

Shunryū Suzuki-rōshi
Wednesday Evening, July 24, 1968
Tassajara

To have complete understanding of our school or—is at the same time—to unders- [partial word]—to have perfect understanding of the non-sectarianism. I don't know precisely [?] [1-2 words] so much, but last night I briefly talked about how various sect appeared in our history of Buddhism. As I told you last night, at first—when—in China when various scriptures was—were introduced to China or translated into Chinese—when some group of scriptures, like *Prajñāpāramitā* group or *Kegon Sūtra*¹—each time some important sūtra [was] introduced into China, when that sūtra was translated into Chinese, they did it under the help of the king. All the learned scholars, not only Buddhist scholars but also Confucian scholars, all the learned scholars in China, you know, participate [in] the translation of some special scriptures, and from China—from India, of course, some teachers. And someone who knows Chinese and Indian Sanskrit translated it into Chin- [partial word]—Chinese, and they—and many people were listening to it. And when they agreed with the translation, they, you know, write down.

In this way, in a big scale, translation was made. So each time the translation [was] made, the people who participated the translation or people who were listening to it, you know, naturally appreciate the big meaning of the teaching, and there they formed some kind of sect. In this way, there were in China there—there was many sects appeared. That is one way of, you know—it is almost by accident [laughs], you know, various schools appeared in China.

But this is not actually the one schools of Buddhism. In its strict sense—in its strict sense, when some great teacher study Buddhism through and through, by all means, not only some special scripture but also many scriptures, and organized the Buddhist thought, and finding out the key points of the Buddhist thought, they organized or systematized whole Buddhism. That is so-called it *Kyōsō-hanjaku*,² you know: how you—some stand for it—"taking some stance for it"—and organize or systematize all the teaching. If someone come to this point, there is no need to study all the scriptures, you know, as he did. The most of people can understand all the scriptures according to his way of understanding it. And actually those teachers who are very great teacher, and his—their characters were so great at the time that people naturally believed in his teaching.

¹ *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra* (Jap. *Kegon-kyō*).

² *Kyōsō-hanjaku*: Classification of Buddhist tenets according to a sectarian standpoint. The founders of Chinese and Japanese sects adopted the classifications as their respective doctrines.

And this is, you know, real—this is—in this way, true schools of Buddhism appeared as Kegon or Tendai, not by accident but by study. And what I was talking about last night is, although they—their understanding of religion is based on his philosophical study of Buddhism, but they also practiced Zen, you know, a kind of Zen.

And I talked about the difference between Bodhidharma's Zen and their zazen. Their zazen is to contemplate on some profound teaching. And to improved—improve their state of mind is their way, you know, by complete—by dwelling on the lofty teaching of Buddhism. And they—they try to have full understanding of it. And they try to improve their state of mind. "State of mind," we say, but this is, you know, it has more deeper meaning, but we say *shinkyō*—*shinji* [?]³—*shinkyō*? *Ji* means also "zazen, Zen, or zazen practice." To—to have—to have higher state of mind or to be able to [attain] higher class [?] of zazen, you know, by studying various kinds of our teaching and they meditate on some kind of teaching.

The difference between our practice and their practice is we, you know, do not, you know—our practice is not to rely on—is not the practice to having some lofty teaching in our mind, and to dwell on this kind of understanding, and to improve our state of mind is not, you know, our way. And why we do not take this way is already—I explained.

In this way, Zen, which does not rely on any teaching, whose practice is not something completely different from the meditation on some teaching started by Bodhidharma. But later, you know, in Sung dynasty, Zen students applied something like *kambo* [?], or contemplation on some teaching like *kōan* appeared. This is, you know, something more like *kambo* or Tendai or Kegon practice, and some of them go back to the Mahāyāna usual practice.

And I compared our practice, which is independent from teaching, and practice which depend on some example or some teaching or some lofty teaching. I compared and—if we become interested in *kambo* or to—to practice zazen aiming at some higher stage of practice, more and more our practice will become special practice for some selected people or some great teachers. And then [it] will not be everyone's practice.

