



[westernchanfellowship.org](http://westernchanfellowship.org)

October 2018

## NEWSLETTER 35

### WESTERN CHAN FELLOWSHIP NEWS AND RETREAT PROGRAMME

Welcome to Newsletter 35. This includes our retreat programme for first part of the coming year and also brings you news of other WCF activities. Please refer to the website at [www.w-c-f.org/Q342](http://www.w-c-f.org/Q342) for the latest updates and more details.



As usual the majority of our residential 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 in February and for Bala Brook in Devon in May.

### 2019 PROGRAMME OF RETREATS AND OTHER EVENTS

5<sup>TH</sup> – 10<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY: WESTERN ZEN – 5-NIGHT RETREAT

LEADER: JAKE LYNE. VENUE: MAENLLWYD, WALES

<http://w-c-f.org/Q487-357>

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.

9<sup>TH</sup> – 16<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY: ILLUMINATING THE MIND – 7-NIGHT RETREAT

LEADER: SIMON CHILD.

VENUE: MAENLLWYD, WALES

<http://w-c-f.org/Q487-358>

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 today in 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.

18<sup>TH</sup> – 22<sup>ND</sup> FEBRUARY: A TASTE OF CHAN – 4-NIGHT RETREAT

LEADER: FIONA NUTTALL. VENUE: HAGG FARM, DERBYSHIRE

<http://w-c-f.org/Q487-359>

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, personal guidance by individual interviews and opportunities for exploration of the application of mindfulness in everyday activity as we share the experience of the time together.

9<sup>TH</sup> – 16<sup>TH</sup> MARCH: INVESTIGATING KOANS – 7-NIGHT RETREAT

LEADER: FIONA NUTTALL. VENUE: MAENLLWYD, WALES

<http://w-c-f.org/Q487-360>

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, supported by personal interviews. 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.

17<sup>TH</sup> – 22<sup>ND</sup> APRIL: WESTERN ZEN – 5-NIGHT RETREAT

LEADER: SIMON CHILD. VENUE: MAENLLWYD, WALES

<http://w-c-f.org/Q487-361>

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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.

18<sup>TH</sup> – 25<sup>TH</sup> MAY: CONNECTED PRACTICE

ENHANCE YOUR PRACTICE IN YOUR OWN ENVIRONMENT

CO-ORDINATED BY HILARY RICHARDS

<http://w-c-f.org/Q487-363>

Join us in a commitment to a period of connected and enhanced practice to celebrate Wesak. Wesak celebrates the Enlightenment, Birth and Death of the Buddha. It is traditionally held over the last full moon in May and in 2019 falls on May 19th.

We intend to raise the tempo of our practice for this period, increasing our capacity to be aware in our daily lives. 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.

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.

25<sup>TH</sup> MAY – 1<sup>ST</sup> JUNE: ILLUMINATING THE MIND – 7-NIGHT RETREAT

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

<http://w-c-f.org/Q487-362>

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## RETREAT BOOKINGS: FEES, WAITING LISTS, AND CANCELLATIONS

We have made some changes to our retreat booking arrangements.

1. In the past we have charged the same fee for an event regardless of which venue it is held at. Different venues incur different costs and so we will in future calculate fees on a per venue basis so that income more closely matches the expenditure for each venue that we use.
2. We have experienced a high number of cancellations by those who put themselves on a waiting list a long way in advance of a retreat. To reduce the number of cancellations that we have to process we will no longer accept bookings on to a waiting list when a retreat is fully booked, except for during the last few weeks prior to the start of a retreat.
3. Before making a booking please review our cancellation terms.  
<http://w-c-f.org/Q24#c1932>

## DAY RETREATS AND OTHER LOCAL GROUP 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:

**The Every Day Way:** a guide to the practice of Chan Buddhism. A series of short talks by Hilary Richards and Pat Simmons. Thursday evenings in Bristol. Details: <http://w-c-f.org/Q7>

**Manchester Day Retreat:** Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> October

Leaders: Simon Child, Fiona Nuttall. Details: <http://w-c-f.org/Q487-354>

**Birmingham Day Retreat:** Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> October

Leader: Fiona Nuttall. Details: <http://w-c-f.org/Q487-364>

**Lincolnshire Day Retreat:** Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> October

**Leader:** Juliet Hackney. Venue: Brant Broughton Quaker Meeting House in Lincolnshire.

Email: [sleafordchan@westernchanfellowship.org](mailto:sleafordchan@westernchanfellowship.org)

**Cardiff Chan Group** are running evening sits at the Cardiff Tibetan Buddhist Centre (Samye Foundation) on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each Month. Details: <http://w-c-f.org/Q47>

**London Weekend and Day Retreats:** March 9-10, June 9, July 14 2019.

Contact: [londonchan@westernchanfellowship.org](mailto:londonchan@westernchanfellowship.org)

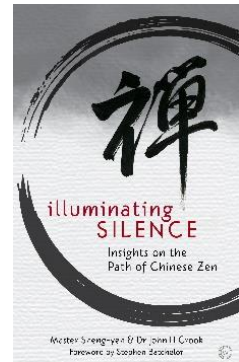
## FOR INFORMATION

### WCF TRUSTEE ROLES

We thank Jeremy Woodward for the many years that he has served as treasurer, a post from which he has now stepped down and been replaced by Sara Elloway – welcome to Sara. However Jeremy continues to contribute to WCF as he has now taken up the role of Secretary from which Alysun Jones has stepped down. Our thanks to Alysun and our thanks again to Jeremy.

### ILLUMINATING SILENCE

The book 'Illuminating Silence', John Crook's compilation and editing of Chan Master Sheng Yen's retreat talks in Wales in 1989 and 1995, with additional material by John Crook, has long been out of print. It has now been republished by Watkins Publishing and is available for purchase from the usual places.



### SILENT ILLUMINATION RETREAT: POLAND 23<sup>RD</sup> – 30<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2019

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 will be posted later at: <http://w-c-f.org/Q367>

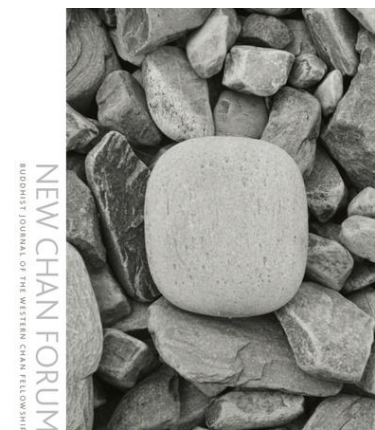
### TWIRL THAT PEN!

#### 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](mailto:editor@westernchanfellowship.org), who will be more than happy to discuss with you how any idea can be taken forward.



### MAILING PREFERENCES

To update your mailing preferences, e.g. if you no longer wish to receive postal mailings, and instead receive only email notifications, please login to the website and then go to <http://w-c-f.org/Q708>

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[westernchanfellowship.org](http://westernchanfellowship.org)