

Shunryū Suzuki-rōshi
SANDŌKAI LECTURE IV
Wednesday, June 3, 1970
Tassajara

[Lecture starts 3/4 of the way through Side B of the original tape.]

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

Line 9 *Mommon issai no kyō,*
Line 10 *ego to fuego to.*
Line 11 *Eshite sarani aiwataru.*
Line 12 *Shikara zare ba kurai ni yotte jūsu.*

Line 9 The five sense gates and the five sense objects
Line 10 are interdependent and absolutely independent.
Line 11 Interrelated endlessly,
Line 12 yet each stays in its own position.]

Tape operator: The beginning of the lecture, given on June third.

Suzuki-rōshi: Last night [lecture?], I explained *ri* and *ji*. And usual person stick to *ji*. That is quite, you know, usual. And characteristic of Buddhist—Buddha's teaching is, you know, to go beyond things. "Things" means the various being and various idea we have and we think. Even though we say "truth," truth usually means something we figure out, [something] we think. That is truth. But this truth as a—something which we can figure out or think about is also *ji* in Buddhism. When we go beyond subjective and objective world, which is *ji*, we come to the understanding—oneness of everything, oneness of subjective—subjectivity and objectivity, oneness of inside and outside.

For an instance, if you sit zazen you are not thinking anything. You are not watching anything. Your focus is, you know, four feet—four, five feet ahead, but actually we are not watching anything. Just focus is there, but we don't watch anything. Even though many ideas come, we do not think, you know. It comes in and goes out, that's all. We do not entertain various idea, you know. We do not serve [laughs] food or anything, you know. If they come in, okay, and if they go out, okay [laughs]. That's all [laughs]. That is zazen, you know. When we, in that condition—in this kind of mind—when we have this kind of mind, our mind actually, you know, include everything. Even though you do not try to include, you know, everything, actually everything is in your mind.

And another thing I must tell you is we do not talk about, you know, things which have no relationship with ourselves, you know. We do not think, you know—we do not [get] concerned about—we—we do not

accept—expect something which may exist, you know, beyond our reach. Whatever we talk about, you know, it is, you know—the moment we talk about, it is within our mind.

[Side A of original tape starts here, repeating the following 1-1/2 sentences.¹]

... we—we do not accept—expect something which may exist, you know, beyond our reach. Whatever we talk about, you know, it is, you know—the moment we talk about, it is within our mind.

So everything, you know, all the thing is in our mind. But usually, you know, you think there is many things, and we are thinking about this and this and this. In cosmic world, there may be many and many stars. But the stars we can, you know, reach is right now only moon. In few years we will reach some other stars. So eventually we will reach to some other constellation [laughs]. But, you know, we do not think in that way.

We think our mind pervade everywhere. So—our mind is, you know, not our mind. Our mind is something greater than the mind which we think is our mind. This is Buddhist thought. So in Buddhism, mind and being are one, not different. So there is no limit in cosmic being, so is our mind, you know. Our mind—there is no limit in our mind. Our mind will reach, you know, everywhere. And our mind and outward being is one. So if you think, "This is mind," you know, "That is mind," if you think, "This is some other being," that is very much so. But actually when we say "this," you know—when Buddhists say "this" or "that" or "I," that "I," or "this" or "that" include everything.

So we must, you know, listen to the sound of it, you know. The other day I explain what is sound [laughs].² Sound is different from noise. Sound is, you know, something, you know, which comes out more real, and which comes out from your practice is sound. Noise is more—something more objective [laughs], you know, something, you know, which will bother you, you know. The noise is more objective being. The sound is both objective and subjective. So, you know, if you hit drum, the sound is—you make is, you know, sound of your own subjective practice, and it is also the sound which encourage, you know, all of us. So sound is subjective and objective.

¹ This overlap suggests that the end of Side B was dubbed from another tape after the lecture.

² At the end of the last zazen period of the day, the large drum at the back of the zendō is hit. The night before this lecture was given, Suzuki-rōshi stopped the student hitting the drum and, while everyone continued zazen, explained that hitting the drum should be sound, not noise. [Note from *Wind Bell*, Summer 1976, p. 46.]

