



Mike Fitter (UK)

Buddhist name: Bhaktika

Bhaktika joined Amida Sheffield in 1998, shortly after it formed.

At this time the Amida Trust was a network of local groups in the UK. The particular attraction for me was the combination of Buddhist psychology and engaged social action. Dharmavidya's book ***The Feeling Buddha*** was a revelation and inspiration. And Amida Sheffield is where I met my wife to be Sundari (Gina Clayton).

In 2000, the Amida Sheffield group was invited by a Canon at Sheffield cathedral to join him in guiding weekly 30 minute mediation sessions in the cathedral. Sundari and I have continued with this until the 2020 pandemic put a stop to face to face contact.

Over several years I coordinated the Annual Amida Conferences and later contributed to the Buddhist training for counsellors and therapists. When the Amida Order was established Sundari and I joined and were ordained in June 2005. Especially important was the summer training programme at Amida France - community living, activist training, and Dharmavidya's teachings, in particular the summer he fully 'came out' as a Pureland teacher.

Professionally I am an organisational psychologist (now retired) and a community activist. I have also trained in Process Oriented Psychology. This and Amida Buddhism complement each other and inform much of my personal and professional practice. For the past 10 years I have been a member of Sheffield Faith Leaders group and co-chair of Sheffield Cohesion Advisory Group. Although I'd love to live in a world at peace I know this is not possible when such colossal injustice exists. For me racial justice is the key to addressing unconscious privilege that reveals many forms of injustice. Remembering the personal vow I took when ordained (To hear the cries of the world) I sometimes say to myself, be careful what you ask for.

As age and mortality come increasingly to my attention, the importance of faith, friendship and community come even more to the fore.

