



westernchanfellowship.org

September 2025

## NEWSLETTER 53

### WESTERN CHAN FELLOWSHIP NEWS AND EVENTS

We have extended our retreat programme up to mid-2026.

We are continuing to take some non-intrusive precautions against Covid-19 transmission on retreats: details are given on the website retreats page which also lists upcoming events and any updates: [www.w-c-f.org/Q342](http://www.w-c-f.org/Q342)

#### RETREAT FEES REDUCED

We continue to review our retreat fees to make them more affordable. Our fees for the second half of 2025 are lower than in the first half of 2025. We plan to continue these lower fees in 2026.

Supported retreat places continue to be available to support those who need financial help to be able to attend retreats. There is no means-testing – simply select that option when booking.

### 4<sup>TH</sup> – 11<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER: INVESTIGATING KOANS RETREAT – 7 NIGHTS

LEADERS: SIMON CHILD, JAKE LYNE. VENUE: SHAWBOTTOM, PEAK DISTRICT [HTTP://W-C-F.ORG/Q487-477](http://w-c-f.org/Q487-477)

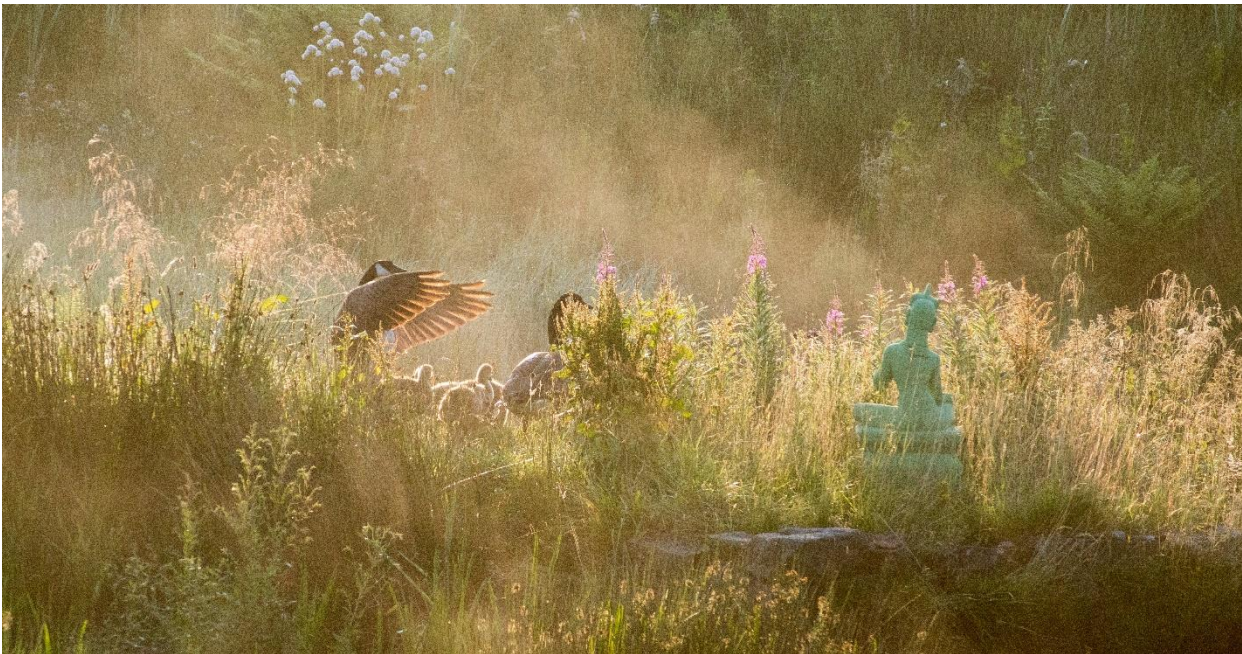
The ancient Chinese Zen practices of investigating Huatou and Gongan (Koan) are best practised in a supportive environment such as this intensive silent Chan retreat, supported by personal interviews. As one becomes deeply absorbed in the practice, mental constructions drop away and one is confronted 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.

## 15<sup>TH</sup> – 22<sup>ND</sup> NOVEMBER: SILENT ILLUMINATION RETREAT – 7 NIGHTS

LEADER: FIONA NUTTALL. VENUE: SHAWBOTTOM, PEAK DISTRICT [HTTP://W-C-F.ORG/Q487-478](http://w-c-f.org/Q487-478)

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.



GEESSE AND GOSLINGS RETURN TO VISIT TARA: SIMON CHILD

## 29<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER – 4<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER: WESTERN ZEN RETREAT – 5 NIGHTS

LEADER: SIMON CHILD. VENUE: SHAWBOTTOM, PEAK DISTRICT [HTTP://W-C-F.ORG/Q487-479](http://w-c-f.org/Q487-479)

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 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.

## **14<sup>TH</sup> – 19<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY: WESTERN ZEN RETREAT – 5 NIGHTS**

LEADER: JAKE LYNE. VENUE: SHAWBOTTOM, PEAK DISTRICT [HTTP://W-C-F.ORG/Q487-487](http://w-c-f.org/Q487-487)

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## **28<sup>TH</sup> MARCH – 4<sup>TH</sup> APRIL: SILENT ILLUMINATION RETREAT – 7 NIGHTS**

LEADER: SIMON CHILD. VENUE: SHAWBOTTOM, PEAK DISTRICT [HTTP://W-C-F.ORG/Q487-488](http://w-c-f.org/Q487-488)

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## **25<sup>TH</sup> APRIL – 2<sup>ND</sup> MAY: INVESTIGATING KOANS RETREAT – 7 NIGHTS**

LEADER: FIONA NUTTALL. VENUE: SHAWBOTTOM, PEAK DISTRICT [HTTP://W-C-F.ORG/Q487-490](http://w-c-f.org/Q487-490)

The ancient Chinese Zen practices of investigating Huatou and Gong'an (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.

