



The Contemplative Consciousness Network

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Dear Friends,

We've had a wonderful summer with the retreat at Gaunts House and then the Mindfulness Conference at Samye Ling at which Alan was one of the keynote speakers. See news about both these events below. We are also excited to announce that Alan Wallace will lead a retreat at Samye Ling in June 2016. For more information and to book your place, please see below.

UK Retreat with Alan Wallace now confirmed for 23rd – 30th June 2016

We are delighted to confirm that Alan has agreed to lead a retreat in the UK next year in June at the Samye Ling Tibetan Buddhist Centre in Scotland. Alongside CCN, the retreat is being kindly co-hosted and supported by The Mindfulness Association and Kagyu Samye Ling. It will run from 7.00pm on 23rd June, following a soup supper at 6.00pm, until after lunch at 12.30pm on 30th June.

About Alan Wallace

Alan Wallace is an internationally recognised Buddhist scholar and teacher who has studied and practised Tibetan Buddhism for over 40 years. He spent fourteen years training as Tibetan Buddhist Monk, ordained by H.H. the Dalai Lama, and has studied with many great Yogis and Lamas. Alan also has a doctorate in Religious Studies and a degree in Physics and the Philosophy of Science, and he has an extensive knowledge of the Christian mystical tradition. Today, Alan is a world-renowned meditation teacher, specialising in Shamatha, Vipashyana and Dzogchen teachings. With his unique background, Alan brings deep experience and applied skills to the challenge of integrating traditional Indo-Tibetan Buddhism with the modern world.

About the retreat

The retreat will be entitled '***The Way of Shamatha: Soothing the Body, Settling the Mind and Illuminating Awareness***'. Alan explains his intentions for the retreat as follows:

"During the retreat we will explore in theory and practice a range of methods for developing meditative quiescence, or *shamatha*. We will begin with the practice of mindfulness of the breathing as taught by the Buddha, which is an especially effective approach to soothing the body and calming the discursive mind. We will then explore an approach to *shamatha* that is particularly pertinent for Dzogchen practice, called 'settling the mind in its natural state', as taught by the nineteenth-century Dzogchen master Lerab Lingpa in his commentary to the 'Heart Essence of Vimalamitra'. Finally we will engage in the practice of "*shamatha* without signs" as taught by Padmasambhava in his classic *terma Natural Liberation*. Although this subtle practice is taught explicitly as a means of achieving *shamatha*, Padmasambhava comments that it may even result in a realization of *rigpa*, or pristine awareness. The achievement of *shamatha* is widely regarded in the Buddhist tradition as an indispensable foundation for the cultivation of contemplative insight (*vipashyana*), and this retreat is designed to provide students with a sufficient theoretical understanding and a basis in experience to enable them to proceed effectively toward this extraordinary state of mental and physical balance."

Samye Ling

Based near Lockerbie in the lowlands of Scotland, Samye Ling was founded in 1967 by two spiritual masters, Dr. Akong Tulku Rinpoche and Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, as the first Tibetan Buddhist Centre to be established in the West. It was named after Samye, the very first monastery to be established in Tibet. It is now a thriving monastery and international centre of Buddhist training, known for the authenticity of its teachings and tradition within the Karma Kagyu lineage of Tibetan Buddhism. It is also a centre for the preservation of Tibetan religion, culture, medicine, art, architecture and handicrafts. Alongside the retreat booking (see details below), accommodation will need to be booked separately with Samye Ling direct via their website at www.samyeling.org/webbooking. No deposit is required. The Centre offers accommodation in a variety of different forms, including all meals (vegetarian). Options comprise over 50 single rooms (£43-58 per night), 7 Twin rooms (£66 per night), 33 dormitory beds (£28 per night) and extensive facilities for tents and camper vans (£18.50 pp per night). Lockerbie station is readily accessible by efficient train services from Glasgow, Edinburgh or London. Details of bus or taxi services from Lockerbie to the Centre can be found on the website, along with details of other facilities at the centre.

