

Living with Uncertainty: Exploring the Bardos

Led by Jayachitta and Padmadarshini

About the retreat

At times like these we might find ourselves with some uncertainty about ourselves and about the world. Everything around us seems to be shifting: structures of society, political directions of countries, and values that seemed to be long-established and firmly rooted. In this time, when solid ground seems scarce, we can look together at in-between states.

Who, and how, are we on shifting grounds? Who is 'me' when I do not recognize myself anymore? Tibetan tradition calls these experiences of in-between times, of gaps and transitions, 'bardos'. Bardos describe what happens after our physical death, and the teachings are also concerned with impermanence, as we can observe it both in life and in death.

Taking the verses of the Six Bardos from the Tibetan Book of the Dead as a basis, we will explore how we experience moments of transition, in everyday life, in interaction and in meditation. We will look at themes like: How to be with loss? What happens when the old (me) dies? Who is this 'I' that is present, even when identity is absent?

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.

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 Buddhist practice.

The methods used are from Jayachitta's approach to practice - The Play of Now. These practices 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. For more see Jayachitta's website [here](#).

Pema Chödrön helps us to practice within uncertainty. She says:

"Compassion practice is daring. It involves learning to relax and move gently toward what scares us. The trick to doing this is to stay with emotional distress without tightening into aversion; to let fear soften us rather than harden into resistance." Comfortable with Uncertainty, p.71-72

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?

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 has been a member of the Triratna Buddhist 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 including 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 see her [website](#).

Padmarashini has long been interested in exploring and working with the body. She has taught yoga at Bodywise in Manchester for many years and during this time her personal practice and approach to teaching have ongoingly changed and evolved. It has been important to her to see the practice of movement as a process of enquiry, exploration and creativity.

For some years she has also been drawn to also exploring less structured somatic and embodied movement approaches - allowing movement to arise from listening to impulses within the bodymind rather than from an external form. She loves the practice of Authentic Movement, a little known but very rich embodied relational movement practice. It's a bit like doing the metta bhavana through movement! Whether through movement or meditation she is really interested in discovering how the body can be a 'doorway' into listening to ourselves and can help us find a deeper, more open, easeful relationship to ourselves, others and the world around us.