

Suzuki Discusses Future Of Zen In U.S.; All Day Buddhist Service Held In Chapel



Photo by Susan Erlich '69

REV. SUZUKI

by Teresa Tan '69

The future of Zen Buddhism in the United States was the theme of the lecture given by Reverend Suzuki in the Browsing Room on Fri., Feb. 24. About forty people, including faculty and faculty wives, and Smith and Amherst students came to hear him speak.

The main barrier to the Westerner's acceptance of mystical Zen is his materialistic thinking, said Suzuki. Used to thinking in concrete, factual, descriptive terms, he cannot understand the religion's lack of conceptualization. The Westerner's dualistic thinking describes each object in re-

lation to abstract extremes, like short and long, dark and light. The Zen Buddhist does not make these distinctions but accepts each object for itself.

Suzuki believes that once the Westerner realizes the inherent weaknesses in his dualistic thinking, he will accept Zen Buddhism, his own brand of Zen Buddhism, modified to fit his spiritual needs.

The next day an all day Sasheen was held in the chapel. Smith and Amherst students, local Northampton residents, and several visiting out-of-towners participated in the traditional Zen sitting which began at 6:30 a.m. and lasted till 8 p.m. The day was spent in meditation, with breaks taken for meals and discussion periods.

Rev. Suzuki was here at the invitation of the local Northampton Zen Center. Members of the group come from Amherst, Smith, and Northampton. It meets every Tuesday night for meditation and discussion. Mrs. Marshall Schalk, leader of the group, is interested in stimulating further interest in Zen, and urges all interested to come and participate.

5' VOL. XV No. 19
SMITH College
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