

# NEW CHAN FORUM

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## On Making a Difference

During the past year we have been making considerable efforts in redefining the institutional aspects of our work. In particular the support of individuals in everyday practice, the relationship between group leaders and their flocks, the links between local groups and our central organisation and the role of group meditation in the support of individual mindfulness have engaged our attention. In November 2006 John and Simon went with a range of questions to New York for consultations with the Venerable Chan Master Sheng yen, our Patron, and also visited Roshi John Daido Looi. This edition reviews some of our deliberations and findings with support from other articles that also bear upon the title chosen for this issue and its key article.

Chuan-Deng Jing-di

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## On Making a Difference

### Mindfulness and Meditation in the Practice of Lay Zen.

John H Crook, *Chuan-deng Jing-di*, Teacher of WCF

*This article takes a close look at the efficacy and function of key activities in Chan. It arises from reflections on discussions both within the Fellowship and with our consultants in New York last November. It was originally presented to the Leaders Retreat of the Western Chan Fellowship in February 2007 as a policy document for discussion and intended to be a guide for new activities in teaching by local Leaders. This final version is extended to include a broad survey of the relationship between retreat practice and everyday Zen in the understanding of Dharma.<sup>1</sup>*

#### Problems in lay Practice

Some years ago a practitioner at the Maenllwyd on being asked why he was there, told me, “to make a difference”. I have always recalled this reply and wondered how effective we may be in making any difference to the world or ourselves. At this time of reconsidering our orientation and commitment, it is appropriate to have a serious look at this question.

Do our retreats make a difference in the lives of participants? Do our participants use our retreats to make a difference? We know from our retreat report collection that our retreats are highly effective in opening retreatants to themselves, to fresh views of living and to the onset of some understanding of Buddha dharma. Yet the effect is normally short lived, people return to their karma-determined habitual ways and many soon feel the need for a return visit to this farmstead in Wales, which many come to call “home”.

Many have remarked on the yo-yo effect of attending retreats; the up and down in mood, quality of being, depressive tendencies and personal relating that goes on between repeated visits to the Maenllwyd. Serious practice between retreats is quite rare. Many restrict themselves to half an hour of meditation in the mornings and perhaps also the evenings – the rest of the day being spent in the habitual rush of business or minding the baby. The brief appearance of calm is followed by the repetitive and ultimately exhausting daily routine. It is not as if routine life is commonly based in some values related to either retreats or daily mind calming, rather in this consumerist society all values pivot automatically upon self improvement; self satisfaction; concerns with comfort, beauty, status, health, competence and earning power, all subject to shaky self – confidence. It is a me-me-me society.

Yet it is also far from clear whether a more persistent Buddhist practice really makes a much greater difference. Geshe Damchos Yontan of the Lam Rim Centre once told me of a Geshe who, having a bad temper, took himself off onto a three-year solitary retreat. On his return everyone remarked on his calm, happy demeanour, yet, within a week, he fell out with someone and was back to his raging and backbiting. Shifu once asked a retreatant why he came regularly on retreats. “You see, Shifu,” he replied “For some days after I get home I don’t quarrel with my wife!” Certain young western Zen masters given both *inka* and transmission by their Japanese teachers have fallen by the wayside in spectacular fornication and money misuse, leading to their being expelled and disrobed by their sanghas. Even a monk’s training here made little difference to a basically immature person ultimately thinking of his own pleasures.

A number of critics have pointed out that the Zen training of laity as part-time monks in a monastic style in the West sometimes produces a split between a pseudo-spiritual life of

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<sup>1</sup> I have benefited greatly from extensive discussions on the theme of this paper with Simon Child, Rebecca Li, David Slaymaker and Jimmy Yu (Guo-gu) to each of whom I am very grateful. The more general discussions within the WCF provided the background for the initial enquiry, which had led to a consultation with Master Sheng yen, our Dharma patron, in November 2006 in Pinebush, NY. (see Teacher’s Report to the WCF’s AGM 2007.)

meditation, liturgy and even significant Zen experiences approved by masters, and ordinary lay activity where irritation, karmic mistakes, hurtful relationships continue, even within the Centre itself. Such a practice commonly becomes abandoned after some years and the reputation of Zen necessarily questioned. Even sincere practitioners may continue to have such persistent difficulties in their life however honestly they may try to surmount them.

It seems therefore that a lay Zen practice following a monastic schedule whether on intensive retreats or over longer time spans makes only a limited difference. Lay practitioners of course have in no sense 'left home'. They are neither renouncers nor 'consecrated' to their practice as a monk may be. To a degree, a pattern of schizoid activity is almost inevitable. The question remains open as to how best a lay Zen practitioner can train in Buddha dharma. Yet, as Shifu has pointed out, monks too have their dilemmas and having left the house may not necessarily mean, "leaving home." Attachments may indeed persist. For monk and layman alike the issue concerns coming to terms with the karma of the self.

### **Vow Power, Mindfulness and the Clarity of Insight**

It seems clear that meditational sitting upon a cushion may not by itself necessarily bring about a difference. Whether one does one's half hour a day or practices alone for three years there seems to be no guarantee that a deeply embedded change will necessarily arise. It looks as if the self-concerns based in karmic habits have not been sufficiently touched. What then is lacking?

The answer is self-confrontation. One may sit on one's backside for aeons, either in a state of hassling mind, a calm condition or even a thoughtless one but that does not mean that one's personal problems and prejudices are being addressed or habitual self reference being confronted. Indeed this was the root of Da Hui's objection to the quietism he believed to be present in Silent Illumination.<sup>2</sup> Meditation may suppress emotion and bring a degree of calm but it does not in itself address the fundamental origin of ones karmic reactivity in prejudice, anger or self-concerning love. Meditation in its basic breath-watching forms is the opening teaching in much Zen practice and may lead one into skilled awareness of silence or into states of trance without for a moment asking who or what the meditator is. Such self-confrontation is essential if any difference is to be made. So how to bring it about?

Our intensive retreats begin with the Western Zen Retreat<sup>3</sup> in which the key issue in the communication exercises is the question "Who am I?" "How is life fulfilled?" "What am I?" and related questions circling around conceptions of self. Statistically, some 25% participants discover forms of self-acceptance that contain the roots of great teachings and insight into Zen, others come to understand the human condition deeply and a few suffer much but find the struggle to have been beneficial.

Yet it has been argued from a Chinese perspective that the use of enquiry involving "Who?" questions slows down or may prevent a 'realisation' due to focussing on self concerns. It is certainly true that a question (hua-tou) such as "What is Wu?", being empty of any target for thought, may allow a retreatant to "drop the question" in a direct realisation of emptiness perhaps more easily. There is however a serious error in the view that working with "Who?" is mere psychotherapy or potentially a side-tracking of the mind into irrelevancy. The problem with immersing oneself too immediately in a dropping of all concern, as may occur with "Wu?", is that genuine personal karmic problems (*samskaras*) may remain far from resolved, being merely buried for the time being.

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<sup>2</sup> See: Cleary, C. 1977. *Swampland Flowers. The letters and lectures of Zen master Ta Hui*. Grove Press. NY.

<sup>3</sup> For a description see: Crook, J.H and D.Fontana (Eds).1990 *Space in Mind. East-West Psychology and Contemporary Buddhism*. Element. Chapters 8 and 13

We have seen how inexperienced Zen masters who have undoubtedly experienced *kensho* have none the less subsequently committed serious immoral acts. Clearly, this is because *kensho* alone does not heal buried karma. The communication exercise in the WZR does allow buried karma to be processed by raising issues of personal distress through focussing on “Who am I?” Subsequently this then allows the mind to address “Wu?” from a condition no longer involving the repression of karma but from an inner freedom generated through self understanding. While this work can be described in Western psychotherapeutic terms, it can also be understood completely within the psychology of mindfulness utilised by the Buddha himself (see below). Moreover, a prime theoretical basis of the WZR retreat lies within the tradition of the Vijnanavada school of Mahayana Buddhism as found particularly in the model of mind presented in the Lankavatara Sutra.<sup>4</sup>



Yet, even these retreats do not necessarily prevent the yo-yo effect from developing and a practitioner may soon be back for more of an essentially therapeutic treatment. More is needed to extend the insights of the retreat into everyday practice.

There are two ways of embedding new understanding: Vow power – as Shifu calls the determination to fulfil precepts through vows, and Mindfulness. Vow power involves taking the precepts seriously and in depth every day. The Chan lay precepts are expressed conventionally in negative terms – no killing, lying, stealing, irresponsible sex or drunkenness. Each precept needs further interpretation as in no killing of a child’s joy, no false advertisements, no stealing of other’s beliefs etc. These are important no-nos but what we need in contemplating the precepts are positive and assertive injunctions. We need to express the precepts in positive terms: – give life; always speak truth; be generous, express love; be mindful. As part of an everyday practice one needs to recall these positive vows powerfully and be mindful of whether one fails in expressing them or not.

A serious practice of mindfulness requires a more or less continuous awareness of the quality of one’s mind and behaviour. Normally when something happens or someone says something negative to one or about one, we immediately react with rejection, irritation, anger or, sometimes, even violence. These reactions come about instantly and recur unbidden in memory whenever the mind falls vacant to be immediately filled by wandering thoughts. A hurt person spends hours mulling over, nursing their pain and planning revengeful responses. A mindful person observes these states of mind, lowers their intensity, questions them, and alters the resultant behaviour. Instead of swearing or threatening, one may ask “Did I hear you correctly?” or “Lets have another look at this,” - thereby opening the way to negotiation rather than dispute.

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<sup>4</sup> See Crook, J.H. 1990. Mind in Western Zen, *In Space in Mind: East-West psychology and Contemporary Buddhism*. (Eds; J.Crook & D. Fontana). Element.

A longer pause allows one to note what aspect of one's self is responding so angrily. One can see that at the root of all such reactions lies fear. Fear is the father of all emotions: jealousy, anger, scorn are all fears for self. The reflex irritations arise without thought; they have become automatic through a deep repression of fears long ago experienced in childhood. These are the source of karma, the roots of personal 'samskaras'. When one reacts in this way, one is not aware of the deep origins of such responses. Long ago Freud pointed out that understanding the self involves the 'recovery of the repressed'. We need to know the origins of our fears and their attendant emotional derivatives. Once we do know them, it becomes possible to identify their re-expression as it arises and to create a tiny mental pause as if remarking to oneself – "Ah, here it comes again!" What I call the 'wry smile' may arise. Such an observation allows a modification of one's habitual reaction into something that with practice becomes a reflection rather than a reaction. To reflect on something allows a pause for consideration to arise. We need therefore to train ourselves to reflect rather than to react. The capacity to reflect in this way is the crucial aspect of mindfulness. It is far from easy.

A prime realisation that comes from such reflection is the shocked understanding of the omnipresence of a selfishness that persists even though a mind may have been skilfully calmed to yield a one-pointed focus on external or internal events as occurs in many practices of *shamata* or *vipassana*. Indeed such a sometimes blissfully relaxed focus can prevent one from seeing how even such a praiseworthy practice may be a self-serving activity. Furthermore, if the focus on "Who?" questions leads only into self-referential introspection without a breakthrough, the subtlety of the enquiry may be missed. It takes time, persistence and a willed focus to recognise the largely unconscious self-serving orientation of the mind even when the stated intention may be the induction of wisdom and compassion.

The specifically Dharmic intuition known as *prajna* is an insight that sees this obsession clearly and allows the mind to drop out of it into the more basic underlying no-self condition known as "No-mind", "Buddha mind", "Emptiness" or the "Unknown". This is a quite radical state of clarity in which the distinction between self-concern and its absence becomes observed in action. Although not a "kensho", i.e. the totally complete experience of self-absence that may last only a short time, this clarity becomes a form of knowledge of "the other shore" where compassion emerges simply as the natural form of the absence of self-reference. It may arise through intensive sitting practice or in any highly one-pointed reflection providing it does not get stuck in 'the cave of demons' of self-indulgent relaxation.

Once it becomes possible to rest in this clarity, the mind may expand further to a "one mind" state that embraces the whole of experience rather than the divided mind that is present in normal consciousness. When realised, the contrast between these states is at last understood or intuited and can then be sought for both within formal practice and outside it. It allows the practitioner to put the other fully before oneself since the relevance of ones' self can be set aside. This is then the basis for an uncontrived, compassionate empathy that is the expression of a Bodhisattva's intentionality (*bodhicitta*).

