

About Amida-Shu

Amida-shu exists to bring Pureland Buddhism to the contemporary world in a manner that is both spiritually profound and socially relevant. Welcome to our sangha. We train people for and support them in ministry, chaplaincy, religious vocations, committed lay life, volunteer involvement and simple interest in the wonderful teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha, especially as those teachings have come down to us through the Pureland tradition.

Visiting Information

The style of Amida-shu is a mixture of formal and informal. If you want to discover a warm and welcoming sangha you will certainly find one here. Amida-shu is deeply involved in the engaged social action work of the Amida Trust and Amida centres are hubs of both spiritual and practical activity. First and foremost, however, we are a religious communion, supporting one another in the spiritual life in a multitude of settings ranging from the fully contemplative to the completely engaged. Welcome.

Amida-shu has temples in UK, France, India and Hawaii and also members in Canada, Zambia, and Israel as well as students in many parts of the world. The home base is at:

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

Registration Fees

Courses marked P form part of the Psychotherapy training programme. These courses are charged at professional rates.

Retreats and other events which do not form part of this program are charged at a lower rate or offered on a donation basis.

Full information on visiting and course fees can be found at
<http://www.buddhistpsychology.info/practicalities.htm>
Or Telephone:+ 44(0)116.2867476E-mail: amida@amidatrust.com

Amida Trust



2006-7

AMIDA YEAR AT A GLANCE 2006-2007

Please visit www.amidatrust.com for up to date information, as this calendar is subject to development and review.

November						
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
		1 [P]	2 [P]	3 [P]	4 [P]	5 [P]
Applied Buddhist Studies						
6	7	8	9	10	11	12 M
Memorial Rt						
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Moving into Chaplaincy						
20	21	22	23	24	25	26 T
Belgium Rt						
27	28	29	30			

December						
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
				1	2	3
Bodhi						
4	5	6	7	8	9	10 M
Retreat & Ordination Ceremonies						
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Ango						
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Christmas						
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Retreat in France NY Rt in Fr. NY						

January						
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
NY Rt in Fr. Hawai'i Programme Volunteer						
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Training Retreat in France peer learning w/e						
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Memorial Rt						
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Van. Prog. Cont.						
29	30	31				

February						
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
			1	2	3	4
Ango begins						
5	6	7	8	9	10 [P]	11 M
Buddhist						
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Psychology course block [P]						
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
India Programme Cultural						
26	27	28				
Exchanges						

March						
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
			1	2	3	4
Week India Programme						
5	6	7	8	9	10	11 M
India Programme PL Intro Rt						
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25 T
Memorial Week						
26	27	28	29	30	31	

April						
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Easter Retreat in Fr						
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Intensive						
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Volunteer Training in France						
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	End of angu practice period					

May						
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
	1	2	3	4	5	6
[P] Buddhist						
7	8	9	10	11	12	13 M
Psychology course block [P]						
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Ord.						
21	22	23	24	25	26	27 T
Mtg						
28	29	30	31			

June						
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
			1	2	3	4
Applied						
5	6	7	8	9	10	11 M
Buddhist Studies Course block						
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25 T
End of Ango Practice Period						
26	27	28	29	30	31	

July						
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Summer						
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Retreat						
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Programme						
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
France						
30	31					

August						
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
		1	2	3	4	5
Arts Period Begins in France						
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
PL Intro Rt						
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26 T
Amida Fest						
27	28	29	30	31		
TBH						

September						
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
					1	2
Volunteer training programme begins						
3	4	5	6	7	8	9 M
Introducing Amida						
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23 T
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

October						
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13 [P]	14 M
Buddhist						
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Psychology course block [P]						
22	23	24	25	26	27	28 T
Applied						
29	30	31				
Buddhist Studies						

Welcome to Amida

The Buddhist House is the hub of Amida's International network with visitors coming and going, volunteers being trained, students studying, meetings and gatherings taking place, and new schemes being developed. The house is, however, also a haven where one can take refuge from the storms of life and get some respite and replenishment in homely surroundings and supportive company.

The religious training provided at The Buddhist House integrates going inward and going outward – character training and community building – so that, as a sangha, we grow in faith and in capacity to be of service to the world, to stand up for what is good, to learn from experience and to work harmoniously in a co-ordinated way together.

Three Practices

The central practice of Amida-shu is nembutsu, the chanting of the Name of Amida Buddha, also called Nyorai, usually in the form Namo Amida Bu, using tones, rhythms, melodies and choreographies. The practice expresses religious feeling. There is nothing calculating or spiritually ambitious about it. It expresses the intimate relationship between the practitioner and quan and chih quan. The nembutsu expresses the deep feeling of the ordinary being who calls out (namo) toward the infinite grace of the Blessed One. Nei quan is a practice of reflection which deepens our understanding of our own nature while chih quan is a practice of offering and opening toward Amida's blessings. Nyorai pours down the rain of Dharma on great and poor, good and bad, alike. How we are affected depends upon our karmic condition, but grace cuts through karma. The nembutsu is a call from the human condition toward the sacred, from this to That.

The liturgy of the Amida Order incorporates several important principles: It dramatizes the expression of faith; it incorporates time honoured elements; it is flexible to adapt to context; it is a sacred art form; it enables us to express the nembutsu with body, speech and heart; and it sustains community life.

Sunday Services

Every Sunday at 5pm we hold a service which is open to the public. This is a good time to come to the Buddhist House if you are interested in experiencing Pureland Buddhist practice. This service includes the main practices for a Pureland Buddhist; starting with our primary practice - Chanting Namo Amida Bu to the beat of a mokoju, then reciting the Tan Butsu Ge, doing prostration and making water offerings, reciting refuges and precepts, followed by walking, then sitting nembutsu, finishing with a Dharma talk and offering incense. After the service there is a vegetarian potluck supper. This is a great time for fellowship and getting to know each other better.

