

Voice of Amida-shu, Amida-kai and The Amida Trust: Pureland Buddhism: Absolute Grace, Total Engagement: Issue 20, Winter 2010
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RUNNING TIDE



WHAT'S ON GUIDE

THE LAST DAYS OF THE BUDDHA

Alex Buchan

THE 72 HOUR CONTINUOUS NEMBUTSU

Katrien Sercu

MY FATHER, WHEREVER YOU ARE

David Dharmavidya Brazier

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.

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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.

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Revd Sujatin performing Amida-shu ceremony for Simon Williams at the Buddhist House, see more on page 8.

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Several years ago, I stayed at the main temple of the Jodo Mission of Hawaii and met the bishop in office at that time. I asked him what the difference was between Jodo Shu and Jodo Shinshu, two of the largest Pureland schools in Japan. He answered in a very simple way, 'When Jodo Shu say the nembutsu, they are saying "please", when Jodo Shinshu say the nembutsu, they are saying "thank you".' In relating the flavour of the Nembutsu with two commonly used expressions, the bishop acknowledged that Pureland Buddhism places importance on the emotions and sentiments that religious practice evokes in ordinary human beings. From Honen, the founder of Jodo Shu, we get a sense of longing, of yearning, of needing the Buddha to be near us and to save us from our own folly. From Shinran, the founder of Jodo Shinshu, one feels joy and liberation that arises from having been accepted unconditionally by the Buddha of Infinite life and light.

The way for ordinary beings is not easy – sometimes our nembutsus may be plaintive and other times they may be joyful. Whatever quality we give to the nembutsu, it is still an act of remembering the Buddha. It is a way for ordinary beings who have no capacity for enlightenment through one's own effort to express faith in the Buddha's teachings wherever, however, whenever so that when dukkha strikes we feel protected and safe in the Buddha's light.

One could describe the past couple of months as dangerous times for spiritual practitioners in the Amida Sangha, however, it could also be said that it was a time of spiritual potency, love and maturity. The one thing that I can say confidently is that this issue is late due to noble reasons. It is late because of many changes that are human, real, and close to the heart of this Sangha. An issue has sprung to life and time is being used to understand how real people, and real situations perhaps based on delusion fit into the Buddhist paradigm in the West. This Running Tide will be followed by another one shortly with more articles and commentaries that offer a special quality so rare and yet often found in writings based on direct personal experiences. They will add to the blog posts on Friends of Amida ning site <http://amidatrust.ning.com> about the changes that have happened in the Amida sangha and hopefully add depth and colour to the whole.

The heartfelt stories told from encountering Dukkha are always heart wrenching and deeply moving. We crave for things to be different, to be better, to be other than what they are and so are desperate for the Buddha to stay with us until Samsara ceases. The Nembutsu reminds us of the Buddha's love that shines on everything indiscriminately. Wherever one is in life, whatever one is doing at any given time the light is always there. How can we not feel happy and grateful for a light that shows us that we are not alone in our experience of Dukkha? We are reassured then, just as Julian of Norwich was reassured by Jesus who, in a vision, told her that although sin was unavoidable, all will be well and all manner of things shall be well. Dukkha is not just unavoidable but it is a noble truth. I hope you enjoy this issue.

Susthama

Web sites

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

The Last Days of the Buddha

by
Alex Buchan

AT THE BUDDHIST HOUSE we have been studying the last days of the Buddha as recorded in the early texts, which was a neat co-incidence because I had just finished reading about how these texts were compiled and so was able to add this into the mix. I had read about it in *Buddhist Saints in India* (Ray, 1999); a book I can thoroughly recommend.

A major topic there is the change that took place in Buddhism during the first hundred years after the Buddha's passing. Ray gets much of his inspiration from Max Weber who was one of the first to draw attention to the evidence for this change. Weber sees the emergence during this period of settled monasticism as involving a shift in the type of authority found in Buddhism, from one based on charisma to one based on traditional structures, rules and procedures. Ray, although he does not accept Weber's view that this was a betrayal of the Buddha's intentions, feels that this change was, nevertheless, accompanied by a distortion in how Buddhism is understood, a distortion which persists to this day.

He sees the *Parinirvana Sutra*, which tells the story of the Buddha's last days, as having a pivotal role in this distortion by portraying Buddhism as sharply divided by means of a two-tiered model where the monastics are in the ascendant. He believes this did not reflect the situation at the time of the Buddha and never fully reflected the ongoing situation in India, which he believes was far more multifaceted. As part of his argument he provides evidence for the continuation of peripatetic 'forest' renunciants throughout the long period of Buddhism in India. He sees these as retaining elements of the earliest

tradition and as being linked to a rich and continuously evolving lay devotional tradition ultimately based on the Buddha's enlightenment which these saints partake in.

He shows how those who undertook this path were seen as developing miraculous powers which could then be used to help others. He provides fascinating details of the mythic cults which surrounded various arhats noted for their forest renunciation. They were seen, among other things, as being available to those who called upon them in distress. Given this association with the development of powers to help others, it is perhaps not



Buddha by Simon Williams



surprising that Shantideva in his 'Meditation' chapter in the *Bodhicaryavatara* portrays the Bodhisattva as a forest renunciant. This may also be connected to the origins of the Mahayana itself as we shall see.

At the Buddhist House we based our study of the Buddha's last days on the Theravada version of the *Parinirvana Sutra*. Although Ray questions the assumptions which underlie the selection of the oldest strata of the text, he, nevertheless, accepts the evidence that all the versions may be traced back to an original core compiled about 80 years after the Buddha's death. This core comprises the following: the Buddha's arrival at Kushinagar, the visit there by Subhara, his ordination as the last person to be ordained by the Buddha, and the reaction of the faithful immediately after the Buddha's passing.

This core of the *Parinirvana Sutra* we are told was originally an important component of the oldest discernible vinaya, which can also be dated to around the same time. This has been termed the old 'Skandhaka'; a proto-vinaya predating all the others and arrived at by a western scholar through cross-referencing the different extant vinayas. The old Skandhaka is remarkable in that it can be very clearly seen as marking the emergence of settled monasticism. It does this through the self-conscious incorporation of the earlier peripatetic form of Buddhism, by recasting it as an attitude of mind, while simultaneously laying down various rules which renders it impossible for a monk or nun to pursue in practice. The *Milinda Panha* shows the same self-conscious awareness of concern that Buddhist monastics are not following the lifestyle led by the Buddha and the same arguments are used there as in the old Skandhaka.

