



Vijithapura - The scenic fortress-city

Vijithapura is an ancient fortress-city of Sri Lanka. Dutugemunu Aranya Senasanaya is a forest monastery located in Vijithapura, Pulliyankulama, in the vicinity of the scenic Kalaweva in the Anuradhapura District. Richly steeped in Sri Lankan history, this city is chronicled in the Mahavamsa, Dipavamsa, Rajavaliya and Thupavamsa.

The Dutugemunu Aranya is located in a picturesque and serene forest area spanning about 100 acres.

On Wesak Full Moon Poya 2016, the Dutugemunu Aranya Senasanaya chalked a significant milestone. On the initiative of Venerable Kiralogama Wimalasidhdhi the Aranya was offered to Venerable U. Dhammajiva, for affiliation with Nissarana Vanaya. The objectives being, teaching and furthering meditation practice, and sharing the Dhamma.

Today the management of the Aranya is supervised by the Nissarana Vanaya Sanrakshana Mandalaya, and three monks from Nissara Vanaya have taken residence in the monastery. They diligently practice meditation and offer Dhamma Talks to the villagers in the neighbouring areas.

Currently, work on walking meditation paths, a dana sala and kuti renovation is in progress with the support of Nissarana Vanaya. Alms to the monks are provided by villagers, and a caretaker and a helper are attending to the needs of the resident monks. On the last Saturday of every month, monks from Nissarana Vanaya (eg Venerable Dhammasuneetha or Venerable Chandaratane) conduct a one-day meditation retreat for the villagers.



A Study on the Psychological and Physiological Effects of a Mindfulness Meditation Program



The results of the first Sri Lankan research study on mindfulness meditation practitioners were presented at the Sri Lanka Medical Association Annual Scientific sessions in July 2016. The 35 meditators who participated in the study were volunteers from a long retreat, held at Nissarana Vanaya last year. The study was conducted by a team of researchers from the Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo.



Expansion of the Nissarana Vanaya Retreat Centre

A new, second floor dedicated to female retreatants' accommodation is due to be inaugurated in three months. This floor will have nine large rooms, each with an en-suite bathroom to be shared by four ladies. A common pantry, which will be fully equipped with modern amenities and a refrigerator, is being constructed for this new second floor. This wing will accommodate a maximum of 36 participants and will have a washing machine and clothes drying facilities as well.

The third level of the Retreat Centre is being fitted with sandy, indoor walking paths according to standard specifications. These will address the perennial problem of lack of space for walking meditation during the rainy season. A bordering parapet wall and a high roof will provide an openness and space for the new walking meditation area.

This new facility will enable the Retreat Centre to cope with the high demand for places at retreats throughout the year. From 2017 onwards the Centre will be able to accommodate 70 female and 20 male retreatants per retreat.