The Buddha himself was a prime exponent of such mindfulness. Indeed, it formed the basis for his novel practice whereby he was able to observe the mind in all its expressions rather than bending it wilfully into trance – as was the prime activity of meditative yoga in his time. The essential ideas are expressed in the *Satipatthana Sutta* and *Mahsatipatthana Sutta*. The focus of mindfulness dwells on four foundations, mindfulness of body, the feelings, the mind and the objects in mind. These are observed precisely as they are without judgement. The attention is entirely focussed, for example on the body in breathing; "just as a wood turner concentrates on his blade as he makes a long or a short turn." The practice extends into mindfulness of the Four Noble Truths of Suffering, of the Cause of Suffering, the Elimination of Suffering and the path of practise. It is at this point that the omnipresence of self can be observed and the mind transformed. In a further sutta, the *Mahadhammasamadana Sutta*, the Buddha examines the

ways by which activities may be undertaken through understanding what ways may be pleasant now but end in pain, unpleasant now and end in pleasure etc. the foundation of the ways lies in mindfulness. In these methods of close observation, the mind becomes practised in understanding its many ways of arising, their origin and their cessation. Such understanding brings about the power to alter behaviour through personal knowledge gained in practice. Clearly here is a way to make a difference.

### **Cultural Contrasts between China and the West**

Our contemporary ways of life in the West are shaped by the extreme individualism of our times that have become pronounced in European and especially in American traditions since the European Enlightenment. There is thus an especial need for Westerners to understand how our egotism is cultivated in education and through consumerism. Yet, this is not to shift blame onto culture. We are the culture and just as we have created it so can we change it. In becoming mindful of the ways in which we respond and of their origins in our personal histories, both as individuals and as members of a culture, we can initiate change. In that such changes allow for understanding the responses of both self and other, real shifts in compassionate understanding become possible. In such a development, the task of training must inevitably emphasise the everyday practice as one not of lesser importance than training on retreats but rather as the foundation from which going on retreat is a further development. In the West, such work requires direct understanding of one's self and one's motivation.

When Shifu first asked me to lead Chan retreats in his stead, I asked him how I should do it. He said, "John, I am Chinese, you are British. You find out!" Although amazed by Shifu's level of trust in me, this is precisely what I have been endeavouring to do since that time. Perhaps, however, neither Shifu nor I perceived in what ways our differing cultures of origin might require contrasting approaches to the same Dharma. Extensive psychological research shows conclusively that East Asian peoples (Chinese, Korean and Japanese) educated within their traditional systems show very high levels of communal concern and a much less individualistic motivation than traditionally educated American or European citizens.<sup>5</sup> The aim is to merge with the positive aspects of the communities or groups to which an individual belongs, whether that is the family, the firm or a religious group. Identification with a collective psychology means that an individual is less concerned with standing out from a background and creating waves of his or her own. It follows that the question "Who am I?" has less significance for a traditionally educated Chinese than it does for a Westerner. Indeed, in interview with one Chinese gentleman he confessed that at depth he could not see a difference between himself and his engagement with his family. I suspect this E-W contrast lies at the root of Shifu's playing down of the "Who?" question in favour of a direct approach to "Wu?"

There is also a difference between the requirements of monastic and lay practice. Monks, through extensive mind calming practice may have considerably reduced their karmic entanglements so that a focus on who is doing them would be less essential. Yet, perhaps one should not be too sanguine in considering monkish attainments.

Of course, neuroses occur just as frequently in the Far East as in America but their basis in ego-psychology is different and consequently the manner of working with personal identity needs also to differ. China, together with India, is in any case little influenced by post-Freudian developments in Western mental health psychology - so that models of mind well understood among the laity in the West have little impact in the Far East. What the appropriate question for a traditional Chinese in a WZR might be remains undetermined but plausibly "What am I like if completely alone?" or "Without a role, who am I?" might be startling.

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<sup>5</sup> See: Neisser U and D.A. Jopling. (Eds) 1997. *The Conceptual Self in Context. Culture, Experience, Self-Understanding*. Cambridge University Press. Especially Chapter 2.

## **Meditation**

The practice of intensive Chan meditation is a yogic discipline for training the mind in one pointed observation through the cultivation of Samadhi. In itself, it has no effect on the emotions, which are suspended or suppressed during practice. The yogic endeavour is to change the conditions of consciousness within which thought may occur so that for example, in a calmed mind objects normally giving rise to anger appear in a different light – just as they are. Repeated practice gives rise to an easier induction of calmed states as the condition for deeper realisation that, if one avoids the faults of falling into 'the cave of demons', may take one all the way to the cessation of ego reference in enlightenment. In returning to everyday life, these skills wane through lacking a basis in the meditative mind state. It is only with the addition of mindfulness that a persistence of a collected mind can be actively and successfully cultivated. As the Buddha remarked the four foundations of mindfulness, provide the direct path for the purification of beings.

For us practitioners in the contemporary world we can now see that an exclusive practice of meditation with neither self confrontation nor an everyday mindfulness under vows that can at least sometimes take one into clarity, is unlikely to make much of an impact on our lives. Yet a system of training in which everyday mindfulness, powered by determined resolution, is enhanced through the periodic cultivation of meditative mind states allowing a deep insight into mind in illuminated calm, may indeed place one firmly on the Buddha path. It is this approach therefore that the Western Chan Fellowship needs to promote if it is “to make a difference”.

## **Supports for Practice**

Many people have almost no insight into the causation of behaviour that often causes them deep distress. The practice of psychotherapy has become almost universal in the Western world and does indeed often assist people greatly. A key aspect of this is the recovery of repressed mentalities that, once understood and as it were ‘digested’, lose their power to cause anguish. Almost any method that effectively brings about such renewed understanding helps enormously; whether this is in individual counselling or in workshops designed expressly for the purpose. These can be given a Buddhist flavour providing a basis for putting feet on the Buddha path as, for example, participation in Ken Jones’s skilled, Zen oriented workshops undoubtedly does. In Master Sheng-yen’s eyes, however, unless vows are taken and precepts adopted such approaches do not amount to Chan itself.

The Tibetans too, understand very well that meditative practice needs support through other activities – the mind, speech and body supports – visualisation, mantric chanting and physical yoga. In this way, they cultivate a rounded path related to everyday life as well as the tantric endeavour.<sup>6</sup>

Among our retreats the WZR is, as we have mentioned, first and foremost an endeavour to understand the sources of one’s karma. It is for this reason that I recommend it as the first or prime retreat on starting intensive practice. The WZR, through the “Who am I?” approach, establishes a basis for mindful self-awareness in subsequent everyday life. When this approach leads into or includes the taking of Vows, it becomes the first step in Chan study at both experiential and knowledge based levels. We need then to consider how, within the WCF, we can support the mindfulness practice that ensures the making of a difference. A new role for the leaders of local groups can be envisaged.

## **Leadership in the WCF**

The local groups of the WCF are ‘led’ by kind people who often lend their homes or make other arrangement for the meetings of weekly or monthly groups. They may also provide elementary guidance in how to “sit”, begin meditation, basic Dharma ideas such as the Four Noble Truths and offer helpful guidance. They are, however, neither allowed to teach Dharma

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<sup>6</sup> See: Crook.J.H and J, Low. 1997. *The Yogins of Ladakh*. Motilal Banarsidass. Delhi.

as such nor to carry out intensive interviewing. This is because faulty teaching of Dharma subtlety can lead to quite major misunderstandings and because they are not trained to deal with possible personal distress.

We are however endeavouring to shift the major orientation of the fellowship away from a primary focus on intensive retreats onto the everyday practice of those who have or intend to take up intensive work on retreat. Indeed, there are also those who have no wish to attend an intensive retreat but who would benefit from basic teaching concerning everyday Zen. We are not of course reducing our concern with the vital functions of intensive retreat, but, rather, adding to it considerations that have so far been rather neglected.

It is here that the leaders of local groups can take up a further, highly responsible, activity. This concerns the promotion of Vow Power and Mindfulness in which they themselves may require further training. As we have seen, Vow power stems from the positive and active assertion of the Precepts in promoting life, truth, honesty, love and mindful awareness. Leaders need to understand these points in depth and consider the ways in which the precepts provide numerous metaphors for conduct in everyday life that can be monitored through personal mindfulness.

The practice of mindfulness requires skill in self-examination. This however should not be some sort of worried introspection asking whether one is good enough. Rather it should be a simple mental note taking as to mistakes, successes and misunderstanding in seeking to sustain ones positive Vows. Mistakes, errors and inadequacies are inevitable. A careful watchfulness will however increase the beneficence with which one faces life and reduce the often-distressing reactions with which one so commonly responds to other people. The mnemonic is the replacing of reaction by reflection. One's responses to others become increasingly considered and considerate rather than automatic and ego based.

During weekly meetings, means for the maintenance of vows and the practice of mindfulness can actively taught, considered and perhaps monitored. While confession can be an excellent practice not all may be inclined to go that far – even though it is a basis for monks' relations in Theravada monasteries. One suggestion is the use of the new Aspirational Prayer as a very practical approach to the Precepts. This is available in our Maenllwyd liturgy book. There is also the very helpful Tibetan practice of *lho-jong*, Mind training, with its use of memorised slogans as reminders of the work and the related *tong-len* practice of taking in and giving out – exchanging bad thoughts/feelings for compassionate ones.<sup>7</sup>

Of course, leaders have to be practised in these ways themselves. In particular, no self-righteousness should be allowed in relation to moral success! A kind of dispassionate and objective evaluation is what is needed. Above all the entire endeavour should be considered as a path of compassion, the practice of a Bodhisattva.

We have to discuss many aspects of this. What training do leaders need or want? Who is prepared to add these roles to their work as Leaders? What difficulties can be foreseen? And so on.

I believe that a training in the vow based, mindful application of “Reflection not Reaction” to be provided by our Leaders in their local groups can indeed begin “to make a difference”; to push forward Shifu's teachings among Westerners and to augment our practice of intensive retreat in beneficial ways.

*Presented by the Teacher to the Leaders Retreat of the Western Chan Fellowship at the Maenllwyd retreat centre, Wales, in February 2007. Subsequently revised.*

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<sup>7</sup> Chogyam Trungpa. 1993. *Training the Mind and Cultivating Loving-Kindness*. Shambala.



## Record of the Discussion between Chan Master Guangqin and Ven Master Hsuan Hua

1974, 14<sup>th</sup> of the 1<sup>st</sup> month (lunar calendar), at Taiwan Banqiao (Taipei) Tucheng District, Great Peace Quarters of Chengtian Monastery on Mt Qingliang

With comments by Zholt Hadhazi

Old Master: What is the meaning of 'sitting'?

Ven Master: No meaning!

*Without any attachment or goal just sitting is the real Zen meditation.*

Old Master: No meaning? Then is it the same as a lump of rock?

Ven Master: Even if it had meaning, it would still be a rock. 'One should abide nowhere, yet generate the [bodhi] mind.' Thus, there is no meaning, neither realization nor attainment

*Non-attaching is beyond grasping and rejecting. It manifests perfectly in every situation.*

Old Master: Neither care for nor cherish the body!

Ven Master: Because there is no 'person', no 'self', no 'living being', no 'life', and other such appearances. All appearances are false and deceptive, if one sees all appearances as false and deceptive, that is seeing the Tathagata [Thus Come One]. So, as I see the Tathagata, he neither comes, nor does he go. Thus, there can be no 'going'.

Old Master: This is what the bodhisattvas teach. However, I still have this body of flesh.

*There is really nothing to be done, nothing that could be or should be attained. Here and now everything is perfect. This is the absolute point of view and with the eyes of an ordinary person it seems very far away like something that is impossible in this life.*

Ven Master: No attachment [to it], that is [being] a bodhisattva.

Old Master: Only with attachment, that is [being] a bodhisattva.

*In fact there's nothing supernatural in this, anybody can realize it right now.*

Ven Master: All is illusion, all actions are nothing.

Old Master: But who is it who says this?

Ven Master: The speaker is the speaker. The eater is the eater!

*One should not believe that ignorance is the Buddha. But if it is not the ordinary human then what? Just doing without any attachment is the Buddha-mind, the true nature of human.*

Old Master: Yet I cannot eat my fill. The heart is unwilling!

Ven Master: Not eating one's fill, is because one has not eaten. To eat - one must eat one's fill.

Old Master: Is that the one who has greed?

Ven Master: The one with greed, is that person. The one with greed, is also a Buddha!

Old Master: The speaker has a good point!

*The one who only partially able to do non-attachment in reality he did not realize the mind. This mind is present in everybody in the same way, it is never deluded. It is not rejection to be done, not destruction, but realizing the truth that is non-attachment.*

Old Master: If there were no point, when I am in the US, those Americans would not follow and obey me!

*(At this point in the conversation, Ven Master Hua said to his American attendants who were his disciples Do you have any questions? You can ask the old master!)*

Disciples, nodding(?): We cannot think of any questions that we could ask about!

Then, the Old Master said to the America disciples:

Don't ask verbally, simply by seeing with the eyes, one can know!

*Until we work with thoughts we cannot understand it. The Buddha-mind must be directly experienced.*

Ven Master: Even without seeing with the eyes, one can know. In the past, when I was in the US, very early on we knew you are an elder in cultivation and practice!

