



STOP PRESS:

AMENDMENTS TO PROGRAMME:

The **Leaders Retreat** and **AGM** are being moved back by two weeks, so that the Leaders Retreat will start on Feb 24th, and the WCF AGM will be on Sunday Feb 27th 2000.

The **Mahamudra Retreat** scheduled for Feb 13th 2000 is **cancelled**. A Mahamudra Retreat will be scheduled soon in the next programme.

However there will be a retreat following the AGM, from Feb 27th to March 3rd 2000: **Introducing the Dharma of Ch'an**. This retreat will provide a survey of the Dharma that underlies Ch'an. Several people have expressed a need to know more about the underlying principles of Ch'an and this retreat will give an opportunity to catch up on this issue. The retreat will follow the format of a Ch'an meditation retreat with morning and evening discourses focussing on the Four Noble Truths, the meaning of Emptiness, Co-dependent Arising, Heart Sutra, Lankavatara Sutra and Avatamsaka Sutra. We will end with a discussion of Zen in the West. There will be several periods of mondo (question and answer), discussions and reading periods in the afternoons using the facilities of the Maenllwyd library.

This retreat is especially recommended for leaders of WCF groups and senior Fellows but is open to all.

July 1st-8th 2000 Millennial Ch'an With Master Sheng-yen. This retreat is scheduled to be held at, and organised by, Gaia House. Contact Gaia House West Ogwell, Newton Abbot, Devon, TQ12 6EN, (Tel: 01626 333613, email: gaiahouse@gn.apc.org) to be put on their mailing list, but they will not take bookings until they have published the programme which includes this retreat (probably Nov 1999)

Notes From The Network Of Buddhist Organisations Sally Mashedor.

The June meeting of the NBO took place outside Derby at the premises of the newest members, the New Kadampa Tradition. A number of topics were discussed which are of interest to WCF members.

The first of these concerns the setting up of a 'safety net' for those within any Buddhist tradition who find themselves at odds with their sangha and who have to leave, often feeling very battered and bruised as they do so. There have been a number of such reported cases in recent years, from a variety of sources, and it was a deeply felt concern for such problems which gave rise to the Amaravati Conference at which the NBO in its present form was first set up. As time has passed, the building-up of trust between the member groups may now make it possible to move forward with this problem, which was brought to the forefront of our concerns with a fresh set of allegations concerning the British Shingon Buddhist Association in the Spring. It is suggested that we should have a working group, of which I shall be a member, to examine the possible responses to these problems and to see what the NBO as an organisation can offer.

There was a presentation of the educational work carried out by the Clear Vision Trust, which works under the auspices of the FWBO. They have prepared award-winning teaching material for use in schools in which the teacher has to present Buddhism as part of the National Curriculum, but who may have no working knowledge of the topic at all. To my untutored eye, the material looked of very high quality, and as far as I could see, great efforts had been made to acknowledge the different Buddhist traditions, rather than to present only a one-sided view. People who have an interest in this area might like to contact Phil Evans, Clear Vision Trust, 16-20 Turner St, Manchester M4 1DZ. Tel: 0161 839 4815.

Finally, you may like to know of the International Dunhuang Project, which exists to study and preserve the Dunhuang Legacy, which is a collection of ancient, and therefore rare, Buddhist documents from Central Asia. The collection is currently housed in several major European museums while conservation work is in progress, and there is a project at the British Library to make the texts available on the Internet. Sponsorship is invited to meet the costs of this project. For more information, there is a database on <http://idp.bl.uk> or you can write to Dr Whitfield, IDP, The British Library, 96, Euston Rd, London NW1 2DB.

A **new group** is forming in the **Mid-Wales** area. John Senior has moved near to this area and is co-ordinating this group. The first meeting is scheduled for 7:30pm on Saturday 25th September at the Credit Union building in **Rhayader**. Contact John on 01885 488323, or Mark 01597 870277, or Dave 01597 824071.

The new **East Midlands Ch'an Group** is meeting in **Nottingham**. We meet at Nottingham Natural Health Centre, 354 Mansfield Road, Nottingham on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month, 7.30 till 9.30pm. Cost per evening 1.50 for each person. The format for our meditation evenings follows the general pattern of: short introduction and liturgy 30 minutes meditation kinhin walking meditation 30 minutes meditation reading or discussion and tea. For further information contact Hilary Richards.

There will be a **Weekend Retreat in Bristol** on Sat/Sun 23rd/24th Oct, probably 10am-6pm on Sat and 10am-4pm on Sun. The weekend will be led by Rigdzin Shikpo (Michael Hookham) of the Longchen Foundation in Oxford. Ring Caroline Paine for further details. The **Bristol Ch'an Group** is ten years old this year and will mark the occasion with a retreat on the weekend of Dec 11th/12th to be led by John Crook.

