

**Shunryū Suzuki-rōshi**  
**Thursday Evening, November 13, 1969**

Tonight I am supposed to explain "form is emptiness, and emptiness is form." In—last night, we came to the point to make to clarify especially "emptiness is form," which is rather difficult to make it clear. But actually, form is so-to-say "big mind"—no, emptiness is "big mind." And big mind as sky, which contains—which doesn't—air or sky, empty sky. But—"empty sky," we say, but everything grow—when plants and everything grow into the sky, sky doesn't care, you know. And the sky is always ready to accept things in it.

And—but our mind is not—should be like a sky, you know, our big mind. We should accept things as it is, and we should not discriminate things, as the sky doesn't discriminate things in which many ex- [partial word]—in which many things exist. Various being is quite free in the big sky. But our mind is not so. "I like this. I don't like this. This is beautiful. But this is not so beautiful. I like him, but I don't like him. I like this part of him, but the other part is not so good." In this way, our small mind always discriminate things and sometime reject things. That is small mind. So small—in the realm of the small mind there are many objects, there are many beings, and that beings exist as if they have self-nature, good nature or bad nature—a beautiful nature or ugly mean nature.

But Mahāyāna—in this way, even though Theravādan teaching accept the teaching of selflessness, their way is more like small-mind way—small-minded way because they acknowledge things, various being which has—which is not empty. Dharma<sup>1</sup>—when we say dharma, you know, it include our sense organs and mind. So we have six—five sense organs and mind. That is six. And sense object, object of thinking and objects of our sense organs. And the world which sense organ and sense objects create—get [?] with and create some world—world of sight, world of sound, world of taste, world of feeling. In this way, each sense organs has world, its—their own world.

In this way, in—Theravādan canon acknowledge things—some substantial things. They count seventy-five dharmas. But that is actually—not—actually, dharma we say, but that is actually the beings—more psychologically analyzed elements of being. So this is—it—it doesn't—instead of self, Buddha's teaching is teaching of selflessness. So actually instead of saying self, they say five senses, or five elements, or six elements, or six sense objects, or six worlds of each—for each sense organs.

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<sup>1</sup> Suzuki-rōshi pronounced it more like "dhamma" (the Pāli form) throughout, but the Sanskrit "dharma" is used here for the sake of consistency.

So even though they do not say "self," actually they, you know, acknowledged a self which is as permanent as—as things, dharmas. The Hinayāna teaching is, in one word, the teaching of existence of dharma [and] nonexistence of self. That is Hīnayāna canon.

But actually, they—when they say—they—when they acknowledge objective world of objective being, it is same thing to acknowledge self which is observing objects. Do you understand this point? That, you know, to acknowledge lamp means to acknowledge my mind which is observing, you know, lamp. Moreover, you know, when you think, "I am seeing, observing a lamp," you know, as I said before, my mind, my eyes or my mind, or self of mine is projected, and you are reflecting your past experience. You say "I am observing," but actually I observed a lamp, and you are thinking about "I" which is—who is observing lamp.

So, it—it is same thing to acknowledge self. When they say, especially when they say "lamp is existence, lamp exist like this," means I exist and I am observing a lamp. So even—they say, you know, "teaching of selflessness." They never say "self." But actually they—what they mean is, when they say "here is lamp," it means that they acknowledged self which is existent and which is permanent. This is their nature of canon, or weak point of canon, or immaturity of understanding.

When we understand things in that way, it means that in our mind we have various objects. And it means that we are discrim- [partial word]—it is sa- [partial word]—as soon as you have some substantial idea of many things, you start to discriminate, and you start to have some feeling of good or bad. So in that way, we cannot actually obtain big mind which is empty, which is called emptiness. No big mind actually exist as long as they understand things in that way, objective world in that way. I mean substantial way and attached to something specially. That is the nature of, you know, the teaching: five *skandhas* are not empty, five *skandhas* are existent. Five sense *dhātus* is existence, or eighteen *dhātus* is existent.<sup>2</sup>

So *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* deny this thought. In *Prajñā*- [partial word]—according to Mahāyāna, everything [is] empty, not only self but also everything is empty. There is nothing which is not empty. It means that in big mind we should include everything as our own children, as our own family. In our family, you know, they are all a part—they are all part of our parents. And parents treat them as they treat their own hands and feet. Actually, there are—childrens are part of parents. So in that sense when they treat—love children, they have no idea of loving children. But actually he is—they are loving. They have no idea of parents, you know.