Old Master: No! No! I always feel that this false shell [of a body] is no yet free!

Ven Master: Free or not free, just don't give any attention to it!

Old Master: If I don't give any attention to it, it still suffers pains!

Ven Master: 'One should abide nowhere, yet generate the [bodhi] mind.' You have to look after your health!

Old Master: Can't even look after it, even if I wanted to!

Ven Master: You must look after it, even if you can't!

Old Master: Abide nowhere!

Ven Master: Looking after it is also abiding nowhere!

*Until we imagine non-attachment as a state, we're constantly between two extremes and trying to attain the pure state. But that is impossible! We must let go every effort, however, this does not mean an extreme to reject phenomena. When we realize the Buddha-mind then it is clear that every process is enlightenment.*

*Not to worry for anything  
Is just like throwing  
And grabbing whatever freely  
Who makes matter of this  
Falls to the deepest hell  
Not even Kannon can save him*

*I'd gladly explain it  
But word and silence fail me  
Flower, stick, smash  
Doesn't say anything  
Doesn't want anything  
Doesn't know anything  
The whole world is flaming  
Useless are the three vehicles*

*Nowhere to run*

*We hold each others' hands*

*The soup is cooked*

*Eat! Eat!*

This interesting dialogue took place in Taiwan between the Venerable Hua who had created an important Chan centre in San Francisco and the ancient Master Guang qin who died soon after. The 'old master' had cultivated Chan for many years in the mountains where he lived on wild fruits. His primary approach seems to have been Pure Land but he was celebrated far and wide for his insight. When asked how he became so wise he used to say that the only thing he cultivated was the recitation of "Namo Amitoufo". There are many miraculous stories about him. It is said that he practiced in a Tiger's cave (in Taiwan?) who guarded him carefully - perhaps a reference to his wisdom.

## **Visiting Shifu and Roshi John Daido Looi**

*John Crook and Simon Child met Shifu in his personal residence at the Dharma Drum Retreat Centre at Pine Bush in upstate New York. The interview was interpreted by Rebecca Li, and filmed and recorded by monks in attendance. The meeting began with formal prostrations: a warm welcome followed, during which tea and cake was provided. The meeting resulted from discussions about the future of WCF throughout the year and is presented in full in the teachers report to the AGM of the WCF 2007. (See website). John and Simon were also able to visit Roshi Looi at his monastery on Mount Tremper, NY and this article summarises their discussions also - and provides a concluding assessment of both consultations. Shifu's clarification of the meaning of transmission is especially significant in relation to lineage security. JHC.*

Shifu's health is very poor. He remains resolute, strong in spirit and lucidly clear in his responses to our questions. We covered a lot of ground and here I can only summarise main themes. We showed him group photographs of recent retreats. He commented upon the relatively advanced ages of the participants – an issue he was to return to.

Although various interpreters have attempted to explain to Shifu the relation between therapy and Chan practice in the WZR, Shifu clearly considers the WZR to be a psychotherapeutic exercise. He emphasised the importance in all Chan retreats of 'Vow power', that is the taking of vows and precepts as a basis for daily practice. To this end, he emphasised longer retreats using Silent Illumination or Hua-tou, encouraging larger attendance and teaching Dharma in them more profoundly. In response, John agreed that there is a strong psychotherapeutic component in the WZR: its great value to Westerners being increased clarity of mind and motivation using Western terminology prior to a clear entry to Chan practice. WZR retreats are especially useful for newcomers to Buddhism, and experienced practitioners also often find value in their fresh approach. He pointed out that our "flag-ship" retreat remains Silent Illumination.

The idea that the WZR is essentially psychotherapy has regrettably taken hold in some quarters of Dharma Drum Mountain in New York and may account for the rather poor attendance over two years. This is both unfortunate and erroneous and the precise function of therapeutic themes in this retreat is once again being emphasised both to Shi-fu and DDM with an insistence on the use of our own retreat description in advertisement of these events. (See further *On making a difference*: above)

Shifu took up the question of integrating Dharma and daily life. He stressed two main approaches. Firstly, to emphasise the use of both methods and concepts in daily life reminding oneself to 'pick up' the method as much as possible especially when facing problematic issues: secondly to create longer residential programmes. These may however have only limited benefit, he argued, unless the results extend beyond into subsequent every-day life. He suggested local groups should do much more to emphasise daily practice, even instituting early morning gatherings for those living close by. Group leaders should devise methods for re-enforcing individual participation in Dharma group activities through a variety of focussed events. Dharma gossip and mere socialising should be avoided through emphasis on the importance of the issues involved for each person and their relationships in life. Local leaders should help people develop a thirst for learning the Dharma and going deeper in both practice and concept. Again: develop Vow Power.

With regard to transmission in lay lineages, Shifu emphasised that transmission lasts longest when the recipients are young Dharma heirs with a long life ahead of them. Older recipients do not have much time left either to teach or to find their most effective replacements. Such young recipients should be encouraged to go to Universities etc. to understand the problems of the

time. Failure of a lay lineage is by no means certain. Indeed properly established monastic lineages can and do also fail.

John discussed the problems in modern society of finding an appropriate Dharma heir. Most lay practitioners are primarily engaged full time in business or in family support. For most, a retreat is an occasional recuperative event however well the process is understood and applied. Shifu said that it is vital to locate enthusiastic supporters of Dharma who will put energy into continuation and future transmissions of Dharma. Some such persons may not have experienced enlightenment (*kensho*, i.e.: 'seeing the nature') but if they have enthusiasm, sufficient understanding of concept and method, and vows, then they can receive a form of transmission. Such serious students will do everything they can; they may teach, run events, do the accounts and support the Dharma programme in every practical way.

A student who has "seen the nature" has gone further and, having gone beyond residual doubt, Dharma becomes the focus of his or her life and career; profession and family are secondary to Dharma - Dharma indeed is then expressed through such activities. Such a person is a prime candidate for full transmission.

John asked, "Can those who have not 'seen the nature' themselves give transmissions?"

Shifu answered that such a teacher would not be able to lead a retreat at a deep level. They would not be able to recognise clearly when another has 'seen the nature' because they have not had that experience themselves. Such a teacher must know his or her limitations and be up-front about it with trainees. Such teachers are not qualified to transmit the 'Dharma of mind' – i.e., to give '*inka*'. They can share the principles they know but cannot confirm another's experience. Only a sufficiently advanced and experienced practitioner can do that. Dharma heirs can be transmitted as teachers or administrators but may not necessarily be Dharma Masters – only those with *kensho* experience can be considered as the latter. This needs transparency and must be well understood lest errors occur. It is clear that lineage descends only through the transmissions of qualified Dharma Masters although others assist them greatly on the path. Even so, transmission does not depend on *kensho* alone. As previously stated by Shifu, a candidate needs to have a sound knowledge of Dharma, a well-established personal practice, be able to teach and attract a following and have a place in which to do it.<sup>1</sup>

John suggested that maybe we need to emphasise *Bodhicitta*, – the will to become a compassionate Bodhisattva - in contemporary Chan, rather than chasing after experiences. Shifu replied that it is easy to give rise to vows but hard to 'see the nature'. He recalled that we need both in the development of wisdom and compassion. John asked whether it was essential to go through a long ceremony and teachings before one can take the Bodhisattva vows in Chan. Shifu said John could make a proposal for a simple ceremony. The main elements are the three pure precepts, the ten virtues and so on. Guo Gu has translations into English. Shifu would then approve if suitable.

Concerning the differing points of focus of monastics and lay practitioners, Shifu remarked that there should be no difference in the depth of Dharma training. The difference lies in the styles of life. John remarked that lay persons with their families and businesses have to attempt non-attachment within attachments. Is not this a major koan about the nature of renunciation? Shifu replied that it was not the case that monastics did not have attachments! Lay people need to train in the context of their family lives. Since monastics have few possessions that is undoubtedly a help, - but they may still be very attached to self. So home leaving is in the heart – not physical – suggested John. Shifu agreed. Leaving the house does not always mean one has 'left home'.

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<sup>1</sup> NCF 9, p. 3

John and Simon thanked Shifu for his inspired teaching over many years and told him they will continue to sustain the lay lineage he had created in Britain through their transmission.

### **Mount Tremper**

Mount Tremper is about two hours drive from Pine Bush and set at a higher altitude among pine forests. The main building of the monastery is a massive, rather austere structure, originally an institution for correcting bad boys from New York. A number of other buildings are scattered among the trees. The forest is beautiful and the open-air shrine and cemetery above the main quarters is sublimely peaceful. In the winter, there is heavy snow.

Roshi John Daido Looi is a large, impressive man seemingly in late middle age. He greeted us warmly without the formalities we are used to in Chan. He responded at once to John's quote that he had argued that Lay lineages only last three generations. Roshi said he had had much more experience of teaching both lay and monastic practitioners since he had written that. Never the less the monastics had a clear advantage in some respects. At Mount Tremper, they can pursue their studies without interruption from worldly affairs. During "Dharma combat" Roshi felt that monastics were usually clearer in their replies and understanding. None the less, lay practitioners do well. As many as fifty families had left their home locations and settled in nearby areas so that they could attend teachings. Many had gotten jobs or some form of employment in the vicinity. Schoolteachers spend their holidays at the monastery; those with their own businesses or the self-employed can find the time for practice and teachings.

Roshi spent most of our interview explaining the teaching model he had developed at Mount Tremper. Monks receive a \$100 stipend per month but lay residents do not. Basically, monastics and laity follow the same teachings and practices. These are mainly Rinzai Zen, developed from Roshi's own teacher (Roshi Maezumi) and include progression through 750 koans although this is too many for lay people. The Koans are tested through supplementary questions; there is the Rinzai rush for interviews that are usually brief. The process is supported by lectures, mondo, Dharma combat and a rising through a hierarchy of positions and roles within the institution. There are however those who prefer to practice in the Soto style using Shikantaza. Transmission in Rinzai may be to either monk or lay persons but on the Soto path transmission to non-monastics is not possible. The Shobogenzo of Dogen is a prime teaching text.

Roshi suggested that intellectuals like Koans, those with faith in practice prefer Shikantaza. Yet, he argued, the end result of either process is similar – the "capacity to enter Samadhi".

He argued that a residential community guarantees a greater degree of continuity than any other institutional structure. It provides a disciplined community atmosphere in which it is possible to delve deeply into Dharma, experience self-confrontation within a community, and practice in the long term. Even if such an institution falls upon hard times or fails to produce good teachers, the existence of the physical presence of a place often carries the institution through till better times and better teachers emerge. This has often been the case in history, he argued – and indeed the survival of Chinese Zen through the intense communist period in China partly illustrates this. Most of the old monasteries, however badly destroyed have re-arisen in their own grounds.

The prime emphasis in this system is an educational one, intellectual, physical, artistic and spiritual. It is a gradual progression with tests, examinations and movements from one stage to another. The range of spin-off institutions is considerable and clearly a great many excellent people and teachers are involved.

### **Preliminary conclusions**

There are few British institutions that can compare with western American Dharma centres or monasteries such as Mount Tremper, Green Gulch Farm or Tassajara in terms of Dharma training, monastic recruitment, lay support and financial security: nor are there many to

compare with the Tibetan monasteries established in France. Our own institution is a small contribution compared with these but a significant one. There is no doubt the Fellowship is bringing intensive retreats with few attached strings to an increasing number of serious Dharma enquirers across Europe. There are doubts however about both the depth of our Dharma training and its viability into the future. Serious thought needs to be put into our approach, its institutionalisation and the responsibilities of leaders. The extensive membership, life commitment, organisation and financing of these other institutions provide models of modern practice to be seriously examined as we go forward.



Our discussions together and with Shifu and Roshi Daido Looi suggest a number of considerations to be developed as our policy for the future. As Teacher, I recommend the following:

**i/ Transmission**

Shifu's clarification of transmission within Chan Buddhism clears up several confusions. It is clear that, while transmission may be given to teach or administer within an institution, only transmission to someone having received *inka* confirming the experience of "kensho" amounts to the transmission of Dharma Mastership within the lineage. Only Dharma Masters may transmit such Mastership to others. Unfortunately, the term transmission still refers to both forms of "promotion" and relies on the honesty of teachers in making clear their status to disciples. If this is not present confusion can still be a result. It is to be hoped that a change in the Chinese terminology may clarify this matter still further.

