

Shunryū Suzuki-rōshi
The Blue Cliff Record, Case 61:
FUKETSU'S "ONE PARTICLE OF DUST"
Monday, July 26, 1971
Tassajara

[ENGO'S INTRODUCTION

Setting up the Dharma banner and establishing the Dharma teaching—such is the task of the teacher of profound attainment. Distinguishing a dragon from a snake, black from white—that is what the mature master must do. Now let us put aside for a moment how to wield the life-giving sword and the death-dealing blade, and how to administer blows with the stick: tell me, what does the one who lords it over the universe say? See the following.

MAIN SUBJECT

Fuketsu said to the assembled monks, "If one particle of dust is raised, the state will come into being; if no particle of dust is raised, the state will perish."

Setchō [at a later time], holding up his staff, said to his disciples, "Is there anyone among you who will live with him and die with him?"

SETCHŌ'S VERSE

Let the elders knit their brows as they will;
For the moment, let the state be established.
Where are the wise statesmen, the veteran generals?
The cool breeze blows; I nod to myself.]¹

Last night² I talked about our practice as a Zen Buddhist. Whether you are layman or monk, there is some important point which we should make clear. The point was to—to put more emphasis on big mind rather than small mind. That is the point we should make clear in our practice. In this way, more and more, you will develop your buddha-mind, which is buddha-mi- [partial word]—big mind.

And when you have big mind, when you are involved in some practice, experiencing big mind or expressing the big mind, at first you will feel

¹ Quoted from *Hekiganroku* [*The Blue Cliff Record*], Case 61, from Katsuki Sekida, trans., *Two Zen Classics: Mumonkon and Hekiganroku* (New York, Weatherhill, 1977), p. 314.

² SR-71-07-25V.

you are developing big mind. And you feel you have big mind, and you developed your big mind to everything: to your friend, to your food, to your household, or to your monastery. But actually, if you continue to practice, developing the big mind, you—eventually you do not feel as if you have big mind or you are developing big mind. That is so-called-it "no-mind."

Big mind is, you know, something big, in contrast to the small mind. So it is not real big mind. No-mind is actually the great mind. Same thing will be true for our Tassajara institute or Zen Center. Why we have Zen Center is to develop our big mind, so that we can develop our big mind we have Zen Center. So that we can continue to practice our way and develop our way, we have Zen Center. But if you have the idea of Zen Center too much as an organization—institute, that is still [laughs], you know, something wrong with it. This point should be, at the same time, carefully examined. We should know what we are doing here or in the city zendo.

Here is a kōan or Zen story which was told by Fuketsu Enshō³ who—three or four—fourth generation of Rinzai.⁴ And on some occasion, maybe, he mounted—he mounted on the altar and told the students—here is my translation for it: "If you pick up one dust, nation will become prosperous. If you pick up one dust, nation will become prosperous. If you don't, nothing will happen." That is first part [of Case 61]. That is what Fuketsu Enshō said when he mounted on the altar.

And to this, Setchō said—says, taking up one staff. You know, staff is long stick. And Setchō said: "Is there anyone who would go through birth and death with you? Is there anyone who would go through birth and death with you?" And that is the whole story.

Fuketsu said, "If you pick up a speck of dust, nation will become prosperous. If you do not, nothing will happen." That is what Fuketsu Enshō said. Later after Fuketsu died, Setchō-zenji said, taking up his staff: "Is there anyone who would go through birth and death with you? Is there anyone who would go [through] birth and death with you?" That is Setchō, you know, what Setchō said. And there is appreciatory word by same Zen Master Setchō. But I want to explain the first part first.

"If you pick up a dust": What it means—"pick up a dust," means, you know, to do—to do something like to start some monastery or to start some Zen group in everywhere—in somewhere. That is to pick up, actually—what he meant is to have some group or to start some zendo. That is to—but actually, he didn't say so. Just to pick up a

³ Feng-hsüeh Yen-chao (Fuketsu Enshō): 896-973. Chinese Rinzai master.