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<sup>2</sup> *dhātu* (San., Pāli): region, realm, element. The 18 *dhātus* are the physical and/or mental elements that determine all mental processes (e.g., organ of sight, mind-consciousness, etc.). The five *dhātus* Suzuki-rōshi referred to may be the five *skandhas*.

But actu- [partial word]—that is parents. When they have no idea of children, they are actually really parents. You know, if parents has some idea of parent [laughs], they are not parents. Parents, you know—for children, you know, if they think, you know, "I am good boy, good children of my father or mother," he is not yet so good, you know. When he thinks, "I am very bad boy, I am not his—not—I don't worth as a children of my parents." Then he may be a good children. So when parents has no idea of parents, when children has no idea of children, they are, you know, good parents and good children.

The same thing is true with dharma, with our everyday life. When you think, "I am doing—I am practicing zazen," you know, you are not actually practicing zazen [laughs]. Maybe very painful zazen, or maybe very sleepy zazen—"Oh! It's terrible." [Laughs.] When you, you know, want to know what time it is, "ten more minutes [laughs], five more minutes." That is not zazen, you know. When you don't know what you are doing, that is true zazen.

The big mind is same thing, you know. When there is no idea of anything, that is big mind, that is emptiness itself. Now, "form is emptiness" is all right. Form—forget all about form and color. The form was not observed as some certain form. That is emptiness.

Then "emptiness is form" is maybe next problem, how we understand the "emptiness is form." Maybe I already explained it, you know, right now. Emptiness—when—from emptiness, you know, when everything are in state of emptiness, everything, you know, start to appears in its true sense. Do you understand? You know, when parents forget himself, he is true parents. So when emptiness take place, the form appears in its true sense. That is "emptiness is form—emptiness is form."

If I explain it by our actual experience—if I explain it more maybe psychologically or biologically—emptiness, the word emptiness is directed, actually directed to our mind. It looks like—against Theravādan canon, *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* put emphasis on no eyes, no ears, no nose, no mouth, no body, or no mind, like this. They put emphasis on emptiness of things, but actually Mahāyāna teaching is directed—is actually—denies the teaching of—put more strength on emptiness of self. To realize or to experience—how to experience emptiness of self is to practice zazen. And actual—in actual everyday life we—to experience oneness of objective and subjective world, you know. When you attain enlightenment it is like this [taps stick twice], you know. It—we call—we, figuratively speaking, you know, it is like—our zazen is like a chicken in its shell. When we are ready to come out, you know, the mother—not "mother chicken" [laughs]—hen?—or what do you call?—hen will peck it and help the chicken comes out from the shell. That is, you know, enlightenment experience.

So in your zazen, if your zazen is—if your practice is full practice, you know, it means that you are ready to break the shell and jump out as a small chick, you know [laughs]. So, you know, at that time there is no self, you know. It looks like he is in a shell, but he is ready to break the shell, and at that time, you know, mother hen will peck, peck. That is oneness of your practice and enlightenment. *Fffft!* At that time there is no hen or no chicken—chick. They are one. They—he is one with everything.

So in emptiness everything exist—obtain same world. If ten people are practicing zazen, this world is each one of ten student. So actually, the world of emptiness is one. But—it is one, but at the same time that world of emptiness could be thousands of people's world, past and present and future. That is "emptiness is form." Emptiness is one big world which belongs to everyone. When you forget yourself, you know, you own whole world as a small chicken [chick]. He is not anymore a small chicken—no, chicken, chick?—or what?—I don't know how you say. Each one of them, if they are ten, you know—each one of the ten chick has obtained the same world but, you know, they are enjoying their own world. But the world they enjoy is one big world. That is what we mean [by] "emptiness is form." *Mmm*. Does it make some sense?