**ii/ Emphasise Local Groups.**

Participation in Maenllwyd retreats has led individuals to offer their homes as meeting places for meditation and now local centres are active across the country. It is from these centres in turn that many individuals come for retreat at the Maenllwyd. The Maenllwyd lies at the hub of a large wheel that continues to acquire more spokes. This institutional structure has proved very successful in promoting important and deep Chan practice utilising retreat formats of four kinds - unique in Europe. The weaknesses we have been identifying stem perhaps from too intensive

a focus on attending occasional retreats. We can conceive of a further wheel in which the personal life practice of individuals takes central place and retreats at Maenllwyd become one of the spokes - perhaps necessarily a rather distinctive one. These wheels are not alternatives but rather complimentary ways of envisaging and focussing our planning. One wheel on each side of our chariot - as it were. We should do two things: emphasise the importance of membership of local groups, and encourage their leaders to take on much more responsibility for the members' initial recruitment and training.

Membership of local groups should require active participation in Dharma events and participation in their planning and organisation. Members need to be pro-active in finding and recruiting young beginners interested in what Buddhism has to say in the modern world – especially in relation to the ongoing and increasing world crisis. The responsibility for this shift in orientation must lie with local leaders. These need to undergo more training, study Dharma more deeply and play a very active role in the encouragement of local members. They need to provide the initial teachings, show the relevance of the Dharma to our time, demonstrate how Dharma can be practised in both family and business life and encourage participation in our central retreats. Attention may need to be given to providing leased or purchased premises for events of increasing size. This may entail considerations of local fund raising. Local leaders need therefore to upgrade their programmes with more Dharma social events, more frequent, even daily meditation meetings, giving talks and exchanging visits with other local group leaders and senior Fellows and retreat leaders, arranging meetings between neighbouring local groups etc. Local leaders may need to establish small local committees to help them. Each local group has unique characteristics so that each one can develop its own unique mode of participation in Dharma teaching. The focus should be on increasing the sense of community in a local group with a view to lessening the separation between Dharma and ordinary everyday life. Clearly this gets easier as a group enlarges to acquire aspects of a community; hence the need for recruitment.

### **iii/ Local Leaders' Responsibility**

The responsibility of local Leaders thus emerges as a most important new emphasis in a developing Fellowship policy - and this will require improved ways of training local leaders. To this end we have discussed ways by which local leaders may consult with the Teacher or Dharma heirs when necessary, and sign up with a 'mentor' from among the senior Fellows with responsibility for Maenllwyd and local retreats. Mentoring can be a way to share and discuss difficulties, the advisability of suggested local programmes, how to deal with problematic members and improving Dharma teaching appropriate to the group. The Teacher will discuss these proposals further with an Advisory sub group – probably the same as took part in the initial Teachers consultation. Conclusions will then go before the Committee.

### **iv/ Recruit Youth**

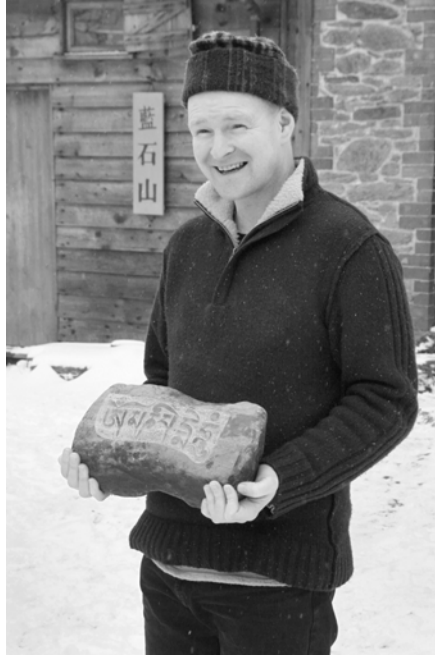
It is especially important that young persons across all classes of society be encouraged to come along. There should be no unconscious class or community prejudice in our local endeavours. The more intellectual groups need to open themselves to practitioners that are more simple-minded. Those with only basic understandings need to obtain instruction in more difficult issues. Hopefully it will be among younger members that some future Dharma heirs may emerge. This is a point strongly emphasised by Shifu. He suggested recruitment should be focussed particularly on Universities and colleges where Dharma involvement can become part of adult education. Group leaders active near such colleges should take this point seriously.

### **v/ Networking.**

As discussed at a previous Leaders retreat, net working can be used to increase communication between groups and especially between local group leaders. Net working should be supported by visits from those designated as mentors who can evaluate the quality of the Dharma life of



local groups and advise accordingly. Dharma heirs should also travel to local groups in the same way. While busy timetables has made this difficult John has visited Glastonbury this year, given three talks to the Bristol group and visited the Precious Wood of Eric's associated group in SW Wales. We hope to develop this further when not dashing across Europe to respond to yet another call for a retreat.



#### **vi/ Month-long Dharma Retreats.**

Shifu and other Masters recommend much longer retreats – rains retreats or 49 day retreats. The most we have managed is a three-weeker. Effective Dharma instruction needs embedment through living it and this is best acquired initially on long term retreat in which the intellectual and experiential understanding can develop together without dilution from worldly involvements. Such a strengthened practice can then be more easily assimilated to a daily life practice on completion of retreat.

To this end, I am considering offering longer retreats of three to four weeks focussed on Dharma teaching. These events would not however be intensive retreats such as the five or seven day events at the Maenllwyd; rather they would be more like monastic living in periods on non-intensive practice. We would have a loose programme centred on Dharma instruction backed by periods of zazen, work, administration, cooking and recreational walks etc. A test of such a retreat took place after the failure of the Skokholm adventure and will be tested again during the Chan Convivium of the present programme. Two advantages spring from this longer period of retreat. Firstly, there is time for experiential understanding to develop together with intellectual realisation of the meaning of Dharma concepts. Often academic instruction needs to be followed by experiential instruction of an entirely different order. One is form and the other is emptiness – it takes time to understand and also experience their relationship and meaning. Secondly, life in a small community necessitates the cultivation of tolerance for the individual idiosyncrasies of others. There is training implicit here in compassion and in mindfulness of others in a way not available in intensive, individually focussed, short retreats. This aspect of monastic training undoubtedly contributes to the tolerant compassion often visible in older monks whether Buddhist or Christian.

### **vii/ Facilities**

Such longer-term retreats need appropriate premises with reasonable mod-cons. The development of old buildings at Winterhead is a possibility that could meet this requirement. John is consulting with Nick Salt concerning such a project, which may or may not require some financial participation by the Fellowship.

It is far from clear however whether the present members of the Fellowship would wish to attend these rather differently oriented monastic type retreats and the offer may have to be made more widely. The signs are not especially promising as the absence of solitary retreatants etc. suggests. It would therefore be useful if readers of this report could state their potential interest in such a project.

**viii/ Residential Community** There can be no doubt that Roshi Daido Looi is right when he argues that the establishment of a residential community is probably the best way to ensure the continuity of a lineage even through dark periods. This current suggestion for longer term, Dharma focussed, retreats may be a way towards establishing such an institution, which is clearly not possible for us at the moment.

These eight recommendations do not cover the entire range of issues discussed during the year but they emphasise the prime conclusions. In the coming year they will be considered further, discussed in committee and brought before the AGM. In this way, we are hoping both to improve our presentation of Dharma in the West and ensure its continuity into the future.

### **Final Remarks**

I am well aware of an alternative perspective to the one I have outlined above. This would be based more on an appreciation of our success story so far and upon the hard work, indeed devotion that many have shown during its development. Indeed, maybe we do not need to do anything! Continuing as we are and allowing an organic growth of our current activities is certainly an attractive option. Could we rely on it? As one written contribution to the Teacher's Consultation put it: "A Zen attitude for me is an attention to my moment to moment reaction to the world around me in a precise and aware fashion that is appropriate, honest and authentic ... This is best expressed when self-concern drops out of the way. We learn about self-concern through the practice of Chan. We should be careful we don't develop a kind of organisational self concern that overwhelms our authenticity". These are wise words and they need attention. If only it were so easy!

What then drives the motivation apparent in the 'Preliminary conclusions' paragraph above. I have spent some four years writing a book entitled "World Crisis and Buddhist Humanism" which is at last in press and will be published in about a year's time. Investigating the current world crisis is indeed a sobering activity but it was encouraging to discover how closely Buddhism compares with the finest values of the European humanist 'enlightenment' in its empirical approach. There is hope here; although time for adequate correction is short. The overwhelming stupidity, ignorance and political inadequacy of our times, contrasting so pathetically with our scientific genius, is painfully apparent and the selfishness on which the institutionalised greed of our largely unconscious consumerism depends is clearly revealed.

We cannot perhaps rely solely on the authenticity of a well-meaning individualism however focussed on moment-to-moment involvement in living. In less stressful times, that may be adequate but such an approach may be too easily swamped today by the illusions and cults of the contemporary, self serving, global society. While it would be easy and doubtless gratifying to relax back into one's hermitage of authenticity, the cultivation of *bodhicitta* impels us to care for our world. This necessitates consideration of how we can best operate to make a difference. Here the role and function of our institution can play a part and we need therefore to examine it seriously. It is this that I encourage all fellows to do.

## POEMS

Sophie Temple Muir

### **On a Blessingway (for a Babe about to be born )**

*Welcome, warmly welcome, little one!  
Your spiral nine moon evolution near  
complete. Ripe for leap to air and sun  
and earth: as bright it is, your blessing  
day, so may your birthing be illumined,  
while you make your way fluid from sweet  
waters round, from gentle womb. Sound  
of heart, your mother's beating drum  
stay with you clear and strong. Light  
of father's love in smiles molecular  
forever changing with you as your life  
is long. May you be happy everywhere  
and here may you be peace. Your nature  
pure as perfect mystery from whence you come.*

### **Tremayne**

*Green hidden creek,  
breeze singing, soft  
shoreless sea.  
Heron standing, shy  
and still. Bright  
and pure in the sun,  
egret lifts into flight.  
Found: one tawny  
feather from a warm  
buzzard, recently fallen  
to the shaded ground.  
Two swans sail together,  
gliding side by side  
over the jade water.*

## Childhood House Revisited

*House of red which lasts  
across the centuries; speck  
by speck catching the sun  
making a blaze of fire-gold -  
every brick, even and delicate  
receiving near hundred  
million miles of warmth  
on each clear evening -  
folds the memory in  
as darkness wraps around  
the walls - night which  
is the one night within which  
suns burn, watches and holds  
the little history amid  
the weave of all, vast  
yet sewn entire upon the cloth  
of one planet small, pearl-like,  
pure - where tales resound  
together, places link and change  
revolves perpetual as wind -  
beyond the wind, beginningless,  
something of the house endures,  
stagepost for a soul, willing,  
waiting - in illumined form  
resplendent till time comes  
to dissolve as dust, surrendering,  
beauty neither coming nor  
going - home reflected in the  
house - little centre spinning,  
still and quiet, issuing peace  
within all eternity.*

**Tom**  
**26.6.62 - 31.10.85**

*His bones  
at angles  
on the pavement  
stone*

*The depthless  
promise  
of his poet  
voice*

*all gone  
all quiet  
forever  
lost*

*forever folded  
back  
into the marrow*

*now decomposing*

*and fast returning  
cell by cell  
to the ground*

*song by song  
swallowed  
by its own*

*origin*

*21.7.06*

## Where Do You Go Next?

### Bill Pickard's last letter to Eric Johns

*Sadly Bill Picard, whose autobiographical discussion of his life in the Dharma we published in NC F 33, has died at an advanced age, well into his nineties. Bill was a highly influential figure in the early days of Zen in Britain having an especially close, though ultimately controversial, relationship with Rosh Jiyu Kennet of Throssel Hole. Eric Johns allows us to print this last letter he received from Bill as a final testament to his wisdom. Eds.*

Dear Eric,

“Where do you go next” you ask. The trite answer is “you” don’t go anywhere, for there’s no place to go or any “you” to go! But let’s look at the meditation situation and take each of your questions in turn.

The first thing to remember is that the practice of meditation never ends and, because you are a bundle of habits and complex reactions all competing for attention in your consciousness, as you meditate in every moment there is a different “you”. When you do pass through the various stages of your meditation, and manage for a while to still all the flux of thoughts, memories and emotions, you reach a stage of apparent emptiness. But nothing has fundamentally changed. You are still all these aspects; your character is still unchanged.

This is why meditation experience is not pure or mature yet. Because the habit of being that particular “you”, that particular character; is still reactive, so, when not in actual meditation, you find yourself right back in your inner turmoil. It is to break down the life long habits; to overcome the weaknesses; to cut out greed’s fears, angers etc, that the various moral codes were devised. It is only by becoming gradually detached from all the habits that the empty state we can experience in meditation, is carried over into our daily life. This is the long and arduous part of the way. It is said that real self-training only starts *after* the first “experience” of “not self” in meditation.

This passing oscillation between the meditation state and your daily state is one we must all pass through. The letting go part is where mindfulness comes in as the confronting of habits as they come up, and gradually becoming detached from them. This is why “seekers” have usually had to simplify their life styles; why they become monks or hermits, but that is not enough if the inner practice isn’t going on. Meditation can become just a comfortable escape from the habit of self.

