



Nā Uyana Aranya

Theravada Buddhist Forest Monastery



Nā Uyana Aranya is the largest meditation monastery of **Śrī Kalyāṇī Yogāśrama Saṁsthā** (also known as *Galduwa Tradition*), the main forest monastic organisation of Sri Lanka.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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AT A GLANCE

- More than 5000 acres in land area
- Residence to about 100 monks and 30 lay practitioners
- Follows the Pa-Auk Meditation System
- Strict adherence to *Vinaya* (Buddhist Monastic Discipline) and the *Theravāda* tradition
- Strong meditative atmosphere
- Simple yet adequate facilities for practice
- Situated in rural Kurunegala (160km/3-4 hours by car from Colombo)
- The main monastery is situated in an ancient Ironwood forest
- The rest of the monastery spreads over mountains that are being reforested
- **Dhammika Aśhramaya** is a separate nunnery affiliated with Na Uyana for **female practitioners**.



Photo: A cave kuṭi (monks' residence) at Na Uyana Aranya

Na Uyana Aranya ('Ironwood Grove Forest Monastery') is one of the oldest Buddhist forest monasteries in Sri Lanka, dating back to the time of King Uttiya (3rd Century BCE). The modern revival of this ancient monastery during the past few decades has seen its emergence as one of the main meditation centres in the country. Today it is again a home to a thriving community of monastic and lay Buddhist practitioners.

IN THIS GUIDE

1. General Information
2. Food and Accommodation
3. Meditation
4. Common Facilities
5. Communication Facilities
6. Travel and Visas
7. Health
8. Other Information
9. Ordination, Lay precepts
10. Uposatha Day

General Information

ORIENTATION OF THE MONASTERY

Na Uyana Forest Monastery covers a total of more than 5000 acres, which can be divided into 4 main sections: (1) Pansiyagama Section, (2) Mountain Section, (3) Matale Section and (4) Andagala Section. The Pansiyagama Section is situated within an Ironwood forest, and contains the following structures: an *uposatha* hall (*Simā Sālā*), a meditation hall (*Bhāvanā Sālā*), a dining-hall (*Dāna Sālā*) and alms food hall (*Pinḍapāta Sālā*), a library and offices, in addition to about 80 kuṭis (monks' residences). The Mountain Section is the newly developed area on the main hill of the monastery, which has about 80 kuṭis and includes a meditation hall and service hall (*Upaṭṭhāna Sālā*). This area is in the process of being reforested. The Matale Section has about 20 kuṭis and includes a meditation hall, a dining-hall and an alms food hall. It is situated among grassy hills on the eastern side of the monastery. The Andagala Section is a remote, densely forested area, situated in the north-eastern part of the monastery.

Section	Name	Altitude	Landscape	Accommodation type	
1	Pansiyagama	Lower Monastery	200-350m	Ironwood forest	Cave and old concrete kuṭis
2	Mountain	Middle Monastery	350-480m	Acacia and teak forest	Modern concrete kuṭis
3	Matale	Upper Monastery	450-500m	Savannah landscape	Modern concrete kuṭis
4	Andangala	Eel-rock area	200-400m	Dense tropical forest	Basic wood and leaf kuṭis

COMMON DAILY ACTIVITIES

Dhamma Talk (*Dhamma Desanā*): Ven. Ariyananda normally gives a Dhamma talk on Wednesdays at 4:00 p.m. in both Sinhala and English at the *Bhāvanā Sālā* on the Mountain and on Tuesdays at 4:00pm in Sinhala only at the Matale *Bhāvanā Sālā*. All are welcome to attend.

Chanting and Offerings (*Pūjā*): Morning chanting is held at the Lower Monastery *Bhāvanā Sālā* at 4:00 am. Evening chanting is held at Lower Monastery *Bhāvanā Sālā* at 7:00 pm. There are also ceremonial offerings made at the Lower Monastery *Cetiya* at 7.30am and 5.00pm, and at the Lower Monastery Bodhi Tree at 7.30pm.

