantial gains, 'agitation' was recognized as the primary means of materializing the agenda.

Dharmapala was uncertain how long the agitators would have to struggle to materialize his conceived spaces. He thus advised Harischandra: "we may not succeed [immediately], but we must try and ten years after we might get what we had wanted."[28] Later, in 1902, his colleagues in Colombo advised Harischandra to neither get involved in any activity harmful to the cause, nor to be in haste; they advised him to wait until the time is ripe; i.e., when the Buddhists realize their "rights [are] being infringed in so gross a manner."[29] Yet, Harischandra showed urgency; he continued to make public speeches on the need to reclaim Anuradhapura as a Buddhist area through depopulation.

4.4. Constructing "Nationality"

The claim for Anuradhapura was neither local nor regional but "national." Before the advent of Harischandra's movement, the "to-be sacred" area was relatively peaceful. It housed the Buddhist sacred places, hosted sacred activities and events, and was home to the caretakers of the former and the organizations that hosted activities. It was its own place. Its nationalization occurred via the new conception of the leaders of Buddhist revival, connected at large to the emerging elite from the Low Country. Scholars like Gombrich &

[27] Letter from Dharmapala to Harischandra, January 29, 1901. L/11/U/C/42, SLNA.
[28] Letter from Dharmapala to Harischandra, December 23, 1901. L/11/U/C/42, SLNA.
[29] Letter from Weerasuriya to Harischandra, January 19, 1902. L/11/U/C/42, SLNA.

Obeyesekere (1988), Jayawardena (2000), Malalgoda (1976), Perera (1999), and Roberts (1982) have well addressed and spatialized this issue.

Although the Low Country elite and the revivalists gained political and economic power, they were unable to extend their influence to the sacred city of Kandy, which remained beyond their reach. Anuradhapura was their alternative; it was certainly a candidate for the most sacred city in Ceylon, perhaps as worthy as Kandy. In practice, Kandy continued to be the home of the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic of the Buddha. Low Country people, including its Buddhist establishments, were looked down upon by the Up Country people, and the Up Country Buddhist establishment, which was limited to the Up Country *goigama* caste, thought to be the highest. Dharmapala had some association with monks in Kandy (Amunugama 2016), but he belonged to an elite family of the Low Country and was not acceptable to this establishment. Hence, the Low Country elite as well as the revivalists fought against both colonial and Up Country values in the country (Jayawardena 2000; Perera 1999; Roberts 1982, 1997).

Although the Low Country elite surpassed their Kandyan compatriots regarding power between the 1860s and 1880s (Roberts 1982; Perera 1999), they could neither penetrate the Kandy-based Buddhist organization nor take control of the most sacred city, Kandy. Anuradhapura provided a counter-space to Kandy of the Up Country elite and the (Kandyan) upper-caste domination within the Buddhist establishment, for revivalists. Up until the early stages of this struggle, Anuradhapura was a place many ruins spread out across the area. Some pilgrims visited select sacred sites. Harischandra's struggle can be

seen as one to transform this place into a center of Buddhism in the colony and/or among Sinhala Buddhists.

As the Up Country establishment did not accept them, those who wanted to become monks had no avenue. The revivalists had to create their own *nikaya*s (fraternities), allowing people in Low Country castes to become monks in the Buddha *sasana*. It is in this context that the centrality of Anuradhapura becomes a vital alternative to Kandy. While Low Country's socio-political struggle against Kandy was located in Colombo (Perera 1999), Anuradhapura became the center of religious activities.

During the riot of 1903, Harischandra was not involved in violence. Instead, he supported the police to control the crowd, and the police magistrate of Anuradhapura appreciated his actions. Although the colonial state found no direct involvement of Harischandra in the event, it believed him to be the mastermind and he was arrested[30] (See Figure 5.2). When arrested as the 13th of 83 accused of the riot, Harischandra sent a telegram for the publication in *Sarasavi Sandaresa* newspaper: "Parents, friends, relatives, do not be sorry - stone walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage; minds innocent and quiet take that for a hermitage" (Harischandra 1908, p. 90).

[30] By compiling relevant correspondence and newspaper reports, Harischandra provides a detail account on Anuradhapura riots in his *Sacred City of Anuradhapura with Forty-Six Illustrations* (1908: 87 – 104).

Figure 4.2 Harischandra, standing in the center, was arrested by the colonial government.

Source: Harschandra (1908, p.126)

The proclamation represents the awareness of the revivalists that the meaning of the space is determined not merely by the materials and structures but by the imagination of the user and the agency that turns that abstract space into a space of practice. While we do not know how much mental power he had, he believed that he could transform a prison into a hermitage, the use of such weapons of the weak makes it difficult to control from above. Both he and Dharmapala as leaders were on a mission to translate historicity and archaeological facts of the place into patriotic matter exclusively belonging to Sinhala-Buddhists.

The culmination of all resistance was the Anuradhapura riot in 1903 that brought violence into agitation. The riot began as a protest, in response to the knocking over of a pilgrim by a horse rider during a Poson festival in Anuradhapura. Poson festival, which falls on the full moon day in June, celebrates the arrival of Arahant Mahinda who brought Buddhism to Lanka in the third century BC (K. M. de Silva, 2005; Rāhula, 1956; Wickremeratne, 1987). On June 09, a Mudaliyar (chieftain) of Anuradhapura Kachcheri, who happened to be a native Christian, had ridden over a female pilgrim who came to Anuradhapura to participate in the festival.

This incident brought hundreds of Buddhists to the streets to express upset that the Mudaliyar abandoned the injured woman and her husband on the road without admitting his fault. Most associates of Harischandra, members of the Maha Bodhi Society , and also the rioters in Anuradhapura were from the Low Country (Karuṇananda, 2003; Nissan, 1985; Rogers, 1987).The frustrated individuals, perceived as “rioters” by the colonists,

commenced the destruction of particular structures that were not related to Buddhism in the town. Although Dharmapala and Harischandra did not perform any violence at the riots, the mobs were heavily inspired by the revivalists' claim of Anuradhapura and the authenticity of the Sinhalese they made. As *The Times of Ceylon* reported on 9th June 1903: "The [Catholic] church of the former mission house and school room was wrecked and burnt: the meat-stall and the flower garden, which had been laid out by Government opposite the Bo-tree temple were destroyed" (cited in Harischandra 1908, p. 87). All the places and uses the revivalists wanted to remove from the "sacred city" including the "meat stalls, liquor shops, foreign places of worship and so forth" (ibid, p. 15), were severely damaged. The riot fundamentally followed the revivalists' spatial imagination, removing "other" political, cultural, and religious institutions. By attacking the elements that contaminated its purity, the rioters attempted to rewrite the sacred space, enabling the revivalists to claim their sacred space.

4.5. Awakened and Impelled Buddhists

The production of citizens' sense of belonging to the nation is a crucial aspect of nationalism (Anderson, 1991; Balibar, 1991; Chatterjee, 1993). Regarding space, this involves the establishment of a sense of place and belonging; a claim to the territory, but with its material and intellectual (ideological) contents (See Perera 1999). This is what precisely Low Country leaders produced via Anuradhapura, i.e., in addition to Colombo (cf. Perera, 2016).

The historical representations of place play a significant role in the production of such image of a community. These representations enable the community to establish a sense of ownership of a territory combined with social order. Dharmapala, as a pioneer revivalist and a founder of the modern Sinhala-Buddhist consciousness, also aimed to build subjects within this nationalism, i.e., 'Arya-Sinhala' people who are loyal to Buddhism. Our intention is not to reduce Dharmapala into a mere Sinhala-Buddhist revivalist by ignoring his role as a personal and international spiritual seeker (Amunugama, 2016; Kemper, 2015). He neither conceived a nationhood connected to the land (Ceylon, the island) nor engaged in liberating Ceylon for the subjects. He was much bigger than the social role of our focus: i.e., the consequences of his spatial claims to and in Anuradhapura in the production of a new form of Buddhist went far beyond spirituality.

By educating the Sinhala-Buddhists of the wisdom of the great *dhamma* (Buddha's teachings) and the accomplishments of their ancestors, he encouraged the Sinhalese to repudiate the habits they learned from their colonial masters. He prompted Buddhist monks, as superiors of moral authority, to assume the leadership of this cultural transformation (See Seneviratne, 1999). The movement also aimed to reestablish the link between the religion and the state across history by laying claims to the glorious past they were building on with the assumption that the creators of the ancient Lankan civilization were indeed the ancestors of contemporary Sinhala-Buddhists.

This also ignores the impossibility of the existence of a 'pure' nation on an island that experienced many foreign invasions throughout the history, beginning with the invasion of

Vijaya (who is considered the founder of Sinhalese nation two-and-half millennia ago). Through this discourse, Dharmapala laid the foundation for a modern Sinhala-Buddhist identity in Sri Lanka. In so doing, he was building a Sinhala-Buddhist "nationhood" which brings Sinhala Buddhists together but did not mirror the European version of a nation with a bounded territory.

Unlike contemporary nationalists such as Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, the idea of political autonomy was not significant for Dharmapala. He believed that the 'government' is merely a lay organization, but the virtue of dhamma is more valuable for the Sinhalese. Kemper (2015) observed that the moral reforms of the people were more important to Dharmapala than political independence. Dharmapala considered the Sinhalese a 'supreme group of people' which had "deteriorated after the arrival of the Europeans" (Dharmapala, 1965). Thus, the revival of ancient chronicles and sites were the means to reconnect the Sinhalese with their glorious past, hopefully building a similar future.

Explaining the nationalists' association with ancient ruins in Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and Thailand, Leach (1973, p. 35) claimed that "any young, educated, potentially nationalistic man or woman is bound to feel that the evidence of past glory lies all around; and this past glory was Buddhist." The ruins of the island, particularly in Anuradhapura became significant living evidence for Dharmapala to establish the Sinhala Buddhists' belonging to the island. Instead of considering the ruins as displaced objects which should be placed in museums (Tuan, 2001), the revivalists saw them as cultural and social capital in the

formation of the collective identity of the Sinhala Buddhist. While glorifying the past, saying "no nation in the world had a more brilliant history than ours" (Dharmapala, 1965), Dharmapala launched a campaign to awaken the Sinhalese and raise their awareness around Anuradhapura.

Consequently, some Sinhala Buddhists 'awoke' and organized against injustices of the colonial authority over their sacred land. By their mere presence, the Low Country and non-native rioters of 1903 displaced the locals who took care of the sacred places and institutions for millennia. For the British, Harischandra's involvement in Anuradhapura represented an extreme form of activism, which would not even tolerate secular practices, let alone other religions, within the sacred city. For the government agent of the North-Central Province it was like creating a Buddhist fundamentalist state.

Eventually, the court acquitted Harischandra of all the charges. The British also recognized a significant difference within, or an opportunity to divide, the Buddhist camp: the Buddhists who obeyed the colonial rule and those who challenged it. Governor Sir West Ridgeway stated that the Anuradhapura riot is "*the work of foolish men duped by better-educated men* whether here, in Colombo, or further afield, I do not know, but *they pulled the strings*" (Harischandra, 1908, p. 104). According to the governor, the rioters were uneducated, ignorant individuals who were just provoked by the teachings of the enlightened Buddhist leaders. Instead of following the spiritual path of the religion to attain awakening, the followers were obsessed with using violence as a means to actualize their

mundane religious claims. Yet, Dharmapala and Harischandra, when attempting to liberate their national space, shared faith in British justice.

Dharmapala and Harischandra conveyed their resistance through public speeches and writings. Their followers employed violence to 'liberate' Anuradhapura from the non-Buddhist occupation. Although employing violence was against their leaders' will and the virtues of Buddhism, the revivalists aimed to liberate their territory through direct violence against the non-Buddhist others in Anuradhapura. Perhaps this reflects Fanon's (2009) idea that violence is a medium for the colonized subjects to liberate and decolonize themselves. Although the rioters did not intend to liberate the colony from the empire, and their involvement was considered an action manipulated by the educated Buddhists, violence made them and the leaders visible to the colonial government and the Sinhalese society.

However, the tensions that arose from the riot in Anuradhapura were not mitigated. Later, the struggle was revived by nationalist political leaders in the middle of the 20th century. It instigated the nationalist political leaders to plan Anuradhapura, cleansing the sacred area of its residents. The revivalists' plea for preserving the sacred city through eliminating secular uses was 'politicized' at the dawn of independence. Dharmapala and Harischandra's vision for a Buddhist sacred city became a reality under Sinhala nationalist politics, attributing postcolonial spatial thinking in Sri Lanka; this is the theme of chapter six of the dissertation.

4.6. Summary

In sum, Anuradhapura is a national claim of Sinhala-Buddhists. It was constructed by multiple actors, such as the inhabitants, monks, pilgrims, colonial administrators, revivalists, archaeologists, and historians, as well as the colonials, but primarily conceived by the leaders of the Buddhist revival movement of the turn of the 20th century and first carried out by the rioters of 1903. In constructing Anuradhapura as Ceylon's most sacred city, Dharmapala spatialized the Buddhist revival movement and conceptualized Sinhala-Buddhists as the numerical majority of the colony and its rightful heirs. As their actions imply, both Dharmapala and Harischandra considered themselves the legitimate voices of the voiceless majority Sinhala-Buddhists. As they represented the majority, they also established the collective identity of the Sinhalese Buddhist. Yet, there is no evidence to suggest that they had any desire to expand their struggle to claim any political autonomy for the colony or for Sinhala-Buddhists; their struggle seems to be "above" such "mundane concerns," and their space was above political spaces. Instead, they fought for the majority Sinhala-Buddhists who were ruled by the British and seemingly dominated by 'minor' ethnic/religious groups like the Christians and the Tamils.

Despite spatializing Buddhism at a "global" scale, incorporating sites such as Bodh Gaya, and leading the struggle, Dharmapala did not use violence to materialize his imaginations, nor did Harischandra who fought for Anuradhapura. Yet they both were forceful. Some followers, however, were not hesitant to use violence. The key element was to reclaim and revive 'sacred items' in Anuradhapura by creating a sacred area for them and removing

secular activities and people from the perceived area. The solution was to build a separate new city for them, much like a colonial cantonment. The fired-up Buddhist revivalists from the Low Country used violence in 1903 to remove the smallest non-Buddhist elements from what they saw as the sacred area. Both the ideas of violence and segregation continued into the postcolonial socio-spatial thinking in Sri Lanka.

CHAPTER 5

Nationalism, Planning, and Postcolonial Spatial Reason

This chapter focuses on planning the new town in Anuradhapura. It analyzes the political conditions that enabled the design and relocation of the native politicians' concentration from the colonial capital of Colombo to Anuradhapura, leading to a transformation in the imperial influence over Ceylonese in the 1940s. The chapter examines Anuradhapura's transformation into a pivotal location for the emerging nationalist political elites who worked to preserve it as a powerful symbol of Sinhalese Buddhist historical identity. Planning emerges as the central mechanism, illustrating how it enabled the nationalists to realize their desire for Anuradhapura. The chapter examines the significance of planners, planning, and planning in shaping the spatial manifestation of nationalism. The chapter demonstrates how planning and nationalism are integrated into creating the new town, profoundly shaping Ceylon's postcolonial spatial thinking.

In 1947, the Government Town Planner of Ceylon, Oliver Weerasinghe, presented a layout plan for Anuradhapura's new town (Figure 5.1). He explained that the new town designated 3,000 acres to accommodate around 15,000 people (Weerasinghe, 1948). The new town plan featured a variety of land uses, primarily residential, commercial, and industrial, and a substantial area for governmental services to serve the evolving urban community. The planning process was significantly shaped by the comprehensive planning approach, the most dominant form of planning during the mid-20th century. The government's vision was to relocate buildings, homes, and government structures around the old town's sacred

bodhi tree and other ancient monuments to the new city. Accordingly, the primary aim of the planning project was to preserve the sacred and ancient past of the Sinhalese Buddhists from the dangers of modern constructions that had begun in the late 19th century.

As outlined in Chapter 3, the British viewed the ancient artifacts and buildings as tangible evidence of a bygone era, which sparked their curiosity. For the colonials, Anuradhapura was a dead place, with the ruins serving as a reminder of its former glory. In contrast, Chapter 4 demonstrated how Buddhist revivalist leaders, mainly Dharmapala and Harischandra, considered the ancient materials in Anuradhapura as living aspects of Buddhism rather than dead artifacts. In their mission to rescue Anuradhapura, Dharmapala and Harischandra opposed colonial knowledge and asserted the need to uphold the site's historical and sacred identity by removing all secular activities, including colonial administrative practices. The revivalists' prime spatial strategy was to separate their sacred space from secular activities—their ambition was to construct an alternative urban center for the other Anuradhapura. During the mid-1900s, emerging national political elites who were members of the State Council of Ceylon (State Council)[31] endorsed Dharmapala and Harischandra's vision for Anuradhapura.

