

# The Production of Vishuddhi Spaces and their Subjects: Identity, Meaning, and Space of the 'Ritigala Vishuddhi Haramba' Process and Establishment.

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## ABSTRACT

This ethnographic study centered around the community and space of the bearers of an indigenous combat art known as the Ritigala Vishuddhi Haramba, which originated in the countryside of Ritigala, Sri Lanka. Ritigala Vishuddhi Haramba possesses an infinite volume of traditional indigenous knowledge. The Shilpa bearers' culture and the way of life are thoroughly enriched with the Vishuddhi Haramba teachings. Despite the ancient lineage of attending national security, what they practice today is contemporary. While it creates a new meaning, identity, and sense of place, the Vishuddhi Haramba education is strongly tied to their history.

The Vishuddhi education takes place not in sophisticated indoors, but in informal outdoor spaces under natural weather conditions in which a warrior could develop strengths and confidence to fight and win a war. The Vishuddhi community has imagined their activities to fit into some specific existing spaces which are used by their ancestors for their ancient combat missions but with some redefinition, re-interpretation, and adjustments with little or no changes to their existing built fabric and possibly to their ancestral teaching. When the Shilpis carry out their combat training in these spaces following their traditional Vishuddhi cultural practice, they also transform the existing space that used to be a Buddhist temple (in most cases) and produce their own *vishuddhi puhunu bimas* (Vishuddhi training ground): These are dynamic lived spaces.

Henri Lefebvre (1991) and David Harvey (1973) affirm that space is socially produced; every social practice creates space and space affects practices. Maurice Godelier (in Carrithers 1992: 1) asserts, "human beings, in contrast to other social animals, do not just live in society, they produce society in order to live". Nihal Perera (2016) highlights, capital and state are not the sole producers of space, providing tools for such studies, Perera (2016) demonstrates how to map out the way ordinary people produce space for their daily activities and cultural practices. Building on such a framework, this study investigates the worldviews, perceptions, and aspirations of this community, expressing who they are,

what they do, their knowledge, what spaces they make, through what practices, and how they produce their spaces to function daily basis creating the identity and sense of place.

Since the qualitative/subjective aspects discussed in the study could not be identified using abstract spaces, demographic, or existing quantitative data, I spent an extended period of time in Vishuddhi spaces observing and listening to the people's stories for two months using qualitative methods and some techniques used in lived-in experience (Ratnapala 1999). They helped me understand my research subjects from their vantage point and to see their spaces from the space of production. The adoption of the inside-out approach, participation-observation, and the collaborative ethnography provided me with an intellectual platform to work together with the subjects not only in the fieldwork but also in the writing process. Since development and planning are specific to each community, I believe such understanding and a comprehensive approach is valuable to planners in community development essentially to develop knowledge of the ways people live and produce their lived space applying creativity, imagination, and agency, in order to foster development and to preserve unique cultural contexts.

## INTRODUCTION

According to its custodian, 'Ritigala Vishuddhi Haramba' is an indigenous warrior martial art that originated and evolved in the magnificent countryside of Ritigala, Sri Lanka. The word *vishuddhi* means "purification of mind" (which could be achieved through spiritual development and continuous meditation practices) and the word *haramba* is "combat fighting" in Sinhala. Although the meanings of the words *vishuddhi* and *haramba* are contrasting, the Ritigala Vishuddhi Haramba is a balanced combination of combat and meditation (or the purification of the mind).

"There is no spiritual formation in a martial art that is solely focused on combat fighting", the Ritigala Vishuddhi Haramba custodian, Ritigala Sumedha affirms (2019a). Therefore, he does not use the word combat-fighters for those who learn and bear this *shilpa* (particular 'art of war' or combat discipline) but calls them *shilpis* or *shilpa dharis* (lit. artists or bearers of a particular *shilpa*). According to the custodian, this 'art of war' or what they practice is different from the other well-known martial arts which do not involve meditation. Therefore, he introduces Ritigala Vishuddhi Haramba as a 'way of life' which involves tradition, a knowledge system, and continuous teaching/practice that handed down from generation to generation. Hence, these *shilpa dharis* are nurtured, toughened but disciplined to handle both combat abilities and human responsibilities with patience, discipline, and sensitivity. They are also

trained meditators who continuously develop spirituality through *vishuddhi* meditation which is exclusive to Ritigala Vishuddhi Haramba. “Every component of Ritigala Vishuddhi Haramba has a form of meditation embedded within it,” Sumedha justifies (2014: 25). Vishuddhi meditation, according to him, makes the trainee a wise, sensible, balanced, and gentle human who is sensitive to all living beings (not simply humans) and all aspects of living including carrying out family life.