Paying Respects to Ven. Ariyadhamma Mahāthera (*Vandanā*): If you wish to pay respects to Ven. Ariyadhamma Mahāthera, please go to his residence (kuṭi) at 9:00 am, where a daily Dhamma discussion is held in Sinhala. If you wish to speak with him privately, please arrange a suitable time with his attendant, Ven. Ariyasīla, or with Ven. Ariyananda. You will need a translator if you cannot speak Sinhala.

Special Information for Monks

Robe Washing: Natural detergent and sinks for robe washing are available at the *Pandu Sālā* (Robe Dying Hall) and at the *Upaṭṭhāna Sālā* (Service Hall) every Sunday, beginning after breakfast.

Head shaving: Every Sunday, monks are required to shave their heads and beards, and to trim their nails if necessary. Razors and soap are available from the store room.

Disciplinary Inquiries (*Vinaya*) and Community (*Saṅgha*) issues: Disciplinary or Community issues may be addressed to Ven. Saṅghasobhana Thera, who is usually available after lunch in the library.

Special Information for Lay Practitioners

Etiquette around Monks: Please be mindful when relating to monks and other spiritual companions at the monastery. Paying careful attention to the way Sri Lankan laity behave towards the monks is perhaps the best way to learn the appropriate etiquette of lay-monastic relationships. Laypeople should never sit on the same seat or mat as a monk, or wear footwear in their company. Lay practitioners are also expected to help with simple duties for the maintenance of the monastery.

PLANNED EVENTS

Please check the notice board in the upstairs area of the *Simā Sālā* which gives information about future events, e.g. the day of the *Uposatha*, when the doctor is coming, etc.

Food and Accommodation

FOR MONKS

Breakfast/Lunch (*Dāna*):

Lower Monastery: Breakfast is served at 6:00am and lunch is served at approximately 9:35 am, both collected from the *Pinḍapāta Sālā*. After the wooden block has been sounded, monks should meet outside the *Sīmā Sālā* with both shoulders covered. A line is formed according to seniority (*vassa*) and the monks then proceed to the *Pinḍapāta Sālā*. Monks can eat their alms food either at the *Dāna Sālā* or back in their *kuṭis*.

Mountain: Monks on the mountain retreat are served breakfast at 6.00am and lunch at 9.00am, both at the Mountain *Upatṭhāna Sālā*.

Matale: At approximately 6.20am, monks from the Matale area meet at the small mud *kuṭi* near the *Cetiya*, where rice gruel is normally served. At 6:40am they line up according to seniority with both shoulders covered and proceed onwards to the *Pinḍapāta Sālā*. Monks can eat their alms food either at the *Dāna Sālā* or back in their *kuṭis*.

Andangala: All monks staying in the Andagala area go to the surrounding villages for *Pinḍapāta*.

Village *Pinḍapāta* (Alms Round):

If you want to go to the village to collect alms food, please get permission from Ven. Ariyananda or Ven. Saṅghasobhana. Monks wishing to do *Pinḍapāta* in the Pansiyagama area must refer to the map in the *Sīmā Sālā*. Please write down the appropriate route number on the calendar below the map.

FOR LAY PRACTITIONERS

Lower Monastery: Breakfast is served at 6:00am and lunch is served at approximately 9:35 am, both collected from the *Pinḍapāta Sālā*. Laymen should meet outside the *Sīmā Sālā* after the wooden block has been sounded. Foreign Laymen should line up with the Sinhalese Laymen, behind the saffron-clothed *Upāsakas*. Laymen can eat their alms food either in the downstairs area of the *Sīmā Sālā* or back at their *kuṭis*. Please do not feed the monkeys or dogs any scraps of food.

RESIDENCES

Please take care of the *kuṭi* you are assigned. Please do not make any improvements or remove furniture without permission from Ven. Saṅghasobhana or Ven. Ariyananda. Between 7:00 am and 7:30 am residents should clean their *kuṭis* and sweep and clear the surrounding areas. Please be careful when using candle-lanterns and candles and don't leave valuables lying around in obvious places. If the lodging is left for more than a short while, doors and windows should be closed to prevent rain and wind-blown debris from entering. Please make sure you return the key when you leave.