So sound, you know, is—we say *hibiki*. *Hibiki* means, you know, "something which goes back and forth." *Hibiki*. Like echo, you know. If I say something, I will have feedback, you know, back and forth. That is sound.

Buddhists understand everything, every noise, as a sound which we make, you know. You may say, "The bird is singing there—over there." But we think, you know—bird—when we hear the bird, bird is "me," you know, already. I—actually I am not listening to [laughs] bird. Bird is here, you know, in my mind already, and I am singing with the bird. "Peep-peep-peep." [Laughs.] If you think, when you are reading something, if you think, "Bird is there," you know, "bluejay is over my roof" [laughs]—"bluejay is singing, but their voice is not so good," you know [laughs, laughter]. When you think in that way, that is noise, you know. When you are not disturbed by the bluejay, you know, the bluejay will come right into your heart, and you will be a bluejay, and bluejay will [be] reading something [laughs]. Then the bluejay doesn't disturb your reading. Because—because you think, "Bluejay is there. Bluejay should not be over my roof, "you know. When you think in that way, that is more primitive understanding of being.

Why we understand things in that way is because of our want of practice, you know. When you practice zazen more, you can accept things as your own, whatever it is, you know. That is actually the teaching of, you know, famous teaching of Kegon—*jiji-muge*.³ *Jiji-muge* means "being has no," you know, "no barrier, no disturbance." It—it, you know—interrelated closely. And it is difficult to say, "This is bird, and this is me," because it is interrelated very closely. So it is difficult to separate bluejay from me. That is *jiji-muge*.

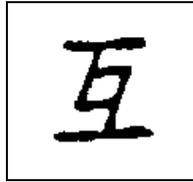
And this *jiji-muge* or interdependency of being is—here [Line 10] we have *ego*.

[Line 10 *ego to fuego to.*]

E-go. And here [Line 10] we have *fuego*. *Fu* is, you know— *Ego* is very special technical term of Buddhism or Zen. *Ego*. *Go* is, you know,

³ *Jiji-muge* (also *jiji-muge hokkai*, Ch. *shih-shih wu-ai fa-chieh*), is usually translated as "mutual interpenetration"—one of the central concepts of the Kegon, Flower Garland, or Huayen school of Buddhism (*Wind Bell*, Summer 1976, p. 46). *Jiji-muge* is also defined as meaning "all forms of phenomenal existence in the world blend with each other without impediment"—Daitō Shuppansha, *Japanese-English Buddhist Dictionary* (1971), p. 135. Ruth Fuller Sasaki defined it as "the realization of the realm of the completely harmonious and unobstructed interpenetration and interconvertability of all things with each other" (*Zen: A Religion*, New York: The First Zen Institute of America, 1958, p. 14).

character, you know, going this way, you know—[draws character for *go* on the board].⁴



Interrelated, you know [laughs]. Two things, you know—two line, two, you know, figure is interrelated. You see? Like this [continues to draw characters on the board] and like this. This is *go*.

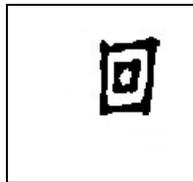
E means "to go round"—round and round and round. This is *e*.



This part of the character [points to left part of character for *e*] is "to go round" or "to meet":

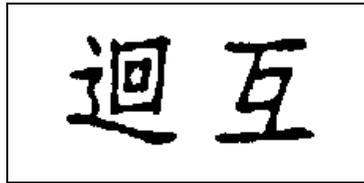


And this part [points to right part of character for *e*] is "to go"—also "to go round."



⁴ For the Chinese characters see: *Wind Bell*, Summer 1976, p. 42; the unpublished MS by David Chadwick, *Sandōkai Study*, Line 10 explication; *Branching Streams Flow in the Darkness*, p. 22; or the Sino-Japanese Buddhist canon: Takakusu Junjirō and Watanabe Kaigyoku, eds., *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō*, (Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924-1932).

So this is *e-go*.

