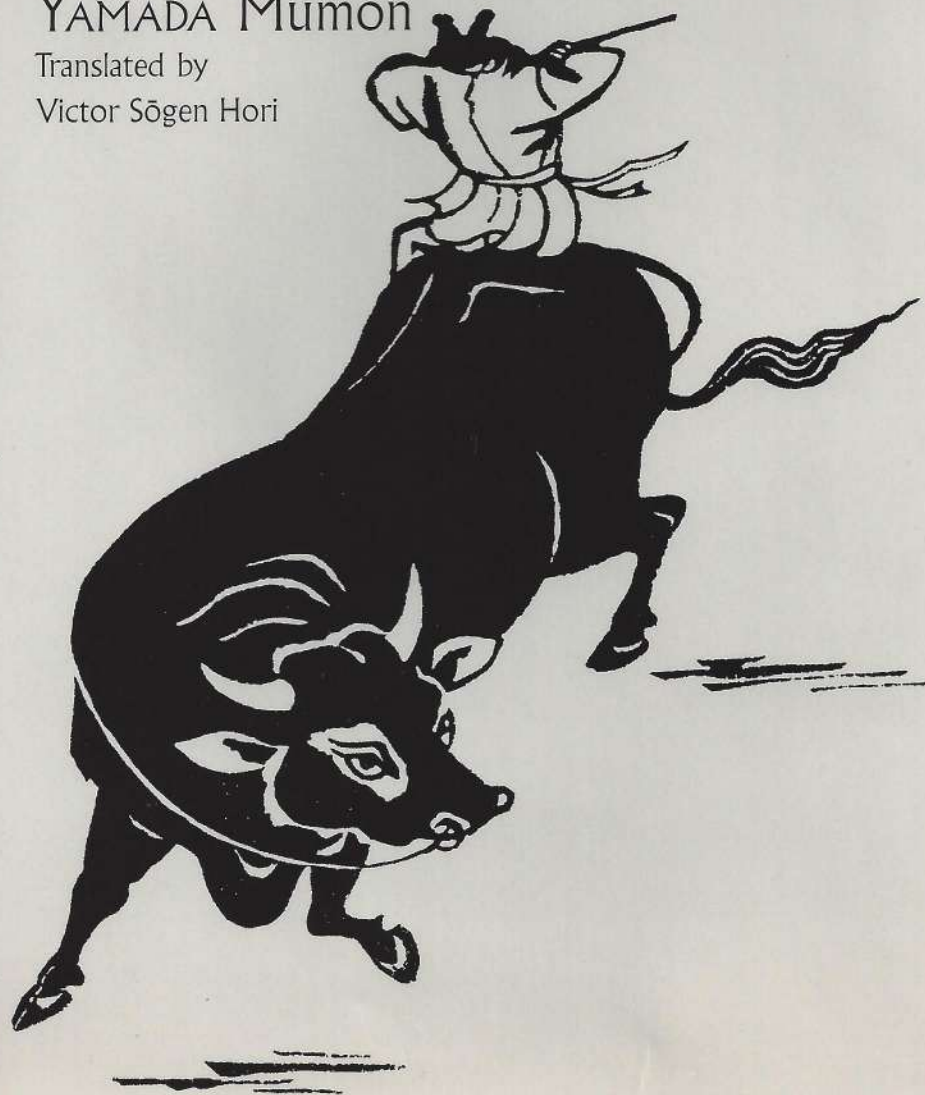


Lectures on  
**The Ten  
Oxherding  
Pictures**

YAMADA Mumon

Translated by  
Victor Sōgen Hori





雲もなく  
月も 桂も  
木もかれて  
はらひはてたる  
うわの空かな  
本来無一物

No Clouds

## Lectures on The Ten Oxherding Pictures



**Yamada Mumon**

Rōshi of the Shōfuku-ji Monastery, Kobe (1953-1977)  
Chief Abbot of the Myōshin-ji Honzan, Kyoto (1978-82)

Foreword by  
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## FOREWORD

*Priscilla Daichi Storandt*

Those of us who came into contact with Mumon Rōshi felt him to be an exemplar of the truly developed person, one who lives each gesture and every moment beyond ego. In his every movement, he showed us that what we had read about was actually possible, that awakening was alive in an accessible human being. Mumon Rōshi was clear of all attachment to any desires. In truly forgetting himself, he was beyond the need to make any further conscious efforts to let go of ego. He was constantly, energetically, and unself-consciously using his life to be the Way for others. We can read for years about the possibility and the methods of working to develop ourselves; we can hear of great masters of the past and hope to emulate them. But to actually meet a person who has thoroughly become selfless in state of mind is life-changing in its effect on our ability to believe that it is actually possible for us as well.

Although it was not formal practice that led him to his first enlightenment experience (a spontaneous enlightenment when he was abandoned to die with tuberculosis), Mumon Rōshi nevertheless continued throughout his life in teaching other people to believe in the clear true nature and to realize enlightenment through formal Zen training. Never limiting his audience to those who were ordained or of some special virtue, he extended himself energetically to men and women of all ages, livelihoods, nationalities and beliefs. Very far ahead of his time for the Shōwa period in Japan, he allowed women and even non-ordained men and women to train right along



with the monks. This was a unique offering to people who had been traditionally turned away from any possibility of monastic Rinzaï training. He would often tell us, chuckling, that he kept his beard and hair long and unshaved, as a reminder to people that all human beings are endowed with exactly the same buddha-nature. He reminded us that Bodhidharma wore an earring and Kannon-sama<sup>1</sup> a necklace, thus noting that enlightenment is accessible to anyone who makes the necessary effort.

Although he was so open and welcoming to anyone seriously interested in training, even being described as grandmotherly ("feeding enlightenment on a spoon" in his easily grasped lectures), Mumon Rōshi's stance on life's meaning was straight and uncompromising: we are alive in order to realize *kenshō* or enlightenment. For this purpose we exist in human bodies on this planet. He never wasted an opportunity to say it again in a new way, a more encouraging way, a way that would allow us no wasting of time or slipping off the point into a wavering sidetrack. How often we would think he was actually reading our thoughts! The pulse of his very existence prodded us without cease, urged us relentlessly to keep up our efforts. Constantly he reminded us, "There is something that never changes. I urge you to ponder it well, my friends."

In this book, Mumon Rōshi's formal lectures to his monks have been translated for the English reader. This series of lectures, on the Zen text, *The Ten Oxherding Pictures*, was given during one of the traditionally set three-month training periods. Although he lectured broadly to various types of audiences, his regular Dharma lectures to the monks training with him maintained a traditional Zen form and flavor. Revealing the teaching beyond the words, these lectures are not so much about the Dharma as they are the Dharma speaking itself. His manner of speaking is direct and may even seem at times harsh, pointed as they are at the listener's intuitive participation. The Rōshi always began a Dharma lecture by reading the text in the ancient Chinese style after which he rang a bell and then a ceremonial cup of tea was served. Next he proceeded to explain the text, its historical context and any difficult terms. Then came the revealing of the text's internal spiritual teaching and exquisite Dharma fabric, which were only to be thoroughly grasped through sharp intuitive attention. Often the monks, who had been meditating for long hours prior to the

lecture, were easily lulled to sleep by the droning reading of the text, despite their best intention to listen wholeheartedly. This fact was also responsible for the occasional strong reminders and compassionate derogatory remarks made by Mumon Rōshi, which could be very powerful. Consistently they had an uncanny effect of making us listeners want to get right back to the zazen cushion and concentrate as hard as possible, harder than ever before. Mumon Rōshi's energy, with his own exquisite telling of the universe's story unraveled through the Patriarchs' teachings and discoveries made possible through true zazen, could do that. He made it seem easy and joyful, the only thing we could possibly want to do. The inner essence of these lectures conveyed by word and gesture was again one more expression of what he never tired of reminding us, that from the beginning, we are ALL already endowed with that same clean pure mind which the Buddha realized in his deep awakening. It is in order to clarify and experience that true mind directly, RIGHT NOW, that we have been born.

The translator of this book is Victor Sōgen Hori. Although the translation was begun as a joint project, he took it upon himself to see the translation through with uncompromising quality. A Zen monk of many years training, Sōgen has successfully captured Mumon Rōshi's grace, simplicity and directness, even when the lectures are very Japanese in flavor. He was able to do this because he knows through deep experience the same steps, learned through the same mistakes, described in the Pictures.

Finally, acknowledgments would not be complete without mentioning Harada Shōdō Rōshi, one of the few disciples to whom Mumon Rōshi transmitted the Dharma. Harada Rōshi is truly a worthy successor for his very life personifies the last verse which Mumon Rōshi left behind:

For the liberation of all beings  
There is finally nothing to be said  
No words, no form  
Only abandoning everything throughout heaven and earth.

Sōgen-ji, Okayama, Japan  
August, 2003



## TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

This book is a translation of Yamada Mumon Rōshi's formal lectures to his monks on the Zen text called *The Ten Oxherding Pictures* [J. *Jūgyūzu*]. The original tape recordings of the Japanese lectures were transcribed and edited by the staff of the Institute for Zen Studies, Hanazono College, Kyoto, Japan and published in Japanese by the Institute for Zen Studies in 1985.

The translation of this book into English presented several challenging problems. First was the problem that Mumon Rōshi originally directed his lectures to a small group of Japanese monks while this English translation must address a far wider readership. Yamada Mumon Rōshi was speaking directly to the monks of his community, all of whom were seated immediately around him and each of whom he knew personally. He was speaking as Master to monk and not directing his remarks to the general public. Most certainly, he did not have the Western reader in mind. His recorded talks, therefore, are full of words not familiar to the layperson and Buddhist technical terms and vocabulary, which refer to activities particular to Zen monastic life such as begging, sutra reading and boiling up the bath. More important, he presupposes that most of his listeners share the intention to become the resident priest, or *jūshoku*, of a local temple ministering to the community around it. In footnotes, I have tried to give short explanations of technical terms and monastic activities to help the English reader. But the outlook presupposed in the lectures, that monks will go on to become "parish priests" after their monastic training, may seem quite parochial to some English readers.

A second problem was that although Mumon Rōshi was giving a formal Zen lecture executed with full ceremonial ritual, he nevertheless spoke in the colloquial, intimate, even vulgar, style typical of



such lectures. Even though the lecture is peppered with Buddhist technical terms and gives explanations of difficult Buddhist philosophical concepts, nevertheless, far from being formal or academic, it is full of slang, colloquialisms, dialect, and sometimes vulgar expressions or stories. In English translation, it is quite impossible to capture even an approximation of this style, intimate yet philosophical, crude yet eloquent. To the English reader, the following English translation will seem too casual and to lack the formality appropriate to its elevated subject matter. But in fact, it is far more formal and academic than the original.

A third problem was to produce a final translation in gender-inclusive language. The Dharma that Mumon Rōshi was expounding is inclusive with regard to gender. And, in fact, his explanations are surprisingly free from references to gender partly because of the nature of the Japanese language. In Japanese, one can carry on a gender-neutral discussion about Buddha, God, buddha-nature, True Person without Rank and people in general because Japanese sentences do not require the constant inclusion of a gender-specific pronoun like "he" or "she". But in translating such a discussion into English, we are forced to use the pronouns "he" or "she", the only third-person singular personal pronouns available. In order to avoid gender bias, one must use the ugly combinations "he and she," "he/she" or "s/he". My solution is to use "he" where the gender of the person being talked about is traditionally thought to be male, for example, in referring to the oxherd in the early pictures or to Hotei Oshō who appears in the tenth picture. But where Mumon Rōshi speaks of the Zen practitioner in general, I have used the pronoun "you", partly because "you" makes no distinction between men and women and partly to make his lecture style more colloquial. Nevertheless, there are still some passages (e.g. the "True Person without Rank" in Jion's Introduction) where, for example, I, the translator, (not Mumon Rōshi) ended up speaking of buddha-nature as if it were male. I am open to suggestions about how to avoid such (mis)translation.

Despite the emphasis in Zen on "a separate transmission outside of scripture", Mumon Rōshi's lectures are full of literary references. I have given the original Japanese or Chinese characters for the most important names of persons, titles of texts, Buddhist technical terms, and lines of Chinese or Japanese poetry in footnotes, along with some

Chinese pronunciations and romanizations. But since this text is not meant to be a scholarly study, I have not provided this information for every single reference and have limited information in the footnotes to only what is required to help make sense of Mumon Rōshi's lectures. There is no scholarly discussion about either the text, *The Ten Ox-herding Pictures*, or about the many Buddhist concepts which Mumon Rōshi so freely uses. The term *kokoro*, which is often translated as "mind" or "consciousness", I have translated as "mind", "heart and mind" or "heart-mind", depending on context. The single word *kokoro* has the intellectual connotations of "mind" but also the emotional connotations of "heart". Since no single English corresponds, where necessary I have used a combined term "heart-mind".

A word about some of the conventions which have been used in this translation. In general, because Mumon Rōshi spoke from within the Japanese Buddhist tradition, I have given Indian Buddhist and Chinese Buddhist names and terms in their Japanese pronunciation: thus, Shakamuni instead of Sākyamuni, Kannon instead of Kuan-yin, Rinzai instead of Lin-chi. Sanskrit and Chinese pronunciations are given in footnotes. There are, however, many exceptions to this rule wherever I thought the Sanskrit or Chinese was more familiar than the Japanese, e.g. Agamas rather than *Agon*, Hinayāna and Mahāyāna rather than *Shōjō* and *Daijō*, Laṅkāvatāra rather than *Ryōga*, and so on. Admittedly, this is inconsistent.

Foreign words generally appear in italics. However, a growing number of Indian Buddhist and Japanese Zen terms have entered the vocabulary of Western Buddhists and these have not been italicized. These include "Zen", "zazen", "Rōshi" and "satori". Some Sanskrit words, such as "samsara," "nirvana," "sutra" have entered English and are used without italics or diacritical marks, except when they occur in some technical reference, as in "Nirvāṇa Sūtra."

Japanese names are given in Japanese order, surname first. Names of cities in Japan do not have diacritical marks since they are so well known. In a very few places, I have inserted my own words into the text, indicated by square parentheses, to fill in missing information for the Western reader.

Victor Sōgen Hori  
Montreal, January 2004



## PREFACE

*Editorial Staff, Institute for Zen Studies,  
Hanazono College, Kyoto*

The Zen text known as *Jūgyūzu*, (*The Ten Oxherding Pictures*) is the creation of Kakuan Shion Zenji, a Buddhist priest who is said to have lived on Mount Ryōzan, in China at the end of the Northern Sung Dynasty (about the 12th century C. E.). The ten pictures, accompanied by commentary and appended verse, expound the teaching that all beings are endowed with buddha-nature. They liken buddha-nature to an ox, that most familiar of animals to the Chinese, and compare the stages of the practice of seeking buddha-nature to the process by which an oxherd catches and tames an ox. The ten pictures and the appended verses are generally thought to be the work of Kakuan Zenji himself while the Introduction and the Preface to each picture are said to be the work of Kakuan's disciple Jion.<sup>1</sup>

*The Ten Oxherding Pictures* is one of four texts collected together and known as the *Zenshū Shiburoku* (*The Four Texts of the Zen Sect*). The other three are the *Shinjinmei* (*The Faith in Mind Inscription*), the *Shōdōka* (*Song of Enlightenment*) and the *Zazengi* (*The Principles of Zazen*).<sup>2</sup> Together with these other texts, *The Ten Oxherding Pictures* from early on became well known and favored as an easy introductory text. In Japan, during the era known as the *Gozan* (Five Mountains), new Japanese-style *waka* verses were added to it; it was published in large numbers and became popular.

The *waka* which were included in this book are said to be the work of Shōtetsu Shoki (the "Clerk Shōtetsu") of the temple, Tōfuku-ji.

This present book was produced from recordings of the lectures which Yamada Mumon Rōshi gave to the monks of the monastery of Shōfuku-ji<sup>3</sup> in Kobe, Japan, during the summer and winter training terms of 1953.

## Introduction

*Jion Oshō*

Now, all sentient beings possess within themselves from birth the true source by which each develops into a buddha. Through confusion, they get enmired in the Three Realms; through awakening, they escape at once from the Four Births. In this way, they come forth as buddhas or they come forth as sentient beings. For these reasons, the Original Sage in his compassion made many paths across a broad field. In doctrine, he put forth both the partial and the complete; in teachings, he expounded both the sudden and the gradual. He included both the rough and the fine, encompassed both the shallow and the profound. Towards the end of his life, he cast a look with his lotus eyes and drew forth a smile from the ascetic. With this act, the Repository of the True Dharma Eye was transmitted to all heaven and earth, to all our mundane and every other world. To grasp the principle of the Dharma is to transcend sect and overcome doctrine just as a bird in flight leaves no traces. But to grasp at particulars is to quibble over phrasing, to be misled by words and be no better than the fabled turtle that swept away its tracks with its tail.

In recent times a priest, Seigo Zenji, has appeared who takes into consideration the basic condition of his followers, and then, like a doctor matching treatment to ailment, uses pictures of an ox to adapt his teaching to their individual capacities. At first, he shows stages of not yet realized ability as gradations of whiteness, then he displays the root potential slowly ripening into the attainment of pure truth. There, at the stage where both person and ox have disappeared from sight, he shows the extinguishing of both



mind and things. But here, though the principle underlying the pictures has reached its logical conclusion, his method of expression still leaves a kind of shroud. Because of this, those whose practice is still shallow of root will have doubts and those of limited ability will be thrown into confusion; they may even fall into nihilism or plunge into eternalism. Now, when we look at Sokkō Zenji, though he models his pictures after those of his talented predecessors, he nevertheless expresses his own mind; his ten verses are so well composed, they illuminate each other with their brilliance. From the very first "Being Lost" to the final "Return to the Source", his skillful ministering to the abilities of his followers is comparable to feeding the starving and bringing water to the thirsty.

In turn, I, Jion, have used these pictures to seek and understand the mystery and meaning of the Dharma, to touch and grasp its profound subtleness. Just as the eyeless jellyfish uses the shrimp as its eyes in its search for food, so also I have used these pictures as my eyes. Yet from the first "Searching for the Ox" to the final "Re-entry into the Marketplace", I have willfully stirred up waves and attached horns sideways onto the ox's head. Furthermore, since fundamentally there is no heart-mind to be sought after, why then should there be any need to search for an ox? Just who is that devil that at the end enters the marketplace? And what is worse, when an ancestor's tomb is not completed, then misfortune strikes the descendants. Thus, recognizing that it may all be nonsense, I present this commentary.

