

Shunryū Suzuki-rōshi
SANDŌKAI LECTURE II
Sunday, May 30, 1970
Tassajara

[The following lines of the *Sandōkai* are discussed in this lecture:

Line 2 *tōzai mitsuni aifusu.*
Line 3 *Ninkon ni ridon ari,*
Line 4 *dō ni namboku no so nashi.*

Line 2 was handed down closely from west to east.
Line 3 People may discriminate the dull from the keen,
Line 4 but in the true way there is no Patriarch of North or South.]

I explained in last lecture about the title of this scripture, *Sandōkai*—what does it mean by *San-dō-kai* and *Chikudo daisen no shin*. Tonight, maybe, it is necessary to explain about the background of this poem—why Sekitō-zenji—Sekitō Kisen-daioshō, wrote this poem.

As you know, under the Fifth Patriarch¹ there were outstanding teacher who is called Jinshū,² and when the Fifth Patriarch announced that he will give transmission to someone, and everyone thought that, of course, Jinshū will receive the transmission. But actually Enō,³ the Sixth Patriarch—Enō who became the Sixth Patriarch—Enō who was pounding rice in the corner of the temple received the transmission.

But Jinshū was a great scholar. So later Jinshū became—went to the northern country and became a great teacher. And Jinshū's school was called Northern—Hoku Zen—Northern School of Zen, Hoku Zen, Hoku Zen.⁴ And the Sixth Patriarch, who went to south, spread his teaching in southern countries, and his school was called Nan Zen, Southern—South Zen.⁵

Later, as you know, Jinshū's school became—after Jinshū, his school became weaker and weaker. But in north, the Sixth Patriarch's school became, after the Sixth Patriarch, stronger and stronger. But at Sekitō's time, you know—Sekitō is the Eighth Patriarch, Enō is the Sixth Patriarch,

¹ Daiman Kōnin (Chin. Daman Hongren, 601-674): Fifth Chinese Ancestor.

² Daitō Jinshū (Chin. Datong Shenxiu, c. 605-706): student of Daiman Kōnin; founder of the Northern School.

³ Daikan Enō (Chin. Dajian Huineng, 638-713): Sixth Chinese Ancestor.

⁴ Hoku-shu Zen (Chin. Pei-tsung ch'an): Northern School of Chan Buddhism.

⁵ Nan-shu Zen (Chin. Nan-tsung-ch'an): Southern School of Chan Buddhism.

and Seventh Patriarch is Seigen.⁶ And Seigen's disciple is Sekitō. Sekitō is the author of this poem. In Sekitō's time, Hōkō-shū or Northern Zen was still powerful. But there were another disciple. Of course, Sixth Patriarch had many, many disciples. Maybe more than fifty. We can count fifty, but there must be more disciples under the Sixth Patriarch.

And one of—there were a disciple whose name is Katakū Jinne.⁷ Katakū Jinne denounced the Northern Zen, which is, you know, Jinshū's Zen, pretty strictly, and he was a very active person. And what he said was not exactly—we cannot accept his teaching, you know, as a disciple of the Sixth Patriarch. Not exactly so, but he was very alert and active person. And he denounced, or his disciple, denounced the Northern Zen a lot.

So [in] Sekitō's time there was, you know, some conflict between Southern Zen, which is Enō (Enō's, the Sixth Patriarch's) Zen, and Jinshū's Zen. So Sekitō Kisen, the author of this poem, wanted to solve this, you know—wanted to make this dispute clear from his own viewpoint. This is, you know, why he wrote this poem.

So he—first of all, he started by Buddha's teaching, you know, Buddha's teaching, which is the teaching "a Great Mind of Sage in India," you know. That is the first thing he started to say. And it says:

[Line 1] The mind of the Great Sage of India

[Line 2] Flowed unseen from west to east.

[Translation by Reiho Masunaga.]

"Flowed unseen from west to east." *Tōzai mitsuni aifusu*. In Chinese, *tōzai mitsuni aifusu*. *Tō* means, you know, "China." And *zai*—"east" [west] means India. "In India and China, Buddha's great mind [was] transmitted all over, unseen—flowed unseen from west to east."

