



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

February 2019

## NEWSLETTER 36

### WESTERN CHAN FELLOWSHIP NEWS AND RETREAT PROGRAMME

Welcome to Newsletter 36. This includes our retreat programme for rest of 2019 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, for Bala Brook in Devon in May, and for Crosby Hall Educational Trust in Merseyside in July/August.

### 2019 PROGRAMME OF RETREATS AND OTHER EVENTS

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>

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.

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> – 27<sup>TH</sup> MAY: STONE CARVING AND MEDITATION WEEKEND

LEADER: HENRY GRAY. VENUE: GRAY'S CARVING STUDIO, SALISBURY

<http://w-c-f.org/Q487-368>

This non-residential course is suitable for beginners and experienced meditation practitioners, and stone carvers of any ability. A focus of the course will be the 'doing' aspect of practice - on bringing mind and body together through work. The three days will be interspersed with body exercises, carving, sitting practice (zazen), walks and short talks.

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>

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.

29<sup>TH</sup> JUNE – 4<sup>TH</sup> JULY: WESTERN ZEN – 5-NIGHT RETREAT

LEADER: FIONA NUTTALL. VENUE: MAENLLWYD, WALES

<http://w-c-f.org/Q487-369>

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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.

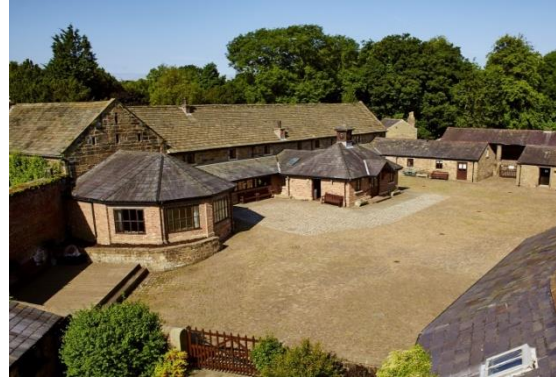
26<sup>TH</sup> JULY – 2<sup>ND</sup> AUGUST: ILLUMINATING THE MIND – 7-NIGHT RETREAT

LEADERS: FIONA NUTTALL AND HILARY RICHARDS.

VENUE: CROSBY HALL EDUCATIONAL TRUST, LIVERPOOL

<http://w-c-f.org/Q487-370>

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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.

1<sup>ST</sup> – 6<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER: CHAN BRUSHWORK RETREAT – 5-NIGHT RETREAT

LEADERS: JAKE LYNE AND JOS HADFIELD. VENUE: ROSELIDDEN FARM, CORNWALL

<http://w-c-f.org/Q487-372>

In this retreat we will practice meditation through investigation of a Chan Buddhist koan which will also be explored through Japanese brushwork. As one becomes deeply absorbed in the practice, mental constructions and assumptions drop away facilitating a deepening exploration into the nature of life and reality.

Chan Buddhism is the precursor of Japanese Zen but is approached somewhat differently and full instruction will be given. Brushwork is also based in the Chan/Zen tradition. As Zen Master Hakuin (1688 - 1768) explained, brushwork is a practice with the intention of drawing 'lines of unfettered simplicity, to reveal nothing special, with no particular beauty, only an uncommon ease that transcends our understanding of space and time'.

According to the Japanese philosopher Nishida Kitarō true creativity is not the product of conscious effort but rather the 'phenomenon of life itself'. True creativity arises from a state beyond thought, emotions, and expectations.

6<sup>TH</sup> – 8<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER: LEARNING BUDDHISM, LIVING ZEN – 2 NIGHT RETREAT

LEADER: FIONA NUTTALL. VENUE: RAGMANS LANE FARM, FOREST OF DEAN

<http://w-c-f.org/Q487-377>

Silent meditation within the context of a living Chan Buddhist tradition. Suitable for both those new to meditation and those with more experience.

14<sup>TH</sup> – 19<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER: AWARENESS IN THE EVERYDAY - WORKING WITH WHAT ARISES – 5-NIGHT RETREAT

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

<http://w-c-f.org/Q487-371>

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.

