

Shunryū Suzuki-rōshi
Sunday, July 21, 1968
Tassajara

¹ ... I don't think [laughs] we can reach conclusion.

I was asked to talk about—about some—something like sectarianism. What is Sōtō and what is Rinzai? Or—and what is the position, or what is the attitude as a Sōtō priest to other schools of Buddhism? This is the subject I was given to—I was given to speak about it. But this is not so, you know, simple question. It is very big problem.

First of all, we should understand how—why we have so many schools of Buddhism. As you know, various schools arised [arose]—or especially Buddhism, various schools which we have now is the—almost all the schools are Mahāyāna Buddhism. So-called-it Theravāda Buddhism is also—is not just Hīnayāna school or Theravāda school. The scholars of Hīnayāna Buddhism or Theravāda Buddhism knows what is Mahāyāna, you know, and intellectually, or so far as the teaching [is] concerned, there is not much difference between—excuse me—all of—all the Buddhists, I think—most of the Buddhist understand not only their own teaching of their own school but also the teaching of various schools too.

So, so far as the understanding goes—actually there is no particular school. But here Zen is not, you know—Zen school or Zen Buddhism is very much different from the other schools of Buddhism. The other schools of Buddhism put emphasis on understanding, but we Zen Buddhist put emphasis on practice, you know, actual practice.

So, you know, Zen Buddhism is something different. And why Zen Buddhism arrived in China is something very important point we should know. Before Bodhidharma came to China, there were many schools of Buddhism already. There were Pure Land school, and Tendai school, and San-lun, and some other schools of Zen. And almost all the scriptures were translated. And Chinese people studied Buddhist philosophy very hard and established pretty well-organized understanding. And according to their way of understanding, there—there were many schools of Buddhism. And they put emphasis on some scriptures which was told by Buddha.

Those who or thinks *Kegon Sūtra* is the best of all the sūtra, their—their—was Kegon school. Those who thinks *Lotus Sūtra* is best, Tendai school established. And those who thinks Pure Land—the three scriptures of Pure Land school is the best of all the teachings, then they started Pure Land school. But all those schools [were] based on the philosophy of

¹ Opening words were not recorded, but the remainder of the sentence sounded like an aside to a student rather than the beginning of the lecture.

Buddhism.

And in Mahāyāna Buddhism, the teaching is not anymore just teaching. It is something more than that. But they did not come to the turning point where they should switch over intellectual understanding to—from intellectual understanding to actual practice. Even Pure Land school did not, you know—was not completed like Pure Land school in Japan established by Shinran.² They, you know—even though they—I don't say they do not practice zazen, or they do not practice various rituals, and they do not attain enlightenment by practice.

But their practice is something different from our practice or from Bodhidharma's practice. The—what is the difference is the—according—as long as we expect perfection or enlightenment, it is—their practice is involved in dualistic understanding, you know. We are not perfect, but by practice or by believing in the teaching of Buddhism, then we will improve our understanding. And eventually we will attain perfection.

But according to even Mahāyāna school, it was not so easy, you know, to attain the perfection. It was necessary, according to Tendai school—it was necessary to many and many *kalpas* of time. And we—unless we continue our practice many and many *kalpas* of time for us which is not perfect, it is not possible to attain enlightenment, you know. That was their understanding. And some school like Kegon—this kind of, you know, many and many *kalpas* of time of practice was understood—a kind of teaching, you know, not practice itself, but they established, you know, the—another version of practice as a teaching, you know.

In Shingon school, they understood many and many *kalpas* of time as a—our evil desires, you know. Not actual so long time of practice. But this is another interpretation of our evil desires. Because our evil desires is so deep, it is necessary for us to practice so many *kalpas* of time, you know. So instead of emphasizing practice, they put emphasis on our evil desires [laughs]. And that is, you know—this is rather dangerous, you know. So unless they be a good teacher, this kind of understanding will create big problem for Buddhist. But instead of put—saying so many *kalpas* of time of practice, they put emphasis on so deep and in—so deep and great problem of evil desires. And, you know, the—according to Buddhism or Buddha's teaching, evil desires itself, you know—if we understand it properly, it is enlightenment itself, you know, buddha-nature itself.