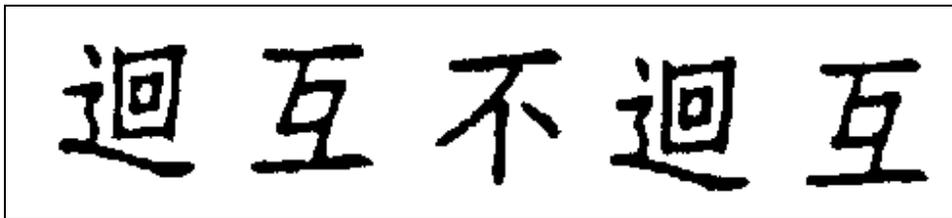


And *fu* is "not":



[Therefore *fuego* means] "not *ego*." "Not *ego*."

[The entire Line 10 reads as follows (*ego to fuego to*):]⁵



Although it is, you know—things are interrelated, you know, or because things are closely interrelated, you know, everyone, every being, each being can be a boss, you know [laughs]. Because, you know—each one of us can be a boss because we are so closely related. You know, if you say "Suzuki," you know—"I—I'm very much closely related to you, so I can be president of, you know, Zen Center."⁶ So if you s- [partial word—"say"?]—I say "Mel," Mel already is not just Mel [laughs], you know.⁷ He is one of the Zen Center students, and to see Mel is to see Zen Center. If you see Mel, people understand what is Zen Center [laughs]. So, you know—but if you think, "Oh, he is Mel" [laughs], then your understanding is not good enough. You don't know who is Mel. So if you

⁵ Suzuki-rōshi did not cite the entire line at this point, although it was probably on the blackboard. It was added here only for reference. The character *an* in Line 10 (*ego to fuego to*) is the Japanese word for "and," which is added to the Chinese characters in the line.

⁶ According to an early transcript, Suzuki-rōshi was probably speaking to Silas Hoadley, the present of Zen Center.

⁷ Mel Weitsman was a student, at the time, sitting directly in front of Suzuki-rōshi [per *Wind Bell*, Summer 1976, p. 46.]

have—if you have good understanding of things, that, you know—things will—by things you will understand whole world.

So it is, you know—because each one of us is the boss of whole world, so not—if you understand this way, it is not, you know, interrelated. It is independent. We are independent. Each one of us [is] completely independent, absolutely independent. There is nothing to compare with you. You are you, just you. You see?

We have to understand things from both way. One is, you know, interrelated—to understand things [as] interrelated being. The other way of understanding is to understand ourselves quite independent from everything. You know, when we include everything, you know, we are completely independent because nothing to compare to you [laughs]. Do you understand? If there is only one thing, how can you compare, you know, things to you, because there is nothing to compare to you. This is, you know, "inter-" [partial word]—this is "absolute independency": in Chinese, *fuego*—not interrelated, but [and?] absolutely independent.

This first sentence—

[Line 9] *Mommon issai no kyō,*

—this is rhetorical, you know, words. *Mommon* means "gates." "Gates" means our eyes, or nose, or ears—the—all those sense organs—six—five sense organs are gates, you know. And for the gates, there are sense object, you know. For eyes, something color to see; for the ear something to hear—some voice to hear; some smell to smell for the nose; something to taste, you know, for the—our tongue. In this way, six sense organs has—five sense organs have five sense object. This is, you know, our, you know—Buddhist common sense, you know.

The purpose of, you know, referring to this—to those things is just to say "everything," you know. Instead of saying "everything," we say *Mommon issai no kyō*. *Mommon* is "gates." There is many gates, and to the gates there is many sense objects, you know. All those things—things, you know—all those things are interrelated, and at the same time they are independent, you know. *Mommon issai no kyō*. Flowers and—it is same thing to say flowers and trees and bird and stars, you know, but instead of saying stream and mountain, we say *Mommon issai no kyō*.

So various being which we see, which we hear, is the things which is interrelated, and, at the same time, they are—each being is absolutely independent and [has] its own value. I said "value" right now. That "value" means *ri*, you know, *ri*. *Ri* is, you know—something which make something, you know, meaningful is *ri*, you know—which is not theory or anything.

Mmm. This is rather difficult to understand, you know. *Ri*. It may take time [laughs, laughter] before you understand *ri—ri*, you know.

