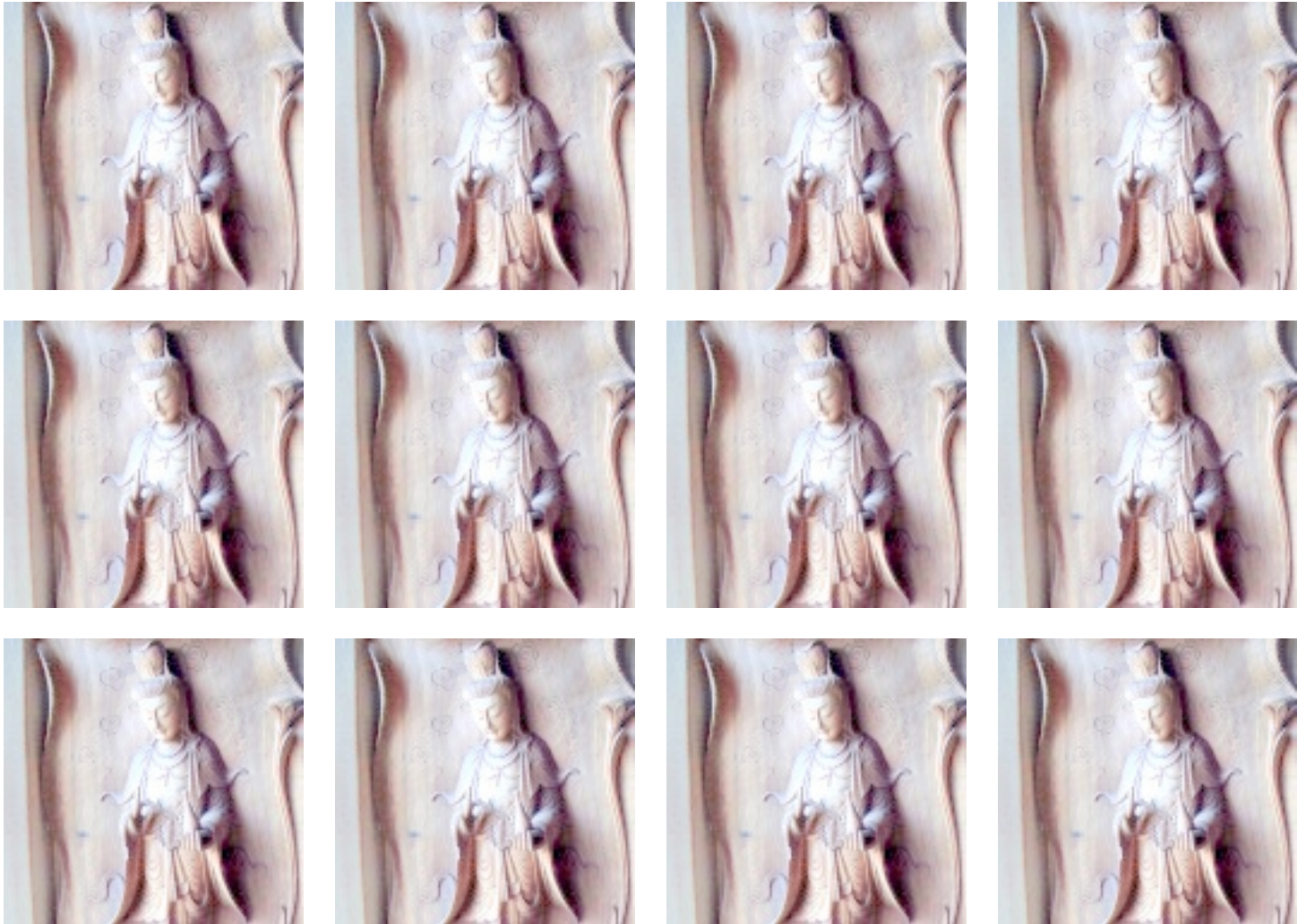


RUNNING TIDE



Sorting Out Pseudo-Darwinisms
P.15 Mary Midgley

A Personal Statement on Somatic Therapy
p.18 Sally Ridgway

Perspectives On The Road
p.22 Caroline Prasada Brazier

Courses and events pp.3-14
Plus a special supplement: Art Poems Books
Calendar of Events Autumn 2009

Running Tide

Offers a voice for faith and practice, as well as critical, existential and socially engaged enquiry within the broad framework of Pureland Buddhism.

We publish short articles, poetry, pictures, interviews, comment and Buddhist resource materials.

Opinions expressed are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Amida Trust, Amida-shu or Amida-kai.

Running Tide is distributed by:

Amida Trust
The Buddhist House
12 Coventry Road, Narborough
Leicestershire LE19 2GR, UK

Correspondence and contributions
Submissions for consideration should be sent to the Editor at:
runningtide@amidatrust.com

Amida Trust
A religious charity established in UK, registration number 1060589, for the furtherance of Buddhism. The Trust sponsors a wide range of Buddhist activities. The Amida Trust is a member of the Network of Buddhist Organisations in UK, the European Buddhist Union, as well as the World Buddhist University, and has mutual affiliation with the Buddhist Peace Fellowship.

Amida Order & School
The Amida Order and Amida School are a religious order and communion, respectively, following the Pureland tradition, established under the auspices of the Amida Trust. In this periodical the letters OAB after a name indicate membership of the Order of Amida Buddha and the letters MAS indicate membership of the Amida School. The Amida School is also referred to as Amida-shu. All Order members are also School members.

Amida-Kai
The Amida Association, an association for spirituality and its application. Amida-kai is the association for everybody interested in the Trust's work, for the application of spiritual principles to empirical world problems, and to the exploration of the meaning of spirituality irrespective of faith alignment.

EDITORIAL

Right livelihood is one of the eight noble steps on the spiritual path and is of particular importance to both lay and monastic practitioner in expanding the range of activities and ways of applying the Buddha's teachings. Our Autumn issue has grown around a calendar of events (pp3-14) which include workshops, courses, and other wholesome activities conducive to a balanced lifestyle.

Mary Midgley, patron of Amida Trust and eminent philosopher, noted for her work on science, ethics and animal rights, is celebrating her 90th birthday this month (see p.15). She uses plumbing as an analogy for philosophy – something that doesn't get noticed until it starts to smell bad and to face the bad smells is what the Buddha and other great philosophers have done. The spiritual path often starts by noticing that our lives are governed by views and opinions that no longer make sense at best and create more suffering at worst. The noble eightfold path shows us that there is a way to live ethically without panicking. Her books along with others are featured in the book catalogue: a special supplement called **Art Poems Books**.

Resting in the arms of Amida Buddha, or dwelling in the base of infinite space, gives us a sense of Samadhi – right vision, which in turn gives us confidence to take up the floor boards and start the work that is needed. For some that may mean engaging the mind with the heart and body (p.18), changing one's perspective and seeing through another set of eyes (p.26), while for others it may mean entrusting one's plumbing to Amida Buddha (p.27).

Sasthama

IN THIS ISSUE

ARTICLES AND ESSAYS

Mary Midgley Sorting out Pseudo-darwinisms	15
Sally Ridgway A Personal Statement on Somatic Therapy	18
Katrien Sercu Colours of a process : a little part on the path	24
Prasada Caroline Brazier Perspectives on the Road	26
Freya M Have I Heard Amida's Call?	27

Membership Of Amida-Kai
Open to anybody who supports Amida Trust and is interested in spirituality and its application. To join please send a donation (£20 per year suggested) to Amida Trust with a covering letter. Membership of the Kai does not imply membership of the Amida Order or School or any particular religious affiliation. For subscription queries contact: The Buddhist House.

The Buddhist House
12 Coventry Rd
Narborough
Leicestershire
LE19 2GR
Great Britain
+44(0)116 286 7476
courses@amidatrust.com

Sukhavati
21 Sussex Way
London N7 6RT
Great Britain
+44(0)207 263 2183
Amida France
La Ville au Roi
Bessais le Fromental
18210 Cher, France
+33 (0)2 48 60 70 19

WHAT'S ON PAGES 3-14

Starting on the next page is a little insert with regular events and upcoming courses at different Amida locations in the UK: Newcastle, Sheffield, London, and Leicester. Amida centres and groups vary greatly and are super models of Right Livelihoods. We are delighted to include the new centre in Hawai'i and are buoyed by developments at Amitayus Wellbeing, a neighbouring alternative therapy centre whose commitment is to benefit and improve the well-being of all.

ACTIVITIES FOR THE BODY ACTIVITIES FOR THE MIND ACTIVITIES FOR THE HEART

*Welcome to the calendar pages that will tell you what is happening this autumn.
Please use the following icons to help you find an event fast.*



SHEFFIELD



NEWCASTLE



NARBOROUGH



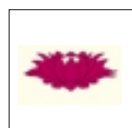
LONDON



HAWAI'I



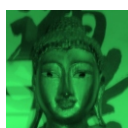
MAITRI



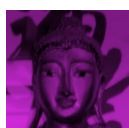
AMITAYUS
WELLBEING



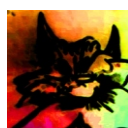
RETREATS



PSYCHOTHERAPY
COURSE



SOMATIC
THERAPY



CAMPAIGNS



WORKSHOP

This calendar guide will help you plan your Nembutsu experience week by week.