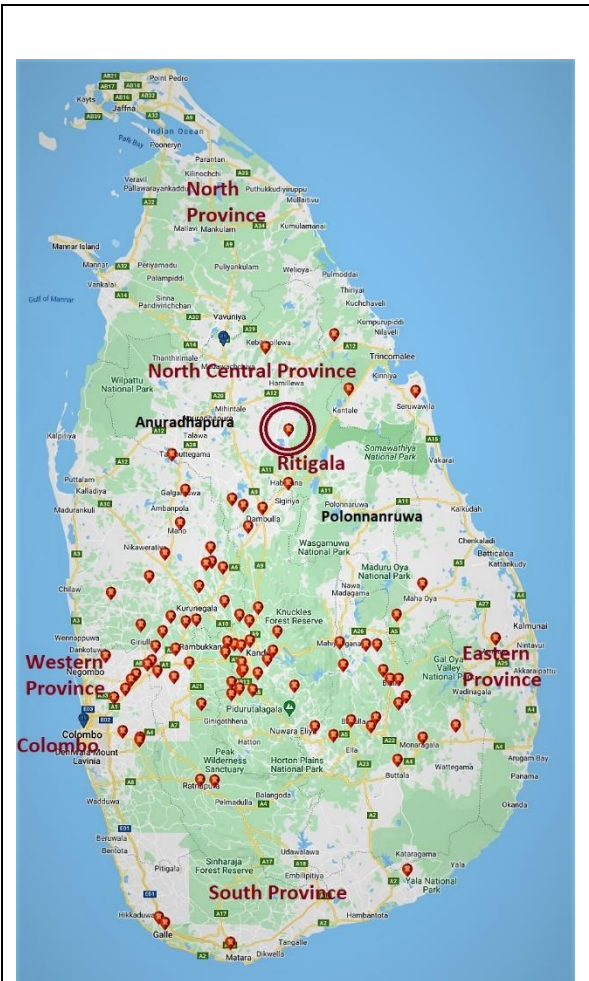


Figure 1.1: Location of Ritigala in the North Central plains of Sri Lanka, an edited map originally published on Ritigala media (Sumedha 2020)



Figure 1.2: The Vishuddhi Shilpa Dharis engaged in their usual Vishuddhi training at the training grounds Ritigala (Sumedha 2020)

According to the Vishuddhi practitioners, the Ritigala Vishuddhi Haramba is not only a martial art but a philosophy of life that develops an individual with high moral standards supported by physical and mental strength, and responsibility through the continuous *vishuddhi* practice.

The locale, Ritigala, Sri Lanka, where the Ritigala Vishuddhi Haramba originated, is composed of a rural village complex with small neighborhoods, rustic built structures, paddy fields, lakes, rivers, and natural forests in the face of a distinctive mountain range named Ritigala *kanda*. It is located between the two ancient capitals: Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa, in the North Central plains of Sri Lanka. Ritigala is renowned for its historic remains of an ancient Buddhist forest monastery, an enormous meditation retreat where hermits used to live (“A guide to Ritigala” 1983; Chandananda 2017; Medhananda 2007). The Archaeological Department has sensitively restored many of these ruins that the modern pilgrims see today. Ritigala, which seems to have been abandoned by many and has been taken over by the jungle today, is graciously holding up many untold stories of this native combat tradition.

Moreover, the Ritigala Vishuddhi Haramba education is not just limited to Ritigala. It had been dispersed across the country through a network of 166 spaces built by King Valagamba (103-89 B.C.), orbiting around this central space at Ritigala. Many of these spaces are active training grounds today: The *vishuddhi shilpa* bearers have recently launched their 101st training ground (*puhunu bimas*) in 2020; in all centers, they train approximately 7000 *vishuddhi* members.

This central place at Ritigala, which is also their hub or the command center of the Ritigala Vishuddhi Haramba, is known as ‘Ritigala Bhumi’ (*see figure 1:4*). It is a composition of spaces where the massive learning process of Ritigala Vishuddhi Haramba takes place in Ritigala: The areas include, the Vishuddhi Bhumi, a part of the Ritigala mountain, 5 reservoirs at Ritigala, pathways, and paddy fields along the villages surrounding Ritigala. The Vishuddhi Bhumi is an assembly of spaces at Thelhawadiyawa village which is also known as ‘Ritigala Vishuddhi Adhyatmika Arana’ or ‘Ritigala Vishuddhi Spiritual Monastery’. It is the *vishuddhi* center of authority or the administrative center for the 101 networks of practice centers (grounds) across the country. The spaces include *guru gedara*, *nuga-wahanse* (space around the banyan tree), *wew-wahanse* (Thelhawadiyawa reservoir), *dwanda bhumi*, and the 15-acre land integrated with paddy fields belong to *gurunnanse* (*see figure 1:4*). It is the place where the main education of Vishuddhi Haramba is given to senior *vishuddhi shilpis*, and administrative activities, meditation practices, and many other activities related to *vishuddhi* education take place. It is also the place where Ritigala Sumedha, or the custodian of Ritigala Vishuddhi Haramba, resides.

