

Shunryū Suzuki-rōshi
Saturday, January 16, 1971
San Francisco

Something valuable [laughs]—not jewel or not candy, but something which is very valuable. You recite right now, you know, a verse on unsurpassable, you know, teaching. What is actually—how to, you know, receive this kind of treasure is, you know, to have well-oriented mind. I have been talking about self for maybe three lectures—what is self and what is your surrounding, what kind of thing you see, how you accept things, and purpose of zazen.

Purpose of zazen, why we practice zazen is to be a boss of everything. That is why you practice zazen. If you practice zazen, you will be a boss of your surrounding—wherever you are, you are boss [laughs]. But if I say so, it will create some misunderstanding: you are boss, you know, you are boss of everyone or everything. And you is, you know, also, in your mind, you are boss of everything, you know. When you understand in that way, you know, you are enslaved by idea of you and, you know, your friend, or everyone—all the people surrounding you. You are, you know, you know, you exist in your mind as a kind of idea, and also people exist in your mind as a member of [laughs] delusion [laughs]. I say "delusion" because when those idea is not well-supported by your practice, then that is delusion, you know. When you are enslaved by the idea of "you or others," then that is delusion. When real, you know, power of practice is supporting those idea, at that time, you know, I say you are "you" who is practicing our way is boss of everything, boss of you yourself, you know.

That is why we say, or Buddha say, you have to control yourself, you know, control yourself. When, you know, you have something you have to control, that is, you know, deluded you, not real you. "You" are in your mind as an idea, you know [laughs], and you are deluded by the idea of you, and [laughs] you are enslaved by the idea of people, so, you know, you have difficulty or confusion between idea of you and idea of your friend. That is confused [laughs] mind. But when you have, you know, you support or you are supporting in its true sense—not encouraging [laughs]. I don't mean to encourage, but you are. Those idea are well controlled by your power of practice, then, you know, that "you," you know, is boss of everything. So even confused mind will be supported by your practice.

That is how, you know, how things, you know, how sound of motor car or various sound, you know, come to your ear when you are practicing zazen. Even though you practice zazen, you may hear various voice. Sometime you may have various idea, you know, in your mind, but if your practice is good, you know, it is, you know—it is supported—not "supported"—your practice obtains, you know, those things from outside. It is not actually from outside, but, you know, are things you have at that moment. At that time, you know,

things you see or you hear is a part of you, you know. You include, actually —your practice owns or include the things you hear, images you have, but your practice is strong enough to obtain it, to have it, to own it, without being enslaved by it, as if you have your own hands, your own eyes.

You know, it doesn't create any trouble, even though it looks like, you know, you know, creating problem, you know. Sometime, you know, this hand and this hand will fight [laughs]—not fight—it looks like fighting, you know, when you [laughs] holding, you know, something like this. [Probably made a gesture with hands.] It looks like this hand is fighting with the other hand [laughs]. But, you know, it is not problem for you. They are trying to do something, that's all [laughs].

When you are really boss of everything, even though it looks like confusion, you know, it is not confusion. Even though it looks like confusion, you know, it is not confusion. Even though you look like doing something wrong, you know, some bad thing [laughs], people may say, "Oh, he is doing something bad." [Laughs.] But, you know, that is, you know, their understanding. For you it is not bad. You are not doing anything bad. It is, you know—because "you" owns everything, and you manage things as if you manage your hands. So it is not bad. So, you know, "don't do something bad" means let yourself be, you know, with everything and let everything as they want to. That is the power of practice, and that is quite different from doing something wrong. And by doing something wrong, by doing something wrong, you may suffer, you know, but for him there is no suffering. He is just, you know, managing things in some way, as his own. So it is a part of practice you do in your everyday life.

The precepts also should be observed in this way, you know. You observe precepts not because you have to follow Buddha's words, but because to extend or to have true practice in our everyday life or to settle yourself on yourself. That self, you know, include everything.

You know, sometime we say, you know, you have to extend our practice on everyday life is to be completely involved in your activity, or to be one with, you know, what you have or what you do. That is how you extend our practice, you know, in your everyday life. But that is not, you know, so clear. Then you may ask, you know, to be caught by baseball mania [laughs] is, maybe, our practice [laughs]. To be infatuated in some, you know, gambling [laughs] or something, may be practice [laughs], you may say, but that is not our practice. Do you know why? Why that is not practice? Because you are enslaved by it [laughs], you know. You are not boss of, you know, gambling. Gambling is boss of you [laughs]. Your practice is not working. You are enslaved by something which you create in your mind. You know, the machine is just going [laughs] without thinking or without doing anything [laughs], but your mind works on it, you know, and you create some delusion on the machine. And, you know, your gaining idea or your playful

speculative idea, you know, makes machines, you know, gambling, that's all. So you are enslaved by yourself and by machine too. You are not practicing zazen at all. You are not boss of, you do not own the machine, you do not own your legs, you know, so, you know, as soon as you get up, your legs [laughs] wants to go to Reno. [Laughs, laughter.] You don't own your legs even [laughs]. There is no practice, you know, which support your legs. That is the difference, you know.

