

KETUMATI BUDDHIST VIHARA [MANCHESTER]

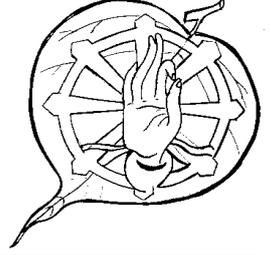
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Ketumati Buddhist Vihara Trust –Registered Charity No:1078173



NEWSLETTER

NAMO TASSA BHAGAVATO ARAHATO SAMMASAMBUDDASSA



Volume 6 No. 4 & Volume 7 No. 1

Winter 2004 & Spring 2005

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL MINDFULNESS

By

Ven. Dr. Henepola Gunaratana Nayaka Thera, Bhavana Society, West Virginia

What is “bare attention”? In studying meditation, you may hear the phrase mentioned as a goal you should seek. I would call it “total attention” rather than “bare attention,” which could be misinterpreted as “barely attention.” But “total attention” or “entire attention” means 100% attention –not 99.99%. This means focusing the total mind exclusively on the things you experience.

The Pali word is *manasikara*. *Manasi* means in the mind, *kara* means making. In other words, to put things in the mind as an object so that mind can direct itself to it. It is not concentration as such, but directing the mind towards the object. It means remembering without saying anything, without doing anything else, simply directing the mind to the object.

If you verbalise, you will focus your mind on the sound of what you verbalise, not the object. The object you wish to pay attention to will pass quickly and easily under the of your word. The sound and the attention, in fact, happen almost automatically. Whenever something happens in the mind and if you simultaneously become conscious of it –the mind straight-away goes there and then you have to keep focusing the mind on that particular thing for the mind to get a better grip of that particular object.

So directing the mind to the object is called *manasikara*. For instance, if you direct your attention to the sound that escapes my lips as I speak, you hear what I say. If you do not direct your mind to what escaped my lips you will not understand what I say. When you hear a sound outside, if you don't direct your total attention out there you don't hear the sound clearly. Superficially you may think you have total awareness, but you don't really know what it is.

So to know the object, to gain a clear impression of it, the mind must direct itself totally to the object. That is total attention. It is not attention with some preconceived notions, conclusions or conditions. Simply directing the mind to the object is total attention.

Distractions

When you watch your breathing and a distraction arises, should you pay attention to the distraction or ignore it and stay with the breathing?

If the distraction happens to be very strong you may be unable to remain with breathing. The mind naturally goes to the distraction. Then simply notice the distraction, without saying anything. Pay attention to the distraction only to see its impermanent nature.

Whatever you experience through your senses can be a distraction and all such distractions are impermanent. There is no need to form the words in the mind – “impermanent, impermanent.” Simply pay total undivided attention. Direct your attention to the distraction. You can see mentally that this distracting thing, whatever it is, is changing. That change ends in the disappearance of the distraction.

When you direct your attention to any sound, thought or memory, they change; they disappear – provided you do not add more sound, more words, and more thoughts. This is only possible through total attention, so that we do not add or subtract anything from the experience. Soon, the mental image of the object that you pay attention to fades away, leaving the mind alone. Then mind returns to the breath.

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

The breath is your constant object, a consistent source of focus that is always there. Simply focus the mind on the breath exclusively without anything else. But when other things interrupt your attention to the breath then take care of that particular thing, paying total attention to whatever arises. When it goes away return to the breath.

Don't rely on my words or those of other teachers. You have heard many teachers say many different things. You stay here for one week and go away and then begin to think; "what did Bhante say? But I heard other teachers say such and such. I get confused."

What to do? Here is some very basic advice-listen to all the teachers, remember as much as you can and then check with the text. Read Mahasitipatthana Sutta in any language that it is available. Read it over and over, 100 times. Each time you read, you will learn something new.

When you begin to practise, start with the breath. Pay attention to it. All of a sudden some disturbance arises within you. You find in the Sutta a method to deal with it. For example, when anger arises immediately become aware of it and know anger is in you. Keep looking at it over and over again until it slowly fades away. It will take quite some time to get rid of it. It does not matter how long it takes. Keep paying attention to it. It will go away.