So, you see, when you—your zazen is very good, you know, if a bird come and, you know, sing, you will—the world of bird appear, endless world. Now we say—in autumn we say, in early autumn, if one sick leaves—what do you say?—not so strong leaves in September, maybe. Right now almost all the leaves are coming down, but in September or end of August when all the leaves are sick green, one or two leaves may fall. We say to see one sick falling leaves—seeing one sick falling leaves, we know autumn is all over. One sick small leaves are our big world. Autumn is all over. Or when a bird sing, you know, one bird sing in the mountain, we know that how the calmness of the mountain all the more. You know, calmness of—it is not matter of sound, you know, if the bird sings it should be noisy [laughs], you know, but because of the one bird we feel the complete calmness of the whole mountain. When the one bird enjoy whole world, that is complete calmness, that is real calmness, that is real emptiness. And that is real form of form. When you think, you know, "This is bird. I am here," or "This is sick—just sick falling leaf," that is not real falling leaves. That is the silt<sup>3</sup> of your thinking mind.

Oh, yeah, each year at this time of the year, you know, many leaves comes down, fall down. "Oh, it is troublesome to see it" [laughs]. If you feel in that way, that is more Hinayāna way. Or you attach to the idea of falling leaves because that falling leaves are silt of your experience, not

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<sup>3</sup> Suzuki-rōshi pronounced "silt" very clearly here and later in the lecture. If he had looked up the word in a dictionary before the lecture, as he often did, he would have found a definition like: "a sediment consisting of very fine particles."

fresh vivid experience. That is, you know, "emptiness is form." By form —when form appears from emptiness, there is true form. The form we know or we acknowledge as a result of thinking or silt of experience, that is not true experience or that is not true form. So first of all, we deny the silt of experience, subject or object—objective world or subjective world. First of all, we deny this kind of idea. And we come back to the more original, vivid experience. And there we experience the emptiness and form too. At that time we cannot say, you know, form or emptiness. Everything is both form and emptiness. So that is why we say "emptiness is form."

Okay? [Laughs.] Emptiness is form. Not—it is very logical discernment, but it is not just logical. It is more based on our actual experience of everyday life. Not special teaching but, you know, something—some teaching which could be approved, which could be experienced by practice and through everyday life.

Hmm. [Laughs.] Okay? Did you figure out what I want to say? [Laughs.]

**Student A:** Rōshi?

**Suzuki-rōshi:** *Hai.*

**Student A:** When you say "big mind"—

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Mm-hmm.

**Student A:** —you seem to say big mind in the same way that the Theravāda says dharmas.

**Suzuki-rōshi:** No. Theravāda—when Theravāda says dharmas, it is, you know, based on idea of existent. That is why Nāgārjuna, you know, rejected that kind of thinking. Whatever statement it may be, there is four statements. But if there is no more than four statements, but whatever the statement may be or understanding may be, if it—it is based on idea of being or idea of nonbeing—this is pair of opposite (being or nonbeing)—it is not right understanding.

They say, you know—as long as they acknowledge some substantial dharma it means that they don't acknowledge the big world of emptiness. They say our—those—self-nature is empty, but actually they acknowledge, they accept objective substantial dharmas. When they accept objective, substantial dharma, they are already accept it, the objective, projected self, self out of self. It is not true self, you know. Self you reflect on in some experience. Actually, I attained enlightenment [laughs] on this point. My first enlightenment was—did I tell you? [Laughs, laughter.] I shouldn't say so, because I am Sōtō

priest [laughs]. You know—

**Student A:** Tell us anyway.

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Mmm? You know, I had very difficult time, you know—bodhis- [partial word]—oh, no—*dōshin*—*dōshin*—way-seeking mind. What is way-seeking mind? To practice something without any gaining idea. We should not practice our way for sake of ourselves. For sake of others, no[t] sake of Buddhism even. For sake of practice, we should practice. That is famous statement—very impressive statement, isn't it [laughs]? Very encouraging, you know. You should practice true way, not even for sake of Buddha. Not sake of for others. You should practice our way for sake of the ... [*Sentence not finished. Tape turned over.*]