So to be one with something, you know, does not mean to be caught by something. Why you caught by something is you become a member of something, you know, in your idea. You already create some, you know, something interesting in your mind. And as a member of, you know, the group, you, you know, become very insuggestic [suggestive], you know. You feel some zeal to be a member of, you know [laughs], to be a member of the group you have in your mind. And you are enslaved by it, and you have nothing but something which you create in your mind. There is no practice—nothing which is supporting you. You are not boss, and you even lose yourself, you know. That is the difference.

So we say you have to practice zazen without any gaining idea, gaining of idea, without any purpose [laughs] even, we have to practice zazen. Let things work as they go, supporting everything, you know, as your own. So you have always—real you have—real practice has orientation. It has orientation or direction. But it has no purpose or no gaining idea. We do not practice zazen because of something which is in your mind, but because, you know, your real "you," you know, [is] well-oriented, and, you know, and always extending itself. It has some direction, you know, direction, which works always outside and at the same time inside too. It has some, you know, always some feeling or direction. That direction does not work, you know, will not be realized, will not happen to be active, but when something come, at the same time it includes everything. So whatever it is, you know, it will work on it. Whether it is good or bad, it doesn't matter. Something bad come, "Okay, you are [laughs], you know, a part of me." Something good come, you know, you will say, "Oh, okay."

We do not have any special goal or special object or purpose of practice. It doesn't matter whatever it is. That is why we call it "Big Mind," because it include, you know, include everything. So we call it "Big Mind." Because it is great we do not say "Big Mind." Whatever it is, it include within us, and we own it, so we call it "Big Mind," "purposeless purpose," or we say "tongueless tongue" [laughs] "tongueless tongue." Even though I talk [about] something, there is no purpose [laughs], you know. I am talking to myself [laughs], you know, because you are a part of me, so I have no purpose of [laughs, laughter]. I have no purpose in my talk. Something is going, you know, that's all. How it goes is, you know, because of the real joy to share the joy of, you know, practice.

So maybe you practice our practice to share our practice with everything. So when one is practice zazen, everything [is] practicing zazen. When you practice zazen, everything you have, you know, is practicing zazen. Buddha practice zazen, Bodhidharma practice zazen, and everything practice zazen with you. And you share the practice with everything. So, you know—it happens in that way. Our real life happens in that way. Our real bodhisattva way happens in that way. That is how you help others, you know. Help others. "To help others," means to share the practice with people. With children, you know, with people on the street. We have to share the practice, even though they do not practice zazen, you know, like this, you know [laughs], we can share the practice because if I see people, you know, people is already here. And I practice zazen with him, with the sound of the car, with everything.

So to have well-oriented mind is, you know—if someone ask me why you practice zazen, I may answer to have well-oriented mind I practice zazen. Without any purpose we practice zazen. Without any special purpose. So point is not to lose this kind of, you know, well-oriented mind. In Japan, you know, in Japan, children has, you know, Bodhidharma toy, you know. Do you know the paper toy, made of paper? And it, you know—even though you toss it, it will stand up [laughs]. Well-oriented [laughs, laughter] practice. People enjoy the toy, you know, tossing around, because it stand up, wherever it goes, it will stand up like this. It doesn't matter where it goes. That is, you know, good example of our practice.

So our practice should be with everything, you know, with everything. Without being enslaved by it, we should be able to share the practice with everything. That is how you establish yourself, you know, on yourself. And we should know that "the self," we say, but it include everything. It is ready to include everything. And it is not even "it," you know [laughs]. It is something which include, you know, everything is real self. We don't know where it is [laughs]. If you say, "Here is my mind," that is already some idea of, you know [laughs] self. It is here instead of here [laughs]. When you say, "Here. Here is my self," you know, but actually, at that time, the self is here [laughs], not here [laughs, laughter]. And your brain is up here too [laughs, laughter]. Where is it? No one knows. [Laughs.] The only way is to participate [in] the practice, Buddha-practice, and to share the joy of practice. That is, you know, so-called-it, *anraku no hōmon*¹—"easiest and most," you know, "easy and joyful practice."

Thank you very much.

¹ *Anraku* (well-being and peace) + *no* (means previous word, *anraku*, is in the possessive case) + *hōmon* (practice, teaching, dharma gate). Hence, "dharma gate of peace and joy." Dōgen used this expression in *Shōbōgenzō* "Bendōwa" and *Fukan-zazengi*.

Source: City Center transcript. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Translation of Japanese terms and research assistance by Shōhaku Okumura-rōshi. Verbatim transcript checked against tape by Bill Redican 11/29/01.