

Wild open heart: Women's hillwalking and embodied movement



About the retreat

This retreat will take an embodied and heartfelt approach to exploring and deeply connecting with our experience – out walking in the hills, through movement practice and in meditation.

We will meditate indoors and outside, where exploring our senses and opening our hearts to an elemental connection with nature will guide us. We will continue to practice the Mindfulness of Breathing and Metta Bhavana and also introduce Buddhist ritual and the seven-fold puja, with an emphasis on connecting with nature. Periods of silence together and quiet walks will all support a deep and rich experience of coming home to ourselves and the landscape that surrounds us, holds us and lives within us.

The retreat will include three days of guided walks, with walks to suit different levels of fitness. All walks are in the local area, but some require a short drive to get to the starting point. You can also go on your own walks and our walk leaders will be able to advise you.

The team will also offer mindful movement sessions including gentle yoga and dance to deepen our connection with our embodied experience and explore new ways of relaxing, moving with ease and deeply resourcing ourselves.

There may also be the opportunity for wild swimming whilst out walking and here in the loch at Dhanakosa. Please note swimming will not be lifeguard supported and is at your own risk.

This Going Deeper retreat is an ideal first regulars' retreat. It is suitable for anyone who has already done an introductory retreat or, who has been attending their local Triratna centre and wants to take things deeper.

A note on led walks

Typically we will offer led walks falling into three categories; easier, medium, and more difficult. The relative difficulty is often not in the length of the walk but the steepness of the climb and the difficulty of the terrain under foot.

- Easier walks – Typically 8 to 13 km along hill tracks, but also using quiet roads, made paths, and sometimes short sections of unmade paths. Typically climbing between 100 and 300m over the course of the walk
- Medium grade walks – Typically 8 to 13km using a combination of hill tracks, unmade paths and open hill. Typically we climb between 300 and 600m over the course of the walk.
- More difficult walks – Typically 8 to 13km. Will generally be a combination of unmade paths and open hill, including steeper or more challenging sections. Typically we climb between 600 and 900m during the course of the walk.

Participants who may find the easier graded walks challenging are welcome to attend the retreat and we will offer advice on where they can walk in the local area on walk days but cannot guarantee being able to offer led walks.

Experienced hill walkers with expectations of longer walks over the higher mountains are also welcome, but we invite you to moderate your expectations to fit into the “retreat walking day” (max 6 hours) so you can take part fully in the retreat programme.

Is there anything special I need to bring?

Yes!

A pair of well-fitting walking boots with good grip and ankle support are essential for most of the medium and difficult graded walks as many of these walks include sections of uneven ground. Our guides will not take you on a walk if they consider your footwear unsuitable.

Waterproof jacket and trousers.

Suitable clothing: Light weight trousers (not jeans), underlayer that will “wick” moisture away from the skin (preferable not cotton), and a fleece for warmth. Have a spare top for additional warmth as well. A hat and gloves are also essential.

A small rucksack, a water bottle and sun cream.

A swimsuit and camping towel – if you would like to swim at Dhanakosa or when the opportunity arises out on a walk.

If you are planning to go for your own walks make sure you also have a map (Explorer 365 the Trossachs is best) and compass.

What can you expect from the programme?

The retreat day begins at 6.30am with a rising bell, and then a double period of meditation at 7.00 with some light movement to start to bring us into our bodies. Meditation sessions will have brief instruction and normally last for between 30 and 40 minutes.

On walking days, we will meet after breakfast to organise the day's walks, returning to the centre in the afternoon for another meditation and/or movement session before the evening meal. In the evening there will be a mix of talk's, group discussions and an exploration of Buddhist practice, including ritual.

On non-walking days there will be practice mornings with meditation and movement teaching and periods of reflection – often taking place outside. There will normally be an opportunity to discuss your meditation practice with a member of the retreat team one-to-one, as well as smaller group sessions to share our personal experience.

There will normally be periods of silence throughout the retreat with two to three days of silence at the heart of the retreat.

About the retreat team

The team are good friends who share a great love of wild places. For each of us, connection with nature and embodied movement practice are central parts of our lives as Buddhist practitioners. We are very happy to be co-creating this women's retreat together and sharing it with you all.

Moksadhi joined the Dhanakosa team in June 2021. She was ordained in 2019 and loves the great outdoors, is a keen hillwalker and is exploring engaging with the elemental landscape as part of her Buddhist practice.

Subhanaya lives and works at Dhanakosa, heading up the House and Grounds team and working in the garden; helping to tend this wild and beautiful place. The big landscape here holds her heart and provides a reflection of spaciousness which nourishes her practice. Dance and movement are an important part of her practice life and she has danced 5Rhythmns© for 7 years and more recently is exploring sharing and teaching Open Floor movement practice.

Diana has been involved with the Glasgow Buddhist Centre since 2009 and has supported hillwalking retreats at Dhanakosa since 2012. Her love of wild places was kindled by her Dad in childhood, who ignited a life-long passion for hillwalking and adventure. Nature-based practice continues to deepen her imaginal relationship with geological 'big time', space and spiritual freedom. For Diana, experiences of being truly alive and open to both inner and outer landscape, whether in wilderness or urban conditions, are key to acting

from kindness. Diana is currently training for ordination within the Triratna Buddhist Community.

Elise has been coming to Dhanakosa regularly since 2010 when she attended a yoga and meditation retreat and was hooked. She is a qualified hatha flow yoga teacher and massage therapist and should have completed the three-year training as a Somatic Experiencing Practitioner™ by the time this retreat takes place. When not on the yoga mat Elise can often be found having adventures on her bike, in her kayak or out on the hills! She finds that being outdoors in remote and wild places helps her keep in connection with herself and others and is a fundamental aspect of her spiritual practice. Elise is training for ordination within Triratna.