

Shunryū Suzuki-rōshi
PRIEST ORDINATION CEREMONY: Paul Discoe and Reb Anderson
Sunday, August 9, 1970
San Francisco

Suzuki-rōshi (speaking formally):¹ ... Paul Discoe and [1 word unclear] Reb Anderson, who have come here to be ordained as a disciple of the Buddha. Listen to—listen calmly and attentively.

Due to surpassing affinities, this ordination ceremony become possible. As Buddha's disciple, you have acquired the opportunity to receive the teaching transmitted from Shākyamuni Buddha through the patriarchs to me and to manifest the Buddha's way forever.

Even the buddhas and patriarchs cannot help but admire you who are earnestly seeking the Buddha's path in this world. With sincere belief in—in his dharma and practicing his way with [2-3 words] for all sentient beings.

It is rare indeed to receive a human body in this cosmic world. However, since we cannot avoid the reality of birth and death, we must deeply and gratefully appreciate how meaningful and marvelous this present existence is. There indeed is the opportunity to listen to the dharma, and the appearance of Buddha in this world is our great joy.

Embracing Buddha's teaching, we seriously accept—sincerely accept the buddhas as our parents. And moment after moment we endeavor to live the life of enlightenment which transcends greed, anger, and self-delusion. Thus, Paul and Reb reflect on the circumstance that have made this ceremony possible and considered deeply the innumerable blessing of your family and friends.

The great deliverance bestowed upon you by your father is higher than a mountain. And your mother's love is deeper than the ocean. It is my sincerest wish that you return at least a small part of this parental kindness, and with your whole life express your gratitude to all those who have cared so much for you.

[After 50 seconds, the recorder was stopped for an unknown interval.]

The last hair is called *shura*. Only Buddha is able to cut it off. Now I will shave it off. Do you allow me to do this?

Paul: Yes I will.

[Wood clappers (kaishaku) are struck twice.]

¹ Opening words are missing on tape.

Suzuki-rōshi (chanting):

Shaving your head and again shaving your head, you are now in the path of the Buddha with immovable mind of great determination, having made a vow to save all sentient beings from their suffering.

Shaving your head and again shaving your head, you are now in the path of the Buddha with immovable mind of great determination, having made a vow to save all sentient beings from their suffering.

Shaving your head and again shaving your head, you are now in the path of the Buddha and immovable mind of great determination, having made a vow to save all sentient beings from their suffering—having made a vow to save all sentient beings from their suffering.

Suzuki-rōshi (speaking formally):

Nyohō² [?]. Paul Discoe, your name—your Buddhist name will be Daiho Zengyu. And your friend will call you by name of Zengyu. August Ninth, Nineteen-Seveny.

Nyohō [?]. Reb Anderson, your Buddhist name will be Tenshin Zenki. And your friend will call you by name of Tenshin. August Ninth, Nineteen-Seveny.

[After 35 seconds, recorder was stopped for an unknown interval.]

Suzuki-rōshi (speaking formally): Do you want to receive Buddha's precepts? You should make confession. There are two ways—there are two meanings—two meanings in confession, but there is a way for confession transmitted from the Buddha through the patriarchs to us. Recite after my words.

Suzuki-rōshi (chanting): All the *karma* ever created by me—
[Clappers 1X.]—

Ordinands (chanting): —since of old, on account of greed, anger, and self-delusion, which have no beginning, born of my body, speech, and thought, I now make whole open confession of it. [Clappers 1X.]

All the *karma* ever created by me since of old, on account of greed, anger, and self-delusion, which have no beginning, born of my body, speech, and thought, I now make whole open confession of it. [Clappers 1X.]

² Presuming *nyohō* is correct, it means "to act in conformity with the regulations prescribed by the Buddhas and patriarchs" (Y. Yukoi, *The Japanese-English Zen Buddhist Dictionary*. Tōkyō: Sankibō, 1991, p. 510).

All the *karma* ever created by me since of old, on account of greed, anger, and self-delusion, which have no beginning, born of my body, speech, and thought, I now make whole open confession of it.

[After seven seconds, recorder was stopped for an unknown interval.]