It should be said that Ray sees the emergence of settled monasticism as an inevitable adaptation to circumstances, especially to stabilising and regularising lay support. However, the important point is that such a change required ideological underpinnings and the rigid two-tier system provided this. It also reflected the need for monastics to compete with Brahmins 1) in purity, which

they could claim by virtue of strict adherence to the rules of the vinaya and 2) in their monopoly of knowledge of the sacred texts. The *Parinirvana Sutra* was important in validating this arrangement because it could be taken as containing the Buddha's final word.

Because the composition of texts like the *Parinirvana Sutra* predate splits in the Sangha it is easy to see how such a portrayal of Buddhism could come to be seen as issuing from the Buddha himself. Given that all the schools that developed out of these splits adhered to such a view by virtue of being monastic in structure, the context out of which the Mahayana critique of monastic Buddhism arose becomes clearer. Ray provides textural evidence from within Buddhism of a clear awareness, on the part of some, of the dangers of settled monasticism. These date from early condemnations found in the *Theragatha* onwards. He shows that these very early critiques were often accompanied by detailed predictions of Buddhism's eventual decline as a consequence and it is interesting to speculate whether the original doctrinal basis for the Age of Mappo can be found in these reactions to the emergence of settled monasticism.

Ray believes the Mahayana initially developed in lineages of forest renunciants in South East India who were in close contact with important stupa sites and their lay devotees. That the Mahayana's disparate forms shared a common critique of the world-view of monastic Buddhism is perhaps not surprising given what is outlined in Ray's book. The irony is that the Mahayana itself, just as it was becoming self-conscious of itself as a movement adopted a mainly monastic form, in order, Ray argues, to preserve its own tradition and outlook. This is perhaps why the critique of monastic pretensions found in Mahayana texts seems so radical and yet so out of step with Mahayana institutional Buddhism as it has developed and spread. However, Ray's analysis shows that the innovative impulse in Mahayana Buddhism, which has recently led to new developments in Buddhist vocations in the West, has deep roots in Buddhism's past.



*20 minutes sitting 'n chanting
accompanied by a gentle drum
20 minutes chanting 'n walking
following the direction of the sun*

*Namo Amida Bu for 72 hours
3 X 24: sometimes silent other times louder
4 days and 3 nights
Namo Amida Bu*

*Voices mingle, soft, tired, fresh and firm
Voices jingle, bold, modest and joyfully loud.*

*Listening to the other and driven by impulse
Energies changing, careful steps, strong marches
Bodies moving, dancing and tense movements*

*Harmony leads: gentle on the ears
Chaos follows: rather painfully
Sometimes good, other times ecstatic*

Hands still in namaste. Moving. Reaching out



The 72 Hour Continuous Nembutsu

by

Katrien Sercu MAS

Thursday noon, the Bodhi Retreat begins. I am there at the start to join in the 72 hour nembutsu until 10pm that very same day, having one or two breaks, before going to bed to rest. I have met my mind in full glory and think *Namo Amida Bu*.

In life, I have learned that it's important to know what you think and feel, so that you can find a personal place in a group. While chanting gently, I have an awareness of voices, movements, impulses, emotions, contact and my opinions arise: good, beautiful, awful, bad, tedious, painful and sometimes I think I am very brave, and then I see all these judgements, mostly negative towards others and positive towards myself. For the first 8 hours this dialogue is non-stop and then I realise that nobody can hear all these comments except me! And it's only

me who is really troubled by all of this, I conclude. What this leads to when I go to my room is senseless and I think to myself, 'I'm sure that I've made the wrong choice to join Amida - it is full of delusions and so I convince myself that I should leave.'

As I drift off to sleep, alone in the room, I find the silence there helpful. I find some rest from my circling thoughts.

On Friday morning, I am in a different frame of mind and having promised to take a turn on the mokujo (wooden fish used as drum). I walk over to the main house. I notice the birds are singing and I feel a lightness in the air. There are no questions now, no longing to run away but still a sense of just doing 'my duty'. My involvement in the chanting recommences. I feel more loving, more light somehow and clarity comes for a moment.

There was so much variety in the simple calling of 'Namo Amida Bu' during the 72 hour continuous nembutsu. The diversity of friends, together in one room encountering 'The Other' in each other with a golden statue of the Buddha, the unimpeded light, in the middle of the room. I see our focus and witness openness which seems to last for the entire 72 hours.

I know that I can only talk about my own journey and the little steps that are useful in helping me to find some doors that have closed, unconsciously. I was always aware of feeling unconditional love, mostly in nature, but I never trusted it. Perhaps I believed I would have to go through old family patterns chiseled in body and mind before I would reach it? And yet, with chanting 'Namo Amida Bu' I found myself walking and walking, without realising what was unfolding - and it all seemed strangely vivid.

When I returned home, after 10 hours travelling, I had the realisation that unconditional love DOES exist! Amida Buddha is there with other Buddhas and we, foolish beings, are in relationship with them, whether we allow and dare to entrust ourselves or not. I recall, in particular, the short meetings in the kitchen with others on the retreat and the delicious meal we shared on Sunday: authentic human connection with friends, in flesh and blood, much more than a photo shared on the Ning site can ever reflect.



Prasada and Vimalashri in the congo line dancing to the continuous nembutsu



Vimalashri and Pundarika Matri - new Ganko-shas who live and work in Israel



Simon Williams and Massimo D'Alessandro - new postulants on the Amitarya track

Photos taken after the ordination ceremonies during the Bodhi retreat.



Leo and Modgala.



Pundarika, Kuvalaya, Vimalashri, and Susthama.



Annetta, Sujatin, and Madrakara.



Back to front, left to right: Richard, Brandon, Dean, Zee-Zee, Linda
Massimo, Madrakara, Bruce, Annetta, Leo, Dharmavidya, Prasada, Tony, Kaspalita
Kualaya, Modgala, Sudana, Orna, Sumaya, Susthama, Sundari, Sujatinm Vimalashri
Dawn, Simon

Dear Friends,

On the 9th December 2009, in an historic and beautiful ceremony presided over by Dharmavidya at the Buddhist House, Narborough, the following good people took various vows, refuges, precepts, new responsibilities and spiritual commitments as follows:

Prasada, Modgala, and Sujatin became acharya - recognised as teachers in the Order of Amida Buddha;

*Rachel Abel became an order member and was ordained as a ganko-sha with the name Amita Kuvalaya;
Orna Matri became an order member and was ordained as a ganko-sha with the name Amita Pundarika;
Yaakov Matri became an order member and was ordained as a ganko-sha with the name Amita Vimalashri;*

*Massimo D'Alessandro and Simon Williams became postulants;
Madrakara Albiges, Tony Danford, Dawn Hart, and Zee-Zee Heine became aspirants;*

*Madrakara Albiges took the five precepts;
Zee-Zee Heine took the ten precepts;*

Annetta de Quaasteniet and Simon Williams were admitted as members of the Amida-shu;

Bruce Coleman, Brandon Haywood, Dean Haywood, and Richard Ollier took the five refuges.

