

Western Chan Fellowship



www.westernchanfellowship.org

7th March 2010

Newsletter 20

Retreat Programme 2010

In 2010 we shall have retreats at three different venues. Of course Maenllwyd in Wales remains our main venue, but we shall also again have some retreats at Hourne Farm in East Sussex, including for the first time a full-length 7-day Silent Illumination Retreat. We are also to use a new venue, Barmoor in North Yorkshire for the first time, for a 5-day Chan Retreat. Barmoor is accessible from the East Coast rail line, North of England, Scotland and with good rail links to Manchester Airport. Full details are available on our website at www.westernchanfellowship.org

We hope to introduce online booking by credit/debit card during the coming months, but in the meantime please refer to the retreats page on the website for booking details and application form:

www.westernchanfellowship.org/retreats.html

This programme is subject to change, so please refer to the website for the latest version.

April 1st to 6th, Western Zen Retreat

(fully booked, waiting list in operation)

Leader: Jake Lyne. Venue: Maenllwyd, Wales

A simple monastic regime enables the mind to face the major paradox - Who am I? - in creative mutual questioning. People work in turns with each member of the group in exploring this fundamental Koan. The intensive focus drives each into a self-presentation that is difficult to experience in other ways. The outcome may be a profound sense of the unity of self and possibly a direct insight into the 'ground of being', in traditional Zen considered to be a glimpse of Enlightenment. Whether or not such an insight happens, participants share a rich experience in new self-knowledge and understanding others. Open equally to beginners and established trainees.

Suitable both for beginners and for experienced practitioners.

May 8th to 13th, Chan Retreat in Sussex

Leader: Fiona Nuttall, Venue: Hourne Farm, E. Sussex

In silent retreat the mind may calm and open, enabling the cultivation of wisdom and compassion. Whether you are already on the journey or are just beginning, a period of dedicated practice can give you a taste or a deepening of Chan insight. There will be teaching in Chan methods for newcomers, and ample practice opportunity for experienced practitioners. We shall rise early with a concentrated programme of sitting meditation and exercise sessions. Personal interviews will be available.

Newcomers are particularly welcome, and suitable also for experienced practitioners.

June 26th to July 1st, Everyday Chan - Buddhism Everyday

Leader: Ken Jones, Venue: Maenllwyd, Wales

A comprehensive introduction to working with the vicissitudes of your life as a potentially transformative practice. This retreat will draw together approaches introduced on previous retreats led by Ken Jones, together with new material.

Suitable both for beginners and for old timers.

July 3rd to 8th, Chan Retreat in the North

Leader: Jake Lyne, Venue: Barmoor, N. Yorkshire

In silent retreat the mind may calm and open, enabling the cultivation of wisdom and compassion. Whether you are already on the journey or are just beginning, a period of dedicated practice can give you a taste or a deepening of Chan insight. There will be teaching in Chan meditation for newcomers, and ample practice opportunity for experienced practitioners, with guidance on the method of Silent Illumination - the 'method of no-method'. We shall rise early with a concentrated programme of sitting meditation, work practice and exercise sessions. Individual interviews will be available. All are welcome to this summer retreat.

Barmoor is accessible from the East Coast rail line, North of England, Scotland and with good rail links to Manchester Airport.

Suitable both for beginners and for experienced practitioners.

July 24th to 31st, Silent Illumination

Leader: John Crook, Venue: Maenllwyd, Wales

This traditional week-long retreat will allow the time and space for serious practitioners to learn, practice and cultivate the method of Silent Illumination. Simple yet difficult, within this space you may encounter an opening that allows you to come to rest and find freedom, peace and lucidity. This is not a place to opt out but enables effective engagement with daily life. Facilitated in a kindly and supportive manner we will present the teaching and methods of Master Sheng-yen, through practice, talks and individual interviews. The format will be that of a full Chan retreat, rising early, a rigorous schedule of meditation and exercise, with work periods for food preparation and keeping the Maenllwyd (Grey Mountain) log fires glowing. In the still heart of Wales, join us for this intensive Seven Day Chan Retreat.

