



westernchanfellowship.org

December 2022

NEWSLETTER 45

WESTERN CHAN FELLOWSHIP NEWS AND EVENTS

We are continuing to run our regular residential retreat programme, mostly at Shawbottom near Leek in the Peak District. We are continuing to take precautions against Covid-19 transmission on retreat but these are proving not to be disruptive to retreats. Details are given on the website retreats page.

Forthcoming events are listed inside this newsletter, with updates listed at www.w-c-f.org/Q342

Do visit the website from to time as we will continue to add further events to the listing.

14TH – 21ST JANUARY: ILLUMINATING THE MIND – 7-NIGHT RETREAT

LEADER: SIMON CHILD. VENUE: SHAWBOTTOM, PEAK DISTRICT [HTTP://W-C-F.ORG/Q487-429](http://w-c-f.org/Q487-429)

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.

Previous experience of a residential retreat is recommended but serious beginners are also accepted.

11TH – 16TH FEBRUARY: WESTERN ZEN RETREAT – 5-NIGHT RETREAT

LEADER: JAKE LYNE. VENUE: SHAWBOTTOM, PEAK DISTRICT [HTTP://W-C-F.ORG/Q487-430](http://w-c-f.org/Q487-430)

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.

4TH – 11TH MARCH: INVESTIGATING KOANS – 7-NIGHT RETREAT

LEADERS: SIMON CHILD AND FIONA NUTTALL. VENUE: SHAWBOTTOM, PEAK DISTRICT [HTTP://W-C-F.ORG/Q487-432](http://w-c-f.org/Q487-432)

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.

Previous experience of a residential retreat is recommended but serious beginners are also accepted.

EASTER/APRIL 2023 – POSSIBLE RETREAT – SCHEDULING PENDING

Please check the website for details of a possible further retreat around Easter which we hope to be able to run but is not yet confirmed at the time of this newsletter.



27TH MAY – 1ST JUNE: WESTERN ZEN RETREAT – 5-NIGHT RETREAT

LEADER: SIMON CHILD. VENUE: SHAWBOTTOM, PEAK DISTRICT [HTTP://W-C-F.ORG/Q487-433](http://w-c-f.org/Q487-433)

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.



10TH – 17TH JUNE: INVESTIGATING KOANS – 7-NIGHT RETREAT

LEADER: FIONA NUTTALL. VENUE: SHAWBOTTOM, PEAK DISTRICT [HTTP://W-C-F.ORG/Q487-432](http://w-c-f.org/Q487-432)

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.

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DAILY/WEEKLY ONLINE EVENTS

On most days of the week there are online events available for you to attend. Please see the list at <http://w-c-f.org/Q728> Even when these events are arranged by a WCF local group leader they are open to attendance from anyone including those outside their area.

We also have a Western Chan Fellowship Practice Support Group on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/257812581073712>

And we have a long-established mailing list called WCFtalk, where you can discuss Chan topics with others.

Apply for membership at: <https://groups.io/g/wcftalk/>



LOCAL GROUP EVENTS

Details can be found at <http://w-c-f.org/Q3>

BRISTOL DAY RETREAT

The Bristol Chan group will be running a day retreat on Saturday 14th January, led by Jake Lyne, on the theme of Ecodharma. Venue Bristol Zen Dojo, 91-93 Gloucester Road, BS7 8AT (above Miss Millies Kitchen). For further information contact Pat Simmons at bristolchan@westernchanfellowship.org

LONDON DAY RETREAT

London Chan Group are holding a day retreat, led by Kitty d'Costa, on 21st January 2023, 11am - 4.30pm. The venue is Peacon House, Colindale Gardens NW9 4DS. Bring vegetarian lunch to share. Contact: londonchan@westernchanfellowship.org

KENT DAY RETREATS

The Kent Chan group is offering regular day retreats. Every three months the group meets at the St Benedict's Centre in West Malling, which is easily accessible by train from London. The dates for 2023 are Sunday 5 March, Sunday 4 June, Sunday 3 September, Sunday 3 December. On the months between these in-person day retreats, the group also hosts a half-day online retreat.

The group is also on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/kentandmedwaychan>

Western Chan Fellowship CIO, registered charity in England & Wales number 1166162.

Office 7511, PO Box 6945, London, W1A 6US

westernchanfellowship.org