However, the nationalists who propagated the preservation of (sacred) Anuradhapura were distinct from the revivalists in several respects. Most significantly, Dharmapala and

[31] The primary legislative body of the colony was the State Council Ceylon, which became Parliament after Ceylon gained independence in 1948.

Harischandra did not conform to mainstream political nationalism. Nor were they driven by the desire to become political leaders. Though they could have pursued political leadership, their motivation was spiritual renewal. Rather than seeking political power, the revivalist leaders aimed to establish the moral authority of Sinhalese Buddhists, with Anuradhapura as a central spatial assertion in their vision. Unlike the revivalists, the emerging nationalist political leaders in Ceylon were primarily political. They viewed political power as crucial to their cause and expected to become leaders of Ceylon upon its independence from Britain. In the nationalists' hands, the revivalists' struggle to rescue Anuradhapura had been 'politicized.'

The proposal to preserve Anuradhapura was not a mere coincidence at the State Council, as it was put forth by local political agents, especially members of the Sinhalese community. Hence, the key question is, what led Ceylon's emerging Sinhalese leaders to plan a new town in Anuradhapura and preserve the old? Moreover, how did Anuradhapura become a significant political matter at the time of the emergence of a new nation-state in the 1940s? The emerging nationalist political leaders constructed their identities with ingenuity and desperation to fit into the transforming political world. They also had to build meaningful relationships with voters to draw their support. Anuradhapura's occupation of the locus of burgeoning nationalist politics and the notion of the new town had emerged from this complex and peculiar political background. This chapter investigates the political milieu of the late 1930s, which sparked a new urban vision for Anuradhapura, especially the interplay between nationalist politics, native spatial articulations, and urban planning in constructing the modern spatial vision for Anuradhapura a decade before the colony's

liberation from British imperialism. By so doing, this chapter demonstrates how the country's (colonial) planning discourse shaped and was shaped by national spatial expressions, ultimately making Anuradhapura the first planned urban community in postcolonial Ceylon.

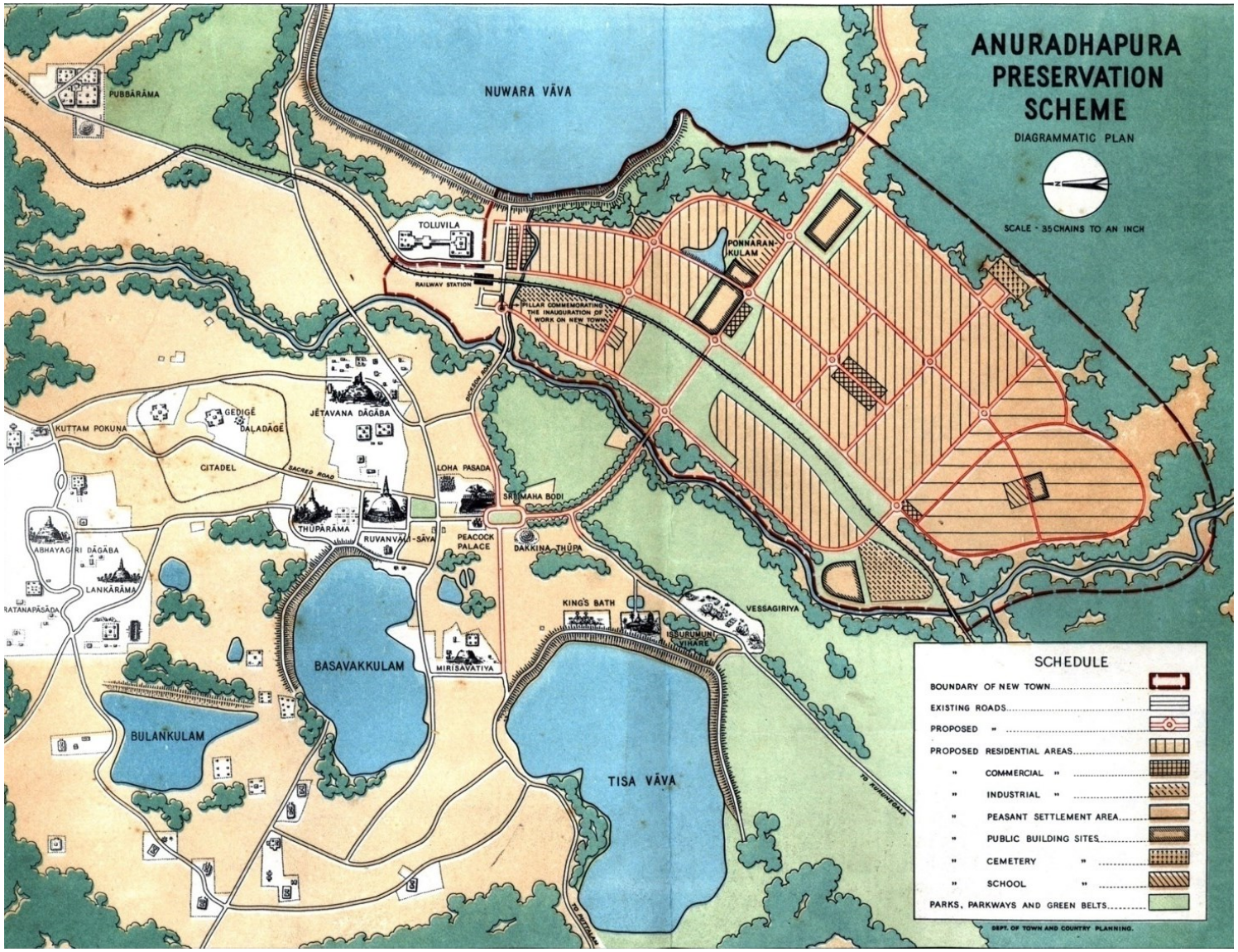

Figure 5.1 Anuradhapura Preservation Scheme 1947
Source: Department of Town and Country Planning

5.1. The Emergence of New Political Grounds, Actors, and Claims

The emergence of postcolonial spatial reasoning of Anuradhapura among the nationalists in Ceylon was not inherently "national" and "postcolonial." It emerged within the backdrop of colonial rule but prior to the creation of independent Ceylon. In most dialogues on the new town planning project, S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike[32] is credited as the mastermind of the new town plan. However, before exploring the authorship of the new town plan, it is crucial to understand the political dynamics that influenced it. Especially what political change drove and empowered native political leaders to establish their authority over Anuradhapura, especially before independence.

The focus was on the political reforms suggested by the Donoughmore Commission and how these reforms significantly changed Ceylon's governmental order and political practice[33]. In 1931, the British enacted the Donoughmore Constitution, significantly changing the colony's political environment and creating a new awareness of politics and institutions among the Ceylonese[34]. With the new constitutional reforms, the State Council

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[32] Solomon West Ridgeway Dias Bandaranaike (1899-1959), better known as SWRD Bandaranaike, was a leader of Ceylon in the early 20th century. In 1956, he became the fourth prime minister of the Dominion of Ceylon. However, Bandaranaike was assassinated in 1959, the year before he was due to complete his fourth year in office.

[33] In 1927, the British government sent a committee to Ceylon to examine its constitution and put forward essential revisions. As the Sixth Earl of Donoughmore led the committee, it was named the Donoughmore Commission. The commission was appointed by Sidney Webb, a well-known British socialist and the first colonial secretary of the British government from the Labour Party, expecting to explore the necessary political reforms to the colonies to make the British Empire more equitable. Based on the commission's recommendations, the Donoughmore Constitution was introduced to Ceylon in 1931 and continued until the Soulbury Constitution replaced it in 1947 (K. M. de Silva, 2005; Russell, 1982; Wickramasinghe, 2015).

[34] Read Jane Russell's (1982) *Communal Politics Under the Donoughmore Constitution* for further understanding of the Donoughmore Commission's composition, reformations, and negotiations with the native political leaders and those leaders' responses to the Commission's recommendations.

became Ceylon's primary legislative body, replacing the colony's former governmental body, the Legislative Council. The Donoughmore Constitution, however, had widespread implications for the ethnic identities of the colony's inhabitants[35]. The new constitution was fundamental in eliminating Ceylon's communal electorate systems, which were introduced by constitutional changes in 1912, 1920, and 1923. Despite considering ethnicity when selecting legislators, the new constitution brought about universal suffrage, making Ceylon the first non-European nation to guarantee the right to vote for all adults regardless of race, gender, or economic status[36].

The new constitution caused sufficient uncertainties for most leaders of minor ethnic communities. Their more significant concern was that Sinhalese political leaders would dominate the State Council with the majority's support (Russell, 1982). In the absence of communal representation in state politics, the electoral system that relied on the masses' support evolved to favour the Sinhalese as the most considerable portion of the society with political power (Russell, 1982; Wijeyeratne, 2014). Examining the particular context's political and social relations, mainly the Sinhalese holding a majority voice in participatory politics, Wickramasinghe (2015, p. 101) argued that the new political order "initiated a reconquest of political power by the Sinhalese majority." For instance, looking at the

[35] For instance, the former constitutional reformers created a system for selecting local representatives by the colonial government for its Legislative Council. It aimed to protect the political rights of certain ethnic minorities, such as the Tamils, Muslims, and Burgers in Ceylon. However, the Donoughmore Constitution abolished the colony's communal political tradition by introducing universal suffrage and an electoral political system that allowed the locals to elect their leaders (De Silva, 2005).

[36] Rather than giving a descriptive summary of the impact of the new constitution, I intend to illustrate how the changes to the electoral process and the government structure had a significant effect on the political consciousness of the Ceylonese. The new constitution gave rise to a new cognizance among the population that they could choose their leaders and influential individuals like Bandaranaike to become people's representatives.

members of the State Council after the 1931 Ceylonese State Council election, we can observe that Sinhalese leaders gained more control in the house as the representatives of the majority population[37] (De Silva, 2005).

Although the constitution was reformed, colonialism was intact. The native politicians were neither firmly entrenched in the state apparatus nor achieved their total representation in government (see Russell, 1982; De Silva, 2005). The natives' receiving the right to vote was not an effect of the indigenization of state rule. It did not mark conquest domination or the end of colonialism. Rather than an outright victory achieved by the Ceylonese through their battle against the British, the right to vote was nothing but a privilege the British conferred on them. Therefore, the local representatives were not the leaders of an independent country. Instead, the colonial government allowed its subjects to appoint local administrators to effectuate the imperial order more equitably and justly to its people. However, the British had full authority in defining the roles and the administrative practices the locals had to abide by. Therefore, the elected native political representatives, argued by Jayawardena (1974, p. 8), "were satisfied to work within the existing colonial structure."

[37] During the 1930s, Ceylon underwent more than just political changes, with effects felt in the economy. As Wickremesinghe demonstrated, the colonial government, for example, established novel financial institutions with a reorganized political order. The making of the Bank of Ceylon implied the colony was "being transformed from an autocratic colonial state to a quasi-nation state (2015, p.146)." The political and economic shifts marked colonial hegemony as entering a liminal phase. Indigenous representatives could participate in state affairs as the colonial state became more precarious and transitional. The British used political and economic advancements to create a quasi-political atmosphere in Ceylon, which remained until independence in 1948. These must have been crucial signals for native political agents to assume that independent status was not too far away.

Nevertheless, the opportunity created by the Donoughmore Constitution transformed many native elites into political agents, representatives, and members of the State Council. It also offered native politicians more familiarity with administrative practices under their colonial master, the British. These tasks spanned a wide range of duties, from creating and leading committees to assuming the role of ministers for specific subjects, such as education, health, and local government. Simultaneously, we can observe that Anuradhapura's historical and religious significance had become a consequential claim to the native representation of the State Council during this time. In particular, the political discourse of the new Anuradhapura was a spatial manifestation of politics during this transitional period.

Bandaranaike, in 1941, long before he became the country's first prime minister introduced the *Anuradhapura: Preservation of Historic City and New Town Scheme* (Preservation Scheme). As the minister of local administration, Bandaranaike proposed the Preservation Scheme to protect the sacred space and its historic remains from modern constructions, which occurred when Anuradhapura became the capital of the North Central Province in 1873. The scheme recognized all the pre-existing settlements and inhabitants other than historic structures as a challenge to Anuradhapura's historical and sacred representations. The solution was to build a new urban space to shift the existing establishments, leaving the holy city with historical monuments. This proposal created the need for new town planning in Anuradhapura.

Before Bandaranaike, in the late 1930s, three other native political representatives manifested a strong interest in preserving Anuradhapura's historical and sacred significance. Nissan (1985) named G.R. de Zoysa as the first State Council member to express his concern regarding safeguarding Anuradhapura's historical remains in 1934; Zoysa's proposal to protect historical sites involved moving modern establishments to a different location[38]. The suggestion made by Zoysa evokes the revivalists' plea to conserve the history of Anuradhapura by dissociating it from the present and leaving it undisturbed. The idea of Anuradhapura as a distinct spatial identity significant to the Low Country elites, discussed in Chapter 4, persisted three decades after the revivalists, especially as Zoysa and the Low Country political elite, promoted it. As he raised the motion, Zoysa was representing the distinguished region of Balapitiya in the Low Country at the State Council. Zoysa's motion failed but drew attention to the need to separate ancient and non-ancient components in the national political arena.

In 1936, A. Ratnayaka highlighted the concern of Anuradhapura for the second time as a private motion at the State Council. He motioned, "This Council is of the opinion that all private buildings within the *plague stricken area* [emphasis added] at Anuradhapura should be acquired and the area around the sacred Bo-tree declared a crown reservation" (Hansard, June 09, 1936, p. 441). In his original motion, Ratnayake identified the place he wanted to redeem as a land afflicted by the plague. Later, the original motion was

[38] "Appoint a Select Committee to report on the advisability and feasibility of ensuring the preservation of the historical remains of Anuradhapura by transferring the existing modern town to a spot wholly separated from the sites of historical interest" (Hansard, July 17, 1934: 1255 as cited in Nissan 1985, p. 291).

amended: “I wish to delete the words “plague-stricken area” and substitute the words “in the neighbourhood of existing ancient monuments” (Hansard, December 03, 1936, p. 3243). Yet, the spatial connotation of the term “plague-stricken” is far from innocent.

In a different context, Foucault emphasized that during the plague outbreak in medieval European cities, the first measure taken was enforcing strict spatial segregation. All human activities and movements were subject to constant surveillance and documentation within the region affected by the plague. Bringing order to space and bodies was the primary focus in the plague-stricken area. In this sense, the plague was more than a health concern; it was a political phenomenon. Foucault argued,

> The plague-stricken town, traversed through-out with hierarchy, surveillance, observation, writing; the town immobilized by the functioning of an extensive power that bears in a distinct way over all individual bodies - this is the utopia of the perfectly governed city… In order to see perfect disciplines functioning, *rulers dreamt of the state of plague* [emphasis added] **(**1991, p. 198-199).

The plague, viewed from this perspective, constructed spatial divisions, and controlled the movements of those in concerned regions, fulfilling a political aspiration of modern governance. Ratnayaka’s motion brought attention to the necessity that “all private buildings in the neighbourhood of existing ancient monuments at Anuradhapura should be acquired and the area around the sacred Bo-tree declared a Crown reservation (Hansard, December 3, 1936, p. 3244).” He suggested a new form of spatial order to Anuradhapura. Considering the motion’s primary aim and the term he used, it can be inferred that Ratnayaka chose his words cautiously. He aimed to impose discipline upon all social interactions, which the sacred bodhi tree served as its core. Exploring the political

endeavours to preserve the ancient Anuradhapura reveals the nationalist leaders' vision for a future society where Anuradhapura would occupy a central place.

In 1940, A.E. Goonesinha put forth the third attempt regarding Anuradhapura, which added an element of exclusivity to the boundary of the sacred city. Differing from previous moves, Goonesinha incorporated an ethno-religious perspective into preserving historical sites, particularly emphasizing those that hold sacred value for the Sinhalese Buddhist community[39]. At the State Council, he passionately discussed the matter, weaving together Anuradhapura's significance with the essence of Sinhala Buddhist identity.

> The ancient city of Anuradhapura is being subjected to various acts of vandalism by the present UDC calculated entirely to change its historic aspect, immediate action should be taken to preserve intact everything held sacred by the Buddhists in particular and the Sinhalese in general (*Hansard*, May 30, 1940, p. 1142).