Why in Heian Period in Japan,⁴ various new schools of Zen appeared is—at previous time, the religion—Buddhism become more and more aristocratic, and the people—Buddhists become more and more

³ *shin*: mind. *kyō*: object. *shinkyō*: subject and object. *shinji*: "mind-ground"; the mind or mental state.

⁴ The period between 794 and 1185, named after the location of the imperial capital, which was moved from Nara to Heian-kyō (Kyōto) in 794.

interested in some fallacy, you know, practice of Buddhism. And naturally their practice became more and more aristocratic—luxurious way, and lost the interest of majority of people. That is why new schools of Buddhism appeared in Kamakura Period.⁵

And even for us there is this kind of danger. If Zen is a practice for just men, or for just learned scholars, or for just great—man of great ability—spiritual ability, Zen will not help people. Actually in Japan, Sōtō Zen, who put emphasis on our everyday life, not only zazen practice but also everyday life, thinking everyday life is a kind of prac-[partial word]—Zen practice, and having great concern to our everyday life, aiming at spreading Buddhism all at once [?], under some influential—under the influence of some *daimyō*⁶ or government. Just to constantly trying to make them understand, not by some impure motivation, but also—but only just to help others whether they can practice zazen or not, you know. Try and help people by all means, Sōtō spread little by little until Sōtō become one of the largest schools in Japan.

But in our history, you know, we never depend on any influential people. Although we helped, you know, for an instance, Emperor Go-Daigo,⁷ you know, when he was in small island after [being] defeated by Kamakura government, you know. He didn't know what to do, so [laughs] Sōtō priests get together and send him something, you know, to the island. In that case we helped, you know, but we never helped, you know—ask help, or we have no Zen masters of our schools [who] did not [did] like to practice our way under the influence of some patron.

You know, when Dōgen-zenji was asked to help Kamakura government, he refused. But the Kamakura government asked him so intensely, so he went to Kamakura for one month and he came back. And he said to him, "If you want to help," you know, "people why don't you be a priest [laughs]? That is the best way. Why don't you give up your position as a, you know, head of the Kamakura government?" So they gave up [laughs]. "This is the best way, I think. Why don't you be a—become a priest?" he said—Dōgen said, and he came back.

And there are many and many stories like this at [1 word] period. I think he was Jōshū Tengyo [?]. He—he was so famous that Shikana [?] government wanted to invite him to Kyōto. So he, you know—if he stay at his temple, they will force him to come to Kyōto. So when he went for—he took a trip for some [?] day, and he went to the remoted

⁵ The period from 1192 to 1333, during which the Kamakura shōgunate reigned.

⁶ *daimyō*: (Jap. literally "great name") a feudal lord of a province or castle.

⁷ Go-Daigo-tennō: 1319-1338. 96th Emperor of Japan. He was exiled to Chiburi island in 1331.

country, and he was practicing zazen. **Katsu**, the Kamakura—no, **Shikana** [?] government found out where he was. But they thought—government thought—that was Yoshimi—**Yoshimi** thought he will—he will not come to Kyōto. So he sent artist, and he—Yoshimi asked the artist to paint his, you know, picture and to bring it back to Kyōto. And the painter—but painter could not meet him, you know, if he knows—if **Jōshū Tengyo** knows he is making picture of him for the government, he will refuse it [laughs]. So he was hiding himself under the bridge [laughs]. And he was, you know, going to zendō, you know [laughs], and he draw his image and went back to Kyōto. And that is one of the national treasures [laughs, laughter].

In this way, you know, as you know, Sōtō Zen is peasant [?] Zen [laughs]—form of Zen, people say, you know, because we didn't have any support from *daimyō* or government—from outside. But there is some reason why we should be a farmer. For us there is no influential people or farmer. They are all Buddhist for us. As Dōgen-zenji said, "You may say merchant is not Zen monk. But for Zen monks, there is no merchant or no Zen monks. They are all Zen students." This is our understanding of practice. So whatever we do, whether they realize or not, actually we are all practicing zazen. And why it is so is the—is the things I explained in my lecture [last night].