Recommendations

The retreat is open to anyone who has an interest in developing their spiritual practice. No preparation is required but anyone who would like to prepare in advance is invited to read Alan Wallace's book 'The Attention Revolution'.

To Reserve Your Place

The Mindfulness Association has kindly set up a booking system. The basic retreat fee will be £195. A deposit of £75 will be required to secure a place, payable immediately at the time of booking, with the balance payable in April 2016. Note that members of CCN's and Alan's own networks are being given 30 day advanced notice of this retreat. After 9th October 2015, the retreat will be advertised more widely across both the Mindfulness Association and Kagyu Samye Ling networks. So **if you wish to secure a place, please do so soon, before 9th October if possible.**

To book your place, please [click here](#). (A credit card is required to make this booking. If you have any problems please contact info@mindfulnessassociation.net)

Please note that the fee does **not** include accommodation and meals which need to be booked directly with Samye Ling – see above. We suggest you do this at the same time as booking the retreat to avoid later disappointment. Nor does the fee include any element for our teacher as each person will be invited to make an offering directly to Alan at the end of the retreat according to their means. A recommended minimum is £50 but this is entirely a free will offering in gratitude for the teaching.

As previously, some bursaries will be available. Please apply to Elizabeth West at emwest1944@gmail.com, setting out circumstances and the amount you can pay and we will do our best to help. Type text here

Dzogchen Retreat with Lama Alan Wallace at Gaunts House June 5th – 13th by Judith James

"In that very instant I awoke from the dense slumber of the mind into the buddhfield of Akanistha, the absolute space of phenomena, free of extremes."

The opening sentence of 'The Foolish Dharma of an Idiot Clothed in Mud and Feathers' by Dudjom Lingpa, the nineteenth century Dzogchen master of the Nyingma tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, is a most focused, succinct and concentrated expression of what is then developed throughout the remainder of the text.

It explodes the reader on their path into the subtle reverberation and realm of a

sense of what might be possible in a breaking through into a pure rarefied realm. And more than that which was glimpsed through such a resonance, is the awakening of desire to devote myself more consciously and consistently to my practice of my own Dharma path, in order to come closer to the possibility of that reality.

This was the gift that was given to me even before we as a group sat together with Lama Alan Wallace to explore Dudjom Lingpa's text and to practice the ever deepening meditation through which we were led throughout the silent retreat.

Urgency and necessity imploded within me. This I understood as we encountered Dudjom Lingpa's message in our journey through the text: we are urged not to squander the freedom given in this precious life of leisure and opportunity but to know this deeply within our beings; not to procrastinate; to arouse a sense of urgency and to integrate and embed this opportunity and urgency at a deep and subtle level of being; to 'put off the pretense and pursuit of life's affairs' – that is to say to make a conscious, aware-full and active commitment to the devotional pursuit of the reality of one's being.

The guidance of extensive learning offered by Lama Alan throughout the period of the retreat - even when he himself was unwell; the clarity and focus that he created through the periods of meditation; the attention, devotion and practice of all the participants at the retreat, even before the daily sessions began, all created an extraordinarily powerful and supportive environment that promoted my own efforts to take my practice to a space of greater stillness, of greater aware-fullness, and of more subtle contact and recognition of that reality that is our object.

Surrounded in silence, we came to hear more; to listen more gently and with greater subtlety. We had the leisure, an extraordinary leisure, to commit our endeavours to the refuge of the Buddha – to create a connection, as Alan explained - to be caught by the hook of compassion in all my lifetimes until the job is done. To submit to the liberation of the motivation embodied in Bodhicitta. And to celebrate the deepest essential nature of reality or consciousness as embodied in 'Hum'.

..... Rich, vibrant, vivacious textures of reality discovered through the stillness of silence, of intention, of connection, and of commitment

The retreat became a most powerful and nurturing 'pit stop' on my Dharma path that has changed my vision forever: I no longer have the impunity to dawdle, to deny, nor to deviate!

