

## On ‘The Mind Cannot Be Grasped’

(*Shin Fukatoku*)

### WRITTEN VERSION

**Translator’s Introduction:** This discourse was not incorporated into the *Shōbōgenzō* until some time after Dōgen’s death. It is likely that he intended the work for his senior monks, since it contains some cautionary remarks about well-known Chinese Meditation Masters that might be misunderstood by novices or lay disciples. These remarks were made as part of a traditional style of Buddhist debate which is undertaken, not as a form of one-upmanship, but as a form of dialectic intended to ferret out the deepest possible Truth. Dōgen’s point in refuting these Masters is not that what they said was incorrect, but simply that they did not go far enough in their exploration of the Matter.

*At Kannondōri in Kōshōhōrin-ji Temple*

The Mind that cannot be grasped is what all Buddhas are, for They personally rely upon It as supreme, fully perfected enlightenment. As the *Diamond-Cutting Scripture* says, “The mind of the past cannot be retained; the mind of the present cannot be held onto; the mind of the future cannot be grasped.” This expression points to the Buddha’s reliance upon the Mind that cannot be held onto, which is what all Buddhas do. It is what They have come to rely upon, saying that It is the unretainable mind of past, present, and future, and that It is the ungraspable Mind of all thoughts and things. If you do not learn from the Buddhas what They are relying upon, which is what makes this matter clear, you will not directly experience It, and if you do not learn from the Ancestors what They are relying upon, you will not be truly Transmitted. ‘To learn’ means ‘to learn from the sixteen-foot-tall body’ and ‘to learn from a single blade of grass’.<sup>1</sup> ‘Learning from the Ancestors’ means ‘to learn from Their Skin and Flesh, Bones and Marrow’ and ‘to learn from the face that broke into a broad smile’.<sup>2</sup> What all this fundamentally

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1. The first allusion is to learning from the Buddha’s standing up from His meditation posture after having realized enlightenment. The second is to learning from all things, no matter how small, since all things express the Dharma.
  2. The first phrase alludes to Bodhidharma’s passing on of the Dharma. The second alludes to the Buddha’s disciple Makakashō smiling in response to the Buddha’s holding aloft the udumbara blossom of His enlightenment.

means is that you should study the Matter\* by seeking answers to your questions from a Master to whom the Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching has been clearly and correctly Transmitted. This Master has had directly passed on to him what the Mind seal\* of Buddha after Buddha and Ancestor after Ancestor has directly and precisely pointed out. Then, beyond question, that Master's Bones and Marrow, Face and Eyes will be passed on to you, and you will receive the Master's Body, Hair, and Skin. If you do not learn the Way of the Buddhas and do not enter the private quarters of an Ancestor, you will not see or hear about It, nor will you understand It. The method for asking about It will be beyond you, and you will not understand the means for expressing It, even in your dreams.



When Tokusan, in his earlier days, was still not a solid fellow, he had excelled in the *Diamond-Cutting Scripture*. People at that time called him Chou, the Fully Perfected Lord of the *Diamond-Cutting Scripture*. He was king among more than eight hundred scholars. Not only was he well versed in the commentaries, particularly those by the Chinese scholar Ch'ing-lung, but he had also edited a ton of writings, and there was no lecturer who could stand shoulder-to-shoulder with him. When he happened to hear that there was an unsurpassed Buddhist Teaching in the South, a Teaching that was being passed on from successor to successor, he went there, crossing mountains and rivers, loaded down with his own manuscripts. He had stopped to catch his breath by the side of the road that led to Master Ryūtan's temple, when an old woman came by. Tokusan asked her who she was.

The old woman replied, "I am an old woman who sells rice cakes."

Tokusan asked her, "Will you sell me some rice cakes?"

The old woman said, "Reverend monk, why would you want to buy them?"

Tokusan replied, "I would buy your rice cakes so that I might refresh my mind."

The old woman remarked, "Reverend monk, that load you're carrying with you is really something!"

Tokusan replied, "Have you not heard of me? I am the Fully Perfected Lord of the *Diamond-Cutting Scripture*. I have so mastered this Scripture that there is nothing in It that I do not understand. What

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\* See *Glossary*.

I am carrying with me are my commentaries on the *Diamond-Cutting Scripture*.”

