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Land of Joy

Buddhist Retreat Community



"Every day, think as you wake up, today I am fortunate to be alive, I have a precious human life, I am not going to waste it. I am going to use all my energies to develop myself, to expand my heart out to others; to achieve enlightenment for the benefit of all beings. I am going to have kind thoughts towards others, I am not going to get angry or think badly about

others. I am going to benefit others as much as I can."

— His Holiness Dalai Lama XIV

June has continued at Land of Joy with a quality of light that feels almost generous - long days, open skies, and the land humming with life.

In this issue, you'll find news from across our community - updates from the centre, the wildlife and gardens flourishing in our care, celebrations of the wonderful volunteers who sustain us, and a look at what's coming up over the summer months ahead.

As always, this newsletter comes to you with love and deep gratitude for your continued connection to our community, whether you join us here in Northumberland or hold us in your heart from afar. ❤️

Retreat Hut Project Update





We're delighted to share that the retreat hut project is entering an exciting new phase!

Over the past five months, we've been blown away by the generosity of our community. Thanks to the incredible kindness of so many, we've now raised **over £90,000** towards building our two new retreat huts together. It's been incredibly heartwarming and inspiring to receive support from so many, and we're deeply grateful to everyone who has helped along the way.

We have passed through our Building The Structures phase of our fundraising campaign at the speed of light and are now **just £5,000 away from reaching our overall fundraising goal - wow, wow, wow!**

With the fundraising campaign nearing its goal, we're excited that **groundworks are due to begin on 13th July**. After months of planning and preparation, it's wonderful to see the project moving from drawings and dreams into reality.

The Finishing Touches phase of our campaign is now open, so if you've been thinking about being a part of building the retreat huts together, this is a wonderful time to help us cross the finish line. Every contribution, large or small, brings us one step closer to completing these powerful new retreat spaces and ensuring they can benefit countless future retreatants.

From all of us at Land of Joy, thank you! Your generosity, encouragement, trust

and belief in this project have been truly inspiring, and we can't wait to share more updates as the build progresses.

Make an Offering

Celebrating our Remote Volunteers

Land of Joy is fortunate to have a dedicated group of remote volunteers whose presence, skill, and heartfelt commitment sustain so much of what we do here as a centre.



Beth is the heart of our operations as Centre Director, and has also been generously holding the role of Spiritual Programme Coordinator. She works closely with the operational team and serves as our liaison with the board of trustees, keeping the many moving parts of Land of Joy running smoothly and in harmony.





Laura, our Bookings Manager, is often the very first voice our visitors encounter, warmly handling all our registrations for retreats and retreat huts. Her care and attention ensure that every guest's journey with us begins smoothly, long before they arrive at our door.



Leanna, our Communications Coordinator, is the voice behind our newsletters and social media, sharing the life of Land of Joy with our wider community. She also collaborates with Beth on a range of operational projects, and is beginning

to step into an Assistant Spiritual Programme Coordinator role for the year ahead.



We're delighted to welcome **Hilary**, who is joining our Spiritual Programme team as a new remote volunteer. Having attended retreats at Land of Joy herself, Hilary knows first-hand the value of what we offer, and has kindly offered her service to help shape the programmes to come.

Richard our bookkeeper quietly keeps everything ticking along behind the scenes, helping us keep track of donations and finances. Their careful work makes a real difference every single week. We are so grateful for the time, skill and generosity he brings to Land of Joy.

To each of our remote volunteers - **thank you**. Your dedication, often quietly

Would you like to be a remote volunteer?

We are always warmly welcoming new remote volunteers! Regardless of where your talents lie, if you feel called to offer your time and energy to our community, we would love to hear from you.

Please reach out to us at volunteering@landofjoy.co.uk

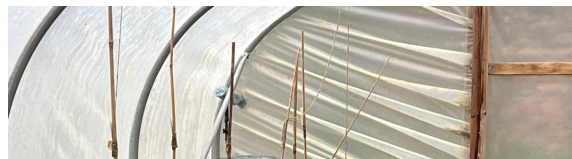
All the vegetables for summer have been planted & are already shooting up

with the warmer weather and sunshine ☀️. Our fruit bushes are laden with fruit, so good pickings when they ripen!

The onion and potato crops should give us enough for summer with leftovers to store for the winter months. Tomatoes, peppers, brassicas, beans, courgettes, pumpkins, and lots of lettuce are all thriving in the polytunnels and should produce plenty of lovely fresh food for the kitchen.

