



westernchanfellowship.org

January 2018

NEWSLETTER 34

WESTERN CHAN FELLOWSHIP NEWS AND RETREAT PROGRAMME

Welcome to Newsletter 34. This includes our retreat programme for the coming year 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.



As usual the majority of the retreats will be held at Maenllwyd. Also as last year we will be using additional venues, repeating our bookings for Hagg Farm in the Peak District, Bala Brook in Devon, Crosby Hall Educational Trust near Liverpool, and Barmoor in North Yorkshire. We are also repeating the Stone Carving and Meditation weekend following a successful event in 2017.

2018 PROGRAMME OF RETREATS AND OTHER EVENTS

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 teacher 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.

27TH – 29TH APRIL: NON-RESIDENTIAL STONE CARVING AND MEDITATION WEEKEND

LEADER: EDDY STREET WITH HENRY GRAY. VENUE: SALISBURY, WILTSHIRE

<http://w-c-f.org/Q487-333>

This weekend is suitable for beginners and experienced meditation practitioners, and beginners and experienced stone carvers. A focus of the course will be the 'doing' aspect of practice - on the bringing together of body and mind through a work practice. The three days will be interspersed with body exercises, carving, sitting practice (zazen), walks and short talks. Although this is not a silent retreat, principles of a Chan (zen) retreat will be adopted, for example, there will be some liturgy, a short talk each day, some sitting practice (zazen) periods; however most of the 'formal' practice will be the 'work' periods. There will be plenty of short breaks and instruction on linking body and breath in activity, listening to the stone, tool handling skills and stone carving techniques.

The course is non-residential. Camping is available for free, or Henry can recommend local B&B's; contact him on 01722 341372 or 07766 464048.

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

LEADER: SIMON CHILD. 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 teacher 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 – 26TH MAY: CONNECTED PRACTICE: ENHANCE YOUR PRACTICE IN YOUR OWN ENVIRONMENT

CO-ORDINATOR: HILARY RICHARDS

Join us in a commitment for a period of connected and enhanced practice. We will undertake this in our daily lives, whether at home or in the workplace, with the silent support of knowing that we are not practising alone. We intend to raise the tempo of our practice for this period, increasing our capacity to be aware in our daily lives. A Mindfulness Bell will be rung at noon every day, when all participants may pause and be joined in the silence that the bell marks. Members of our Sangha may use this opportunity in different and creative ways. Open to all. To join in email: connected-practice@westernchanfellowship.org. More information at: <http://w-c-f.org/Q487-343>

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>

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.

9TH – 16TH JUNE: INVESTIGATING KOANS – 7-NIGHT RETREAT

LEADERS: FIONA NUTTALL AND REBECCA LI. VENUE: MAENLLWYD, WALES

<http://w-c-f.org/Q487-335>

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28TH JULY – 2ND AUGUST: WESTERN ZEN – 5-NIGHT RETREAT

LEADER: FIONA NUTTALL. VENUE: MAENLLWYD, WALES

<http://w-c-f.org/Q487-336>

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18TH – 25TH AUGUST: ILLUMINATING THE MIND – 7-NIGHT RETREAT

LEADERS: SIMON CHILD AND FIONA NUTTALL.

VENUE: CROSBY HALL EDUCATIONAL TRUST, LIVERPOOL

<http://w-c-f.org/Q487-337>

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This venue <http://www.chetcentre.org.uk> has a larger capacity than our usual retreats so do come and join us for this summer retreat.

8TH – 13TH SEPTEMBER: AWARENESS IN THE EVERYDAY - WORKING WITH WHAT ARISES – 5-NIGHT RETREAT

LEADER: FIONA NUTTALL WITH HILARY RICHARDS. VENUE: MAENLLWYD, WALES

<http://w-c-f.org/Q487-338>

This workshop retreat will encourage everyday awareness as a fundamental Chan life practice. We will offer individual and group work to develop mindfulness allowing time for exploration and understanding of individual experience through the lens of meditation. Rising early each day, the retreat will also include teaching, silence, interviews and periods for exercise. Open to all.

14TH – 23RD SEPTEMBER: INVESTIGATING KOANS – 9-NIGHT RETREAT

LEADER: SIMON CHILD. VENUE: MAENLLWYD, WALES

<http://w-c-f.org/Q487-341>

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.

6TH – 11TH OCTOBER: RUNNING AND ZEN MEDITATION – 5-NIGHT RETREAT

LEADER: JAKE LYNE, RETREAT LEADER, WITH STUART MCLEOD, ENDURANCE RUNNER AND CHAN MEDITATION INSTRUCTOR.