And next, you know, you don't have translation. And next sentence is not like this, you know. I have here someone's translation, but next, if you follow the order of the sentences, next one will be: "People discriminate the dull from the wit." This is—it means, you know, dispute between—which is better, you know, Northern School or, you know, Southern School? People, you know, say "Northern School is better," or "Southern School is better." People may—people say so, you know. It is actually, you know, it means, it means the dispute between Southern School and Northern School. And a strong criticism of [by] Katakū Jinne, Katakū Jinne. Katakū Jinne. Katakū Jinne is—was born 668 and died 670 [760]. Katakū Jinne. He is—he was—at that time, you know, maybe you must have studied the *Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch*. That sūtra was compiled, maybe, compiled by someone who is under the strong influence of Katakū Jinne. So in that sūtra, you know, Jinshū's teaching is pretty badly

⁶ Seigen Gyōshi (Chin. Qingyuan Xingsi, 660-740): Student of Daikan Enō.

⁷ Katakū Jinne (Chin. Heze Shenhi, 670-762): student of Daikan Enō.

denounced, you know. Jinshū was not so good, you know. Only the Sixth Patriarch [laughs] was great teacher. It seems in that way because, maybe, the sūtra was compiled by someone under the influence of Katakū Jinne. Anyway, this kind of dispute was very strong at that time.

So:

[Line 1] The mind of the Great Sage of India

[Line 2] Flowed unseen from west to east.

[Translation by Reiho Masunaga.]

It means that, you know, Sekitō knows, you know, the true teaching of the great sage of Shākyamuni Buddha, which will include both Southern School and Northern School without any, you know, contradiction. From his viewpoint, you know, there is no need to, you know, to fight [laughs]. Because they don't understand real teaching of Buddha, they get into dispute. That is what he mean [laughs].

[Line 1] The mind of the Great Sage of India

[Line 2] Flowed unseen from west to east.

[Translation by Reiho Masunaga.]

You know, although they may not understand, you know, the teaching of the great sage, Shākyamuni Buddha, but his teaching flowed all over. If you have the eyes to see or have the mind to understand his teaching, you will understand it. And if you understand it, there is no—it is not necessary to be involved in this kind of dispute. Actually, it meant this kind of thing. "Flowed unseen from west to east."

And next sentence is—I translate it in this way: "People discriminate the dull from the wit." "The dull from the wit." It does—[laughs] does it make sense [laughs]?

Student [David Chadwick]: "The dull from the sharp."

Mm-hmm. "Dull from sharp" or—

[Conversation in background between students: "Dull from sharp" vs."Dull from wit."]

"Dull," you know, it means that—it is, you know, difficult to translate. *Jōkon gekon*, we say. *Jōkon* means "better—those who has," you know, "more appropriate capacity of potentiality to understand Buddha's teaching" is someone who [is] not only alert, you know, or sharp, or clever. The cleverness is sometime barrier of—clever people sometime cannot understand Buddha's teaching. "Some," you know, "appropriate potentiality," you know—that is *Jōkon*. *Gekon* means, you know—*Gekon* means "someone who—people who find it difficult to understand, to

accept Buddha's teaching." But this is not so important, you know, in this sūtra . This is [in] some rhetorical sense he says:

[Line 3] People discriminate the dull from the wit,
[Line 4] but true way has no patriarch of south or north.
[Translation by Suzuki-rōshi.]

You know, this is important [laughs]. "True way has no patriarch of south or west [north]." No patriarch, you know, of the Sixth Patriarch or Jinshū. Jinshū is good, and the Sixth Patriarch is good. And Jinshū is good for someone who study things literally, you know. And the Sixth Patriarch's teaching will be good for some, you know, someone who has quick, sharp mind- [partial word]— -minded fellow.

But although, you know, according to the people, you know, teaching someone explained Buddha's teaching in detail, so that he can understand words after words. But for someone it is necessary to, you know, to point at the point without using so many words. So it is up to the people, but not—but for the great teacher, you know, there is no difference. Great teacher can be, you know, even [if] he is really great teacher, there is no difference in his true understanding. But his way of explaining teaching will be different.

