



www.westernchanfellowship.org

October 2017

NEWSLETTER 33

WESTERN CHAN FELLOWSHIP NEWS AND PROGRAMMES

Welcome to Newsletter 33. This includes our retreat programme for the first part of 2018 and also brings you news of other WCF activities. Please refer to the website at www.w-c-f.org/Q342 for the latest updates and more details.

2017 retreats remaining

28TH OCTOBER – 1ST NOVEMBER 2017: RUNNING AND ZEN MEDITATION RETREAT – 4-NIGHT RETREAT

Leader: Jake Lyne. <http://w-c-f.org/Q487-304>

11TH – 18TH NOVEMBER 2017: SHATTERING THE GREAT DOUBT – 7-NIGHT RETREAT

Leader: Fiona Nuttall. <http://w-c-f.org/Q487-305>

2ND – 7TH DECEMBER 2017: WESTERN ZEN RETREAT – 7-NIGHT RETREAT

Leader: Jake Lyne. <http://w-c-f.org/Q487-306>

8TH – 10TH DECEMBER 2017 PEAK DISTRICT RESIDENTIAL WEEKEND RETREAT

Leader: Simon Child. <http://w-c-f.org/Q487-322>

2018 Programme of retreats and other events

6TH – 13TH JANUARY: ILLUMINATING THE MIND – 7-NIGHT RETREAT

LEADERS: SIMON CHILD. VENUE: MAENLLWYD, WALES

<http://w-c-f.org/Q487-327>

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. It is the origin of the Japanese Soto Zen practice of Shikantaza but is approached somewhat differently and full instruction will be given.

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 and compassion in everyday life.

10TH – 15TH FEBRUARY: WESTERN ZEN – 5-NIGHT RETREAT

LEADER: SIMON CHILD. VENUE: MAENLLWYD, WALES

<http://w-c-f.org/Q487-328>

Who am I? Thoroughly confronting this question can take us directly to the centre of our being. Over the course of this five-night 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.

19TH – 23RD FEBRUARY: A TASTE OF CHAN – 4-NIGHT RETREAT

LEADER: FIONA NUTTALL. VENUE: HAGG FARM, DERBYSHIRE

<http://w-c-f.org/Q487-332>

An opportunity to experience the traditional style of a formal, silent Chan retreat. The format includes sitting meditation, work practice, Chinese style exercises, and walking meditation both indoors and in the countryside around the venue.



The main methods of Chan practice will be introduced to participants, including calming and relaxation methods, the use of Silent Illumination and Koan/Gongan work. These methods will be explored experientially so that the practitioner can 'taste' for themselves the various styles and see which they feel affinity with.

The retreat will be rigorous with early starts and intensive periods of meditation each day. It is an opportunity to experience personal silence in a place of nature and to discover more about ourselves in the space that silence creates. There will be instructional talks each day and opportunities for exploration of the application of mindfulness in everyday activity as we share the experience of the time together.

7TH – 14TH APRIL: INVESTIGATING KOANS – 7-NIGHT RETREAT

LEADER: FIONA NUTTALL. VENUE: MAENLLWYD, WALES

<http://w-c-f.org/Q487-329>

The ancient Chinese Zen practices of investigating Huatou and Gongan (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.

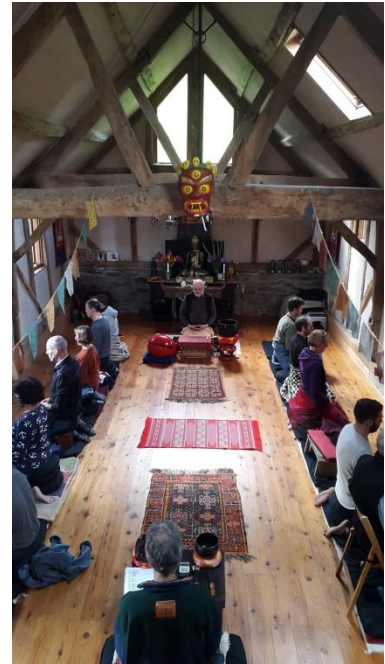
28TH APRIL – 3RD MAY: WESTERN ZEN – 5-NIGHT RETREAT

LEADER: SIMON CHILD. VENUE: MAENLLWYD, WALES

<http://w-c-f.org/Q487-330>

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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.