As you know, in *Gakudō-yōjin-shū*⁸ is ten instructions to—for the students how study Zen. He says our Zen is not **kambo** [?] like, you know—in one practice—practice which include three thousands of dharma, you know.⁹ That kind of practice is not our practice, or he says the teaching of transiency is the found- [partial word]—people may say, is the foundation of the Buddha's teaching. But that is not, you know, something which you will know after you study Buddhism. Even though you don't study it [laughs], you know, that is actual truth, you know. That everything changes is actual truth, and it is not Buddhism. This is interpreted [?] [laughs]—outward [?] truth for Buddhist—for Buddhist and as well as for everyone. So this is not, you know, just—this is not—those teachings are not just our teaching, but the teaching for everyone. Even though Buddha didn't tell it—talk about it, that is truth. That is a truth which I—we, you know, are observing every day. So there is no need to depend on teaching. But the most important thing is to practice and realize our true nature is the most important point [laughs]. This is, you know, Zen. If so everyone has, you know—as long as we have buddha-mind, Buddhism is for everyone.

⁸ *Gakudō-yōjin-shū* (1234): A fascicle by Dōgen-zenji in which he lists ten rules for the beginning practitioner.

⁹ "Reflect on your ordinary mind. ... Is it endowed with the essence and appearance of the three thousand worlds in a single moment of thought? ... No." (Dōgen-zenji, *Gakudō-yōjin-shū*, in Yūho Yokoi, Ed., *Zen Master Dōgen*, New York: Weatherhill, 1976, p. 49.)

In this way, Zen school established without depending on any teaching, any particular teaching. So Zen student use various scriptures, you know. We do not say this is the most important scripture or this is not so important. We do not say that. Whatever the teaching may be, that teaching will help at least someone. Not all or—it may not be for all of them, but it will help someone. So it is like a medicine, you know, medicine or prescription, you know. For some patient some particular prescription is necessary, but we cannot say this is better prescription or this is not so good. If it is appropriate—if you use it in appropriate way, that is the test of prescription. We understand in this way.

So far I—[is] what I talked about last night. Tonight, you know, I want to explain *shikantaza*. We say "just to sit." What does it mean by just to sit?

Some monk asked a Zen master,¹⁰ "It is very hot [laughs]. How is it possible to sit somewhere where no hot or no cold weather come?"

The master—the master's answer was, "When it is hot, you should be hot buddha [laughs, laughter]. When it is cold, you should be a cold buddha [laughs]."

That is "just to sit." When it is hot, you should be hot buddha. When it is cold, you should be a cold buddha. But, you know, this is very direct, you know, understanding of the story. Actually it says when it is hot, you should kill hot. When it is cold, you should kill cold by practice. It says so.

But according to Dōgen-zenji, you know, when it is cold you should be a cold buddha, and when it is hot you should be a hot buddha. But if you—if you say "kill," you know, "kill" is extra [laughs]. If you say "kill," you know, or "to attain enlightenment," you know, "attain" is extra. You know, when your practice is not good, you are a poor buddha [laughs]. When—if your practice is good, you are good Buddha. And poor and good is also independent buddha, you know. Poor is buddha, and you are buddha, and good is buddha, and you are buddha too. For every word, or whatever you think, whatever you say, every word become buddha. Then there is no trouble [laughs], you know. I am buddha. If I say "I am buddha," "I" is buddha, "am" is buddha, "b" is buddha, and "buddha" is of course buddha. Buddha, buddha, buddha [laughs, laughter]. That is how you say buddha, buddha, buddha, buddha [laughs, laughter]. There is no need to translate it into English, you know [laughs, laughter]. There is no

¹⁰ Case 43 of *Hekiganroku (The Blue Cliff Record)*, "Tōzan's 'No Cold or Heat.'" It is also found in Dōgen-zenji's *Shōbōgenzō* "Shunju."

need to [be] bothered by fancy, you know, explanation of Buddhism [laughs]. If you say "buddha, buddha, buddha, buddha" [laughs], that is the way. That is *shikantaza*, you know: everything is buddha. So sitting is buddha, lying down is buddha, and whatever you say, you know, each word is buddha. He understand in this way, so he said, "When it is cold, you should be a cold buddha. When it is hot, you should be hot buddha."

