



## Newsletter September 2011

*"For the sake of our survival, let alone our flourishing as a species, we must now evolve spiritually through the cultivation of wisdom and insight into our own nature and our relation to the world around us."*

*B Alan Wallace*

New Website [www.c-c-n.org](http://www.c-c-n.org)

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## *Dear Friends*

Here at last is the first Newsletter of the Contemplative Consciousness Network. We were successfully registered as a Company Limited by Guarantee in March and received Charitable Status in June. Our website <http://www.c-c-n.org> is now fully functioning, though there is still a great deal that needs to be done to increase its content and scope. The old website is still there, but is not being updated, but instead links people to the new one. We are also on Facebook, our page there is being looked after and enhanced by Jim Parsley a friend and student of Alan Wallace.

The big work at the present is preparing the events which will take place during the visit of Dr. B Alan Wallace in June next year. You can find details of these at the end of this newsletter.



Welcome to Katie Morrow who has now joined us as a Trustee of CCN and will be a great help and support as she brings experience in many of the fields that we are involved in. Katie and I are leading a weekend from 4-6th November entitled "Transforming your world by changing the way you see it." See events for details.

## *Volunteers & Appeal*

Leading up to and during the visit of Alan Wallace volunteers will be needed in many areas. If you have the skills we need or if you would simply like to help on the day, we will be delighted to hear from you. If you feel you could help please complete the form enclosed with this newsletter.

You will also find enclosed with this newsletter an appeal for subscriptions and funds. At this time we really need help with funds so please consider helping us in the ways listed in the form. However we would also be grateful if anyone has any suggestions or can offer any help in the area of

fundraising. We are launching at a time of real financial difficulty and anxiety for many people. However we are not letting this daunt us as we feel that what we are doing is more important and relevant now than ever before and we trust that you do all you can to help.

### *Future Newsletters*

With the growth of the world of the internet and on line communication and the growth of the Charity, future newsletter will be sent out mainly via the Internet. This will save both time and money as we plan to use bulk mailing programmes and people will be able to automatically sign up for the Newsletter on line and the social networks like Facebook. However I know some of you really appreciate receiving a paper newsletter or else do not have the internet. If you are in either category please let me know either by email or via post if you return the subscription form, then I will see that you get a paper version at least three times a year. However it will not be possible to send every small announcement via the post.

I hope that this does not make you feel that the whole thing is becoming impersonal. This is not the case—I hope especially that our older and long term members will stay on board as we move into this new phase of our life.

In trying to develop there are so many balancing acts as you see in my following short article.

With Warm Wishes to everyone and looking forward to hearing from you and any suggestions you may for our on-going development.



### **A Balancing Act by Elizabeth West**

As you will have seen in the previous newsletter in changing our approach and including the Scientific and Secular side in our dialogue we are performing a balancing act. While we wish to continue the rich strand of dialogue which has been part of this Network from its inception, we need to

do this in a way that does not alienate the non-religious people who are interested in the spiritual path or the scientists interested in meditation research and the brain. Some of you may feel that we are falling to one side or the other. We will always be happy to hear your views and include your insights in our thinking.

As you will see from Mike's article, and as we all feel in our lives, the world is slipping rapidly into deeper crisis, but at the same time this very crisis bears signs of hope. The World is changing faster than is comfortable, and it is this rapid change that means that we have to become stronger and more deeply rooted on the one hand, and more open and flexible on the other. This is the reason I think the phrase "only the mystics will survive" attributed to Karl Rahner, is so often quoted.

The unprecedented growth of interest in Mindfulness Meditation reflects this picture. Some feel it is the flavour of the moment and will fade, but others, and I am one of them, think it is part of the critical times we are experiencing and is one of the big signs of hope. It also I think reflects a deep disillusionment on the part of many with Institutional Christianity, and often religion in general, while at the same time experiencing a deep yearning for meaning, and for more than the shallow materialistic frenzy the media offers.

This is precisely why I believe that we need to move in the direction we are going, to meet this need, by bringing out the depth of the wisdom traditions of the past in a way that makes sense and brings healing and depth to our confused society.

The following conclusion of Alan Wallace's book "Mind in the Balance" so perfectly fits here that I print it even though I think I have done so before. It is the source of the quote that goes with our logo.

