



The 100th Meditation Retreat at Nissarana Vanaya

*'Leaving no more need for us to run around in search of the truth...
Enabling to see the truth as soon as the eyes are closed - deeper and deeper, day by day...
Making that was unthinkable and unreachable to be experienced in this very life...
Clarifying in no uncertain terms what should be done until the last breath of life!'*

Words from a disciple (August 7, 2015)

The Chief Meditation Master, Most Venerable Uda Eriyagama Dhammajiva Maha Thero was felicitated at a simple ceremony held at Nissarana Vanaya on the 7th of August this year. This was at the conclusion of the 100th meditation retreat. The event was attended by all the resident sangha at the monastery, members of the Karakha Sabha as well as senior members of the Nissarana Vanaya community. The Retreat Organisers and staff were also present.

The Karakha Sabha President and Secretary, and Duleep Mahatantila addressed the gathering and traced the events of the last decade which has led to the highly successful retreat schedule that is presently in place. Each retreat has capacity attendance and back-to-back retreats are the norm during the months of the year that Maha Thero is in Sri Lanka. Over 3-5 months each year Maha Thero conducts overseas retreats at centres in the UK, USA, Canada, Europe, Australia and New Zealand. On behalf of the Retreat Organisers Dila Hettiaratchy spoke a few words highlighting the processes of organising retreats and how these have evolved in quality, in the past several years. Even though the felicitation was for 100 retreats completed at Nissarana Vanaya, she emphasised that Venerable Maha Thero would have conducted nearly 200 retreats during the past 10-15 years.

Many yogis residing overseas sent words of appreciation and gratitude, saluting the efforts of the meditation master.



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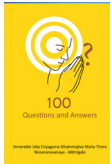
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The following books were launched during the felicitation ceremony of The 100th meditation retreat



100 Questions and Answers

'The richness of discourse and the ability to capture the attention of majority of retreatants irrespective of their age or duration of their practice, are what make Venerable Dhammajiva's teachings unique.'

This book contains one hundred questions and answers compiled from several discussion sessions held as part of meditation retreats conducted by Venerable Uda Eriyagama Dhammajiva Maha Thero, the Chief Meditation Master and Abbot of Nissarana Vanaya, Mitirigala.

The questions posed by retreatants and the answers given by Maha Thero in Sinhala, have been simultaneously transcribed and translated into English. The question and answer sessions were selected from many retreats held in Sri Lanka at Nissarana Vanaya as well as at overseas retreat centres from 2011 onwards.

The questions are a mix, combining those that would suit beginners in the practice as well as those that would benefit experienced practitioners. Whilst this book would ideally suit a regular practitioner who uses the Maha Thero's instructions for guidance and to navigate one's self through the delicate steps in a meditative journey, it would also come in handy for a beginner. A reader who is familiar with Maha Thero's teachings will feel at home with the deep but typically lucid answers given to the questions posed by the meditators.



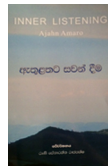
Freed Freedom

'An intensely private search for spiritual fulfillment'

This book enshrines a continuous seven year correspondence by letter that was conducted in the 1980s between the meditation master (Most Venerable Matara Nanarama Maha Thero) resident in a rural monastery (Nissarana Vanaya, Mitirigala) and his female disciple.

Miriam de Saram was, at the time of writing a Sinhalese widow in her seventies living in the residential heart of Colombo, Sri Lanka's capital city. The exchange of letters presented in this book is unique because of the depth of understanding of the student and the ability to communicate these questions written in English, via a translation by a senior Bhikkhu resident at the same monastery, so that the meditation master was able to provide lucid answers in Sinhala which were relayed to the student in English. This type of exchange of letters on a subject that is seldom explored in print outside fiction or religious publication, is indeed rare.

Translated into Sinhala by Rani Rajapakse



Inner Listening

'Inner listening' or 'meditation on the inner sound'... Referring to what has been called 'the sound of silence...'

This book describes a meditation practice often employed by Ajahn Sumedho, and found in various spiritual traditions, but which is not widely known in the Southern Buddhist world. It is a method that can support the qualities of both calm and insight, and has been found to be of great benefit to many people over the centuries. There are a number of themes that are very familiar to people who practice Buddhist meditation: 'mindfulness of breathing', where you focus on the rhythm of the breath; 'walking meditation', that revolves around the feeling of the footsteps as you walk up and down a path; the internal repetition of a mantra, such as 'Bud-dho' – these are all designed to help ground the attention in the presence of this very moment, this present reality.