If you understand—actually when you practice zazen, you know, with —with this understanding, that is true zazen. Even though we say "just sit," but to understand what does it mean is rather difficult, maybe. So that is why Dōgen-zenji left us so many teachings to explain what is just to sit. But it does not mean his teaching is so difficult. When you sit, you know, without thinking or without expecting anything, and when you accept yourself as a buddha or as a tools of buddha or ornament of buddha, or if you understand everything is the unfolding of the absolute teaching or truth or [2-3 words], or if you understand everything is a part of the great being— one whole being, when you reach this understanding, whatever we say, whatever we think, or whatever we see, that is the actual teaching of Buddha. And whatever we do, that is actual practice of the Buddha himself.

The problem is—because you sit, or because you do something—trying to do something, that is the trouble. Or if you do not understand what it is, you think nothing result or nothing exist. Or if you feel you can rely on something—no teaching—teaching means nothing. But before you try to rely on it, teaching exists, you know. Before you attain enlightenment, enlightenment is there [laughs]. That is true. It is not after you attain enlightenment, you know, you un- [partial word]—it is not because you attained enlightenment [that] enlightenment appears. Because enlightenment is always there, so if you realize it that is enlightenment. If you think enlightenment is something, some particular thing which you can reach for or which you can attain, so sometime you will be discouraged because you are seeking for it, and you think that is something which can be attained. But if it is not possible, you know—if you do not feel it—it was possible to attain it, you will be discouraged. And you will give up the practice and you will try to find out some other teaching which is, you know, worth while to strive for. And in this way you will change your way from one to the other. And you have no time, you know, to realize you—our true nature which is universal to everyone.

So whether you can realize it or attain enlightenment or not is minor problem—not so big problem. If you realize it or if you attain enlightenment, that's all the better. But even though you don't, you know, there is no need to seek for some special teaching because the teaching is always here.

This is something, you know—this kind of understanding will be difficult for you to accept, you know, I—I—I think. After practicing, you know, one or two months, if you don't think you make—you have made some progress, you will change—you will give up in seeking for something good. But religion is not—true religion cannot be obtained in that way. This kind of a way is the way to attain something in more materialistic sense.

But true spiritual way cannot be like this. The way to work on spiritual things is quite different from the way to work on something which is more materialistic. Even though you talk about spiritual things, that is not actually spiritual. That is a kind of substitute for the [laughs] spiritual things.

That you are here means, you know, that you will vanish [laughs]. Something, you know, which exist—things which exist are bound to be vanished, you know. So something which you attained cannot be perpetual attainment. Something which you cannot, you know, figure out what it is will exist forever. Something which exist before everything appear will exist forever. So as long as you seek for something, you know, you will get just shadow of the reality, not actual one. But when you do not seek for anything—only when you do not seek for anything you—you have it. So when you do not try to attain enlightenment, you have it, you know. When you—because you try to attain something you lose it. And renunciation is, you know, could be attained when A is just A and B is just B. Because A tried to be a C or a D [laughs], there is, you know, problem. A should—because A is just A, and A is bound to be disappear, that is renunciation, you know.

If you, you know, always stay in that way, that is not renunciation—that is attachment which does not exist. That is delusion. So A should be just A, B should be just B. And A should vanish, you know, in the form of A, and that will appear again in some form of C or D. And C or D should vanish in that form. C or D should not try to be, you know, [laughs], at the same time something different. So when you just sit and when you appreciate your being fully in your sitting, that is, you know, to lose your mind and body before you lose it.

When you have no mind and body, you have no problem [laughs, laughter]. Because you say, "This is mind and this is," you know, "body—body should not be the burden of the spirit," or something like that. "We should," you know, "mind should work hard to control our body" something like this. In this case, mind is not mind. Mind is delusion, and body is also delusion. And delusion and delusion is fighting.

