

**Shunryū Suzuki-rōshi**  
**Sunday, August 1, 1971**  
**Tassajara**

NOT VERBATIM

At the time of Yakusan—Yakusan Igen-daioshō<sup>1</sup>—we—every morning we recite chant names of Buddha. Daikon Enō-daioshō.<sup>2</sup> Daikon Enō is the Sixth Patriarch. And Seigen Gyōshi—Seigen Gyōshi is the Seventh Patriarch. And Eighth Patriarch is Sekitō Kisen. And [the Ninth Patriarch is] Yakusan.

At this time, Zen Buddhism was very—became very popular or—and stronger. Every master—there were lots of students. But in Yakusan's monastery there were only twenty, you know. He—he was total [?] strict teacher. And one day, the temple—a monk who is taking care of temple asked him to give a lecture. "You haven't—you haven't given lecture for so long time, so students want to hear you. So please give us some lecture today," he said.<sup>3</sup>

So Yakusan asked **ino-sho** to hit the bell, so students came to lecture hall. And at the third round, Yakusan appear and mounted the pulpit, and sitting for a while. He without giving anything—saying anything, he went to his room [laughs]. [Words] taken care of [Zen master] asked him, "Why didn't you say anything?" Yakusan said, "Because I'm teacher who give lecture and there's some teachers who discuss Buddhism but [words] to give lecture is not my [word]." And his—that was his answer. And then if he doesn't give any lecture. What is his purpose? No one knows but it is difficult to figure out what was his purpose. That there's no reason is actually his teaching.

[Words] group [words] you feel good. If your group [words] you feel good. But if your group just [word] you don't feel good. But that is, you know, why we're group sometimes. If water has some particular place it is not water. [Words] why he didn't say anything. Some true Buddha, you know, he didn't say anything. Maybe because I'm not true teacher I have say to say many things. Actually there is no—not necessary to explain something about Buddhism, what is Zen. And then there is—in appreciating word for the—this story, Zen kōan. We should thank, we should thank Yakusan because he appear and [words]. [He] is thankful, thankful. But because he didn't say anything was not so bad, not so bad. But you [shouldn't punish] the monk who is taking care of the monastery students—criticize or punish—not punish—criticize Yakusan for not [giving/speaking] [word/a lecture][words] want to criticize him. He did criticize him because he appeared on the

<sup>1</sup> Yaoshan Weiyān (Yakusan Igen; also Kōdō Daishi): 745–828. Chan master. Dharma successor of Sekitō Kisen.

<sup>2</sup> Dajian Huineng (Daikan Enō): 638–713.

<sup>3</sup> From *Book of Serenity*, Case 7: "Yaoshan Ascends the Seat."

pulpit to sit. That was [appreciating] words for Yakusan. True activity. Let's think about this point more.

Zen Buddhism [in this day]. Zen Buddhism [in this day]. We've got to —It is not something special, according to Buddhism. [Words] if you have eyes to see, if you have ears to listen to, teaches you everything. Whatever it is it is good teaching for you. It is not altogether beautiful. So this is true for Zen master. If you have—If you already have ears to listen why Zen people—Zen master to come to America? Or say something to it [word]? Give you something, yourself, which coming to you so that you can drink it. If you're given to plain water no one will drink it. So Zen is extra. Teaching [word] whatever the teaching maybe if you have ears to listen to, you know, you can understand [words] which [words] and which has good sense before Buddha. And which you [admit] forever. Before some true Zen master like Yakusan, you should [?] able to escape [maybe]. Your life goes on, you know. You appear and the lecture hall is already a mistake. But at his time Buddhism was so popular, Zen was so popular, when some of the people were in the vicinity they visited him. [Words] see them. And keep Buddhist way until [words] that is what he did but he needed some good students that is why he have [word] Buddhist students, maybe. We should think about this [word] little more, before you start Zen.

[Words] Zen teaching is something special. Our teaching is expression of your true nature which is inward, usually. You know already what is Zen Buddhism. There's no need for you to ask someone else. But why, you know, you don't [word: hope/work] for with what you have is because of your [strong/wrong] mind. Because your eyes are not clear, because you want to [look] for something [better] which is like—as Buddha said, "You are like someone who has high goal on his [word] and is poking around. He seeks for something good. So, naturally having [word] we search over and over. [Words] because you want to seek for something, something good, some other places. But if you do realize what you have on your head then there's no need seek for something good. So what we should do is to clear, to have clear mind. To get rid of excessive desire. And that is, you know, what you should do.

[Word] for enlightenment—Enlightenment is—If you realize what you are doing that is enlightenment. If you realize what you are doing you will find out how perfect you are, how [words] special you are, and how groovy [does he really say "groovy"?] you are. So according to Buddhism the problem—our problem is the idea of self which you have, already have and it's [word] the source of all activities, quite [selfish/source of] ideas, which is not actually exist. Nothing has its own self-nature, including human beings. When you realize that we have ordinary [word] self then what you hear or what you see will be

very clear. And will be [true to self] because [your] [ears are hearing and [word] eyes are seeing not, you know. Probably this kind of idea is very unusual to you because our everyday life is deeply involved in idea itself. Actually our life is [nothing but/not result] [word] not our culture is [2 words] culture. It is a human culture but it is not even human culture. It is deluded, self-centered culture. I have no [word] how self-centered culture we have. But even if realize how selfish we are this is so-called [word]. And when we get—get rid of idea itself our activity is—is really Buddha's activity itself. That is the point we should know [word] about.

[Words] there is nothing to [word]. But you have something to settle that is the [word] of self [word] and practice of selflessness, that is Zen practice. [Words] that kind of practice is [words] practice. But it is actually—If you [complain] with your problem of [word] unless you are very strong person you cannot see, even see how perfect you are. [word] , you know, [words]if you realize, actually realize there is actually no self you would, you know, cover your ears or eyes. When you —if you are told by your doctor you have a cancer here, cancer here, what will you do? [Word] [words] your cancer. Because you are so self-centered really [words]. It's a invitation that you [word] cancer [words]. Can be tried [words]. But even if you can see—if you can—if you do not [lose] even though you know you have cancer; even though you know your body is [word]. You may be pretty strong person. What kind of strength is your real strength? If it's easy to fight, to win something but if it's difficult to [word] when you [word] it is, you know, easy to go ahead. But it is difficult to be—to remain [words] your group. It is easy to be first person, always but it is difficult to remain last person, always. Not so easy. [Words] can be last person in our society and the world. So if you are always trying to be the first, you know, you will become weaker and weaker. You will lose real, special part. [Word] you have materialistic path which doesn't work so well.

However, if all of us try to be the first we create confusion. But if you always ...

*[Tape is too difficult to transcribe hereafter.]*

[A question is asked, but the sound is very muffled. Suzuki-rōshi laughs.] Well, I don't think there's a [word] in that sense, you know. ...

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This transcript is a retyping of the existing City Center transcript. It is not verbatim. The tape requires enhancement. The City Center transcript was entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997, and partially retranscribed by Sara Hunsaker (8-18-99). It was reformatted by Bill Redican (10/31/01).