



westernchanfellowship.org

October 2019

NEWSLETTER 37

WESTERN CHAN FELLOWSHIP NEWS AND RETREAT PROGRAMME

Welcome to Newsletter 37. This includes our retreat programme for the first part of 2020 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, in the first half of 2020, the majority of our residential retreats will be held at Maenllwyd. Also, as last year, we will be using Bala Brook in Devon in May.

2020 PROGRAMME OF RETREATS AND OTHER EVENTS

4TH – 9TH JANUARY: WESTERN ZEN – 5-NIGHT RETREAT

LEADER: JAKE LYNE. VENUE: MAENLLWYD, WALES

<http://w-c-f.org/Q487-390>

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.

1ST – 8TH FEBRUARY: ILLUMINATING THE MIND – 7-NIGHT RETREAT

LEADER: FIONA NUTTALL. VENUE: MAENLLWYD, WALES

<http://w-c-f.org/Q487-392>

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.

14TH – 21ST MARCH: INVESTIGATING KOANS – 7-NIGHT RETREAT

LEADER: FIONA NUTTALL. VENUE: MAENLLWYD, WALES

<http://w-c-f.org/Q487-393>

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.

9TH – 14TH APRIL: WESTERN ZEN – 5-NIGHT RETREAT

LEADER: SIMON CHILD. VENUE: MAENLLWYD, WALES

<http://w-c-f.org/Q487-391>

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.

MAY: CONNECTED PRACTICE

ENHANCE YOUR PRACTICE IN YOUR OWN ENVIRONMENT

CO-ORDINATED BY HILARY RICHARDS

Join us in a commitment to a period of connected and enhanced practice. A period of connected practice will be run again in 2020 and dates will be announced soon – check the website for details once they are posted.

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.

23RD – 30TH MAY: ILLUMINATING THE MIND – 7-NIGHT RETREAT

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

<http://w-c-f.org/Q487-394>

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.

6TH – 13TH JUNE: INVESTIGATING KOANS – 7-NIGHT RETREAT

LEADER: FIONA NUTTALL. VENUE: MAENLLWYD, WALES

<http://w-c-f.org/Q487-395>

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>

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:

South Devon Day Retreat: Saturday 23rd November 2019.

Leader: Jake Lyne. Details: <http://w-c-f.org/Q487-382>

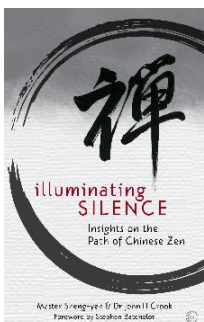
Manchester Day Retreat: Saturday 26th January 2020

Leader: Simon Child. Details: <http://w-c-f.org/Q487-389>

Bristol Chan Group: Jeremy Woodward, Leader of the South Devon Chan Group, will be leading a day retreat for us on Kshanti Paramita: the perfection of patience, forbearance and tolerance on Saturday 30 November, 10.30 to 4.30, at the Bristol Zen Dojo, 91-93 Gloucester Road, BS7 8AT (above Miss Millie's Fried Chicken). Cost £5. For further information ring Pat Simmons on 01179774683.

We will be running a silent Sitting Day, led by Pat Simmons, on Saturday 18 January, at the same address.

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. WCF has also purchased a stock and copies are available at retreats and other events. NB we are not selling by post, only in person at events.

LEGACIES

We'd like to alert you to a new link on our website relating to leaving a legacy to charity, and memorial gifts, to commemorate the death of a loved one.

<http://w-c-f.org/Q32#legacy>

Some of you may have already made a will, others may be thinking about it and who they would like to leave their assets to. Please do have a look at our page about legacies and consider the opportunity of leaving a legacy to Western Chan Fellowship.

A legacy can make an enormous difference to a relatively small charity like ours and the potential that it offers. Please take a few minutes to read through and have a think if it is something that you can do too.

NEW CHAN FORUM

Pat Simmons is taking over from George Marsh as Editor of New Chan Forum.

She writes: Many thanks to George for the excellent work he has put in over several years as Editor. I helped him with a couple of issues, so I know how imaginative and painstaking he's been in the job - I hope I can do as well.

PLEASE consider writing something for me! Whether it's a personal experience related to your Buddhist practice, an interesting idea that's occurred to you from considering a particular aspect of Buddhist writing or teaching, or a poem, please send it to me. Don't worry if you don't feel confident in your writing ability - we've got two or three experienced editors who will be happy to edit your piece for you or sit down with you and work out how to improve it. (Actually, you can almost certainly write better than you think!)

Please send finished pieces, or pitch ideas, to me at editor@westernchanfellowship.org

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>

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

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

westernchanfellowship.org