



## Newsletter 25

### Contents

- Retreat Programme
- Resourcing Experiments in Chan
- Couples Membership of WCF
- Enhance your practice in your own environment: Connected practice for Wesak
- Good Reads
- New Chan Forum – future issues

### ***Retreat Programme May – December 2013***

Please note that this programme includes venues at Bala Brook on Dartmoor, Hourne Farm in E. Sussex, as well as Maenllwyd, Wales.

The programme is subject to change (additions, amendments, and cancellations), so please refer to the website at [www.w-c-f.org/Q342](http://www.w-c-f.org/Q342) for the latest version.

### **22<sup>nd</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> May: Silent Illumination 7-day Retreat**

**Leader: Jake Lyne. Venue: Bala Brook Retreat Centre, Dartmoor**

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. This seven-day 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 in everyday life.

### **24<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> May: Wesak Weekend**

**Leader: Hilary Richards. Venue: Hourne Farm, E. Sussex (fully booked)**

Discover who you are with Chan meditation. Join us for this weekend silent retreat at Wesak to celebrate the birth, enlightenment and death of the Buddha. The weekend will include meditation and periods for teaching and exercise.

## **29<sup>th</sup> June – 4<sup>th</sup> July: This is your Life 5-day Retreat**

**Leader: Ken Jones. Venue: Maenllwyd, Wales**

Use the ups and downs of your daily life to work towards a profound easefulness with self and others. We shall focus on relationships, sickness, work and other life experiences. To turn muck into gold we shall use talks, meditation, small group work, interviews and liturgy in a warm-hearted and supportive atmosphere. For this "Everyday Buddhism" please visit [www.kenjoneszen.com](http://www.kenjoneszen.com).

## **5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> July: Silent Illumination Weekend Retreat**

**Leader: Jake Lyne. Venue: Bala Brook Retreat Centre, Dartmoor**

Discover who you are with Chan (Chinese Zen) meditation. The weekend will include meditation, teaching, walks and exercise. Suitable both for beginners and those with experience. Bala Brook is in a beautiful location on the edge of Dartmoor.

## **27<sup>th</sup> July – 1<sup>st</sup> August: Western Zen 5-day Retreat**

**Leader: Fiona Nuttall. Venue: Maenllwyd, Wales**

This retreat designed for Westerners enables the mind to face the major paradox - Who am I? The question is investigated within a framework of silent sitting meditation, alternating with a tested 'Communication Exercise' in which people work in turns with each member of the group to explore this fundamental Koan.

The intensive focus drives each practitioner into a self-presentation that is difficult to experience in other ways. Practitioners are supported through this process by regular personal interviews with the teachers, interviews being offered most days. This method makes use of words to go beyond words and thereby enter the main gate of Chan. The outcome may be a profound journey through the unity of self, and the acceptance of self, to "self at ease". This may possibly lead further to a direct insight into the ground of being. Participants share a rich experience in new self-knowledge, understanding others and the human condition.

## **27<sup>th</sup> July – 3<sup>rd</sup> August: Silent Illumination 7-day Retreat**

**Leader: Simon Child. Venue: Hourne Farm, E. Sussex**

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. This seven-day 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 in everyday life.

### **13<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> September: Shattering the Great Doubt 9-day Retreat**

**Leader: Simon Child. Venue: Maenllwyd, Wales**

The ancient Chinese Zen practices of investigating Huatou and Gongan (Koan) are best practised in a supportive environment such as this intensive 9-day 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.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> November: Western Zen 5-day Retreat**

**Leader: Hilary Richards. Venue: Maenllwyd, Wales**

This retreat designed for Westerners enables the mind to face the major paradox - Who am I? The question is investigated within a framework of silent sitting meditation, alternating with a tested 'Communication Exercise' in which people work in turns with each member of the group to explore this fundamental Koan.

The intensive focus drives each practitioner into a self-presentation that is difficult to experience in other ways. Practitioners are supported through this process by regular personal interviews with the teachers, interviews being offered most days. This method makes use of words to go beyond words and thereby enter the main gate of Chan. The outcome may be a profound journey through the unity of self, and the acceptance of self, to "self at ease". This may possibly lead further to a direct insight into the ground of being. Participants share a rich experience in new self-knowledge, understanding others and the human condition.