Volunteer Suzanne has been working hard planting and taking good care of the gardens and helping Fichou in the grounds, giving them lots of loving attention. Our new compost bins are working well, and she has been busy mulching the beds so the soil will produce healthy plants and fruit bushes. Fichou continues to care for the grounds and a polytunnel full of chrysanthemums and beautiful irises which will fill the vases in the gompā all summer.

Thanks to all the help from our volunteers, we will have plenty of fresh organic veggies to feed our volunteers and visitors. 🌱





Upcoming Woodland Working Week

**Our next Woodland Working Week is the
7th-14th August 2026.**

Wondering what to expect?

The biggest job will be clearing bracken to maintain footpaths to the quarry, around it and beyond. Between the quarry and the road we have a mixed woodland, moorland site after clearing the conifers, with 2 areas of peat. We want to encourage some clearings with the sphagnum mosses, lichens, wild flowers and to clear regrowth on access paths. There are at least 1500 new trees with guards that need care. There may be time for some rhododendron clearing above the walled garden to prepare for more tree or shrub planting. Checking for regrowth in cleared areas of rhododendron we always do.

Maintaining and expanding our register of trees, bats, birds, flowers, plants, butterflies, moths, insects and animals would be great to do and anyone with skills and knowledge would be most welcome. There will be many other tasks to be identified at the start of the week. Volunteers need to be confident about working in woodland with some dense undergrowth and unpredictable footing. It's a wonderful place to be, from the Tarsset burn with trout and otters up through the ancient woodland, past the lake and ponds, to the moorland and meadows. Red squirrels always a highlight.

[Register Here](#)

Upcoming Retreats



The Two Wings of Wisdom & Bodhichitta: An Exploration of the Lam Rim

With Ven Mary Reavey, Friday 3rd to Saturday 11th July

The Buddhist path to awakening is often described as two wings of a bird: wisdom and bodhichitta. Only when both wings are fully developed can we truly take flight. In this retreat, Ven. Mary Reavey will guide us in exploring these two essential aspects of practice. We will look more deeply into the Lamrim—the graduated path to enlightenment—focusing on cultivating wisdom and the compassionate intention of bodhichitta. The emphasis will be not only on intellectual understanding, but on using meditation to feel and experience the teachings directly, so that they become a living part of our practice.

[Register Here](#)



The Heart Sutra: Exploring the Wisdom of Emptiness

With Geshe Thubten Sherab, Wednesday, 22nd to Sunday, 26th July

Land of Joy warmly welcomes Geshe Thubten Sherab for a retreat exploring the profound wisdom of The Heart Sutra, one of the most treasured and widely studied texts of the Mahayana Buddhist tradition. Though brief in length, the Heart Sutra contains the essence of the Buddha's teachings on emptiness, pointing directly to the nature of reality and the wisdom that frees the mind from confusion and suffering.

During this retreat, Geshe Thubten Sherab will guide participants through the meaning of the Heart Sutra with clarity and warmth, helping to unpack its

essential message and its relevance for daily life and spiritual practice. Through teachings, meditation, and discussion, the retreat offers a valuable opportunity to explore this foundational text in a supportive environment.

Each day will include periods of teaching, guided meditation, and time for questions and discussion, allowing participants to reflect on the teachings and deepen their understanding. Time will also be set aside for quiet contemplation and personal practice, creating space for the insights of the Heart Sutra to settle and become more experiential.

[Register Here](#)



Facing Death with Peace & Understanding Through the Buddhist teaching of the Five Powers (Online Only)

With Ven Mary Reavey

Saturday 8th - Sunday 9th August

Although this is a stand alone weekend, participation in previous weekend (Who Lives, Dies & Is Reborn) would be an advantage. Rather than treating death as a separate event, the focus here is on what can be done in life that supports the dying process. The 5 Powers are a clear and practical approach that brings peace, stability and a beneficial transition. Understanding how to benefit ourselves at the time of death gives insight into benefiting others.

[Register Here](#)



Mindful Movement with Body & Breath

With Lou Beaumont, Friday, 28th to Sunday, 30th August

Mindful Movement with Body & Breath is a gentle and nourishing retreat designed to reconnect you with your body's natural rhythm and subtle energy.

Through the combined practices of pranayama (yogic breathwork) and qigong (mindful movement), we explore how breath and movement can harmonise the body, calm the mind, and support overall wellbeing. These ancient systems complement each other beautifully—breath guiding awareness inward, and movement allowing energy to flow freely.

Together, they create a grounded and accessible pathway into meditation, helping you feel more present, balanced, and at ease.