Upon hearing him say this, the old woman asked, “Reverend monk, would you permit an old woman like me to put a question to you?”

Tokusan replied, “Yes, ask whatever you may wish.”

She said, “I once heard the part in the *Diamond-Cutting Scripture* where it says, ‘The mind of the past cannot be held onto; the mind of the present cannot be held onto; the mind of the future cannot be held onto.’ Which mind do you think you are going to refresh with these rice cakes? If the reverend monk is able to say, I will sell him some rice cakes. If the reverend monk is unable to say, I will not sell him any rice cakes.”

Tokusan, at this moment, was so flabbergasted that he could not recall how he would have customarily responded, whereupon the old woman dismissed him with a flick of her wrist and left without selling Tokusan any of her rice cakes.

How regrettable that a commentator on hundreds of documents, one who had been a lecturer for decades, was seen through by a poor old woman posing one measly question. It is like the vast difference between someone having a true teacher and someone not having one, between someone seeking answers to one’s questions in the private quarters of a true teacher and someone not entering the private quarters of a true teacher. There are people who, upon hearing the phrase ‘cannot be grasped’, have simply assumed that there is nothing to be attained in either case, for these people lack the living pathway of practice. Further, there are those who say that It cannot be grasped because it is said that we already possess It from the first. How does that hit the mark?

It was on this occasion that Tokusan understood for the first time that a rice cake in a picture does not slake one’s hunger. He also realized that, in training and practicing in the Way of the Buddhas, one by all means needs to meet ‘such a person’.\* In addition, he realized that someone who is uselessly caught up only in commenting on the Scriptures cannot attain true spiritual strength. Ultimately, he trained under Ryūtan, and after the path of Master and disciple manifested before his very eyes, he unquestionably became ‘such a person’. Nowadays, he is recognized not only as an Ancestral predecessor of Ummon and Hōgen, but also as a teacher and guide both of ordinary people and of those in loftier positions.



When we consider this narrative today, we can see that Tokusan, long ago, had not yet clarified the Matter. Although nowadays we say that the old woman had succeeded in shutting up Tokusan's mouth, it is difficult to establish whether she was, in fact, 'such a person'. We may conjecture that, having heard the phrase 'the mind cannot be grasped' much earlier, she may have simply thought that the mind was something that could not be possessed, and therefore asked him about it in the way that she did. If Tokusan had been a solid person, he would have had the spiritual strength to be prudent in his responses. Had he been prudent, he would have been able to discern whether the old woman was 'such a person', but, since it was at a time when Tokusan was not yet the awakened 'Tokusan', he was not yet able to recognize whether the old woman was indeed 'such a person'.

What is more, we today are not short of reasons for having doubts about the old woman. When Tokusan was unable to speak, why didn't the old woman question him further? She could have said, "You, my reverend monk, are unable to respond now, so you should go ahead and put the question to this old woman, and I, in response, will say something for the reverend monk's benefit." Then, upon hearing her own question from Tokusan, if she had some response for him, it would be evident whether or not the old woman had the ability to speak true.

In this way, someone who has the Bones and Marrow, Face and Eye of those who trained in the past, as well as the radiance and vivacity of the old Buddhas—all of which are due to having the wherewithal from doing the same spiritual practice as They did—will not be concerned about either holding onto or letting go of such notions as 'Tokusan', 'the old woman', 'not being able to grasp', 'being able to grasp', 'rice cakes', or 'Mind'.



What we call 'Buddha Mind' is synonymous with the three temporal worlds of past, present, and future. This Mind and the three temporal worlds are not separated from each other by so much as one single hair's breadth. Even so, when we are discussing the two as things that are distinct and separate from each other, then they are farther apart than eighteen thousand breadths of hair. Thus, if I were asked what the phrase "This is the mind of the past" means, I would have to say in response, "This cannot be grasped." If I were asked what the phrase "This is the mind of the present" means, I would have to say in response, "This cannot be grasped." If I were asked what the phrase "This is the mind of the future" means, I would say in response, "This cannot be grasped."