Suzuki-rōshi (speaking formally): Now we should receive the Triple Treasures. [Clappers 1X.]

Suzuki-rōshi (chanting): I take refuge in the Buddha.

All in room (chanting): I take refuge in the Buddha.

Suzuki-rōshi (chanting): I take refuge in the dharma. [Clappers 1X.]

All in room (chanting): I take refuge in the dharma.

Suzuki-rōshi (chanting): I take refuge in the sangha. [Clappers 1X.]

All in room (chanting): I take refuge in the sangha.

Suzuki-rōshi (chanting): I take refuge in the dharma. [Clappers 1X.]

All in room (chanting): I take ...

[Recorder was stopped for an unknown interval.]

Suzuki-rōshi (speaking formally): In the Buddha realms, in all directions, the earth trembles and flower fall—flowers fall. What is the meaning of such an extraordinary sight? Buddha says in this world of [2-3 words], for us [?] who want to receive the precepts, having received true [?] discourse on bodhisattva's precepts, revealed [?] by their teacher who had previously received them from his teachers, are allowed to receive the Buddha's precepts, and now they are sure to be buddha. Therefore, the universe manifests such a joyous omen. From hearing this, the bodhisattva bow to them and said [?], if so, we have now accepted the precepts and by keeping them with the spirit of Shākyamuni Buddha, the great teacher and sage.

Our study and practice are accompanied by innumerable bodhisattvas. This is due to the perennial and diamond-like element of the bodhisattva's precepts. Due to ripening [?] of this great opportunity, their bodies are resting in the dharma world. And all the world are involved in those bodhisattva precepts.

In the realm of the great observance of bodhisattva precepts, who are practicing the precepts for whom [?] as the great precepts practice—to whom it may [?] are going, the observance of the pure bodhisattva precepts, there

is no subjectivity or objectivity and no merit—it—no merit even in pure practice. Thus, our practice continues forever. We should preserve the good fruit of those true merit of bodhisattva precepts and mutually share the true buddha way with all sentient beings.

Here we have Zengyu and Tenshin, and bodhisattva's precepts have been transmitted to them, and they have joined our order of Buddha. It is our heartfelt desire that they will be mindful of those precepts and manifest the precepts in their everyday live.

[Brief conversation off-mike.] [Clapper 1X.]

Suzuki-rōshi begins to chant in Japanese:

Sesshi kai ziki ...

[Recorder stopped for unknown interval.]

Suzuki-rōshi (speaking informally):

I am so grateful to have [name unclear]-sensei and Nishima [?]-sensi for the ordination of Zengyu-san and Tenshin-san. And I'm so happy with all of your friend to have—to have this ordination ceremony.

I have—I want to say just thank you for our teachers and your friend, who make this occasion possible for us. It is, of course, not only our effort but also especially for the—of the patriarchs and—patriarchs and originated from Buddha's enlightenment.

If—but if one attains enlightenment, all the sentient beings will be enlightened. The—there is this kind of truth which we—which is difficult to accept, but that is very true. And to have a disciple who will attain enlightenment is the most important thing for our society. Your parents raise you so that you can contribute some good element for our society. First of all, we all should be very grateful for Zengyu-san's parents and for Tenshin-san's parents, who raise you with this spirit.

Everyone has the spirit to save others. That spirit is always inside with us. Our true mind is always the spirit—mind to save all sentient beings. In your happiness, or in your adversity, or even in critical moment of each one of us, the things—the mind which is—which comes out always, in such a moment, is the mind who want to contribute something to our human work. This is the mind Buddha found out in its true sense. After leaving various things behind him, he found out this truth. He found out true mind, which to—which is a spirit to save all sentient beings, and became Buddha.

On this point, if you think about the true spirit of saving others, which is bodhisattva-mind and which is buddha-mind too, we will realize how

important it is to have someone who will be the good example of our human being which has—which have the true spirit of saving others before—even before save themselves. When we think and reach this point, we cannot help extolling this ceremony of ordination, which means to join our order, to save all sentient beings.

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude for Buddha, for our teachers, for your parents, and all of you, and all sentient beings in the world.

Thank you very much.

Source: City Center original tape. Transcribed by Katharine Shields 6/6/00.
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