*Please visit <http://amidatruster.ning.com> for more details or email
courses@amidatruster.com*

Web sites

www.amidatruster.com
<http://amidatruster.ning.com/>
www.amidatruster.com/runningtide.html
www.buddhistpsychology.info
<http://amidatruster.typepad.com/amidashu>
<http://www.amidatruster.typepad.com/amidakai/>

Amida Centres/Groups

Newcastle: http://lotusinthemud.typepad.com/amida_newcastle/
Sheffield: <http://pureland.wordpress.com/>
London: <http://www.amidalondon.org.uk/>
Belgium: <http://www.namoamidabu.be/>



CONTACT INFO



AMIDA SHEFFIELD

CONTACT BHAKTIKA OR SUNDARI 0114 272 4290

amidasheffield@blueyonder.co.uk • <http://pureland.wordpress.com/>



AMIDA NEWCASTLE

CONTACT REV SUJATIN • sujatin@gmail.com

http://lotusinthemud.typepad.com/amida_newcastle/



AMIDA LONDON

SUKHAVATI • 21 SUSSEX WAY • FINSBURY PARK • NORTH LONDON • N7 6RT

CONTACT SR MODGALA • 0207 263 2183 • modgala2004@lycos.com

<http://www.amidalondon.org.uk/>



AMIDA TRUST

THE BUDDHIST HOUSE • 12 COVENTRY RD • NARBOROUGH • LEICS • LE19 2GR

CONTACT SUSTHAMA OR KASPALITA • 0116 286 7476 • courses@amidatrust.com

<http://amidatrust.ning.com>



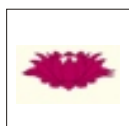
AMIDA HAWAI'I

CONTACT FRANCO • franco@amidatrust.com



MAITRI PROJECT

CONTACT KASPALITA OR MUDITA • kaspalita@amidatrust.com • mudita@amidatrust.com
0116 286 7476



AMITAYUS WELLBEING

189 LONG STREET • ATHERSTONE • CV9 1AH • <http://www.amitayus-wellbeing.co.uk/>

CONTACT DAWN • 01827 719926 • dawn@amitayus-wellbeing.co.uk



ONGOING events



MAITRI CENTRE DROP-IN • MONDAYS 10.30 - 1PM

A place to come in for a chat, some company, a cup of coffee; to be listened to, or just to sit with someone. All Welcome
Bishop Street Methodist Church • 10a Bishop Street • Town Hall Square • Leicester



SUTRA CLASS • MONDAYS 7PM

Reading and studying Buddhist sutras and texts with others in an informal and friendly setting. All Welcome
The Buddhist House • 12 Coventry Rd • Narborough • 0116 286 7476



PANDRAMATICS • TUESDAYS 7.30 - 9PM

Pandramatics is an experimental space where we use the idea of performance in as flexible and imaginative way as possible.



MEDITATION AND RELAXATION • THURSDAYS 7.30PM

Members of the Buddhist House community take it in turn to run these classes. Styles and techniques include sitting, standing, walking, and lying down.



COFFEE MORNING • FRIDAYS 10 - 12PM

Come in for a cup of tea or coffee, meet the community, enjoy the garden, ask for a tour or just come and sit in the shrine room.



OPEN ART SESSIONS • FRIDAY AFTERNOONS

Come and enjoy our art room. These sessions are for individuals to be creative and experiment.



PURELAND BUDDHIST SERVICE • SUNDAY 5PM

This service includes the main practices for a Pureland Buddhist; chanting Namō Amida Bu, reciting the Tan Butsu Ge, making offerings, taking refuge and finishes with a Dharma talk. After the service there is a shared vegetarian meal.

COME
JUST
AS
YOU
ARE
REALLY
JUST
AS
YOU
ARE

ONGOING events



PURELAND BUDDHIST SERVICE IN SOUTH YORKSHIRE • MONDAYS 6PM

Chanting, sitting and walking nembutsu

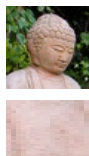
118 Broomspring Lane • Sheffield • 0114 272 4290 • <http://pureland.wordpress.com> • All Welcome



GUIDED MEDITATION FOR BUSY PEOPLE • MONDAYS 1PM

Sundari, Bhaktika and Mary take it in turn to guide 30 minutes of meditation

Sheffield Anglican Cathedral • Sheffield • <http://www.sheffield-cathedral.co.uk/links.asp?articleID=111> • All Welcome



MORNING MEDITATION FRIDAYS • 8.15 AM

Half an hour to sit silently before starting the day

Please phone 0114 272 4290 or email amidasheffield@blueyonder.co.uk in advance



PRACTICE AND REFLECTION AT 118 • 10 - 1PM

Saturdays September 5th, October 10th, and November 7th



DROP-IN SESSIONS AT NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

Please visit http://lotusinthemud.typepad.com/northumbria_buddhist_soci/ for location and times



MEDITATION FOR RELAXATION • TUESDAYS 12.30 - 1.15 PM

Come and meditate. Go to http://lotusinthemud.typepad.com/amida_newcastle/ for more details

Research Beehive (Level 2), Old Library Building • Newcastle University • except Oct.13 in University Chaplaincy

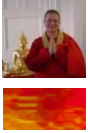


LUNCH AND BUDDHISM • FORTNIGHTLY ON WEDNESDAYS • 1.45 - 2.30pm

Bring your own sandwiches and learn the basics of Buddhism and Buddhist practice

Havelock TV Room, Castle Leazes • Newcastle University • sujatin@gmail.com • 14, 28 Oct & 11, 25 Nov 2009

ONGOING events



WEEKLY AMIDA NEWCASTLE MEETINGS • TUESDAYS 7 - 9 PM

Pureland chanting, sitting meditation, Nei Quan and Chih Quan practice followed by discussion and tea
Amida Sanctuary, Beacon House • 49 Linden Rd • Gosforth • Newcastle • sujatin@gmail.com • All Welcome



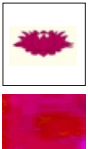
MEDITATION FOR RELAXATION • WEDNESDAYS 12:30 - 1:15 PM

Come and meditate in the Chaplaincy - 23 Sept - 25 Nov resuming on 13 January 2010
4th Floor of Wynne Jones • Northumbria University • sujatin@gmail.com



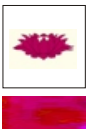
LUNCH AND BUDDHISM • WEDNESDAYS 1.15 - 2 PM

Bring your own sandwiches and learn the basics of Buddhism and Buddhist practice • sujatin@gmail.com
4th Floor of Wynne Jones • Northumbria University • 23 Sept & 7, 21 Oct & 4, 18 Nov



MEDITATION AND RELAXATION CLASS • TUESDAYS 7.30 - 8.30 PM

Starting 15 September - a 6 week course on the elements
Amitayus Wellbeing • 189 Long Street • Atherstone
Please book info@amitayus-wellbeing.co.uk



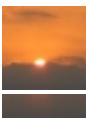
GUIDED BUDDHIST MEDITATION • WEDNESDAYS 1 PM (Starting in October)

A half an hour of guided Buddhist meditation .through the Amida Trust
Amitayus Wellbeing • 189 Long Street • Atherstone



WEDNESDAY PRACTICE EVENINGS • 6.15PM SNACK • 7 PM PRACTICE

Fellowship and practice: nembutsu chanting, contemplation, sharing and discussion around a dharma talk or theme
Sukhavati • 21 Sussex Way • London • Nearest Tube: Finsbury Park • modgala2004@lycos.com • 0207 2632183

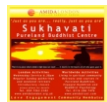


WEEKLY EVENING SANGHA PRACTICE • WEDNESDAYS 6.30 - 8PM

Amida Hawai'i Pureland Buddhist Dharma Center • Downtown Waimea (in the Mauna Kea Center)
Chanting and sharing with the Amida Hawai'i Sangha • email franco@amidatrust.com • All Welcome



SEPTEMBER



INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHIST PSYCHOLOGY led by SR. MODGALA

Many forces shape our lives and the way we respond to these affects our actions. In this retreat we will start to look at our lives through the window of Buddhist Psychology and hopefully find some keys to the self we have developed to protect ourselves from the winds that blow around us and within us – the “self” which inhibits us from leading full and meaningful lives that are beyond hurt and fear.

Sukhavati • Sat 12 Sept • 10 - 4pm • Please book • phone: 0207 263 2183
Email: modgala2004@lycos.com • Simple low cost shared accommodation is also available
Refreshments • Vegetarian lunch • Suggested donation £15 waged • £5 unwaged

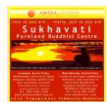


LOVE AND ITS DISAPPOINTMENT led by DAVID BRAZIER

A weekend seminar upon the themes: what the client learns in therapy • the power of esteem • what therapy and art can learn from one another • how we make sense of our lives • what it means to remain authentic in the face of adversity • what is involved in helping another person to do so. Here, therefore, we are examining fundamental questions about the nature of personal growth, healing and creativity and why it is that one life can triumph and another be broken by similar challenges.

TBH • 10am Sat 19 Sept - 4pm Sun 20 Sept • please book 0116 286 7476 • email courses@amidatrust.com
Accommodation • Single £35/night • Twin £25/night • Basic £15/night • 10% off for all students
Cost £15/day for the public • Free for Buddhist Psychology Students

OCTOBER



KARMA - all our actions have consequences led by SR. MODGALA

This is a very simple explanation of karma. Some may think about how our actions in this world affect us in another world. However, in this retreat we will look at how our day to day actions have consequences. We will look at these actions in the light of our own histories and in the history of our families and communities. We are not alone and we are all affected by the stories. In our sharing more understanding can arise and we can go beyond the stories that limit us, and find stories that inspire us.

Sukhavati • Sat 12 Sept • 10 - 4pm • Please book • phone: 0207 263 2183
Email: modgala2004@lycos.com • Simple low cost shared accommodation is also available
Refreshments • Vegetarian lunch • Suggested donation £15 waged • £5 unwaged

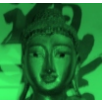
VISIT [HTTP://AMIDA](http://AMIDA)
OR EMAIL courses@amidatrust.com



OTHER-CENTERED THERAPY led by DAVID & CAROLINE BRAZIER, GINA CLAYTON

A Buddhist approach to therapy is concerned with the way in which we relate to others. *Other-Centred Approaches* are particularly concerned with helping clients to live in a more honest, appreciative relationship with the others in their lives, helping them to live in empathic connection rather than self-centred alienation. This course block will explore the fundamental qualities of an other-centred relationship and the paradigm that underlies this approach. This course block falls between the publication of David Brazier's new book *Love and Its Disappointment* and Caroline Brazier's book *Other-Centred Therapy*. It draws on theory from both these significant works. The Other-Centred Approach is at the cutting edge of psychotherapeutic theory and this is an unparalleled opportunity to be involved in this important development.

TBH • Sat 10 - Sun 18 October • £60/day/public • £36/day/gen reg students
accommodation • Single £35/night • Twin £25/night • Basic £15/night • 10% off for all students



THE NECESSARY CONDITION IS LOVE

The ability to love is a fundamental human drive, and that successful therapy involves enabling the client to love more fully and freely. The therapeutic relationship both models this self-less love and also performs a function in facilitating change through skilled professional practice. It is both free flowing and boundaried; person to person and restricted by codes of behaviour. This core skills weekend will explore the complexities of the inter-personal exchange that happens in the therapy room and the core principles of Other-Centred Therapy. We will look at the way in which the therapeutic relationship is both a spontaneous communication and a skilled set of responses, a genuine expression of caring and an intentional healing practice. We will practice core skills and examine ways in which they support the development of real encounter.

