

RE-TREAT: A(NOTHER) SOJOURN ON THE HOLY ISLE

Rajan Madhok

Winter 2025



With respect and thanks to Ani and the many: resident and visiting volunteers who make Holy Isle a special place; I am very grateful for all you do.

I went for a two-weeks winter retreat in February 2025, and which was slightly extended as the boat could not come to take us off the island due to bad weather. The initial upset soon turned into joy at the thought of extra days in this magical place. Here are some reflections from my visit. For ease of reference, I have attached the previous anthology from my first visit in 2019 also.

Re-treat

Why are you here

So that I do not have to come again?

Do you deserve it, don't know

Do you need it, you bet

Retreat, recharge to reengage



All together

Different stories

But same search

For meaning, peace

Will they find it

Will I find it

Who knows

But in right place



Judgement Rock

So, what do you think?

Have I learnt enough?

Will I find peace?

The rock stays quiet

In silence is the answer

Only you can know

Look in your heart



Up to you

Calm mind to meditate

Meditate to calm mind

Which comes first

Both and neither

Stop over-thinking

And start doing



We all leave, eventually

Boatman will come for sure

To take you across

But when, who knows

He decides day and time

Don't get impatient

Or waste time worrying

Enjoy, and be ready for when he comes



Companionable evening

Sitting, whittling away

Carving spoons, knives, spatulas

Occasional how about this

No wittering, only music

As he also sits with guitar, singing softly

All around the log fire

Wild windy stormy outside

Calmness reigning here



Do it right

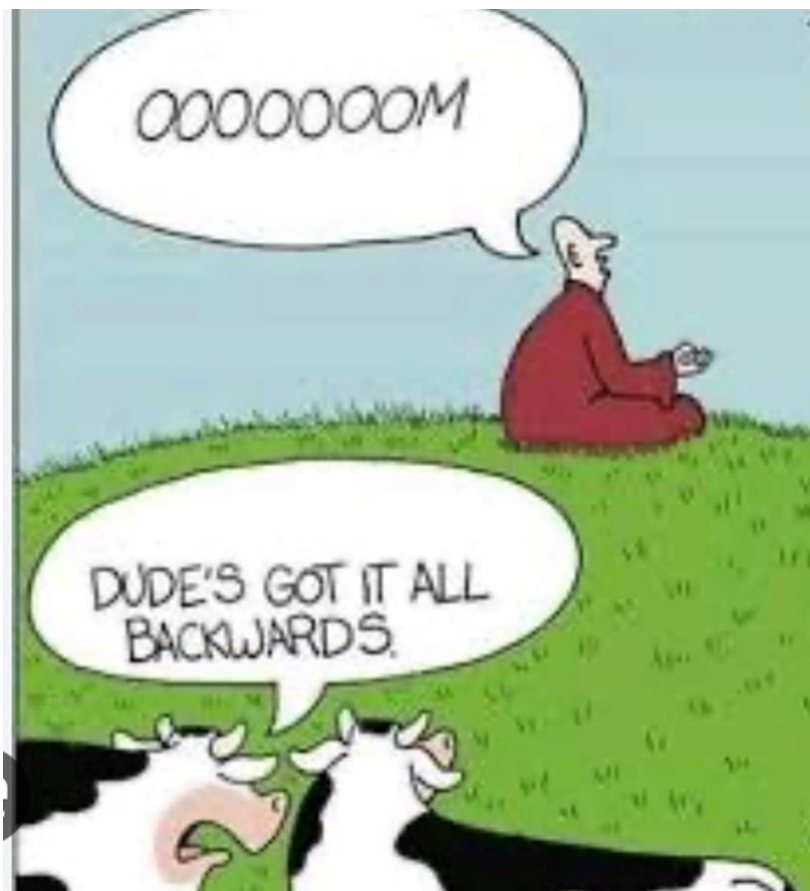
Don't pursue it will ensue

More you control, worse it is

Let go to get it back

All there, waiting for you

Peace, calmness, joy



Note: source of photo unknown, but thanks.