When you—even though you don't attain enlightenment, you have attained—you have enlightenment, we say. That enlightenment means *ri*. That something exist here means something, you know, has already some reason why he—it exist here. And because of that reason, it makes sense—some sense [laughs]. I don't know [laughs] what sense. No one knows, but there must be some reason. And, you know, everything must have some virtue for itself.

And—and it is, you know, very strange that everything has—no things are same, you know [laughs]. One is different from other. So ea- [partial word: each?]-there is nothing to compare, you know, with you. So you have your own value, and that value, you know, is—is not—is not comparative value or exchange value. It is that value something more than that. So just—when you are just on the cushion, you have your own value. And that value—because that value is related to everything, so that value is also absolute value.

Ahh. Maybe better not to say [laughs] too much. Ahh.

[Line 9] *Mommon issai no kyō.*

Mommon—"sense gates," you know, "sense organs and its objects"—it means everything—"is related—interrelated." And, on the other hand, it is absolute. It—everything has absolute value for itself.

And here again:

[Line 11] *Eshite sarani aiwataru.*

E means "here" [writing on board], you know:⁸



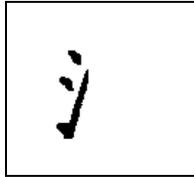
E is "interrelationship" or "interrelated." So everything is interrelated. And *aiwataru* is "going on and on"—*ai*⁹—to, you know, "to hike," you know, "on and on and on," you know. "Everywhere" means *wataru*. Or, you know, birds, you know, comes from north in springtime, you know,

⁸ The same character for "e" as in the previous line.

⁹ The prefix *ai* means "together or mutually," as in Line 2 (*aifusu*). When he mentions "hike" here, Suzuki-rōshi is referring to *wataru*.

come to south. And go back to the north, you know, crossing various mountains and rivers and sometime ocean. That is *wataru*.

This is [pointing to the left part of the character for *wataru*], you know, "water":



This [pointing to the right part of the character for *wataru*] is "walk":



So [laughs], to cross many things—water and mountain, by foot or by boat—this [pointing to the entire character for *wataru*] is *wataru*:



So things, you know, [are] interrelated endlessly, you know, going everywhere.

And: [Line 12] *Shikara zare ba [kurai ni yotte jūsu].*

"Or else," you know, "or else it stand, it dwell, or it stay in its own position." This [*kurai*] is "position." "According to the pos- [partial word]—this [*yotte*] is "rely on" or "according to." "According to the position they stay." So it means if the bird stay at some place, you know, at some lake, for an instance, his home is not only lake, but also whole world is his home. That is how a bird flies and live in the—in their world.

So everythi- [partial word]—things are interrelated. But, on the other hand, or else, or on the other hand, they are stay in their own position. And they are independent.

In Zen story sometime we say, "*Nin nin koko heku ryu bankin,*" you know. "Each one of us is," you know, "steep like a cliff." [Laughs.] No

one can climb up on you [laughs]. You are completely independent. So no one can climb up. You are like a steep, you know, rock. No one climb up on you. Absolutely you are—you are absolutely independent, and yet you are interrelated. This is, you know, right understanding.

So you—when we say you are absolutely related, you know. So—but when you hear me say so, you should understand, you know, the other side too. That is *hibiki*, you know. If you understand [laughs] one side of the truth only, you don't hear the, you know—my voice. *Hibiki*, you know. We say *kotoba no hibiki*. *Kotoba no hibiki* means "the other side of the words." We say, "If you do not understand Zen words"—*mmm*—there must be some—*mmm*—yeah, I thought there was—you have some good words for that. "If you do not understand Zen colloquial" [colloquially? colloquy?],¹⁰ you know, "you don't understand Zen." You are not Zen student, you know.

We have—our word is different from usual word. It has double meaning. We say, "double-edged sword" [laughs]. Double edge. Edge is here, this side, and the other side too. It cut both way [laughs], you know. You may say, you know—you may think I am cutting this way [laughs], but, you know, actually, I am cutting [laughing] something that way. You think you are—I am cutting something here, but actually I am cutting here, you know, something here—*shhht*. [Laughing; sounds like he is imitating the sound of a sword cutting through the air.] Do you understand?