When you do not have anger within yourself just become aware of the absence of anger. When it disappears become aware of that. When disappeared anger does not arise again just become aware of that. These instructions are given in the Sutta. You simply start paying attention to your breathing and become aware of it. When you pay total attention to whatever arises, you will see that the particular thing does not stay with you all the time. It disappears because everything is impermanent.

You learn from that disappearance that the particular thing is impermanent. When something else arises just notice it and that, too, disappears. It, too, is impermanent. When it goes away the mind will look for another object, and then return to the breath. The breath is your constant object. It is always there.

Training the mind

Millions of things are happening at any given moment in your mind and body. You train your mind to become aware of them, paying total attention to whatever you experience without clinging to it.

Whatever feeling arise, watch them with total attention. Become aware of the pleasantness of the feeling. When the pleasantness disappears and unpleasant feeling

arises, notice the change. And when you have painful feeling, then become aware of that feeling exactly as it is. When it disappears and neutral feeling arises become aware of that. Neutral feeling is not very clear. So at that point sometimes the mind can return to the breath again, and become aware of it.

When the mind is withdrawn, depressed or sad, just become aware of such states when they arise during meditation. Pay attention to a depressed state and know it for what it is. When that feeling passes, then the mind feel scattered and unfocused. Just become aware of that, too, and when the feeling disappears return to the breath.

Feeling is there for you to gain awareness and insight, not for you to cling to it. And when you begin to feel the body, then you become aware it exists for you to gain knowledge and awareness, not for you to cling to. At the time you pay attention to something you can not pay attention to the breath at the same moment. In those moments, leave the breath alone. This means you pay attention to one thing at a time. Do it without saying anything, without rejecting, without clinging. Pay attention to an object or feeling and let it pass. Then return to the breath.

This approach is mentioned in every paragraph of the Mahasitipatthana Sutta from beginning to end. So to see whether what I or other teachers say is consistent with the teachings of the Buddha or not, there is no need to debate, argue or grow confused. Just read the Sutta. If you don't, you will not gain a real understanding of the system even by listening to various teachers' interpretation. Every word in Kalama Sutta must be applied to your meditation.

Learning from the Sutta

In your practice, you will discover that no word is sacred. No truth is sacred. What is sacred is purity of mind, the mind free from all psychic irritants. That purity does not come from any word, but from a freedom from words. This results from paying total attention to the reality you experience.

Pain is not a word, sound is not a word, sight is not a word, smell is not a word, taste is not a word, touch is not a word, and mental objects are not words. On the other hand, all of them can become objects of mind. And they all are subject to the three aspects of reality, namely: impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and selflessness.

What is the meaning in the Suttas of the expression "mindfully contemplate on the body internally and contemplate on the body externally", "mindfully contemplate on the feelings internally and contemplate on the feelings externally", "contemplate on the mind

(Continued on page 3)

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internally and contemplate on the mind externally”, “mindfully contemplate on the Dhamma internally and contemplate on the Dhamma externally”.

This is a point often mistranslated and misinterpreted. “Mindful of the body internally” has been commonly misinterpreted to mean “internal breathing or inhaling.” And “Be mindful of the body externally” to mean “exhaling.” That is a wrong translation because one has to be mindful of both inhaling and exhaling as one object.

We should understand the meaning of these sentences. “Internal” and “external” here means one’s own and other’s bodies. You become mindful of your own body. Then you compare your experience with those of others. You know your body is made up of mere elements and as the elements change constantly your body changes. You age. You grow old. You become sick. You die. These are the things that happen to other bodies, as well. There is no difference between your body and that of others.

So being mindful of the body externally means, first, you must gain awareness and understanding of the function of breathing. It comes and goes all the times. Once you establish this mindfulness, you make the comparison with others. What is happening to others is external. But you don’t go and keep your nose close to somebody’s nose to understand their breathing. What happens with your breathing happens to all living beings. Everyone’s breath is coming and going and is impermanent.

