

Tai Chi, Poetry and Meditation

Dance of the Elements

About the retreat

“Dance of the Elements” A retreat expanding our horizons through language: opening to the wisdom of the body and integrating our heart and head. Each move in Tai Chi is a metaphor. The structured forms provide an inspiring backdrop for the creation of rhythmic patterns with words. Tai Chi, writing & poetry have much in common: form, structure, sensitivity and a striving towards wholeness. Clouds like thoughts come and go; inspired by the surrounding mountains, lochs & sky, we will combine writing with movement and mindfulness for our own wellbeing and for all living beings everywhere.

This week of Tai Chi, writing and meditation will trace our intimate relation to the dance of the elements: Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Space, and Consciousness – with an overall theme of impermanence. Whatever arises from our practice we will use to play with the reality of our interconnectedness - write about it and share our stories.

Is there anything special I need to bring?

Bring a handful of earth from somewhere near your home and write about your *earth*. Bring your writing/story to the retreat. And bring:

- A notebook to use as a journal
- Writing/drawing materials
- Elemental poems, stories & songs you would like to share
- Loose comfortable clothes for movement and tai-chi
- Warm outdoor clothes and footwear
- Bring your dreams

To allow for deeper reflections and quiet time for our writing, there will be periods of silence overnight and after each meditation (3 or 4 each day) leading to a whole day of silence.

About the retreat team

Larry Butler (www.playspacepublications.com) will lead some of the movement/taiji sessions, the creative writing, poetry, singing and storytelling.

Linda France (<https://www.lindafrance.co.uk/>) will lead the writing sessions

Jayaraja (<https://www.dhanakosa.com/retreat-leaders/jayaraja>) will lead the meditations.

The Earth Says (after Hokusai Says)

The earth says
keep still
stay put & listen to the roar of silence
hold on & root deep for treasure
feel the sap rising through your bones
wait & see what happens

The river says
keep flowing
into the lochs swirling & swelling & swishing
keep floating down
down & down
falling & carving the mountains
down to the beautiful sea

The trees say
keep rooting
rooting & rising into sky –
spread out your arms to embrace everything
breathe deep deeper with each falling leaf
gather fruit & nuts for winter

The sky says
keep looking
sniff the air & notice the small
changes moment by moment
breath by breath
cloud by cloud
watching your thoughts float by

The birds say
keep singing
sing from your heart
fly from branch to branch
stay curious
stay light
start fresh
each year with a new nest then be patient
& sit on your eggs till they hatch

The sun says
keep smiling
smile at your reflection on still water
from dawn to dusk go outside
out to play with light & shadow
in the day long dazzle leaping through thin air

The compost heap says
keep rotting

decomposing
turning
burning
digest everything that comes your way
keep returning to the earth
& the earth
returns
tenfold to you

the earth says keep still
stay put
wait & see what happens
next