Just be

Nothing to be gained by ruminating on the past

Everything to be lost by ignoring the present



Joy

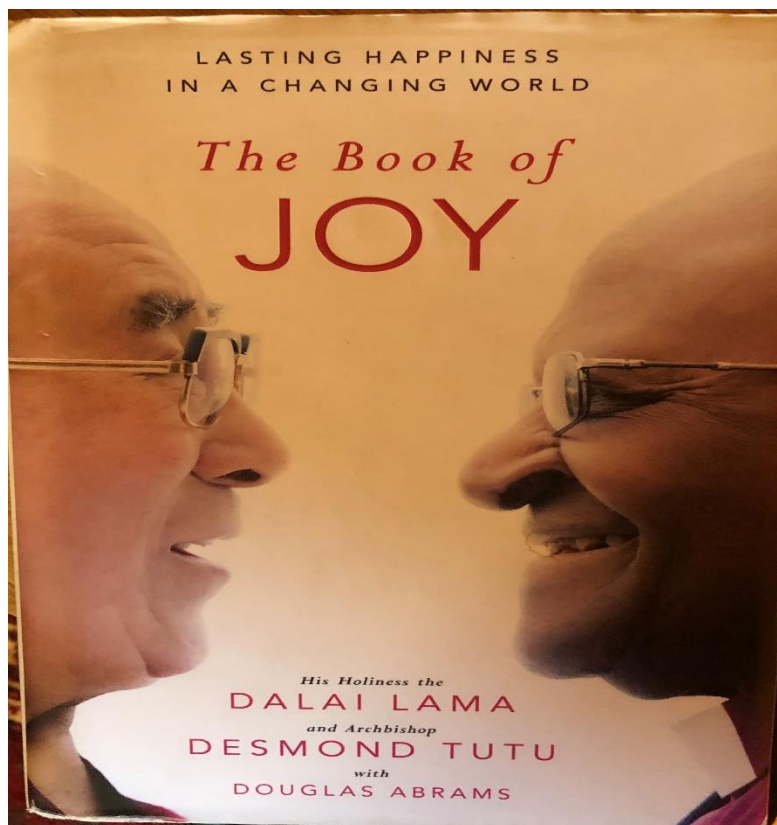
Something deep

Satisfying inner need

Does not come easily

Once experienced, never forgotten

And this is the place



A full life

Will it happen today

Weight will drop off

Lighter, will soar

Believe and it will be



A SOJOURN ON HOLY ISLE

Rajan Madhok

Spring 2019



With thanks to fellow participants for making it a great experience and for the photos.

Retreat on Holy Isle

Cut off from the world
no worries, just joy
of being with the nature
open skies, sea, birdsong, animals
solitude, what more could one ask for
What took you so long
but better late than never
Wonder why they call it retreat
surely not withdrawl, rather progress
Bet everyone wants a re-treat
I do, do you?



Ode to a blackberry *

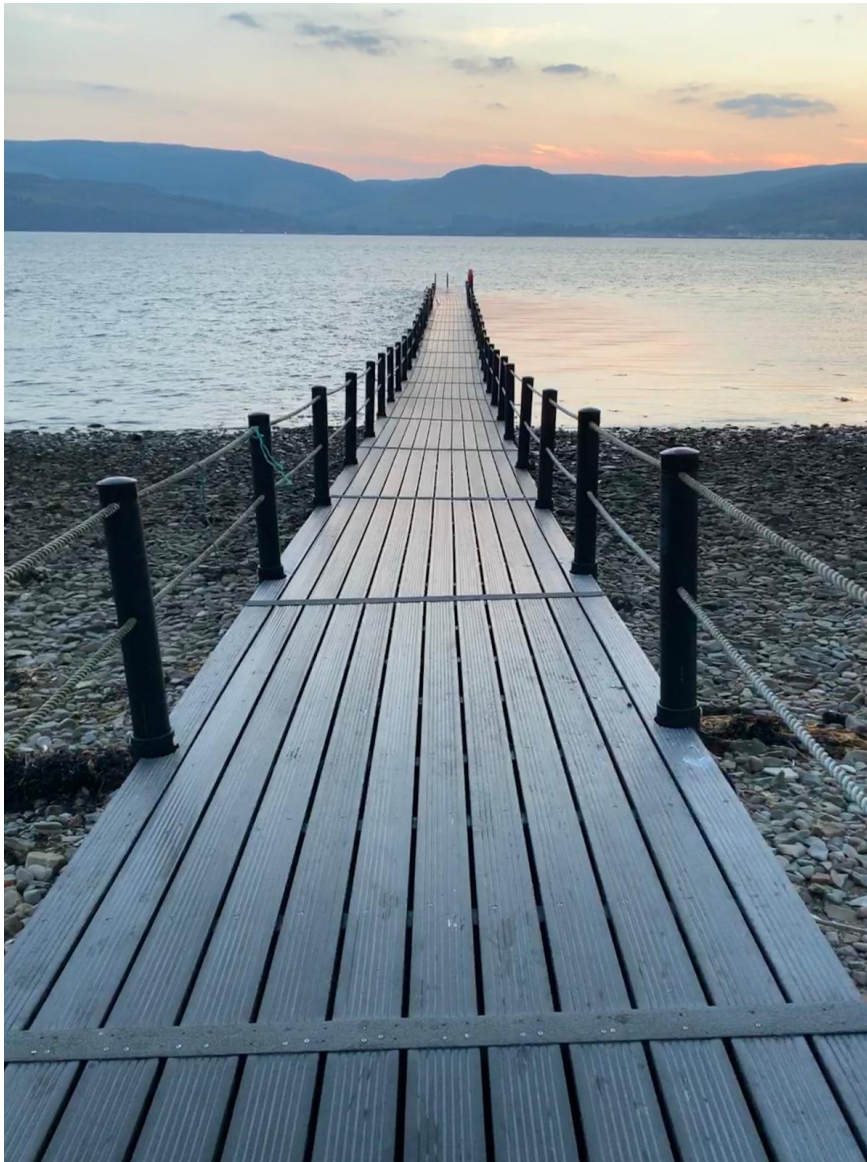
You did not die in vain
the lessons you taught
live in me now
bringing joy and peace



