

# FOREST MONASTERIES AND MEDITATION CENTRES IN SRI LANKA

## A Guide for Western Bhikkhus and Lay Practitioners

Updated: January 2008

### INTRODUCTION

In Sri Lanka there are many forest hermitages and meditation centres that may be suitable for western Buddhist monastics or for experienced lay Buddhists. The following information is particularly intended for Western bhikkhus, for those who aspire to become bhikkhus, and for those who are experienced lay practitioners. Another paper has been written for less experienced lay practitioners. It is called: *Information about Meditation Centres and other important places in Sri Lanka for visiting Western Buddhist Lay Buddhists*.

Factors such as climate, food, noise, standards of Vinaya (monastic discipline), and accessibility have been taken into consideration with regards the places listed in this work.

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The greatest concentrations of forest-monasteries are on the Western side of the country, esp. in Kurunāgala, Colombo, Gālla, and Mātara districts. Due to the armed conflict there are very few active forest-monasteries in the northern and eastern districts although there are ruins of ancient ones in many places. In the higher mountain areas there are also few monasteries because the Sinhalese often find it too cold there.

The area where the meditation centre is located gives a good indication about its climate. In the South-western low-country the climate is tropical, i.e., hot and humid, especially in March-April. 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” (This is quite an exaggeration as it can rain very heavily here and there can be floods.) is in the East, North, and South. This area starts about 15 kms north of Mātale, at the eastern and southern edges of the hill country (such as the eastern slopes of the Knuckles range), and east of Balangoda and Tangalle. Only one main monsoon (November-December) takes place here. The deep South (the coastal area between Ambalantota and Pānama) and the far North (Northern coast & Jaffna peninsula) are the driest areas in S.L. The upcountry is the hill- and mountain-area in the center of Sri Lanka (roughly between Mātale, Kægalla, Badulla, Haputale, and Balangoda). Here the climate is temperate and it can get cool (10–22°C depending on the altitude and time of the year) at night. For westerners it is generally a more agreeable climate than the low-country. In the south-west up-country areas such as the Singharāja rainforest and the Śri Pāda Wilderness areas it rains a lot, so much so that it can be impossible to dry one’s clothes for days after washing.

The food is generally the same everywhere and all the time. It is usually fairly plain and simple. It can be quite spicy compared to Western food. In the cities the food can be more nutritious while in poor rural areas the food can be quite unnutritious. Many people in Sri Lanka don’t eat meat or fish. In some monasteries and meditation centres small amounts of fish might be served (meat or eggs are rarely given), but if one is a vegetarian one can easily refuse without offending anyone. It might be a good idea to take a vitamin supplement if one finds that the food is not nutritious enough.

The medical care in government hospitals is free for monks in Sri Lanka. There are bhikkhu wards in the larger hospitals for those bhikkhus who are seriously ill. Medical care and hygiene are generally not of the same standards as they are in the west, 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 Asiri, Apollo and Navaloka hospitals in Colombo, but they are private hospitals and expensive. The same doctors who work in the private hospitals also work in government hospitals, but the equipment and facilities in government hospitals are of a lesser standard, especially in rural hospitals. Dentists often help monks for free. There are some good dentists in Sri Lanka, some trained in the West, who can do the same work as dentists in the West.

Unlike some other tropical countries, tropical diseases are not so common because the government healthcare system is fairly well organised. However, in some urban areas, especially in and around Colombo, there are cases of dengue fever and chikagunya fever, and, to a much lesser degree, Japanese encephalitis. In some South-western coastal areas there is a small risk of contracting the filaria parasite that causes elephantiasis. All these diseases are spread by mosquitos. In rural areas North, Northeast, and East of the country there is a small chance of contracting malaria, which is also spread by mosquitos. It is therefore always good to protect oneself against mosquito bites by using mosquito nets and repellents. Note that the malaria mosquito tends to bite early in the evening, while 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 water.

There is rabies in Sri Lanka and one should go to the local hospital to get anti-rabies shots when one is bitten by a dog, stray cat, (fruit-) bat, or by a macaque monkey. The Sinhalese are well aware of the danger of rabies and most dogs are vaccinated against it. Every big hospital has an anti-rabies clinic where one can get the vaccination-shots, which nowadays are completely painless and without side effects.

There are also cases of leptospirosis or Weil’s disease, which is transmitted by rats’ urine in contaminated water or on softdrink-cans as well as through cuts or cracks on the hands and feet.

Intestinal pinworms are common in Sri Lanka. These harmless creatures are spread through food, particularly raw vegetables, touched by the unwashed hands of an infected person. The symptom of their presence is itching in the anal

area at night—the time when the worms will emerge to lay their eggs and crawl around to make one want one to scratch. The pinworms will go away by themselves within a few days, if one does not reinfect oneself by scratching, which can happen while sleeping. One needs to regularly wash one's hands and bottom with soap, especially at night and in the morning. If this does not work, Vermox anti-worm tablets will remove the worms. Other types of worms are quite rare in Sri Lanka.

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 around Riṭigala, Kuḍumbigala, Sīhulpahuva, Rājagala and even Sigiriya, there are wild elephants and bears which regularly attack and kill people. Even monks have been attacked by these beasts and one has to take care when being 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 you can run, 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 can not escape, then fall face flat 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 can not turn one around, 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 one better keeps away from them. Leopards are very shy and attack people only very rarely. They are not considered a danger.

There are various dangerous snakes such as cobras, Russel's vipers, and kraits in Sri Lanka and many people are killed each year due to snakebites, especially by Russel's vipers and krait bites. So take care when going off paths into the jungle, etc. Kraits are nocturnal snakes and regularly bite people while they sleep. The snake is attracted to the body heat of a sleeping person and the snake may bite when the person turns around 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, don't panic, note what kind of snake it is and try to go to a hospital as soon as possible to get antivenom. Don't trust village snake doctors.

The bite of the big black or blue-green scorpions one often encounters after heavy rainfall is painful but not dangerous, but. The bite of the big brown-red centipede or the striped centipede is very painful.

It is advisable to use a mosquito-net in forests and rural areas to keep away kraits and other dangerous creatures such as scorpions, centipedes, and mosquitos. However, the risk of having a grave traffic accident while walking on the street or going on a bus in Sri Lanka is much larger than being bitten or attacked by some dangerous creature in the jungle.

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Sri Lanka is a great place to practice patience, simplicity, renunciation, and humility. Conditions in meditation centers and monasteries can be very simple and uncomfortable for those used to the luxuries and comforts of the West. Meditation centers and monasteries are not so well off in Sri Lanka and only a few of them will have a vehicle. One will have to get used to taking public transport or walking when one wants to go somewhere. Bhikkhus who don't use money can use special coupons with which one can travel on government buses (known as CTB, Central Transport Board). The monastery one stays in can usually supply these.

Bhikkhus do not get showered with requisites in Sri Lanka and are not so highly respected and honoured as in Thailand or Burma. Bhikkhus from Thailand have to get used to things that are never done there. The body language and the way Sinhalese people and monks speak and behave might appear disrespectful to monks used to the Thai or Burmese customs.

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-temples on Poya-days.

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 usually is 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 colloquial Sinhala and people are usually helpful and understanding.

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It is generally easier for foreign Buddhist monks to get a visa in Sri Lanka than in other Buddhist countries, although it still is a hassle. In Sri Lanka Buddhist monks get a free one year residence visa, which needs to be extended annually. In order to extend one's visa, one needs to get a sponsorship letter for a visa from the senior monk of the monastery one stays in or is connected to, then one needs to go with this letter and the so-called "application form to obtain a letter of recommendation to extend the residence visa" (available at monasteries and/or the Ministry of Buddhist Affairs in Colombo) to the monk who is the secretary of the district (*Iekhakādhikāri handuruwo*) and get the application form signed and stamped by him. (It is best to telephone the secretary monk beforehand and make an appointment. The secretary monk in Kandy is only available in the weekend.) Then this form needs to be signed and stamped by the secretary of the Provincial Council (*Kacceri*). (Note that when one still has a picture as a laymen on one's passport that a picture as a monk will need to be attached to this application and is to be stamped or signed by the district monk and provincial council secretary.) When this has been done, one can go to the Ministry of Buddhist Affairs in Colombo 7 (at present at the Ministry of Religious Affairs at Wijerama Mawatha, opposite the Lanka Vipassanā Centre) and get a recommendation letter for the Department of Immigration. (Don't forget to ask for an application form which one can use next year.) For the first time application for a residence visa, one needs to bring along two or three passport pictures. (They can be obtained from a shop at the Dept. of Immigration itself.) The Department of Immigration is now

in Maradāna, within walking distance from the Ministry of Buddhist Affairs. (No. 41 Ananda Rajakaruna Mawatha, Punchi Borella, Colombo 10. Tel. 011-532-9300.) At the Ministry of Buddhist Affairs one generally has to wait less than one hour and at the Immigration usually one and a half hours, maybe more. The Immigration might ask one to come back in a few days. One can go to the Ministry of Buddhist Affairs in the morning, have lunch there (they will provide you a lunch if you ask them, or one can go to Lanka Vipassanā Centre across the road and ask if one can eat there) and then walk to the Immigration (a 30 minutes walk) after lunch.

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The standards of discipline 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 Galdūva Forest Tradition is the strictest *vinaya* tradition in Sri Lanka and the bhikkhus follow strictly the commentarial traditions. In forest monasteries and meditation centres that are not affiliated with the Galdūva tradition the *vinaya* standards are generally less strict, but still reasonable. [In many city and village temples and monks schools (*pirivenas*) (not listed in this work) the *vinaya*-standards can be low.]

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

*The Kalyāna Yogāshramaya Saṃsthāva or Galdūva tradition* is an independent part of the Rāmañña Nikāya. The headquarters is in Galdūva, near Ambalangoda. It is the largest forest sect in Sri Lanka. There are close to a hundred centres 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 Galdūva. Until recently, the procedure would be to do a *dalhikamma*, a short ceremony intended to reconfirm the original *upasampadā* in accordance with the Galdūva standards, but this is not done anymore. Monks who got their *upasampadā* in the Pa Auk monastery in Burma or in the Ajahn Chah are accepted and don't need to get a new *upasampadā*.

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

*The Mahāvihāra Vaṃshika Shyāmopāli Vanavāsa Nikāya or Vaturavila* group has over 80 branch monasteries throughout the country. The *Vinaya* standards are not as strict as in the Galdūva group, but are generally reasonable. Only members of the Sinhalese high caste are accepted for *upasampadā* and, judging from the population of Vaturavila monasteries, it appears that many of them are elderly, retired men. The headquarters are in Vaturavila in Gālla district.

*A sub-sect of the Vaturavila group* that follows stricter *Vinaya* standards has its headquarters in Madakada Aranya near Ingiriya. This group follows the example of the Galdūva group.

*The Kanduboda group or Swejyin Nikāya* chapter of the Amarapura Nikāya is a group of monasteries connected to the Kanduboda International Meditation Centre. It originates from the Burmese Swejyin Nikāya. The Mahāsi meditation technique tradition of Burma is practiced. It has reasonable standards of *Vinaya*. There are about twenty small meditation centers connected to this tradition in and near towns but most are of no significance for westerners.

*The Tapovana group or Kalyāṇavaṃsa* 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.

*The Mahamevnāva group.* A rapidly growing new tradition, or rather movement, led by the popular meditation teacher Venerable Kiribathgoda Nāṇānanda. In June 2004, Ven. Nāṇānanda together with 45 other novice disciples received the *Upasampadā* and in 2005 another 40 became bhikkhus. They follow a strict practice of the Dhamma and *Vinaya* with an emphasis on studying the Suttas and *Vinaya* rather than the Abhidhamma, Commentaries and the *Viduddhimagga*. There is meditation in the monasteries, but the main emphasis of Ven. Nāṇānanda is missionary activity, i.e. to spread the Dhamma and set up new monasteries, which has led to quite a few problems due to lack of experience of the often young and recently ordained abbots and teachers. At the time of writing there are 34 branch monasteries connected to this tradition, including one in Canada, and more are being set up all the time. There are some monasteries which could be classified as forest monasteries, with kutis and (regrowing) forest, but most are in village and town areas and all are generally crowded. The monasteries are well kept and the monks, who are usually young and well educated, are diligent and motivated. The headquarters is Mahamevnāva Asapuva near Kægalla. The first *upasampadā* ceremony was carried through the Kalyāṇavaṃsa branch of the Amarapura Nikāya.

Information on the formation and history of the forest traditions in Sri Lanka can be found in Michael Carrither's book called *The Forest Monks of Sri Lanka*, Oxford 1983.

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Western monks are usually regarded highly by Sinhalese laypeople as they have not gone forth out of cultural or economic reasons, but out of a sincere desire to practice the Dhamma. Generally, western monks are welcome anywhere and travelling western monks are normally 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 to the abbot and it is normally readily granted if there is place.

In some places the Sinhalese monks might not be so helpful due to negative experiences with non-adaptive Westerners, or due to nationalistic feelings and dislike of foreigners. One has to keep in mind that Sri Lanka has been colonized by three European nations. What apparently can also happen is that Sinhalese people misperceive a Western monk's reservedness as racist dislike for their skin colour. This is a difficult situation to avoid as Sinhalese people tend to be very open and inquisitive, approaching one on the street and asking where one is going, how many brothers one has, and so on, and after a while one tends develop a habit of being reserved. However, it is good to keep in mind to remain polite and not to appear harsh. Although Sinhalese people themselves can be very critical about the situation in

their country, as a foreigner one generally has to be careful not to repeat this and make negative comments about things that could be improved upon, etc. One also has to be careful about making comments on the conflict in the North and politics. Coming from a highly organized and outgoing culture, one will notice plenty of things to improve in monasteries, etc, but one has to be careful not to develop an overly critical attitude, which can easily happen. Sinhalese people, and Asians in general, are generally quite indirect and are afraid of blame. If one points out a mistake to someone, then normally the recipient will pass on the blame to someone else. While workers are doing construction or repair work in a monastery, one has to be quite tactful when pointing out things that have been done wrongly or which can be improved upon. It is best to ask a Sinhalese monk or layperson to do this, so as to avoid disgruntled workers. Westerners, often due to their Protestant background, also tend to be critical of Sinhalese rituals and tend to avoid evening chanting, offering food to the Buddha image, etc, which Sinhalese monks are very keen on doing. This avoidance tends to set one apart and it is best to join in occasionally for the sake of harmony.