Inaugural teachings in the Middle East - September 2016

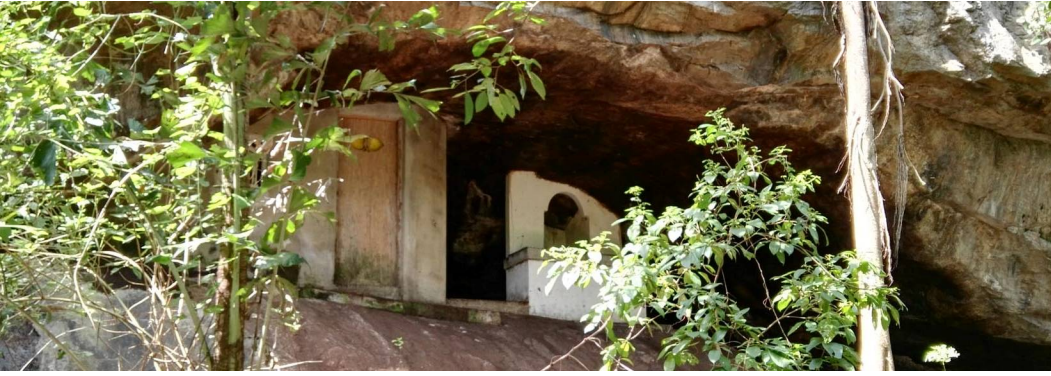


The first meditation retreat in a Middle Eastern country conducted by Most Venerable U. Dhammajiva Maha Thero was held in the Sultanate of Oman, at the Sri Sambuddhatwa Jayanthi Viharaya at Madinat al Sultan Quaboos. The scheduled program consisted of sitting and walking meditation sessions, along with Dhamma Talks and Dhamma Discussions to support the practice. The retreat was attended by Sri Lankans living in Oman and about 100 meditators participated.

At the end of the retreat, Venerable Dhammajiva Maha Thero invited to conduct a similar program in 2017. Venerable Maha Thero also got an opportunity to introduce Sati Pasela to the children who gathered at the venue. The response from the children was very encouraging and their understanding on the subject was impressive.

Visit the following link for more about Sati Pasela program:

<https://satipasela.wordpress.com>



Satara Iddhipāda (Part 1)

Chanda Iddhipāda – Developing zeal to strive in the practice

Viriya Iddhipāda – Exerting Ardent Energy

A translated excerpt of a talk given by Most Venerable Udaeriyagama Dhammajīva Maha Thero in Melbourne, Australia in January 2016.

Meaning of 'iddhipāda'

Iddhipāda is a compounded term composed of “power” (*iddhi*) and “base” or “constituent” (*pāda*), denoting the supportive factors towards one’s spiritual enlightenment, at times referred to as the four bases of power or the four paths to spiritual power, the four bases of spiritual success, also variously translated as the “means of accomplishment” and the “path to spiritual power”.

The four pathways to spiritual power (*satara iddhipāda*) form part of the 37 factors of awakening (*bodhipkākshika dhamma*). In the progress of insight (the development of the path to awakening (*bodhi*)), one comes into contact with the 37 qualities related to awakening.

Each of the four pathways to spiritual power, *chanda* (conviction or zeal to strive in the practice); *virīya* (ardent effort); *citta* (mind and consciousness) and *vīmaṇsā* (investigation of dhamma or investigative inquiry) suits individual character traits. Not knowing them, we fail to realise their practical benefit in assimilating the path, to know what is useful, what is practical and suited, to our character traits.

The Buddha had a rare ability to know the character trait of each individual; and to teach accordingly, imparting instructions bespoke to their character trait. During the Buddha’s time, many were able to listen to one or two stanzas and become enlightened, or in response to a rhetorical question posed by the Buddha, realise the dhamma instantly. This was a special ability of the Buddha.

We no longer have the Buddha in our presence. Through our progress in the four pathways to spiritual power (*iddhipāda*), we could discern our character traits, or, at least, know our inclination, whether we are bent on conviction to strive in practice (*chanda*); ardent effort (*virīya*), determination or strong resolve (*citta*) or have an investigative, inquiring mind (*vimāṇsā*).

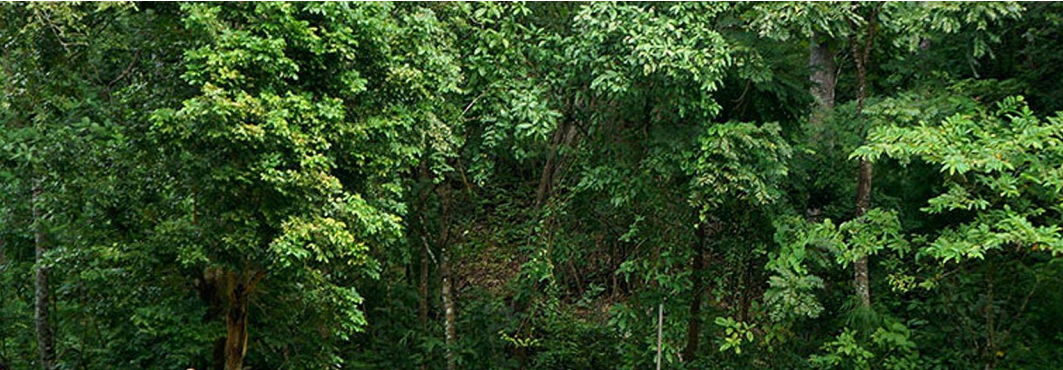
Each person is endowed with or bent towards at least one of the four bases of spiritual power and this could be discerned in discussion of one’s meditation experience (practice) with the teacher, where, over a number of discussions, the teacher is able to make an intelligent guess as to the person’s character trait(s), and their inclination in the practice.