"The people discriminate the dull from the wit," or—"but true way has no patriarch of south or north." *Tōzai mitsuni aifusu*. "Flows—flowed unseen." Unseen is this—*mitsuni*. *Mitsuni aifusu*. *Memmitsu no kafu*.⁸ This is *mitsuni*.⁹ *Mitsuni* means, you know, "not secret." Sometime it means "secret," but "unseen" looks like "secret," but this "unseen" may not be so good a translation. *Mitsuni* means "exactly," you know, "exactly"—without no gap between the two.

Here the main purpose of this *Sandōkai* is to explain reality from both side. The title is *Sandōkai*: *San* means "many"; *dō* means "one." And what is "many"? And what is "one"? Many is one; one is many. If you really understand reality, even though you say "many," each one of things are not separated from the other, you know. It is closely related. If so, it is one. But even though it is one, it looks like many [laughs]. So "many" is right, and "one" is right. So even though we say "one," we cannot ignore, you know, various being like stars and moons and, you know, animals and fish—the various being.

But although they are many, they do not exist separately; they are not separated from each other; they are closely related. So that is—from this point, we say they are interdependent. So "one" is—when we, you know,

⁸ *Memmitsu* (*na*) (careful, considerate; detailed; meticulous) + *no* (of) + *kafu* (..). [See also Lecture SR-70-05-27, where this phrase was introduced.]

⁹ That is, *memmitsu* and *mitsuni* have the same root (?).

discuss about the meaning of each being, we say "many." We have many things to discuss. But if we come to the conclusion, or if we come to the real understanding or reality, you know, in fact it is just one. So all the discussion will be included [in] one real understanding of things. So "one" and "many" is very famous words. One and many.

And the other—another way to explain it, the reality, is differentiation. Differentiation is [laughs] equality. Equality. Equal value—things has equal value because they are different. You know, if man and woman is same [laughs], "man" and "woman" has no value. Because man and woman is different, "man" is valuable and "woman" is also valuable. So to be different is to have value. So in this sense, we have equal value—equal absolute value. Everything has absolute value, which is equal to everyone. But usually, you know, we are involved in the standard of evaluation, exchange value, you know, materialistic value, or spiritual value, or moral value. "Morally he is good," you know. "He is not so good." You know, if you—because you have some standard, you can say, "He is good." Moral standard will define the value of people. But the moral standard changes always [laughs], so, you know, virtuous person is not always so. If you compare [him] with someone who is like Buddha, he is not so good [laughs]. So "good" or "bad" is caused by some evaluation—standard. But the truth, you know—things—because things are different, you know, because of the difference, everything has its own value. That is, you know—that value is absolute value. Mountain is not, you know, valuable because it is high. Or river is not less valuable because it is low. Because mountain is—because mountain is high, on the other hand, you can say, because mountain is high, mountain is mountain. And it has absolute value. The water is—because water runs lower valley, you know, it is valuable. Because, you know, mountain—quality of mountain and quality of the river is completely different. Because it is different it is—it has equal value. "Equal" means absolute value.

So if we say—if we evaluate things from absolute viewpoint, it has equal value. So, you know, equality is, you know, differentiation, according to Buddhism. Differentiation is equality. So in usual sense, you know, differentiation is opposite to equal, but we understand equality and differentiation is same thing. And one and many is same [laughs]. If you think "one" is different from "many," that is wrong—your understanding is too materialistic and too superficial.

Anyway, so it says:

[Line 1] The true mind of the great sage of India

[Line 2] flowed unseen from west to east.

[Translation by Suzuki-rōshi—close to Masunaga's.]

This kind of true mind, you know, this kind of understanding of reality started by Buddha, flowed unseen from west to east. Whether you understand or not, what Buddha says is true. So "unseen from west to east." But people easily get into confusion, you know, because of the evaluation of things—discrimination. Dull from wit—the wit. Dullness or sharpness. But from the standpoint of the patriarch, you know, it is same. There is no—for the Patriarch—Patriarchs—all the Patriarchs understand this point. So there is no Northern Patriarch or Southern Patriarch.