VENUE: BARMOOR, N. YORKS

<http://w-c-f.org/Q487-334>



This retreat has been designed with experienced runners in mind, who are interested in exploring the mutual benefits of training the body and training the mind. Our core focus will be to introduce participants to sitting meditation practice in the Chan (Chinese Zen) Buddhist tradition, including calming and relaxation methods, and extending these principles of mindfulness and awareness to movement through walking and running. The retreat is designed to offer a fully immersive experience and will include early starts and intensive periods of meditation each day.

With Barmoor retreat centre sitting in the North York Moors National Park, we have the perfect environment to run the trails around Hutton-le-Hole and Spaunton Moor on the edge of the Rosedale Valley. There will be extended periods of silence throughout the retreat, to enable us to focus our attention and engage with our surroundings. 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.

To discuss this event further please contact Stuart McLeod s.i.mcleod@blueyonder.co.uk 07913 858612.

20TH – 25TH OCTOBER: WESTERN ZEN – 5-NIGHT RETREAT

LEADER: JAKE LYNE. VENUE: MAENLLWYD, WALES

<http://w-c-f.org/Q487-339>

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3RD – 10TH NOVEMBER: ILLUMINATING THE MIND – 7-NIGHT RETREAT

LEADER: FIONA NUTTALL. VENUE: MAENLLWYD, WALES

<http://w-c-f.org/Q487-340>

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.

1ST – 8TH DECEMBER: INVESTIGATING KOANS – 7-NIGHT RETREAT

LEADER: SIMON CHILD. VENUE: MAENLLWYD, WALES

<http://w-c-f.org/Q487-342>

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.

RETREAT BOOKING: CANCELLATION CONDITIONS

In 2017 we revised our cancellation terms. This was in response to having received a record number of late cancellations over the preceding 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: Sunday 4th February

Leader: Jake Lyne. Details: <http://w-c-f.org/Q487-345>

Salisbury Day Retreat: Sunday 25th February

A 'Shi-ne' (Calm Abiding) practice day led by Sophie Muir.

Details: <http://w-c-f.org/Q487-347>

London Day Retreat: Sunday 4th March, led by Kitty D'Costa. Contact

londonchan@westernchanfellowship.org

London Non-residential Weekend Retreat, Sat/Sun 12th/13th May, led by Hilary Richards. Contact

londonchan@westernchanfellowship.org

South Devon Chan Group are running a residential weekend on 8th – 10th June

<http://w-c-f.org/Q487-344>

WCF SOCIAL MEDIA

NEW: Insight Timer group: 'Western Chan Fellowship'.

The 'Insight Timer' app for both Android and Apple/iOS is a popular meditation support app. Install the app in the usual way via Google Play or App Store: <https://insighttimer.com/> Use the app to request an invite to group 'Western Chan Fellowship'. It is also planned to use Insight Timer to support the Connected Practice event so please go ahead and give it a try.

See also:

- 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>

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

FOR INFORMATION

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

SCOTTISH CHAN RETREAT 25TH – 28TH JANUARY

3-night Residential Retreat, led by Fiona Nuttall in Fife, Scotland. For details contact Frank on 07900 305103 or Till on 07834 596727.

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: 15TH JULY – 2ND SEPTEMBER

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>

SILENT ILLUMINATION RETREAT: NEW YORK 26TH MAY – 3RD JUNE, WITH SIMON CHILD AND REBECCA LI

<http://w-c-f.org/Q367>

WESTERN ZEN RETREAT: NEW YORK 5TH – 10TH OCTOBER, WITH REBECCA LI, SIMON CHILD, AND FIONA

NUTTALL <http://w-c-f.org/Q367>

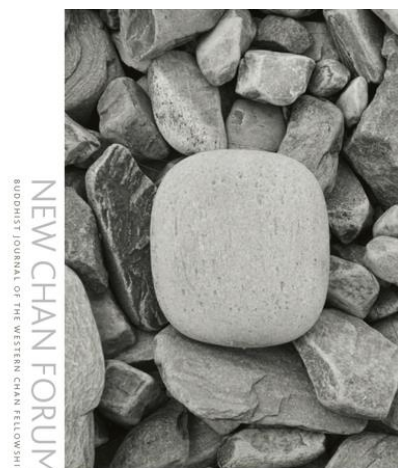
TWIRL THAT PEN!

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.



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