Goonesinha was a renowned trade union leader based in Colombo who was hailed as the "father of the labour movements" in Ceylon. Consequently, a shift caused him to transition from being a leader in Colombo to becoming a staunch protector of Anuradhapura's Sinhalese Buddhist heritage. A comprehensive understanding of the political context is crucial in order to appreciate Goonesinha's interest in Anuradhapura and interpret its significance from a Sinhalese Buddhist standpoint. Jayawardane's (2003) observation of Goonesinha's transformation significantly contextualizes his affinity for a location like Anuradhapura. Jayawardena (2003) persuasively demonstrated that Goonesinha shifted significantly in his political life in the 1930s from a non-racist trade union leader who even

[39] In her investigation, Nissan (1985) also clarifies that Goonesinha's interpretation of the importance of Anuradhapura and the imperative to protect it stemmed from the perspective of Sinhalese Buddhists.

endorsed the Donoughmore Commission's recommendation for universal suffrage in Ceylon to a chauvinistic political figure. Jayawardena argued, "When Goonesinha switched to chauvinism in the 1930s, his own earlier slogan – that the working class knew no barriers of caste, color, race, or creed – was taken up by the Left, and the LSSP firmly supported the rights of minorities." (2003, p. 52)

Goonesinha lost control of the Colombo-based labour unions to an emerging socialist group from the LSSP, which stands for Lanka Sama Samaja Party[40], whose Marxist political values clashed with Goonesinhe's. In his later years as a politician, he focused more on embracing Sinhalese Buddhist nationalist beliefs. He became interested in Anuradhapura during this time. I do not see Goonesinha's plea for Anuradhapura solely as an effort to appeal to Sinhalese voters. Instead, I demonstrate that Anuradhapura became significant to Goonesinha during his political conversion and that he had more fondness for nationalism. Anuradhapura was already interconnected with the Sinhalese Buddhist consciousness developed by the religious revivalists. Therefore, it was unsurprising that Goonesinha was enthusiastic about preserving Anuradhapura as part of embracing nationalism. However, the significance is embracing the significance of Anuradhapura, among other things.

Bandaranaike's approach was unique in this context because he became the saviour of Anuradhapura, the ancient and sacred city of the Sinhalese Buddhists. Unlike his

[40] The LSSP was founded in 1935 and is the first political party in Ceylon. Being the first Marxist political party in South Asia, it laid the foundation for a new era of the region's political landscape.

contemporaries, he had faith in a unique approach to make all three demands a reality. By the 1940s, when Bandaranaike engaged, the political dialogue about Anuradhapura had highlighted three primary spatial concerns: dividing land uses, effectively asserting control over historical sites, and ensuring their preservation as culturally significant to the Sinhala-Buddhist community. When submitting the Preservation Scheme to the State Council, he emphasized its three main aims through a persuasive presentation.

> (a) to protect the ancient city of Anuradhapura from further encroachment and to remove incongruous building of recent origin, which now stand on sites of religious and archaeological interest, to a new town planned for modern development outside the historic city,
>
> (b) to afford the utmost opportunity to pilgrims who visit Anuradhapura to worship in an appropriate atmosphere of peace and dignity, and
>
> (c) to enable the archaeological Department to carry out the work of preservation within the ancient city unhampered by modern development, which now disfigures and threatens to obliterate totally the remains of ancient buildings. (*Administration Report*, Government Town Planner, 1948: CC4).

The Preservation Scheme did not strive to introduce regulations to control the ongoing and future activities and buildings in Anuradhapura. Instead, it aimed to eliminate all modern 'intrusions' from the ancient city. Therefore, the Preservation Scheme was more of a political process of commanding and manipulating the city of Anuradhapura than physical preservation. It encompassed all his predecessors' demands regarding Anuradhapura and went above and beyond what served his political ambition of becoming a national leader.

Bandaranaike, known for his political stand, was a prominent Sinhala nationalist politician in Ceylon[41]. Nissan (1989) posited that Bandaranaike viewed Anuradhapura as a prime project to win the imaginations of potential supporters, particularly the country's rural masses. Establishing himself in national politics relied on winning those masses who were likely voters for any political figure. However, Bandaranaike's main competitor, Senanayake, who was the colony's first minister of agriculture and lands before becoming the first prime minister of independent Ceylon in 1948, had already connected with non-elite Sinhalese voters of the country in the early 1940s. Senanayake had created large-scale farming in most of rural Ceylon. The primary beneficiaries of the agricultural programs were mainly Sinhala peasants. In this context, Bandaranaike, a leader motivated by political ambitions, established his own political movement in a way that it could gain popular support. Nissan (1989) engagingly wrote, "Bandaranaike hoped he had found a project [in Anuradhapura] of at least equal appeal" (p. 74). Finally, with Anuradhapura, the cause he had been waiting for seemed to have arrived. Bandaranaike harnessed his political authority by mapping out Anuradhapura as a representation of patriotism, building on its pre-existing fame.

The proposal for instituting a "modernist planning" system and the religious revivalists' vision for Anuradhapura that I discussed in the previous chapter are closely connected.

[41] Bandaranaike founded Sinhala Maha Sabhawa, a political movement promoting the Sinhalese Buddhist community's cultural and religious interests. Over time, the Sinhala Maha Sabha underwent a significant transformation and developed into a major political party called the Sri Lanka Freedom Party. The first left-wing Sinhalese nationalist party to emerge was the Freedom Party, which played a vital role in the political landscape of independent Ceylon, prioritizing the development of a Sinhala Buddhist identity rather than a national identity. The Freedom Party eventually led Bandaranaike to become the fourth prime minister of the Dominion of Ceylon in 1956.

Dharmapala and Harischandra's determination for Anuradhapura in the early 20th century was also to build a new urban center, "an administrative town," to rescue the sacred city. Both are spatial conceptions that involve the necessity of preserving the sacred city by relocating all secular tasks to another place. However, there is a significant contradiction between the two visions. Although religious and nationalist thoughts inspired both movements, the revivalist leaders did not intend to claim political power but wanted to restore Anuradhapura as a Sinhala-Buddhist heritage. Bandaranaike integrated the Sinhalese Buddhist viewpoint on Anuradhapura into a broader nationalist political discourse. The political development merged Anuradhapura with a modern urban vision, discursively shifting Anuradhapura from a religious center into a key representation of nationalist politics.

Bandaranaike established the stage for a debate at the State Council by introducing the Preservation Scheme. The discussion focused on how the construction of the new city of Anuradhapura was perceived by the people living in the already-established city. The tensions that evolved regarding preserving and building a new town in Anuradhapura are visible in the arguments between the parties who supported Bandaranaike's vision and those who opposed it at the State Council during the early 1940s. It marked the confluence of integrating planning, space, and Sinhalese Buddhist nationalists' expressions of their sacred city.

5.2. The Invasion, Preservation, and Arrival of Planning

What is intriguing is that the inhabitants of Anuradhapura did not request planning. They did not see the need; the plan for a new town came from outsiders. The preservation of Anuradhapura and the construction of the new town were developed from the outside. The drivers perceived that it was their obligation to protect Anuradhapura's spiritual and historical legacy, establishing a new town to move the existing inhabitants and non-pilgrim functions. However, according to the locals, most external interventions in Anuradhapura that intended to preserve the place's history evoked distress and uncertainties among the locals. During fieldwork, I witnessed the locals' skepticism towards outside interventions to preserve Anuradhapura.

Sena, 78, a resident of Anuradhapura, recalled his experience during one of the communal riots in Sri Lanka's recent history that made a severe impact on Anuradhapura: the attack against Tamils in Anuradhapura following the country's general election in 1977.[42] He remembered, "The Tamil residents in the town were desperate. They were terrified when they heard what was happening in the nearby regions of Anuradhapura." The police had no power over the riot until the end. Many of the local Tamils, including some leading business owners in Anuradhapura, were brutally assaulted during the riot[43]. The most crucial finding

[42] The anti-Tamil riot that occurred in 1977 and later in 1983 and their impact on the Tamil communities in Anuradhapura needs to be examined further against the causes and political reasoning based on ethnic identities. However, I will not elaborate on those details in this study.

[43] Most of the Tamils were left devastated after losing their properties to looters, who took everything they could find and set fire to the rest. Without police and military control, Sena and a group of his friends and relatives stepped up to defend their neighbours. During the riot, they protected many Tamils against the attackers and assisted them in moving to safer areas, primarily in the North.

from my encounter with Sena was the identity of the rioters, which shocked me. According to Sena, the rioters were not inhabitants of Anuradhapura. Instead, they were "folks from the Low Country areas of the country" who were fuelled by rampant racial discrimination. Sena was determined: "Most were vendors and traders in the new town's fish and meat markets. They showed up screaming [and making threats] to slice and murder people." He even mentioned that individuals who began the riot arrived in Anuradhapura from Weligama and Ahangama, two prominent regions in southern Sri Lanka, for work and business purposes. Not every local I engaged with held Sena's perspective on the rioters, but some regarded the Sinhalese from Low Country regions as disturbers of peace. They highlighted those non-locals, mainly some individuals of Low Country origin, who fuelled the 1977 conflict against the Tamil in Anuradhapura[44].

Anuradhapura's new town had a significant Tamil presence before the riots of 1977 and 1983, with Tamils occupying positions as schoolteachers and government officials. Their success extended beyond individual achievements, as they also ran thriving businesses in the town. Most locals agreed that Tamils came to Anuradhapura from the northern Jaffna area. Mayadunne (2012, p. 32) explained that in his account of Anuradhapura's recent history, most Sinhalese villages in the district were associated with Tamil government officials: "Tamil public officers were honest, hardworking and approachable, so much so

[44] In this study, however, my goal was not to uncover who had instigated the riots and attacks. Apart from the information I accumulated from dialogues, I could not discover any facts to confirm the source and leaders of the disruption during the race riot in Anuradhapura in 1978. During this study, I did not survey to measure what fraction of the local population disagreed with Sinhalese from the Low Country in Anuradhapura and accused them of attacking the Tamils. Even I was uncertain if the residents I had been interacting with harboured any prejudice against the Sinhalese from the Low Country.

the ordinary villagers of the district preferred them to some of their own kind." Most adults who talked to me looked back on their childhood with nostalgia, remembering how they spent their time in Anuradhapura's old town, playing and exploring in a diverse community. In my interviews, none of the locals identified Tamils as their enemies or a threat. Per my experience and observations[45], Tamils are not viewed as outsiders or the "other" by most locals in Anuradhapura. Instead, the Low Country Sinhalese were perceived in that way as the "other" in Anuradhapura[46].

5.2.2. Fright, Ambiguity, and Argument

The findings and insights derived from these interactions were inevitably controversial. Indeed, they were not immune to prejudice, either. Still, these discussions are essential. They demand our attention to locals' perception of the Low Country Sinhalese's influence in Anuradhapura. The findings from these discussions resounded with the central theme of Chapter 4, the religious revivalists' expectation of rescuing Anuradhapura from secular practices. For instance, Harischandra, Dharmapala, and most of their followers who arrived in Anuradhapura in the early 1900s were from the Low Country. In addition, when examining the State Council's debate in the 1940s regarding Bandaranaike's spatial vision for Anuradhapura, the matter of Low Country intervention in Anuradhapura was raised. Observing the State Council debate, H.R. Freeman, the representative of the Anuradhapura

[45] Nevertheless, as noted above, some were not fond of the Low Country Sinhalese. For instance, in the middle of a discussion, a family asked about my Low Country heritage because of my last name, "Don," which is commonly found among Low Country Sinhalese. I noticed that they were hesitant to proceed with the discussion.

[46] Despite my discussions with the locals, I could not find other evidence to support this claim. This requires additional research.

electoral district, can be seen as the most critical opponent of Bandaranaike's vision for Anuradhapura. When Freeman addressed the State Council, the house was tense about his apprehension about building the new town to shift the existing one: "This is a fateful day for the chief town of the North-Central Province. *Invaders from the Low-country* [emphasis added] want to walk into our oasis, that is Anuradhapura, and push us out some miles into the jungle…" (Hansard, March 04,1941, p. 3)

Freeman's political role and relationship with the locals in Anuradhapura and the North Central Province is complex. He was British by birth and arrived in Ceylon as a civil servant in the early 1880s[47]. Despite being a British official, he became well-known for his close relationship with the colonized[48]. "English Gamarala"[49] was a nickname used for Freeman; it highlights his association with village farmers. He was part of the community by locals, like any other *gamarala* or village farmer[50]. Although he advocated for the rights of the locals and questioned the colonial administration, I could not find evidence to support that Freman was against colonialism. He was not resisting the crown. So, I am uncertain

[47] Before entering politics, Freeman held positions in the Ceylon Civil Service, including the government agent of the North Central province (Collins, 1966). After he retired from British civil service in the late 1920s, Freeman stayed in Anuradhapura, not returning to England as most of his contemporaries did.

[48] When Freeman contested elections in 1931, with the provisions made by the Donoughmore Constitution, he won with a large majority. Until he died in 1945, Freeman was the prominent political voice for the Anuradhapura electoral division at the State Council. As a civil servant and politician, some of his administrative decisions contradicted the perception of many narratives of European colonialism. For instance, his intolerance to the opening of taverns in the area as the government agent in 1918 challenged the most popular view that colonizers always used alcohol to corrupt natives morally. His administrative diary highlights his stance on the local arrack tavern -"Villagers complain, and complained at the time it was started, against the arrack tavern at Kahatagasdigiliya; I hope to abolish it next year. It was started because of a few Tamil coolies and wayfarers who want to drink; but it is rough on the local Sinhalese population" (Diary GA/NCP, April 15, 1918, 41/514).

[49] *Ceylon Times*, August 2, 1953. Times Collection LB623/SLNA.

[50] On most occasions, the colony's media considered Freeman a father figure for impoverished farmers who lacked a voice against the government. Although he was not recognized as a national father figure like Senanayake, most inhabitants in Anuradhapura trusted him as their representative of the State Council.

whether Freeman's actions ever transcended his white male privilege or Englishness, though his "sympathy" towards the locals set him apart from other colonial officers. Therefore, instead of perceiving him as a *father* or *saviour* of the villagers in the North Central Province, I find it reasonable to identify Freeman as a colonial settler in Ceylon.

Freeman was unique in having a deep affection for impoverished natives, unlike most native politicians and colonial administrators. His view of most State Council debates suggests his skepticism toward the integrity of the intentions of native political leaders like Bandaranaike. He located himself in a liminal space between colonial and nationalist political domes. Freeman's role as a political representative can be identified as a political manifestation of the shifting dynamics of the postcolonial era.

During the debate on the Preservation Scheme, Bandaranaike emphasized that his effort to construct a new town held profound religious significance. He said his intention was purely spiritual: to safeguard the sacred sites important for Buddhists in the colony, "I say from the general antiquarian point of view, should be preserved and, particularly on sites that happen to be most sacred to the Buddhists of Ceylon (*Hansard*, March 4, 1941, p. 314). However, Freeman doubted that a concealed political motive drove the Preservation Scheme. From Freeman's perspective, the Preservation Scheme was a determined political maneuver. He demonstrated that "the threat to move the town is political, not religious" (Hansard, March 4, 1941, p. 316). Freeman explained that Bandaranaike had already leveraged Anuradhapura for his political agenda and attempted to manipulate its historical and cultural importance.

For instance, Freeman argued that before bringing the bill to the State Council, Bandaranaike held a political gathering of his Sinhalese Maha Sabha near the sacred bodhi tree in Anuradhapura. According to the critique, the proposal for a new town was derived from a nationalist political movement.

> The site of what is called – glibly called – the "new town" is not even suggested or known.... The big political idea of this movement is to have [a] *"Mudalali government"* [emphasis added] for the new town. ... It is not that we, the people of Anuradhapura, have been unkind to the pilgrims, hundreds of thousands of pilgrims who have been coming there all these years. We take them into our verandahs (sic) and houses and every conceivable building, and we treat them well. [But] how all these pilgrims, when this movement takes place when the town is pushed miles outside, are going to manage, I do not know. How are they going to be fed; how are all the priests in the place to be fed[?] It will be like a dead place. (Hansard, March 4,1941, p. 317)

Freeman observed that the existing town of Anuradhapura, which organically grew around the sacred bodhi tree since the late-1800s, had been a welcoming space for people of diverse backgrounds despite its lack of planning. Also, urban areas could accept existences with difference and otherness. As a town, it appreciated the amicable relationship among community members, sacred and ancient monuments, and pilgrims and visitors. The "past" (history) and the "present" (modern) coexisted in perfect harmony in that space; ancient monuments and modern urban settings coexisted with distinct charm. As Freeman argued, shifting all the activities to another location would end the town's fundamental characteristics, diversity, and inclusion.

The future town that evolved in the nationalists' imagination seemed to lack the faith to achieve such harmony. The debate between Sinhalese nationalists and Freeman shows that he predicted the future national political sphere would only acknowledge Sinhalese

nationalist ideology. As Freeman observed, nationalist leadership forged a new political identity rooted in their sense of entitlement to an exclusive Sinhalese Buddhist ethno-religious identity. Anuradhapura became the embodiment of their claim to space and power. Therefore, Freeman argued that the Preservation Scheme was a deceitful ploy to win political support by rewarding the desires of the Low-Country Sinhalese rather than the inhabitants of Anuradhapura. He feared the possibility of creating an environment that lacked a collective sentiment, encompassing different identities in the future.