10 - 11 October • 10am-5pm Saturday • Student Seminar 5.15 - 6.15pm Saturday • 10am - 4pm Sunday
accommodation • Single £35/night • Twin £25/night • Basic £15/night • 10% off for all students
£120 for members of the public • £72 for General Registered Students



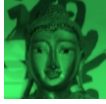
MEETING OTHERS

Mental health depends upon our ability to relate to others. As we encounter others, we are drawn out of our habits of view and action, which insulate us from life's unpredictability. Yet in each meeting we impose our expectations. We see each other through misted vision. Nonetheless, in every encounter we are affected and can be changed. Our being is at stake as is that of the other. This four day section looks at the experience of relationship as it unfolds in various group and one-to-one meetings, and explores our capacity to see each other as others. We will explore other-centred methodology and theory and the ways in which it can enhance these Meetings.

12 - 15 October • 10am-5pm Monday - Friday • 10am-4pm Thursday
accommodation • Single £35/night • Twin £25/night • Basic £15/night • 10% off for all students
£240 for members of the public • £144 for General Registered Students



OCTOBER



OTHER-CENTRED THEORY

Explore the fundamentals of Other-Centred theory as presented in Caroline's book of that title, published this month. This involves the appreciation of an inter-active model of the self, being through relationship, mirroring, the power of the object and the transformative effect of an evidence based yet person-centred approach.

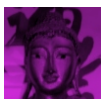
Friday 16 October • 10am-5.15pm • £60 for members of the public • £36 for Gen. Reg. Students



ESTEEM & TRANSFORMATION

Participants will gain an understanding of Esteem Theory, the manner in which the matrix of esteem supports and frustrates self-concern, how this opens the pathway toward constructive change in the way a person relates to his or her world, and how such change may be facilitated and enhanced. We will explore the use of object-related methods to enhance people's appreciative relationship with the object-world which they inhabit. Through skills exercises we will draw out ways in which everyday experiences can be made more vivid and meaningful, transforming daily activity into a source of psychological and spiritual growth.

17 - 18 October • 10am-5pm Saturday • Student Seminar 5.15 - 6.15pm Saturday • 10am - 4pm Sunday accommodation • Single £35/night • Twin £25/night • Basic £15/night • 10% off for all students
£120 for members of the public • £72 for General Registered Students



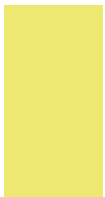
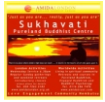
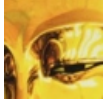
THE HEART OF SOMATICS led by SALLY RIDGWAY

This module introduces somatic theory through an experiential exploration of the role of body as container of unconscious messages and behaviour. Cellular memory and psycho-physio patterning is understood through the use of touch as empathy, resonance, witnessing, dialogue, and through simple hands-on bodywork at the skin level. A central focus of this module is around the fundamental need of human contact for health. Ways in which we negotiate this primary boundary and our presence in the world are provoked through attention to sensations, feelings, and unintentional movement patterns and behaviours. An understanding of their expression through mindful movement and images, dreams, and symptoms of illness, is unravelled as a basis for therapeutic intervention. The role of breath and its practice of awareness as both healing and spiritual guide are nurtured to support these intentions

23 - 25 October • 10am-5pm Sat - Sun • 10am - 4pm Monday • Block 1 for Somatic Therapy students accommodation • Single £35/night • Twin £25/night • Basic £15/night • 10% off for all students
Closed Group - please ask for details on how to enrol onto the Somatic Therapy Post-Qual. Programme



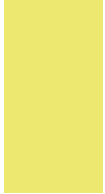
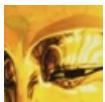
OCTOBER



LOVE AND ITS DISAPPOINTMENT led by DAVID BRAZIER

A day seminar upon the themes: what the client learns in therapy • the power of esteem what therapy and art can learn from one another • how we make sense of our lives • what it means to remain authentic in the face of adversity • what is involved in helping another person to do so. Here, therefore, we are examining fundamental questions about the nature of personal growth, healing and creativity and why it is that one life can triumph and another be broken by similar challenges.

Sukhavati • Sat 24 Oct • 10 - 4pm • Please book • phone: 0207 263 2183
 Email: modgala2004@lycos.com • Simple low cost shared accommodation is also available
 Refreshments • Vegetarian lunch • Suggested donation £15 waged • £5 unwaged



BRUNCH AND BUDDHISM with DAVID BRAZIER

Brunch followed by a seminar to look at the question What is Buddhist about Engaged Buddhism? Sometimes one has the impression that so-called engaged Buddhism is just social activism carried out by people who happen to be Buddhist or even that it is a hi-jacking of Buddhist terminology or Buddhist sympathies in the service of agendas that have little if anything to do with Buddhist principles. Is Buddhism really about democracy? rights? equality? justice? Can we develop useful concepts that really are Buddhist that really do help

Sukhavati • Sun 25 Oct • 11pm start • Please book • phone: 0207 263 2183
 Email: modgala2004@lycos.com • Simple low cost shared accommodation is also available
 Please bring veggie dish to share • Suggested donation £15 waged • £5 unwaged



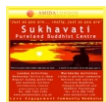
SPONSORED NEMBUTSU CHANT

Chanting Nembutsu is an expression of faith. It is a devotional practice of calling the Buddha. Amida is the light that holds us. Beyond measure, not knowable, but yet sensed by our heart's longing, Amida is the focus of our spiritual intuition. We will be alternating periods of walking and sitting and while some people will complete the full 12hours others may not. We simply ask that you chant for a minimum of 1 hour for which you will be expected to raise a minimum of £10.00 in sponsorship money.

Amitayus Wellbeing • 189 Long Street • Atherstone • Refreshments will be provided • For more information or to register for the event call 01827 719926 • Saturday 31 October 7.30am - 7.30pm • Help raise funds for Acorns Childrens Hospice.



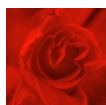
NOVEMBER



TRANSFORMING ANGER led by SR. MODGALA

This retreat day will focus on looking deeply into our roots of anger and irritation. We might be surprised at what we find there. We might be moved and find our anger melts away so that we find new energy to face the world. Anger is energy, wasted energy that could be harnessed. We can use this energy to build a Pure Land.

Sukhavati • Sat 7 Nov • 10 - 4pm • Please book • phone: 0207 263 2183
Email: modgala2004@lycos.com • Simple low cost shared accommodation is also available
Refreshments • Vegetarian lunch • Suggested donation £15 waged • £5 unwaged



EXILE AND RETURN led by SUSTHAMA

A weekend retreat gathering, Friday evening 7pm (or meal at 6) to 3.30pm Sunday. It is traditional in Pureland Buddhism to hold a retreat in the autumn in memory of the exile of Honen Shonin and other founders of Pureland in Japan. From about the year 1200 onward the traditional Buddhist temples in Japan began to be more and more alarmed by the spread of the nembutsu teaching throughout the land. In 1204 they petitioned for the abolition of the nembutsu practice. In 1207, Honen Shonin, then 75 years old, was exiled and his leading disciples were all exiled to different parts of the country. This actually eventually led to the dissemination of the nembutsu through Japan and to its becoming the largest school of Buddhism in the country. The banishment was repealed a couple of years later and Honen eventually returned to the capital where he died in 1212. At this retreat we will remember these formative events and also look at the themes of exile, return and refuge and of keeping faith through difficult times as they manifests in our own lives. A time to practice together, share experience, learn about the tradition and celebrate our connections as a sangha.

TBH • 6 - 8 Nov • 7pm Fri to 3.30pm Sun • Please book 0116 286 7476 • email courses@amidatrust.com
Accommodation • Single £35/night • Twin £25/night • Basic £15/night • 10% off for all students
Suggested Donation £15/day



REMEMBRANCE DAY SERVICE FOR THE ANIMALS led by PASTOR JAMES THOMPSON

This year, for the second time, Quaker Concern for Animals will be represented at a Remembrance Day service for the animals to be led by Pastor James Thompson of North Wales – the Animal Padre – at the Animals' War Memorial in London on Sunday, November 8 at 10.30 am. Large and small animal welfare groups are being invited to send representatives.

If any of your members and followers are available to attend, please could they contact me. The service, which will be a respectful commemoration of those who, having no choice, were wounded and died in wars and military activity – and unfortunately continue to do so - will be in the Anglican tradition, but people of all denominations and faiths, or of none, are very welcome.

Animals' War Memorial in London • Sun 8 Nov • 10.3am • more details at <http://www.quaker-animals.org.uk>



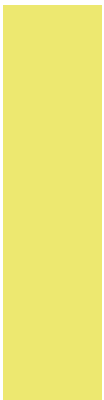
NOVEMBER



PURELAND INTRODUCTORY RETREAT led by KASPALITA AND SUMAYA

Learn the basics of Pureland practice and find out what it means to practice. This introductory retreat is open to all. We will introduce some basic concepts found in the Amidist approach to Pureland Buddhism and spend some time practicing together. Amida retreats are friendly, informative, and replenishing. This will be a good time for those interested in taking time out from a busy or stressful life to relax, chant, explore one's faith and spirituality and experience life in a Buddhist community.

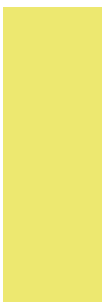
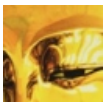
TBH • 13 - 15 Nov • 7pm Fri to 3.30pm Sun • Please book 0116 286 7476 • email courses@amidatrust.com
Accommodation • Single £35/night • Twin £25/night • Basic £15/night • 10% off for all students
Suggested Donation £15/day



TSA TSA WORKSHOP with VENERABLE ANI CHOESANG

Ani Choesang will be teaching the shortened Tsa Tsas practice and how to make exquisite statues from plaster and earth pigments. Tsa Tsas are relief figures made from plaster and in this case we use 'dental' plaster which creates beautifully defined statues that can be painted. You will have the opportunity to make a number of these statues and probably time to paint at least one of them. £5 of the cost of the day will be for the use of materials:- fine 'dental' plaster. Earth stain - Paints (excluding gold leaf and other 'metal' 'leaf') and paint brushes. You can expect to make at least one moulds worth of statues and take home at least one statue. There may be an opportunity for making a second amount, time and numbers permitting and share or donate your extras. There will be a chance for you to paint at least one of the statues.

Sukhavati • Sun 15 Nov • 9.30 - 6pm • Please book • phone: 0207 263 2183
Email: modgala2004@lycos.com • Simple low cost shared accommodation is also available
Refreshments • Please bring some food to share for a vegetarian lunch • Cost £15



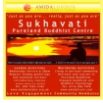
ZEN THERAPY with DAVID BRAZIER

The foundation of Buddhist psychology lies in the theories of dependent origination and of conditioning. In this workshop we shall revisit this material as well as the principles that underpin the Buddhist attempt to live a life of unconditional compassion. "Since this book was published in 1995 I have been on a long, rich journey. The advent of this book was the opening door that precipitated us into offering a professional training programme for therapists based on Buddhist psychology principles and led to our intense experimentation with the contemporary implications of this age-old corpus of wisdom and know-how. Let's revisit the source, review the journey and see where we are up to. Let's ask ourselves once again, what is it that is truly therapeutic and what is the way of being that one needs to adopt to be an agent."

