

Upcoming major Buddhist festivals

Southern Dharma Celebration: 7th to 9th March 2008

Gen-la Kelsang Khyenrab will be granting the empowerment of White Tara, in London. By receiving the special blessings of White Tara our wisdom, life span and good fortune will increase, and by relying upon her with faith she will protect us from the dangers and sufferings of samsara. For more details, please visit the website: www.meditateinlondon.com/sdc

NKT International Spring Festival 2008: 23rd to 26th May Empowerment of Buddha Vajrapani & commentary to the practice with Venerable Geshe Kelsang Gyatso at Manjushri Centre, Ulverston, Cumbria.

NKT International Summer Festival 2008: 25th July to 9th August Empowerment of 1,000 armed Avalokiteshvara & teachings on *Universal Compassion* with Venerable Geshe Kelsang Gyatso at Manjushri Centre, Ulverston, Cumbria.

For details about both the above festivals, please visit:
www.kadampa.org/festivals

Opening the Wisdom Eye: Paris 2008

For the first time ever, Venerable Geshe Kelsang Gyatso will be granting the empowerment of Prajnaparamita (the embodiment of the Wisdom Truth Body of all the Buddhas) in Paris in November 2008, from 31st October to 7th November. This is in our backyard virtually, and it is so rare for Geshe-la to come anywhere near Maitreya Centre! Many members of the Centre will be going so if you wish to team up with them and go as a group, then please contact the Centre. For more details, please visit the French festival website at: www.kadampaFestivalParis.org or pick up a brochure from the Centre.

Maitreya Centre is a member of the New Kadampa Tradition – International Kadampa Buddhist Union and is a not for profit charitable organisation.
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January 2008

A new year of meditation classes begins!

Starting on Monday February 4th, a new term of meditation classes begins at Maitreya Centre, Bexhill, and its branches in Hastings (starting on Tuesday 5th) and Rye (starting on Thursday 7th). Please see the new Centre brochure for full details of the exciting range of courses available for 2008. We hope you will agree that the new brochure is the best that we have ever put together. Please note within the brochure the slightly altered opening times of the Centre from February onwards.

Open Day

The first of two Open Days at Maitreya Centre this year will be on Saturday 22nd March. This will give the public a chance to learn about the Centre in depth and to have a fun time too. If you are able to help with running this event then please contact the Centre. It is one of the key ways in which we will be trying to raise the public profile of the Centre in 2008.

Medicine Buddha empowerment Saturday 29th and Sunday 30th March

Lam-ma has kindly agreed to offer us another empowerment this coming March. Last year she gave us the Green Tara empowerment, unanimously regarded as a sublime event which made all who came feel very blessed and happy. This year, on the weekend of the 29th and 30th March she will grant us the Medicine Buddha empowerment, together with a commentary on the meditation practice of Medicine Buddha, which is a rare treat indeed, as well as being a unique opportunity to form a very close and personal connection with enlightened minds! So please join us for what will undoubtedly be the highlight of the Maitreya Centre calendar! Since last year's empowerment was very popular, you will need to book well in advance as places will be limited by the capacity of the Centre to cater for, and seat, people on the day. The cost will be £20.00 per day or £30.00 for the weekend, inclusive of refreshments and a buffet lunch (concessions available on request).

A unique, week-long Prajnaparamita retreat

In November there will be a truly unique event within the NKT world when the Spiritual Director of the NKT, Venerable Geshe Kelsang Gyatso (and the founder of Maitreya Centre, by the way), will grant the empowerment of Buddha Prajnaparamita for the first time ever, in Paris. To follow up on this historic event, Lam-ma will be leading a week-long retreat on the meditation practice associated with Prajnaparamita at Maitreya Centre, from Monday 10th November to Saturday 15th November. There will be four sessions of meditation each day, and you can attend as many of them as you want of them, free of charge.

First ever weekend retreat

There will be a series of weekend meditation retreats in 2008 in which guided meditation sessions will be offered together with advice on how to deepen our meditations. The first retreat will be on 23rd and 24th February. This will give us all a chance, no matter what our level of understanding and practice, to help each other develop our experience of meditation. There will be four meditation sessions a day on each day, so just drop into whatever sessions you can manage; no booking is needed. Refreshments will be provided in between sessions, but no lunch (there are excellent cafes very near the Centre). Full details are in the Centre brochure and on the website.

The sponsored walk 2008

Please note that this major event in the Centre's fundraising calendar will take place on June 8th. It will actually be organised by the local Rotary Club who did an excellent job last year on behalf of all local charities wanting to use the event to raise funds; all Maitreya Centre has to do is to register for the event and provide the walkers! There will be a choice of three routes, of varying lengths, and they all start and finish very close to the Centre. The Rotary Club provides all the marshals, refreshments and safety back-up. You can participate either by joining in the walk and finding sponsors for yourself or by kindly sponsoring those who will be walking. All sponsorship monies will be allocated totally towards the Centre's capital reserves to enable us to one day purchase our own premises and therefore safeguard the Centre's long-term future, so you can feel that you are helping to keep the Dharma in the local area for a very long time, for the potential benefit of countless people! Full details will be given nearer the time, so stay tuned to this space!

Volunteers needed

There is always a critical need for more volunteers to help out around the Centre, especially as the Centre is now developing so rapidly. If you can spare an hour or two with helping in the Centre's shop that will be most helpful, as the existing shop volunteers are very much overworked! No retail skills or experience is necessary and full training is given. It's a great way to meet people and to help spread the Dharma, as visitors are always asking about meditation and Buddhism! Plus volunteers are needed to help prepare for classes and courses and to help clean and decorate the Centre. You don't get paid, but you get huge amounts of positive karma! Honest!

Help needed with distribution of publicity

This year, for the first time ever, we have a Centre brochure that has been professionally printed, and we have plenty of them, so if you know of anywhere to put them out where the public can access them, please let us know. Also, if you are able to distribute some of them yourself, then please take as many copies as you think you can handle. This would be a superb way of helping to spread the precious Dharma.

Wish list for 2008

Maitreya Centre is always in need of funds for improving and updating the Centre, projects which cannot be met out of operational funds. Therefore, donations or interest-free loans are invited for the following projects:

- Updating the current computer system in the shop, which is old, out-of-date and unable to cope with the current workload imposed on it
- Video camera for the video-link feed for the upstairs lounge (the one currently used belongs to a Centre member who brings it in whenever needed, and is therefore not available to the Centre all the time).
- A new CD music player dedicated full-time for the meditation room (the current one has to double up as back-up for the branch meetings, imposing heavy wear on it).
- Display panels for the shop window and interior of the shop (to display the Centre's courses in a professional way), and display racks for the brochures received from other Centres.

Reminder:

The Meet the Buddhas meditation ceremonies will now be on Thursdays from 10.30am to 11.30am at Maitreya Centre during term times.