The services will be led by lay and ordained members of Amida-shu. Second and last Sundays of the month also have additional events as follows:

Memorial Services (Marked M on the Calendar)

Every second Sunday of every month we conduct a short ancestor commemoration as a part of our Sunday service. Members of our congregation and school who have lost a loved one are welcome to place a memento or photo of the deceased on the ancestor shrine in the Shrine Room. This is a wonderful opportunity for us to pay our respects to our ancestors, teachers of the past, and previous Buddhas. The ceremony involves reading the names of those who have died in that calendar month out of the memorial book.

Transference of Merit Ceremony (Marked T on the Calendar)

On the last Sunday service of every month we invite members of the Sangha to transfer merit to family and friends, or to people who we feel will benefit from it. By giving the merit of one's practice to someone else we are thereby helping Amida create a Pureland in this world. This ceremony involves gathering around the Buddha-rupa and as individuals feel moved to speak they transfer merit to others.

COURSES AND RETREATS 2006-

COURSES AND TRAINING PROGRAMMES

Volunteer Training Programme

The Voluntary Service Scheme has grown out of a range of initiatives that the Trust has taken in the past to assist disadvantaged groups and to support Buddhists engaging in social or humanitarian action in various parts of the world. The training includes: Introduction to living and working in communities and specific teaching or groupwork skills depending on placement, introduction to the society and culture of the country to which you will be going, introduction to Pureland Buddhism, principles of engaged Buddhism and its history in Amida Trust, team building and co-operative working. Recruitment and orientation is ongoing throughout the year, while training takes place a couple of times a year, usually September and April. These preparatory courses are run at The Buddhist House in UK or in our centre in France by Sr. Modgala and other senior members of Amida-shu, with input from past volunteers.

Attendance Courses in Buddhist Psychology [P]

The Buddhist Psychology training programme offers a unique approach to the application of Buddhist Psychology as a therapeutic method. The attendance courses run in 9-day blocks and can be broken down into sections. The weekend sections focus on skills, techniques and methods, while the 4-day section mid-week is more experiential. Fridays are seminar days and time is spent looking at theory and models. These courses are offered once a term and usually occur in October, February and May. Courses start promptly at 10am everyday and finish at either 4pm or 5pm. Students participating on the Advanced Certificate Programme usually hold a seminar on Saturdays from 5.15pm-6.15pm. Many of these courses are led by Caroline and David Brazier, founders of the training program.

Courses in Applied Buddhist Studies

These courses are broad based, incorporating an integration of different fields of engagement represented by traditional Mandala imagery. Facets of engaged work balance and compliment one another - the compassionate humanitarian field balancing the field of advocacy and protest; the wisdom field of insight and political and social analysis balancing the communications field of empathic understanding and inter-personal relationship. At the same time these fields offer specialisms so students are encouraged to develop their work in specific fields such as peace studies, environmental work, community work, overseas aid work or health development work and so on. Course blocks usually run for 9-days and are held three times a year, usually late October, late February and June, they function as a key part of the training of trainees in the Buddhist House Community. Members of the public are also encouraged to join the Amida community on a residential basis for an extended period of time to experience learning in formal and informal settings.

Vow22 Ministry Training Programme

This is a special time for students on the Vow22 programme to come together, deepen faith and learn skills in a Buddhist environment. This is a good opportunity to meet with others on or aspiring to get onto the path of ministry. This course forms part of a ministry development

RETREATS, FESTIVALS, AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

Introductory Retreats

Several times a year we hold Pureland introductory retreats for anyone interested in practicing with the Amida Sangha and learning some of the key features about Pureland Buddhism. It is a great time to come and ask questions to members of the Amida-shu and to share in many of the communities daily activities. These retreats are run by ordained and lay members of Amida and can be experienced in any one of our centres around the world. Retreatants are encouraged to arrive the evening before for a light supper and then leave on Sunday after 4pm.

Memorial Retreats

Remembering our ancestors and paying homage to all the great teachers in our lives is an important part of the religious life. These retreats generally take place around the anniversary of the passing away of great teachers in Buddhism.

Bodhi Retreat

This is the most important retreat of the year. December is considered to be a very auspicious time of year because of the Buddha's great awakening on 8th December. The retreat starts with chanting the Nembutsu for 24 hours continuously thus entrusting oneself to Nyorai. Those deeply committed to Nyorai's vow will receive ordinations and take either 156 or 238 precepts, while those committed to Pureland practice will be admitted into Amida-shu or take refuge in the Buddha, Dharmma and Sangha if they wish.

Summer Teachings

Every summer, members of the Amida-shu and others interested in deepening their faith come together for an intensive summer session. As we retreat away from the busy-ness of life and focus on teachings by the Head of the Order, Rev. Dharmavajra we slowly awaken to Amida's grace. The teachings are usually held during the month of July at Amida France and retreatants return home spiritually renewed.

Art Retreats

These retreats are open to anyone who is interested in creating or producing art in any shape or form. This is a good opportunity for families and friends who want to spend more time relaxing, engaging in creative activities and enjoying outdoor life at our retreat centre in France. The arts period usually runs during August.

Amida Festival

Every year, in mid-August people come together and share food and delight in each others' company. Young and old alike are welcome to celebrate Amida's bounty. This is a good time to leave all the stress and worries behind and take part in creative workshops that will make you feel light-hearted and care-free. This festival takes place at the Buddhist House and is run by members of the Amida Sangha.

Other activities