Shunryū Suzuki-rōshi *SANDŌKAI* LECTURE I Wednesday, May 27, 1970 Tassajara

[This is the first in a series of lectures on the Sandōkai (Chin. Cantong qi or Tisan-tiung-chii), a poem by Sekitō Kisen. Historical details of the series are appended to the end of this lecture. Japanese transliteration in all lectures is by Kazuaki Tanahashi (1999). English translation in all lectures is by Suzuki-rōshi.]

[The following line of the *Sandōkai* is discussed in this lecture:

Line 1 Chikudo daisen no shin

Line 1 The mind of the great sage of India]

I am so grateful to have chance to discuss about or to talk about *Sandōkai*. This is one of the most important teaching for us. And meaning is so deep, and the expression is so smooth, that it is, you know, pretty difficult to have some feeling, you know, when you read it.

Sekitō Musai-daishi¹ (his posthumous name is Musai-daishi), and he is [dharma] grandson of the Sixth Patriarch² [Enō] and son of Seigen,³ the Seventh Patriarch. As you know, under the Sixth Patriarch there were many disciples, but the most important disciples are Nangaku⁴ and Seigen—Seigen and Nangaku. And later, under Seigen, Tōzan⁵ appeared, and under Nangaku, Rinzai ⁶ appeared. And Rinzai and Sōtō is the most powerful schools under the Sixth Patriarch.

¹ Sekitō Kisen or Sekitō Musai (Chin. Shitou Xiqian or Shih-t'ou Hsi-ch'ien, 700–790): Eighth Chan Patriarch.

² Daikan Enō (Chin. Dajian Huineng or Wei-lang, 638–713): Sixth Chan Patriarch.

³ Seigen Gyōshi, Gusai-zenji, or Kosai-zenji (Chin. Qingyuan Xingsi or Ch'ing-yuan Hsing-ssu, 660–740): Seventh Chan Patriarch.

⁴ Nangaku Ejō (Chin. Nanyue Huairang or Nan-yueh Hai-jang, 677–744): student of Daikan Enō and master of Baso Dōitsu.

 ⁵ Tōzan Ryōkai (Chin. Dongshan Liangjie or Tung-shan Liang-chieh, 807– 869): student of Ungan Donjō and one of the founders of the Sōtō school of Zen.

⁶ Rinzai Gigen (Chin. Linji Yixuan or Lin-chi I-hsuan, d. 866): founding master of the Rinzai school of Zen.

Sekitō's, you know, way—Seigen's way is more gentle in comparison to Nangaku's way. And Sekitō's [Seigen's] way may be, you know, elder brother's way, you know, who is mostly gentle [laughs], you know. Nangaku's way is, you know, maybe like second boy or third boy's way, who is rather naughty [laughs]. You know, in Japan, mostly, if someone is very gentle, you may be the first son [laughs], we say, you know. And sometime the first boy is not so able [laughs]. We say "*Soryo no jin roku*."⁷ You know, *Soryo no*—the first one, first boy is mostly very gentle. And we, you know, understand in that way when we talk about Sōtō and Rinzai. Tatsugami-rōshi⁸ put emphasis on *memmitsu no kafu*.⁹ That is more Sōtō way. *Memmitsu* is "very careful" and "very considerate" and "very," anyway, "very careful" in doing things. That is more Seigen's way.

Anyway, Sekitō, who wrote this poem, was is the [dharma] grandson of the Sixth Patriarch. His way, in one word, to find everything in his mind. So in other word, to have the Great Mind which include everything is his way of practice. So if you read this *Sandōkai*, you will understand this point clearly.

Usually, you know, our understanding is, you know, to—we—even though we say "to observe things-as-it-is," you know, actually we are not observing things-as-it-is when we think, you know, "Here is my friend," you know, "There is a mountain," "There is the moon," you know. When we say so, the friend or mountain or the moon is not, you know, the moon itself, or the mountain itself, or your friend himself. It is, you know—friend— You, you know, think [laughs] your friend is your friend. The friend you think, you know, the mountain. The moon, you think, the moon. It is not actually the moon itself, or friend himself, or mountain itself.

