

**Shunryū Suzuki-rōshi**  
**SUMMER *SESSHIN* LECTURE: 6:00 PM**  
**Friday, Thursday, July 30, 1965**  
**Lecture D**  
**Soko-ji Temple, San Francisco**

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Do you have some question?

**Student A:** Sensei, D. T. Suzuki wrote that "Zen was religion of the will," is what he said. What do you think about that?

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Religion?

**Student A:** Of the will, he said.

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Oh. I—I haven't read it. What does he say?

**Student A:** Oh. He just said—I just remember this sentence. He said Zen is the religion of the will.

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Will?

**Student A:** Will.

**Suzuki-rōshi:** I don't understand.

**Student:** Willpower.

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Will?

**Several Students:** Willpower. Will.

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Uh-huh. Yeah, I know [laughs, laughter] what is. Wheel. No?

**Student:** No.

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Will.

**Student:** Will.

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Will.

**Student:** Yeah.

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Uh-huh. [Laughs, laughter.]

**Student:** "I will do it."

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Yeah.

**Student:** "I will." Willpower.

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Yeah. It is—he may say [laughs] religion of will. But willpower is not only power we have, you know. Will, and emotion or feeling, and moral—morality. Willpower may be the driving power, but in contrast with European religion, they say emotion is deepest. They think it is—emotion is deepest, and willpower is not so deep. And intellect is most superficial [laughs].

But Zen is not just willpower—religion of just willpower. Sōtō is more—more, you know, maybe emotional. And religious feeling is something like emotional, but just emotional power—emotion [is] blind. The willpower is also sometime [laughs] blind. So that is why we want rational power. But rational power will correct the mistake of—will blind [blend?] or help blend willpower and feeling or emotional power. I don't exactly figure out why he said so, but because in practice we want big willpower. Zen is religion of practice, so he must have said Zen is religion of will. But I don't think Zen is just will, religion of will. [It is a] religion of whole mind. Some more question?

**Student B:** Do you have an explanation for the three bodies of Buddha?

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Three bodies of Buddha?

**Student B:** Yeah.

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Mm-hmm. Some other question?

**Student C:** What is the importance of the body?

**Suzuki-rōshi:** The body? Uh-huh.

**Student C:** Yeah.

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Uh-huh.

**Student C:** And then [2-3 words] you mind.

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Oh. Okay. Some other question?

**Student D:** Would you please talk a little bit about Dōgen's ideas on training? I—I've heard you talk about Dōgen's training before, but I think it [4-6 words], like Theravādin Buddhism.

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Oh. His idea of training.

**Student D:** Mm-hmm.

**Suzuki-rōshi:** That may be the [laughs] conclusion of the two question, maybe. Some other question?

**Student E:** My question may be in line with his, though. Since man from the beginning has buddha-nature, then why is he so inclined to be influenced [1 word] by a [1-3 words]?

**Suzuki-rōshi:** [Laughs.] The three mind of the Buddha—three body of Buddha, you know: Dharmakāya Buddha, Nirmānakāya Buddha, and Sambhogakāya Buddha.<sup>1</sup> The Sambhogakāya Buddha, or *hosshin-hosshin* is Buddha. Let me explain historical Buddha first. Buddha as a human being, he is Nirmānakāya Buddha. And in another sense he is Sambhogakāya Buddha, rewarded body. By good merit and perfect practice he attained Sambhogakāya Buddha. *Hosshin—Hosshin-butsum*, he—after practicing a long time he attained *hosshin—no[t]—no[t] Hōjin—Hōjin-buddha*. Not long "ō." *Hosshin-buddha*, "rewarded body."<sup>2</sup>

And Nirmānakāya Buddha is the buddha who takes various form to save people. That is actually the historical Buddha. Historical Buddha is the embodiment of Sambhogakāya Buddha or Dharmakāya Buddha. Dharmakāya Buddha is Buddha as a truth. Absolute truth—absolute truth take—takes two forms: One is, we say, *Keshin-butsum*.<sup>3</sup> *Keshin* is embodiment body, and [*hōjin* is the] rewarded body, and [*hosshin* is the] dharma body. That is three bodies of Buddha.

