



MOUNTAIN SILENCE

NEWSLETTER OF THE DANCING MOUNTAINS ZEN SANGHA

Issue 28 ; Spring 2016

Spring Growth

Events

CANCELLED: Weekend sesshin in Devon with Ingen Breen

at Devon
with Ingen Breen
**16th April 2016 to 17th
April 2016**

A two day sesshin with
Ingen Breen in Devon
Cost: £TBA
melsmere@hotmail.com

All Day Zen

at Ingen-ji, Dublin
with Ingen Breen
23rd April 2016
One day sesshin
Cost: Please enquire
ingenstheme@gmail.com

All Day Zen

at Belfast
with Ingen Breen
24th April 2016
One day sesshin
Cost: Please enquire
j.uhlemann@btinternet.com

Two Day Sesshin

at Hebden Bridge
with Ingen Breen
7th May 2016
Non-residential Two Day
Sesshin
Cost: Please enquire
rebeccahabs@googlemail.com

Dancing Mountains AGM

at Hebden Bridge



The Force that Through Green Fuse Drives

Editorial

By Michael-Kogan Muju

This is the Spring issue of Mountain Silence with a new editor and the equinox bringing light and energy back to our northern hemisphere so we had looked forward to an issue bursting with your contributions. It seems however that the sangha has been locked into the winter darkness or else the ceaseless rain and wind has dampened the imagination so there are a dearth of articles in this issue. This has led to some discussion on the board about the future of the newsletter, whether it should be a wide ranging 'magazine' type publication as our past

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with Ingen Breen
8th May 2016
The Dancing Mountains
Annual General Meeting
Cost: N/A
07875155464
devin@dancingmountains.org.uk

**The Bodhisattvas
Samadhi**
at Fyllingbo Sweden
with Tenshin Reb
Anderson
**13th August 2016 to 21st
August 2016**

This retreat is Tenshin Reb Anderson's sole visit to Europe this year. The venue in Southern Sweden is in a beautiful forest setting. The days will be spent in sitting together, walking meditation, dharma talks and discussion and interviews (if requested) with Reb all accompanied by the usual Soto Zen Forms and Rituals. Places are restricted to 50. For application forms e-mail rebineurope@gmail.com
Cost: From 4100 to 3100 Swedish Krona
rebineurope@gmail.com

**Group Facilitators
Support and Study
Retreat**
at TBC
with Ingen Breen
**22nd October 2016 to
23rd October 2016**
Developing practice for
event & group
facilitators
Cost: £TBC
07875155464
devin@dancingmountains.org.uk

issues with your articles, opinions, stories, poems, photos and letters. If this is not possible perhaps we should instead consider publishing a 'thinned down,' publication with news of events such as sesshin and other sittings and summarising important developments within the sangha. Another idea I have had is that rather than just an editor there should be an editorial team of three or four people that would ensure that for one/two years Mountain Silence would remain a lively, colourful and thought provoking read. Maybe a different sangha would be prepared to take on the responsibility for this after every few issues? I would welcome your views, proposals and ideas. For me Mountain Silence is an important part of Dancing Mountains but I have never considered it has fulfilled its potential. Unusually as editor I have no idea how much it is read or appreciated by sangha members, the wider sangha or our online readers. Again some feedback from you would be good.

I do not wish to give the impression that with the lack of 'news,' nothing has been happening within the sangha. Far from it. Through last autumn and winter the dharma has been bubbling up and refreshing all with life and vigour. Tenshin Reb Anderson's second retreat in Sweden was, I have heard from many participants, a deep and inspiring experience energising all sitting in Suzuki Roshi's lineage across Europe. Zenvagen is superb setting quite isolated in the midst of the deep Swedish forest. If you haven't already attended one of these retreats I would urge you to go if at all possible. Invitations have recently been sent out. If you haven't received one and are a part of the sangha go to rebineurope@gmail.com Quite apart from major events such as this there have been a number of sittings across UK and Ireland many supported and led by Ingen Breen. It feels to me that there is after many years of slow green growth a real blossoming of the dharma in our midst in which so many have participated. Devin has written an article that describes the new and significant possibility of priest training that will take place here in UK over the next few years and I feel certain that this is a major step in ensuring the future of Dancing Mountains Sangha and the lineage of Shogaku Shunryu Suzuki in the UK and Ireland for many years to come.