*Namo Amida Bu,
Tony Danford
Registrar to the Order of Amida Buddha*



THE NEMBUTSU TO CHANT OR NOT TO CHANT?

by
Adrian Thompson

I have been fascinated by the idea of intensive meditation retreats since I read the novel *This Book Will Save your Life* by A. M. Holmes. In the opening scene the main character, Richard Novak, is rushed to hospital with incredible pain. No cause is found and the advice from his very unorthodox doctor, Doctor Lusardi, is "live!" As Novak becomes more conscious of his isolation in the world, he begins to build new relationships and try out new things. He then receives a telephone message from Lusardi letting him know about a workshop called Transcending Suffering - a seven day intensive working with the complexity of our relationships to pain, grief and loss - in silence. Novak immediately signs up; at this point he is ready to try anything. He attends the workshop sceptically and expecting the silence to be easy. Novak finds the routine grueling and the most memorable incident is when on the fourth day a relaxing massage ends with a surprising internal massage.

With these thoughts in mind, I was glad to attend part of the 72hr Nembutsu, however, while I find the ethical and philosophical aspects of Buddhism appealing I struggle with having faith: the heart of Pureland practice. I was very curious to see what effects chanting for an extended period of time would have and was hoping for some kind of revelation.

I entered the shrine room around 2pm on Saturday, two days of chanting had already taken place. I was unsure what exactly I was supposed to be doing but soon picked up the pattern of the chanting as we walked around the room. Then the bell rang and it was time to sit and chant. There was such a peaceful

atmosphere, and I began to feel tingly. I was falling asleep. With much effort, I managed to keep my eyes open and press on. I was secretly praying for the bell to ring again so I could stand up again - less chance of falling asleep when standing up! Fortunately, the energy in the room began to rise and the chanting became more rousing. I did not feel tired now at all, and there were some very touching moments: Sumaya's peaceful face; Caroline and Modgala sitting together chanting and laughing like school-girls; Caroline trying to persuade Dharmavidya to get some sleep; seeing joy on peoples faces.

It was interesting how the chanting changed organically; at times, as if of its own accord and at other times with a clear leader. There were times when I struggled to say 'Namo Amida Bu' at all, after so many repetitions the syllables blurred together and I had to listen to the person next to me to remember what I was supposed to be saying at all.

I had only planned to stay for an hour, thinking I would get fed up, but I found myself enjoying taking part and being with a community. After 3 hours, I thought I'd better stop and check the train times but I didn't really want to leave. So, I had a quick drink and decided to stay a little longer. Eventually I did have to leave to catch the train back to Birmingham but I do wish I could have stayed for longer.

I certainly did not have any kind of revelation but returned in a very calm state of mind and with a new respect for the members of the Amida Order who still had another 18 hours of chanting to go.



Falling In and Out of Grace

Katrien and I are members of the Belgian sangha, and we participated in the 72 hours nembutsu-singing at the Buddhist House (the 'heart-seat' of our faith). I had sung the nembutsu and meditated a lot before, but never for such a long period. My main concern was getting bored. All these interesting people merely singing and smiling at each other? I objected to this, and recognised this as something my mind does: controlling situations by creating an image before I actually experience the situation.

Another objection I had overcome during the years of adhering to the Amida movement was chanting phrases in totally unknown languages like Sanskrit or Chinese. At first, it made me feel like a disciple of a sect and though I like to try out new things, there is a need to understand the underlying values or history of a practice. As a therapist I encountered a lot of people who crave for magical solutions for their suffering. Over the years, I had exchanged my own vague beliefs and practices for an approach I thought to be real, that is, no nonsense Buddhism. And my experience with western Buddhism was that it too, often is just a copy and paste of practices that are imported from a strange culture, without understanding the depth of their origins: undigested rituals and invocations similar to lullabies.

Over time I have let go some of the judgements in these observations and felt that what I really missed in western Buddhism was a religious dimension. Sheer meditation on a cushion felt too individualistic: spiritually materialistic and self powered. In the Amida sangha I experienced the deep impact of singing the open vowels and soft consonants of 'Namo Amida Bu'. In some

way, there is still a connection between the sound of these Japanese words and their meaning. I found that chanting in old languages like Latin and Sanskrit has a similar effect. Maybe it reflects what our ancestors felt by the campfire, telling stories and singing songs as a direct connection with the forces of nature. Other power was in the air and in their bones.

But while at the Buddhist House, I still had to let go of another objection in my head. The deep impact of chanting occurs only in a group, not on my own. Especially when I'm in deep despair I tend to visualize and feel something bigger; the sky that surrounds me or a bright light that dissolves my darkness. So the nembutsu was not my thing. It was a practice that was too Japanese. It wasn't until recently that I realised that when my ego really feels threatened, I often start to moan and put my hands on my heart in an attempt to open up. Is this spontaneous moaning not the childish variant of a consciously practiced discipline of calling to the Buddha Amitabha?

Obviously I needed the previous, long introduction to the actual experience of the 72 hour nembutsu which turned out to be an incredibly simple experience. Somewhere during the first day the bulk of my thinking gave in as the singing filled the room and my head. I was immersed in the voices of all these people of which I knew only six or seven. Most of them felt very close, as the singing stripped off all of my usual judgements. I noticed all these different timbres and emotions in the voices. I started to switch between very personal encounters



by Ksaf Vandeputte

and joining in a collective bath of sound. Sometimes my attention was drawn to one individual with whom I shared the same need to bring in a higher or a lower pitch voice, or to add more rhythm or power when the group sounded tired or somewhat uninspired.

What touched me especially was sharing with the others the intention of reviving the atmosphere when the singing got stuck in a pattern that didn't feel lived through. Of course probably a lot of these 'shared intentions' often were merely encounters with myself, or rather with my many selves. Me, the great stimulator or saver of the essence in situations I judge as dull. Me, the natural born but seldom fully recognised leader. Me, the reckless seeker of beauty and harmony. Me, the knight who fights dragons that withhold the virginal emotions...