⁴ Rinzai Gigen → Koke Zonshō → Nanin Egyō → Fuiketsu Enshō.

dust.

In the great universe, you know, or in great buddha-land, to start zendo is just [laughing] like to pick up a dust, you know. Not so big thing. Even though it is very small thing, you know, but if you don't [do it], nothing will happen. But he says nation will be prosperous. "Nation," he says; but it means "Buddha," or "Zen members," or "Zen students will become prosperous" [laughs]. Many Zen Center students come to Zen Center, for an instance, or come to—go to some other center.

But is this, you know, something very meaningful thing or not? We—we should think about nation become prosperous, or Zen students become prosperous. Is this good thing or bad thing? If something good happens, something bad will happen at the same time. Most likely of one good thing happens, and five or ten or more than [laughs] twenty bad things will happen. So we should think, whether to pick up one dust, to establish something is good thing or bad thing. But if you don't, nothing will happen [laughs]. This is also true. What will you do? Will you pick up one dust or you don't pick up any dust? Leave everything as it is without saying anything?

How many people are suffering? "What is the matter? Let them suffer. Let them go [in the] wrong direction. That is not our problem. Let it go as they go. You—I will not, you know, do anything with you." That is, "We will not pick up, do, or pick up any dust." But if you want to do something with them, or if you want to help them, at the same time many bad things will follow [laughs]. This is very interesting but very real.

As Dōgen-zenji said, "If you—if, because, you—everything is buddha. So, there is enlightenment and defilement, birth and death, Buddha and sentient beings." If you pick up one thing there is birth and death, enlightenment and delusion, and Buddha and sentient beings. And good—something good and something bad. Even though your speech is good, many things will happen just because you picked up one thing. If you say do anything, don't do anything, nothing will happen. But because we do something many things will follow. That is actual fact. So we call it "Genjō-kōan."⁵ That is our kōan to solve—actual kōan we have.

If you don't pick up anything, it means that if you think—if you understand what is the real teaching of Buddhism, it means what is the purpose of Buddhism. Purpose of Buddhism is not to establish Buddha's teaching, Buddha's groups, but to help people. And to help people going their own way. But because—just because they are not follow their own way. So Buddha gives them some warning: "If you

⁵ "Actualizing the Fundamental Point," a fascicle of Dōgen's *Shōbōgenzō*.

do—if you do not follow the right path, you will be lost." That is only reason why Buddha left his teaching for human being. So he doesn't want to pick up anything. Or there is no need to pick up anything if all sentient beings follow right path. But, you know, most people or some Buddhist will make big mistake. They try to establish something for sake of Buddhism in its wide sense—small, narrow sense. Then that is big mistake

The real purpose of Buddhism is to bring about the time when we do not need Buddha's teaching, when we do not need Zen Center or anything. Without teacher, without Buddhist teacher, we can follow our own way. That is best. That is the goal of Buddhism. The goal of Buddhism is to bring about the life—human life where there is no Buddhism. So not to pick up anything or to bring about a human life where there is no need to pick up anything is why we make our effort.

And personally, because we always try to pick up something and to establish something in its small sense is small mind. That is why, you know—that is why the more we make effort, the more we have trouble [laughs]. That's very silly, you know—about—if we establish something just to have more trouble [laughs], it doesn't make sense.

So, as I said last night, the most important point of our practice is always trying to do something with big mind, not by small mind. If you—when you do something with big mind, if there is no need to do it, you will not do it. Only when you have to do it you will do it. That is big mind.

And Setchō's appreciative word for that is: "Old men may not release [relax] his eyebrows as they might have otherwise." [Laughs.] Old men may not release his eyebrows as they might have otherwise." "Release eyebrows" means, you know, to make faces. Old men [laughs]. "Old men" means—wears [words?], you know, blank [blame?] Zen masters—good Zen masters. They would, you know, they will make face: "Ah! Silly boys [laughs] to start Zen Center at Tassajara. Oh, silly boys! [Laughs, laughter.] They shouldn't do that." The old—old [2 words unclear], Zen masters may say so, you know. Isn't that interesting [?]. [Laughter.] As they might have otherwise [laughs]. If we do not start Zen Center, they will not make face. They—they will release their eyebrow. They will—they may feel good.