Along with these more well-known methods there are many others that can serve a similar function. One of these is known as 'inner listening' or 'meditation on the inner sound' or, in Sanskrit, 'nada yoga'. These terms all refer to attending to what has been called 'the sound of silence', or 'the nada-sound'. 'Nada' is the Sanskrit word for 'sound' as well as being the Spanish word for 'nothing' – an interesting and accidentally meaningful coincidence.

Translated into Sinhala by Rani Rajapakse

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dhammaarchive@gmail.com

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<https://archive.org/details/NissaranaVanaya>

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Venerable Dhammajiva Maha Thero's overseas Retreat Schedule

(December 2015 - January 2016; May – July 2016)

Dates	Venue	Retreat Organizers	Email Address
AUSTRALIA			
December 2015 - January 2016	Brisbane, Sydney, Canberra, Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne	Amaranath Jayakody Badra Samarakoon	ajayakody@gmail.com Badra.Samarakoon@computershare.com.au Samarakoon.family@gmail.com
USA, CANADA, UK, GERMANY			
27 th May 2016 - 5 th June 2016	Chuang Yen Monastery - New York	Sunil Amitirigala	Sunami2004@msn.com
7 th June 2016 – 12 th June 2016	"Mindfulness for Kids" program - Florida	Shana Smith	Sunami2004@msn.com
13 th June 2016 - 23 rd June 2016	Toronto Canada	Mallika Karunaratne	sarathkaru@rogers.com
25 th June 2016 – 5 th July 2016	UK	Shiro Bandara	shiroma@hotmail.co.uk
7 th July 2016 – 17 th July 2016	Germany		

Retreat at Chuang Yen Monastery (May 2016)

On the invitation of Venerable Bhikkhu Bodhi, Most Venerable Dhammajiva Maha Thero will be conducting a meditation retreat for the first time at the *Chuang Yen Monastery*.

The *Chuang Yen Monastery (CYM)* is a Buddhist temple situated on 225 acres in Kent, Putnam County, New York. The temple is home to the largest indoor statue of Buddha in the United States. The name "Chuang Yen" means "Majestically Adorned". Even though the CYM only conducts meditation retreats for its members, the monastery has offered about 30 - 40 places for regular attendees of Venerable Dhammajiva Maha Thero's retreats in the USA. The retreat will be conducted in English and translations done in Chinese where necessary.

Kids Mindfulness Program



The 'Kids Mindfulness Program' will be conducted for the second consecutive year during 2016 June in Florida.

Visit the following link for more information

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1429820600676823/>

2016 - Retreats in Sri Lanka

The meditation retreat schedule of Venerable Dhammajiva in Sri Lanka for 2016 is currently in preparation. The retreats scheduled to be held at Nissarana Vanaya, Mitirigala as well as in other locations in Sri Lanka will be published on www.nissarana.lk.

These retreats will be conducted in Sinhala and English. Interested participants are requested to apply for retreats by completing the Retreat Application Form accordingly. Preference will be given to newcomers at retreats, whereas a few places will be reserved for experienced meditators at every retreat.

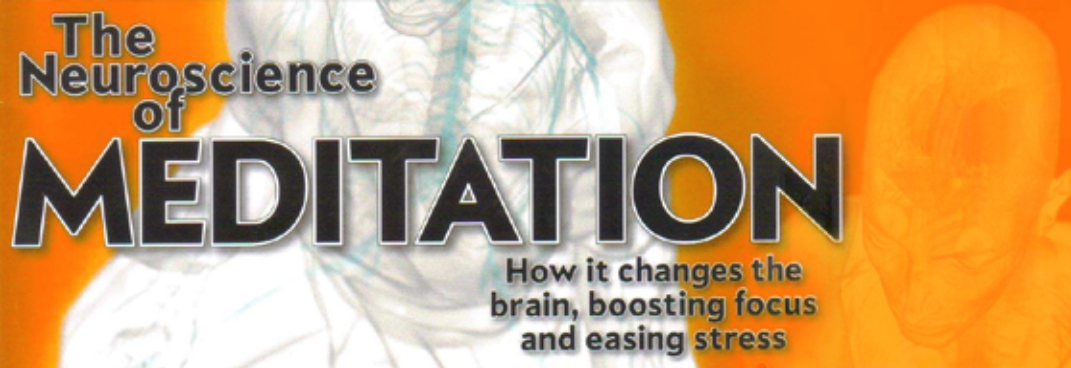
You may inquire regarding retreat application by mailing dilahet@sltnet.lk

