



www.westernchanfellowship.org
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Newsletter 28

Retreat Programme

Please refer to the website at www.w-c-f.org/Q342 for the latest updates.

11th – 18th October 2014: Silent Illumination 7-night Retreat

Leader: Fiona Nuttall. Venue: Maenllwyd, Wales

Silent Illumination is a profound meditation practice which leads to a mind of great calmness and insight, using ancient Chinese Zen methods which are just as applicable to the modern West. This seven-night silent retreat is an opportunity to learn and deepen this practice through intensive meditation, with instruction and personal guidance by individual interviews with an experienced teacher. Whether or not a breakthrough to Enlightenment may occur, establishing a practice gives a firm basis for subsequent ongoing mindfulness in everyday life.

8th – 13th November 2014: Western Zen 5-night Retreat

Leader: Hilary Richards. Venue: Maenllwyd, Wales

Who am I? Thoroughly confronting this question can take us directly to the centre of our being. Over the course of this five-day retreat you will investigate the question "Who am I?" within a standard retreat framework, using silent meditation in conjunction with a unique method of verbal inquiry. This format allows you to use words to go beyond words and thereby enter the main gate of Chan.

The intensive nature of this process of inquiry drives each practitioner into a self-presentation that is difficult to experience in other ways. To guide and support you, personal interviews with the teachers are offered regularly throughout the retreat. With whole-hearted engagement this retreat may lead to the acceptance of self, the experience of "self at ease," and may even provide an opportunity for direct insight into the ground of being.

6th – 13th December 2014: Shattering the Great Doubt 7-night Retreat

Leader: Simon Child. Venue: Maenllwyd, Wales

The ancient Chinese Zen practices of investigating Huatou and Gong'an (Koan) are best practised in a supportive environment such as this intensive silent Chan retreat. As one becomes deeply absorbed in the practice, mental constructions drop away and one is confronted by a realisation that one does not know the nature of existence and one's fundamental assumptions of life are groundless. Staying with and cultivating this 'doubt', it can become all-consuming 'Great doubt' which may 'shatter', giving a direct insight into reality which may be what is known as an Enlightenment experience.

12th – 14th December 2014: Weekend Chan Retreat

Leader: Jake Lyne. Venue: Bala Brook Retreat Centre, Devon

This is an opportunity to learn the basic techniques of Chan meditation and for experienced practitioners to deepen their practice. The retreat will consist of periods of sitting meditation, walking meditation and exercises. There will be Dharma talks; otherwise the retreat will be held in silence. There will also be an opportunity for private interviews for participants to question and investigate their practice. Open equally to beginners and established meditators.

14th – 21st February 2015: Silent Illumination 7-night Retreat

Leader: Simon Child. Venue: Maenllwyd, Wales

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7th – 12th March 2015: Western Zen 5-night Retreat

Leader: Fiona Nuttall. Venue: Maenllwyd, Wales

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The intensive nature of this process of inquiry drives each practitioner into a self-presentation that is difficult to experience in other ways. To guide and support you, personal interviews with the teachers are offered regularly throughout the retreat. With whole-hearted engagement this retreat may lead to the acceptance of self, the experience of "self at ease," and may even provide an opportunity for direct insight into the ground of being.

4th April – 11th April 2015: Shattering the Great Doubt 7-night Retreat

Leader: Simon Child. Venue: Maenllwyd, Wales

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23rd – 30th May 2015: Silent Illumination 7-night Retreat

Leader: Jake Lyne. Venue: Bala Brook Retreat Centre, Devon

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Local Events

Day Retreats

Several local groups arrange day retreats and other events from time to time.

- Manchester 30th November 2014
- Exeter 28th February, 9th May

See the website events page <http://w-c-f.org/Q342> and individual groups pages at <http://w-c-f.org/Q3> for details of events not available to list when this newsletter went to print

Other Events of Interest

The following events are not run by the WCF but may be of interest

Retreats abroad with Simon Child

Contact Simon for details

- Dharma Drum Retreat Center, USA 5-day Western Zen retreat, Oct 10-15 2014
- Warsaw, Poland: 7-day Silent Illumination retreat, March 21st – 28th 2015
- Dharma Drum Retreat Center, USA 9-day Silent Illumination retreat, May 2015
- Vancouver, Canada, 7-day Silent Illumination retreat, Summer/Autumn tbc
- Dharma Drum Retreat Center, USA 5-day Western Zen retreat, Oct 2015 tbc

Twirl that pen!

Please send us articles for The New Chan Forum

Books: We would like to include in each issue an introduction to a book that beginners read, like "Zen Mind, Beginners Mind," "Everyday Zen," or, "Hoofprint of the Ox" by Master Sheng Yen. Alternatively please think about writing an introduction to a key text that is important to your Chan, such as "The Platform Sutra," or "Poems of Enlightenment" (with commentary by Master Sheng Yen). By way of introduction for beginners, some descriptions and commentaries on the central sutras would be particularly helpful too.

Images: Artwork, photographs, poems, haiku and haibun would be very much appreciated.

Articles: Any other lively articles relevant to Chan learning and Chan living would be most welcome. We need to create The New Chan Forum for ourselves, in the way we want it to be. And please keep the retreat reports coming! They are very highly valued contributions to the understanding of the power of the retreat process.

If any of these things stimulate you then please contact the editors, Pat Simmons and George Marsh, who will be more than happy to discuss with you how any idea can be taken forward. They can be contacted at editor@westernchanfellowship.org

Western Chan Fellowship AGM 2015

Details will be circulated nearer the time.

Mailings

If you no longer wish to receive postal mailings, please help us save printing and postage costs by notifying admin@westernchanfellowship.org