That is Setchō's appreciative word. And—and he says: "Tentatively, I will establish the foundation for the nation, but—even though old men may make face, you know. But tentatively, I must say 'Excuse me,' you know, 'My fault. Excuse me. Right now, under this situation, we must do something for—for people. So excuse me,'" you know. "So tentatively I will establish the foundation for the nation. But tactful

generals and great shogunate, where are they now? But someday, the day [will] come when we do not need any tactful generals or great shogunate—powerful people. Someday, we will have the time when we don't need any Zen master, or tactful, you know, priest—or priest of great power—someday. But at that time, to have that kind of—to bring about that kind of peacefulness for people, tentatively, you know, we make some foundation. We will pick up a dust."

[Opens a page.]

Think about this "Genjō-kōan." It is actual fact, you know—[laughing] more than real, you know, kōan for us. We are exactly the same thing at Tassajara. We already picked up something. But when Zen master would make face [laughs]—knowing that, we dare—we have to pick up something here.

So again, it is good to fulfill your responsibility in Zen Center and to help Zen Center establish—to help establishing Zen Center, it is good, of course. But if you have slight idea of self in it, if you are involved in small selfish idea, then you cannot see Buddha—Buddha's face again. It is not vision [visible?] any more.

If you want to stay at Zen Center, you will sit—extend your practice with big mind, not small mind. You shouldn't have funny [any?] kind of self-centered idea because whatever you do, whether it is good or bad, what you will do with big mind is Buddha's activity, whether it is good or bad. But if you do it with small mind, that is delusion. That is not Buddha's activity any more. It is demon's activity [laughs], not Buddha's activity. It is [1-3 words unclear].

If you are trying to extend or trying to express your big mind in its true sense in your practice and help Zen Center, even [though] that is not the first principle, Buddha allow us to do it. And if the purpose of establishing something is [to be] ready to go forget all about Zen Center, then we do not need Zen Center—then people will not need Zen Center,

If you like Zen Center too much, you will usually involved in some—a kind of self-centered idea. To think about only to yourself is self-centered idea, of course; but to think about only Zen Center is a kind of small mind—even it is—even Zen Center is a dust—can be a dust—a small dust in comparison to big buddha-land. It is just a speck of dust. But if something [is] a speck of dust, like something like something as small as a speck of dust appears, we will be already dust [?].

As Dōgen-zenji says in his "Fukan-zazengi":⁶ "If your," you know, "if

⁶ Dōgen-zenji: "If there is a thousandth or a hundredth of a gap, the

your purpose of zazen miss the point going [gesturing?], you know, a little bit, you know, then the difference will be heaven and earth." Our zazen doesn't make any sense. Or in our mind, even the slightest taint [?] appears when you lose our way. It is—you will—they will be back. The point is what kind of interest you have in our Zen Center activity is the point. You should not seek [see?] intensively [?] something personal. But you should be ready to give up Zen Center when it is not necessary.

I don't think we can dream about such a peaceful time where is no need to have Buddha's teaching. I don't know when. But we should be ready to resign from Zen Center when, you know, you are not necessary. But, you know, I don't know [laughing] when I can say, you may resign from Zen Center. I cannot say [laughs] so easily. But each one of us should be ready for that.

That is—and we should not be proud of our faculties, or tactfulness, or, you know, bright smart mind, or your good practice. That is also enemy of Buddhism. You should not pursue Buddhist way for sake of fame or personal interest. We should not seek for some advantage in our everyday life. Usually, Buddha's teaching—actually, why we study Buddhism is to have enough courage to do something with it, to do something people will thank you for [preceding 5 words unclear]. Whether people like you [to] do something or not, if it is necessary to do, you should do it.