## **What Shall We Become? By B Alan Wallace**

We began with the question "Who am I?" and it is to this question that we turn once again. Insofar as we lead our lives mindlessly, simply reacting to



situations without discerning mindfulness, we can indeed be likened to robots responding to stimuli based upon our neurochemical and genetic programs. Insofar as we follow our baser instincts, we can be regarded simply as animals, leading our lives under the influence of our genes, instincts, and emotions, with all our actions oriented toward survival, procreation, and the pursuit of mundane pleasures. In the grand scheme of things, human existence seems infinitesimally insignificant as we consider that we inhabit one planet in a solar system within a single galaxy with one hundred billion stars within a known universe that includes 50-100 billion galaxies. When we consider our finite existence as biological organisms, the immensity of the universe is overwhelming.

Leading physicists cited in this book, however, have proposed that our role in the cosmos may not be as insignificant as it seems. The evolution of the universe from the Big Bang to the present day as we conceive and experience it has no objective, independent nature of its own. Rather, we choose the kind of world we inhabit as observer-participants. If this is true of the past and present, it is all the more true of our future. We are creating it with our every thought and action.

Judaism and Christianity insist there is more to human existence than can be understood with the methods of physics and biology. Humans are created in the image of God and have the capacity to evolve spiritually into more and more perfect reflections of our Creator. In a similar spirit, Buddhism declares that all sentient beings, not only humans, are imbued with a Buddha nature, and each one has the capacity to realize the perfect enlightenment of a Buddha.

With our rapidly growing population, ravenous exploitation of the Earth's natural resources, and our insatiable consumerism, humanity is swiftly and radically altering the biosphere in ways that are making it less and less conducive to human survival and flourishing. *We are on a trajectory of self-destruction, and since the human genome changes only one half of*

*one percent every million years, it is impossible for us to evolve rapidly enough biologically to adapt to the environment we are shaping. For the sake of our very survival, let alone our flourishing as a species, we must now evolve spiritually through the cultivation of greater wisdom and insight into our own nature and our relation to the world around us.*

The meditations explained in this book, culminating in the Great Perfection, may be practiced by anyone, regardless of their beliefs. The purpose of presenting these theories and practices is not to convert people to Buddhism or any other religious faith. Rather, they may be followed by anyone as a means to gain greater experiential insight into the nature of the mind and its relation to the rest of the world. By doing so, you may find that your way of life becomes more harmonious with those around you, that your mind becomes more balanced and peaceful, and that you experience a growing awareness of the inner resources of your own mind.

The insights you gain from such practices may then be integrated into your own belief system, whether you are Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Taoist, Buddhist, agnostic, or hold to any other worldview. Most of the great contemplative traditions of the world have fallen into decline with the rise of modernity, but the time may now have come for people of different spiritual traditions *to bring about a renaissance of their own contemplative heritages*. By exploring contemplative practices, scientists, too, may broaden the horizons of their own disciplines—from physics to neuroscience—and in doing so bring about the first great revolution in the mind sciences. The implications of such a revolution are bound to be far-reaching, challenging many of the current assumptions of physics and biology.

Every time one of us chooses to devote ourselves to contemplative practice, we change our world, we shape our own future, and we help to bring about a renewal of understanding and meaning in today's society.

*Taken from 'Mind in the Balance' with kind permission from Columbia University Press.*

## **Conscious and Ethical Societies “Flourishing in a Rapidly Changing World” By Mike Anson Chairman of the CCN Trust**

We are living in times of accelerating change be it economic, social, environmental or political all of which can be quite unsettling to many people. Some experts are predicting that the changes now underway will accelerate and within a few years could well be occupying the attention of all nations and societies. Notwithstanding these changes provide us with the opportunity to question our current world views, values, behaviors, ethics, and our societal systems at large.

The radical and visible changes taking place in many countries around the world will impact our environment, energy, basic resources, food and water, and are factors that might contribute significantly to the creation of new societal paradigms and the emergence of flourishing societies.

For example the social unrest we are witnessing in the Middle East that is now spreading to western nations, many of which are now focusing on their massive budget deficits coupled to the implementation of austerity measures, is the obvious outcome of societies and systems that were constructed outside of our natural sense of harmony.

In fact all nation-states are being impacted significantly by the current economic paradigm, which is principally designed such that most wealth flows principally in one direction – to those who already possess it and who control large swaths of the system.