If you—I am, you know—sometime I am scolding my st- [partial word]—my disciple. *No!* [Laughs.] But the other student may think, "Oh, he is scolded" [laughs]. But it is not actually so. Because I cannot, you know, scold people from outside [laughs], so I have to scold my student who is near me, you know. *Raaa!* [Loud mockingly threatening sound. Laughing.] But most people think, "Oh, he is—poor guy, he is scolded. Oh." [Laughs, laughter.] If you think in that way, you know, he is not—you are not Zen student. If one is scolded, you should listen to it, you know. You should be alert enough [laughing] to know who is scolded. We have always—we are trained in that way.

When I was a quite young disciple, I went—we went out and came back pretty late. There are many, you know, venomous small snakes like rattlesnake in Japan too. And my—my teacher¹¹ said, "You are wearing *tabi*,¹² so you should go ahead, you know. I'm not wearing *tabi*, so I may bit by—I may be bit by—snake will bite me, so you go ahead," he

¹⁰ The Derby transcript shows "words" written in later by hand, but Suzuki-roshi clearly said something like "colloquial"—i.e., spoken language or terms.

¹¹ Gyokujun So-on.

¹² *Tabi* are a kind of slipper, usually white, worn on formal occasions. The students were probably returning from performing a Buddhist ceremony, and they had not yet removed their *tabi*.

said [laughing]. And [we said] "Okay!" And we, you know, walked ahead of him. And when we reached—as soon as we reached to the temple, he said to us: "You—all of you must sit here. Sit here." We didn't know what is happening—what has happened—but I—we all sit in front of him [laughing]. "What a silly guys you are," he said. "When I am not wearing *tabi*, you know, why, you know, you are wearing *tabi*? It is not fair." [Laughs.] "Moreover, you know, I am your teacher. So it is all right with me to wear *tabi* when you don't wear *tabi*"—socks, you know. "So," he said, "I—" "So I said," you know, "I give some warning to you: 'I am not wearing *tabi*.'" [Laughs.] If I say so, you should notice, 'Oh—I shouldn't'—you shouldn't—you should notice that: 'Oh! We disciples should not wear *tabi* because my teacher is not wearing *tabi*.' So if you put off, you know—you should put—put off your *tabi*. But you [laughs], you know—without any idea of that, you go—you walked ahead of us. What a silly boys you are!" [Laughs, taps on table or lectern.]

[Side A ends here. Lecture resumes at start of Side B, a few minutes from the head of the tape.]

... just what he said, that's all. But we should, you know, realize something more than [what] he said.

When I was at Eihei-ji, I opened, you know, right-hand—right-side door—*fusuma*—*shōji*¹³—it—because it is a kind of rule to open this side. But I was scolded, you know: "Don't open that side!" he¹⁴ said. So next morning [laughing] I opened this side. I was scolded again: "Why do you open that way—that side?!" I didn't know what to do. Yesterday when I opened this side, he scolded me, so I opened this side and I was scolded again. I couldn't figure out why. And I—at last I noticed that yesterday guest was [sitting on] this side [laughs], and this morning guest was [sitting on] the other side. So I opened, you know, where there is the side where the guest was. And this morning again I opened [laughs] where—I opened the side where guest was—is, you know. That was—that is why I was scolded. They never tell us why, but just scold—scold us. It is, you know—the words they use is double-edged [laughs].

Those are also double-edged words. This is [pointing to *ego*?] interdependency. This is [pointing to *fuego*?] absolute independency.

¹³ *fusuma*: sliding wood-frame door with an opaque (often patterned) cover over the panes; traditionally used as an interior door or room divider. *shōji*: sliding wood-frame door or window covered in translucent rice paper. Both terms would not be used together. *Fusuma* is probably correct (see SR-66-08-19), and Suzuki-rōshi may have switched to the more familiar term *shōji* for his American students.

