

Feb. 16, 1996

Dear David,

Frances Thompson told me you are interested in what I know about the original tape recordings of Suzuki Roshi's Los Altos Zen talks--the ones that were used in Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind. Here is what I know about the missing tapes.

Sometime between August and November of 1970, not long after Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind was published, the possibility of marketing the original tape recordings occurred to someone at Zen Center. When the tapes couldn't be found someone (it may have been Silas) contacted me at Tassajara and asked if I knew where they were. I had no idea. Two years had passed since I last handled the tapes. I'm pretty sure I put them back in the cabinet where I stored all the tapes recorded in Los Altos. I know I didn't take them to Tassajara.

The last time I saw the tapes would have been shortly before I turned my home and the Los Altos Zen group over to Les Kaye. It may be that whoever took on the job of tape recording lectures erased this set of tapes in order to use them to record new Zen talks. I left no instructions to preserve any tapes after they had been transcribed. None of us involved in the project--Dick, Trudy, Roshi or myself--had the foresight to see that the tapes were preserved. So how could anyone not involved in the project be expected to have this foresight? At that time Dick Baker had not even submitted the manuscript of Roshi's book to Weatherhill.

My memories of the poor quality of the original tapes make me believe they would have proved to be unsuitable for the production of a professional, marketable product.

I am enclosing a copy of an article I wrote about how Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind came to be published. It adds a few

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additional details to the account Baker Roshi wrote in the Introduction to Suzuki Roshi's book.

I am also including copies of "The History of Haiku Zendo" I wrote in February of 1969 and "Haiku Zendo" that Barbara Hiestand wrote and published in 1973. If you don't already have copies of these booklets in your research files I think you will find them helpful. You have my permission to use any of the material I wrote, in your biography of Suzuki Roshi, if you haven't finished it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Marvin".

P.S. Please don't call or write me. It isn't necessary to thank me.