Requires prior attendance at a 5 day retreat.

August 21st to 26th, Western Zen Retreat

Leader: Hilary Richards, Venue: Maenllwyd, Wales

A simple monastic regime enables the mind to face the major paradox - Who am I? - in creative mutual questioning. People work in turns with each member of the group in exploring this fundamental Koan. The intensive focus drives each into a self-presentation that is difficult to experience in other ways. The outcome may be a profound sense of the unity of self and possibly a direct insight into the 'ground of being', in traditional Zen considered to be a glimpse of Enlightenment. Whether or not such an insight happens, participants share a rich experience in new self-knowledge and understanding others. Open equally to beginners and established trainees.

Suitable both for beginners and for experienced practitioners.

September 2nd to 5th, Core Sutras - the Roots of the Dharma

Leader: Hugh Carroll, Venue: Maenllwyd, Wales

Group study and contemplation of some of the most ancient Buddhist texts we have. The Pali Suttas, when looked into deeply, can bring much clarity. We will be supported by reflective sitting and discussion. All welcome!

October 16th 23rd, Huatou Retreat

Leader: John Crook, Venue: Maenllwyd, Wales

A Hua-tou is a short, paradoxical statement, often the punch line of a Koan, or a challenging, maybe confronting, question. You will be shown a collection of such texts from which you may choose the one on which to work both in traditional seated meditation and throughout daily activity. While intensive focus is required, we do not push practitioners into excessive, physically exhausting effort and, although strict, the approach is rooted in compassion. Such practice often leads to major insights into the Dharma and one's "True nature".

This is a disciplined retreat for retreatants with a regular practice. Requires prior attendance at a 5 day retreat.

October 23rd to 28th, Chan Retreat in Sussex

Leader: Eddy Street, Venue: Hourne Farm, E. Sussex

In silent retreat the mind may calm and open, enabling the cultivation of wisdom and compassion. Whether you are already on the journey or are just beginning, a period of dedicated practice can give you a taste or a deepening of Chan insight. There will be teaching in Chan methods for newcomers, and ample practice opportunity for experienced practitioners. We shall rise early with a concentrated programme of sitting meditation and exercise sessions. Personal interviews will be available.

Newcomers are particularly welcome, and suitable also for experienced practitioners.

November 1st to 6th, Western Zen Retreat

Leader: Simon Child, Venue: Maenllwyd, Wales

A simple monastic regime enables the mind to face the major paradox - Who am I? - in creative mutual questioning. People work in turns with each member of the group in exploring this fundamental Koan. The intensive focus drives each into a self-presentation that is difficult to experience in other ways. The outcome may be a profound sense of the unity of self and possibly a direct insight into the 'ground of being', in traditional Zen considered to be a glimpse of Enlightenment. Whether or not such an insight happens, participants share a rich experience in new self-knowledge and understanding others. Open equally to beginners and established trainees.

Suitable both for beginners and for experienced practitioners.

November 30th to December 6th, Mahamudra on the Tantric Path

Leader: John Crook, Venue: Maenllwyd, Wales

An opportunity for practitioners to deepen their insight through an introduction to a profound Tibetan meditation system that originated in India during the richest period of Mahayana evolution. Preliminary exercises create the motivation for receiving an empowerment to practice methods evoking compassion and wisdom with humility and self-understanding. The retreat provides the first steps in 'becoming a Buddha in one lifetime' through the mental yogas of the Mahamudra meditation system.

Previous experience of either a Western Zen Retreat or Chan/Silent Illumination retreat is required.

December 4th to 11th, Silent Illumination

Leader: Simon Child, Venue: Hourne Farm, E. Sussex

This traditional week-long retreat will allow the time and space for serious practitioners to learn, practice and cultivate the Chinese Zen method of Silent Illumination. Simple yet difficult, within this space you may encounter an opening that allows you to come to rest and find freedom, peace and lucidity. This is not a place to opt out but enables effective engagement with daily life.

