

## *Freedom in Unfree Times*

### *Koans and Stories*

Shitou said, "What meets the eye is the Way."

Ma said, "Ordinary mind is the Way."

Baizhang asked, "What is the essential import of our school?"

Ma replied, "It's just the place where you let go of your body and your life."

Someone asked, "What is the essential meaning of Buddhism?"

Ma asked in return, "What is the meaning of this moment?"

Shitou said, "All of you must know your own mind essence. Know that its substance is apart from extinction and permanence, and that its nature is neither stained nor pure. Know that it is absolutely still and completely whole. Know that its responding to circumstances is limitless."

Ma advised, "Benefit what cannot be benefited; do what cannot be done."

Linji suggested, "Face the world and walk crosswise."

Ma said, "You can't always be moving around without staying anywhere, nor staying somewhere without moving around. To advance from where you can no longer advance and to do what can't be done, you must make yourself into a raft or a ferryboat for others. It is not for you to remain here forever."

Nanquan reported, "Since the day I was kicked by Master Ma I haven't stopped laughing."

Dahui's instructions for working with a koan:

1. You must not take it as a statement of truth
2. You must not take it as something you do not need to do anything about