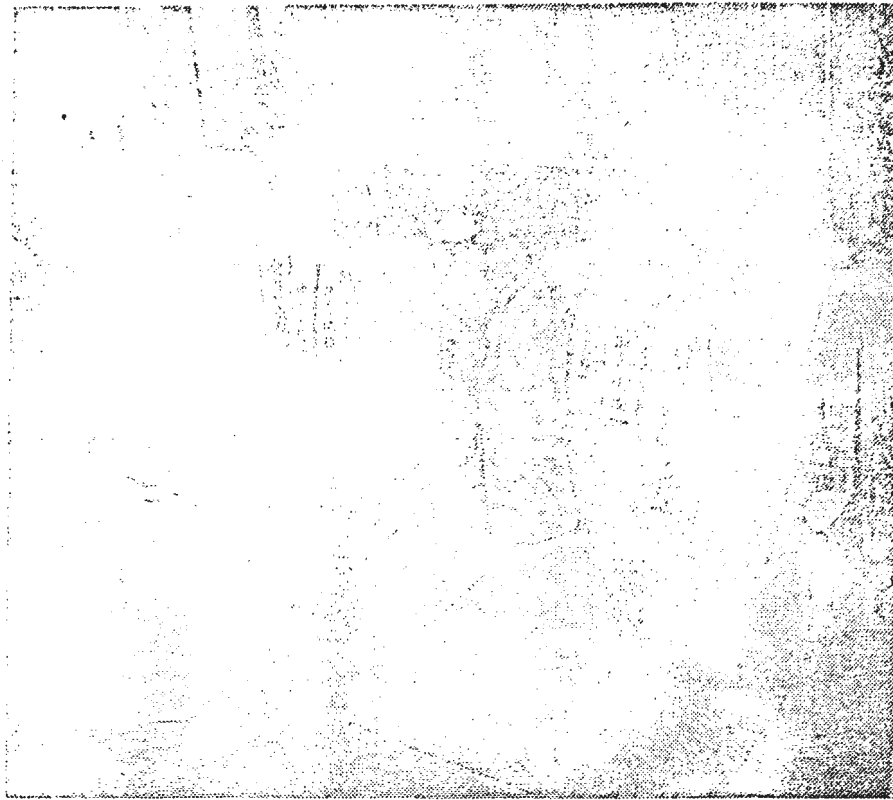


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The Rev. Shunryu Suzuki (center) assumed role of Sokiji Temple master yesterday

Ancient Rites in S. F.

The Color, Sound of Zen

By Jonathan Root

The Rev. Shunryu Suzuki is 59 years old, a short sturdy man with bright languid eyes and a round face, fixed with a look of eternal meditation.

He became master of the Sokiji Zen Buddhist Temple at 1881 Bush street yesterday in a ceremony so ancient no one knows where it came from.

It has been performed in Japan, the Rev. Mr. Suzuki's homeland, for hundreds, maybe thousands, of years.

It was held here yesterday for the Rev. Mr. Suzuki, a monastic most of his life, to celebrate his new appointment.

It began in the bright noon sunshine at the corner of Post and Buchanan streets with a parade.

Leading the procession was a temple member in a blue gabardine suit carrying a five-colored streamer — black, white, yellow, red and green.

"The five natural colors," he

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Zen Ritual--- Temple Gets A Master

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explained, "for the earth, the sun, the night, the day, and the green of nature."

Behind him came a priest carrying a small brass bell, wrapped in cord and struck with a stick.

"We are not called priests. We are called Reverends."

Then an elder of the temple holding a small drum. Then another elder with a pair of cymbals.

First the bell, then the drum, then the cymbals. Leisurely. "Ting — boom — clang."

The Rev. Mr. Suzuki was swathed in robes of brilliant red and gold, his shaved head covered by a peaked gold headdress.

Behind him, walked 20 little Japanese boys and girls in native costume, carrying armloads of red and white carnations.

"It is so in other religions. The children of innocence leading us to Buddha. How do you say it? 'A little child shall lead them.'"

"Ting—boom—clang" and the procession, shepherded by two policemen, moved up Post to Laguna and north to Bush street, gathering on-lookers by the score in its wake. "Ting—boom—clang." Every 15 steps.

As it passed an old yellow frame house, six small children playing on the front porch shrieked with laughter every time the cymbal went "clang."

At the temple, an old clap-board synagogue purchased by the Buddhists in 1934, the procession crowded together on the front steps for "a memorial photograph."