The Preservation Scheme offered something beyond a plan for the new city. It embodied the nation's structure, mainly the selectness of the future, as imagined by the evolving nationalist leaders after the departure of colonial authority. Freeman foresaw that Anuradhapura's new town planning attempt was a spatial representation of the future nation the new leaders wished to build. The critique and questions of the Preservation Scheme highlighted that building a new town could encourage Low Country Sinhalese superiority in Anuradhapura. In his response to Bandaranaike, Freeman explained his point by labeling the future rule of the town a "*mudalali* government," suggesting its association with questionable business practices. The concern was that those individuals with their limited social and economic beliefs and biased political aspirations would control the future urban space. According to Freeman,

> We know that the "Mudalali" people are contractors, merchants, and so on. They are generally after the money bags. There is a mint of mony [sic] to be made by Mudalalis from the Low-country-introduced by politicians-on the building of a town at the new site. And another dagoba is likely to be restored, to swell the Mudalalis' profit.

> Court records show that most of the crime in the provinces is due to these adventurers from the Maritime parts of Ceylon. (Hansard, March 04,1941: 317)

In this context, mudalali, was defined as a group of small-scale entrepreneurs. Yet, it held significance as a social and economic category and a geographical identity. It is mainly meant for people in business from the Low Country. However, Freeman's criticism also encompasses his foresight of a future where a non-native individual, like himself, would encounter alienation as a foreigner[51].

As Bandaranaike won the support of Sinhalese representatives at the State Council, his proposal for Anuradhapura gained momentum. Despite their diverse desires and commitments, the political figures who supported the new urban vision shared a collective perception of a significant threat to the sacred and historical sites in Anuradhapura from the people who inhabited the area. Nationalist politicians feared that the locality's transformation into a town would diminish its value, which was significant for Buddhists. To support the proposal, most Sinhalese State Council members, including those who motioned to preserve Anuradhapura before Bandaranaike, critically questioned Freeman's role as a representative. They also harshly critiqued Freeman's position to stand in resistance to a campaign to guard Anuradhapura as a non-resident, especially with

[51] If we set the Preservation Scheme aside, we can uncover how nationalist political trends produce a more exclusive political landscape in the colony, exposing some severe examples. As an illustration, the Citizenship Act was one of the initial laws in independent Ceylon that denied citizenship to the workers from Southern India who were brought to Ceylon by the British to work in colonial plantations. Approximately 11 percent of the total population, mainly those who arrived in Ceylon as plantation workers from India during the colonial rule, became stateless after the act was passed in 1949. Again, in 1956, as the prime minister, Bandaranaike implemented the Official Language Act, also known as the Sinhala Only Act. In one decisive move, English was replaced by Sinhalese as the only recognized language, leaving Tamil speakers completely marginalized. In the vision of nationalist leaders, as Freeman predicted, the future state would prioritize a Low Country-based Sinhalese Buddhist dominance, trivializing the relevance of other ethnic origins, religious faiths, and linguistic backgrounds.

colonial traits. Ironically, from the Sinhalese representatives' perspective, Freeman was an outsider threatening what they believed was rightfully "theirs" in Anuradhapura. Most Sinhalese representatives at the State Council admired Bandaranaike for his effort to preserve the ancient city amidst concerns from Freeman and non-Sinhalese representatives who were afraid of a Sinhalese-dominated future for Anuradhapura. Despite the disagreements, the Preservation Scheme was passed in 1941.

5.3. The Nationalization of Planning or the Spatialization of Nationalism

In a later event, Bandaranaike emphasized what he believed about cities. A city is not merely a lifeless physical entity, according to him. It contains more robust social values integrated with the inhabitants' cultural life. A city like Anuradhapura, which inherited a legacy from its creators, primarily holds its own sense of self. The city has self-possession.

> Like a human being, a city is a living entity. A city has a life. It can be a high life. It can be an important life. Otherwise, it can change. If there are any persons we respect, [like] King Dutugamunu, King Parakramabahu and many others who lived and are alive; [likewise], if there is a place we [must] respect, [then] it cannot be said that there is any city in our country that deserves our honour more than the ancient sacred city of Anuradhapura. There is no room for [other ways of] thinking (Quote from Banadaranaike's address at the ceremony marking the inauguration of the Anuradhapura new town on February 13, 1949. (Translated by the author).

The religious revivalists believed Anuradhapura was not a bunch of ruins but a location interconnected with a living religion. Anuradhapura, however, in the nationalist imagination, had never been dead. It was always there, a constant presence of the glorious past of the Sinhalese Buddhists. The hope was that, like the ancient city, the Sinhalese would reclaim their lost identity under nationalist leadership after the British left. As

leaders like Bandaranaike showed it, they could build a place where they could be Sinhalese again: that place was Anuradhapura.

However, the primary difficulty for Anuradhapura in pursuing its greatness again was its inhabitants; the problem was the people. For the nationalists, the residents did not peacefully coexist with the historical and sacred areas and monuments in Anuradhapura town. Instead, they occupied and vandalized the spaces that were considered sacred by the Sinhalese Buddhists. To solve the problem, moving the locals from their current place to another location was necessary. Planning emerged as an influential political instrument in the process.

While Silva, Ratnayake, and Goonesinghe shared a common perspective on preserving Anuradhapura, Bandaranaike deviated from their stance. He acknowledged that safeguarding the past was necessary but said those safeguards alone did not go far enough in terms of significance and intensity. In the State Council debate in 1941, he argued that no existing rules and regulations controlled the physical form of a town or its built environment. Even the Urban Council Ordinance and the Housing and Town Improvement Ordinance of 1915 would not be adequate to protect Anuradhapura, he said, nor could the Antiquities Ordinance, introduced by the British to preserve the historical sites in the colony, provide sufficient provisions to administer the new building constructions in Anuradhapura. He described - “Almost all kinds of buildings are coming up daily, which we have no power at all to deal with, on sites which I say from the general antiquarian point of

view should be preserved and particularly on sites that happen to be most sacred to the Buddhists of Ceylon" (Hansard, March 4, 1941, p. 313).

Although the threat was physical, caused by the people living in and occupying the sacred city, its impact was profoundly cultural and historical from the nationalists' perspective. Protecting the sacred city was necessary for the Buddhist community, as they deeply revered it.

Bandaranaike presented his solution to the Anuradhapura problem, encompassing two main objectives. Both objectives were entirely spatial: First, to discipline the existing social ties of the location, it was deemed essential to implement more rigorous regulations to preserve the place. The second step was to produce a disciplined, planned town space at a different location and transfer all the existing non-sacred and historical activities[52].

> We want to draw up a very comprehensive scheme with regard to this matter; and that scheme falls into two parts. [1] At the very outset, we want an Ordinance at once-a small Ordinance-regarding which, as a matter of fact, I have had informal talks already with the Legal Draftsman, an Ordinance that is sufficient and adequate *to protect the present city of Anuradhapura* [emphasis added] in a manner for which the provisions in the existing laws are not sufficient. Well, that is not enough. It is not possible that the business town should continue to be where Government work, and so on, is transacted while further buildings are prevented from coming up. [2] It is also necessary *to have a plan ready for the new business town of Anuradhapura* [emphasis added]. It is not sufficient artificially to put a stop to the further development of the existing town without also having a plan as to what the new business town should be (*Hansard*, March 4, 1941, p. 314).

[52] In Chapter 4, we explored how certain places, such as the meat stall and Catholic church, were destroyed and attacked during the Anuradhapura riot in 1903. We can assume that they had been rebuilt.

Accordingly, planning was the only logical solution that he presented. To preserve the present and direct efforts toward shaping the future, Bandaranaike embraced a modern planning method: separation. Anuradhapura relied on planning to preserve its past and shape its future in two places. Simultaneously, Bandaranaike emphasized:

> To engage the service of a Town Planning Expert to prepare a scheme for the preservation of the historic city of Anuradhapura and a scheme for the development of a new town outside the antiquarian zone at Anuradhapura, in collaboration with the Town Planner of the Local Government Department (Hansard, March 4, 1941, p. 312).

With these political interventions, Anuradhapura saw the fusion of planning and nationalist discourse. The expectation of engaging a planner was to introduce building guidelines to prevent any new constructions and alterations to buildings within the limits of the Anuradhapura Urban Council[53]. Clifford Holliday was the planner chosen for the specific task. As Bandaranaike informed the State Council, Holliday, one of the British Empire's most distinguished planners and planning educators during his time, was in Ceylon in 1941. Holliday visited Ceylon to prepare a new planning framework for the local authorities and a physical plan for Colombo[54].

Moreover, Holliday was invited to be involved in the new town planning project to establish the spatial regulations for the preservation areas in Anuradhapura. Instead of attributing the planning scheme to one author, we can acknowledge the contributions of two planners

[53] In 1932, the Anuradhapura Urban Council was founded under the name Urban District Council, with six elected officials representing different wards. In contrast to the former governing body of the city, the Local Board, which was overseen by the Government Agent, the Urban Council was led by a president elected by the voters (Karuṇananda, 2019, p. 27-28).
[54] Administration Report of the Department of Local Government. *Sessional Paper* XI (1940, p. 6-7.)

involved in spatializing the political vision of a comprehensive spatial reality in Anuradhapura: Holliday and Weerasinghe. Weerasinghe was the inaugural Government Town Planner of the Town and Country Planning Department in Ceylon. The department was also created at the suggestion and legal framework developed by Holliday to advise the minister of health and local government on planned urban and rural developments in the colony. Weerasinghe's position as the first government town planner established him as the foremost indigenous planner in Ceylon, leading such a project. It is reasonable to presume that Bandaranaike counted on Holliday's consultancy and Weerasinghe's cooperation to develop a legal and spatial plan to safeguard the sacred city of Anuradhapura.

Weerasinghe and Holliday collaborated to create the new legal and spatial framework for Anuradhapura titled the Anuradhapura (Preservation) Ordinance No. 34 of 1942 (Preservation Ordinance). Figure 5.2 shows the front page of the Preservation Ordinance, which marked the moment nationalists' consciousness of space met with colonial planning. The Preservation Ordinance's central aim was to regulate the physical space, giving the state authority over the built form. It was expected to obtain power over the current city and keep its traditional meaning to the Buddhists. The Sinhalese Buddhist nationalists' spatial vision of Anuradhapura was built upon two planners' designs, which were imperative to devising a distinctive spatial organization in the sacred city. The Preservation Ordinance's goals and scope were expressed as follows:

> An Ordinance to make provision for the prohibition or control of the erection and alteration of buildings and of the sale or disposition of land in and in the

neighbourhood of Anuradhapura, and for matters connected with or incidental to the matters aforesaid.

Holliday introduced a three-pronged approach to the sacred city. It included implementing immediate protective measures to safeguard the religious and historical significance of Anuradhapura.

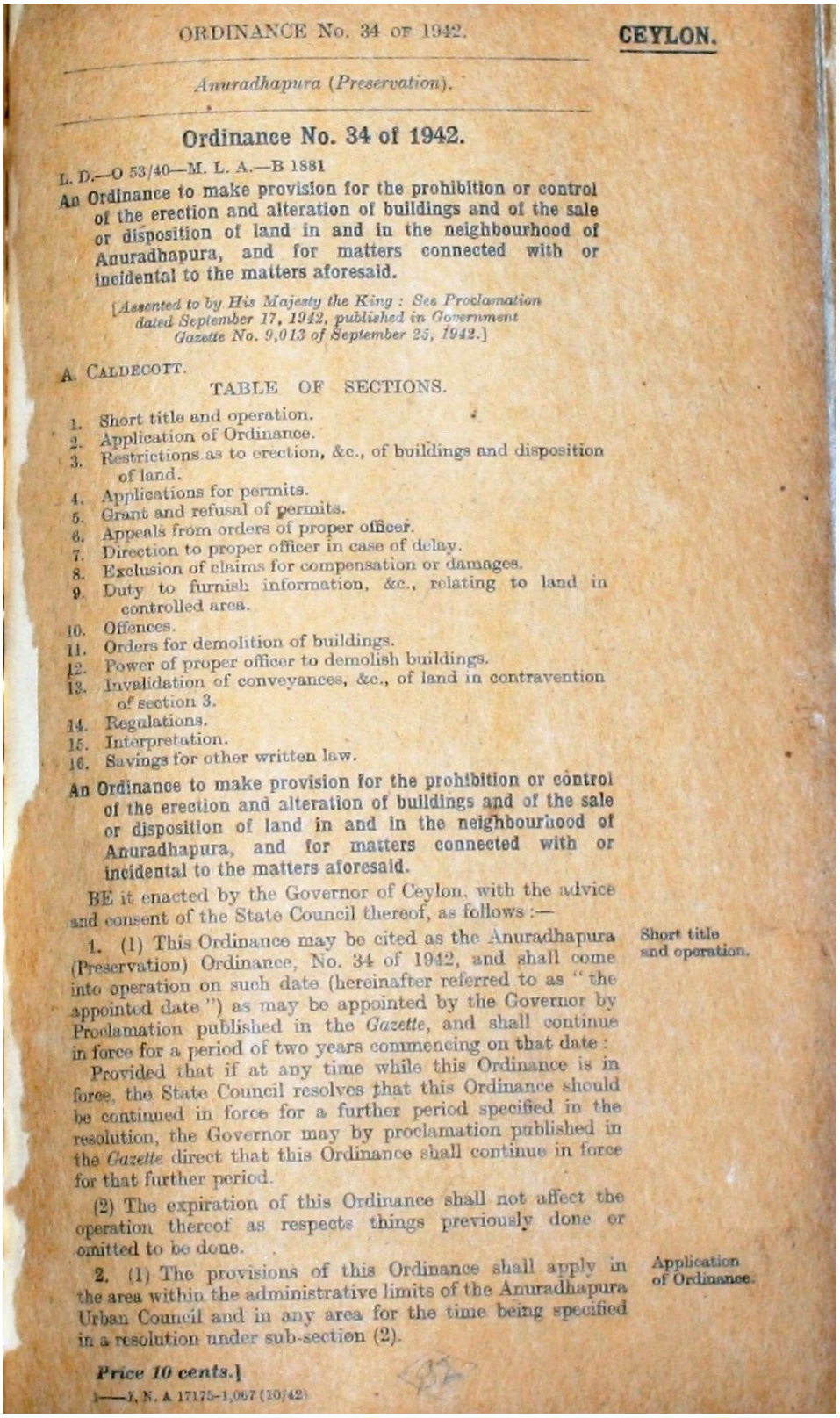
1. The provisions of this Ordinance shall apply in the area within the administrative limits of the Anuradhapura Urban Council and in any area for the time being specified in a resolution under sub-section (2).

2. Upon motion made in that behalf by the Minister for Local Administration, the State Council may by resolution declare that the provisions of this Ordinance shall apply in any area lying within a distance of not more than ten miles from the administrative limits of the Anuradhapura Urban Council the administrative limits of the Anuradhapura Urban Council; every such resolution shall be published in the *Gazette* and shall come into operation upon such publication.

3. Every area in which this Ordinance applies is hereinafter referred to as a "controlled area."

However, the Preservation Ordinance's impact was beyond the control of the growth and expansion of the urban space in Anuradhapura. The three objectives show the creators' precise aim of asserting absolute authority over the site, which somewhat aligns with the British agenda of asserting their dominance in Jerusalem following the British occupation in 1917. The two spatial regulations' resemblance was not a coincidence or accident. Holliday was involved in both projects. He was pivotal to several planning schemes, including the city of Jerusalem, during the British mandate between 1926 and 1930 (Home, 2013). The Preservation Ordinance was also significantly influenced by the regulation introduced in Jerusalem. Nissan (1988) recognized Holliday's role in the Preservation Ordinance and as a planner in Jerusalem in the early 20th century. Nissan emphasized

Jerusalem's similarities, mainly its historical significance to the Jews, with Anuradhapura as a "national heartland" of the Sinhalese Buddhists in Sri Lanka (ibid, p. 254).



ORDINANCE No. 34 OF 1942. **CEYLON.**

Anuradhapura (Preservation).

Ordinance No. 34 of 1942.

L. D.—O 53/40—M. L. A.—B 1881

An Ordinance to make provision for the prohibition or control of the erection and alteration of buildings and of the sale or disposition of land in and in the neighbourhood of Anuradhapura, and for matters connected with or incidental to the matters aforesaid.

[*Assented to by His Majesty the King : See Proclamation dated September 17, 1942, published in Government Gazette No. 9,013 of September 25, 1942.*]

A. CALDECOTT.

TABLE OF SECTIONS.

An Ordinance to make provision for the prohibition or control of the erection and alteration of buildings and of the sale or disposition of land in and in the neighbourhood of Anuradhapura, and for matters connected with or incidental to the matters aforesaid.

BE it enacted by the Governor of Ceylon, with the advice and consent of the State Council thereof, as follows :—

Short title and operation.