So actually when we—after by our practice we will have rewarded body, which is full of virtue like Buddha. Buddha is supposed to practice his way for many and many—I don't know how long but [laughs], many past—many lifes of—many and many lifes of practice, he attained his rewarded body by long practice, like Amida Buddha. And Nirmānakāya Buddha which is embodiment of the Buddha, the truth, is like a Avalokiteshvara, Kanzeon-bosatsu. He takes various

<sup>1</sup> Suzuki-rōshi defines and discusses these terms in detail in the 1968 *Lotus Sūtra* series of lectures.

<sup>2</sup> Suzuki-rōshi may have reversed the two terms. Traditionally, *hōjin* means the "reward-body" of a buddha—the body of a buddha produced upon realizing buddhahood as a result of the practices of a bodhisattva; it is equivalent to *Sambhogakāya*. *Hosshin* is the body of the highest aspect of the threefold body of the buddha; it is the absolute nature of buddha-mind; it is equivalent to *Dharmakāya*.

<sup>3</sup> *Keshin-butsum*: Traditionally, the Buddha appearing in the same form as those to be saved (e.g., as an animal to preach to animals; as a being in hell to save people in hell).

form for—to save people. He does not take any particular form. He change his form according to the people who he want to save. This is so, but Nirmānakāya Buddha or Sambhogakāya Buddha is not different from Dharmakāya Buddha. It is only one buddha. But only one buddha takes three forms or three meaning. This is three bodies of buddha.

And why body is important is our body is too indispensable to express Dharmakāya Buddha. Dharmakāya Buddha is absolute body which is —which is before—before form or color. You cannot see Dharmakāya Buddha. He has no form or color. If you have body, through body you can express dharma. And when you want to save some particular person, he will take some—some special form to save some special person. When he want to save fisherman, he will become a fisherman. When he want to save a woman, he will be a woman. Or when he want to save children, he will be a children. You know, that is his way of saving people. So [laughs] when you want to save people—he want —when you want to save someone, he want you should be—you should be completely one with the people who [you] want to save, or else you cannot save [them].

I think for priest it is necessary—one important condition is not to be so fancy and not to be so rich [laughs]. He much be rich—as rich [as] the people are. Just, you know, as rich as people are or as poor as [laughs] usual people were. Or else it is—maybe [in an] especially poor country like Japan, it is almost impossible to save people when you have too much money [laughs] or when you have too much time or leisure. He may say—they may say, "Oh, that's proper—there is no wonder [laughs] that he so generous," you know. "He should sa- [incomplete word]—help us," you know. "And there is no problem, no difficulty for him who is rich to be—to be generous." So this point is very important when you help others. This is the idea of Nirmānakāya Buddha, like Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva.

Anyway, expression is important: how to express his spirit. To express our spirit or way, it is necessary to express it through action, through body. Our physical action is very important. Actually when you are trained, your demeanor will be, you know, different. Your conduct will be refined when [laughs]—unless—without well-trained body, it is impossible to express the truth and help others. So just by the presence of him will be—just presence of him among people will be enough to save pe- [incomplete word]—to help people. And through physical practice we can train our mind. Our big mind—our big mind doesn't want training [laughs]. Unless you control your body with strong will, you know, will of religion [?]-with strong will and well-refined emotional function and refined aesthetic attitude or expression, we can help others. So anyway, training is necessary when you want to express the big mind. By training we can—we will be emancipated

from the physical body even. But without physical body, no emancipation will achieved—will be achieved. Without no material you can play any magic. You want something [laughs]? That is why physical training is wanted.

And what was your question?

**Student E:** In the beginning [15-20 words] for the little mind.

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Little mind. Little mind. When you think that is little mind, that is little mind. You know, when you understand your mind is not little mind, that is big mind. So mind is the same, and when you think this is good or bad, it is already discrimination of small mind. When you say so, you know—be careful. When you say so you are—your question based on the small mind.

**Student E:** What I mean is in the beginning, before man achieved awareness—

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Uh-huh. Before—

**Student E:** Yeah, yeah. Like—

**Suzuki-rōshi:** —it is said?

**Student E:** Yes. In the beginning, like in the Bible, for instance, the Garden of Eden. And why was the temptation—why is it Adam and Eve give into this temptation if they were pure [1 word], you know? If they are completely already pure—

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Already pure, you say?

