

March, 2019

Dear all,

The sky is cold and all things come to an end. If you are caught up in difficulties or trapped, this transition will solve everything. And the spring wind blows and the flower of the old, dried out peach tree blooms afresh.

So goes a poem by Master Daichi, whom Michel loved, just like Master Deshimaru and Kodo Sawaki before him. ***The sky is cold and all things come to an end.*** This sentence refers to the mind of zazen; the mind becomes cold and quiet and returns to its point of origin. Michel sometimes spoke of the difficult times after the death of Master Deshimaru, which were times of upheaval and doubt for him as well. He told me then about an encounter he once had with a Tibetan master, who was familiar with Master Deshimaru, and who said: 'simply follow the mind of your master, beyond happiness and misfortune, without concern for victory or defeat, and let others share the experience of your practice.'

This advice continued to provide guidance to Michel beyond all difficulties and discussions and came to guide me and us all too. Shortly before his own death Michel wrote the following inscription to me in an edition of the Shinjinmei: **'Faith in the true mind is paramount.'** It is the deep faith in this ever-existing Buddha mind, the mind of Zazen, that allows us to not only see darkness in what is dark, not only light in what is bright, but instead the absolute pervasion of both sides and beyond.

Michel always placed a great emphasis on the pure mind of practice as the foundation of all actions, beyond all discrimination and categories, *mushotoku*, without gain or loss. Beyond speech or silence, it expresses itself in the sangha's *gyoji*, without interruption, without beginning or ending, as the 'pure wind of spring' that Master Daichi spoke of. Master Ryokan also says: **'a leaf falls from the tree, it turns and shows its other side.'** The time after Michel's death was naturally characterised by change and upheaval. Some forms may not be the same, and yet the original mind of our ancestors remains present, the eternally new surrounded by the eternally old, as Master Kodo Sawaki says.

Today, in this year of remembrance of Michel, who died 10 years ago, I would like to remember how important the continuation of zazen in the Dojo was to Michel, as an 'oasis of stillness' amidst the restlessness of everyday life, with faith in the true mind. It was his deep wish for everyone to entrust themselves to the power of zazen and to harmonise through practicing together, to find one another like in the 'swing' of a large symphony. In this way, in the seamless continuation of the daily practice of zazen, of ceremony and genmai, zazen days and sesshin, the Dojo blossomed into a new strength. Aside from other activities and introductions to zazen for school classes and other groups are also offered, the Dojo present in the life of the city.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt thanks to Master Yuko Okamoto and his wife Chie of Teishoji for many years of generous and unlimited support, as well as to Michiyo

Uoya for her help with accompanying and organising our trips to Japan; in particular to *Seiten* Bodo Hammes and *Kaihô* Richard Fürst and the Zen Dojo in Vienna too, as well of course as to all practitioners from the Zen Dojo in Zurich, for all of our friends of the way, who make it possible with their daily practice to keep the teaching and practice of zazen alive, to continue it and to pass it on.

Day by day, breath by breath, point by point.

Zazen – nothing special – and yet extraordinary.

Here's to lots more zazen,
I shin den shin,
In gasshō,

Eishuku Monika Leibundgut