

The Spiritual Aura of the Kettarama Purana Viharaya



The brilliant illumination of the Kettarama Purana Viharaya invokes serenity

Together with the ceremonial opening of the awasaya for the Buddhist priests, the exposition of the sacred relics was held at the Kettarama Purana Viharaya in Palatuwa, Matara.

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Photographs Menaka Aravinda



The sacred hair relic on display at the Kettarama Purana Viharaya, Palatuwa, Matara

The temple is the oldest in the area, being over 300 years. It is generally referred to as the Egoda Pansala, Parana Pansala and Purana Viharaya. The Bhikkus of the temple hail from the Dhammadinna lineage and the temple was started by Ven Attadassi Thero. Ven Palatuwe Jinarathana Thero of the Gangaramaya Temple was ordained at this temple in 1962 by the then Chief Incumbent Ven Malimbada Chandarathana Thero. To further his studies, the Thero attended the Pirivena of Gangaramaya Temple and remained since then.

Being of the seventh generation of the Dhammadinna lineage, the responsibility of the temple was bestowed upon Ven Palatuwe Jinarathana Thero. Surrounded by lush green paddy fields, the temple was renamed as the Kettarama Purana Viharaya. And, the temple has been affiliated to the Gangaramaya Temple according to the Venerable Thero's wishes.

As many of the buildings of the temple needed repairs Ven Palatuwe Jinarathana Thero firstly decided to build the dana shalawa as it was utilised for multiple purposes. As the

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Venerable Thero recalled he was ordained in the old dana shalawa, which was in good condition at that time. The building being on a slope, started to sink into the ground overtime due to the rains and finally collapsed. Therefore, in 2011, in response to the many requests of the dayakas (devotees) who wanted a place to observe sil, the Venerable Thero laid the foundation stone of the new hall and succeeded in constructing a two storey building with the support of the dayakas. In 2012, under the patronage of Ven Galboda Gnanissara Thero, Chief Incumbent of the Gangaramaya Temple, the building was opened by Sagala Ratnayake and Namal Rajapaksa.

Four Buddhist priests reside at the temple, with three being students. It is Ven Palatuwe Jinarathana Thero's wish to ordain more monks at the temple. The halls thus built provide the required facilities for devotees to observe sil and for daham pasal (Sunday School) to be held.



Ruwan Wijewardena, MP and Sagala Ratnayake, MP ceremonially opening the Awasaya. While Ven Palatuwe Jinarathana Thero and L H Piyasena look on

As there was need for an awasaya it was decided to commence the construction of this building as well. The old house was completely demolished and again, it was the wish of Ven Palatuwe Jinarathana Thero to construct a two storey building. The dayaka of both Kettarama Purana Viharaya and Gangaramaya Temple, supported the Thero with the endeavour. It took over three years to complete the awasaya. The people of the village and members of the Armed Forces and CDF who are from the area all worked together to make this a reality.

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The people had served seven dansal that included breakfast, lunch and coffee as well. As the Venerable Thero explained, even prior to the opening of the awasaya and exposition of the Sacred Hair Relics at the temple, the people all got together to ensure that everything was ready on time. The residents of the village were united and worked together.



Ven Galboda Gnanissara Thero, Chief Incumbent of the Gangaramaya Temple and Ven Palatuwe Jinarathana Thero with the Dayakas of both temples

The opening of the awasaya and the exposition of the Sacred Hair Relics was held under the patronage of Ven Galboda Gnanissara Thero, Chief Incumbent of the Gangaramaya Temple and was opened by Ruwan Wijewardena. Sagala Ratnayake was also present on this occasion. Ranjith Wijewardena, the Chief Dayaka of the Gangaramaya Temple attended the event on a special request of the Venerable Thero. Many dayakas of both temples attended the function, which was held in a beautiful and charm ceremony that included a sermon by Ven Galboda Gnanissara Thero, Chief Incumbent of the Gangaramaya Temple and Ven Palatuwe Jinarathana Thero.

Providing spiritual guidance and a place of worship for the people of the area, the Kettarama Purana Viharaya in Palatuwa, Matara continues to be a symbol of serenity and

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peace as it has done for over 300 years.