I suspect that that you have a long battle still before you with all the various weaknesses, habits, attachments that we all have. Yet, you have made a kind of one-sided progress. Because you could achieve relatively quickly the early stages of Samadhi, you expected that it would somehow quickly change or do away with the mental habits of a lifetime. But at least you have a foundation to work from. Now your practice has got to be carried over into your life.

How do you do this? First, don’t expect meditation to be the answer if you use it simply to escape into - for the sake of being comfortable and calm. You have to develop the watchfulness, the constant diligence to see when the old habits of attachment are in charge.

First comes the changing of the self, this complex bundle of memories, habits, weaknesses, which we are. This is done in gradually withdrawing from them. Which are the habits that take you over, only you can say. Yet, remember the objects of our attachments are not in themselves “bad” or mostly not what we might call bad. It’s their hold over us, taking over our emotions, our thoughts, our reactions, that is the cause of confusion. Before we can really talk of dropping the “self” or being without self, we have to know what they are, and be able to become detached from their grip.

This aspect of the way is never ending because so much rubbish lies hidden in our sub-conscious; it is a case of constant wearing away at habits. Meditation is the means, but the breaking of habits is the way.

Sorry if my writing is a bit difficult to read, but I have arthritis in my hands and it is painful holding a pen. I don't know how much help the above will be. At this stage you are very much on your own, and, as you realise, there are few of us that come this far. So, keep on. The Buddha himself said that practice never ends till all is one.

Always write when you feel the need. Let me know when you think you'll be down as sometimes I do go away and I don't want to miss you.

Yours in the way.

Bill

## Brief Biography

*We have been presenting brief biographies of several Zen teachers who have contributed notably to the spread of Zen Dharma in the West. We are grateful to Sister Ruth for furnishing us with this account of the life and teaching of John Garrie who, like Bill Picard (NCF 33) and Katsuki Sekida (NCF 34), played a crucial role in this task in the days after WW2. We remember his life with gratitude. Eds*

## Madam, Why do you only Sit and Scratch it?

**Kashin (Sr. Ruth Furneaux, Dec. 2005)**

Humour was typical of the way John Garrie Roshi taught, not the laughter of unkindness but the laughter which shows us our own condition or points to a deeper place – more of that later concerning the above punchline.

Indeed it was a joke that made for him the connection with his first teacher Sayadaw U Tittila, (b.1896); the Burmese master who was still alive and well over a hundred years old, just a few years ago. This meeting took place in a church hall in Manchester in 1951 when Roshi was 28 years old. As he told us, sitting in the front row there was a middle class woman typical of such events wearing tennis shoes and a beanie hat, who was waxing long and bitterly on the ‘moral’ state of ‘young people’ now. The Bhikkhu lent forward and offered her a flower into which she sniffed deep and long. At which point he said to her ‘Madam, you have just had your nose in the sexual parts of a flower’. Much impressed Roshi thought ‘that’s the man for me’.

So began the training with his first teacher, at the Buddhist Society in London. He told us movingly of the events that accompanied his commitment and surrender to him and of the teaching, which showed him the degree of resistance we have in our own minds; in his case sitting up all night while his greatest fear – which was rats, took form and assaulted him.

In a long life of practice and teaching (over 40 years in Roshi’s case) in the absence of any European Buddhist monasteries, the choice in training was either to go to the East or to accept the teachers who came here. In the 1960’s, Roshi continued to train with U Tittila’s student, the Englishman Kapilavaddho (1906-71). It was during this time that the Dhamma was really beginning to have a presence in the U.K. and friendship and his mentorship with Ven.Dr. Hammalawa Saddhatissa Thera (1914-1994), head of the London Buddhist Vihara from 1966, began. Also, at this time, he was friendly with Choegyam Trungpa Rinpoche and the man who was to become Ajahn Khemmadhammo of the Forest Hermitage in Warwickshire. Indeed the latter credits Roshi’s teaching with being the impetus for his own bhikkhu ordination in 1971. Ajahn Khemmadhammo remained a lifelong friend and supporter, visiting Plas Taliaris (the penultimate centre of Roshi’s teaching) until Roshi’s passing in 1998.<sup>1</sup>

Roshi’s early life was the ‘compost’ for what he later became. He often advised students who lamented their ‘previous wasting of life time’ to be grateful and bow to it: ‘it has brought you to where you are now’, i.e. ready to practice, receiving the great blessing of the teaching, but ‘don’t cling to the past for identity’.

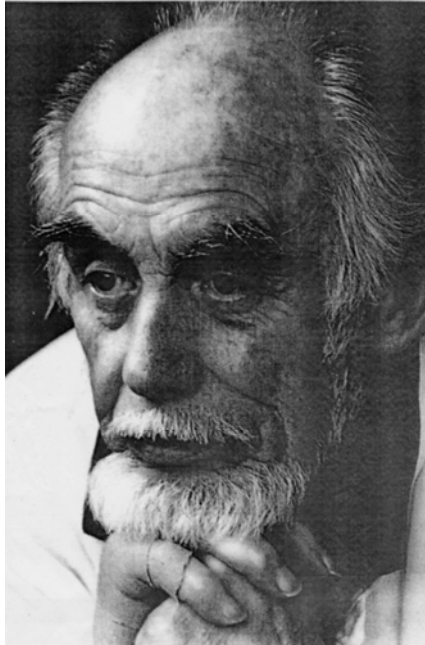
Roshi had realized at the age of eighteen that he possessed certain iddhis and siddhis, which he says his teacher ‘knocked out of him’. They came flooding back he said, 17 years later but in a form which was shorn of ego. He most certainly possessed ‘divine eye’ (*dibbena caccku*)

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<sup>1</sup> At the time Khemmadhammo was at an Angulimala (Buddhist Prison Chaplaincy) event and he was driven to Roshi’s bedside by Rev. Master Saido Kennaway from the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives, who has become a dear ‘spiritual friend’ of the author.



for the great benefit of his students, or those prepared to listen to the prompting. Such prompting is hidden deep within each heart-mind (belly) and Roshi gradually honed and tested it in the student, often to their distress, as the manifestation of ‘still small voice’, ‘hara’ or ‘inner teacher’ emerged. We learn to trust it, and not to abuse the power it brings, thus training in recognising and letting go of even the smallest ‘perfume’ of self will. Yet often students would be sure the ‘inner teacher’ was guiding them in the everyday things of life, only to be told, “it’s just your conditioning” or “just an old being”: what a blessing and invaluable service he provided for us, in never being prepared to compromise or negotiate with a student's potential even to his own apparent detriment. It’s easy enough to be liked by students, not so easy to be disliked and still ‘do what is necessary’ for their benefit.



Photograph courtesy of Paul Taylor Sensei

As the dhamma came West between the 1950’s and early 1970’s, there was a great deal of almost ‘incestuous’ activity going on. The ‘community’ of practitioners and teachers was small and they largely knew each other. Centres grew up in London, Oxford and Cambridge. Trungpa Rinpoche, Ven. Dr. Saddhatissa, Ananda Bodhi, Lama Sonam Gyatso were all in Oxford and Cambridge during this time either as students or teachers at the university. Roshi retained a connection with Ajahn Chah after the latter’s visit to the Hampstead Vihara in 1977. Before this, however, he co-ran the English Sangha Trust meditation centre in Biddulph with Ananda Bodhi, the Canadian Monk who was to be recognised and enthroned by the 16<sup>th</sup> Karmapa as Ven. Namgyal Rinpoche, leaving Britain in 1971 to establish a Dharma centre in Canada. Through this English Sangha Trust work, Johnston House, at Langholm in Scotland was bought as a meditation centre and made available to Akong Rinpoche and Trungpa Rinpoche by Rinpoche when they were looking for somewhere to set up Samye Ling Monastery - at cost price I believe.

The degree of interconnection between groups and teachers of different traditions seems to have been quite close. In 1974, Roshi was given this honorific title by the students with whom he had long worked. It meant senior teacher although in Japan, I am told, people tend to prefer ‘Sensei’, since ‘Roshi’ contains a hint of ‘old and useless’. Roshi set up the Sati society, to teach Satipatthana and Zen, which some now call ‘satizen’. By that time, he had been

teaching for many years in Britain and on the continent, his manner of teaching being 'close and personal' for those who asked and were accepted. Often students were asked to go away and do other work first e.g. psychotherapy or body-work. Roshi's professionalism, skill and experience were of prime importance – he knew the 'dangers' of 'messing with the minds and bodies' of those not ready for it. He often said he would not teach meditation to anyone under 25 years old "since they do not have the life experience and a mature identity" to begin the essential dismantling or deconstruction work. Young people are in the process of trying on and establishing identity and are not yet normally ripe for this.

At first, teaching took place for many weeks per year in hired centres and even convents; student numbers were in their hundreds. He delighted in telling how a Mother Superior of a convent used for workshops, advised her nuns "watch how Mr. Garrie's students walk". For most of his life of teaching, there was some form of availability of 'living with the teacher'; in Oxford in the late 70's; in the Forest of Dean in the early 80's; in Devon in the mid 80's and then at Plas Taliaris, a large mansion house in Wales, bought by a group of five students who sold their own houses to provide a place for the teaching and for Roshi in his last years. Plas Taliaris was never a 'community' but a group of fellow travellers on the way. There was too much zen 'seize the moment' and too little 'when one flower blooms it is spring everywhere' for a community to develop, despite the emphasis in the practice on 'the Illimitables'. By this time Roshi was 66 and had experienced a heart attack.

For the last two years of life he lived with a small group of close students in Somerset at Kemps in Winsford.

It might be said that the crux of the satipatthana teaching was 'wanting and not wanting, liking and disliking – the mother and father of all suffering'. Only recently have I understood that the last phrase is not a vernacular form of speech but yet another layer of direction to the teaching, of overcoming the opposites, neither male nor female. How very rarely do we hear all the nuances of a teacher's words, perhaps not even 'meant' by them, but they are 'being spoken through'. Roshi said to me that most students only connected with 10% of the teachers mind at best. He often described himself as 'just a simple roshi', yet the kaleidoscope of that simplicity was 'outbreath' taking.

His commitment to his students was very deep, if necessary Roshi was available day or night for a student, if urgent. This might be 'breakthrough or breakdown' and he well knew the importance of this close relationship for the development of the student's potential. It was not of course 'on' to abuse that availability and a regular supply of live-in assistants helped to guard his boundaries. It was an honour to be so close to the teaching, even when, as often it was, uncomfortable in having one's pretensions and delusions as they arose in everyday life poked. Not everyone appreciated this 'hands on' approach.

I myself had never come across someone who had such consummate skill. On meeting Roshi, it was amazing to find a person who would be willing to give me the time to explain and to engage in dynamic interaction. I saw or spoke to him every fortnight for several years and also lived with him for a time. This was the peak of practice for me, a blessed and joyful time (despite many tears) of 'being fully oneself in non-self', recognised and appreciated by the teacher, no masks necessary, nothing 'out of bounds' and the opportunity to 'test' one's insight in private interview. The importance of this 'living with' and 'sitting before' the teacher cannot be underestimated. It is all too easy to go away from retreat and either not 'deepen' what has happened there or be unable to manifest it in the world away from retreat – and that is why Roshi normally referred not to retreat but to 'workshops'. The work of being in the moment, of attention, of awareness, of seeing through, of seeing directly into true nature, of letting go of old beings *is* work, the work of finding the place of non-doing.

As a lay teacher he was one of the few who offered a quality of training to non-monastics which is rare. Whether students came to realisation or not, many, many beings were benefitted. He had a formal but private means of accepting students and authenticating them and also of giving permission to teach. In lay situations it was not possible to 'oversee' what happened when people left the centre and he was well aware of people teaching without his permission. For some of us it was hard enough to get the courage and confidence to teach *with* his permission, and some have made mistakes, but he was there to help and advise and to ensure that those who taught had a clear contract to do so with those asking for teaching. This is of course part of the understanding of *Satipatthana*, non interference, letting be, finding out first what the world is before attempting to rush in and change it – however it may look to you, in short *Sampajanna*, clear comprehension in the activities of everyday life.

To give the flavour of one interaction with a male student let us look at the following, which is not easy for those who do not understand the process.

*Student is cutting the grass underneath Roshi's window.*

*Roshi throws up window and shouts "Now is not the time to cut the grass".*

*Student comes back later and the 'same' thing happens, and again later.*

*Student in exasperation "When is the right time to cut the grass?"*

*Roshi "There is no right time to cut the grass".*

The student probably did not have any insight in that moment perhaps, but later on the interaction will have born fruit for him. In this way in many forms the student gradually came to trust that 'he or she would get precisely what they needed in that moment to be able to move on' even when they didn't appreciate it. Some didn't and would leave or reject, turn away

He was a pioneer in involving bodywork as a major part of the practice, understanding that 'getting rid of' something is not the way, but rather seeing through one's attachment and allowing transformation. Many of his students are recognised by other teachers for their 'quality'. He was skilled in presenting the work in a form in which even those who were not specialists in ki work could engage. He worked with individuals at as refined a level of mind and energy as they became capable.