So I wanted to practice our way for sake of practice. I started the practice, you know. That practice was to get up thirty minutes earlier than other student. I was in dormitory at that time. And before they get up to clean, you know, restroom so that they may not notice me cleaning restroom. But as I was cleaning, you know, many things happens actually. I had many times some people coming to restroom. I saw many room lit up, you know. "Oh, he may come," you know. "Because he [laughs]—he get up, he will come pretty soon." So at first I escaped, you know. I hide myself somewhere so that they may not notice me. But even so, you know, while I'm hiding myself, funny feeling [laughs]. I didn't know what kind of practice I am practicing [laughs], you know, hiding myself from people [laughs, laughter], so that they may not notice me, you know. Very strange feeling, you know. If I'm doing something good, there will not be no need to be afraid of anything. But I was very afraid of people at that time. I couldn't solve this problem, you know. And I didn't know whether I am practicing, you know, my prac- [partial word]—our practice for sake of practice. The conclusion was, anyway, this kind of practice cannot be a real practice. But at the same time, I couldn't give up, you know. I was rather obstinate. So once I determined to do it, I must do it.

But the practice I am practicing is very awkward. I didn't know what I was doing. At that time, when I was—we have to study—we have to take some unit of psychology. And Professor Iriya<sup>4</sup> once told me—told us that if you—it is impossible to actualize your past experience again. If you think about it, it is already—it is not already actual experience you experienced. And it is not psychological state which you had. That word

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<sup>4</sup> Professor Yoshitaka Iriya, an authority in Tang colloquial language. One of the authors (with Sasaki and Fraser) of *A Man of Zen: The Recorded Sayings of Layman P'ang*. (1971); author of *Rinzairoku* (1989); *Gensha kōroku* (*Comprehensive Record of Xuansha*) (1987–1989), *Zengo jiten* (1991), and other works. He was director of research for the First Zen Institute of America in Japan, and he contributed significantly to the research for *Zen Dust* (p. xxi). Suzuki-rōshi also talks about Prof. Iriya in Lecture SR-67-09-08B.

struck me:

"Oh. I shouldn't think about my practice anymore. I shouldn't think about my," you know, "state of mind or my experience. I shouldn't criticize my experience. Maybe whatever happened it doesn't matter, so if I do it because I have to do it, that's all, you know. You shouldn't say—I shouldn't say my practice is pure or impure, or for sake of others or for [laughs] sake of Buddha or sake of practice."

That is useless thing to think about, so I gave up to think about my practice.

Since then I didn't mind [laughs]. Whoever come, I clean. "Just a moment, I'm cleaning this," you know, "this place. So you should go that way. You should go the other restroom." So when you, you know, when you think about—when you feel as if you are doing something, you know, at the same time you are accept[ing] it. You projected "you" outside of yourself, and you are criticizing "you" which is outside of yourself. It is not true you. True you is on your side always, which cannot be criticized [laughs]. It is foolish, you know, to criticize yourself. I had that kind of, you know, enlightenment at that time. [Claps hands together.] "Okay!" [Laughs.]

That is what—exactly what Mahāyāna Buddhist started to think about. To name various elements, you know, eighteen<sup>5</sup> or seventy-five,<sup>6</sup> it is maybe very foolish thing. Whether that is empty or not empty [laughs] is very far away from our actual life. And when you think in that way, you are involved in that kind of thinking, far away from the buddha-mind. Some more question?

**Student B:** Then what is small mind used for?

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Small mind—in this case I mean, you know, small mind is mind which attach to many things, you know. Why you attach to things is you have a kind of idea of substantial—you acknowledge substantial element in things. Because you think, "Here is a cup," you know, you attach to it. But actually, the cup is not some independent—something which has its own self-nature. Because you see the cup, you know, cup exist. If you don't see it, there is no cup. Because cup exist, I exist here, you know. That is teaching of interdependence. Because I exist, cup exist. Because cup exist, I exist. If I don't exist, cup doesn't exist.

**Student B:** If you see the cup, but you don't say to yourself, "I see a

<sup>5</sup> The 18 *dhātus*.