It was a relief to notice that most of the time I didn't have to come to the rescue of a captured virgin voice. I often encountered the straightforward expression of a pure and unique soul in a voice. Sometimes I was ashamed of singing too loud or when I filled the space with my dominant aggression heard in my voice. Sometimes it was 'right' to sing loudly, in an outburst of pure power, the sheer joy of celebrating life together. And then joy turned into grief, in an honest sharing of loneliness that confronted us with a mutual impotence...

From the second day on I realised that this singing was as close as we can get to heaven. It felt like all the aspects of love, from the innocent love for a child, over an invitation to make love to an adult, to falling in love with life itself. And

then the inevitable loss of heaven. I got too tired to resist any feelings or thoughts and at the same time there was a calmness that wiped out the need for any thoughts or feelings. The shame of the manifestations of my ego softened. All these moods and intentions were only ripples on the surface. The main mood in me was gratitude for being with all these strange as well as familiar people. They are my real family, even though I might never meet them again in person.

On the way back, when we were in London, to my great surprise, I was not overwhelmed by the noise and fuss as I usually am. The singing went on in my head and was a buffer against what my ego labels as 'ugly' or 'the rat race'. Now the singing in my head has stopped, but the earlier objections against the Nembutsu have too. Thanks to you all, present then or now.

GIFT FOR A NONBELIEVER

*jumped off the riverbanks so many times
I don't remember why I didn't give up
considering that every time I came back
I found myself on the same side of the water*

*have just accepted the fact
of being rooted too firmly
in doubt and cowardice*

*when suddenly a door opens
in the molecules of the air
god opens one of his hands and says:
although I don't exist*

*here is some gold
since you knew where to find me
or didn't you?*



MY FATHER, WHO IS IN HEAVEN, or, more likely, in some other place more suited to his temperament, was a war hero who had been awarded a swatch of medals including the DFC and bar and who, as is probably the case with many such heroes, was all his subsequent life troubled by the effects of what he had experienced getting them, experiences that marked his consciousness indelibly in an age when psychology was little regarded and talking about one's troubles was frowned upon, a circumstance that left him one of the walking wounded all his life as far as emotion was concerned.

I am sure that this much is true, but there is no such thing as experiential determinism and insofar as one can say that a later characteristic is a function of an earlier experience one has to allow that there are other variables also at work, especially the operation of a personal equation that processes the experience in a distinctive manner.

My father was a bomber pilot and second world war bombers were not much more than kites with engines, more or less defenseless against anti-aircraft fire and only lightly armed against attacks by fighter aircraft. To fly one into enemy territory, hear the sirens scrambling aircraft, see the search lights ahead, fly into the midst of that pool of lethal light in order to deliver an equally lethal cargo, see other companion craft shot down, and keep one's nerve long enough to fly away and home again, even then pursued, must have been stressful in the extreme. To do so repeatedly for a 'tour' of twenty or so operations was generally considered to be the limit of human endurance.

Such experience must have welded a crew together in the most soul riveting manner. My father completed such a tour and survived with his crew. They were then each posted to new theatres of combat as the war continued. My father was sent to North Africa. Arriving there he probably felt relief and safety - it was certainly a much safer zone than he had been in. It would have begun happily enough. Then the first of a series of letters would have arrived bringing shocking tidings. News came that one of his former crew had been killed in action. Then another. Then another. After a year or so had passed, my father remained the sole survivor of his original crew. At this point he volunteered to do a second tour of bombing operations over Germany. By this time it was even more dangerous than before. What mix of desire for revenge and suicidal compulsion drove him I can only speculate. However, he survived again and thus became so highly decorated.

These facts are surely enough to explain certain facts about my father, aren't they? A man of great charm and charisma when one encountered him for short periods who was subject to black moods, bouts of fury, claustrophobia and inability to drive at night when headlight beams triggered terrible recollections. He had little time for friends or family and found me, his only child, often an inconvenience, rarely if ever a delight.





However, one must also remember the personal equation. In fact, my father's anti-social and anti-familial feelings predated his war time experience. That fearsome trauma merely incised more deeply a stream that was already well established in its solitary bed. My father so much hated his brother and sister that I was never even introduced to my aunt or my uncle or their off-spring and grew up not even knowing what they look like. To this day I would not recognise any of my paternal relatives if I ran into them in a social situation. They are unknown to me due to my father's isolationism. This tendency toward isolation is something that I too have had to wrestle with in my own life, successfully on the whole, but it has not been easy.

I have never experienced the kind or degree of trauma that my father suffered and I would not wish it on anybody. I am amazed at what human beings sometimes do and what they suffer and endure. I admire him and respect him and also wish his life could have been otherwise. I would love to create a Pure Land where such things are unheard of. Nonetheless my life has also known some [lesser] battles and I too carry scars. I am immensely grateful to the many friends who now surround me and make my life so completely different from his. Wherever you are now, Dad, I hope that you find some new friends and that this time they

are not ripped away from you in such a brutal fashion. And for the rest, I hope that we can all collectively find a way of living that eliminated the terrible soul destroying logic of war.

I am left, however, with the mystery of fate and experience. Did Dad become a bomber because of his character or did the war shape his character? Both must be true. So how do we get off such a terrible wheel of misfortune? How do we fly in the face of Yama? We may call Pureland the "easy path", but I have no illusions that the path of faith is no soft option and the steps that we have sometimes to take in order to live a life of no regret must, of necessity shake our foundations, foundations that go back into the depths of our karmic history.

So. Dad, you, for all your killing, your rages and what you put me through, you are not just a hero for the war time victorious, but also a personal hero for me for being a human being who was true to his own lights even though they were very different lights from the ones that I myself try to live by now. I hope that in my role as a Buddhist priest I can continue to respect each person who comes before me, not for his or her conformity to my ideals, but for her or his essential spirit: each for his own kind of eudaemonia or loyalty to his or her own guiding light.

My Father, Wherever You Are

By Dharmavidya OAB

How little I know about the world. How little I know about the others.

How much I would like to be at ease with this fact and just live, open to the unknown and open to receive. Sometimes it happens as a glimpse, as a short moment, and it has many different forms.



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How little I know about the world

by
Sumaya Budkovska OAB

I just have to live, to be alive, to face the dukkha : impermanence, change.

Usually I'm in trouble when I'm asking for meaning in my life. It is at that time when I am out of touch with everybody and everything, dukkha overcomes me, I feel hurt and I close down.

