

Buddhist Forest Monasteries and Meditation Centres in Sri Lanka

A Guide for Foreign Buddhist Monastics and Lay Practitioners

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by

Bhikkhu Nyanatusita

Introduction

In Sri Lanka there are many forest hermitages and meditation centres suitable for foreign Buddhist monastics or for experienced lay Buddhists. The following information is particularly intended for foreign bhikkhus, those who aspire to become bhikkhus, and those who are experienced lay practitioners. [Another guide is available](#) for less experienced, short term visiting lay practitioners.

Factors such as climate, food, noise, standards of monastic discipline (vinaya), dangerous animals and accessibility have been considered with regard the places listed in this work. The book *Sacred Island* by Ven. S. Dhammika—published by the BPS—gives exhaustive information regarding ancient monasteries and other sacred sites and pilgrimage places in Sri Lanka.

The [Amazing Lanka website](#) describes many ancient monasteries as well as the modern (forest) monasteries located at the sites, showing the exact locations on satellite maps, and giving information on the history, directions, etc.

There are many monasteries listed in this guides, but to get a general idea of of all monasteries in Sri Lanka it is enough to see a couple of monasteries connected to different traditions and in different areas of the country. There is no perfect place in saṃsāra and as long as one is not liberated from mental defilements one will sooner or later start to find fault with a monastery. There is no monastery which is perfectly quiet and where the monks are all arahants. Rather than trying to find the perfect external place, which does not exist, it is more realistic to be content with an imperfect place and learn to deal with the defilements that come up in one's mind. Nevertheless, there are particular conditions such as climate and food which affect each person differently and this guide can be used to find a place which matches one's physical constitution and temperament. It can also be used when travelling or going on cārikā, a walking journey, so that one can walk from monastery to monastery.

Conditions in monasteries change and some of the information given here might be outdated and inaccurate. The guide is based on a basic list of monasteries made 15 years ago. Several monks have helped with updating this guide. To help keep this list update and accurate please send suggestions

and information (contact details, abbot's name, number of monks, facilities, number of kutis, condition, affiliation, etc.), from your own experience, to: Bhikkhu Nyanatusita, Forest Hermitage, Udawattakele, PO Box 61, Kandy, Sri Lanka. Email: nyanatusita[at]gmail.com

Country, climate & food

The greatest concentration of forest monasteries is in the western side of the country, especially in Kurunegala, Colombo, Gālla, and Mātara districts. There are very few active forest monasteries in the northern and eastern districts, although there are ruins of ancient monasteries in many places. Some of these monasteries are now being re-developed, most notably Kudumbigala. In the higher mountain areas such as Nuwara Eliya there are also few monasteries because most Sinhalese find it too cold there.

The area where a monastery or meditation center is located gives a good indication as to its climate. In the south-western low country the climate is tropical, i.e., hot and humid, especially in March/April, rather like a steam-sauna. The Eastern low country has a dry season between May and October. The South West (roughly between Mātara, Colombo, and Ratnapura) is the so-called “wet-zone” where two monsoons a year take place (May-June, November-December). The so-called “dry-zone” is in the East, North, and South. This area starts about mid-way between Mātale and Dambulla, at the eastern and southern edges of the hill country, and east of Balangoda and Tangalle. Only one main monsoon (November-December) takes place there, although there is some rain too during the intermonsoon period in April and the occasional shower in other times of the year. In fact the term “dry-zone” is quite an exaggeration since it can rain very heavily there and floods occur regularly.

The deep South (the coastal area between Ambalantota and Pānama) and the far North (Northern coast & Jaffna peninsula) are the driest areas in SL. It can be quite warm here but it is not as humid as the low-country wet zone. The “upcountry” is the hill and mountain area in the center of Sri Lanka (roughly between Mātale, Kegalla, Balangoda, Haputale, and Badulla). The climate there is temperate and it can get cool at night. (10–22°C depending on the altitude and time of the year. In Nuwara Eliya the temperature can drop to freezing point in clear nights in December–February.) For those originally from cool climates it is generally a more agreeable climate than the low country. In the south-west upcountry areas such as the Singharāja rain forest and the Śri Pāda Wilderness areas it rains a lot, and most of the year, so much so that it sometimes can be impossible to dry one's clothes for days after washing.

Loudspeakers can be quite a disturbance in Sri Lanka, as in Asia in general. There are only a few places which completely escape the sound of the Paritta chanting blasted from village monasteries on Poya days.

The food is generally the same everywhere and at all times. It is usually fairly plain and simple. Rice is the staple food and many Sinhalese eat it three times a day. The curries served with rice can be quite spicy, with chilli, black pepper and other spices, as well as very salty, especially in rural areas. Although the quality of food has improved greatly in recent times, in undeveloped rural areas food can be unnutritious due to overcooking and lack of fresh vegetables and fruits. If one finds that the food is not nutritious enough a vitamin supplement can be taken. Many Sinhalese Buddhists do

not eat meat or fish, and even if they do, do not give it to monks. In some monasteries and meditation centres small amounts of fish might be served (rarely meat or eggs), but if one is a vegetarian one can easily refuse without offending anyone.

Vinaya & monastic traditions

The standards of discipline (vinaya) vary from tradition to tradition, and from monastery to monastery. In Sri Lanka there is not such a strong tradition of refined teacher and monastery etiquette as there is in the Thai Forest traditions. The Galduwa Forest Tradition has the strictest vinaya tradition in Sri Lanka and it also follows the commentarial interpretations strictly. In forest monasteries and meditation centres that are not affiliated with the Galduwa tradition the vinaya standards are generally less strict, but still reasonable. In many city and village temples and monastic schools (pirivena) (not listed in this work) the vinaya standards can be in need of improvement.

Usually the tradition a monastery or meditation centre belongs to is mentioned as it gives an indication of what the vinaya standards and customs are like in a place. There are many traditions in Sri Lanka. The main ones are:

The Kaḷ yāna Yogāshramaya Saṃsthāva or Galduwa tradition is an independent part of the Rāmañña Nikāya. The headquarters is in Galduwa, near Ambalangoda. It is the largest forest sect in Sri Lanka and the emphasis is on meditation practice. There are about 150 monasteries affiliated with this tradition. The monks are easily recognised by the palm-leaf umbrella they carry and by the habit of wearing the double robe whenever they go outside the monastery boundaries. Members of all castes are accepted. Bhikkhus from other traditions who wish to become resident for a long period at one of their monasteries are usually requested to reordain at Galduwa. Until recently, the procedure would be to do a daḷ hikamma, a short ceremony intended to reconfirm the original upasampadā in accordance with the Galduwa standards, but reportedly this is not done in most places now. Monks who ordained in a Pa Auk monastery in Burma or in the Ajahn Chah tradition are accepted and do not require a new upasampadā. The main monasteries in this tradition of interest to foreigners new to Sri Lanka are Na Uyana and Nissarana Vanaya.

The Deldūva group is a small group of forest monasteries. It is an older forest division of the Rāmañña Nikāya, and is not affiliated with the Galduwa tradition.

The Mahāvihāra Vaṃshika Syāmapāli Vanavāsa Nikāya or Waturawila group has over 80 branch monasteries throughout the country. The Vinaya standards are not as strict as in the Galduwa group but are reasonable. After the passing away of the founder, the meditative and ascetic interest in this tradition has slackened and some monasteries have become pirivenas (monastic schools) with many young novices. In some other monasteries there are many elderly monks, who ordained after retiring. The headquarters are in Waturawila in Gālla district. It has no monasteries where foreigners can ordain and receive a training. The Madakada group is a sub-sect of the Waturawila group that follows stricter Vinaya standards has its headquarters in Madakada Aranya near Ingiriya.

The Vajirāma Tradition or Dharmarakshita Chapter is a subsect of the Amarapura Nikāya. Its headquarters are Vajirārāmaya, Bambalapitiya, Colombo, and Dharmāyatana Bhikkhu Training Centre, Maharagama, Colombo. This is mainly a study and teaching tradition, but there are forest

monasteries with stricter Vinaya standards connected with it, i.e. Bowalawatta Aranya (Kandy), Katu Pota Aranya (Mihintale), Senanāyakārāmaya (Kandy), and the Island Hermitage.

The Kanduboda group or Swejyin Nikāya chapter of the Amarapura Nikāya is a group of monasteries connected to the Kanduboda International Meditation Centre and with Sumantiphala Meditation Centre. It originates from the Mahasi Sayadaw tradition, which is part of the Burmese Swejyin Nikāya. The Mahasi Sayadaw meditation technique is practised. It has reasonable standards of Vinaya. There are about twenty small meditation centres connected to this tradition but most have little to attract foreigners.

The Tapovana group or Kaḷ yāṇ avamsa chapter of the Amarapura Nikāya is a small group of semi forest monasteries usually situated near major towns. The headquarters are near Colombo. Usually the Mahāsi meditation method is practised. The monks have reasonable Vinaya standards.

From the same Kaḷ yāṇ avamsa chapter originates the Mahamevnāva group, a rapidly expanding revivalist movement started in early 2000s by the preacher Ven. Kiribathgoda Ñāṇ ānanda. There are now many Mahamevnāva Asapuwa monasteries all over Sri Lanka and the world. They are not meditation centres or forest monasteries. The main emphasis of this tradition is Sutta study, making merit, large building projects (stupas, etc.) and the revival of pure Sinhalese Buddhism. The monasteries are well kept and the monks, mostly young, are educated, motivated and well-behaved. The headquarters is at Polgahawella. The monasteries are mostly in town areas, tend to be crowded (especially on Poya days), and there can be chanting from loudspeakers. Without permission from Ven. Ñāṇ ānanda, outside monks can only stay for 3 days at most.

Information on the early history of the Galduwa and Waturawila forest traditions in Sri Lanka can be found in Michael Carrithers' book *The Forest Monks of Sri Lanka*, Oxford 1983.

Note that the names of monasteries do not always reflect what is actually happening in a place and that although some village monasteries are called “international meditation centre”, etc., this can have been done because it sounds prestigious and there might be no meditation teachings and no English speakers or foreign monks.

“Best places” for newcomers

The places that most foreigners stay in when new to Sri Lanka are Na Uyana Aranya in Kurunegala District, Nissarana Vanaya in Colombo District, and Sumanthipala & Kandubodha Siyane International Meditation Centre in Colombo district. These places have teachers and are experienced in dealing with obtaining residence visas, etc.

Culture, manners

Normally travelling monks are welcome to stay in any monastery for the night. Even if there is no monastery in a village, one can stay in the school or some other empty building. For longer stays in a monastery, one needs to ask permission from the abbot and it is normally readily granted if there is space. In some places the Sinhalese monks might not be so helpful due to negative experiences with foreigners or perhaps due to strong nationalist sentiments. It is good to make an effort to remain polite and not to appear harsh.

Bhikkhus generally do not get honoured in the same manner as in Thailand or Burma. The body language and the way Sinhalese people and monks speak and behave might appear disrespectful to monks used to Thai or Burmese customs.

Although Sinhalese people themselves can be critical about problems in their country, as a foreigner it is better not to talk about politics and the like. Many Sinhalese monks, even those in meditation and forest monasteries, are quite nationalistic and can express negative sentiments towards other ethnic and religious groups in Sri Lanka as well as foreigners. Occasionally there are riots and pogroms by Sinhalese against other ethnic groups, nowadays mainly Muslims. One has to be careful not to develop an overly critical attitudes about things that can be improved or openly condemn rituals that the Sinhalese Buddhists do. Like most Asians, Sinhalese are generally quite indirect and are afraid of blame.

In general one can be, and needs to be, independent in Sri Lanka. If one likes to practice independently and is not looking for a charismatic teacher to support one's practice, then Sri Lanka may be suitable. Sinhalese culture, being part of the Indian cultural sphere, allows more individualism than the conformist Thai culture, which is part of the Chinese cultural sphere. Sinhalese leave space to others and there is not such a strong teacher tradition in Sri Lanka as in Thailand. Nevertheless, there are monks, nuns, and lay practitioners who can give useful instructions and help one along the way.

Travel & communication

Conditions in meditation centres and monasteries can be very basic and sometimes uncomfortable for those used to comforts. Meditation centres and monasteries generally are not so well off in Sri Lanka. One has to get used to taking public transport or walking when one wants to go somewhere. Bhikkhus who do not use money can use special coupons with which one can travel on government buses (known as CTB, Ceylon Transport Board). The monastery one stays in can usually supply these. There are also special monks' coupons to travel on trains.

Sri Lanka used to be a British colony and there are many Sinhalese people who can speak English well, especially in Colombo and other big towns. However, in remote country areas it can be more difficult to find English speakers. Nevertheless, in almost every village there will be (or is supposed to be) an English teacher in the village school who will be keen to practise his English and can help with translating if necessary. In the bigger meditation centres and monasteries there is usually someone who can speak English, but in the more remote and smaller monasteries this might not be the case. It is not difficult to learn spoken Sinhala and people are usually helpful and understanding. Many English or rather "Singlish" terms have made their way into the Sinhala language, for example a bus stop is called "bus halt" a "bus station" a "bus stand," and one "gets down" from a bus rather than getting off or out of it. If one uses such information one is more likely to be understood. All people have learnt a bit of English at school, so if there is no other way one can try with simple English terms.

Sri Lankan institutions and monasteries often do not reply to emails or letters since Sri Lankans prefer personal contact. It is best to go in person or telephone if that is not possible.

Medical care & diseases & dangerous animals

The medical care in government hospitals is free for monks in Sri Lanka. There are special wards for Buddhist monks in the larger government hospitals for those bhikkhus who are seriously ill. Medical care and hygiene are generally not of the highest standards, but the doctors usually do their best to help sick bhikkhus. There are quite a few doctors and dentists who have trained and worked in the West. The monastery one is connected with will help if one needs medicines or medical care. The best hospitals are the large private hospitals in Colombo, but they are expensive. The same doctors who work in the private hospitals also work in government hospitals, but the equipment and facilities in government hospitals are often of a lesser standard, especially in rural hospitals. Dentists often help monks for free.

Unlike some other tropical countries, tropical diseases are not so common because the government healthcare system is well organised. Malaria has been eradicated from Sri Lanka. However, in some urban areas, especially in and around Colombo, there are cases of dengue fever (called “dengu”) and chikungunya fever, and, to a much lesser degree, Japanese encephalitis. In some western and south-western coastal areas there is a small risk of contracting the filaria parasite that causes swelling of the lymph nodes and elephantiasis. A campaign is being waged to eradicate this disease. All these diseases are spread by mosquitos. It is therefore always good to use mosquito nets and repellents. Note that the dengue fever mosquito bites during the daytime in shady places. The drinking water is generally of good quality in Sri Lanka; nevertheless, it is always safer to drink boiled, filtered or bottled water.