So it means you pick up some dust [laughs]. People may—even smallest piece of dust—dust is dust; people may not like it. But if it is—if you think it is necessary, you should do it. That is, you know, our spirit. And we do not do it because people admire you, because you will live good successful life in future. Knowing that what we are doing is not always necessary or not necessary forever. It—it is just tentative good means to help people. Knowing this, to make the best effort in our everyday life is actually Buddhist practice.

So the big mind is—you should extend—the way to extend our big mind is limitlessly big. Actually there is no limit. So we say we establish Buddha's way with defilement—in defilement. Whatever we do, it is delusion—delusion [tapping on lectern or table]. Knowing that this is delusion, to do something, to pick up a dust is bodhisattva's way and at the same time Buddhist way. So we do not expect anything in doing something, because we know what we are doing is not always necessary. Right now it is necessary, but tomorrow we don't know.

separation is as great as that between heaven and earth; and if a trace of disagreement arises, we lose the mind in confusion. "Fukan-zazengi (Rufubon)," in *Shōbōgenzō*, Nishijima and Cross, ed., 1994, p. 279.

We will be very happy if people do not want us [?] [laughs]. We will be very happy. That is real big mind. We wear robes. Why we wear robes, maybe, in short, to take off robes we wear robes. Unless you put on your robe, you have no time to take off [laughs]. If you do not wear robe from the beginning, that also does not make sense. You are not, you know—nothing to do with human life if you do not wear priest robe, Buddhist robe. We must have wear it as we must have pick up [taps], you know, a dust. Even it is dust you must pick up [taps]. So if it is Buddha's robe, you know, there is no reason why we do not wear it.

But Buddha's robe is formless robe. So any time you can take [it] off. When time come and all the sentient beings become buddha, then you can take off the robe. Then your robe makes sense. If you wear it in some idea to keep, you know, wearing it forever as it is, you know, Buddha's robe, that kind of idea doesn't make any sense.

Our practice look—looks like very rigid, very formal. But why we observe such a rigid, formal practice is to acquire the absolute freedom. Until we have great freedom for human beings and should continue our rigid practice. You may say it might be better not to [be] involved in [laughs] such a rigid practice, you know. "It is out of question," if you say so. "I have no time to discuss about Buddhism with such a people." They do not know the "Genjō-kōan," the kōan of our everyday life. They do not—do not know what is our life.

Day after day, moment after moment, we are creating bad karma. I have to accept it. Even [at] Tassajara we ate eggs—eggs, you know. It is living being. Eggs are not dead. Even though you eat grain, that is living being. You are killing them. But you have to eat it, knowing that it is not dead. Because of the big mind we have to do it. Because we do not—we choose big mind rather than small mind to discriminate: "This is good or bad." Whether we are following Buddha's precepts or not, that is, you know—small mind say—say so—but big mind will accept things as it is. If we have to, we will do anything. [*Sentence finished. Tape turned over.*] ... kōan.

So whatever it is, according to Dōgen-zenji, it is kōan—big kōan. And he carefully set up great kōan of reality, a great kōan of our life. He set up a great, you know, stage for human being. Whatever you do on the stage, that is a big story [?]-Buddha's act which will continue forever. And whatever it is, from Dōgen's viewpoint it makes sense. If you have good understanding of the great kōan, whatever you do it makes sense. But only when you are involved in small mind, it doesn't make sense. You cannot stay on the stage of the great kōan. You are not alive anymore. Just corpse is [laughs] moving; but real human being is not there. That is actually Dōgen-zenji's great kōan. [Folds up paper.]

So starting from the practice of big mind, the practice, you know, will —will be developed in our group activity, like Zen Center or like Buddha's sangha. And we will show the good example to the other group when we really follow Buddha's path and when we really—the meaning of life, meaning of what we are doing every day.

In short, we shouldn't be bothered by—we shouldn't be bothered by so much about: "This is good or bad"—the idea of this is good or bad. But we should—we should be concerned about your real practice, whether your practice is sincere practice or not, whether your practice is supported by big mind or not. This is the most important point.

