

The Ten Ox-Herding Pictures

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01. Glimpsing the Tracks

What is The Way?

How do I find the Way? For my life?

Where are the tracks?

How do I grab it?

Is there anything to grab?



02. Glimpses of the Path?

What does my spiritual path LOOK like? Is it a religion?

An exercise?

A discipline?

Following a Master or Guru or sect or School?

What. Is. My. Path?

What?



03. Seeing the Ox

"Ah, I see it! I see it! I SEE it! THIS is the object of my search!

"Finally, we have found the "thing" we are looking for -- the Path, the religion, the group, the philosophy or sport, the value system, the sect or School...

Finally, after a lecture or a book or something on the radio we heard, maybe something our friend recommends, we are ready to jump into it....

How many times have we done this?



04. Catching the Ox

I jump into the "new" "way."

I am enthusiastic, inspired.

I grab it. I give it my all.

I buy all the right golf clubs for it, the right gloves, the right clothes.

I attend its expensive retreats.

I buy all of their tapes, their books.

I am ready to give everything, money, time, even relationships, to attain this thing,
and make it my own.

Struggling, happily, with the new "way."



05. Taming the Ox

Finding it, struggling with it, wrestling, and even playing.

As I let go of the struggle -- if the practice has been sincere -- the "way" that I imagined seems to be different.

"I started yoga because of a health problem."

"I begin sitting because of too much stress."

"I started playing golf because my boss played regularly -- needed to have something to share with him."

Yet, after some effort, the "way" transforms itself from our original, selfish, minor intentions.

It changes.



06. Riding the Ox

The "way" is transformed.

It is not a struggle anymore.

"I" and this "way" have fused together.

A greater comfort in its pursuit.

No longer a need to "master" something.

No longer a need to "control" this effort.

It is becoming playful, riding this "path"!



07. Ox forgotten, self alone

At ease.

The "way" is relaxed, and relaxing.

No more conflict with the "conditions" of practice.

The "way" just becomes how I am.

It is natural. Like a breeze.

"Hasn't this breeze always felt this way on my cheek,
the sun on my face?"



08. Ox gone, self gone

Primary point.

Completely become one.

Not this, not that – no inside, no outside.

Subject and object become one.

That is also a mistake: subject and object were never separate.

Opening my mouth about this is already a big mistake.



09. Returning to the Source

Reality, as it is: everything is already complete:

"No attainment, with nothing to attain."

What is there ever to strive for?

"Mountains are blue, water is flowing."



10. Returning to assist sentient beings

The insight of things, as they are.
Perceiving this, there is only the
remembrance of darkly suffering
sentient beings, struggling in a dream,
a complicated complicating dream
of "this" and "that."

Returning to living beings to share the view
that "you" and "I" are the illusions
of the dream

that required a "way"
that caused a search
for a thing that never existed,
return to their lives,
to live,
and just be,
free from the torture of any duality.
"Wisdom + love = compassion."
Return.
Return.
Return.