You think, you know, "Here is I. And there is mountain," you know. In this case, when you observe things in that way, that is dualistic way of observing things. "Here is a— There is a mountain," you know. "I must climb up that mountain when I go to San Francisco. San Francisco is there [laughs], and I am here. So after climbing up that mountain, I have to go to San Francisco, which is," you know, "Bay Area." That is how we understand things.

That is not actually Buddhist way of observing things. We find, you know, the mountain, or San Francisco, or the moon within ourselves right here. That is, you know, our understanding. That is the mind, so-called-it "big mind," you know. Within the big mind everything

 ⁷ soryo = first son [?]; + no = of; + jin = [?]; + roku = not so bright.
⁸ Sotan Ryosen Tatsugami-roshi: Head of training at Tassajara for three

practice periods. Former *ino-rōshi* at Eihei-ji monastery in Japan. ⁹ *Memmitsu* [or *menmitsu*] *no kafu* (Jap.): "a very careful and deliberate style."

exist. To see things is not like, you know, to find out things which is on the—in the shelf, you know, one, two, three, four [laughs]. That is, you know— Most people understand things in that way. But in that case, you know, "I am here, my mind is here, and there are many things on the shelf. And one, two, three, four."

The Sandōkai, you know, Sandōkai: San is "things," you know, san is "three." San-dō-kai. San is "three"; $d\bar{o}$ is "sameness." $D\bar{o}$ means "same," you know. To identify something with something else is $d\bar{o}$. And san is "three." $D\bar{o}$ is actually "oneness" or "one whole being," which means "Great Mind." The san is "many beings." San.

Kai means, you know, the— Actually, we think there is one big whole being which include everything, and there is many things which we find in one whole big being—great being. So $san-d\bar{o}$. Even though we say "many things," or actually it is many parts of one whole big being, including all of us. So if you say "many," that is many. If you say "one," that is one. "Many" or "one" is, you know, different way of describing one whole being.

To have complete understanding of this relationship between one big whole being and many things which exist in one big whole being is *kai*, you know. The, you know— *Kai* means, "to shake hand." "Hi," [laughs], "how are you?" [laughs]. When you shake hands, you know, you feel, you know, really one. You feel— You have real feeling of friendship, you know. So "many things" and "one whole being which include many things" is a good friend, you know, or more than friend, because it is originally one. If you say "many," that is many; if you say "one," that is one. So two names of same thing [laughs] should be very good friend, you know. It is originally more than "good friend." So we say, *kai*. "Hi, how are you?" That is *kai*. This is the name of the, you know, this sūtra: *Sandōkai*.

Originally this title, *Sandōkai*, is the title of Daoist book, you know. But in the same title, you know, he [Sekitō] described Buddha's teaching in almost same way, and under the same title. That is what he tried [to do].

And what is the difference between Daoism and, you know, Buddhism is— Do you know—someone knows what is the difference? Very similar, you know. If you read it, you know, as a book it is maybe same. But way we read is different, you know. When Buddhist read it, that is Buddhist book; when Daoist, you know, read it, that is Daoism. It is rather, you know— It is actually same, you know, vegetable [laughs], but if Buddhist eat it, you know, that is, you know, Buddhist food; and if, you know, vegetarian people eat it [laughs], that is vegetarian food. There us it is just food [laughs]. There is that kind of difference.

Now we, you know— The way we eat food, you know, is not just because the vegetable—some—a kind of vegetable has some particular nourishment, you know—you know, yang, or acid, or alkaline. We, you know— To eat food is part of our practice [laughs]. That is the difference. We, you know— For sake of practice we eat food. Not just to take nourishment—to help our way, to practice Buddha's way, we eat food—not just to support ourselves as a, you know, human being or as a kind of animal like, you know, like this [laughs].

That is, you know, to treat—to eat food or to understand food or things as they—as something which exist with or without not much, you know, relationship or not much contact with our practice is Daoist way. And Buddhist way is to practice our way, we eat food. So it include always our mind, our practice: not small mind, big mind which include things. And if we, you know, think, "This is just vegetable," you know, that is not our way. We must treat things as a part of ourselves, which exist in our practice or in our big mind. Do you understand this point?

Why we, you know— In other word, in another word, small mind means mind which is under limitation of desires, or some particular emotional, you know, understanding of, or some discrimination of good or bad, you know. "this is good," and "this is bad." So actually, even though you think you are observing things-as-it-is, but actually you are not. Why? Because of our discrimination, because of our desires, we are not observing things-as-it-is.