Register Here



Living with Integrity: A Weekend on the Second Perfection - Ethical Discipline

With François Schick

Friday 4th - Sunday 6th September

During this weekend at Land of Joy, François Schick will guide us into a gentle exploration of the second pāramitā — ethics and morality. Together, we will deepen our understanding of this essential practice and the ways it supports a meaningful life.

Throughout the retreat, François will invite us to reflect on how ethical conduct nurtures inner peace and how our choices shape both our present and future through the law of karma. Rather than abstract philosophy, we will focus on how these timeless teachings can be applied to the small moments of daily life — in our words, our actions, and our relationships.

The retreat will weave together guided reflections, simple practices, and quiet time for personal contemplation. Through this balance, we will discover how living with integrity can bring steadiness, clarity, and ease to the way we move through the world.

[Register Here](#)

Retreat Hut Availability





Land of Joy is a wonderful environment for retreat. Our semi-rural location offers quiet, spacious and beautiful grounds which can be explored during your breaks whilst the retreat facilities provide a private space that will support your practice.

Our three private retreat huts are in a part of the woodland close to the main house overlooking the valley. We ask that you plan to stay for a minimum of one week and a maximum of three months.

We still have availability in 2026:

Retreat Hut 1: 11th - 19th November | 2nd - 19th December

Retreat Hut 2: No availability

Retreat Hut 3: 17th - 25th November | 10th - 19th December

NOTE: Our retreat huts bookings are open to 2027, be sure to book in advance!

“I was very happy to see so much wildlife now - I saw an otter twice, bats, two herons, and three white-tailed deer! Happy sentient beings!”

-Sheri, a recent retreatant in a private retreat hut-

A recipe from the Land of Joy kitchen



Vegan Thukpa Ingredients

- Noodles (wheat or egg-free noodles)
- Vegetable stock or water

Aromatics

 Aromatics

- Garlic
- Ginger
- Onion
- Green chilies (optional)

 Vegetables

- Cabbage
- Carrots
- Bell peppers
- Tomatoes
- Spinach or bok choy
- Spring onions

 Protein

- Tofu

 Seasoning

- Soy sauce
- Salt
- Black pepper
- Chili sauce or chili oil
- Vinegar

 Garnish

- Fresh coriander (cilantro)
- Lemon (optional)

Instructions:

1. Heat a little oil in a pot.
2. Add chopped onion, garlic, ginger, and green chili. Cook until fragrant.
3. Add carrots, cabbage, bell pepper, and tomatoes. Stir-fry for 3–5 minutes.
4. Pour in vegetable stock or water and bring to a boil.
5. Add soy sauce, salt, black pepper, and a little vinegar.
6. Add tofu cubes and let everything simmer for about 10 minutes.
7. Add noodles and cook until tender.

8. Stir in spinach or bok choy near the end so it stays fresh.
9. Taste and adjust seasoning. Add chili sauce or chili oil if you want more heat.
10. Serve hot topped with spring onions and fresh coriander.