So buddha-nature and evil desires is one, you know. Originally it is one. So according to Shingon, with this kind of interpretation of evil desires and enlightenment is one. This is a kind of teaching, you know. With this teaching, they replaced so many *kalpas* of practice into a kind of understanding of evil desires we have.

² Shōnin Shinran (1173–1262). Student of Hōnen. Founder of Jōdō-shin-shū.

So in this way, you know, even our practice was replaced by a teaching. And this kind—this kind of interpretation of so many *kalpas* of practice was—happened—happened in Kegon school too. So although they noticed that, you know, just intellectual understanding actually do not help us. And if—as long as we have the idea of buddha-nature as a goal of practice, you know, something to attain it, our practice should be dualistic.

So as long as it is dualistic, you know, it takes time until we attain perfection. But actually it is not possible [laughs], you know. But even though we can—we understand it—we understand that is possible, but it takes so many *kalpas* of time or else, you know, we cannot attain enlightenment. That is the, you know, dead end of [laughs] Zen Buddhism—that was, actually.

But Bodhidharma's, you know, understanding of Zen is quite different. They didn't—he did not, you know—let me put in this way: The difference between Bodhidharma's practice and Mahāyāna practice of various Mahāyāna schools of practice, even though they practice Zen, but the meaning of practice or way of practice or content of practice, it was quite different.

According to Bodhidharma, you know, buddha-nature is not something to be attained by practice. But according to other schools of practice, or understanding of practice, the practice is something to attain enlightenment. That is why this practice eventually come to the dead end, you know. And there is no other way to go back, or to—to have another version of practice, or to substitute practice—actual practice to or for the intellectual understanding or teaching of Buddhism.

But for Bodhidharma, our practice is quite independent from various teaching. This is—our practice is independent practice from Buddha's teaching. Although we acknowledge, or we accept Buddha's teaching, but our practice is not something based on some teaching. The—our practice is the practice based on our original nature—buddha-nature. Even though Buddha, you know, did not appear in this world, you know, we have [laughs] all nature, you know. And we, you know, should start our practice because of our true nature which Buddha found out.

So in this sense, Buddha is founder of Buddhism, but we do not depend on Buddha's teaching which was told by Buddha. Our practice is not depend on, because our practice is the practice which is depend on Buddha's, you know, true nature as long as our nature and Buddha—as long as Bud- [partial word]—there is no difference between buddha-nature—our buddha-nature and Buddha's buddha-nature. There is no need for us to depend on his teaching, but directly we should practice as he did. That is starting point of Zen Buddhism. And that is

Bodhidharma's Zen.

So it is not, you know, after you practiced so many *kalpas* of time that attain enlightenment, but the practice is based on our true nature, you know, which is always within us. So starting—by—because of our true nature, we practice zazen. So the meaning of practice is completely different from the practice of other schools. Do you understand this point?

For other school, the practice is something—something—the practice is means of attaining enlightenment. To attain enlightenment we practice zazen. But a characteristic of Zen is, without depending on teaching—because of our buddha-nature, you know, or starting from buddha-nature, we practice zazen. Opposite, you know. Not to attain enlightenment, but to experience the enlightenment—to have enlightenment exper- [partial word]—enlightenment experience. To express our true nature, we practice zazen.

In this way you will have, you know, ten powers [laughs]. You know, I explained what are the ten powers [of a bodhisattva]. If [?] the ten powers is the power you will, you know, attain by practice, you know. I don't know when you will attain it [laughs]. Those ten powers are to some extent the power you have already, you know. You—if you understand what are the ten powers, you know, that is the power you have already. But because of your idle practice you cannot [laughs], you know, bring it, you know, bring about, you know, fully [wholly?]. But it is not something which you attain but—but something which you have already. And this is, for beginner, a kind of belief. But for some good student it is not just to be—it is actually you feel in its true sense, you know. Something you have it, and something you found not as a goal, but as a actual power you have. This is the difference.