In non Sinhalese areas in the North and East one might sometimes be less warmly received as some Sinhalese bhikkhus are involved in politics and openly support a military solution to the conflict, etc. However, if Tamil people see that one is a genuine practitioner of Dhamma and is not there on a political mission, then they will be helpful, even if one is a Sinhalese bhikkhu. One Sinhalese bhikkhu walking barefoot from the South to Jaffna had no major problems and received generous *piṇḍapāta* even in LTTE (Tamil Tiger) controlled areas. He attracted some local journalists and his motives were questioned several times. At the time of writing, 2007, it is not recommended to go to the North and East due to the heavy fighting going on. Ampāra district is still accessible though.

In general one can, and needs to be, more independent in Sri Lanka. If one likes to practice independently and is not looking for a powerful teacher, then Sri Lanka can be a suitable place. Sinhalese culture, being part of the Indian cultural sphere, allows more individualism than the conformistic 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.

There are many monasteries listed in this guide, but when has seen a couple of monasteries connected to different traditions, in a different areas of the country, then one has an idea of what all of them will roughly be like. 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 which at first appeared to be great. There is no monastery which is perfectly quiet and where the monks are all arahants. So, this guide is not intended as a guide to find the perfect place, as a bible for restless monks. There was one user of this guide who went to many of the forest monasteries in this guide but still could not find the perfect conditions he was seeking. So 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 are different for each person 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 stay in places with a reasonable vinaya practice.

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The transliteration of Sinhala characters has been added when it was known and considered useful. This makes it easier to pronounce the place name and make oneself understood to the local people.

The character *æ* is pronounced as the English *e* in *end* or *a* in *cat*, *ā* is pronounced long drawn like the *a* in *taxi* spoken by a New Yorker, *a* as the *a* in *another*, *ā* as the *a* in *art*, *i* as the *i* in *ink*, *ī* as the *ee* in *eel*, the *u* as the *u* in *put*, the *ū* as the *u* in *prudent*, *e* as the *a* in *age* (but before a conjunct consonant as in *end* and thus the same as *æ*), *ē* as the *a* in *ache* but long drawn. The *o* as the *o* in *own* (but before a conjunct consonant as in *orange*). The *v/w* is pronounced mid-way between the English *v* and *w*. The *v* has been used in this work. For more information on the correct pronunciation of Sinhala, see p. ix ff of *An Introduction to Spoken Sinhala* by W.S. Karunatilake, and the "Guide to Pronunciation" in *The Forest Monks of Sri Lanka* by Michael Carrithers.

In printed roman script maps and streetname boards, etc, the *v* will usually be printed as *w*, *æ* and *ā* as *e*, *ī* as *ee*. Long vowels will be given as short vowels (e.g. *ā* as *a*).

This paper is based on a much more basic list made six years ago by another monk, which is still available on the Metta Lanka website. Several monks helped with proofreading and updating this guide.

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The forthcoming book *Sacred Island* by Ven. S. Dhammika—to be published by the BPS—gives exhaustive information regarding ancient monasteries, some of which are included in this list, and other sacred sites and pilgrimage places in Sri Lanka.

Please send any suggestions with regards this list to:

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## ABBREVIATIONS

aff.: affiliation/affiliated with.

A.: Aranya.

AS.: Aranya Senāsanaya.

BM.: Bhāvanā Madhyasthānaya/Meditation Centre.

DA.: Dharmāshramaya.

FM: The Forest Monks of Sri Lanka, Michael Carrithers, Oxford, 1983.

IVMC: International Vipassanā Meditation Centre.

MC: Meditation Centre/ Bhāvanā Madhyasthānaya

S.: Senāsanaya.

T.: Tapovanaya.

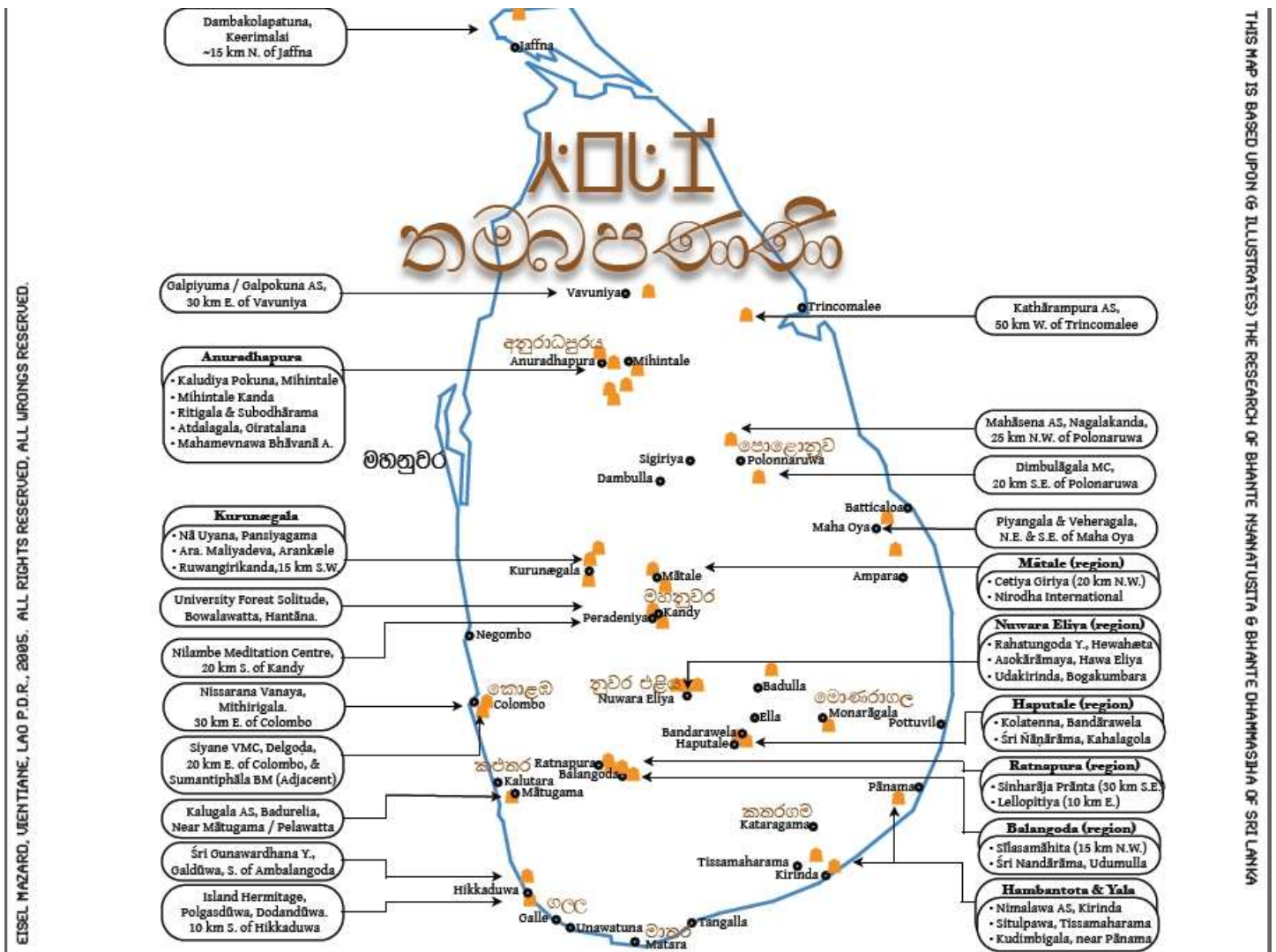
Y.: Yogāshramaya.

VMC: Vipassanā Meditation Centre.

E: East. N: North. S: South. W: West.

# MONASTERY MAP OF SRI LANKA

Prepared by Eisel Mazard



EISEL MAZARD, UENTIANE, LAO P.D.R., 2005. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED, ALL IRRINGS RESERVED.

THIS MAP IS BASED UPON (6 ILLUSTRATES) THE RESEARCH OF BHANTE NANNATUSTRA & BHANTE DHAMMASSA OF SRI LANKA



## MAJOR PLACES FOR THOSE WHO ARE NEW TO SRI LANKA

**Nā Uyana AS.** Pansiyagama 60554. 0773-031085 or 0773-145140 or 037-5677328. Email: nauyana@gmail.com. Get down at Mælsiripura on the Kurunægala-Dambulla Rd, from there take bus to Pansiyagama. From there it is a 30 min. walk. The senior monk is Ven. Nā Uyana Ariyadhamma, but he is often away. The meditation teacher is Ven. Ariyananda Thera, who speaks good English and has an excellent knowledge of the Pa Auk Samatha and Vipassanā methods. The central area of the monastery consists of an ancient monastery with a few caves and a beautiful forest with many big Ironwood trees. The hills around and above this area, where many kutis have been built, are being reforested. In the forest it is not too hot. There are more than sixty monks at present, but because the monastery is so large (at least 500 acres) it does not feel crowded. There is a strong meditative atmosphere and the place is well organised, clean and tidy. A new meditation hall and some kutis have been built on top of one of the hills. At the moment it is the most prominent meditation place in the Galdūva Saṃsthāva. Many foreign bhikkhus, Western as well as Asian, have stayed here. Only very few have taken the Pabbajā and Upasampadā here because it is not a training monastery.

**Nissarana Vanaya or Mītirigala A.** Mītirigala (Meetirigala) 11742. (Tel: 071-749-134). Large, 100 hectare, forest monastery 30 kms east of Colombo. Founded in 1968. About 15 resident monks. The meditation teacher, Ven. Dhammajīva, speaks excellent English and has meditated for a long time with Sayādaw U Paṇḍita in Burma. He mostly teaches Mahāsi method. Ven. Dhammaramsi also speaks good English and teaches Samatha meditation. The library has a good English section. Strict standards of Vinaya and little talking. Dense low-country jungle on a hill. Humid and hot climate. Good support and food for Sri Lankan standards. Sometimes some noise from the nearby village. The Sri Nānarāma Dharmāyatana (see next entry) is on the hill next to Nissarana Vanaya; a 25 minute walk away. There have been some problems between this monastery and the main Galdūva tradition in recent years, but at present they appear to have been resolved. From Colombo take a Kirindivela Bus at Central Bus stand in Pættah, the bus leaves close to the Bodhi tree outside the station. In Kirindiwælla, ask for a bus to Ranvalla or Vedagama, get down at Mītirigala (25 min. walk from bus-stop to monastery.) (Don't take the bus to Amitirigala which is further away. If coming from the Ratanapura side, one can take a bus to Amitirigala from Avissavælla and ask the driver to stop at the Mītirigala junction. It is about 40 minutes walking from there. If coming from Kandy, take Colombo bus and get down at Nitambuva, then go to Kirindivæla, etc.)

**University Forest Solitude or Bovalavatta A.** (or Vajirārāma A.) Bovalavatta, Hantāna, nr. Kandy. (060-2809210). In a large forest (previously a tea-estate) on the mountain above Perādeniya University (1 hours walking). About 8 kms from Kandy town. Very quiet. Approx. 15 kutis. Very neat, clean, and orderly. Ven. Sanāthavihāri thera, the abbot, is only here occasionally as he normally stays at Katupotha Kanda Aranya near Anurādhapura. He speaks excellent English, is helpful, and has experience with the Pa Auk method. Cool climate. In the rainy seasons it can be quite humid. Many western monks have stayed here. There is no teacher and during the last few years only junior monks have resided here. Affiliated to the Vajirañāna Dharmāyatana chapter of the Amapura Nikāya. Reasonable Vinaya. At the Kandy Clocktower Station take a Bovalavatta Bus. The conductors will know the place. From there follow the small signs or ask for the way.

**Sumantiphala BM.** Hibatgala Rd, Kanduboda, Delgoḍa. Tel: 011-2402805. A new meditation centre opened in 2003 on the land right next to Kanduboda VMC (see next entry) and has overtaken it in terms of importance for Westerners. The abbot and teacher is Ven. Premasiri, a popular and experienced teacher in the Mahāsi tradition as well as other traditional meditation techniques. He is helpful and friendly to foreigners and gives Dhammatalks, which are translated into English. Before he was teaching at Kanduboda VMC and then at Lanka Vipassanā Centre in Colombo. A book with his teachings called *Walking the Tightrope*, has been published by the Buddhist Publication Society. The place is mainly for laypeople, but monks stay here too. A few Westerners have become monk here recently. The female yogis and nuns have their own separate areas. The facilities are nice and spacious. Lay people have built many kutis and the place looks a bit like a village. There are no trees. 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, Pættah, take the bus no. 224 which stops outside the monastery; also the bus no. 207 from Gampaha goes there. Some of the buses to Kirindivælla also pass near Kanduboda (but this is not a good option, as they are infrequent).

**Siyānē VMC or Kanduboda VMC.** Kanduboda, Delgoḍa. Tel. 011-2445518; 011-2570306. E-mail: [bhavanam@slt.net.lk](mailto:bhavanam@slt.net.lk) A meditation centre and monastery with a long tradition of offering meditation-instruction to Westerners. Besides monks and nuns, also lay meditators are welcome and some take ordination here. The abbot and teacher at present is Ven. Piyaratana thera. Women have a separate, enclosed area, and ordination has sometimes been given for western women (which may interest potential *dasa-sīl-mænayos*). 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. Although the tradition is part of the Amarapura Nikāya, it has a separate ordination lineage, which is originating in 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. There is more individual meditation than group meditation. Kanduboda has more than 25 branches throughout the country. Most are of no significance for westerners. The directions are the same as for Sumantiphala BM (see previous entry).