1. (1) This Ordinance may be cited as the Anuradhapura (Preservation) Ordinance, No. 34 of 1942, and shall come into operation on such date (hereinafter referred to as "the appointed date") as may be appointed by the Governor by Proclamation published in the *Gazette*, and shall continue in force for a period of two years commencing on that date :

Provided that if at any time while this Ordinance is in force, the State Council resolves that this Ordinance should be continued in force for a further period specified in the resolution, the Governor may by proclamation published in the *Gazette* direct that this Ordinance shall continue in force for that further period.

(2) The expiration of this Ordinance shall not affect the operation thereof as respects things previously done or omitted to be done.

Application of Ordinance.

2. (1) The provisions of this Ordinance shall apply in the area within the administrative limits of the Anuradhapura Urban Council and in any area for the time being specified in a resolution under sub-section (2).

Price 10 cents.]

1—J. N. A 17175-1,067 (10/42)

Figure 5.2 The first page of the Anuradhapura (Preservation) Ordinance No. 34 of 1942 indicates its main objectives.

5.3.1. Building a Buddhist Jerusalem?

Drawing on Nissan (1985), it can be observed that Bandaranaike was mindful of the administrative practices applied in Jerusalem during the British mandate, such as imposing regulations to control the existing environment and prevent new construction in the Old Walled City of Jerusalem. These practices served as a basis for drafting the Preservation Ordinance for Anuradhapura. However, Nissan (ibid) overlooked what Jerusalem was to the British, particularly after liberating the holy city from Ottoman control. In addition, she disregards the crucial role of modern planning and the British planners' involvement in Jerusalem. While Holliday's contribution to Jerusalem is recognized, there is no analysis of how his experience influenced the establishment of the legal structure in Anuradhapura.

Owing to its immense spiritual resonance and deep connections to Christianity, Islam, and Judaism, Jerusalem has been a site of many ethnoreligious contentions for generations. Apart from being a sacred space with a contested history, Jadallah (2014) asserted that Jerusalem had a significant role in fostering nationalist sentiments and representing the cultural values of the Jewish community. Jerusalem "performs an important national function for Jewish nationalism. It is a symbolic, even if ineffective, reminder of the Other against which Israeli is constituted" (Jadallah, 2014, p. 84). Jerusalem, however, had been a part of the Ottoman Empire for centuries. Thus, Ottoman rule significantly affected the holy city's social structure and the physical landscape. For instance, Gitler (2003) wrote that Jerusalem's population, particularly within the walled Old City, underwent considerable growth under the Ottoman rule in the 19th century. In addition, the Old City of Jerusalem

was divided into four quarters, each with its own sense of cultural and spiritual uniqueness, based on the inhabitants' religions: Jewish, Christian, Armenian (Christian), and Muslim (See Figure 5.3).

In 1917, the British ended the longstanding Ottoman control of Jerusalem by conquering Palestinian territories. The new colonial rulers declared authority over Jerusalem from 1922 to 1948, known as the mandate era. The British were sensitive to the symbolic importance of Jerusalem, demonstrated by their desire to control the holy city's identity, as seen in their attempt to "preserve" the ancient sites and their contents. For instance, when they arrived, the British proclaimed their purpose in Jerusalem was "to preserve and maintain the places holy to three religions" (Efrat & Noble, 1988). They seemed to assume that the emerging modern buildings that benefited the inhabitants of the Old City did not align with the historical city's symbolic landscape and holiness. Nevertheless, the British had observed the need to conserve the holy sites and established a new spatial layout by organizing and governing land use. As a fundamental move, the British military government in Jerusalem prohibited any changes or additions to structures within a 2,500-meter radius of the Damascus gate in the Old City in 1918.

For the British, connecting Jerusalem to their empire was not just any conquest of lands. It was a powerful symbol of their strength and power, coupled with the enduring struggle inherited from the Crusades. Critically analyzing the colonial attitude toward the holy city, Gitler (2020) argued that the British had a more prominent strategic motive behind their approach to Jerusalem. The British mission was "to preserve the walled Holy City's historic

sites which hold immense religious significance for Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and to transform Jerusalem into a modern city" (2020, p. 20). The primary aim of the British in regulating Jerusalem was, according to Gitler (2003, 2020), to have control over the Old City's physical space. Therefore, by introducing a 2,500-meter radius, the ongoing growth of Jerusalem was limited, allowing the British to dominate the symbolic landscape and physical space of the Old City.

The British considered the control of the physical areas crucial. First, we cannot forget that for the British, Jerusalem was a holy place deeply associated with the origin of their religious beliefs. Then, it was a reminder of what they lost to Muslims in medieval times. However, when the British captured Jerusalem, the Old City had earned most of its character under the Ottoman Empire, including spatial organization and built form. Therefore, as the conqueror of parts of the Ottoman Empire, the British worked to remove the Ottoman legacy from Jerusalem and its built environment. The British aimed to delegitimize and "systematically devalue" (Gitler, 2020, p. 25) the impact of the Ottoman influence on Jerusalem.

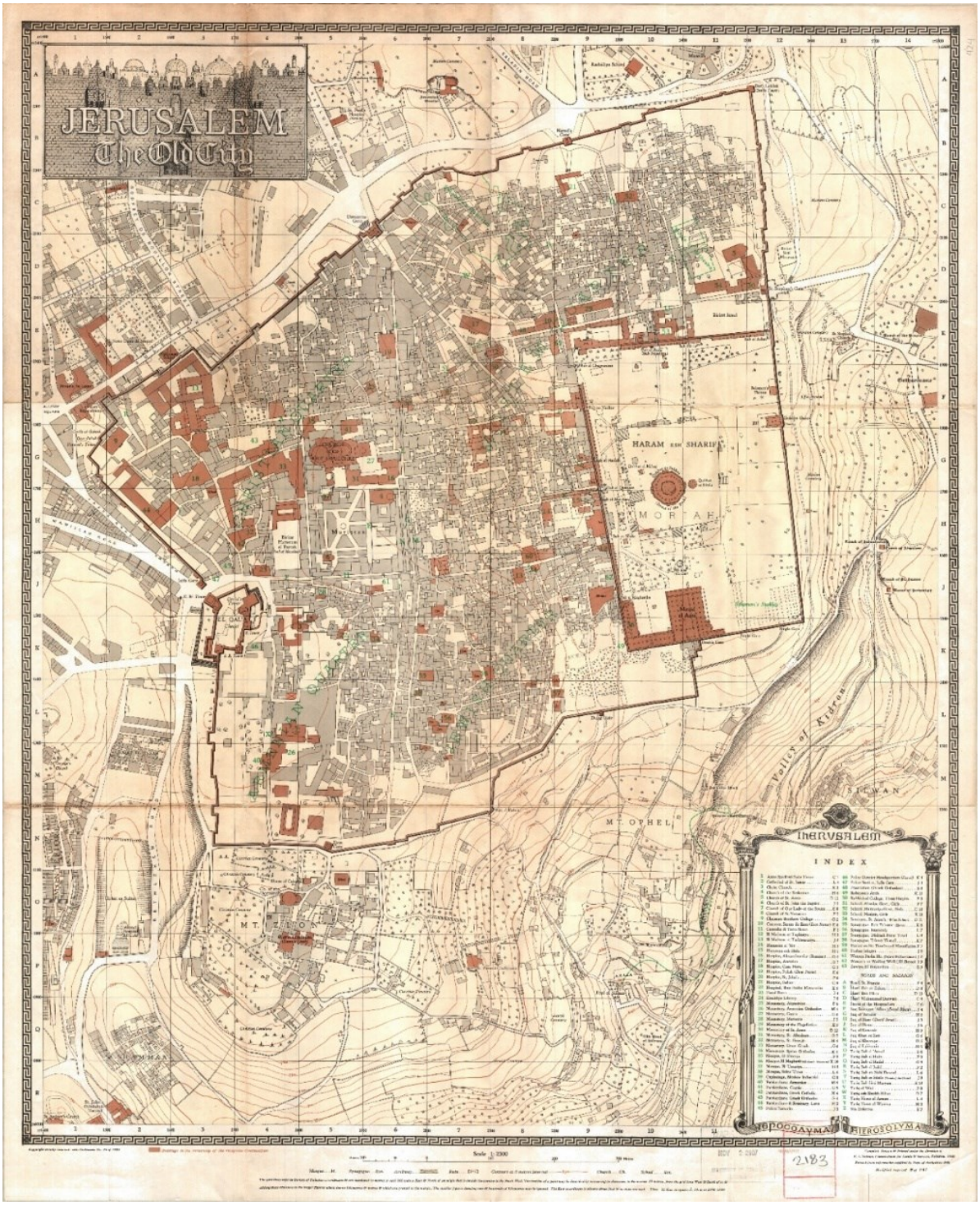


Figure 5.3 Old City of Jerusalem map by Survey of Palestine map 1-2,500 (1936)

Courtesy: Wikimedia Commons

During the early 20th century, planning was a vital practice for the British to liberate what belonged to them in their historical imagination of Jerusalem. Roberts (2013) contended that the British aimed to use planning to "redeem" Jerusalem from Ottoman influence. He further argued that "British planning recast Jerusalem as a city divided between a religious Old City, oriented toward the past, and a secular New City, facing the future" (p. 8). Planners advocated the separation of secular and religious practices in Jerusalem. In the next three decades, as Hyman (1994) demonstrated, many prominent British architects, engineers, and planners, like William Hannah McLean, Patrick Geddes, and Charles Robert Ashbee, approached the holy city. These practitioners were expected to prepare planning schemes to safeguard the holy city and its historical significance. Likewise, Holliday arrived in Jerusalem and established himself as a leading figure in planning a sacred space in this context (Home 2013). Concerning his role as a planner, Holliday served as one of the inaugural town planning advisors to the City of Jerusalem between 1922 and 1928 and then as advisor to the Central Town Planning Commission from 1927 until 1935. He also prepared the first statutory plan for the City of Jerusalem, providing the initial standards for all subsequent mandate-era building plans (Gitler 2020).

There are notable similarities between the new spatial arrangement the nationalists suggested for Anuradhapura and the British spatial strategy for Jerusalem. In Jerusalem, the British envisioned the holy city encompassing the desire to preserve the historic sites and create an alternative urban center to accommodate the emerging constructions. These objectives paralleled the Anuradhapura Preservation Scheme's aim, which was introduced by Bandaranaike in 1941. While upholding the sacredness of Anuradhapura's ancient city,

which was significant to Buddhists, the Sinhalese nationalist leadership also sought to construct a modern urban center.

Holliday's arrival in Anuradhapura brought the concept of preserving a place's historical identity through a legal system, aligning with the nationalists' aim to control spatial practices. The Preservation Ordinance reinforced the Sinhalese Buddhists' nationalist viewpoint of their sacred city while excluding non-Sinhalese Buddhist activities. Planning in Anuradhapura brought rationality to the nationalists' spatial expressions by serving their desire for exclusivity. The ultimate alignment of the law and the political hegemony of the nationalists has engaged, making Anuradhapura an exclusive space for the Sinhala Buddhists.

There were critical apprehensions about whether the bond between nationalism and space established by planning through the Preservation Ordinance would discriminate against the Tamil and Muslim communities. Their discontent towards building a new town in Anuradhapura can be found in the Report of the Soulbury Commission. The British established the Soulbury Commission in 1947 to determine the constitutional arrangements to grant dominion status to Ceylon in 1948. While evaluating the colony's potential to be its own, the commissioners were told that the Preservation Ordnance was prejudicial to Muslims and Tamil communities in Anuradhapura.

> [The Preservation Ordinance] was severely criticized on the ground that the Tamils and Muslims formed a considerable section of the population of Anuradhapura (about 10,000 in all) and either owned or occupied the greater portion of the land affected by the measure (the Soulbury Commission Report, 1948, p. 42).

However, during the commissioners' "brief visit" to Anuradhapura, they could not find any substantial evidence to support the claim that the Preservation Ordinance caused ethnic discrimination in the sacred city. Instead, the commissioners were "naturally in sympathy with a measure designed to safeguard the remains of an ancient city of great extent and beauty" (p. 42). The notion of natural sympathy is significant in representing that the commissioners and the nationalists shared the common opinion that Anuradhapura's history should be preserved as a separate entity or object outside everyday life; therefore, the new set of regulations to control the space and its social relations.

Despite entertaining the material elements of the native history in Anuradhapura, the commission members had not seen how the emerging national political leadership reimagined the site's history. In particular, the members of the commission could not identify that the relevant Sinhalese Buddhist nationality was superior to other nationalities and ethnicities during the preservation process and building of the new town. Still, the evaluators' and observers' inability to recognize the prejudices does not diminish their impact. The new town planning in Anuradhapura reflected how colonial planning discourse influenced the national spatial consciousness, symbolizing the nationalists' authority over space. Therefore, we cannot dismiss the fact that the concept of a new town raised concerns about the marginalization and exclusion of most of the inhabitants of Anuradhapura before it gave them any hope of a potential modern urban existence in a postcolonial nation.

5.4. Anuradhapura Reimagined: A Postcolonial Capital in the Making

The first postcolonial planning project that emerged in the colonial world aimed to preserve the essence of the past through modern planning. Like most planning projects in the early and mid-20th century shaped by the ideological effects of modernism (Holston, 1989; Scott, 1998), Anuradhapura's new town plan was drawn heavily from the modernist perspective. It was also created in a centralized process led by a small group of experts and bureaucrats rather than the inhabitant communities. As a result, a new town plan and planning had not evolved to accommodate the perceptions of the potential inhabitants of the urban center. Instead, a few political and bureaucratic elites charged with the responsibility and power assigned to them by the new state created the city for the people without their participation.

However, the modern spatial vision of Anuradhapura encompassed more than building a new town to preserve the past. The nationalists desired to integrate the identity of the future independent Sri Lanka with the old essence of Anuradhapura. Although the State Council debates in the early 1940s did not mention a specific interest in building a new capital, Bandaranaike envisioned the new Anuradhapura as the future capital of independent Ceylon. When he became the country's prime minister over a decade later, Bandaranaike unveiled his motivation for making Anuradhapura an alternative urban center to Colombo.

During his visit to Anuradhapura around 1958, Bandaranaike shared his visionary plans for the development of the new town:

> As we think of reconstructing Mahavihara [the Great Temple of Anuradhapura], *we hope to make Anuradhapura the capital city of Lanka and build our parliament in Anuradhapura* [emphasis added]. While keeping Colombo as the central city for trade and commerce, we have to think about how to use Anuradhapura as the government's capital city. Minister Maithripala Senanayake is working on creating a designated area in Anuradhapura for airplanes to land. So [eventually] you can reach Anuradhapura from Colombo in 20 minutes to half an hour. You can make the journey to Colombo from Anuradhapura in half an hour. That is also useful. *Do not consider those matters as fixed decisions* [emphasis added]. These are a few [thoughts] that I have in mind. If we can accomplish a few of the ideas I have in mind, I think we all will be much happier in the future. [55](Translated by the author).

With himself as the leader, Bandaranaike's goal was to move Colombo's political and administrative functions to Anuradhapura, potentially leaving Colombo's role as Ceylon's primary economic hub. In this, he demonstrates his interest in restructuring the colonial spatial order as the leader of a new national state.

Nevertheless, Bandaranaike's speech shows his uncertainty about thinking beyond colonial structures. The new native rulers encountered the complicated task of establishing a new national spatial-order to address the aspiration of Ceylon as a new nation. It required a new spatial thinking that could transcend the spatial structures and infrastructure that served the colonial order while renegotiating Colombo's political, economic, and social centrality. Even though the nationalists ultimately found a location for a postcolonial capital, it was uncertain whether they could create a postcolonial space to overcome the hegemony of the colonial structure of space. Bandaranaike's failure to

[55] The quote is from one of Bandaranaike's speeches given in Anuradhapura when he was prime minister. It is from the booklet titled *Jathika Urumaya Rekadun Bandaranaike Agramathyathuma* (Prime Minister Bandaranaike, who protected the national heritage) (n.d., p. 12), compiled by David Athukorala to honor Bandaranaike's contribution to establishing a new town in Anuradhapura while preserving the sacred city.

make a definite promise to make Anuradhapura the new capital reveals the new nation's challenge in creating its "own" spatial thinking.

Spatial thinking matters. It defines not only those who use the space but also those who create it. As noted, the Preservation Ordinance is primarily associated with Holliday's influence. He gave legitimacy to the aspirations of Sinhalese Buddhist nationalists for their sacred space. However, Weerasinghe, as the first indigenous planner, played a crucial role in preparing the layout plan of the new town, ultimately materializing Bandaranaike's spatial vision for Anuradhapura. Hence, exploring what kind of spatial vision Anuradhapura's new town plan offers as the first planned urban community in independent Ceylon is crucial. Alongside the plan, it is vital to examine how Weerasinghe was influenced by nationalists' perception of Anuradhapura when preparing the new town. Understanding what the planner was associated with and negated in planning the new town of Anuradhapura is crucial.