Ninkon: *nin*, "human"; *kon*¹⁰ is, you know, *kon*, is *kikon*—it—*ki-kon*. And this is, you know, technical term of Buddhism—*kikon*.¹¹ And sometime we say *rikon*.¹² *Ri* is "sharp," or someone who has advantage in studying or accepting Buddha's teaching. *Ri*. *Don* is "dull." But here [in the *Sandōkai*], you know, [we have] *ridon*: "dull"—someone who is dull has great advantage in studying Buddhism [laughs]. It is not, you know, always dull person bad to study Buddhism. Clever one is not always have advantage in studying Buddhism. But temporarily we divide our human potentiality into *rikon* and *donkon*.¹³ Dull one is good because he is dull [laughs]; sharp one is good because he is sharp [laughs]. You cannot compare, you know, and you cannot say which is good. Do you understand this point [laughs]?

I'm not so sharp so [laughs] I understand very well [laughs, laughter]. My master always called me, "You crooked cucumber!" [Laughs.] "Crooked cucumber." The first—I was the last disciple of my teacher, you know, but I became the first one [laughs] because good cucumber ran away [laughs, laughter]. All the good ones run away. Maybe they are too smart.

I was not smart enough to run away [laughs, laughter], so I was caught [laughs, laughter]. That is, you know, for studying Buddhism, you know, my, you know, dullness was advantage, you know. If I were a sharp, you know, fellow, I should have run away [laughs] with them [laughs]. When I was left alone, I was very sad, you know: "Oh, no—" But when I left home, you know, I left home by my own choice. I told my parents, "I will go." [Laughs.] And they said, "You are too young, so you have to stay more here." But I must go, and I left my parents, so, you know, I

¹⁰ *kon*: root; character or nature of a human being, as in *kikon* and *rikon*. [See *Sandōkai* Lecture 3, SR-70-06-01, p. 8, and earlier discussion in this lecture on *jōkon* vs. *gekon*.]

¹¹ *kikon*: "The capacity of the common people to understand the teachings of Buddhism"—Daitō Shuppansha, *Japanese-English Bud. Dict.* (1971), p. 174.

¹² *rikon*: "People with keen minds who are capable of understanding the subtle teachings of the Buddha"—*ibid.*, p. 234.

¹³ *donkon*: "A man of inferior spiritual capacity"—Hisao Inagaki, *A Glossary of Zen Terms*, 1991, p. 52.

couldn't go back. I could, but I thought I couldn't [laughs]. So, you know, I have nowhere to go. That is one reason. Another reason was I was not smart enough [laughs].

So, you know, smart one is not—haven't—smart one haven't always advantage, you know, and dull one—dull person is good because he is dull. We understand in this way. So actually there is no dull person or no smart person. It is same. Anyway, it is not so easy [laughs]. It is difficult. For the smart person, there is some difficulty for smart person. For dull one, there is some difficulty, you know, for dull person. For an instance, to study, you know, he must study hard, and he must read one book over and over again because he is not smart. But smart one forget [laughs] quite easily, you know. He may learn it very quickly, but, you know, what he learn does not stay so long for smart people's mind. But dull people, you know [laughs], for dull one it takes time to remember something, so over and over we should read it. If you read it over and over and remember it, it will not go so soon. So, you know, maybe same thing.

[Line 3] *Ninkon ni ridon ari,*
[Line 4] *dō ni namboku no so nashi.*

"In the true way there is no Northern Patriarch or Southern Patriarch." That is very true. That is, you know, Sekitō's understanding. By the way, Sekitō was the—actually the Sixth's Patriarch's disciple. But after the Sixth Patriarch passed away, he became disciple of Seigen. That kind of things happens, you know, very often. I have some disciples here, maybe, you know, but if I die, those who cannot be—couldn't be my disciple will be disciple of some of, you know, disciple of my disciple, you know. Sekitō was one of them like that.

Here, you know, to study Buddhism is not like to study something, you know—it takes time. Until you accept the teaching completely, it takes time.

And the most important point is, you know—you yourself rather than your teacher, you know. You yourself study hard. And what you receive from your teacher is the spirit of study, you know, to spirit to study. That spirit will be, you know, transmitted from warm hand to warm hand, you know. You should do it. That's all [laughs]. There is nothing to transmit to you.