¹⁴ Kishizawa Ian-zenji (1865–1955), whom Suzuki-rōshi attended when Kishizawa was *seido* (distinguished visiting priest in residence) and Suzuki-rōshi a novice at Eihei-ji. This incident probably took place in 1930, when Kishizawa was 65 (*Crooked Cucumber*, p. 69). See also *Wind Bell*, Summer 1976, p. 44.

This [side of the?] sentence is interdependency, and this side is absolute interde- [partial word]—absolute depe- [partial word]—in—independency. So every thing which we hear, which we see, is interdependent and absolutely independent. And each things—this interdependency goes on and on to everywhere, and yet things are situated in its own place. Things stays in its own place. That is the main point of *Sandōkai*.

[Line 9] *Mommon issai no kyō.*

Mommon is "sense gates." *Issai no kyō*: *Issai* means "all—each or all." Each—*kyō* means "objective world." Our sense—our five senses and its objective world is independent—is interdependent and independent. And this interdependency goes everywhere. And each things stays [in] its own place. This is, you know, what it means.

[Line 1] *Chikudo daisen no shin.*

The great mind of the great sage in India
flow unseen from east to west.
There are alert—there are alert fellow and
dull fellow in sentient being,
but there is no Patriarch of South or North.

[Line 3] *Ninkon ni ridon ari.*

Ninkon is, you know—*nin* is "man"; *kon* is "root." Root means, you know, "sense organs." So sense organs—human being which has sense organs. There is— Someone is alert, someone is not so alert . But there is no Patriarch of South or North. Buddha's teaching is same.

[Line 5] *Reigen myōni kōkettari.*

Reigen is—

Source of the teaching is pure and stainless.

But its stream is unt- [partial word]—the source, you know, pervades everywhere. *Ruchū* is "to flow." *Ruchū* is "pour," like water pour into various place. And the *reigen*—the source of the teaching is not, you know, so clear to every- [partial word]—to us because the source of the teaching is not the teaching of right or wrong or this or that.

To stick to things is delusion,
and yet to recognize is not always
—is not enlightenment also.

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

Ji—ji is "being" or "fact" or "event."

To stick to event or fact or things are delusion.

Mayoi is "delusion." *Ri* is, you know— *Ri* is *ri* [laughs].

To recognize *ri* is not enlightenment also.

[Line 9] *Mommon issai no kyō.*

Mommon means various being and its various sense organs and its objects. So it means "everything."

[Line 10] *ego to fuego to.*

Ego is "interdependency." *Fuego* is "dependency."

[Line 11] *Eshite sarani aiwataru.*

This interdependen- [partial word]—dependency goes on and on. And everything stays [in] its own place. This is independency.

Okay. Do you have some question? *Hai.*

Student A [David Chadwick]: You said that *Reigen myōni kōkettari*—that means, "The source of the teaching is clear."

Suzuki-rōshi: Mm-hmm.

Chadwick: Now, *Shiha anni ruchūsu.* Does that mean that the branches of the stream—of the source of the teaching [?] flow in the darkness? Or what does that mean—how does it fit in the sentence?

Suzuki-rōshi: *An—an—okay.* *An*, you know—*an* means—I must explain *an* more later. But right now, you can understand in this way: The source, you know, stream of the source or maybe like a spring, you know—pure spring—will, you know, as it flows down, like Tassajara Creek or, you know, it will vanish into somewhere—fade into somewhere.

But it does not mean source [of the] water vanished or anything. Water may be everywhere—moistened all over. *An* means, you know—*an*—"darkness." Darkness means opposite of brightness. In bright light like this [laughs], you know, you can count your hair even [laughing]. If it is dark, you know, you cannot see anything. But even though you don't see anything, it does not mean no one is here—no one is here. You know, all of us is here. All of us are here, but it is bec- [partial word]—only because it is dark. So, you know, *reigen*—the pure source of the teaching is always there, but sometime we can see it, and sometime we

don't see it. When we see it, you know, it means that we count everything. It is *ji*. When we don't see it, it is *ri*, you know.

Chadwick: Is *reigen* "ri" and *shiha* "ji"?

Suzuki-rōshi: Hmm?

Chadwick: Is *reigen* "ri" and *shiha* "ji"?