TBH • 10am Sat 21 Nov - 4pm Sun 22 Nov • please book 0116 286 7476 • email courses@amidatrust.com
Accommodation • Single £35/night • Twin £25/night • Basic £15/night • 10% off for all students
Cost £15/day for the public • Free for Buddhist Psychology Students



NOVEMBER



GRIEF led by PRASADA

Of all the emotions, grief is perhaps the most difficult to face. The misery of loss can throw a blight over our lives for long periods after a loved one has died or left. Yet grief is also the seed-bed of spiritual renewal, the dark time from which we may emerge with a deeper will for life and psychological maturity. Buddhism teaches the centrality of grief in the spiritual path, and the potential of this universal human emotion to transform. This day workshop will be an opportunity to share, to express, to reflect and to look at the Buddhist teachings which inform our understanding of grief.

Sukhavati • Sun 22 Nov • 10 - 4pm • Please book • phone: 0207 263 2183
 Email: modgala2004@lycos.com • Simple low cost shared accommodation is also available
 Refreshments • Vegetarian lunch • Suggested donation £15 waged • £5 unwaged

DECEMBER



TOWARDS A BETTER WORLD, CREATING A PURE LAND led by SR. MODGALA

We can all help build a better world especially when we come together. Dharmakara, who became Amida Buddha vowed to create a Pureland where all can be enlightened, without discrimination. How can we contribute to this world? In our wonderful diversity we can all bring many good things into this world. When we share our visions we can find a bigger one and share the joy that comes with it.

Sukhavati • Tues 1 Dec • 10 - 4pm • Please book • phone: 0207 263 2183
 Email: modgala2004@lycos.com • Simple low cost shared accommodation is also available
 Refreshments • Vegetarian lunch • Suggested donation £15 waged • £5 unwaged



THE BODHI RETREAT with DHARMAVIDYA AND MEMBERS OF THE SANGHA

The Bodhi Retreat is held in commemoration of the Enlightenment of Shakyamuni and the founding of the Buddhist tradition. Always the most important and exuberant event in the Amida annual calendar, the Bodhi Retreat has grown in significance as the Amida-shu and the Amida Order have developed. Four years ago we inaugurated the practice of 24 hours of continuous chanting at the beginning of the retreat. This year we plan to extend this to three days of continuous chanting. This practice provides the opportunity for a complete immersion in the nembutsu. One can spend every waking hour in nembutsu practice. In order to make this possible we have scheduled all admission and renewal ceremonies for 9th December, the day after enlightenment day, to symbolise their forward orientation. Once the Buddha is enlightened, admission to his community becomes possible. If you are a present or intending member of Amida-shu, do make every effort to attend. If you are contemplating an advance in your commitment, please arrange to discuss this ahead of the retreat with one of the teachers of the Order.

TBH • 2 - 9 Dec • start with brunch at 10 • Please book 0116 286 7476 • email courses@amidatrust.com
 Accommodation • Single £35/night • Twin £25/night • Basic £15/night • 10% off for all students
 Suggested Donation £15/day



SORTING OUT

PSEUDO-DARWINISMS

Mary Midgley

Mary Midgley, a moral philosopher with wide interests, author of *Beast and Man*, *Evolution as a Religion* and *Science as Salvation*.

Her new book *Darwin. Hobbes and the Solitary Self* is about the Egoist tradition from Hobbes to the Selfish Gene and will be out soon.



The word 'Darwinism' now serves as the name of an ideology, a politico-spiritual-moral stance which can readily be used as a battlefield. Considering how much trouble Darwin himself took to prevent this happening, today's rows may seem a little surprising. But of course they are nothing new. The Athenians prosecuted Anaxagoras for impiety when he suggested that the sun might really be just a red-hot stone, and we all know what happened to Galileo.

Nor are these connections just accidental. The truth is that science never is really distinct from the rest of thought. Scientists, being human, naturally draw their background assumptions from the life around them. In every age they take for granted large ideas which seem obvious at the time, and they sometimes find it natural to see these as scientific truths. Not surprisingly, the bystanders then pick up resonances from what they say. Thus Newton welcomed certain apparently miraculous aspects of his theory, such as his view on gravitation, because he thought they provided extra proofs of God's existence. And, with equal confidence, today's Dawkinsians welcome Darwin's view on evolution as proving the exact opposite. But since these are not really physical doctrines at all, they cannot be discussed in terms of the physical sciences. They need different conceptual tools.

This entanglement with religion has not, of course, been the first ideological twist to overtake Darwin. Social Darwinism - the direct application of 'natural

selection' to contemporary human affairs - sprang up already in his own day. This idea, which is still influential, should really have been called Spencerism since it came from Herbert Spencer, but unluckily Spencer believed himself to be expounding Darwin. His message was that the 'survival of the fittest' - a phrase which he invented - was both the right, and indeed the only possible pattern of evolutionary development. It ought therefore to be imposed in human life whenever, by some mischance, it failed to appear on its own. Thus, for instance, all organized charity to relieve the poor interfered with the cleansing work of natural selection and such activity was therefore merely misguided self-indulgence -

The whole effort of nature is to get rid of such, to clear the world of them, and to make room for better... If they are sufficiently complete to live, they do live. If they are not... they die, and it is best that they should die.
(*Social Statics* New York, 1864, pp. 414-15)

Darwin hated this view. Spencer, however, preached it all over the United States during the 1880s, so effectively that he outsold every other philosopher there during that decade. It also became influential in Germany, where the great biologist Ernst Haeckel promoted it again, under the impression that it was part of Darwin's own doctrine. This led German military theorists to use Darwinism as a justification for aggressive foreign policy during the First World War. And the news of that propaganda, which was

widely reported in America at the time, thoroughly blackened Darwin's reputation there, leading, among other things to the Scopes Monkey Trial in the 1920s.

Today's neo-Darwinists officially dissociate themselves entirely from Social Darwinism. And it is quite true that they don't apply their arguments to current political problems. This restraint, however, comes of their having moved away from politics to the still more exciting sphere of metaphysics. Here they claim that competitive natural selection is the prime explanatory principle for every kind of process biological (through genes), social (through memes), and perhaps also even cosmological (Peter Atkins explains, in The Creation, that the Big Bang itself resulted from competition - within the previous nothingness - between various rival possibilities, the fittest of which eventually prevailed and became real). Thus the destructive effect of competition is, as Daniel Dennett puts it in Darwin's Dangerous Idea, a 'universal acid', a kind of explanation that supersedes all other major thought patterns.

This new outlook has, as they explain, drastic consequences for all of us, consequences by no means confined to religion. As Richard Dawkins says on page 1 of The Selfish Gene, Darwinism has taught us that 'we no longer have to resort to superstition when faced with the deep problems; Is there a meaning to life? What are we for? What is man?' And in expounding the ideas that we can use instead, these theorists display a one-sided, melodramatic, fatalistic insistence on the bloody-mindedness of life a trait which actually links them quite closely to the earlier Social Darwinists. It is none too clear, either, why they do not think that a belief in entities such as memes, or possibilities jousting in space before the dawn of time, is superstitious.

Before tracing these flights, however, we should perhaps contrast them briefly with Darwin's own much more modest program. Darwin carefully avoided all vast metaphysical and moral speculation, not just because he feared controversy but because he thought the world was genuinely mysterious and our knowledge of it extremely limited. And he used the idea of selection solely to explain biological evolution, never suggesting for a moment that it should be used anywhere else. Even within that biological sphere, he emphasized that he did not think it was the sole cause of evolutionary change. He expressed sharp irritation in his Autobiography at the way in which people kept ignoring his repeated denials on this point - a tendency which

only shows how hard readers have found it to take in the full originality of his doctrine.

He added that he did still think selection was the main cause. This is not surprising since he had just discovered it, and no other possible causes had yet been suggested. But it is clear that he saw how inadequate this one negative cause was to shape the whole huge positive development. He always remained interested in the Lamarckian idea of inheritance of acquired characteristics, although he saw its problems, because it might possibly offer something to fill this gap. And when he said that thinking about the problem of the peacock's tail made him feel physically sick, he was clearly expressing his sense of this disproportion of the need to find other contributory causes.

Scientists today are beginning to look for these, for instance, by considering the quite limited range of development that is open to molecules when they start to form into living cells, or to particular species when they need to change. These investigations make it plain that the workings of natural selection are not in the least like the model of 'blind chance' - or as Jacques Monod put it the 'casino' - that is cited by modern neo-Darwinians. And there seems little doubt that Darwin himself would have been pleased to join them in these enquiries.

So what, by contrast, is the neo-darwinistic meaning of life? In River out of Eden, which he has firmly subtitled 'A Darwinian View of Life'. Richard Dawkins expounds its essence:

In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. The universe we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference. As that unhappy poet A.E.Housman put it:

*'For Nature, heartless, witless Nature
Will neither care nor know.
DNA neither cares nor knows. DNA just is.
And we dance to its tune.'*

This passage mixes an officially impersonal, objective scientific account with an unbridled mythical melodrama to very strange effect. On the impersonal side, all that needs to be said is that physical science does not deal in questions of meaning and value, so it naturally has nothing to say about the point or purpose of life. What Dawkins is

claiming here, however, is that science has proved that there is no such point or purpose.

If this were right, the lesson that we are said to have learnt from The Origin of Species would be that life is meaningless. But the latter part of this manifesto tells us, even more surprisingly, that life does indeed have a meaning - a horrible one. Here the story is dramatised to suggest that an omnipotent Fate-figure, DNA, who is not impersonal but actively malicious, is actually in charge. The phrase 'pitiless indifference' only makes sense if it describes a conscious being who is capable of pity and fails to feel it when he ought to. Like the constant talk of 'ruthless selfishness' in The Selfish Gene, this language builds a colourful picture of a callous, manipulative demon in whose hands humans are helpless. Without that personification, the idea of playing a tune that others must dance to would have no sense at all.

In case this story upsets his readers, Dawkins does occasionally tell them that he doesn't mean a word of it. Thus, at the beginning and end of The Selfish Gene (pp.3 and 215) he explains that actually we can resist this demon quite easily any time that we want to. 'We have the power to defy the selfish genes of our birth and, if necessary, the selfish memes of our indoctrination....We, alone on earth, can rebel against the tyranny of the selfish replicators' (p.215). Unfortunately, however, this free-will story is apparently only a mantra which (perhaps like the paternosters of mafia members) does not affect the doctrine of demonic rule, which continues to prevail everywhere else.