Group Photo of the Participants



Mindfulness Association Summer Gathering 2015

June's summer conference held at Samye ling was organised by the Mindfulness Association and Aberdeen University. The conference explored the *Science of the Mind in relation to Mindfulness and Compassion*. The following key note speakers filled the days with inspiring talks: Lama Yeshe Rinpoche, Rob Nairn, Prof. Paul Gilbert, Dr. Alan Wallace; leading psychologist Dr. Rick Hanson; editor of the Clinical Handbook of Mindfulness Dr. Fabrizio DiDonna, and world renowned lucid dream teacher Charlie Morley.

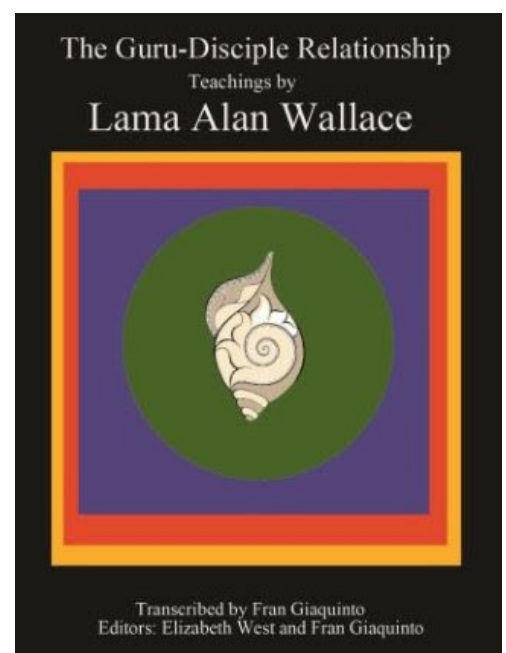
On the first morning Dr Alan Wallace spoke on "Buddhist and Psychological Views of Mindfulness." This talk was greatly appreciated and we are promised a copy of the audio version which we hope to make available to members through our website. With great clarity Alan's talk described the benefits and limitations of so called secular mindfulness, and the depth and potential of a fully nuanced understanding of the teaching of Buddhism on Mindfulness.

The Guru-Disciple Relationship

by Alan Wallace - a new CCN publication

The role of the teacher is significant in all spiritual traditions although it can be difficult for western students to accept the level of respect and trust that is necessary when relating to a spiritual guide. For this reason, CCN have published this 56-page book to clarify the meaning of the teacher-student/guru-disciple relationship in Buddhism, particularly in Vajrayana and Dzogchen.

The book is based on Dzogchen teachings that Lama Alan has given in recent years.



Chapter 1 introduces the subject with an explanation of the differences between secular and spiritual teacher-student relationships. Chapter 2 presents Lama Alan's teachings on the words *guru* and *lama*, and then explains the subtle differences in the way the guru is perceived through the Three Turnings of the Wheel. Chapter 3 describes the qualities to seek in an authentic guru; the qualities a disciple aspires to cultivate to establish a meaningful relationship; the benefits of the relationship for the disciple, and the importance of equal reverence for all teachers.

The book comes with an accompanying CD of five guided meditations given by Lama Alan: Envisioning our own flourishing; Mindfulness of breathing; Settling the mind in its natural state; Cultivating the causes of genuine happiness; Introduction to Guru Yoga meditation, and Shower of Blessings.

The text for Shower of Blessings is given in the book, along with a beautiful black and white photograph of Guru Rinpoche with consort.

May this book encourage all those who wish to learn from authentic teachers and seek to benefit from Buddha-dharma.

By purchasing The Guru-Disciple Relationship you will be directly supporting the development of a Mind Centre in Tuscany.



How America Lost Track of the Good Life

Alan Wallace sent this interesting article by Sarah van Gelder on the search for sustainable happiness.

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