Photo: A *kuṭi* in the lower monastery



Photo: A monk returning from his almsround in the Pansiyagama village

Meditation

Na Uyana is one of the two principal meditation monasteries of the *Śrī Kalyāṇī Yogāśrama Saṃsthā*. The main meditation method taught is **Pa-Auk Samatha Vipassana**, and the senior meditation teacher is Ven. Ariyananda Thera. Practitioners may join the group sittings conducted in the two main meditation halls, or continue on their own in their individual *kuṭīs*.

Meditation Instructions (*Kammaṭṭhāna*)

Please see the table below for scheduled interview times with the meditation teachers. These times may vary according to circumstances.

Teacher	Day of the Week	Time	Location
Ven. Ariyananda	Sat	4.00 pm	Lower Monastery <i>Bhāvanā Sālā</i>
Ven. Ariyananda	Mon, Fri	4:00 pm	Mountain <i>Upaṭṭhāna Sālā</i>
Ven. Ñāṇasiri	Tues, Wed, Thurs, Sat	4:00 pm	Mountain <i>Upaṭṭhāna Sālā</i>
Ven. Ānanda	Everyday except on the Uposatha	4:00 pm	Lower Monastery <i>Cetiya</i>
Ven. Vimalavaṃsa	Wednesday	9:00 am	Matale <i>Bhāvanā Sālā</i>
Ven. Vimalavaṃsa	Saturday	2:00 pm	Matale <i>Bhāvanā Sālā</i>

MONASTIC RETREAT

Na Uyana provides an environment for intensive group meditation in the mountain retreat area, situated in and around the *Bhāvanā Sālā* and the *Upaṭṭhāna Sālā* on the mountain. Each retreat lasts 14-15 days and starts the morning after the *Uposatha* and finishes on the morning of the following *Uposatha*. If you are interested in joining, please see Ven. Ariyananda.

Laymen are welcome to sit in the *Bhāvanā Sālā* with the monks on retreat; however, they must take their meals at the Lower Monastery.

RECOMMENDED READING:

The following books are recommended to those interested to know more about the system of practice that is taught here:

1. *Teaching and Training* by Bhikkhu Moneyya
2. *Knowing and Seeing* by Pa Auk Sayadaw

Common Facilities

THE LIBRARY

New visitors are required to get permission from Ven. Saṅghasobhana before using the library. If you wish to borrow a book, please enter the book code, the book title, your name and date in the borrowers' book. If you wish to donate books to the Saṅgha, please deposit them in the donation box located in the library or give them to Ven. Saṅghasobhana.

Laymen are kindly requested not to sit on the chairs in the library, which are reserved for the monks. If you would like to read in the library, you may sit on a mat on the floor or on the wooden bench.

STORE ROOM

There is a book available near the postal box in the upstairs area of the *Sīmā Sālā* where you can write down if you need any requisites. Please write your *kuṭi* number, the date, and what you need. The requested items will be placed in your *kuṭi* box, usually the following day. Please note that the monastery supplies **only the following items for lay practitioners**: soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes and razors. Other items can be bought from Pansiyagama or Melsiripura.

Communication Facilities

EMAIL

If you need to send an e-mail, type your message in an MS Word, Open Office or Plain text document in the following format:

To: email@example.com
Subject: From [Your name]
[Your message here]

After you have typed the e-mail, you may save it on the email thumb drive (normally hanging outside Ven. Piyaratana's office door). The email will later be sent from the Na Uyana email account nauyana@gmail.com. Please inform anyone who wants to email you at this account to include your name in the subject field of the email, so that it can easily be identified. Received emails sent to this account will be printed out and placed in one of the small slots above the postal box in the *Sīmā Sālā*.

TELEPHONE

To make a local or international call, please go to the office next to the *Dāna Sālā*. You will need to use the SLT telephone and an SLT passport phonecard in order to make either an international call or a local call. The phonecard can be bought from a local telephone shop in Melsiripua or Kurunegala, or you can order them from www.lankafood.com and they will be delivered via postal mail to Na Uyana. To place a international call, dial 1287, then press 3, then enter the pin code (from the SLT phone card) and finally enter the telephone number you wish to dial. If you need to have someone call you back and they are calling from outside of Sri Lanka, the telephone number in the office is +94 37 337 9036.