So for us there is no dead end. You know, we say even though we have, you know—there are innumerable sentient being, we vow to save them [laughs]. That is our vow. This vow is not based on the possibility, you know, but possibility of attaining or saving all of them, but to express—to make your best effort to express it—to express our true nature, we vow to save—to save them all. And if it is impossible—if there are innumerable people, our effort will be endless. In this way, we understand our practice and our vow. And our evil desires are, you know, [in?]exhaustible. But we vow to, you know, put an end to it [laughs]. This is something which you should do, which your buddha-nature ask us to do it. Not something which you should do or—or which should promise to do [laughs]. Something which you should do day by day, every day, you know.

This is the big—main difference between zazen practice of other schools of Buddhism and Buddhist—Zen Buddhist practice. Before I, you know,

talk about non-sectarianism, you know [laughs], I must [take] pride on my sectarianism first. And how my sectarianism is non-sectarianism [laughs, laughter]. It is the next thing I should, you know, try to explain. But right now, you know, we should establish ourself, you know, in firm foundation. And we are talking about, you know, universal foundation to every schools.

This kind of understanding is true with Shin school in Japan too, you know. Before Shinran the—to repeat Amida Buddha's name is a kind of practice, you know, to be saved by Amida Buddha. So if you want to be saved by him, sooner we should repeat it, you know, many and many times. That was the idea of repeating Amida Buddha's name. But according to Shinran, because we are, you know, originally saved by Amida Buddha, so even you—even you repeat it, you know—even you say it once that is enough [laughs], according to him. If you are aware of your true nature, that is enough.

When—only when we, you know, reach this point—this kind of understanding, the Buddhism become teaching for everyone—to save every one of us. It is easy to, you know, maybe to repeat Amida Buddha's name by mouth. It is also [?]
—maybe for Pure Land students or Pure Land school, everyone can practice it, you know. It is quite different from zazen. Everyone can do. And religion should be, you know, for everyone—not just for man, or for someone who can cross their legs, you know, in lotus posture. What will they do if they cannot cross their legs [laughs, laughter]? In this point [?], many people say Zen is not for everyone [laughter], and Zen is just for [laughs] men and not for ladies. Maybe Pure Land school is better [laughs]
—is better, you know, because a religion should be for everyone.

So if, you know, zazen is the purpose of—means of—one of the means of to attain enlightenment, you know, the only—few people will be saved by Zen. But according to Dōgen-zenji, you know, Zen is not such thing. Zen is for everyone whether you can cross your legs or not, you know. Everyone is Zen Buddhist as long as they have buddha-nature. This is, you know, difference.

Only when we understand zazen in this way, Zen is for everyone. And difference between, you know, if I say it varies—how we, you know, what will be the Rinzai school from our viewpoint—how we understand Rinzai school from our viewpoint? When—the time of Sixth Patriarch, you know, there was no kōan [laughs]. There were no kōans. Only Sung Dynasty, then kōan started—kōan study started. If kōan study is only way to study Buddhism, the Sixth Patriarch or Bodhidharma is not Zen master [laughs, laughter].

So I don't say kōan study is not good, but if you think kōan study is only way to study Zen, that is not, you know—you cannot explain why

Bodhidharma or the Sixth Patriarch did not use *kōan* [laughs]. So Zen is not just *kōan* study. And the weak point of—of course, you know, there is some weak point or blind angle, you know, for every practice. Weak point of *kōan* practice is—it is, you know, substitute [?] for the teaching, you know. *Kōan* is a kind of teaching, and *kōan* practice is, you know, the means of to attain enlightenment. If that is a means of to attain enlightenment, there will be many steps, you know. So that is why they say until you pass so many numbers of *kōan*, you know, you cannot get *inka*.³ You know, there should be, you know, many stages like stepladder, you know, until you solve—let me put in this way: Actually if—whether it is *kōan* study or *shikantaza*, it is—if you practice it, you know, you will make some improvement. So in this sense there is many steps.

