

**Shunryū Suzuki-rōshi**  
**BLUE CLIFF RECORD, Case 3**  
**Baso's SUN-FACED BUDDHAS,**  
**MOON-FACED BUDDHAS**  
**[Date unknown; thought to be 1962]**

NOT VERBATIM

Introduction by Shaw<sup>1</sup>

The principal character in this model subject is Baso Dōitsu (Ma-tsu Tao-i) (704–768), the chief disciple of Nangaku Ejō (Nan-yueh Hai-jang), one of the disciples of the Chinese Sixth Patriarch, Daikan Enō (Hui-neng).

Introductory Word by Engo

Introducing, he said: One gesture, one posture. One word, one verse! Now, if one plans such an approach (in teaching disciples), that is like gouging out wounds in good meat, making holes and cavities in it. The Great Activity<sup>2</sup> is before us, manifest. There are no regulations in it.

If you plan to make known to men 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 do not 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 buddhas, moon-faced buddhas."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> R. D. M. Shaw, *The Blue Cliff Records: The Hekigan Roku*. London: Michael Joseph, 1961.

<sup>2</sup> Great Activity: Meaning "Great Use," the active aspect of the Real Way—its spiritual activity. See also Model Subject No. 20.

<sup>3</sup> Sun-faced Buddhas, Moon-faced Buddhas: The reference is to *Butsumyōhō* (*A Scripture on the Names of Buddha*), a scripture in twelve volumes that contains the names of 11,093 buddhas and bodhisattvas. Sun-faced buddhas live for 1800 years; moon-faced buddhas live for one day and one night.

[Shaw's interpretation:]

Commentary by Suzuki-rōshi

Although you are looking forward to the bliss of 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 the way to go.

Actually you continuously go over and 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, are nothing but the Great Activities of such a character. The buddha-nature is quite personal to you and essential to all existence.

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This transcript is a retyping of the existing City Center transcript (thought to be based on notes by Baker-rōshi). It is not verbatim. No tape is available. The City Center transcript was entered onto disk by Bill Redican (11/4/01).

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Baso replied: "When we think about our human lives, there are, as you know, people who live long, like those Sun-faced Buddhas, and there are people whose lives are short, like those Moon-faced Buddhas. It's useless to worry." *The Blue Cliff Records*, Shaw (ed.), p. 31.