As to the mind of which I am speaking, if I say that there is Mind, which at the present moment is described as 'Mind that cannot be grasped,' then I say, "At the present moment, It cannot be grasped." I do not say, "The mind cannot be grasped," I say in all earnestness, "It cannot be grasped." I do not say, "The mind can be grasped," I say in all earnestness, "It cannot be grasped." Further, should you ask me, "What is the mind of the past which cannot be grasped?" I would say, "It is synonymous with being born and dying, going and coming." Should you ask, "What is the mind of the present which cannot be grasped?" I would say, "It is synonymous with being born and dying, going and coming." Should you ask, "What is the mind of the future which cannot be grasped?" I would say, "It is synonymous with being born and dying, going and coming."

In sum, there is Buddha Mind, which is the fences and walls, tiles\* and stones, and all the Buddhas in the three temporal worlds directly experience It as something that cannot be held onto. There are only the fences and walls, tiles and stones, which are Buddha Mind, and all Buddhas directly experience It in the three temporal worlds as ungraspable. What is more, That which is ungraspable within the great earth with its mountains and rivers exists there by Its very nature. That which is ungraspable in grasses and trees, wind and water, accordingly, is Mind. Also, It is what is ungraspable in "Letting our mind abide nowhere and giving rise to the Mind."<sup>3</sup> And also, the Mind Beyond Grasping, which gives voice to the eighty thousand Gates by means of all the Buddhas throughout all generations everywhere, is the same as this.



To cite another example, during the time of National Teacher Echū, Tripitaka Master Daini arrived at the capital from far-off India, letting it be known publicly that he had the ability to read the minds of others.<sup>4</sup> When the T'ang Emperor Su-tsung charged the National Teacher to examine this claim, no sooner had the Tripitaka Master laid eyes on the National Teacher than he immediately made a full prostration before the National Teacher and then stood to his right.<sup>5</sup>

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3. This quotation is the line from the *Diamond-Cutting Scripture* which triggered Enō's realization of Truth before he left lay life.
  4. 'National Teacher' is a Chinese imperial title conferred upon a monk whose devotion to spiritual life has been exemplary. Echū served as the emperor's personal spiritual advisor. 'Tripitaka Master' is a secular title which might be comparable to the present-day 'professor of Buddhology'; it does not imply that the person was necessarily a monk or even a practicing Buddhist. The *Tripitaka* is the general name for the canon of Buddhist Scriptures.
  5. That is, in the position that is least confrontational.

Thereupon, the National Teacher asked him, “Do you have the ability to read the minds of others or not?”

The Tripitaka Master replied in a humble tone, “I would not dare to make such a claim.”

The National Teacher then said, “Speak! In what place is this old monk now?”

The Tripitaka Master responded, again with a humble tone, “The reverend monk is indeed the teacher of this nation, so why does he go to the Western River and watch people racing around in their boats?”<sup>6</sup>

After a rather long time, the National Teacher asked him again, “Speak! In what place is this old monk now?”

The Tripitaka Master replied all humbly, “The reverend monk is the teacher of this nation, so why does he go to Tientsin Bridge and watch people playing with their pet monkeys?”<sup>7</sup>

The National Teacher again asked, “Speak! In what place is this old monk now?”

Although the Tripitaka Master remained there quite a long time, he did not know what to say.

The National Teacher rebuked him, saying, “O you wild fox spirit, where is your ability to read minds now?”

The Tripitaka Master still had no response.<sup>8</sup>

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6. ‘The Western River’ flows through the Western Paradise. The Tripitaka Master is saying, in effect, “Why do you, who are so saintly that you are already in the Western Paradise, bother to pay any attention to us ordinary people who are engaged in worldly, competitive pursuits?”
  7. While Tientsin is the name of a major Chinese metropolis, ‘Tientsin Bridge’ literally means ‘the bridge that leads into the Harbor of Heaven’. The Tripitaka Master is saying in effect, “Why do you, who are standing on the very bridge of Heaven, concern yourself with us worldly people who are preoccupied with playing around with our everyday minds?” Both this and the previous statement are offering seemingly flattering but spiritually meaningless remarks in response to the National Teacher’s deeply spiritual question, all the while still hinting that he could, indeed, read the minds of others.
  8. Evidently, the Tripitaka Master realized that what he was being asked for required something beyond ‘parlor Zen’ responses, but because he did not know what the True Mind of the National Teacher was, he was unable to reply. ‘A wild fox spirit’ is a term used negatively in Zen Buddhism for a clever and manipulative person who gives teachings that are false and misleading.

