
The classes of our city

By Claude Cannizzo

Since one year now, the Butsu Shin Zendo has been regularly welcoming primary school children, at the city of Mulhouse's request.

The "City classes" is a citizen's initiative.

By discovering structures and institutions of their environment, the pupils learn to live together in the diversity, the multiplicity.

We deliver messages of respect, tolerance and peace.

The children are susceptible to spirituality.

We speak, to these young people from 8 to 10 years old, of letting go, of energy.

One of our practitioner welcomes them during the Wednesday morning zazen. After a chat, the classes go to the gaetan to attend, silently, the end of zazen.

Impressed, amazed, they show straightaway a great respect for what they see: people sitting in front of a wall without moving.

Their eyes open wide when the kyosaku moves at the kaijo to strike the wood. The sounds amuse them, but we feel that they also perceive another dimension by attending the end of zazen.

A class asked us to sing sutras.

Spontaneously, they are full of respect and without fear.

They control their curiosity, but nevertheless they ask a lot of questions.

Some have more difficulties staying calm, but each of them, with the teacher and the parents who are with them, try the posture.

The curiosity and the surprise give way to enjoyment.

All concentrate and let themselves be touched by the peace and the silence of zazen. After that, they keep asking questions, and some of them even stay sitting in the posture.

During one hour and a half, the children are attentive to our answers, our explanations, our words, they are attentive to zazen. They stare at our kimonos, kesa and rakusu and discover the simplicity of the Master.

Their imagination grows richer, they make gasshô.

These moment of exchange were very rich for each of us. Children sent us a thank-you card, the teachers made photos.

More and more classes wish now to come to the dojo to share this experience.

We cannot welcome them all, but it is with pleasure that we wait for the visit of the next ones.