**Student E:** Yeah, in the beginning we all have buddha-nature so to start off then, why did we go the other path—on the small-mind path?

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Yeah, that's what I'm saying, you know? You say—your question is based on small mind, you know, discussing it like this, you know [laughs, laughter]. So, you know, it—there may be—it may be better to answer—if I answer with small mind, you will understand it [laughs, laughter]. Like this [?]. In realm of ethics or, you know, science or psychology, you will—you will be satisfied with my answer. But my answer should be, you know—I should take religious standpoint [laughs]. So it is impossible, you know, to answer your question from my viewpoint.

**Student E:** You mean, to satisfy me?

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Yeah. No, I cannot satisfy you.

**Student E:** Can you go on? Actually, I know this question would not be anyway hoping to get any enlightenment where we're standing.

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Uh-huh.

**Student E:** The question is [4-10 words], probably.

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Mm-hmm. Yeah.

**Student E:** And so—

**Suzuki-rōshi:** —to some extent—

**Student E:** —if you don't want to give an answer that I'm not—I mean, it doesn't matter if you want to. [Preceding part of question may not be accurate.]

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Yeah, to some extent I can—you will be satisfied with my answer, but you will not be completely satisfied with my answer. You know, so far, why do we have small mind is because of our ignorance [laughs]. When we say "ignorance," it is already religious viewpoint. But for you that is not ignorance, that is scientific truth [laughs]. But for us that is ignorance. Ignorance—ignorant of our true nature. But that is knowledge of science. So from scientific viewpoint the b- [partial word]—our true nature should be—our inmost nature should be measured by, you know, some measure of value—measure of value of morality, or aesthetics, or science—scientific truth. Something accord with scientific knowledge is buddha-nature. Some knowledge accord with moral truth is buddha-nature. Something beautiful is buddha-nature. But this explanation will not satisfy you [laughs].

**Student E:** That's satisfying.

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Are you satisfied [laughs]? So it should be—it should be, you know—morally—we should be moral, and beautiful, and truthful: those who have buddha-nature. But why we [are] inclined to be bad is we are so conscious or so concerned about what we are doing, what we do. Our nature is half-and-half, good and bad. Half-and-half is our human nature. If you are 50% bad, you are [laughs] 50% good, because your measure of value is dualistic. So it should be so: 50-50. But it seems to be for conscientious people, all people are bad [laughs]. No one is good [laughs]. It looks like so and we feel so, because our true—true nature is so conscientious, so pure, and so good.

**Student F:** Could you speak on transmission—the master gives the student who is enlightened [1-2 words].

**Suzuki-rōshi:** When—transmission is the symbol of perfect understanding of the transmitted way from Buddha. As I said, it is three [?] cover—cover of the Buddhism.

**Student F:** Is it necessary, though? If one is enlightened, why does the master have to give him transmission if he's already enlightened? What's the purpose of it? Is it—

**Suzuki-rōshi:** That is cover [laughs].

**Student F:** Symbolic?

**Suzuki-rōshi:** If you have no cover, the food will be—become dusty more and more. If, you know, it is 3000 years, almost—not 3000 years, but 3000 years since he passed away. And transmis- [partial word]—while transmission handed down through patriarchs, it will become very dusty unless you have cover on it. That is dharma.

Dharma is not just the written scripture. That is transmission. So transmission will be handed down from warm hand to the warm hand, from body to body, from person to person. That is transmission. That is dharma, or cover [laughs]. You neglect cover, you know: "I don't want cover." [Laughs.] "If I have pan and food, that's enough." But for awhile it is so, but it will be stale. It will go bad quite soon if you have no cover to it.

So when you receive transmission, you know, it is not just symbol. You know, we have many ritual, and when—sometime before we understand what the—what is the true meaning of the cover, but we sometime we rec- [partial word]—we have to receive it. In that case, we—the master recognize his possibility to be—to have full understanding of the dharma. Some day he was—when he is so sure —when he become so sure, he will give you the transmission before—even before he realize its true meaning of—true meaning of the cover. And after studying [laughs] the true meaning of the cover for a long time, he will realize: "Oh that's a tremendous—I have to transmit this cover to my disciple." In this way, transmission—our transmission is handed down from Buddha to us.