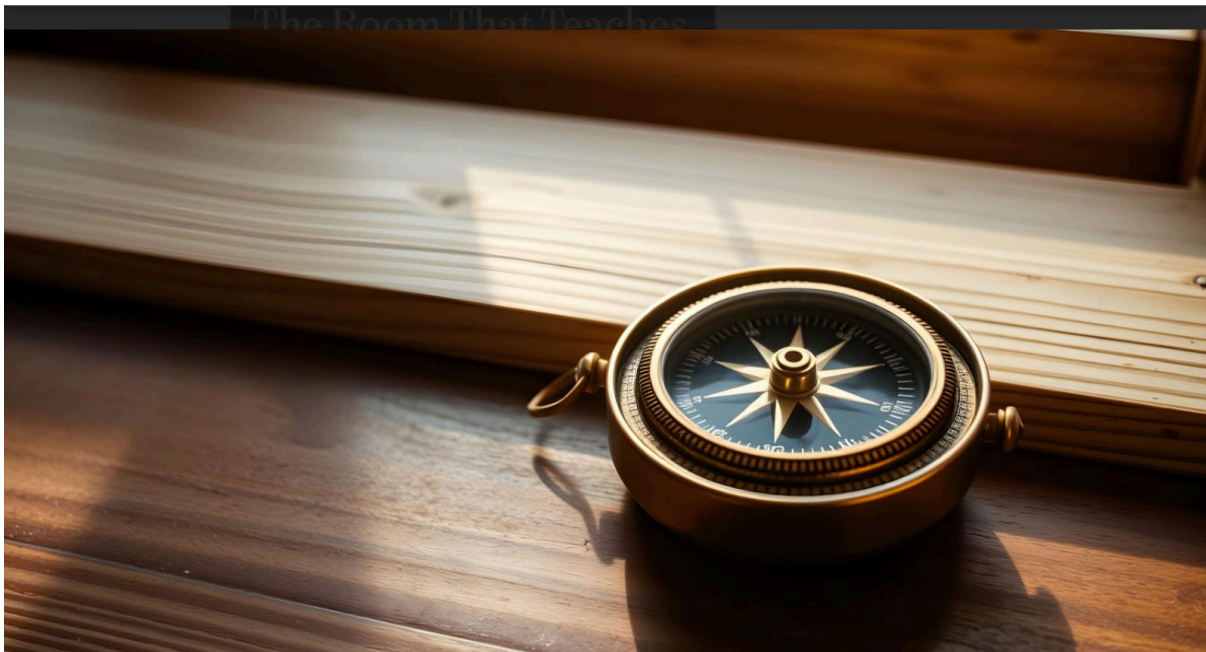


Stories from Land of Joy

We're honoured to share this series written by Land of Joy volunteer Sandeep Krishnappa, who spent forty days in a volunteer room at Land of Joy. What began as a quiet corner for rest became a mirror for awakening.

The Room That Teaches: A 40-Day Journey from Seeking to Seeing is a collection of short, luminous stories—each born from an encounter with the ordinary. A drawer. A spider. A salad bowl. Each one a window into awareness.

This is not a book of reflections. It's a book of windows. Three minutes to read. A lifetime to live.



Story 8: The Phone That Tried to Find North

He uses his phone as a compass.

This morning, I watched him pacing the room, screen held flat like a sacred offering.

“North,” he whispered, spinning slowly.

The little arrow flickered, east, then west, then spun wildly like a bee trapped in logic.

He frowned, shook the phone, even blew on it, as if the problem was dust, not doubt.

Then he sighed, walked over to the radiator, and leaned the phone against it. The arrow jumped again.

That's when he smiled, that quiet smile that happens when recognition replaces frustration.

"It's confused because it's next to metal," he said.
And then, softer: "So am I."

He sat down, switched off the compass, and just breathed.
The phone finally went dark, but somehow, he looked more oriented than ever.

Sometimes, finding direction isn't about fixing the needle.
It's about noticing what's pulling it.

Moral: When you stop clinging to certainty, you trust awareness itself.

COMMENTARY SECTION:

The commentary sections are for those who want deeper philosophical context. If
you prefer to stay with the stories and practices, that's perfect too.

Madhyamaka Reflection: The Emptiness of Direction

The compass reveals the nature of all orientation, dependent, relational,
and never
absolute.

"North" is not a fixed entity. It arises only in dependence upon the
magnetic field,
the body holding the phone, and the space in which movement occurs.

Nāgārjuna might say:

The compass is not inherently a compass.
It is called compass in dependence upon direction, motion, and intention.

In this moment, the interference of metal exposed the deeper truth:
our inner compasses often tremble for the same reason.
We stand too close to our attachments, our assumptions, our certainties.

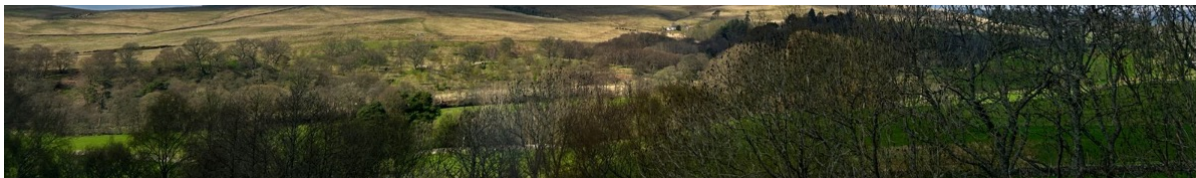
When he stepped back and switched off the device,
orientation ceased to be about finding a point on the map.
It became an act of awareness, the quiet recognition of what distorts
perception.

In Madhyamaka terms, this is wisdom:
to see that direction, like identity, has no fixed essence,
yet functions perfectly when freed from clinging.

Zen Poetic Mirror: Thusness of Direction

The arrow trembles.
Metal hums.
Mind searches for North.
Then stillness.
Breath replaces signal.
Silence orients itself.
No map,
no pole,
only presence turning true.





**A big thank you, as always, for your ongoing support of Land of Joy.
Please continue to visit us and support us in any way you can.**

We hope to see you soon!



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