**Lankā Vipassanā IVMC.** 108 Wijerāma Mawatha, Colombo 7. Tel. 011-2694-100. The present abbot is Ven. Ariyavaṃsalaṅkara. When Ven. Premasiri used to stay here, Western monks often used to stay here when their extending visas, etc, but the present abbot does not encourage short term visitors and one could be refused. Ven. Abhaya, a Sinhalese-Australian bhikkhu who became monk under Ajahn Brahmavamso in Australia is residing and teaching here now. Good support, tidy, clean, quiet. In Colombo's diplomatic quarter. Suitable place for lay-people who like to meditate. Fairly quiet for Colombo standards. Women stay in a separate wing.

**Dhammakūṭa VMC.** Mowbray, Galaha Road, Hindagala, Perādeniya. (Nr. Kandy) 060-2800057/081-2385774/070-800057. email: dhamma@sltnet.lk Website: www.lanka.com/ dhamma/dhammakuta. 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. In an abandoned tea estate on a mountain slope. Beautiful views and cool climate. Meditation courses, in English as well as Sinhala, are held here. One can not stay long term here. It is better to book well in advance as the courses are often booked out. It has places for six monks at each course and once a year, in November or December, there is a course for bhikkhus only. It is important to bring all basic personal requisites such as towels, bed-sheets, soap, mosquito repellent, vitamins, medicines, torch, alarm-clock, etc. It is located about 5 kms from Perādeniya towards the south. From Kandy, take a Galaha bus. Another Goenka Vipassanā Centre, called Dhammasobha VMC, has recently been opened near Avissavælla.

**Nilambē Meditation Centre.** Mahakanda, Galaha Road, Perādeniya. (Mr. Upul Gamage: 0777-804555 or try 08-225471.) The major lay-meditation centre in Sri Lanka for western travellers. Many westerners, both male and female, come here, but there are also some Sinhalese meditators. Occasionally a monk or two are visiting or staying here as well, but it is mainly a place for lay-people. There is a 400/- a day charge for lodgings and food. (Not for monks.) There is a strong daily schedule and little talking. In tea-estate-country on a mountain-top above Perādeniya. Quiet area. Cool, wet climate, beautiful views. Relaxed and friendly atmosphere. Godwin Samararatne, the respected and internationally known meditation teacher, was long connected to this place and passed away in early 2000. The resident teacher for Sinhalese meditators is Mr. Upul Gamage. Other teachers also come occasionally. The Englishman Dennis Candy helps westerners. It is located about 20 kms south of Kandy. From Kandy take a bus to Galaha get down 17 kms after Perādeniya at the Nilambē Bungalow junction (conductors will know the place). From there it is a steep 40 min. walk through tea plantations. Follow the white arrows.

## COMPLETE LIST

### COLOMBO DISTRICT

The capital of Sri Lanka. Hot, humid, noisy, polluted, and sensual, but still more agreeable than many other cities in Asia. There are no really convenient places to stay anymore for short term visitors.

**Pagoda Meditation Centre.** 49/2, 1<sup>st</sup> Cross Street, Pagoda Road, Nugegoda. Tel: 011-2812397. Website: <http://groups.msn.com/PagodaMeditationCentre>. A centre started a few years ago by Ven. Olanda Ānanda, a well-known senior Dutch monk who speaks fluently 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.

**Kanduboda VMC.** Delgoḍa. See Major Places section. **Lanka Vipassanā IVMC.** 108 Wijerāma Mawatha, Colombo. See Major Places section.

**Shri Kalyāṇī DA** (Formerly known as “German Dharmadūta”), 418/31 Bauddhaloka Mawatha, Colombo 07, 00700. (Tel: 011-696 494) Abbot: Ven. Nanda thera. Main Galdūva place in Colombo, thus sometimes crowded with visiting and sick monks from all over Sri Lanka. Guest monks normally stay in a dormitory. Strict Vinaya standards, clean and tidy. Between a major road and school, so it can be fairly noisy.

**International Buddhist Research and Information Centre (IBRIC) or Nārada Centre,** 380/9, Sarana Road, Colombo 00700. Tel: 011-5364115. Email: bhikkhu.mettavihari@gmail.com. Opposite the back entrance of the BMICH. Prof. Bhikkhu Dhammavīhāri’s place. Connected to Maharagama (see next). It is a small place with a lot of noise and dust from the road. Outsiders usually can’t stay here. The Danish Bhikkhu Mettavīhāri is helpful and can provide useful information to westerners new to the country, but he is often away and usually only here at night. (From about 9 pm to 7.30 am. At other times one might be able to contact him at his Linux Teaching Centre and Television Studio in Nugegoda. Tel: 011-2811120.) On the ground floor there is a Buddhist book shop with a wide selection of books.

**Dharmāyatana Bhikkhu Training Centre.** Lake Road, Maharagama, Tel. 011-2850-305 or 011-2850-207. Usually referred to as Maharagama. A major training-centre, *pirivena*, for young Sinhalese monks. The late Mahānayaka of the Amarapura Nikāya used to stay here. There is a “meditation-section” in the back where foreign monks who come to renew their visas occasionally stay. The new Mahānayaka is in Ratmalāna. There are over 25 branches throughout the country. There are a few forest monasteries with stricter vinaya standards connected to this tradition; Bovalavatta Aranya being the major one. In general it is not a forest tradition though and the emphasis lies on study, teaching, and helping laypeople.

**Sambodhi Vihāra.** 106 Wijerāma Mawatha, Colombo 00700. Tel. 011-689307. Next door to Lanka Vipassanā Meditation Centre; see above. The abbot is Ven. Kusaladhamma thera. A large 3 story pagoda like vihāra has recently been constructed but it is mainly used by laypeople and the employees of the television studio. There are usually only one or two monks. Joining in for the frequent outside functions, such as dānas, pirit chanting, and funeral ceremonies of politicians, and other important people, is expected. Reasonable vinaya. It is next to a road and somewhat noisy. Connected to Vajirārāmaya/Maharagama.

**Vajirārāmaya.** Vajira Road, Bambalapitiya. Colombo 4. Tel. 011-2584202. Close to Gālla Road. An old and reknown monastery with a famous tradition of scholars like Ven. Nārada, Soma, Kheminda, and Ven. Piyadassi. Westerners used to stay here. There is a good library, but it might be quite difficult to get permission to use it. There are some elderly monks staying here and a feeling of faded glory pervades the place. Amarapura Nikāya.

- Buddhist Cultural Centre (BCC)**, 125 Anderson Road, Nedimala, Dehivala, Tel. 011-726234, 011-734256 Fax. 011-736737. Director: Ven. Vimalajothi thera. There is a comprehensive selection of Buddhist Books. PTS books in stock. A deposit can be made on behalf of a monk so he can get books. There is a branch-bookshop at the junction of Baudhaloka Mawatha and Sarana-road in the All Ceylon Buddhist Congress compound, and 2 smaller centres, one in Kelaniya, and another near Lake House alongside the cetiya opposite the Hilton. Affiliated with this place is a meditation centre in Horana outside Colombo: Dekandūvala Meditation Centre; see the next entry.
- Central Hospital Vajirāmāya**, Central Hospital, Colombo, 011-692018. Small vihāra in the General Hospital. The resident bhikkhu is very helpful for sick monks. One could eat lunch here when going to the hospital for treatment or when visiting the mortuary.
- Police Mortuary**. St. Francis St. (Off Kinsey Rd.) It is situated in the small St Francis Street behind the Medical College (which is opposite the SE corner of the General Hospital complex.) This police morgue is suitable for practising the *asubha-kammaṭṭhāna*. Buddhist monks normally do not need to get official permission to enter here and they can walk in and have a look. Otherwise, ask permission from one of the anatomists or the director, Dr. Alwis. The monk at the nearby Central Hospital Vajirāmāya—see above—can help too. Laypeople need to be accompanied by a monk. There is very poor hygiene and one needs to be careful. Don't go bare-footed into the cutting theaters as there are scalpels, blood stains, etc., on the floor. Afterward one will need to wash all one's robes to get rid of the odour that will penetrate them very quickly. Open every day, but on Saturdays and Sundays only in the morning. Nearby, off Kinsey Road on the backside of the Hospital, is the Hospital Mortuary where autopsies are also done.
- Vishva Niketan International Peace Centre**. 72/30 Ravatavattē Road, Moratuva. Tel/Fax: (94-1)655653 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.
- Divalpitiya Dhammāyanaya**. Divulapitiya. (Managed by The Leela Jayatilaka Trust). **Gothama T.** Kalapaluvawa, Mulleriyawa-New Town. **Sri Kavidhaja Vachissara MC**. High Level Road, Mīgoda. **Vipassanā Bhāvanāyanaya**. Sri Jayawardenapura Rajamalvattē, Rajasaba Mawatha, Kotte. Tel. 011-863635. Teacher: Ven. Erapola Vipassī. **VMC**. Talagala, Milleva. **Gilan-āvāsaya**, 525/3 Elvitigala Mawatha, Nārāhænpiṭa, Colombo 5, 00500. Tel: 075-350-976. Small place where sick Galdūva monks can stay in Colombo. Aff. Galdūva.

## THE AREA AROUND COLOMBO, AVISSAVÆLLA, 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. There generally is 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 Kægalla district, etc.

**Sri Nāṇarāma Dharmāyatana**, Mithirigala 11742. Nr. Kirindivæla. On the hill next to Nissarana Vanaya, entrance road starts next to NV entrance. This place was set up to be the largest study and vinaya training centre of the Galdūva group but it was somewhat of a flop. In the 1990s it was used as a Pa Auk meditation centre for a while. Now, again it is a Galdūva tradition study centre with a dozen monks. Large meditation hall; rooms in a compound; regrowing forest.

**Nissarana Vanaya**. See Major Places section above.

**Dikhena BM / Sri Lanka Myanmar Pa Auk Meditation Centre**. Dikhena, Polgasowita 10320. (Tel: 011-780140) 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. Abbot: Ven. Mīthalave Vinīta thera teaches Mahāsi Method. Ven. Dasvattē Sumanasīla thera teaches Pa Auk method when visiting. At times hot and humid. Aff. Galdūva.

**Dekandūvala Meditation Centre or Dhamma Training Centre**. Kahatapitiya-Kananvila, Horana. (Tel: 034-4286334.) Inquiries and bookings should normally be made through Ven. Vimalajothi at the Buddhist Cultural Centre; see above. The place is nicely situated on a hill-top. Both small huts (*kutis*) and rooms are available for lay-meditators. Good facilities, nice meditation hall, quiet, nice views. Westerners are welcome to stay here. One can stay for two weeks. Since 2003 there has been a program going on here in which young Sinhalese men can take ordination temporary. It is about 20 kms south-east of Colombo. There is no charge for the lodgings and food, but donations are appreciated. Siyam Nikāya. Take the 120 bus route from Colombo. It is close to the Vidyaratana Pirivena. If traveling from Homagama, Padukka or Horana: Get down at the Govipola junction.

**Dhammasobha VMC**. 38 Pahala, Kosgama. Tel: 036-2253755 or 0714182094. Along the highway from Colombo to Avissavælla. A new Vipassanā meditation centre in the tradition of Goenkaji. It is much warmer and, due to its promiximity to the highway, noisier here than in Dhammakuṭa near Kandy, but the facilities will be better here because there is more space.

**Shanti Y.** Arukpitiya, Talangama South 10120. (Tel: 011-864973) 10 kms E of Colombo. Abbot: Ven. Dhammasiddhi. Friendly and supportive. Monastery in small area with many buildings. A bit cramped. A few kutis. Some noise. Foreign monks have stayed here.

**Nāṇacetiya 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. Galdūva.

**Sri Piyanda VMC**, Naivala Road, Udugampola, Doranagoda, Gampaha. Quite a large centre—probably has kutis. Ven. Visuddhi is the headmonk. Westerners have stayed there. Aff. Kanduboda.



**Gothama T.** Kalapaluvæva, Mulleriyawa-New Town. Tel: 011-863826/884962. 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 Kalyāṇavamsa division of the Amarapura Nikāya to which the Tapovana group and Ven. Kiribathgoda Nāṇānanda's Mahamevnāva group are connected.

**Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuva.** Dompē, Palugama. Monastery connected to Ven. Kiribathgoda Nāṇānanda; see Mahamevnāva Asapuva near Kægalla. Kuṭis in regrowth jungle in an abandoned rubber-estate on a hill in the Dompē area. About 16 monks. Well supported, clean. (*Not listed in latest Mahamevnāva list. Broken away?*)

**Isigilikanda VMC.** On a rock-hill with caves about 5 kms away from Kanduboda towards the north, near Naranvala, via Udupila. Hot. At the moment, 2004, somewhat run down and not so suitable.