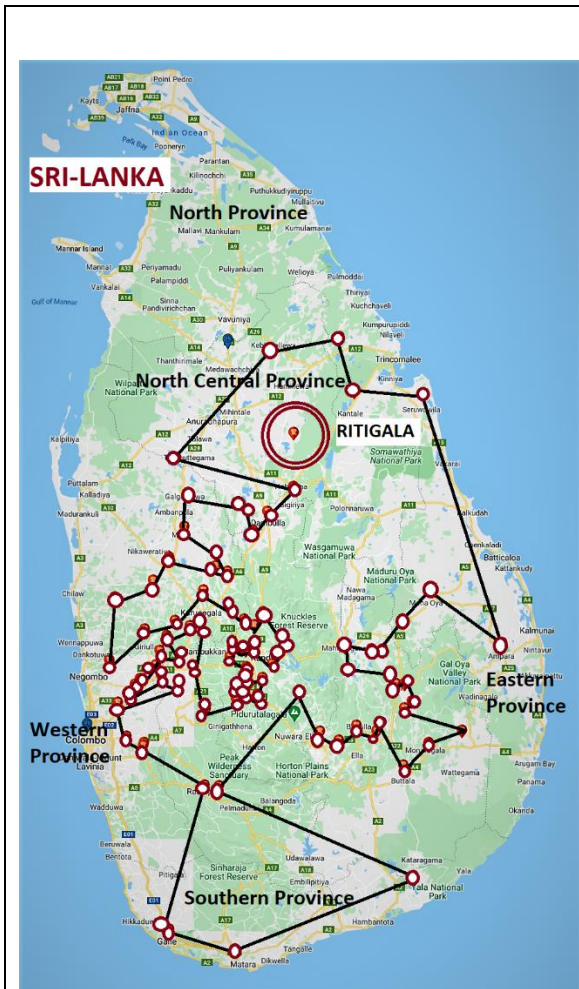


Figure 1.3: Locations of the network of 166 Vishuddhi spaces across the country, an edited map originally published on Ritigala media (Sumedha 2020)

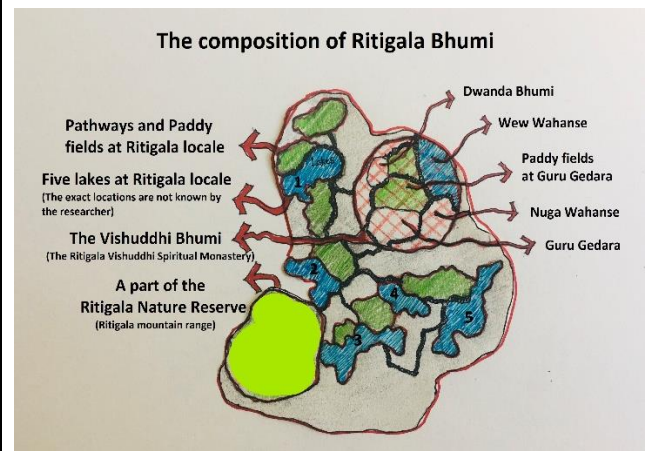
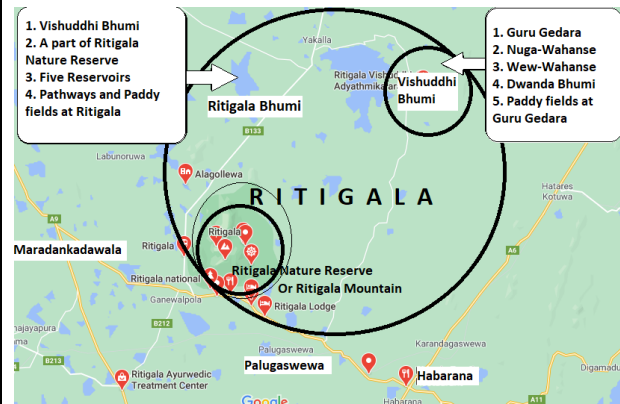


Figure 1.4: The Ritigala Bhumi and the Vishuddhi Bhumi, the place where the Vishuddhi training takes place at Ritigala

The Ritigala mountain range is an exceptional place for its custodian, the Vishuddhi community, and the Ritigala Vishuddhi Hamba itself (Sumedha 2011: 2014). They utilize their spaces creating meaningful relationships with their environment at different depths and spectrums. I observed how the Vishuddhi Hamba bearers create their own spaces that are substantially meaningful to them when they carry out their everyday practices.

According to Henri Lefebvre (1991), space is socially produced: Every social practice creates space, space affects practices (see also Perera 2016). In defining people's spaces, Nihal Perera (2016) asserts, the state and capital are not the sole producers of [social] space. Further, in People's Spaces, Perera (2016) unveils how ordinary people produce, reproduce, and transform their space as part of

engaging their daily activities and cultural practices (ibid). In this sense, the Vishuddhi community is the creators of their unique space.

I was curious to learn about these Vishuddhi Haramba bearers, what they do, their main activities and cultural practices, knowledge traditions, way of life, and the spaces of the Vishuddhi Haramba practices, i.e., the selection of locations, the potential and constraints of available spaces, and spaces the *vishuddhi* practice creates/produces through the process. The aim is to understand the nature of the community and how these people produce spaces to carry out their daily functions, creating the identity of the place.