But in *Sōtō*—in *shikantaza*, there is no steps, you know, because we are expressing our true nature through practice, you know. We are already—we have already innate nature. And what we should do is to express it. So there is no steps. And if—as long as there are many steps, you know, then there will be someone who, you know, who can climb up so many steps. And someone will not be—for someone it will not be possible to, you know, climb even one step. If the practice is this kind of practice, that is not for everyone, you know, because it is—because we have originally true nature, and our practice is based on a kind of belief or a kind of experience for a good student. For a beginner it is a kind of dream [trip?]. Because we have—our practice is the expression—our understanding of practice is expression of our true nature. So whether our practice is good or bad, as long as we have true nature, you know, every practice should be true practice. Even though you cannot cross our legs, you know, if you have this kind of understanding, your everyday life is zazen practice. We understand zazen in this way. This is the—how we, you know—this is our understanding of Rinzai or—not Rinzai, but *kōan* practice from our viewpoint.

Anyway, you know, the nature of practice is completely different, you know. Not the same thing. Completely different. This is, you know, one, you know—what I want to say first of all. And how—what is our attitude towards Rinzai? Or how Rinzai people—student from Rinzai standpoint, what is understanding of *Sōtō*, you know? "*Sōtō* is," you know, sleeping zazen" [laughs], you know. They understand that they have originally buddha-nature, you know. So whether they practice hard or not—whether their practice is good or bad, you know, originally there is no difference [laughs]. So, "They are not so sincere in their practice." Maybe that is true. That is, you know, what Rinzai students may say about our practice.

So for Rinzai students, you know, it is necessary for them to continue practice forever, you know—not only aiming at enlightenment but also as

³ *inka* (Jap.): seal of confirmation.

a expression of their true nature, or with gratitude of attaining enlightenment, or appreciating former teachers' effort to transmit Buddhism to us. They should continue our practice, and they should transmit our practice to our descendent. In other word, their practice also should be continued forever. There is no time to rest on the black cushion, you know, even though they attain enlightenment. And I think many good Rinzai stu- [partial word]—teachers put emphasis on the practice after *kenshō*, after enlightenment.

And we Sōtō student should practice more sincerely, you know, like the Rinzai students make their effort, even though, you know, because of— they may practice hard because of candy [laughs] of enlightenment. Anyway they are practicing very sincerely. So that is good example for us, you know. And Sōtō student like to talk about zazen. Rinzai student does not talk about so much about zazen. They give you some kōan, you know, without any explanation, and they ask you to give some answer to it. And that is their way.

So of course Rinzai has some shortcoming, and as we have. And at the same time, they have good points as we have. But complete, you know —we should not lose—Zen priests and Zen students should not lose the key point of Zen—why Zen is independent school of Buddhism, you know. Why it is necessary for us to have this kind of understanding of Buddhism. If we lose the key point of understanding—in understanding of Buddhism, it is not even Hīnayāna school [laughter]. You know, it is, you know, some—it is not even religion, you know. It is a kind of exercise instead [laughs]. It is not religion. It doesn't help us in its true sense.

In China for a long, long time, 400 or more, there was not—there were not so many teachers who understood this point. That is why Dōgen—Dōgen-zenji wanted to come back to Japan, you know, because he couldn't find any good teachers in China. But fortunately they met with Nyojō-zenji,⁴ who had a perfect understanding of Buddhism. So he became—Dōgen-zenji became disciple of him. Not as disciple of Sōtō school, but because one of the disciple of Buddha. For Dōgen-zenji, his teacher Nyojō-zenji was the only one teacher who understand—understood what is Buddhism in its true sense. What was the mercy of Buddha in its true sense? He was only one.

So he became his disciple. That is why Dōgen-zenji, you know, did not like to say he is Sōtō—to use the name of Sōtō. In China, Sōtō school is one of the five schools of Zen. But according to Dōgen-zenji, you know, this point—this understanding is—should be the understanding of all the schools of Zen as long as they are a descendant of the Sixth Patriarch or Bodhidharma.

⁴ Tiantong Rujing (Tendō Nyojō): 1163-1228.