The last period of time here at The Buddhist House many people are raising questions how to react to the people honestly and sensitively. This question straight opens a space in front of me, the space of the grey where a sensitive approach doesn't have to be honest and a honest approach doesn't have to be sensitive, and sometimes helps to say insensitive thing and sometimes is better not to be totally honest, but maybe it is all other way around. What I can learn from that? (An another common question here at TBH) The contradictions of life, the difficulty to fit to some ideal, the conditions of being human, the unpredictability of future events.

And I am back with the treasure that I found here in this Pureland community.

Being a bombu, full of evil and darkness, and still be able to celebrate that there is the unconditioned, the love, the kindness, the joy,..., the infinite space and the infinite time of light and love. Just celebrate it in front of me. When I'm trying to be like it, I'm always pushing this treasure, this ideal, this hope, this love away, and as a result there are just the clouds there.

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.*



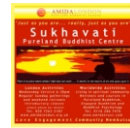
SHEFFIELD



NEWCASTLE



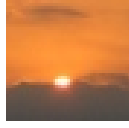
NARBOROUGH



LONDON



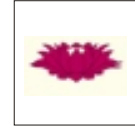
FRANCE



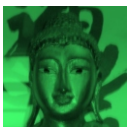
HAWAII



MAITRI



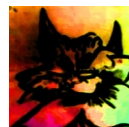
AMITAYUS
WELLBEING



PSYCHOTHERAPY
COURSE



RETREATS



CAMPAIGNS



WORKSHOP

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

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

WHAT'S ON GUIDE

CONTACT INFO



AMIDA SHEFFIELD

CONTACT BHAKTIKA OR SUNDARI 0114 272 4290

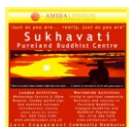
amidasheffield@blueyonder.co.uk • <http://pureland.wordpress.com/>



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 FRANCE

LA VILLE AU ROI • BESSAIS-LE-FROMENTAL LE CHER • 18210 • CONTACT +33 (0)2 48 60 70 19
or 0116 286 7476 • courses@amidatruster.com • <http://amidatruster.typepad.com/france/>



AMIDA TRUST

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

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

<http://amidatruster.ning.com>



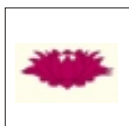
AMIDA HAWAI'I

CONTACT FRANCO • franco@amidatruster.com



MAITRI PROJECT

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



AMITAYUS WELLBEING

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

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

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

ONGOING events



SERVICE AND SUTRA STUDY • 10 - 1PM

Sunday Feb 7th, Sunday March 14th, Sunday April 11th, Saturday May 15th

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



PURELAND BUDDHIST SERVICE • SUNDAY 5PM

This service includes the main practices for a Pureland Buddhist; chanting Namo 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.

The Buddhist House • 12 Coventry Rd • Narborough • 0116 286 7476



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.

Bishop Street Methodist Church • 10a Bishop Street • Town Hall Square • Leicester • All Welcome



MAITRI CENTRE DROP-IN • MONDAYS 2 - 4PM

A place to come in for a chat, some company, and arts activities

Bishop Street Methodist Church • 10a Bishop Street • Town Hall Square • Leicester • 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



PURELAND BUDDHIST SERVICE • MONDAYS 6PM

Chanting, sitting and walking nembutsu

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



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

ONGOING events



MEDITATION FOR RELAXATION • TUESDAYS 12.30 - 1.15PM

Come and meditate. Go to http://lotusinthemud.typepad.com/amida_newcastle/ for more details
Research Beehive (Level 2), Old Library Building • Newcastle University • Room 2.20



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



CREATIVE SPACE • TUESDAYS 7.30 - 9PM

An open space for pandramatics, poetry, sacred chanting and other creative activities.
The Buddhist House • 12 Coventry Rd • Narborough • 0116 286 7476



MEDITATION AND RELAXATION CLASS • TUESDAYS 7.30 - 8.30 PM

Phone 01827719926 for more information
Amitayus Wellbeing • 189 Long Street • Atherstone • Please book info@amitayus-wellbeing.co.uk



MEDITATION FOR RELAXATION • WEDNESDAYS 12:00 - 12:45PM

Come and meditate in the Chaplaincy February 3, 10, 17, 24 March 3, 10, 17, 24, April 28, May 5, 12, 19, 26, June 2
4th Floor of Wynne Jones • Northumbria University • sujatin@gmail.com



LUNCH AND BUDDHISM • WEDNESDAYS 12.45 - 2PM

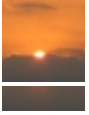
Bring your own sandwiches and learn the basics of Buddhism and Buddhist practice • sujatin@gmail.com
4th Floor of Wynne Jones • Northumbria University • February 10, 24 March 10, 24, April 28, May 12, 26



WEDNESDAY PRACTICE EVENINGS • 6.15PM SNACK • 7PM 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

ONGOING events



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



GUIDED BUDDHIST MEDITATION • THURSDAYS 1PM

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



MEDITATION AND RELAXATION • THURSDAYS 7.30PM

Come and join us for an hour of relaxation and meditation exercises.
The Buddhist House • 12 Coventry Rd • Narborough • 0116 286 7476



MORNING MEDITATION FRIDAYS • 8.15AM

Half an hour to sit silently before starting the day
Please phone 0114 272 4290 or email amidasheffield@blueyonder.co.uk in advance



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.
The Buddhist House • 12 Coventry Rd • Narborough • 0116 286 7476



OPEN ART SESSIONS • FRIDAYS 2 - 4.30PM

Come and enjoy our art room. These sessions are for individuals to be creative and experiment.
The Buddhist House • 12 Coventry Rd • Narborough • 0116 286 7476

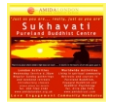
FEBRUARY



INTRODUCTORY RETREAT led by BR. KASPALITA AND SR. 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 • 7pm Fri 12 Feb - 3.30pm Sun 14 Feb • please book 0116 286 7476 • email sumaya@amidatrust.com
Accommodation • Single £35/night • Twin £25/night • Basic £15/night • 10% off for all students
Suggested donation £15/day for the public • Free for Buddhist Psychology Students



FACING FEAR led by SR. MODGALA

Fear can rule our lives. Fear also underlies many if not most of our actions. During this retreat we will look deeply at the fears we hold and how our thoughts and actions follow them and limit our lives. In doing so we may be able to start to go beyond some of them, see others in a new light and find new energy. We can then put this energy to use to benefit others.