And what you learn is—maybe from books or from the other teachers, so that is why we have teacher—master and teacher. Teacher could be various great teacher. Master is one, and we—master's disciple is—we call *deshi*, "disciple." And for the—for the students, whether he is his disciple or not, the student like this, like Zen Center. Some of you are—is my, you know, disciple. Some of you are not my disciple. Then, those

who are not my disciple is called *zuishin*. *Zuishin* is "follower," or—and he may stay, you know, pretty long time under some teacher. Sometime longer than the period he stay with his master.

My, my tea [incomplete word—"teacher"?]—when I was thirty-two, my teacher passed away—my master passed away. So after that I studied, you know, under [Ian] Kishizawa-rōshi. So most of the understanding, you know, I have is Kishizawa-rōshi's understanding. But—but my master is—Gyokujun So-on is my master.

So, anyway, in the true way has no patriarch of south or north. True way is one, you know. [*Sentence finished. Tape turned over. It resumes with Suzuki-rōshi and students laughing.*] Our practice is not to put [gather] something in your basket. We don't force it, but it is rather to find something in your sleeve. What do you have?¹⁴ But before you study, you know, hard, you don't know what you have in your sleeve, that's all [laughs, laughter]. Buddha has the same thing, and I have the same thing. "Oh! [Laughs.] It is amazing!" you know.

So we must have—that is the spirit we must have, you know. Anyway, you should study hard, whatever it is, whatever is said. If you don't like what I say, you shouldn't accept it [laughs]. It is okay. Eventually you will accept it [laughs, laughter]. If you say, "No!" I will say, "Okay. Go ahead. [Laughs, laughter.] Try hard!" I think that is the characteristic of Buddhism. Our, you know, approach is very wide, and as a Buddhist you have big freedom to study. And in what you say—whatever you say, it is okay, so there is no [laughs] patriarch of south or north [laughs]. We know this. Like Sekitō says here: "Born, we clutch at things and later compound our delusion by following ideals" [Masunaga's translation]. And this is very—maybe very easy to understand, but what he is trying to say here is the relationship or the important teaching of Buddhism, you know. "Clutching at things"—it may be better to say in this way: "Clutching at things" (I just, you know, this is my translation, so you can change it)—"Clutching at things is delusion." This is more literal translation. "Clutching at things is delusion."

[Line 7] *Ji wo shūsuru mo moto kore mayoi.*

[Line 8] *Ri ni kanō mo mata satori ni ara zu.*

So:

[Line 7] Clutching at things is delusion.

[Line 8] And to recognize the truth is not always enlightenment either.

[Translation by Suzuki-rōshi.]

¹⁴ From the tape turnover until this footnote number, the gap in the lecture was reconstructed by Marian Derby from her contemporaneous notes.

It may be, but it is not always. "Clutching at things is delusion, but to recognize truth is not always enlightenment." Or you can say, "Recognize the truth is not enlightenment either."

"Clutching at things" means, you know, to stick to things, to stick [to] many, you know, many things you see. Understanding each being is different, you know, so, you know, this is something special, you know. "He is something special." If you think so, you will stick to him. That is, you know, not—that is illusion. But, on the other hand, even though you recognize the truth, you know, that everything is one, even though you understand in that way, it is not always enlightenment, you know. It is just, you know, understanding by your head, by your thought, by your thinking. Real enlightenment include both. Enlightened person do not ignore things and do not stick [to] things. And he does not even to stick to the truth either. There is no truth which is different from each being. Being each being itself is truth, you know. Truth is something, you know, which is beyond, which is controlling each being. You may think in that way, you know: "There is truth, like a truth of gravitation," you know. The apple is the each things, so behind the apple there is some truth which is working on an apple is the truth of, theory of gravitation. Even though you understand things in that way, that is not enlightenment, it says. This is the backbone of all this—all of this *Sandōkai*.

[Line 1] The true mind of the great sage of India
[Line 2] flowed unseen from west to east.
[Line 3] People discriminate the dull from the wit,
[Line 4] but true way has no patriarch of south or north.
 [Translation by Suzuki-rōshi—close to Masunaga's.]

So far is, you know, he, you know—this is introduction, maybe. Introduction about what he want to say here at this—under that circumstances where there were various poliminous [polemic], you know, understanding of which teaching—which school is better.