Today we begin a series of lectures on *The Ten Oxherding Pictures*. This first lecture is on Jion Oshō's Introduction. *The Ten Oxherding Pictures* were drawn by the priest Kakuan Shion Zenji who resided on Mount Ryōzan in Tei-shū in China and it was he who composed and appended a verse to each picture. But it was Kakuan Oshō's Dharma heir, Jion Oshō, who published the pictures and added this Introduction. Kakuan Shion Zenji belongs to the Yōgi branch of the Rinzai Sect having received Dharma transmission from Daizui Genjō Zenji in the lineage that runs Yōgi Hōe Zenji, Hakuun Shutan Zenji, Goso Hōen Zenji, Daizui Genjō Zenji. He was the successor to Daizui Genjō. Engo Kokugon Zenji, who wrote the *Hekigan-roku* [*Blue Cliff Records*], is also descended from Goso Hōen Zenji and is Dharma

uncle to Kakuan. Also Daie Sōkō Zenji, known as the person who burned the *Blue Cliff Records*, is a brother disciple in the Dharma.

*The Ten Oxherding Pictures* is a rather early work produced very shortly after the *Blue Cliff Records*. A nice combination of pictures with verse, from early on, it appealed to many people and was widely read. To this, Jion Oshō wrote his Introduction giving an outline of its contents and thus broadening even further its reach in society at large.

Now, all sentient beings possess within themselves from birth the true source by which each develops into a buddha.

"Now" is just used here to introduce the paragraph. "The true source by which each develops into a buddha"—by this is meant the fundamental source of all buddhas past, present or future. It is in the possession of every sentient being from birth. Stated otherwise, the true source of all buddhas, is that "original face" which each person possesses. Rinzai Oshō says, "On your lump of red flesh, there is a true person without rank who is always going in and out of the face of every one of you. Those who have not proved him, look! look!" Within the body of each one of you, there is a "true person without rank," someone who has no status, who is neither buddha nor bodhi-sattva, neither saint nor sinner; each one of you possesses that true person without rank, so Rinzai says. This true person without rank is the true source of all buddhas. Within that five-foot bag of dung which you call your body, there is the true source of all buddhas, the true person of no rank. To grasp this clearly, to see this precisely, is *kenshō jōbutsu*, "to see one's nature and realize buddha." Rinzai says, "He is always going out and coming in through your five senses." For all of us, he is always going out and coming in through our five senses. It is truly amazing. Having gone out, he becomes the objective world, the world of myriad phenomena. He becomes mountains and rivers, rain and wind. But entering within, he becomes the subject, feeling hungry or sleepy, happy or sad. This is the true source of all buddhas, the true person of no rank.<sup>1</sup>

This buddha-nature in each person, which becomes objective when externalized and subjective when internalized, is fundamentally one single entity, one single life, one single consciousness. Now,



broadly speaking, we take the self to be something subjective and consider everything outside the self to be the objective world. The self is "person" and all else is "the world". But on closer analysis, even what I call myself, even my own body, turns out to be an object as well. I can direct my attention to my own bodily movements such as when I move my hand or foot or when I scratch my head. Saying things like, "Lately during the rainy season, my body feels so heavy; I've lost my appetite, maybe something's wrong somewhere," we can look at our own bodies. Examined closely, our own bodies are objective, are external objects.

One's own mental self, too, when examined closely turns out to be objective. When you say, "Today I came up with a good idea," or "Today I did something I shouldn't have," or in self-reflection, "I am full of delusive obsessions; I am an evil person weighed down with bad karma," the self being reflected upon is the object while the reflecting consciousness is the subject.

Humans, it is said, differ from animals in that humans possess a mirror. The fact that humans can look at their own faces makes humans different from animals. One is reflecting upon oneself when one looks in a mirror and says, "Uh, oh, there's a smudge on my face," or "Hmm, my collar's a bit crooked." That is what is unique about humans, but the self that is reflected in the mirror is entirely an object. Absolute subjectivity is just the mirror by itself. A mirror reflects all things but a mirror by itself projects no image. The subjectivity which projects nothing at all is absolute subjectivity and this is the true source of all buddhas. The Buddhist term, "Great Perfect Mirror Wisdom," refers to just this.<sup>2</sup> There is also the old saying, "Between two mirrors no image is reflected."<sup>3</sup> One Master meeting another Master is like one mirror reflecting another mirror for there is no projecting across of any image. That heart-mind which we all have, that neither images nor is imaged, is our real source, our innermost deepest place of abode. This is the true source of all buddhas. The true source from which all buddhas arise is the place where not even the thought of a thought arises, like a mirror without a speck of dust. The self who is reflected in the mirror can acknowledge, "Yes, I am indeed a deluded and obsessed person weighed down with bad karma." This is the provisional self, the self which acts. If we divide the self into the self which reflects and the self which is reflected

upon, then the self which reflects is the true source of all buddhas and the self reflected upon is the ordinary person weighed down with bad karma.

Ikkyū Oshō writes in his poetry:

From the heart suspended from his neck  
Will the puppeteer pull out a devil or a buddha?<sup>4</sup>

We can see here what we call our heart or mind is on one face a buddha and on one face just an ordinary person. There is a saying, "Intrinsic wisdom is mother to all the buddhas."<sup>5</sup> The fundamental source from which all buddhas arise is that absolute subjectivity which we all possess, which is the original possession of all sentient beings. The saying, "Each and every sentient being possesses the wisdom and merit of the Tathagatha,"<sup>6</sup> refers to just this.

The honorary title of the founder of Myōshin-ji is Honnu Enjō Kokushi, *Honnu* meaning "original possession", *Enjō* meaning "complete perfection" and *Kokushi* meaning "National Master". This name is taken from *honnu enjō butsu* which means "The Buddha in complete perfection is our original possession."<sup>7</sup> Now there is a kōan, "The Buddha in complete perfection is our original possession. Why then do we become sentient beings fallen into confusion and suffering?" If everyone possesses the mind of a buddha, possesses buddha-nature, why then do we become mere ordinary mortals? Why do we become lost? It is said that Dōgen Zenji climbed Mount Hiei to the Tendai monastery to learn Buddhism but could not answer to his own satisfaction this question, "The buddha in complete perfection is our original possession from birth. Why then do we become sentient beings fallen into confusion and suffering?" None of the instructors that he asked could answer him. Then he was told that at the temple Kennin-ji, there was a priest named Yōsai, recently returned from studying Zen in China, who might know. Dōgen came down from the mountain, sought out Yōsai at Kennin-ji, and that was how he eventually entered Zen.

Our true nature is originally buddha; it is the Great Perfect Mirror Wisdom. But the self which we find within ourselves is just an ordinary mortal replete with delusive passions and deeply sunk into bad karma. However, the self which is seeing this is the true person of no



rank, the true source of all buddhas. So long as there are these two selves within us, we are not truly living. When these two become completely one, we have achieved satori. To finally attain this is what we seek to achieve in our practice.

Through confusion, they get enmired in the Three Realms; through awakening, they escape at once from the Four Births.

The root of confusion is to think, "That passion-ridden mortal is me." When such confusion arises, one sinks into the Three Realms.<sup>8</sup> The "Three Realms" is a Buddhist term referring to the Realm of Desire, the Realm of Form and the Realm of the Formless.

The Realm of Desire is the realm where we live only for our desires. Take away these desires and we do not know what we are living for; to think this way is to be in the Realm of Desire. Beyond the level of desire, there is also the realm where we think we cannot live without things; this is to be in the Realm of Form. Look at a scientist doing scientific research. Research is not merely a matter of desires only; research is research into things. Take away things and the meaning of life disappears. The Realm of the Formless is spiritual life beyond things and beyond desires. Here musicians sing songs, poets compose poetry, philosophers contemplate etc. To live in the spiritual world beyond desires, beyond things, is to be in the Realm of the Formless though this too is a realm of confusion. The task of Buddhist teaching is to liberate people from these Three Realms.

If one awakens to the fact that the self is the absolute subjective, that it is a mirror which lights up everything, but which itself is not lit up by anything, then one may "escape at once from the Four Births".<sup>9</sup> At once, one can escape from the world of ignorance and delusion. The "Four Births" is another Buddhist term. It refers to the four different ways in which beings were thought to be born into the world, that is, from the womb, from eggs, from moisture, and from metamorphosis or transformation. Living things born from the womb include humans, cows, horses and dogs. Those born from eggs include fish, snakes, turtles and birds; first the egg is laid and then these creatures hatch from the egg. Creatures that breed in moisture include maggots, slugs and the like. Birth through metamorphosis or transformation refers to those creatures whose birth involves a change of shape or form.

The ugly hairy caterpillar which turns into a beautiful butterfly, the larvae which turn into mosquitoes, and the river maggots which turn into dragonflies are all said to be born from metamorphosis.

Though living creatures have these four ways of being born, nevertheless they all belong to the world of confusion of the ordinary mortal. If however, you awaken to the fact that your original nature is absolute subjectivity, is the root source of all buddhas beyond anyone's reckoning, is the root source of the universe, then at once you can escape that world of confusion. In this way, for all of us, to be confused is to be an ordinary mortal but to be awakened is at once to become a buddha.

In this way, they come forth as buddhas or they come forth as sentient beings.

We thus have the potential for becoming a buddha or for remaining an ordinary mortal. Are you better off being just an average person or is it better to be a buddha? What do you think? Hirata Atsutane, a Shintō scholar during the Tokugawa period (1603-1867), wrote a book called *Amusing Stories on Coming Out of Meditation* in which he satirizes Buddhism. He says for example, "You don't want to become a buddha. If you do, you get sent to some place like paradise and have to sit on a lotus flower and be on your best behavior all the time. I can't see why anyone would want to be so confined. Sitting on a lotus leaf from dawn to dusk, what's so interesting about that? If you start to drowse off, you'll fall into the pond. Isn't it better to be just an average person drinking tea and having a cigarette? What's so wrong with the ordinary world?" This is how he satirizes Buddhism. Yes, we are all possessed of the potential to become buddha or to remain an ordinary mortal. Now, I ask you, all of you, which would you choose? Probably ninety-nine percent of you are thinking, "Me?—Don't go out of your way to make me a buddha. I'm satisfied to be just an ordinary person. I want to have a little fun in life; the straight and narrow—that's not for me. Afterwards maybe I'll retire to the country or the mountains." Ninety percent of people think this way.

For these reasons, the Original Sage in his compassion made many paths across a broad field.



Though we all possess the potential for becoming buddha, dragged back by desire and karma, we fall back into being mere ordinary mortals and bring suffering to both ourselves and others. The term "Original Sage" can refer to any of the ancient teachers but primarily it refers to Shakamuni Buddha. Moved by compassion at the sight of those pathetic people fallen into the world of confused souls where they cause grief to themselves and others around them, Shakamuni made many paths across a broad field. He expounded the dharma on 360 occasions, using 84,000 teachings expounded in more than 5040 sutras. To save all sentient beings, he tried every tactic, used every possible means. Thus he labored for more than forty years. Scholars in the past have studied Shakamuni Buddha's teaching in many ways and have classified its content into the Four Teaching of Methods, the Four Teachings of Doctrine, and the Five Periods and Eight Teachings.<sup>10</sup>

In doctrine, he put forth both the partial and the complete; in teachings, he expounded both the sudden and the gradual. He included both the rough and the fine, encompassed both the shallow and the profound.

If we examine the body of sutras expounded by Shakamuni Buddha in order, we find that he began with partial, simplified, easily understood teachings directed at the common people but eventually ended with a comprehensive doctrine called the "Complete Teaching". Further, he expounded a Sudden Doctrine which shows the way to attain buddhahood directly and a Gradual Doctrine which shows how to approach buddhahood in stages by gradually getting rid of delusive passion. In the beginning he expounded the ethical and moral system presented in the early Agamas. He preached a very general doctrine which everyone could understand: one should not kill, one should not steal, one should not tell lies, one should not drink alcohol, etc. From there he went on to teach the Emptiness of Perfect Wisdom.<sup>11</sup> Advancing even further, he taught Wondrous Being in True Emptiness.<sup>12</sup> Finally, he taught the Manifold Dharmas are True Reality.<sup>13</sup> He guides sentient beings following an order that goes from shallow teachings through to deep philosophical principles. He could not help but take pity on sentient beings, beings otherwise destined to slip back into being plain mortals, and went to great pains to lead all to buddhahood.

Towards the end of his life, he cast a look with his lotus eyes and drew forth a smile from the ascetic. With this act, the Repository of the True Dharma Eye was transmitted to all heaven and earth, to all our mundane and every other world.

Towards the end of his life, Shakamuni gave the sermon on Vulture Peak. First, a Brahman king approached him, presented him with a golden lotus flower and requested a sermon. Thereupon, Shakamuni mounted the high seat and without a word held out the flower in front of him before the entire assembly. No one there understood what this meant except for Kashō Sonja<sup>14</sup>. Only Kashō, among the ten disciples the most advanced in ascetic practice, understood and smiled. "Lotus eyes" refers to the furled leaf of the lotus. The underside of the leaf is white so that when the two edges are furled inward, the white part comes to the front; in the middle of that white, there is a green portion visible. This is said to resemble the eyes of a beautiful woman. Shakamuni Buddha was said to have had such beautiful eyes. When Kashō Sonja saw it, he smiled. At that point, Shakamuni Buddha said, "I have the True Dharma Eye, the Marvelous Mind of Nirvana, the True Form of the Formless, the Subtle Dharma Gate. It is not founded on words or phrases; it is a separate transmission outside scripture. This I entrust to you, Great Kashō." This is the origin of the Zen teaching of "Not founded on words or phrases" and "A separate transmission outside scripture".<sup>15</sup> From here the Zen teaching of *Shōbōgenzō*, the Repository of the True Dharma Eye, spread throughout heaven and earth, throughout India, China and Japan, to all places.

To grasp the principle of the Dharma is to transcend sect and overcome doctrine just as a bird in flight leaves no traces. But to grasp at particulars is to quibble over phrasing, to be misled by words and be no better than the fabled turtle who swept its tracks with its tail.

If you grasp the fundamental point of Zen and understand the basic principle of Buddhism, then you will "transcend sect and overcome doctrine". You must transcend the differences between the basic teachings of each sect, for example, between the "self power" of Zen and the "other power" of Pure Land, or between Hinayāna and Mahāyāna. Each sect also has its own style or character; you must not



get distracted by these either. A bird leaves no traces when it flies. Similarly, if you really understand Zen, you leave Zen behind. "The best *miso* does not smell of *miso*." True satori does not smell of satori. But, if you fail to understand the basic truth and get caught up on particulars, then you will argue about what the Lañkāvatāra Sūtra says as opposed to what the Nirvāṇa Sūtra says, what Bodhidharma said as opposed to what the Sixth Patriarch said. You will be confused by words and get hung up on terminology; you will get caught up on the differences between sectarian doctrines. This is exactly like the ancient turtle that attempted to wipe out its tracks by sweeping with its tail. It was certainly clever of the turtle to think of sweeping away its footprints with its tail but it amounted to nothing since it then left behind its tailprint. If you have really grasped Zen, the truly real, you will not get caught up on differences in sect or doctrine. If you have not really grasped Zen, then no matter how clever you may be, some residue will remain. When you "transcend sect and overcome doctrine," then nothing at all remains. This is the world of the complete circle. Your ultimate objective is that state where there is nothing left. We usually think this is where things end but *The Ten Oxherding Pictures* go on to explain that there are even further stages of Zen training. There is first, destroying that circle, then "Return to the Origin, Back to the Source" and finally "Reentry into the Marketplace" where you start again from scratch, where not even satori is left.

In recent times a priest, Seigo Zenji, has appeared who takes into consideration the basic condition of his followers, and then, like a doctor matching treatment to ailment, uses pictures of an ox to adapt his teaching to their individual capacities.

Around that time, a Sōtō Zen priest named Seigo Kōshō Zenji<sup>16</sup> had been using a "skilful means" suited to the condition of his followers just as a doctor's treatments are suited to his patients' ailments. He adapted his teachings to his followers' abilities by drawing pictures of an oxherd saying that one imitates the training of a wild ox. Even from very ancient times, there was a custom of learning from the ox. Because the precept against killing living things is so widely accepted in India, India is sometimes called an animal's paradise. The ox is not killed. No one gets angry even if an ox wanders down the middle of a

busy street blocking traffic. In Hinduism, the ox is considered a messenger of the gods and is treated with great respect. Accordingly, the keeping of an ox became also the training of one's own spirit on the highest level. In *The Sūtra on the Last Teaching of the Buddha*, there is this analogy: just as you must firmly lead the ox by the nose and not let it run wild in the neighbor's field, so also you must tie a rope tightly to your heart-mind and not let it run wild. In China also, in the Zen sect, the ox represents the human heart-mind. There are kōans like "Sekkyō's Ox" and "Isan's Water Buffalo".

And then there is Nansen Oshō's challenge, "Give the ox a bath." Once Nansen came round to the living quarters of the monastery and found one of the monks boiling up the bath. "Hey, what are you doing?" "Yes sir! I'm boiling up the bathwater. Today it's my turn to get the bath ready." "Is that so? Well, once it's hot enough, give the ox a bath first, will you?" Now this monk had his wits about him. "Yes sir! I understand." When the bath was ready, the monk went round to the Master's quarters and announced, "... Ahem. The water is hot now, Mr. Ox. You can take your bath." That's a monk with nerve, don't you think! At this, Nansen replied, "Well, you said you were going to give the ox a bath but did you bring a rope for leading him?" The monk couldn't reply. He was slightly alive to the situation but his sham was quickly exposed. Just then, Jōshū Oshō, the head of Nansen's disciples, returned. Nansen said, "You've come back at just the right time. This monk said he was going to give the ox a bath but he forgot to bring the rope." At this, Jōshū at once grabbed Nansen by the nose and pulled him out coaxing, "Come along now. Come along now. This way. Come this way." Nansen was completely taken aback. "Okay! Okay! But you don't have to be so rough," was how Nansen showed his approval of Jōshū. Likewise we too must firmly take hold of this ox so that we can use it freely.

In addition to the present *Ten Oxherding Pictures*, there are also Funmyō Zenji's *Ten Oxherding Pictures* and Jitoku Zenji's *Six Oxherding Pictures*. Furthermore, in the *Agama Sūtras*, there are the "Twelve Rules of the Ox". From these you can see how from ancient times, the taming of the ox has been used as a model for how we are to use our own buddha-nature. Seigo Zenji's version of *The Ten Oxherding Pictures* are also included in the *Shōyōroku* (*Record of Serenity*). Here, at first, the ox is shown as all black. Then gradually as



training advances, starting with its head it turns white; eventually it turns completely white.

At first, he shows stages of not yet realized ability as gradations of whiteness, then he displays the root potential slowly ripening into the attainment of pure truth.

In the beginning, just the top of the ox's head is white and the rest of the body is completely black. This is the stage where you understand, but you don't understand, the kōan *Mu*! Then after seven years or eight years, as your practice in the meditation hall ripens, a white ox finally appears.

There, at the stage where both person and ox have disappeared from sight, he shows the extinguishing of both mind and things.

