

**Shunryū Suzuki-rōshi**  
**OPENING LECTURE AT PAGE STREET ZENDŌ:**  
**AMERICAN PRECEPTS**  
**November 22, 1969**  
**City Center, San Francisco**

I am so grateful with you to have chance to practice zazen in this, maybe, magnificent [laughs] building. I think we must be very grateful for Buddha and our successive patriarchs.

Can you hear me? Can you hear me?

I don't think I have much time to speak, but first of all, I want to express my gratitude and—and my confidence or my—I want to express my confidence in practicing with you. Whether we will be successful or not is, for me, out of question. I—if we [are] bothered by that kind of idea, we cannot do anything because our practice is always concentrated on present moment. If our practice in this moment is good, then next moment we will have good practice. And in this way, if we continue our practice, naturally we will have good practice forever. That is, as you know, our confidence in our practice.

Our group is now pretty many. We have many students now. When Hyakujō-zenji<sup>1</sup>—Hyakujō—established monastic life in China, many people came to monastery and wanted to practice with him. So Hyakujō-zenji set up *Hyakujō Shingi*. *Hyakujō Shingi* means—I—because Hyakujō established the rules of monastery, we call it—*shingi* is monastic—"pure rules." And because he established, for the first time for the Zen monk, the "pure precepts" or "pure rules." We call it *Hyakujō Shingi*.

Since then, in China, Buddhist or Zen Buddhist started to practice zazen according to—mostly according to the *Hyakujō Shingi*. In India they have precepts, but in China, before Hyakujō, they—Zen Buddhist did not have special precepts for themselves.

Precepts is, you know, two sides. One is, you know, prohibitory, negative pa- [partial word]—side, and the other side of it is to—how to generate our spirit—how to do something good. It is more positive side of the precepts. So the positive side is called *sazenmon*<sup>2</sup>—to do something good. And the negative side is *shi-akumon*.<sup>3</sup> *Shi-akumon* means to, you know—prohibitory side. There are two side.

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<sup>1</sup> Hyakujō Ekai (Baizhang Huaihai): 720-814. Ch'an master of T'ang period. Dharma successor of Baso Dōitsu.

<sup>2</sup> *sa* (make); *zen* (good); *mon* (gate or entrance).

<sup>3</sup> *shi* (impulse); *aku* (evil); *mon* (gate or entrance). Cf. *shi-akushu* (four evil worlds).

I think we will have—we will naturally need some way of life as a group. It may be difficult to set up all at once, but if we try hard, we will find out our precepts which include both side—will be established. This is very important point for our practice and for our practice to help others and to help themselves—to help ourselves.

That we have our own way of life means that you encourage people to have a more spiritual and more adequate way of life for human being—not only for ourselves, but also for people we must study our way. It is something which we must create or something which we must establish as it is—as our rules are actually for ourselves, for human being.

As a Chinese, Hyakujō-zenji established *Hyakujō Shingi*. I think we must establish, maybe, American *shingi*. I'm not [laughs]—I'm not saying this jokingly. I am pretty serious. But I don't want to be too serious [laughs]. If you become too serious, you will lose your way. If you are playing game of [with] it, we will lose our way. So little by little, with patient [patience] and endurance, we must find out our way for ourselves.

On this occasion, I want—I want to introduce you one [of] Hyakujō's word.<sup>4</sup> A monk asked, you know—a monk asked Hyakujō, "What is the special practice?" "What is the special practice?"

And he said, "To sit on the summit of Daiyūhō."<sup>5</sup> Daiyūhō is the name of his mountain. "To sit on the top of mountain Daiyūhō."

After all, various way of practice is just to sit on the top of mountain Daiyūhō, you know. If you want to sit well, you must organize your life. So Hyakujō tried to help his people to organize their life so that they can sit on the top of mountain Daiyūhō with him. **Tokusan**<sup>6</sup>—*Daiyūhō*: to sit on top of the mountain Daiyūhō.

Let's practice hard. And let's concentrate our life on zazen practice and organize our life so that we can sit well.

Thank you very much.

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Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Bill Redican 9/26/00. Miyagawa Keishi-san kindly provided assistance with the translation of Japanese terms.

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<sup>4</sup> *The Blue Cliff Record (Pi Yen Lu, Hekiganroku)*, Case 26.

<sup>5</sup> "Sublime Peak": Daiōhō, Mount Baizhang, Ta Hsiung Mountain, or Hyakujō-san Mountain.

<sup>6</sup> Possibly a Japanese form of Ta Hsiung, or the name of the monk Tokusan Senkan (780-865).