The same is true for our bodies. Any physical movement you make is not made by one single, unchanging, permanent, immutable entity within yourself. But because of the condition of elements and consciousness, and depending on the aggregates, the body makes the movement. Some movements are intentional and many are unintentional. When an intention arises it creates movement in the mind. Energy discharged by the mind makes the body move. Every movement you make is like that. This is true for you and all other people.

The traditional meditation on dead bodies is another way of gaining awareness and understanding of the true nature of all things. Some people think that you can not practise such a meditation nowadays because the average person does not see bodies going through the stages of decomposition. In fact, even in the time of the Buddha dead bodies were not to be found everywhere. But every meditator who wants to try the practice can imagine and visualise as if they see a corpse.

When you mentally visualise a dead body, you observe the gradual changes, it goes through: turning blue, eating by insects, oozing bodily liquids, separating flesh

and sinews, separating flesh from bones, separating the bones from one another, turning them white, scattering them in a wide area, breaking them down into small pieces eventually reducing them into dust, and finally mixing with the dust in the earth. You will realise that what happens to that body will certainly happen to your body too.

The loving kindness connection

Feeling can be just as instructional. Feeling arises due to contact, internally and externally, mental and physical. That is how the feeling arises in any person’s body and mind. Your feeling is generated by certain psycho-physical processes. Your pain arises in a certain way. If somebody else happens to be in the same position as you, that individual, too, feels the same way as you do. Your feeling arises when senses and sensory objects come in contact. Your feelings arise dependent on numerous factors. Those factors and your feelings change without any exception. Similarly, the feelings of others arise and pass away the same way.

Your consciousness is affected by greed, hatred, ignorance, jealousy, fear, anxiety, and depression. The consciousness of others, too, is affected likewise. Your consciousness as well as that of others changes incessantly. Your mental objects, too, change constantly. You have no control of these changes. Similarly, the mental objects of others change constantly.

But you don’t have to go around and crawl onto other people’s bodies, feelings and minds to make this generalisation. It is universally true. You practise mindfulness of your own body, feeling, mind, and mental objects. You know that other people experience the same factors and they too, change in exactly the same way. In this respect there is not any difference between you and them. You universalise your personal experience. This helps you to develop true loving-kindness towards all living beings. This knowledge instills in you an enormous capacity to let go of your covetousness, hatred, resentment, jealousy, pride and fear of others.

In the end, through such total attention you realise that you and other people are no different. You experience the same states, you are faced with the same situations, you are composed of the same aggregates. For this reason, you cultivate loving kindness for your self and others.

When you make such comparisons at the beginning of *vipassana* meditation, all differences will come to disappear from your mind. So “internal” and “external” should be understood in this way. This is what is called inferential insight. You experience it first and then generalise that experience for all living beings.

(From Bhavana Society Newsletter, Vol.13, No.1, Jan-Mar 1997)

CHILDREN'S PAGE

Our religion –Buddhism-

One of the main practices in Buddhism is “Meditating”.
The main aim in meditating is getting our mind to think straight, calm and focus on one thing at a time. The way to do this is by sitting cross legged with your hands in a cupped position, resting left hand on the lap, right hand on top.

One of the key set of prayers (out of the full set that most Buddhists recite every night) is the “Pansil Paha” in English known as “The Five Precepts”.

1. Do not to kill
2. Do not steal
3. Do not misuse senses
4. Do not tell lies
5. Do not take drugs and alcoholic drinks.

Finally the main aim of the Buddhism on whole is to live a calm, happy and safe life.

