Ecuminism Enhanced at Buddhist Temple Service
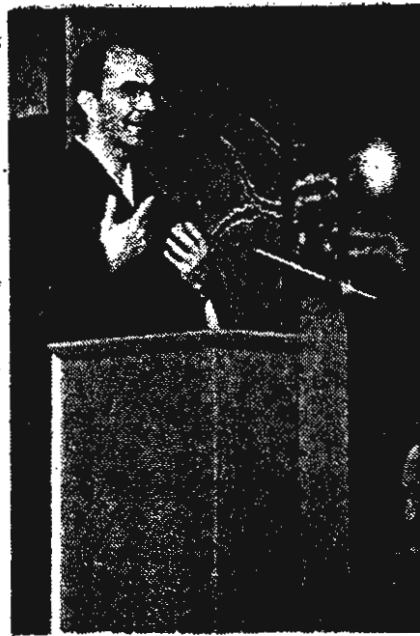
Caucasian Becomes "Japanese"

Spirit of ecuminism was enhanced last Sunday when Roshi Richard Baker, head priest of the Zen Center, spoke at the Nirvana Day service of the San Francisco Buddhist Church. Baker is successor to the late Roshi Shunryu Suzuki, who taught his caucasian student the fundamentals of Zen Buddhism.

Said Baker in part:

"Actually the leader of Zen Center is not me; it is still Suzuki Roshi. He left us so carefully that we all, as a group, seem to know what to do to take care of the practice. I feel a little funny, being here, dressed in Japanese robes and talking to you in your church. Buddhism in many ways is so new in America. It is a Japanese religion — Chinese and a religion of India.

"Why am I going to Japan is rather interesting. When I was young I searched in this country for some way to make sense in life. I couldn't find any way. Most people come to America to become an American, but I am an American who is becoming Japanese. But actually we have to find some way — you people are doing it whether you realize it or not. Buddhism is here in America mostly because of the Japanese people who live here and have priests like Reverend Ogui to set examples for us Americans who are searching for a more meaningful life.

"I found in Suzuki Roshi — transmitted teaching from India, through China, and through Japan, the most satisfactory way of life, not only personally, but also an example for our coun-

ROSHI RICHARD BAKER
Head Priest of Zen Center
At Nirvana Day Service
(Photo by Isao Tanaka)

Roshi Baker mentioned that the Zen Shu and Jodo Shin Shu have some similarities. He noticed in Japan that when a Zen Roshi became old, he starts talking of Jodo Shin Shu rather than Zen Shu because zazen (meditation in a sitting position) becomes difficult. Even the great scholar and teach Daisetsu T. Suzuki in his later life was interested in Jodo Shin Shu even though most of his books which he wrote were on Zen Shu.

"Roshi Richard Baker is a quiet, humble man with inner feeling who is more Japanese