There is rabies in Sri Lanka and one should go to the local hospital for anti-rabies shots if one is bitten by a dog, stray cat, bat, or by a monkey. Many dogs are vaccinated against rabies. Every major hospital has an anti-rabies clinic where one can get the vaccination-shots. There is also Leptospirosis or Weil’s disease, a dangerous disease characterized by jaundice and fever, which is transmitted by rats’ urine in contaminated water in paddy fields, etc., or on on surfaces such as floors, by way of cuts on the skin or ingestion.

Intestinal pinworms or threadworms are common in Sri Lanka. These usually harmless creatures are spread through food, particularly raw vegetables, touched by the unwashed hands of an infected person. Their presence is marked by itching in the anal area at night. Regular washing one’s hands and bottom with soap will usually stop them from reinfecting oneself. If this does not work, an anti-worm tablet such as Vermox will dispel them. Other types of worms are very rare in Sri Lanka since no raw meat and fish is eaten.

Compared to some other tropical areas such as South America or Africa, Sri Lankan nature is benevolent; however there are creatures that one has to be wary of. In many undeveloped jungle areas in the South, East, and North, such as at Kudumbigala, there are wild elephants and bears that regularly attack and kill people. Monks have been attacked by these beasts and one has to take care when in or near jungle areas, especially at night. The best thing to do when an elephant charges is to run away in a zigzag manner and hide behind a tree or rock. Elephants can run very quickly in a straight line, much quicker than humans, but have difficulties turning. The bear is considered the most unpredictable and dangerous animal by the Sinhalese. People have been killed or badly maimed by them in forest areas. They are good climbers and runners. If one cannot escape, then fall

face down on the ground with one's arms spread out and pretend to be dead. The bear will normally want to maul one's face and neck, but if one lies face down and with the arms spread out so that the bear cannot turn one over, then the injuries will be on the back of the head and neck where they are less dangerous. Wild pigs are also known to charge at people and it is better to keep a distance from them. Leopards are very shy and only attack people very rarely.

There are various dangerous snakes such as cobras, Russell's vipers, and kraits in Sri Lanka and many people are killed each year due to snakebites, especially those of Russell's vipers and kraits. Kraits are nocturnal snakes and often bite people while they sleep. The snake is attracted to the body heat of a sleeping person and it may bite when the person turns over in his sleep. Cobras are shy and will only bite when cornered. Vipers, however, will often not move at all when one approaches and are much more likely to bite. When bitten by a snake, do not panic, note what kind of snake it is and try to go to a hospital as soon as possible to get antivenin. Do not trust village snake doctors. There are crocodiles (kumbila) in rivers, lakes and ponds in the south and east of the country so ask a local about them before bathing. The large black monitor lizards that live near lakes and rivers are not aggressive but one should not go close to them since they can whip with their long tail. Their bite is poisonous and requires hospital treatment. The sting of the big black or blue-green scorpions one often encounters after heavy rainfall is like the sting of a wasp and not dangerous. On the other hand, large centipede stings are very painful. Tarantula spiders occasionally enter houses, but they rarely bite people unless provoked. Sri Lankan tarantula bites can cause partial paralysis and severe pain. The large black hunting ants called "kaddi" in Sinhala that one encounters in swarms on tracks in the forest can also give a painful sting, like the sting of a wasp.

Leeches ("kudella") or ticks ("khinithulla) are present in most forest and scrub areas. Leeches are common in humid wet-zone forests, especially on hills and mountains, while ticks are common in dry zone lowland forests. It is rare to have both leeches and ticks in one area. If not treated, leech bites cause bleeding for 10 minutes or more because the leech injects an anti-coagulant into the blood. One will generally not feel the leech bite until the leech has detached and blood starts to flow from the wound. It is best to put tissue, paper or ash on the bite to stop the bleeding. It is easy to remove the leech by pulling or scratching it off. To prevent bites one can avoid going off paths and swept areas into areas with leaves and undergrowth. Putting mosquito repellent, soap, or salt on one's feet will repel them off for a while. There will usually be no itching, unless one is allergic to leech bites. Leeches do not transmit diseases and the bites usually do not become infected. Ticks are common in dry zone forests with a lot of tall grasses and shrubs, especially in national parks where there is a lot of wildlife. Tick bites can cause a lot of itching which can last for days, and due to scratching the wounds, the bites can get infected. Ticks can be quite small and difficult to spot and can climb up one's robes to one's abdomen and back of one's head. They generally bite in soft spots such as the upper legs. Fortunately, they are not known to transmit diseases such as Lyme's Disease or other borrelia fevers in Sri Lanka. One can avoid them by not going into scrubby areas and washing oneself and one's clothes well with soap if one has done so. If one has been bitten, then it is best to apply a four way action antiseptic cream (which contains a combination of antiseptic, anti-inflammatory, analgesic and soothing ingredients) as are sold in pharmacies in Australia (Paraderm Plus, etc.). Ticks should never be pulled out straight, which can cause the head to break off and remain embedded, but should be carefully twisted around until they let go by themselves.

First putting a drop of oil on the tick will make it easier to remove. Reportedly, backing soda is also useful to remove ticks and disinfect bites. It is advisable to use a mosquito-net in forests and rural areas to keep away kraits, scorpions, centipedes, and mosquitos. However, the risk of having a serious traffic accident while walking on the street or travelling on a bus is much greater than that of being stung or attacked by some dangerous creature in the jungle.

Visas

Visa regulations are complex and frequently change in Sri Lanka. Before applying it is best to inquire about the requirements.¹ This is the procedure as in mid 2018:

If you are not intending to stay for more than half a year in Sri Lanka then you can enter the country on a one month tourist visa (ETA), which can be applied and paid for online, or it can be paid for in cash on entry into the country, or at a Sri Lanka diplomatic mission abroad.² This tourist visa can be extended against payment for another two months and then for another three months³ at the Department of Immigration in Battaramula outside of Colombo, or at the Immigration Services Centre on Galle Road in Colombo (a private enterprise recommended by the Immigration Department on their website, but the fees will be higher),⁴ but then you will have to leave the country.

If you wish to stay at a monastery or meditation centre in Sri Lanka for longer, then an entry visa is required. It is to be obtained from a Sri Lankan foreign diplomatic mission (not necessarily in your home country) with the help of the monastery where you intend to stay. The website of the Sri Lanka immigration states: “To obtain a Residence Visa, it is necessary to arrive in Sri Lanka on an Entry Visa issued by a Sri Lankan Mission abroad with the concurrence of the Controller General of Immigration and Emigration. The fact that you wish to apply for Sri Lankan Residence Visa has to be mentioned when obtaining the entry visa and necessary supporting documents has to be submitted.”⁵

Your monastery will first apply for the entry visa from the Buddha Sasana Ministry and then to the Immigration Department. After approval, the Controller of Immigration will inform the Sri Lanka foreign diplomatic mission, from where you can get the visa.

The following papers will have to be sent to the Buddhasasana Ministry department by the head of the monastery:

1. A formal letter of sponsorship.
2. A police clearance report / certificate of good conduct from the country of birth (or domicile?). If it has been translated into English from another language then the original is also required.
3. When a monk, a photocopy of your monk's ordination certificate.
4. A photocopy of the personal data pages of your passport (i.e. those with your name & photo and the one with “valid for all countries”).
5. If you are currently residing in another country, a photocopy of your visa page in that country.
6. A filled in “Application to obtain a letter of recommendation for an Entry-Visa”.

7. A recommendation letter from a Buddhist monastery, or Buddhist Centre, or Buddhist government office of the country of domicile.

For the Immigration Department the following papers are required:

1. Letter of recommendation obtained from Buddhasasana Ministry.
2. Application form “Entry Visa”.
3. Your foreign address and the foreign diplomatic mission where you are going to apply for the visa.
4. A copy of the passport with visa and exit-visa-stamp of your last exit from Sri Lanka. (The Immigration charges Rs. 750 for the receipt.)

Your police record will be sent by the Buddha Sasana Ministry to the Ministry of Defense for checking, which should take from 4 to 6 weeks but can take even more. During this time you should be out of Sri Lanka. When the monastery receives the approval letter from the Controller of Immigration, they will send it to you by email or ordinary mail.

The following papers will be required at the foreign mission:

1. Passport.
2. A copy of the approval letter from Controller of Immigration.
3. Entry-visa application form “B”.
4. Copy of passport with visa.
5. Two passport size photographs.
6. Copy of ticket of booked flight to Sri Lanka.

This entry visa costs the same as a tourist visa. After arriving in Sri Lanka with the entry visa you will be given a 30 day visa on arrival.

After arriving in Sri Lanka, your monastery will help you to apply for the one year resident visa. Visas for monks and nuns are free. Lay people need to pay for the application. In order to apply for a residence visa, you need to get a sponsorship letter from the senior monk of your monastery, then you need to go with this letter and the so-called “application form to obtain a letter of recommendation to extend the residence visa” (available at your monastery and/or the Ministry of Buddha Sasana and Religious Affairs in Colombo) to the monk who is the secretary of the district (Iekhakādhikāri handuruwo). If one applies for the first time for a residence visa, then please check whether another form is required from the Ministry of Buddha Sasana rather than the one to extend an existing visa, otherwise one might be turned away at the Ministry of Buddha Sasana. One then needs to get the application form signed by him and stamped with his official seal. (It is best to telephone the secretary monk beforehand and make an appointment since some secretary monk have jobs and are only available certain days of the week.) Then this form needs to be signed and stamped by the secretary of the Divisional Secretary (kacceri or pradesya lekham). (Note that if one still has a passport photo as a laymen in one’s passport that a passport photo as a monk will need to be attached to this application. It will also need to be stamped and signed by the district monk and provincial council secretary.) The monastery where one stays should help you with this.

When this preliminary paper work has been done, one has to go to the Ministry of Buddha Sasana and Religious Affairs at 135 Dharmapala Mawatha (opposite Vihara Mahadevi Park) in Colombo 7

(Tel. 0111-340-7401/ 011-230-7402. Fax: 011-230-7409) and lodge one's application. Since 2017 the application has to go through the Ministry of Defense, for which an extra application form has to be filled in, and a photograph needs to be attached. One does not need to go to the Ministry of Defense oneself since the Ministry of Buddhasasana will send it there. After having made investigations with regard to one's criminal record, etc., the Ministry of Defense will approve the application in about 4 to 6 weeks and return it to Ministry of Buddha Sasana, which should then inform you that the approval has arrived. However, this cannot be taken for granted and one better calls the ministry oneself after a month to see whether it has arrived. If so, one has to return to the Ministry of Buddhasasana and get the recommendation letter to take to the Department of Immigration.

For the first time application for a residence visa, bring along two or three passport photos. (They can be obtained from shops in or near the Immigration Dept itself.) The Immigration Department office is in Battaramulla, a 45 minute hour bus ride from central Colombo. The residence visa application form can be downloaded from the Immigration Department website.⁶ At the Ministry of Buddha Sasana one generally has to wait less than one hour. At the Immigration Department it usually takes one and a half hours, perhaps more.

One does not need to go in person to the Immigration Department but one can send someone to bring and collect the passport. Probably this can be done too at the Buddha Sasana Ministry for subsequent visa extensions.

According to Sri Lankan law, it is not possible for foreigners (or former Sri Lankans who have emigrated and become citizens of other countries) to become Sri Lankan citizens.

Abbreviations

- aff.: Affiliation/Affiliated with
A: Aranya.
AS: Aranya Senāsanaya.
BM: Bhāvanā Madhyasthānaya/Meditation Centre.
DA: Dharmāshramaya.
MC: Meditation Centre/ Bhāvanā Madhyasthānaya
S: Senāsanaya.
T: Tapovanaya.
Y: Yogāshramaya.
VMC: Vipassanā Meditation Centre.
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Monasteries and Meditation Centres

Colombo City

Pagoda Meditation Centre. 49/2, 1st Cross Street, Pagoda Road, Nugegoda. Tel: 011–281-2397 (8am-9am, 8pm-9pm only). The meditation centre of Ven. Olanda Ānanda, a well-known senior Dutch monk who speaks fluent Sinhala and has been teaching meditation for a long time in Sri Lanka and abroad. There are meditation retreats held by Ven. Ānanda and there is accommodation for laypeople. Situated in a quiet area in a suburb of Colombo. Website: <http://www.olandeananda.org>

Shri Kalyāṇī DA, 418/31 Bauddhaloka Mawatha, Colombo 07, 00700. (Tel: 011–269-6494) Abbot: Ven. Nanda thera. This is the main Galduwa monastery in Colombo, thus sometimes crowded with visiting and sick monks. Guest monks normally stay in a dormitory. Clean and tidy. Between a major road and school, so it can be fairly noisy.

Lankā Vipassanā MC. 108 Wijerāma Mawatha, Colombo 7. Good support, tidy, clean, quiet. In Colombo's diplomatic quarter. The current abbot is connected to the Galduwa tradition. Visiting monks can stay here.

Dharmāyatana Bhikkhu Training Centre or Siri Vajiranyāṇa Dharmāyatana. Siri Vajiranyāṇa Mawatha, Maharagama. Tel. 011–285-0305 or 011–285-0207. Usually referred to as Maharagama. A major training centre, pirivena, for young Sinhalese monks. There is a “meditation-section” in the back where foreign monks who come to renew their visas occasionally stay. There are over 25 branches throughout the country. A few forest monasteries with stricter vinaya standards are connected to this tradition; Bowalawatta Aranya being the main one. In general it is not a forest tradition though and the emphasis lies on study, teaching, and service.

Sri Vajirārāmaya. Vajira Road, Bambalapitiya. Colombo 4. Tel. 011–258-4202. Email: vajiraramaweb@gmail.com Website: www.vajirarama.lk Close to Gālla Road. An old and renowned monastery with a famous tradition of scholars like Ven. Nārada, Soma, Kheminda, and Ven. Piyadassi. There is a good library, which has recently been renovated. Venerable Ānanda, Anunāyaka of the Amarapura Nikāya is staying here and is helping to revive this tradition. Vajirāma Group of the Amarapura Nikāya.

Nārada Bauddha Dharmayatana, 380/9, Sarana Road, Colombo 00700. Email: mettavihari@gmail.com. Opposite the back entrance of the BMICH. Connected to Maharagama (see next). A small monastery where one can't stay. The Danish Ven. Mettavihāri who resides there can be helpful to new foreigners but is usually only there at night.

Buddhist Cultural Centre (BCC), 125 Anderson Road, Nedimala, Dehiwala. Tel. 011–273-4256, 011–272-6234, or 011-272-8468. Fax. 011–273-6737. E-mail: info@buddhistcc.com Web Site: <http://buddhistcc.net> Open all days from 8.30 am to 5.30 pm. Director: Ven. Vimalajoti thera. There is a comprehensive selection of Buddhist Books. Branch bookshops are at the junction of Bauddhaloka Mawatha and Sarana Road in the All Ceylon Buddhist Congress compound, and 2 smaller centres, one in Kelaniya, one near Lake House alongside the cetiya opposite the Hilton and one at Jayanthi Madira 32, Sambuddha Jayanthi Mawatha, Colombo 5.