What is practice, you know? We—when we were young, we disc- [partial word]—when we have discussion, we used to discuss about what is bodhisattva's way to save others before we saved [laughs] ourselves. What does it mean? Is it possible to save others before we save ourselves? That kind of thing. And what is the goal of practice, and—and—or what is idea and what is the reality—reality in its ordinal [ordinary] sense? And reality cannot be, you know, the ideas. The practice will be the bridge to the reality to idea. This kind of, you know, discussion we had.

But according to Dōgen-zenji, you know, practice is practice—practice buddha, reality is the reality buddha, idea is idea buddha [laughs]. There is no problem [laughs, laughter]. When you practice, there is no Buddha or no human being. That is—that which exist is the—just practice. When you say: "I am," you know, "human being," the hu- [partial word]—it means human-being-buddha—another name of buddha. We understand in that way.

So there is no need to have bridge to the, you know—to the other shore. Other shore is other-shore buddha, this shore is this-shore buddha [laughs]. Just name is different but actually everything is Buddha by himself. Bridge is ornamental Buddha, and this shore is also ornamental Buddha. The other shore is also ornamental Buddha.

And each being is necessary. How they attain renunciation is just to be this shore, you know—this shore, the other shore—and the other shore. And they are bound to be vanish, you know [laughs], as long as they actually exist it should—it should vanish. It cannot be in that way always. So when one—because one is just one, it is possible to vanish, you know. If it is possible for one to be something else, you know, he—it maybe perpetual being, but that is perpetual being in its wrong understanding. It is a kind of delusion because no such thing actually exists.

So to be just, you know, A like A—only when we satisfy ourselves as A, you know—as me, there is, you know, chance to—to have realization or there is chance to vanish [laughs], you know. It is necessary to vanish [laughs]. If you don't, you are ghost [laughs] in your delusion. Something that which exist should vanish, you know. Is there something which doesn't vanish forever?

So we say "just to sit," but this word—just A should be A, directly point out the liberation from A. Just because you try to be something else, you know, you lose your reality. Do you understand? So we should be just—I should be just me. Then, at the same time, I have liberation. I have enlightenment. I am not ghost [laughs]. I exist here, you know. I am Buddha himself. I am not ghost. This is, you know, just to sit.

And this is not some, you know, fancy teaching at all, you know [laughs]. This is direct teaching. There—there can be no more—there can be any other teaching so direct, you know. "Just to sit" is the most direct teaching. You cannot [laughs] say no or yes even, before you—you cannot say anything about it: "just to sit" [laughs]. So we say "just to sit." There is no more teaching.

This is not something—because—something you understand because I say so, you know. This is not teaching you believe in because Buddha say so. This is actual ultimate truth, you know. And only way to attain renunciation without any problem—without causing any problem for anyone: just to be myself, you know. No problem whatsoever.

This is what we mean by "just to sit." So those—those masters who understand Sōtō way, you know, may use instead of "just to sit," they may say, you know, they may give you kōan *mu*. What is *mu*? "Just to sit is *mu*" [laughs]. There is no difference. And this just to sit will be various kinds of kōan, actually. So there may be thousands of kōan for us, but if you can sit *shikantaza*, *shikantaza* include various power of practice. And this is the direct way to the enlightenment, or renunciation, or nirvāna—whatever you say.

Thank you very much. Do you have questions? *Hai*.

Student A (Bill Shurtleff): It seems that on some evenings you emphasize the idea of non-attainment—

Suzuki-rōshi: Mm-hmm.

Bill: —and that there is nothing to do except simply to give up and to just sit and to be whatever you are at each instant.

Suzuki-rōshi: Mm-hmm.

Bill: And yet at other times, it seems that you speak of exerting your best effort. And when I think of exerting my best effort, it's in order to attain something. In other words, exerting my best effort to keep good posture, or you said that it's important, if you can, to cross your legs in full lotus, which is very difficult and requires great deal of effort.

Suzuki-rōshi: Yeah.

Bill: Why do you bother speaking about effort at all? Why not simply stay to the teaching of not trying to do anything at all? [5-6 words.]

