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## THE TIME BEING

**A**N ANCIENT BUDDHA [Yaoshan] said:

For the time being, stand on top of the highest peak.

For the time being, proceed along the bottom of the deepest ocean.

For the time being, three heads and eight arms [of a fighting demon].

For the time being, an eight- or sixteen-foot body [of the Buddha].

For the time being, a staff or whisk.

For the time being, a pillar or lantern.

For the time being, the children of [common families] Zhang and Li.

For the time being, the earth and sky.

*For the time being* here means time itself is being, and all being is time. A golden sixteen-foot body is time; because it is time, there is the radiant illumination of time. Study it as the twelve hours of the present. *Three heads and eight arms* is time; because it is time, it is not separate from the twelve hours of the present.

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Even though you do not measure the hours of the day as long or short, far or near, you still call it twelve hours. Because the signs of time's coming and going are obvious, people do not doubt it. Although they do not doubt it, they do not understand it. Or, when sentient beings doubt what they do not understand, their doubt is not

firmly fixed. Because of that, their past doubts do not necessarily coincide with the present doubt. Yet, doubt itself is nothing but time.

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The way the self arrays itself is the form of the entire world. See each thing in this entire world as a moment of time.

Things do not hinder one another, just as moments do not hinder one another. The way-seeking mind arises in this moment. A way-seeking moment arises in this mind. It is the same with practice and with attaining the way.

Thus, the self setting itself out in array sees itself. This is the understanding that the self is time.

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Know that in this way there are myriads of forms and hundreds of grasses [all things] throughout the entire earth, and yet each grass and each form itself is the entire earth. The study of this is the beginning of practice.

When you are at this place, there is just one grass, there is just one form; there is understanding of form and beyond understanding of form; there is understanding of grass and beyond understanding of grass. Since there is nothing but just this moment, the time being is all the time there is. Grass being, form being, are both time.

Each moment is all being, each moment is the entire world. Reflect now whether any being or any world is left out of the present moment.

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Yet, an ordinary person who does not understand buddha dharma may hear the words *time being* this way: "For a while I was three heads and eight arms. For a while I was an eight- or sixteen-foot body. This is like having crossed over rivers and climbed mountains. Even though the mountains and rivers still exist, I have already passed them and now reside in the jeweled palace and vermilion tower. Those mountains and rivers are as distant from me as heaven is from earth."

It is not that simple. At the time the mountains were climbed and the rivers were crossed, you were present. Time is not separate from

you, and as you are present, time does not go away.

As time is not marked by coming and going, the moment you climbed the mountains is the time being right now. If time keeps coming and going, you are the time being right now. This is the meaning of the time being.

Does this time being not swallow up the moment when you climbed the mountains and the moment when you resided in the jeweled palace and vermilion tower? Does it not spit them out?

Three heads and eight arms may be yesterday's time. An eight- or sixteen-foot body may be today's time. Yet, yesterday and today are both in the moment when you directly enter the mountains and see myriad peaks. Yesterday's time and today's time do not go away.

Three heads and eight arms move forward as your time being. It looks as if they are far away, but they are here and now. The eight- or sixteen-foot body moves forward as your time being. It looks as if it is nearby, but it is exactly here. Thus, a pine tree is time, bamboo is time.

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Do not think that time merely flies away. Do not see flying away as the only function of time. If time merely flies away, you would be separated from time. The reason you do not clearly understand the time being is that you think of time only as passing.

In essence, all things in the entire world are linked with one another as moments. Because all moments are the time being, they are your time being.

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The time being has a characteristic of flowing. So-called today flows into tomorrow, today flows into yesterday, yesterday flows into today. And today flows into today, tomorrow flows into tomorrow.

Because flowing is a characteristic of time, moments of past and present do not overlap or line up side by side. [Zen master] Qingyuan is time, Huangbo is time, Mazu is time, Shitou is time, because self and other are already time. Practice-enlightenment is time. Being splattered with mud and getting wet with water [to awaken others] is also time.

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Although the views of an ordinary person and the causes and conditions of those views are what the ordinary person sees, they are not necessarily the ordinary person's reality. The reality merely manifests itself for the time being as an ordinary person. Because you think your time or your being is not reality, you believe that the sixteen-foot golden body is not you.

However, your attempts to escape from being the sixteen-foot golden body are nothing but bits and pieces of the time being. Those who have not yet confirmed this should look into it deeply. The hours of Horse and Sheep, which are arrayed in the world now, are actualized by ascendings and descendings of the time being at each moment. The rat is time, the tiger is time, sentient beings are time, buddhas are time.

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At this moment, you enlighten the entire world with three heads and eight arms; you enlighten the entire world with the sixteen-foot golden body. To fully actualize the entire world with the entire world is called thorough practice.

To fully actualize the golden body with the golden body—to arouse the way-seeking mind, practice, attain enlightenment, and enter nirvana—is nothing but being, nothing but time.

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Just actualize all time as all being; there is nothing extra. An “extra being” is thoroughly an extra being. Thus, the time being half-actualized is half of the time being completely actualized, and a moment that seems to be missed is also completely being. In the same way, even the moment before or after the moment that appears to be missed is also the time being complete in itself. Vigorously abiding in each moment is the time being. Do not mistakenly confuse it as nonbeing. Do not forcefully assert it as being.