Central Hospital Vajirāramaya, Central Hospital, Colombo, 011–269-2018. Small vihāra in the General Hospital. One can eat lunch here when going to the hospital for treatment or when visiting the nearby police mortuary (on St. Francis St.) or hospital mortuary (off Kinsey Road).

Vishva Niketan International Peace Centre. 72/30 Rawatawatte Road, Moratuwa. Tel/Fax: 011-265-5653 E-mail: vishvaniketan@mail.ewisl.net. Aff. Sarvodaya, a social self-help movement. There are programs for males and females of all religions. There are also anti-stress programs for businesses and other organisations.

Gilan-āvāsaya, 525/3 Elvitigala Mawatha, Narahenpita, Colombo 5, 00500. Tel: 011-236-8254. Small place, conveniently located, where sick Galduwa monks can stay in Colombo. Abbot: Ven. Rahula. Opposite Pan Asia Bank, lane just before Kirimandala Mawatha and large Bodhi tree. There is a tyre shop at the entrance to the lane. Aff. Galduwa.

Vipassanā Bhāvanāyatana, Sri Jayawardenapura Rajamalvatte, Rajasaba Mawatha, Kotte. Tel. 011–286-3635. Teacher: Ven. Erapola Vipassī. Sri Kavidhaja Vachissara MC. High Level Road, Mīgoda. VMC. Talagala, Milleva.

Colombo District, Avissawella, and Gampaha

Due to its proximity to the capital, there are many monasteries in this area. Mostly flatland with some isolated hills, rubber estates and paddyfields. Generally has a hot and humid climate. Listed here are the monasteries and centres in the area about 30 kms around Colombo, although some could have been included in Kegalla district, etc.

Sumantiphala BM. Hilbatgala Rd, Kanduboda, Delgoda. Tel: 011–240-2805. Located right next to Kanduboda VMC (see next entry), and, although there are still separate front entrances, in effect the two monasteries have merged together into one. The abbot and teacher on this side is Ven. Premasiri, a popular and experienced teacher in the Mahāsi tradition as well as other traditional meditation techniques. There are daily question and answer Dhamma discussions from 3-4pm. The place is mainly for laypeople who do not need much guidance, but several foreign monks, especially Czech, stay here too. The female yogis and nuns have their own separate areas. The facilities are nice and spacious. Warm and humid climate. It is close to a small road and surrounded by coconut plantations and a few village houses. It is about 20 kms east of Colombo. From the CTB Bus Station at Olcott Mawatha, Pita Kotuwa (Pettah), take the bus no. 224 which stops outside the Kanduboda VMC monastery.

Kanduboda Siyane VMC. Hilbatgala Rd, Kanduboda, Delgoda. Tel. 011–244-5518; 011–257-0306. Website: <http://www.insight-meditation.org> E-mail: bhavanam@slt.net.lk

A meditation centre and monastery with a long tradition of offering meditation instruction. Besides monks and nuns, also lay meditators stay here and some take ordination. The abbot and teacher at present is Ven. Piyaratana Thera. A few large buildings with rooms and some kutis. The teaching is in the Mahāsi tradition and the monastery arose out of Mahāsi tradition Sayādaws teaching here in the 1950s or 1960s. One is expected to meditate more than 10 hours a day. The teachers speak little English. For lay people, the cost to stay here is Rs. 5000 regardless of the duration of staying. Although the tradition is part of the Amarapura Nikāya, it has a separate ordination lineage,

originating from the Swejyin Nikāya of Burma (to which Mahāsi Sayādaw belonged). The daily schedule and discipline is more relaxed than in the Mahāsi centres in Burma and there is more individual meditation than group meditation. Kanduboda has more than 25 branches throughout the country but most have little to offer foreigners. The directions are the same as for Sumantiphala BM (see previous entry).

Nissarana Vanaya or **Mītirigala A. Mītirigala** (Meetirigala) 11742. Tel: 033-492-1135/ 033-333-9193. Email: nissaranavanya@gmail.com Website: <http://www.nissarana.lk>

A large, 100 hectare, forest monastery 30 kms east of Colombo. Founded in 1968. About 15 resident monks, usually including a few foreign monks. The meditation teacher, Ven. Dhammajīva, speaks English and has meditated for a long time with Sayādaw U Paṇḍita in Burma. He mostly teaches Mahāsi method and offers several retreats every year in English (and many more in Sinhala). For the past years he has been teaching overseas for extensive periods and often is not there. When he is not there, the teacher is Ven. Chandaratana, who speaks English well and is helpful. The library has a good English and German section. Dense low-country jungle on a hill slope. Humid, windless and hot climate. Sometimes some loudspeaker noise from the village. The Dharmāyatana (see next entry) is on the next hill, a 25 minute walk away. From Colombo take a Kirindiwela Bus at Central Bus stand in Pita Kotuwa (Pettah). The bus leaves close to the Bodhi tree outside the station. In Kirindiwella, ask for a bus to Ranwalla or Wedagama, get off at Mītirigala. It's a 25 min. walk from the bus-stop to monastery. It is also possible to get off at Pallegama Junction (between Kirindiwela and Pūgoda) and catch buses to Mītirigala Junction. (Do not take the bus to Amītirigala which is further away. If coming from the Ratanapura side, one can take a bus to Amītirigala from Avissawella and get off just after having crossed the bridge over the Kelaniya river. It is about 40 minutes walk from there. If coming from Kandy, take a Colombo bus and get off at Nitambuwa, then go to Kirindiwela, etc.)

Sri Nāṇ arāma Dharmāyatana, Meetirigala 11742. On the hill adjoining and west of Nissarana Vanaya. The entrance road starts a bit beyond the Nissarana Vanaya gate. A large Galduwa tradition study centre with a dozen monks. Large meditation hall; rooms in a compound, a few kutis; regrowth forest. Hot and humid climate.

Dikhena BM / Sri Lanka Myanmar Pa Auk Meditation Centre. Dikhena, Polgasowita 10320. (Tel: 011-278-0140) Meditation Centre. Facilities for laymen and laywomen. Set in coconut estate near Piliyandala, Kesbeva, south of Colombo. Facilities for about 12 monks. Two-week meditation courses for laymen and laywomen. Excellent meditation hall. Fairly quiet. Kutis/rooms are either close to each other or adjoining. It is reported that the former abbot, Ven. Mīthalave Vinīta Thera, who teaches Mahāsi Method, left in 2012 and only a few monks remain. Ven. Dasvatte Sumanasīla Thera teaches Pa Auk method when visiting. From Colombo take bus No 120 in the direction of Horana. At Polgasovita get off at the petrol station and walk down the road to the centre (10 minutes) or take a three wheeler. At times hot and humid. Aff. Galduwa.

Dekanduwala Meditation Centre or **Dhamma Training Centre.** Kahatapitiya-Kananwila, Horana. Tel: 034-428-6334. Website: <http://site.buddhistcc.com/meditation-centre> Inquiries and bookings should be made through Ven. Vimalajothi at the Buddhist Cultural Centre (see above). The place is nicely situated on a hill-top. Both small huts (kuṭ is) and rooms are available for lay

meditators. Good facilities, nice meditation hall, quiet, nice views. Foreigners are welcome to stay here for up to two weeks. About 20 kms south-east of Colombo. No charge for the lodgings and food, but donations are appreciated. Siyam Nikāya. Take the 120 bus from Colombo. It is close to the Vidyaratana Pirivena. If traveling from Homagama, Padukka or Horana: get off at the Govipola junction.

Dhammasobha VMC. Balika Vidyala Road, Pahala, Kosgama. Tel: 036–2253755 or 0714182094. Email: info@sobha.dhamma.org. Website: www.sobha.dhamma.org. Along the highway from Colombo to Avissawella. A 6 acre Vipassanā meditation centre in the tradition of Goenkaji. Near highway.

Shanti Y. Arukpitiya, Talangama South 10120. (Tel: 011–286-4973) 10 kms east of Colombo. Abbot: Ven. Dhammasiddhi. Friendly and supportive. Monastery in small area with many buildings. A bit cramped. A few kuṭ is. Some noise. Foreign monks have stayed here. Aff. Galduwa.

Ñāṇ acetiya Y. Raiyadoluva, Uggalboda, Udugampola 11030. Head Monk: Ven. Dhammananda who speaks good English and is very knowledgeable with regards the suttas and vinaya. One can go on piṇḍapata. Aff. Galduwa.

Sri Piyananda VMC, Naiwala Road, Udugampola, Doranagoda, Gampaha. Quite a large centre—probably has kuṭ is. Ven. Visuddhi is the head monk. Foreigners have stayed there. Aff. Kanduboda.

Gothama Tapovanaya. Kalapaluwewa, Mulleriyawa-New Town. Tel: 011–286-3826/288-4962. A Buddhist centre established in a humid and hot twelve acre forest grove three kilometres from the Colombo city limit. A monastery with a Mahāsi tradition meditation centre and a boy's orphanage. The abbot is D. Chandrasiri Thera, the Nāyaka Thera of the Kaḷyāṇavaṃsa division of the Amarapura Nikāya, i.e. the Tapovana group.

Isigilikanda VMC. On a rock-hill with caves about 5 kms away from Kanduboda towards the north, near Naranwala, via Udupila. Hot. Currently there are no monks and it is not so suitable. Good views and a pool for bathing.

Palugama Asapuwa. Dompe, Palugama. Monastery that used to be connected to the Mahamevnāva tradition (see Kegalla section). Kuṭ is in regrowth jungle in an abandoned rubber-estate on a hill in the Dompe area. Well supported, clean.

Sirimangala Y. Danawikanda, Weliveriya. On Colombo–Meetirigala bus route. Coconut estate. Nice kuṭ is. One big house. Aff. Galduwa.

Haddagala AS or Indomulla AS. Indolamulla, Dompe 11680. About 20 kms E of Colombo. Rocks, 20 minute climb, good views, secluded. 1 monk. Get off ½-1 km past Dompe Hospital (on left coming from Kanduboda). Aff. Galduwa.

Aturugiriya BM, Aturugiriya 10150. Ask the way from Colombo. Abbot: Ven. Ñāṇānanda thera. Formerly a study place, but now a meditation centre. Aff. Galduwa.

Ratnagiri Vivekāshrāmaya, Napawala, Avissawella. Abbot: Ven. Sanghasubhadra. Old bungalow in rubber estate. Perhaps kuṭ is. 3 kms from Avissawella.

Kodikanda AS. Koswatta, off Ilukowita Junction, Thummodara.

Arunodaya AS. Puwakpitiya. Aff. Galduwa. (Perhaps the same place as Kodikanda AS.) Shri Kalyāna DA. No. 272, Dompe 11680. Aff. Galduwa.

Shri Sumana Y. Pelengashena, Dompe. Aff. Galduwa. Varana A. Varana. (= 5 kms E from Yakkala on Colombo-Kandy road.) Aff. Galduwa.

Devagiri AS. Puwakmal Ella, Udamalibada 71411. Avissawella area. Aff. Galduwa.

Shailagiri Y. Deraniyagala 71430. 15 kms E of Avissawella, Kegalla District. Aff. Galduwa.

Shaila-pabbata Y. Vidiyawatta, (Miyanawit̃ a), Deraniyagala 71432. Aff. Galduwa.

Sama Uyana Tapovanaya. Galboda, Vaturugama 11742. East (?) of Kirindiwela. Aff. Tapovana Group.

Sri Shānta Tapovanaya AS. Katuwewa, Kaḷ agedihena 11875. Aff. Tapovana Group.

Siri Mangala Y. Danavkanda, Kirikitta, Veliveriya 11710. 25 kms NE of Colombo. Aff. Galduwa.

Sailagiri Y. Deraniyagala. (Near Avissawella). Aff. Galduwa.

Maligātenna AS. Gampaha. Aff. Waturawila.

Mahakanda Purāna AS. Alawala, Veyangoda. Aff. Waturawila.

Millatākanda AS. Millate, Kirindiwella. Aff. Waturawila.

Bopetta Viveka S. Ūrāpola. (Between Nittanbuwa and Kirindiwella.) Aff. Waturawila.

Kolankanda AS. Diddeniya, Hanwella. Aff. Waturawila.

Katana VMC, Sri Vimaladhamma Tissa Mawatha, Katana (North). Aff. Kanduboda.

Indigolla MC, Indigolla, Gampaha. Aff. Kanduboda.

Katuwalamulle MC, Katuwalamulla, Ganemulla. Aff. Kanduboda.

Mīgahawatta MC, Mīgahawatta. Aff. Kanduboda.

Nittanbuwa Mahamevnāva Asapuwa. Bandāranayaka Paudgalika Rogala Pāra, Watupitiwala, Nittambuwa. Tel: 033-493-4326.

Horana Mahamevnāva. Āṇ amaduwa Mahamevnāva Dakuṇ u Paliyāgama North, Āṇ umaduwa. Tel: 032-493-0974.

Kaduwela Bodhinggana Mahamevnāva. Rājasingha Mavatha, Heewāgama, Kaduwela. Tel. 011–437-7924.

Mālambee Amawatura Asapuwa. 228/1, New Kandy Road, Piṭ ṭ ugala, Mālambe. Tel: 011–241-3025 or 011-437-8720. Email: amawatura@gmail.com. Along road from Avissawella, near Colombo. Meditation centre in suburban area. Large meditation and Dhamma hall.

Thai Temple at Heyantuduwa on Colombo – Pūgoda Road, after Byagama turn right (Kaduwela Bridge).

Kandy Town

The ancient capital of the hill country. A fairly large town which is the home of the Temple of the Tooth-Relic (Sri Daladā Māligāva), the headquarters of the Siam Nikāya, and the extensive Peradeniya University, which is nearby. Temperate climate; cool at night.

Sri Daladā Tapovanaya, Udawattakelee, Kandy. Tel.: 081–222-5052. Abbot: Ven. Samita. Forest-monastery/temple, 5–15 monks, at the entrance of the Udawattakele Sanctuary. Foreign monks regularly stay here. Good support, kuṭ is and rooms. Clean and tidy. Aff. Tapovana group.

Senanāyaka Ārāmaya, Udawattakele, Kandy. Situated in the 250 acres Udawattakele Forest Reserve—an ancient royal sanctuary—in the centre of Kandy. It is a small place about 20 minutes walk from the entrance of the forest. Five rooms, no kutis. There are usually two Sinhalese monks resident. Clean and tidy. Piṇ ḍ apāta. Laymen can't stay here. The chief resident monk is Ven. Samithadhamma. Aff. Vajirārāma Group.

Forest Hermitage, Udawattakele, c/o Buddhist Publication Society, PO Box 61, Kandy. Tel: 081–5671653. The Forest Hermitage was established by Venerable Nyanatiloka Thera and Nyanaponika Thera in 1951. If one wishes to visit, please write or telephone beforehand to the resident bhikkhu, Ven. Ñāṇ atusita, or contact the BPS (see below).