Not to know about such matters is bad enough, but not to have heard about them, what a pity! The Ancestors of the Buddha and those who are academic scholars of the *Tripitaka* are not equal; they are as different as heaven and earth. The Ancestors of the Buddha, having clarified what the Buddha Dharma is, are in That Place; academic scholars of the *Tripitaka* have not yet clarified what It is. Truly, when it comes to scholars of the *Tripitaka*, even ordinary people have been scholars of the *Tripitaka*. They are comparable, for instance, to those who seek for position in the literary world. So, even though the Tripitaka Master may have had a broad comprehension of the languages of India and China, as well as having been trained in reading the minds of others, nevertheless, when it came to 'Body and Mind in the Way of the Buddhas', he had never seen a thing even in his dreams.<sup>9</sup> As a result, in his interview with the National Teacher, who had directly experienced the level of the Ancestors of the Buddha, the Tripitaka Master was seen through. In learning what 'Mind in the Way of the Buddhas' means, we need to know that the myriad thoughts and things are Mind, and the three worlds of desire, form, and beyond form are nothing but Mind. It will be a matter of nothing but Mind being nothing but Mind: it will be a matter of this Buddha being your very mind. Be there a self, be there an other, neither must be mistaken for the 'Mind in the Way of the Buddhas'. Do not vainly drift down the Western River; do not stroll about on Tientsin Bridge. Whoever would preserve and accept responsibility for 'Body and Mind in the Way of the Buddhas' needs to learn how to function from the spiritually wise discernment of the Buddha's Way.

What we call 'in the Way of the Buddhas' means that the whole world is Mind, without Its being changed by anything that arises or disappears. And it means that the whole of the Dharma is Mind. And we also need to experience the whole of Mind as the functioning of spiritually wise discernment. The Tripitaka Master had not seen this before, for he was simply a wild fox spirit. So, even the first two times that the National Teacher said to him, "Speak!" he had not seen the Mind of the National Teacher, for he had not penetrated to the Mind of the National Teacher. He was a wild fox cub who was idly playing around with the Western River and Tientsin Bridge, with boat races and monkeys, so how could he possibly have seen the National Teacher?

Further, the reason is quite clear why he could not see the place where the National Teacher was. When asked three times, "In what place is this old monk now?" he did not listen to these words. If he had listened, he would have been able to answer, but, since he did not listen, he overlooked it. Had the Tripitaka Master

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9. The phrase 'Body and Mind in the Way of the Buddhas' can be understood as a reference to the True Nature of Body and Mind as seen from the perspective of an enlightened mind.

directly experienced the Buddha Dharma by doing his training, he would have understood what the National Teacher was saying, and he would have seen the Body and Mind of the National Teacher. Because he had not directly experienced the Buddha Dharma through undertaking spiritual training in daily life, he had let a chance to hear It vainly slip by, even though it might be said that he had been born to meet one who was a teacher and guide both of ordinary people and of those in loftier positions. How sad and pitiful!

Speaking in general, how could a worldly scholar of the *Tripitaka* possibly match the everyday practice of the Buddhas and Ancestors, or recognize the whereabouts of the National Teacher? And what is more, Indian academic students of the *Tripitaka* could never recognize the everyday practice of the National Teacher.<sup>10</sup> But any academic teacher or arrogant scholar could surely understand what the Tripitaka Master knew. How could what pedestrian teachers or arrogant scholars know possibly match the powers of wise discernment of bodhisattvas\* about to realize Buddhahood, or even of those ‘thrice wise and ten times saintly’?\* The Body and Mind of the National Teacher cannot be recognized by an arrogant scholar. Indeed, It is not yet clearly comprehended even by bodhisattvas about to realize Buddhahood.

Comments about Body and Mind in our various Buddhist traditions are like those in the following discussions. You need to understand them and trust in them, for the Dharma of our great teacher, the Venerable Shakyamuni, has never been like the teachings of the wild foxes following the Lesser Two Courses\* or non-Buddhist ways. This is why, from olden times, this one story has been thoroughly examined by venerable Masters in various generations.