### The inspiration:

Ahead of my curiosity about their spaces, in 2009, I met with the Ritigala Vishuddhi custodian in Colombo, Sri Lanka. He provided me with a concise account of the traditional martial art, Ritigala Vishuddhi Haramba (then known as Ritigala Angam). A few years later, I came across some pictures of Ritigala Vishuddhi trainees practicing in Ritigala on social media (Danushka and Kushantha 2011). I was inquisitive to understand the spaces these pictures were taken, or else what the visuals did not delineate. The actors, the kind of martial art or the movements of what they practice, and their poses were inextricably blended with the surrounding natural environment; this made me even more interested to know about their spaces. Later, I came to know that these natural grounds were the actual places they use to practice their traditional combat art.

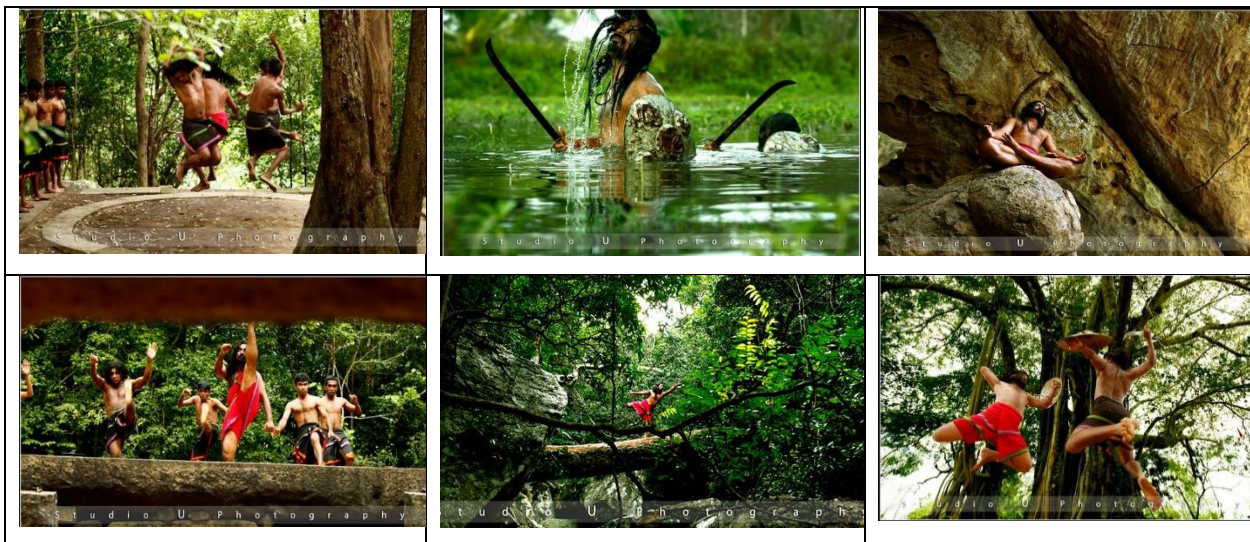


Figure 1.5: The expression of power and charisma of Vishuddhi combat in their training grounds at Ritigala Bhumi published on social media, a blog posts by Studio U (Danushka and Kushantha 2011)

Over time, the curiosity regarding the Ritigala *vishuddhi* community emerged again when I was listening to inspirational talks about ‘community and space’ at the South Asia conference in Madison, WI in 2017. Reading and learning about ‘space’ motivated me to learn the relationships people make with and through space at different scales. The existing literature on communities, people’s spaces, cultures, and the dynamic spaces produced in complex Asian cities by different communities provoked my desire to study such communities and investigate who they are, what the people do, and what spaces this community makes in the process.

### **The Issues:**

Ritigala *vishuddhi* community looked like a unique community. Therefore, primarily, I was keen to know who these people are, how they have created their unique identities internally and externally, what they do, especially their *haramba*, why this practice is important for them, their knowledge system, and, most importantly, what spaces they produce in the process, and why these spaces are important to them. Subsequently, as Lefebvre (2014) stresses in his publication, *Rhythmanalysis*, I learned that the *vishuddhi* community gives life to their spaces, transforming their own rhythm into these *vishuddhi* spaces through their daily pattern of activities and cultural practices. Therefore, these spaces/places should be understood through the rhythm of these people, their activities, and stories rather than looking at the abstract spaces. In this sense, my research focused on understanding and developing some knowledge on the nature of the community and how these people live and produce space to function on a daily basis creating their own identity.

Furthermore, I have learned that planning and development are specific to a community and, for this, learning about people (inhabitants or users) is highly important and it takes time and dedication. Therefore, in the larger context, I intend to investigate how could and should the planners, government agents, and those who are interested in development approach this community and others like this. In the broader sense, this will provide awareness to the existing literature how diverse communities produce and reproduce space through their daily processes.