Bodhivana Monastery, 160 Dharmashoka Mawatha, Kandy 20000. Tel. 081–4921814. A small monastery in a suburb of Kandy (1.5 kms away from the centre of town). The monastery consists of a house with a few rooms near the road, and 4 huts (kuṭ is) higher on the slope, near the eastern edge of the Udawattakele. Monks go on piṇ ḍ apāta.

Potgul Vihāra. Anagarika Dharmapala Mawatha, Kandy. A few kuṭ is. Near the Kandy lake and the Temple of the Tooth (Sri Dalidā Māligāva). On slope of Udawattakele Sanctuary, but noise from road. Aff. Amarapura Nikāya.

Burmese Resthouse. D.S. Senanayaka Mawatha. On the main street near Trinity College. Burmese vihāra on a major street in the centre of Kandy. One or two Burmese monks are residing here. The place is popular with foreign travellers since it is cheap and central.

Primrose Gardens Vajirārāmaya or **Kandy Vajirārāmaya**. Primrose Gardens, Kandy. Tel. 081–222-5353. Email: vajiraramaya@gmail.com On a hill overlooking Kandy. Pirivena for training novices, 25 at present. Foreigners have stayed here to learn Sinhala. Vajirāmāma group.

Buddhist Publication Society (BPS), PO Box 61, 54 Sangharāja Mawatha, Kandy. Tel: 081–223-7283 or 081-223-8901. Email: bps@bps.lk. Website: www.bps.lk. The BPS, founded by Ven. Nyanaponika in 1958, has a bookshop with a large assortment of Buddhist books in English, Sinhala, and German. There is also a large reference library with books in various languages. Situated along Kandy Lake, a 5 minutes walking east from the Temple of the Tooth.

Kandy District

Bowalawatta A. or University Forest Solitude (or Vajirārāma A.), Bowalawatta, Hantāna, nr. Kandy. (081 380 9210). In a large forest (previously a tea-estate) on the mountain above Perādeniya University (1 hour's walk). About 8 kms from Kandy town. Very quiet. Approx. 15 kutis. Neat,

clean, and orderly. Cool climate. In the rainy seasons it can be quite humid, with many leeches. Many foreign monks have stayed here. There is no teacher. Affiliated to the Vajirāma group Dharmarakshita chapter of the Amurapura Nikāya. At the Kandy Clock tower station take a Bowalawatta bus. The conductors will know the place where you should get off. From there follow the signs.

Ulpatkanda A.S. Springhill Watta, Hantāna Estate, no. 27 Hantāna, Kandy. Phone: 081–380-8812. Chief monk: Ariyagavesi. Six kutis and dining hall. In the forest above Bowalawatta Aranya. The road leading to the aranya starts behind the General Hospital in Kandy and goes through a tea estate. The last part of the road is in a bad state and unpaved. The monks speak English and there is a friendly atmosphere. Cool, wet climate. Aff. Galduwa.

Pāramitā International Buddhist Centre. No. 07 Balumgala, Kadugannawa, Tel/Fax: 081–257-0732 (office). Website: www.paramitaibc.org A meditation centre situated on the hill above the point where the road from Kandy to Colombo starts going down (near to the tunnel through the rock); 20 kms west of Kandy. Built especially for foreigner meditators. Both males and females can stay here. Good facilities and food. Including a meditation Hall, a large library, book store, and 11 comfortable kutis. Teachers occasionally come for visits and sometimes formal retreats are held, but the emphasis is on practising and studying by oneself. There is considerable noise and air pollution from the adjoining Kandy–Colombo highway and railway line. A donation is expected from laypeople.

University Vihāra. Perādeniya University, Peradeniya. Tel.:081-238-8975. Vihāra in quiet area on the border of the forest on the hill behind the University. Chief monk: Ven. Santavimala is very kind and helpful. This is a busy place, but there are a few kuṭ is in the pine forest behind the Vihara. Aff. Vajirārāma group.

Sri Subodhārāma International Buddhist Centre, Eriyagama, Perādeniya 20400. Tel. 081–238-4646 or 081-238-8080. Email: subodhabc@gmail.com. Website: www.subodha.org/home.php Abbot: Ven. Dhammāvāsa is kind and helpful. A popular Pirivena. Rooms. A few foreign bhikkhus have stayed here. Possibly a good place for learning the Sinhalese language and monk’s chanting and customs, etc. Several novices from Bangladesh, Cambodia, etc., stay here. Ambuluwawa Retreat Center, see below, is connected to this place. Aff. Amarapura Nikāya.

Ambuluwawa Retreat Center, Ambuluwawa, Gampola. A retreat centre connected to Subodharama, where lay retreats are held, on the large mountain with the tower right west of Gampola. Kutis and compounds. Nuns and lay people stay here but monks can stay in a kuti in the back with the permission of Ven. Dhammāvāsa. In a quiet village and rubber plantation area. On the western side of Ambuluwawa mountain on the Gampola – Hemmathagama road , about 3 kms down from the mountain pass.

Rock Hill Hermitage International Meditation Centre, Vegirikanda, Hondiyadeniya (via Gampola). Tel.: 081-380-1871. Website: www.rockhillsrilanka.com Situated on a mountainside and consists of a monastery, a men’s area, a nunnery and a women’s area. It has a large meditation hall, a library, some caves and student houses. In the 1980s it was a popular retreat centre. The founder, Ven. Kassapa, passed away in 2016 and the current situation is unknown. The website says that “a minimum amount of US \$ 20 a day is payable” as a donation.

Sri Sumedha MC. Gomaraya Road, Thawalantenna. Monastery of the popular speaker and healer Bhante Wellawatte Sīlagavesi, who speaks English. Some kuṭ is along a mountain stream. East of Wattedagama on Knuckles mountain range. Take bus to Gomaraya or Bambara Ella from Wattedagama. The monastery is a few kms. below/before Bambara Ella village, near the bridge on the road to Gomaraya.

Sri Dhātu Gallena A. / Sri Daladalena As / Galiha A., Mahaweli Raja Mawatha, Adhikarigama, Gonagantenna, Hanguranketa. 25 kms SE of Kandy on the road to Randenigala Reservoir, less than 1 km from Adhikārigama. On steep mountain-slope. Nice views. Facilities for about 6 monks. Piṇḍapāta possible. A few ancient caves and kuṭ is. Some noise from houses and the road in the valley. Aff. Galduwa.

Bo Uyana AS. Pallegama, Nawalapitiya. Ven. Sumanasiri. 2 kms before Nawalapitiya on Kandy-Nawalapitiya Rd. 5 kuṭ is. 2 monks. Nice views. Some noise from road and railway in the valley. Aff. Galduwa.

Kundasala Mahamevnawa Asapuwa. Warapitiya, Kundasalee, MahaNuwara. Tel. 081–495-0182. 8 kms east of Kandy. From Potgul Vihara, in Kandy, catch a bus to Warapitiya and get off at the police station.

Devanapathis International Samatha-Vipassanā Meditation Centre, Pallakele, Kandy. The centre of the late Ven. Amatagavesi Thera. The place is run by nuns.

Dhammika Puñṇavaradhanāshramaya. Makehelwela, Vattedagama, 71411. Aff. Galduwa.

Kadugannawa A. Possibly a new Galduwa place on the hill behind the Kadugannawa hospital.

Dhammika Puñṇavaradhanāshramaya. Makehelwela, Vattedagama, 71411. Aff. Galduwa.

Diyamakanda A. Liyamagahakotuwa, Handessa. Near the Embekke devale. Small place, 2 monks, caves. Probably connected to Waturawila.

Dumbara Y. c/o Amila Services. Digana, Rājawella, 20180. On the Kandy-Māhiyangana road. In the Victoria reservoir valley. Small place next to the road so noisy with some English speaking monks. Aff. Galduwa.

Sri Veluvana Y / Devagolla Y. Devagolla Alupathakada, Uduwela, MahaNuwara 20164. 4 miles along the Kandy-Uduwela Rd. Aff. Galduwa. Gannoruwa Aranya, Gannoruwa, Peradeniya, cave kuti and small danasala on edge forest reserve, one monk.

Bambaragala, Digana. An ancient cave monastery on a rocky hill near the Victoria Reservoir. Connected to Asgiriya Siyam Nikāya. Now a village temple, but on the hill there are old caves.

Samādhi Asapuwa. Mowbray, Galaha Road, Hindagala, Perādeniya. Below Dhammakuta MC.

Dhammakūṭa VMC. Mowbray, Galaha Road, Hindagala, Peradeniya. (Nr. Kandy). Tel.: 081–238-5774 or 081–383-7800. email: info@kuta.dhamma.org. Website: www.kuta.dhamma.org A meditation centre where 10–day Vipassanā Meditation courses are given in the tradition of Sayagi U Ba Khin as taught by S.N. Goenka. On a mountain slope with nice views and a cool climate. One cannot stay here outside of retreat periods. It is better to book well in advance. Course information and applications forms are available online. It has places for six monks at each course and once a

year, in November or December, there is a course for bhikkhus only. Bring all basic personal requisites. Located about 5 kms from Perādeniya towards the south. From Kandy, take a Galaha bus. Another Goenka centre, called Dhammasobha VMC, is near Avissawella, and another one near Anuradhapura, called Dhamma Anurudha.

Nilambe Meditation Centre. Mahakanda, Galaha Road, Peradeniya. Contact information is on nilambe.net/contact-us.php. A major lay-meditation centre in Sri Lanka for foreign visitors, both male and female. Occasionally monks are visiting here for a while, but cannot stay long term. There is a strict daily schedule and little talking. It is located on a mountain in tea-estate-country. The resident teacher is Mr. Upul Gamage. To get there by bus: take a Deltota bus from the Kandy Goodshed Bus Stand (near the train station) and get off at the Nilambe Bungalow Junction (17km from Kandy). From there it is a steep 45 min. walk through tea plantations. The gate is open from 6am to 5pm.

Kegalla District

Kegalla district is located in the foothills of the central mountains, between Colombo and Kandy.

Salgala AS. Welhella, Galapitamade, Warakāpola. From Warakapola, take a bus to Galapitamade, then take a bus to Salgala or walk 45 mins. About 15 kms south of Warakāpola towards Ruvanwella. Large quiet forest monastery on a mountain-top. One of the first modern forest monasteries, founded in 1934; see *Forest Monks of Sri Lanka* p. 175. Well known. Nice kuṭ is, including caves. Foreign bhikkhus have stayed here for periods. Wet, dense forest with many leeches. Moderate climate. Aff. Waturawila.

Mahamevnāva Asapuwa, Vaduvāva, Yatigaloluva, Polgahawella. Tel.: 037-224-4602, 037-494-2746 E-mail : info@mahamevnawa.lk. Website: www.mahamevnawa.lk Located 10 kms north of Kegalla. Turn off to Vaduvāva from Yangamodara (3.5 km) on the Alavva–Polgahāwella rd. The head monastery of the movement of the very popular teacher Ven. Kiribathgoda Ñāṇānanda, an English speaking Dhamma teacher and, most of all, missionary monk who is very knowledgeable about the suttas and encourages practice in accordance with the suttas. There are about 150 monks in this training centre. The resident monks are friendly and the place is very clean and tidy. Well supported. Behind the public section there are some kuṭ is in the forest on the hill, but most monks sleep in rooms in compounds. The new Buddha Maligāwa (Buddha Palace) is a major visitor's attraction. New branch monasteries are continuously being made all over the world.

Mahakanda Aranya. Three kilometers from Gonagaldeniya. (Midway between Nittanbuwa and Ruvanwella. 12 kms east of Kirindiwella.) One monk. Several kutis and an ancient cave dwelling on a mountain top. One cave has been prepared and is quite nice. Aff. Waturawila. There is a Galduwa monastery lower on the slope of the same mountain: Nugasevana Senasuna. Waharaka, Gonagaldeniya 71304. Aff. Galduwa.

Mellagala Y. Deewela, Pallegama, 71022. Nr. Kegalla. Tel. 077–915-5295. Take bus from Māwanella to Attanagoda. Kuṭ is close to each other and noise from valley and road. Aff. Galduwa.

Nārangala Ānandabodhi Āshramaya. Ambalakanda, Aranāyaka (= 15 kms W. of Gampola.) Aff. Galduwa. 3 kuṭ is. Some houses nearby, but very little noise from road. Take bus from Māwanella to Ambalakanda or Aranāyaka.

Nāvimana Y. or Warakāpola AS. Warakāpola 71600. 1½ miles along Warakapola–Mirigama Rd, on top of a hill. In a mahagony tree forest. Abbot: Ven. Samita. There can be some noise from the village below the hill. Aff. Galduwa.

Kodigala Y. Kehelapannala, Hemmatagama 71530. 7 kms. west of Gampola. 3 kuṭ is, one dormitory. Quiet. Aff. Galduwa. Bus from Gampola or Mawanella.

Wewaldeniya AS. Pahalgama, Wewaldeniya. Near Warakāpola. 6 monks. Aff. to Kandubodha.

Ānanda Bodhi Āshramaya. Pitiyagama, Kirivadunna 71014. (or Hirivadunna?). Nr. Kegalla. Aff. Galduwa.

Navagala AS. Ambāmpitiya. Near Kegalla, behind Ambāmpitiya factory on hill. Aff. Galduwa.

Gallenagoda AS. Devatagama, Dippitiya, Aranāyaka. Bus from Māwanella. 1 monk & 2 (?) cave kuṭ is with good solitude.

Bodhitenna Y. Talgamuva, Devanāgala 71527. Between Kegalla and Kandy. Take a bus from Māwanella (between Kandy-Kegalla.) Aff. Galduwa.

Tummodara Y. Udumagama, Hettimulla, Aff. Galduwa.

Ānandabodhi Y. Aranāyaka -20 kms SE of Kegalla. Aff. Galduwa.

Ashokāranya S. Alavva, Ranawala, Beligalla 71044. On Ranawala–Beligalla Rd, 1 mile from Alavva, on Colombo–Kurunegala Rd. Probably a very small place. Aff. Galduwa.

Koswatta A. Nava Colombo Para, Polgahawella 60300. (On Colombo-Kurunegala Rd.) Probably a small place. Aff. Galduwa.

Sri Dharmodaya Y. Manikkava, Hingula 71520. Aff. Galduwa.

Diviyāgala Y. Randiwela, Karapane. Take bus from Māwanella to Ramukena. Aff. Galduwa.

Kegalla Abhayabhūmi Tapovanaya. Bandaranāyake Mawatha, Kegalla. Aff. Tapovana group.

Māwanella VMC, Māwanella. Aff. Kanduboda.

Potgulgala A. Devalegama. Abandoned and falling apart former monastery of Ven. Katukurunde Ñāṇananda. There is no reason to stay here unless one wants to overnight here while on carika. Ask the layman next door for help.

Ratnapura District

The gem district. Some fairly large wilderness areas in the mountains and hills. Warm and humid climate.

