

## Dhamma Setu

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Dhamma Setu, meaning 'Bridge of Dhamma', is situated amid paddy fields and open farmland on the outskirts of the major South Indian metropolis of Chennai (formerly Madras), about 10 kms from the Chennai Airport. The 18 sq acres of land, previously used for rice cultivation, was purchased from 1991 onwards. The long and painstaking process of making the plot suitable for construction bore fruit in May 2000 with Goenkaji's visit in September of the same year, when Dhamma Setu was formally established.

Since the inauguration, continuous development and extensive landscaping have progressed. Currently the Centre can accommodate 96 male meditators and 48 female meditators in spacious double-occupancy rooms, all with attached baths and solar-heated hot water facilities. Besides the Principal Teacher's residence, rooms for male assistant teacher and for two female assistant teachers are available.

The large dining hall accommodates over 200. The main Dhamma Hall of the centre can seat 120 meditators, and is surrounded by shaded walkways, lush gardens, coconut palms, and open green expanses. Two additional halls have a capacity of 75 meditators each, and a mini Dhamma Hall can seat 30. Construction of the circular, three-tiered pagoda that crowns the Centre is slated for completion by Dec. 2005, and will provide 150 cells for an ideal meditation environment.

Since January 2005, 10-day courses are being conducted on a bi-monthly basis. The comfortable facilities are well suited for executive courses. With the completion of the pagoda complex this year, Dhamma Setu could also become a suitable site for conducting long courses and be more deeply involved in the spread of Dhamma in South India.