Why would a readiness to explain everything by natural selection bring anybody to such a doctrine? The trouble here surely comes from an unbalanced emphasis on the competitive, destructive side of the creative process at the expense of noticing its wider tendencies. As Brian Goodwin points out:

There is as much co-operation in biology as there is competition. Mutualism and symbiosis organisms living together is a state of mutual dependence such as lichens that combine to form a fungus with an alga in happy harmony, or the bacteria in our guts, from which we benefit as well as they are an equally universal feature of the biological realm. Why not argue that co-operation is the great source of innovation in evolution, as in the enormous step, aeons ago, of producing a eukaryotic cell, one with a true nucleus, which came about by the co-operative union of two or three prokaryotes, cells without nucleus?

(How The Leopard Changed Its Spots, Weidenfeld, London 1994, p.166, emphasis mine)

Both factors are evidently active in the cosmos, just as they are in our own emotional nature, and Darwin's work dwells equally on both of them. He does indeed often make clear his horrified response to the presence of so much suffering in the world, as when he wrote to Hooker in 1856, 'What a book a devil's chaplain might write on the clumsy, wasteful, blundering low and horribly cruel works of nature!' And this problem of suffering was indeed a main cause of his disillusion with the rather naive kind of Christianity that he had been reared in. But it certainly never moved him to take anything like Dawkins's position that the cosmos contains 'no design, no purpose, no evil and no good'.

On the contrary, writing with evident care in his autobiography he noted:

The extreme difficulty, or rather impossibility, of conceiving this immense and wonderful universe, including man...as the result of blind chance or necessity. When thus reflecting, I feel compelled to look to a First Cause having an intelligent mind in some degree analogous to that of man, and I deserve to be called a Theist.

He added, of course, that he couldn't entirely trust this view because he knew that his intellect, which produced it, was a fallible product of the evolutionary process. But he knew that it shared this disadvantage with all the rest of his thought, and of course this tentativeness never led him to draw extreme and sweeping conclusions. As he wrote to several correspondents, including John Fordyce in 1879, 'I have never been an atheist in the sense of denying the existence of God'. In his autobiography he wrote that 'The mystery of the beginning of all things is insoluble by us and I for one must be content to remain an agnostic' and clearly he used that word, not as a euphemism but in its proper sense.

As for the concept of purpose, anyone who wants to know how scientists treat it today should read the last chapter of the cosmologist Paul Davies's excellent book The Goldilocks Enigma; Why the World is Just Right For Life. In that book Davies describes the problems that recent discoveries about the fine tuning of the universe - the striking coincidences which make possible the vastly improbable development of life within it, - pose to physicists. And at the end, he lays out the various ways in which they now react to these.

Ordinary people, as he points out, will naturally ask whether all this suggests that something purposive is



A PERSONAL STATEMENT ON SOMATIC THERAPY

Sally Ridgway

SOMA (Greek: 'the living body in its wholeness')

'SOMA is more than all the religious and philosophical abstractions that clutter the heads of human beings; it has always been more than that, from the very beginning..... it is not an object but a process. In the same way, life is not a 'what' but a 'how'. To understand the soma and its process is to understand the 'how' of life.' Thomas Hanna, *The Body of Life*.

The eloquent and far-reaching statements of Thomas Hanna state nothing less than 'the soma is the body of life', yet not a 'body, mind, spirit or soul.' On a cellular level, it is that rounded, 3-dimensional shape contained within a membrane whose integrated process concerns itself with its own survival. It is energy and movement that in the animal kingdom generally and human body specifically, is able to be both lost *and* replaced as it seeks dynamic balance. Its constantly shifting flux and change in relation to the surrounding environment lends it its fourth dimension of time. And it is the dance of this exchange within which I focus my work in Somatic Therapy that is explored, liberated and honoured through the art of perception; that is through direct, sensory information that invites direct and heartfelt response with conscious awareness.

The heart of my practice is a holistic framework focusing on

four primary parts around which circulation is understood as central to the experience of bodymind integration and health. It requires a body that is sufficiently stable, adequately supported, and spacious enough to maintain dynamic equilibrium. The heart as both resting-place and centre of activity, with an energetic field reaching far beyond the physical body, has phenomenal power to extend its life force via the flow of blood and breath. With its musculature spiralling in infinite figure eight loops and mirroring that of DNA in the heart of each cell, it invites the subtlest form of communication within the body through touch and intention, that of resonance. Essential touch is that quality that meets energy through sensing and through communication with each specific body system in which we are focused.

I understand the necessity of constant flux and change where grasping can be released with trust and ease found through open enquiry. Whatever and however the issue is presented, I am convinced utterly in the wisdom of the body and adhere to this as my primary indicator for therapeutic intervention. I see circulation spiralling around myriad aspects of the human body creating patterns of movement that are ever forming and reforming. Dis-comfort and dis-ease are then the manifestations of qualities and levels of compromise that affect circulation to the point of restriction. These are the reference

Sally is a Somatic Movement Therapist and Educator registered by the International Somatic Movement Education and Therapy Association. Sally has broad and extensive teaching experience in community, educational and professional contexts.

Sally may be contacted on 07773788608 or go online to theheartofmoving.com.



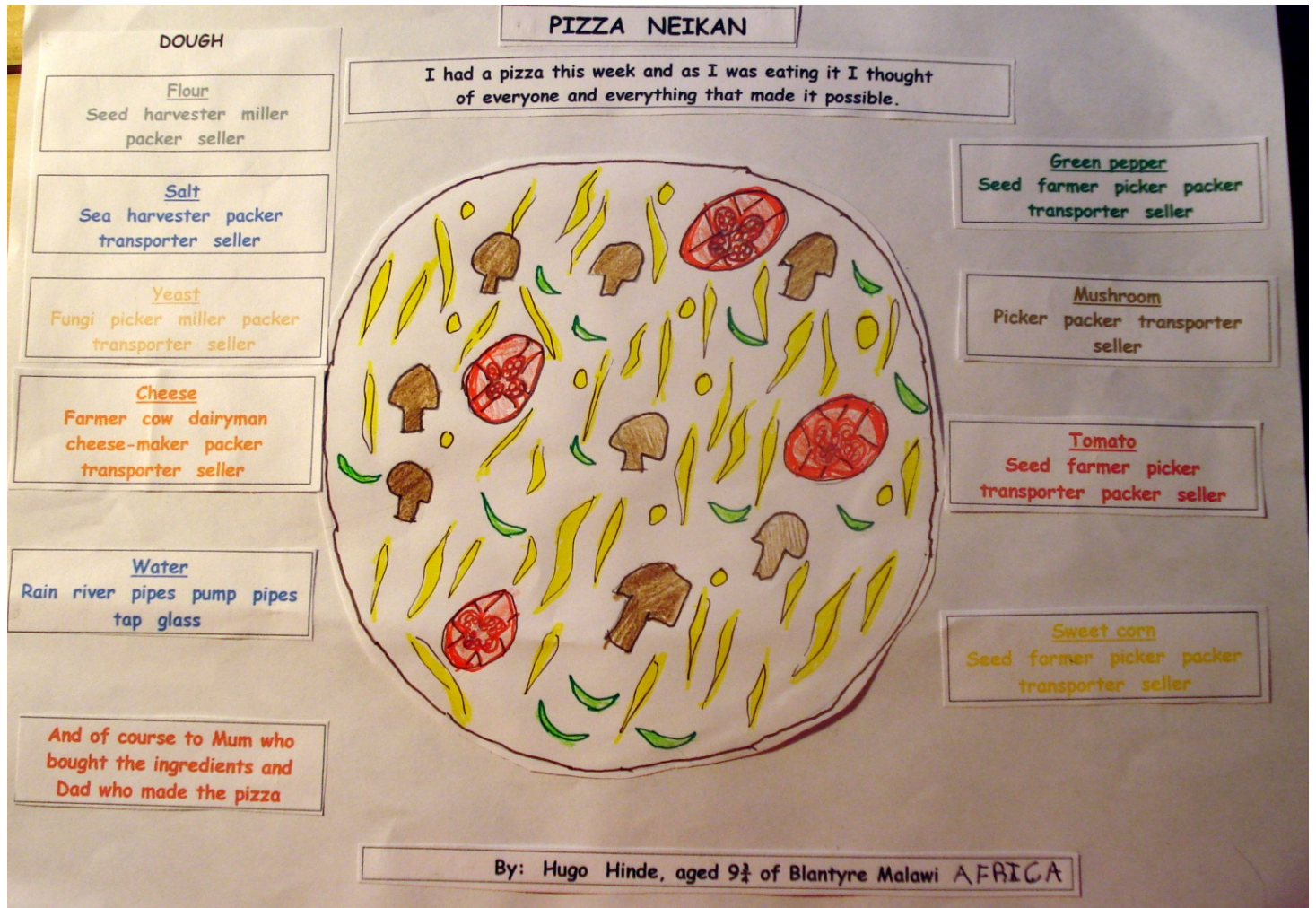
points against which I gauge my intentions and the working methods and principles I employ in their exploration.

Flow is witnessed as the coursing of integrated movement and its embodiment addresses issues where restriction on any physiological level results in stagnation, coldness, or harsh, abrupt lines. From lying and moving across the floor comes a sense of 'ground' and 'being'. Emerging as organ support and the deep inner substance and volume necessary for well-balanced posture and movement, these are the foundations out of which all else must flow. Their fluid contents cushion easy and pain-free turning and simultaneously awaken surfaces of the skin. Here boundaries that are neither too rigid nor too loose ensure that new experiences are neither emotionally or psychologically overwhelming. The theory and practice of early movement patterns require that yielding into that organic support is sufficiently well established before the movement efforts of dynamic balance are undertaken. Infant Movement Development embodies developmental psychology just as volition, muscle and blood generate its energy and 'Fire'. And the capacity and desire for life,

sensed with the permission or not to breathe 'Air', is profoundly reflected through exercises and awareness practices that focus or direct the subtle changes of breath. These often address any lack of readiness and may encourage vitality and vigour back to movement and light behind the eyes.

