
Taisen Deshimaru's coming to Europe

By Lluís Nansen Salas

It has been fifty years now since the arrival of Taisen Deshimaru in Europe and many of the practitioners of Zen today didn't know him personally. But even if we didn't know him personally we have read his books which are full of strength and determination to practice zazen and we have received the practice from his disciples in the sesshins and dojos that have been opening everywhere.

The fact that we have not met him in person, this does not mean that we cannot feel deep gratitude to him for all that he has given us, especially by his example, the determination and detachment when he left his life in Japan to come to Europe with nothing more than his kesa and his bowl, without further support other than from the friends who accommodated him in a health-food shop.

Thus, giving it all without fear, without reservation, without calculation or gain, he has always aroused great admiration in me, a sincere desire of wanting to be like him, and I do not mean by his personal characteristics, but to be like him in his faith in the practice of Dharma, beyond all discernment. And that, despite not having known him, his faith still inspires me in remembering this fiftieth anniversary, I can only express nothing but a profound gratefulness.

A deep gratitude for having come here and leaving his life behind, and bringing this practice to fill every day of our lives, a deep gratitude for having created this great Sangha which is our refuge, a deep gratitude for having taught disciples who have become our teachers. So, when I ask: What is the meaning of Taisen Deshimaru coming to Europe? My eyes become teary full of gratitude and I do not want anything else but do zazen and share it with all the others beings.