The Marxist example and even now certain democratic systems which embrace inappropriate lobbying and systemic control demonstrate that whatever the ideology and the initial equitable repartition of resources, through the bias of influence and power, a country’s wealth is rapidly redistributed in an inequitable manner to those who are the most skillful in manipulating the system. Is it not a question of ethics? In a certain sense, yes, the challenge can be addressed through the bias of ethics. However, the ethics of an individual

will never be greater than their world view and the de facto paradigms.

More than ever it will be necessary to provide methods, tools and the appropriate environments in which conscious, responsible, resilient and wise individuals and communities, be it within the leadership and rank-and-file of the private and public sectors or in the lives of John and Jane Doe, can flourish.

It's clear that there is a significant need to champion the emergence of a new generation of responsible leaders and the public at large who can embrace and live sound ethics and harmony with the agility to navigate and operate with compassion in this rapidly changing world we are all now experiencing.

For this reason, it will behoove us to support and accelerate the research and practical application of contemplative and consciousness-based programs, methods, and practices targeted to and applied by those individuals and especially leaders who are ready and willing to embark on these personal and collective transformations. In this way perhaps we can provide a foundation for the emergence of conscious and responsible societies that can become the example of social coherence and stability in the face of significant social, economic and environmental disruptions and change thereby serving to create a more sustainable, just and fulfilling world.

The CCN is dedicated to providing information, methods, practices and support for those embarking on this important journey which can lead to a reduction of human suffering and support the emergence of a more harmonious and peaceful world. An exciting series of workshops and programs are now being developed for launch in 2012. We hope you will join us at the upcoming Buddhism and Science Event and the Mindfulness Day currently planned for June 2012.

## **The Past, Present and Future of the Cultivating Emotional Balance (CEB) Project by Kathryn Byrnes, PhD**

In March 2000, His Holiness the Dalai Lama and a group of distinguished scientists met at Dharamsala, India for five days to discuss the topic of “Destructive Emotions”<sup>1</sup>. The conference was the eighth meeting in a series of Mind and Life meetings between His Holiness the Dalai Lama, other contemplative scientists, and Western scientists. The meetings attempted to bridge the contemplative science of the inner world and the Western science of the outer world through presentations and dialogue between Western scientists and contemplatives. As His Holiness the Dalai Lama explained in the foreword to the book detailing the exchanges from that meeting in 2000, “Buddhism and science are not conflicting perspectives on the world, but rather differing approaches to the same end: seeking the truth.”

The Mind and Life Institute<sup>2</sup> was a brainchild of North American businessman, R. Adam Engle and Francisco J. Varela, a Chilean-born neuroscientist with a lab in Paris. Simultaneously in 1983, California and Austria the two learned of the Dalai Lama’s interest in science and after connecting in 1985, they formally agreed to collaborate on the first meeting, which occurred two years later for five days at the Dalai Lama’s home in Dharamsala, India. The first meeting was structured as a conversation between Buddhism and the cognitive sciences and included the Dalai Lama, six scientists, two interpreters and a few observers.

The mission of the Mind and Life Institute is to:

“... understand the human mind and the benefits of contemplative practices through an integrated mode of knowing that combines first-person knowledge from the world’s contemplative traditions with methods and findings from contemporary scientific inquiry. Ultimately, our goal is to

relieve human suffering and advance well-being.<sup>3</sup>

Between 1987 and 1998, Mind and Life sponsored seven dialogues with the Dalai Lama on topics including “Neuroscience”, “Emotions and Health”, “Sleeping, Dreaming and Dying”, “Altruism, Ethics and Compassion”, “New Physics and Cosmology”, and “Quantum Physics and Eastern Contemplative Sciences”.

Mind and Life VIII on “Destructive Emotions” in April 2000, was the first dialogue to move in the direction of collaborative research possibilities. His Holiness asked the scientists present whether all this talk could lead to anything constructive. Would they study contemplative practices in their laboratories, and if beneficial according to Western scientific standards find ways to teach them in a purely secular environment so that more people could benefit? “It is important for us to make sure that the conversations we have here don’t remain simply as expressions of opinions or aspirations, but rather to try and implement them practically. Somebody has to change how things are implemented, so how do we reach there with, as we say, warm heart? ...”<sup>4</sup>

