

SUZUKI ROSHI LECTURE 62-00-00

This is one of the oldest Suzuki lectures we have, although it's obviously only a summary of the main point he made. This is on a theme he would return to up to his death. In the early years it is said (by Richard Baker?) he lectured on all hundred of the Blue Cliff Records. Most of these lectures we have no notes or tape on. The earliest tapes are from 1965. All these early lectures are from the earliest Wind Bells.

Corrected by Gordon Geist using the original Shaw translation.

BLUE CLIFF RECORD # 3: BASO'S "SUN-FACED BUDDHAS, MOON-FACED BUDDHAS."

Suzuki Roshi read first from R. D. M. Shaw's translation of BCR: the principal character in this Case is Baso Doitsu (Matsu Tao-i, 704-788), the chief disciple of Nangaku Ejo (Nanyueh Huai-rang), one of the disciples of the Chinese Sixth Patriarch, Daikan Eno (Huineng).

Introductory Word by Engo:

Introducing he said: One gesture! One posture! One word! One verse! Now, if one plans such an approach [in teaching disciple], that is like gouging out wounds in good meat, making holes and cavities in it. The Great Activity (1) is before us, manifest. There are no regulations in it. If you plan to make known to people that there is an Absolute, throughout the whole heaven and the whole earth the search for it will not succeed. Supposing one does attain, and what if one does not attain?—an extremely small matter. Supposing one does not attain, what if one does attain?—an extremely critical matter. And if you don't pass along either of these roads, what is the right thing to do? I tentatively put the matter before you. Ponder it.

Main Subject by Setcho:

Attention! Baso the great teacher was unwell. The temple's chief accountant visited him. "Sir, during these recent days, how is your health?" The great teacher said: "Sun-faced Buddha, Moon-faced Buddha." (2)

Commentary by Suzuki Roshi:

Although you are looking forward to the bliss of hearing the teaching, you do not know that you are always in the midst of the teaching, so your practice does not accord with your teacher's. Once you realize Buddha Nature within and without, there is no special way to follow for a student or any specific suggestion to give for a teacher. When there is a problem there is a way to go.

Actually, you continuously go over the great path of the Buddha with your teacher, who is always with you. Negative and positive methods, or the First Principle and the Second Principle (3), are nothing but the Great Activities of such a character. The Buddha Nature is quite personal to you, and essential to all existence.

Notes:

(1) Great activity. Zen may be said to be the practice of complete acceptance and cultivation of our mind, to make it deep and open enough to accept things as they are. When this perfect acceptance takes place, everything will be oriented by itself according to its own nature and the circumstances. We call this activity the Great Activity. The Great Activity has no regulations and

everything is beyond dimensions. The earth is not great nor a grain of sand small. In the realm of Great Activity picking up a grain of sand is the same as taking up the whole universe. To save one sentient being is to save all sentient beings. So nothing is too long, nothing is too small. And in whatever you do the true way is there. [from comments by Suzuki Roshi].

(2) Sun-faced Buddha, Moon-faced Buddha. The references are to a book called the Butsu Myoho--A Scripture of the Names of Buddha. The Scripture is in twelve volumes and contains the names of 11,093 Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. The "Sun-faced Buddha" lived for 1800 years. The "Moon-faced Buddha" lived for one day and one night.

Shaw's interpretation: Baso replied, "When we think about our human lives, there are, as you know, people who live long like that "Sun-faced Buddha" and there are people whose lives are short, like that "Moon-faced Buddha." It is useless to worry.

(3) First Principle: actual experience or direct intuition. Second Principle: learning or study.