5.4.1. The Planner, Father and Reconciler of Nationalism and Space

In most contemporary urban planning discussions, Weerasinghe is widely recognized as the "father" of modern Sri Lankan planning (Karunathilaka, 2011; Kurukulasuriya, 2011; J. Liyanage, 2003). He earned proficiency in both domains of architecture and town planning. Sri Lankan planners embrace Weerasinghe as a hero in Sri Lankan planning, crediting him for introducing a way for future planners to deal with the country's historically significant places. However, the above discourse provides no critical perspective on the planner and planning project. It only acknowledges the physical dimensions of the Anuradhapura new

town planning project. However, it is blind to how Weerasinghe's religious and cultural responses, national sentiments, and how planning education influenced his practices in Anuradhapura. Instead of critically analyzing Weerasinghe's role in merging planning with nationalists' spatial desires, planning discourse portrays Weerasinghe as a triumphant planning pioneer.

We can make one crucial observation about the hero-planner model, which emphasizes Weerasinghe as the paternal figure in planning, the patriarch of the profession and Anuradhapura's new town planning initiative. Undoubtedly, most modernist planning schemes were male-oriented. In her critique of modernist planning, Sandercock (1998, p. 168) emphasized the dominance of men in planning: "Cities, built and planned by men, for men." Spatial politics was mainly in the hands of men for most of the 20th century. Men have had a significant influence on the modernization of Anuradhapura. Although making Anuradhapura a historically significant planned town was a collective effort involving multiple actors, from colonial officials to the Sinhalese nationalists, these were only males. This research found no evidence of women's involvement in the new town's development. Thus, it is understandable that Sri Lankan planners found solace in Weerasinghe as a father and in male-centric roots of planning in Lanka.

Before Weerasinghe, Sri Lankan planning depended highly on expertise imported from the British Empire. Like Ceylon's formation as a political entity, introducing planning to organize its capital of Colombo was an outcome of colonization. Revealing the colonial making of Ceylon's modern spatial discourse, Perera (2005) argued that urban planning was

"imported" to the colony by the British administrators from England as knowledge and practice via the empire. He demonstrated that the Housing Ordinance of 1915 gave birth to modern planning in Ceylon by "creating" specific urban issues in the capital of Colombo. Perera further contended that the conditions viewed as problems according to the new law, such as "bad housing" and "overcrowding" in Colombo, made the need to introduce planning. Those conditions were not "problems" until they were interpreted as problems by legal "perceptions" imported by the colonial authorities through the Housing Ordinance. Therefore, Perera (2005) argued that urban problems in Colombo and planning as the solution to those issues were imported phenomena. Besides the problem, the British also invited planning experts to solve the newly created urban issues in Colombo. In Colombo, planning was expected to address the emerging issues of urban living by improving the sanitary conditions ordering the city's built form. The colonial authorities believed a better physical plan could solve the problems, so Patrick Geddes was invited in the early 1920s to plan Colombo. Later, the colonial government commissioned Holliday and Patrick Abercrombie to prepare plans for Colombo and the surrounding areas in 1940 and 1949, respectively.

Given that planning was an imported practice, it raises the question whether Weerasinghe can be considered the originator or the father of planning. Despite Weerasinghe's Ceylonese origin, his spatial vision as a planner and architect was likely shaped by his education and professional training in England[56]. In 1938, Weerasinghe was appointed as

[56] Weerasinghe completed higher education in prominent universities like Sheffield and Liverpool in England during the late 1920s. Besides the knowledge, Weerasinghe received professional recognition in England by

the government town planner of Ceylon. The emergence of local leaders like Bandaranaike had brought about a political transformation towards nationalist politics in Ceylon in the 1930s. This era marked the involvement of native professionals in architecture and planning, such as H.J. Billimoria, Neville Gunaratne, and Justin Samarasekera, along with Weerasinghe (see Pieris, 2013). These native professionals worked with colonial specialists to make a national sense of the colony's social and spatial dynamics. Referring to the Ceylonese architecture, Peries (2013, p. 12) argued, "It is important to realize that the nationalist architecture of this era was in fact designed by British architects such as Wynne-Jones, Sir Patrick Abercrombie and Clifford Holliday, with assistance from local architects trained in England or elsewhere."

In this context, Weerasinghe worked closely with Holliday, whom Bandaranaike selected to protect Anuradhapura in the early 1940s. They collaborated to actualize the nationalists' aspiration of preserving Sinhalese Buddhist heritage in the sacred city and, subsequently, planning the new town[57].

becoming a Fellow of the Royal Institute of Architects and the Royal Institute of Town Planners. Weerasinghe's experience was not limited to education; he connected with some leading professionals of the British Empire during his stay in Britain. Planning historian Home (2010) contends that Weerasinghe also received the privilege of learning and training under Abercrombie, one of the most distinguished British planning educators and practitioners. These exposures enabled Weerasinghe to engage Abercrombie as a mentor in planning Colombo as he embarked on his career as a planner in Ceylon.

[57] Holliday's influence on the planning in Ceylon was not limited to making the Preservation Ordinance for Anuradhapura and a planning scheme for Colombo, as the Colombo Municipal Council requested. Moreover, Holliday was expected to develop a town and country planning for Ceylon. The Ceylonese government hired him as a consultant to produce a planning framework to control urban form and the built environment and improve health and sanitary conditions in human settlement[57], which are not different from the expected outcome of planning in England at the beginning of the 20th century. Holliday's contribution to Ceylon planning provided the basis for implementing the Town and County Planning Ordinance No. 13 in 1946. His guidance significantly impacted the advancement of Ceylon's planning practice under Weerasinghe as the first government town planner in 1947. The same ordinance established the colony's first planning institution

Weerasinghe's involvement in Anuradhapura could be one of the critical turning points in the country's planning history[58]. Unlike his colonial predecessors, who focused on rationality and objectivity in planning Colombo, Weerasinghe prioritized culture and history in planning Anuradhapura. Notably, he reconciled colonial planning and nationalism in Anuradhapura as the government planner, marking a national turn in Ceylon's planning. It allowed him to invent his desires for the new nation and bridge the national consciousness of space and colonial planning discourse. Through planning Anuradhapura, he embraced the role of a dedicated planner and guardian, committed to safeguarding the nation's historical and religious identity.

5.4.2. The Shape of Modernism and the Gaze of the Planner

While I conducted fieldwork in Anuradhapura, a resident shared a view to comprehend the perspective from which the plan was developed. Nimal, 54, a tour guide raised in Anuradhapura, knew the relationship between Weerasinghe and the new town plan. When he learned of my study's aim, he asked, "Do you mean Mr. Oliver's plan in the 1950s? The plan to make Anuradhapura the country's capital?" His response surprised me because I thought only a planner working for the UDA or the NPPD would remember Weerasinghe's contribution, not the residents. However, Nimal's perspective of the new town allowed me to find the embodiment of modernist planning in the new town planning. In his explanation,

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in 1947, the Department of Town and County Planning, known as the National Physical Planning Department since 2000.

[58] Weerasinghe became the head of the Town and Country Planning Department, established in 1948 (See also Perera, 2008). It was a national institution that controlled the planned spatial development of the new nation until the Urban Development Authority was established in 1978. By launching a new institution to plan cities, he contributed to beginning a new planning tradition.

Nimal offered me a perspective to look at the planned town. He explained, “The only way to truly see the planned Anuradhapura is to observe it from above. As you walk on the streets, you may not see it. [Therefore], seeing the new town from an elevated angle would be helpful. You can then observe what Oliver wanted to build here.”

As a resident, Nimal knew one could not fully understand the new town’s spatial organization from within, but it had to be viewed from a higher, more elevated perspective. Therefore, the above is a crucial vantage point for comprehending the new town’s configuration. Unsurprisingly, Anuradhapura has seen sufficient changes since the mid-20th-century plan was instituted. Still, residents like Nimal and their daily observations represent the top-down perspective of the planning project envisioned.

Designing cities with a top-down standpoint, or “planner gaze,” as Scott (1998, p. 57) put it, is not new; rather, most leading modernist planning schemes were developed from a similar perspective. If we delve deeper into Nimal’s observations, we find they resonate with critical perspectives to attain an apparition of most modernist urban visions. According to Amin (2011, p. 632), the modernist planning approach was shaped from a perspective that can be identified as “privileged.” It was a vantage point: “know the pulse that beats through urban life, intervene through a central authority and roll out a plan of the good life.” Therefore, such planning initiatives “acted to save cities from disaster, lift the masses out of want and poverty, and re-engineer the urban fabric to meet the goals of modernity (ibid).” in the case of Anuradhapura, it was the significance of the “past,” that determined the shape of the present and future of the urban life. It was also a plan that has

emerged from the privileged vantage point of the planners, one which continues to shape even today's urban landscape.

In another context, de Certeau (1988) offered a critical reading on comprehending cities' modern planning development and everyday activities, which could help us obtain planners' views in Anuradhapura. De Certeau adopted the point of view of contemporary planners by getting on top of the tallest building in New York. He elevated his position to look at the city from above and expressed the planners' desire to understand urban spaces from a God-eye perspective. De Certeau (1988, p. 92) argued such a perspective from above that allows one to earn pleasure from the objective totality of a city equals a "voyeuristic view" that gives pleasure in that "it transforms the bewitching world by which one was 'possessed' into a text that lies before one's eyes." Those with access to this view can imagine the city as an abstract whole and have the power to organize and structure the spaces for the public, who can only view their urban areas from the street level. Turning to Anuradhapura, I learned from a resident that it could not be fully observed from its street view. Nimal was unaware of these intellectual debates; still, he sensed the plan was distant from people's everyday lives. He shared a vantage point with me, allowing me to observe the town from above. From there, I could see the fragmented association between the planned space and everyday life.

What most modernist planners of Weerasinghe's era stood for were their convictions, the cities they idealized for their visions of an ideal society. What he knew and how he knew the city had shaped his practice, too. For instance, given his familiarity with Jerusalem and the

standard Western idea of planning during his time of urbanization, it can be inferred that Holliday proposed regulations to regulate the city's expansion. Although he prepared the Preservation Ordinance for the ancient city, he was not emotionally attached to its history. Holliday's relationship with Anuradhapura was characterized by objectification.

In Weerasinghe's understanding, Anuradhapura "is not merely a place of historical interest." He believed its remaining ancient monuments are "a source of pride and inspiration to the people of Lanka, who see in them the magnificent civilization of their ancestors" (Weerasinghe, 1948, p. 52). Weerasinghe viewed the ancient as a place of national pride and was deeply bonded with it. He explained: "The building of the new Anuradhapura begins on the eve of a new era of freedom in Lanka. No city could have a more auspicious beginning, or a more noble object" (1948, p. 55). Therefore, planning the new town of Anuradhapura was not simply another endeavour. It was a noble venture for Weerasinghe, symbolizing a new beginning, nation, hope, and spatial identity while preserving the past.

Weerasinghe's admiration for the place demonstrates his belief in Anuradhapura's continued greatness. As he described, the essence and spirit of the place were never defeated by time.

> The uniqueness of Anuradhapura is that it remained the capital of Sri Lanka continuously for a millenium and a half. [However], in the 10th century AD the city was abandoned owing to the disruption of the tank-irrigation system and finally the advent of the anopheles mosquito which spread the deadly malaria disease. For eight succeeding centuries Anuradhapura remained enveloped in the jungle growth but its greatness continued in story and romance for in it were

> the strivings of the Sinhalese race who tasted misfortune but were never conquered in spirit (Weerasinghe,1976, p. 10).

Anuradhapura's religious layout was another significant distinction between Holliday's and Weerasinghe's spatial thinking. Buddhism held great importance for Weerasinghe, shaping his perspective. He even concluded that Anuradhapura symbolizes the Buddhist heritage and its enduring historical monuments as tangible proof of that religious legacy.

> The greatness of Anuradhapura however lies in its Buddhist heritage. In ancient times it was a city devoted to Buddhist learning and culture. From it Theravada Buddhism, the orthodox teachings of the Buddha, went to the countries of South-East Asia. The visitor to Anuradhapura should remember this when he sees the monasteries and monuments in the city just as he would see in the West heritage of the Christian people. The stones of Anuradhapura are only part of the long story of Buddhism which began five centuries before the birth of Christ with Gautama Buddha whose doctrine on the causes of suffering and the way leading to the cessation of suffering has influenced a quarter of the world population (Weerasinghe, 1976, p. 12).

The planner repeatedly embraced Anuradhapura's greatness as a place that gave birth to the ancient civilization of the Sinhalese. He consistently admired the ancient rulers' contribution to Anuradhapura as the capital, the ancient hydro civilization in the area, and Buddhist monasteries.

However, there is a void in Weerasinghe's understanding regarding the immediate history of sites influenced by colonialism and religious revivalists, particularly in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He claimed that Anuradhapura's former glory could even challenge the advancement of the Western world, even considering the British construction of Anuradhapura. He also observed the role of colonial infrastructure in connecting

Anuradhapura with the rest of the country as the beginning of the site's modern history: "modern history of Anuradhapura begins with the extension of the railroad northwards at the close of the last century" (Weerasinghe, 1976, p. 10). Still, the planner neglected to evaluate how British colonialism impacted the site's recent transformation into a site of archaeological ruins. In that case, the planner was not alone; archeologists also collaborated closely in the preservation efforts.

> The protection and preservation of any ancient city is no easy task, even if it is entirely a work of excavation as in Pompeii and Herculaneum. But when modern development has encroached on sites of historic interest, and intermingled with the ruins of ancient monuments, the work of protection and preservation presents a most difficult and complex problem to the archaeologist and the town planner (Weerasinghe, 1948, p. 53).

Besides the impact of colonialism, Weerasinghe also failed to acknowledge the locals' resistance to the colonial transformation of Anuradhapura at the beginning of the century—especially by the religious revivalists. The role of Dharmapala and Harischandra in determining the need for separated urban entities in Anuradhapura as old and new was not significant to Weerasinghe. The planner was ignorant of the core argument of the revivalists: Anuradhapura was not a dead land for archaeologists to explore but a (spatial) representation of living religious practices and rituals. Instead, he significantly acknowledged Bandaranaike's effort to preserve the site—"The people of Lanka owe a deep debt of gratitude to the Hon. Mr. S.W.R.D Bandaranaike, who as Minister of Local Administration initiated this great scheme" (Weerasinghe,1948, p. 53). So, it suggests that the planner connected with the historical and religious narrative of the site, which is primarily influenced by Sinhala Buddhist nationalist political ideologies.

Ultimately, Weerasinghe's relationship with the place was not based on objective perception. He had become a subject of the Sinhala Buddhist narrative of the place. The consequence was that Weerasinghe overlooked the fact that archeological preservation was not embraced by the leaders of native culture, especially the leaders of Buddhist revival, but a practice introduced by the British. Along with creating the new city, Weerasinghe expected to maintain the historical city as a suitable place for archaeological research, writing, "afford the utmost opportunity to the archaeologist to carry out the work of preservation within the city" (Weerasinghe, 1948, p. 53).

5.4.3. The order and structure: The spatial configuration of the new town

Inspired by the modernist paradigm in the early 20th century, most planners were convinced that they knew how to design space and understand what people needed to thrive. Most influential urban thinkers of the early 1900s who endorsed rational comprehensive planning, like Abercrombie, Le Corbusier, and Koenigsberger, assumed they knew what the public wanted. When discussing modernist planning decisions, Sandercock (1998) offered a critical perspective on what planners missed in the rationale and comprehensive planning process.

> In this model the planner was indisputably the "knower," relying strictly on "his" professional expertise and objectivity to do what was best for "the public". The notion of "the public", never critically examined, implied an undifferentiated, homogeneous group in which differences of class, or race, or gender, were not considered relevant "input." This is a model which assumes a benign state, and a state whose structure is neutral with respect to questions of gender and sexual preference, race and ethnicity, rather than a state which may be, for example, patriarchal, homophobic, racist and allied to capital. (Sandercock, 1998, p. 170)

Zoning was a priority for the planner when designing the new Anuradhapura. The prevailing paradigm of modernism and rationale comprehensive planning model shaped Weerasinghe's plan for building a new urban life in Anuradhapura. He also functioned as if he knew what the place was and the interests and desires of the potential inhabitants. The allocation of lands in the planned town reflects the planner's assumptions about the public's desired urban living.

As shown in Figure 5.4, the layout plan details five main uses – residential, institutional, commercial, industrial, and recreational. Housing was the new town's most considerable use based on land allocation. Looking at the conceptual layout map for the new town, it becomes apparent that a considerable amount of land has been designated for residential purposes (see Figure 5.5). Likewise, significant land in the new city was allocated for key government establishments, such as the Secretariat Building for general administration, hospitals, and post offices, reflecting the central role of the government in the emerging state. The plan implementation was divided into three main phases. The initial stage involved constructing key administrative buildings and new houses, allowing the government to relocate residential living to desired areas by 1956.