There was a monk who once asked Jōshū, “Why didn’t the Tripitaka Master see where the National Teacher was the third time?” Jōshū replied, “He did not see where the National Teacher was because he was right on the tip of the Tripitaka Master’s nose.”

Also, there was a monk who once asked Gensha Shibi, “Since the National Teacher was already right on the tip of the Tripitaka Master’s nose, why didn’t he see it?” Shibi replied, “Simply because he was just too close.”

Kaie Shutan once commented on Shibi’s reply, “If the National Teacher was right on the tip of the Tripitaka Master’s nose, why was

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10. Namely, his practice of devoting himself to helping all sentient beings realize the Truth.

he having such difficulty seeing it? After all, he did not recognize that the National Teacher was right inside the Tripitaka Master's Eye."

Also, Shibi, as if challenging the Tripitaka Master, once remarked, "You, say! Did you even see It the first two times?"

Setchō Jūken later commented on that remark, "Seen through the first time! Seen through the second time!"

Also, there was a monk who once asked Kyōzan, "Why didn't the Tripitaka Master see the whereabouts of the National Teacher the third time, since he was there a rather long time?" Kyōzan replied, "The first two times, the National Teacher's mind was in the realm of externals. He then entered the meditative state of delight in the True Self, so the Tripitaka Master could not perceive his whereabouts."

Although these five venerable Masters were all clearly on the mark, they overlooked the National Teacher's everyday practice. That is, they only discuss the Tripitaka Master's failure to know the third time, so it looks as though they were conceding that he knew the previous two times. So, this is something that these former worthies have overlooked.

The concerns that I now have about these five venerable Masters are twofold. The first is that they do not recognize the intent behind the National Teacher's way of examining the Tripitaka Master. The second is that they do not recognize the National Teacher's Body and Mind.

First of all, as to my saying that they apparently did not recognize the intent behind the National Teacher's way of examining the Tripitaka Master, there is the question of what the National Teacher intended when he exclaimed, "Speak! In what place is this old monk now?" At the time, he was inquiring into whether or not the Tripitaka Master understood the Buddha Dharma. If the Tripitaka Master had ever heard the Buddha Dharma, he would have been able to see how the words he heard as "In what place is this old monk now?" conformed to the Buddha Dharma. As to being in conformance with the Buddha Dharma, the National Teacher's saying, "In what place is this old monk now?" is asking, in effect, "Is It here? Or is It there? Is It unsurpassed enlightenment? Or is It the wisdom that ferries others to the Other Shore? Is It dependent on unbounded space? Or is It standing on solid ground? Is It the hermit's grass hut? Or is It the Treasure House?" The Tripitaka Master did not recognize this intent, so he proffered the opinion of, say, an ordinary person who wanders through life in ignorance or one who follows the two Lesser Courses. The National Teacher again asked, "Speak! In what place is this old monk now?" Hereupon, the Tripitaka Master again proffered idle words. Again the National Teacher asked, "Speak! In what place is

this old monk now?” The Tripitaka Master now said nothing, though a considerable time passed. His mind was blank. The National Teacher then rebuked him, saying, “O you wild fox spirit, where is your ability to read minds now?” Upon the National Teacher’s speaking in this way, the Tripitaka Master still had nothing to say.

When we consider this story carefully, the former worthy Masters all held the view that the National Teacher was rebuking the Tripitaka Master because, even though he had known the National Teacher’s whereabouts the first two times, he did not know it the third time. But this is not the case. In brief, he rebuked the Tripitaka Master for being merely a wild fox spirit, someone who had not encountered the Buddha Dharma even in his dreams. He did not say that the Tripitaka Master did or did not know it the first two times. His rebuke was intended for the Tripitaka Master in general. As to the National Teacher’s intent, he was wondering in the first place whether one could call the Buddha Dharma the ability to read the minds of others. Further, the National Teacher was thinking that, even though one may speak of the ability to read the mind of another, one would need to understand ‘other’, ‘mind’, and ‘the ability to read’ according to the Way of the Buddhas. But what the Tripitaka Master was saying was not in accord with the Way of the Buddhas, so how could it possibly be called the Buddha Dharma?” As to his examining the Tripitaka Master, even if the latter were to have said something the third time, if it was anything like the first two times, it would not reflect the principles of Buddha Dharma or the National Teacher’s intent—which is why the National Teacher needed to rebuke him. As to the National Teacher’s asking three times, he asked again and again in order to find out whether, at any time, his words were understood by the Tripitaka Master.