Previous issues are available [here](#)

Get involved

Facebook group

For general discussion and socialising about Dancing Mountains and related events on Facebook, please click the link above. Business matters and decisions are made separately via an email list - please contact us if you want to be part of this.

Local Contacts

Visit the [Local Groups webpage](#) for details of Dancing Mountains groups in your area, and the [Diary](#) for their regular meeting dates and times.

Next Issue

The Summer edition will have a theme around "Moving from Light to Darkness". We welcome your articles, poetry, pictures, letters, retreat reflections and book reviews! Publication date: 31st **September**, deadline for submission of material 1st September. Submissions to the Newsletter/Website: Michael Elsmere, 07817 604156
Address: Westerly, Washbourne, Totnes, TQ9 7UF
melsmere@hotmail.com

Membership

You already belong, so why not become a member? - Download a printable [membership form](#) and support Dancing Mountains.

[Unsubscribe from this list](#)

For enquiries related to this newsletter please email: devin@dancingmountains.org.uk

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Issue 28;

Article

Priest Training With Tenshin Reb Anderson

By Angyu Devin Ashwood

Last summer, Rebecca, Bev and I all spoke to Tenshin Roshi (Reb Anderson Roshi) about our wish to ordain as priests in the lineage of Suzuki Roshi. As far as I know, since the 1980's, Tenshin Roshi has only ever agreed to train priests in residence at Green Gulch and has required a five year commitment to this residential training. For various reasons, Rebecca, Bev and I are all unable to fulfil this commitment, as many who have come before us have also been unable, however, present circumstances have led Reb to have a change of heart and he has opened to the possibility of working with visiting senior priests such as Ingen Breen and Catherine Gammon to ordain and train us in the UK. This turning has come as a welcome surprise to many of us, and it opens the real possibility of establishing Suzuki Roshi's lineage firmly on English soil. The readiness of the candidates and the evolution of the sangha they would serve, seem to have come together at this critical time, and we are grateful to Tenshin Roshi for supporting this opportunity to grow together.



On my recent visit to Green Gulch, I took the opportunity to speak with many senior priests there about what it is to train as a priest and how this might translate into the more flexible arrangement of us training from afar. The main theme that came out of this for me was how priest training was a community enterprise. As priest candidates, we have been meeting and talking with each other and Myoyu who has already ordained, but will need to complete his training here in the UK with us. Our conversations have been exploring our motivation and what would be different were we to receive priest ordination with Tenshin Roshi. In particular we have been considering the forms of practice that would make up the container for our training.

It seems important to me that to fulfil our ordination intentions to serve in the UK, we seek to deepen the mutual support of our sangha. In this spirit, we have shared enthusiasm that others might approach their teacher to explore joining us on this journey. We invite your ideas, energy and commitment to help this project in whatever way seems appropriate.

With deep respect and gratitude,

Angyu Devin Ashwood

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Article

Zen's Chinese heritage - The First Zen Masters

By Michael

Since Tenshin Reb Anderson's inspiring talks in his 2014 retreat in Fyllingbo, Sweden concerning our fourth Chinese ancestor Dayi Daoxin I have read more widely and researched the lives and legends of these earliest zen masters. I have been intrigued and fascinated by their practice and fortitude, their insight and compassion, as well as their eccentricity and humour, especially their humour!