Most of the time, you know, when we receive transmission, we—we have faintest idea of the transmission. So even though you receive transmission, that is not like a license, you know [laughing]. If you have license you can drive a car. But for us it is not so, even though you have license [laughter]. If you do not have full—if you do not understand full meaning of it, it will—you cannot drive your car,

actually. So you find out later, perhaps when your master is no more<sup>4</sup> [laughing]. You will understand why he was so difficult with you—he was—why he was so mean to you. That is way it goes, you know [laughter] in society [?]. It is too late. And when you realize it, you will regret why I was not with you more, why I left him so soon, or why he left me so soon. You know, that is how we feel about our master.

So everyone—when we have a new temple, we offer incense to the state, to the country, and to the Buddha, and to the—to our master. And everyone cry [laughs, laughter] when he gives—offer the incense to his master. When—usually when he offer incense to the Buddha, he does not cry [laughs, laughter]. When he offers incense to the country, he never cry [laughs, laughter]. But before he offer the incense to his master, he is like this [laughs, laughter]. He is not there. He is already passed away. But that is how we feel. That is transmission. That is the relationship [of] master and disciple.

In this way, we have cover to our dharma. That is the meaning of the cover. So sometime when we—when I become lonely, I talk about transmission with Reverend Katagiri. "When American people will understand the meaning of transmission?" [Laughs.] It may be—it will take pretty long time for you to understand the full meaning of transmission.

**Student F:** Does a formal ritual take place when the transmission is handed down?

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Yeah. When we receive—when I receive it, I wasn't—just busy. I was scared [laughs, laughter]. He<sup>5</sup> was so strict, and I was scared, that's all [laughs, laughter]. After many years, I started to realize what he taught. That is not because of the identical culture, or, you know—this kind of feeling seldom appear in relationship [between] father and his boy. It appears just [between] master and disciple. [Laughs.] His master is, you know, more valuable or more important or vital for him than his parents—for—for a Buddhist. That is cover—why cover is so important. And this kind of feeling still exist, and this cover is still exist in Japan.

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<sup>4</sup> Dead.

<sup>5</sup> Gyokujun So-on Suzuki (c. 1877-1934): Shunryū Suzuki-rōshi's master. As an orphan, he was legally adopted by the Suzuki family, at which time he was given the family name Suzuki. He received dharma transmission from Suzuki-roshi's father Butsumon Sogaku Suzuki. He served as abbot of Zoun-in monastery, where Shunryu Suzuki began his training for the priesthood, and later Rinso-in Temple.

**Student G:** Will you tell us what the meaning of the first three words in the *Heart Sūtra* are? The [1-2 words] says that—or in Chinese *Guan zi zai* or *Kan ji zai*, means "look, see"—or "look, perceive, present." Or that is, am I—what it really means is, "Look to see if I am here or not." "Am I present at this moment?" Is that—is that — does it have that same meaning in Chi- [partial word]—in Japanese or is it lost in translation?

**Suzuki-rōshi:** *Kan?*

**Student G:** *Kanjizai.*

**Suzuki-rōshi:** *Kanjizai.*<sup>6</sup> *Jizai* is "free": freedom without any disturbance and without any form or color. *Kan.* *Kan* is not to—not to observe form or color, but to understand full meaning of it—full meaning of the color—through color and form to understand its true meaning. *Kan* does not mean philosophy or science—scientific knowledge, scientific viewpoint—understanding from our sense organ or our—by philosophical effort. To—to penetrate into the true meaning of it, that is *kan.* *Kan—jizai*—when it—the *kan* is fully in function, the function is *jizai*, free, without any disturbance.