Sequentially, making reference to the 37 qualities of awakening, the four foundations of mindfulness (*satara satipatthāna*): contemplation of body (*kāyānupassanā*), contemplation of feelings (*vedānānupassanā*), contemplation of mind (*cittānupassanā*) and the contemplation of mind objects (*dhammānupassanā*) are discussed first; followed by the four right efforts: exerting effort to prevent the arising of unskillful mind- states, to abandon unskillful mind- states that have already arisen, exerting effort, so that skillful states can arise, to sustain and increase skillful states that have already arisen. Followed by these qualities, the four pathways or bases to spiritual power (*satara iddhipāda*) are discussed. The five spiritual faculties (*pañca indriya*) and five spiritual powers (*pañca bala*) are considered next...

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Retreat Calendar 2016: Some Highlights

Day Retreat - Vipassana Meditation Centre, Colombo 7

Date: October 9, 2016 - 6:00 am.

Organizers: Mr. Vidura Ranasinghe & Mr. Reggi Herath

<http://www.nissarana.lk/event/day-retreat-at-vipassana-meditation-centre-colombo-7-3-3-2-2-2/>

Day Retreat in Galle (Weduwa Aranya - Koggala)

Date: October 30, 2016 - 6:30 am.

Organizer: Mr. H P Liyanage

<http://www.nissarana.lk/event/day-retreat-at-vipassana-meditation-centre-3/>

Day Retreat - Matara Sri Gnanarama MC, Thalawathugoda

Date: November 12, 2016 - 6:00 am.

Organizer: Mr. Hemantha Ranawaka

<http://www.nissarana.lk/event/english-medium-day-retreat-4-3-4-3-2-2-2-2/>

Three-Day Residential Retreat for Children

Date: December 8, 2016 - 2:00 pm.

Organizer: Ms. Rupika Gunawardane

<http://www.nissarana.lk/event/residential-retreat-for-6-days-3-6-2-3-2-4-2-2-2-2/>

Dhamma Talks at Nissarana Vanaya

Most of the Dhamma Talks delivered by Venerable Dhammajiva Maha Thero and other monks at Nissarana Vanaya during the past two decades, can be accessed on: nissarana.lk/audio-and-publications/dhamma-audio-archive/

The above link allows access to many of the talks delivered in the early days, as well as those discussed in the upper monastery.

In case there are difficulties in downloading these talks, please e-mail:

nissaranavanaya@gmail.com

A great loss to Nissarana Vanaya



On the 4th of August 2016, the Nissarana Vanaya monastery and retreat centre lost a stalwart and very dear friend. W D Somadasa, known to everyone as Loku Liyanamahattaya, was a staunch loyalist and faithful supporter of the monastery for decades. He was primarily the main administrator who supervised the proceedings of the Nissarana Vanaya office. In addition, he stepped in to help in every aspect of the monastery related work, particularly connected to alms offerings to the monks and meditators on a daily basis.

At times when staff deficits posed difficulties he even took over the role of organizing meditation retreats and communicating with participants. Despite chronic ill health Loku Liyanamahattaya would always be present at the monastery willing and offering to help in any capacity. Everyone associated with the monastery would surely miss this faithful friend.