



westernchanfellowship.org

July 2022

NEWSLETTER 43

WESTERN CHAN FELLOWSHIP NEWS AND EVENTS

We are pleased to announce that we have restarted our regular residential retreat programme, expecting to run approximately one retreat per month, mostly at Shawbottom near Leek in the Peak District.

Our apologies for the delay in restarting the programme, which has been due to multiple problems with the building contractors doing the work at Shawbottom, but that is now all resolved.

Covid-19 has not gone away and we still need to take some precautions, and these are detailed on the website retreats page.

Alongside in person events we intend to continue to hold some online events. Below we list one online retreat and also give details of regular online sessions hosted on different days of each week.

In this newsletter we also have a short article by Jake Lyne telling us something about the work of the European Buddhist Union EcoDharma network.

Please refer to the website at www.w-c-f.org/Q342 for the latest events updates and more details.

13TH – 20TH AUGUST: INVESTIGATING KOANS – 7-NIGHT RETREAT

LEADER: SIMON CHILD. VENUE: SHAWBOTTOM, PEAK DISTRICT [HTTP://W-C-F.ORG/Q487-420](http://w-c-f.org/Q487-420)

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.

2ND – 7TH SEPTEMBER: AWARENESS IN THE EVERYDAY: FINDING FREEDOM RIGHT WHERE YOU ARE!

LEADERS: JULIET HACKNEY AND ALYSUN JONES. VENUE: ONLINE VIA ZOOM [HTTP://W-C-F.ORG/Q487-422](http://w-c-f.org/Q487-422)

This online retreat will help participants to enter into the reality of daily experience, exploring and reducing the separation that is commonly felt between mind and body, and between individual and environment. Practice will help to bring habitual reactions into awareness and allow participants to gently release them resulting in greater appreciation of life in the here and now. There will be meditation, working with the body and emotional awareness, connecting with the environment and nature, and supporting each other through sharing.

This retreat will be limited to 15 retreatants. We will practice meditation intensively for two days at the beginning. During weekdays we will meet for practice in the morning and again in the evening. During daily life between these sessions there will be opportunities to explore what is going on for you, through various practices. For this reason, it would be helpful to give yourself a light schedule at work on these days, or not work at all.

This retreat is most suitable for those with prior experience of WCF retreats. Applications will be considered and any not accepted will receive full refunds.



17TH – 24TH SEPTEMBER: INVESTIGATING KOANS – 7-NIGHT RETREAT

LEADER: SIMON CHILD. VENUE: SHAWBOTTOM, PEAK DISTRICT [HTTP://W-C-F.ORG/Q487-421](http://w-c-f.org/Q487-421)

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.

22ND – 29TH OCTOBER: ILLUMINATING THE MIND

LEADER: JAKE LYNE. VENUE: SHAWBOTTOM, PEAK DISTRICT [HTTP://W-C-F.ORG/Q487-423](http://w-c-f.org/Q487-423)

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.

THE EUROPEAN BUDDHIST UNION (EBU) ECODHARMA NETWORK

JAKE LYNE

Network coordinators: Jake Lyne WCF (kjlyne@gmail.com) and Silvia Francescon Italian Buddhist Union (ambiente@buddhismo.it).

At present there are three workstreams in the network.

SEE-FAB PROJECT (SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT ON EARTH FOR ALL BEINGS PROJECT)

This is an environmental management programme for Buddhist Centres in Europe. The project is in the pilot phase in which participating centres are supported in moves they make towards using sustainable energy, waste and water management, reducing the environmental impact of travel, environmental education and environmental activism. Centres in Sweden, Spain, France, and the UK are taking part. The project prioritises the involvement of younger generation Buddhists.

ITALIAN BUDDHIST UNION PROJECTS

- Touring with singer and musician Elisa and partnering with her and the UN Campaign on Social Development Goals. Elisa's tour "back to the future" supports green villages + EcoDharma spaces in Milan and Rome (touring on 40 dates in all 20 regions of Italy from June to October)
- Supporting the project Music4thePlanet and urban reforestation, together with the environmental association Legambiente, which is the Italian reference point for the European Commission <https://www.timeout.com/news/how-milan-is-being-transformed-into-one-gigantic-urban-forest-110221>
- Ecodharma retreat in Italy with David Loy in September (at Istituto lama Tzong Khapa)

BUDDHIST UNION OF SPAIN: SASSAKALA APPROACH/ CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION PROJECTS

Sassakala means harvest time. Contributing to a multi-agency proposal seeking EU funding to conduct a complex project on regeneration of Mediterranean forests, in Spain, Italy and Greece, with outcomes in terms of biodiversity improvement, habitat regeneration and socioeconomic impact.

New EBU website: <https://europeanbuddhistunion.org/>

For more information or to join the network please contact WCF EBU representatives Jake Lyne kjlyne@gmail.com or Jannie Mead.

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 CHAN GROUP

The Bristol group is now meeting face to face again, every Thursday evening, 7.30-9.30, at the Bristol Zen Dojo, 91-93 Gloucester Road, Bristol BS7 8AT (above Miss Millie's Kitchen). A recent day retreat was based on the theme of New Beginnings, and we also held our first spring walk in two years. Both very enjoyable occasions.

DALES CHAN GROUP

The next Sunday morning meditation is 14th August and will be a zoom morning.

KENT CHAN GROUP

Alongside their weekly online meetings, the Kent group is now offering monthly 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. On the months between these in-person retreats, the group also hosts a half-day online retreat.

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

SOUTH DEVON CHAN GROUP

Now meeting face to face on Tuesday evenings in Ashburton and monthly at Leusdon on Dartmoor.

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

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