<sup>6</sup> Possibly the 75 Sarvāstāvādan dharmas, which constitute the final, indivisible, real units of existence.

cup"—

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Hmm?

**Student B:** —if you see the cup, but you don't attach any particular thing to it, like saying it's a cup.

**Suzuki-rōshi:** No. It means that when I say, "I see a cup," means I—this cup is mine [pats self], a part of me, a part of big self. Not something which exist outside of me. And that, you know, that "me" which actually observing a cup is not the self which is projected to somewhere, you know, and "I have a cup." This self is picture of true self or picture of big mind which include everything. So we are always talking about projected self as if that kind of self exist. But it doesn't!

You know, if I say whether I am doing right practice or not, that is projected self which can be criticized, you know. But even though you criticize it, that is not myself anymore. "I am here always [pats self], true self is always with me, and moment after moment with me. And we are—I am completely involved in something which I am doing right now." Our life is continuity of this kind of life. I am here, here, here. And on each moment we are including many things. That is true "I." But projected self or self which is the object of thinking mind is not true self.

What was your question, by the way [laughs]?

**Student B:** I asked you what was the use of the small mind.

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Small mind—use of?

**Student B:** Yeah, what is its—it's there, but you, of course, say it doesn't exist.

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Small mind doesn't exist actually. It is the silt of thinking mind. Small mind doesn't. You think as if, you know, it is quite natural for us to think in that way. But actually, if you think more, and if you, you know, want to do something, you know, as Buddha told you, you know, with that kind of mind you cannot do anything. Projected mind doesn't work at all. It will create always many trouble [laughs] because it is dead one, you know, it is not active one. And moreover, it changes, you know, like a ghost. True self, when it changes there is—must be some reason. But without any reason, you know, if someone criticize this [taps on something like a water pitcher] projected self, you think as if you did very bad thing. If you think, you know, "I did very nasty thing," you know. "Why you get up so early and clean the restroom? You nasty fellow [laughs]," you may say. You yourself will criticize you, you know. That "you" is not here, not me, but there—self which you think there was two, three days ago [laughs]. That's—it



doesn't mean anything. That is why we have to live in each moment. It means that don't criticize your projected self. Self it might be in future; self it was in past. But that is—that kind of self doesn't exist. At least useless, you know. No end in treating that kind of self.

**Student B:** Rōshi, is it possible to criticize yourself in the present?

**Suzuki-rōshi:** No.

**Student B:** It doesn't seem like it wouldn't [?].

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Hmm?

**Student B:** It doesn't seem like it wouldn't [?].

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Criticize yourself? Criticize yours- [partial word]—whether you are fully, you know, fully occupied or involved in what you are doing or not would be the point. When Dōgen says you shouldn't talk about the teaching which is lofty or which is not so lofty. You shouldn't say so. But you should know whether your practice is true practice or not.

**Student C:** So if our practice is lazy practice, then we should just let it be lazy. I was thinking that it is lazy, so we shouldn't try to practice hard because that's then projecting something. That's wrong understanding to be practicing hard.

**Suzuki-rōshi:** [Laughs.] But you can say so, you know, by words [laughs]. But if you—if your practice is—why, you know, you have lazy practice is, you know, [because] just half of yourself is working or something, and half of it is—belongs to past or somewhere else, you know. You are not here, and—you are not actually here, and you are not actually doing thing lazy. When you are lazy, you know, when you, you know, feel very sleepy, you know, at the same moment, "I must stay in bed. Why I was so sleepy," you know, "I am so sleepy?" In this way, you will have—your s- [partial word]—the self will be projected in various ways. That is why we become lazy. So the best way is to get up as soon as you hear the bell [laughs], before you think anything. That is, you know, the practice. We are always involved in thinking mind and, you know—

**Student C:** But supposed we just don't get up to the bell. Should we say to ourselves, "I should get up for the bell" or should we just—or just not do anything at all but just stay in bed [laughter]?