If you wish to make a local call, dial 1286, then press 3, then enter the pin code (from the SLT phone card) and finally enter the telephone number you wish to dial. Or if you do not have a phonecard and wish to make a local call, you can use the Suntel telephone, after having made the call, please write in the register book (located in the office), your name, the recipient's name, the recipient's telephone number and the length of the call. If you need to have someone call you back and they are calling from inside of Sri Lanka, the telephone number in the office is 037 337 9036.

For monks only: If you do not have a phonecard and wish to make a local call, you can use the Suntel telephone. After having made the call, please write in the register book (located in the office), your name, the recipient's name, the recipient's telephone number and the length of the call.

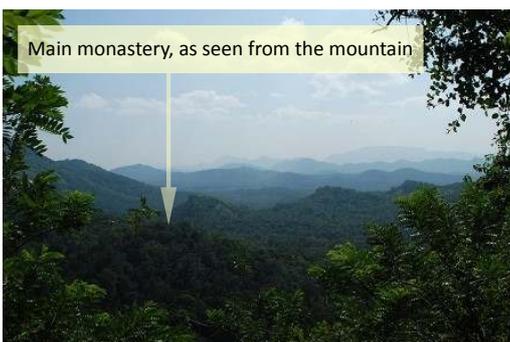
SENDING POSTAL MAIL

If you wish to send a letter, then please place it in the outbox section of the postal box in the upstairs area of the *Sīmā Sālā*. For monks, stamps are available from the store room. Please ask Ven. Saṅghasobhana about current international postal rates.

Na Uyana postal address: Na Uyana Aranya Senasanaya, Pansiyagama 60554, Sri Lanka

INTERNET

Na Uyana does not provide internet facilities; however, you can go to an Internet Cafe at Melsiripura.



Travel and Visas

TRAVEL

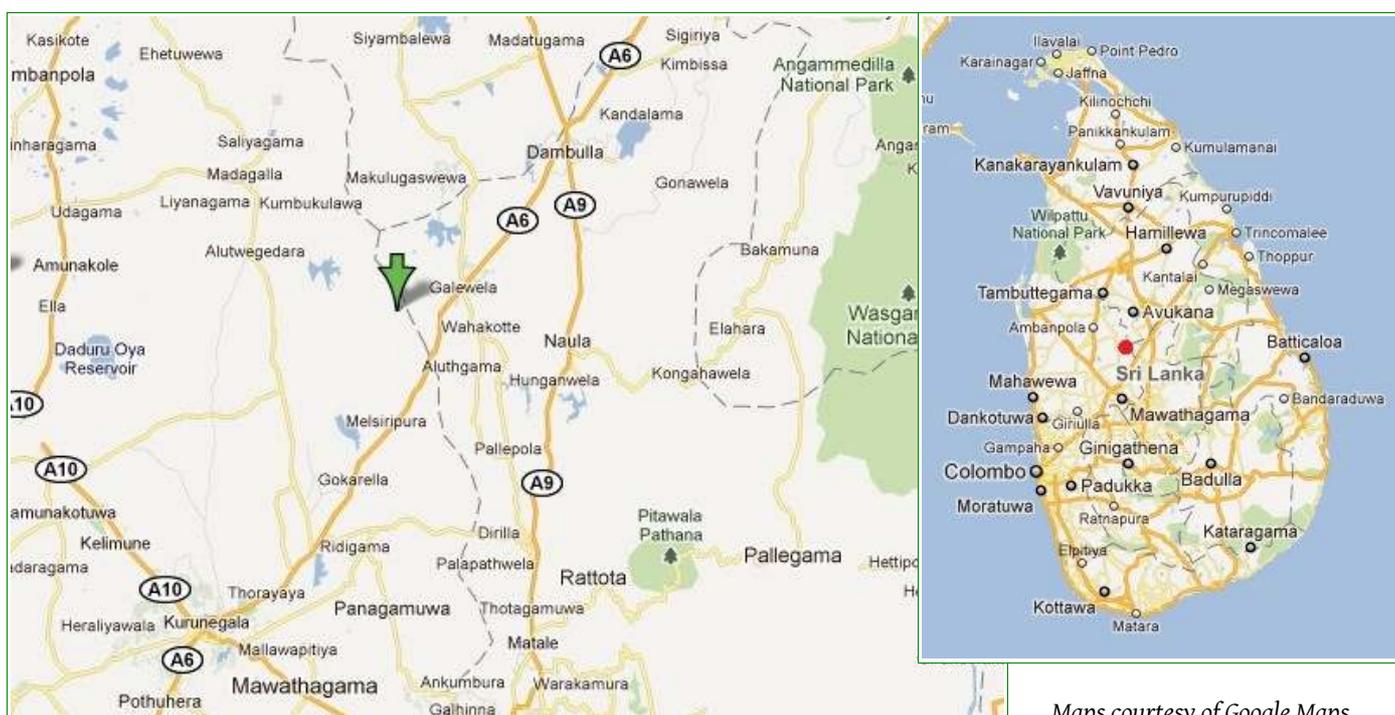
There is a bus station in Pansiyagama village which has buses going every hour to Melisiripura. It is a 30 minute walk to Pansiyagama village and a further 45 minutes bus ride to Melisiripura. From Melisiripura, there are buses going to Kurunegala and Colombo. Monks who do not use money can get special bus coupons which allows monks to travel on government buses (CTB). These coupons can be got from the store room. Please see Ven. Piyaratana to check whether there is a vehicle going to Kurunegala or Colombo on the day you wish to travel.