Gieseking and Mangold (2014: 285) assert that “While space and time may seem ubiquitous, human experiences of space and time are remarkably specific to certain groups and cultures in particular places and times”. As I understood, the Ritigala *vishuddhi* community has a unique culture and identity that their culture has a specific influence on their places, times, and the space-making process. They sanctify their space through the *vishuddhi haramba* process to create the Ritigala *vishuddhi* individuals. Besides, the Ritigala Vishuddhi identities are created and consolidated through the Ritigala *vishuddhi*

spaces. Therefore, they work in specific spaces at specific time periods. Yet, per my experience, professional planners, architects, developers and policy makers involved in development have given very little attention to human subjects and their everyday practices, especially the space making process of ordinary people and the identity of place given by them.

Mainstream literature hardly discusses or critiques the lived spaces produced by the consumers or inhabitants of space. Believing that development is all about building replicas of Western cities, the dominant social agents are actively engaged in creating smart cities and state-of-art buildings. They employ existing maps and statistics without paying attention to the lifestyles of the inhabitants. By these acts, knowingly or unknowingly, the power holders either marginalize the original inhabitants in their own habitats or displace them in unfavorable places, making them victims of abstract spaces created by authorities (Perera 2016). Ironically, this move has erased the identity, sense of place and the cultural value of most Asian cities while homogenizing their built environment (Perera and Tang 2009).

Therefore, people (or the subjects) continue their journeys through coping, resisting, and adapting these abstract spaces, making a series of negotiations of the space and their daily activities (Perera 2016). It is people who create the identity and sense of place. If we are to avoid the above imposition and desire to facilitate people's processes of creating place, it is highly important to develop knowledge of the ways people live and produce space applying creativity, imagination, and agency. This is the goal of this study.

### **The Project:**

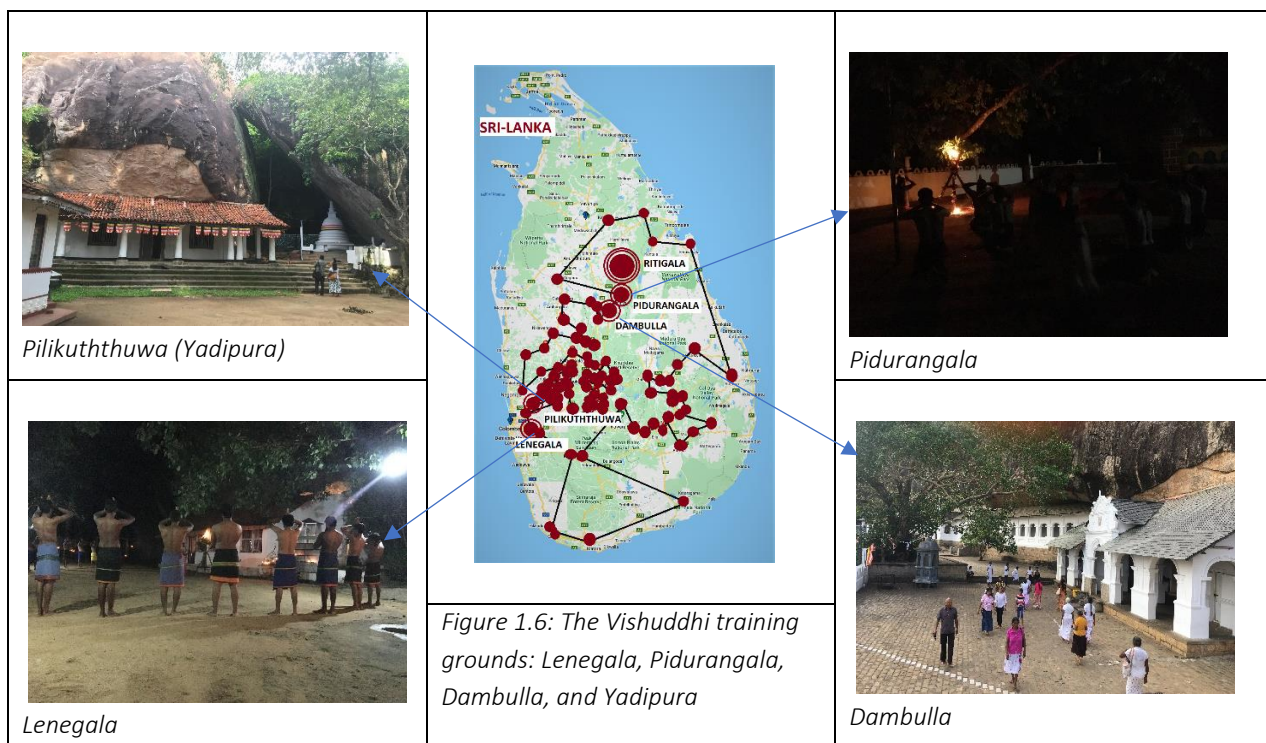
Addressing above gaps and issues, the study brings about the worldviews, perceptions, and aspirations of the Ritigala Vishuddhi community, expressing who they are, what they do, their knowledge, what spaces they produce, and through what practices. It focuses on how this community produce and transform space through their activities and how they attach identities and meanings to their spaces. Moreover, this work will also describe how the serene and sacred atmospheres are enhanced through their cultural *pujas*, *haramba* practices, rituals, and special elements/symbols to produce the sense of place united with the invisible powers which are required to carry out their practice silently.