Sinharāja Prānta AS. Kadamuduna, Bulutota, between Rakwana and Suriyananda at the 116.5 km post (opposite Christian church), more than 30 kms SE of Ratnapura. On top of a slope on a mountain-range in tea-estate country. Beautiful views. Cool, large dense rain-forest with leeches.

The place was formerly a forest monastery but now is a pirivena monastic school with many novices, but there are still a few kutis. Bus from Rakwana. Aff. Waturawila.

Sīlasamāhita YA or Belihul Oya BM. Sīlagama, Belihul Oya, 70140. Tel: 045-228-0210. At 156 km post, when going from Balangoda towards Haputale. Chief monk: Ven. Susanta. About 10 monks, a bit of noise from road and hotels below, cool climate and beautiful mountain scenery. Aff. Galduwa.

Tanjan Tenna Area. Gilanhāla, Bhaddeka Vihari Upasthana Kutiya, Tanjan Tenna, Balangoda (Tel.: 045-360-9506). Website: bhaddekavihari.org Located 23 km southeast of Balangoda. A group of about 20 monks, also a few foreign monks. About 20 solitary kutis or rock shelters, ranging from simple to comfortable. Chief monk: Venerable Vimalanyana Thera speaks some English and is helpful. The central meeting place is the Gilanhāla where there is a library (Sinhala and English), computer room with internet connection, etc. The kutis are popular and it can take a long time before one is free. Daily pindapata. The climate in the area is dry and warm. From the Balangoda bus stand catch buses either to Kaltota, Weele Oya, Kataragama, Hambegamuwa or Damwelodaya. Get off at the school bus halt at Tanjan Tenna (23 km post). 10 min. walk past the school to the Gilanhāla. Affiliation: Galduwa.

Śri Nandārāma. Udumulla, Bulatgama, via Balangoda. The late Ven. Balangoda Ānanda's monastery. It has a large library with Ven. Ānanda's large collection of books. A few kuṭ is. Situated on a hill-top, scenic views over the mountains. Aff. Amarapura Nikāya.

Lellopitiya VBM. Lellopitiya 10 kms E of Ratnapura. The head monk is Ven. Piyananda, the Swejyin Mahānayaka thera and Vinaya teacher. Quite a large centre, with emphasis on study, well situated. Aff. Kanduboda.

Balangoda VMC. Thotupola-tenna, Balangoda. The head monk is Ven. Mahānāma who is kind and helpful. A number of kuṭ is, well situated atop a hill. Aff. Kanduboda.

Samangiri AS. Varnagala, Eratna 70560. At the start of the northwestern route to Sri Pāda mountain.

Sri Pada AS. Siripāgama, Palabaddala. At start of the western route to Sri Pada. Reportedly very hard to find. Aff. Galduwa.

Indolawatta AS or Assagiri YA. Indolawatta, Ayagama 70024. (= 12 kms west of Ratnapura.) A forest hermitage; Aff.: Galduwa.

Badūwela Kanda Kuṭ iya.c/o Mahindakade, Gangodakanda, Ayagama 70024. (= 12 kms west of Ratnapura.) Aff. Galduwa.

Iluktenna AS. Panilkanda, Ulliduwāva, Deniyāya. Aff. Waturawila.

Sri Dhammapāla AS. Kolawenigama, Pallegama, Deniyāya. Aff. Waturawila.

Budulena AS. Vaturāva, Kalavāna. Aff. Waturawila.

Bambaragala AS. Galpāya, Pallebedda, Godakawela. Aff. Waturawila.

Samanala AS. Massenna, Balangoda. Aff. Waturawila.

Bulatwatta Gāllena AS. Lellopitiya. Aff. Waturawila.

Etugalakanda AS. Kolandagala, Lellopitiya. Aff. Waturawila.

Merekelē AS. Paranagama, Ellawala. Aff. Waturawila.

Balangoda Mahamevnāva. Uddellapola, Balangoda. Tel: 045 492-7712.;

Siripāgama Mahamevnāva. Mandagala, Kanegalla, Gilīmalē, Sirīpāgama. Tel.: 045-492 7714.

Eratna Mahamevnāva. Dakunu (south) Adhavikanda, Eratna. Tel: 045–492-7713.

Kalutara District

Coastal district. Warm and humid. Inland, where it rains a lot, there are some hilly rainforest areas.

Madakada AS. (Ingiriya A.) Ingiriya. Approx. half way on the Pānadura-Ratnapura Road. Forest in river-gulley. Wet. Ābbot: Ven. Mangala is friendly. Good vinaya. About 15 monks. This is the headquarters of a section of the Waturawila group that keeps stricter vinaya standards (not handling money, etc.) and follows the example of the Galduwa group. Aligned with this group are Salgala Aranya and a number of other smaller aranyas.

Bodhināgala A. Approx. half way on the Pānadura-Ratnapura Road, one mile before Ingiriya (see previous entry). There is a sign along the road. When traveling by bus, get off at Bodhināgala Junction, and from there 3 kms walk. Forest monastery. Amarapura Nikāya.

Kalugala AS. Pahalahevessa, Badureliya, Mātugama. Tel: 034–394-5480. One of the nicest places in Sri Lanka in terms of seclusion and nature. Remotely situated inside a valley surrounded by hills. Foreign bhikkhus have stayed here for long periods. Meditative atmosphere. Good vinaya. Kuṭ is. Wet, dense forest with many leeches. Moderate temperature. Not a place which is suitable for beginners. Founded in 1942; see Carrithers, *Forest Monks of SL*, p. 178. Monks from both the Waturawila Vanavāsin group and the Amarapura Nikāya stay here. From Kalutara take a bus to Mātugama, from there a bus to Baduraliya, and then about an hour of walking. Or, when coming from the South along the Gālla-Colombo road, take a bus from Aluthgama to Pelawatta and walk for about 2 ½ hours. Tundola A. and Pujalena A. are both about 5 kms. away.

Tundola A. Egodakanda, Polgampala, Mātugama, 12136. Via Mātugama and Agalawatta. About 5 kms. north of Kalugala in the same rainforest hill range. 6 kuṭ is on a hill. From Mātugama take Pelwatta bus, get off at Polgampala.

Pūjālena AS. Kirimetiawala, Hedigala 12234. The reported approach is from the south, a “difficult walk” from “the Nelluva – Pellawatta Road (B363), turn off at 13 mile post”, which would be a bit before the Thiniyawala tea factory. But according to the map, it can be approached easier, and without having to cross the Maduru Ganga river, from the north by going to Hedigala from Baduraliya, the same village from where Kalugala is approached. Pujalena Aranya is a branch monastery of Na Uyana and monks regularly go back and forth between the two places. About 15 kutis, large cave, on a hill near a river in secondary forest on former tea estate. On the northwestern side of the Singharaja forest on the edge of a reserve called Runakanda Forest. 6 kms. east of Kalugala Aranya. Abbot: Ven. Saddhānanda, who speaks English. Aff. Galduwa.

Dharmadvīpa Y. Kalawilawatta, Aluthgama. Near the beach (and next to large tourist resorts) in a mangrove forest at the mouth of the Bentota Ganga river. The head monk, Ven. Sārananda, is kind and helpful and does a lot of social welfare work. There are kuṭ is among the mangroves, but the main attraction of this place is the 200 m long and 100 m wide forested rock-outcrop (previously an island) with a few kuṭ is on a narrow peninsula and tourist beach on the opposite side of the river. Only lunch is provided on the “island”, which is reachable by boat from the monastery or by walking two kilometers south along the road and then north along the beach. At the 59 km post on the Colombo-Gālla Road. When traveling by bus, get off at the Lagoon Garden Hotel. Aff. Amarapura Nikāya.

Shri Kalyāna DA. De Abrew Mawatha, Kalutara North 12000. Aff. Galduwa. Spacious compound on beach. No kuṭ is but 3 rooms. Helpful English speaking monk. Kitulgoda Aranya. 1 monk. Between Polgampolla and Agalawatta, then 3-4 km walk. Not a practice place. (Near Tundola). Migahatenna BM. Migahatenna, Siyambalope. (E of Bentota, not far from Kalugala A.) Aff. Galduwa. Veligalpotta AS. Yagirala, Avittāwa. (? Kalutara Distr.) Aff. Waturawila. Bulatsinhala Mahamevnāva. Botalēgama, Bulatsinhala. Tel. 034-494-3916. Serupita Mahamevnāva. Serupita Janapadaya, Bolossagama, Kantarata South. Tel: 034-494-3833.

Gālla District

Coastal district. Hot and humid. The headquarters of the forest traditions of Sri Lanka are in this district. Inland there are some fairly large wilderness areas on the hills and mountains such as the Sinharaja National Park. The Sinharaja area is the largest and wettest rainforest in Sri Lanka.

Island Hermitage. Polgasduva, Dodanduva, 80250. Located on two small forested islands in a tropical lagoon, 10 kms south of the beach resort of Hikkaduva. This famous place was founded by Ven. Nyanatiloka in the early 20th century. There is a large, recently renovated and airconditioned library. It used to be a major centre for Western Buddhism, and the first monastery built by and for foreign bhikkhus in Sri Lanka in modern times. It is now a Sinhalese monastery run by a group of relatively junior monks connected to the Vajirāramaya sect of the Amarapura Nikāya, but a few foreign monks still usually stay there. About 10 kutis, most with inside and outside walking paths, and electricity. The monks go by boat to the mainland to go on piṇḍapāta daily. The climate is humid and there can be noise from surrounding villages. Although the monks are helpful when a monk has managed to reach the place, it is complicated to go here. It is best to write the abbot to inform him when one will come to visit, but do not expect a reply. Directions: On the Colombo – Galle Road get off the bus at Ratgama Junction, just south of Dodanduva, and walk to Katudampe village. Then ask for Mr Sunil who can arrange for a boat. Aff. Vajirārāma group.

Parappadūva Island Hermitage, the island neighbouring the Island Hermitage (near the Katudampe village temple), which used to be the site of Ayyā Khemā’s nuns monastery in the 1980s. Tel.: 091-309-4668. But there are now a few Sinhalese monks. Senior monk: Ven. Bodhivaṃsa. Aff. Vajirārāma group.

Shri Gunavardhana Y. or Galduwa A. Galduwa, Kahava. Between Ambalangoda and Hikkadūva. The headquarters of the Sri Kalyāna Yogāshrāmaya Saṃsthāva, i.e. the main forest monastery tradition in Sri Lanka. Abbot: Somavaṃsa Thera. This monastery is a training centre for junior

monks with group chanting three times a day. Well supported and tidy. The climate is hot and humid. It is situated in a palm-estate area on the edge of a coastal swamp. Aff.: Galduwa.

Vanavāsa Sangha Mūlasthānaya or **Waturawila A.** Waturawila, Tibbotuwewa, Kahadūva. About 20 kms northeast of Hikkadūva. The headquarters of the Waturawila group. One section is a large pirivena with many novices; the other section is a forest-monastery. Aff. Waturawila.

Kottāva Nāga A. or **Nāga A.** Kottāva, Kottagama. 12 kms E of Gālla. Take bus to Udagama from Gālla and get off at Kottāva junction. About 50 acres of forest on small hills with a stream running through it. Fairly quiet. Warm & humid. Several kuṭ is. Aff. Waturawila.

Tripitaka DA. (Koggala A.). Vedduwa, Koggala, Habarādūva 80630. 10 kms SW of Gālla. Abbot: Ven. Anuruddha. Originally a meditation monastery, but it is now more study orientated. The monastery comprises of a number of buildings and nice kuṭ is situated on a small raised elevation of land jutting out into a lagoon and approached by a causeway. There are crocodiles in the lagoon. Hot and humid. Piṇḍ apāta possible. Aff. Galduwa.

Diviyāgala AS. Kosgoda 80570. 10 kms south of Bentota. The headmonk, Ven. Dhammasīla Mahāthera, was a long time resident of Nissarana Vanaya. Quiet, nice patch of forest, about 6 monks. Good kuṭ is. At times hot and humid. Good library, also English books. Good food and vandana in the evening. Forest hermitage. Aff.: Galduwa.

Opāta A. / Rajavangala A. Senanayaka Rd, Opāta, Akuressa, 81442. 30 kms SE of Gālla. Nice monastery in forested hilly area with streams. Ven. Suguṇasāra, a meditation teacher in Pa Auk tradition, helpful and friendly, is staying here. Wet, but not overly hot climate. Take an Akuressa bus from Gālla and then the Udugama or Thawalama bus. Get off at Opāta. About 3 kms from Opāta. Aff. Galduwa.

Sinhalena Tapovanaya. Kosmulla, Neluva 80082. About 50 kms NE of Gālla, 30 kms E of Ambalangoda. Abbot: Ven. Jinavaṃsa. A small forest monastery on the western edge of the large Siṅharāja Rainforest National Park. Dense rainforest with streams and waterfalls etc. Wet and humid, leeches, moderately cool climate. To get here, take a bus from Gālla to Neluva and then walk for about 2 hours up a mountain through the tea-plantations. Foreign bhikkhus have stayed here. Aff. Tapovana Group.

Deldūva A. In the Ambalangoda area. The headquarters of the Deldūva forest division of the Rāmañña Nikāya. Suddellāva AS. Ihalahewessa, Pitigala. (10 kms NE from Elpitiya) This is supposed to be a nice place, beautifully situated, but a little tough. Aff. Waturawila. Uluvahugala AS. Mavita, Neluva, 80082. Nr. Neluva; see Sinhalena Tapovanaya entry above. Forest Hermitage. Aff. Galduwa. Vihāragoda Viveka Senasenaya, Vihāragoda, Vatugedara 80340. Ambalangoda area. Aff. Galduwa. Vivekārāmaya. Godakanda, Karapitiya. Just outside Gālla town. Aff. Galduwa. Shri Ñāṇabhasara Y. Ihala Dickson Pāra, Gālla 80000. Aff. Galduwa. Sri Kaḷyāṇā DA. Lawallena Watta, Baddegama 80200. (= 10 kms east of Hikkadūva.) Aff. Galduwa. Nāgala A. Eppala, Panangala. 80075. Near Sinharaja National Park. Aff. Galduwa. Sītaladela AS. Nākiyādeniya Watta, Pilidola Koṭasa, Nākiyādeniya. Aff. Waturawila. Nugagala AS. Yālagala, Hiniduma, Udugama. Remote forest monastery. Aff. Waturawila. Digālena AS. Naravel Ketiya, Piṭuwala, Elpitiya. Aff. Waturawila. Attuwagala AS. Attuwagala. About 4 kms from Elpitiya. Friendly old abbot, but lack of

food. Aff. Waturawila. Diwankaralena AS. Dūva Piṭ uwala, Elpitiya. Aff. Waturawila. Viveka S. Agalia, Baddegama. (= 10 kms east of Hikkadūva.) Waturawila?

Mātara District

Coastal district. Hot and humid. Some small wilderness areas. Flat land along coast, inland some hills.