This article, the first of a series, is my attempt to remind readers of Mountain Silence of the debt that we owe to these men and women, not unlike us, who often devoted themselves to practice under very difficult circumstances. As with any good story we should begin at the beginning or, rather near the beginning. When Bodhidharma in the 5th century C.E. set off from India to take, at his teacher's Prajnadhara's behest, Mahayana teachings to China, Buddhism had already been established there since the 1st C.E. The perilous journey took three years travelling through the Straits of Malacca to Guangzhou in Southern China. Bodhidharma remained here for some time, possibly acquainting himself with the language, before travelling north where the legend of his meeting with Emperor Liang Wudi (Wu) has become the supreme example of 'pointing at the mind to reveal Buddha nature'.

The Emperor had attained power through assassination and intrigue but, perhaps in an attempt to atone for these acts, became a great supporter of Buddhism. He therefore asked Bodhidharma what merit he would attain from such acts. The sage's answer was uncompromising 'No merit.'

I imagine Emperor Wu was somewhat taken aback by this, but to give him credit, he attempted to save face by asking Bodhidharma to explain the highest truth of Buddhism. Again the answer was koan like and enigmatic, 'Emptiness nothing holy.'

By now the Emperor must have felt the rug being pulled from under his feet and in desperation queried 'Who is it that faces me.'

The sage's answer was again shocking and apparently senseless.

'I don't know.'

The Emperor was totally bemused but according to some stories intuited that he had had a life changing opportunity and missed it and wanted to send a messenger to call back Bodhidharma who had set off north. His vizier however realising that there was no way that such a master could be persuaded changed Wu's mind.

On Mt. Song at the Shaolin monastery Bodhidharma spent nine years 'facing a wall'. It is said that at the end of this extended session the sage wished to return to India but other accounts say he was poisoned by jealous rivals but was then encountered by a monk three years later wandering in the Himalayas carrying one sandal. When this story reached the new Emperor he had Bodhidharma's grave opened only to find it empty except for one sandal!

Scholars agree that a text known as 'Outline of Practice,' was probably written by Bodhidharma.

Next time: The Second patriarch Dazu Huike 487-593 C.E.

Much of the information in this article is based on the detailed account in 'Zen's Chinese Heritage.' by Andy Ferguson published by Wisdom Books 2000 and several Wikkipedia articles.

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Article

DM Members' Spending Survey 2016 - Summary

By Chris Brown DM Treasurer

- We conducted a brief survey of Dancing Mountains members to help in making decisions about how to direct our financial resources in 2016. Respondents (13 in total) scored different categories of expenditure in terms of their importance, and 3 people left further comments as shown on these slides.

- The results are shown in a chart. Overall, it's clear that there is no category that was overwhelmingly thought to be more or less important than all the others, as the difference in scores amounted to only about a 20% difference between the highest and lowest scored categories.