The **Bury (North Manchester)** group holds day retreats on Sundays every six weeks or so, the next being 31st Oct and 28th Nov, as well as regular Friday evening meetings. Contact Simon Child.

The **Brighton** Group recently held a two day retreat, and plans to do so again in the future. Contact John Mitchell.

Do you know of any organisations or individuals that would support the WCF? We wish to raise funds to replenish the bursary fund, and also to consider larger projects for the future. Perhaps you know of a body in your area that donates funds to other charities and may consider assisting the WCF. If so please give the details to a committee member, or pass the WCF details to that body.

If you wish make any **announcements in this newsletter** then send your information to the secretary Simon Child. We intend to send it out with each issue of NCF, both to NCF subscribers and also to all others on our mailing list.

The next meetings of the **Executive Committee of the WCF** will be on October 9th, and then December 12th 1999. If there are any matters that you wish to be raised at a meeting then please contact a committee member.

Forthcoming events at Maenllwyd

(See the full retreat programme for details):

Oct 1st-8th 1999 Ch'an Retreat

Dec 2nd-7th 1999 Western Zen Retreat:

Approaching the Millennium

January 6th 13th 2000 Ch'an Celebration;

Welcome the Millennium

Feb 24th-27th 2000 Leaders Training Retreat

Feb 27th 2000 WCF Annual General Meeting

Feb 27th-March 3rd 2000

Introducing the Dharma of Ch'an

April 20th-25th 2000 Western Zen Retreat

Western Ch'an Fellowship Contacts:

Teacher Dr John Crook, Winterhead Hill Farm, Winscombe, N. Somerset, BS25 1RS
Johcro@compuserve.com

Chair Hilary Richards, 8 Park Terrace The Park Nottingham, NG1 5DN, Tel 0115 924 2075
Hilary@theview.demon.co.uk

Secretary Simon Child, 24 Woodgate Ave, Bury, Lancs, BL9 7RU, Tel 0161 761 1945

Fax 0161 763 3221. *wcf@child.demon.co.uk*

Treasurer and Membership Secretary Tim Blanc, 26 Hinton Rd Greenbank, Bristol, BS5 6HB
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Western Ch'an Fellowship Webpages

http://www.child.demon.co.uk/wcf/

(include past issues of New Ch'an Forum, retreat programme updates, etc)

WCF-L Ch'an Email List Send message

"*subscribe WCF-L*" (without the quotes) to:
majordomo@child.demon.co.uk

If you have difficulties with majordomo, email
wcf@child.demon.co.uk

For information about **retreats in New York with Master Sheng-yen** contact:

Ch'an Meditation Center,

Institute of Chung Hwa Buddhist Culture,

90-56 Corona Ave., Elmhurst,

New York 11373, USA,

Tel: 00 1 718 592 6593, Fax: 00 1 718 592 0717

Email *ddmbany@aol.com* *http://www.chan1.org/*

Buddhist Tours in prospect

John Crook continues to offer tours to Buddhist sites in the Orient. Thanks to help from Yiu Yannang, the projected tour in China can now be advertised. It is an exceptional opportunity for Spring 2000. A tour in Bhutan is also in prospect for Autumn 2001. We do not expect any Fellow to attempt more than one tour in a year, hence these timings. Suggestions for tours or repeats of previous tours will be examined. Please state your interests and get your names listed.

Monastery Tour China 2000[□]

An outstanding opportunity to explore Chinese Buddhism as it is today. In eastern China lie several important sites for Buddhist history and culture. China reveres four famous Buddhist mountains and of these two sites are relatively easily reached from Hong Kong.

The first of these is **Pu Tou Mountain** on a small island in the Zhou Shan Archipelago off the China coast south of Shanghai. The whole island is studded with monasteries and temples forming huge complex where 3,000 monks and nuns practised before World War II. Although communist destruction has caused much change, the place is re-invigorated by recent developments and has a wonderful atmosphere on an exceptionally beautiful coast. **Jiuhua Mountain** about 600 miles from the coast and near the Yangtze river is another mountain with active Buddhist monasteries and an important college. This was a Taoist mountain before the Buddhists came. In the 8th century it was dedicated to Ksitigarbha, the Bodhisattva who sits on the Maenllwyd offering table. Climbing steps to reach spectacular pavilions and by using the cable car we can explore the monasteries that ring these mountains.