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

LEADER: JAKE LYNE. VENUE: MAENLLWYD, WALES

<http://w-c-f.org/Q487-373>

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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.

14<sup>TH</sup> – 17<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER: A TASTE OF CHAN – 3-NIGHT RETREAT

LEADER: FIONA NUTTALL. VENUE: CHERRY TREE LODGE, FIFE

<http://w-c-f.org/Q487-378>

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.

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**23<sup>RD</sup> – 30<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER: ILLUMINATING THE MIND – 7-NIGHT RETREAT**

LEADER: FIONA NUTTALL. VENUE: MAENLLWYD, WALES

<http://w-c-f.org/Q487-374>

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.

**7<sup>TH</sup> – 14<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER: INVESTIGATING KOANS – 7-NIGHT RETREAT**

LEADER: SIMON CHILD. VENUE: MAENLLWYD, WALES

<http://w-c-f.org/Q487-375>

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.

## **RETREAT BOOKINGS: LATE ARRIVALS**

When booking to attend a retreat we require you to commit to participate in the whole retreat from start to finish, arriving in time for the start and staying until the end. It is disruptive to others on a retreat if someone arrives late, leaves early, or is not participating fully. Committing and participating fully and wholeheartedly supports your fellow retreatants and respects the retreat teachers who are volunteers offering their time freely. If you do not arrive by 7:30pm on the first evening of the retreat this will be treated as a no-show and so as a late cancellation, i.e. your booking is cancelled with no refund of fee payable. You will not be admitted to the retreat even if you arrive subsequently.

Before making a booking please review our booking and cancellation terms at

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

## FOR INFORMATION

### 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 a 7-day retreat at Dłużew, near Warsaw, Poland. Teaching and interviews are in English, with Polish interpretation available if required. International applications welcomed. Details and application form at: <http://w-c-f.org/Q367>

### SILENT ILLUMINATION RETREAT: USA 25<sup>TH</sup> MAY – 2<sup>ND</sup> JUNE 2019

Simon Child will lead a 7-day retreat at Dharma Drum Retreat Center. International applications welcomed. Details will be posted later at: <https://dharmadrumretreat.org/events/>

## 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.



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## 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:

**London:** there are **day retreats** scheduled for June 9, July 14 2019, and a **non-residential weekend retreat** Saturday 9 to Sunday 10 March 2019, 10am to 4.30pm, led by Hilary Richards. Address: Yoga in Daily Life, 133 Salusbury Road, London NW6 6RN. Contact Kitty D'Costa to book your place Cost: £50, with concessions available on request. Contact: Kitty D'Costa [londonchan@westernchanfellowship.org](mailto:londonchan@westernchanfellowship.org) 07506810761 <http://w-c-f.org/Q65>

**Bristol Chan Group:** Now meeting at 7.30 pm every Thursday in a new venue: Bristol Zen Dojo, 91-93 Gloucester Road, BS7 8AT (above Miss Millie's Kitchen). Thursday evening talks: 28 February. Henry Gray on 'The Joys of Renunciation'; 2 May, Hughie Carroll, on 'Silence'

Forthcoming event: Saturday 4 May, Newport Cathedral: 'Sharing Silence - Christian and Buddhist Perspectives on Love and Compassion', with members of Anglican churches in South Wales. We hope to be joined as well by members of the Cardiff and Forest of Dean Chan groups.

**Derbyshire Dales Chan group:** This new group is led by Juliet Hackney and meets in Matlock Bath on Wednesday evenings. Contact [derbyshiredaleschan@westernchanfellowship.org](mailto:derbyshiredaleschan@westernchanfellowship.org) <http://w-c-f.org/Q714>

**Leek Chan group:** This is another new group which meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday evening each month: <http://w-c-f.org/Q715>

**South Devon group** Alongside the regular second Sunday of the month half day retreats, there will be Saturday day retreats on Saturdays 23rd February, 25th May, 21st September and 23rd November.

### WESTERN CHAN FELLOWSHIP CIO ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**Please save the date:** Sunday 23 June 2019. Details to follow.

## 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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