**Sirimaṅgala Y.** Danawikanda, Wælviveriya. On Colombo-Mithirigala bus route. Coconut estate. Nice kuṭis. One big house. Aff. Galdūva. **Haddagala AS** or **Indomulla AS.** Indolamulla, Dompe 11680. About 20 kms E of Colombo. Rocks, 20 minute climb, good views, secluded. 3-4 monks. Aff. Galdūva. Perhaps this is the same place as Māligātænna described in *FM* p. 178. **Aturugiriya BM,** Aturugiriya 10150. Ask the way from Colombo. Abbot: Ven. Nāṇānanda thera. Formerly a study place, but now a meditation centre. Aff. Galdūva. **Ratnagiri Vivekāshrāmaya,** Napavala, Avissavælla. New place of Ven. Sanghasubhadra. Old bungalow in rubber estate. Perhaps kuṭis. 3 kms from Avissavælla. **Shri Kalyāna DA.** No. 272, Dompe 11680. 35 kms E of Colombo. Aff. Galdūva. **Shri Sumana Y.** Pelengashena, Dompe. Aff. Galdūva. **Arunodaya A.S.** Puvakpiṭiya. Aff. Galdūva. **Varana A.** Varana. (= 5 kms E from Yakkala on Colombo-Kandy road.) Aff. Galdūva. **Devagiri AS.** Puvakmal Ælla, Udamalibada 71411. Avissavælla area. Aff. Galdūva. **Shailagiri Y.** Dæranियagala 71430. Tel: 036-49455. 15 kms E of Avissavælla, Kægalla District. Aff. Galdūva. **Shaila-pabbata Y.** Vidiyavatta, (Miyanaṅgala), Dæranियagala 71432. Aff. Galdūva. **Sama Uyana T.** Galboda, Vaturugama 11742. East (?) of Kirindivæla. Aff. Galdūva. **Sri Shānta Tapovana AS.** Katuvæva, Kaḷagedihena 11875. Aff. Galdūva. **Siri Mangala Y.** Danavkanda, Kirikitta, Veliveriya 11710. 25 kms NE of Colombo. Aff. Galdūva. **Sailagiri Y.** Dæranियagala. (Near Avissavælla). Aff. Galdūva. **Māligātænna AS.** Gampaha. Aff. Vaturavila. **Mahakanda Purāna AS.** Alavala, Veyangoda. Aff. Vaturavila. **Millatākanda AS.** Millate, Kirindivælla. Aff. Vaturavila. **Bopætta Viveka S.** Ūrāpola. (Between Nittanbuva and Kirindivælla.) Aff. Vaturavila. **Kolankanda AS.** Diddeniya, Hanvælla. Aff. Vaturavila. **Katana VMC,** Sri Vimaldhamma Tissa Mawatha, Katana (North). Aff. Kanduboda. **Indigolla MC,** Indigolla, Gampaha. Aff. Kanduboda. **Katuvalamulle MC,** Katuvalamulla, Ganemulla. Aff. Kanduboda. **Mīgahavatta MC,** Mīgahavatta. Aff. Kanduboda. **Nittanbuva Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuva.** Bandāranayaka Paudgalika Rogala Pāra, Nittambuva. Tel: 060-2337887. **Horana Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuva.** Āṇamaduva **Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuva.** Dakuṇu Poliyāgama, Āṇamaduva. Tel: 060-2322035. **Kaduvæla Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuva.** Rājasingha Mavatha, Hēvāgama, Kaduwela. Tel. 011-2537337. **Mālambē Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuva.** Piṭṭugala, Mālambē. Tel: 011-2413025 or 060-2141428. **Amavathura Mahāmevnāva Asapuva.** Pittugala, Malabe. Ven. Kiribathgoda Nāṇānanda's teaching centre for Colombo laypeople. Along road from Avissavælla, near Colombo. Meditation centre in a suburban area. Large meditation and Dhamma hall. (*Not on new Mahāmevnāva list. Broken away?*)

## KANDY

The ancient capital of the hill country. A fairly large town with the Temple of the Tooth-Relic (Sri Daladā Māligāva), both the headquarters of the Siam Nikāya, and the large nearby Peradeniya University. There are some forests left on the hills and mountains. Temperate climate; cool at night.

**Levælla Meditation Centre,** 160 Dharmashoka Mawatha, Kandy 20000, Tel. 081-4921814. A meditation centre in a suburb of Kandy (1.5 kms away from the centre of town) connected with Nilambē MC, mainly for lay-people, both Westerners and Sinhalese. There is a house with a few rooms near a road and 4 small huts (kuṭis) in the shrubby forest on the slope above the house near the eastern edge of the Udavattakælē. Group-meditation in the evening. No females can stay here. Yoga-classes are given by Mahesh. Relaxed atmosphere. This place is in a town-area and can therefore be a bit noisy. For laypeople there is a Rs. 400,- a day charge for lodgings and food.

**Sri Daladā Tapovanaya,** Udavattakælē, Kandy. Tel.: 081-2225052 or 074-471415. Head-monk: Ven Satimanta Thera. Forest-monastery/temple, 5-15 monks, at the entrance of the Udavattakælē Sanctuary. Western monks regularly stay here. Good support, kuṭis and rooms. Clean and tidy. Aff. Tapovana group.

**Forest Hermitage,** Udavattakælē, 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 the early 1951. Venerable Nyanaponika lived here for 40 years and founded the BPS, to which this hermitage is still connected. Situated in the 250 acres Udavattakælē Forest Reserve—an ancient royal sanctuary—in the centre of Kandy, it is a small place about 20 minutes walking from the entrance of the forest. If one wishes to visit, then it is recommended to write or telephone beforehand to the resident bhikkhu, Ven. Nāṇatusita, who is the editor of the BPS and the author of this guide, or contact the BPS itself (see entry below). Monks and laypeople visiting the Forest Hermitage need not pay the fee for the Udavattakælē sanctuary, however, the gatekeeper might ask for a note from the resident monk to show that one has visited the Hermitage. Visitors usually stay at the adjoining Senanayakārāma (see next entry) or at the Tapovana (see previous entry) at the entrance to the forest.

**Senanāyaka Ārāmaya,** Udavattakælē, Kandy. Adjoining the Forest Hermitage is the Senanāyakārāma Hermitage where western monks regularly stay. A fairly large building with 5 rooms. There are usually two or three Sinhalese monks resident. Simple facilities. The monks get their food by going on piṇḍapāta. Laymen can't stay here unless they are intending to become monks. Ven. Mettavihāri of the Nārada Centre in Colombo is the abbot but very rarely visits here. The resident monk is Ven. Kalyāṇasīla.

- Potgul Vihāra.** Anagarika Dharmapala Mawatha, Kandy. Amarapura Nikāya. A few kuṭis. Near the Kandy lake and the Temple of the Tooth (Sri Dalidā Māligāva). On slope of Udavattakælē Sanctuary. Quite noisy due to being located above a major road. Western bhikkhus have stayed here and it can be convenient when visiting the Temple of the Tooth.
- Burmese Resthouse.** D.S. Senanayaka Mawatha. On the main street near Trinity College. Burmese vihāra on a major street in the center of Kandy. One or two Burmese monks are residing here. Laypeople can cheaply get a room and the place is popular with western backpackers.
- Primrose Vajirārāma.** Primrose Gardens, Kandy, Tel 081-225353. On a hill above Kandy. Westerners have stayed here. About 15 monks. There might be kuṭis. Amarapura Nikāya.
- Buddhist Publication Society (B.P.S.),** PO Box 61, 54 Sangharāja Mawatha, Kandy. Tel: 081-2237283. The BPS, founded by Ven. Nāṇaponika, has a big bookshop with large assortment of Buddhist books in English, Sinhala, and German. There is also a large reference library with books in various languages.

## KANDY DISTRICT

- Nilambē MC,** Galaha Rd, Kandy. See Major Places above.
- Dhammakuta VMC.** Mowbray, Galaha Road. Hindagala, Perādeniya. See Major Places above.
- University Forest Solitude or Bovalavatta A.** Bovalavatta, Hantāna, nr. Kandy. See Major Places above.
- Ulpatkanda A. S.** Springhill Vatta, Hantāna Estate, Hantāna, Kandy. Phone: 081-2233471. A new place. 4 kutis & *dānasālā*. In the forest above Bovalavatta 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 all speak English and there is a friendly atmosphere. Cool, wet climate. Aff. Galdūva.
- Pāramitā International Buddhist Centre.** No. 07 Balumgala, Kadugannāva, Tel/Fax: 081-570732 (office). A fairly new meditation centre situated on the hill above the point where the road from Kandy to Colombo starts going down (near where the old road goes through the rock); 20 kms west of Kandy. A comfortable place especially built for westerners, both males and females, with good facilities and food. Teachers occasionally come for visits and sometimes formal retreats are held, but normally the emphasis is on practising and studying by oneself. There is a good library. The former Malaysian monk Visuddhacāra, now called Visu, sometimes teaches retreats here with his wife. There is quite some noise from the adjoining Kandy-Colombo road and railway line. Laypeople are charged for lodgings and food.
- University Vihāra.** Perādeniya University, Perādeniya. Vihāra in quiet area on the border of the forest on the hill behind the University. Western monks occasionally stay here, but it is a busy place and there are many girls nearby. There are a few kuṭis. The university library is nearby, but can't be used by non-students and non-staff.
- Subodhārāma,** Perādeniya. Tel. 081-2388544. Amarapura Nikāya. A popular Pirivena/Study Centre. Rooms. A few western 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.
- Rock Hill Hermitage,** Vegirikanda, Gampola. A rocky hill with caves in a rural area. It used to be a popular place for Western travellers in the 1980s when Ven. Olanda Ānanda taught here. The place apparently made a new start in 2004 after a long period of absence of Ven. Kassapa. Ven. Kassapa has been much involved in hospice work and in giving lectures to doctors, etc, since staying in Australia.
- Sri Dhātu Gallena A. / Sri Daladalena As / Galiha A.** Mahāveli Raja Mawatha, Adhikārigama, Gonagantænna, Hanguranketa. Tel.: 0602803479. 25 kms SE of Kandy on the road to Randenigala Reservoir, less than 1 kms from Adhikārigama. On Kandy-Hangurankete Rd. On steep, forested mountain-slope. Nice views, from the vihāra the Randenigala reservoir can be seen. Small place, not so well kept. Facilities for about 6 monks. A few ancient caves and kuṭis. Moderately cool climate. Some noise from houses and the road in the valley. Aff. Galdūva.
- Bo Uyana AS.** Pallegama, Navalapitiya. Ven. Sumanasiri. (2 kms before Navalapitiya on Kandy-Navalapitiya Rd.) New place. 5 kuṭis. 2 monks. Nice views. Some noise from road and railway in the valley. Aff. Galdūva. **Kundasala Mahamevna Asapuva.** Kundasalē, Mahanuvara. Tel. 081-2423488. 8 kms east of Kandy. Connected to Ven. Kiribathgoda Nāṇananda. **Devanapathis International Samatha-Vipassanā Meditation Centre,** Pallakæle, Kandy. The centre of the late Ven. Amatagavesi therā. The place is run by nuns. **Kadugannāva A.** Possibly a new Galdūva place on the hill behind the Kadugannāva hospital. (2006) **Dhammika Puññavaradhanāshramaya.** Makehelvæla, Vattēgama, 71411. Aff. Galdūva. **Diyamakanda A.** Liyamagahakotuva, Handessa. Near the Embekke devale. Small place, 2 monks, caves. Probably connected to Vaturavila. **Dumbara Y.** c/o Amila Services. Digana, Rājavælla, 20180. On the Kandy-Māhiyangana road. In the Victoria reservoir valley. Aff. Galdūva. **Sri Veluvana Y / Devagolla Y.** Devagolla Alupathakada, Uduvæla, Mahanuvara 20164. 4 miles along the Kandy-Uduvæla Rd. Aff. Galdūva. **Sangharāja Gallena.** Udavæla, Upper Division, Hantāna Estate, Kandy 20000. The cave where Saranaṅkara Sangharāja sometimes used to stay in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. On the road going up behind the general hospital. **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 Asapuva.** Mowbray, Galaha Road. Hindagala, Perādeniya. Below Dhammakuta MC. Perhaps connected to Kiribathgoda Nāṇananda.

## NUVARA ELIYA DISTRICT

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

**Rahatungoda Y.** Hevahæta, 20440. Tel: 0602814461. 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 kuṭis. A few foreign monks have spent *vassa* here. Not far from houses and can be some village-noise. Aff. Galdūva.

**Asokārāmaya**, Hawa Eliya, Nuvara Eliya. Tel 052-280994. Probably the coldest monastery in Sri Lanka. Western monks sometimes stay here. Rooms. Vajirañāṇā Amarapura Nikāya. **Udakirinda BM.** Bogakumbara, Velimada. Meditation-centre with compound and also a few kuṭis. Siyam-nikāya. Mahāsi Method. A few westerners have stayed here. Mountain area 5 miles north of Keppetipola. **Kande Vivekāshramaya**, Ukutule Nægenhira (Utukule East), Māturaṭa (3 kms from Padapællala and about 10 kms from Rikilligaskada. (Bus from Rikilligaskada to Māturata.) One monk: Ven. Sugunadhamma.

## HAPUTALE DISTRICT / UVA PROVINCE.

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

**Kolatænna Hermitage**, Bandāravæla. A place founded by a Tsech monk in the 1960's where western bhikkhus have stayed for a long time, but at present the only residents are Sinhalese bhikkhus from nearby Kahagolla, Diyatalāva. Rooms for approx. 4 persons, good library. Piṇḍapāta. Over 1000m altitude, cool climate. Surrounded by village and tea-estates on a mountain-slope above village-areas. Noise from temples, an army-camp, and the surrounding villages. From Bandāravæla walk approx. 2 kms on the Haputale Road, then at the railway crossing, turn to the right.

**Shri Nāṇārāma Vivekāshramaya / Kahagolla A.** Kahagolla, Diyatalāva 90150. 5 kms SW of Bandāravæla, Badulla District. Above 1000m, cool, nice climate. Rooms in a communal building. In village area, near army-camp. Can be noisy. Aff. Galdūva.

**Piyangala A.** Welihællagama, Diyatalāva 90150. Small aranya with a few kuṭis on a slope with pineforest in a quiet river-valley 4 kms south of Diyatalāva. Cool climate. Probably a few monks from Kahagolla are residing here, ask the way at Kahagolla A.