So Buddhist way is, after trying very hard to eliminate, you know, this kind of emotional discrimination or prejudice of good or bad, you know —to see things-as-it-is. After doing so, it is possible to see things-as-it-is.

So, you know, when we say "thing-as-it-is," means to practice hard to get rid of our, you know, desires—not to get rid of, or [but rather] to know, to count our desires—to calculate [laughs], you know. If there is computer [laughs], you must put, you know, the data, as a—one of the data will be our desire, you know. This much desire [laughs]. And this much nourishment. And this kind of color. And how heavy is it, you know. So one of— We should count our desires in it. Then you will see the thing-as-it-is.

So usually we don't count our desires, you know. Without reflecting on our selfish judgment we say, "He is good" or "bad." Someone who is bad, you know, to me is not always bad, you know. To someone else he may be a good person, you know. In this way, we see thingsas-it-is. So when we have, when we understand the mind transmitted from Buddha to us, we can see things-as-it-is.

This is buddha mind. *Chikudo daisen no shin*, you know. *Chikudo* is "India," you know, *Chikudo. Daisen* [means] "great sage." *No shin*: *Shin* is "mind," big mind which include everything. *Chikudo daisen no shin. Shin* of the great sage, *daisen*, of—in India. *Chikudo*. So *Chikudo* is "in India." *Daisen* is "great sage." *No* is "of." And *shin* is mind. "Mind of," you know, "great sage in India" [laughs]. It [the order of characters] goes opposite way, you know. *Chikudo daisen no shin*, you know. "In India, great sage of mind." "Mind of great sage in India."

That is the buddha's mind which include everything. In other word, the mind we have when we practice zazen is the great mind in which we don't try to see anything, you know. We stop thinking. We stop emotional activity, you know. We just sit. Whatever happen to us, we just sit. If something happen, you know, we are not bothered by it. It, you know, it is like something happen in the great sky [laughs]. Sky doesn't care [laughs] whatever happen to the sky. What kind of bird fly, the sky doesn't care. The great sky doesn't care. Even the atomic bomb [laughs]. It doesn't care, you know. That is the mind transmitted from Buddha to us.

When we sit, you know, maybe many things will happen. You may hear the sound from the stream. You may think of something, but your mind does not care. Your great mind is there, just sitting. Even though you don't see things or you don't hear, you don't think you are hearing anything, you don't think you are thinking something, maybe, you know, something is going on in the big mind. And that is the way, you know, how we observe things, you know. We don't say "good" or "bad," you know. We just sit. And we say, "Oh, good morning," that's all, you know. And we enjoy, you know, things. But we have no special, you know, attachment to it. At that time, we have full appreciation of it, but that's all. One after another, things will happen to us in that way—with full appreciation. That is the mind which is transmitted from Buddha. That is, you know, at the same time how we practice zazen.

So if you do not practice zazen, you know, even though you enjoy some event or something, later it will cause some trouble to you [laughs], you know. Do you understand this point [laughs]? I think you have various experience of this kind. You know, because you think, you know, "This is it! It should be like this." [Laughs.] If someone makes some opposition to you, you will be angry. "<u>No! It</u> <u>should be like this!</u>" "Zen Center should be like this!" [laughs], you know. Maybe so, but it is not always so. If time changes, you know, if, you know, we—Zen Center student lose Tassajara [laughs] and move to some other mountain [laughs], the way we have here cannot be the way we will have some other place, you know.

So we shouldn't stick to some particular way, and we should be always open our mind, you know, to observe things-as-it-is, and to accept things-as-it-is. Without this preparation, if you say, you know, "This is the mountain," "This is your friend," "This is the moon," the moon will not be the moon itself. That is, you know, difference between socalled-it "naturalism" and Buddhist way.

So Buddha's teaching is the teaching of or study of human nature, you know [laughs]—how we should study, how foolish we are, you know, what kind of desire we have, or what kind of discrepancy we have. Or what kind of tendency we have. So my motto is, you know [laughs]—I don't know how to explain it [laughs]—my motto is—I am always, you know, careful—I always remember in your word, you know, "to be liable to," you know, liable to. We are liable to live like this. We are liable to say in this way. When, you know, we should be, you know, this is— "Tendency," you may say, "The tendency is also the thing itself," but if you say so, it means that you ignore yourself.