Originally, there should not be any—there should not be so many schools of Zen. It should be one school of Buddhism. Even though their way of practice is different, but the key points should be the same. That was Dōgen-zenji's—his understanding of Nyōjō-zenji. For him, Nyōjō-zenji is Buddha himself, or the Sixth Patriarch himself, or the Bodhidharma himself. So for him there is no five schools, you know. For him there is no Rinzai or Sōtō.

So he respects various teachers who belong to Rinzai's lineage. He doesn't mind whether he belong to Rinzai or Sōtō. If he is good, he is a descendent of Bodhidharma, and the Sixth Patriarch, and Buddha. That is his non-sectarianism.

So if people say, you know, because we stick to this key point [laughs] that is Sōtō—that is [laughs]—maybe all right, you know. They say—to say—for them to say, "He is Sōtō," it is all right. But we have no sectarianism. But we believe in religion—Buddha's religion who save all sentient beings—not selfless, good, good student [laughs]. That is, you know, our understanding of Zen.

So it is not matter of Rinzai or Sōtō, you know. If there is some school like Sōtō—Sōtō school is a school which put emphasis on the transmitted buddha-mind and practice our way as the expression of our transmitted mind, or to develop a buddha's mind. So way we practice may not be the same, but whatever we do is the expression of our true nature. If I say just "expression of true nature," you know, it is quite simple. How, you know, we express our true nature is the thing I am explaining in my previous lecture.

In short, I think there must be, you know, various schools of Buddhism. There must be. But it is necessary to have mutual understanding. And it is necessary to know the position of various schools. What position does one school have in history of Buddhism, or in the activity—actual activity as a religion, you know? What kind of good points and bad points? And what kind of responsibility every religion has?

And as we concerned—the most concerning point for us is not teaching, you know, but practice. So we cannot practice many things, you know, at the same time [laughs]. So we should stick to one practice. And with full understanding of our practice, as a Sōtō student it is necessary to stick to *shikantaza*. But sometime, you know, to practice kōan or to understand kōan will be helpful. But the key points should be, you know, *shikantaza*, or Dōgen's zazen, or Bodhidharma's zazen, or Buddha's zazen. This point is very important, and all the practice or all the power you will have by zazen practice is based on—should be based on this understanding, or else your practice will become, you know—you will—your practice will end in dead end. It will create more problem for you.

Our practice is like a water, you know. Water is necessary for everyone. Even though wine or, you know, lemon juice tastes good, or ice cream is good [laughs], if you always take ice cream or lemon juice, you know, you cannot survive. So you should not forget water, you know, the—our practice is like a water. So people liable to forget [laughs] why—you know, water which is so important, but you can find out everywhere [laughs]. So you do not appreciate water so much. But if you forget water, you will eventually get into some trouble. You should not forget water.

This is, you know, my understanding of sectarianism and Dōgen's non-sectarian. I think this is not just—Dōgen's sectarianism can be non-sectarianism with Christianity or some other religion too. Only if you have this kind of understanding, you know, Christianity is all right. [3-4 words] may be all right [laughs, laughter]. Maybe [laughs, laughter].

But they will not understand, you know [laughs], the point. It is they could understand our point, whatever the religion is, that is very helpful. This is my non-sectarianism. So my sectarianism is sectarianism and non-sectarianism [laughs]. Both. Do you understand? You cannot say it is non-sectarianism, because I am very proud sectarian [laughs].

You cannot change my, you know, understanding. No one can change it [laughs]. The only way is to change their understanding [laughter]. But you only frustrated [?] [laughs, laughter]. Even so I, you know, I do not reject any understanding. And I don't—it does not mean for me there is nothing to study [laughs]. I have to study a lot of things, but there is no need for me to change my foundation of religion.

Because of this foundation, I feel free to study many things, you know. If we—I lose this foundation, you know, I must be a kind of sectarian—very bad sectarian [laughs]. Because I feel some easiness, you know, I have no fear of losing my way. Whatever I study, it is all right.

Do you have some question? *Hai*.

Student A: Do you and Yasutani-rōshi⁵ and Sōen-rōshi⁶ have the same foundation?