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You may suppose that time is only passing away, and not understand that time never arrives. Although understanding itself is

time, understanding does not depend on its own arrival.

People only see time's coming and going, and do not thoroughly understand that the time being abides in each moment. Then, when can they penetrate the barrier? Even if people recognized the time being in each moment, who could give expression to this recognition? Even if they could give expression to this recognition for a long time, who could stop looking for the realization of the original face? According to an ordinary person's view of the time being, even enlightenment and nirvana as the time being would be merely aspects of coming and going.

The time being is entirely actualized without being caught up in nets or cages. Deva kings and heavenly beings appearing right and left are the time being of your complete effort right now. The time being of all beings throughout the world in water and on land just actualizes your complete effort right now. All beings of all kinds in the visible and invisible realms are the time being actualized by your complete effort, flowing due to your complete effort.

Closely examine this flowing; without your complete effort right now, nothing would be actualized, nothing would flow.

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Do not think flowing is like wind and rain moving from east to west. The entire world is not unchangeable, not immovable. It flows. Flowing is like spring. Spring with all its numerous aspects is called flowing. When spring flows, there is nothing outside of spring. Study this in detail.

Spring always flows through spring. Although flowing itself is not spring, flowing occurs throughout spring. Thus, flowing is complete at just this moment of spring. Examine this thoroughly, coming and going.

In your study of flowing, if you imagine the objective to be outside yourself and that you flow and move through hundreds and thousands of worlds, for hundreds, thousands, and myriad of eons, you have not devotedly studied the buddha way.

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Yaoshan, who would later become Great Master Hongdao, instructed by Shitou, Great Master Wuji, once went to study with Mazu, Zen Master Daji of Jiangxi.

Yaoshan asked, "I am familiar with the teaching of the Three Vehicles and Twelve Divisions of scripture. But what is the meaning of Bodhidharma's coming from India?"

Mazu replied:

For the time being, have him raise his eyebrows and blink.

For the time being, do not have him raise his eyebrows and blink.

For the time being, to have him raise his eyebrows and blink is right.

For the time being, to have him raise his eyebrows and blink is not right.

Hearing these words, Yaoshan experienced great enlightenment and said to Mazu, "When I was studying with Shitou, it was like a mosquito trying to bite an iron bull."

What Mazu said is not the same as other people's words. The *eyebrows* and *eyes* are mountains and oceans, because mountains and oceans are eyebrows and eyes. *Have him raise his eyebrows* is to see the mountains. *Have him blink* is to understand the oceans. The *right* answer belongs to him, and he is activated by your having him raise his eyebrows and blink. *Not right* does not mean not having him raise his eyebrows and blink. Not to have him raise his eyebrows and blink does not mean not right. These are all equally the time being.

Mountains are time. Oceans are time. If they were not time, there would be no mountains or oceans. Do not think that mountains and oceans here and now are not time. If time is annihilated, mountains and oceans are annihilated. As time is not annihilated, mountains and oceans are not annihilated.

This being so, the morning star appears, the Tathagata appears, the eye appears, and holding up a flower appears. Each is time. If it were not time, it could not be thus.

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Shexian, Zen Master Guixing, is an heir of Shoushan and a dharma descendant of Linji. One day he taught the assembly:

For the time being, mind arrives, but words do not.  
For the time being, words arrive, but mind does not.  
For the time being, both mind and words arrive.  
For the time being, neither mind nor words arrive.

Both mind and words are the time being. Both arriving and not-arriving are the time being. When the moment of arriving has not appeared, the moment of not-arriving is here. Mind is a donkey [that has not yet left], words are a horse [that has already arrived]. Having already-arrived is words and not-having-left is mind. Arriving is not “coming,” not-arriving is not “not yet.”

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The time being is like this. Arriving is fulfilled by arriving, but not by not-arriving. Not-arriving is fulfilled by not-arriving, but not by arriving. Mind fulfills mind and sees mind; words fulfill words and see words. Fulfilling fulfills fulfilling and sees fulfilling. Fulfilling is nothing but fulfilling. This is time.

As fulfilling is caused by you, there is no fulfilling that is separate from you. Thus, you go out and meet someone. Someone meets someone. You meet yourself. Going out meets going out. If these do not actualize time, they cannot be thus.

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Mind is the moment of actualizing the fundamental point; words are the moment of going beyond, unlocking the barrier. Arriving is the moment of casting off the body; not-arriving is the moment of being one with just this, while being free from just this. In this way you must endeavor to actualize the time being.

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The old masters have thus uttered these words, but is there nothing further to say? You should say:

Mind and words arriving partially are the time being.  
Mind and words not arriving partially are the time being.

Further, you should examine the time being:

To have him raise the eyebrows and blink is half the time being.  
To have him raise the eyebrows and blink is the time being missed.

Not to have him raise the eyebrows and blink is half the time being.

Not to have him raise the eyebrows and blink is the time being missed.

Thus, to study thoroughly, coming and going, and to study thoroughly, arriving and beyond arriving, are the time being of this moment.

*On the first day of winter [the first day, the tenth month], the first year of the Ninji Era [1240], this was written at the Kosho Horin Monastery.*