This is, you know—so far is the introduction, and—

[Line 7] Clutching at things is delusion,
[Line 8] and to recognize the truth is not enlightenment.
 [Translation by Suzuki-rōshi.]

This is the, you know—oh, excuse me. I skipped, you know, to—I changed the order of the sentence. In this translation, you know, something should be, you know, in—the main backbone of the poem is translated in the introduction. So [laughs] I think I have to change the order. No, I am not changing, I [laughs] want to follow the original text.

"Clear source":

[Line 5] Source of the teaching is clear.
[Translation by Suzuki-rōshi—close to Masunaga's.]

Source of the teaching is clear. And kept—

[Line 6] The streams of the teaching kept pure or unsullied.
[Translation by Suzuki-rōshi—close to Masunaga's.]

[S.R. unsure of pronunciation, so he spelled out "unsullied." Students pronounced it.] And then, you know, come to this sentence:

[Line 7] Clutching at things is delusion,
[Line 8] and to recognize the truth is not enlightenment.
[Translation by Suzuki-rōshi.]

This is the teaching which was started by Buddha and kept unsullied in various stream. Hmm. Okay? [Laughs.]

I think if you, you know, type this, you know, in three—big—three—

Student A [David Chadwick]: Double-space.

Suzuki-rōshi: Yeah, double-space or more. So that I can change the order and, you know—

Student B [Lew Richmond?]: Rōshi, couldn't we just work from the Japanese and forget that translation?

Suzuki-rōshi: Hmm?

Student B: Couldn't we just work from the Japanese and forget that translation?

Suzuki-rōshi: Yeah.

Student B: Throw away that translation and work from the Japanese—from, like, you know, we had the biggest group [?]-what we're learning is like—

Suzuki-rōshi: Yeah, yeah. Okay.

David Chadwick: You probably know English much better than [Reiho] Masunaga, you know.

Suzuki-rōshi: [Laughs.] Uh-huh, yeah. I am trying [laughs, laughter], you know. I am trying hard to follow the order, you know, so that, you know, it is—if you translate it in fluent English, you know, it will—you may find it difficult to explain it. This is very, you know—the original poem is

very, you know, full of technical terms. And you cannot, you know, change it. If you change it, you will lose, you know—it doesn't make, actually, much sense, you know.

So even though it is difficult, I think we should follow the original text. That is because I have to—I want you to understand completely, I feel I have to follow the—even though it is difficult—I want to follow the original text faithfully.

So maybe it is difficulty for me and for you too. So you can forget all about Japanese, you know, but [laughs, laughter]—but as you are reciting, you know, every morning, so I am trying to follow the meaning of those words.

Student B: But when you explain to us, for instance, *San-dō-kai*—

Suzuki-rōshi: Mm-hmm.

Student B: —*San-dō-kai*—

Suzuki-rōshi: *Hai*. Yeah.

Student B: —it's not so difficult for us to make it into right English.

Suzuki-rōshi: Oh. Oh.

Student B: When we understand what *san* means and what *dō* means and what *kai* means, we can make a sentence out of it.

Suzuki-rōshi: Uh-huh.

Student B: You follow what I mean?

Suzuki-rōshi: Uh-huh.

Student B: But Masunaga, for instance, he says [the title is], "The Union of the Spiritual and the Phenomenal Worlds." Now that is not as meaningful to us. It's good English—

Suzuki-rōshi: Uh-huh.

Student B: —but it is not as meaningful to us as translating *San-dō-kai*.

Suzuki-rōshi: I see.

Student B: You understand?

Suzuki-rōshi: Maybe so.

Student B: And then we make it into—then each one of us will make it into a different sentence, ultimately. [Laughs, laughter.]

Suzuki-rōshi: Some, yeah. Maybe, you know, I think that is easier eventually, you know, after all you [will] find it easier to understand if we follow one by one.

Student B: Mm-hmm

Suzuki-rōshi: And you are reciting it, you know, in Japanese, so that is why I started to, you know, talk about this one.

Mmm. I think we have no more time. [Bell rings.]

Sources: Contemporaneous transcript and notes by Marian Derby. City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape by Bill Redican, 6/5/00.