



## **An Introduction to Zen Meditation Retreat and Holiday**

**in a Christian place**  
Lassalle Haus,  
Bad Schonbrunn  
nestling in the lower Alps  
above Zug  
on the edge of  
Lake Zurich, Switzerland

**Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> May  
to  
Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> May 2008**

**Retreat starts 20:00 hours on  
Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> and ends  
17:00 hours on Wednesday 21st**

Organised by Alan Harpham  
Member of MODEM, Spirit at Work,  
Spirituality in Workplace (Douai Abbey) and  
Spirit at Work (Bedford)

### **Background:**

I first visited Lassalle Haus and its associated Lassalle-Institut in 2003 as a guest of the Spirit in Business Organisation ([www.spiritinbusiness.org](http://www.spiritinbusiness.org)).

It was a wonderful discovery of this beautiful place nestled in the sweet meadows of the lower Alps, overlooking the town of Zug on the side of Lake Zurich in Switzerland.

I have been back since with my fellow stewards of Spirit in Business - a much smaller group. Each time, even though we have been working hard, it has been a deeply relaxing and invigorating experience.

Each day begins in meditation or prayer – sometimes in the Chapel and other times in the Zendo. This is often led by the spiritual leaders of Lassalle – Father Niklaus Brantschen, Pia Gyger, or Dr Anna Gamma, all three of whom are Christian leaders and Niklaus and Pia are also Zen Masters, and Anna is a Zen teacher.

In the 14<sup>th</sup> Century an anonymous English monk and priest wrote a wonderful book about contemplative prayer called 'The Cloud of Unknowing'. This is a beautiful and simple book about how to practice contemplative prayer – the journey in silence, to within the quiet inner self, the core of our being in our search for the God within. Whilst he describes this so simply and succinctly, it is a practice many in the Western Church have lost or left behind in the age we live in. Some Christians have been finding this old wisdom again through the practice of Zen meditation. Whilst it has obviously been practised by Buddhists as part of their ancient wisdom and prayer, some Buddhists have come to Christianity and brought the practice with them, and some Christians seeking the God within have learnt the art of Zen meditation and found it extremely helpful. Lassalle has a long association through its spiritual leaders with this practice and they will be our guides.



#### **This trip:**

In common with some other Christians and those interested in interfaith, I (and I hope many of you) have a desire to learn more about meditation and Zen meditation in particular. I am therefore organising this silent retreat for 3 days to study and practice Zen meditation led by a teacher provided by the Lassalle-Haus. His name is Dr Peter Widmer or Ki Gen Peter Widmer Sensei. The retreat will be followed with two restful days of local sightseeing, or you may care just to soak up the atmosphere of the Haus and its surroundings, all set in the beautiful surroundings of the Swiss Alps we will agree this there.

#### **About the Institut:**

The Vision of the Lassalle-Institut is to enable leaders in business, politics and other sectors of society to promote an ethically-based culture of values in their professional environments as well as in the national and international community. A comprehensive view of reality is the foundation of this culture. The Institut is one of Europe's foremost institutions in the fields of Zen, Ethics and Leadership. It is philosophically and financially autonomous in the pursuit of its goals.

See [www.lassalle-institut.org](http://www.lassalle-institut.org) and the English section.

#### ***Zen – Ethik – Leadership***

describes the goal and purpose of the Institut.

#### ***Zen***

Traditional Zen meditation creates a balance between thinking, feeling, and doing. Zen regenerates and reduces stress and enhances creativity. It is a decisive aid furthering mindfulness, awareness and presence.

#### ***Ethik***

Ethics is the culture of values and therefore the foundation of a viable society and economy. Ethics includes mindful perception of all forms of life, intelligent decision-making and sustainable action.

#### ***Leadership***

Their unique programme (Lassalle-Institut-Modell®) enables decision-makers to develop visions, put them into practice, and to maintain equanimity while dealing with the complexities of work and everyday life. «GEIST & Leadership»® forms modules of the Executive MBA Steinbeis University Berlin diploma program.

**During our visit** we will be focusing on Zen meditation, but we hope that Dr Gamma, or one of her colleagues will take some time towards the end of our visit to explain the work they do reconciling differences between groups, such as Israeli settlers and Palestinians.