Buddhist Psychology is deeply felt as a truth in my own experience and work. Its practice resonates with the process of somatic awareness and cycles of completion expounded within Biodynamic Massage and Body Mind Centering®, Each provides a ground for psychological and emotional understanding in which awareness of process is nurtured through mindfulness of somatic experience. Together with the theory and practice of Infant Movement Development and Authentic Movement, these are powerful and direct means to explore the unfolding of personal process and nurture embodied consciousness and healing. Bodymind awareness then invites attention to habitual patterns of behaviour through touch and re-patterning, movement and expression. This experience of embodiment provokes self-knowledge that is deeply empowering and restorative. The means are hands-on bodywork, movement

Continued on page 25



The Forgotten Destination

by
Helen Hinde

We set off along a small dirt track through the beautiful rainforest, heading for the waterfall that we could hear nearby. I anticipated tropical birds, colourful flowers, small animals...

But that afternoon the birds were strangely quiet and there was no wildlife to be seen, just a tangle of green creepers and trees, hardly a flower even. The path seemed much longer than I had thought it would be. I wondered if the children would start to get tired or bored without much wildlife to look at or many birds to spot. They chatted away however, and then one of them noticed the tyre marks along the small track. They started to talk about what type of car might have made those tracks, and then Hugo decided to make his own tracks and whipped off his shoes. Nyassa and Benjamin followed suit. Suddenly they were squelching in and out of mud puddles and tracks, trying out one area of mud for 'feel' after another. They were enraptured. One area of mud was likened to chocolate icing, another to soft ginger cake. After some time they shouted. 'Mum, mum, take off your shoes too.' 'Oh no', I replied very primly, 'I will do that when we get there.' Then it occurred to me, that THEY had already 'got there'!

The waterfall destination was long forgotten. The birds, flowers and wildlife were not missed. The only thing in their world it seemed right then, was their feet and the mud beneath it.

Cooking with Modgala

Veggie cookery days in London

Following a meeting on a delightful day at the Islington health and bike festival Modgala has embarked on a series of veggie cookery days. The first one in August was great fun and here is one of the favourite recipes. If any more people are interested do contact modgala at sukhavati on 0207 2632183 or email modgala2004@lycos.com

Vegetable Pate

4 large onions finely chopped
 2 peppers finely sliced
 2 large carrots diced small
 ½ cabbage sliced thinly
 2 cups beans soaked overnight
 and cooked till soft
 1 tin chopped tomatoes
 1 teaspoon salt
 1 teaspoon black pepper
 2 teaspoons paprika
 ¼ teaspoon chilli pepper
 1 teaspoon each - sage, rosemary, parsley/lovage
 1 teaspoon marmite or vegemite
 2 tablespoons margarine
 6 bay leaves

METHOD

Fry onions quickly in margarine so they brown
 Add peppers and fry quite quickly
 Add the herbs and spices, cabbage and carrots
 Fry lightly for 2 minutes stirring,
 Add the beans and tin of tomatoes
 Bring to the boil stirring then simmer for half an hour
 stirring occasionally
 Add extra water if needed but only enough to keep
 from singeing
 Turn off heat and Puree with the hand blender
 Put in greased small tins
 Bake for 30 mins 180C/360F

Each of us should help save the planet by changing our diet by Nitin Mehta

Here is something we can all do and should do to save our planet: give up meat eating and return to a plant-based vegetarian and vegan diet. Apart from the human population of six-and-a-half billion we are raising a staggering 60 billion animals a year for meat. Our planet is simply not big enough to sustain these numbers. Farmed animals produce more greenhouse emissions than the world's entire transport system. To produce a pound of meat 2,500 gallons of water are needed as opposed to 25 gallons needed to produce a pound of wheat. In the Gulf of Mexico pollutants in animal waste have contributed to a "dead zone" where there is not enough oxygen to support aquatic life. During the summer of 2004 this dead zone extended over 5,800 square miles. Livestock is responsible for 70 per cent of the Amazon deforestation. On present trends the rain forests of South America, the lungs of the planet, could disappear by 2030 – this could lead to a major catastrophe. The introduction of bio-fuel combined with livestock rearing may deliver a fatal blow to mother Earth putting in danger the human civilisation as we know it. Industrial fishing is doing to oceans what animals reared for meat are doing to the land. All marine life from turtles to dolphins is perishing due to modern fishing methods. Mangrove forests and coral reefs are disappearing; mangrove forests are being cleared to start fish farms. The amount of grains fed to animals could feed up to 4 billion people, and with the human population set to grow up to 9 billion by 2050 mass starvation is inevitable unless the Western world and the middle classes of India and China reject meat and fish as a food of choice. On present trends global meat production is projected to more than double from 229 million tonnes in 1999 to 465 million tonnes in 2050, while the milk output is set to rise from 580 to 1,043 million tonnes. Unless this trend is reversed, future generations will face a unimaginably bleak future. Let every individual weigh the habit of meat eating with the terrible damage it is already doing to our planet. Here is something positive we can do – go vegetarian and reduce our foot print.

This is an edited extract from a talk given by Nitin Mehta, the founder of the Indian Vegetarian Society, at the Jain Centre, Manchester.

PERSPECTIVES ON THE ROAD

Caroline Prasada Brazier OAB

Last night I drove down to visit my parents in North Devon. The journey usually takes me five hours, but last night it took eight.

I left Narborough at about 2.00pm. I had plenty of time, and felt relaxed at the prospect of a relatively short and pleasant drive. (I say relatively, for two days earlier I had been on the road for eighteen hours returning from the retreat centre in France.) The day was sunny and a blustery wind whisked the roadside trees. The road was clear and I was enjoying the solitude.

The first hold up came at Moreton-in-the-Marsh. Red tail lights heralded an obstruction ahead, and I found myself joining a queue. At this point, recollection of a similar traffic jam on a previous journey gave me a sense of *déjà vu*. Instinctively I glanced around and saw a turning. Should I take a side road and try to by-pass the obstruction? A moment of indecision, and I had missed the opportunity, carried past the turning by the slow grind forwards. The sun still shone. I noticed myself smiling, enjoying the time to muse and do nothing. No need to fumble for alternative routes or become anxious about a deadline.

Progress was very slow. Often we seemed just to sit still. I watched the large van, ten vehicles ahead, its rear doors painted to advertise its contents, unmoved for five minutes or more. I watched the woman in the car behind, alone also, about my age, her face creased against the sun-light, moving between frustration and resignation. I smiled at the irony as we eventually passed the 'queues likely' sign outside the town. I consulted my road atlas and decided all the alternatives were probably worse than simply waiting my turn to get through. I toyed with thoughts of stopping as we passed the supermarket and a favourite cafe. My mind amused itself.

It took about an hour. Eventually we reached the junction where a young uniformed woman in a day-glo vest directed us to take a side road. Chuckling inwardly, I realised that this would actually take us very close to the first turn-off which I had

contemplated an hour earlier. I followed country lanes, guessed a left turn, and rejoined my route a few miles on. Having lost so long, I realised I was going to hit Bristol in the rush hour. I anticipated further delays.

It was after five o'clock when I joined the M4. Dark clouds hung over the Severn valley, dramatic and glorious in their monochrome shades of dark and light. The wind had increased and I felt its pull on the car as I drove. Ahead, an overhead sign announced severe delays on the M5. As I had expected rush hour traffic would be at its peak.

By the time I reached the Bristol turn-off, however, the warning signs escalated to a 'queue after next junction'. Sure enough, I could see static tail lights ahead. I made a snap decision. Recalling Moreton, I didn't want to be stuck in another queue. Crossing the city centre in the rush hour might be congested, but at least city traffic usually moves, albeit slowly. Besides, a glance at the map reminded me that the M32 went right into the centre. I only needed to cross half the city on ordinary roads.

Hardly had I left the M4 for the M32 motorway, however, before the heavens opened. A terrifying wall of water hit my windscreen, obliterating tail lights in front and behind. Lightning and thunder flashed simultaneously overhead. I slowed to a crawl, aquaplaning slightly as I did so, flashers pounding out an anxious heartbeat, as I hoped against hope that the driver behind was not insane enough to go at speed.

At six thirty I phoned my parents from an underpass. I am not in the habit of phoning whilst driving indeed, I'm not in the habit of phoning much at all on my mobile but on this occasion I was not going anywhere fast. I was stationary. "I am going to be late." I told them.

A bit over two hours later, I made my next call from Taunton. I was going to be later still. The intervening forty miles had passed initially in urban crawl and then in congested country lanes, interspersed with village junctions, each with its queue of tail lights. It had been slow. Had I been too hasty leaving the

motorway? Should I not have learned that city centres rarely provide sensible alternatives to traffic jams? Had I been stupid? I chided myself as I drove.

But then I began to notice that my plight was as nothing against that of others. Leaving Bristol a stream of traffic was coming towards me along what should have been quiet rural roads. Sometimes it backed up and became stationary. I soon began to realise that my own delays were as nothing compared to those of others. Perhaps I had done the right thing after all. I rejoined the M5 near Bridgewater. The northbound carriageway was completely jammed, solid with traffic going nowhere. In my own direction, traffic was heavy but moving.

Searching for a local radio station I discovered that I was part of the evening's drama. Nostalgic eighties pop songs alternated with text messages. 'Love to Tommy (7) and Sarah (3) who are being so good in the M5 queue', 'Thank you to my husband for driving, we have been stuck here for five hours', 'The lovely people in the caravan behind are letting us use their toilet!', 'I'm supposed to be at a party, but nothing is moving'. Suddenly, instead of my personal struggle with traffic and delays, I found myself part of a bigger picture. The Dunkirk spirit surged through the air waves, *"We are cheerful. We are stuck but we have had a great holiday. Police are sorting it out."* Traffic is starting to move, slowly. It will be some time, but, hell, we'll get home tonight.

At Taunton I left the motorway. I crossed Exmoor in the dark, winding up empty roads across empty spaces, peering into the blackness for animals and fallen branches. Rain fell intermittently and lightly, the storms left behind with the traffic chaos. I reflected.

Experience lies in the space between events and mental process. I thought about how the drive had involved a range of experiences, and these had been conditioned by both external factors and my own reactions and responses. The moment by moment detail was complex, but the grosser swings of mood and action were all a composite of factors within and without my personal mental process, most of which were beyond my control.

The interface between our minds and the world is a fascinating repository of factors which have intrigued Buddhist practitioners for years; been catalogued and observed, and formed the ground of theory and meditative method. Experience happens. We perceive things, but our perception is conditioned. One factor in this is our predominating preoccupation. Predominance is one of the forms of mental conditioning listed in the Abhidharma. Thus, the mind which has a predominance of worry is alert and quickly spots signs of potential delays. The mind whose predominating mood is relaxation conditions attentiveness to pleasant surroundings or nice places to stop.