DIRECTIONS TO NA UYANA

Take the road to **Madahapola** at the **Melsiripura** junction (between **Kurunegala** and **Dambulla**) on the **A6** highway. At the **Pansiyagama** junction on the Madahapola road, take the road to **Galewela**. About 500m on this road is the Na Uyana road, which leads to the monastery.

By Bus: From the Kurunegala bus station, take the bus to Dambulla and get off at Melsiripura. From Melsiripura, take the bus to Pansiyagama. From Pansiyagama Village, you can either take a three-wheeler (taxi) to Na Uyana or you can walk (around 35 mins). To walk from the bus station at Pansiyagama, take the road going up the small hill which passes a school on your right. After about 500 m, turn to the right, onto a track called Na Uyana Road. Walk about another 500m, then turn to the left, onto a small dirt road. Walk another 700 m and you will see Na Uyana Monastery on your right, just after passing the Bodhi Tree (also on your right hand side). You can ask the villagers for directions at any time.

Foreign monks and nuns who visit Na Uyana could be provided with transport from the Colombo airport. Please contact the monastery office prior to making your travel plans.



Maps courtesy of Google Maps

VISAS

If you wish to extend your visa past the initial 30-day entry in Sri Lanka, you can apply for a single 3-month extension. **If you wish to stay for more than 3 months, you need to apply for visas prior to arrival.** Na Uyana can support you with a sponsorship letter. In Sri Lanka, Buddhist monks get a free one year residence visa which needs to be extended annually. You need to have your monk photo in the passport for this. You should apply for your extension at least one week before the expiry date of your current visa. The monastery may be able to assist you with your visa application, depending on circumstances. Please see Ven. Ariyananda or Ven. Piyaratana for more information. Also visit www.immigration.gov.lk.

Health

A doctor of traditional indigenous medicine normally visits Na Uyana once a week. Western-trained doctors also make frequent visits to the monastery. For non-serious complaints, there is a medical room at the back of the *gilanhala* with Western and Chinese medicines. Please inform Ven Ariyananda or Ven. Piyaratana if you need to take something from this room. There is also a detailed and comprehensive medical book, *The Merck Manual*, available in the library, which can be used to assist diagnosis of any illness or complaint. For a serious complaint or illness, please see Ven.Ariyananda or Ven. Piyaratana, and they will be able to arrange a visit to a doctor or hospital in Kurunegala.