**Student G:** Would you say that—the last two sentences again [2-3 words]?

**Suzuki-rōshi:** If *kan* is perfect, that function of *kan* will be *jizai.* *Jizai* is free. No disturbance.

**Student H:** What—what is mind?

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Mind? The mind is, you know—yeah—when you say "mind," of course you have idea of body, mind and body, or big mind and small mind. So mind—meaning of mind is very—there are various meaning. We mean many things by mind. But this—it was a big problem for us. It has been, and still it is big problem. What is mind and what is our body? Materialistic or duality or—mind and body is the same. But in Buddhism, mind and body is two faces of one reality.

**Student H:** What does it mean to say, "Everything is mind?"

**Suzuki-rōshi:** "Everything is mind." Mind include everything or everything—you know, we take this viewpoint. Mind—we [are] concerned about each individual's attainment or nirvāna or happiness. So happiness should be for each one of us. We do not talk about just mind in scientific way. When we say "mind," that—that mind is

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<sup>6</sup> *Kanjizai-bosatsu* are the first two words of the *Heart Sūtra* in Romanized Japanese. Literally, *kan* means "to see" or "to view"; *jizai* means "free" or "freely"; hence, Avalokiteshvara is the "Freely Seeing Bodhisattva."

someone's mind: my mind, or your mind, or someone's mind who is concerned about his own life. If so, mind include various problem he thinks he—he will see, or feel he is involved in. So for him, mind is his hand, mind is his room, mind is his family, mind is his country. Because he—his mind concerned with people, with family, with his body. So in this sense mind and body is one—in religious sense.

But for science, you know, mind is something—some—some function, some object of study. But for—for us it is most concerning [laughs] point, and each one's problem is mind. Do you understand the difference? So we are talking about each one's mind. I am talking about my mind, and you are listening to your mind [laughs] about your mind, not someone's mind. If so, that mind include all the problem you have. Without mind, there is no [laughs] problem. Without "you," there is no problem [laughs]. Because there is "you," you have problem. Because you have mind, small or big, I don't know [laughs]. Anyway, because you have your mind, there is problem. So whatever it is, the problem you have is your mind.

**Student I:** Isn't it also true from the other side, that if—I don't know [?] how to say it—when you just know mind, it's—

**Suzuki-rōshi:** No mind.

**Student I:** Yeah, yeah—when you—when—when you just know, when you become just mind, now there's nothing else. There's really nothing else but mind, and it covers everything. You can't even say it covers everything, there's nothing left to cover. I mean—

**Suzuki-rōshi:** So, yeah, that's true. When you say "mind," there is no material. When you say "material," there is no mind. That is why watch the water, you know. Fish—before you see the fish, watch the water. When you watch the water there is fish, not water. For science it's water, but for me it is fish [laughs, laughter]. For science—scientific mind it's water. Oxygen plus what? Hydrogen two plus oxygen is water, just water [laughing]. But for me it is not water, it is fish, and I'm involved in it, and I am swimming—swimming in the water. In this way we are, you know, flying through the sky. The—all the sky is mind. This understanding is very subtle and wonderful, you know. All the sky is my home. If you say that is too wide, it is too wide, that is your problem. If you say that's wonderful, that is your pleasure of life.

**Student J:** How long do you have to go fishing before you [2-3 words]—[laughter]?

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Before you go fishing?

**Student J:** How long does it—do you have to go fishing before you can see the fish?

**Suzuki-rōshi:** [Laughs.] How long does it take? What did you say?

**Student J:** Yeah. How long does it take?

**Suzuki-rōshi:** *Noo*, it—it doesn't take any time [laughing, laughter]. You are there. Fish is there, right there. Buddhism is two-handed, you know. So you ignore the truth. It is two-handed. It is right here. This fish has immense value. You cannot measure its value. You don't know whether it is big or small. How many fishes are there? One, two, three. Each one has his own fish, and each fish are the same. It's wonderful.

And this kind of philosophy—not philosophy, actual fact, is interpreted in philosophical way [laughs]. That is why it is difficult to understand Buddhist philosophy. The most difficult thing may be to give some interpretation to self-evident fact [laughs, laughter].

Thank you very much.

**Tape operator:** *This is the end of Friday evening lecture starting at 6 p.m., ending now at 7:25.*

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Source: City Center original tape. Verbatim transcript by Diana Bartle and Bill Redican (7/31/01).