By Pramudi Wijeyasiri

Ketumatamma School

DHAMMA & SINHALA CLASSES

SECOND SUNDAY
OF EVERY MONTH

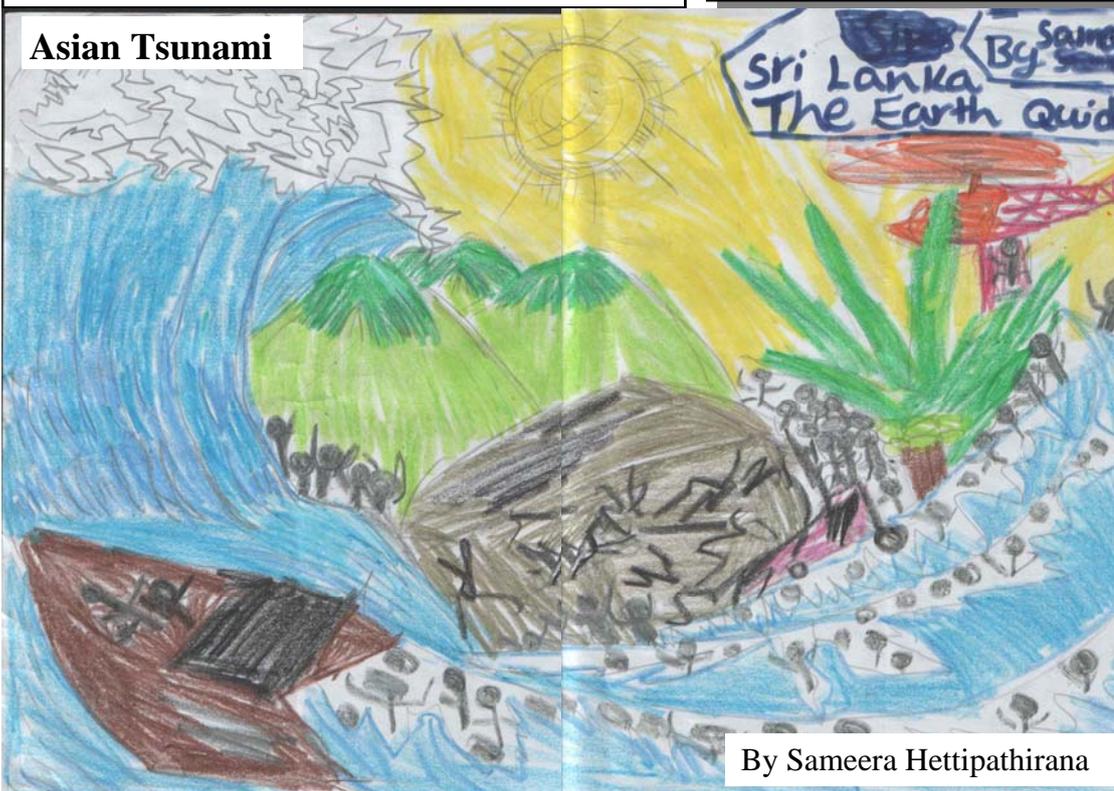
FROM 02.00 TO 05.00 P.M.

OPEN TO CHILDREN
OF ALL AGES

ALL PARENTS ARE INVITED TO BRING THEIR
CHILDREN

PLEASE CONTACT THE VIHARA
FOR DETAILS

Asian Tsunami



By Sameera Hettipathirana

*I*t is easy to shower love and affection on your family members, your near and dear ones. When you can feel the same love and affection for strangers even, you will have progressed spiritually.

-The Buddha



Patthana

*Iminā puñña kammena
Māme bāla samāgamo
Satam samāgamo hotu
Yāva nibbāna pattiyā*

Aspiration

By the grace of this merit that I have acquired,
May I never follow the foolish ;
but only the wise until I attain final goal- Nibbana.

A man who does not speak may not be wise. A man who chatters incessantly may not be wise. Wisdom lies in knowing when to speak and when to be silent.

-The Buddha-

NEW YEAR CELEBRATION AT KETUMATI

The **Singhalese and Tamil New Year Celebration** was held on Sunday 17th of April at the Polish Social Club at Hollins. The festivities commenced with the traditional Buddha Puja and Anumodhana. This was followed by Dana to the monks and lunch for the laity. Afternoon session was augured in by lighting of the Traditional Oil Lamp and reciting Jayamangala Gatha by Children of the Ketumati Dhamma School.

