

# Western Chan Fellowship



[www.westernchanfellowship.org](http://www.westernchanfellowship.org)

29<sup>th</sup> September 2010

## **Newsletter 21**

### **Retreat Programme 2010/2011**

In 2011 we shall have retreats at several venues. Maenllwyd in Wales remains our main venue, and we shall also hold one retreat at Holy Isle in Scotland in July. Other venues/dates are not yet confirmed for 2011, so are not listed here, but we shall add more events/venues to our programme when bookings are confirmed so please keep an eye on the website where full details and updates are posted.

Online booking by credit/debit card is now available - please refer to the retreats page on the website for booking details and application form:

[www.westernchanfellowship.org/retreats.html](http://www.westernchanfellowship.org/retreats.html)

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

#### **October 16<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> 2010, Huatou Retreat**

**Leader: John Crook, Venue: Maenllwyd, Wales**

A Huatou 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 five-day retreat.

#### **October 23<sup>rd</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> 2010, An Introduction to Chan: Following the Path of Bodhidharma**

**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 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> 2010, 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.

Suitable both for beginners and for experienced practitioners.

## **November 30<sup>th</sup> to December 6<sup>th</sup> 2010, 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 4<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> 2010, 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 Sheng-yen, 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.

## **January 22<sup>nd</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> 2011, Western Zen Retreat**

**Leader: Simon Child. Venue: Maenllwyd, Wales**

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Suitable both for beginners and for experienced practitioners.

## **February 19<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> 2011, Ordinary Mind is the Path: Five Day Chan Retreat**

**Leader: Jake Lyne. Venue: Maenllwyd, Wales**

In Chan we uncover the nature of mind, or 'heart-mind', through meditation focussed on calming, opening and investigating. This enables the cultivation of wisdom and compassion. Whether you are already on the path or just beginning, a period of dedicated practice can give you a taste or a deepening of Chan insight. On this retreat we all start from the same place, the place of not knowing, so whilst there is teaching in Chan methods for newcomers, experienced practitioners are encouraged to put aside all preconceptions and come fresh to learn anew as if for the first time. We shall rise early with a concentrated programme of sitting meditation and exercise sessions. Personal interviews will be available.

Suitable both for beginners and for experienced practitioners. Newcomers are particularly welcome.

## **March 19<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> 2011, Koan Retreat**

**Leader: Simon Child. Venue: Maenllwyd, Wales**

This retreat focuses on traditional koans as a means of training. This retreat is designed for Westerners based in the writings of Linji, Hsu Yun, Hakuin, and Dogen, and incorporates both Chinese and Japanese approaches in a fresh format.

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

## **April 9<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> 2011, An Introduction to Chan: Following the Path of Bodhidharma**

**Leader: Eddy Street, Venue: Maenllwyd.**

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. Using Bodhidharma's 'Outline of Practice' as a guide 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.

Suitable both for beginners and for experienced practitioners. Newcomers are particularly welcome.

## **May 21<sup>st</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> 2011, 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.

Suitable both for beginners and for experienced practitioners.

## **July 2<sup>nd</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> 2011, Pitfalls, Blocks and Delusions on The Great Way**

**Leader: Ken Jones. Venue: Maenllwyd, Wales**

A personal opportunity to review, refresh -- or begin -- your Buddhist practice in the face of "spiritual materialism". There will be a strong focus on emotional awareness and enquiry into your self. Meditation, talks, interviews and interactive work combined with liturgy and play, indoors and out.

Suitable both for beginners and for experienced practitioners.

## **July 24<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> 2011, Beyond Meditation: Meaning in Koans**

**Leader: John Crook. Venue: Holy Isle, Scotland**

If meditation becomes merely quietism, simply calming the mind, that is not Zen. Zen is perpetual enquiry into life - whatever it may present. While a degree of calming is usually essential for practice, the essence of this enquiry lies in exploring what lies beyond thought in order to place our everyday themes in the wider context of a universal understanding. From such a perspective we can develop a 'world-view' capable of facing the world crisis of today. This will be our task on this retreat. Our starting koan can be "Why did the Saint come to the Island?"

Suitable both for beginners and for experienced practitioners.

## **August 24<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> 2011, Western Zen Retreat**

**Leader: Fiona Nuttall. 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.

Suitable both for beginners and for experienced practitioners.

## **October 9<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> 2011, Huatou Retreat**

**Leader: John Crook, Venue: Maenllwyd, Wales**

A Huatou 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 five-day retreat.

## ***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](mailto: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](mailto:wcfannounce-subscribe@westernchanfellowship.org)

## Other Chan Events of Interest

### **Two Day Retreat in Glastonbury, led by Ned Reiter and Jake Lyne, November 13/14<sup>th</sup> 2010**

10:00 am Saturday 13th to 4:00 pm Sunday 14th November, organised by Glastonbury Chan Group

This is an opportunity for novices to learn the basic techniques of Chan meditation and experienced practitioners to deepen their practice. The retreat will consist primarily of periods of sitting meditation, interspersed with other practices such as walking meditation, chanting, Chinese yoga, and Prostration Practice. There will be a Dharma talk in the evening; otherwise the retreat will be held in silence.

Guidance on meditation practice will be available from authorised Chan meditation instructors. There will also be the opportunity for private interviews for participants to question and investigate their practice.

Prior booking essential. Contact Ned Reiter –Tel: 01458 833663 / [info@glastonburychan.org](mailto:info@glastonburychan.org)

### **You Yourself, with Ken Jones, Hourne Farm E. Sussex, November 17<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> 2010**

Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2010, at Hourne Farm, E. Sussex, organised by Medway Chan Group

This workshop/retreat will help you to bring the experiential study of yourself into the centre of your practice. Meditation, talks, interviews, group work, body work, and, of course, down-to-earth exercises to do with you and your life. Suitable for both beginners and old timers, new friends and old. Booking forms available from Stuart McLeod - [s.i.mcleod@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:s.i.mcleod@blueyonder.co.uk); 01634 571659

### **Cambridge Day Retreat: Saturday June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

#### **Chan meditation complemented by mindful, classical yoga**

Retreat Leaders: David Brown (Chan meditation) and Helen Stephenson (classical yoga)

Mindful classical yoga is based on the original Patanjali sutras and can be practiced by anyone; no previous experience or special physical ability is required. This form of yoga is a perfect complement to sitting meditation.

Information will be posted on the group website at <http://cambridge.westernchanfellowship.org>; or contact [cambridgechan@westernchanfellowship.org](mailto:cambridgechan@westernchanfellowship.org) Information about Helen Stephenson is available at <http://www.helenstephensononline.co.uk/>

## Other Areas

Several other WCF groups organise additional events such as day retreats from time to time. Keep an eye on their web-pages at [www.westernchanfellowship.org/local-groups.html](http://www.westernchanfellowship.org/local-groups.html)

## More Events

- Simon Child will lead a Western Zen Retreat in New York, USA, October 15<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> 2010
- Simon Child will lead a Silent Illumination Retreat in New York, USA, November 20<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> 2010
- Hilary Richards will lead a retreat at Gaia House, UK, February 4<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> 2011
- John Crook and Simon Child will lead a Silent Illumination retreat in Poland, in May 2011
- Simon Child will lead a Western Zen Retreat in New York, USA, in October 2011
- John Crook and Simon Child will lead a Silent Illumination retreat in New York, USA, in November 2011