Shri Rohana Y./Puhulwella A. Puhulwella, Hakmana 81390. 15 kms E of Mātara. Ask the way at from Mātara. Well-known and well supported place. Kuṭ is in 2 lines up forested hill. Comfortable place, about 10 monks. Some sound from village. Warm and humid. Founded in the early 1950's; see Carrithers, *Forest Monks of SL* p.218. Aff. Galduwa.

Ellakanda AS. Kekanadura 81020. 10 kms E of Mātara. Abbot: Ven. Sudhamma. A very calm thera with learning and experience in meditation. A meditation centre situated in a state forest on a peninsula surrounded by a reservoir. Foreign monks have stayed here. 15–20 monks. Good kuṭ is. Warm, humid, dense forest. There is only one meal a day and there are group meditation sittings. Catch Yatiyana bus from Matara and get off at Apatenna. Aff. Galduwa. Has a branch, Pasādika A., at Walasmulla which offers more seclusion.

Kirinda A. Kirinda. 15 kms NE of Mātara. Old forest on a hill. A historical place, as it is the oldest continually occupied forest monastery in Sri Lanka, founded by Ven. Paññānanda, the founder of the Rāmañña nikāya, in the early 1850's; see Carrithers, *Forest Monks of SL*, p. 69f. Aff. Deldūva.

Baṭ uvita A. Baṭ uvita. A few miles from Puhulwella A. The second oldest forest monastery in Sri Lanka; see Kirinda A. above. Aff. Deldūva.

Tummodara AS. Kandambigoda, Parapāmulla, Hakmana. (20 kms NE of Mātara). Aff. Waturawila.

Gallabadakanda AS. Moravaka. Aff. Galduwa.

Aharagala AS. Dellawa, Morawaka 81477. Approx 30 kms N of Mātara. Forest hermitage. Āff.: Galduwa.

Gallena-vihāraya. Addarakanda, Rambukana, Morawaka. Affiliation unknown.

Nigrodhārāmaya S. Vaturava, Beliatta, Kumbara Post Office 70456.(= 30 kms E of Mātara.) Hermitage. Aff. Galduwa.

Rammala AS. Rammala, Varāpitiya, Walasmulla. (= 30 kms NE of Mātara.) Aff. Waturawila.

Pasādika A., a branch of Ellakanda AS. Close to Walasmulla. Offers more seclusion. Aff. Galduwa.

Vavulagala AS. Vavulagala Vatuyāya, Hawupe, Imaduwa. 4 monks, mosquitos Aff. Waturawila.

Siri Sugata T. Poratota, Akuressa. Aff. Waturawila.

Dediyagala AS. Dediyagala, Maliduwa, Akuressa. Aff. Waturawila.

Yogashrāmaya, Wehella, Dikwella. Affiliation unknown.

Hambantota District

Probably the driest district in Sri Lanka, especially along the coast. Hot. Some large wilderness areas such as Yala. Generally flat land, but there is the Vedahitakanda near Kataragama.

Nimalāva AS. Kirinda, Tissamahārāmaya 82614. 12 kms SE of Tissamahārāmaya. About 3 kms walking from Kirinda on the way to Yala National Park. Founded in 1951; see Carrithers, *Forest Monks of SL*, p. 212. Abbot: Ven. Dhammadassī, a very strict Mahāthera. A large forest monastery. It is rather hot in the dry season. Ancient cave kuṭ is under boulders in the jungle. It is bordering Yala National Park and therefore there are elephants and other wildlife such as crocodiles. Foreign monks have stayed here. There is chanting/vandana 3 times a day, but one can be exempted. About the driest climate in Sri Lanka. The piṇḍapāta starts at 9 am (About 25–30 minutes, the monks are usually driven back.) A new retreat centre with 7 restored rock shelters, called Tammana, is less than 1 km, about 15–20 minutes walking, from the original centre, the piṇḍapāta taking consequently that much longer. One can stay there and only have breakfast at the Nimalāva monastery. Usually only one monk stays in Tammana. From here it is worthwhile to visit the ancient forest monastery of Situlpāva in Yāla National Park; see next entry. Aff. Galduwa.

Situlpāva. Accessible from Tissamahārāma, Kirinda, or Kataragama. It is easiest to walk along the access-road from Tissa and get a lift with the pilgrim-buses or jeeps going there. From Nimalāva go to main National Park entrance on the Kirinda road and then take the boundary track north to the Tissamahārāma entrance. A large, ancient cave-monastery. There are ancient ruins and probably more than a hundred cave kuṭ is situated on and along large 70 meter high granite boulders sticking out of the jungle. It is mentioned in a Sinhalese Buddhist song as a place where there were so many arahants flying in the sky that they obscured the sunlight and the farmers could not grow their crops. The incumbent monk of the place is Ven. Hemaratana Thera, a Siyam Nikāya temple monk who speaks English well. Forest monks can stay in the cave kutis (after asking permission from head monk.) Food can be gotten from the temple and from pilgrims who come to see the stupas and ruins. There are many wild animals such as elephants. There are also a few rest-houses where laypeople can stay. About mid-way between the Tissamaharama entrance and Situlpāva there is a smaller abandoned ancient aranya called Makulvihāra.

Madunāgala A. Koggala. 15 kms north of Ambalantota, east of Siyambalagoda, north of Ridiyagama Wewa. An ancient cave monastery on a remote, quiet forested rock-outcrop ridge, northeast of Ridiyagama Wewa, surrounded by shrubby lowland. Hot, dry climate. Founded in 1946 by the founder of the Waturawila Vanavāsin group, Waturawila Ñāṇananda; see *Forest Monks of Sri Lanka* p. 184. About 10 cave kutis. There is a cetiya on top of one of the big boulders. Nearby, about 15 mins. walking to the southwest, is another monastery called Karambagala Aranya; see next entry. To get here, take a bus from Ambalantota (at the clocktower) to Koggala and walk about 7 kms. There are also buses to Suriyawewa, which come closer (3 kms) but are less frequent. From Embilipitiya, take a bus to Suriyawewa and get out at Mahāpelesa, then walk about 7 kms to the monastery, passing the hot springs, and take the road to the east of the ridge. At night, elephants roam in the jungle.

Karambagala A. This monastery, including Madunāgala, was founded in King Gotrabhaya's time and the monks claim that it is the Kuraṇḍaka Monastery of the arahant Cittagutta, whose cave,

mentioned in the Visuddhimagga (Ch. 1 § 104ff) is now the shrine room. The modern monastery was founded early in the 20th century. There are many rock overhangs on this rocky hill. Some have been converted into kutis. On top of the 100 m high hill is a cetiya. In 2006 the place was inhabited by one 29 year old bhikkhu and 18 young novices.

Bundala Kuṭi. A single kuṭi near the village of Bundala, Hambantota district. For lovers of solitude. In dune shrubland in the Bundala National Park near the sea. There are a few elephants in the forest. The kuṭi was built for Ven. Ñāṇavira in the late fifties. He died in 1965 and since then many foreign bhikkhus have stayed here. Piṇḍapāta in the village, which is about 10 minutes away. Dry hot climate. PTS Pali Tipitaka books are kept in the main dayaka's house in the village. There is some noise from the nearby road and waves crashing on the beach.

Sīmāpavura AS. Sūriya Āra, Angunukolapelessa, Thanāmalwila. Abbot: Ven. Jinasara. On top of rock-hill. Small place with 3 kutis. One cave-kuṭi. Very hot. Angunukolapessa is 10 kms west of Tanāmalwila, which is halfway on the Tissamahārāma-Wellawāya Rd. Aff. Waturawila.

Usgala A. Suriyawewa (Andarawewa). 10 km northeast of Karambagala. There are three small rock overhangs and a few mud kutis. Monks from Karambagala A. stay at this rocky outcrop.

Mattala A. A new aranya with rock overhangs near Badagiriya Wewa, 10 kms north of Hambantota and Bundala. Perhaps near the village of Udamattala, north of the wewa. Aff. unknown.

Veheragala A. About 5 kms northwest of Hambantota. Svarnagiri AS. Laginagala, Galhiramankada, Kotaweramankada, Tanāmalwila 91312. 1 monk. About 30 km from Sīmāpavura, north of Hambegamuva on the road to Balangoda. Aff. Galduwa.

Andagala or Edagala A. Komaligama, a few kms. west of Tanāmalwila, off the Colombo Wellawaya Rd. Karandulena AS. Ridiyagama. Aff. Galduwa. It is unclear whether there is a monk here and where it is.

Walaskanda AS. 31 Kanuva, Kitulkoṭe, Tanāmalwila. 1 monk. Not a practice place. Not far from Sīmāpavura. Aff. Waturawila.

Suriyawewa Mahamevnāva. Suraviregama, Suriyawewa. Tel. 047-492-0660.

Kataragama Mahamevnāva. Peragirigama, Kataragama. Tel. 047-493-1377.

Vedahitakanda. Kataragama. There is an abandoned cave kuṭi on the peak next to the temple on Vedahitakanda. A Swiss monk stayed here for some years.

Nuwara Eliya District

The central and highest part of the hill country. Coolest climate in Sri Lanka. Mostly tea estates, but there is some remnant forest on the mountains.

Sri Swarnagiri Viveka Senasanaya. On top of a hill near the Nuwara Eliya Horse Racing Course. Beautiful views. Three kutis and rooms. Two monks. A large Buddha image is being constructed. From the Nuwara Eliya Town Hall, go up the Haddon Hill Rd. 15 min. walk. Aff. Waturawila.

“Kande Ela Reservoir Monastery”. A small forest monastery with small wooden kutis in a pine forest at Kande Ela Reservoir, 10 kms. south of Nuwara Eliya.

Asokārāmaya,Hawa Eliya, Nuwara Eliya. Pansala/village monastery. No kutis.

Amarapura Nikāya. Nuwara Eliya Temple. 200m before the bus station, on the right. Convenient place if one arrives late and needs somewhere to stay.

Rahatungoda Y. Hewaheta, 20440. Tel: 052-3814461. 30 kms SE of Kandy. Tea-estate country. Cool climate at about 1100m. altitude. 3 resident monks. Friendly and helpful abbot: Ven. Nyanavimala. 6 nice kuṭ is. A few foreign monks have spent vassa here. Not far from houses and there can be some village-noise. Aff. Galduwa.

Kande Vivekāshrāmaya. Utukule (or Ukutule) Negenhira, Mathurata. 3 kms south of Padiyapelella and about 10 kms from Rikilligaskada. Bus from Rikilligaskada to Mathurata.) One monk: Ven. Sugun adhamma.

Badulla District & Uva Province

The southern edge of the hill country. Cool climate and spectacular views over the southern lowland. Mostly tea and vegetable estates in the upcountry.

Shri Nāṇ ārāma Vivekāshramaya / Kahagolla Aranya. Kahagolla, Diyatalāva 90150. 5 kms SW of Bandārawela. Rooms in a communal building as well as kutis in a pine forest area in a village area, near army camp. Can be noisy. Aff. Galduwa. Goenkaji vipassana meditation is practiced here.

Kolatenna Hermitage. A place founded by the Czech monk Nyanasatta in the 1960s. At present there is only one resident monk. Rooms in compounds, good library. Surrounded by village and tea-estates on a mountain-slope above villages and a large army-camp. From Bandarawela walk about 2 kms on the upper Haputale Road, then at the railway crossing turn to the right, or walk along the railway line from Bandārawela.

Piyangala A. Welihelagama, Diyatalāva 90150. Small aranya with a few kuṭ is on a slope with pineforest in a quiet river-valley 5 kms north of Diyatalāva. Cool climate. Probably a few monks from Kahagolla are residing here. Ask at Kahagolla A. There is a rock shelter nearby.

Bandarawela Mahamevnāva. Kumbalwela, Bandārawela. Tel. 057-492-6447. Monastery on the slope of a remote tea estate on a steep mountain about 10 km from Bandārawela on the road to Badulla (not to Ella). Kutis with covered walking paths along a road going through a tea estate. Stupa on top of mountain. Aff. Mahamevnāva.

Udakirinda BM. Bogahakumbara, Welimada. Meditation centre with compound and also a few kuṭ is. Mahāsi method is practiced here. Mountain area 8 kilometers south of Keppetipola. Close to Boralanda. Aff. Siyam-nikāya.

Nilagala. An ancient cave monastery with 4-5 kuṭ is on a big rock outcrop 20 kms. east of Bibile. Near nature reserve. Aff. Galduwa.

Mahasudharshana AS. Gadugodawewa, Pahala-oya-gama, Ūraniya. (Between Mahiyangana and Bibile). Aff. Waturawila.

Kalyāṇī Yogāshrama. Nikapitiya, Gampaha, near Koslanda. Uva Province. 200 acres of forested land. Still undeveloped due to lack of funds. Only one hut. Cave nearby (20 min. walk). Not as high as Haputale, but still has a pleasant climate with cool nights. Aff. Galduwa.

Monaragala District

The southeastern edge of the hill country. There are many small aranyas in this undeveloped area, with limited support and water, and facilities for only a few monks. Hot climate with a dry season. Mountains, hills, and flatland.

Budugal-lena AS. 23 km post, New Katarama Road, Vaguruwela, [14, Kanuwa Raja Mawatha] Buttala 91100. Tel: 055-355-2900. The abbot is Ven. Dhammarakkhita. Good support. Practice of Pa Auk method. Jungle on the slope of a hill. Warm climate. Caves, including a big cave used for doing vandana. Quiet. Good food. Close to Yala so there are wild animals. Electricity. Aff. Galduwa.

Monarāgala Mahamevnāva. Tambalavinna-āra Tapovanaya, Hulandāva Dakuṇa, Monarāgala. Tel. 055-492-8318. On forested mountain 6 kms south of Monaragala town.

Sambodhi Y. 35 Kumaradola Pāra, Monarāgala 91000. On hill above Monarāgala bus-stand. Convenient as a stop-over place on a long bus journey. Aff. Galduwa.

Alulena AS. Dambepitiya 91060. Near Maligawila, 10 kms SE of Buttala. Aff.: Galduwa.

Lollehela AS. Galgediyawa, Galabedda, Monarāgala 91008. Outside Monarāgala Town. Aff. Galduwa.

Sitakanda AS. Monarāgala 91000. Aff. Galduwa. Vallagambā

Rājaleña AS. Helatungala, Badalkumbura, Monarāgala 91070. Aff. Galduwa.

Sandekebelle AS. Kanda-uda-vanguva, Monarāgala 91032. 1 kms from town on the Kumardola Pāra, turn off at the Water Supply Dept. Aff. Galduwa.

Sakmangala AS. Kumaradola Pāra, Monarāgala 91000. Located on Monarāgala Mountain. 10 kms from town via Kumardola Pāra. At present no monks. Aff. Galduwa.

Wattārāma AS. Wattārāma, Kotiyagala, Monarāgala, 91024. 1 monk & 6 novices. Quiet. Aff. Galduwa. Rahatan Kanda AS /

Devagiri AS. Dahatune Kanuva, Mahagoddayaya, Buttala. Aff. Waturawila.