This year's New Year festival did not take a celebratory theme but was focused on remembrance of the victims of the Tsunami. A Pahan Puja was conducted by the pupils in remembering the victims of this great ca-

lamity, in the hope of blessing them.

As part of the aid programme for Tsunami victims in Sri Lanka, Dr. Suneetha Perera explained the work that has being organised by Hela Sarana organisation in UK in association with Shilpa Children Trust in Sri Lanka. She used a collection of projected slides for this purpose.

Children of the Dhamma School participated in items of singing dancing and short speeches pertaining to the Tsunami, The event was a great success with about 200 attending.

Pictures below capture some of the events of the occasion.



VESAK CELEBRATION AT KETUMATI

The **Vesak Celebration** at Ketumati Buddhist Vihara to honour and commemorate the three important events in the life of the Buddha was held on Saturday 13th of May, at The Unitarian Chapel at Oldham. This was attended by hundred of devotees both children and adults. Ven Bhikkuni Kusuma conducted the religious programme by administering the Eight Precepts to

the devotees who observed Sil. The rest of the day was devoted to Meditation, Dhamma talks and Dhamma discussions. A separate Sila programme was organised for the Children. The children's programme was concluded with them participating in completing the decorations of the traditional Vesak lanterns.

Pictures below capture some of the events of the occasion.



EDITORIAL

DHAMMA VIJAYA- A CHAKKAVATTI FOR THE PRESENT WORLD.

When prince Siddhartha was born, the wise men convened to the royal palace as was traditional for the day, on studying the very special signs seen on the little prince's body, predicted that this very exceptional prince "Siddhartha" (one who accomplishes the ultimate goal) would one day become either a World Teacher of the Truth "the Buddha" or a "Universal monarch" (Chakkavatti Raja).

As they predicted, the prince Siddhartha, to some discomfiture of King Suddhodana, his father, became the Buddha and introduced Buddhism to the world. All of us have studied or attempted to study the nature of the Exalted one the "Buddha" and his unique collection of Teachings the "Dhamma".

According to tradition the concept of a "Universal Monarch" is also a very important one. However, we know very little about such a person and his way of ruling of a conglomeration of nations, since there had not been such a ruler, in known history.

May be, the idea or concept of a "Universal Monarch" (Chakkravatti) is just an imaginary one. Such an imaginary but salutary figure had never ever existed in the real world, but the characterisation and embodiment of the so called "Universal Monarch" and his way of ruling the conglomeration of nations, will help us to get some idea as to delineate a pathway of achieving the much needed world peace in this war torn world today; so leading to nations at peace with each other, and working together for the betterment of the whole mankind.! That is the main idea of writing this article.

First of all, let's now see the way traditions explain the principles of such a universal monarch.

There are ten such principles. They are:

1. Be liberal and avoid selfishness.
2. Maintain a high moral character.
3. Be prepared to sacrifice one's own pleasure for the well being of the subjects.
4. Be honest and maintain absolute integrity.
5. Be kind and gentle.
6. Lead a simple life for the subjects to emulate.
7. Be free from hatred of any kind.
8. Exercise non-violence.
9. Practice patience.
10. Respect public opinion to promote peace and harmony.

Emperor Asoka a great Buddhist king who lived in 3rd century B.C was the only ruler who successfully adopted these teachings to a great extent after becoming

a Buddhist.

According to the history, he used the forces violently and defeated smaller and weaker kingdoms killing so many people and destroying their properties to make his empire bigger. But when he witnessed mass death and destruction during the war he was greatly moved and very upset. When he became Buddhist, he totally renounced the violence and aggressive nature and ruled the country according to the Dhamma as explained in Buddhism. Though he was a very strong follower of Buddha Dhamma, he respected, supported and protected other religions in his empire. He also encouraged his ministers and the people to live harmoniously and peacefully. Not only the human beings, other living beings and even the vegetation were protected and cared for. As a result the entire empire prospered and people enjoyed the highest level of peace, harmony prosperity and security.

