



# Spring Rain on Still Waters

## About the Retreat

The five skandhas are a description of human experience often evoked in both early and later Buddhism to point to the nature of reality through reflection. When tackled experientially this list that at first glance seems rather dry and abstract becomes rich and wondrous. And, has the power to lead us to deep transformation. On this retreat we will take a three levels of wisdom approach to the topic; using study to conceptually understand our topic just enough to support reflection, then diving into our direct experience we will familiarise ourselves sufficiently to support deeper meditation, enabling us to witness the unfolding of experience with a new sense of freedom.

The Skandhas are of course a description of the whole of our experience so as well as a substantial amount of time in the shrine room we will be encouraging an integrated and wholistic approach to practice specifically including periods of meditation and reflection outdoors where the full and sensuous experience of nature can gently lead us deeper.

## Is there anything special I need to bring?

Please bring warm clothes, outdoor footwear and waterproofs as we will be doing some retreat sessions outdoors.

## What can you expect from the programme?

The retreat day will start with a double meditation before breakfast (most meditation sessions will be about 40 minutes). After breakfast there will normally be a short seminar session, followed by a period of reflection and further meditation including a lead introduction to meditative reflection on the five skandhas. There will also be some ritual practice each day as well as opportunities for group exploration. Optional Chi Gung sessions will also help ground our experience and retreat reviews will give opportunity for personal guidance.

You can expect there to be some periods of silence every day to support going deeper, and a block of three to four days of silence in the middle of the retreat. You can also expect there to be four to five hours of meditation and ritual each day some of which is likely to be outdoors.

## About the retreat team

**Nayaka** came to Dhanakosa in 1996 after learning to meditate with the Newcastle Buddhist Centre. Drawn by the mountains, he quickly felt at home here and became increasingly involved in the running of the centre. He became part of the management team in 1999, was ordained into the Western Buddhist Order in 2001 and became centre director in 2006. He has a background in earth and life sciences, has a long standing interest in natural history and a love of the wilderness.

**Moksadhi** joined the Dhanakosa team in June 2021. She was ordained 2 years ago and loves the great outdoors, is a keen hillwalker and is exploring engaging with the elemental landscape as part of her Buddhist practice.