

Wild open heart

Led by Jayachitta and Arthaketu

About the retreat



How do we consider our heart, our mind? Do we see it as a garden that needs careful trimming, cultivation and keeping in check? Or is it more like an open space with room for everything and everyone – more like a wilderness, unpredictable, fresh and full of discoveries?

To have an open heart is a beautiful idea – but is it naïve? Can we keep our heart open, in this world that so often seems to be hard, rough, or full of pain?

With the practice of the Metta Bhavana – of loving kindness – we engage with all we meet in the world with an ever-expanding openness. The practice invites us to shed the covers of our habitual identities, and to be present and alive to the world as we meet it.

Do we dare enter the thrilling wilderness that is our own heart?

This retreat will focus on metta, and explore the stages of the Metta Bhavana in our heart, mind and bodies, in meditation, in nature and in the way we relate to one another. Practicing in- and outdoors, we will research how we can trust what is wild and surprising in ourselves, the mind-heart in its natural state.

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 are new to meditation, or those want to discover a fresh approach to the Metta Bhavana. 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>

Arthaketu has been involved in the Triratna Buddhist Community for over 30 years. During that time he has lived and practiced as an active member of the Manchester Buddhist Centre and for the last seven years has been involved with teaching Buddhism and meditation at the Berlin Buddhist Centre.

Three aspects of practice are central for him. The body, its sensations, energy and the possibility to feel grounded and relaxed. The imagination, and how we can connect to it through image, symbol, story, myth and ritual and it's capacity to help us to find a sense of meaning in difficult times. And the spacious quality of the mind, how the mind itself can be sensitive to and accommodate all things. All of this can be connected to through meditation.

His explorations have also included - training as a Shiatsu practitioner, learning Focusing, drawing, painting and carving wood and recently qualifying as a mindfulness trainer with Breathworks. He looks forward to being on retreat with you and exploring together.