This question and the experience of dialoguing with the Dalai Lama had a profound influence on Paul Ekman, a research psychologist and world expert on emotions. He commented, ‘I’ve spent more than forty years in the psychology of emotion – and my original motivation was doing what I could to help reduce human suffering and cruelty. ... I’ve returned to my own roots and motivations – and that allows me to take what I’ve learned in forty years and use it for my original goals.’ ... The week had given him ‘a renewed sense of what I can do with this next, last epoch of my own life’. Although he had been winding down his obligations, for the first time in nearly a decade he felt like taking on a new one: the mind-training program for adults envisioned during our meetings, now called Cultivating Emotional Balance.”<sup>5</sup>

Paul Ekman and Alan Wallace, participants in the 2000 Mind and Life

Dialogue, led the development of the Cultivating Emotional Balance (CEB) curriculum with the support of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. They assembled a core team including: Margaret Kemeny, Janine Giese-David, and Jeanne Tsai, and an advisory council including: Richard Davidson, Mark Greenberg, Daniel Goleman, Jon Kabat-Zinn, John Teasdale, and Joseph Goldstein. The expertise of these individuals included psychoneuroimmunology, measuring emotional behaviour in social interactions, cultural aspects of emotion, affective neuroscience, social-emotional intervention programs in schools, emotional intelligence, mindfulness-based stress reduction, cognitive-behavioural therapy and Buddhist meditation.

The curriculum designed collectively incorporated third-person, Western scientific inquiry with 2500 years of first-person, contemplative scientific inquiry. At its core, the training offered adults secular meditation practices that focused on the cultivation of attention, insight, and the qualities of loving-kindness, compassion, empathetic joy and equanimity. In addition the training emphasized awareness and skills in understanding and managing one's emotions and others' emotions to enhance interpersonal skills.

A pilot study<sup>6</sup>, funded by the Fetzer Institute, occurred in 2002-2003 with fifteen female schoolteachers. The five-week training integrated lectures, discussions and practices related to both contemplative meditation and scientific literature on the awareness and understanding of emotional experience. The format included a three-hour introductory session, a two-and-a-half day retreat, a three-hour follow-up session, and three full-day final sessions.

The program was assessed using a number of behavioural evaluation measures designed to capture changes in emotional and interpersonal behaviour. Participants showed a significant decrease in depression, anxiety and hostility, demonstrated a significant improvement in their ability to detect subtle forms of emotional expression on the face, showed a response

pattern on a post-test stress task that suggested less emotional and physiological reactivity compared to their reactivity prior to the training. In self-report measures, participants reported a reduction in negative mood, an increase in awareness of their emotions, their thoughts, and their reactions to others, and an ability to interact with others in a more compassionate and forgiving way.

The next phase of the CEB project involved a clinical trial with female schoolteachers, nurses and other health professionals to compare the integrated training to a control condition. Training procedures were similar to the pilot study and took place in a group setting over an 8-week period, including a retreat and some day-long sessions. Trainings offered participants awareness of and skills in cultivating attention, including concentration and mindfulness; acknowledging and handling a range of emotions; and developing empathy and compassion for oneself and others.

The evaluation of the clinical trial involved self-report measures as well as psychosocial and biological measures of emotion and social interaction immediately before, immediately after, and six months following the 8-week training period. A scientific paper detailing the results will be published soon.

The structure and format of the curriculum evolved from the ensuing pilot study and clinical trial to include forty-two hours of classroom training experienced by participants in eight sessions over eight weeks. Four sessions occurred on weekday evenings for two and a half hours every other week for eight weeks while the other four sessions occurred on a Saturday in between the weeknight sessions for eight hours of intensive meditation and emotional skills training. Participants practiced guided meditations, wrote journals and a reflection paper as homework. Both the pilot and clinical studies were co-facilitated by two individuals, with Alan Wallace providing expertise in first-person contemplative practice and Margaret Cullen

providing expertise in third-person emotional skills training.

Five years after the clinical study was completed, the creators of the CEB project, Paul Ekman and Alan Wallace, organized a five-week teacher training in order to prepare the next generation of CEB facilitators. The teacher training was organized by the Santa Barbara Institute for Consciousness Studies<sup>7</sup>, founded by Alan Wallace in 2003 in collaboration with the Phuket International Academy Mind Centre<sup>8</sup>. The training occurred at the Mind Centre in Phuket, Thailand during July and August 2010 with fifty-three participants. The participants were chosen by the facilitators with a screening process that included psychological health; physical health; background in psychology, social work or education, and/or experience in meditation, (preferably both); and personal goals/motivation. The participants consisted of professionals ranging in age from mid-twenties to late sixties and from six continents: Europe, South America, Central America, North America, Australia and New Zealand, and Asia.