Satipatthana was the Buddha's practice which brought him to realisation. Roshi often quoted the following piece to show the undoubted links between *satipatthana* and zen.

'Chinese Ch'an and Japanese Zen, are the closest to the spirit of *satipatthana*. Notwithstanding the differences in method, aim and basic philosophical concepts - the connecting links with *Satipatthana* are close and strong, and it is regrettable that they have hardly been stressed or noticed. In common for instance, are the direct confrontation with actuality; the merging of everyday life with the meditative practice; the transcending of conceptual thought by direct observation; - and the emphasis on the Here and Now.'

Ven. Nyanaponika Thera (The Heart of Buddhist Meditation)

As is now well known in the West, the big mistake of students is to imagine that teachers, especially those from the East are in some way already 'perfect'. The teacher who has reached a certain level and been given permission to teach, is there precisely because they know how little he knows but is able to plug into 'hara', speak from centre and do just what needs to be done. Thus, only a couple of years before his passing, Roshi understood more deeply the non-separation of mind and body work, 'What took you so long' said some students to whom it

had been clear for some time. They did not however imagine that that gave them license to suppose that they had overtaken Roshi. Pride takes many forms.

He passed on at 11.45 a.m. on Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup>. 1998 – over 100 students came to the hospital for a last ‘touch’ with the teacher and over 70 of them, including his daughter and grand daughter came to the burial at home in Somerset three days later. We sat with the body at the time of his passing, a rumble was heard in the universe and the sun broke through the clouds. A group of students of one of Roshi’s disciples now tend the grave and some of his ‘own’ students hope to be buried there too – room for nine more.

As the recyclable coffin was lowered in the grave his favourite *ancient blessing on wayfarers* was read:

*That on your way  
your skin may know the  
touch of the thread of a  
thousand silkworms.  
That in your nostrils there  
will rise the perfume of  
Jasmine, and in your mouth  
the taste of honey.  
That your ears may hear  
the rush of an eagle’s wing,  
and the rustling of bamboo.  
That your eyes may behold  
the elephant walking through  
the rainbow  
and that in your  
consciousness there may  
rise the bright diamond point  
of the Dhamma-Kaya  
of clear pure mind.*

The work goes on by some of those to whom he gave permission and in the hearts and minds of others, manifesting according to their potential in the world.

Let me explain the title of this piece. The joke goes like this: “The conductor is rehearsing the orchestra for the proms. He stops suddenly and fixes the lady cellist with a severe eye. Madam, he says, you have between your legs an instrument of great beauty, why do you only sit and scratch it?”

A common theme of Roshi’s work was the subtlety, the delicacy, the refinement of this body-mind, which in ignorance, through not knowing true nature, we treat with such disrespect that it fails to give out its harmonic melody in the world.

And is he yet among us? As Lin Chi asked of his monks on the death of a close dharma friend, “Where is the energy of Fukai now?” Can you answer?



## **Ty Ichaf: Strumble Head**

**November 2006. To C.E.**

*Winter ist herein gekommen  
No birdies sing cuckoo  
The breeze in the trees  
An occasional sneeze  
A cow in a barn going MU.*

*Sorry about that – try this –*

*Crows feet against the sky  
night falling early,  
wind shaped trees evoke  
private grey stone ghosts,  
green hills and rock-pile castles  
still challenging the prowling norsemen  
out at sea.*

*After midnight  
in the silence of this stone-walled room  
the last flickering of a burnt out log stirs.*

*Wind softly in the chimney now  
lost voices of ancient sailors  
moving in from the shore.*

*Not only swan y mor,  
a howling gale, rollers from Atlantis,  
rooks and starlings tossed in air.*

*Skyfog – what's in a name?  
We had to visit –old farmhouse  
tumbling stream.*

*Gale force on Strumble Head,  
maned coasters exploding spray cathedrals,  
wet on the wind lighthouse flash unfazed.*

*November is a harsh month scudding clouds  
sailor's trousers scattering the windswept sky -  
A curious joy.*

*Out on the headland  
This couple, old now,  
Regard the raging sea  
He bedazzled by beauty  
She remembering  
Love in time gone by -  
Love never in time but being  
Time moves on in changes  
Tossed like rooks in the wind  
Cawing -  
Yet often in this we  
The we denies the I  
Just as the I denies the we  
And we forget to be  
The love that is  
The love that flies  
Caught in wind like gulls in storm  
Powerful upon great wings  
Yet ordinary -  
Passion not yet spent  
Like spray.*

JHC

## Practice for Now

### The Second Talk on Silent Illumination, April 2006

Simon Child

Yesterday I mentioned some of the history of Silent Illumination and how it starts with Hongzhhi. In fact it goes back further than that and I found a reference in the Sutra of Hui-neng, the Platform Sutra. Most of you probably know the Platform Sutra, or at least the first chapter of it which is the story of how Hui-neng, the “barbarian” ended up in a monastery and became the sixth Patriarch. Here are a couple of sections on Samadhi and Prajna. You can equate Samadhi to Silence and Prajna to Illumination. This is what he had to say:

*‘The patriarch preached to the assembly as follows. Learned audience, in my system samadhi and prajna are fundamental. But do not be under the wrong impression that these two are independent of each other for they are inseparably united and they are not two entities. Samadhi is the quintessence of prajna, while prajna is the activity of samadhi. At the very moment that we obtain prajna, samadhi is therewith, and vice-versa. If you understand this principle you understand the equilibrium of samadhi and prajna. A disciple should not think there is a distinction. To hold such an opinion would hold that these are two characteristics in the Dharma. Samadhi begets prajna and prajna begets Samadhi. Learned audience, to what are samadhi and prajna analogous? They are analogous to a lamp and its light. With the lamp there is light. Without it there would be darkness. The lamp is the quintessence of the light and the light is the expression of the lamp. In name they are two things, but in substance they are one and the same. It is the same case with samadhi and prajna.’<sup>1</sup>*

We may replace the words Samadhi and Prajna with Silence and Illumination.

Although the method has two words in its title and they seem to refer to two things, it’s not that you have two tasks or two competing activities, one to cultivate Silence and one to cultivate Illumination. Through your cultivation, both of these emerge. And to the extent that one is there, the other will be there. And, to the extent that the second is there, the first will be there. To the extent that one is lacking, the other will be lacking. Neither is complete until both are complete.

Silence may get a bit tricky to practice sometimes. On the next page we find this:

*‘Learned audience. Some teachers of meditation instruct their trainees to keep a watch on their mind for tranquillity so that it will cease from activity. Hence the disciples give up all exertion of mind. Ignorant persons become insane from having too much confidence in such instruction. Such cases are not rare and it is a great mistake to teach others to do this.’<sup>2</sup>*

Silence is not having the mind cease from activity. So what does Silence mean? There seems to be some kind of contradiction there. We use the word ‘Silence’ to mean the mind stopping doing things. Yet here is a clear warning against quiescence, against switching off, against going into a trance. And, as Hui-neng says, there are still today people who teach that way and understand that way. It is all too common for people to hear that meditation is about calming the mind and thus to think ‘Oh yes the more relaxed I get the better I am getting at it’. But no! Relaxing and calming the mind is an important part of practise but it is not the whole of practise.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Diamond Sutra and the Sutra of Hui Neng*, Tr A. F. Price and Wong Mou-Lam, Book Two, p. 42 (Lightly edited for clarification)

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, Book Two, p. 44



Certainly, these days we come across people who have cultivated calming the mind over many years and got somewhat stuck, blank. What is lacking? What is lacking is the Illumination aspect. Illumination is the mind being Silent but also alert, bright clear, knowing, seeing. That too is quite tricky.

It is relatively easy to have a silent mind by switching it off. But how about having a silent mind that is still hearing, seeing, knowing? That is trickier. An elderly woman turned up at our meditation group a few weeks ago. She said that she has no problem with disturbances by external noises when she is meditating, she just switches off both her hearing aids! Well, OK, you switch off both your hearing aids, you close your eyes, you settle yourself in a room with no distractions, and yes you can get a sense of silence that way. Is that a useful sort of silence of mind to cultivate?



The Maenllwyd is a fairly quiet place to practise and there are benefits in having a quiet place to lessen distractions. Our minds are so wild that it is quite difficult to begin to calm them. So we use these expedient methods, in a sense ‘inappropriate’ methods, to find a way to get the mind to begin calming. We put ourselves in a quiet place. Perhaps we close our eyes. Perhaps we use quite a narrow suppressive method, a narrow focus such as a mantra or counting the breath. Perhaps we switch off our hearing aids. We can begin to calm the wild mind. Actually there is no problem with that providing we understand that it is only a beginning, a preparation for a more complete method later.

Silence does not mean switching off the world and cutting it out and not knowing it. Silence refers to absence of the interference of ‘self’ in perception of the world. That is what is to be silenced. So often the self simply gets in the way of Illumination, of seeing the world, of knowing the world. Maybe we see the sunrise, as we did this morning, shining through the mist. Maybe we truly see the sunrise shining through the mist – or maybe we have all sorts of self-referencing thoughts such as ‘I wish I had my camera with me’; or ‘That’s nice, I hope it does it again tomorrow’. Do we simply just see things or do we grasp onto them - or push them away if it is something we do not like? How about simply seeing the sunrise; or simply feeling the rain on our head? Or simply feeling the cold? Or tasting the food? These are simple things but we make them complicated, we add to them. We attach to them. So how can we cultivate that ‘disinterested’ Silence, without being cut off from the world?

The mnemonic John uses many times on retreats is very relevant here. ‘Let through, let be, let go’. Let through means ‘really be with what is happening. Really see the sunrise, feel the rain,

feel the cold' or whatever it is. Let it through. It's there and it's part of the world and part of experience. Know it, feel it, be it. But then we say 'let be'. 'Let be' means leave it alone, don't interfere with it. Don't fuss about it, don't push or pull or try to prolong it. Accept is as it is. This is where it gets very sticky because 'yes I want more of that' or 'I want less of that' or 'I can make use of that in the future' or 'I'll try to avoid that in the future'. Self gets in there.

The Silence we are talking about is a silence of the self, a self which is interfering all the time. It is very subtle and pervasive. It is only after quite a while, when we have settled down well in meditation, that we begin to appreciate that it really is so very pervasive. This indeed is perhaps the main reason for meditating. Through settling down, what's left after letting go of some of self becomes clearer – and that is Illumination beginning. As the surface froth settles, understanding and clarity has a chance to arise. A little bit of silence, and a little bit of clarity. So the clarity refers not only to the world out there, it refers to the world in here. It is OK to see yourself in action. We are not denying the self, we are trying to not have it in the way so much. If it is in the way, then let yourself see that process. Whatever there is to be seen, see it whether it's external or internal. Self, world, that's Illumination. Don't block your seeing of it, that's Silence.

Again back to the Sutra of Hui Neng. He was uneducated and illiterate and became enlightened merely by hearing the Diamond Sutra being chanted in the marketplace. He found out what was being chanted, went to the monastery and worked in the kitchen. He spent several months there, de-husking rice. Eventually he found his way to a secret interview with the Master, the Fifth Patriarch, during the third watch of the night. And the Master was testing him:

*“The Master expounded the Diamond Sutra to me. When he came to the sentence ‘one should use one’s mind in such a way that it will be free of any attachment’ I at once became thoroughly enlightened.”*<sup>3</sup>

‘One should use one’s mind in such a way that it will be free from any attachment.’ He doesn’t say that one should switch-off one’s mind so that it will become free of any attachment. Use one’s mind, but free from attachment. Attachment of course is the activity of the self. But using the mind implies Illumination.

There are several different ways of translating that phrase. John uses a translation that puts it this way: ‘Let the mind arise but do not put it anywhere’. Again, you see that the mind is active, but do not put it anywhere, do not get locked on to anything. That is a quotation from the Diamond Sutra but it is not easy to find the original as the words do not match. But I think I found it. It says ‘The mind should be kept independent of any thoughts that arise within it.’ The full paragraph says:

*‘Bodhisattvas should leave behind all phenomenal distinctions and awaken the thought of the consummation of incomparable enlightenment by not allowing the mind to depend on notions evoked by the sensible world, by not allowing the mind to depend upon notions evoked by sounds, odours, flavours, touch contacts, or any qualities. The mind should be kept independent of any thoughts which arise within it.’*<sup>4</sup>

So again the mind is there but it is not trapped by responses to the world, which are usually self-driven responses. We hear a sound, smell a smell, and straight away the self starts filtering, judging. Of course, there are certain survival instincts and evolutionary forces at play here when we talk about ‘what is dangerous for me’. Probably this is how this pattern of thinking arises. It is self-protective in a literal sense, but in modern society it has gone way beyond that,

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, Book Two, p. 18

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, Book One, p. 44

becoming a whole self-oriented world generated from an initial evolutionary precaution. It gets in the way of our experience in the world.