Facilitated in a kindly and supportive manner we will present the teaching and methods of Master Shengyen, through practice, talks and individual interviews. The format will be that of a full Chan retreat, rising early, with a rigorous schedule of meditation, work periods, and exercise.

Requires prior attendance at a 5 day retreat.

Cambridge 2-day Meditation and Pranayama Yoga Retreat June 2010

Cambridge Chan Group will be hosting a 2-day meditation and pranayama yoga retreat, non-residential, over the weekend Saturday June 19th - Sunday June 20th. Retreat leaders will be David Brown (meditation) and Helen Stephenson (pranayama yoga). No fee, though dana for Helen and to cover costs of the hall will be appreciated. Contact for bookings: davidbrown1000@btinternet.com

Chan and Poetry, Pilgrimage to China April 2011

This pilgrimage has been organised by South Mountain China Tours at the request of The Western Chan Fellowship and is open to Chan practitioners within the WCF and members of overseas Chan Groups that have grown from the inspiration of Master Sheng Yen. It will be led by the celebrated author Red Pine (Bill Porter) to visit and practice at some of China's most famous Chan monasteries. We will explore Chinese Chan today, and meet with Chinese Chan abbots and practitioners. We will also visit Guoqing Monastery, home to the poet Cold Mountain and a number of other monasteries and sacred mountains, including sites relevant to Dogen Zenji the founder of the Soto Zen tradition in Japan. This is a journey to the heart of Chan culture.

Full details of the itinerary and booking details are on the South Mountain Tours website www.southmountaintours.com The dates are 9th - 26th April 2011. There are 30 places though many are already booked.

Price US\$ 2,459.00* Single Supplement. US\$ 520.00*

* Pricing does not include international air travel and is for land only. China visa fees not included. Full refunds are offered for cancellation up until 60 days before departure.

Overseas Chan Events of Interest

(Details on the website)

John Crook and Simon Child will lead a Silent Illumination retreat in Warsaw, Poland, March 20th - 27th

Simon Child and Jake Lyne will lead a Koan Retreat in New York, USA, May 22nd - 29th

Simon Child and Hilary Richard will lead a Western Zen Retreat in New York, USA, October 15th – 20th

Revised Cancellation Policy

Many of our retreats book up quickly, and people who may have come on a retreat if there was space will often have made alternative arrangements by the time a late cancellation happens. In addition we incur costs that cannot be covered by retreat income, and booking or cancelling by credit or debit cards incurs bank charges. So reluctantly we have a cancellation policy. Cancelling within four weeks of the start of the retreat means that the full fee is forfeited unless we are able to fill your place with another participant. If we are able to fill your place we will return your fee less a £20 cancellation fee. Cancelling a retreat more than four weeks before the retreat commences incurs only a £20 cancellation fee with a refund of the rest of the fees paid. If there are significant compassionate grounds for late cancellation the WCF may at its sole discretion refund fees paid other than a £20 cancellation fee, on application in writing to the WCF secretary Dr Simon Child, 24 Woodgate Avenue, Bury, LANCs, BL9 7RU. In some circumstances it is possible to claim for cancellation on holiday insurance, please consider this option if it is available to you. Any remaining credit from a cancellation after recovering expenses will be placed in the Bursary Fund.

Mailings

We have posted this programme to you because your details are held on our database as someone who has attended retreats in the past or expressed an interest in our programme. If you do not wish to receive mailings please contact our Membership Secretary membership@westernchanfellowship.org or c/o 9 Church Lane, Elsworth, Cambridge, UK, CB23 4HU

eMailing Lists

You may wish to subscribe to our mailing list for announcements of retreat programmes, publications, etc. To subscribe send an email request to wcfannounce-subscribe@westernchanfellowship.org