The training focused on learning the theories and practices of psychology regarding emotional balance, as taught by Dr. Paul Ekman and the relevant theories and practices of Buddhism, taught by Dr. Alan Wallace, particularly focused on the cultivation of attention, insight through the practice of mindfulness, and the qualities of loving-kindness, compassion, empathetic joy, and equanimity (the Four Immeasurables). The format consisted of lectures, meditation and discussion. The first two weeks consisted of streamed video presentations and question-and-answer sessions by Dr. Ekman, facilitated in person by his daughter Eve Ekman. Exercises in small groups and discussions followed the presentations with one hour of each day focused on meditation practice and discussion. The following three weeks were facilitated by Dr. Wallace and focused on meditation in morning

and afternoon sessions. Optional early morning physical fitness, afternoon physical fitness and evening meditation sessions were led by participants or Mind Centre employees.

The teacher training experience was intensive for participants and aimed to develop each participant's capacity and skills in both Western psychological and Buddhist psychological theories and practices with the intention that one individual could facilitate an integrated cultivating emotional balance program. Participants who completed the teacher training are currently in the process of being certified as CEB facilitators and will receive a teacher manual, which is currently being written. The individuals and organizations involved in the creation and facilitation of the Cultivating Emotional Balance Project hope to increase its availability to adults all over the world through the successful training of new facilitators. The future of CEB is unknown and its potential for positive influence in the world is huge. Mathieu Ricard, a Buddhist monk, and the Dalai Lama adeptly explained the importance of this work at the 2000 Mind and Life meeting and their words serve as a reminder for us all about what we need to create a new vision for ourselves and our world through our cultivation of emotional balance.

“The aim is to ask what we can do from medical or scientific research to bring about greater social well-being; a flourishing of peace, harmony, a sense of well-being in individuals and the society as a whole. This should become an imperative just like health and education. ... This should be of universal applicability. Just as, for example, if you get an education in Beijing, or anywhere in the world, you study mathematics. It's not considered Western or Chinese – it's universal. In a similar fashion, social and emotional learning should be considered everywhere to be just as imperative as standard science, mathematics, reading and writing.”<sup>9</sup>

We are talking about how to help society. If we aspire to contribute something to our society – to achieve a new vision of things – we need to

begin with ourselves. We need to decide to transform ourselves, and that can come only through training, not through fleeting ideas.<sup>10</sup>

## Notes

1. For more information on this meeting, see Goleman, D. (2003). *Destructive emotions: How can we overcome them? A scientific dialogue with the Dalai Lama*. New York, NY: Bantam Books.
2. <http://www.mindandlife.org/>
3. <http://www.mindandlife.org/about/mission/>
4. Goleman, D. (2003). p. 231
5. Goleman D. (2003) p. 363
6. For more information on the pilot study and clinical trial, see the Cultivating Emotional Balance website: <http://cultivatingemotionalbalance.org>
7. The Institute attempts to develop interdisciplinary and cross-cultural investigation of the nature and potentials of consciousness through its emphasis on research, education and practice. For more information see: <http://www.sbinstitute.com>
8. The Mind Centre focuses on the dynamic interface between scientific and contemplative means of exploring the nature origins, and potentials of human consciousness.
9. His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Goleman D. (2003) p.221
10. Matthieu Ricard in Goleman D. (2003) p.215

## Hope: A Form of Delusion?

### **Buddhist and Christian Perspectives The 9th Conference of the European Network of Buddhist-Christian Studies Liverpool Hope University, 30<sup>th</sup> June – 4<sup>th</sup> July 2011 by Dr Elizabeth Harris President**

Can we hope in a world that is shot through with suffering? Should hope be shunned as a form of attachment? Should we affirm our hope or let go of it? And, if we embrace hope, what should we hope for and what can inspire us? Between 60 and 70 people, from 16 countries, came together to address questions such as these at the 9th conference of the European Network of Buddhist-Christian Studies, held in glorious weather at Liverpool Hope University in England, between 30<sup>th</sup> June and 4<sup>th</sup> July 2011.