Mmm. Just before I— When I was preparing for this lecture, someone came and asked me about self-respect, you know. "What is self-respect? How we obtain the self-respect?" Self-respect is not something which you can, you know, feel you have [laughs]. Do you understand? When you feel, "I have self-respect," that is not self-respect anymore. When you are just like this, you know, without thinking anything, without trying to saying something special, just to talk what, you know, I have in our mind and how I feel, you know, then there is naturally self-respect.

So when we are, you know, closely related to you all and to everything, then, you know, I am a part of one big whole being, you know. When I feel something, you know, we—I am not exactly, you know—maybe <u>almost</u> a part of it [laughs], but not quite. When I don't feel anything, and when I do something without any feeling of doing something, then that is you yourself. When you are completely with everyone, you don't feel you are who you are. That is self-respect.

So when you feel you are someone, you know, you have to practice hard—you have to practice zazen harder. Actually, it is, as you know, it is very difficult, you know, to sit without thinking, without feeling. When you don't think, you're very [laughs]—you will sleep, you know [said quietly, almost as aside]. [Laughs.] Without sleeping, to be you yourself without thinking, that is our practice. When you are able to do that, you will be able to say things without thinking too much, without having any purpose. Just to express yourself you speak, you do something. That is self-respect. That is complete self-respect.

So how you obtain this kind of self-respect is maybe to practice zazen, to [be] strict with yourself, especially to be strict with your tendency. Everyone has, you know, their own way which is peculiar to himself and which is not universal to everyone. So we must know that. But if you try to get rid of it, it is just try to not to think in your practice. Try to not to hear the sound of the stream. That is impossible [laughs, laughter]. It is not possible. So let your ear hear it, let your mind think about something, but without <u>trying</u> to think, without <u>trying</u> to hear, without trying to stop it, you know. That is practice.

So more and more you will have this kind of habit, or strength, or whatever you say. Or power of practice. If you practice hard, you will be like a boy or a girl again, or children, you know. When we are talking about self-respect, you know, some bird [laughs] was singing outside. *"Peep-peep-peep-peep."* [Laughs, laughter.] That is selfrespect. *"Peep-peep-peep-peep."* It doesn't mean anything [laughs]. Maybe, you know, it is—he was just, you know, singing, or even without trying to sing, it goes some, you know, *"peep-peep-peep-peeppeep"* in various way [laughs]. If you hear it we couldn't stop laughing, you know, smiling. It has— We cannot say it is just a bird [laughs]. It controls whole world—whole mountain. That is, you know, self-respect.

So that we can have this kind of everyday life, this kind of practice, we, you know, study hard. When we come to this point, there is no need to say "one whole big being" or ... *[tape changed]* big being, you know. There is no need to say "bird" or "one big whole being" or "many things which is included in one big whole being." It may be just a bird. It may be just a mountain ... *[tape changed again!] — Sandōkai*, you know [laughs]. Very, you know— If you understand really this point, there will be no need to recite *Sandōkai* [laughs]. *Chikudo daisen no shin* ... [laughs]. This is Chinese. Or it is Chinese or Japanese [laughs]. There is no need— It is not matter of Chinese or Japanese. It is just a bird. But, you know—

This is just my talk [laughs]. It does not mean much, but— So we say Zen is not something to talk about. It is something which you experience in its true sense and which will be very difficult. Anyway, this world is difficult, so don't worry [laughs]. Anyway, this world is not so easy. Wherever you go, you will have problems you should confront with. So it may be— It is much better to have this kind of problem rather than you know, mixed-up various kinds of problems.

Hmm. Excuse me. What time is it?

Student: 9:25.

Oh. Just right time.

Student: 9:45.

Too late? Okay.

Student: Too early.

Too early [laughs, laughter].

Student: What's the next feature?

"Next feature" [laughs, laughter].

Student A [David Chadwick]: Can I ask you a question?

Mm-hmm. "What will be the next part"? *Hai*.

David Chadwick: You did not say, I don't think— I didn't hear you say what "*Sandōkai*" means together. You said what each word means, but I didn't—

Suzuki-rōshi: *San* is "three," you know.

David Chadwick: No, no. You said what each word means. But together, what does "*Sandōkai*" mean?