Expectations condition stories. 'Plenty of time', conditions 'enjoy the sun'. 'Getting late' and 'Don't want to repeat what happened in Moreton' conditions 'avoid that queue'. From this conditioned position, the mind heeds the senses differentially. The relaxed mind may focus on the mind-sense, dreaming and scheming. The anxious mind may draw on the eye, which, gazelle-like, notes each possible hazard.

Observations, conditioned by our mind-states, lead to decisions and actions. Depending on our predominating mentality at the time, we may try to control the course of events, or simply go with the flow. Habitual patterns surface. Either way, even if we try to control the situation, we cannot. We are caught between being proactive and responding, between being initiator and being victim, between fear and faith. We want to know the right action, but in the end, we cannot. We never know what might have happened had we taken the other path. Had I stayed on the motorway, would I have arrived in Taunton at seven, or nine o'clock, instead of eight? If I had taken a different detour, might it have been quicker or slower? I made a choice. The alternative is for ever precluded.

Amidst this uncertainty and our attempts to control it, grounded in our previous experiences, we seek to create a semblance of stability. This is when we seek a story. We look for a framework in which to display events so that they make sense. Out of the chaos of random happenings, we look for structure and stability to reassure ourselves that life is predictable and not just a collection of random discomforts. Through such

Continued on page 26

Colours of a process : a little part on the path

by
Katrien Sercu MAS

As I write this, it is just 3 months since Dharmavidya, assisted by Sumaya, led the ceremony in Belgium, admitting me and Gerald from Holland as members of the Amida-shu. It seems much longer than 3 months, as if a broad, deep and strong river has taken me with her and I have said 'yes'. This feels good as well as scary.

Since I was little, nature was my teacher, a safe place where I found spirituality and connection with life, sometimes with people but not with the world.

When I reached 23 years of age, I left my home and my family to join an Anthroposophic Community, a Christian sect. For me, it was a flight from the bad world and it took more than 15 years to return and become 'self-employed' in the world. The integration was rich and I saw what wasn't right, noble and honest in that system/vision, in the world and in me. Eight years ago, in the summer, my partner and I went on holiday to France, where by chance I met Dharmavidya and Prasada at the Amida retreat centre. I didn't know anything about Buddhism at the time. After a week living there, the sentence came to me:

I found the veins of the earth

Strange words, but true. So I met the broad, deep and strong river called Amida Buddhism and I started to go along to the group in Belgium, slowly, tasting, eating and integrating it, without much experience of the practice, but feeling inspired and interested.

One or two times a year, we would attend a weekend retreat or workshop with Dharmavidya and Prasada. These were sources of learning and growth, running alongside the rich chanting taking place in our sangha. We meet every 6 weeks in the houses of the different members because of being scattered in an radius of 100 km.

It just happened, relatively unconsciously, that I was prompted to ask Dharmavidya if I could become a member of Amida-shu, without knowing what this would be like. It was time to do that I thought and then subsequently I was then was invited to join. (Thank you all!) So I entered with my little toe in the broad, deep and strong river on 26th April 2009, with a consciousness of responsibility and of grace. Faith and practice were no longer an option, instead they became a natural and serious intention, with the basic Buddhist attitudes following as consequence.

The vows for the benefit of all becomes a daily intention. This often brings struggles with it, however. What about the spiders that scare me? What about my aggressive neighbour or my own aggression? What about slugs that eat the produce I love? This leads me to a lot of dilemmas and questions about what brings

awakening. It helps me to live a more wholesome and noble life. Before my membership of Amida-Shu I had fewer ethical questions! This is good and yet troublesome.

Connecting with the wider sangha, on the web, is the second fruit I could taste. I find myself putting more than my little toe in, instead I am entering with my legs and heart. I'm not interested in theories and philosophy that much unless they're connected with experience and bodily awareness. The warm and personal sharing with some people on Friends of Amida Ning site shows me the searching nature of practice in daily life; that this is in food, drink and the joy we share together, giving me the longing to understand the basic theories. There are now a few people on Ning who have made an agreement to chant the Nembutsu at the same time of day: this feels like a chain connecting us together. It is also challenging. When rereading my posts and other comments; how I'm dominated by a crumpled brain, that always judges, that has feelings of guilt and shame, feelings that condition patterns in me on different levels. The result: a real foolish being, imperfect, craving to be perfect! Namo Amida Bu.

Mostly though, the Nembutsu is like a little sparrow in the middle of a noisy polluted big city. My brain functions like a non-stop-machine, even at night. This is a physical handicap where I need self-power and discipline to open myself to Other-Power. As a temporary solution I visualise a warm light in the middle of my brain, to bring silence and openness, so that the Nembutsu becomes possible. I may then rebuild my habits and find my natural state.

I see the walls of protection, patterns of judging and thinking as human, but not good or necessary. Faith in the unconditional love of Amida Buddha gives me the power to practice this, 'by the grace that I receive'. This faith comes and goes with the flow of life, and is growing slowly. I feel it's always there, even when I'm too tired or defeated to recognise it.

Sometimes I want to jump in the middle of the Amida river, to leave my home and my family and to go to The Buddhist House for several months. However, this is would not be good at the moment. It would be an egoistic choice, with elements of flight, away from the responsibilities I have here. I have my children and my old father to think of; the social work I do with disabled people who live on their own and my psychotherapy practice and the love I feel for them must never cease!

To jump or to choose to change my whole life would also be scary. What with my longing for a glass of wine in the evening, my attachment to clothes or to having a tan, the moments I need some solitude, the duty I feel to do things I don't want to do, the times I want to kill a spider. This step would be a step too soon at the moment. I find myself wondering if I am perhaps a bit lazy and selfish? I mention this without wishing to be judged: it is as it is and it grows, it is part of a process.... too?

Yes, I long to live in a sangha, whilst I am living alone. Sometimes, this leaves me with feelings of loneliness. I have learned to live with the ups and downs, to have trust and faith that love really exists, even when this is not evident in my own neighbourhood. It still gives me the possibilities and space for important things.

Last week, I changed my psychotherapy room into a little Amida temple. Now the opportunity to connect with Amida is always present. I try to use the house and beautiful garden as an open space for Amida's love and to experience the light shining in the world, a peaceful place for my struggling brain and longing, loving heart, open for people who want to come and to share moments of life, as long as this is wholesome.

Namo Amida Bu

Somatic Therapy continued from p. 18

therapy and authentic expression, that bring together contemporary body and movement therapies with creative process for wellbeing and creativity. Somatic Therapy is effective for immediate relief from sudden and severe conditions, such as physical injury, grief or anxiety, and from the misery of ongoing and long-term trauma, including chronic pain or depression. Creative workshops that explore personal and authentic expression through stress-free, authentic and natural, movement and expression, will also often tap into personal metaphor whilst accessing integrated and easy movement. For more than 20 years I have worked in improvisation as performance artist and movement practitioner. This practice exerts a certain ongoing quality of a spontaneous and creative pas de deux. As healing and spiritual practice unite with creativity within healing ritual an awful lot is said about why I am drawn to this work.

going on, but official science has excluded such a possibility for so long that many aren't going to look at it now. Thus, when Steven Weinberg declared that, 'the more the universe seems comprehensible, the more it also seems pointless' he came in for some flak from his colleagues not for denying purpose but for even asking about it. (p.18). But anyone who looks through the available alternatives which Davies scrupulously lists including the seemingly very extravagant 'multiverse' - may find this attitude surprisingly casual. After weighing them, Davies himself concludes, citing the agreement of several eminent colleagues -

It seems to me that there is a genuine scheme of things the universe is 'about' something. But I am equally uneasy about dropping the whole set of problems in the lap of an arbitrary God, or abandoning all further thought and declaring existence ultimately to be a mystery.... Even though I do not believe Homo Sapiens to be more than an accidental by-product of haphazard natural processes... I do believe that life and mind are etched deeply into the fabric of the universe, perhaps through a shadowy, half-glimpsed life-principle.(pp.302-3, my emphasis)

Among biologists, Simon Conway Morris expresses similar views, reasoning that the remarkable convergences which different life-forms show towards similar solutions are evidence for a purposive movement, and that only dogmatic habit prevents scientists from recognising this. As he says

Some cosmologists like to speculate that the universe is designed to be the home of life, to which some biologists might add, 'Yes, and not only that but we have a pretty shrewd idea of what was on the cards' [namely intelligence. We need to ask] if some of our predecessors who saw their religious faith either ebb or haemorrhage were both misinformed and over-pessimistic, and to enquire whether some common ground can be regained.

(Life's Solution; Inevitable Humans in a Lonely Universe, Cambridge 2003, pp.21-113)

This way of thinking does not, of course, put us back in Newton's position or do his job for him. But it surely does draw this whole topic away from the Cold War approach of science-versus-religion and lay it open for serious thought once more.



Perspectives continued from p. 22

stories we create identities which give us a sense of being someone, of having control of our destinies and of continuity in our paths. Dukkha (affliction) is the driving force behind our desire to cling. It is the seed around which we form our mental states and sense of self.

So, I rejoiced in finding a story on which to hang last night's events. We all like the relief of recognising the script, like hearing a familiar song played in a foreign place. We fit the new into the familiar, honing our actions and responses into pre-existing blue-prints. The story might be negative (I always get stuck in traffic) or positive (I made the best choice and avoided hours of queuing). It might be solitary (I beat the rush) or collective (We are keeping up our spirits in the middle lane). I might even feel moved to tell the tale in writing, adding a twist of amusement and a pinch of insight to turn a strung out evening on the road to worthwhile purpose.

So, in our minds, we filter reality to create experience. We nip and tuck the world to suit our mood, and seek within it justification for our views. Yet, inevitably, whether our minds are sunny or anxious, creative or gloomy, events occur over which we truly have no control. Dukkha happens and we live in its wake.

Today I heard that yesterday morning somebody threw themselves off a motorway bridge in Bristol. The bridge was closed for much of the day whilst police investigated. Another story. More dukkha. A couple of extra hours on the road seem small fry by comparison. Namō Amida Bu.

Faith and Doubt or reasons for writing a text for Running Tide By Dankwart Kleinjans

During our sangha meeting, when Dharmavidya and Kaspalita visited us in Belgium last April, I was very skeptical about Buddhism in general and about the Amida Order's interpretation of the 4 Noble Truths which is found in the *Feeling Buddha* by David Brazier. This interpretation is not orthodox and I was not touched at all. In a way, that was a pity, because normally, I feel really inspired.