To understand the tremendous social and environmental context where this massive *vishuddhi haramba* learning process takes place, I split them into three parts: Ritigala *bhumi*, *vishuddhi bhumi*, and Valagamba temples (the other 101 out of 166 *vishuddhi* training grounds outside Ritigala. Out of all the practice spaces they employ, I focus only on a few of Ritigala Vishuddhi training grounds in detail. This includes some of their central spaces at Ritigala *bhumi* (the administrative center which I introduce as



*vishuddhi bhumi* and a part of Ritigala mountain) and a few *vishuddhi* training grounds outside Ritigala: Lenegala, Pidurangala, Dambulla, and Yadipura (see figure 1:6) in order to understand the *vishuddhi* process and evaluate the key points I wish to discuss the production of *vishuddhi* spaces related to planning. These spaces outside Ritigala *bhumi* are some historic Buddhist temples that were originally built by King Valagamba, known as cave temples (De Silva 1987; Gamini 2018; Marasingha 2016; "Valagamba of Anuradhapura: King of the Anuradhapura Kingdom of Sri Lanka" n.d.). These abstract spaces are transformed and developed further by the authorities and ordinary users over time. All these spaces are negotiated and redefined by the Ritigala *vishuddhi* community to support their activities, giving them unique meanings. They keep evolving as they are utilized by various users to carry out their daily activities and cultural practices over time. Therefore, these spaces are incomplete.

Since development and planning are specific to each community, this research may enable planners to understand and engage in communities more closely, especially to develop knowledge of the ways how people live and produce their lived space applying creativity, imagination, negotiations, and agency. I hope this understanding is valuable to planners in community development to foster developments and to preserve unique cultural contexts. It also will add awareness to the existing literature, that production of people's spaces is a nonlinear process.



## The Methods and Methodology:

Since the aspects I discuss in this thesis are qualitative and subjective that could not be discussed using abstract spaces, demographic, or any existing quantitative data, I spent an extended period of time with the Ritigala *vishuddhi* community, observing them, their cultural activities, *haramba* practices, and listening to their stories as they carry out their *vishuddhi* processes in their own space for the purpose of understanding my research subjects from their vantage point.

This ethnographic study which is conducted through the application of long-term participant-observation and the inside-out approach in my fieldwork assisted me to explore this particular social group, and to see their spaces from the space of production while constructing an in-depth knowledge on them and the spaces they produced. I carried out participant-observation for two months with the Ritigala *vishuddhi* community at their spaces or *vishuddhi* training grounds also using qualitative methods and some techniques used in lived-in experience (Ratnapala 1999). Through this process, I understood that learning about people, their culture, beliefs, traditions, lifestyles, and their space-making process are dynamic, subtle, and complex. Learning those requires close observations and experience.

Understanding the fact that having formal interviews and developing a questionnaire would limit my knowledge base, I conducted informal interviews and storytelling methods. As Sandercock (2005: 301) elaborates, "storytelling is a largely recognized force in planning practices". I experienced the facts Sandercock points out about "the power of story" and "the crucial importance of storytelling in multicultural planning" which have become of utmost importance in my fieldwork. The verbal and nonverbal stories helped me learn more about Ritigala *vishuddhi shilpis*, their *haramba*, way of life, vocabulary, thoughts, visions, beliefs, deep-rooted connections with nature, supernatural powers, the village life, cultural practices, and their spaces. People's stories became effective tools for me to develop in-depth knowledge about this social group, how they produce space negotiating time and authority, and how they create a subculture within the modern cultural constraints of Sri-Lanka to maintain their identity using their agency, flexibility, creativity, and power within their mainstream socio-cultural contexts.

The key methodology is collaborative ethnography conducted in cooperation between the researcher and the subjects not only in the fieldwork but also in the writing process. Here, the research participants are not just the informants but are close relatives of this ethnographic study. They have the potential to go beyond the field conversation in order to extend knowledge production.



Figure 1.7: In the field: Listening to people's stories

### My Challenges, scope, and research limitations

The more I engaged the Ritigala *vishuddhi* community, their activities, cultural practices, and spaces, the more my understanding and knowledge about them grew and my research expanded progressively: My learning flourished like tree limbs branching off from the main stem of a massive tree. The study was supported by reading and the structuring of knowledge was supported by my discussions with my mentor/advisor who also took part in some interviews and activities including some conversations with the custodian and the senior *vishuddhi* instructors.