Understanding the value of Buddhism, he sent missionaries to neighbouring countries to introduce Buddhism. Thus Buddhism crossed the boundaries of its native land and became an international religion for the first time and the rulers of the neighbouring lands became very close friends and allied to the Emperor Asoka. He was so pleased with this new tactics and proclaimed that "Before I started expanding my empire using forces violently causing death destruction and fear to many people, but now I send Dhamma making many people happy, bringing goodwill and friendliness from many countries. Therefore, I advice all my successors to stop this violent and brutal forces to win people (*dikvijaya*), but to win people's hearts and minds by the means of true friendliness and kindness (*Dhamma vijaya*)

Mankind in the world today are living in fear of attack and destruction and the world leaders and authorities very much believe that only powerful weapons can protect them. So they spend a great deal of their know-how, time and wealth on deadly weapons, believing violence can only be defeated by violence. In fact, violence creates more violence and hatred creates more hatred. If look at the recent world tidings wisely, we realise the great truth of this unfortunate malady.

Now is the right and appropriate time to consider using Dhamma as taught by the Buddha, in order to achieve lasting and peaceful solution in this manifold human conflict and disagreement

According to the Dhamma, "Avijja" is the main cause for any conflict or suffering. This Pali word "Avijja" directly translates into English as "ignorance". The English word "ignorance" has two meanings. One

(Continued on page 7)

KETUMATI NEWS

By Dr. SARATH C. SENARATH-YAPA

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT- TO REMAIN THE MAINSTAY OF KETUMATI ACTIVITIES.

The past year has been an educating if not enlightening one for the Ketumati Buddhist Vihara community, including the resident priests.

As requested by the senior members of the Ketumati Buddhist Vihara fraternity and well wishers of Ketumati, the Board of Trustees sat with the Chief Incumbent Priest, to deliberate and delineate as far as is feasible how best to take forward the spiritual development of the Ketumati community as a whole; and review the administrative elements of the Trust machinery. Following this review it was agreed that the chief incumbent of the Vihara continues to be a Trustee in order to provide guidance and advice on spiritual aspects while all financial and general administrative functions, would be handled by the lay Trustees.

Pursuant on these worthy cogitations shared equally by the Chief Priest and the members of the Board of Trustees; and also acting quite independently Venerable Pidiville Piyatissa, our Chief Incumbent Priest has now embarked on a programme of meditation retreats to be held at the Vihara, for all of us in the community seeking to develop meditative skills and relaxation of the mind.

Meditation sessions will continue as before on Wednesday and Sunday evenings commencing at 7.30pm. at the Vihara. Monthly sermons on the first Saturday of the month would normally be followed by Meditation retreats and Dhamma discussions on the Sunday that follows. However over the "Vassana" period from August to October devotees would have the added bonus of attending meditation retreats on the Third Sunday of these months specially conducted by Venerable Piyatissa.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Ketumati finances remain strong under the stewardship of our diligent Treasurer Mrs. Nimala Pieris and with the generous donations of our benefactors and well-wishers. As at end of June 2005, the Ketumati Saving Shares Account stood at £27,620.39 and the Current Account stood at £7,507.18, together with a further sum of £164.99 held as petty cash.

FUTURE PROGRAMMES.

This years Kathina ceremony will be held on Sunday the 30th October at the Polish Social Club at Hollins, Oldham, sponsored by Dr. Thilak Pieris, Mrs. Nimala Pieris and family.

At a special ceremony "Vasaradhana" held at the Vihara on the 20th July evening attended by friends in dhamma, Dr. Thilak and Mrs. Pieris invited the resident priests, as was customary, to observe the "vasvisuma" at the Vihara, which would finally culminate after the end of the season in the "Kathina" ceremony.

MONTHLY DHAMMA SERMONS & MEDITATION RETREATS.

These will continue as usual on the first Saturday of the month and the Sunday that follows as customary. During the period under review the following Dhamma Sermons were held.

February: Benefits of Mindfulness. Ven. Bikkhu Kovida

March: Buddhism and us Ven. Medhankara

May: A question of Balance . Ven. Bhikkhu Pesala

May: Foundations of Mindfulness
.Bhikkhuni Kusuma

June: The Right Livelihood.

