

## Earth Caravan in Balkan 2018 report

'Share happiness and freedom!' - Earth Caravan is a global pilgrimage whose mission is to share happiness and freedom on earth through art, music, intercultural exchange, shiatsu therapy and interreligious prayer.



### 1. Earth Caravan Balkan 1st to 7th of July 2018

Since 2015 the caravan has been travelling through Japan, Europe, Middle East and Canada, every year visiting the places where pain and trauma of war and conflict are still present. We share our strong message of hope and healing. The activities are rich in variety; from peace concerts to Tao shiatsu treatment, from charity events to peace cycling and art events to support local projects working for a better future. Impressions of the first Earth Caravan in the Balkans.

#### **Tuzla (Bosnia):**

Tao shiatsu introduction workshop at Peace Flame House (Kuca Plamena Mira).



**Srebrenica (Bosnia):** Visit to Potocari genocide memorial, the brewery 'Silvertown', the project 'Srebrenica, City of Hope' and his eco-farm, participation in 'Drina adventure' an eco-tourism project.



*Brewery Silvertown*



*Eco farm of the project in Osmace*

#### **Peace cycling from Bosnia to Serbia and a multicultural exchange in Petrovac na Mlavi:**

Reception of the 'Message for peace' by the mayor of Petrovac na Mlavi. A multicultural exchange event at primary school 'Osnovna Skola Jovan Serbanovic': traditional dance and song, Origami, Japanese and Hebrew calligraphy, sushi, dolls and necklace making workshop.



### 2. 25 Years after the war

In the 90's the Balkan wars and Bosnian civil war have taken place in former Yugoslavia. This was described as 'Ethnic' conflict. But it is surprising to discover that this is actually not entirely true. From the DNA perspective, Croats, Serbs, Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims) are the same folk. Only they believe in different religions (Catholic, Serbian Orthodox and Muslim) and the historical background differs according to their colonial past, one country dominated by Austria-Hungary, the other by the Ottoman Empire.

During the war, the words 'Ethnic conflict' was used on purpose to stir up fear against other groups. This war left deep wounds in each country. It is 25 years ago that the war came to an end, but the traumas of the people and the societies are so deep and difficult to heal. In Bosnia and Serbia the unemployment rate is between 50 and 60%, young people prefer to find their future abroad. Political conflict hampers the reconstruction of the countries.

Today the relationship between Balkan countries are still sensitive. Nevertheless there are initiatives setting the goal to create togetherness again. Srebrenica is a touching example. The contact between younger generations also increases little by little. So there is a hope for sure. 'If we can live here together, then it is possible everywhere in the world.'(City of Hope) This is a truly universal message to the world.

### **3. The mission – connecting people**

1. Support local projects that stimulate economic/social reconstruction.
2. Inviting participants from all countries to learn about the reality in Bosnia and Serbia, in order to create international basis for support.
3. Stimulating exchange within Balkan countries creating a network.
4. Creating opportunity for meeting among projects and activists for possible cooperation or mutual support.



### **4. Live in oneness**

The underlying philosophy of all Earth Caravan activities is the practice of 'union of self and others' (Jita Funi), one of the basic attitude of Buddhism. This means nothing other than living with empathy, described in the Bible "be glad with those who are happy, have sorrow with those who are grieved".

'Jita Funi' means also staying united against all dividing force, awakening to the fact that "the interests of self and others" are not in conflict, provided everyone confronts their own ego and keeps it inside. The process of overcoming ego is not easy, but definitely promises a happier and freer life. The core of every spiritual path is here – the compassion embraces all gaps and melt separation between self and others. This way allows even deep traumas to be overcome.

Earth Caravan aims to spread this state of oneness in each heart; being responsible for the happiness of others. Even more: by Tao shiatsu and Ki and Heart workshops we offer, one can sense with his own body how much this attitude gives you and others a warm, peaceful and strong energy. How we can transform pain into joy. What kind of action is in harmony with the Universe. We believe only the wisdom and love experienced from within can bring true healing, quenching the thirst of the soul. From the bottom of the heart we wish this way of life may encourage the local citizens to create a bright future!

The summer program will take place from 15th until 23th June 2019, ending with a cultural street festival in Srebrenica. You will be taken to the very heart of Balkan: discover the beautiful nature, rich cultures and local foods, warm-hearted people. Everyone welcome, join us to the caravan!

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