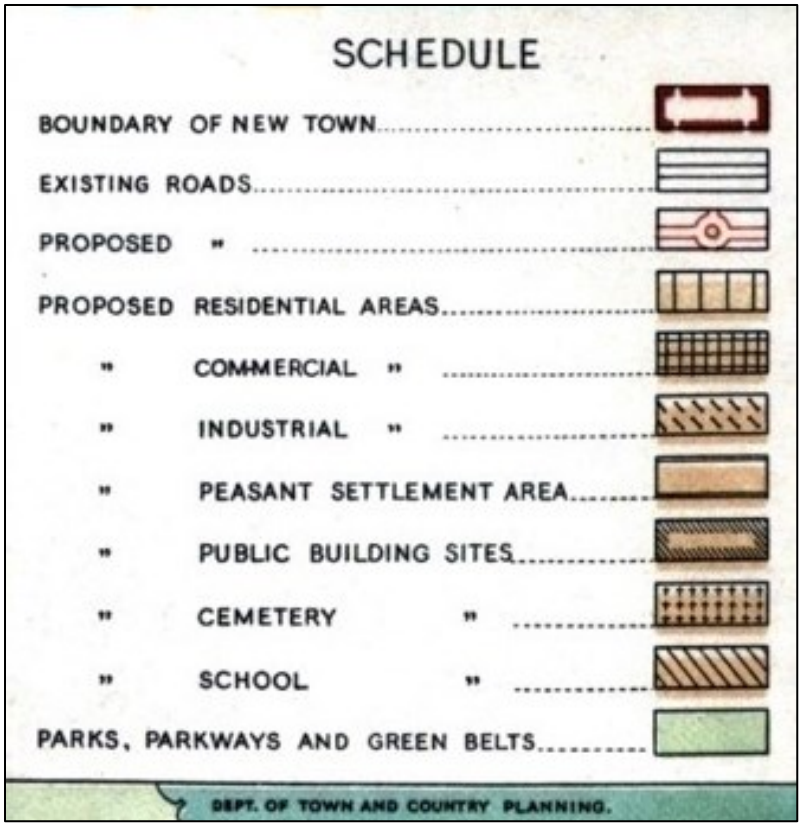

Figure 5.4 The legend depicts the primary land uses of the layout plan

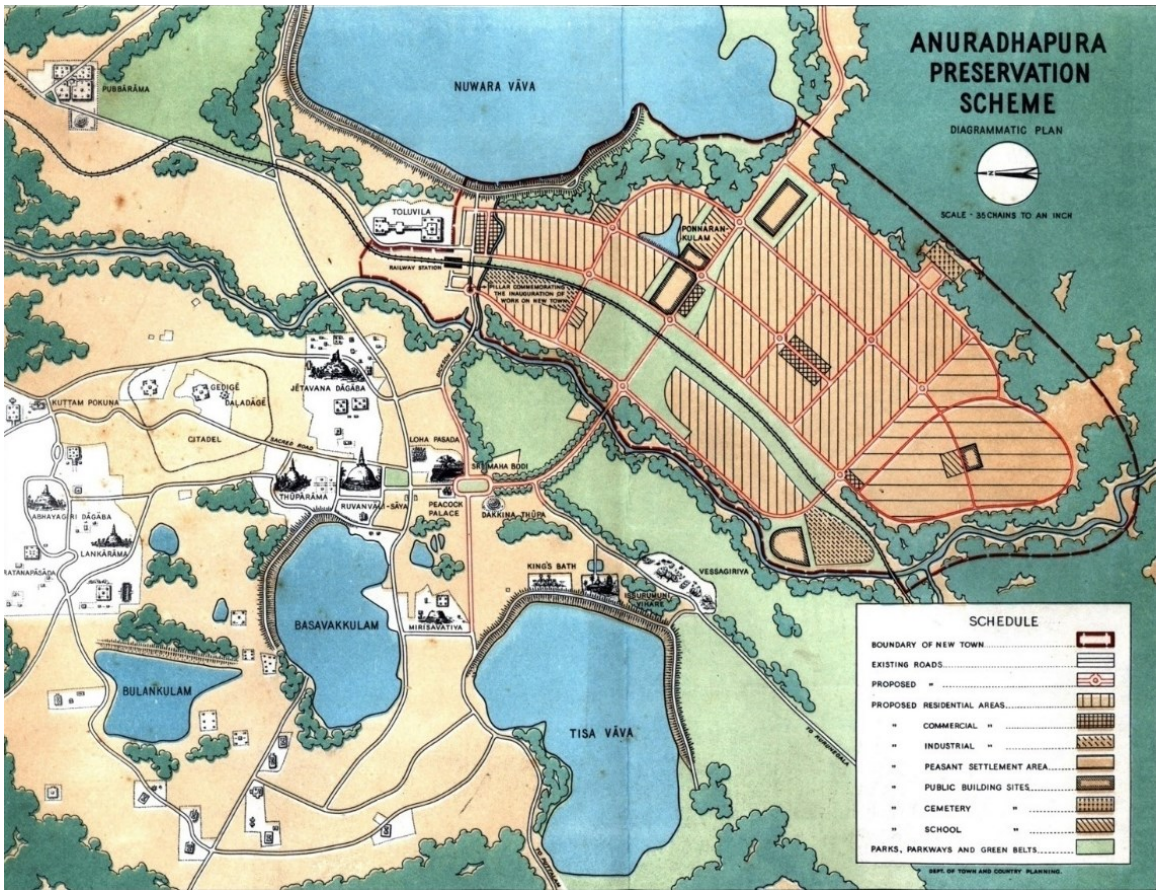

Figure 5.5 As the layout plan indicates, residential uses were the most significant land use in the new town

Source: Department of Town and Country Planning

According to Fishman (1997: 38), idealist thinkers in the modern urban planning paradigm, like Howard, Wright, and Le Corbusier, feared "that the metropolis would attract and then consume all the healthful forces in society." They perceived sprawling cities as an incurable disorder in the modern world. The cure, they believed, for contemporary disordered and disorganized cities was a meticulously planned spatial order, which could enhance future urban living. Weerasinghe's plan for Anuradhapura involved a new town born out of fear of compromise. It was not fear of what was to come but the security of what had already

passed and the site's historical significance. In this scenario, modernity was depicted as a threat to the past. Still, the future was a byproduct of that modernity and carried a sense of irony.

Eventually, the planning scheme contributed to regulating the sacred city as a separate land use from the secular. The plan did not officially acknowledge the religious and ancient use as a distinct land use or zone. However, leaving religious spaces with historical remains, such as stupas, and the absence of another use around them, except for some paddy fields on the layout map, is a compelling visual representation of the planner's vision (see Figure 5.6). As Figure 6 illustrates, the planner envisioned a line of trees as a visual representation of the boundary between sacred and secular. The Western concept of "green belt," which is represented by these trees like a bikini, serving as a barrier between the sacred and secular entities, is likely a consideration Weerasinghe adopted from Garden City principles. Although public health was one of the most significant elements for Howard in introducing the Garden City concept and greenery to town plans, in Anuradhapura, there is no sign that health was such a vital concentration. Perhaps Abercrombie's green-wedge vision for London inspired Weerasinghe, as it was more relevant to how he used a green belt in Anuradhapura to create divisions rather than unity between the two cities.

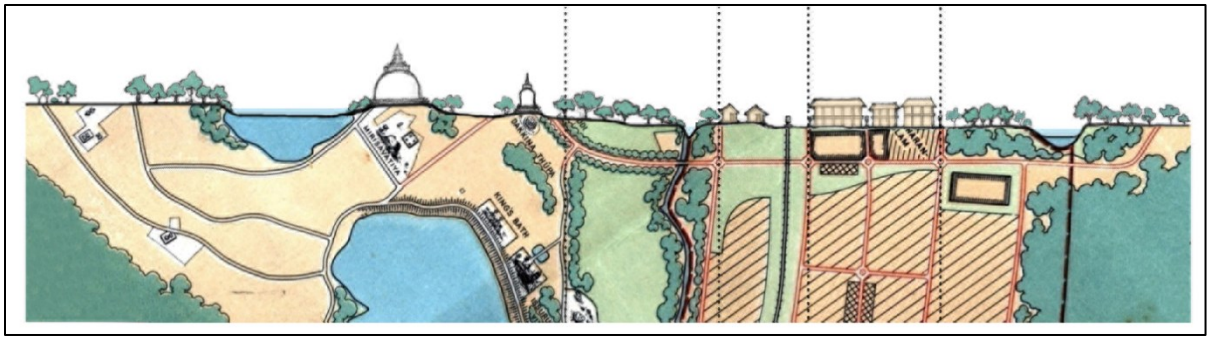

Figure 5.6 The green belt separating the sacred and secular areas.

Prepared by Sanjani Liyanage

While the past protected the future, the present was neglected. By the present, I mean the old city's existing social structures and spatial relationships. Unlike the British-established urban center that grew more organically, the sacred Bo-tree was at the center; the new town was expected to align strictly with specific land uses. Likewise, in the old town, every activity happened, but these were not spatially categorized, limited, and separated like the different uses introduced in the layout for the new town. In the sacred city, every monument was a center in its own way.

In contrast, the new town revolved around its own center, the railway station, signifying that the city's main transport hub was the central element of the settlement. It implies that another critical aspect of the planner's understanding of the new town has not evolved from the residents' perspective. Instead, Planner understands the city as he arrives at Anuradhapura as a stranger from Colombo or Jaffna. Hence, the new town provided what the town offered to the pilgrims and tourists visiting Anuradhapura, not necessarily for the inhabitants of the pre-existing town. Like the planning process, the planned city itself

privileges the needs of outsiders rather than the local communities. In that case, the planner had not referred to local traditions, built forms, or the tensions and confrontations between the existing communities. For example, the layout plan does not indicate the existing settlements (see Figure 5.6). The areas surrounding the crucial religious sites were utterly devoid. Likewise, the map marker disregarded the settlements, practices, and land uses that were present around the sacred monuments when the layout plan was created. People have always been marginalized.

5.4.4. People and Population

Homogenization and repetition, as Scott (1998) argued, are deemed essential elements that should be present in modern designs. In that case, most modernist projects lack a sense of diversity and uniqueness, but a geometric charm dominates the urban landscape they produce. Anuradhapura's new town planning process categorized the urban space into zones, each with its own unique function, resulting in a harmonized spatial layout. Thus, the layout plan signifies that the new town was for everyone, but for no one in particular. It evokes the feeling of being excluded in the future urban center that emerged from the locals during the initial phase of the Preservation Scheme's development under the guidance of Bandaranaike.

If we refer to Freeman's criticism of building a new Anuradhapura, we see he was uncertain how the existing inhabitants would become part of the new town. Although people could dwell in the new town, he was concerned that the new town would not embed them or accept them as its inhabitants, as the nationalists' could not understand what people

needed. It appeared the plan failed to recognize the inhabitants' role in structuring the city's spatial organization as they would inhabit it. Instead, the new town was constructed to cater to an imaginary sense of "population," eliminating the authenticity of the social relations.

For instance, the original plan accommodated a population of 10,000. Although the rationale behind the expected population is unknown, the State Council Debate between Bandaranaike and Freeman also confirmed that the new town was designed for 10,000 while releasing the religious and historical sites from the miseries of modern meanings of expansion, leaving it with ancient monuments in the coming years. We can note that the selection of the planner(s), the location for the new town, and the aspects of city design were cautiously chosen throughout the process. However, the population configuration in the new city was arbitrary. When the city was constructed, the original figure of the total expected population was revised. It increased to 15,000 people. Based on Weerasinghe's administration reports, we can assume that he did not ignore the new town's potential to attract more people and expand its territories in the following decades. So, ultimately, to have room to expand, "adequate land has been reserved and laid out for the ultimate development of a town with a population of 15,000" (Weerasinghe, 1948, p. 54). Again, an additional 5,000 population was arbitrary. Weerasinghe's later works in the mid-1970s, describing his role as the chief planner in the planning and development of the new town, mentioned that the new town would eventually become accustomed to over 30,000 inhabitants. Even with the arbitrariness, the population change over the years represents the uncertainty of future growth as a constant element of the planning process.

The new town was planned for an arbitrary "population," not the citizens with their own identities. Along with planning, building the new town of Anuradhapura was a state project. Initially, the construction was overseen by the Department of Town and Country Planning, but in 1961, it was taken over by the Anuradhapura Preservation Board. Unlike the old town that organically evolved around the sacred bodhi tree, the new Anuradhapura was not expected to grow on its own with the support of its inhabitants. Like the planning and development of buildings, the state was expected to move people. Thus, incorporating modernity into the new town plan was to facilitate spatial configurations. However, it did not sufficiently address establishing an environment conducive to shaping a modern individual or a postcolonial urban dweller. Referring to the main objectives of the Preservation Scheme, the success of the new city plan did not depend on creating a new human settlement that could accommodate the existing needs but on the extent to which the historical materials, considered the nation's history, were protected.

Another vital point from the State Council's debate is the emergence of a new mudalali community. Freeman's criticisms of the notion of mudalali extended beyond fears of Low Country Sinhalese control in trade and commerce in Anuradhapura. Instead, the criticism of forming a mudalali community showcased the emerging nationalist political leadership's failure to construct an inclusive space and society. Therefore, using mudalali was not merely a prejudiced claim against the people from the Low Country regions. Nor was their dominance over Anuradhapura. In a broader sense, mudalali represents a new "political subjectivity" that evolved under the emerging native leadership. It was a new form of a "political subject" closely associated with the changing native political system,

dominated by the nationalists' political principles. The association between the nationalist political leadership and the new political subjects of mudalalis might undermine the social values and harmony upheld by the locals of Anuradhapura for years. Their relationship might exploit religion, notably Buddhism, for their continued existence.

5.4.5. The Roundabouts, Yielding, and Conformity

The historical moment at which Anuradhapura's new town plan came into being coincided with Ceylon's effort to establish itself as an independent state. The critical question hinges upon whether the nationalist leaders intended to form a postcolonial nation or to provide a national face to the country's political and social structure within Western modernity. In view of gaining insight into this issue, I examine one of the key physical elements introduced to the new Anuradhapura: the design of roundabouts, a defining feature of Anuradhapura's new town.

I discovered that most visitors who drive from outside regions find it quite challenging to navigate within the city because of the number of roundabouts and their "repetitive" nature. For instance, Sisita, 38, a legal consultant based in Colombo who routinely visits Anuradhapura to appear before the High Court of Anuradhapura, shared his experience as a driver; "[in the new town] you will always spot a roundabout, then another. No matter where you go, you always find a roundabout. However, the most confusing part is that they all look the same, even when some roundabouts have statues or decorations in the middle. Driving around the same block a few times is unavoidable to figure out the correct way." This experience was not limited to outsiders. Lionel, 49, , a new town resident, explained,

“Even the people who live in the city find it hard to move around. Trying to get around a town full of roundabouts is tricky sometimes.” Also, I discovered Anuradhapura was not only revered by Sinhalese Buddhists for its historical and religious value but also the new town is commonly known as “the roundabout capital of the country,” for the copious number of rotary junctions it has.

We can observe that roundabouts were prominently featured in the initial layout plan for Anuradhapura’s new town. When devising the blueprint for Anuradhapura’s prospective urban center in 1947, the planners assumed that a rotating system would mitigate the commotion on the streets that would arrive in the future. The Department of Town and Country Planning’s plan recognized 11 four-way road interactions to construct roundabouts within the new town, one of which is the location for the inauguration column of the new city, the Lion Pillar (see Figure 5.7). However, during my field studies in the new town, I observed 14 roundabouts around the town. Nine of them were as proposed in the original plan; the rest were near the new town, and a few were at the main entrance from certain main roads. For instance, the image in Figure 8 illustrates the shape of a major roundabout in Anuradhapura from the early 1960s.

Figure 5.7 The new town incorporates multiple roundabouts into its layout.

Figure 5.8 One of the main roundabouts in the Anuradhapura's new town in the 1960s

Source: *Daily Mirror*, June 25,1963

The idea of the roundabout is modern. Before roundabouts became an element of traffic control in modern cities, Todd (1991, p. 143) noted they were a site of "monuments and fountains" in major British and French cities. He further wrote that roundabouts effectively controlled one-way traffic, first in France, then in England, and much later in the United States in the 20th century. In the more conventional sense, roundabouts effectively reduce automobile speed and improve traffic flows in most cities. The center island of the roundabouts provides grounds for landscaping and displaying public art in some cities. Roundabouts are an imported concept. Liyanage and Perera (2015) claim that *handiya*, the road/street intersection known to locals, is the most frequently encountered intersection in Sri Lanka. Beyond its physical definition, they argue that *handiya* is a socially produced lived space. The state and the planners have been unsuccessful in creating or replicating a *handiya*, resulting in an intersection or a node. It is "a social space created through the materialization of the social potential of a physical road/street confluence" (Liyanage & Perera, 2016, p. 214). Unfortunately, the planner in Anuradhapura could not more consciously incorporate such local spatial elements in the new town design town.