Can we stop doing that? Can we trust that actually we don't need to be constantly on guard? There aren't too many wild animals around here. Food is probably going to appear on the table in the next day or two so we don't need to worry about starving. The weather is cold but we have fires. So, actually, our evolutionary-based survival instincts can be switched off. Perhaps we can trust to let go of defending ourselves. Peek out of the armour and see if you can see the world unfiltered. What would that be like? Maybe we don't know. Maybe we have never been without our armour. Can we drop our armour, drop our pretences, drop our defences? That is what is meant by Silence.

We have methods to help us. By placing our total awareness on the body, we are cultivating Illumination. When we include all our bodily experience we are automatically including all the experience of being us. We are including what our body is doing, our thought processes, and through our senses we are including awareness of the outside world. So placing awareness on our body is all we need to do to gain total Illumination. Everything is available to us that way. What gets in the way is that we don't actually succeed in having total awareness of our body, it's partial and distorted. We pay more attention to some parts than others. We ignore some parts that are uncomfortable physically or emotionally. We gravitate towards certain things that are pleasant. If we can actually achieve gradually, through cultivation, a total awareness of our bodily experience, then we will inevitably have a total awareness of all experience.

And where does Silence come in? Well, if your mind is totally on your bodily experience then that is Silence. If your mind is wandering off into thoughts, planning etc. then that is not Silence, that is the activity of the ego. But if you can drop that and simply have your attention on your bodily experience then self is out of the way. Self may still be doing its stuff, and that may be part of what you notice in your Illumination, but actually if it is just part of an even Illumination it is just part of what is there and is no longer pulling you off-centre. It's only when it pulls you off-centre and makes your body-awareness distorted or lost, that it is not Silent.

If your attention is fully and evenly on your bodily experience then it is both Illuminated and Silent. To the extent that it is wandering or distorted, off-centre, it is not fully Silent and it is not fully Illuminated. Don't be cross with yourself. Just notice what is happening. Sit with the intention to practise, knowing that you will slip, that something will happen, you'll get pulled off course. And that noticing is Illumination and that not getting cross with yourself is Silence. Notice what happens all the time but don't do anything with it. Notice yourself slipping and don't get cross. Notice that you are not slipping and don't get proud. Simply notice what is happening.

I spoke yesterday about stages in practise of Silent Illumination. And I mentioned that these are just labels of convenience, there are not clear cut demarcations for each stage. In general the early stage is focused on bringing the mind and body together. When you arrive on retreat the mind can be a long, long way away, both physically and in time. But if you cultivate a habit of noticing where the mind is, and bringing it back when it is not here, and noticing when attention to the body has slipped and bringing it back, the mind does begin to settle. Mind and body are becoming one, rejoined, fused. And when your body is walking your mind is with you, it's not anywhere else. It's not back home or at the destination of your walk. Walking from here to lunch, your mind isn't already there at the table, it's here feeling your feet on the ground, feeling the chill, feeling the sun. You are simply there with your body and when you arrive at the table you sit at the table, your body and mind are there.

Of course, from time to time you slip up, but overall you gradually get a better sense of being unified. And with that comes a possibility of a wider experience both of self and outside. And

this is not particularly linear in the way I'm describing it. You may have times when your body and mind are not particularly well unified but you also have a good sense of the outside. That's OK as well; it's not that you have to do one then the other stepwise. As you bring your mind more within the sphere of your body it has more chance of noticing what is happening within you and around you. And there becomes a gradual solidifying of the sense 'This is me here, I'm in this place, this is the experience of being me, and this is the experience of being me in this place'.



Watch out for a tendency to be in this place yet not be you. What I mean by that is you can get caught by a landscape, you can get caught by a view. And you can have a sense of place but you may have lost your reference point, yourself. Having a sense of place is actually quite fine and there is a method of practise called Direct Contemplation based on that, which we may do later. For Silent Illumination your attention needs to be brought back to a reference point in the body. You may include what is out there but you do not go to what is out there. There is a difference between having an expanded sense of self and having gone from here to over there. If you find that you have gone from here to over there what is lacking is the contact with the body, so bring experience of your body in too.

Experience of the body is the traditional way to enter Silent Illumination. One way it can just happen is through following the breath. As you get better at following the breath, there comes a point at which you are with the breath and your sense of what is happening can expand. The breath is happening against a sort of background. There can be a flip-over when, rather than your attention being on the breath, your attention is on the space that contains the breath. This can happen particularly when your attention on the breath is very acute, and you notice the breath coming in and out, and you notice there is gap between the breath coming in and out – a second when there is no breath. If your attention is on the breath, at that turning point between the in and out breath - where is your attention when there is no breath? Your attention is just open waiting for the breath. If your attention is just open, when the breath comes it is a bit like the filling of a container, a container that is sometimes filled with breath and sometimes not. You don't need to bother with what the container is, but just notice that there is breathing happening. And maybe there are other things happening such as sensations, sounds and so on. So, having started here with a narrow focus, once again you are slipping into a broader awareness. If you are well-practised at following the breath you may notice these turning points. If you try to do this or think about it of course you've created noise in your mind and

lost it! But if you are simply following the breath very acutely you will notice these gaps, and in the gaps you may notice a kind of foreground-background flip.

Why am I mentioning this? Well during this second stage of Silent Illumination a similar thing can happen. You settle your attention on the body and it is quite clear and stable. You get a sense of expansion, inclusiveness. There may be an itch on the knee but it is no different from hearing the airplane or birdsong or smelling the incense. It may be the beating of your heart but, whatever it is, every sensation is part of an even awareness. There is no particular distinction between different sensations. They all have an equal status in your awareness. There is no need to make a distinction between one type of sensation and another, nor between outer and inner. These are simply things that are happening and they are noticed. There is no need for a commentary, they are simply there.

At some point you can do this foreground-background flip and you may have a sense they are happening within a container, which you might call 'space'. At that point, your attention is on everything - space and anything that arises in that space. You also have a sense of the space itself, the background behind what is arising. Your awareness has expanded beyond what you can actually sense. Your experience is waiting for whatever may arise anywhere.

The 'flipping' happened to me on my first Silent Illumination retreat here with John. I had done a lot of Western Zen Retreats but on this Silent Illumination retreat John instructed us all to follow our breath for the first day and a half. After a while, I went to John and said 'I can't do that, I keep losing the breath, I keep falling into the gaps between the breaths'. He said 'That's OK, carry on!' If you don't understand what is happening, it may be a bit confusing.

It's the same with Silent Illumination practise as a whole. If you don't understand that these changes in awareness may happen as the practise progresses it can be confusing when they do happen. But, don't try to make them happen! That doesn't work. As soon as you try to make something happen, or try to take a short cut and jump ahead, then the self is active and these things will not happen. If the mind is not Silent, these things will not happen and to the extent that you think they have happened then you are just kidding yourself, telling yourself a story.

So, apply the method, be aware that it may shift in its own way in its own time. But it's not something to be pushed.

One more point. At this point, when your sense of awareness has expanded, although the instruction is to have body awareness, there is a time in which body awareness slips away. Because your awareness is now quite even across all phenomena, the body becomes less obvious, lighter, and the boundary of it has faded. You need to be aware of the distinction between losing awareness of the body with the mind going somewhere else and a simple sense of expansion. When you are in the expanded state, if something happens with your body, a sound, an ache, then you'll know about it. If you have gone off somewhere else then you are in a kind of trance-like state. You may well not notice what is going on around you, you are just being somewhere else. That's the test.

Cultivate a sense of awareness of your body and notice how there is sensations and feelings there, weight, heaviness, warmth, cold, tension, ache, pain. Whatever it is, notice it but don't fuss about it, they are just there and confirm that you are sitting there. Know them but don't do anything with them. Notice the change, maybe a tension gets worse or eases, or a temperature changes. Notice how a thought wanders into the mind then out again. You don't have to do anything with them, they wander in and out. If they are noisy, busy and distracting then use some of the methods that you know for calming yourself, whatever works for you. When you have calmed down a bit, regain awareness of the body. Simply continue from there.

## **Messages from God**

### **God's Email**

**Swami Satprakash**

One day God was looking down at earth and saw all of the rascally behaviour that was going on. So He called one of His angels to go to earth for a time. When he returned, he told God, "Yes, it is bad on Earth; 95% are misbehaving and only 5% are not."

God thought for a moment and said, "Maybe I had better send down another angel to get a second opinion."

So God called another angel and sent him to earth for a time, too. When the angel returned he went to God and said, "Yes, it's true. The earth is in decline; 95% are misbehaving, but 5% are being good."

God was not pleased. So He decided to e-mail the 5% who were good, because He wanted to encourage them, give them a little something to help them keep going.

Do you know what the e-mail said?

No? .....

Okay, just wondering. I didn't get one either.

### **Celebrate**

A young monk arrives at the monastery. He is assigned to helping the other monks in copying the old canons and laws of the church by hand. He notices, however, that all of the monks are copying from copies, not from the original manuscript.

So, the new monk goes to the head abbot to question this, pointing out that if someone made even a small error in the first copy, it would never be picked up! In fact, that error would be continued in all of the subsequent copies.

The head monk, says, "We have been copying from the copies for centuries, but you make a good point, my son."

He goes down into the dark caves underneath the monastery where the original manuscripts are held as archives in a locked vault that hasn't been opened for hundreds of years.

Hours go by and nobody sees the old abbot. So, the young monk gets worried and goes down to look for him. He sees him banging his head against the wall and wailing, "We missed the "R"!, we missed the "R"!

His forehead is all bloody and bruised and he is crying uncontrollably.

The young monk asks the old abbot, "What's wrong, father?"

With a choking voice, the old abbot replies, "The word was...

**CELEBRATE!!!"**

## Seat 16

Haibun

Ken Jones

*Through  
the Looking Glass  
a high speed train  
racing backwards*

I didn't notice it at first, what with the anxious bustle of passengers stowing their bags, and flapping about with those long card tickets, crammed with information. No problem matching mine to its seat: "voiture 15 place 15". No one is struggling to claim seats 16 to 19. Which is because, to my amazement, they are not there. But where have they gone? Here is our huge Train de Grande Vitesse creeping stealthily out of Lille Europe, bound for the Riviera at some 200 mph, and carrying four metaphysical seats. The occupants of seats 20 to 23, which are where 16 to 19 *should* be, seem quite unperturbed. They go on reading. Quite a spread: *Figaro*, *Le Canard Enchaîné* and *Le Monde Diplomatique*. As we speed across the plains of Picardy an uneasy sun shifts on the elegant white and beige upholstery of empty seat 20 – or is it *really* seat 16?

Nonchalantly I explore my own coach and the adjacent ones. Mine alone has four more seat numbers than any other, yet carries the same number of seats. Ah, the ticket collector! A large, jolly fellow, he just shrugs: *L'actualité, monsieur, souvent c'est bizarre*. At this, *Le Monde Diplomatique* is lowered just enough to reveal a goatee beard and an ironic gaze: *Soyez stoïque, mon brave!* he grins.

I begin to suspect some Gallic conspiracy. Yet at some time senior officials of the august Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer must have felt obliged to create this *grande perturbation* in the whole booking and statistical system by making four seats vanish and adding four more to this one coach of this one train. What dreadful scandal or tragedy had overwhelmed seats 16 to 19 of coach 15 and, presumably, their occupants?

*Faster than thought  
here and gone  
an ancient church and steeple*

I ease my way along to the bar. And the possibility of a sympathetic listener. *D'un certain âge*, she is chic, witty and game for a bit of *drôlerie* about Gallic logic. In my reckless French I joke about the roundabouts and bypass of the little town of Descartes, in Poitou, where you always end up where you started. Then stop mid-sentence. Her ticket! Between two black gloved fingers: "voiture 15 place 16".

*Three hundred kilometres an hour  
losing the long shriek  
of its electric horn*

## **Now my Dying has a Name**

### **Iris Tute**

What an extra ordinary journey it has been so far through several misdiagnoses to being told that there was absolutely nothing wrong with me. For almost a year I have felt at times as if my body was dying and as I became increasingly weaker I wished for it. So when I was given the diagnosis of an incurable cancer of the bone marrow, Multiple Myeloma, I felt a sense of relief that my dying does have a name, is real and that there is maybe a bit of time left.

Being able to share this news has resulted in a wonderful experience of love, friendship and offers of help. Some of this has been very moving and has made me feel more deeply in touch with family, friends and acquaintances.