Gradually as your practice progresses and the ox turns completely white, you find you no longer have any use for the ox. The person who sought the ox also disappears. Person and ox are both gone from sight. In the beginning, you throw yourself completely into turning the ox white but when your practice has matured, when you and the ox become one, then there is neither a person seeking the ox nor an ox to seek. There is only the perfect circle where both mind and object have disappeared. This is what Seigo Zenji's version of *The Ten Oxherding Pictures* show to this point.

But here, though the principle underlying the pictures has reached its logical conclusion, his method of expression still leaves a kind of shroud.

Although the theory behind Seigo Zenji's version of *The Ten Oxherding Pictures* has been taken right to its logical limit, nevertheless it still leaves the one circle where neither person nor ox remain; this is like a shroud that has not yet been removed.

Because of this, those whose practice is still shallow of root will have doubts and those of limited ability will be thrown into confusion; they may even fall into nihilism or plunge into eternalism.

Here those whose practice has not yet reached maturity will become confused. On seeing Seigo Zenji's version of *The Ten Oxherding Pictures* and being told that the disappearance of person, ox and of everything else, is fine, people of mediocre or lesser ability will plunge into the world of nihilism. Or they may cling to "Fundamentally there is not one thing" and get fixated with the idea that *Mu* is something eternal, that emptiness is something eternal. But the truth of the matter is that you must leave that world of nothingness, return to your original somethingness, and start again from scratch. Here Seigo Zenji's version of the *Ten Oxherding Pictures* suffer from the defect that they may mislead those whose practice is still not mature.

Now, when we look at Sokkō Zenji, though he models his pictures after those of his talented predecessors, he nevertheless expresses his own mind; his ten verses are so well composed, they illuminate each other with their brilliance.

Now, if we look at *The Ten Oxherding Pictures* by Sokkō Zenji, that is, Kakuan Oshō, we see that he has used the works of Seigo Zenji, Funmyō Zenji and other past teachers as models; however he has taken the good parts from them and used them to express his own spirit. To each individual picture he has appended a beautiful poem in the Chinese style; the ten poems together possess a glowing brilliance. It is truly a fine work. In previous versions of *The Ten Oxherding Pictures*, there was something lacking but with Kakuan Oshō's pictures, for the first time, we have a completely satisfying work.

From the very first "Being Lost" to the final "Return to the Source", his skilful ministering to the abilities of his followers is comparable to feeding the starving and bringing water to the thirsty. From the very first arousing of the Bodhi-mind which seeks for the lost ox to the final return to the utter naturalness of things just as they are, these ten stages thoughtfully minister to each person according to each one's level of practice. This is truly like bringing food to the starving or water to the thirsty. In turn, I, Jion, have used these pictures to seek and understand the mystery and meaning of the Dharma, to touch and grasp its profound subtleness. Just as the eyeless jellyfish uses the shrimp as its eyes in its search for food, so also I have used these pictures as my eyes.



Jion is the person who writes this Introduction. He is said to have been the disciple of Kakuan Oshō. Jion is saying that he himself through these pictures was able to seek and finally grasp the meaning and mystery of Zen, to take in and savor its subtle and mysterious flavor. The jellyfish mentioned here apparently has neither eyes nor ears; it can only float aimlessly in the water. How does a jellyfish without eyes find food, you may ask? Within the loose folds of its body, there is a parasol-like organ which emits a sweet secretion that attracts shrimp. The shrimp live permanently within the loose folds of its body. When a predator approaches, the shrimps flee taking the jellyfish with them; when they move to better feeding grounds, they drag the jellyfish along. The jellyfish has no eyes but using the shrimp for eyes, it manages to avoid its enemies and forage for food. In the same way, Jion says he was able to use *The Ten Oxherding Pictures* as his eyes and with them plumb the dark and mysterious principle of Zen, grasp its subtle and mysterious truth.

Yet from the first "Searching for the Ox" to the final "Reentry into the Marketplace", I have willfully stirred up waves and attached horns sideways onto the ox's head.

As a reference or guide, Jion Oshō has added a Preface to each picture from the first "Searching for the Ox" to the last "Reentry into the Marketplace." But he says that to do so was perhaps as willful and unnecessary as making waves, or as futile and pointless as attaching horns to the ox's head at some ridiculous angle. Perhaps it was as pointless as the proverbial adding feet to a drawing of a snake.<sup>17</sup>

Furthermore, since fundamentally there is no heart-mind to be sought after, why then should there be any need to search for an ox?

Fundamentally, though one may search for the heart-mind, there is nothing there to seek. The Second Patriarch Eka Daishi said, "I have sought for my mind and it is nowhere to be found."<sup>18</sup> No matter how much you may search for it or look for it, it is not something which you can grasp in your hand. Why then should you think that the ox is something that can be searched for, sought after and finally captured? If that is so, then hasn't Kakuan Oshō, in first searching for the ox and

then eliminating it, done something quite unnecessary? Here Jion is needling Kakuan a bit.

Case number 91 of the *Blue Cliff Record* is called "Enkan's Rhinoceros Fan". [It is important to know that the Chinese character for "rhinoceros" 犀 contains the character for "ox" 牛. In this story, the rhinoceros is a substitute for the ox.] Enkan is Enkan Saian Zenji, a successor in the Dharma to Baso Dōitsu Zenji; it is said that Empress Wu of the T'ang Dynasty took refuge with him.<sup>19</sup> One day Enkan Oshō said to his attendant, "Attendant, it's hot. Bring me that fan made of ox bone that I always use."

The attendant was a simple person and replied, "Master, that fan is broken. You can't use it anymore."

Whereupon Enkan Oshō made the incredible reply, "So, it's broken, is it? Well then, forget the fan. Just bring me the ox. Just lead the rhino in here."

The simple attendant was struck dumb and couldn't reply. Now, this story made the rounds of the monks. They said, "What's the problem? If I had been that attendant, I would have known what to say," and each shot off a reply.

First, Tōsu Oshō composed this answer for the attendant: "I am not refusing to bring it, but I am afraid the horn is not perfect. If it is your wish, I can lead it out but believe me it is not anything you would want to see." The head is smashed, the horn is broken, it's not something to be looked at, he was saying.

Next, Sekisō Oshō replied, "If I give it to you, Master, then it's gone. I'll give it over if you order me to, but if I present it to you then I don't have one."

Then, Shifuku Oshō drew a circle before the Master and very carefully drew the character for "Ox" inside. He meant, "Here's the ox. Do what you want with it."

Finally, Hofuku Oshō said, "Master, you had better ask someone else. You have become cranky in your old age, and seeing as this is so difficult a job now, perhaps you had better get another attendant."

They all spouted off an answer saying what they would have replied in the attendant's place. The original request, "Bring the rhino here" really meant "Show me your mind," or, in other words, "If you've really understood *Mu*, then show me that *Mu* that you've understood." Well now, that story is in the *Blue Cliff Record*, but



fundamentally, since the mind cannot be grasped, the ox cannot be anything that can be captured. If that is so, then in searching for the ox, Kakuan Oshō has done something completely unnecessary, so Jion reminds us.

Who is that devil that at the end enters the marketplace?

This so-called “Entering the marketplace with extended hands”—wandering around the streets, hobnobbing with Smith here and Jones there—what kind of spectacle is this? If we’re being taught such craziness, then we’re in trouble.

And what is worse, when an ancestor’s tomb is not completed, then misfortune strikes the descendants.

This phrase comes from a text called the *Ninden Ganmoku*<sup>20</sup>. It means, if an ancestor has left behind some unfinished business, then misfortune is sure to strike his descendants. “My illustrious ancestor has created this useless thing called *The Ten Oxherding Pictures*, so unless I put the finishing touches on it and send it out into the world, then I, the descendant, will face misfortune,” so Jion Oshō is saying with a little theatrical exaggeration.

Thus, recognizing that it may all be nonsense, I present this commentary.

It may all be incoherent nonsense but hoping to enhance even just a little these *Ten Oxherding Pictures* bequeathed by my ancestor, I, Jion, present this commentary, the unnecessary frettings of a good-intentioned, old lady. With this, Jion Oshō brings his Introduction to a close.

## PICTURE ONE Searching for the Ox



第一  
尋牛



PREFACE:

Till now, the ox has never been lost. Why then do you need to search for it? Turning away from your own awakening, you became estranged from it; then enclosed by dust, in the end you lost it. The hills of home recede farther and farther away; you're lost as soon as the paths divide. Winning and losing consume you like flames. Right and wrong rise round you like blades.

VERSE:

Beating about the endless wildgrass, you seek and search,  
The rivers broaden, the mountains stretch on and the trails go  
    ever deeper.  
Your strength exhausted and spirit wearied, no place allows  
    you refuge.  
The only sound—evening cicadas shrill in the maples.

WAKA:

Searching  
The deep hills,  
No sight of the ox.  
Just the empty  
Shrilling of the cicadas.

Today we begin the first talk on *The Ten Oxherding Pictures*. The first step is to go out in search of the ox. We are at the stage of *hotsu bodaishin*, "arousing Bodhi-mind," the desire for enlightenment where each person affirms the vow to seek the Buddha-dharma.<sup>1</sup> All your practice is in vain if you do not first make that affirmation of the vow. These days we are often told that we must live our lives with hope. That is very important of course, but in Buddhism the affirmation of the vow is what is primary. There are people who lack the fire to bring light into their own future; they lapse into wishful thinking hoping someone else will provide that light for them. Have nothing to do with this kind of thinking. You must resolve to create that light for yourself. You must affirm the vow never to give up until you have become a buddha and brought peace to this world. The Jōdo (Pure Land) School of Buddhism teaches that we are saved through Amida Buddha's Original Vow. It does not teach that we are saved by Amida Buddha's satori or by Amida Buddha's teachings. It is by Amida Buddha's Original Vow that we are saved, by his affirmation of the vow that we may not go unsaved. It is the same for us. We are not saved by our satori. We are saved by our affirmation of the vow that we must attain satori, attain enlightenment.

The Pure Land School says that the Original Vow belongs to the Buddha. In Zen, we say that the Original Vow is ours; it belongs to one's self. It looks like we are making a distinction between two things here but if you look closely, you will see that they are the same. Each person's Original Vow is itself the Original Vow of the Buddha; the Original Vow of the Buddha is itself each person's Original Vow. In Buddhism, there is a saying: "The first arousing of mind, that moment, is already true realization."<sup>2</sup> When you first affirm the vow to attain enlightenment, at that moment there is already a splendid enlightenment. Thus, the first step is that each one of you must affirm the vow. You must affirm, "Sentient beings are numberless; I vow to save



them." You must affirm, "Delusive passions are inexhaustible; I vow to put an end to them." You must affirm, "Dharma teachings are unfathomable; I vow to master them." You must affirm, "The Buddha's way is supreme; I vow to attain it."

#### PREFACE:

Till now, the ox has never been lost. Why then do you need to search for it?

Going out to search for the ox—this is really about each one of you trying to grasp your original face before you were born, about you becoming aware of your spiritual self. Now then, "Till now, the ox has never gone astray." That is, do you recall ever having lost your buddha-nature? Has there ever been an occasion when you misplaced your original face? No, your buddha-nature, not just yours but everyone's buddha-nature, till now has never been lost, is not something which can be lost. Your original face is not something which you can leave lying around somewhere, not even once. When you eat, when you drink, when you lie down to sleep or when you awake and get up, this is all buddha-nature. These acts are all original face at work, are they not?

"Till now, the ox has never been lost. Why then do you need to search for it?" We are already living our daily lives within buddha-nature. Isn't it then a little odd to go in search of it? Why should we have to search for it? Remember, "All sentient beings possess within themselves from birth the true source by which each develops into a buddha." Since we all possess a buddha within ourselves from the beginning, since we have never lost that buddha-nature, does it make sense to say that we now have to go in search of it? It is like looking for your glasses with your glasses on, or like searching for your walking stick with your walking stick, or like looking for the shoes that you are right now wearing. Going in search of the ox is the same sort of queer thing. Do you search for an ox when you are riding on its back?

Turning away from your own awakening, you became estranged from it; then enclosed by dust, in the end you lost it.

Although we all possess this buddha-nature, although we all have an original face, although we each have an immaculate spiritual self,

yet we turn our backs on that original face because we are all attached to the belief that only in the world of sensations, in the world of the body and emotions, in the world of discrimination does the self exist. When we deny our buddha-nature, we become estranged from it. Buddha-nature is that place without discriminating consciousness, but because we fall into discriminating consciousness, we end up strangers to our own buddha-nature. The selfless self, like that of a newborn baby, is our original face, but as soon as we gain a little unnecessary knowledge, we end up strangers to our original face. An old verse goes:

What a mistake to dye it Kyoto-white!  
My own white hair was better.

As soon as you discriminate in thought, do something ridiculous like that, you lose that original face. "Then enclosed by dust, in the end you lost it," says the Preface. That is, when you fall into the "vulgar world of the five desires," it is like having your feet mired in a mud field, the mud of constantly saying this is pleasant and that is painful, this is good and that is bad, this is worthwhile and that is not. When you do this, you have lost your original face. This discriminatory thinking, mired in the vulgar world of the five desires, makes you more and more estranged from original face.

The hills of home recede farther and farther away; you're lost as soon as the paths divide.

Here you are falling deeper and deeper into the world of discrimination. In a certain neighborhood, a family lost one of its sheep and all the people in the family had to go out in search for it. They came upon a man in his house and asked,

"If you have some time, can you help us look for our sheep? We've asked the whole village to help us."

The man in the house asked, "What's happened?"

"Our sheep has got lost."

"For one sheep, why do you need so many people to help you?"

"But we need lots of people. When we go looking for sheep, we go down a path. The path divides into two, so we need to split up into two. We go along in two groups but the two paths divide into four and



so we need to split into four groups. Then later on, when the paths branch again, we need to split into eight. The path keeps branching, that's why we need a lot of people to help. So won't you help a little?" They all went off chattering in a large group looking for the sheep. But when night came, they all returned home empty-handed.

"What happened?"

"The path kept branching but in the end we didn't have enough people. So we gave up and came back."

This little story illustrates, "You're lost as soon as the paths divide." With discriminative thinking, you fall into the relative world, you jump into making comparisons, but discrimination only brings more discrimination which only brings on more discrimination until finally you don't know what is what.

Winning and losing consume you like flames. Right and wrong rise round you like blades.

I'm happy or I'm sad; I win or I lose; that was good or that was bad—these are the flames of discrimination which blaze up around us like a conflagration plunging us into an all-consuming discrimination which traps us no matter which way we turn. Here at this point, it certainly looks like there is no way out. More and more it looks like there's a nervous breakdown approaching which can't be avoided.

We used to say that parents and children are one single entity, but now they are not a single entity, they are separate individuals. We used to say that husband and wife are one, but now they each have individual rights. Now the eldest son should not have special privileges; all brothers and sisters in a family are to have equal rights. If we try to divide up all our daily life like this following the dictates of discriminative thinking, then each person's share will never be enough. Claiming, "This is unfair! That's unequal!" each person will fall headlong into the discrimination where "Winning and losing consume you like flames. Right and wrong rise around you like blades." From this, it doesn't look as if there is any way out. There is a common expression, "You can't cut a peach into four equal parts." Though you may think that you have cut the peach into four equal parts, each portion is slightly different in size. Each portion is slightly different in taste. If you really try to equalize all these things,

you won't be able to divide even an ordinary cookie into equal parts. Clinging to this divisive way of thinking, getting hung up on dividing everything, is what causes the conflict in modern life.

Here is where the modern person's troubles arise. But your true self, your real self, does not reside here. Giving the larger portion to the other and taking the smaller for yourself so that everyone is satisfied—this is true equality. When everyone defers to the other saying, "Please, you take the larger portion," then everyone feels pleased and says "Thank you, thank you." This is how to share things equally.

The real self, the true self, is not found in this world of discrimination; it resides in a higher place that transcends discrimination. In that place that transcends discrimination, there is true human equality. It is just this human equality which is the Buddha we must all revere. Unless we go right back to the original starting point, there will be no world anywhere where we can be saved.

"Till now, the ox has never been lost. Why then does he need to search for it?" Though we are all fallen into the world of discrimination, nevertheless still we have managed to bring forth the bodhi-mind, the noble desire to seek the ox beyond discrimination. "The first arousing of mind, that moment, is already true realization." Just to recognize that our original face, our eternal self, resides in that place beyond discrimination, proves that we humans are originally buddha. You must generate the bodhi-mind, you must affirm the vow and set forth to seek the ox.

VERSE:

Beating about the endless wildgrass, you seek and search.

Despite having affirmed the vow, wherever you look, you find your mind is still filled with illusory thoughts and driven by delusive passion. You are probably wondering, can there really be buddha-nature here? But whatever the case, you know that you have to do zazen. So you endured the trials of "begging outside the gate" and "requesting temporary stay"<sup>3</sup> and were finally admitted to the monks' meditation hall. But the more you sit, the more your mind fills with thoughts. This is "Beating about the endless wildgrass, you seek and search." No trace of the ox, not even a footprint, can you find. You can't catch a glimpse



of even the tip of its tail. You think to yourself, "Where do I find this thing called *kenshō*?"<sup>4</sup> In your impatience, you may even start to think, "Who needs *kenshō* anyway? I'll take my deluded self just as it is." You may even end up thinking such things as, "Shinran Shōnin says that we are fine just as we are. Maybe I'm better off in that kind of religion where they say my deluded self is okay just as it is."

The rivers broaden, the mountains stretch on and the trails go ever deeper.

The streams of passion and desire grow broader and broader; the mountains of ego stretch on and on. There doesn't seem to be any way to get across the waters of passion and desire, or to climb over those mountains of ego. It doesn't look like you will ever get to the other side to continue your search there. The further into those mountains you go, the narrower and more frightening the path becomes. There is no point in even thinking of asking someone for help since there is absolutely no one around. Lost in the dark valleys of the deep mountains, you don't know what to do or which way to go.

The *kanshō*<sup>5</sup> bell rings. You've probably been thinking to yourself, "I'll go to *sanzen* and just say, 'I don't know'. Maybe the Rōshi will just tell me." But not only does he not tell you, he thunders at you and then summarily dismisses you. Yes, truly, "The rivers broaden, the mountains stretch on and the trails go ever deeper."

Your strength exhausted and spirit wearied, no place allows you refuge.

You are now at the point of saying to yourself. "Three months have gone by since I entered the *zendō*<sup>6</sup> and I still can't get this *kōan*, 'Jōshū's *Mu*'. I'm at the end of my rope. Even if I stay here three years, I'm never going to get *kenshō*. I'll just put in the required one or two years for a temple priest's certificate and then go back to my home temple. Actually, I don't even need to take over a temple. If I go out and perhaps get even a part time job, that will bring in some money. What's the point of living this monk's life, all shut up, going '*Mu! Mu!*' from morning to night. This is awful. Maybe I should go back to lay life. All I want to do when the end of term comes, is to get home in hurry, take it easy and enjoy an afternoon nap." But, no matter what

you do, you can't get your hand on it. You've fallen into this black hole where you understand and then you don't understand.