Moreover, when Anuradhapura plan was drafted and the new town was constructed in the mid-20th century, few Ceylonese owned automobiles. Then, the question is why roundabouts were so significant to Weerasinghe when designing the new town of Anuradhapura? One assumption that can be made is that Weerasinghe expected more automobile traffic in the city, especially from the tourists and pilgrims who may want to visit the sacred city. As we already discussed, the new town development prioritized the outsiders' comfort more than that of the inhabitants. So, establishing roundabouts to

ensure smooth traffic flow in the city was a rational decision. In his argument, Weizman (2019, p. 11) contended that roundabouts "are banal, utilitarian instruments of traffic management." He further said that "roundabout islands are designed to keep people away. The continuous flow of traffic around them creates a wall of speeding vehicles that prohibits access. While providing in open spaces (in some cities the only available open spaces) these islands are meant to seen but not be used" (2019, p. 12). As with most modern road regulations, ultimately, roundabouts aim to produce "a modern subject (the driver) who can self-regulate" (2019, p. 25). Weizman's thought-provoking observation about roundabouts prompts contemplation.

The roundabout is a forcefully imposed modern urban element in the new town of Anuradhapura that its users could not fully incorporate into. Unlike the traditional *handiya* that allows people to meet and share, the roundabout does not aim to improve social interactions. Instead, the roundabout is a disciplinary device that allows creators to control the mobility of users. Disciplining the inhabitants' movement normalizes the self-control of its users. The driver must continually reduce the speed as he or she approaches the roundabout and then follow the traffic flow. It provides only one direction to the users who must accept and submit to it. The ability to yield or conform is essential to get out of the roundabout safely.

In Anuradhapura, where the historical narrative is dominated by the nationalists' understating and construction of history, the roundabout idea is more relatable. As mentioned, a common roundabout design characteristic is the middle island, the center,

and all the movements revolving around it. Nevertheless, the users are not granted access but may gather information about the intended direction.

Like the roundabout, the hegemonic narrative of Anuradhapura's history provides a view of the past; however, one cannot tap into its potential. The movements of the future will revolve around the frozen past. The majestic Lion Pillar, representing the greatness of the Sinhalese race, stands at the center of the new town's first roundabout, commanding attention from all who pass by (Figure 5.9). As unveiling it in 1949 marked the beginning of the new town's construction, we can consider the lion pillar as the *axis mundi* of the new town. If we look at the time when the new town plan was implemented, it was a time of building a new nation at the departure of the colonial rule. The new national political leadership facilitated the former subjects' transition into citizens of a postcolonial nation. Regardless, the new citizens must remember to acknowledge the Sinhalese Buddhist dominance at the core. This scenario can be visualized as a roundabout as a spatial construct with interconnected elements and continuous flow.

Figure 5.9 The iconic lion pillar of Anuradhapura, the ceremonious inauguration pillar, or the symbolic axis mundi of the new town in the 1960s.

Source: Times Collection, 962A/06, SLNA.

5.5. Summary

This chapter analyzed the interplay of colonialism, nationalism, and modernism in planning the new town. It explored how Anuradhapura became an essential space for the emerging native political elites, mainly fueled by Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism in the context of Ceylon becoming an independent nation. Preserving Anuradhapura's historical significance and association with Buddhism as a sacred space had become a vital concern for them since the early 1940s. It was decided to construct a new town to address the issue while ensuring that all modern developments in the sacred town were controlled. Planning was instrumental in realizing that vision.

The making of Anuradhapura's new town was fueled by Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism. Bandaranaike's role as a rising political figure was significant, as he incorporated planning as a tool for designing the new town to shield the sacred city from modern and non-Buddhist activities. However, the nationalists' vision for introducing a new urban future faced criticism, especially for its exclusive nature that would favor the Sinhalese Buddhist communities. A fundamental critique of the new town plan was that it would allow the Low Country Sinhalese dominance over the new urban space while marginalizing the non-Sinhalese Buddhist communities already living in Anuradhapura. However, eventually, the nationalist vision for Anuradhapura became a reality a year after the independence of Ceylon inaugurating the building of the new town.

The planning project indicates that planning is a highly political endeavor. Urban planning can do more than design and manage human settlements; it can also spatialize political

and national sentiments. Anuradhapura's new town is a testament to the challenge of transforming nationalism into a physically encompassing experience.

The next chapter is the conclusion of this dissertation, which will showcase the essence of the discoveries made in this research journey.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

This dissertation explored the development of the first planned urban community in independent Sri Lanka, focusing on how colonial and nationalist ideologies came together and shaped it. The planning of Anuradhapura's new town, the central focus of my research, was significantly influenced by colonialism and nationalism. In Anuradhapura, the impacts of colonialism and nationalism extended beyond the planning of the new town; they shaped its historical, religious, and ethnic centralities in Ceylon during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These multiple identities of Anuradhapura are also modern constructions alongside planning. In this context, I explored the underlying actors and processes that constructed the contemporary representations of Anuradhapura as a place of history, religion, and culture. These constructions were intricated in planning Anuradhapura's new town in the mid-1900s.

Many historical sources were analyzed in this dissertation to comprehend the construction of the "present" spatial relationships and understanding of a postcolonial community. Immersed in this study, I felt like conducting a journey encompassing a wide range of historical events of the making of spatial thinking in a postcolonial present. Most postcolonial spaces are not postcolonially created. Instead, we explored that postcolonial spatial claims, relations, and perceptions did not emerge immediately after colonial rule without a colonizer. Their formation occurred when the colonized claimed space, negotiated, and contested. They evolved through multiple negotiations and contestations

within the colonial world during a period of post-colonizing that began in the late 19th century and continues today.

In this concluding chapter, I summarize the discoveries made throughout my research journey. The summary will provide a comprehensive overview of the dissertation, covering its conceptual framework, research method, and examination findings. It also presents the critical discourses, moments, and actors that shape the spatial identity of Anuradhapura. A discussion on the potential of this research for future examinations follows the summary. I began with an analysis of the colonial transformation of Anuradhapura from the perspective of its becoming an administrative center and its historical significance in the 19th century. Then, I explored the Buddhist revivalists' assertion of Anuradhapura as their historical and sacred space and the nationalist political claim for a spatial division to safeguard the place's historical significance amidst the rapid expansion of modern settlements. Finally, I explored how the nationalists' ethnic and religious sentiments were spatialized through planning the new town in Anuradhapura.

In the preceding chapters, the study demonstrated how nationalism became a spatially encompassing reality in Anuradhapura. I outlined the discursive elements of Anuradhapura's new town planning, highlighting the multilayered nature of the spatialization of nationalism. For instance, the urban vision for Anuradhapura in the 20th century was heavily influenced by colonial practices like administration, cartography, and archaeology, and above all, the implications of Sinhala Buddhist nationalism, which viewed Anuradhapura as a place symbolizing past grandeur. The colonials, inhabitants,

religious revivalists, nationalists, and planners created multiple meanings and perceptions interpreting Anuradhapura. These interpretations, relationships, and understanding remain as integrating and conflicting layers of knowledge about the place. The multilayered nature of the place and the planning project indicate the complex and diverse essence of spatial relations in postcolonial societies.

The connection between Anuradhapura, space, and nationalism forms the central focus of this research. I dedicated the opening chapter to establishing the conceptual and intellectual contexts of the study, with particular emphasis on Anuradhapura as the main empirical subject. Chapter 1 demonstrates the intellectual grounds to establish this research, indicating that the contemporary intellectual discourse of spatialization disregards the consequences of nationalism. In contrast, the discourse of nationalism lacks comprehension of the spatial nature of nationalism outside the nation-state boundaries. Therefore, studying the planning of the new Anuradhapura offers valuable insights into the often overlooked dynamics between the spatialization of nationalism and discourse. In Chapter 2 of the dissertation, I detailed my journey in making this theoretical contribution, which involved conducting archival surveys and ethnographic field studies to delve into this subject. The chapter also presents what I learned and unlearned as a researcher during my explorations of Anuradhapura's new town planning project, which explored the impact of colonialism and nationalism on making the first planned postcolonial urban community.

Chapter 3 of this dissertation reveals the transformation of Anuradhapura, illustrating how the British colonial officials who came to the area later became fascinated by exploring their colonial subjects' history and material traits. Their explorations and discoveries of Anuradhapura contributed to building a new knowledge and historical sense of the area. They constructed the modern knowledge of Anuradhapura through its rehistoricization, familiarizing themselves with the unknown territory and its historical ruins and ancient artifacts. Chapter 3 analyzed the colonials' familiarization with Anuradhapura, which led to an epistemic subjugation of colonized history from an outside-in perspective. They explored the history of the ancient monuments, connected them with the local chronologies, and incorporated Anuradhapura with the colonial political system as a regional capital. The British created new knowledge of Anuradhapura. They also created a new spatial consciousness of the place as a historical and political entity. By exploring the historical landscape, introducing archaeological excavation to examine the remains of the ancient civilization, and incorporating Anuradhapura into the colonial administrative over as a regional capital, the British established a new sense of the place's past and present. The British connected the native past with colonial modernity and reinvented the indigenous heritage. So, the chapter suggested that colonialism has rehistoricized the indigenous consciousness of heritage and linked it to their past chronologically.

While colonialism may have a detrimental effect on indigenous practices and knowledge by shaping the worldviews and social relations of the colonized, there are still possibilities for contesting, negotiating, and counteracting its impact. In Anuradhapura, the essential negotiation for the spatial division, which gave birth to postcolonial planning for their

sacred place, emerged within the colonial world in the early 20th century, which is the central theme of Chapter 4. The chapter shows that the colonial understanding of Anuradhapura as a dead place with ruins was challenged by the Buddhist religious revivalists, mainly Harischandra and Dharmapala. Anuradhapura had never been a dead site; it was a living sacred center in their imagination. For them, what was religious in Anuradhapura was alive, not the ruins of a dead civilization. The Sinhala Buddhists in the country were descendants of the creators of ancient glory. Thus, Anuradhapura must not be archeologically excavated, as the historical artifacts were not ruins of a distant past but the sacred elements of a living heritage.

The revivalists argued the need for spatial separation in the site as sacred and administrative cities to preserve the Sinhalese's ancient heritage from all the colonial government's modern spatial meanings. Although initially based on debates and discussions between Buddhist monks and Christian priests about the significance of their faiths, the argument of Dharmapala and Harischandra gave a spatial existence to Buddhism through their practice. While Dharmapala focused on Bodhgaya, Harischandra mobilized locals to preserve their heritage in Anuradhapura at the beginning of the 20th century. Their struggle against the dominant colonial perspective of the place's past made Anuradhapura one of the central locations in the Sinhalese Buddhist universe in the modern world.

Although colonization is an influential and imposing process, mainly referring to British colonialism, it is as incomplete as any other social reality that shapes modern humanity.

However, the revivalists' claim for preserving Anuradhapura was not solely against the colonial occupation of the sacred site belonging to the Buddhists. The revivalists' struggle was against the former native kingdom of Kandy's influence and control over Buddhism. So, their struggle to rescue Anuradhapura and establish it as a sacred center for the Buddhists reflected their disconnection with the last kingdom of Kandy. Although a place like Kandy held a vast significance for the Buddhists, the leaders of the revivalist movement were not significantly associated with it but were mainly from the Low Country. Then, they were the most influential leaders in forming the Sinhalese Buddhist identity and making Anuradhapura a symbolic center for the Sinhalese people.

Faced with the country's emergence as an independent nation, the Sinhalese Buddhist nationalists envisioned preserving the ancient city of Anuradhapura while building a new town, thus shaping the country's postcolonial spatiality. Unlike the revivalists, the leaders of the nationalist movement and proponents of protecting Anuradhapura's sacredness, like Bandaranaike, had a solid political motivation for a new spatial order in the sacred city. Chapter 5 analyzes the planning of the new town of Anuradhapura against the emergence of nationalist political elites who expected the national leadership who anticipated assuming national leadership in Ceylon after the departure of the British. It shows how a regional center like Anuradhapura and the historical narrative that revolved around it made use of nationalist politicians like Bandaranaike. Unlike the revivalists, Bandaranaike aimed at the national leadership in independent Ceylon. These were significant movements for building a base for his political movement, as defined by the Sinhalese Buddhist

nationalists' ideologies. The chapter focused on the nationalists' political claim for Anuradhapura in the 1940s and how that claim evolved.

Nationalism accompanied the planning in Anuradhapura. Despite the British introducing planning to Ceylon for Colombo and its surroundings, it was not until Anuradhapura that the nationalists' spatial expressions aligned with the colonial planning discourse. Including Weerasinghe, the first local planner, in the planning project for Anuradhapura's new town plan added great importance to its significance. The planning of Anuradhapura substantially affected Weerasinghe's understanding of the history and politics of the time of independence. Weerasinghe acknowledged the influence of contemporary construction near the historical sites. However, he failed to critically examine the impact of colonialism in designating Anuradhapura as a regional capital or grasp the significance of Harischandra's and Dharmapala's efforts to preserve the sacred town in the early 1900s. The new town plan was developed amid this ambiguity.

Since the beginning, the Anuradhapura planning scheme has glorified Sinhalese Buddhist history and excluded communities that could not belong to that discourse. It even created fear for the existing residents and non-Sinhalese Buddhist communities. The uncertainty was about the inclusion in the planned town established in a country dominated by Sinhalese Buddhist nationalist values. Beyond the uncertainty, Chapter 5 shows the fear evoked by Bandaranaike's mission of making a new town. The Anuradhapura political representative saw the new town planning scheme as a deliberate attempt by the Low Country Sinhalese to invade Anuradhapura. The new town planning met resistance from

non-Sinhalese Buddhist communities and their representatives. They opposed the nationalist political actors' attempts to preserve Anuradhapura's ancient and sacred site as an inheritance exclusive to the Sinhalese Buddhists.

The nationalists' voice prevailed, making the spatial division and planning of the new town in Anuradhapura in the mid-20th century. Planning was the nationalists' strategy to preserve Anuradhapura's historical and sacred value for the Sinhalese Buddhists. The nationalists led the planning effort, intending to create a comprehensive vision for the new Anuradhapura. Their spatial vision was based on modernist spatial thinking. The nationalists employed modernist planning to preserve what was not modern but what they perceived as traditional in the ancient historical site, which served as a testament to the rich heritage of the Sinhalese Buddhist tradition.

The reason for Anuradhapura to become the first planned postcolonial town in Ceylon was a question I was consistently asked from the beginning of this study. I interacted with many planners, researchers, and even locals who wondered why a town like Anuradhapura was chosen as the first planned urban community in independent Ceylon instead of a functioning urban center like Kandy, Galle, or Jaffna. Those towns had larger populations, more advanced political and commercial networks, and physical infrastructure constructed during colonial times at the time of independence in 1948. It became apparent that preconceived notions accompanied those queries, as the queries assumed that planning a new town had been a rational process based on the urban hierarchy. Yet, planning is beyond an approach dictated by rational choices and concrete facts. From that

perspective, other larger urban centers had more potential to become the first planned towns. Still, Anuradhapura was chosen.

As previously examined, Anuradhapura was abandoned in the 11th century BC. However, it remained significant to pilgrims for centuries until the British discovered Anuradhapura as a historically significant site (from their perspective) and a suitable location to establish the province's administrative center. The British transformed Anuradhapura into a regional capital, initiated archaeological excavations, and brought new life to it. They rehistoricized Anuradhapura in the late 19th century. Like the colonials, religious revivalists and nationalist politicians renegotiated and reinterpreted Anuradhapura's historical and sacred significance according to their desires. These findings imply that the communities' pasts or histories do not contain an essence that could control their present.

In other words, past actions, constructions, and events do not entirely define the present of a community. Instead, different actors in the present reimagine the past, crafting narratives about it and using them as a foundation to construct the future they desire. It is an exclusive and selective process dictated by multiple perceptions and subjectivities that formed multiple cultures in the material, institutional, and cognitive realms. These creations eventually play a critical role in shaping the thinking of the present, establishing and maintaining a sense of historical continuity, and shaping how communities should and should not remember their past to be a part of the present in the production. By interweaving historical narratives with the present, Anuradhapura achieved a sense of historical continuity, ultimately birthing the first postcolonial urban center.

Planning Anuradhapura's new town was a deliberate political maneuver that failed to acknowledge the perspectives that praised only the rationality of the planning. The planning of Anuradhapura was shaped by the social, political, and religious ideologies of the time, accommodating various aspirations and subjectivities. By encompassing a wide array of elements, such as nationalist sentiments, religion, and ethnic identities, the plan emphasizes the cultural aspects that necessitated the development of a new town while also challenging the dominant principles of rationality in urban planning. Ultimately, the historical development of Anuradhapura's new town plan shows that planning is inherently political. It is a practice beyond the relationship between planners and physical spaces, which provides a framework for the spatial development of a community. It represents that a plan holds a broader meaning than a legal framework to determine future spatial relations, expressing the political and cultural dynamics.

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