At the heart of the conference were ten keynote presentations on five crucial aspects within the theme of hope: Hope and the Critique of Hope; Hope in Pastoral Situations; Embodiments of Hope; Hope in Situations of

Hopelessness: Engaged Buddhism and Liberation Theology; Eschatologies of Hope. Dr Sybille Fritsch-Oppermann (Church of Southern Hesse) gave the introductory lecture, which suggested that hope can be seen both as a utopian ideal within and beyond living religions and a working hypothesis, through which humans can strive towards truth and transcendence.

Each theme was addressed from a Buddhist and a Christian perspective, followed by a plenary to enable dialogue between the speakers, and between speakers and participants. Addressing the first theme, Hope and the Critique of Hope, from a Buddhist perspective, Richard Gombrich (Balliol College, Oxford) robustly argued that hope was not a category that was relevant to Theravāda Buddhism, distinguishing between hope and confidence, and hope and expectation. Werner Jeanrond, (Glasgow University), taking the Christian perspective, suggested that a critical theology of hope, an inter-hope dialogue, was necessary, within a critique of other key concepts such as salvation, faith and love.

Within the session on 'Hope in Pastoral Situations', Dr Hiroshi Munehiro Niwano (Rissho Kosei Kai, Japan) focussed on Rissho Kosei Kai's pastoral work, most movingly its response to the recent earthquake and tsunami in Japan. Notto Thelle (Oslo University), speaking from a Christian viewpoint, sensitively explored pastoral situations caused by life experiences that seem to question and make a mockery of hope, drawing on decades of Buddhist-Christian encounter. Peggy Morgan (Mansfield College, Oxford), addressing the third theme, 'Embodiments of Hope' concretized her brief by focussing on a contemporary embodiment of hope capable of emboldening Christians: Rosemary Radford Ruether and her listening dialogue with Buddhism. Mitsuya Dake (Ryukoko University, Japan), on the other hand, chose Amida Buddha as his empowering embodiment of the wisdom, compassion and non-dualism that lies at the heart of Buddhism, focussing on Shinran's understanding.

The theme, 'Hope in Situations of Hopelessness' was opened to the public in an evening session. Sallie King (James Madison University, USA), using examples such as the Sarvodaya Movement in Sri Lanka and the Dalai Lama's peace work, argued that Buddhism was 'loaded' with hope from an Engaged Buddhist perspective. Buddhist hope, at one level, was an amalgam of acceptance, lawful change and effort. At another, it was the conviction that everyone had the potential to change and that truth had power. Sathianathan Clarke (Wesley Theological College, Washington DC), movingly examined Dalit liberation theology, suggesting that hope within this context could be seen as a proxy topos that extended faith into life, an alter-wisdom where love could enrich life, and an energy, a verb, leading to transformative action.

Addressing the last theme, Eschatologies of Hope, Anthony Kelly (Australian Catholic University) recognized a contemporary crisis of hope and, distinguishing between hope as an emotion and hope as a virtue, explored a paradox: that Christian hope is rooted in the resurrection of the crucified Jesus but that this event is described in a varied rhetoric of negations. Justin Ritzinger (Oberlin College, USA), noting that endings are hard to find in Buddhist literature, examined the coming of Maitreya, the future Buddha, as a possible candidate for a Buddhist eschaton, concluding that the similarities to Christian eschatology were superficial, with the exception of a contemporary reinvention of the Maitreyan tradition in China.

In addition to invited keynote speakers, a range of other researchers responded to a call for papers. These were presented in three time slots. In the first, a session for postgraduate research students and recognised researchers, twelve papers were given, including: The Fullness of the Present in Zen Buddhism and Christianity (Raquel Bouso Garcia, Universitat Pompeu Fabra); *Imitatio Christi* and the Tantric Way: Prolegomena to a Comparative Study of the Hagiographical Works of

Bonaventura and GTsang Smyon Heruka (Massimo Rondolino, Bristol University); “Interreligious Monks”: Transformative Aspects of Intermonastic Encounter (Timon Reichl – Muenster University); The Sangha Acts in Thailand (Venerable Ratan Jyoti Barua – Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University). The second was a Forum for Practitioners, in which the main speaker was Elizabeth West of the British-based Contemplative Consciousness Network. The last, containing six papers on the theme of Hope and Buddhist-Christian Relations, included: ‘Loss, Memory and Hope in Sri Lanka; Buddhist-Christian Perspectives’ (Jude Lal Fernando, Irish School of Ecumenics), ‘Is Birth into Amida’s Pure Land a Delusion?: an inquiry into strategies of ascertaining, and a comparison with, similar problems in Christianity’ (Martin Repp, Heidelberg University) and ‘Masao Abe’s Hope for Buddhists and Christians in Thirty Five Years of Dialogue’ (Anniewieke Vroom, VU University, Amsterdam). These three sessions were incredibly rich and varied.