Suzuki-rōshi: Yeah. *Shiha* is "ji." *Hai*.

Student B: Is *ego* mean "the bird is the whole world," and *fuego* means "the bird is just the bird?"

Suzuki-rōshi: Mm-hmm. Bird is just bird. *Shiki*, you know, in *Prajñāpāramitā-hridaya* [Heart] *Sūtra* we say, *Shiki soku ze ku, ku soku ze shiki*, you know.¹⁵ That is—*Shiki soku ze ku, ku soku ze shiki* is *ego*. And *Shiki—ze shiki—ku soku—ku* is *fuego*. [Knocks on table with stick.] This is *fuego* [laughs]. You cannot say, you know—it is difficult to say what it is. [Knocks again. Laughs.] *Hai*.

Student C: Is there any particular reason that we strike the bell on the word *mon*?

Suzuki-rōshi: When?

Student C: *Mommon issai no kyō?*¹⁶

Suzuki-rōshi: Mm-hmm.

Student C: That's when we hit the bell.

Suzuki-rōshi: Yeah. *Mommon—*

Student C: Is there a reason for this?

Suzuki-rōshi: To hit bell?

Student C: Mm-hmm.

Suzuki-rōshi: To hit bell means to produce, you know, independent buddha one after another. *Gong*. Buddha. One independent buddha appear. *Gong*. Next buddha appear. When next buddha appears [laughs], no—the buddha, you know, last buddha disappear. So each,

¹⁵ "Form is emptiness. Emptiness is form."

¹⁶ During the chanting of the *Sandōkai*, the *keisu* or gong is struck at specified places in the text.

one by one, striking one after another, you produce, you know [laughs], buddha, one after another. That is our practice. *Hai*.

Student D [Reb Anderson]: You said that it's like a cliff—

Suzuki-rōshi: Mm-hmm.

Reb: —one side is like a cliff—

Suzuki-rōshi: Mm-hmm.

Reb: —and the other side is that everything is interdependent.

Suzuki-rōshi: Mm-hmm.

Reb: Is the reason why each of us is a cliff is because we die, and we never know each other because of this cliff—because as people we just die?

Suzuki-rōshi: Cliff? Yeah, it means, you know—it is just parable, you know. It doesn't mean anything, you know, special, you know.

Reb: I mean, why—

Suzuki-rōshi: [It means] to cut off, you know, various entanglement, in one word. When you do so, you are actually independent. And at the same time, you are closely related. [Laughs.] This is, you know, very interesting. Usually, you know, when you become independent, you know, you are independent, and you have not much—you are not—usually you are not supported by people. But if you [are] really independent, you know, then people may support you.

So, you know—to be independent from everyone means to be supported by everyone, to be related to everyone—closely related to everyone. When you are closely related to everyone, you are independent. So to be independent [interdependent?—and to be independent means same thing, you know. So if you really [are] involved in your everyday activity, you are independent. If you really follow our schedule, you are independent [laughs]. Because you think, "Oh, it is too—too much," you know. "Maybe so far as I am here I will observe the rules, but really I don't want to do it. But it can't be helped," you know. If you feel in that way, you know, you are not independent. And sometime you may think, "I am—I must be—I must have freedom from everything. I must have my own way," you know. But that—your own way is not related. If your own way is not is not related to anyone [laughs], it doesn't mean anything, you know. When your way is related to everyone's way, you know, and when you have confidence in your activity, then you are

independent. But, you know, [you are] dependent on various people—you are supported by various people. Do you understand?

Student E: At Tassajara, sometimes we try, as a community, to be independent.

Suzuki-rōshi: Mm-hmm

Student E: Is this Buddha's way?

Suzuki-rōshi: Independent?

Student E: Mm-hmm—not to depend—

Suzuki-rōshi: How?

Student E: —not to depend on other people for food, or for clothing, or for our needs. Is this Buddha's way?

Suzuki-rōshi: Dep- [partial word]—independent from what?

Student E: To try to be independent from the community—the larger community—from [1-2 words unclear].