Sukhavati • Sat 20 Feb • 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

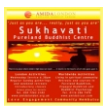


THE NEW BUDDHISM led by DHARMAVIDYA

Based on the themes advanced in his book *The New Buddhism*, Dharmavidya will lead this retreat seminar as an investigation into the development of culturally and socially engaged spiritual practice. At Amida-shu spiritual training has never been through segregation from the social and cultural world. Of all forms of Buddhism, Pureland has always been a path for the ordinary person facing the real issues of the day. The spiritual dilemma of the individual and those of the group are essentially the same. Following the bodhisattva ideal we cannot properly address one without the other.

TBH • 10am Sat 27 Feb - 4pm Sun 28 Feb • 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

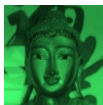
MARCH



HAPPINESS led by SR. MODGALA

There is affliction in this world and we react to our afflictions. However our impulses are nothing to be ashamed of. We can use the energy normally lost in our habitual reactions to walk a wiser path and create a better world where happiness reigns. In this retreat we will explore how we can do this in our own lives.

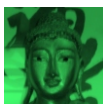
Sukhavati • Sat 6 March • 10 - 4pm • Please book • phone: 0207 263 2183
Email: modgala2004@lycos.com • Simple low cost shared accommodation is also available
Refreshments • Vegetarian lunch • Suggested donation £15 waged • £5 unwaged



LIVING WITH TRANSIENCE led by DAVID & CAROLINE BRAZIER, GINA CLAYTON

March is a time when winter changes into spring. The first signs of new life start to emerge in the countryside, and people look forward to warmer days. Since earliest times, people have been sensitive to the changing seasons and their effect on life. Feeling at the mercy of the natural forces which determine the quality of life and death, people have experienced this time of year as a point of spiritual renewal. This training block explores the yugen qualities of early spring, with its poignant reminders of the fragility of life but also of its persistence against great odds; the effects of such experience upon the psyche and the possibilities for enhancing the appreciation which reflection on these matters can bring.

TBH • 9 day course block • Sat 20 - Sun 28 March • £60/day/public • £36/day/gen reg students accommodation • Single £35/night • Twin £25/night • Basic £15/night • 10% off for all students



NATURAL CYCLES: NATURE, ART AND CREATIVITY IN THERAPY

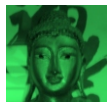
Our minds are conditioned by objects to which we give attention. Relating to our natural environment, we are exposed to situations that spontaneously create conditions for mental change. In this weekend we will take as touchstone the poem of Saigyô:

*Once I see
the new green leaves
my heart may take to them too
if I think of them as mementos
of blossoms now scattered*

Seeing the processes of life unfolding naturally we are touched by poignantly mixed feelings of rejoicing and mourning. The natural world has always been a force in shaping human thought and in providing inspiration to people. At times it may be challenging or saddening. Often it becomes a rich source of creativity. This weekend skills course will explore the use of natural imagery and materials, and even outdoor environments as stimulus for therapeutic work. We will look at the practicalities of introducing nature into therapeutic process as well as at the possibilities which it opens up.

20 - 21 March • 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

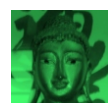
MARCH



OJO: DEATH, BIRTH AND THE PSYCHOLOGY OF DANGER AND SALVATION

Pureland Buddhism talks of salvation through faith. Can this concept have meaning for those who are not Pureland in their orientation? What personal stories do we carry about life and death? What are we to make of ideas of birth, death and faith in the modern world and how do such ideas impact upon our clients? Is it meaningful to speak of death within life, life within death? This four day group will offer space to explore our relationship with the big questions that humans have wrestled with through the centuries and with the impact of different answers both in this life psychology and in terms of beliefs about what lies beyond this life. It will also be an opportunity to reflect on the concepts introduced by the notable Japanese psychologist and teacher Gisho Saiko whose memorial day falls within this block, and at the practical example of people like Amrita Dhammika who took her life in her hands to help people in Africa and lost it, who we remember on 25th March.

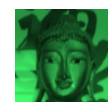
22 - 25 March • 10am-5pm Monday - Friday • 10am-4pm Thursday
accommodation • Single £35/night • Twin £25/night • Basic £15/night • 10% off for all students
£240 for members of the public • £144 for General Registered Students



IMPERMANENCE AND THE IMMORTAL: THEORY SEMINAR

The relationship between dukkha (affliction/danger) and human psychology is central to the Buddhist approach. Our minds are conditioned by our attempts to escape from knowledge of our impermanence, and to create permanence in our sense of identity. In the process the nobility of our existence as authentic beings is compromised. Buddhism can be conceptualised as the spiritual path that is based on a struggle with the question: Is it possible to live an authentic life? This seminar day will look at the basic theoretical underpinnings of Buddhist theory and at its understanding of transience and transformation.

Friday 26 March • 10am-5.15pm • £60 for members of the public • £36 for Gen. Reg. Students

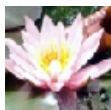


THE SPEAKING BODY: THERAPEUTIC MICROSKILLS

People convey meaning both intentionally and inadvertently through their facial expression, body posture and gesture. The observation and reading of body-language is a vitally important part of therapeutic skill, since significant change is often detectable in the body before it dawns in the mind and before it can be expressed with any fluency. This micro-skills workshop will help students develop their skill in responding not just to verbal cues given by their clients, but also to non-verbal indications of meaning. A practical and important course section for students at all levels.

27 - 28 March • 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

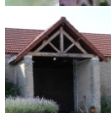
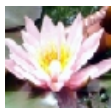
APRIL



EASTER RETREAT: WHO LOVES DIES WELL led by DAVID BRAZIER

Easter is the time of death and rebirth, loss and resurrection, the beginning of new life. In this four day retreat gathering we will study the Buddhist teachings on transience and the universal spiritual idea of being born anew. Dharmavidya will give teachings from the book *Who Loves Dies Well* which introduces the main themes of Pureland spirituality and is also a celebration of the death of his dearly loved mother. The weekend is an opportunity for extended practice and reflection on the most profound existential issue. This is a retreat for all whose spiritual need is to address aging, loss, change and renewal.

TBH • 6pm Thurs 1 April to 3.30pm 5 April • 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

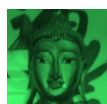


NEW BEGINNINGS: EASTER IN FRANCE led by PRASADA, SUMAYA, AND MASSIMO

Spring is a time when the world starts to come back to life. The darkness of winter gives way to lighter days and new growth appears in our countryside. Easter is perhaps the most beautiful time in France - a time of spring flowers and birdsong, blossom and new leaves. This five day period will be a time to reflect and tune in to the processes of change, to nurture the shoots of new beginnings and to heal from the ravages of darker times. Through quiet time, Buddhist practice, group sharing, creative processes and contact with the natural environment we will embrace a journey of change and resurrection. For those who know me, you will know that this winter has been a difficult personal journey. Do join me in embracing the coming of warmer times.