**Kalyāṇi Yogāshrama.** Nikapitiya, Gampaha, near Koslanda. Between Haputale/Beragala and Vællavāya, Uva Province. 200 acres of forested land. Still undeveloped due to lack of funds. Only one hut. Aff. Galdūva. Not as high as Haputale, but still has a pleasant climate with cool nights.

**Bandāravæla Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuva.** Kumbalvela, Bandāravæla. Tel. 060-2570333. Newly built monastery on the slope and top of a remote tea estate of a steep mountain about 10 kilometers from Bandāravæla. The kutis, with covered walking paths, are situated fairly close to each other along a road going through the tea estate. Nice views over the mountains. No electricity. No trees. Cool climate.

## KALUTARA DISTRICT

Coastal district. Hot and humid. On the inland hills, where it rains a lot, there are some small wilderness areas. Flatland along coast. Rubber and palm estates.

**Kalugala AS.** Pahalahevessa, Badureliya, Mātugama. Tel: 034-4925032. One of the nicest places in Sri Lanka in terms of seclusion and nature. Remotely situated inside a valley surrounded by hills. Western bhikkhus have stayed here for long periods. Meditative atmosphere & friendly monks. Good vinaya. Kuṭis and caves. Wet, dense forest with many leeches. Moderate temperature. Not a place which is suitable for beginners. Founded in 1942; see *FM* p. 178. Monks from both the Vaturavila Vanavāsin group and the Amarapura Nikāya stay here. From Kalutara take a bus to Mātugama, from there a bus to Badureliya, and then about an hour of walking. Or, when coming from the South along the Gālla-Colombo road, take a bus from Aluthgama to Pelavatta and walk for more than an hour.

**Madakada AS.** (Ingiriya A.) Ingiriya. Approx. half way on the Pānadura-Ratnapura road. Forest in river-gulley. Wet. Friendly abbot. Good vinaya. About 15 monks. This is the headquarters of a section of the Vaturavila group that is keeping stricter vinaya standards (not handling money etc.) and follows the example of the Galdūva 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. There is a sign along the road. Forest monastery. Amarapura Nikāya.

**Dharmadvīpa Y.** Kalavilavatta, Aluthgama. Near the beach in a mangrove forest at the mouth of the Bæntota Ganga. Warm and humid. The head monk, Ven. Sārananda, is very kind and helpful. He is teaching meditation at local ayurveda clinics, etc. A fairly large place, with about 15 monks. There are kuṭis among the mangroves, but the main attraction of this place is the little rock-island about 50 m. off the beach with a few kuṭis. It is accessible only by boat. A few western monks have stayed here. On the beach, visible from one side of the island, western girls in and out of bikinis might attract unrestrained eyes... (At the 59 kilometre stone on Colombo-Gālla road. Step out at the Blue Lagoon Hotel or at the big bridge over the Bæntota River.)

**Tundola A.** Egodakanda, Polgampala, Mātugama, 12136. Via Mātugama and Agalavatta. Not far from Kalugala A. In 2004 bhikkhus connected to Kandubodha/Lanka Vipassanā Centre went there to stay at this abandoned monastery. 10 kuṭis on a hill. Rainforest. From Mātugama take Pelvatta bus, get down at Polgampala.

**Shri Kalyāna DA.** De Abrew Mawatha, Kalutara North 12000. Aff. Galdūva. Spacious compound on beach. No kuṭis but 3 rooms. Helpful English speaking monk. **Pūjālena AS.** Kirimætiyāvala, Hædigala 12234. (Nr Horana). Aff. Galdūva.

**Migahatænna BM.** Migahatænna, Siyambalope. (E of Bæntota, not far from Kalugala A.) Aff. Galdūva. **Veligalpotta AS.** Yagirala, Avittāva. (? Kalutara Distr.) Aff. Vaturavila. **Bulatsinhala Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuva.** Bōtalægama,

Bulatsinhala. Tel. 034-5675374. **Serupita Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuva.** Serupita Janapadaya, Bolossagama, Kantarata Dakuna. Tel: 034-5673020.

## RATNAPURA DISTRICT

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

**Sinharāja Prānta AS.** Kadamuduna, Bulutota, Rakvāna, more than 30 kms SE of Ratnapura. On top of a slope on a mountain-range in tea-estate country. Beautiful views. Cool, dense rain-forest. (Leech-country). Western bhikkhus have stayed here. Aff. Vaturavila.

**Sīlasamāhita YA or Bælihul Oya BM.** Sīlagama, Bælihul Oya, 70140. 15 kms north-east of Balangoda on the road to Haputale. About 10 monks, some noise from road below, cool climate and beautiful scenery. There is a meditation teacher, but he speaks little English. Ven. Nāṇaramita, a senior German monk, is living here. Aff. Galdūva.

**Tænne Area.** There are a number of Laggala-style solitary kuṭis in the jungles of this area, which is located southeast of Balangoda and north of Udavalava National Park. More information about the kuṭis can be obtained at the *Sīlasamāhita YA*.

**Sri Nandārāma.** Udumulla, Bulatgama, via Balangoda. The late Ven. Balangoda Ānanda's place. The Japanese sect leader Aum Shinryo had a very large library built here in which Ven. Balangoda Ānanda's large collection of books is kept. Basically the place is a temple with a few kuṭis. Situated on a hill-top, scenic views over the mountains. Amarapura Nikāya.

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

**Balangoda VMC.** Thotupola-tænna, Balangoda. The head monk is Ven. Mahānāma who is very kind and helpful. Foreign monks have stayed there. A number of kuṭis, well situated atop a hill, good support from local village. Aff. Kanduboda.

**Samangiri AS.** Varnagala, Eratna 70560. (On Avissavælla-Ratnapura road turn left at Kuruwita.) On Sri Pāda mountain. **Sri Pada AS.** Siripagama, Palabaddala. Aff. Galdūva. **Indolavatta AS or Assagiri YA.** Indolavatta, Ayagama 70024. (= 12 kms west of Ratnapura.) A forest hermitage; aff.: Galdūva. **Badūwæla Kanda Kuṭiya.** c/o Mahindakade, Gangodakanda, Ayagama 70024. (= 12 kms west of Ratnapura.) Aff. Galdūva. **Iluktænna AS.** Panilkanda, Ulliduwāva, Deniyāya. Aff. Vaturavila. **Sri Dhammapāla AS.** Kolawenigama, Pallegama, Deniyāya. Aff. Vaturavila. **Budulena AS.** Waturāva, Kalavāna. Aff. Vaturavila. **Bambaragala AS.** Galpāya, Pallegama, Godakavæla. Aff. Vaturavila. **Samanala AS.** Massænna, Balangoda. Aff. Vaturavila. **Bulatvatta Gāllena AS.** Lellopitiya. Aff. Vaturavila. **Ætugalakanda AS.** Kolandagala, Lellopitiya. Aff. Vaturavila. **Merekælē AS.** Paranagama, Ællavala. Aff. Vaturavila. **Balangoda Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuva.** Uddællapola, Balangoda. Tel: 045 5672760. **Siripāgama Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuva.** Gilīmālē, Siripāgama, Kuruwita. (Kuruwita is on the Avissavælla-Ratnapura road.) **Caratna Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuva.** Adhavikanda, Caratna. Tel: 045-5674614.

## 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 Sinharāja National Park. The Sinharaja area is the largest and wettest rainforest in Sri Lanka.

**Island Hermitage.** Polgasdūva, Dodandūva, 80250. Tel: 075-452453 (?). Located on two small forested islands in a tropical lagoon, 10 kms south of the beach resort of Hikkadūva. This famous place was founded by Ven. Nyanatiloka in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. There is an excellent Pali, English, and German library. The place used to be a major centre for Western Buddhism and the first monastery for Westerners, but at present the place is occupied by a group of nationalistic, ascetic young Sinhalese monks who don't allow visitors to who who intend to stay less than two weeks. People are not allowed to bring food to the island anymore and the monks only go on piṇḍapāta. Monks who use postal stamps, buscoupons, or travel in vehicles are not allowed to participate in the Uposatha and have to go to the neighbouring Parappadūva Island for the occasion. The last few years only a few non-Sinhalese have stayed here and then only for short periods. The place is now basically a Sinhalese monastery loosely connected to the Mahāragama Dhammāyatana. If one is keen to visit the place, then it is best to contact beforehand Ven. Mettāvihāri, the official abbot, at the Nārada Centre in Colombo and help to make arrangements. The climate is generally quite humid and hot and there is quite some noise from flying foxes and herons roosting in the trees, from fishermen, and also from temples, houses, and around the lake.

**Parappadūva Island Hermitage,** the neighbouring island (near the Katudampē Pansala village temple) used to be the site of Ayyā Khemā's nuns monastery, but there is only one monk, Ven. Upasanta, staying at present and the buildings are in a bad condition. It is easier for visiting monks to stay here, but here too one needs to go on piṇḍapāta.

**Shri Gunavardhana Y. or Galdūva A.** Galdūva, Kahava. Between Ambalangoda and Hikkadūva. The headquarters of the Sri Kalyāna Yogāśhrāmaya Saṁsthāva, i.e. the main forest monastery tradition in Sri Lanka. Ven. Ariyadhamma is the abbot of this monastery, as well as the head of the Galdūva group. He is highly proficient in the Pa Auk meditation system as well as in the Mahāsi meditation system and is a Tipiṭaka Bhāṇaka, having mastered the Pāli scriptures. This monastery is mainly a training center for junior monks, a *pirivena*. There are Buddha-Pujas three times a day and the young monks do a lot of study. Ven. Ariyadhamma knows and visits all Galdūva places regularly and can give advice

about their suitability. The climate is hot and humid as it is situated in a palm-estate area on the edge of a coastal swamp.

**Vanavāsa Saṅgha Mūlsthānaya** or **Vaturavila A.** Vaturavila, Tibbotuvæva, Kahadūva. About 20 kms northeast of Hikkadūva. The headquarters of the Vaturavila group. One section is a large pirivena with many novices, the other section is a forest-monastery.

**Kottāva Nāga A.** Kottāva, Kottagama. 12 kms E of Gālla. Take bus to Udagama from Gālla and get down at Kottāva junction. About 50 acres of forest on small hills with a stream running through it. Fairly quiet. Warm & humid. Several kuṭis. This was Ven. Olanda Ānanda's monastery for some years. At present the Austrian bhikkhu Ven. Nāṇasanta, who was formerly at the Island Hermitage, is residing here. Aff. Vaturavila.

**Tripitaka DA. (Koggala A.)** Koggala, Habarādūva 80630. 10 kms SW of Gālla. Originally a meditation monastery, but it is now more study orientated. The monastery comprises of a number of buildings and kuṭis situated on a small raised elevation of land jutting out into a lagoon and approached by a causeway. Hot and humid. Aff. Galdūva.

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

**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. Aff. Galdūva. Take an Akuressa bus from Gālla and then the Udugama or Tavalama bus. Get down at Opāta. About 3 kms from Opāta.

**Sinhalena T.** Kosmulla, Næluva 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 Sinharāja Rainforest National Park. Dense rainforest with streams and waterfalls etc. Wet and humid, leeches, moderately cool climate. There are two large (unused) rock-caves inside the monastery boundary. To get here, take a bus from Gālla to Næluva and then walk for about one hour (or more?) up a mountain through the tea-plantations. Western bhikkhus have stayed here for long periods. Aff. Galdūva.

**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 hard living. Aff. Vaturavila.

**Uluvahugala AS.** Mavita, Næluva, 80082. Nr. Næluva; see above. Forest

Hermitage. Aff. Galdūva. **Vihāragoda Viveka Senasenaya**, Vihāragoda, Watugedara 80340. Ambalangoda area. Aff.

Galdūva. **Vivekārāmaya**. Godakanda, Karapitiya. Just outside Gālla town. Aff. Galdūva. **Shri Nāṇabhasara Y.** Ihala

Dickson Pāra, Gālla 80000. Tel: 075451762. Aff. Galdūva. **Sri Kalyāṇā DA.** Lawallena Vatta, Baddegama 80200. (= 10 kms

east of Hikkadūva.) Aff. Galdūva. **Nāgala A.** Eppala, Panangala. 80075. Near Sinharaja National Park. Aff. Galdūva.

**Sītaladela AS.** Nākiyādeniya Vatta, Pilidola Koṭṭasa, Nākiyādeniya. Aff. Vaturavila. **Nugagala AS.** Yālagala, Hiniduma,

Udugama. Remote forest monastery. Aff. Vaturavila. **Digālena AS.** Naravæl Kætiya, Piṭuvala, Elpitiya. Aff. Vaturavila.

**Attuvagala AS.** Attuvagala. About 4 kms from Elpitiya. Aff. Vaturavila. Friendly old abbot, but lack of food.

**Diwankaralena AS.** Dūva Piṭuvala, Elpitiya. Aff. Vaturavila. **Viveka S.** Agalia, Baddegama. (= 10 kms east of Hikkadūva.)

Maybe connected to Vaturavila.

## MĀTARA DISTRICT

Coastal district. Hot and humid. Some small wilderness areas, but generally developed. Flatland along coast, inland some hills.

**Shri Rohana Y./Puhulvælla A.** Puhulvælla, Hakmana 81390. 15 kms E of Mātara. Ask the way at from Mātara. Well-known and well supported place. Kuṭis in 2 lines up forested hill. Foreign monks have stayed here. Some sound from village. Warm and humid. Aff. Galdūva. Founded in the early 1950's; see *FM* p.218.

**Ællakanda AS.** Kækanadura 81020. 10 kms E of Mātara. Abbot: Ven. Sudhamma. A very calm cultured thera with learning and experience in meditation. A meditation centre situated in a state forest on a peninsula surrounded by a reservoir. Several foreign monks have stayed here for extended periods. 15–20 monks. Warm, humid, dense forest. At the moment a young Sinhalese monk called Bhikkhu Dhammaramsi is teaching here. He is trying to emulate Ajahn Chah (without having been in any of Ajahn Chah's monasteries) and has already attracted quite a few followers, including the abbot. On his encouragement, there is only one meal a day and there are group meditation sittings. Aff. Galdūva.

