

Muneyoshi Hase

## On Being Affirmed Across Time

2022

It is extremely difficult for people to recognise and accept one another's differences beyond notions of good and evil, or of liking and disliking.

I sometimes feel this even within my own family.

It is all the more so when it comes to others.

What truly matters for us as human beings should not be something extraordinary, but something found within the ordinary fabric of everyday life: freedom, equality, consideration, compassion, attentiveness, tolerance, devotion, empathy, emotional understanding.

Yet truth does not reside in words.

When our eyes are drawn only to immediate interests, we lose sight of what is essential.

The process that is myself is built upon the benefits and sacrifices of those who came before me.

Humanity has lived — and continues to live — even under the most absurd of circumstances.

With age, I have gradually come to understand the feelings of those predecessors more honestly.

Will we be affirmed across time?

Will we be able to leave something behind, to pass something on to our children?

Each day, I encounter “things that do not speak.”

They are also myself — a self that seeks to understand, and to walk together with others.

Amid the deep green of the Aokigahara forest, these thoughts came to me.