**Suzuki-rōshi:** You see, there is interesting argument [laughs, laughter]. You know, this, you know—when you hear the bell, that moment include your past and future, you know. And next moment

include its own past and future. So, you know, when—the moment you get up, you know, it has the—has its own future. *Zendō* is in your—*zendō* belongs to that moment. And to wash your face also included at that moment has its own past and future. There is no—noth- [partial word]—no experience or no activity which has no past or future. It belongs to each moment. Maybe you can call it intuition because there is no time even to think about. It appears in that way. Because I, you know, explain it by words I have to say its own past or future. But intuitively, you appears in empty world in that way. That is your own emptiness.

So what is bad? That which we cannot do is bad. What is good? Something which you want to do, it is good, you know. That is why *Dōgen* said so. At that moment intuitively we know that. If you think there is many things to say, but before you think—the world you have before you think is actual world on which you should strive for. *Hai*.

**Student D:** Did you say that the cup is a projection of self?

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Mm-hmm.

**Student D:** Is that a projection of the small mind?

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Project—not real projection, you know. It is something which arise in relation to the objective being. The more you think, you may lose the point, you know. [Laughs.]

**Student E:** *Rōshi*?

**Suzuki-rōshi:** *Hai*.

**Student E:** Suppose I—

**Suzuki-rōshi:** In—in—in—just a moment—in one word, you know, your thinking is involved in, based on, you know, the idea of being. That is the trouble [?]. You are caught by illusion or shadow of the being. That is a trouble [?]. Because you think, you know, something exist here in this way, that is, you know, idea of being. The opposite background of thinking is non-being. Just to think whether lamp exist here or not exist here. When we say "nothingness," you know, you may think the opposite of being, you know. There is no such thing like lamp exist. That is, you know, the opposite of thinking of being. Being or non-being. Complete—there is no complete idea of being or complete idea of non-being. Nothing arise from nothingness. Nothing vanish into non-being. But, you know, I don't know why, but—

**Student B:** *Rōshi*?

**Suzuki-rōshi:** —when we think, we think in that way. *Hai*.

**Student B:** When the breath goes out, and we count "one," and then "two," are we attaching to breathing?

**Suzuki-rōshi:** No. No. No. Watching.

**Student B:** Oh by—yeah, by watching it, creating an object, thinking mind seeing something happening—

**Suzuki-rōshi:** No.

**Student B:** —breathing happening.

**Suzuki-rōshi:** No. Moment after moment, you—that is, you know, the subtle distinction from real breathing, counting-breathing practice, and not true one, you know. You don't count just to know how many, you know [laughs, laughter].

**Student B:** Couldn't handle it [?].

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Huh?

**Student B:** We stopped at ten and go back to one.

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Yeah.

**Student B:** But what is it that perceives a breath going out to call it "number one, number two," and so forth.

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Number two. The—we choose the most simplest activity on which we don't—about which we don't think. It is another practice of following-breathing practice. The point is not to count but to—not to one [?] with your practice.

**Student B:** If—if you don't make—can you get mechanical that way, like just "one" [2-3 words]?

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Not mechanical, you know. My understanding of mechanic is just to do, you know, just to work, just to count [to] ten, you know. And something which produce ten something, you know, ten breathing, that is more mechanical way. And without using not much body or mind, you can produce something. That is mechanism.

**Student B:** Yeah.

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Yeah. But when you count your breathing it is very simple to count from one to ten, but each breathing should be, you know

—on each breathing all of your mind and body should participate. With whole body and mind you take one breathing. And instead of saying something else you say, "one, two." See? That is practice.

**Student B:** Thank you, Rōshi.

**Student F:** Rōshi, when you're sitting counting your breathing like that, and you're involved in saying "one" and following your breath out, it seems like there's a kind of split of one part of you or you being involved in the following of the breathing—

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Oh. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

**Student F:** —and another part on another side was something being aware of the whole action taking place, of being aware of your concentration on following, and another that seems to be aware that's not even involved in it but aware of it taking place.

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Yeah. Aware of—I don't know what do you mean by "aware of," but—

**Student F:** Well, count like—you're following your breath, and are you counting as you're breathing, and you're—say you're very carefully trying to follow your breathing, and yet at the same time you're aware of all of it taking place. All—you're aware of your action, aware of your counting your "one," your "two." Seems like there's a split.