Feeling a tiny body in the vast machine of the NHS besides it's inevitable difficulties, I have also received much help and care for which I am deeply grateful. Through the advancement in medicine and technology my body is being restored for a little while longer courtesy of the NHS, giving me a more intensified opportunity to practise and being aware of the Dharma.

With the kind support from Lam Rim, Wales, I received literature about the Medicine Buddha, putting disease into the context of the suffering in the world, practicing loving kindness. Learning to accept myself in weak states, having to let go on so many levels. Then feeling better temporarily and able to pick up life a bit more, acutely aware about its uncertainty and treasure. Watching generations flourish and making their way is a bonus.

I see illness as a gift towards a more intensified, increasingly conscious journey through the last part of my life.

I am also very lucky that our local Chan Group meets weekly close to my house, so I can meditate with them when I am able to. That feels like holding on to something immensely valuable and supportive. I have to learn to accept myself as I am in different states, not being embarrassed about leaving halfway through because of intense fatigue, not being able to hold the posture etc. Acceptance of a changing physical image of myself and living with increasing uncertainty. Every day is a gift.



## Retreat Reports

*Retreat reports are an integral aspect of our journal and one much approved of by Shifu. We print them mostly anonymously and are most grateful to our practitioners for sharing themselves so generously with us. In reading these reports we learn much about the experiences of others on retreat and they often provide pointers for our own understanding Eds.*

### Better than Winning the Lottery-for Sure!

#### Shining Silence Retreat, January 2007

*A valuable report from which all of us can learn. Read, mark, learn and inwardly digest. Eds*

I arrived at Maenllwyd again with increased confidence and a sense of trust in the place, the fellowship and the process as well as in John. A series of Western Zen retreats had unknotted and made clear some of the karmic complications that have burdened me throughout my life. I felt ready for a Silent Illumination retreat and had a sense that whatever came up, all would be well. For a change, I did not have a sense of any particular issue or problem that needed to be faced, whereas in past retreats there was a feeling of being pregnant with particular issues that felt ripe for processing. I did however bring with me the old familiar sense of anxiety and my frustration at the persistence of 2 particular vexations that have dogged me for years despite psychological and dharma work both at retreats and in daily practice : I still had regular urges to harm or kill myself and urges to have a drink. Both are unpleasant, anxiety provoking and difficult to understand (as I am not depressed, never harmed myself and have not had a drink or drug for years). I have come to accept that this would be a burden that I may need to bear for life.

The retreat started to flow and despite the usual discomfort of sitting with a very busy mind for the first day, things settled quite quickly. It was very helpful that the initial emphasis was on mindfulness in everyday life and the connection between cushion work and changes in the way one can live life in the conventional sense. Total body awareness has been my daily practice for 2 years (apart from short periods after WZR's of sitting with huatous) and it was easy to fall into this on retreat. By the second full day the practice was going well. The mind was reasonably calm, a sense of sitting within spaciousness, vastness and awe developed naturally with not much need for struggle or striving. First interview with John and Charlie, '...going well...continue...'.

For the next few days the practice continued, spaciousness, joy, being, physical bliss climbing up the back and storming through the whole body, love. All of this coming and going, dipping in and out of 'one mind', were experiences of varying clarity. A sense of almost not knowing anymore when one was in or out of these experiences. This was interspersed with difficult sessions, resentments of the coughing neighbours, vexations arising during meal times, sibling rivalry type reactions around fellows and physical pain. But on the whole there was a sense of contentment to just sit and be.

It was then that the first un-knotting happened. I realised that after my mother's death, I had decided that I was to blame and that I did not deserve to live, in fact I decided that I deserved to go to hell. This became clear and once I could see it and accept it, I could let it through, let it be and let it go. Talking with Charlie in interview allowed this to drop and there emerged a sense of freedom from a burden that I had been unknowingly carrying for 20 years. This was amazing - I was sitting for longer than I have ever sat before, quite happy indeed to sit indefinitely.

On the 5th day after morning exercises, John said something about opening the eyes and 'seeing everything mirrored in the mind'. During the first morning I was moved to bow to the cushion and make a vow to awaken during this sitting. Total body awareness... opening to

sounds... a sense of vast spaciousness... sat-chit-ananda...and then opening the eyes and... falling into a new reality, as if pushed through a thin membrane into reality. The visual somehow melding with total body awareness, the sounds and the spaciousness. Here was the clearest state of one mind, seeing everything as a living matrix of vibrating aware particles, no boundaries, no things, everything here and now and this: alive, aware, boundless. The sense of time and of space and of separate thingness disappeared completely. I had seen this before but never so clearly and in such a stable way. The experience gradually dissolved, leaving a sense of gratitude and calm.



I remember little of breakfast itself, but, after I finished eating, something unexpected happened. I remember just sitting there and suddenly knowing that I was gone. I caught a sense of my self being extinguished, like a little flame spluttering off when a candle is extinguished. A momentary fear of 'I am dying' and a moment of 'earwigo' a letting go and I was gone. Totally gone. Just not there. And nothing was missing! A sense of suddenly waking up in reality, everything clearer, more real, more ordinary, sharp, crisp, immediate. Light, bright soft pearly white light emanating from everywhere, not blinding, just light. Looking around for a moment, looking for me... nobody home...and nothing missing. A sense of fullness, alrightness, the absence of any anxiety or tension. No time, no separation, no me, no mind. Just being, awareness with no one being aware.

Clarity, of course this is how it is, how simple, how could it have been so difficult to see? Funny that it seemed like there was no need for anything in addition. Clear seeing of what self is and how it is when self is dropped...aha...how simple and obvious...of course.

The suicidal ideas became clear, to kill myself, what an obvious mistake, a near miss, taken too literally (or not literally enough). Sadness about family members who committed suicide. More relief, a great un-knotting happened in a flash. Gone.

Another learning came in the form of the koan about the 100 foot pole – the pole being a place where a self delusion is firmly established. Letting go dissipates the delusion: counter-intuitive because one feels that one will die, but actually one wakes up.

It was clear that there was nothing personal about any of this, nothing personal at all. Even when self-concern is rife, there is actually no one there. The lights are on but there is no one there. Thinking without a thinker, looking without a looker, being without a be-er...

Later, seeing the process of selfing stirring again, like an engine revving up. First intermittent stirrings, movements in the deep, desire, aversion, a sense of wanting, and a 'me' making its appearance, splits appearing in the wholeness. Subtle stress, anxiety, self concern. While it is so spluttering and intermittent, there is an opportunity to clearly see the mechanics of this illusion before it turns full on and becomes a delusion again. In that window of opportunity, noble truths experienced directly!

And in hindsight surprisingly, no misgivings about self waking up again, the un-reality of it somehow taking the sting out of the return of suffering.

Afterwards, I was sitting and realising that more unknottling had occurred. As a child I knew that in order to live I needed to connect to the divine, to god, but growing up with an atheist father and being the product of a mixed faith it seemed there was no way to do this. This sense of alienation from the divine has dogged my subconscious all my life. Although I found the Dharma, there was always a sense of unease, a child's pain about not being able to tread the path to the god of my childhood. A sense of being abandoned, blocked and rejected. And gradually it was completely clear that sitting with shining silence was a direct way to god. The separation crumbled as I saw that this was another misunderstanding, no barrier ever existed, the road was always open and god is closer than close; here not there. And the whole thing just dropped. Suchness.

This changed the way that I practice. I get it now, just sitting, being present, aware and willing to allow suchness to manifest in whatever way it does. Much less to do, it was the activity and the striving that obscured it. Nothing to do, just being aware, present, ready, open. A spontaneous, wordless huatou arises, very close to 'what is it?' but more subtle, wordless and full of wonder.

When I got it, my first thought was 'how come nobody just told me this before, they could have saved me a lot of time and effort...'. But of course, people did say exactly that. It was just not possible to get it until I got it. How strange.

I saw John for interview but couldn't tell him about any of this. Somehow, it was still going on and it was only the next day that with a degree of reluctance I told Charlie. He suggested that I see John and in interview John confirmed my experience. Somehow this was both surprising and obvious at the same time. I suppose that I suspected it but wasn't sure if I could be somehow kidding myself. John suggested three prostrations before the Buddha.

Since this experience, a process of realignment seems to be going on. It was difficult to sleep for a few nights and it is surprising how things seem different in the light of that experience. Initially doubts came up, was it real or was I kidding myself somehow? Habitual self-doubts... what settled this was faith in John and Charlie as well as in the tradition and lineage. Also, there was a deep sense of rightness underlying the doubts. I was able to let this go. A basic shift in outlook has taken place which is still unfolding and affects everything in my life. Reading Dharma feels different, the heart sutra tallies with reality, it all seems a lot simpler and more real.

Anyway, it seems ridiculous to make a big deal out of what is basically just having a very temporary look at what one is. Even though I cannot see it now, I know what it is like because I have experienced it, and that changes things.

I feel practice is easier now, knowing that I have seen it, I can now practice with less pressure to attain any special state. This is not about 'creating the nature', the nature is always here regardless of what one sees or thinks and therefore there is no attainment because there is nothing to attain that one does not already have (or actually that one always is).

Another difference is that Silent Illumination as a method is clearer, the progression one tends to go through, the stages and experiences along the way make sense as stations along a path

rather than isolated states. It seems very clear that the previous retreats and daily practice were instrumental in bringing about the conditions for this opening. Previous Silent Illumination retreats were a powerful way of learning the method and practicing in an intensive way. Western Zen Retreats have been very powerful training in sitting, huatou practice and tsan as well as in familiarising with experiences of one mind and in exposing and releasing karmic knots. Also, it would be mistaken to see this as an achievement, as one doesn't (and can't) do it, it comes over one from its side.



However, it is very clear that I am back, vexations and all. I understand what John said about having a brief taste of enlightenment being different to somehow being in that state all the time. Although my sense of self is back and along with it comes self concern, suffering and unskilful thought, speech and action; there is also a basic difference, because having experienced being free, the outlook is altered.

My view of addiction and recovery is also developing. The absence of a stable permanent and separate 'I' explains why one cannot just make a decision to never drink/use again— there is no one home to make the decision. Which means that vow power is all one has. No insurance policy, no certainty. Just vow power as it manifests itself in practice and in day to day life.

The urges to harm myself or have a drink have lost their power; somehow knowing that there is nothing personal or real about 'I' has taken the edge off this.

Most of all, the motivation to continue practicing is now even stronger than before; a daily ongoing practice that is both the way and the fruit.

So, this has been quite a retreat, a good experience, better than winning the lottery for sure. I feel surprised that I should have the opportunity to see even to this small extent, excited about life and very grateful.

I wonder what comes next....

## **Notices**

### **Submissions to New Chan Forum - Editorial Policy**

We welcome your contributions, whether articles, poetry, artwork, retreat reports, letters, or whatever else. However we do not promise that we shall publish your contribution, or in which issue it will appear if we do so. Owing to the workload involved, our policy is that we do not acknowledge materials received. Where possible submissions by email to **editorial@WesternChanFellowship.org** are preferred for articles, poems, etc, since this obviates the need for retyping or scanning. For artwork email submissions are also useful, but in addition non-returnable copies or originals by post may be helpful since then if required we can rescan them ourselves at higher resolution than may be appropriate for email attachments. Thank you.

The articles in this journal have been submitted by various authors and the views expressed do not necessarily represent the views of the Western Chan Fellowship.

### **Data Protection Act IMPORTANT Please Read**

We keep the NCF mailing list and the WCF membership list on a computer database for administration and mailing purposes. If you do not wish your details to be kept on a computer database then please write to the Membership Secretary. There are sometimes circumstances where it may be helpful to use this database in other ways, and we would like your permission to do so. We would of course do so sensitively. The circumstances that we have in mind are to contact individuals in a geographical area e.g. (i) to attempt to form the nucleus of a new local meditation group or (ii) to respond to enquirers who wish to discuss Chan or WZR or meditation with a contact in their locality. If you would not wish your details to be released in such circumstances then please write to the Membership Secretary and your wishes will be respected.

### **Illuminating Silence – Available at Discount Pricing**

The WCF has bought a stock of the book “Illuminating Silence” and is now able to sell it at £8.99 which is less than the cover price and also includes free UK postage and packing. This is a key book for us, including as it does the teachings at two Maenllwyd retreats with Master Sheng-yen on the method of Silent Illumination, and also other texts and retreat reports by John Crook. To order your copy (everyone should have at least one!) send payment to Jake Lyne (WCF treasurer), cheques payable to “Western Chan Fellowship”.

### **Solitary Retreats**

[westernchanfellowship.org/solitary-retreats.html](http://westernchanfellowship.org/solitary-retreats.html) describes several opportunities at Maenllwyd (using either the new hut or the main buildings) and at Winterhead House.

Further information on Winterhead House and the facilities for solitary retreats are available here: [westernchanfellowship.org/winterhead.html](http://westernchanfellowship.org/winterhead.html)

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