Theraputtabhaya AS. Kalawela Aragama Pāra, Wellawāya. Aff. Waturawila.

Mayuragiri AS. Veliyaya, Monarāgala. Aff. Waturawila.

Buduruwvagala, village temple. 1 hour walk to rock carvings. South of Wellawāya.

Bhavanagala AS. Punehipara, Etimole Wewa. Aff. Waturawila.

Maha Tissa Lena AS. Netol Kele, Ella Pāra, Wellawāya. Aff. Waturawila.

Wewatenna AS. Dahate Kanuva, Rattanadeniya, Bibile Road, Bakinigahawela. Aff. Waturawila.

Buttala Mahamevnāva. Buttala, 5 Kanuwa, Buttala Road, Badalkumbura.

Ampāra District

This area has a lot of ancient monasteries, but due to the former armed conflict they were not redeveloped or were abandoned. Now most of the area is accessible again and some ancient monasteries are being developed, notably Kudumbigala A. There is a lot of wilderness in this area but it has a hot climate and a dry season.

Kudumbigala Mahā Tapovanaya. Heleva Eliya, Pānama. Tel.: 068-5674944. Near Okanda, 15 kms south of Pānama. At 12 km post there is a sign, then 3kms inland from main road. Ancient cave monastery. Abbot Ven. Buddhavaṃsa. Good place for individual practice. Spectacular setting on the eastern border of Yala National Park, very remote, caves, wild animals. Pictures and a history of the place and its founder can be found in Carrithers' Forest Monks of Sri Lanka. About 10-15 monks and novices at present. 15 rock shelter kutis are inhabitable. In recent years much has been done to improve the water supply, rebuild kutis and a new dining hall. etc. There are other abandoned ancient monasteries in jungles in the area, such as Bambaragastalāva. To get here, take a bus from Monarāgala to Pottuvil or Pānama. One can either walk, or get a lift with a bus or private vehicle going to the Monastery or Okanda. About an hours walk to the coast at Okanda, with large beaches, a Kataragama Deva shrine, and the new Kumana National Park Headquarters and Museum. Aff. Galduwa. See <http://amazinglanka.com/wp/kudumbigala>.

Shastrawella A. Between Pānama and Pottuvil. Get off the bus at the army camp. Ancient cave monastery on forested rocky hill ridge which runs east from the army camp up to the the mouth of the Heen Oya River. Abandoned pansala. One cave is high on a rock overlooking Ārugam Bay, but is not suitable due to visiting tourists. Elephants and other wildlife, and little noise, but the pansala area can be noisy with villagers. Near Pānama are other ancient abandoned cave monasteries including Wewavehera near the reservoir (wewa) 3 kms west of Pānama. <http://amazinglanka.com/wp/mani-naga/>

Tarulenagala A. / Habutugala A. Hulannuge. Between Siyambalanduwa and Lahugala National Park, along Monarāgala–Pottuvil Road. Small monastery with a large rock shelter with an ancient lying Buddha statue and Veddha drawings. On top of the hill is the Yodalena, supposedly the longest rockshelter in SL, about 200 m. long. There are also other caves. Take a bus from Monaragala. Aff. Galduwa. See <http://amazinglanka.com/wp/hulan-nuge-tharulengala-rajamaha-viharaya>,

Buddhangala A. 22 Kanatta Rd. Ampāra. Ancient site, but no rock shelters except the eating hall. Pilgrims come. Somewhat like Nimalāva A. 10 monks. Good kutis. Hot. Nice views. Elephants nearby. Ramanya Nikāya. See <http://amazinglanka.com/wp/buddhangala>.

Samangala A. On western side of the Kohombana Junction on the Ampara – Maha Oya road. Large caves on rocky hill. Quite remote. A 4 kms walk to the nearest village. Good solitude. A few monks. See <http://amazinglanka.com/wp/samangala-forest-hermitage>.

Sandakebella Tapovana AS. On a forested hill on the western side of the Ampara – Siyambalanduwa highway, 4 kms southwest of Govinda Hela / Westminster Abbey peak. See <http://amazinglanka.com/wp/sandakebella/>

Negombo and Chilaw Area

Coastal area known for its tourist beaches. Predominately Christian area. Hot and humid.

Polwatta BM / Sri Dharmodaya BM. Industries Estate, Polwatta, Minuvangoda, Ekala 11380. Near Ja Ela between Colombo and Negombo. About 1–2 acres with buildings on industrial palm estate. Not so suitable for meditation. Aff. Galduwa.

Kocchikade Mahamevnāva. Chilaw Road Kocchikade. Tel: 031–493-6016. (North of Colombo.)

Huṇ umulla Mahamevnāva. Badalagama Pāra, Huṇ umulla. Tel: 031–493-6104.

Ranaketugala AS. Tutiriwela, Bandar, Koswatta 60424. Aff. Galduwa. 20 kms N of Negombo.

Nekkawila VMC, Nekkawila, Chilaw. Aff. Kanduboda.

Kurunegala District

There are many aranyas and monasteries in Kurunegala district such as Nā-Uyana Aranya. People in this district are known for their strong faith. Warm climate. Hills and flatland. There are wilderness areas on and around the hills. On every hill in this area there are likely to be ancient cave kuṭ is.

Nā Uyana AS. Pansiyagama 60554. Tel: 037 337 9036, 037 494 3688 or 037567 7328. Email: nauyana@gmail.com. The website www.nauyana.org gives useful information. To get there get off at Melsiripura on the Kurunegala–Dambulla Rd, from there take bus to Pansiyagama. From there it is a 30 min. walk. The meditation teacher is Ven. Ariyananda Thera, who speaks good English and has an excellent knowledge of the Pa Auk Samatha and Vipassanā methods. Good kutis, library and facilities. Strict adherence to Vinaya (monastic discipline). There is a meditative atmosphere and the place is reasonably well organised and tidy. At the moment it is the most prominent meditation place in the Galduwa Saṃsthāva. Many foreign bhikkhus, Western as well as Asian, mostly Taiwanese, are staying here. The monastery area covers thousands of acres of hill slopes and there are four monastery sections: The old monastery where the uposatha hall is located in the valley. The meditation retreat section, with its own meditation hall, is located on top of the hill. Behind this, further to the North-east there is a retreat section, where monks can dwell in kutis in seclusion and have their own dana sala down the hill to the east. The fourth section, down the hill to the west of the retreat section, near the village of Endagala, is an “ascetic” section, with a few simple mud kutis. The central area of the monastery consists of an ancient monastery with a few caves and a beautiful forest with many big ironwood trees (Nā trees). This area was a small forest monastery from the 1960s until 1996, when it became a meditation centre in the Pa Auk tradition. The hills to the north of this area, where many kutis have been built, are being reforested. There are about one hundred monks and 30 laypeople at present, but because the monastery is so large and divided into different sections it does not feel crowded. There is a separate nunnery for female practitioners, called Dhammika Ashramaya, a few kilometers away.

Ruvangirikanda A. Karagahagedara, Nārammala 60106. 15 kms SW of Kurunegala, 7 kms from Nārammala to Junction, then about 8 kms from the main road. Forested hill with a nice cave-kuṭ i on top with a good view and walking path. Also other cave-kuṭ is and ordinary kuṭ is. Good walking paths. Foreign monks have stayed here. Quiet and suitable for meditation. Aff. Galduwa.

Nāthagane AS. Mahākeliya, Māspota 60344. 10 kms from Kurunegala on the Puttalam Road. 10 min. walk from main road. Abbot: Ven. Sirivimala. Forested hill-side. About 10–12 kuṭ is. Some isolated caves. Friendly atmosphere. Suitable for meditation, but also a study/training place for young monks. Some noise from road. Aff. Galduwa.

Siri Vidusarana T. / Nabeta A. Henegedera Landa, Nabeta 60540. Nr. Melsiripura on Kurunegala–Dambulla Rd. Nice forest. Small monastery. 1 km to main-road but fairly quiet. Facilities for 4–5 monks. 1 cave kuti. There can be a lack of water during the dry season. Aff. Galduwa.

Nāgolla A. also known as: **Devahuva A.** or **Gomoktāva A.** Nāgolla, Bulanawewa, Devahuva, Galēwela 21206. (On Kurunegala-Anurādhapura Rd.). Turn off at the mosque and then walk along the cart road to the aranya. An ancient cave monastery on a large hill with an ancient cetiya. Forest with ironwood trees and big rocks. Small monastery with only a few kutis. Aff. Galduwa.

Dolukanda A. / Rankotlena AS. Dolukanda, Hunupola, Nikadalupotha 60582. On western slope of the Dolukanda mountain. (Arankele is on the other side of the mountain.) A few big caves. On top of the mountain (a long climb) there is a partly forested plateau with an ancient palace, fortress and bathing pond. There is a cave on one side of the plateau. Coming from Arankele, first go to Hiripitiya, then 7 km from there. Aff. Galduwa.

Diddeniya A, or Rangirikanda A. Diddeniya, Melsiripura 60544. Turn off at Melsiripura. Close to Nā Uyana. Ancient cave monastery on a rocky hill. Abbot: Ven. Ñāṇasīla, an English speaking Vinayadhara. A popular training and study place for new monks with a daily schedule. Facilities for about 30 monks. Crowded (monks have to share kutis), but well kept. About 7 km North of Melsiripura. ½ hr walk from bus stop. Aff. Galduwa.

Arahatta Māliyadeva AS. or **Arankele A.** Arankele, Kumbukwewa, Kurunegala District. On the site of a medieval Pamsakula Sect monastery, about 15 or more kuṭ is and caves, and near an archeological site with extensive ruins. This is the place where the Sinhalese arahant Māliyadeva lived, thus the name *aran* (arahant) + *kele* (forest). His simple cave is now a kind of shrine. This used to be a place connected to Kanduboda but in the 2010s it became a Mahamevnawa Asapuwa with the usual large scale merit making and building projects. There is, or used to be, a kuti on the hill behind the archeological site. From Kurunegala, take a bus towards Madagalla, and get off at Bodagalla.

Ridivihāra Kelepansala. Cave kuti on a forested hill about half an hour walk from the ancient Ridivihāra belonging to the Malwatta Nāyaka thera. Fairly quiet. Piṇḍapāta to nearby village. There are also several other caves in the forest. From Kurunegala take the Kepitigolla bus to Ridivihāra. Aff. Siyam Nikāya.

Bambaragala MC. Moratiya. On the Kurunegala–Kepitigolla Rd. Less than 10 kms from Kurunegala. A place set up as a meditation centre, but the founder went abroad. Kuṭ is and a large unfinished Dhamma-hall on a forested hill.

Jathika Namal Uyana. Upalathagama, Galkiriyagama, Madatugama. Small pansala/aranya on a hill in a fairly large forested area. Ancient stupa and ruins in an old growth Na tree forest on rose-quartz rock-outcrops.

Minnettiya A. Māspota, Mahakeliya. In the area of Variyapola on the Kurunegala-Puttalam Rd. 1 cave kuṭ i with one monk. Near village. Aff. Galduwa.

Pahankanuva A. Kandegedara, Maharacchimulla. Maybe aff. to Kandubodha.

Vevgala A. Vevgala, Kurunegala. Aff. Galduwa.

Etugala AS. Etugala, Kurunegala 60000. Hermitage near huge Buddha statue on mountain above Kurunegala. Aff. Galduwa.

Dodamthalawa AS. On forested mountain 4 kms south of Yatiwila, Weuda (on the Kurunegala Kandy rd).

Sudarshana Y. Gantiriyāva, Bamunākotuwa 60347. 5 kms NW of Māspota, near Variyapola on the Kurunegala–Puttalam Rd. Aff. Galduwa.

Rambapokuna AS. Kandegedera, Nikaveratiya 60470. (= Midway on the Kurunegala–Puttalam Rd. Aff. Galduwa.

Dandūvāva AS. Danduwa, Nikaweratiya 60470. Aff. Galduwa.

Banakiyangama Y./Sri Kaḷ yāṇ ī Shaka YBanakiyanagama, Mūnamaldeniya 60218. 10 kms along Kuliyaṭṭiya–Hettipola Rd, Kurunegala District. Aff. Galduwa.

Sri Tampaṇ ṇ i A. Weluwewa. Navagattegama 61520. 15 kms W of Galgamuva. Aff. Galduwa.

Kappetigala AS. Galneva, Tuttiripitiyagama 60426. (= 10 kms NE of Māho.) Aff. Galduwa.

Nāgansole AS. Ratandala Oya, Nikaweratiya 60470. 3 miles along Nikaweratiya -Hidogama Rd. Aff. Galduwa.

Nammuvagama AS. Sindagamdaluva, Nikaweratiya 60470. Aff. Galduwa.

Hidogama AS. Mahagirilla. Along Nikaweratiya-Māho Rd. 2 miles to Mahagirilla then to Hidogama. Aff. Galduwa.

Yahangala AS. Delvahuva, Galēwela 21206. Aff. Galduwa.

Kodigala AS. Polpitigama. Approx. 40 kms north of Kurunegala and 10 kms E of Māho. Aff. Waturawila.

Sudarshanapura VMC, Sudarshanapura, Mavatagama. Aff. Kanduboda.

Telandapitiya, Tarangollagama, Maragolla Bazar. 10 kms from Migalāva. Caves and kuṭ is. Aff. unknown.

Ibbāgamuva Mahamevnāva. Mūkalanyāya, Ibbāgamuva. Tel: 037-494-2743.

Polpitigama Mahamevnāva Asapuwa. Polpitigama. Tel. 037-494-2741

Mahamevnāva Anāgārika Asapuwa. 7 Kanuva, Seafeld Watta, Māwattagama. Tel: 037–224-3698.

Potugura Mahamevnāva. Algama, Potugura. Tel: 037–494-2742

Uyandana Mahamevnāva. Uyandana, Kurunegala. Tel: 037–494-2744.

Mātale District

The northern part of the hill and mountain country. Some large wilderness areas.

Laggala Forest Area. There are a number of kuṭ is with excellent seclusion in the large wilderness area between the eastern slopes of the Knuckles Mountain Range (Dumbara Kanda), E of Mātale, and the Vasmamuva National Reserve, SW of Polonnaruwa. Conditions are simple and sometimes tough. Open 3 wall kuṭ is and caves, small remote villages, sometimes long and rough piṇ ḍ apāta routes and very simple food. There are elephants and leopards. A place for those who are experienced in bhāvana and staying alone. No computers, mobile phones, and other electronic devices are allowed. This is not a place for newcomers and inexperienced monks. The villagers do not know English. Ven. New Zealand Guttasīla, the leader of the Laggala Sangha, lives in the area and may be able to help newcomers.

Gallenawatta AS. Etābendiwewa Pāra, Pannampitiya. Caves on the base of a hill. Kuṭ is close to each other, but there are many other caves in this area. A few bhikkhus and several novices. Further on the road there are ancient ruins. Turn left off the Mātale-Dambulla Rd about 8 kms before Dambulla, then about 1.5 kms. Aff. Waturawila.