Yet, I reckon, although my thirst for grasping a more practical understanding of the subject grew stronger, what I perceived from the study is only a part of an infinite knowledge base of the *vishuddhi* community, their combat art, worldviews, and beliefs. I have known some of the *vishuddhi* actors for at least 10 years, observed their *haramba* from evening to dawn for months, drenching in the monsoon rain and becoming a victim of mosquitoes, and sat for hours having open-ended interviews with about 60 people. Yet, I would say, my knowledge is incomplete. My immersion with the Ritigala *vishuddhi* community never made me a full insider. There were times I felt neglected and dissatisfied. I assume there were some boundaries for my gender too. Yet, I understood that the Ritigala Vishuddhi Haramba is a massive subject in which the *shilpis* could share only the essence of it with an outsider. That is the nature of this combat art and the reality of my study. The unknown knowledge is obscure, like the roots of a massive tree entangled together underground in a big forest, which is enigmatic and not visible.

It was a challenge to reach out to the dominant parties and their sacred spaces. There were certain spaces that I was not allowed to access because I am a female. One of the interesting factors was, the liaisons I worked with were hesitant to use the words 'do not', 'no' and 'cannot'. Instead, they use an

indirect language to imply such. I was not familiar with this in the first place and had confusion when I needed some clarifications but gradually, I understood their way of acceptance, rejection, and denial. It was interesting to work with different people with different worldviews. I understood the limitations and the barriers the researchers meet while working with certain communities and cultures.

I used to observe the *vishuddhi* cultural process and *haramba* from the beginning to the end which usually takes at least seven hours. The *haramba* normally lasted till midnight. It was challenging but interesting to observe them at night. I let my research evolve without forcing it while knowing that holistic knowledge production is incomplete. **Hence, this research is not a comprehensive learning experience about Ritigala Vishuddhi Haramba teaching or their cultural practices.** Also, it does not analyze the healing system, combat arts, or the supernatural powers or occult experiences involved in the Vishuddhi teachings. Moreover, the *vishuddhi shilpis* and their cultural process describes close relationships and associations with divine spirits or deities and occult powers. Although I accentuate them in necessary events or instances, I do not discuss them in detail. It is not the focus of my study. This study mainly focuses on the Ritigala *vishuddhi* community, their world views, way of life, cultural practice, the proceedings of the combat art, the basic *vishuddhi* teachings, and their production of *vishuddhi* spaces.

#### **Organization of the study:**

**Chapter one:** Basic Introduction of the Vishuddhi community, scope of the study, methods and methodology, and the organization of the thesis.

**Chapter two:** An analytical study of the existing literature expressing the gaps and misconceptions in the existing knowledge, so delineating or supporting the issue/s, the project, and the methodology related to my study; thereby to build the conceptual background and theoretical framework.

**Chapter three:** The key chapter of this study. It presents an analytical description of my experiential journey to Ritigala and other *vishuddhi* training grounds. Here, I highlight the spatial stories I encounter and the significance of the *vishuddhi* combat art, *vishuddhi* knowledge traditions, world views, daily *vishuddhi* practices, main cultural elements/symbols used in the practice, and the *vishuddhi* cultural proceedings based on what I learned from the dominant *vishuddhi* actors. In fact, this narrative brings to light who these people are, what they do, their way of life originated in the virtue of their *shilpa*, Ritigala Vishuddhi Haramba, and their social identity.

**Chapter four:** This analyses the space production of Vishuddhi with reference to the spatial progression, the *vishuddhi* cultural process, the meaning, and the space production of the Lenegala *puhunu bima*. The

historic Ritigala and ensemble of spaces at the *vishuddhi bhumi* are also detailed, branching off from the Ritigala mountain range, highlighting how the *shilpis* make use of these spaces to fit into their activities as they consume them.

The key analysis of Lenegala illustrates how the *vishuddhi shilpis* transform the existing Buddhist spiritual grounds and produce their own spaces for and through their daily pattern of events and cultural practices through the *satana* atmosphere using their creativity, imaginations, negotiations, and agency. Literally, it highlights the same *vishuddhi* process and the space production theory they adopt in all the other 101 training locations across the country. This knowledge illustrates the dynamic role they play in creating their own spaces by giving life to the existing built environment they inhabit.

**Chapter five:** This concludes the study elaborating the significant knowledge the study uncovers. While discussing the Vishuddhi Shilpis' present-day mission and the space utilization in the present-day context, it sheds light on the traditional *vishuddhi* knowledge and cultural practice employed in the *vishuddhi* combat education in creation, transformation, and negotiation of the *vishuddhi* spaces, and extension of them into further dimensions. The *vishuddhi shilpis'* continuous *vishuddhi* process which results in their space production essentially gives it a new meaning and becomes a platform to fulfill their life journeys and production of Vishuddhi individuals or subjects.