**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 *FM* p. 69f. Aff. Deldūva.

**Baṭuvita A.** Baṭuvita. In the Mātara area. (A few miles from Puhulvælla A.) Aff. Deldūva. The second oldest forest monastery in Sri Lanka; see Kirinda A. above. **Tummodara AS.** Kandambigoda, Parapāmulla, Hakmana. (20 kms NE of Mātara). Aff. Vaturavila. **Gallabadakanda A.S.** Moravaka. Aff. Galdūva. **Aharagala AS.** Dællawa, Morawaka 81477. Approx 30 kms N of Mātara. Forest hermitage. aff.: Galdūva. **Gallen-vihāraya.** Addarakanda, Rambukana, Morawaka. Affiliation unknown. **Nigrodhārāmaya S.** Waturawa, Beliatta, Kumbara Post Office 70456.(= 30 kms E of Mātara.) Hermitage. Aff. Galdūva. **Rammala AS.** Rammala, Warāpitiya, Valasmulla. (= 30 kms NE of Mātara.) Aff. Vaturavila. **Vavulagala AS.** Vavulagala Vatuyāya, Hawupe, Imadūva. Aff. Vaturavila. **Siri Sugata T.** Poratota, Akuressa. Aff. Vaturavila. **Dediyagala AS.** Dediyagala, Malidūva, Akuressa. Aff. Vaturavila. **Yogashrāmaya.** Wehælla, Dikvælla. Affiliation unknown.



## MĀTALE DISTRICT

The Tipiṭaka was probably first written down at the Aluvihāra near Mātale town. The northern part of the hill and mountain country. Some large wilderness areas.

**Laggala Forest Area.** There are a number of kuṭis 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 Polonnaruva. Conditions are simple and sometimes tough. Open 3 wall kuṭis and caves, small remote villages, sometimes long and rough piṇḍapāta routes and very simple food, (a small) chance of malaria, elephants, leopards, and bears. A place for those who are lovers of intense solitude and who are experienced in bhāvana. Not a place for newcomers and inexperienced monks. The villagers don't know English and some knowledge of Sinhala is required in order to be able to communicate. Ven. Saṅkicca can help to introduce one to this area; see the next entry.

**Vatagala BM,** Vatagala, Moragaha Ulmeta, Vilgamuva 21000. Near Laggala, Hættipola. Abbot: Ven. Sankicca Thera. He speaks good English and likes to help introduce foreign monks to the Laggala area; see above. Caves and kuṭis. Aff. Galdūva.

**Nirodha International Bhāvanā Centre.** Knuckles Estate Bungalow, Bambara Ælla, Vattēgama. On upper Western slopes of the Knuckles Range, 30 kms NE of Kandy. Tea and cardamom estates. Quite cool, lots of rain, spectacular views. An old British tea-estate house. Manager living in other side of house. Large rooms. Nice place for walking, but there are many leeches. The place is connected to Ven. Homagama Kondañña but he is not there most of the time. Simple food. A few kilometers northeast there is a very large natural cave in a small valley above the Bambara Ælla village (which is below the Nirodha estate). It is not used but could be a suitable place. Ask the estate manager (Mr. Jewanis) in Bambara Ælla. Take a bus from Vattēgama (on Kandy-Mātale Rd) to Bambara Ælla (by way of Panvila.)

**Cetiya Giriya,** Maningamuva, Pallepola, Mātale District. On a rocky hill 20 kms NW of Mātale. Moderately cool climate. Small place, only 2 or 3 monks. A few kuṭis and caves. Two caves, some distance away, are semi-independent. Amarapura Nikāya.

**Gallnavatta AS.** Ætābendivæva Pāra, Pannampitiya. Turn left off the Mātale-Dambulla Rd about 8 kms before Dambulla, then about 1.5 kms Caves in the base of a hill. Kuṭis 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. Friendly abbot. Aff. Vaturavila.

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

**Pidurangala.** Pidurangala Rājamahāvihāra, Pidurangala, Sīgiriya. Less than a km E of Sīgiriya rock, near ancient monastery ruins. It can be reached by leaving Sīgiriya through the Northern Gate. Several ancient cave kuṭis under a large boulder-hill in the Sīgiriya forest above a well kept village temple. Some kuṭis have been prepared under the rocks, but might not have been used for a number of years as the pirivena is not a meditation centre. The friendly head monk will be supportive if one wishes to stay in one of the caves. Near the top of the boulder there is an ancient reclining Buddha image.

**Māliyadeva Devala Len Vihāraya.** Ælkaḍūva Pāra, Punci Mola, Vattēgama. Comfortable kuṭis and a cave where the arahant Māliyadeva is supposed to have stayed. Supposed to be a nice place on a mountain with forest. The place belongs to a Siyam Nikāya scholar monk who comes for retreats here and is supportive in supporting forest monks who want to maintain proper vinaya practice.

**Sri Jinavamsa Y.** Mātale Road. Elkadūva 21012. Near road and town. Rooms in compound. Aff. Galdūva. **Gallena AS.** Vævalavæva, Dambulla. Aff. Vaturavila. **Rangirigama AS.** Rangirigama, Dambulla. Aff. Vaturavila. **Nāgolla Nadi S.** Nāgala Væva, Kimbissa, Dambulla. Aff. Vaturavila. **Dambulla VMC,** Kalundeva Road, Dambulla. Aff. Kanduboda. **Samādhi T.** Tambarā-Valiya Road. Aluvihāra, Mātale. Cave-kuṭis. **Mātālē Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuva.** Madavala Ulmeta, Mātālē. Tel. 060-2661111. **Rattota Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuva.** Rattota, Mātālē. About 10kms east of Mātālē.

## KÆGALLA DISTRICT.

In the foothills of the central mountains. Humid climate, but less warm than the coast.

**Potgulgala A.** Pahankanuva, Devālēgama. 10 kms north of Kægalla. Ven. K. Nāṇananda thera is living here. He is the author of *Concept and Reality* and *Magic of the Mind* and speaks fluent English and is very knowledgeable in Pali. Simple conditions, only piṇḍapāta food, a few kuṭis and a few caves to live in. Daily vandana. The location is on a hilltop and there can be some noise from the surrounding villages. Cooler than the low-country. From Kægalle get a bus to Devālēgama, and from there ask the way. Unaffiliated with any tradition.

**Salgala AS.** Galapitamade, Varakāpola. (Tel. 03523772). From Varakāpola, take a bus to Galapitamade, then get a bus to Salgala or walk 45 mins. About 50 kms east of Colombo, and about 15 kms south of Varakāpola towards Ruvanvælla. 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 kuṭis, including caves. Western bhikkhus have stayed here for periods. Wet, dense forest with many leeches. Moderate climate. Aff. Vaturavila.

**Mahakanda Aranya.** Three kilometers from Gonagaldeniya. (Midway between Nittanbuva and Ruvanvælla. 12 kms east of Kirindivælla.) One monk. Several kuṭis and ancient cave dwelling on a mountain top. One cave has been prepared and is quite nice. Aff. Vaturavila. There is a Galdūva monastery lower on the slope of the same mountain. Which could be:

**Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuva**, Vaduvæva, Yatigaldaluva, Polgahāvælla. E-mail : [asapuwat@sltnet.lk](mailto:asapuwat@sltnet.lk). Web : [www.mahamevna.org](http://www.mahamevna.org) | [www.gautamabuddha.org](http://www.gautamabuddha.org) (= 10 kms north of Kægalla. Turn off to Vaduvæva from Yangamodara (3.5 km) on the Alavva-Polgahāvælla rd.) The head monastery of the movement around the very popular teacher Ven. Kiribathgoda Nānānanda, an English speaking, meditative and, most of all, missionary monk who is quite knowledgeable about the suttas. There are about 60 monks in this crowded training centre. There are kuṭṭis in a forest on a hill, but many monks sleep in compounds and even in the meditation hall. Well supported.

**Mællagala Y.** Divæla, Pallegama, 71022. Nr. Kægalla. Tel. 077-9155295. Forest hermitage. Aff. Galdūva. Take bus from Māvanælla to Attanagoda. Used to be a major Galdūva monastery, but now somewhat run down. Kuṭṭis close to each other and noise from valley and road.

**Nārangala Ānandabodhi Āshramaya**. Ambalakanda, Aranāyaka (= 15 kms W of Gampola.) Tel. 060-2359023. Aff. to Galdūva. 3 kuṭṭis. Some houses around the place, but very little noise from road. Take bus from Māwanælla to Ambalakanda or Aranāyaka.

**Lunu-atuva A.** Udutænna 21006. Mātale-Godapola, Alvatta. About 5-8 kms outside Mātale by bus. Large cave used as vihāra. Facilities for only a few monks. Aff. Galdūva. **Nāvimana Y.** or **Varakāpola AS.** Varakāpola 71600. Tel 078-641-662. 1 miles along Varakāpola-Mirigama Rd, on top of a hill. In a mahagony tree forest. A lot of noise from the army-camp and the villages below the hill. Aff. Galdūva. **Ānanda Bodhi Āshramaya**. Pitiyagama, Kirivadunna 71014. (or Hirivadunna?). Nr. Kægalla. Aff. Galdūva. **Navagala AS.** Ambāmpitiya. Near Kægalla, behind Ambāmpitiya factory on hill. Aff. Galdūva. **Nugasevana Senasuna**. Vaharaka, Gonagaldeniya 71304. Aff. Galdūva. **Gallenagoda A.S.** Devatgama, Dippiṭiya, Aranāyaka. Bus from Māvanælla. 1 monk & 2 (?) cave kuṭṭis with good solitude. **Bodhitenna Y.** Talgamuva, Devanāgala 71527. Between Kægalla and Kandy. Take a bus from Māwanælla (between Kandy-Kægalla.) Aff. Galdūva. **Tummodara Y.** Udugama, Hættimula, Kægalla. Aff. Galdūva. **Ānandabodhi Y.** Aranāyaka -20 kms SE of Kægalla. Aff. Galdūva. **Ashokāranya S.** Alavva, Ranavala, Beligalla 71044. On Ranavala-Beligalla Rd, 1 mile from Alavva, on Colombo-Kurunægala Rd. Probably a very small place. Aff. Galdūva. **Kosvatta A.** Nava Colombo Para, Polgahavælla 60300. (On Colombo-Kurunægala Rd.) Probably a small place. Aff. Galdūva. **Kodigala Y.** Kehelapannala, Hemmatagama 71530. Between Kægalla and Kandy. 3 kuṭṭis, one dormitory. No noise. Aff. Galdūva. Bus from Māvanælla. **Sri Dharmodaya Y.** Manikkava, Hingula 71520. Aff. Galdūva. **Diviyāgala Y.** Randivæla, Karapane. Take bus from Māvanælla to Ramukena. Aff. Galdūva. **Kægalla Abhayabhūmi T.** Bandaranāyake Mawatha, Kægalla. Aff. Tapovana group. **Māvanælla VMC**, Māvanælla. Aff. Kanduboda. **Vealdeniya A.S.** Pahalgama, Vealdeniya. Near Varakāpola. 6 monks. Aff. to Kandubodha. (FM 157 mentions a hermitage founded by Ven. Ratanapāla. It has ancient caves and is situated on a hill top near Asmaṇḍala, near Māvanælla.)

## NEGOMBO AND CHILAW AREA.

**Polvatta BM / Sri Dharmodaya BM.** Industries Estate, Polvatta, 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. Galdūva.

**Koccikande Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuva.** Halāvata Pāra, Koccikande. Tel: 031-22724219. (N= North of Colombo.) **Huṇumulla Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuva.** Badalagama Pāra, Huṇumulla. Tel: 031-2247181. **Ranaketugala AS.** Tutirivæla, Bandar, Kosvatta 60424. Aff. Galdūva. 20 kms N of Negombo. **Nekkavila VMC**, Nekkavila, Chilaw. Aff. Kanduboda.

## KURUNÆGALA DISTRICT.

There are many aranyas and monasteries in this district. The better known ones are Nā-Uyana A. and Arankæle A. 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 kuṭṭis.

**Na Uyana AS.** Pansiyagama. See Major Places section above.

**Arahatta Māliyadeva AS.** or **Arankæle A.** Arankæle, Kumbukvæva, Kurunægala District. On the site of the medieval Pamsakula Sect monastery, about 15 or more kuṭṭis and caves. Good library. A few westerners have stayed here. This is the ancient cave monastery where the Sinhalese arahant Māliyadeva lived, thus the name *aran* (arahant) + *kæle* (forest). His simple cave can still be visited. It is an archeological site with extensive ruins of an old monastery. About 10 monks. Amarapura Nikāya. From Kurunægala, take a bus towards Madagalla, and get down at Bodagalla.

**Ruvangirikanda A.** Karagahagædara, Nārammala 60106. 15 kms SW of Kurunægala. Forested hill with a nice cave-kuṭṭi on top. Also other cave-kuṭṭis and ordinary kuṭṭis. Foreign monks have stayed here. Quiet and suitable for meditation. Aff. Galdūva.

**Nāthagane AS.** Mahākeliya, Māspota 60344. 10 kms out of Kurunægala on the Puttalam Road. Abbot: Ven. Sirivimala. Forested hill-side. About 10-12 kuṭṭis. Some isolated caves. Friendly atmosphere. Suitable for meditation. Also a study and training place for young monks. Some noise from nearby Puttalam Road. Aff. Galdūva.

**Siri Vidusarana T. / Nabæta A.** Henegedera Landa, Nabæta 60540. Nr. Mælsiripura on Kurunægala-Dambulla Rd. Nice forest. Small monastery. Near main-road but fairly quiet. Facilities for 4-5 monks. There can be a lack of water during the dry season. Aff. Galdūva.

