

Our teacher is gone. Nothing can express our feeling for Suzuki-roshi except the complete continuation of his teaching. We continue his existence in the light of his mind and spirit as our own and Buddha's mind and spirit. He made clear that the Other Shore is here. This time includes past, present and future, our existence, his existence, Buddha's time. It was and is true for Suzuki-roshi. We are him and he is us. He expressed this in teaching us by going away.

Gone, gone to the Other Shore! Beyond the Other Shore! Bodhi! Svaha!

*Gyate gyate hara gyate hara so gyate! Boji! Sowaka!*



IN A LETTER that went out to some of you from Yvonne Rand, President of Zen Center, she wrote: "Suzuki-roshi died early in the morning, Saturday, December 4, 1971 just after the sounding of the opening bell of the five-day sesshin commemorating Buddha's Enlightenment. He left us very gently and calmly. And he left Zen Center very carefully, teaching us in everything he did. There is almost no sense of his being gone, for he continues to live clearly in the practice and community that were his life work. His last appearance in public was on November 21 at the ceremony to install Richard Baker-roshi as his successor, according to his long-standing plan. He left specific directions for the ways he wanted the community to develop, and his wishes are being carried out."

Mrs. Suzuki, Otohiro his son, and Baker-roshi were with Suzuki-roshi when he died. Shortly after, the older disciples came up from the Zendo and moved him to the room where he usually met with students for *dokusan* (personal interview) or tea. The disciples offered incense and chanted the Heart Sutra in Japanese and English. Then all of the one hundred and fifteen students attending the sesshin came up and one at a time offered incense. They were joined by many of the older students from all over the Bay Area. The incense offering lasted until he was taken to the funeral home late in the afternoon. The funeral was to be done according to Japanese custom here in America. We waited a week for the arrival from Japan of Hoichi, his son and Abbot of Suzuki-roshi's former temple, Rinso-in, and for Niwa-roshi, his Dharma-brother and Abbot of Eihei-ji in Tokyo. During this week two students at a time sat with him and did zazen and helped the many people who came to sit or offer incense.

THE FUNERAL CEREMONY was calm and very beautiful, on Sunday, December 12 at 2 p.m. It was led by Niwa-roshi, Katagiri-roshi, and Moriyama-sensei, the successor of Suzuki-roshi as Head Priest of Soko-ji Temple. About five hundred people attended, including Buddhist priests of many schools and countries. Hoichi-sensei and Baker-roshi, as Suzuki-roshi's direct disciples, bowed and offered incense for all the disciples. The ceremony ended with a statement by Baker-roshi of all our feeling:

"There is no easy way to be a teacher or a disciple, although it must be the greatest joy in this life. There is no easy way to come to a land without Buddhism and leave it having brought many disciples, priests and laymen well along the path, and having changed the lives of thousands of persons throughout this country; no easy way to have begun and nurtured a Sangha and community that include a mountain monastery, a large city practice center, and other practice centers in California and elsewhere.

"He brought us Buddha, himself, and an understanding of Buddha which included us. There was room for everyone. He knew himself that well. He brought us Dharma, such a thorough understanding and living of the teaching that grasses, trees, flowers, tables did actually teach us. He brought us Sangha, the traditional ancient Buddhist community, giving us a full sense of how to live through Buddhist tradition, to learn from his own Japanese culture, and to include our own culture through which Buddhism must find its expression.

"But this 'no-easy-way', this extraordinary accomplishment, rested easily with him, for he gave us, from his own true nature, our true nature. In Hazel Paget's funeral ceremony and Trudy Dixon's funeral ceremony he spoke of three minds:



*Niwa-roshi and, behind him, Katagiri-roshi*

Joyful Mind, the joy of Buddha's mind in all conditions; Compassionate Mind, which includes all of us without any idea of self; and Big Mind, as big as a mountain, deep as an ocean, without discrimination, penetrating fully and exactly, one with everything simultaneously.

"Through the intimate and unconditioned relationship of teacher and disciple, he left us intimate with Buddha and ourselves. He left as much as any man can leave, everything essential: the mind and heart of Buddha, the practice of Buddha, the teaching and life of Buddha. He is here, here in each one of us, if we want him, and in the life here, which was his life work to allow us to continue.

"Let us do everything possible to allow his passage, in many forms, to be complete, treating each other as Buddha. Let us each be reborn now. Let us realize our own true nature.

"At the beginning of Buddha's Enlightenment sesshin, just after the bell opening the first period of zazen, our great teacher, Suzuki Shunryu-daisho, joined Buddha. He passed with decision and gentleness. A few days before he died, when it was difficult for him to speak, I asked him, 'Where will we meet you?' A small hand came out from underneath the covers, made a small bow, and drew a circle in the air."