Suzuki-rōshi: No, that is not possible [laughs]. It is dream—daydream [laughs, laughter]. That—that kind of, you know, independency doesn't mean anything. You will be lost, you know, if you stick to that kind of idea, because that is, you know, very primitive, you know, naïve understanding of human being, you know. *Nin*—this is human being, you know [drawing the character for "human"—two lines leaning on each other¹⁷]:



—supported, you know, with [by] each other. This is Chinese character. This is "human being." [Laughs.]

Student E: Is that like [1-2 words unclear]?

Suzuki-rōshi: [Laughs, laughter.] We are originally like this, you know. If this is man—"Oh, I am strong enough," you know, "so I don't need my wife" [laughs, laughter]. Your wife may say, you know: "I'm already

¹⁷ See also SR-70-06-06, p. 5.

supporting you! Without me you cannot live. Sometime you should take care of yourself. So for one week I will make trip." [Laughing so hard he is almost unable to speak.] Then one week—[laughs, laughter].

It is not so, you know, it is not so agreeable to be like this always to supporting, you know, your husband always. You may feel in that way, but that is, you know, her nature [laughs]. So if—without this—something to support, you know, wife cannot exist. That is human being. And I think that is very true. But when you are [makes gesture—sounds like putting hands together] like this, both are independent. This is independent and this is independent and this is too.

Student E: Is that why Buddha's practice was to beg [?]? Is that part of Buddha's way?

Suzuki-rōshi: Yeah, that is Buddhist way. We—our practice, you know, is not always one-sided practice, you know. "Middle Way" means, you know—not between two extreme is not Middle Way. To be quite independent and dependent is Middle Way. You know, "Middle Way"—if I say "Middle"—you s- [partial word]—I say "Middle Way," you may understand, "This is Middle Way." It is not so, actually. To be [laughs] like this [gestures] is Middle Way, you know. To be myself is my Middle Way. So that I can be just myself, you know, I must support someone, you know. And at the same time I must be supported by various people. That is why I can be like this, you know, I can be independent.

Student F: Rōshi, today someone was saying, or I think he was saying, "No students, no teacher. No teacher, no students." That the two—well, somebody was saying, "Well, what makes the rōshi the rōshi?" And someone else said, "Because he has students."

Suzuki-rōshi: Mm-hmm. Yeah. Yeah.

Student F: You see? You can't be the rōshi without students.

Suzuki-rōshi: Yeah. Yeah.

Student F: Students can't be students without the rōshi.

Suzuki-rōshi: Uh-huh.

Student F: So they are both independent but both—

Suzuki-rōshi: Yes.

Student F: —together.

Suzuki-rōshi: Yeah. Together. Without student, no teacher. Yeah. So that is very true, you know. And student encourage teacher [laughs]. It is very much so. If—usually, if I have, you know—I know that if I have no student, I may goof off every day [laughs, laughter]. Because I have [laughing] so many students watching me, you know, I must be doing something. I must study so that I can give you some lecture, you know. If there is no lecture, I will not study. But at the same time, you know, I shall be very much ashamed of myself if I, you know, study just to give lecture, you know. That is very, you know, very, you know— To study is just for myself—should be. So usually, when I start to prepare for my lecture, I u- [partial word]— always got to another direction, leaving something to study aside. "Oh, this is interesting." [Laughs, laughter.] And, you know, most of the time I don't study for the lecture, but still, you know, if I don't study I don't feel so good. Because, you know, I feel I have to prepare for the lecture, I start to study. But as soon as I start to study I start my own study [laughs]—not for giving lecture. And in this way, you know, things is going on and on, endlessly, and it is good, you know.

Someday what I study will help students. I don't know when [laughs, laughter]. Just to feel good we study, and just to feel better we practice zazen. No one knows, you know, what will happen to us after sitting, you know, one, two, or ten years. No one knows. No one knows is right. Just to feel good we sit zazen, actually. Eventually that kind of practice, you know—practice of purposeless practice—eventually [will] help you in its true sense.

Again! [Perhaps referring to the lateness of the hour.]

Sources: Contemporaneous transcript by Marian Derby and City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. Transcript checked against tape and made verbatim by Bill Redican (8/7/01).