

**Karmadeva Andrew Nicholls (23<sup>rd</sup> September 1960 – 30th April 2024)**

The poems which members of Karmadeva's family read at his funeral reminded us of his smile and his laughter, of how he nurtured his family, and of their profound sense of loss at his passing.

We in the Amida Order already knew that Karmadeva more than lived up to the meaning of his Buddhist name: 'one who performs good actions'. When Amida Birmingham was founded by Sanghamitra, Karmadeva was one of its first members. We were aware of his unstinting work to foster community cohesion as a member of (and sometime Chair of) Birmingham Council of Faiths, of his trusteeship of his local Theravada Buddhist temple, and of his unfailing support of vulnerable people through his very 'hands on' work for MIND, the UK's primary mental health charity. The diversity of the congregation at his funeral spoke volumes about the unconditional inclusiveness of Karmadeva's loving approach to everyone he encountered in his work and his spiritual life. (Not only humans but all sentient beings received the bounty of his love – he had a little dog to whom he was devoted!) Additionally, I remember and treasure a more private, low-key side to him: he was very modest and unassuming, never liking to be the centre of attention. For example, he was not very confident when conducting Zoom services, but when he did so he left us all awestruck. It felt as if he were whispering the Dharma-truth directly into our hearts. He once said to me after one such service "all that matters is faith and love". There was a straightforward simplicity and unforced humility to him that was just so endearing – and so infectious. I was his mentor, but he taught me so much about how to live out one's spiritual values without pretension. A bow of gratitude to you, Karmadeva.

Listening to his family speak, it was obvious that they were talking of the same person we in Amida knew and loved, but they added another dimension. We always knew he was relaxed: one of his sons confirmed this by remarking that his dad was so laid-back he once fell asleep in a disco. I can believe it. He manifestly adored his grandchildren and didn't mind their youthful high spirits: quite often when I phoned him it sounded as if there were grandchildren skateboarding across his lounge! We knew his mind was often on higher things rather than on practicalities: one of his sons told us that his otherworldliness often nearly drove them mad! He always spoke lovingly to us of his family: the funeral confirmed that the feeling was absolutely mutual. He was so proud of his children and grandchildren: he has the tenderest of smiles on his face in the family photos in the Order of Service. What some of us were not aware of, perhaps, was the full extent of Karmadeva's public service: we understand that he served on Birmingham City Council for several years, representing one of the most deprived parts of the city. Performer of good actions he most certainly was.

Karmadeva we will miss you so much, but we also recognise that we have to let you go. We are grateful for your life among us. The Pure Land was always going to be your destination: our love is with you as you go.

Namo Amida Bu.

Paripurna.