Suzuki-rōshi: [Laughs.] Yeah. That is very good question. Yeah.

You know—anyway, you know, even though I say stay, you know, and do whatever you like, you know, you are doing [laughs] something, you know, with some effort [laughs, laughter]. Can you do it without any effort—something? No, you cannot. Anyway you have some problem, you know. So it is better to have some good problem rather than bad one [laughs, laughter]. If you don't sit, you know—if you don't come to Tassajara, I don't know what you are doing right now [laughs] at city. I don't know [laughs, laughter].

But to have this, you know, kind of accurate, you know, understanding of oneself is very important, you know. It is like to—it is same thing to have a clock, you know. To know it is ten past nine is very important. But actually, there is no such time, you know [laughs]. It is no ten past nine, you know. When I am saying something [laughs], it will be eleven past ten [nine] [laughs].¹¹ I am pointing up—at something, you know, which is non-verbal, you know. We say "just to sit," but this "just to sit" is extra, you know [laughs].

There may be some question like this: You know, if everything is, you know, one big whole being, according to—I don't know what—according to the ladies whom I met last night—yesterday to eat, you know—what is it—in some direction—in what way A is changing, you know? You will have this kind of question. And if you sit, you know—if you—if your purpose of zazen is just to sit, you know, is it possible to improve yourself, or which direction [laughs] you are going, you know: This kind of problem will be next question.

But before you realize who you are, you know, it is not possible for you to go your own direction. Because you—you are bound by some idea, you don't—you cannot find out your way for yourself. Only when you can "just to sit" you can find out your own way—best way for it. This kind of thing is, you know—I am explaining it as if it—this is some good teaching, you know [laughs], as if I know something—some secret, you know. But it is not so. I am speaking about everyone's own way. That is why we, you know—we put emphasis on "just to sit," because everyone has his own way and myriad of ways or dharmas. And moment after moment, you will find out your own way when you "just to sit," when you [are] exactly you yourself.

Student B: What about "just philosophizing"?

Suzuki-rōshi: Philosophyng?

Student B: Just philosophizing. Just anger? Just anger?

Suzuki-rōshi: Excuse me?

¹¹ Perhaps: "By the time I have said something else, it will be eleven past nine."

Student B: Just anger.

Suzuki-rōshi: Just anger?

Student B: You know, just killing?

Suzuki-rōshi: Just killing?

Student B: Yeah. Is—is there any distinction between that and just sitting?

Suzuki-rōshi: Just killing? Just be angry?

Student B: That's foolish.

Suzuki-rōshi: That's foolish.

Student B: Yeah.

Suzuki-rōshi: Yeah, there is big distinction, you know. That is why we sit, you know [loud laughter]. You cannot be angry. Anger is—appears, you know, when you lose yourself, you know, and when you—you are enslaved by B or C, you know.

Student B: But if you "just do it," how can you lose it?

Suzuki-rōshi: Hmm?

Student C: I—I think he means if you could, say, just be angry and nothing else—like "just sit."

Suzuki-rōshi: Mm-hmm. That is not possible [laughs] when you're angry, you know. Anger last pretty long time, you know.

Student B: Just that long.

Suzuki-rōshi: Hmm?

Student B: Just that long.

Suzuki-rōshi: Just at the moment?

Student B: Yeah—no longer, no shorter. You're just angry. Angry, angry, angry [laughter].

Suzuki-rōshi: But that is not possible [laughs]. You cannot be always angry, you know.

Student B: But you stop.

Suzuki-rōshi: Hmm? Yeah, until you stop. And if you forget all about it after you, you know, you are angry, that is good. But when it lasts, you know, so long time unnecessarily because of the idea of, you know, "I became angry," you know. "I—I'm no good." Or, "He made me angry" [laughs, laughter]. And more and more, you know, you will have, you know, more angry, you know—you will become more angry because you are not just you. That is, you know, that is why we say you cannot just to sit when you're angry. Anger is something—or delusion or anger or greediness is—means—or appears when you are not just you.

