

**Were a man of society to pass by here,
I would retreat even deeper into the mountains.**
Daibai Hojo

July 2023

Dear all,

We all keep longing for love, harmony and peace in this world.

When Buddha awakened, he immediately understood: everything is already here, everything is good as it is; everything is already in peace and harmony. Only man with his desires, ideas, concepts, with his ego-consciousness, duality, constantly creates unrest, chaos, strife and war. This chaos, the suffering of mankind, he then tries to fight with new ideas, desires and concepts. This is like trying to extinguish fire with fire.

The approaching summertime and the holiday season are the ideal moment to let go of this fruitless thinking, to leave the hamster wheel in which we find ourselves, to retreat just like in Buddha's time and take some time out - "spiritual holidays", as Master Kodo Sawaki calls it, to sit down in Zazen, in silence, and quiet our mind by stopping moving (with the body) and stopping being moved (in the mind) and letting our basic nature, our Buddha-nature emerge, letting the cosmic energy work. This Buddha-nature is clear, formless, intangible. This is not just a question of place, but of mind. By practising together with the Sangha, by being naturally connected in and through Zazen, intuitively, by ourselves, we come into harmony and peace.

To enter deep into the mountains of Zazen means to let go of the man of society with all desires, greed, *bonno* and delusion, by ourselves becoming the mountain - still, strong, stable and alive -; to let go of our limitations on ourselves, to become deeply familiar with ourselves; one with our body, our breathing, our mind. In this way, unconsciously, naturally, by ourselves, we come into oneness with all that surrounds us; feel deeply the dignity that is realised through Zazen, which reflects the form of the universe; and we can follow the cosmic order.

Zazen - being Buddha whilst remaining an ordinary human.

I wish everyone beautiful and inspiring summer days.

With warm regards,

In Gassho,

Eishuku Monika