The only sound—evening cicadas shrill in the maples.

Up in a tree, there is a cicada constantly shrilling, "Mee, mee." You think to yourself, "I don't understand a thing. This is awful." This state of mind is truly searching for the ox. But if you throw in the towel here and give up, all your efforts will be wasted. After all, you are only at the very beginning of *The Ten Oxherding Pictures*. You have taken only the first step in searching for the ox. If you are already this tired, already reduced to this wretched state, how will you ever awaken to the One Great Matter? Going through this dark state of mind is something through which all of us must pass. At the monastery of Shōgen-ji in Ibuka there was a monk named Tairyū<sup>7</sup> (1827–1880), who had been in the monastery for six years. He had been told to repeat, "*Mu! Mu!*" over and over again everyday. Other monks who had entered the monastery after him had managed to pass this *kōan*, but even though he had been there long enough to become one of the senior officers, he still had not experienced *kenshō*. How pitiful! But people in the old days had such totally honest determination. Tairyū decided that if during the week of Rōhatsu, he did not achieve *kenshō*, he would have to kill himself.<sup>8</sup> With this in mind, every night he climbed up to the second storey of the Ibuka temple gate to do late night *zazen*. It was the last night of Rōhatsu, the night when *zazen* lasts till morning. He had resolved that if he did not attain *kenshō* by the "Cock's Crow" of the next morning (that is, by the time the morning board<sup>9</sup> was sounded) he would dive head first off the top of the temple gate and smash his head against the ground killing himself. But although he sat deep in *zazen* atop the temple gate, nothing happened. Dawn came and the morning board began to sound. His time was up. There was nothing he could do except throw himself off the gate. He stood up on the roof of the gate. At the very instant when he was about to throw himself from the top of the gate, suddenly he had his *kenshō*. In later years, he went on to become the eminent Zen master known as the Great Tairyū of Ibuka. But the point of this story is, everyone experiences a time when he says, "I can't do it, I've failed." At this time especially, you must not think of giving up and returning to lay life. In



my own case, during the war, I was attendant to Seiga-shitsu Rōshi of Tenryū-ji,<sup>10</sup> when he made a tour of China. On the return boat, I asked him, “Rōshi, this year I turn forty. In the old days, they said that a man was no good if he had not accomplished anything by age forty. Well, I’m turning forty and I haven’t accomplished anything;<sup>11</sup> I guess that means I’m not worth anything.” Seiga-shitsu replied, “Nonsense. Remember the saying, ‘A person of great talent is slow to mature.’” A person of great character develops slowly, enduring great suffering along the way. I know you don’t like being my attendant all the time but you—yes, you!—when your time comes, when you finally arrive, you will walk around trailing five attendants. Don’t worry!” So I was told. At some time or other, everyone has to experience this crisis of being pushed to the extreme. If you do not, you will not amount to anything.

## WAKA:

Searching  
The deep hills,  
No sight of the ox.  
Just the empty  
Shrilling of the cicadas.

Shōtetsu Shoki, “the Clerk Shōtetsu”, of the Tōfuku-ji monastery<sup>12</sup> appended this *waka*. You cannot see the ox anywhere; it is like searching around in complete darkness; you don’t even know where to start looking. The Rōshi, after explaining it all in his lecture, asks, “Now do you understand? Now do you understand?” but it all sounds like the sound of the cicada. You get scolded, “Aha, sleeping again!” You get yelled at, “Go to *sanzen*!” and they drag you away. The Rōshi too tries to instruct you but it is all like the empty shrilling of the cicada. Nothing helps. You are searching desperately everywhere but can’t find even the slightest trace of the ox; there is only a cicada up in a tree meaninglessly shrilling away. You don’t know where to turn. You are lost on some forgotten bypath. Here you must not break the vow that you have affirmed. You must make an even greater effort, push yourself even harder. There is still a long way to go before you get to clarification of the Great Matter. As the old verse says:

To persevere day and night without break,  
And light the candle of the Dharma,  
Is at once to attain it.

If you keep at “*Mu! Mu!*” from dawn to dusk, then just as a spark leaps from the flint you are striking, so also, without fail, there will come a moment when your eye opens. That is what the great seal on the *Mumonkan* (*The Gateless Barrier*) guarantees. The key, the heart, of the matter is, “To persevere day and night without break.” You will achieve nothing if you work on your kōan only when you happen to think of it. Your efforts will result in nothing more than froth carried away in the stream. But if you push on straight ahead, single-mindedly, without break, then there will be a time when suddenly your eye opens. The *Mumonkan* tells us this explicitly. I ask you to do this *sesshin*<sup>13</sup> with this attitude. Do not let down your guard even once.



PICTURE TWO  
**Seeing the Traces**



第  
二  
見  
跡

PREFACE:

With the aid of the sutras, you gain understanding; through study of the teachings, you find traces. You see clearly the many vessels are all one metal, and the ten thousand things are all yourself. But if you do not distinguish correct from incorrect, how will you recognize true from false? Since you have yet to pass through that gate, only tentatively have you seen the traces.

VERSE:

By the water and under the trees, tracks thick and fast.  
 In the sweet grasses thick with growth, did you see it or did  
 you not?  
 But even in the depths of the deepest mountains,  
 How could it hide from others, its snout turned to the sky?

WAKA:

Determination deep  
 In the mountains  
 Your efforts bear fruit.  
 Tracks!  
 How gratifying to see a sign.



The second picture is *Seeing the Traces*. This is the stage where, after searching for the ox deep in the mountains, you finally come across its tracks.

PREFACE:

With the aid of the sutras, you gain understanding; through study of the teachings, you find traces.

First, we must study the sutras and ponder the records left by the teachers of the past in order to determine where our own nature is. Sometimes you hear it said that Zen monks do not have to read books or to study. When did this misleading idea get started? It's ridiculous to think that this could possibly be true. We say Zen is "a separate transmission outside the scriptures," but it is only because there is a teaching that there is something transmitted separate from it. If there were no teaching necessary in the first place, you could not speak of a transmission separate from it. If we do not first study the sutras and ponder the records of the ancients, we will end up going off in the wrong direction altogether. The ancient teachers engaged in all branches of scholarship and studied all there was to study; but just through scholarship alone, they were not able to settle what was bothering them. It was then that they turned to Zen. That is why their Zen has real power and dynamism. If you have no understanding of Buddhism, no knowledge of the words of the Dharma, it does not matter how many years you sit, your zazen will all be futile.

"With the aid of the sutras, you gain understanding." The Zen sect does not base itself on any one sutra but considers all sutras in the Buddhist canon equally worthy. It is worthwhile reading any sutra which Shakamuni Buddha expounded, but within those, it is good to read the ones especially pointed out by our ancient teachers. Bodhidharma passed the *Lañkāvatāra Sūtra* on to the Second Patriarch Eka

Daishi with the advice that he would not be making a mistake if he took this text as a guide to practice. Both the Fifth Patriarch and the Sixth Patriarch attained their Zen through the *Diamond Sūtra*. Rinzai Zenji came to Zen after thoroughly studying the *Avatamsaka (Flower Garland) Sūtra*. Hakuin<sup>1</sup> writes in his autobiography that he read the *Lotus Sūtra* when he was young but threw it away laughing, "If this is the king of all sutras, then even popular novels or storybooks or puppet-plays can be king of all sutras." Years later when he had taken over a temple, he reread the *Lotus Sūtra*. Reading the *Sūtra* till late one night he heard the "crick, crick" of a cricket from under the floorboards and was suddenly enlightened to it as the wonderful embodiment of the *Lotus*. He cried out in a great voice, "This wonderful sutra! How could I have been so prejudiced till now and rejected it out of hand!" In the *Lotus Sūtra*, it is written, "Daily duties and attending to work is nothing other than true reality."<sup>2</sup> When we do business, or farm, or do temple work, or engage in politics and economics, all this is the Buddha-dharma. Again it is written, "All things now in the Three Worlds are my possession; all sentient beings within them are my children." To grow in comprehension of these words is what is meant by "With the aid of the sutras, you gain understanding." In the *Avatamsaka (Flower Garland) Sūtra* is written, "The grass and trees, the land and the earth, are all buddha."<sup>3</sup> In the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* is written, "All sentient being whatever possesses buddha-nature."<sup>4</sup> In the *Diamond Sūtra* is written, "Rouse the mind which resides nowhere."<sup>5</sup> All of these are none other than the immaculate embodiment of Zen. All express the buddha-mind just as it is.

If without studying the sutras, you merely sit in zazen and get swellheaded because you've passed some kōans, or even—Heaven forbid!—have had satori and received permission to teach, you will become a "Zen devil."<sup>6</sup> "With the aid of the sutras, you gain understanding; and through study of the teachings, you find traces," so it is written. Through the pointers left behind by the ancient teachers, we catch sight of the ox's traces. We catch sight of the footprints of the ox called the heart-mind.

You see clearly the many vessels are all one metal, and the ten thousand things are all yourself.



In the hardware store, there are pots and pans and row after row of utensils all made of metal. Though they are all shapes and sizes, they are all made of the same metal. In this world there are innumerable things of every kind and variety, but we know that they are all reducible to the same elements. The ten thousand things are all this one body of mine! When you realize this, for the first time, you become heaven and earth and the universe; you become all things in their infinite number and variety. You bodily realize that all the ten thousand things just as they are all you yourself. It is written, "I am of the same root as all heaven and earth; I am one body with the ten thousand things."<sup>7</sup>

Those are splendid words. It is indeed just as they say, but it won't do if you come to this understanding only through the sutras. That is merely understanding gained from reading the words of the teachings; it is not *kenshō*, "seeing one's nature". It does not mean that you have actually seen the ox. All it means is that you have found the tracks.

But if you do not distinguish correct from incorrect, how will you recognize true from false?

So now you know what the *samadhi*<sup>8</sup> of *Mu* is, but that is still just a trace. You cannot call it *kenshō* unless, to use the words of Rinzai Oshō, you have realized "True Insight"<sup>9</sup> out of which comes the dynamic for distinguishing Buddha from devil. If you cannot recognize the difference between correct and incorrect, you will not be able to distinguish true from false. If all you can talk about is the *samadhi* of *Mu* in which all things are just *Mu*, you haven't yet got the real thing. You cannot say that you have really seen the ox until you get that power by which "In the leap of a spark, you separate black from white; in a flash of lightning, you discern stop from start."<sup>10</sup>

Since you have yet to pass through that gate, only tentatively have you seen the traces.

At this point, we really still cannot say that you are inside; you are still an outsider beyond the gate. For this reason, this provisional stage of "Seeing the Traces" has been created. You think you have gradually gotten settled into the *samadhi* of *Mu* but you still cannot recognize

correct from incorrect, distinguish true from false. You've been saying "*Mu! Mu!*" over and over but you haven't the slightest idea if this is the right way or the wrong way. This is still just "Seeing the Traces" and for this, Kakuan Oshō has written a verse.

VERSE:

By the water and under the trees, there are tracks thick and fast.

In search of the ox, you entered the mountains and then where you reached the clear waters of a running stream, in a thick cedar forest, you came upon the tracks of the ox, did you not? This is the place of:

The willows are steeped with Kannon's wondrous form,  
The whispering pines teach the salvation of sentient beings.<sup>11</sup>  
An old pine speaks intrinsic wisdom,  
And a mysterious bird toys with truth.<sup>12</sup>

The sound of the wind in the pines, this too is a trace of the ox, is it not? The call of the nightingale, "*Hō-hokekyō*,"<sup>13</sup> this too is a trace of the ox, is it not? The streams, the birds, the trees and the forest are all chanting Buddha, chanting Dharma, chanting Sangha. Everything you see, everything you hear, each and every one is a manifestation of the heart-mind. There is nothing which is not a trace of the ox. An ancient verse runs:

The splashing of the brook is the eloquence of the Buddha,  
Are not the mountains in color the pure Buddha body?<sup>14</sup>

In the sweet grasses thick with growth, did he see it or did he not? The sweet grasses here refer to the sutras which expound Buddha-nature and the recorded sayings of the ancients which point to Zen. There are in fact enough such books to make a mountain. "Thick with growth" here means that those grasses are full and plentiful; those grasses, still wet with dew, are endlessly lush and profuse. In those sweet grasses, in everything you see and in everything you hear, there is nothing which does not reveal buddha-nature. Are they not all traces of the ox? And you? Have you seen it? Have you heard it?



But even in the depths of the deepest mountains,  
How could it hide from others its snout turned to the sky?

Despite the fact that there are so many traces of the ox everywhere, still you haven't seen it. This is because you are stuck in the weeds of self-delusion. The thickets of self-delusion are choked with overgrowth. It does not matter how much you seek, how much you search; always you are buried under a mountain of self-delusion, choked with the weeds of mistaken thinking, with the weeds of intellectualization. There is no way you can find the ox. But it is not as sad as all that. "How could it hide from others its snout turned to the sky?" says the verse. So long as you've seen the traces of the ox, there is no way that ox can hide its snout, that nose lifted to the sky. Sometime or other, it will show that snout to everyone. So things are not really so sad, after all.

If you've seen the tracks, then do not throw down your staff in frustration and call it quits; follow up the tracks until you finally catch it. So long as you do not give up that affirmation of your vow, so long as you do not break your staff in frustration, for certain you will be able to catch the ox. Don't get discouraged. No matter what, you must summon up that determination, once more push on up that mountain. We are only at "Seeing the Traces", the second of *The Ten Oxherding Pictures*. You have been in the monastery for just three months, and are only now at the point where you are finally starting to see something like the traces of the ox. But there are still among you many who don't know if you're looking at the tracks of an ox or at the tracks of a horse. This is no place to get discouraged and throw down your staff.

WAKA:

Determination deep  
In the mountains  
Your efforts bear fruit.  
Tracks!  
How gratifying to see a sign.

You've been repeating "Mu! Mu!" morning and night since the start of the training term.<sup>15</sup> As a result, regardless of what you may

think, your "Mu!" has turned into the tracks of the ox. Up till now, you've been repeating "Mu! Mu!" as if it had no connection with you but now you are starting to see that this "Mu" is your own "Mu". It has turned into the traces of the ox, your own heart-mind. Somehow it has settled into you. Remember:

If you persevere day and night without break,  
Then just one lighting of the candle of the Dharma  
Is at once to attain it.

Do not let those tracks out of sight wherever you go. Ponder them when you are out on begging rounds, when you are out doing work. If you persevere without break through the day through the night, then finally you are going to catch one brute of an ox.

Search to the very limits of your uncertain heart,—  
There, the tracks of the long lost ox.

Well, you seem to have found the ox's tracks but now, no matter what you do, no matter how far you go, all you find are traces. There's no sign even of the ox's tail. You haven't spotted even the ox's tail let alone that snout pointed up at the sky. You say to yourself, "No matter how many times I go to *sanzen*, I just get rung out by the bell. I give up." Even if this is what you are thinking, there's no way out of it because if you get dragged out by the head monk, you will still have to go and do another "Mu!" The very idea of going to *sanzen* disgusts you. You didn't think it would come to this. How many years is it going to take going "Mu! Mu!" at this pace? You are completely disgusted. That's what you may be thinking but on the other side—the one who has to listen to all this "Mu! Mu!" from every one of you, one after the other with never a change—in the end he gets disgusted, too. This is an endurance contest, a test of patience. Who's going to give in first? There's nothing to do but play the fool and, just as always, go out and search for the tracks of the lost ox. Now, with that attitude, go get that ox.



PICTURE THREE  
**Seeing the Ox**



第三  
見牛

PREFACE:

Through sound, you gain entry; by sight, you face your source.  
The six senses are none different; in each daily deed, plainly  
there.

Like salt in water, or glue in paint. Raise your eyebrows—it is  
nothing other.

VERSE:

In the trees nightingales sing and sing again,  
Sun warms the soft wind, green willows line the bank,  
Here, there's nowhere left for it to hide,  
Its majestic head and horns no artist could draw.

WAKA:

In spring sun in the green willow strands  
See its timeless form.



In search of the ox, we started out on the path of practice and finally came across the tracks of the ox. The third picture, "Seeing the Ox," shows the stage where we actually catch sight of the ox. In other words, it is the stage of *kenshō*, of satori.

PREFACE:

Through sound, you gain entry; by sight, you face your source.

By listening carefully to the call of the ox, we open the gate of the ideal and are able for the first time to encounter it in our heart-mind. In Buddhism, it is said our consciousness has six functions or "six roots": eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind. Among these, the working of the ears is the most marvelous. It is said that Kannon Bodhisattva is sensitive to all the sounds of the world. It is not just sounds but all the workings of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind are Kannon Bodhisattva. Still, among these, sounds do the most work in our consciousness. Shakamuni awakened when he saw the morning star at dawn. Reiun Oshō awakened when he looked at the blossoms of a peach tree. Baddabara<sup>1</sup> Bodhisattva, it is said, experienced *satori* when he got into a bath. But in addition to these ways, there seem to have been quite a few people who experienced satori on hearing a sound. Mumon Oshō, the compiler of the *Mumonkan* (*Gateless Barrier*), suddenly was awakened on hearing the drum in the dining hall. Kyōgen Oshō flicked a scrap of tile against a green bamboo in a bamboo grove and at the sound of the "Tock!" suddenly had *kenshō*. Hakuin Oshō heard the sound of the temple bell at dawn and instantly was swept by *satori*. The haiku poet, Basho, had his *kenshō* at hearing the splash of water when a frog leaped into an old pond. This is what is meant by "Through sound, you gain entry; by sight, you face your source." Through some external stimulus, satori is triggered. The "Plop!" sound made by the frog that leaped into the old pond wasn't

just a bomb; it hit Basho as if the entire universe had exploded. When Reiun saw the peach blossoms in bloom, he leaped up in astonishment. Actually though, when you think about it, we should all be astonished at the world we are living in, but we are not the least bit excited. Without something fresh, new, to move your consciousness like this, you will not penetrate to the source.

The six senses are none different,

What I have said is true not merely for the ears but also for the eyes. It is the same also for the sense of smell and of taste, as well. Similarly for sensation and thought. Eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind, all six roots are oneself; nothing which touches the six roots is not a gateway to *kenshō*.

in each daily deed, plainly there.

"Deed" here means act, activity or action. buddha-nature is activity. In the eyes, it refers to seeing; in the ears, it means hearing; in the nose, it means smelling an odor; in the mouth, it means talking. In these activities of our consciousness, isn't the ox here showing its head? Buddha-nature is here nakedly revealed. There is nothing which hides it.

