

We are taking this opportunity when mailing you the new retreat programme for Maenllwyd to give you some information on the "Western Ch'an Fellowship".

For many years Dr John Crook has been organising and leading retreats at Maenllwyd. Some regular participants expressed a desire for continuing contact with fellow practitioners outside of the retreat situation. Furthermore John wished to establish an organisation which could carry on his work even after he is unable to continue it personally. Some of these needs have been met by the formation of local meditation groups and the events that they organise, and other developments such as the publication of New Ch'an Forum journal by the Bristol Ch'an Group. As a further development a group of longstanding practitioners have founded an organisation which we call the "Western Ch'an Fellowship". This organisation is now registered as a national charity No.1068637.

If you simply wish to continue attending retreats on an ad hoc basis as before then you will be able to do so and need pay no attention to the WCF. But the formation of the WCF should make it easier for you to continue attending retreats in the future. Based on the organisational structure defined in our constitution John is training meditation teachers for the local groups, and training leaders for future retreats. As a charity we hope to be able to raise funds to facilitate a bursary scheme to subsidise retreatants who cannot afford to pay full retreat fees, and also to contribute in other ways to the facilities available to practitioners both on retreat and in local meditation groups.

The constitution of the WCF determines that the lineage orientation of the retreats at Maenllwyd will continue to be mainly Ch'an, as transmitted through Master Sheng Yen, and the Western Zen Retreats, as introduced by John Crook. There is also scope to continue to include other events as has been the case in the past, exploring other forms of practice such as Tibetan Mahamudra and the links to Western psychology as in the case of last year's Zen-Gestalt retreat.

Other than maintaining the retreat programme the WCF's other main focus is the development and support of local meditation groups and support of practice away from the retreat situation. The WCF will co-ordinate and link the local groups so that practitioners should be able to feel less isolated than they have in the past. Other projects and ideas may be tried and we are open to further suggestions. The WCF is also taking over the publication of New Ch'an Forum from the Bristol Ch'an Group.

It is not necessary for you to join as a Fellow of the WCF and retreats continue to be open to all comers as before, with perhaps the exception of group leaders training retreats. However those who are eligible are encouraged to join so as to have a louder voice in the development of the Fellowship. Fellows are guaranteed to receive all retreat programmes, newsletters, and notices of other events through our mailing list, receive a free subscription to New Ch'an Forum, and are eligible to vote at the general meetings and to be elected to be trustees of the charity when vacancies arise.

The constitution places some restrictions on eligibility to apply for fellowship, so not all can be accepted. In brief, you must have attended three retreats at Maenllwyd including one Ch'an Retreat and one Western Zen Retreat (or equivalent elsewhere subject to the approval of the committee), take the three Refuges and follow the basic precepts, follow a regular Buddhist practice, and undertake to continue to attend at least one retreat every three years and to support the Objects of the charity. These requirements are not meant to be exclusive but are to protect the lineage orientation of the WCF. For further details with a copy of the constitution and an application form send a stamped addressed envelope to the membership secretary Tim Blanc (address overleaf).

As a charity we of course hope to raise funds to support our work, and donations are welcome! The two main uses for donations are to support the bursary fund and to support facilities e.g. library at Maenllwyd, local meditation group requirements, etc. We have joined the charity card scheme and so taxpayers can make tax-efficient donations through this scheme. Tel 0800 993311 for details. Alternatively send donations direct to the treasurer Tim Blanc or contact him to discuss other donation arrangements.

**Local groups** meet in various localities, and you can meet other meditators and receive meditation instruction. As well as the regular meetings noted many of the groups also hold occasional additional events such as weekend or day retreats.

**Bristol Meditation Evenings.** The Bristol Ch'an Group meets on Wednesday evenings 7.30-10.00 p.m. at the Iyengar Yoga Centre, Denmark Place, Gloucester Rd, Bristol. For details contact Caroline Paine on 0117 924 5332.

**Dharma Study Group** meets in Bristol. Contact Tim Paine for details on 0117 924 5332.

**Brighton Group** meets on Thursdays. For further call John McGowan on 01273 401643.

**Cardiff Group** meets on the last Tuesday of every month at 19 Velindre Rd, Cardiff CF4 7JE. For details contact Eddy Street on 01222 691146.

**Edinburgh Group.** For details contact Frank Tait on 01721 721146.

**London Group** meets on Fridays at 6:45 p.m. at: The Jamyang Centre, 43 Renfrew Road, Kennington, London. SE11 4NA. For details contact: Bruce Stevenson, 20 Goodhall St, London, NW10 6TU, Tel 0181 961 7802

**Manchester Group** meets on Friday evenings in Bury. For details call Simon Child on 0161 761 1945.

**Stroud Group** meets on Wednesday evenings. For details call Alec Lawless on 01452 814216.

**Swindon Group** meets on Monday evenings. For details contact John Senior on 01793 613940 or Dave Horsley on 01793 487402.

**York Group** meets on Wednesday evenings. Contact Jake Lynes de Ver on 01904 728419 or James McCarthey on 01904 330977.

## **Western Ch'an Fellowship Contacts:**

**Teacher,** Dr John Crook, Winterhead Hill Farm, Winscombe, N. Somerset, BS25 1RS.

**Chair,** Hilary Richards, 8 Park Terrace, The Park, Nottingham, NG1 5DN

**Secretary,** Simon Child, 24 Woodgate Ave, Bury, LANCS, BL9 7RU, 0161 761 1945,  
email [wcf@child.demon.co.uk](mailto:wcf@child.demon.co.uk)

**Treasurer and Membership Secretary,** Tim Blanc, 26 Hinton Rd, Greenbank, Bristol, BS5 6HB, email  
[tblanc@globalnet.co.uk](mailto:tblanc@globalnet.co.uk)

**Website** <http://www.child.demon.co.uk/wcf/> includes past issues of New Ch'an Forum.

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**New Ch'an Forum:** For a subscription please send a cheque for £7.50, payable to: **Western Ch'an Fellowship**, to: Tim Blanc, 26 Hinton Road, Greenbank, Bristol, BS 6HB

This will pay for three issues, which are published approximately three times per year (variable). Back issues can be obtained for £3.00 per issue.

Details may be kept on a computer database, which will be used for subscription administration and for keeping you informed of Western Ch'an Fellowship activities. Please indicate if you do not wish your details to be kept on a computer database.

Name

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Address

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e-mail