

**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. Just a moment. [Okusan speaks in  
Japanese.] Don't be so serious. [Okusan speaks in Japanese.]

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

**Student:** He's coming.

**Suzuki-rōshi:** *Hai.* Good morning.

**Okusan:** *Dozo* .... [please]

**Suzuki-rōshi:** I am so sorry to be so lazy monk [laughs], but—  
because my doctor, Makura [?], thought I had 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 was hospitalized, 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 have cancer. 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 is big relief to me, that I can eat whatever I like. So that I can live longer, I have to eat. I had a list of things which I cannot eat. But now I have no restriction. I myself, selfishly feel good, but on the other hand I am very sorry for you. 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. I am not so sure about it. So I want you to be prepared for it. If I live longer, it is better, of course, for me and for you, I think. 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. 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 things you can decide between you, discussing. If necessary, I can join your discussion. Physically, I get tired quite easily.

Thank you very much for coming.

And do you think the 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. 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 – Ryuho Yamada  
{DC}.]

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

I have been doing what I wanted to do, so you shouldn't feel the need to do exactly what I did. So you may be free to do, to develop our way, exactly as people want you to do. That is Bodhisattva idea. If they want you to be a beggar, you should beg [laughs]. That is the spirit I mean. 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 Ryuho. Suzuki-rōshi answers in English.]

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Maybe, yeah. I didn't ask exactly where it is. Maybe so, 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 something immediate, something you want to know 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.

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

**Suzuki-rōshi:** Uh huh. But I was very lucky 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 Ryuho in Japanese. Suzuki-rōshi replied in Japanese.]

**Suzuki-rōshi:** *Hai*.

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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). Lightly edited for readability by Gordon Geist (10/22/06) DC made a few small changes. Will get doctor's name (1/25/06).