

The Play of the Elements

Led by Jayachitta

About the retreat

How do the elements around us, and in us, move, dance, even play? How can we be part of that playful engagement rather than stand apart?

In this retreat we will be taking the five elements (Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Space) as our starting point, and explore them in our own bodies, in meditation, in nature and in the way we relate to one another.

Practicing in and outdoors, we will research how the elements move us, and move through us, and so, each, find our unique place within the elemental play of the world.

Easy physical improvisational exercises will help us to become more present, and open to more light and joy. This will enrich our attention within and outside of meditation with the spirit of discovery. In meditation and in movement improvisation we enter the unknown, a dance with ever new experience. Joining this dance, we can discover where stillness and engagement meet.

On this retreat we will apply what we notice in the physical experience straight to our meditation. Engaging with a spirit of support, play and appreciation makes the retreat very suitable for people who do not think of themselves as 'performers'. The methods used from the playbook of *'The Play of Now'* (<https://www.playofnow.com>) help us to learn how to be present and engaged in this moment, leaving the next one to come freely, without being weighed down by our plans or assumptions.

Everyone is welcome to join this retreat, whether new to meditation, Buddhist practices, or improvisation and movement. Everyone will bring their own experience of these methods - so it should be an interesting mix! With the experience Jayachitta has to offer, in both those fields, all participants will be able to deepen their own research of the interrelatedness of movement and stillness.

Is there anything special I need to bring?

For the improvisation it will be good if you wear clothes you can move in easily, like for any movement or exercise.

What can you expect from the programme?

The programme is not fully decided yet, but it is likely that we will start the day with some gentle movement before the morning meditation. Then after breakfast we have the main session of improvisation until lunchtime. The afternoon will have some free time to explore the beautiful surroundings and some meditation, including an introduction to the practices.

The evening will be meditative, and generally there will be silence overnight.

About the retreat team

Jayachitta has followed a Buddhist practice since 1981 and a member of the Order since 1990. She has lived and worked with other Buddhists for a lot of that time. Jayachitta enjoys the practice of body-based methods to deepen experience of meditation and attending to the mind. Having trained in physical theatre and improvisation for over 25 years, she uses them as additional approaches to the spiritual life, based on embodied experience and play.

In that spirit of play we can discover more about who we can be and find new paths in our meditation and the spiritual life.

Jayachitta has trained and worked in the world of dance and theatre, with teachers like Andrew Morrish, John Britton, Kate Hilder and others. She holds an MA in Applied Theatre, and has studied physical theatre (after Jacques Lecoq) at Kiklos Scuola in Italy.

For more information please see: <https://www.playofnow.com/about-jaya>

Maitrihridaya encountered Buddhism in her twenties, and has been leading a life increasingly devoted to Buddhist practise since then. She was ordained in 2015 and lives in the north of Scotland with her husband and children, deeply inspired by meditation and the natural world.