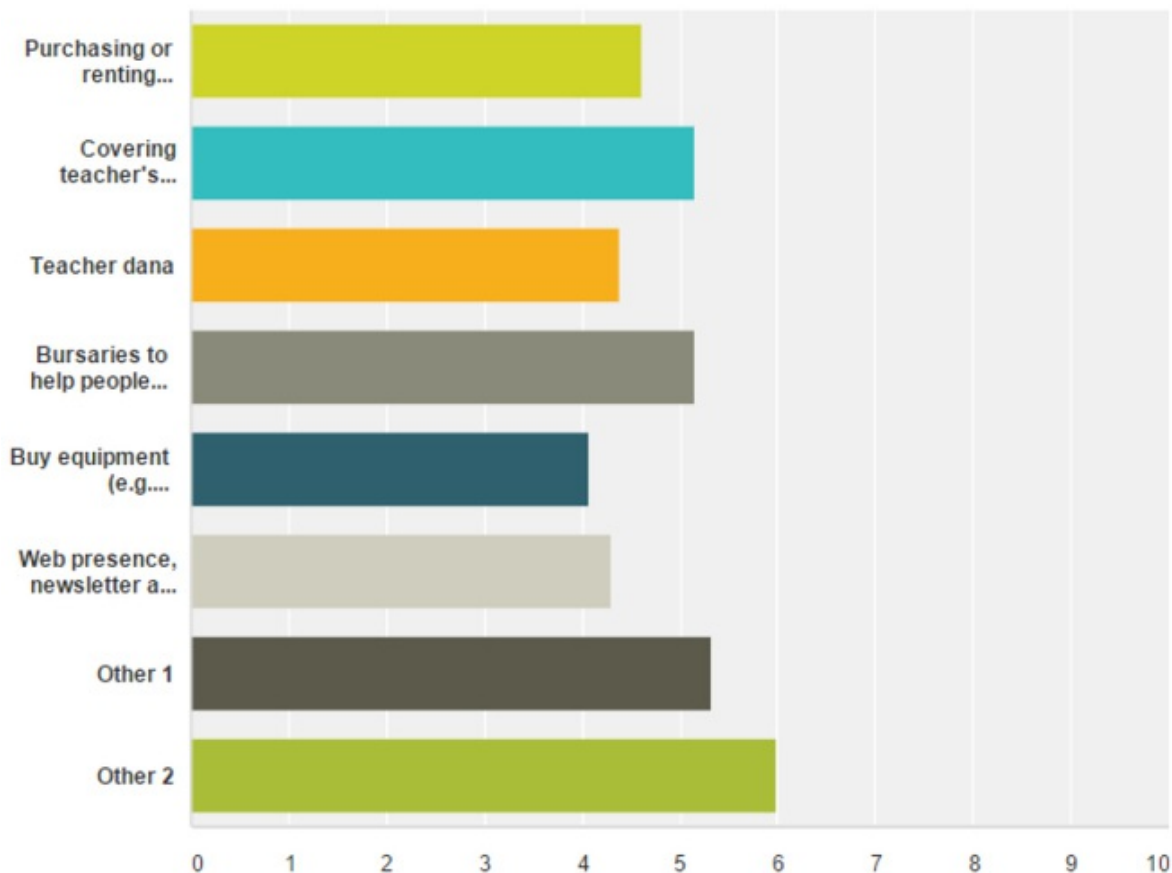
- We interpret these results to mean that we should continue to be supporting all of these activities at appropriate times, and not give very large resources towards to one type of activity if it is at the expense of others.

	Extremely important	Very important	Quite important	Quite unimportant	Very unimportant	Extremely unimportant	Total	Weighted Average
Purchasing or renting practice places	30.77% 4	23.08% 3	23.08% 3	23.08% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	13	4.62
Covering teacher's travel expenses	38.46% 5	38.46% 5	23.08% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	13	5.15
Teacher dana	30.77% 4	15.38% 2	30.77% 4	15.38% 2	0.00% 0	7.69% 1	13	4.38
Bursaries to help people afford to attend retreats	30.77% 4	53.85% 7	15.38% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	13	5.15
Buy equipment (e.g. meditation cushions, bells, statues, etc.)	0.00% 0	23.08% 3	61.54% 8	15.38% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	13	4.08
Web presence, newsletter and other media	7.69% 1	23.08% 3	61.54% 8	7.69% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	13	4.38
Other 1	66.67% 2	0.00% 0	33.33% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	3	5.33
Other 2	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	1	6.00



How important are the following activities are for Dancing Mountains to support?

Answered: 13 Skipped: 0



Further comments on "Other" responses

Showing 3 responses

supporting practitioners to practice "in their locality" 2. In the face of the climate/ecological/energy crisis, support to address the problem of flying in order to study/practice....I

Dana to those in need

I would like 01\11 to spend some time and money on "recruitment" - finding effective ways of sharing our particular form of practice to the masses somehow. It may mean actively bringing other zen teachers to the UK who could perhaps do what Ingen does and travel around the country doing weekend/day retreats but also have a central and perhaps consistent venue that we could use regularly for zen-related events. Thanks for asking.