## **Recent Publications:**

**Stilling the Mind: Shamatha Teachings from Dudjom Lingpa's Vajra Essence Stilling the Mind.** By B Alan Wallace Published by Wisdom

This is really a wonderful book both on the teaching of meditation, and for an understanding of mind training in Buddhism, and the Dzogchen view. It is a commentary on the Vajra Essence, which makes the text completely clear and comprehensible for Westerners. It helps overcome the cultural barriers which often make understanding such texts difficult. If you are attending Alan Wallace’s retreat on Holy Isle next year, then reading this will be wonderful preparation. The teachings here are universally applicable to our practice and our daily lives. *(available on Amazon also on Kindle)*

## **Wisdom Songs: A book of Wisdom Chapters in Five Centuries**

by Priest-Monk Silouan. Available from Lulu.com and on Kindle

This is a book of the Wisdom and Mystical Teachings of the Orthodox Church. It is very profound and Scripture based. As the author of the Forward writes: "This is not a preliminary book of advice on prayer in the Orthodox Church. On the contrary it is the fruit of an Orthodox ascetic who has spent years in navigating the deep waters of the Eastern Orthodox mystical tradition.... Here is the deep sense from the Scripture itself, that Sophia, Wisdom, is the Divine Logos Himself: none other, accessing the heart and soul as one (not cut into parts as modern anthropology would have it), in so far as Divine Wisdom is the architect and archetype of the very soul, the essential spiritual consciousness of the human being."

Here is a taste from page 291: "Wisdom's intention is pure and enlightened, safely out of the reach of all confusion and division. Being Primordially pure and spontaneously present, wisdom is infinitely all - pervading and indivisible .....

Wisdom imparts what is holy to the holy, revealing the kingdom of light. The divided mind sees division where wisdom see difference. The confused mind see confusion, where wisdom sees union. The deluded mind sees disintegration where wisdom discerns wisdom self-liberating all in all."

For any lover of Christ and the Scriptures this book could take you on a journey into the depths the mystery of Christ.

*(Ed comment: It is surely at this depth that all traditions do and must converge in a deep and fruitful silence of wonder and love. If they do not do so, then religion, it seems to me, is not a valid quest for truth, which leaves us with nothing but science and materialism. So we need to work hard to discover this convergence.)*

# Events 2011

**Transforming the world by changing the way you see it  
With Katie Morrow and Elizabeth West  
At the Kairos Centre Roehampton  
4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> November 2011**

Many people who embark on a spiritual path find themselves on a hamster wheel of self- improvement, constantly trying to create a better version of themselves. Meditation, as it is taught in the Mahayana Buddhist Tradition, shows us instead how to let go of this futile struggle and discover that the qualities we seek to acquire are already inherent within us. At the same time, meditation reveals the painful way in which we distort these qualities, carrying them within us as ghosts, skeletons and storylines. During this weekend we will explore how they can lose their power over us when we allow them to be touched by the unconditioned.

Katie Morrow has been a practitioner of Tibetan Buddhism for 30 years, as a student of Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, she has been authorised to give meditation instruction and teach in the Shambala Tradition since 1986.

Elizabeth West has long experience of Christianity and is now a practitioner on the Dzogchen path as taught in the Tibetan Buddhist Tradition.

**COST: Single room not en suite: £140 (9 available)**

**Shared twin rooms en suite: £140 (7available)**

**Using twin as a single room en suite: £150 (if we have spaces left and there are no people willing to share)**

**BOOKING: Please email [elizabeth@c-c-n.org](mailto:elizabeth@c-c-n.org) to reserve your place and room type, and send the cheque for the full amount after Elizabeth sends confirmation that what you want is still available.**

**DIRECTIONS TO KAIROS CENTRE: go to:**

**[http://www.thekairoscentre.co.uk/contact\\_kairos.htm](http://www.thekairoscentre.co.uk/contact_kairos.htm)**

# Events 2012

## Ishpriya in London March 10th & 11th 2012



Ishpriya is the founder-chairperson of the International Satsang Association and its spiritual animator and guide. She also belongs to a Catholic religious congregation, the Society of the Sacred Heart. She left Europe for India in 1971 and spent many years in the foothills of the Himalayas, a Christian presence among Hindu Sanyasis, committed to Inter-faith dialogue in a spirit of mutual understanding and common search. Ishpriya now lives in Austria and travels widely conducting Retreats, Satsangs and Seminars in many countries . She holds a Doctorate in Psychology from the University of London and brings insights from this academic discipline to her teaching which focuses on finding ways to live with faith and commitment to our spiritual life and face creatively the challenges of the modern world. People seek her compassionate and perceptive spiritual guidance from all over the world.