Ven Bhikkhu Bodhidamma

July: The Buddha Ven. Kabalewe Sirisumana

(Continued from page 6)

meaning is "ignoring". The second meaning is "not knowing". In Pali, the word "Avijja" literary means "not knowing" because it directly comes from the Pali verb "avijanati" which means does not know.

Avijja is regarded as very important, because it acts as the forerunner of the mass (skanda) of Suffering as enunciated in Paticca Samuppada (the Doctrine of Dependent Origination) e.g. *Avijja paccaya sankara, evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkandassa samudayo hoti*. Because of ignorance there arise mental formation.....thus there arise the mass of suffering. (Paticca samuppada)

It is very clear that, deluded and confused leaders can easily abuse their power for personal gain through corruption, and create conflict in the society which can even lead to civil strife destroying invaluable human lives within the country and ultimately to international conflict and war when extreme nationalism cloud rational thinking.

The only way to solve this problem is to gain inner peace first, as explained in the Dhamma, and then take action towards the peaceful coexistence with all organisations and neighbouring nations. In other words the leadership of a country should genuinely be honest, kind, wise and tolerant. When these salutary qualities (Dasa Raja Dhamma) are deficient or absent in the leaders of the nations; the much needed peace and harmony between nations of the world could not be expected.

(This theory or concept can apply not only to a leadership of a country; it also can equally apply for any level of conflict in the society.)

May all beings be well and happy

(Raja Bhawatu Dhammiko)

By Venerable Pidiville Piyatissa Thero

Regular programmes

Daily: From 7.00 PM To 7.45 PM
Buddha Puja, Meditation &
Pirith Chanting

First Saturday of Every Month
At 7.30 P.M– Dhamma Sermon

Following Sunday-
Day Meditation Retreat

Every Wednesday and Sunday
At 7.30 P.M. Meditation &
Dhamma Discussion

Second Sunday of Every Month
From 2.00 P.M To 5.00 P.M.

Dhamma School for Children
Dhamma Discussion (For parents)
For details Please Contact The Temple
0161 6789726

SPECIAL MEDITATION RETREATS DURING THE RAINY RETREAT

1st Retreat :

21st Sunday, August, 2005

2nd Retreat :

18th Sunday, September, 2005

3rd Retreat :

16th Sunday, October, 2005

Commencing at 9.30 am
At Ketumati Buddhist Vihara

All are cordially welcome

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WILL BE HELD

FROM 10.00 A.M. TO 04.00 P.M.

ON

SUNDAY, 30TH OCTOBER 2005

AT

**THE POLISH SOCIAL CLUB
CHAMBER ROAD, HOLLINS,
OLDHAM**

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SPONSORED BY
DR. TILAK & MRS. NIMALA PEIRIS & FAMILY

ALL ARE WELCOME

SCHEDULED PROGRAMMES 2005

SEPTEMBER 2005

3rd (Sat) - Dhamma Sermon

4th (Sun) - Meditation Retreat

11th (Sun) - Dhamma School

OCTOBER 2005

9th (Sun) -Dhamma School

30th (Sun) - Kathina Ceremony

NOVEMBER 2005

5th (Sat) -Dhamma Sermon

6th (Sun) -Meditation Retreat

13th (Sun) -Dhamma School

DECEMBER 2005

3rd (Sat) -Dhamma Sermon

4th (Sun) -Meditation Retreat

11th (Sun) -Dhamma School

DONATIONS

Ketumati Buddhist Vihara Trust is a registered charity, dependent on voluntary donations from well wishers like you. We need your generous support to meet the day to day running cost of the Vihara. If you like to make a donation please write your cheques in favour of –**Ketumati Buddhist Vihara Trust**- & send it to the temple or inquire from the temple for further details.

Ketumati Buddhist Vihara, 3, Pretoria Road, Oldham, OL8 4NH. Tel. 0161 6789726.

Thank you for your generous support.