When you have been able to achieve the *samadhi* of *Mu* in zazen and have got some understanding of Jōshū's *Mu*, we provisionally call this *kenshō*. But *kenshō* achieved while sitting on a zazen cushion is weak in action. Through contact with the outside world, you must also grasp the life that throbs there. The power that you've built up through *samadhi* in zazen is smashed to pieces by the sounds of the outside world; it is shattered by the sights of the outside world. At that point, suddenly our self-nature externalizes and throbs into life. Is the sound me? Or am I the sound? The sound and I are one; the sound and I go "Gong!" When subject and object are one, there the ox comes trotting along. Buddha-nature is not a precious antique to be wrapped in brocade and packed away in a wooden box. Our buddha-nature reveals itself clearly in our daily work. That is because buddha-nature is act, activity.

Like salt in water, or glue in paint.



This phrase is from Zenne Daishi's work, *Shinnōmei* (*The Heart King Inscription*)<sup>2</sup>. Salt in running water is not visible to the eye. Similarly the glue that is always mixed into an artist's paints is not visible to the eye; the eye sees only the colors, blue or green or red. In exactly the same way, our buddha-nature has no shape or form. But in our every activity, it is present. Seeing, hearing or speaking; laughing, crying or getting angry—aren't these all buddha-nature? If you take these away, where is there buddha-nature?

Raise your eyebrows—it is nothing other.

As soon as you move your eyebrows, already buddha-nature is at work. This is so because in order to raise your eyebrows, you have to open your eyes. When you open your eyes and look, then all seeing and all hearing are buddha-nature. All is the ox. If you are looking but cannot see the ox, that means your mind is full of unnecessary thinking, prejudice, false knowledge and mistaken opinions. But when you throw away that false knowledge and those mistaken opinions, when you throw away those prejudices, when you become no-mind and then look around, then the ringing of the bell is the call of the ox; the beat of the *mokugyo*<sup>3</sup> is the call of the ox; the screech of a car, the clatter of a train, all are the call of the ox. There you must find the Buddha.

VERSE:

In the trees nightingales sing, and sing again,  
Sun warms the soft wind, green willows line the bank,

Perched on the tip of a plum branch, a nightingale sings with its beautiful voice. Isn't this the ox? Isn't this buddha-nature? At last, the spring breezes have come. The sun has started to warm up; the wind is soft; on the willows, buds are forming—a mild and peaceful spring scene. Everything which touches the eyes, which touches the ears, are they not the ox? Are they not buddha-nature? This is, "The splashing of the brook is the eloquence of the Buddha, Are not the mountains in color the pure Buddha body?"

Here, there's nowhere left for it to hide,  
Its majestic head and horns no artist could draw.

At this point, it could not run away even if it wanted to. All seeing, all hearing is the ox. One could not capture in a picture the beauty of its horns, their fine shape. To attempt to draw them would mean making two things where there was one. The "Plop!" of the frog jumping into the pond is an amazing sound but if you were told to convey this sound to someone else, you would have to use some sound or word as a symbol. If you were told to sing like the nightingale sitting on the branch of the plum tree, your singing, no matter how good, would not approach the real thing. The flowers are red, the willows are green. They are inexpressibly beautiful. But if you tried to paint them, you might be able to draw their shape but you would not be able to draw the living ox. This is what is called *kenshō*.

Ippen Shōnin, who had long practiced the *nembutsu*, once met Hattō Kokushi of the temple Kōkokuji in Yura and showed him a verse that he had written.<sup>4</sup>

In chanting, there is neither self nor Buddha,  
Only the sound of Namu Amida Butsu.

To this Hattō Kokushi replied, "That shows your practice is still shallow. Try sitting on it some more." At this Ippen Shōnin reflected, "My verse indeed is still immature. The sound of Namu Amida Butsu and the me who hears that sound are two. Since there are two things, the sound and that something which is not the sound, it then becomes necessary to say 'Only the sound of Namu Amida Butsu'. Yes, of course, that is still immature." So saying, he pondered this for another three years and then showed his verse to Hattō Kokushi when they met again. This time the verse was:

In chanting, there is neither self nor Buddha  
Namu Amida Butsu, Namu Amida Butsu.

Hattō Kokushi replied, "Well, I guess that's all we can expect from you." Ippen Shōnin asked, "Kokushi, what would you have written?" The Kokushi replied,

In chanting, there is neither self nor Buddha  
Over the back pond, the wind is sighing.



Chanting "Namu Amida Butsu, Namu Amida Butsu" is certainly a form of *samadhi*. It is the state of consciousness of *nembutsu*. But it is necessary at some time to destroy this consciousness so that you can see that the actuality of the wind sighing over the pond is itself *nembutsu*. You must see that the wind in the pines is *nembutsu*, that the murmuring of the valley stream itself is *nembutsu*.

WAKA:

In spring sun in the green willow strands  
See its timeless form.

In the gentle balmy warmth of the spring, there on the tips of the willow strands swaying in the softly blowing breeze, something green has appeared. The first buds have thrust forth. Is that not buddha-nature there in the willow buds? Isn't that the ox? Don't say you can't catch this ox. That ox which hasn't moved "from eternal kalpas in the past, from kalpas without beginning in the past"<sup>5</sup>—suddenly it's right there! "The ox, whose lowing were my signs, I searched and oh! — a fleeting glimpse." You heard the sounds of the ox, the sound of its "Moo", the sound of its "Thud!" the sound of its "Plunk!" You persevered in your practice until you clearly saw the ox there in those sounds. Still you have not yet really caught the ox. You have just caught a glimpse from behind. You still have seven more stages yet to go. To catch the ox and train it is no easy task but first you must catch sight of it. You have all come to the monastery and now walk around hoping to catch a glimpse of the ox, but when you are out on begging, when you are sweeping up in the gardens, the ox is there wandering around. It would be a great shame if you did not see that ox. Everywhere, that ox is just lying there in the fallen leaves, in the sand flying off the tip of your broom. If you do not spot the ox, then you will have come to the monastery to walk around in your straw sandals and have nothing to show for it. To catch sight of the ox as soon as you can should be your first desire.

# PICTURE FOUR Catching the Ox



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PREFACE:

Today you've chanced upon it, so long hidden in the wilds.  
But you can't keep up with its high spirit, and it won't give up  
its love of sweet grass. Even more willful, as wild as ever, if  
you want to tame it, you must lay on the whip.

VERSE:

With your last ounce of strength, you take it,  
But stubborn and strong, it won't be broken.  
Now it suddenly climbs to high ground,  
Then it descends to vanish deep into mist.

WAKA:

Thinking only "Ox! Ox! Don't let go!"  
Just this is the real fetter.

Just catching sight of the ox is not enough. You must get a tight rope  
on it, tame it and make it your own. The Zen priest Ikkyū wrote:

With just one glance at the figure of Miss Original Face  
Standing there, you will fall in love with her.

You can't say that you don't know this lady, Miss Original Face. Miss  
Original Face is a pretty woman and you must get at look at her. If you  
catch just a glimpse of your own true heart-mind, that is, your eternal  
self or buddha-nature, you will become so absorbed in your zazen you  
won't be able to stop. That's the frame of mind you must get into.

PREFACE:

Today you've chanced upon it, so long hidden in the wilds,

"Sentient beings are from the beginning buddhas."<sup>1</sup> From the very  
day of our birth right up to this very moment, each of us has been en-  
dowed with buddha-nature but none of us has been aware of where  
that ox has been. Not merely from the day we were born, but from be-  
fore the very beginning of the universe right up to the end of the end-  
less future, the ox of the heart-mind has been hidden somewhere in the  
bush. And now today we have finally found it. Until now, we have  
only heard stories about the ox called buddha-nature but today we  
have at last come face to face with it.

But you can't keep up with its high spirit,

Now that you've caught it, you see that the spirit<sup>2</sup> of this ox is ex-  
ceedingly refined. Far and away above our level, there is no way you  
can keep up with it. Yes, you certainly did catch a glimpse of it, but  
now it has gone off somewhere and disappeared.



This thing called spirit is an individual thing. Only a sparrow can understand the spirit of a sparrow. Only a hen can understand the spirit of a hen and only another fish can understand the spirit of a fish. In this cold weather, perhaps you are feeling sorry for the fish, poor thing, for it has to live in the freezing water. But don't make the mistake of thinking it would be better off if you put it in warm water. That would kill it. You are a human and there is no way you can understand the spirit of a fish. There was once a priest called Tōsui Oshō who acquired the nickname Tōsui the Beggar. He had given up his temple and had taken to living as a beggar on the banks of the Kamo River in Kyoto. One of his disciples heard rumors of what had happened to him and came all the way up from Kyūshū to look for his master. He finally located him under the Sanjō Bridge and addressed him: "You gave up your temple, so there's nothing we can do about that. But you haven't yet got rid of your disciples. You are the only person I can ask to be my master. I have left my temple too, so please let me come with you." Thus pleading, he bowed low touching his head to the ground in front of the master for whom he had come searching.

"Your spirit and mine are different. There is no way we can live together."

"No, please don't say that. I'll learn your spirit. Please take me with you."

"You can't come with me. Go away! Leave!"

But even after being told this, he stayed on and followed. Once as they were crossing over the Ōsaka ridge and heading towards Ōtsu, they came across a beggar who had fallen by the wayside and died. "Well, well, one of our fellows has passed away, pity. There doesn't seem to be anyone around who will bury him so you go over to that farmhouse and borrow a shovel."

They dug a grave in the mountains, buried the beggar in it, and in compassion chanted some sutras. Then they noticed there was some food left in the beggar's bowl.

"Well, well, this was a beggar upon whom the gods smiled. There are people these days dying of starvation but this beggar died leaving food behind. What a waste! Let's take this as today's offering. We're lucky!" Then, as if he were having a delicious meal, Tōsui enthusiastically began eating the food which the dead beggar had left in his chipped and cracked bowl.

"This is today's offering in honor of the dead. I'll give half of it to you." The disciple tried to eat his half but couldn't get it down his throat. The master ate as if he was having a delicious feast but the disciple just couldn't swallow his food. He closed his eyes, set his mind firmly, even tried reciting the Buddha's name, but when he put the food in his mouth, he just couldn't get it down. After a moment, he would belch and then throw it back up. At that, Tōsui said,

"You see, that's just what I mean when I say your spirit is different. You and I live in two different worlds; we can't continue on together. Now go away."

This story is a good example of "But you can't keep up with its high spirit." A mind of thoughts and attachments can't possibly fathom the spirit of that ox called Original Face. With your head full of thoughts of good and bad, pretty and ugly, even should you seek out the spirit of the ox of buddha-nature, there is no way that you would be able to recognize it if you saw it.

And it won't give up its love of sweet grass.

The grass which this ox eats is not the common grass which you can find just anywhere. The grass which the ox of Fundamental Wholeness<sup>3</sup> eats is not found in [mountainous areas like] Rokkō or Arima, much less in [urban areas like] Shin-Kaichi or Motomachi.<sup>4</sup> Don't deceive yourself into thinking that you can feed it your desires and attachments, your passions and self delusions; the ox of Fundamental Wholeness will run away at the mere smell of them. If there is even the slightest whiff of impurity, the ox won't touch that grass. "It won't give up its love of sweet grass." Zen has to be just this daily life of ours. Our actual life just as it is must be our Zen but the ox of Fundamental Wholeness detests even the smell of the actual; it is strictly pure. It hates the world of desires and attachments, passions and self-delusions, and will trot right off to the mountains.

Even more willful, as wild as ever,

That ox is tough! Solid muscle! Although you've managed to get a rope on it, it shakes itself free and runs away. At the first unguarded



moment it will head back to the mountains. You may have caught it, but it is no easy matter to break it and finally make it your own.

If you want to tame it, you must lay on the whip.

If you want to tame that ox so that it will be compliant, well-behaved and always right by your side, then you must hold it on tight rein and lay on the whip. There was once a priest named Shichiri Oshō<sup>5</sup> who used to say you must hold on to *nembutsu* in the same way that you would hold beans in your mouth. You aren't allowed to spit the beans out and you aren't allowed to swallow them; the beans must always be there in your mouth. This story may sound a little messy but the point is that when you chant, "Namu Amida Bu, Namu Amida Bu . . .," you must keep your attention focused as you do when you have a mouth full of beans; if you do this, then you can live in *nembutsu samadhi*. This is what it means to "lay on the whip." Unless you are continually mindful and on guard, never letting go of buddha-nature, then the ox will run right back to the mountains. It is a ridiculous distortion if you mouth sayings like "The passions themselves are enlightenment" as if you were enlightened, yet when you meet a woman, you embrace her, or when presented with alcohol you indulge in drink. There is no satori there.

VERSE:

With your last ounce of strength, you take it,

Only when no wish to drink arises even when you are faced with alcohol, only when no desire to touch a pretty girl arises even when you meet her, only then will you finally take the ox. You have exhausted all your intellectualizing and finally reached the point where there's nothing left to think about, nothing left to say. You become a great fool and all that thinking, thinking, thinking disappears. Only when you get to that place can you get hold of the ox.

Sometimes you hear it said, "In the old days, people died and lamented not being able to live; today people live and lament not being able to die." In the old days people did zazen and rid themselves of discriminative thinking; they would stand up without realizing it, go out without realizing it, and finally they got to become like complete fools.

Then they agonized over how to manifest from that place the great living energy of Zen in immediate action. These days however people agonize over not being able to just die cleanly, once and for all. Always something remains; they do not really die. It is like killing a snake—it's still twitching. Your mouth is going, "*Mu!*" but your tail is still twitching; you are not completely dead yet. So long as you do not first attain the Great Death, the *samadhi* of *Mu*, then you can never catch that ox.

But stubborn and strong, it won't be broken.

However, that ox is wild and strong and will run away at the very first opportunity. It is no easy task to tame its power. It is no easy task to break its wild power and subdue it.

Now it suddenly climbs to high ground,  
Then it descends to vanish deep into mist.

The "high ground" here refers to that place without self-delusions, where there is neither self nor world; it is compared to the clean, fresh highlands one finds around Mount Fuji or Shinshū in the Japanese Alps. Once in a long while, we can get a brief glimpse of this state. During zazen, you may have had the experience of thinking, "Ah . . . this is really good, this must be the *samadhi* of *Mu*. This is just like it's supposed to be, no delusions, no enlightenment. This feels so good, this must be it." But as soon as you stand up it all disappears. The ox disappears again deep into the mists. While sitting in the zendō, you may be thinking, "This is really it," but once *sesshin* ends and you walk out the door to go back to work, then "It" completely vanishes.

Once upon a time, there was a young man of deep filial piety who unfortunately suffered the loss of both his parents. He felt a deep gratitude toward his parents but they had already died; he wondered if there were not some other way for him to express the deep feelings which he felt inside. Now at that time there was a wealthy couple who had many rice fields, much land, a great fortune, but sadly, no children. They circulated a notice on which they wrote: "It is now necessary for us to think about how we are to maintain our family lineage. We are willing to bequeath all our property to any conscientious young person who is willing to care for us in our old age. We wish to



adopt a person of deep filial piety who will ultimately be the beneficiary of our property. Please assemble if interested." Many people gathered. The wealthy man then proceeded to test the mental ability of the people gathered; almost everyone failed his test and only ten remained. Next, he led the remaining persons, each one to a different well, and instructed them, "Draw water with this bottomless bucket and fill this barrel by tomorrow morning." Now, no matter how many times you draw water with a bottomless bucket, you cannot fill a barrel. Most then and there threw up their hands and left. Only one person remained, the young man whose heart was so full of the unexpressed gratitude he felt towards his parents. He did not think of whether the barrel was or was not getting filled with water; he knew only what he had been told to do by the old gentleman. In complete innocence, he drew water with the bottomless bucket, one drop, two drops, at a time. By morning, the barrel was full. Only one person had become a complete fool, and heedless of whether or not it was possible, done exactly what he had been told to do. It goes without saying that the wealthy couple adopted him as their son. Without getting hung up on whether you can or cannot do it, go straight into the *samadhi* of *Mu* even if it is only for one second or for one minute, even if it is only for five minutes. You may say, "In order for me to get into just five minutes of *samadhi*, I have to really sweat for three hours to clear all these interfering thoughts out of my mind." But suffering three hours for a mere five minutes, that too is alright. Those five minutes are five minutes of eternity. Those five minutes are five minutes of the eternal Buddha. This is what is meant by "One inch of sitting is one inch of Buddha." It is not a matter of sitting with the physical body. If in your five minutes you cut everything off and die, then you are "inch by inch becoming a sixteen foot Buddha."

WAKA:

Thinking only "Ox! Ox! Don't let go!"

Just this is the real fetter.

This is a very interesting poem. If you are holding the rope on the ox's snout, thinking you mustn't let go, you are in for a great struggle. The bonds of desire and attachment, thinking and discrimination, are not easily cut; so too the rope attached to the ox of the heart-mind.

The idea that you must not let go of the rope, this thought itself turns into a binding fetter, a source of suffering. You should not be half-hearted about it, but once you've seen the ox of Fundamental Wholeness, you're afflicted with torment; taming and training that ox is no simple matter. Waking and sleeping, it causes you anguish. Yes, you certainly did catch the ox but keeping a rein on your heart-mind, just as it is, is not an easy task.

The other day a newspaper writer came and asked me, "Suppose you did zazen and never had satori? Wouldn't that mean that all your efforts were useless?" I answered him, "These days everyone wants to go to university but just because you go to university does not mean that you are going to graduate. Some people die partway through their studies; others flunk out. Not everyone gets to graduate. But you don't therefore say that going to university is useless and decide not to send your children to university, do you? Whether your children will or will not graduate is a later question. You should be pleased just that they got accepted to university in the first place. In the same way, whether you do or do not attain satori is secondary; rather you should be pleased that you had the good fortune to have come into contact with the teaching of Zen in the first place. Whether you do or do not attain satori will resolve itself naturally. I leave that up to you." This is the answer I gave him. It isn't a simple matter. There is no way to know when and where you are going to be blessed with great fortune. "Through sound, you gain entry"—when and where that will happen for you, we cannot know. That means you cannot relax even for a moment; you must apply yourself day and night without pause in continuous *samadhi*.

There is a story about a monk at the monastery of Tenryū-ji at the time of Gasan Rōshi (1853–1900)<sup>6</sup>. It was the coldest part of the winter and this monk went out on begging rounds with all the other monks. When they were in the area of Nishiōji near Sanjō, an apprentice of a *sake* shop came riding by on a bicycle piled high with empty *sake* bottles. The street was frozen over; the bicycle skidded and turned over. The bottles all fell off and smashed "CRASH! CRASH!" At the sound, the monk was suddenly awakened. He left off begging and raced back to the monastery to see the Rōshi. They say Gasan Rōshi was extremely pleased and declared that there hadn't been a satori like that for a long time. As this story shows, you



do not know where or when you will encounter that sound through which you will gain entry. That means that you must always be in a live and taut state of mind; it is most important to maintain constant *samadhi*. If a balloon is blown up beyond its limit, it can't help but burst with a "Bang!" If "Mu!" totally fills your body, you can't help but explode. Keep that in mind and enjoy yourself while you continue your practice.