Second, as to my saying that the five worthy Masters did not recognize the Body and Mind of the National Teacher, the Body and Mind of the National Teacher was beyond the Tripitaka Master’s ability to recognize, beyond his ability to read. The ten times saintly and thrice wise are not up to it, and it is beyond both those who are about to become Buddhas and those who have just awakened, so how could an ordinary Tripitaka Master possibly recognize it?<sup>11</sup> You must determine what this principle is so that you have no doubts about it. Anyone who would hold that the Tripitaka Master could recognize what the Body and Mind of the National Teacher was—and be a match for it—is, accordingly, someone who does not in the least recognize the Body and Mind of the National Teacher. If you were to say that those folks who pursue the ability to read the minds of others can

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11. ‘Those who have just awakened’ is a rendering of a technical Buddhist term for someone who has just had a kenshō but does not recognize the full import of that experience.

recognize the Body and Mind of the National Teacher, then can those of the two Lesser Courses also recognize it? Because this is not so, people involved in the two Lesser Courses cannot possibly reach even the environs of the National Teacher. Nowadays, there are many in the two Lesser Courses who read the Mahayana\* Scriptures, but they too cannot recognize the Body and Mind of the National Teacher, and, furthermore, they cannot see the Body and Mind of Buddha Dharma even in their dreams. Although they may imitate those who read and recite the Mahayana Scriptures, you must clearly recognize that they are, through and through, persons of the Lesser Courses. In short, the Body and Mind of the National Teacher is beyond anything that can be recognized by those folks who chase after spiritual abilities or who practice in order to have 'a spiritual experience'. The Body and Mind of the National Teacher might be difficult even for the National Teacher himself to gauge or fathom. And why is that? His everyday practice had long been free of any designs to 'become a Buddha', so even the Eye of a Buddha could not spot it. In his everyday comings and goings, he had clearly let go of his cobwebs and dark places, and was beyond anything that a cage could imprison or a net ensnare.



We can now look at what each of the five worthy Masters was getting at.

Jōshū said, "He did not see where the National Teacher was because he was right on the tip of the Tripitaka Master's nose." What does this remark mean? Errors are likely to occur when we state a conclusion without making clear its source. How could the National Teacher possibly be right on the tip of the Tripitaka Master's nose? The Tripitaka Master had not yet recognized that he had a Nose.<sup>12</sup> Further, even though it would appear that the National Teacher and the Tripitaka Master had a connection that would allow them to 'see each other', there was no pathway near enough on which they could approach each other. Those who are clear-eyed will surely be able to discern this.

Shibi said, "Simply because he was just too close." Truly, his being 'just too close' may well have been the case, but the phrase misses the point. What is it that he is calling 'just too close'? What does he understand as being 'just too close'? Shibi had not yet recognized the Tripitaka Master's being 'just too close', nor had Shibi thoroughly examined his being 'just too close'. For, when it comes to Buddha Dharma, the Tripitaka Master was the farthest of the far off.

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12. That is, the Tripitaka Master had not yet seen his Buddha Nature, which is as immediate as if it were on the tip of the nose.

Kyōzan replied, “The first two times, the National Teacher’s mind was in the realm of externals. He then entered the meditative state of delight in the True Self, so the Tripitaka Master could not perceive his whereabouts.” In India, Kyōzan would have been acclaimed far and wide as a veritable ‘Little Shakyamuni’ for this reply, but his remark is not entirely accurate. If he is saying that the place of their meeting each other face-to-face was, indeed, in the realm of externals, this is tantamount to asserting that the place where Buddhas and Ancestors meet each other face-to-face does not exist. That assertion would make it look as if Kyōzan had not learned the spiritual merits of realizing Buddhahood as the Buddha predicted. Kyōzan is saying that the first two times the Tripitaka Master truly knew the whereabouts of the National Teacher; he should have said that the Tripitaka Master did not recognize even a single hair of the spiritual merits of the National Teacher.