Suzuki-rōshi: Sandōkai means, you know— It is difficult, you know, to say in one word [laughs]. You know— To express, you know, one big mind, you know, he [Sekitō] picked out this three words: San– $d\bar{o}$ -kai. And the teaching is, "What is many? What is one? And what is oneness of one and many?" That is kai, you know. So that is— The title is— It is the title of Buddhist big mind or transmitted mind. There is no other way to say it. Okay? Hai.

Student B [Mel Weitsman]: The other day when I was doing the *mokugyo*,¹⁰ there was this small spider that crawled across the top of the *mokugyo*. And there was nothing I could do [laughs, laughter]. I went a little bit off to the side, you know, but he went right into it. It was too powerful for him to escape, you know. And the next—

Suzuki-rōshi: You didn't kill it.

Mel Weitsman: <u>Something</u> did [laughs, laughter].

¹⁰ *Mokugyo:* A wooden drum struck to provide a rhythm for chanting.

Suzuki-rōshi: By mistake. Happened in that way.

Mel Weitsman: Yeah, but I couldn't stop.

Suzuki-rōshi: But you hit some other place.

Mel Weitsman: Some other place, but he still went right into it.

Suzuki-rōshi: Yeah. You know, it can't be helped. Buddha killed him [laughs, laughter]. He may be very happy. *Mokugyo* [as an aside to someone]. Yeah, you know, to live in this world is not so easy.

Mel Weitsman: No.

Suzuki-rōshi: Not at all easy, you know. When you see children playing, you know, by the stream or, you know, on the bridge, you will be really scared, you know. And I think— I always thought, "Oh, how can I survive," you know, "in this way? How could I survive without, you know, "making any accident? On the freeway, many cars is going *zoom, zoom, zoom.*" Something happens, that's all. You know, it is very— It is— If you think, you know, about it, if you stop and see and think, you know, you will be terrified [laughs].

You know, in Kashmir—oh no, not Kashmir— Do you know someone who is 165 years old who has more than two hundred, you know, boys and girls, son and grandson, and great-grandson [laughs]. He may think, you know, sometime, you know— He may, if he think about each one of them, he may be scared of— He may lose, you know, easily one of them in this busy life.

So if you, you know, think about our practice, it can be a very strict practice. It can be, you know. You should be ready to kill something even you are Buddhist. Whether it is good or bad [laughs], you should do that sometime. It is inevitable, you know, to survive without killing anything. So, you know, what kind— We cannot survive by some feeling, you know. We must have deeper— We must be involved in deeper practice than emotional practice. That is the strict side of our practice. And if it is absolutely necessary, you know, you should stop hitting *mokugyo* even though, you know, all of us get into confusion. Yeah. Sometime. Not so easy. *Hai*.

Student C: Would you explain more what you mean by "strict practice"?

Suzuki-rōshi: "Strict practice"? Things is, you know, going in very strict way. There is no exception, you know. If you read this, you know, you will see he refers to this point. Where there is something, there is some rule behind it, or truth behind it, which is always—which

is going strictly, you know, controlling things without any exception. We think we care for freedom, you know [laughs], but the other side of the freedom is strict rule. Within the strict rule there is complete freedom. The freedom and, you know, strict rule is not two separate thing. Or it does not mean to put someone in strict rule. Originally we are supported by strict rules or truths, you know. That is the other side of the absolute freedom.

Student C: Could you give us more examples in our individual lives?

Suzuki-rōshi: When you get up you should get up [laughs]. When everyone sleep you should sleep. That is example [laughs]. *Hai*.

Student D: Sometimes we think there is some special situation at Tassajara. How do we know if we should, at that time, follow the strict way or if we should perhaps make an exception?

Suzuki-rōshi: Mm-hmm. That is, you know, that is why we divide our responsibility, you know. With your responsibility, you know, you should decide. Almost all the time, we have no time to discuss things with someone else. If you discuss something with someone else, you will be too late [laughs, laughter]. So you have to take your [own] responsibility by name of Craig [?] [laughs]. That is inevitable. If you make mistake, that is your mistake. So if you decide things in that way, you know, the things will go more smoothly without being involved in idea of good or bad, you know. *Hai*.