* On learning mindfulness by eating a blackberry

Goodbye black dog

Lugged him all the way to the top
weighed a ton, bending me double
but then I got my own back
throttled him and to make sure
threw him off Mullach Mor into sea below
then danced down the mountain
with spring in my steps, much lighter
and to be safe took the boat out of the island



Talking is over-rated

No need for words
for true communion
just being is enough
heightened senses
natural sounds backdrop
and all is crystal clear
when sitting in silence



Om

Two letters but such power
union of body, mind and soul
few chants and complete shanti
Nirvana

*Shanti = Peace



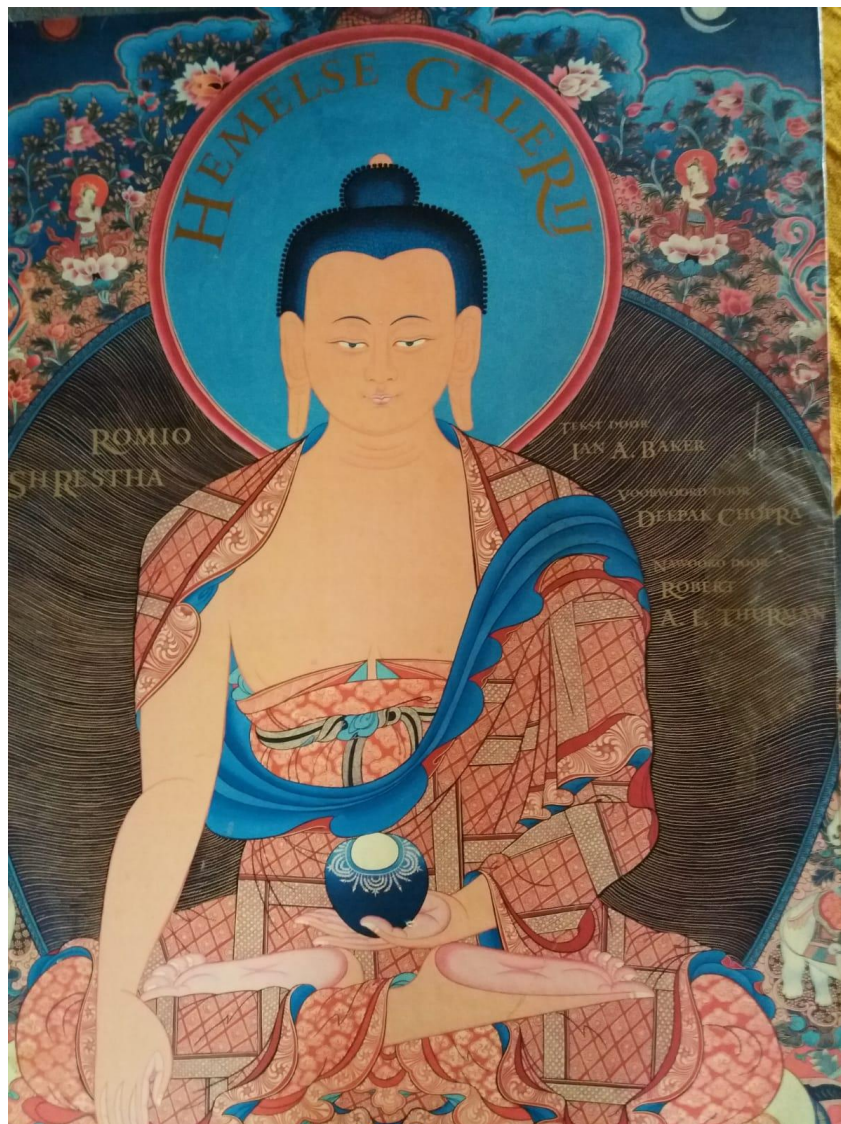
Get on with it

Do what it takes
shed tears, scream, pray
better still laugh
but get it over with
past is past and
future yet to come
Why ruin present
Life is beautiful
to be enjoyed
It can be done
you are in control
and there is help



Moving on

Hope and fear two dacoits
on journey to joy
hoping the other will realise
afraid not to upset more
robbing you in bad relationships
Somethings are not meant to be
clinging on makes it worse
Let go and make new start



Joy

It does not get better than this
so be in the present
savour the moment
one at a time
and which is what life is
a series of moments
Only way to eat the elephant
in bite sized chunks



Smiling is permitted

Every reason and no excuse

For a start you are alive

(dead people wont be reading this)

Journey of thousand miles

begins with the first step

Be happy in this moment

start here, start now

rest will follow, Hakuna Matata



A tribute to Clive Holmes

Believe me it is true
Nightingales sing on Holy Isle
I heard them loud and clear
And what joy they brought me
Took away the black dog
Lightened me and set me free
How did they get there you ask
Because he brought them
Along with his wisdom and wit
Shared freely with all who attended
Turned worriers into warriors
Respect+++++





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