I thought I had found out something very important. My reasoning went as follows: our doctrine is not an unquestionable truth, so it is normal to have doubts about it, therefore doubt is an inherent aspect of faith. It is normal to doubt our faith regularly, at least if you are critical. In this way, I was able to ground my doubt and my skepticism, and to make a law out of it. I planned to defend the following: those who have faith in something have to have doubts about it regularly, in order to remain critical and realistic. Faith has to be justified by doubt in order to be mature and not merely childish clinging onto a beautiful story. I felt proud about this reasoning, and I thought to have discovered something important. This made me feel good, and the fact that I was going to write about it in *Running Tide* made me feel even better.

I'm glad that I didn't do this. My intention was to develop a reasoning that I considered important, and because of this reasoning, I felt important myself. I had hoped that others would think "this is interesting, and indeed it is true in a way" or something like that. This flattered my ego.

This is not what the Buddha taught us. In fact it is about a new way of life, it is about opening us to... (No, I'm not going to develop a reasoning about what the Buddha taught us.) One of the main reasons for writing a piece for the *Running Tide* is to flatter my ego. (No, this is not entirely true.) I like philosophy and reasoning, and in a way I want to share this. But my intentions are not very Buddhist. I do this partially to build and fortify my identity.

I confess this because I felt like I was going the wrong way. During the holidays, I read *The Feeling Buddha* again, and *The Other Buddhism* and I felt really inspired, and still feel inspired. Reading the books I realised that I'm just a foolish being, just like everyone else, and I got a little disgusted by my reasonings about faith and doubt. In this piece I wanted to share how I felt tricked by my ego.

There's something else I want to share, something that has huge implications. David Brazier suggests, in his interpretation of the Four Noble Truths, to disconnect with the object of the feeling and to use the energy of the feeling for the good. Imagine what this means... It makes me very happy, without having to rely on my ego.



Have I heard Amida's call?

by
Freya M

When Susthama asked if I could write a piece about my spiritual journey and how I came to Amida I felt completely inadequate! I had been immersing myself in Amida Trust material for only two days, and had been to one Sunday service in Narborough. However, it was a challenge, and knowing now that I am bombu, I realise that it does not have to be perfect!

I could write a book about my spiritual journeyings, but sufficient to say they have encompassed (in no particular order) 8 years as an Anglican, 5 years as a Catholic, 16 years as a Quaker, 10 years as a TM meditator, and intervening periods of atheism/agnosticism. Some of these ran concurrently, especially TM and Quakerism. Although my early childhood was not particularly religious, I was always very drawn to spiritual matters, and as a teenager regularly visited an Anglican convent and thought I would become a nun. Now I realise that my "vocation" was more about the love and security offered by the Sisters, which compensated for a less than happy home life.

My first agnostic "interlude" followed my mother's death, by suicide, when I was 19yrs old and ended 14yrs later when, after practising TM for some time, I became convinced of the existence of a universal force/intelligence. This eventually led to my joining the Society of Friends (Quakers) and even though I am no longer a member, I do now, after a long gap, attend their Meetings for Worship fairly regularly.

My interest in Buddhism began in 2005. I had read somewhere that belief in dogmas or even in a God was not necessary to follow Buddhism, which sounded attractive to me, but I was put off for a long time, thinking it was just too strange, with many new concepts and a different (and puzzling) language in which to express these. At that stage too, I didn't realise that Buddhism, like Christianity, was divided into many traditions/sects. Oh dear more studying, more choices it was all too much! Nevertheless it gradually became the only logical path for me.

I decided I needed to meet some Buddhists, and my first attempt was a meeting organised by the NKT, which was not what I was looking for. Then I discovered a local Chan group and I settled there for some time. I went to one of their weekend retreats, but wanted to do more, and through the Internet discovered Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey in Northumbria and attended their introductory retreat.

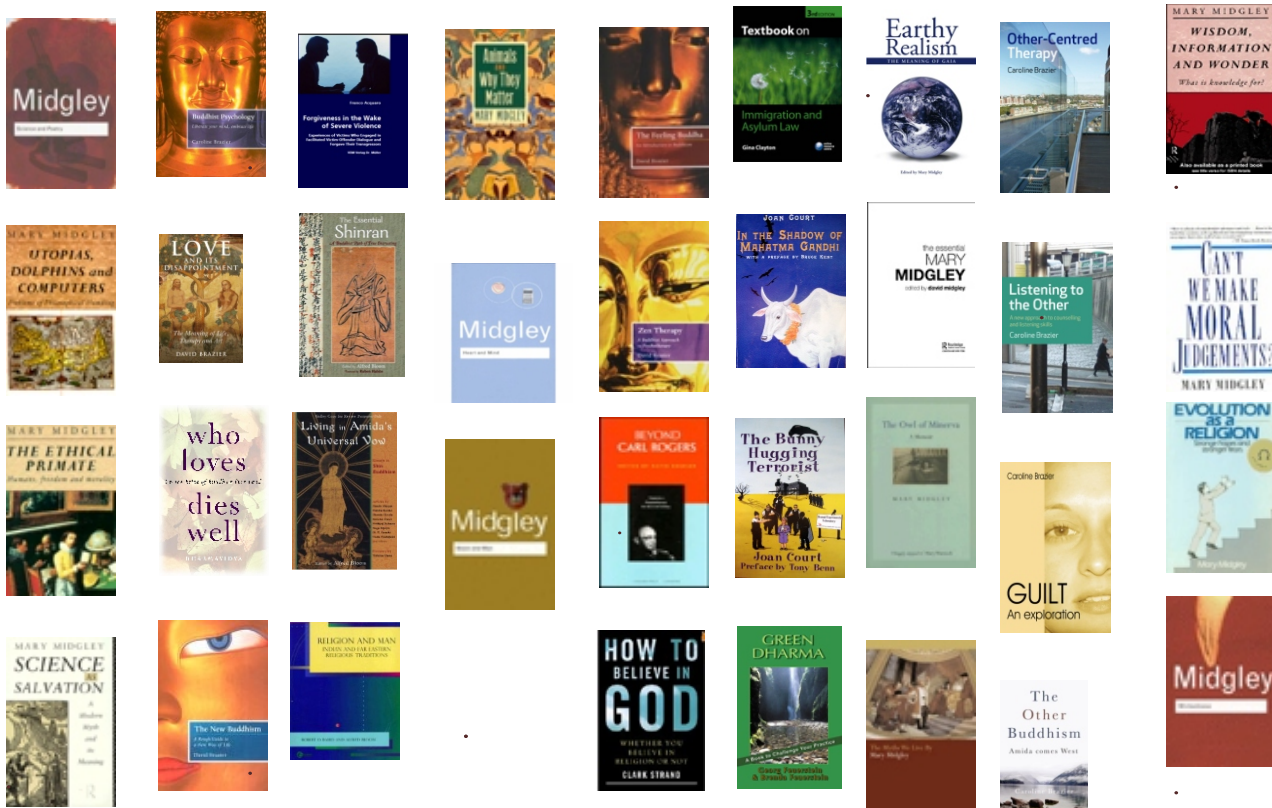
I called it "Buddhist boot camp" and couldn't wait to get away, but it niggled at me for months why had I reacted so strongly? Was it an intuition that they had something I needed but was resisting? I returned several more times, and also, after I moved to the midlands in 2007, started going to occasional day retreats at their Telford Priory.

I learnt much from the OBC and from my training/practice with them in the Soto Zen tradition, but much of it seemed austere and intellectual which allowed me to stay in my "head space". But just doing something one is comfortable with can impede spiritual growth and I knew that I needed to somehow get past my head into my heart, and also that I wanted a sangha which was nearer to home. I tried other traditions a Christmas retreat at an FWBO centre was not it and I stayed for a few days at a Tibetan place near Cambridge but their practise was not for me either.

I "rediscovered" the Amida Trust among some old stuff on my computer. I can't even remember when I first came across it and presumably discounted it or why. I knew that whatever I eventually found had to speak to me and be entirely "kosher" by my criteria, and I was fast running out of options. I read about the Amida Trust, and listened to some of Dharmavidya's audio talks, but it was when I discovered that two of the four people who had influenced him most were Carl Rogers and Rev Master Jiyu Kennett that I realised that perhaps I could relate to Amida Buddhism. I had written my social work dissertation about Rogerian therapy and Rev Master Jiyu is, of course, the founder of the OBC and a heroine of mine!

Bolstered by this information, I made my way to The Buddhist House one Sunday in July, curious, but slightly apprehensive. My problems with Christianity had been around belief in and reliance on an "other-power" and in many ways that remains a difficulty with Amida. On the other hand it is easy to accept that I have a bombu nature, and what does a bombu know?! My hope is that if I persevere with this practice I might be able to experience Amida's unconditional love and acceptance.

Namo Amida Bu

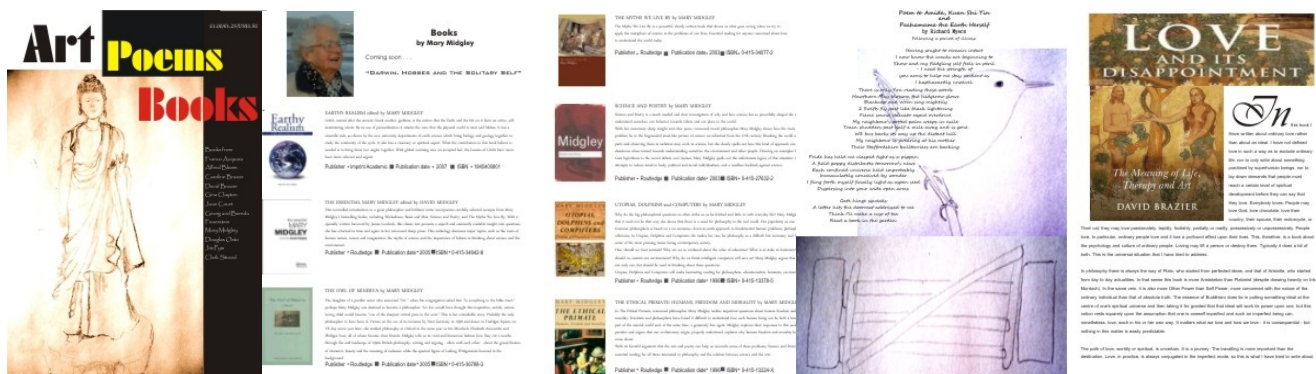


BOOKS BY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF AMIDA

Visit

<http://amidatrust.ning.com>

The Running Tide would like to invite all members and friends of Amida who have published a book to join the 'Members Books' group found on FRIENDS OF AMIDA NING. RT apologises to all members, patrons, and friends whose books haven't been included in the supplement. Please contact runningtide@amidatrust.com for more information.



CHECK OUT THE SPECIAL BONUS **Art Poems Books**