## 23<sup>RD</sup> – 28<sup>TH</sup> MAY: EVERYDAY ZEN SILENT MEDITATION RETREAT – 5 NIGHTS

LEADER: ALYSUN JONES, JULIET HACKNEY. VENUE: SHAWBOTTOM, PEAK DISTRICT [HTTP://W-C-F.ORG/Q487-491](http://w-c-f.org/Q487-491)

This 5-night silent meditation retreat applies the early teachings of the Buddha, which give guidance on how to live our lives in a completely fulfilling way. The retreat is suitable for newcomers and experienced practitioners alike.

Practising meditation, including guided meditations, may help to raise your awareness of and settle your habitual reactions. This can increase the potential for a more direct appreciation of the here and now, leading to the possibility of experiencing greater clarity and freedom in everyday life.

## 4<sup>TH</sup> – 11<sup>TH</sup> JULY: SILENT ILLUMINATION RETREAT – 7 NIGHTS

LEADER: REBECCA LI. VENUE: SHAWBOTTOM, PEAK DISTRICT [HTTP://W-C-F.ORG/Q487-492](http://w-c-f.org/Q487-492)

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## 1<sup>ST</sup> – 6<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST: WESTERN ZEN RETREAT – 5 NIGHTS

LEADER: SIMON CHILD. VENUE: SHAWBOTTOM, PEAK DISTRICT [HTTP://W-C-F.ORG/Q487-493](http://w-c-f.org/Q487-493)

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.

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## DAILY/WEEKLY ONLINE AND LOCAL 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>

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/>

Details of local group meeting schedules and events can be found at <http://w-c-f.org/Q3>

## ONLINE INTRODUCTION TO MEDITATION, BUDDHISM AND CHAN

BOOKING: [HTTP://W-C-F.ORG/Q487-494](http://w-c-f.org/Q487-494)

FOUR CONSECUTIVE WEDNESDAY EVENINGS AT 7:30PM, FROM 11TH FEBRUARY 2026

This free course, consisting of four weekly 75-minute online sessions, is an opportunity to become familiar with a meditation practice and to learn about Buddhism and Chan. The course covers core teachings of the Buddha as well as the roots of Chan Buddhism and practices, namely Silent Illumination and Koans. Both were transmitted to Japan centuries ago where they became Zen.

You are encouraged to practice between the weekly sessions and will be able to reflect on your experience in an online group setting.

Particularly if you are not familiar with the Western Chan Fellowship, the course will help you to establish a meditation practice, to know more about Western Chan and to decide if you might want to go to a residential retreat to deepen your meditation experience.



## CARDIFF CHAN GROUP DAY RETREAT SATURDAY, 11TH OCTOBER 2025

Cardiff Chan group are hosting a one day retreat at the Woodland Retreat Yoga Centre, Cardiff. More details available on request through [cardiffchanretreat@gmail.com](mailto:cardiffchanretreat@gmail.com)

## KENT CHAN GROUP

### THURSDAY EVENING MEETINGS

Currently the Kent Chan Group meets online, but it is planned at some point in the Spring that the class will be hosted in a new Dharma Centre which is due to open in Rochester. The class will then be offered in a hybrid format meaning that people can either attend in person or continue to connect online.

### DAY RETREATS AT THE ST BENEDICT'S CENTRE, WEST MALLING

The regular quarterly programme of day retreats continues, with the final date for 2025 being 7<sup>th</sup> December. Further details about the day retreats can be found at <http://w-c-f.org/Q41>

### DAY RETREAT WITH BODHICHARYA LONDON AT THE BUDDHIST SOCIETY

On Saturday 11th October 2025, Stuart McLeod will be leading an Introduction to Chan day retreat as a guest of Bodhicharya London, hosted at the Buddhist Society near Victoria. You can find more details at <https://bodhicharya-london.org/day-retreats/>.

## SOUTH DEVON CHAN GROUP

### DAY RETREAT: SPIRITUAL FACULTIES, SPIRITUAL POWERS. LEUSDON, DEVON

SATURDAY 25TH OCTOBER 2025 10AM – 4:30PM DETAILS: [HTTPS://W-C-F.ORG/Q487-486](https://w-c-f.org/Q487-486)

An exploration of the Five Faculties as expounded by the Buddha, their transformation into Five Powers, and their relevance to Chan Practice. Led by Jeremy and Jeanine Woodward who are the co-leaders of the South Devon Chan Group, and experienced day retreat leaders. The retreat is likely to be quite a lively one! 'Experiential' is a word that applies...

The five faculties to be considered are: Faith, Energy, Mindfulness, Concentration/Calm and Wisdom.

### WEEKEND RETREAT 12<sup>TH</sup> – 14<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2026: AT KARUNA, DARTMOOR

It will run from 5pm Friday 12th to 3pm Sunday 14th and will be led by Alysun Jones.

It will cost £160.00 full board with half-price supported places available.