## Glossary

1. *adhyatmika arana* – *adhyatmika* is spiritual and *arana* is monastery in Sinhala. This literally Means the 'spiritual monastery'. The *vishuddhi* community explains, a spiritual monastery is a place where hermits or people who wish to develop/purify their minds are accommodated in seclusion under certain religious vows. The 'Ritigala *vishuddhi adhyatmika arana*' a.k.a the *vishuddhi bhumi* is the '*vishuddhi* center of authority' that is based in Thelhawadiyawa village, Ritigala. It is an assembly of spaces including *guru gedara*, *we-wahanse* (Thelhawadiyawa reservoir), *dwanda bhumi*, *nuga-wahanse*, and the 15-acre land integrated with paddy fields.
2. *bhumi* - *bima* or *bhumi* is used to introduce the 'ground' or soil territory.
3. *dawanda bhumi* - Sacred place at 'Ritigala *vishuddhi* spiritual monastery' where the members get advanced training in *vishuddhi*. Special *pujas* are held here.
4. *dhavidhaari wastharaya* - This is a traditional garment or a length of cloth that is typically wrapped around the waist, and tucked at the waistline to cover the bottom part of the body. The *vishuddhi shilpis* wear this in their *vishuddhi* training and special occasions.

The color of the garment varies according to their seniority.

5. *guru gedara* - Teacher's house. Guru is the teacher and *gedara* is the house, *guru gedara* is the place where Ritigala Sumedha, the *vishuddhi* custodian accommodates at Thelhawadiyawa village, Ritigala.
6. *gurunnanse* - In Ritigala *vishuddhi*, *gurunnanse* is the present custodian, leader, or the head teacher of the Ritigala Vishuddhi Haramba. Guru is 'teacher', *unnanse* is a word used to express 'respect and honor' in Sinhala. (*guru + unnanse = gurunnanse.*)
7. *haramba* - is known as a series of hard exercises or the ruthless combat in Ritigala *vishuddhi*.
8. *kandu-wahanse* - *Kandu* is a mountain range in Sinhala and *wahanse* is used to honor and respect something/someone. The Ritigala *vishuddhi* uses the word 'Ritigala *kandu-wahanse*' to express their respect and tribute to Ritigala mountain range because it is sacred and spiritual for them. A part of *kandu wahanse* is used for *vishuddhi haramba* training and rituals as well.
9. *maha gurunnanse* - Gurunnanse is also called *maha gurunnanse*, the custodian of the Ritigala *vishuddhi* (*maha* means huge or enormous; as *gurunnanse* bears an enormous amount of knowledge, he is called *maha gurunnanse*)
10. *nuga-wahanse* - Nuga is a banyan tree. The huge *nuga* tree at *guru gedara* is considered sacred and known as '*nuga-wahanse*' with utter respect and devotion.
11. *puhunu bima/bimas* - The 'training ground' is known as '*puhunu bima*' in Ritigala *vishuddhi*. Puhunu is training/practice and *bima* is ground. (*puhunu+bima = training ground*).
12. *puja* - Offerings for gods.
13. *Ritigala vishuddhi haramba* - A form of indigenous combat style in Lanka which is based in Ritigala. It is combined with six different disciplines into a unified whole; *geta* (knots), *pora* (combat), *nila* (body chakras/ critical points), *jothishya* (Astrology), *wedakama* (medicinal practice), and *manthra* (sorcery). These six disciplines are thoroughly nurtured with the Buddhist meditation. Vishuddhi is cleansing or purification and *haramba* is body movements, exercises, or combat in Sinhala.
14. *satana* - Fight or combat is known as *satana* in Sinhala.
15. *shilpi/shilpis* - (*shilpis* or *shilpa dharis*) Haramba practitioners are introduced as *shilpis* or *shilpa dharis* in Ritigala *vishuddhi*.
16. *shilpa*- A Sinhala word for a particular discipline, here, the Ritigala Vishuddhi Haramba has been introduced as *shilpa*.
17. *unnanse* - This is a Sinhala word used to express honor and unconditional respect for beings/things.

18. *Valagamba* - Valagamba was a king of the Anuradhapura Kingdom of Sri Lanka. His reign is considered 103 BC and 89–77 BC. In 103 BC, he took over the throne from invaders who killed his brother, who was the monarch of the Anuradhapura Kingdom. Five months after becoming the king, he was overthrown by South Indian invaders but he regained the throne by defeating the invaders fourteen years later. After he was overthrown, he was said to have stayed in caves around the country and organized his troof. While he was organizing his army, he also had created Buddhist statues, caves paintings, and upgraded the caves he was staying in for fourteen years until he regained his kingdom. Later, when he became the king, he renovated and converted these caves into temples and offered them for the benefit of Buddhist monks.
19. *vishuddhi* - In Sinhala *vishuddhi* could be explained as purification/cleansing or making something clean or pure by removing dirt, harmful or unwanted parts. The *vishuddhi* community defines this as purification of mind.
20. *wahanse* - In Sinhala, *wahanse* is used to express 'sacred, honor, or respect' with gratitude and Appreciation. The *vishuddhi* community add this suffix to personify certain sacred resources.
21. *wawa* - Reservoir.
22. *wew-wahanse* - Thelhawadiyawa reservoir located in the Vishuddhi *bhumi* is considered sacred to the Ritigala Vishuddhi community and known as *wew-wahanse* in great respect and honor. Some of the *vishuddhi haramba* practices and meditation take place here.

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### **Personal Communications with the senior *vishuddhi* members**

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