### **6<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> November: How to Make an Art your Life 4-day Retreat**

**Leader: Ken Jones. Venue: Hourne Farm, E. Sussex**

Use the ups and downs of your daily life to work towards a profound easefulness with self and others. We shall focus on relationships, sickness, work and other life experiences. To turn muck into gold we shall use talks, meditation, small group work, interviews and liturgy in a warm-hearted and supportive atmosphere. For this "Everyday Buddhism" please visit [www.kenjoneszen.com](http://www.kenjoneszen.com).

### **7<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> December: Silent Illumination 7-day Retreat**

**Leader: Simon Child. Venue: Maenllwyd, Wales**

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. This seven-day 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 in everyday life.

### ***Resourcing Experiments in Chan***

WCF wishes to support innovative and experimental ways of developing Chan teaching – such as focusing on particular groups, developing educational materials, developing a social media presence or advertising. Some of these ideas will require resources, which the WCF can provide. However, charitable funds are also public funds, and so we need information to make sure this expenditure is justified. There is an application procedure, with applications being reviewed by a subcommittee appointed by WCF committee.

Although applications for funding must be made in writing or electronically to the Treasurer, anyone can ask for informal advice from any of the subcommittee members before a project is attempted or support requested.

- Jeremy Woodward (WCF Treasurer)      jemwoodward@aol.com
- Kitty D’Costa      kitty\_dcosta@hotmail.com
- Clive Richards      richards@hilaryandclive.co.uk

Applications are open to WCF members only, and full details including application form can be found in the members-area of WCF website.

Login at <http://w-c-f.org/Q433>, then follow the link to: “Project Grants: Guidelines and Applications”.

### ***Couples Membership of WCF***

We can now offer couples membership of WCF at a reduced fee, compared to two individual subscriptions, of £60. A couples membership will receive only one copy of New Chan Forum instead of one copy per person

Both members of the couple should already be, or be eligible to be, either a full or associate member of WCF. Those who are eligible for full membership will have the voting rights of full members. Membership details: <http://w-c-f.org/Q31>

### ***Enhance your practice in your own environment***

#### **Connected Practice for Wesak: 18<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> May**

Anyone who wishes to participate is invited 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 the period around Wesak, increasing our capacity to be aware in our daily lives. A Mindfulness Bell will be rung at noon every day, when all participants will pause and be joined in the silence that the bell marks. Members of our Sangha may use this opportunity in different and creative ways.

For further information see <http://w-c-f.org/Q311-374>

For an informal chat about connected practice or to join the group contact Hilary Richards [hilary@hilaryandclive.co.uk](mailto:hilary@hilaryandclive.co.uk) Tel: 0117 3300581

## **Good Reads**

Goodreads is the largest website for readers and book recommendations. Having a WCF group on Goodreads is one way of allowing us to feel more connected as a Sangha. The website enables you to

- Catalogue and share the books you have read or are reading
- See what your friends are reading
- Find new reading material
- Find out from the online reviews if a book may be a good fit for you
- Raise or participate in discussion threads

We have set up bookshelves for about twenty different categories from autobiography to zen poetry, emotional awareness to words of the masters, so have a browse around.

We encourage all WCF members and anyone who has an interest in Zen to sign up with Goodreads and join the WCF group.

Visit: <http://w-c-f.org/Q591>

## ***New Chan Forum - Future Issues***

We are looking for contributions for future issues. Currently we are considering the following themes for forthcoming issues so contributions on these would be especially welcome.

- Daily Practice
- Koans in/of Everyday Life
- Reading the literature of a tradition outside the scriptures

Please consider preparing something on one of these themes; it could be something related to your own experience, some teaching that you received that was particularly helpful, or just a few thoughts. It need not be a long piece and could even just fill half a page. Something between 400 and 2500 words would be very suitable.

We would like to include reviews of books that beginners tend to read, e.g. "Zen Mind Beginners Mind" - Suzuki, "Everyday Zen" - Joko Beck, "Hoofprint of the Ox" - Sheng Yen, etc.

By way of introduction for beginners some very brief descriptions and commentaries on the central sutras would be particularly helpful.

Artwork, black-and-white photographs, poems, haiku and haibun would be very much appreciated.

We would like to hear your suggestions for possible themes for future issues.

If any of these things stimulate you then please contact the editor, Eddy Street, who will be more than happy to discuss with you how any idea can be taken forward. He can be contacted at [editor@westernchanfellowship.org](mailto:editor@westernchanfellowship.org)

## **Mailings**

If you no longer wish to receive postal mailings, please help us save printing and postage costs by notifying [admin@westernchanfellowship.org](mailto:admin@westernchanfellowship.org)