**Nāgolla A.** also known as: **Devahuva A.** or **Gomoktāva A.** Nāgolla, Bulanavæva, Devahuva, Galēvæla 21206. (On Kurunægala-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. A few monks. Ancient cetiya. Forest with iron-wood-trees and big rocks. Small monastery with only a few kutis and caves. Aff. Galdūva.

- Dolukanda A. / Rankotlena AS.** Dolukanda, Hunupola, Nikadalupotha 60582. Tel 072-289837. Not far from Arankæle Aranya in Kurunægala District. Ancient Cave Monastery. On lower forested slope of the Dolukanda mountain. (The ancient Arankælē monastery is on the other side of the mountain.) Nice big caves, but the place was/is (?) used mostly for popular big Bodhi-tree-pujas with loudspeakers. (This might not be the case anymore as the previous abbot has left the place.) On the top of the mountain is a 500 metre long, partly forested plateau with spectacular views where there used to be a fortress/palace of a king, the bathing-pond is still there. Aff. Galdūva. In a cave on the side of this mountain-plateau an overly enthusiastic American monk (connected to Arankælē A.) strenuously practised Aśubha meditation with corpses brought to him by villagers until he went mad and disrobed. The pictures of his practice might still be at Arankæle monastery. Aff. Galdūva.
- Jathika Namal Uyana.** Upalathagama, Galkiriyagama, Madatugama. Small aranya *cum* pansala on a hill in a fairly large forested area. Ancient stupa and ruins. Rose-quartz rock-outcrops. The abbot, Ven. Vanavasi Rāhula, is trying to protect the quartz. 10 kms north from Devahuva A.
- Rangirikanda A.** Diddeniya, Mælsiripura 60544. Turn off at Mælsiripura. Ancient Cave Monastery on a rocky hill. Facilities for about 6 monks. Cramped, but well kept. Aff. Galdūva. Abbot: Ven. Nāṇasīla, an English speaking Vinayadhara. About 7 km North of Melsiripura.
- Ridivihāra Kælepansala.** There is a newly prepared cave kuṭi on a nicely forested hill about half an hour walk from this ancient and rich vihāra belonging to the Malvatta Nāyaka thera. Fairly quiet. Piṇḍapāta to nearby village. Close to well and stream. There are also several other caves in the forest. The incumbent of Ridivihāra needs to be consulted if one wishes to stay here. From Kurunægala take the Kæpitigolla bus and get out at the Ridivihāra Devāla and walk to Ridivihāra.
- Bambaragala MC.** Moratiya. On the Kurunægala-Kæpitagolla Rd. Less than 10 kms from Kurunægala. A place set up as a meditation center by Venerable Puṇṇaji, but now there is nothing happening here as the founder went abroad. Several kuṭis and a large unfinished Dhamma-hall on a forested hill.
- Minnettiya A.** Māspota, Mahakæliya. In the area of Variyapola on the Kurunægala-Puttalam Rd. 1 cave kuṭi with one monk. Near village. Aff. Galdūva. **Pahankanuva A.** Kandegedara, Maharacchimulla. Maybe aff. to Kandubodha. **Vævgala A.** Vævgala, Kurunægala. Aff. Galdūva. **Ætugala AS.** Ætugala, Kurunægala 60000. Forest hermitage. Aff. Galdūva. **Sudarshana Y.** Gantiriyāva, Bamunākotuva 60347. 5 kms NW of Māspota, near Variyapola on the Kurunægala-Puttalam Rd. Aff. Galdūva. **Rambapokuna AS.** Kandegædæra, Nikaværatiya 60470. (= Midway on the Kurunægala-Puttalam Rd. Aff. Galdūva. **Dandūvāva AS.** Dandūvava, Nikaværatiya 60470. Aff. Galdūva. **Banakiyangama Y. / Sri Kalyāṇī Shaka Y.** Banakiyanagama, Mūnamaldeniya 60218. 10 kms along Kuliyaṇipitiya-Hættipola Rd, Kurunægala District. Aff. Galdūva. **Sri Tampanṇi A.** Welevæva. Navagattegama 61520. 15 kms W of Galgamuva. Aff. Galdūva. **Kappetigala AS.** Galneva, Tuttiripitiyagama 60426. (= 10 kms NE of Māho.) Aff. Galdūva. **Nāgansole AS.** Ratandala Oya, Nikaværatiya 60470. 3 miles along Nikaværatiya -Hidogama Rd. Aff. Galdūva. **Nammuvagama AS.** Sindagamdaluva, Nikaværatiya 60470. Aff. Galdūva. **Hidogama AS.** Mahagirilla. Along Nikaværatiya-Māho Rd. 2 miles to Mahagirilla then to Hidogama. Aff. Galdūva. **Yahangala AS.** Delvahuva, Galévæla 21206. Aff. Galdūva. **Kodigala AS.** Polpitigama. Approx. 40 kms north of Kurunægala and 10 kms E of Māho. Aff. Vaturavila. **Sudarshanapura VMC,** Sudarshanapura, Mavattagama. Aff. Kanduboda. **Telandapitiya,** Tarangollagama, Maragolla Bazar. 10 kms from Migalāva. Caves and kuṭis. Aff. unknown. **Ibbāgamuva Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuva.** Mūkalanyāya, Ibbāgamuva. Tel: 060-2377537. **Polpitigama Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuva.** *Liyanagama,* Polpitigama. **Mahamevnāva Anāgārika Bhāvanā Asapuva.** Mutugala, Dambadeniya. Tel: 037-2243698. **Mahamevnāva Anāgārika Bhāvanā Asapuva.** 7 Kanuva, Seafield Vatta, Māvattagama. Tel: 037-2243698. **Potugura Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuva.** Algama, Potugura. Tel: 037-2239230. **Uyandana Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuva.** Uyandana, Kurunægala. Tel: 037-2236465.

## HAMBANTOTA DISTRICT

Probably the driest district in Sri Lanka, especially along the coast. Hot. Some large wilderness areas such as Yala. Generally flatland, but there is the Wedahitakanda 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 *FM* p. 212. Abbot: Ven. Dhammadasī, a very strict Mahāthera. It is rather hot in the dry season. Ancient cave kuṭis under boulders in the jungle. It is bordering Yala National Park and therefore there are elephants and other wildlife. Foreign monks have stayed here. There is chanting/vandana 3 times a day, but foreign monks are exempted. About the driest climate you can get in Sri Lanka. The piṇḍapāta starts at 9 am (About 25-30 minutes, the monks are usually driven back in the dāyakas' bus.) 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 just 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 below.

**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-busses or jeeps going there. From Nimalāva go to main (Kirinda-road) National Park entrance and then take the boundary track north to the Tissa entrance. A large, ancient cave-monastery. There are ancient ruins and probably more than a hundred cave-kuṭis 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 monk who speaks English well. Austere western monks are welcome to stay in the caves (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 animals, some are dangerous. There are also a few rest-houses where laypeople can stay. The abbot has plans to make a forest monastery. About mid-way between the Tissa entrance and Situlpāva there is a smaller ancient aranya called Makulvihāra under a large rock. Sil-mānayas used to stay here but abandoned the place in the late 1990's due to the war.

**Madunāgala A.** Koggala. 15 kms north of Ambalantota, east of Siyambalagoda, north of Ridiyagama Væva. An ancient cave monastery on a remote forested rock-outcrop ridge, northeast of Ridiyagama Væva, and surrounded by shrubby lowland. Hot, dry climate. Western bhikkhus have stayed here. Founded in 1946 by the founder of the Vaturavila Vanavāsin group, Vaturuvila Nāṇananda; see *Forest Monks of Sri Lanka* p. 184. In 2006 there were eight elderly monks, but no theras; a situation which is common in Vaturavila aranyas. About 10 cave kutis. There is a cetiya on top of a circular image house, which is on top of one of the big boulders. The hot spring, 3 kms from the monastery, is commercial and unsuitable for monks. Aff: Vaturavila. Nearby, about 15 mins. walking to the southwest, is another monastery called Karambagala Aranya; see next entry. For directions on how to get here, see next entry. From this monastery, take the road to the east of the ridge.

**Karambagala A.** This monastery was originally built 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 monastery was refounded early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Vaturuvilē Nāṇananda first stayed in the caves on this hill, but was asked to leave by the inheritor of the temple monk who stayed earlier and committed suicide. He then moved to the adjoining hill, to the northeast, which was part of this monastery in ancient times. There are many rock overhangs on this rocky hill, perhaps as many as one hundred. Most are on the western side of the hill, where the entrance road to monastery is. The shelters on the ridge leading to the top of the hill 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. There apparently are no affiliations to any tradition, but the novices go to an Amarapura Nikāya pirivena. They are quite friendly and helpful, but because of their lack of proper training the atmosphere in the central monastery area is chaotic. One could stay here alone in one of the caves away from the main area and go for piṇḍapāta in the Karambamula village 3 kms west of the monastery, which is about 40 minutes walking along an unpaved road. Due to their remoteness, Madunāgala and Karambagala are very quiet. To go here, take a bus from Ambalantota (at the clocktower) to Koggala and walk about 7 kms. There are also buses to Suriyavæva, which come closer (3 kms) but are less frequent. From Embilipitiya, take a bus to Suriyavæva and get out at Mahāpælæsa, then walk about 7 kms to the monastery, passing the hot springs. If one is lucky, a tractor will take one along. At night, fierce elephants roam in the jungle.

**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 and also other wildlife and snakes. The kuṭi was built for Ven. Nāṇavira in the late fifties. He died in 1965 and since then many western bhikkhus have stayed here. Piṇḍapāta in the village, which is about 10 minutes away. Dry hot climate, except in Nov-Dec. PTS Tipiṭaka books are available on request from the Forest Hermitage, Kandy. There is some noise from nearby road, especially during the Northeast monsoon (Oct-Mar). There is also the sound of the waves crashing on the beach, especially during the Southwest monsoon (May-Sept), but this sound is not really disturbing.

**Tellula A.** A kuṭi and ruins of kuṭis and a *dānasala* in the dunes about 3 kms away from Bundala near the mouth of the Kirindi Oya river in the village of Tellula near Sūriyavelāva and Māgama. The place was abandoned during the Marxist uprising in the late 1980s after the abbot was assassinated. Nicely situated in the dunes near an ancient cetiya. A French monk stayed here for a long time before passing away in 2003. There is now a temple monk staying here and rebuilding the place. There are 3 abandoned kutis in the dunes.

**Sīmāpavura AS.** Sūriya Āra, Angunukolapelæssa, Tanāmalvila. On top of rock-hill with good views. One cave-kuṭi. Supposed to be a nice place. Aff. Vaturavila. Angunukolapæssa is 10 kms east of Tanāmalvila, which is halfway on the Tissamahārāma-Vællavāya Rd].

**Svarnagiri AS.** Laginagala, Galhiramankada, Kotaweramankada, Tanāmalvila 91312. Aff. Galdūva. **Karandulena A.S.** Ridiyagama. Aff. Galdūva. It is unclear whether there is a monk here and where it is. **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. **Valaskanda AS.** 31 Kanuva, Kitulkoṭe, Tanāmalvila. Aff. Vaturavila. **Suriyavæva Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuva.** Suravirægama, Suriyavæva. Tel. 047-4920660. **Kataragama Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuva.** Teragirigama, Kataragama. Tel. 047-5670833. **Usgala A.** Suriyavæva (Andaravæva). 10 km Northeast of Karambagala. There are three small rock overhangs and a few mud kutis. Three novices from Karambagala A. stay at this rocky outcrop. **Mattala A.** A new aranya with rock overhangs near Badagiriya Væva, 10 kms north of Hambantota and Bundala. Perhaps near the village of Udamattala, north of the væva. Aff. unknown.

## MONARĀGALA DISTRICT

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.** 14 miles post, New Katarama Road, Vaguruvæla, Buttala 91100. Tel: 055-73542. The abbot is Ven. Guṇananda, a very senior monk and the present Upajjhāya of the Galdūva tradition. Good support. Practice of Pa Auk method. Ven. A. Vajiravaṃsa speaks English. Jungle on the slope of a hill. Hot climate. Caves, including a big cave used for doing vandana. Some noise from the nearby road. There are plans for developing a major forest meditation-centre here. Aff. Galdūva.

**Tarulenagala A. / Habutugala A.** Hulannuge, Monarāgala 71000. Between Siyambalandūva and Lahugala National Park, along Monarāgala–Pottuvil Road. Small place with a large rockshelter 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. Two monks usually reside here: Ven. Dhammasiri, the abbot of Kudumbigala, and his father. Aff. Galdūva. Take a bus from Monaragala. If you pass the Lahugala National Park to the east then look out of the bus as there are usually several elephants grazing in the marshes.