### **The trip:**

We will start on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2008 and return on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> May. We will stay in Lassalle Haus who provide accommodation and food for our stay. The Haus has modern single rooms, some with an en-suite, some using separate shared bathrooms and showers. There are also a few doubles, with separate bathrooms.

The retreat will **start at 20:00 hours on the Sunday evening 18<sup>th</sup> May** and you should make **your own** travel arrangements to get there. See [http://www.lassalle-institut.org/aboutus/travel\\_to\\_lassalle.php](http://www.lassalle-institut.org/aboutus/travel_to_lassalle.php) for travel details. The retreat will end at 17:00 hours on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> May. We will leave Lassalle Haus on morning of Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> May.

Travel is reasonably straight forward. The easiest is to fly to Zurich airport. Once at Zurich you take the train direct to Zug (CHF 35 return), and then a short bus ride up the hill to Lassalle Haus (CHF 4 each way). There is a short walk from the bus stop up a gently sloping driveway to the Haus (House) – about 1.5 hours in total. A number of airlines fly to Zurich and cheap flights are available through Easyjet from Luton to Basel with a longer train ride the other end.

We will eat together in the dining room and will spend most of the first few days in the Zendo or in the grounds being led by our Zen teacher – Dr Peter Widmer. We will have three meals a day and the food is simple, straight forward and wholesome. Vegetarians are fully catered for.

It is possible that we may choose to go out one evening after the Zen course finishes to visit Zug and eat there – this will be up to the group to decide. Similarly we can organise trips to other mountain villages and sights for our last two days. I have not included any costs for outings and excursions as they will almost certainly be by local bus and can be paid for individually when we are there.

### **The Price:**

**The budget price is £600 per head.** Based on travelling from the UK, this includes:

- Say £100 for the return flight from LLA to Basle (estimated at circa £60.00), together with the return train and bus fares to Lassalle Haus (CHF90). However Easyjet is only bookable through the Internet. (Or fly BA from LHR to Zurich & train & bus circa £110.) And lots more routes for you to choose.
- Say £330 for accommodation and all meals taken at the Haus for the week. (The Haus does run a bar and a coffee lounge and all extras, including drinks, have to be **paid for individually** before leaving. You can run an account during your one-week stay.)
- Say £125\* for your contribution to the cost of our Zen teacher, and the hire of the Zendo and training space. (\* This is based on ten of us going – more or less will attract a rebate or supplement respectively.)
- Say £45 as a contingency.

Your final cost will depend on your route, when you book your airfare, the ticket price at that time and when we know final numbers. (As you may know Easyjet tickets are variably priced and cannot yet be booked – they release booking dates on set dates).

You will be asked to pay me for accommodation and training in two tranches: –

- an initial non-refundable deposit of £100 – we need to know exact numbers as soon as possible so we can confirm with Lassalle Haus which gets very booked up.
- a second and final payment shortly before we depart.

### **Bookings:**

Clearly to make this work we need to make firm bookings **as soon as we can** – because Lassalle Haus cannot hold the week for us indefinitely. And personally I cannot take the risk of cancellation charges which are not built in to the finances as shown above. Therefore if you would like to come, and we hope you will, we need your commitment as early as possible in order to make it all happen.

**Dates:** Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> to Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> May 2008.

**Latest Date for booking: as soon as possible** and not after December 2007 – numbers are limited!

**I do hope you will be with us on this most interesting opportunity on life's journey – we look forward to having you with us.**

**Booking Form:**

**Lassalle Haus and Institut  
An Introduction to Zen Meditation  
Retreat and Course – 18<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> May 2008 inclusive.**

For details of the Institut go to  
[www.lassalle-institut.org](http://www.lassalle-institut.org) and click on *English*.

Please complete **in capitals asap** and return to:

Alan Harpham, 40 Stagsden Road, Bromham, Bedford MK43 8PT as soon as possible.

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Your Surname:	
First name	
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Full Postal Address:	
E-mail:	
Tel No.:	
Any special health needs:	
Next of kin – Name and telephone details:	
I enclose my deposit of:	<b>£100 - Cheques made out to: Alan Harpham</b>

Don't forget to arrange your own travel insurance if you need to.