

Shunryū Suzuki-rōshi
LAY ORDINATION CEREMONY¹
Sunday, August 23, 1970
San Francisco
SOUND PROBLEM

Tape operator (possibly Yvonne Rand): First part of Rōshi's address here is inaudible on the original tape.

Suzuki-rōshi:

... and obtain similar to result according to [1 word unclear] like our [1-2] bodhisattva way. [2-3] bodhisattva spirit. [3-4] of our practice. And how you, you know, actually practice may be in [1-2]. You say "*Hai!*" That is the point of practice. When you say "*Hai,*" you are one with your "*hai.*" One with your Zen. One with your [1]. And one with your [1].

So when you say *Hai!*—or when you say "Yes, I will!"—then there is true mind of helping, you know. And if you cannot say "*Hai!*" from the bottom of heart, with all of your strength, that practice doesn't work.

[5-7] start with this practice of "Yes, I will!" That is the fundamental practice of bodhisattva practice. And to have complete perfect understanding of how important it is to say "*Hai*" is your whole life's practice.

Thank you.

[*Inkin* bell rings twice. Tape recorder is stopped and restarted after an unknown period. Then *kaishaku* clappers are struck three times.]

Suzuki-rōshi:² If you want to be [1-2] and practicing our [1] precepts, you should start with pure practice of confession. There are two ways and two meanings in the Buddhist way of confession. However, you have the way of confession transmitted from the Buddha through the patriarchs to you. Reciting after my words:

¹ According to Zen Center records, this lay ordination was performed on August 23, 1970. The 36 ordainees included Carl Bielefeldt, David Chadwick, Katherine Thanas, Jerome Peterson, and Yvonne Rand. The original tape was labeled 7/23/70, but August is correct. The date was confirmed on the back of David Chadwick's *rakusu* in SR's own hand.

² The following several paragraphs are similar to the priest's ordination ceremony that Suzuki-rōshi followed for Paul Discoe and Reb Anderson earlier in the month (see lecture SR-70-08-09).

[Clappers 1X.]

Suzuki-rōshi (chanting): All the *karma* ever created by me—

All ordinees (chanting): —since of old, on account of greed, anger, and self-delusion, which has no beginning, born of my body, speech, and thought ... [Tape recorder was stopped and restarted after an unknown interval.]³

Suzuki-rōshi: ... and pure [1] and pure heart. This ordination ceremony is [2-3 words]. This is actually the second time—second ordination ceremony for Zen Center, because while we didn't have lay ordination ceremony [2-3] because I didn't want to give you some special idea of Zen Buddhist. Bodhisattva way—according to bodhisattva teaching, every—actually every sentient being is bodhisattva. Whether or not they are aware of it, they are actually disciples of the Buddha. As this is our conviction, we didn't—I didn't want to give you some special idea of Zen Buddhist. But time has come for us to strive for more sincerely to help others.

As we have so many students here, inside and outside of Zen Center, we need more help. And I decided to have lay ordination for you just to help others, but not to give you some special idea of lay Buddhist, because all of us are Buddhists actually. This is not [1-2] idea. This is the idea or spirit for [2-3 words] Buddha's way.

Accordingly, our way is like Avalokiteshvara Buddha—Bodhisattva. When he want to save ladies, he take—he will take the form of lady. For boys, he will take form of boy. For fishermen, he will be a fisherman. More sophisticated Chinese expression is "to be like white bird in the snow." White bird in the snow. When people are like snow, we should be like snow. When people become black, we should be black. And being always with them, without any idea of discrimination, and we can help others in its true sense, without giving anything—any special teaching or material. This is actually bodhisattva way.

We are—how we actually—this kind of freedom from everything and this kind of acting [?]
—this kind of soft-minded—this is true practice [1-2 words: "already"?]. You may think we are forcing you in some form—forcing some rituals on you, or forcing some special teaching on you, and forcing you to say, "Yes, I will!" But those things are provided for you just to be like a white bird in the snow.

³ The following text appears to be the original lecture upon which the edited *Wind Bell* lecture was based. Earlier fragments printed above were not included in the *Wind Bell* lecture.

When you [2 words: "go through"?] your practice, you will—practice doesn't [1-2], you will have [1-2] in spite of practice and point of helping others. This is why we had ordination ceremony today.

For all of us, included—including various great teachers, it is not at all easy to be like white bird in the snow. Somehow, anyway, we should make best effort to be like a white bird. No matter if previous teacher [1-2 words: "passed"?].

In this way, if you help yourself through practice, you can help others without anything. Just to be with people will be enough.

I am so grateful to have this kind of very very formal ordination ceremony. Without the guidance of Tatsugami-rōshi [?], who came to visit Zen Center—and who came just to visit Zen Center—just to help our practice. [1] we have this kind of very formal ordination ceremony here at Zen Center.

After sewing your robe, in spite of busy everyday life you live [?], I think this is also good example of the Buddha. So even [though] we are busy, there is a way to practice the most formal practice. Even though humans—all human being in the city are busy, there is no reason why they cannot practice our way to be like Avalokiteshvara [?]. If all of us practice pure [?] way [3-4] and practice our way and doing our practice of bodhisattva, the result will be great.

Thank you very much.

Source: Original tape transcribed by Bill Redican (28 June 2000). The second part of this lecture was printed in an edited form in *Wind Bell*, Fall-Winter 1970-71, Vol. IX, No. 3-4, p. 9-11. Sound problem: Level and quality of the original tape are very poor. This lecture should be audio-enhanced if possible.