**Monarāgala Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuva.** Tambalavinna-āra Tapovanaya, Hulanāva Dakuṇa, Monarāgala. Aff. Mahamevnāva. **Alulena AS.** Dambepitiya 91060. Near Maligavila, 10 kms SE of Buttala. Aff.: Galdūva. **Lollehela AS.** Galgediyawa, Galabedda, Monarāgala 91008. Outside Monarāgala Town. Aff. Galdūva. **Sitakanda AS.** Monarāgala 91000. Aff. Galdūva. **Waḷagambā Rajalena AS.** Helatungala, Badalkumbura, Monarāgala 91070. Aff. Galdūva. **Sandækebelle AS.** Kanda-uda-vanguva, Monarāgala 91032 . 1 kms from town on the Kumardola Pāra, turn off at the Water Supply Dept. Aff. Galdūva. **Sambodhi Y.** 35 Kumaradola Pāra, Monarāgala 910000. On hill above Monarāgala bus-stand. Convenient as a stop-over place on a long bus-journey. Tel. 055-76265. Aff. Galdūva. **Sakmangala AS.** Kumaradola Pāra, Monarāgala 91000. Located on Monarāgala Mountain. 10 kms from town via Kumardola Pāra. At present no monks. Aff. Galdūva. **Vattārāma AS.** Wattārāma, Kotiyagala, Monarāgala, 91024. 1 monk & 6 novices. Quiet. Aff. Galdūva. **Rahatan Kanda AS / Devagiri AS.** Dahatune Kanuva, Mahagodayaya, Buttala. Aff. Vaturavila. **Theraputtabhaya AS.** Kalavæla Aragama Pāra, Vællavāya. Aff. Vaturavila. **Mayuragiri AS.** Weliyaya, Monarāgala. Aff. Vaturavila. **Bhavanagala AS.** Punehipara, Etimole Væva. Aff. Vaturavila. **Maha Tissa Lena AS.** Netol Kælē ælla Pāra, Vællavāya. Aff. Vaturavila. **Vævatænna AS.** Dahate Kanuva, Rattanadeniya, Bibile Road, Bakinigahavæla. Aff. Vaturavila. **Buttala Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuva.**

## AMPĀRA DISTRICT

This area has a lot of ancient monasteries, but due to its proximity to rebel areas they have not been redeveloped or were abandoned. Now most of the area is accessible again. There is a lot of wilderness in this area. It has a hot climate and a dry season.

**Kudumbigala A.** Selāva Eliya, Pānama. Private mail box, 91000. Near Okanda, 15 kms west of Pānama. Ancient cave monastery. Spectacular setting on the eastern border of Yala National Park, very remote, caves, wild animals. Aff. Galdūva. The monastery has been going through a difficult period due to the violent death of its founder Ānandasiri during the Marxist uprising and then the Tamil rebellion in the East. It was uninhabited for three years (1999–2001) due to LTTE (Tamil Tiger) presence, but is now accessible again. Pictures and a history of the place and its founder can be found in *FM*. About five monks at present. 10 caves are prepared. There are other abandoned ancient monasteries in jungles in the area, such as Bambaragastaleva, which the adventurous can explore. The abbot is usually in Tharulenagala Aranya near Hulanuga, Monarāgala Distr. At present there are only a few monks. To get here, take a bus from Monarāgala to Pottuvil or Pānama. In Pānama go to the *Sil Mænayo Pansala* (nunnery) where the abbot's mother lives and she will help. The nunnery is 200 meters beyond the hospital. When the abbot, Ven. Dhammasiri, is in Tarugalena A., he can also help one to go to Kudumbigala. The coast at Okanda, with large beaches, a Kataragama shrine, and a (now abandoned) wildlife department office, is about an hours walk.

**Shastravælla A. or Rastravælla A.** Between Pānama and Pottuvil. Get out of the bus at the Special Task Force camp. Ancient cave monastery on forested rocky hill ridge which runs about 600 meters east from the Special Task Force camp along the Pānama–Pottuvil road right up to the the mouth of the Heen Oya River and the beach. There has been a pansala here for 30 years but it was abandoned for some years. In 2003 one young monk stayed here, made a nice kuṭi in one of the caves, and then abandoned the place. One cave is high on a rock overlooking Ārugam Bay, but is not so suitable due to visiting tourists. It is in a wilderness area with elephants and other wildlife, and with little noise, but the pansala area can be busy with villagers. Near Pānama are another few ancient abandoned cave monasteries including Vævavehera near the væva (tank) 3 kms west of Pānama.

**Buddhangala A.** 22 Kanatta Rd. Ampāra. Ancient site, but no caves except the dāna sala. Pilgrims come. Somewhat like Nimalāva A. Close to LTTE area. **Sumaṅgala A.** Kohombana, via Uhana. Huge caves on rocky hill. Quite remote; a 4 kms walk to the nearest village. No monks at present, but there is a police post and the place is supported by the army. **Kokama A.** Inginiyagala. (= West of Ampāra near Gal Oya National Park.) Abandoned? **Ampāra Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuva.**

## 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 flatland with some lonely hills and rock-outcrops. There are many man-made tanks (*væva*). West of Anurādhapura is the large Vilpattu National Park known for its wildlife. Most of the province is undeveloped. Mihintale, east of Anurādhapura, has many old caves, etc, and is more interesting than Anurādhapura in some ways.

**Kaludiya Pokuna T.** Mihintale. Nicely situated near the Kaludiya Pokuna bathing pond, which is below the Mihintale Hill. Ancient cave monastery. 10 caves on the small hill above the monastery have been repaired and are in use. Nice kuṭis and facilities. 5–6 bhikkhus, friendly atmosphere. Sometimes there might be a bit of noise from the road. Aff. Tapovana group.

**Mihintalē Kanda.** This 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 of the large hill.



**Katupotha Kanda Sri Vajiragnana VMC.** Katupotha Kanda, Palugasvæva, Mihintale Rd, Galkulama, Anurādhapura. (By car one has to turn off left [south] a few kms from Mihintale on the Mihintale-Anurādhapura Rd and then turn left [east] after a few kms again.) Small place with ancient caves on southern side of the large hill 2 kms south of the Mihintale hill. Ven. Sanāthavihārī, who is also the abbot of Bovalavatta, is staying here. A few kuṭis. Amarapura Nikāya.

**Ritigala A.** Ganevalpola, Kækirāva. The ancient cave monastery is on the eastern lower slope of Ritigalakanda mountain. It is visible from the Kurunægala-Anurādhapura Rd. The aranya is about 2 kilometers to the east from Galapitigala on the northern slope of the mountain range. The first Sinhalese arahant, Ariṭṭha stayed here. The aranya is in a nature reserve; a large forest with elephants and bears. The best, non-logged virgin forest is around the ruins of the large ancient monastery, which are taken care of by the Archeological Dept. These ruins are 25 minutes walking from the aranya. An English bhikkhu stayed here for a few years and helped to build up the place. A few bhikkhus and some novices. The best cave is about 15 minutes walking up the slope under a big rock with a great view from its top. Take a bus from Kækirāva to Habarana and get down at Galapitagala, walk one hour through the forest, be careful of elephants. If going by car, go along the unpaved but reasonable road going east from Galapitigala and turn left at the first junction after about two kms There is no sign at the junction. Aff. Vaturavila.

**Subodhārāma A. BM / Labunurukanda A.** A few kms NE of Ritigala on the hill facing the northern slope of Ritigalakanda. A forest monastery connected to Ritigala A. with kuṭis and ancient caves in forest on top of a hill. About 7 monks. Piṇḍapāta. Take bus from Kækirāva to Galamudana ( 10 km). Get out at Arugola (= Alagolleva ??) at the monastery sign. Aff. Vaturavila.

**Atdalagala AS.** Giratalana, Migalæva. Between Kækirāva (i.e., to the W) and Galgamuva. Aranya set up by Ven. Ariyañāṇa, an old and friendly English-speaking meditation teacher formerly connected to Kanduboda. Western monks have stayed here. Forest, caves. Hot climate. Two kilometers from the Resvehera-Sasseruva archeological sites. From Galgamuva take a bus to Katugampola and stop at Bongama. From there it is 1 km walk. Five kilometers to the south from here, is the Galgiriya-kanda mountain on which there are several Vaturavila aranyas *cum* pansalas with many rock overhangs. One of them is: **Sāliya Lena AS.** Galgiriya-kanda, Moragollāgama. Aff. Vaturavila. Ven. Nyanavimala used to stay here in a cave. On another side of the mountain is another aranya called **Nilgirikanda Aranya** with an ancient reclining Buddha image in a cave.

**Sambodhi Y.** Kuratiyāva, Migalæva 60750. 15 kms W from Kækirāva. Take bus from Kækirāva. Good new kuṭis and facilities, adjacent to large væva (tank/lake). Possibly good for meditation. Hot, mosquitos, but good support. 3 monks. An English speaking Nepalese monk is the abbot. Aff. Galdūva.

**Pancha Stūpa A.** Palugolla. Mahananneriya. From Galgamuva, take a bus to Anamadūva and get down at Ihala Nanneriya junction. On a hill with an ancient stupa. Tradition unknown. **Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuva.** Vatavandanapara, Lolugasvæva, Anurādhapura. Connected to Ven. K. Nāṇānanda. A small place in a village area. Tel. 060-2259018. **Vedisagiri A.** Sanghappālaya, Vannikudavæva, Galgamuva 60721. (= Between Māho and Anurādhapura.) Aff. Galdūva. **Purāṇa Gallena AS.** Tammennāva, Tambuttagama 60734. (= 25 kms S of Anurādhapura.) **Maradankadavala AS.** Maradankadavala. On Anurādhapura-Kækirāva Rd, 30 kms SE of Anurādhapura. Aff. Galdūva. **Yodhayākanda AS.** Dampitigama, Halmillavæva. (About 50 kms E of Anurādhapura on Anurādhapura-Trincomalee road.) Aff. Vaturavila. **Mihindu A.** Anurādhapura. Along road from Mihintale to Anurādhapura. Pirivena and ordination centre connected to Vaturavila.

## VAVUNIYA DISTRICT

Situated on the northernmost limit of Sinhalese Buddhist culture. Due to its closeness to rebel infested areas, there are not many new monasteries here, but probably quite a few ancient ones.

**Galpiyuma AS. / Galpokuna A.** Kahatagollæva, Padaviya. Approx. 30 kms E of Vavuniya. On the road between Kebatagolleva and Padaviya, get down at Kahatagollæva. Abbot: Ven. Sumanatissa (Mahāthera), English speaking. Ancient cave monastery in large forest area with elephants. Good *viveka*. It can be hot here. Ruins scattered in forest. The area is on the border of the Sinhalese area and was affected by the war. Aff. Galdūva.

**Padaviya Abhayabhūmi T.** Deviyangekanda, Padaviya. Aff. Tapovana group. On a hill with a few caves. Near army camp. Amarapura Nikāya.

## BADULLA DISTRICT

The eastern edge of the mountain country. Cool climate with less rain than the western and central mountains and therefore quite agreeable for westerners. Tea estates with some remnant forest and wilderness areas. Strangely enough, there seem to be no aranyas or meditation centres in this district. The low country east of the mountains around Bibile also appears to be a small part of this district and this is where the following monastery is situated. This area has a hot climate and a dry season. A poor, undeveloped area.

**Mahasudharshana AS.** Gadugodavæva, Pahala-oya-gama, Ūraniya. (Between Mahiyangana and Bibile). Aff. Vaturavila.

## POLONNARUVA 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. An undeveloped and poor area.

**Mahāsena AS.** Nagalakanda, Minneriya 51410. 25 kms northwest of Polonnaruva . 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. Kuṭṭis. Facilities for about 6–8 monks. Friendly abbot. Aff. Galdūva.

**Sinhapura VMC.** Sinhapura, Polonnaruva. Head Monk: Ven. Saṃvuta. 2 or 3 kuṭṭis and a compound. There is also an Upasikā-ārāmaya (nunnery) in the grounds, where *dasa-sil-mēnayo* Dhammanandā teaches meditation. For those who like a hot climate. Aff. Kanduboda.

**Dimbulāgala MC.** Dimbulāgala. 20 kms SE of Polonnaruva . Large ancient cave-monastery on a mountain ridge. In the front section there is a pirivena with about 130 sāmaṇeras, and there is an aranya area with about 15 monks in the back. Amarapura Nikāya. It is in a mixed Sinhalese-Tamil area and is a centre of Sinhalese monastic nationalism. The founder Ven. Sīlalaṅkara was shot dead in the mid-nineties by the LTTE.

**Veharahena Y.** 108 Mile Post, Avudangāva, Habarana 50150. On Anurādhapura–Polonnaruva Rd. Abbot: Ven. Dhamminda. Several kuṭṭis. Small area. Aff. Galdūva. **Bodhiraja AS.** Hiriwadunna, Habarana. Aff. Vaturavila. **KuduSīgiriya A.** Dehi-ata-kandiya. On Mahiyangana-Polonnaruva road. **Polonnaruva Mahamevnāva Bhāvanā Asapuva.** Purakuma Uyana, Polonnaruva. Tel. 027 2226260.

## TRINCOMALEE DISTRICT

Trincomalee is a large port and has a mixed community of Sinhalese, Muslims, and Tamils. There are some ancient Buddhist sites in this area. The interior is undeveloped and poor. There are some large wilderness areas.

**Kathārapura AS.** Kathārapura, Duṭṭuvāva. North of Ratmale, 50 kms from Trincomalee on the Anurādhapura-Trincomalee road. Aff. Vaturavila. **Vān Ela Amādahara Tapovana.** Near Kantalai; mid-way the on the Habarana-Trincomalee Road. New place of Ven. Potuhera Vipassī. Aff. Galdūva.

## 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.** Rājagalatænna 32068. Near Mayadunna, near Bakizella. 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, which is a few kilometers away from the aranya. Some caves. The army is in and around the place due to the LTTE. One bhikkhu and one novice are staying here. The place is run down and near to houses and road. Aff. Galdūva, but reportedly poor vinaya standards.

**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 built by Ven. Ampitiya Rāhula (the founder of Bovalavatta A.), but it was abandoned after a hurricane destroyed the buildings in the late eighties. Two monks at present. There are 4 caves kuṭṭis which are inhabitable. Near houses, but on edge Maduru Oya National Park.

**Omuna A.** Ancient cave monastery in Maduru Oya National Park, about 10 km further along the road from Veheragala. Some caves apparently have been restored in recent times, but there are no monks at present. The army now trains in this area and it is close to LTTE areas. On the way to here from Veheragala is the Hīnagala cave.

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

## JAFFNA DISTRICT

**Dambakolapatuna.** Keerimalai, Kankasanture. One or two kuṭṭis in quiet dune area near the beach, close to the Navy base, which supports the kuṭṭis. It is possible to go on piṇḍapāta in nearby villages. This is reputedly the place where the Sri Mahā Bodhi arrived in Sri Lanka. Not accessible now due to the armed conflict.