TEA & REFRESHMENTS

Herbal teas, medicinal tonics and various other drinks are available. Allowable items in the afternoon are butter, ghee, oil, honey and sugar, as well as various teas and medicines. Chocolate, Nestomalt, milk, cheese and non-dairy creamers, as well as **any other solid food products, are not allowed in the afternoons.**

WATER

The water here comes from mountain springs and when tested recently, it was deemed safe to drink. Most people use a ceramic filter to clean the water and remove traces of mud before drinking; some use a cloth filter. Filtered water is located throughout the monastery.

DISEASES AND BODILY AILMENTS

Malaria	There is no malaria in this region of Sri Lanka.
Dengue Fever	There is a very small chance of contracting dengue fever although it is more common in urban areas rather than rural and forested areas. Symptoms include high fever, severe headache and body ache.
Rabies	There is rabies in Sri Lanka. If you are bitten by a stray dog or cat, a fruit bat or monkey, you will need to go to a local hospital to get an anti-rabies shot.
Worms	Intestinal pin-worms are common. These harmless creatures are spread through food, particularly raw vegetables, touched by the unwashed hands of an infected person. The pin-worms will go away by themselves within a few days. There are worm pills available if necessary. ¹

INSECT AND CREATURE BITES

The following noteworthy creatures can be found at Na Uyana:

Creature	Description	Resultant Contact	Prevention and Cure
Scorpions	Large, black and blue-green coloured or small, red and black coloured.	Painful bite but is not dangerous.	Prevention: Be careful after rain, use a torch at night. Cure: Anti-Histamine, <i>Sarvavishadi</i> Oil.
Centipedes	Large red and brown striped.	Very painful bite and can cause major swelling.	Prevention: Be careful after rain, use a torch at night. Cure: Anti-Histamine, <i>Sarvavishadi</i> Oil.
Tarantulas	Large grey or black coloured.	Very painful bite.	Prevention: Exercise extreme caution, do not try to move it – these spiders can jump. Cure: Anti-Histamine, Painkillers. Seek medical attention.
<i>Hohaputus</i>	Very small mosquito-like biting fly	Minor swelling and itchiness.	Prevention: Mosquito repellent, Citronella oil, <i>Siddhalepa</i> balm. Burning incense. Low lighting and cloth over window at night. Reduction of itchiness: <i>Sarvavishadi</i> Oil.

1. Adapted from Bhikkhu Ñāṇatusita, *Guide to Forest Monasteries of Sri Lanka*, 2007, http://www.bps.lk/other_library/Info%20about%20Sri%20Lanka%20Monasteries.pdf

SNAKES

Sri Lanka has many varieties of snakes and several are very dangerous, notably the Indian cobra, Russell Viper and the Krait. If you are bitten, remain calm and if possible, wash the bite with soap and water. It is important to note the colour, the shape of the head and any other distinguishing features of the snake that bit you. Then slowly make your way down to the area around the *Sīmā Sālā* and inform someone of what has happened. Antivenom is available in Kurunegala and Galewela. The most common incident of snake bite that occurs at Na Uyana is from the Hump-nosed Viper (*Kunakatuva*), which is only mildly venomous and can be treated with anti-histamine or a trip to the local snake doctor.

CLIMATE

Na Uyana is situated in the intermediate zone of Sri Lanka, in between the wet zone and the dry zone. It has a comparatively moderate climate with temperatures ranging from 16°C in the cool season (November-January) to 36°C in the hot season (March-April and August-September). Na Uyana is affected by the North-Eastern Monsoon (November-January) and to a lesser extent the South-Western Monsoon (May-June).

DIET

The diet here at Na Uyana is vegetarian and includes fresh fruit and a choice of either brown/red or white rice. Most curries contain moderate amounts of chilli, however there are chilli-free dishes available, especially for foreigners. No special diets are provided.

Other Information

SUGGESTED ITEMS TO BRING OR BUY

The following is a list of suggested items that would be useful to bring to Na Uyana:

Vitamin and herbal supplements; herbal teas; light, comfortable, easy-to-wash clothing; dental floss; toiletries; towel; talcum/medicated powder; large umbrella; earplugs; water resistant sandals; torch/flashlight; SLT Phonecards (available from www.lankafood.com); battery-powered alarm clock; mosquito repellent; yoga mat (if you practice yoga); get dental work done before coming. Most everyday-items can be obtained locally, name brands excluded; voltage here is 220V.

