

ON ZAZEN AND THE SHINSANSHIKI CEREMONY (published June 1962, Wind Bell #7)

ON ZAZEN

While you do zazen you will come to understand yourself completely and realize that there is no such thing as an "I" which exists. Still, in this moment, there is something participating in cosmic activity. In this moment, something exists as a part of cosmic activity, or as a part of temporal existence and in this way "I" has an absolute value in itself.

If you think, "I practice zazen," that is a misunderstanding. Buddha practices zazen, not you. If you think, "I practice zazen," there will be many troubles. If you think, "Buddha practices zazen," there will be no trouble. Whether or not your zazen is painful or full of erroneous ideas, it is still Buddha's activity. There is no way to escape from Buddha's activity.

Thus you must accept yourself and devote yourself to yourself, or to Buddha, or to zazen. When you become yourself, zazen will become zazen.

THE SHINSANSHIKI CEREMONY

On May 20th Roshi Suzuki was installed as Master of Sokoji in the traditional Shinsanshiki Ceremony. For those of us who attended, it was an occasion of haunting beauty never to be forgotten. Zen Center members contributed much time, effort and money to its success and were rewarded handsomely. For those who could not attend, we are happy to reprint portions of the poems that Roshi Suzuki composed and read during service.

(At front door)

Like the birds I came—
No road under my feet,
A golden-chained gate
Unlocks itself.

(After mounting pulpit)

After I lift this one piece of incense,
It is still there;
Although it is still there
It is hard to lift.

Now I offer it to Buddha
And burn it—with no hand,
Repaying the benevolence of this temple's
Founder, successive patriarchs, and my
Master Gyokojun Soon Daiocho.