We also intend to visit a monastery in **Nanjing** and perhaps also an urban establishment in **Shanghai**. The trip will include a stay in the scenic mountains of **Huangshan**, famous in Chinese poetry and painting for its fantastic beauty. This is not a Buddhist mountain but, steeped in Chinese cultural history, it is well worth a visit. The trip will begin with a stay in **Hong Kong** with a visit to the monasteries on **Lantau Island** and end with a short stay in **Shanghai** before flying back to HK for departure to London.

The tour will include interviews with abbots and monks, so far as it is possible to arrange these, and meditation sessions in monastic halls (Ch'an halls are commonly open to men only, but there is ample

alternative accommodation for this purpose). Correspondence is underway to arrange such meetings during our visit.

Yiu Yannang, John's Chinese friend of many years, has done this trip and recommends it. He may accompany us on part of the journey. The trip by air and coach is comfortable and relatively easily accomplished with a tour company based in Hong Kong experienced in tours in the Chinese interior. Old India hands will find it relatively luxurious - or so we are told! John will act as overall Tour Director, providing Buddhist teachings and meditation instruction as desired, and leading discussions with monks etc. He will also have assistance from national and regional guides on site as well as the tour company manager.

Approximate schedule

Day 1-4	London to Hong Kong. City tour and monastic visits in Hong Kong territory.
Day 5-9	Pu Tuo island monastery in the Zhou Shan islands
Day 10-13	Huangshan scenic mountain
Day 14-18	Jiuhua Mountain monastery complex
Day 19	Shanghai city tour
Day 21	Shanghai to Hong Kong
Day 22	Hong Kong to London

Approximate costs

Estimated at current prices at about £2000 depending on air fares etc. to be determined. This price will be inclusive apart from tips (about £70 for drivers, guides, escort etc). Visa and insurance not included. (Single room at £285 extra).

Suggested dates March 25 - April 15 2000.

Fellows and others interested should contact John as soon as possible to get on the preliminary list of seriously interested persons. We already have 7 names. We aim at a party of 15.

[□] This tour is not the one originally planned, but arises due to Yiu Yannang's personal investigation of available options. We owe him much for his advice in this matter. Western tourists have not yet begun this type of special touring, so we are pioneering new routes for culture-travel holidays.

Maenllwyd Developments and Retreat Facilities

Apparently there was some misunderstanding after the mention in the last newsletter of improvements in the facilities at Maenllwyd. None of the WCF charity's money has been spent on the property of Maenllwyd, since this belongs to John Crook. But as mentioned some WCF money has been spent on items which are used by the WCF for retreats at Maenllwyd, such as beds, books for the library, etc. These items remain the property of the WCF, are recorded in an inventory held in the committee's minutes book, and of course are portable items and can be moved to any other premises that WCF may wish to use in the future. Hopefully that clarifies matters, but if anyone has any queries then please get in touch with a committee member.

Important Notice

The Western Ch'an Fellowship has taken over responsibility for John Crook's Maenllwyd Retreat and the New Ch'an Forum (previously held by the Bristol Ch'an Group) mailing lists. Your details are kept on a computer database, which will be used for keeping you informed of Western Ch'an Fellowship activities. Please notify me if you do not wish your details to be kept on a computer database or if you do not want to receive any further mailings. Thank You. Tim Blanc (Membership Secretary).

Local Groups Contacts:

Brighton John Mitchell 01273 846261,

Bury N Manchester Simon Child 0161 7611945,

Cheadle, S Manchester Ron Henshall 0161 4910612,

Edinburgh Frank Tait 01721 721146,

London Bruce Stevenson 0181 9617802,

Swindon Hughie Carroll 01793 534963,

Bristol Caroline Paine 0117 9245332,

Cardiff Eddy Street 01222 691146,

E Midlands, Hilary Richards 0115 9242075,

Glastonbury, Ned Reiter 01458 833663,

Mid-Wales, John Senior 01885 488323,

York James McCarthy 01904 330977.

New Ch'an Forum

Formerly published by the Bristol Ch'an Group, and now published by the WCF, the New Ch'an Forum includes retreat reports written by participants of retreats at Maenllwyd, Dharma talks by John Crook and Master Sheng-yen, social commentary, articles on lay practice, poetry photos and artwork, etc. Submissions welcome.

Subscriptions to New Ch'an Forum: WCF Fellows receive NCF as a benefit of Fellowship. Others may subscribe at a price of £7.50 per three issues (we aim for three issues per year) by writing with payment enclosed (cheques payable to Western Ch'an Fellowship) to Tim Blanc as below.

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New Ch'an Forum subscription: please send a cheque for £7.50, payable to: **Western Ch'an Fellowship**, to: Tim Blanc, 26 Hinton Road, Greenbank, Bristol, BS5 6HB

This will pay for three issues, which are published approximately three times per year (variable). Back issues can be obtained for £3.50 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

Tel

Address

Fax

e-mail