Amida France • 6pm Thurs 1st to 3.30pm 5 April • Please book phone: 00 33 (0)2 48 60 70 19
Email: courses@amidatrust.com • Cost: suggested donation including food & accommodation €100-€200

MAY

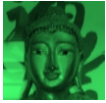


FREEDOM AMIDST CONDITIONS led by DAVID & CAROLINE BRAZIER, GINA CLAYTON

How much choice do humans have over their actions and their mental states? If our mentality is conditioned by multiple factors, and in particular by the object world that we inhabit, how much can we choose our life paths? Buddhist theory suggests that we are generally unwittingly carried along by a tide of conditioned responses and more conditioned than we think, yet, at the same time, also have an irreducible quantum of freedom that we are often not fully aware of.

TBH • 9 day course block • Sat 15 - Sun 23 May • £60/day/public • £36/day/gen reg students
accommodation • Single £35/night • Twin £25/night • Basic £15/night • 10% off for all students

MAY



INTENTION AND ASPIRATION IN THERAPY

Intentionality is seen as the driving force of skandha process. It is powerful in creating the karma which pushes people to perpetuate particular mind states. In Western theory, figures like Otto Rank saw the will as a fundamental driver in mental process. At the same time, as human beings we are caught in all manner of patterns of conditioned mind that can lead us in a state of avidya (not-seeing) to follow old habit tracks rather than responding cleanly to situations. Buddhism sees intentionality as a conditioned phenomenon, which perpetuates our mental structures, however, it also suggests that intentionality can be transformed into aspiration, an inspired, outwardly focused impulse towards healthier states. In this skills weekend we will look at ways of working with intentionality and fostering the aspiration which springs from it.

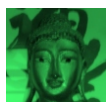
15 -16 May • 10am-5pm Saturday • Student Seminar 5.15 - 6.15pm Saturday • 10am - 4pm Sunday accommodation • Single £35/night • Twin £25/night • Basic £15/night • 10% off for all students £120 for members of the public • £72 for General Registered Students



PROFESSIONALISM AND THE BOMBU PARADIGM

The roots of change come from recognition of our ordinary, bombu, nature. Among the core conditions posited by the American psychologist Carl Rogers, unconditional positive regard is perhaps the most difficult to embrace because we are fundamentally judgmental both of ourselves and of others. Within the therapy profession, regulation and assessment are part and parcel of the process that practitioners embrace. How do we square the need for standards to be preserved with acceptance of our ordinary nature and the need of the client for a non-judgmental space? In this four day group we will explore the constraints and possibilities which operate in therapeutic engagement, the role which expectations play in shaping our work and the healing power inherent in situations where expectations are less constricting.

17 -20 May • 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

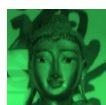


SEMINAR DAY: WILL, INTENTIONALITY AND KARMA

A reflection upon the key role that intentionality has in generating meaning and consequence, without which human life would lack purpose and satisfaction. We will examine the theory of karma and the cycles of repetition compulsion that it gives rise to. We will examine the paradoxes of the will and of the notion of personal freedom, asking whether the notion of an 'unconscious will' is meaningful and asking ourselves what are the springs of human choice and change.

Friday 21 May • 10am-5.15pm • £60 for members of the public • £36 for Gen. Reg. Students

MAY



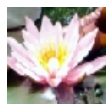
SUPERVISION: CONSCIOUS AND UNCONSCIOUS PROCESS



Supervision is an essential part of therapeutic practice. It provides a forum in which the therapist is both supported and challenged to explore issues which are arising through her work and the personal impact of therapeutic relationships. The supervision relationship itself has a process which is scrutinised and used as a source of understanding, often revealing through parallel process dynamics which have been unconscious in the therapeutic engagement. In supervision, therapist and supervisor work to bring to light factors which may be hidden, to bring to consciousness the unconscious elements. Yet even in supervision, irrational and hidden factors frequently drive the dialogue. Whilst an illusion of understanding may emerge, much remains tantalising and out of reach. This weekend workshop will explore the use of supervision and the ways which it can impact on therapeutic process. In particular we will identify ways in which the process does not always follow rational lines and may be both creative and mysterious in its effects.

22-23 May • 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

JUNE

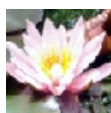


GIVING AND RECEIVING led by SR. MODGALA

We see the afflictions in the world and try to “help”. However, sometimes we are burnt up from too much giving and on the other hand, at the same time can feel we are not doing enough. This gentle retreat will explore this dilemma.

Sukhavati • Sat 12 June • 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

JULY

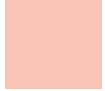


SESSHIN led by DHARMAVIDYA

Pureland chanting is neither dance, nor song, nor meditation, yet is something of all these. It is the calling out of soul to spirit, in voice and in silence, in movement and in stillness, limpid yet flowing, in gratitude and wonder. Here we are not achieving something nor making something nor going somewhere, yet together we are being, doing, coming and going, entering and returning. Pureland is the easiest practice and the most elusive for it is to offer one's heart and to trust in grace. A sesshin is a time to practice together extensively and intensively: five days of immersion in the Name, relying, entrusting and finding refuge.

Amida France • Mon 5 July to Fri 9 July • Please arrive the day before • To book phone: 00 33 (0)2 48 60 70 19
Email: courses@amidatrust.com • Accommodation • €20 - €30 • Cost • Suggested donation €15 - €30 per day

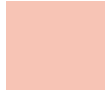
JULY



CRISIS AS OPPORTUNITY - WORKING WITH STRESS led by SR. MODGALA

How can we make this transition? Life can seem overpowering and through this we either can burn out trying to do too much, or draw back in different ways from life. Yet at the point of crisis or at our acknowledgment of the reality of our lives there is a chance to do things differently. The big thing is seeing our lives from another perspective and finding a different vision. Exploring with others away from our daily hubbly-bubble can help. This gentle retreat will provide space to explore, and is suitable for all people.