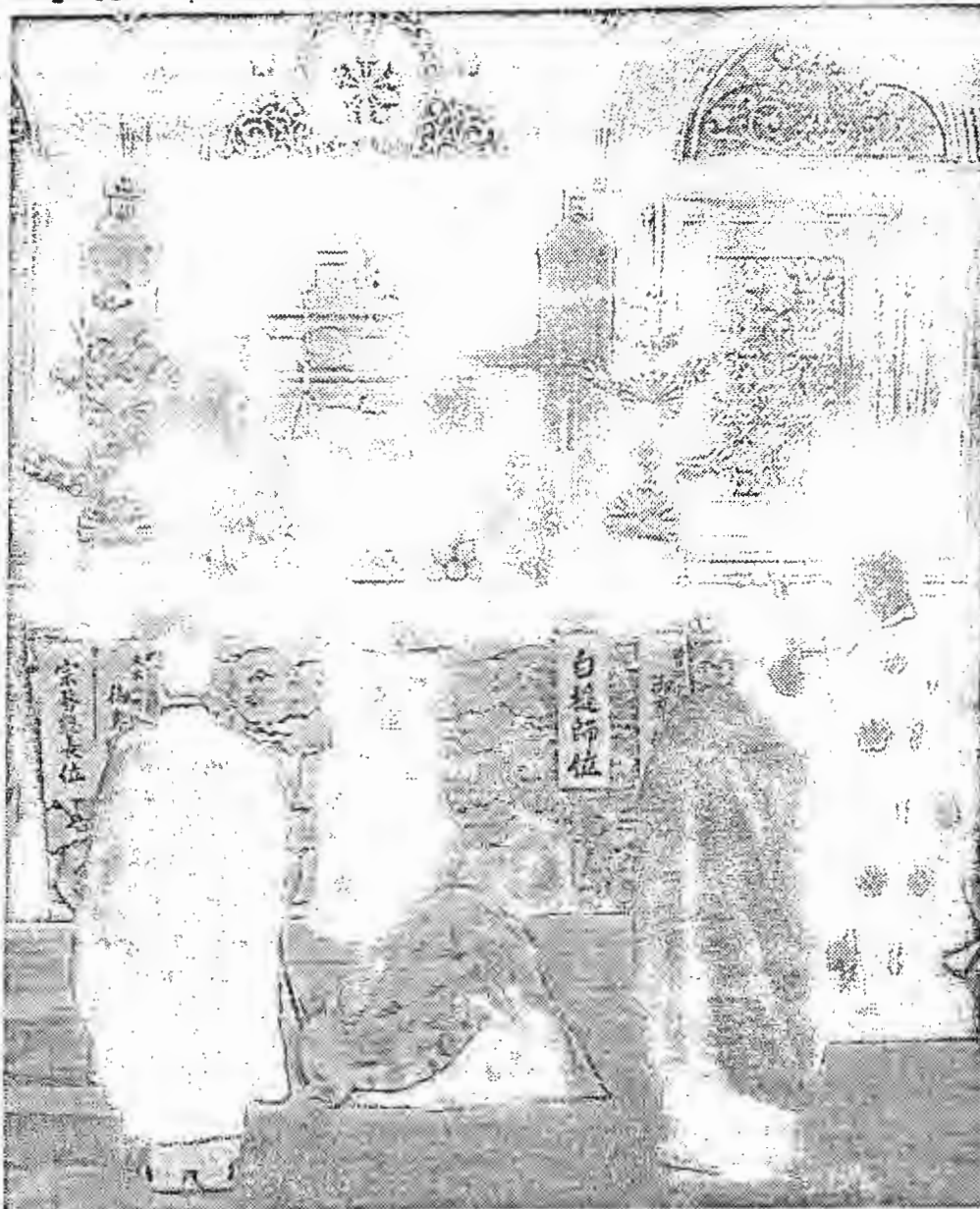
Its entrance was accompanied by a deafening roll on a kettle drum which ended only after the Rev. Mr. Suzuki had climbed to the top of a platform behind the golden altar.

There, beside a huge flame-colored urn from which came a dense haze of

motionless in folding chairs placed along the sides of the altar, their hands clasped around the Zen Buddhist "juju" prayer beads.

In front of the altar were bowls of oranges and rice cakes, food offerings to Buddha, and on either side tall lotus plants painted gold. "The lotus grows in mud. It is the emergence of beauty over all. Buddha was born on a lotus leaf."

The temple was in silence and Suzuki was its master.



ANCIENT CEREMONY—In a colorful Chinese ritual more than 1,200 years old, The Rev. Shunryu Suzuki knelt before the altar of the Zen Buddhist Sokiji Temple at 1331 Bush St. and was installed as Priest of the Temple. Bishop Reirin Yamada (right), of Los Angeles, conducted the ceremony, which is believed the first ever held in the United States.

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