PICTURE FIVE  
**Taming the Ox**



第五  
牧牛



PREFACE:

Once one little thought arises, another follows. Adhere to awakening and all becomes truth; reside in ignorance and all is unreal. This happens not because of the world, but only because of your mind. Keep a firm grip on that rope and do not waver.

VERSE:

Not for a moment put down whip or rein,  
Lest the ox wander back to dust and desire.  
Pull again and again, till it's tame and gentle,  
Of itself, it will follow without bridle or chain.

WAKA:

Days pass, even the wild ox comes to hand,  
And becomes a shadow to my body,  
How gratifying!

Well now, you have finally caught the ox but this ox will not do what you want it to do. That's why you have to train it and make it your own. That's what we mean by "taming the ox". This is what is otherwise called "post-satori practice"<sup>1</sup>: *Kenshō*, or awakening, is our goal but without any follow-up, *kenshō* amounts to nothing. You must tame that ox which you worked so hard to catch. For us, training and practice continue right up until we die. Christians think of their minister as a shepherd<sup>2</sup>. But for us, we are not sheep who expect to be watched over by a teacher; we ourselves must each tame and train our own ox. The most important chapter of *The Ten Oxherding Pictures* is this one, "Taming the Ox", where you sit down and chew the cud of satori fully appreciating its texture.

PREFACE:

Once one little thought arises, another follows.

If even the slightest little thought should arise, then one after another, endlessly, other thoughts arise. As soon as one thought fades, the next thought arises and when that one fades, then another one follows that. We call this being lost in *samsara*.<sup>3</sup> When the thought that you are hungry arises, then next you think about what you want to eat. You think, "What will I have to eat? How about noodles? Or maybe Chinese food? Or maybe a steak?" And then you think. "Do I have enough money? If I don't have enough money, what will I do?" All kinds of unreal ideas and notions arise. Your head is full of such unreal thoughts and ideas.

When you do *zazen*, then you realize how full of unreal thoughts the human animal is. Ordinary people are out working so they carry on their daily lives without thinking that their own unreal thoughts are unreal. But try doing a little *zazen* and you will realize how full of unreal thoughts humans are. Such unnecessary useless thinking! Such



mental waste! You think things that you do not have to think! This is like letting an engine run idle, or leaving the lights on.

Adhere to awakening and all becomes truth; reside in ignorance and all is unreal.

If once you cut right through unreal thinking, then that world we call awakening or enlightenment is revealed. Seen from the world of awakening, you can grasp the true nature of things. People in the world at large think they are seeing things truly but really they see just the shadow of things. They look at things through their many wants and desires, through that self-interest that says, "Me! Me!" Going through life only looking at things through their own personal experience, they have lost their grip on what is true and real. Since their hearts and minds are full of unreal thoughts, the world that they see is of course unreal.

This happens not because of the world, but only because of your mind.

True and false do not exist in the world out there. Depending on whether the mind that looks out on that world is awakened or deluded, the things of the world are true or false. The moon neither weeps nor smiles.

I gaze at the moon, sad for the thousand things,  
Though it's not my autumn alone.

When you are lonely in heart and cry from sadness, then too the moon cries. And when you are laughing inside, the moon too laughs.

Thinking all this is my world,  
I gaze at the moon  
Thinking nothing is amiss.

When you are full of spirit, then the moon too will appear full of spirit. Things in themselves are neither true nor false; they are neither sad nor happy.

There is nothing so important as water. But even though you can-

not live for one day without water, if you get swept away in a flood, you will feel that there is nothing so terrible as water. Water itself is neither good nor bad but people see it as good or bad depending on their particular situation at the time.

You may search the world looking for truth but there is no truth in the world. It arises only from the heart-mind. When the heart-mind that is looking is true, then the world also is true; when the heart-mind that is looking is false, then the world being looked at also becomes false.

What is it for you to always be true? It is a matter of ridding yourself of thoughts. The true state of being of the human person is no-idea, no-thought consciousness; it is no-mind consciousness. The true nature of our heart-mind is a mirror-like spotless condition unmarred by even a single thought. The many unreal thoughts and ideas we have are images cast upon this mirror. No matter how much you search there for truth, there is no truth there. Our original nature is that condition like a spotless mirror where "Fundamentally there is not one thing."<sup>4</sup>

Those who come into contact with a person of such consciousness are all themselves helped. If you yourself are no-mind, then without you saying or doing anything, people who come into contact with you too will take away some of that no-mind. This is how Zen helps people. When a single beautiful flower blossoms, those who look upon it become gentle and calm in feeling. When a single individual attains awakening, those who come into contact with that person also awaken. They too are saved. This is what is meant by saving sentient beings.

Keep a firm grip on that rope and do not waver.

Catch the ox's noseline and keep a firm grip on it so that you never waver from mindfulness. Do this and there will be no faltering. To waver is to falter, to hesitate. Right from the start, leave no room to insert any doubt or discrimination. Moment to moment no-mind—just advance straight down this path and you will be alright. To maintain this consciousness, to proceed in moment to moment mindfulness<sup>5</sup> is what is meant by taming the ox.

In ancient times, there was a famous priest in China called



Ransan<sup>6</sup> who had withdrawn to a rock cave on Mount Kōzan to do post-satori training, which in Zen is called, “the long nurturing of the sacred embryo”<sup>7</sup>. Emperor Tokusō of the T’ang Dynasty heard of this person of great virtue and sent out a summons requesting him to come to the capital and lecture on the Buddha-dharma. When the imperial messenger reached Mount Kōzan, he found Ransan cooking some roots over a fire made from cow dung. Ransan did not greet the messenger when he arrived; he did not so much as even look up.

The messenger said, “Virtuous priest, this is a gracious invitation from His Imperial Majesty. You should not remain squatting there baking those roots. Normally one stands up and makes a polite reply.” Even at these words, Ransan ignored him. He continued baking his roots letting a long drop of water hang off the end of his nose. The drip at the end of his nose was so long it looked like it would reach his chest.

At this sight, the messenger continued, “You can at least wipe your nose, can’t you!”

Ransan replied, “Here I am completely absorbed in mindfulness practice. Just because someone like you from the outside world shows up, you think I have time to wipe my nose!”

This is post-satori training. Only a person who has trained and attained satori does this kind of post-satori training. Those who have not seen their own true nature, who have not attained satori or awakening, can do nothing but stir up more unreal thoughts.

VERSE:

Not for a moment put down whip or rein,  
Lest the ox wander back to dust and desire.

This says, keep a firm hold of the nose line with one hand, hold the whip tightly in the other hand and do not for a moment let go of the ox. If you are careless, the ox will go and hide itself in dust and refuse. If you let one thought through, then that one thought will cause another to occur. If you let your attention waver even a little, this ox will run off somewhere. Do not let down your guard! Allow no openings. Keep a tight grip on that whip and line.

Pull again and again, till it’s tame and gentle,

As you train the ox pulling with the rope and beating with the whip, gradually it becomes tame. That is, train the ox by pulling with the rope, the rope called the *kōans*, and by beating with the whip, the whip called the “old cases”. The ox will become gentle and docile and will do your bidding. It becomes well behaved and will not run away. Standing or sitting, clearly the ox, buddha-nature, is there self-aware.

Of itself, it will follow without bridle or chain.

When the ox has been tamed, though you do not use the whip or the line, it will always follow you like a well trained dog. Though you forget all about *kōans*, you will always be in no-mind. You will get so that you will always be just there blank, thinking of nothing. You must take the training of the ox to this point. You must train the ox so that you will not lose *kenshō*, so that you will not lose buddha-nature. Somewhere in the *Record of Rinzai*, Rinzai Zenji says, “Don’t continue on with thoughts that have already arisen and don’t arouse any that have not yet been aroused. Just this will be worth far more to you than ten years of pilgrimage.”<sup>8</sup> Don’t let thoughts that have already arisen lead you off; let them pass away untouched just as they have arisen. And about those thoughts which have not yet arisen, it is unnecessary to think “I must not cause them to arise.” If you concentrate on letting go all thoughts which may rise without grasping on to them, this will be more useful than ten years of half-hearted monastery training.

WAKA:

Days pass, even the wild ox comes to hand,  
And becomes a shadow to my body,  
How gratifying!

With day after day devoted to training and practice, the ox, the heart-mind that always wants to get lost, even this ox will come to follow you around like your shadow. It is truly a great pleasure when you know that you can always savor the world of no-mind in this way. There is no pleasure as great as this. But remember, it is “days pass”. It is not a matter of just one or two days spent trying to tame the ox. It is not a matter of a mere five-day *sesshin*. You must live in continuous



concentration on mindfulness, in *kōan samadhi*, never letting up even once. Gasan Oshō of Tenryū-ji has a verse:

Half-wakened by the nightwatch drum  
Tomorrow what throw will I use . . .

Even while he is sleeping, a sumo wrestler is thinking, "In tomorrow's bout, I meet so-and-so. What throw will I use on him?" Sleeping or waking, he is always focussed on the bout. Sumo does not take place just inside the ring. Outside, even when sleeping, the sumo wrestler is thinking, "Tomorrow, what throw should I use?" So I put this one request to you: get into *kōan samadhi*, keep a firm grip on this line, and concentrate on correct mindfulness.

## PICTURE SIX

## Riding Home on the Ox



第六  
騎牛歸家



PREFACE:

Shields and spears are gone; winning and losing are nothing again.

You sing woodsmen's village songs and play children's country tunes.

Stretched out on back of your ox, you gaze at the sky.

We call you but you won't turn around, catch at you but you won't be tied down.

VERSE:

Riding high on your ox, leisurely you head for home.

Trilling on a nomad's flute, you leave in the evening mist.

In each beat and verse, your boundless feeling,

To a close companion, what need to move your lips?

WAKA:

Lowling at mind

limpid and soaring

sky.

White clouds are coming back to the peaks.

“Riding home on the ox”: this is the stage where having tamed the ox and having made it your own, you ride it back to your own home. If you had gone into the mountains to tame the ox and then just stayed there riding your ox around, this would have been like the searcher who never came back and thus became the object of other searchers. Shakamuni went into mountains to engage in practice but if he had just left off there in the mountains, if he had left off at just being a buddha, there would be no saving of sentient beings. So, he too came down from the mountains.

All acts are impermanent. All things move. There is nothing in this world that can be depended on. You say that you must engage in zazen practice in order to liberate yourself from the round of birth and decay, but having liberated yourself from the round of birth and decay, you must once again return to the world of impermanence. When one attains *kenshō*, then on returning to the original world of impermanence, that world of impermanence becomes the world of reality. To be right in the very middle of ceaselessly churning daily life, just this is the pure land of serenity and nirvana. One who refuses to return is not genuine. In the everyday world of common sense, the flowers are red and the willows are green. But in zazen, one destroys that world of common sense and enters a world where flowers are not red and willows are not green. But one must not stop at this point. Only when you have returned to the world where flowers are red and willows are green has one really attained truth. Smash right through heaven and earth to where the willows are green; break right through the bottom to where the flowers are red. This is what it means to come riding home on the ox.

PREFACE:

Shields and spears are gone; winning and losing are nothing again.

“Shields and spears” symbolize fighting and struggle. In the mind,



a thought arises. You struggle over this thinking to yourself, "I mustn't let a thought arise." But inevitably another thought arises. Again you think this will not do, but nevertheless again thoughts arise. This is the struggle that arises in the mind. Delusive passion grapples with the desire for enlightenment giving rise to the struggle within the mind. This is mentioned in Picture One, "Winning and losing consume you like flames. Right and wrong rise round you like blades."

The more you do zazen, the more your consciousness became confused. That's good or that's bad: I'm winning or I'm losing, she's nice and he's nasty—there is no end to this stream of unreal thoughts that well up in your mind. But as the training of the ox proceeds, these unreal thoughts fade away; the struggle between delusive passions and the desire for enlightenment subsides. Both delusive passions and enlightenment fade away. Samsara and nirvana fade away. Person and ox fade away, kōans and zazen fade away. This is truly to be immersed in *kenshō*.

When the struggle in the mind has subsided, then the person of no-mind rides the ox of no-mind home. There is nothing to be bothered about and nothing about which to feel constrained. Become like this and everywhere is home. Bankei Zenji often said, that when you become the master of the world, the entire world becomes your own home. Wherever you go, you need feel no reserve. When Shakamuni attained satori, he became master of the world. Wherever he went, he never had to worry about food. Wherever he went, he was always welcomed enthusiastically. He never had to worry that he was imposing on people. In this way, the person of no-mind rides the ox of no-mind home.

You sing woodsmen's village songs and play children's country tunes.

Woodsmen sing simple, innocent songs. Once you have become no-mind, complicated music like "Chidori no Uta" or a Beethoven Symphony become unnecessary. The master of the world does not need to have anyone stand around and listen. You have fun by yourself. Having once become childlike in heart and mind, you are content to sing folk songs or children's songs, simple songs that require no technique or artifice. In pictures you often see the scene depicted here, of a young boy perched on the back of an ox playing his flute.

Stretched out on back of your ox, you gaze at the sky.

You lay your no-mind body down on the back of the no-mind ox and leave everything up to the ox. The ox will not wander into someone else's field nor will it stick its nose into piles of garbage. Leaving everything up to the ox, you look up but see nothing but the vast, vast sky. You gaze only at the blue sky and see nothing on the ground. Since no things are seen, no thoughts arise.

This is truly a carefree scene. Here you have reached the pinnacle of life. One who says I want this or I want that, I want to do this or I want to do that, is still wandering around in life's path. But when you have reached the peak, there is no need to climb anymore, no need to toil and sweat anymore. You just gaze at the sky or look down at the world below. Looking down, you see others still sweating and climbing while muttering to themselves, "We're halfway there" or "We're three quarters of the way there." Yes, it's tough. There's still more to go. It's where you want to give up and turn back. Those who are still thinking about making money, about making a name in society, are wandering around at the half way point.

You stretch out on the back of the ox and gaze at the sky. There is nothing under the sun you seek. Though you seek nothing, everything is given. Because it is all your own home, you pick up whatever you feel like and there is no one to complain. Without asking for anything, all is provided. This consciousness is "Riding the Ox Home".

We call you but you won't turn around, catch at you but you won't be tied down.

At this stage, even if one were to call at you, you would not even glance back. Even if one tried to turn you from the world of discrimination, even if one attempted to pull you away from the world of delusive passion, you would not look back. Answering only "Is that so?" you are not caught up by such things as "absolute equality," "nondiscrimination," "not one thing" and so on. "Catch at you" refers to catching fish in baskets. But even if one were to try net you or scoop you up, you will not be kept. Promptly you hurry on home. You do not get caught up in either the world of discrimination or in the world of equality. You do not get caught up in either the world of unreal



thoughts or the world of satori. You traverse heaven and earth having attained the great freedom of never being caught up by anything. This is the consciousness you attain from having mastered how to ride the ox. Yet you do not wander away. You return right to the beginning to start again from scratch. This is riding home on the ox.

VERSE:

Riding high on your ox, leisurely you head for home.

You worry neither about seeking satori nor about extinguishing delusive passion. Cutting off all thought, there is no one in the world you think either nice or nasty; with the mind of no-mind, you meet everyone as if for the first time. With that relaxed and expansive attitude, you casually leave everything to the ox so that wherever it goes you are at home. Leaving everything completely to the ox, you return home.

Trilling on a nomad's flute, you leave in the evening mist.

The flute referred to here is one that the nomad tribes west of China used, a flute perhaps like the ones blown by the ancient Turks or Persians. Here, you sit astride the ox blowing your flute; relaxed and at ease, you are going home. The evening mist that is starting to close round the surrounding mountains beautifully catches the light of the setting sun. Who needs enlightenment or delusion, samsara or nirvana?

In each beat and verse, your boundless feeling,

Alone you clap your hands in time, alone you sing to yourself, full of a truly bright and peaceful cheerfulness. When the heart is full of such bright cheerfulness, then by itself a cheerful song comes from your lips.

To a close companion, what need to move your lips?

The words "close companion" here translate a Chinese word written with the characters for "know" and "sound"<sup>1</sup>. A person who truly knows your heart and state of mind is called "know-sound,"

"one who knows by sound." According to the classical Chinese work known as *Resshi* (Ch. *Lieh-tzu*) there was in ancient times a great master of the Chinese lute called Hakuga. Hakuga had a close friend named Shō Shiki. Shō Shiki could tell Hakuga's state of mind just by listening to the melody which Hakuga played on the lute. When Hakuga was feeling happy, Shō Shiki knew this just by listening to the Hakuga's playing of the lute. Thus the term "one who knows by sound" has come to mean "close companion", one who knows immediately the other person's state of mind. When Shō Shiki died, Hakuga felt that there was no longer anyone left who could understand him, no one who truly knew how to listen to his music, and so, he cut the strings of his lute. This is what is meant by a true close companion, one who knows by sound.

Such close companions who know each other's heart do not have to speak to each other, do not have to actually utter words with their lips. They have no need for formal greetings like "Hello" or "Good-bye". They do not quibble with each other. When Hakuin Zenji was at the temple Shōju-an in Iiyama, he was hounded and ridiculed by his master, Shōju Rōjin, "the old man of Shōju". He was working on the kōan, the Death of Nansen, "After Nansen died, where did Nansen go?" No matter how many times he went to *sanzen*, he always received a beating. On one terrible occasion, he was even kicked out of the house and fell into the mud left by the recent rains. Again and again he was treated terribly. But for Hakuin, this treatment made his kōan a matter of life and death. By day, by night, he maintained kōan *samadhi*. Ceaselessly he worked on his kōan. Even while begging out in front of farmers' houses, he was sunk in kōan *samadhi*. Always his concentration was on his kōan. Once when an old woman yelled at him, "Go away!" he did not notice. He was concerned only with "After Nansen died, where did Nansen go?" The old woman lost her temper. "So this monk can't hear, eh?" she said and smacked him with her broom. Hakuin fell over on the spot. Passersby got excited thinking that the monk may have suddenly fallen over dead. A large crowd gathered round making a great commotion when all of a sudden he came to his senses. At the very moment of his coming to, he jumped to his feet laughing, "Ha, ha, ha, ha." Leaving behind the crowd which was startled to see a supposedly dead man come back to life, he raced back to Shōju-an. The Shōju Rōjin took one look at Hakuin's face and



without a word knew. He was holding a fan in his hand and with this he just fanned Hakuin's back. "So now you know. So now you know." Close companions do not need to say anything to each other; awakened companions do not need to explain. From just one look at the other's face, they will know.

## WAKA:

Lowling at mind  
limpid and soaring  
sky.

White clouds are coming back to the peaks.