Student E [Reb Anderson?]: My responsibility is such that it's very easy for me to follow the strict way, because that is part of my responsibility. Other people have somewhat different situations, and sometimes, because my responsibility is to follow strictly, we have some discussion, and I sometimes think that maybe they should do different than me. Is that right?

Suzuki-rōshi: Yeah. Sometime you should shut your eyes [laughs, laughter]. You are unfortunate to see something, you know. If you see it, you should <u>say</u> something, so maybe it help to practice your way, you know, without, you know, without looking around. And that is the best way, you know, actually. If you look around, you know, if you see this side of the people [in the zendo], the other side of the people will [laughs] will sleep, you know. If you watch this side, the other side will sleep [laughs, laughter]. Oh, it's better not to see anything [laughs, laughter]. They don't know what he is doing, you know, "stay awake." That is the advantage of zazen practice. You know, if you see something, you know, that's all. The rest of the things will be ignored. If you don't see anything [laughs], you cannot ignore anything. So that is the big mind which include everything.

If someone moves, you know, you will notice [laughs]. Even though you don't try to see it, if some sound come you will catch it. But if you stick to someone, you know, the rest of people will be very happy [laughs, laughter]. If you don't catch anyone, you know, no one can move.

Okay?

Sources: Contemporaneous transcript by Marian Derby; City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape by Bill Redican 6/1/00.

Sandōkai Lecture Series by Suzuki-rōshi

Lecture 1: Wednesday, May 27, 1970—SR-70-05-27 Transcripts: "I am so grateful" Branching Streams: ¹¹ "I am very grateful"
Lecture 2: Saturday, May 30, 1970–SR-70-05-30 Transcripts: "I explained in last lecture" Branching Streams: "In my first lecture I explained"
Lecture 3: Monday, June 1, 1970—SR-70-06-01 Transcripts: "After all, it's better to follow" Branching Streams: "'The spiritual source shines"
Lecture 4: Wednesday, June 3, 1970— SR-70-06-03 Transcripts: "Last night I explained <i>ri</i> and <i>ji</i> ." <i>Branching Streams</i> : "In the last lecture I explained how people stick to <i>ji</i> "
Lecture 5: Saturday, June 6, 1970—SR-70-06-06 (Visiting class) Transcripts: "Purpose of study of Buddhism is to have perfect" <i>Branching Streams</i> (Lecture 13): "The purpose of the study of"
Lecture 6: Wednesday, June 10, 1970—SR-70-06-10 Transcripts: "In my last lecture, although I did not literally" <i>Branching Streams</i> (Lecture 5): "Everything has its own nature and form"
Lecture 7: Saturday, June 13, 1970—SR-70-06-13 Transcripts: "As we have big blackboard, I want to explain" Branching Streams (Lecture 6): "According to Buddhist thought"
Lecture 8: Wednesday, June 17, 1970—SR-70-06-17 Transcripts: "In last lecture I explained the independency" Branching Streams (Lecture 7): "In my last lecture I explained"
Lecture 9: Saturday, June 20, 1970—SR-70-06-20 Transcripts: " I must talk about <i>mei</i> and <i>an</i> Branching Streams (Lecture 8): "First I will talk about the two terms"
Lecture 10: Thursday, June 25, 1970—SR-70-06-25 Transcripts: "Now we are still talking about the reality Branching Streams (Lecture 9): "We are still talking about reality"
Lecture 11: Saturday, June 27, 1970—SR-70-06-27 Transcripts: "Today's lecture will be about how we observe" Branching Streams (Lecture 10): "Now I would like to talk about"
Short Zazen Talk: Sunday, June 28, 1970–(<i>No tape</i>) Transcripts: "You should sit zazen with your whole body" <i>Branching Streams</i> (Short Lecture): "You should sit zazen"
Lecture 12: Saturday, July 4, 1970—SR-70-07-04 Transcripts: "Tonight and tonight lecture and one more lecture" Branching Streams: (Lecture 11): "Koto means 'words'"
Lecture 13: Monday, July 6, 1970–SR-70-07-06 Transcripts: "Here it says: 'Ayumi o susumureba'." Branching Streams: (Lecture 12): "'Progress is not a matter of far'

¹¹ Shunryū Suzuki, *Branching Streams Flow in the Darkness: Zen Talks on the* Sandokai. Berkeley, UC Press, 1999. ISBN 0-520-21982-1.