26TH MAY – 2ND JUNE: ILLUMINATING THE MIND – 7-NIGHT RETREAT

LEADER: JAKE LYNE. VENUE: BALA BROOK RETREAT CENTRE, DEVON

<http://w-c-f.org/Q487-331>

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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 and compassion in everyday life.

MAILINGS

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

RETREAT BOOKING: CANCELLATION CONDITIONS

Earlier this year we revised our cancellation terms. This was in response to having received a record number of late cancellations over the previous 12 months, often coming in just a couple of weeks before the retreat started. This can be too late for those on the waiting list to make arrangements to attend the retreat and so we have the unhappy situation of places being wasted even though there are people who wanted to attend and would have done so if the place had become available sooner.

We need those making bookings to commit to attending, or to give notice of cancellation sooner than two weeks before the start date. The condition that cancellation within two weeks of the start date leads to forfeit of fee paid still stands, but in addition there is now a 50% forfeit of fee for cancellations between four and two weeks of the start of the retreat (unless the vacated place is refilled)

<http://w-c-f.org/Q24#c1932>

DAY RETREATS AND OTHER LOCAL EVENTS

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

See the website events page <http://w-c-f.org/Q342> and individual group pages at <http://w-c-f.org/Q3> for details of events.

Events known at the date of going to press are listed below but please also contact your local group to be informed of other and future events:

Exeter Day Retreat: Saturday 21st October 2017.

Leader: Jake Lyne. Details: <http://w-c-f.org/Q487-324>

York Day Retreat: Saturday 28th October 2017.

Leader: Fiona Nuttall. Details: <http://w-c-f.org/Q487-323>

Birmingham Day Retreat: Saturday 4th November 2017.

Leader: Fiona Nuttall. Details: <http://w-c-f.org/Q487-326>

London Day Retreat: Sunday 5th November 2017. Leaders: Kitty D'Costa, Hilary Richards. Contact: Kitty D'Costa, 07506 810 761 or londonchan@westernchanfellowship.org

Portsmouth Day Retreat: Sunday 3rd December 2017.

Leader: George Marsh, 02392 357783 or georgemarsh1@gmail.com

Manchester Day retreat: Sunday 21st January 2018.

Leaders: Simon Child and Fiona Nuttall. Details: <http://w-c-f.org/Q487-286>

WCF SOCIAL MEDIA

- WCF Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/westernchanfellowship/>
- WCF Practice Support Group on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/257812581073712/>
- YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/WesternChan/videos>
- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/wchanf>

WCF ON RADIO WALES

Simon Child was interviewed at Maenllwyd for a contribution to a Radio Wales programme on religious silence. It was broadcast on 1st October and is available on iPlayer until 29th October.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b096sdqz>

FOR INFORMATION

We list here some retreats which are outside the WCF programme but may be of interest to WCF retreatants.

SILENT ILLUMINATION RETREAT: POLAND 3RD – 10TH MARCH

Simon Child will lead 7-day retreat at Dłużew, near Warsaw, Poland. Teaching and interviews are in English, with Polish interpretation available if required.

International applications welcomed. Details: <http://w-c-f.org/Q367#c1790>

49-DAY CHAN RETREAT IN POLAND: JULY 15TH – SEPTEMBER 2ND

Ven. Chi Chern Fashi will lead a 49-day Chan meditation retreat at Dłużew, near Warsaw, Poland.

International applications welcomed. Details: <http://w-c-f.org/Q367#c1880>

USA: most likely Simon Child will be teaching with Rebecca Li in New York again in 2018 but the dates have not been set yet. Details when available will be posted at: <http://w-c-f.org/Q367>

TWIRL THAT PEN!

PLEASE SEND US MATERIAL FOR THE NEW CHAN FORUM

Articles: Any 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.

Images, including artwork, drawings, photographs, and also poems, haiku and haibun would be very much appreciated.

If these or other ideas stimulate you then please contact the editor George Marsh, at editor@westernchanfellowship.org, who will be more than happy to discuss with you how any idea can be taken forward.