



## Uji The Time-Being by Eihei Dogen Zenji

1

An ancient buddha 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.  
For the time being an eight- or sixteen-foot body.  
For the time being a staff or whisk.  
For the time being a pillar or lantern.  
For the time being the sons of 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.

2

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.

3

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.

4

Know that in this way there are myriads of forms and hundreds of grasses 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 no-understanding of form; there is understanding of grass and no-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, is the entire world. Reflect now whether any being or any world is left out of the present moment.

5

Yet an ordinary person who does not understand buddha-dharma may hear the words the 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 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?

6

Three heads and eight arms may be yesterday's time. The 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 thousands and myriads of 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.

7

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.

8

The time-being has the quality 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 quality of time, moments of past and present do not overlap or line up side by side. Qingyuan is time, Huangbo is time, Jiangxi 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 is also time.

9

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 truth. The truth merely manifests itself for the time being as an ordinary person. Because you think your time or your being is not truth, 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.

10

At this time 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 - to arouse the way-seeking mind, practice, attain enlightenment, and enter nirvana - is nothing but being, is nothing but time.

11

Just actualize all time as all being; there is nothing extra. A so-called "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 complete-in-itself the time-being. Vigorously abiding in each moment is the time-being. Do not mistakenly confuse it as nonbeing. Do not forcefully assert it as being.

12

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. This being so, 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 ordinary people's view of the time-being, even enlightenment and nirvana as the time-being would be merely aspects of coming and going.

13

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 is just the actualization of 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.

14

Do not think flowing is like wind and rain moving from east to west. The entire world is not unchangeable, is 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 invariably flows through spring. Although flowing itself is not spring, flowing occurs throughout spring. Thus, flowing is completed 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 myriads of eons, you have not devotedly studied the buddha way.

15

Great Master Hongdao of Mt. Yao [Yaoshan], instructed by Shitou, Great Master Wuji, once went to study with Zen Master Daji of Jiangxi.

Yaoshan asked, "I am familiar with the teaching of the Three Vehicles and twelve divisions. But what is the meaning of Bodhidharma coming from the west?"

Zen Master Daji replied:

For the time being have him raise his eyebrows and wink.

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

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

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

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

What Daji 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. To "have him raise the eyebrows" is to see the mountains. To "have him wink" is to understand the oceans. The "right" answer belongs to him, and he is activated by your having him raise the eyebrows and wink. "Not right" does not mean not having him raise the eyebrows and wink. Not to have him raise the eyebrows and wink 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 raising a flower appears. Each is time. If it were not time, it could not be thus.

16

Zen master Guixing of She Prefecture is the heir of Shoushan, 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, words are a horse.

Having-already-arrived is words and not-having-left is mind. Arriving is not "coming," not-arriving is not "not yet."

17

The time-being is like this. Arriving is overwhelmed by arriving, but not by not-arriving. Not-arriving is overwhelmed by not-arriving, but not by arriving. Mind overwhelms mind and sees mind, words overwhelm words and see words. Overwhelming overwhelms overwhelming and sees overwhelming.

Overwhelming is nothing but overwhelming. This is time.

As overwhelming is caused by you, there is no overwhelming 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 are not the

actualization of time, they cannot be thus.

18

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.

19

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

Mind and words arriving "part-way" are the time-being.  
Mind and words not arriving "part-way" are the time-being.

In this manner, you should examine the time-being.

To have him raise the eyebrows and wink is "half" the time-being  
To have him raise the eyebrows and wink is the time-being "missed."  
Not to have him raise the eyebrows and wink is "half" the time-being.  
Not to have him raise the eyebrows and wink is the time-being "missed."

Thus, to study thoroughly, coming and going, and to study thoroughly, arriving and not-arriving, is the time-being of this moment.

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