Order of spending priorities

1. Covering teacher travel expenses
2. Bursaries for retreat attendance
3. Purchasing / renting practice places
4. Teacher dana
5. Web presence / newsletter / media
6. Equipment

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Article

A Virtual Practice Period - Sitting together Across the World

By Michael Kogan Muju

During the weeks in January 2016 when the January practice period was held in Green Gulch Zen Farm in California Wendy Klein based in Cambridge UK once again initiated for us a 'virtual' practice period. This offered the possibility to followers sitting in the Soto zen Tradition of Shogaku Shunryu Suzuki to be 'together' with those practising across the ocean in USA. Those interested vowed to sit everyday of the three week period, to chant the Prajna Paramita Heart of Great Perfect Wisdom Sutra and to listen to one or more of Tenshin Reb Anderson's talks that are available on the web at <http://www.rebanderson.org/> or at Gaia House site Dharma Seeds <http://dharmaseed.org/teacher/384/>. Wendy in particular recommended that we view/listen to a series of 6 talks given by Reb in Sacramento in 2014 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UlwK1UH8E7c>, Zen Training for the Welfare of the World. If you haven't listened already I strongly recommend these talks. For me it was almost as if Reb was in the room. The responses to the virtual practice that came in from Germany, Denmark, Sweden and UK demonstrated that this form of virtual practice can be a powerful way of bringing together practitioners who geographically are far apart. This seems to me to be an inspiring and pragmatic approach that Dancing Mountains could utilise to help empower and support its members and sanghas. Deep Bows to Wendy for this initiative.



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[Calligraphy - The Art of the Brush](#)

By Josh Zatz Joyous Devotion Silent Light

Josh Zatz has been studying the ancient Eastern practice of calligraphy and offers these images at the head of several articles as the result of his early work.

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Article

[Dancing Mountains and Branching Streams - In the Silence the Streams Flow](#)

By Editor

Recently we were invited to join Branching Streams an organisation within San Francisco Zen Centre that supports their outlying sangha both in the USA and internationally. After discussion within the Board and seeking advice from Tenshin Reb Anderson it was decided that for the sangha to be a member of Branching Streams would bring DM into closer and more intimate contact with our 'mother house' and we would benefit from support offered by Branching Streams to support teachers from SFZC when they travel to outlying sanghas.

Once we had accepted Branching Streams invitation we received this letter from Steve Weintraub who heads up branching Streams for SFZC.

Steve Weintraub was ordained as a Zen priest in 1973, and he has been teaching Buddhism at San Francisco Zen Center, Tassajara, and Green Gulch Farm for over 30 years. In 1994, he received dharma transmission—full authorization as a teacher—in the lineage of Shunryu Suzuki.

Dear Branching Streams Leaders,

1 - Windbell Set:

I am very pleased to be able to offer to each of you, to each of the Sanghas in our Branching Streams Network, a set of the print magazine that San Francisco Zen Center published for almost 40 years

, Windbell. And I am further pleased to report that all the costs involved -- shipping, handling and other incidental costs -- will be completely covered by funds from our Yearly Contribution Fund. This is the first use of those funds, and its great to be able to use them to benefit any/all Branching Streams Sanghas who wish to make use of this opportunity

I consulted with the Branching Steams Advisory Committee and they are all on board for this use of these funds. And therefore the cost to you is zero.

Windbell

set:

This Set of Windbells (20-30 issues) has editions of the magazine from 1968 until 2005, when we began to publish Sangha News Weekly online. Virtually every issue has an edited Dharma Talk by Suzuki Roshi, not otherwise available. There is a great range and variety of articles and items in the Windbells as well, including: Dharma Talks by Katagiri Roshi and other zen teachers, essays by visiting scholars, articles on the development of SFZC as well as, more widely, the development of zen and buddhism in the West, much original art work, and many many archival photographs

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By Editor

To all readers please note that the Facilitators Support and Training Retreat is now planned for the weekend of 22/23 October 2016 this had previously been planned to take place with the Hebden Bridge Sesshin on 6/8th May but this was not possible. Ingen will attend to support the trainings on these new dates. These weekends offer a big opportunity to support those who facilitate sanghas in different parts of UK but are also open to sangha who wish to practice with others or develop understanding and practice of aspects of Soto Zen forms and ritual. Costs and venue to be notified soon.

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