Shibi, in challenging the Tripitaka Master, remarked, “Did you even see It the first two times?” Though his phrase, “Did you even see It?” seems to say what needs to be said, it does imply that what the Tripitaka Master saw resembled That which goes beyond seeing. Therefore, it is not right on the mark.

Hearing of this remark, Clearly Enlightened Meditation Master Setchō commented, “Seen through the first time! Seen through the second time!” When Setchō took what Shibi said to be the correct way to put it, he could quite rightly speak like this. But had he recognized that it was not the correct way to put it, he would not have spoken as he did.

Kaie Shutan said, “If the National Teacher was right on the tip of the Tripitaka Master’s nose, why was he having such difficulty seeing it? After all, he did not recognize that the National Teacher was right inside the Tripitaka Master’s Eye.” This, too, is discussing only the third time. In that Shutan is not looking at the first two times, he is not rebuking the Tripitaka Master for the right reason. So, even though the National Teacher was on the tip of the Tripitaka Master’s nose and within his very eyeballs, how would Shutan know it?

Every one of these five worthy Masters was blind to what the National Teacher had spiritually achieved; their diligent efforts to practice the Buddha Dharma seem not to have approached his. You need to realize that the National Teacher was none other than a first generation Buddha, for he had clearly had Transmitted to him the Buddha’s Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching. Moreover, people such as Lesser Course academic commentators on the *Tripitaka* do not recognize the whereabouts of the National Teacher, and this story that we have been discussing is the proof. What those in the Lesser Course call ‘the ability to read the mind of another’ should be called ‘the ability to read the intention of another’. It is a mistake to imagine that the ability of a Tripitaka Master of the

Lesser Course to read the minds of others is strong enough for such a one to recognize a single hair, or even a half a hair, of the National Teacher. One thing to earnestly learn from this is that a Tripitaka Master of the Lesser Course is totally unable to see where the spiritual accomplishments of the National Teacher are located. If, for example, the Tripitaka Master knew the whereabouts of the National Teacher the first two times but did not know it the third time, this would have been two times out of three, and he ought not to have been rebuked. But, even if he were rebuked, it would not have been for a total lack of ability. Had he been rebuked for this, who would have any confidence in the National Teacher? The National Teacher's intention was to rebuke the Tripitaka Master for being altogether lacking in the Body and Mind of the Buddha Dharma. In that the five worthy Masters did not at all understand the everyday practice of the National Teacher, they are, to that extent, similarly inaccurate. For this reason I have now let you hear about 'the mind not being able to grasp It' in the Way of the Buddhas. Although it may be hard for you to believe that people who are unable to thoroughly understand this one aspect of the Teaching are apt to understand all the rest of the Teaching, you need to realize that ancient Ancestors may also make mistakes and compound them, as in this case.



A monk once asked the National Teacher, "Just what is the mind of the past Buddhas?"

The National Teacher replied, "Fences and walls, along with their tiles and stones."

This is also 'the mind cannot be grabbed hold of'.

Another time, a monk asked the National Teacher, "Just what is the constant mind of all Buddhas?"

The National Teacher replied, "How fortunate that you have bumped into this old monk on his way to pay a visit to the emperor's palace!"

This also thoroughly explores 'the Mind that cannot be grasped'.

On another occasion, a veritable Lord Indra asked the National Teacher, "How can we possibly get free of the effects of karma?"\*

The National Teacher replied, "O Heavenly One, you can free yourself from the effects of karma by training in the Way."

This Lord Indra then asked, "What could this 'way' you speak of possibly be?"

The National Teacher responded, “Your mind at this very moment is the Way.”

The Lord Indra then asked, “And what is this mind of mine at this very moment?”

The National Teacher, pointing with his finger, said, “It is the very pedestal of enlightenment: It is the very net of pearls.”

The Lord Indra bowed in respect.

In sum, you will often meet with talk about ‘Body and Mind in the Way of the Buddhas’ in the assemblies of Buddha after Buddha and Ancestor after Ancestor. When we learn of both Body and Mind together, through our training, They are beyond what ordinary people, as well as the wise and the saintly, imagine or perceive Them to be. “The Mind cannot be held onto” is to be thoroughly examined through your practice.

*A day during the summer retreat in the second year of the Ninji era (1241).*