When the ox has no-mind, then the self who rides it too has no-mind. When the blue sky is no-mind, then the clouds too are no-mind and all who see or hear are also no-mind. With the mind of no-mind, low at the blue sky, sing woodsmen's songs, play children songs on the flute. Then floating along like the fleecy clouds on the mountain peaks, without attachments or hindrances, come home.

## PICTURE SEVEN

## The Ox Forgotten, the Self Remains



第七 忘牛存人



PREFACE:

The Dharma is not dual, the ox just points to our subject.  
As rabbit and snare differ in name, so fish and net are not the  
same.

As gold comes forth from dross, so the moon emerges from  
clouds,

A shaft of its icy light, ancient even in the age of Ion.

VERSE:

Astride your ox, you've reached the hills of home.

With ox put away, you too are at ease.

The sun's risen three poles high, yet still you're dreaming.

Your whip and line hang idle under the thatched eaves.

WAKA:

Hard to take

People who fret over good and bad.

Knowing nothing of Naniwa reeds.

At the sixth stage, you tamed the ox completely, made it your own, and then rode that ox back to your original home. This was a way of talking about attaining satori. It is fine to have attained satori, indeed, it is truly wonderful, but clinging to it is a kind of sickness.

In life, you need money to do anything. Even to do good, you need money. Just to do social work, you need money. First, you need money; second, you need money. But once you have money in your hands, do you think you will be able to accomplish that socially useful work according to plan? Perhaps you are thinking that once you have financial security, you will be able to make a proper contribution to social betterment. But it is not so simple, for you get trapped by your own money. You made money to do something for the world. You made money to provide security for yourself. But the possession of this money in itself becomes a source of anxiety. You start thinking to yourself, is someone going to steal my money? Am I going to lose it? It seems like a waste to give my money to someone. And with this you render yourself incapable of doing anything. You don't know what is what any longer.

After long arduous practice and self-discipline, you finally attained *kenshō* and now declare that you must save all sentient beings; this is a fine accomplishment, but having completed the practice, you then get trapped by satori. You start saying things like, "I've had *kenshō*; I'm not your average monk. I must have a bigger cushion and my tea must be served in special utensils. I have completed Zen practice so that means I can drink; I can do anything I want." In this way, satori makes people into its servant and strips them of their freedom. This is what is meant by the phrase "fettered by the Buddha, fettered by the Dharma".

That is why when you have attained satori, you must forget about satori. When you become a rich man you must forget about your money. The *Heart Sūtra* contains the phrase "No wisdom and no



attainment". This means that fundamentally there is no knowing anything and no gaining anything. Intrinsic wisdom begins when there is no longer anything strange or unusual. Where there is no attaining satori, that is satori. This is what is meant by "Forgetting the Ox". It means to forget that very ox that you strove so hard to get.

PREFACE:

The Dharma is not dual, the ox just points to our subject.

If you penetrate the Way, then the Dharma is just one. The *Lotus Sūtra* says "There is only the Dharma of the One Vehicle, not of two or of three." The *Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra* speaks of "The Dharma gate of nonduality". There is no dualism in the Dharma. There cannot be any dualism between the self that captured the ox and the ox that was captured. If there is any distinction between the self that was awakened to the Dharma and the Dharma to which the self was awakened, that awakening is not genuine. Self and ox are one. Satori can only be that place where self and Dharma are one, where person and ox have become one entity. However, the ox pictured here is being used only as a symbol, as a convenient teaching device. And the search for the ox represents the practice and discipline required in seeking the Dharma. We have used the ox just as a provisional way of talking about buddha-nature. In the *Chuang Tzu*, there is a similar metaphor.

As rabbit and snare differ in name, so fish and net are not the same.

In order to catch a rabbit, you set a snare but the object is to catch a rabbit, not catch a snare; when you have caught the rabbit, you no longer need the snare. The ox is used in the same way. As a means of achieving awakening to buddha-nature, we created a snare called the ox. But once you have understood buddha-nature, you no longer need the ox. "Ox" is another word for the snare here. A bamboo trap is used for catching fish but once the fish has been caught, the trap is no longer needed. You forget about the trap. In order to awaken to buddha-nature, you went searching for, and finally caught the ox but once awakened to buddha-nature, you no longer need the ox. The fishtrap is like the ox, the fish like buddha-nature. The difference between fishtrap and fish is like the difference between ox and buddha-nature.

As gold comes forth from dross, so the moon emerges from clouds,

When you have caught the fish, you forget about the trap. As in the refining of gold from ore, once refined, that gold never again can be returned to ore. Once it has been refined into pure gold, even if it should be buried a thousand years, it will always shine. That changeless quality is what makes gold valuable. In the same way, once you have attained satori, once you have separated out satori from delusive passion, then that satori never gets mixed together again with delusive passion. Clouds cover over the moon and then part. The clouds may have obscured the moon but the moon itself was always shining. If only the clouds part, the moon must appear. The moon of our heart-mind is hidden and cannot be seen because of the clouds of unreal thoughts and delusive passions; it is not that there is no moon of buddha-nature. Buddha-nature is always there. When you sit quietly in zazen, the clouds of unreal thoughts and passions lift to reveal your own heart-mind as full and round as the autumn harvest moon. You must see it for yourself. When you attain that condition where the clouds part and that splendid full moon floats in the sky, then if you press *MU!* even further, that *MU!* will light up the entire universe of the three thousand worlds. When you enter the *sanzen* room, there is no distinction between male and female. There is no need for formality and reserve. You must bring with you that *MU!* which, like the full moon, lights all heaven and earth.

Hōnen Shōnin expressed it in verse:

Don't think there's light only after the clouds part  
Always in the sky, the dawn moon.

The clouds part, and perhaps you may be thinking, "Now the moon will come out," but it is not like this. What Hōnen Shōnin is saying is that in zazen the clouds part to show the moon which has always of itself been shining brightly.

A shaft of its icy light, ancient even in the age of Ion.

The light of that moon is a shaft of icy brilliance, truly awe-inspiring. Its chill light causes one to shiver and tremble just as does



the cold light of the frosty moon. And it has been shining from before the age of Ion.

Legend says that the Buddha named King Ion (King of Imposing Sound) was the most ancient of Buddhas, the very first Buddha to appear in our world.<sup>1</sup> "Before the age of Ion" then means that age before even Ion Buddha was born. Since Ion Buddha was born a billion, billion *kalpas* ago, that light has been shining for more than a billion, billion *kalpas*. The light of buddha-nature shines right through the innumerable *kalpas* of past, present and future; it penetrates all infinite space and endless time. This is "a shaft of its icy light, ancient even in the age of Ion." Vertically it pierces right through the three worlds; horizontally it embraces the ten directions.<sup>2</sup> To truly appreciate this, the light of buddha-nature, is the meaning of "The Ox Forgotten, the Self Remains." Look at the picture for "The Ox Forgotten, The Self Remains"; the ox does not appear in the picture and it looks as if the ox has been put away in a stall. Only the self remains sitting alone. Here an appropriate verse has been appended.

VERSE:

Astride your ox, you've reached the hills of home.  
With ox put away, you too are at ease.

Once you have managed to ride home on your ox, there is no longer any need for it. Since there is no need to keep hold of the line, you can let it go. You may let the ox go wherever it wants to go, let it do whatever it wants to do, whether it be feeding on grass or lying in the fields. You can forget about the ox altogether. The fact that the ox is entirely gone means that buddha-nature is completely superfluous. There is nothing to seek. There is nothing in the world that you are searching for. All you do is eat when food appears, drink when a drink appears. An old saying goes: "When hungry, I eat; when tired, I take a nap". This is the scene when you reach the last station at the end of the railroad of life. Once a student came to me and asked me, "What is the purpose of life?" When I replied, "To play," he was disappointed. "Just to play, is it?" he asked and went away. But, if you are still thinking that life must have a purpose, then you have not yet arrived at the last station at the end of the railroad of life. When you arrive at the last station at the end of the line, you play. In the *Kannon Sūtra*, it is writ-

ten, "How does the Bodhisattva Kannon play in this Saha world of suffering?" When Kannon comes to save sentient beings in this world, the Bodhisattva is "playing". When you have reached the last station at the end of the line, there is nothing to seek—all one does is play. "You too relax." Here, to have things is fine; not to have them is also fine. To live is fine, to die is also fine. To be happy is fine; to be sad is also fine. If it rains, that's fine; if it shines, that too is also fine. Every-day is a good day. Everyday is a good day.

The sun's risen three poles high, yet still you're dreaming.

The red sun has risen as high as the top of three bamboo poles tied end to end and still you are fast asleep. You are home after being away for so long. Now, there's no need to be formal with anyone, no need to always be bowing to people. You just let out a big yawn and lie spread-eagled on the floor. Spiritually we have all been lost and wandering on a great journey since birth. In fact, it is not just since birth; from beginningless aeons ago, from before the beginning of the world, we have been spiritual vagrants. And now, we have come home, returned to Buddha. "Mama, let me sleep in tomorrow. Let me snore and sleep for three days." Once in your life, you must know what this is like. For so many years, you sought the Buddha Way to make it yours. Now there is nothing left in all the world for you to seek.

Your whip and line hang idle under the thatched eaves.

You no longer need the whip and line which you used right up to the end. Now unnecessary, you toss them into a corner of the closet or wood shed. Those precious works like the *Hekigan-roku* (*Blue Cliff Record*) or the *Gateless Barrier* or even *The Ten Oxherding Pictures*, which you thought would be important someday, you find are now boring and useless. *Kōans*, *inka shōmei* (seal of approval),<sup>3</sup> even these have become irrelevant to you.

When Rinzai Zenji was taking leave of his master Ōbaku Zenji, Ōbaku ordered his attendant. "Attendant, bring me the back rest and lectern of my late master, Hyakujō". Ōbaku was intending to give Rinzai *inka shōmei* and thus ordered the back rest and lectern which he himself had received as *inka shōmei* from his own teacher



Hyakujō. At this, Rinzai told the attendant, "Attendant, bring me some fire." He meant, "I don't need those things. Burn them." Once you truly understand, then such things are unnecessary. The robe and bowl handed down from Shakamuni are unnecessary; kōans are unnecessary. The whip and line are put away in the wood shed. Ikkyū has written a verse:

How pleasant to live in the house of emptiness  
And with Sumeru for my pillow to sleep alone.<sup>4</sup>

Return to your original home and the whole world becomes yours: you are master of the world. No need to be formal for any reason. Take Mount Fuji and make it your pillow. Takasugi Shinsaku is said to be author of a similar poem:

I'd like to kill the crow of the three thousand worlds,  
Become the master and sleep in late.

But this is a different kind of consciousness; this is the hemmed-in mind of the person who always has to share his bed with someone else. He is talking about the person who does not know what it means to sleep in till noon, who has not realized that there is a world of unsurpassed buddha-nature, who is still wandering around in the world of discrimination saying I'm right and you're wrong, I win and you lose.

WAKA:

How pointless  
People who fret over good and bad.  
Knowing nothing of Naniwa reeds.

Along the Yōdo River near Osaka, there are stretches of Naniwa reeds. These reeds are called *ashi* by the local people but in other parts of the country, they are called *yoshi*. Now, there is a pun here. The Japanese word *yoshi* can also mean "good" and the word *ashi* can also mean "bad". Fighting over whether something is good or bad (*yoshi* or *ashi*) is like fighting over the name of the reed (*yoshi* or *ashi*). No matter what you call it, the reed is the same, after all. Similarly, how trivial it is when people fight over whether something is good or

bad; both sides are lost in the world of discrimination and making judgements about everything. So long as they are blundering about in the world of discrimination, both sides are bad, both sides are *ashi*. The fact that they do not realize this is a matter of ten thousand regrets. To penetrate right through judgments about good or bad, isn't that your original face, isn't that buddha-nature? When the clouds of good and bad have been swept completely away, then isn't that the moon of reality shining there? Most people think that the clouds represent the bad and the moon represents the good. But that is not so. Good exists only in relation to bad. It changes depending on the situation at the time, with one's attitude at the time, with the persons involved. It is nothing fixed. When I'm right, he's wrong; when he's right, I'm wrong; and both of us are just fools. To think that the clouds represent bad and the moon represents good is a great mistake; the clouds represent both good and bad. When the clouds of both good and bad have been swept away, then a brilliance appears as eternal and unchanging as the gold which has been refined from ore.



PICTURE EIGHT  
**Forget Both Self and Ox**



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PREFACE:

Shedding worldly feelings, erasing holy thoughts,  
You do not linger where the Buddha is,  
You dash right past where the Buddha is not.  
Don't cling to duality, or the thousand-eyed one will soon find  
you.  
If birds were to bring you flowers, what a disgraceful scene.

VERSE:

Whip and line and you and the ox, all gone to emptiness,  
Into a blue sky for words too vast.  
Can a snowflake survive the fire of a flamepit?  
Attain this, truly be one with the masters of the past.

WAKA:

No clouds, or moon, or cassia tree,  
Swept clean,  
Lost in the sky.



In this, the eighth picture titled "Forget Both Self and Ox", there is no satori or awakening, no Dharma to be awakened to, and no self awakened. Here buddha-nature stands completely and totally revealed. This is the culmination of practice and the completion of discipline. It is, in other words, the perfect circle. Zen monks have been drawing the circle since ancient times and to the drawing of the circle, they have appended verses like "Is this a rice cake, or a dumpling, or a barrel hoop?" and "Eat this and then go have some tea." Sengai's verse was "Thirteen, seven."

These verses are saying, these perfect things are our buddha-nature. Perfect roundness suggests vast emptiness. It lacks nothing and has nothing in excess. It is neither male nor female, neither young nor old, neither rich nor poor, neither learned nor unlearned, neither good nor bad. It is the complete just-so world of satori.

#### PREFACE

Shedding worldly feelings, erasing holy thoughts,

Those worldly feelings, like needing a drink or desiring a pretty girl, have long ago disappeared. Now you are like a completely polished mirror, like the frosty moon shining with its cold clear light. And, if you are asking, is there here anything that smells of something wonderful like satori, that too is gone.

Once there was a man who was thinking of giving his daughter in marriage. He had his daughter visit a teacher of ethics so that she could learn the attitude proper to a young wife. When she came back, he asked her, "What did he tell you?"

"He said that when I get married and become a wife, I must not show any filial piety or consideration for my parents."

The father was enraged and stomped off to the teacher's house. "I thought you were a great teacher; I had high respect for you. But it

seems you are an utter charlatan. You tell young women who are going to get married that they should have no consideration for their parents. That's outrageous! Are you serious about this heartless attitude towards parents?"

"Ridiculous! That's not what I am saying. One should not be considerate of parents but, even more, one should not be inconsiderate of parents. If you go around thinking, 'Now I'm being considerate of my parents,' this is not really being considerate of your parents."

In the same way, if you go around thinking, "I've had satori, I'm enlightened," this is not really satori or enlightenment. If you think "I am pure in mind," then you have just muddled it.

You do not linger where the Buddha is,  
You dash right past where the Buddha is not.

You must not loiter around any place where the Buddha is or where there is satori. These days there seems to be a lot of "Thank you," and "I am much obliged to you," and "You shouldn't do that just for my sake," on every occasion. There is nothing wrong in all this. There is a lot of religious feeling here, but, so long as there is any feeling of gratitude left, it is not genuine. People who say such things have not yet returned to their original home. They are still guests in the house of Buddha; that is why they go around being so polite.

There was once a *myōkōnin*<sup>1</sup> named Shōmatsu in the region of Sanuki who one day was taking an afternoon nap in front of the image of the Amida Nyorai Buddha. One of his companions came upon him and scolded him. "Hey, Shōmatsu, you fool. You're displaying improper behavior in front of Amida Nyorai. No one lies down and takes a nap in front of the Buddha."

At this, Shōmatsu drowsily propped himself up and said, "It's just because this is right in front of our *oya* ['parent'] that I was taking my nap here. You think that you mustn't take a nap in front of our *oya*, but that shows you are only a step-child of the Buddha." So long as you are still going around saying "Thank you" and "Excuse me", you still have not gone home to your Mother and Father, to your *oya*; you are just visiting as a guest.

The Preface says not to remain in any place where the Buddha is, not to stay in any place so restricted and confined. If so, does that



mean we should stay in some place where the Buddha is not, where there is no truth? Not at all. The preface continues, "You do not linger where the Buddha is, You dash right past where the Buddha is not." Where there is no Buddha, run smartly past without a backward glance. You should not associate with the "Thank you, thank you" group, but that does not mean that you should join the halfwits always hanging around the railway station. Making a display of being considerate toward your parents is bad, but being inconsiderate toward your parents is even worse. Things that smell of Buddhism are disagreeable but things that have absolutely no whiff of Buddhism are even worse. What then should one do? Be complete; be round. Not thinking is best.

Don't cling to duality, or the thousand-eyed one will soon find you.

No attachment to being grateful and no attachment to being ungrateful, no lingering where the Buddha is and no lingering where the Buddha is not—if you can understand this state, then not even the thousand-eyed one can find you. "Thousand-eyed one" refers to the Bodhisattva Kannon who is said to have a thousand hands and a thousand eyes. Not even the many-eyed Kannon will notice you; not even Shakamuni Buddha will know of you. "Recently Daddy's been going to the temple. We don't know what's gotten into his head these days." "My wife has started to get assertive and now she's doing zazen; I'm her husband and even I don't know what's she's thinking." "My daughter these days is acting a little strange. She goes to the temple a lot. She's not like the other girls her age. I don't know what's going on inside her head." Well, you are not supposed to know what's going on. Because nothing is going on. Just that is the state you must attain.

If birds were to bring you flowers, what a disgraceful scene.

This verse refers to an anecdote about the Chinese monk, Gozu Hōyū Zenji who went on to receive Dharma transmission from the Fourth Patriarch Dōshin Zenji.<sup>2</sup> Gozu Hōyū retired to the mountains in order to devote himself to relentless practice and discipline; many people came to him seeking refuge in the Buddha-dharma. It is not surprising that people came to him; his power and attainment were so ap-

parent that it is said that even the birds in the mountain forests came bearing flowers in their beaks to lay before him. Now this is the interesting part. When finally he penetrated the Great Matter under the Fourth Patriarch Dōshin Zenji, the birds stopped bringing flowers to him.

That consciousness that not even the thousand-handed Kannon will notice doesn't amount to much if it can be still spotted by birds in the wild. It should not be recognizable by Tom, Dick or Harry. It's still not good enough if your consciousness is the kind that inspires awe and gratitude in people, that makes people talk about you. If it is, this is a disgraceful scene. The word translated "disgraceful" here is derived from an old Indian word that originally meant "shameful". For a monk in training, to be praised by Tom, Dick or Harry is cause for shame. How much more unsightly are those religious movements these days which lead people around by flaunting their humility and goodness. "He's a living god!" "A miracle has occurred!" If that is what is being said about you, that's bad. And an even uglier spectacle are those people who deceive others into saying such things.