Sukhavati • Sat 10 July • 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



SUMMER TEACHINGS: Love is the Life You Already Have led by DHARMAVIDYA

As Amidists we base our lives on faith in love. We take refuge in the fact that there have been, are, and will be Buddhas - beings who really love and are completely genuine. We ourselves sometimes find ourselves in accord with love and sometimes not. What is the life one already has? What is love? In what can we take refuge? It is easy to denigrate or to idealize, but what is real? As we proceed on the spiritual path love seems ever more present and ever more impossible. Our own incapacity becomes more and more unavoidable at the same time as something immeasurably wonderful becomes more and more present to us. In this five day teachings retreat with Dharmavidya and other members of the Amida community we shall investigate the core meaning of our practice as refuge in reality, discovering love as the life we already have yet never own, no escape, yet total liberation.

Amida France • Mon 12 to Fri 16 July • Please arrive the day before • To book phone: 33 (0)2 48 60 70 19
Email: courses@amidatrust.com • Accommodation • €20 - €30 • Suggested donation €15 - €30 per day



NON-VIOLENT LIVING led by ZEE-ZEE, BHAKTIKA, AND SUNDARI

As Buddhists we attempt to live without the use of force or the coercion of others. But if we are in a conflict, or we want something to change, how are we to do this? We aim in this week to learn more about how to be effective in achieving change without violating others, and more about how we can liberate the energy in a conflict for peaceful and productive ends. We will use experiential methods including group and individual exercises and games, and will learn about theory, history and about ourselves. We aim to create a learning community which is fun as well as meaningful.

Amida France • Mon 19 to Fri 23 July • Please arrive the day before • To book phone: 33 (0)2 48 60 70 19
Email: courses@amidatrust.com • Accommodation • €20 - €30 • Suggested donation €15 - €30 per day

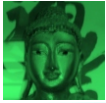


FAMILIES WEEK led by KASPALITA AND SUMAYA

There will be a fully lead programme with activities appropriate to the age of the children attending. Amida France is a great place for outdoor children's activities, such as lighting fires, climbing trees, exploring wilderness, going swimming and playing adventure games. There are also spaces for arts and creative activities, and indoor games. Older children's activities may draw on some of the themes from the grown-up's course on non-violent living, that is running concurrently. There will be one or two all age sessions with the grown-ups, including one afternoon on non-competitive games.

Amida France • Mon 19 to Fri 23 July • Please arrive the day before • To book phone: 33 (0)2 48 60 70 19
Email: courses@amidatrust.com • Accommodation • €20 - €30 • Suggested donation €15 - €30 per day

JULY



BUDDHIST PSYCHOLOGY SUMMER SCHOOL led by DAVID AND CAROLINE BRAZIER

This five day programme will offer an introduction to Other-Centred therapy which has its roots in Buddhist understandings of mental process. Through seminars, teaching sessions, experiential exercises and group time, David and Caroline Brazier will introduce the ideas which they have developed through their shared teaching and writing.

Background reading for this week (optional):

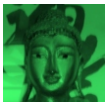
Caroline Brazier Other-Centred Therapy (O-Books 2009) and Buddhist Psychology (ConstableRobinson 2003)

David Brazier Zen Therapy (ConstableRobinson 1995) and Love and its Disappointment (O-Books 2009)

Amida France • Mon 26 to Fri 30 July • Please arrive the day before • To book phone: 33 (0)2 48 60 70 19

Email: courses@amidatrust.com • Costs €150 plus €20-€40 per day residence (concessions available)

AUGUST



ECO-THERAPY led by CAROLINE BRAZIER AND GINA CLAYTON

The environment is a great healer. Being in the midst of the processes of growth and change evident in the natural world, we are faced with the realities of a universe in which all is impermanent, yet beauty is everywhere. Through interacting with this world, we are changed and challenged, facing our limits or recognising the benign presence of ordinary miracles. Amida France provides a wonderful situation for exploration of ourselves in relation to the environment. With thirty acres of land, much of it wild, and varied habitats including woodland and open fields with a rich variety of wild life, it is possible to find solitude or to share experiences. Through group process and through experiential exercises we will use the environment as a source of other-centred work, exploring nature both as metaphor and as a reality in our lives.

Amida France • Mon 2 to Fri 6 Aug • Please arrive the day before • To book phone: 33 (0)2 48 60 70 19

Email: courses@amidatrust.com • Costs €150 plus €20-€40 per day residence (concessions available)



OPENING OUR HEARTS led by SR. MODGALA

We call Namō Amida Bu. What does this mean? At a simple level it means opening our heart to all that is measureless. How does this opening up help us in our daily lives and enable us to face the realities of life and find measureless and creative responses? These questions and more will be with us as we reflect and share.

Sukhavati • Sat 7 Aug • 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



AMITAYUS HEALTHY LIVING LIMITED

A Model For Right Livelihood

by

Susthama Kim OAB

Great master Honen, who lived in the 12th century and started the first independent Pureland school in Japan, is known to have said, 'If being a monk gets in the way of practicing the Nembutsu then disrobe. If being a householder gets in the way of the Nembutsu then ordain.' It is his voice of pragmatism and the Buddha's guiding wisdom that this world needs, especially when faced with the dilemma of having to choose between a religious lifestyle and more conventional one.

One of the steps of the Eightfold path is Right Livelihood. In *The Feeling Buddha* (Brazier, 1997) the understanding of Right Livelihood is to engage with life in a meaningful way, so that one is living wholeheartedly and feeling passionate about the work that one is doing. Right Livelihood therefore is not limited to those living in a monastic setting.

Last summer, Dawn and Garry Hart, two members of the Amida sangha, approached me to talk about an idea of theirs. They were thinking of changing their business into a social enterprise and were looking to involve other people. They talked about how they started a complementary healthcare centre called Amitayus Wellbeing as a private partnership thinking that that was the only option available for them to get a project that was meaningful to them off the ground. And then they discovered 'social enterprises' - businesses with social objectives.

Amitayus Wellbeing has steadily grown from providing a range of different therapies to selling healthy food and body products, however, since it fits more within the social enterprise category it will eventually change over so that it is operating as a not for profit healthy living centre in the coming months. This is a model which hopefully will inspire others who are interested in learning how to apply Buddhist principles full-time so that work and projects for the spiritual wellbeing of oneself and one's community are created.

Faith in the other is the foundation on which relationships between individuals can build and strengthen communities. Although the objectives and areas of specialisation at Amitayus vary from the activities of the Amida Trust I feel that the guiding principles and values are very similar. To be part of a movement that aspires to help all living beings and to continually try to create new environments, new livelihoods, in which people can find meaning, direction and sense of purpose is something that supports not just my own spiritual life but others too.

