

SUZUKI-ROSHI*: As we have so many students here, inside and outside of Zen Center, we need more help. I decided to have Lay Ordination for you old students just to help others, not to give some special idea of lay Buddhist because all of us are Buddhists, actually. Every sentient being is a Bodhisattva, whether or not he is aware of it. As this is our conviction I didn't want to give you some special idea of lay Buddhist, but the time has come for us to strive more sincerely to help others.

Our way is like Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva. When he wants to save ladies he takes the form of a lady; for boys he takes the form of a boy; for fishermen he becomes a fisherman. A more sophisticated Chinese expression is to be like a white bird in the snow. When people are like snow, we should be like snow. When people become black, we should be black. And always being with them, without any idea of discrimination, we can help others in its true sense, without giving anything, any special teaching or materials. This is actually the Bodhisattva way.

*From his remarks at the Lay Ordination ceremony in August, 1970.



Softness of mind is the foundation of our practice to help others. You may think we are forcing you into some form, forcing some rituals on you or some special teaching; forcing you to say "Yes, I will." But these things are provided for you just to be like a white bird in the snow.

When you practice zazen in this way, you have the point of zazen and the point of practice. This is why we had an ordination ceremony today. None of us, including various great teachers, find it easy to be like a white bird in the snow. But somehow, we should make our best effort. If you help yourself through practice, you can help others without anything. Just to be with people will be enough.

In spite of your busy, everyday lives you found time to sew your *rakusus**. I think this is a good example of the Buddhist way; even though we are busy

*The small vestment worn as an outer garment, symbol of the Buddhist robe. True to the Buddha's original robe, made from rags, the *rakusu* is sewn of 19 small pieces. "*Namu kie Butsu*"—"I take refuge in the Buddha"—is said with each stitch, thus sewing hundreds of Buddhas into the cloth and ultimately making the *rakusu* Buddha himself.

there is some way to practice the most formal practice. Even though all human beings in the city are busy, there is no reason why they cannot practice our way. If all join our practice of being a Bodhisattva, the result will be great.