**Suzuki-rōshi:** S- [partial word]? No.

**Student G:** One part is observes the other.

**Student F:** One part is observing. You're doing this action—

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Uh-huh.

**Student F:** —or is not just observing but just aware that it's taking place—

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Oh, I see.

**Student F:** —even—even if—

**Suzuki-rōshi:** You are watching, you know, yourself. Oh, that is—that is not the way. Why you count is—some element, you know, of watch—to watch yourself [is] involved. Because you go—if you go "twenty" or "thirty," "Oh my!" [Laughs.] That much, you know, observation is involved. But I don't mean on each breathing you should be very careful, you know. Instead of being careful about what you are doing, you

should take your breathing with your whole body and mind. Then you have no time to watch.

It is same thing as you make calligraphy, you know, your—or penmanship. Maybe you're watching, you know, so that you may not—your penmanship doesn't go outside of your line [laughs]. But not to go outside of your line, you know, you are making best effort. And that is not you observing it, because—why you think in that way is maybe, I think—the zazen practice is—looks like too easy, you know, so you have time to think about it [laughs]. But even when you are doing very simple easy thing, you should be able to do it as if you are doing very difficult thing. And at the same time, so that you can do difficult thing as if you are doing very easy thing, you sh- [partial word]—we should practice zazen. Do you—do you understand the point?

A cats, for an—a tiger, or an instance, use whole attention and whole strength even when he catch small fish. *Ffft!* [Laughs.] His attitude is same as to catch a big, you know, animal. The tiger has no fear, you know, even though he catches big animal, he can do it as if he catches small fish. Even when he is catching small fish, his way is same way as he catches big animal. How he could do so is the point.

Usually, you know, human being, we—if it is easy, you know, that is quite easy: "Maybe I can do it tomorrow" [laughs]. That is our way mostly. "Oh, this is quite easy." And you don't make—your attitude is quite different from when you do something difficult. That kind of person has big difficulty when he confront with something great—great difficulty. Someone who looks like very bold and very strong is not actually so strong when he face, confront with some big enemy or big difficulty. He will be the first one who may run away [laughs].

When—if someone who is doing—who will do small things with—not "care"—but with—we say, *suki no nai*.<sup>7</sup> *Suki no nai* means—I don't know what. If, you know, this cup has some leakage, it is *suki aru*.<sup>8</sup> *Suki no nai* is "no—no—no gap," or "no chance to take advantage of." If a lady—if a young beautiful lady want to protect himself [herself] from wolf with black hair, long and short [laughs], you know, the way is not to shout or to run away, but we say *suki no nai taido*.<sup>9</sup> *Suki no nai taido*. No—she behave quite natural and beautifully, maybe sometime charming [laughs], but no—he—she doesn't give any chance to be taken advantage of. That is *suki no nai*.

You know, that kind—zazen practice is something like that. [Laughs.]

<sup>7</sup> *suki no nai* (Jap.): *suki* = opening; unguarded moment, flaw, space, or room; *no* = of; *nai* = no. Hence, to be always on alert; to be thoroughly guarded. See also SR-71-03-02 for a similar term.

<sup>8</sup> *aru* (Jap.): some, certain.

<sup>9</sup> *taido* (Jap.): attitude.

Even though you are always making face, you know [laughs], it doesn't protect yourself from cats and dogs [laughs]. Even though you are quite natural and charming enough, but—"Oh my!" [laughs], they will run away, you know, if they have some ambition.

That is what is told in *Lotus Sūtra*. Even though you met with big snake, snake cannot bite you. If you are going to be cut by big sword by bandit—what do you call [it]?—hmm?—

**Student G:** [1 words unclear.]

**Suzuki-rōshi:** —by black-masked [bandit], you—the sword will be broken piece by piece. That is, you know, *suki no nai*.

So, you know, zazen practice is always, you know, figuratively ... [*End of original tape. It sounded like the last sentence was not finished on tape.*]

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Source: City Center original tape transcribed verbatim by Diana Bartle and checked against tape by Bill Redican (7/31/01).