Suzuki-rōshi: Oh yeah, Yasutan- [partial word]—at least, Yasutani-rōshi, you know. I talked about [?] this point, you know. And he agreed with me. He knows what is Sōtō and what is Rinzai. *Hai*.

⁵ Yasutani Hakuun-rōshi: 1885-1973. Student of Nishiari Bokusan-zenji and dharma successor of Harada Sōgaku-rōshi. He is known for his synthesis of Sōtō and Rinzai practices—especially for using kōan practice with Sōtō students.

⁶ Nakagawa Sōen-rōshi (1908-1983): Rinzai master. Dharma successor of Yamamoto Genpō and abbot of Ryūtaku-ji monastery near Mishima. In the West, he taught in the United States and Israel.

Student B: You were talking about non-sectarianism in Sung China. What does it mean in America?

Suzuki-rōshi: In China?

Student B: In America?

Suzuki-rōshi: In America there is, you know—because—my feeling is, you know, because your understanding is—first of all, you have no tradition, you know, of Buddhism—there is no Buddhism yet. And we are start to establish some activity—Buddhist activity here. And you—intellectually you study many things, and you have various understanding, and you—I think some of you already studied under many teachers. So the situation is quite different. In Japan, you know, mostly Sōtō students study Sōtō only. But in—between Rinzai and Sōtō, they—some Rinzai students study Dōgen-zenji, and we study Rinzai practice too. But mostly Rinzai student is Rinzai, and Sōtō students from beginning to end are Sōtō students.

But here, you know, you have—the way you study is not same as we do in Japan. And this is, I think, something like—this situation is something like the situation Buddhism—or Zen Buddhism started in China after the Sixth Patriarch. They recommended their students to some other teachers. Actually there was not much sectarianism, but there were various kinds of practice or way of giving instruction. And I think we are, you know, in America, under the same situation as they had in China.

So I think it is necessary, you know, for us—for teachers to have closer relationship with each other, you know, and to help students, exchanging students, or having discussion with each other. Or else we cannot help students, you know, if I say we should, you know, practice just Sōtō or Rinzai [laughs]. They don't know what to do. So students should choose their way. And we should encourage students to find out appropriate teachers. This is, I think, absolutely necessary for us as a teacher. *Hai.*

Student C: If we—if we feel that it is just a matter of different students needing different methods of instruction to understand the same foundation—

Suzuki-rōshi: Uh-huh.

Student C: —then there really isn't any cause at all for controversy, and it can be just as fluid as possible. Am I correct?

Suzuki-rōshi: Yeah. Yeah. I understand in this way, and I think Nakagawa-rōshi is also—very much like Sōtō teacher, you know. He understand Dōgen-zenji very well, and Yasutani-rōshi is originally Sōtō

teacher, you know. For some reason he became independent from Sōtō. There is good reason for that. That is not matter of, you know—or that is just matter of activity, not matter of understanding. So I—I don't think there is any problems. *Hai*.

Student D: I have two short questions. The first one is, you said that it's impossible to attain enlightenment, and that didn't sound too good. So I thought [laughs, laughter], well, maybe you meant that it's possible to attain enlightenment, but we couldn't say that we'll attain anything. Is that what you meant? [Laughs, laughter.]

Suzuki-rōshi: No. In its, you know—in its usual sense, you know, people think, "I attain—I attained enlightenment" [laughs]. What is, you know—they—doesn't make much sense, you know. He feels in that way, you know. If, you know, I—but it is true that, you know, you reach step. This is what I'm always talking about [laughs], you know. Whatever it is, that is Buddha himself, you know. And however it is complete, that is not Buddha himself, you know. It something that—as long as it is something which we can understand or which we can see because it has some form or color, that is not—cannot be absolute. We have this, you know, idea.

But usually you do not have this idea, so you stick to enlightenment. Even though you think you attained enlightenment, that is not the absolute itself or, you know, buddha-nature itself. It is something, you know, some expression of buddha-nature.

