

**SUZUKI-RŌSHI TALKING TO HIS DISCIPLES
ABOUT HIS ILLNESS**

Sunday, October 9, 1971

In His Room, City Center, San Francisco

Suzuki-rōshi: *Hai.*

Student: Francis sent this—

Suzuki-rōshi: Hmm?

Student: Francis—

Suzuki-rōshi: Francis. Yeah.

Student: —sent this to you and a card.

Suzuki-rōshi: Lazy master. [Laughter.] I am sorry.

[Scattered exchange among Suzuki-rōshi, students, and Okusan—
approximately 30 seconds.]

Suzuki-rōshi: My arm hurts, you know. Just a moment. [Okusan
speaks in Japanese.] Don't be so serious, you know. [Okusan speaks
in Japanese.]

My doctor Makura [?]
—[Okusan speaks in Japanese.] Hmm? Oh.

Student: He's coming.

Suzuki-rōshi: *Hai.* Good morning.

Okusan: *Dozo*

Suzuki-rōshi: I am so sorry to be so lazy monk [laughs], but—
because my doctor, Makura, you know, thought I was hepatitis, but for
hepatitis it took me, my symptom didn't change in so long time, so he
thought it may not be hepatitis, maybe cancer.

So they started to check me, when, what day was it, two, three days
ago, and I hospitalized, Mount Zion again, Mount Zion hospital again,
and they took basalt [?] pictures of my liver and chest and took some
blood from here and every doctor discussed about my illness, and the
next day they had vacation, and the day before yesterday Makura
came and told me you are cancer, you know. So you can eat
whatever you like, you can drink whatever you want to. So he told me
exactly what is happening here. So I am telling you. That was what

has happened to me the day before yesterday, and yesterday I came back here.

So it was a big, it is big relief to me, that I can eat whatever I like. Before, so that, you know, I can live longer, I have to eat. And there are many—I had a list of things which I cannot eat. But now I have no restriction. So it is very—I myself, selfishly feel good, but on the other hand I am very sorry for you, you know. But I think Buddha will take care of everything, so I shouldn't worry too much.

How long I live I don't know. No one knows actually. I asked him, two years? At most [laughs]—he said—what he said. What he said. I am not so sure about it. So I want you to be prepared for it, you know. If I live longer, it is better, of course, for me and for you, I think. But if I—I think I can live one more year for sure, I feel in that way. I don't feel so discouraged or so weak.

So, maybe, I want you allow me to be a lazy monk, that's all what I want you—that's all, you know. I shall be very bad example, but [laughing] instead, you should be a good example. Okay? That's all what I want you to do or to know, to be prepared.

Most of things you can decide between you, you know, discussing. If necessary, I can join your discussion. Physically, I get tired quite easily.

Thank you very much for coming.

And do you think [1 word] tape is okay?

Yvonne: I think so. We can take it out and try it.

Suzuki-rōshi: Uh-huh.

Yvonne: Let's try it, okay?

[Recording stopped. Gap in tape. Recording resumed.]

Suzuki-rōshi: ... and drink here, you know. Cancer is not infectious. [Laughs.]

Yvonne: We can eat off your plate now. [Laughter.]

Suzuki-rōshi: Yeah. You take some. [Laughter.]

Yvonne: Better be careful.

Suzuki-rōshi: It's quite okay. I do not live so long, you know that.

[Laughs.]

[A brief exchange in Japanese with male visitor.]

Claude, I want you to stay here, even though I have no more. Okay? Please. [Laughs.] Thank you. [Two claps.] [Laughs.] Okay.

I have been doing—I wanted to do, so you shouldn't feel to do, you know, exactly what I did, you know. So you may be free, to do, to develop our way, you know, exactly people want you to do. That is Bodhisattva idea. If they want you to be beggar, you should beg [laughs]. That is the spirit I mean. I want you to—that is the main point. If you do not lose that point, the bodhisattvas, all the bodhisattvas will be with you.

[Question in Japanese from male visitor. Suzuki-rōshi answers in English.]

Suzuki-rōshi: Maybe, yeah. I didn't ask exactly where it is. Maybe so, you know, not stomach, and gall bladder is no more, so liver, or tumors [1 word unclear] another one here. So. Maybe liver.

Do you have some question, about immediate something, you know, you want to know [1 word unclear] now? [Laughs.]

Silas: Would you like a bed that goes up and down? [Laughter.]

Suzuki-rōshi: It may be too—but—

Students: [Question/comment.]

Suzuki-rōshi: If you come [laughter—Suzuki-rōshi is apparently pantomiming something], if you go out— It's very good, you know.

Yvonne: Instead of learning to drive a car, you learn to drive your bed.

Suzuki-rōshi: Uh huh. But I was very lucky you know, to live this much, until I have good confidence in you. Okay. *Hai*. [Laughs.] Just in time [referring to a drink brought to him?]. Thank you.

Mel: Can we visit you?

Suzuki-rōshi: Mmm?

[Gap in tape.]

Suzuki-rōshi: Hmm?

[Question from male visitor in Japanese. Suzuki-rōshi replied in Japanese.]

Suzuki-rōshi: *Hai.*

Source: City Center transcript by Barry Eisenberg. Entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Bill Redican (2/9/01).