Pidurangala. Pidurangala Rājamahāvihāra, Pidurangala, Sīgiriya. About one kilometer east of Sīgiriya rock, near ancient monastery ruins. It can be reached by leaving Sigiriya through the Northern Gate and following the road to the east. Several ancient cave kuṭ is under a large boulder-hill in the Sīgiriya forest above a well kept village temple. Some kutis have been prepared under the rocks, but might not have been used for years. Near the top of the boulder there is an ancient reclining Buddha image. From Habarana get off at Inamalava Junction.

Enderagala S. Palwehera, Dambulla (6 kms north of Dambulla, on Habarana Rd.). This is now the headquarters of a small group of monasteries that split off from Waturawila. Mihindu A. in Mahintale, and Ritigala A. are affiliated with this group.

Sri Jinavaṃsa Y. Mātale Road. Elkadūva 21012. Near road and town. Rooms in compound. Aff. Galduwa.

Lunu-atuwa A. Udutenna 21006. Mātale–Godapola, Alwatta. About 5–8 kms outside Mātale by bus. Large cave used as vihāra. Facilities for only a few monks. Aff. Galduwa.

Cetiya Giriya, Maningamuva, Pallepola. On a rocky hill 20 kms NW of Mātale. Small place, only 2 or 3 monks. A few kuṭ is and caves. Some distance away there are two independent caves. Aff. Vajirārāma group.

Watagala BM, Watagala, Moragaha Ulpata, Vilgamuva 21000. Near Laggala, Hettipola. Caves and kuṭ is. Aff. Galduwa.

Gallena AS. Vewalawewa, Dambulla. Aff. Waturawila.

Rangirigama AS. Rangirigama, Dambulla. Aff. Waturawila.

Nāgolla Nadī S. Nāgala Wewa, Kimbissa, Dambulla. Aff. Waturawila.

Dambulla VMC. Kalundeva Road, Dambulla. Aff. Kanduboda.

Samādhi Tapovanaya. Tambarā-Valiya Road. Aluvihāra, Mātale. Cave-kuṭ is.

Mātālē Mahamevnāva. Madawala Ulpata, Mātālē. Tel. 066-492-8484.

Rattota Mahamevnāva. Ganetenna, Rattota, Mātālē. About 10kms east of Mātālē. Tel. 066-492-8483.

Batticaloa District

Some areas in the eastern district of Batticaloa have not been accessible for a long time due to the armed conflict. There are some nice ancient Buddhist sites on the hills in this district. Hot climate with dry season. Undeveloped and poor. Inland there are some large wilderness areas.

Piyangala AS. Rājagalatenna 32068. Near Mayadunna, near Bakiella. North of Uhana, midway along the Amapara–Maha Oya Road. 25 kms southwest of Batticaloa. Large forest area (1 square mile) bordering a wildlife sanctuary and the extensive ruins of the ancient Rājagala monastery situated on top of the mountain. Some caves. One a few monks. Aff. Galduwa.

<http://amazinglanka.com/wp/piyangala-forest-hermitage/>

Veheragala A. Maha Oya. Midway on the Mahiyangana-Batticaloa Road. Ancient cave monastery on a hill, about 1 km from the Maha Oya hot springs. This aranya was abandoned after a hurricane destroyed the buildings in the late eighties and there still might be no monks. There are 4 caves kuṭ is which are inhabitable. Near houses, but on edge of Maduru Oya National Park. See

<http://amazinglanka.com/wp/unuwathurabubula-veheragala/>

Omuna A. Ancient cave monastery in Maduru Oya National Park, about 10 km further along the road and northwest from Veheragala. Some caves apparently have been restored in recent times, but there are no monks. On the way to here from Veheragala is the Heenanigala rock with caves:

<http://amazinglanka.com/wp/hennaanigala-rajamaha-viharaya>.

Nuwaragala. Ancient monastery site with caves on spectacular rock formations. No monks or modern buildings. Best to access from northern, Maha Oya side. See

<http://amazinglanka.com/wp/ampara-nuwaragala-ruins>.

Polonnaruwa District

The second ancient capital of Sri Lanka. There are quite a few ancient monasteries on the hills and rocks in this area. Hot climate with dry season. Low country with some hills and rock-outcrops. Some large national parks.

Mahāsena AS. Nagalakanda, Minneriya 51410. 25 kms northwest of Polonnaruwa. Nice forest on a large hill. The site of an ancient monastery with ancient ruins and statues. Nice views from the top of the hill. Good kuṭ is and walking paths. Facilities for about 6–8 monks. Friendly abbot. Aff. Galduwa.

Dimbulāgala MC. Dimbulāgala. 20 kms SE of Polonnaruwa. Large ancient cave-monastery on a rocky mountain ridge. Nice views from the top of the hill. In the front section there is a pirivena (monastic school) with about 100 sāmaṇeras, and in the back there is an aranya area with about 15 monks (pirivena teachers). Not well kept. Aff. Amarapura Nikāya.

Sinhapura VMC. Sinhapura, Polonnaruva. Head Monk: Ven. Saṃvuta. 2 or 3 kuṭ is and a compound. Aff. Kanduboda.

Veharahena Y. 108 km Post, Avudangāva, Habarana 50150. On Dambulla – Habarana Rd. Abbot: Ven. Dhamminda. Several kuṭ is. Small area. Aff. Galduwa.

Bodhiraja AS. Hiriwadunna, Habarana. Untidy. Aff. Waturawila.

Kudusīgiriya A. Dehi-ata-kandiya. On Mahiyangana-Polonnaruva road.

Ariyadhamma A. Dehi-ata-kandiya. New and large aranya with many kutis. About 10 monks. Aff. Galduwa.

Polonnaruva Mahamevnāva. Perakum Uyana, Polonnaruva. Tel. 027 2226260.

Anurādhapura District

Anurādhapura was the ancient capital of Sri Lanka and the cradle of Sinhalese Buddhist culture. It has a hot climate with a dry season. Mostly flat land with some lonely hills and rocky outcrops. There are many man-made tanks (*wewa*). West of Anurādhapura is the large Wilpattu National Park known for its wildlife. Most of the province is undeveloped. Mihintale, east of Anurādhapura, has many old caves.

Kaludiya Pokuna Tapovanaya. Mihintale. Tel.: 071-842-1278. Ven. Saddhajīva is the abbot. Situated near the Kaludiya Pokuna bathing pond below the Mihintale Hill. Ancient cave monastery. 10 caves on the small hill above the monastery were repaired and are used. Nice kuṭ is and well kept facilities. 5–6 bhikkhus. Sometimes there is noise from the road. Aff. Tapovana group. Mihintale Hill is where the arahant Mahinda began teaching the Dhamma in Sri Lanka. Possibly the nicest ancient monastery site in Sri Lanka. There are many caves around the hill which one can use for meditation. There are also cetiyas on the top. See Sacred Island by S. Dhammika.

Katupotha Kanda Sri Vajirārāmaya VMC. Katupotha Kanda, Palugaswewa, Mihintale Rd, Galkulama, Anurādhapura. Tel. 025-385-3670. Small place with ancient caves on southern side of the large hill 2 kms south of the Mihintale Hill. Ven. Sanāthavihārī, who is friendly and speaks English, is staying here. 6 kuṭ is and a cave which is used as the library. Coming by bus from Kandy (Goods Shed Bus Stand) take a bus to Valvuniya, get off 5 kms past the Galkulama Junction on the Mihintale–Valvuniya Rd, sign on right (going towards Mihintale) to Aranya, walk 2 kms. Coming from Mihintale by car one has to turn off left [south] a few kms from Mihintale at the monastery sign on the Mihintale-Valvuniya Rd. Aff. Vajirārāma group.

Ritigala A. Ganewalpola, Kekirawa. The ancient cave monastery is on the southeastern lower slope of Ritigala mountain. The aranya is about 2 kilometers to the east from Galapitigala. The first Sinhalese arahant, Ariṭ ṭ ha stayed here. The aranya is in a nature reserve with elephants. Most kutis are close to each other. There are two kutis higher up the mountain. A half hour walk to the east from the aranya are the extensive ruins of a large ancient Paṃsukulika sect monastery. To get there take a bus from Kekirawa to Habarana and get off at Galapitagala. There is a direct shortcut path through the forest, but it is better to go by way of the unpaved road that goes along the the village monastery that the the abbot of the aranya is building. Aff. Waturawila.

Subodhārāma BM / Labunoruwa Kanda AS. Maradankadawala, North Central Province 0094. Tel: 0602254193, 0722255883. E-mail: yadmp@yahoo.com A few kms NE of Ritigala on the hill facing the northern slope of Ritigalakanda. A forest monastery connected to Ritigala A. with kuṭ is and ancient caves in forest on top of a hill. About 7 monks. Piṇḍapāta. The teacher Ven. Mandakandawala Sudassana stays here. Take a bus from Kekirawa to Galamudana (10 km) and get out at Arugola (= Alagollewa ??) at the monastery sign. Aff. Waturawila.

Etdalagala AS. Giratalana, Migaleva. Take bus from Galgamuwa. Abbot: Ven. Nyanavira. About 10 monks. Kutis in forest, also a few caves on rocky hill. Quiet and well supported. Foreign monks regularly stay here. Close to the Resvehera archeological site. From Galgamuwa take a bus to Katugampola and stop at Bongama. From there it is 1 ½ km walk. Aff. Kanduboda.

Niyandagala A. Ambagaswewa, South Siyambalagamuwa. 5 kms south of Negamma train station. Abbot: Ven. Sīlaratana. Small aranya with about 6 monks on the base of a forested hill. Mostly monks who practice Goenkaji Vipassana meditation stay here. Nearby a Goenkaji Vipassana meditation centre has been built by Ven. Sīlaratana. Aff. Waturawila.

Siyambalagamuwa A. In the forest reserve between Ambagaswewa and Siyambalagamuwa (about 4 kilometers to the west of Niyandagala) there is a small ascetic forest monastery with three simple kutis.

Sāliya Lena AS. Galgiriyaakanda, Moragollāgama. Aff. Waturawila. Ancient monastery with caves. On the southern side of the Galgiriyaakanda mountain. Less than a kilometer to the north is another aranya, connected to Kandubodha, called Kanduwa A. On another side is Nilgirikanda Aranya with an ancient reclining Buddha in a cave.

Dutugamunu AS. Vijithapura, Kalawewa. Tel.: 025 5730142. On a forested hill west of Kekirawa. Located near the northern edge of the large Kalawewa reservoir. There are nine kutis spread through the forest; three are cave kutis. The monastery is connected to Nissarana Vanaya. It is located about a kilometer away north of the Kalawewa train station. From Kekirawa take a Galewela or Galnewa bus and get off at the 9 km marker. Aff. Galduwa.

Sambodhi Y. Kuratiyāva, Migaleva 60750. 15 kms W from Kekirawa. Good new kuṭ is and facilities, adjacent to large wewa (tank/lake). Hot, mosquitos, but well supported. 3 monks. Take bus from Kekirawa. Aff. Galduwa.

Pancha Stūpa A. Palugolla. Mahananneriya. From Galgamuwa, take a bus to Anamadūva and get off at Ihala Nanneriya junction. On a hill with an ancient stupa. Tradition unknown.

Mahamevnāva Asapuwa. Vatavandana Road, Lolugaswewa, Anurādhapura. Connected to Ven. K. Ñāṇānanda. Tel. 025-492-8155.

Vedisagiri A. Sanghappālaya, Vannikudawewa, Galgamuwa 60721. = Between Māho and Anurādhapura. Aff. Galduwa.

Purāṇa Gallena AS. Tammennāva, Tambuttagama 60734. = 25 kms S of Anurādhapura.

Maradankadawala AS. Maradankadawala. On Anurādhapura–Kekirawa Rd, 30 kms SE of Anurādhapura. Aff. Galduwa.

Yodhayākanda AS. Dampitigama, Halmillawewa. About 50 kms E of Anurādhapura on Anurādhapura - Trincomalee road. Aff. Waturawila.

Mihindu A. Anurādhapura. Along road from Mihintale to Anurādhapura. Pirivena and ordination centre connected to Waturawila.

Trincomalee District

Trincomalee is a large port. There are some ancient Buddhist sites in this area. The interior is undeveloped with some large wilderness areas.

Seruvawila Mahamevnāva. Large cetiya, rooms only. Many tourists.

Kantalai Mahamevnāva. Kantalai. Tel. 026-492-9024. Next to lake, good kutis with walking paths. 7 monks.

Kathārampura AS. Kathārampura, Duṭ uwewa. North of Ratmale, 50 kms from Trincomalē on the Anurādhapura-Trincomalee road. Not very accessible. Aff. Waturawila.

Vān Ela Amādahara Tapovanaya, Near Kantalai; mid-way the Habarana–Trincomalee Road. Aff. Tapovana group.

Pulmoddai Monastery, Pulmoddai. A monastery in shrubland close to the coast and sand mining corporation. Abbot: Dhammagavesi Thera, speaks English well.

Vavuniya and Jaffna District

Situated on the northernmost limit of Sinhalese Buddhist culture. Due to the previous armed conflict, there are very few monasteries here, but probably quite a few ancient ones.

Galpiyuma AS. / Galpokuna A. Kahatagollewa, Padaviya. Approx. 30 kms E of Vavuniya. On the road between Kēbitigollēwa and Padaviya, get off at Kahatagollewa. Ancient cave monastery in large forest area with elephants. Good seclusion. It can be hot here. Ruins scattered in forest. Aff. Galduwa.

Padaviya Abhayabhūmi Tapovanaya. Deviyangekanda, Padaviya. On a hill with a few caves. Near army camp. Aff. Tapovana group.

Notes

1. Contact Details: Department of Immigration and Emigration: "Suhurupaya", Battaramulla. Hotline : 1962. Phone: 94-11-5329000. E-Mail : controller@immigration.gov.lk. Web Site: www.immigration.gov.lk

Ministry of Buddhasasana: "Dahampaya", No.135, Sir Anagarika Dharmapala Mawatha, Colombo 07. Tel: +94-11-2337315. Email buddhistdept@yahoo.com. Website: www.buddhistdept.gov.lk

2. By way of internet: http://www.eta.gov.lk/slvisa/visainfo/apply.jsp?locale=en_US. Otherwise: http://www.immigrationlanka.com/Info-2-15.html?locale=en_US#link_73.

3. According to one source, a one time 5-month extension after the first month is possible with a sponsorship-letter from your monastery to the Ministry of Buddhist affairs, where you'd need to go in person with a representative of the monastery. There you will then receive a written recommendation that has to be handed over at the Immigration Dept.

4. http://www.immigration.gov.lk/web/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=152&Itemid=197&lang=en and http://www.immigrationlanka.com/Info-2-15.html?locale=en_US#link_73.

5. http://www.immigration.gov.lk/web/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=153&Itemid=198&lang=en

6. http://www.immigration.gov.lk/web/images/stories/pdf/form/visa/residence_visas.pdf