I was talking with—with a guest about, you know, our—and she had very good understanding. You know, I was amazed [laughs, laughter]. You know, I—I—we have been talking about maybe thirty-forty minutes, standing under the [1 word]—what do you call it?

Student: Trellis.

Suzuki-rōshi: Hmm? Trellis. Yeah. She said we are, you know, ornament of it, you know, instead of saying buddha-nature. First of all, he said—she said, he was thinking about the word for buddha-nature, you know. And she said—she said it—and we are tools of it, you know, she said. That was what she said—tools of it. And I said, "Yeah, maybe tools of it." And maybe so—and actually we say, "We ornament of it," you know [laughs]. We, you know, we have various form and color, and we—by our body and mind and we give various ornaments to Buddha to eat, you know. We are ornament of it, and she completely understood about it. And—and she said we are not even a part of it [laughs]—even a part of it because we change it [?] [laughs]. We are just tentative ornament of it [laughs]. I don't know how she—how she, you know, keeps this kind of understanding. It is [1-2 words]. And she was German, and she has some difficulty in pronouncing English words like

philosophy [laughs]. And she did not believe in so much philosophy. But she wanted to figure out what is she, you know. And she said, "I am a ornament of it."

And—oh—first of all she said, "I am not I. I am it," [laughs], she said. "I am it." Not "me," "it." That was what she said, you know, before we say not much things—we talk not—not so many. "I am not I, but it." And she started to talk about the relationship between "I" and "it," you know. And I am a ornament of it, a tools of it. And I said maybe ornament of—we say ornament of it. Yeah that's better, she said [laughs].

And next question is—was, what is, then, karma? Karma. That was the second question. And I said karma, yeah, karma is if you do something it will leave a result something, you know. And that result will cause some activity, you know. In this way, we—our activity will continue. And here we started to talk about, you know, eternal. We didn't say "eternal present," but, you know, cause and effect, cause and effect, cause and effect. And it is karma, and it is also eternal expression of each being or actual ornament of it. In this way we are free from karma. And yet we cannot get out of karma. [Laughs.] [4-6 words] communicate this kind of [laughs] things. I was rather amazed. And she is—she is from Redwood City. I don't know what was her name, you know. She was the lady who was sitting, you know, right there. She is very fat lady, wearing something like this, you know. Do you—do you acknowledge [remember?] it—her?

Student E: Was that today, Rōshi?

Suzuki-rōshi: Today.

Student E: Because I—I remember.

Suzuki-rōshi: Her blouse was, you know, trimmed like this.

Student E: White blouse with red—

Suzuki-rōshi: Red.

Student E: —Indian kind of braid.

Suzuki-rōshi: Oh, yeah. No, white on white. And there was red or—[laughter]—not like this, but like this [laughter]. That was good design for her, I thought [laughs], because it's, you know, divide her big, you know, body in two [laughs, laughter]—two small pieces [laughs, laughter]. More beautiful in this way. And her friend was waiting for her because they were leaving.

Student F: Rōshi, she told me that she felt very awkward about doing

zazen and doing the services and bowing. She said she was a little bit frightened.

Suzuki-rōshi: Uh-huh.

Student F: But—well—because at every move of your hands or bowing or turning, she said she felt it meant something, but she couldn't understand it. But I think she was very interested to know about it.

Suzuki-rōshi: Yeah. Yeah. I think she may come back [laughs]. Her understanding is very good, you know. I don't know. Yeah. Her practice is not so good [laughter], you know. And it may be very difficult for her. And if she—she has—she start some diet [laughter]. Some question?

Student G: She just said she was very pleased to be able to talk to you and somewhat surprised that she was able to.

Suzuki-rōshi: [Laughs.] Oh.

Student F: She also wanted to know how come so many people about 25 or 36 years old are trying something like this?

Suzuki-rōshi: Oh yes! Yeah. Why—how come do you have so many young students? What is it—oh yeah, that was [2-3 words]. And then we started something about the teaching, you know. How come? And she was very much interested in—to see so many young students here.

May we—? [Chant follows.]

Source: City Center original tape. Verbatim transcript by Adam Tinkham and Bill Redican (3/21/01).