### **March 10th: CANA Study day with Ishpriya.**

CANA (Christian Awakening to a new Awareness exists to give those seeking a deeper spiritual awareness a safe place to experience, share and develop their vision. It recognises that we are all one, through that of God within us, from whatever background we come. It

**Venue:** Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter, 34 Chepstow Villas, London W11 2QZ

**Fee :** £30.00 for CANA members and £35 for non members. Please send full fee of £30 or £35 each )

**For details and Booking form contact:** [Celia Storey](mailto:celiastorey@aol.com), 102 Church Road, Steep, Petersfield GU32 2DD – 01730 265591 [celiastorey@aol.com](mailto:celiastorey@aol.com)

### **March 11th: Reflection Day with Ishpriya Organized jointly by UK Satsang and Contemplative Consciousness Network.**

This day will focus on the importance of leading a spiritual life in the modern world, and contributing to saving the planet, and bringing about peace and well-being. Its focus will draw on the Wisdom Traditions of East and West. The day is suitable for people of any faith and none.

**Venue:** Greencoat Place, 10mins walk from Victoria Station.

**Cost:** £30.00 - Some Concessions are available £20, please enquire.

**For full details and booking email:** [elizabeth@c-c-n.org](mailto:elizabeth@c-c-n.org) also for more details of content watch the website: [www.c-c-n.org](http://www.c-c-n.org)

## Events 2012 Continued

### Dr B Alan Wallace in the UK



Dr. Wallace, a scholar and practitioner of Buddhism since 1970, has taught Buddhist theory and meditation worldwide since 1976. Having devoted fourteen years to training as a Tibetan Buddhist monk, ordained by H. H. the Dalai Lama, he went on to earn an undergraduate degree in physics and the philosophy of science at Amherst College and a doctorate in religious studies at Stanford. With his unique background, Alan brings deep experience and applied skills to the challenge of integrating traditional Indo-Tibetan Buddhism with the modern world.

**8th-15th June:** Shamatha, Vipashyana Retreat in the Tradition of the Great Perfection (Dzogchen) Led by Dr. Alan Wallace On Holy Isle.

**To receive a booking form and full information email**

**elizabeth@c-c-n.org or call 020 8440 4454**

**only a few places left BOOK NOW**

**The London events will be updated regularly on our website and some bookings will open in November 2011**

**16th-17th June: Cultivating Emotional Balance weekend**

at Samye Dzong London.

**18th June: Public Talk “What it Means to be Human” at Samye Dzong London**

**19th-June : Buddhism and Science Day at Regents College London.** Speakers will be: Dr B Alan Wallace, Dr. Harald Atmanspacher, Dr Peter Malinowski.

**20th June: Day on Teaching Meditation in a Secular Context (Watch the website for more details)**

**21st June: A day of Dialogue with Dr Alan Wallace & Fr Laurence Freeman OSB organised by the Christian Meditation Community.**

## Events 2012 Continued

### **24th August—1st September:**

A week of silence and reflections on the mystical writings from the Christian contemplative tradition, on beautiful Holy Isle, off Aran, Scotland.

Retreat Leaders: **Julienne McLean and Viv Stacey.**

For Details and Flyer Contact:

Julienne McLean: [juliennemclean@btinternet.com](mailto:juliennemclean@btinternet.com)

### **Christian Insight Meditation Retreats:**

Following in the Footsteps of John of the Cross.

Silence and Awareness Retreat's

**7th-16th September 2012:** Letton Hall, Christian Conference Centre, Norfolk

**21-28th September 2012:** Holy Isle off Arran, Scotland.

Retreat Leaders for both retreats: **Mary Jo Meadow and Fr Daniel Chowning OCD**

**For Details and Booking Contact:** Deanna Skittrall : [deannas@btopenworld.com](mailto:deannas@btopenworld.com)