Student B: Isn't it possible to become so angry you forget about all that? Or just to become so foolish or so stupid or so ignorant you don't think about anything else?

Suzuki-rōshi: I don't think so for human being. If you are animal, you know, they may—they may be able to do it. But for us, that is not possible.

Student D: Well what about loving?

Suzuki-rōshi: Hmm?

Student D: Loving has also this feeling of not letting go.

Suzuki-rōshi: Mm-hmm. Loving.

Student D: Loving, yeah.

Suzuki-rōshi: Loving, yeah, also, you know, according to our understanding, just love is not, you know—love usually is very ego-centered idea. And we know it. But we make some excuse [laughs, laughter] for it. But we know pretty well, you know, why I love her, you know. There is many "because, because, because" [laughs, laughter], and you don't "just love" anyone.

Student E: What does "form is form" mean, then?

Suzuki-rōshi: "Form is form"—form is form means, you know, form is emptiness, emptiness is form, and form is form, and emptiness is emptiness. There is four, you know, meaning in it. Before you say, in its true sense, "form is form," you should get through "form is emptiness" and "emptiness form." Or else, that "form is form" is just —doesn't mean anything.

Student E: Well how about—how about Dōgen—how he cut his finger and got angry at the knife after he understood that form is form. Would that anger be anger and nothing else—

Suzuki-rōshi: Oh—oh—who did you say?

Student E: —and make him forget that his finger is cut and that's it?

Suzuki-rōshi: Oh. Not Dōgen but [laughter]—

Student E: Keizan?

Suzuki-rōshi: No. No. Gutei. What do you mean?

Student E: No, I mean anybody. Doesn't—not the—not the kōan. But suppose—couldn't somebody under—who understands what—does understand what "form is form" means—

Suzuki-rōshi: Mm-hmm.

Student E: —couldn't that include anger?

Suzuki-rōshi: I—

Student F [David Chadwick]: You said your master always used to get angry at you, right? Something like that.

Suzuki-rōshi: The, you know—anger—when anger—we don't say anger is not good, you know. But anger—when anger is just anger, that is—we cannot say that is bad, you know. But anger—if anger find out some excuse, you know—if you find out some excuse for being angry, for yourself or for some purpose, that is not just anger. So anger should be just anger, but that is—unless you practice, you know, our way or unless you understand what does it mean, "form is form" or "emptiness is emptiness," it is rather hard, you know, to be just angry like a thunderstorm [makes sound like thunder] [laughs]. Next moment nothing [laughs]. That is beautiful, you know. [Makes loud sound like thunder.] [Laughs, laughter.] That's all. This is very good for—for himself and for others too, you know. If you could do so—I wish I can do so, but [makes sound like thunder] [laughs, laughter]. I think you have more possibility, you know, in this kind of anger [makes sound like thunder] [laughs, laughter]. And I think you will be a good student, you know, better than Japanese people.

You know, Japanese people think anger is [laughs, laughter] [probably gestures]. Here is, you know—his heart is boiling [laughs, laughter]. And his face is, you know, as calm as water [laughs, laughter]. And this is not so good, you know [laughter]. But if—if that is for sake of

some- [partial word]—for to be more kind to others or something, it may be all right, but, you know, because—if that is because to keep his own prestige or something, it is no good [laughs, laughter]. It's much better to be natural. And to be natural is very, you know—some effort is necessary, you know, some special kind of effort like you "just to sit" without leaning like this or, you know, too much tension.

Student E: So it is all right if the most famous of all samurai masters goes [makes two swift, cutting sounds] all the time?

Suzuki-rōshi: Hmm?

Student E: Is it all right if the most famous—I mean, if a samurai master—

Suzuki-rōshi: Mm-hmm.

Student E: —knows—knows Buddhism—

Suzuki-rōshi: Mm-hmm. After.

Student E: —through and through, is it all right for him to kill?