One-Day meditation Retreats in Colombo

Most Venerable Dhammajiva Maha Thero conducts day-retreats in Sinhala and English on a monthly basis at Sri Allenmethiniyarama temple on Polhengoda road, Colombo 05 and at Lanka Vipassana Meditation Centre on Wijerama Road, Colombo 07.

The typical daily schedule includes Walking and Sitting meditation sessions alternatively, Dhamma Talks and Dhamma discussions.

Please email asitha_kumari@yahoo.com or viduravi123@gmail.com for details.



The Neuroscience of MEDITATION

How it changes the brain, boosting focus and easing stress

Research Studies on mindfulness meditation practice

The practice of mindfulness meditation has gained a lot of attention internationally. Results of extensive scientific research conducted on the subject globally have demonstrated positive reasons for integrating such a practice into academia, the corporates, professional and schools systems. There are several studies showing the effects of different forms of meditation in reducing blood pressure and in positively affecting other physiological parameters. Recently there has been wide spread interest on its effects on the cerebral cortex, in conditions like dementia and other illnesses. However, almost all of the scientific research conducted globally on mindfulness meditation has focused on secular (non-religious) meditation practice. Popular literature and media highlight the benefits of such secular practices.

For the first time in Sri Lanka a research study on experienced meditators who have been regular practitioners under the guidance of Venerable Dhammajiva Maha Thero, will be launched during 2015. About 40 practitioners who will participate in a retreat at Nissarana Vanaya will be tested using accepted scientific protocol for physiological, biochemical and immunological changes in addition to psychometric and other forms of testing. The study was designed by a team of experienced meditators who are students of Venerable Dhammajiva Maha Thero and by senior academics from the Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo.

Research Study on School Children

Simultaneously a research study is being planned to test the effects of mindfulness meditation practice on school children. This will be a secular practice where a class of 35-40 children will be subject to a series of mindfulness exercises during an eight week period, with the assistance of the school teachers. They will be tested using internationally accepted psychometric, intellectual and other assessments by the same team of researches and will be guided by Venerable Dhammajiva Maha Thero. This will be the first such study in Sri Lanka.

Dhamma Archive

The Dhamma Archive was initiated in 2013 to enable devotees who did not have access to dhamma talks on the internet to receive CDs of retreat talks by post, free of charge.

In 2014 this program was formalized with an administrator working full time. The 1st of July 2015 marked start of the second year of this program. To date More than 2,300 CDs have been posted to devotees on request. This initiative is maintained on donor funding.

Mindfulness Training in UK Schools Covering 76 schools (6000 students)

The first extensive three-part research study on mindfulness practice amongst school children will be launched in the UK. This includes the first large randomised control trial of mindfulness training compared with 'teaching as usual' in 76 schools, which will involve nearly six thousand students, aged 11 to 14.

Other parts of the study are a programme of experimental research to establish whether and how mindfulness improves the mental resilience of teenagers, and an evaluation of the most effective way to train teachers to deliver mindfulness classes to students.

The £6.4 million research programme will be carried out by teams at the University of Oxford, UCL (University College London) and the MRC Cognition and Brain Sciences Unit, in collaboration with the University of Exeter, over seven years.

<http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/News/Media-office/Press-releases/2015/WTP059495.htm>

Neuroplasticity: The Science Behind Mindfulness

There is a neurobiological revolution in the understanding of how the mind, body and brain function together. The old assumption that our brains stopped growing by late childhood and started to decline around age 25 has been proved wrong. Neuroplasticity refers to the brain's ability to change its pattern and structure throughout our lifetime. The brain is shaped by our environment, our experiences, and our beliefs; and it never stops maturing. For school leaders, this means that the environment we co-create with teachers, parents, staff, the entire school community shapes us, and we in turn are shaped by this environment. Mindfulness practice changes our brain.

<http://mobile.edweek.org/c.jsp?cid=25920011&item=http%3A%2F%2Fapi.edweek.org%2Fv1%2Fblog%2F95%2F%3Fuuid%3D51007>