PROHIBITIONS

Smoking cigarettes, consumption of alcohol and use of any other intoxicants and mind-altering substances is strictly prohibited.

CLOTHING

Laymen are required to dress modestly at all times. They are kindly requested to wear clothes that are entirely white in colour. There may be some spare white clothes in the monastery, otherwise, they can be bought at Melsiripura or Kurunegala.

CUSTOMS AND CULTURE

The Sinhalese culture, being part of the Indian cultural sphere, allows for more individualism. The Sinhalese, like Asians in general, are quite indirect and can get offended by someone with a direct and critical manner. If you have a genuine complaint that needs addressing, then it is advisable to do so in as polite and indirect manner as possible, so as to avoid any possible misunderstandings. It can be useful to ask a local monk for advice about the best way to address a certain problem. For a harmonious stay in Sri Lanka, it is best not to expect the conditions to be the same standard as you are used to back in your home country. Sri Lanka is a great place to practice patience, simplicity and renunciation. According to Ven. Ñāṇatusita's guide to Sri Lankan monasteries, the conditions and facilities at Na Uyana are comparatively excellent in catering for foreigners' needs.²

² Adapted from Bhikkhu Ñāṇatusita, *Guide to Forest Monasteries of Sri Lanka*, 2007, http://www.bps.lk/other_library/Info%20about%20Sri%20Lanka%20Monasteries.pdf

Ordination

For laymen interested in ordination the following books are useful to read:

1. *The Buddhist Monastic Code Vols. I & II* by Bhikkhu Thānissaro
2. *Vinaya Notes* by Ajahn Brahm
3. *The Bhikkhu Rules, a Guide for Laypeople* by Bhikkhu Ariyesako

APPROXIMATE TIMELINE TO BHIKKHU ORDINATION

1-4 months: *Upāsaka* (8 Precepts)

6-12 months: *Pabbajjā* (going forth) and abiding as a *Sāmaṇera* (Novice monk) (10 Precepts and 75 *Sekhiya* rules)

January – March: Vinaya Classes

April: Vinaya Exam

June: *Upasampadā* (higher ordination) at Galduwa Monastery

THE MORAL PRECEPTS

When staying at Na Uyana the laymen are required to observe the 10, 8 or 5 precepts, as laid down by the Buddha. Please see Ven. Saṅghasobhana for more information.

The Eight Precepts

1. I undertake the training to refrain from intentionally taking the life of living beings (*Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi*)
2. I undertake the training to refrain from taking what is not given (*Adinnā-dānā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi*)
3. I undertake the training to refrain from all sexual activity (*Abrahma-cariyā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi*)
4. I undertake the training to refrain from speaking untruthfully (*Musā-vādā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi*)
5. I undertake the training to refrain from taking intoxicating drinks and drugs (*Surā-meraya-majja-pamādatṭhānā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi*)
6. I undertake the training to refrain from taking food after mid-day (*Vikāla-bhojanā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi*)
7. I undertake the training to refrain from dancing, singing, playing or listening to music, attending public performances and from any kind of self-adornment including cosmetics, perfumes, garlands and jewellery (*Nacca-gīta-vādita-visūka-dassanā mālā-gandha-vilepana-dhārana-mañḍana-vibhūsanatṭhānā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi*)
8. I undertake the training to refrain from lying on high and luxurious sleeping places (*Uccā-sayana mahā-sayanā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi*)

Please refer to this excellent guide at Wat Pah Nanachat website: <http://www.watpahnachat.org/8-precepts.php>

Uposatha Day

The Bhikkhu *Pātimokkha* recitation starts at 3:00 pm in the *Sīmā Sālā*, please start arriving at 2:45pm. The *Pātimokkha* is followed by the *Sāmaṇera Dasa-Sīla* (10 precepts) which starts at around 4:00 pm.

The formal undertaking or renewing of the 8 precepts for lay people can be taken at 4:15pm on *Uposatha* day, after the *Sāmaṇera Dasa-Sīla* (Novice monks undertaking the 10 precepts).

