

# Bhikkhu Ariyañāṇa

## Biography



[brazilianmonk.github.io](https://brazilianmonk.github.io)

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## Short Version (85 words)

Bhante Ariyañāṇa, originally Stefano Domit Cervo from Brazil, was a celebrated flamenco dancer, winning awards like the **Festival Flamenco de Almería** (2013) and “**Premio Extraordinario de la Danza de la Comunidad de Madrid** (2015)”. Performing globally, he was lauded for his “fiery” and “precise” style.

In 2015, he turned to Buddhism, ordained and trained in Myanmar’s **Pa Auk** tradition for seven years, and, since 2022, studies at the **International Institute of Theravāda** in Sri Lanka, where he also leads the English Language studies for monastics.

## Middle Length Version (143 words)

Bhante Ariyañāṇa, born Stefano Domit Cervo in Brazil, transitioned from an acclaimed flamenco dancer to a Theravāda Buddhist monk.

Inspired by his mother, a flamenco dancer, he began performing at 11, later moving to Spain at 17. There, he won first place at the **Festival Flamenco de Almería** (2013) and the **Premio Extraordinario de Danza de la Comunidad de Madrid** (2015). As a choreographer and soloist, he performed in **Heartbeat of Home** and at venues like Amsterdam's **Royal Concertgebouw**, earning praise for his “rapid-fire heelwork” and “passion-filled” performances.

In 2015, seeking deeper meaning, he embraced Theravāda Buddhism after a retreat in India. He trained for seven years in Myanmar's **Pa Auk** tradition, ordaining as Ariyañāṇa under Pa Auk Sayadaw. Since 2022, he has studied at the **International Institute of Theravāda** in Sri Lanka, where he also leads the English Language studies for monastics.

## Long Version (358 words)

Bhante Ariyañāṇa, born Stefano Domit Cervo in Brazil, is a former flamenco dancer who captivated global audiences with his performances until 2015, when he embarked on a transformative quest as a Theravāda Buddhist monk.

### Artist Years

Inspired by his mother, a flamenco dancer herself, he, at the age of 11, followed in her footsteps, initially playing percussion and then dancing, teaching, and choreographing. Later, at the age of 17, he moved to Spain, the homeland of Flamenco, where he achieved significant acclaim including first place at the Festival Flamenco de Almería (2013) and the "Premio Extraordinario de Danza de la Comunidad de Madrid" (2015). As a choreographer and soloist, he participated in Heartbeat of Home, a production of the creators of the global phenomenon Riverdance.

In collaboration with top-notch flamenco artists, he performed in venues ranging from traditional tablaos such as "Las Carboneras" in Madrid to iconic concert halls such as Amsterdam's Royal Concertgebouw alongside Maria Juncal and Alfonso Losa. His short but dynamic career took him across the Americas, Europe, and Asia, with critics praising him as a dancer with "stately carriage" and "rapid-fire heelwork," combining "incredible rapidity and precision" in "passion filled, fiery flamenco numbers" that were "truly captivating" and "incredibly moving and powerful." In the words of the iconic dancer Antonio Canales: "He (Stefano) uses everything he has learned, thought, worked on, and felt to shatter it into a thousand pieces of emotion, making the viewer's heart skip a beat..."

### Monkhood

In spite of the ever-growing artistic success, in 2015, seeking deeper meaning and inner peace, he embarked on a transformative inner journey. A retreat with Thomas Dhammadīpa in India introduced him to Theravāda teachings, leading him to the Pa Auk tradition in Myanmar. There, he spent approximately seven years, first as a layperson, and then as a monastic as Ariyañāṇa, under the guidance of Pa Auk Sayadaw, his preceptor, and other teachers such as V. Kumārābhivamsa.

Continuing his spiritual path, in 2022, Bhante Ariyañāṇa joined the Nissayamuttaka course at the **International Institute of Theravāda** in Sri Lanka where he now deepens his traditional Theravāda Buddhist studies and leads the English Language studies for monastics.