Suzuki-rōshi: Maybe [laughs]—maybe, but that kind of thing will not happen to him [laughter]. He should have complete freedom, but he—there will be no need to, you know, to use all the—all his ability. In all of his ability, you know—one phrase is enough, you know, for—that is one of the ten powers. To save people just by one phrase or one blink of eye is enough. And here again, I must talk about—oh [laughter]—our—

Student E: Did you kill something in the [1 word]?

Suzuki-rōshi: —you know—as I said, you know, it is—as—even though we are all Buddha, you know, but there is someone who ac-[partial word]—actually [is] aware of being Buddha and who are not aware of it. So for the enlightened person, everyone is Buddha. But for those who are not aware of it, you know, he is not Buddhist.

So for Buddhist it is necessary to make some special effort to lead—to help people. That is, you know, our—that is a duty for the enlightened one. But enlightened one has some ability or some—to save—to help people in various way—various ways of—he—whether they mistake him or not, he is actually helping people. In this way, you know, our religion exist in social framework. This is, you know—Sōtō school has been developed in Japan. All the Sōtō students or believers are not, you know, Zen student. But they know somehow who is good teacher and who is not. And they rather believe in—believe in him rather than

believe in his teaching, or Buddha's teaching, or teaching of Dōgen, or *Shōbōgenzō*. He—they just believe in his way or his character. In this way, you know, Sōtō developed. And among the people we had many good teachers—good teacher appears from believers or supporters. In this way Sōtō developed. And this is the characteristic of Sōtō school.

So in comparison to Sōtō, Rinzai, you know, teachers has not much students or not much followers, or their organization is divided in many—I don't know how many. If one temple has a branch—five- or ten-branch temple, that is, you know, head temple—-independent temple. But most of Rinzai students are people who actually practice zazen. This is very good for it, you know. Even though they have—they do not have many followers, the followers they have is sincere students who practice zazen. But the practice itself, you know, is very narrow. You know, it is a kind of, you know, practice special to some special people, you know. So that is why Rinzai school does not develop among the—do not have many supporters. That is bad points —bad point of Rinzai school.

So we cannot compare actually—we cannot say Sōtō is good or Rinzai is good. It is difficult to say which is better. I think both is—both should, Rinzai and Sōtō, should exist.

Suzuki-rōshi: What is your question?

Student F: In *The Training of the Zen Buddhist Monk*,¹² D. T. Suzuki says that there was the invention of the kōan that made—that enabled Zen to survive in China because it made it more available—because it was a simpler thing that the m- [partial word]—that you could use—a simpler thing, in a way.

Suzuki-rōshi: Mm-hmm.

Student F: What is your feeling about that statement?

Suzuki-rōshi: You know, if, you know, if to practice zazen is only way to propagate Buddhist teaching, you know, kōan Zen is better than just to sit. You see? That is better. Because more people will be interested in [it] because that is a kind of candy. So it is better to have candy than to have nothing else. You see? So if, you know, Zen is something—just to sit in cross-legged position, like this all day long, or to behave [laughs] like a Zen master always—*uuuh* [*serious-sounding grunt*]*—*[laughs, laughter], if that is Zen, you know, the kōan Zen is better than *shikantaza* [laughs]. That is better, much better [laughs]. But I don't think Zen is just to sit like this, or Zen master should be always like this, you know, like a general [laughs, laughter].

¹² D. T. Suzuki, *The Training of the Zen Buddhism Monk*. Kyōto: The Eastern Buddhist Society, 1934.

What do you think [laughs]? Even Zen master, you know, as a descendent of a buddha, you know, he should not be like always general or samurai [laughs]. He should be Buddha, you know—as a descendent of Buddha.

So if you understand in this way, first of all you should, you know, have—you should be able to accept things as it is, and you should be able to help others in various way, not just by sitting. So although we have no kōan, we have various kinds of way of helping people, not just by sitting. *Ahh*. Do you understand?

Student F: A little.

Suzuki-rōshi: Thank you very much.

Source: City Center original tape. Verbatim transcript by Adam Tinkham and Bill Redican (3/2/01). An edited version appeared in *Wind Bell*, Fall 1968, Vol. VII (No. 3-4), pp. 26-31.