
The Dune of Schwanheim

By Isolde Schnorbach, Trier (Germany), June 2017

After zazen in the Keisei Dojo of Frankfurt, a dozen people went by bus, tramway and car to the region of the Schwanheim Dune, a part of the green belt of Frankfurt.

The Dune of Schwanheim is an inland dune which is protected, because one can find there rare animals and plants, as well as “poor in nutrients sandy grounds” biotopes. The region has its origin in the glacial period of 10.000 years ago, after a shift of the sand quartz without lime of the Main, which is close.

During the hike which we did partially in silence, the participants were invited to become aware of ecological relations and of the negative effects of human activity on the environment.

In the region of the Schwanheim Dune, the ground is naturally poor in nutrients, which happens more and more rarely today in cultivated fields. Because of the poverty of the nutrients and the deep tranquillity of the region, many plants and animals could thrive there. The cultivated areas, on the other hand, are often nowadays excessively fertilized and these species are pushed away by nitrogenous plants with a profusion of foliage and growing very fast.

In the region of the Schwanheim Dune, we can therefore already observe along the paths the influence of the human being: the presence of waste and the footprints push away the typical plants of the “poor in nutrients sandy grounds”. The plants show us that, by comparison with the quiet zones, the conditioning of ground and water are already “anthropogenic” in a well characterized way (intervention of the man).

We also mentioned that conservation and use are important aspects which characterize a community of species of animals and plants. In the case of the Schwanheim Dune, it is the sheep pastures that prevent the landscape from becoming a bush, and this naturally leads to the fact that the rare communities of lives on siliceous ground poor meadows disappear in favour of a forest community of life.

Conclusion of our small hike: we all can take action to help the nature, from which we depend, to keep its diversity of flora and fauna and to help the ground, the water and the climate to remain safe for humanity ... and this by leading a sustainable lifestyle and by reducing our consumption.