And actually, if you have this kind of practice, your mind will have constant and peaceful. Because you are involved in small mind, sometime you will be discouraged; sometime you will be in ecstasy. After this ecstasy, discouragement will come. No calmness in it; no constancy in your practice. When you continue your practice with calmness of your mind, and with constant effort, appreciating, you know, the feeling of constancy, like, you know, like *tai chi* or big wave in the ocean goes up and down constantly, sometime high, sometime low. But it has good feeling. It is not like this [gestures?]. But sometime we like some—something [laughs] to go this way, and [laughs] we don't like to go immediately down, but to go this way is pretty good [laughs, laughter].

But we know that after some excitement, some discouragement will follow. So if you know how important it is to have big constant mind, and if you enjoy the constant effort you make, like a cow [laughs]. Even though I al- [partial word] am going to—to be killed, cow may go like this [gestures?] [laughs]. He doesn't afraid of anything. To the last moment he will continue [laughs] that kind of practice because he has big mind. That kind of mind will keep you always young and happy. If you are interested in something, you know, j- [partial word] some junky [?] life [laughs]—up and down, then you will be tired out and you will lose your spirit quite easily and you will become old.

So you shouldn't mind what will happen in the future so much. But we should worry about this moment—what you are doing. Whether you are happy or not happy is the most important point. If you are doing —if you are following right path, then the quality of your life doesn't different from the quality of Buddha's life. Of course, there is some difference in—in its bigness or in its loftiness [?] or in its maturity—there is difference; but the quality of the practice is the same. Like whether it is big or light, big or small—the flame is flame, you know, even though you may be small, you know; even though I feel cooler [?] in this way [laughter], flame is flame. Same quality. So our practice may not be so good, but the quality of the practice is the

same.

And we find we are supported by big mind only when we do not lose our way in small mind, small practice. That is actually Dōgen-zenji's "Genjō-kōan"—big scale—kōan of big scale where anything can be kōan and where everyone has great freedom from—from usual small activity.

That is again, you know, if I—so the goal of practice again is—again: Mountain is high and river is flowing—that is goal of practice. Where there is no teaching or teacher or sentient beings—that is the goal of practice. Where there is nothing to stick to [laughs, laughter]—you cannot do anything with it, you know, when we say soon [?] [laughs], even though you say "Stop it!" [?] [Microphone appears to have been knocked over. Entire sentence unclear. Parts of following sentences unclear also.] You cannot do anything. Even though you say "Don't!" [3-4 words] next year [2 words]" [laughs], don't do anything. That is the goal of our teaching—where there is no Buddhism and no Buddha.

So we say [2-3 words unclear] as they should, like this. But again, if you think without any training you will have that kind of life, that is great mistake. You do not know what you are doing. When you say you don't need Buddhism, then you are a great fool or you are very selfish person [laughs]. Don't you think so? Maybe, you know, great fool—to be a great fool is better than to be selfish person.

Even though Buddha say same thing, you know, but what Buddha meant and what you mean is—there is great difference—the difference between Buddha's word and your freedom. Don't know what to say—it is out of [beyond?] comparison. You say "freedom" and "nature," but you don't understand what is freedom and what is nature. You say "nature," but your understanding of nature is not true nature. It is something very unnatural nature [laughs], home-made nature [laughs], provided in your kitchen [laughs]. That is nature—looks like nature, but it is not truly nature.

True nature may be, you know, nature which will ignore—almost ignore all living sentient beings. Human being will be ignored, easily be ignored from big great nature. Whether we exist in this earth or not—it is not big problem. Maybe big problem if you realize what is nature; it is actually big problem. But someone who says, you know, whatever you do, that is to follow your nature, and that is freedom—then, with same way, you will be ignored from the sun, from various stars in the space. In the same way you will be ignored.

If you realize that you cannot be ignored from the universe even though you are small, then you realize who you are. And at the same time, you realize that because of some truth being supported by truth

you are—you are alive. As long as you are support by some truth you cannot be free. Should follow some truth.

Ahhh. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Source: City Center transcript entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997.
Verbatim transcript checked against tape by Jeffrey Schneider (8/20/99) and
Bill Redican (1/23/02).