The state of consciousness known as "Forget Both Self and Ox" is a truly elevated state that neither Kannon nor Shakamuni knows about or has even heard of. It is not easy to attain this state. And even should you attain it, people will not recognize it. When it comes to religion, people are really at a low level. When it comes to religion, even cabinet ministers, corporation presidents and important officials suddenly go glassy-eyed.

#### VERSE:

Whip and line and you and the ox, all gone to emptiness,

Both the whip and line which you used to train the ox have now become unnecessary. Kōans have become unnecessary. The person who was awakened and the Dharma to which the person was awakened have all turned into emptiness. All have been swept away leaving not a speck of dust.

Into a blue sky for words too vast.

When clean, clear blue just fills the entire sky, there is no way to communicate that; it is too vast for words. There is no way for you to



send a telegram or write a letter, no way to get even a handhold. It is not transmitted by word of mouth. It is that totally clean state of consciousness which transcends time and transcends space. It is that "Utter vastness, no holiness" of which Bodhidharma spoke.<sup>3</sup>

Can a snowflake survive the fire of a flamepit?

No matter how much snow you put into the red flames of a burning furnace, it all melts away. Willy-nilly it all melts away and nothing is left behind. The snowflake "Good" falls in and melts away; the snowflake "Bad" falls in and melts away. Both enlightenment and ignorance, both devil and Buddha, all melt away. This is the state of consciousness called "Forget Both Self and Ox."

Attain this, truly be one with the masters of the past.

Once you attain this state, you understand Zen for the first time. It means that your mind is just the same as Bodhidharma's immovable mind.

WAKA:

No clouds, or moon, or cassia tree,  
Swept clean,  
Lost in the sky.<sup>4</sup>

Up till now clouds covered the moon causing you worry but now even the clouds have gone. Then the moon came out for you to admire but it too has gone. Legend says there is a cassia tree in the moon but it too has gone leaving nothing behind.

From the beginning nothing in the heart,  
Dream or reality, what do you say?

This is "Fundamentally there is not one thing." This is the "perfect circle." The Buddha— nothing in excess; the fool— nothing lacking. This is the completeness of vast emptiness, the realm of the perfect circle where all has been swept away. There is an old story that Gudō Oshō drew a circle around the great warrior Miyamoto Musashi and

that Miyamoto Musashi could not get out of it.<sup>5</sup> That is what we are talking about, the inner secret of Zen.

This mind is beyond the highest peak of Everest, the world of our highest pinnacle. If you do not penetrate this state to its limits, you cannot say that you have understood Zen. It is not a matter of passing or not passing kōans. It does not matter how many kōans you have passed. Grasp this sharply honed consciousness firmly and for the first time, you will experience *kenshō jōbutsu*, "see your own nature and become Buddha". No matter what you are doing, go straight into the *samadhi* of *Mu*, die cleanly and then do it. It is because you are still trying to save some breath that you fail. You must throw your life away, then there is no self that remains; not even so much as the tip of a hair's worth of self remains. Not even the *Mu!* that you have been working on remains. There is neither training hall nor *sanzen*, just an empty mirror, honed and polished. Not even that remains. This state when attained is called "Directly pointing to one's heart and mind," "Seeing one's own nature and becoming Buddha." For all of us, it is the goal of practice. Everyone, you must all push yourself to the utmost and attain this state at least once.



PICTURE NINE  
**Return to the Origin,  
 Back to the Source**



第九  
 返本還源

PREFACE:

Originally immaculate, without a speck of dust. Watching appearances come and go, you reside in the serenity of non-doing. But this is not the same as illusion, so why cling to it? The rivers are blue, the mountains green. Sit and watch them rise and pass away.

VERSE:

You returned to the origin, went back to the source—such wasted effort.

How much better to just be blind and deaf?  
 From inside your hut, you don't see outside your hut,  
 Let the streams just flow on, the flowers just bloom red.

WAKA:

The Dharma way—no traces—on the original mountain,  
 The pines are green, the flowers glint with dew.



In this, the Ninth Picture, we “Return to the Origin, Go Back to the Source”. What we consider the fundamental nature of the universe is a major life problem. In religion, it is commonly said that God is the foundation of the universe. Christianity teaches that God created heaven and earth, that we all live in the mind of God and that all creatures live and move according to the will of God. Pure Land Buddhism says that Amida Nyorai Buddha is the foundation of the universe and that our existence depends on Amida’s Original Vow. Again, if you ask Buddhist scholars, they will tell you that the foundation of the universe, the substance of the universe, is the “Dharma World of True Thusness”.<sup>1</sup> From the point of view of modern science, however, the universe is fundamentally composed of elements, atoms and energy; the scientists say that the universe is fundamentally material. In philosophy, to say that the universe is fundamentally mind is to assert idealism; to say it is material is to assert materialism. Thus, depending on what fundamental position you take, your outlook on life changes.

Now in Zen, what do we take as the fundamental nature of the universe? It is “Ox and Self Both Forgotten”. Here there is neither self nor ox, only the one perfect circle. Within the pure, immaculate heart-mind in which there is nothing, there is no distinction between self and the world. There are thus no intellectual obstructions or problems about the fundamental nature of the universe, its purpose, etc. For us, what is fundamental is that place where the mind without things dissolves into the world. That place where time and space have been transcended, where self and the world have become one—that is what is fundamental. This is what is meant by the Zen saying, “‘There is not one thing’ is an infinite storehouse, With flowers, the moon, and tall towers.”<sup>2</sup> In the heart-mind, there is nothing. But the heart-mind is identical with, not the least bit separate from, the universe that contains all and everything. What we realize in satori is this, which is fundamental, immovable, eternal in us.

The fundamental does not move or change with our experience. Satori brings us to a realization of this absolutely immovable. Intellectual thinking tells us that we have to believe in the existence of God because it is God who created the universe, does it not? But ours is not this kind of cosmology. Nor is it the kind of logic chopping that says, “No matter what the universe is made of, it still is some thing, isn’t it?” Neither is it the baseless idealism which simply asserts that it is mind which creates things. Nor are we merely offering the explanation that the substance of the universe is the “Dharma World of True Thusness”. That place where immaculate mind without thought is completely identical with the universe and all its myriad things—nothing other than this can be considered an absolute ground. Returning to this place is what is meant by “Return to the Origin, Back to the Source.”

#### PREFACE:

Originally immaculate, without a speck of dust.

That stainless, immaculate place where “inside and outside are fused into one”<sup>3</sup>, where heaven and earth are identical with self, that place is fundamentally stainless, collecting not a speck of dust. As the Sixth Patriarch said, “Originally there is not one thing. Where then is there a place for dust to collect?” This is the purity of looking at a flower when flower and self have become one. If you face the flower and say, “It’s pretty,” then dust collects. If you think, “There it is,” then dust collects. If you think, “Someone grew this flower,” then dust collects. The flower, just the flower, the oneness of the utterly thoughtless flower with the self, that is the place that gathers no dust.

Watching appearances come and go, you reside in the serenity of non-doing.

“Appearances come and go” refers to change in the objective world of material form. “The serenity of non-doing” refers to that state when consciousness is as transparent as a finely polished mirror. This verse can be read in reverse order as well, that is, “Residing in the serenity of non-doing, you watch appearances come and go.” With a mind like an empty mirror, without calculation or discrimination, you



see the ever changing world pass by just as it is. When one can serenely view the world without stumbling over it or without being caught by it, then there is neither good nor bad, neither gain or loss, neither pleasure nor pain. One merely reflects the appearance of things of the world just as a mirror reflects objects.

But this is not the same as illusion, so why cling to it?

The sutras teaches us that our world is like a fantasy, like a dream, like a bubble, like a drop of dew. The world we live in is truly a world of impermanence, constantly changing and shifting, modifying and altering itself with each moment. There is nothing that really exists. In this sense, to look at the world is to conjure up a vision. Now Theravada Buddhism teaches that since this is the nature of our world, one should not acknowledge this world but instead should care only for one's own salvation. But if one has truly opened the eye of satori, then this world of impermanence just as it is the world of Buddha. That is the meaning of, "But this is not the same as illusion." Thus "why cling to it?" The world just as it is, without improvements or amendments or corrections, is the world of the Buddha. Seen with the open eye of satori, the entire world of birth, old age, sickness and death is true reality.

Ryōkan too says, "When you are sick, to be sick is fine; in times of disasters, to encounter disaster is fine; at death, to die is fine." The world of impermanence, when seen in satori, is true reality as it is.

The rivers are blue, the mountains green. Sit and watch them rise and pass away.

The rivers and streams are blue, the hills and mountains are green; the world just as it is is the absolute, our original abode. Look at the world as it is and see it as it is. It is not just that you see it as it is; you see everything as beautiful, as true reality. To open your eyes in this way is to return to the origin, to go back to the source.

Misty rain on Mount Lu, tide in the River Che,  
If I do not go there, a thousand regrets will never let me be.  
I went and returned, it was nothing special,  
Misty rain on Mount Lu, tide in the River Che.<sup>4</sup>

Perhaps you have been longing for many years to actually go and see one of those beauty spots of the world you've long heard about; then finally you go and see only to discover that the so called beauty spot of the world is nothing worth mentioning. When you have gained satori, then the world we live in, just as it is, is the pure land, is heaven. "After satori is the same as before satori." After satori you are the same as you were before satori. Just as you are is fine. You are saved just as you are. "This very place is the Lotus Land of Purity; this very body is the body of Buddha."

#### VERSE:

You returned to the origin, went back to the source—such wasted effort.

In order to return to the origin, go back to the source, you had to exert yourself to the utmost. You left home to search for the ox; you spotted its tracks, caught a glimpse of it and finally caught it; after finally taming and training it, you rode it back home. But then you completely forgot about the ox, forgot the self, and ended up right back where you started. On reflection, it looks as though you went to a lot of unnecessary trouble. All that work for nothing. This here now, just as it is—if this is your goal, then you did not have to put yourself through such great trials searching for the ox. If just this is your goal, then there was no necessity for you to enter a temple and eat monastery gruel.

How much better to just be blind and deaf?

If you have gone to all that trouble and then finally discovered that things are all right just as they are, then it wasn't necessary for you to have tortured yourself in discipline and practice. Right from the start, you should have been just like the blind or deaf. You trip up because you get hooked by external things, get stuck on all those things that fill your thoughts. But, if you can be like the blind who do not get caught up on sights because they cannot see them, like the deaf who do not get caught up on sounds because they cannot hear them, then there is no need for discipline and practice. Is that not so? Fundamentally, the heart-mind you possess has remained as pure and unstained as it



was at birth. Since all you have to do is to return to this thoughtless heart-mind, there should be no necessity to engage in discipline and practice.

From inside your hut, you don't see outside your hut,  
Let the streams just flow on, the flowers just bloom red.

If you are inside a house with the windows closed, then you cannot see what is outside. You have six windows called the six senses, the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and consciousness; but when they are all closed and you are not thinking of anything, when your mind has become like a mirror, this is the place of fundamental purity. Now from this place with no things, if you open the windows and look out, then "the river itself is broad, flowers themselves are red." If you look inside your own mind, there is nothing there. When that mind with no things destroys the shell of no-seeing, no-hearing, no-thinking and you realize that it is one with the outside world, then true reality lies in the natural world as it is, the world where the river itself is broad and flowers themselves are red.

This is the world of "Return to the Origin, Back to the Source". It is just exactly the reverse of the previous stage of the empty circle of completion. If the reverse side is the empty circle, then the front side is "Return to the Origin" where plum flowers bloom and rivers flow. They are like front and back yet they are one.

WAKA:

The Dharma way—no traces—on the original mountain,  
The pines are green, the flowers glint with dew.

The flying bird leaves no footprint, no traces of any kind. In like fashion, the Buddha-dharma leaves no trace behind. The Buddha-dharma is not the Buddha-dharma; that is why it is called the Buddha-dharma. That is the sort of thing the Dharma is. In the Buddha-dharma there are no rules or obligations that say you must believe in this, or you must worship this Buddha, or you must uphold this or that. All you need do is understand your own original heart and mind. This is the Buddha-dharma. In the Buddha-dharma, there are no traces. With that mind without traces, if you look back on the

mountains from which you came, you see that the pines are green and the flowers are red. When you realize that the mind contains no thing, that it is from the beginning immaculate without a speck of dust, then your original mountain home, just as it is, is reality. This self, just as it is, is Buddha. The pines are green and the flowers are red. "This very place is the Lotus Land of Purity; this very body is the body of Buddha."



PICTURE TEN

Entering the Marketplace with  
Extended Hands



第十入麴垂手

PREFACE:

Alone behind a brushwood door, not even a thousand sages are aware. Hiding your light, you shun the tracks of sages of the past. Dangling your gourd, you come into town; thumping your staff, you return to your hut. Visiting bars and fish stalls, you turn all into buddhas.

VERSE:

With bare chest and feet, you come to the market.  
Under dirt and ash, your face breaks into a laugh.  
With no display of magic powers,  
You make withered trees burst into flower.

WAKA:

Hands extended, feet planted in the sky—  
Otokoyama  
On a withered branch perches a bird.



At last, we have come to the final stage in *The Ten Oxherding Pictures*. In the beginning, you set out in search of the ox, discovered its footprints and finally caught a glimpse of the ox itself. Then after catching and taming it, you finally mounted it and rode it home. Once home, however, you promptly forgot about it completely so that you alone remained. The eighth stage was "Forget Both Self and Ox" in which both you and the ox disappeared. The ninth stage was "Return to the Origin, Back to the Source." There you reached that state where the green of the pines, the red of the flowers, this world just as it is, is the source of our universe. Now we are at the tenth stage, "Entering the Marketplace with Extended Hands."

Here Hotei Oshō takes the stage.<sup>1</sup> We do not know very much about Hotei Oshō. According to legend he was a native of Ming-chou of Feng-hua Province in China. He was a person who did not care at all about the way he looked and so had a very unorthodox appearance. He had a narrow forehead, a big stomach and long ear lobes that hung down low. Always dressed in an old robe, he wandered around with a big bag, a straw mat and a staff; whenever he felt like it, he would just lie down and take a nap. If he happened to receive things, he would put them into his bag and when he met any children, he would take them out of his bag and give them away. Talking and laughing, he mingled with the common folk.

This is all that he was, it seemed, but when it finally came time for him to pass away in the second year of Chen Ming of the Later Liang Dynasty (916 CE), he seated himself in zazen posture on a great rock just beyond the deck of a temple called Yüeh-lin ssu, composed the following poem and passed away.

Maitreya, the true Maitreya,  
Embodied in myriad selves,  
Time and again reveals himself,  
Yet no one at the time knows.

After writing this poem, he quietly died. Because he left behind this poem and also because even after his death, there were sightings of him from time to time, people concluded that he must have been an incarnation of Maitreya and so have made him an important figure. If you go to a temple anywhere in China, you will see a large figure of Hotei enshrined right in front of the Buddha Hall. You can also see this in Japan at Manpuku-ji, the headquarters temple of the Ōbaku Zen sect in Uji. Hotei was not worried at all about either his appearance or social standing, and instead, spent his life living among the common folk, helping all sentient being. Because of this he is revered as one of the earthly appearances of Maitreya. Maitreya is the Buddha who will appear in our world 5,670,000,000 years from now. He corresponds to the Messiah in Christianity. Even the Japanese new religion Ōmoto-kyō reveres Maitreya. And in China, Hotei Oshō is greatly revered as an appearance of Maitreya.

Now, we come to "Entering the Marketplace with Extended Hands." Here "marketplace" means village or town. So this chapter is about entering the town, with extended hands, to engage in saving all sentient being.

Up to the seventh stage, "The Ox Forgotten, the Self Remains", there was an oxherd who caught and tamed the ox but at the stage of "Forget Both Self and Ox," even the oxherd disappeared. Now here, all of a sudden, Hotei Oshō appears. There is something inconsistent in the story here. The previous stage was the ninth stage of "Return to the Origin, Back to the Source", of the world just-as-it-is where mountains are blue and flowers are red, of the world which affirmed the manifold material of nature, the Pure Land itself. "To be born in the Pure Land" just means to enter that world. Then from there "To return from the Pure Land" just means to "Enter the Marketplace with Extended Hands". The oxherd who first set out in search of the ox entered the absolute realm of "Both Ox and Self Forgotten", but then when he re-emerges, he comes back as a completely different person, as Hotei Oshō.

Seeking the way, we entered into the samadhi of *Mu* and saw our own nature. This is the realm of "Ox and Self Both Forgotten," the realm of the empty circle. Here after experiencing the sudden awakening of satori, everything we see and hear becomes *Mu*. The mountains and streams become *Mu*; the walls and the floor become *Mu*; any and



all things become *Mu*. When you pass through this realm, the oxherd is no longer an oxherd but transforms into Hotei and re-emerges as a completely different person. This is just like raw ore which is thrust into a red hot furnace; once inside it melts completely and when it is taken out, it has been refined into a magnificent precious metal. The empty circle is the stage where the raw ore is melted completely. When it comes out again, the original oxherd has disappeared and is a magnificent buddha who "returns to transfer merit." There is a Zen phrase, "Don't be intimate with just Jōshu alone; walk hand in hand with the patriarchs of the past." This means, get into the same state, the same world, as Jōshu; get into the same world, the same consciousness, as Shakamuni and Bodhidharma. The oxherd who in his practice pushed himself to the utmost suddenly reappears here at the tenth stage as Hotei Oshō.

#### PREFACE:

Alone behind a brushwood door, not even a thousand sages are aware.

The state of consciousness that has penetrated the Way is known only to itself. This is like a mute who has had a dream; only the mute person can know about it. When the brushwood door has been shut tight, not even a thousand sages, not even Shakamuni or Bodhidharma can visit. This state of consciousness is not something which allows others to drop in for a visit. "Alone behind a brushwood door, not even a thousand sages are aware"—not even Shakamuni or Kannon have any comprehension of our original face where there is no thinking. Though you know that pure immaculate mind which is like the perfect circle of nothingness, still you return to right where you started from, giving no hint that you know. You go back to being a fool and "dim your light and mingle in the dust." Though you achieved a magnificent satori, you put it out of mind completely. That is what is meant by "Alone behind a brushwood door."

This is the consciousness reached by Ryōkan Oshō, or Tōsui the beggar, or Kanzan and Jittoku; such persons give no outward sign of having achieved a magnificent satori but instead return to being fools, return to the world of ordinary people. Hōnen Shōnin said, "Though you may have read the entire Buddhist canon, you must recite the Buddha's name like an illiterate nun who has just entered the

way." That is, no matter what your field, even if you are a scholar who has read all the books in the world, you must not give any air of being a scholar but instead recite the Buddha's name like an illiterate nun who cannot read one letter. The way of a Buddhist cannot be anything other than this.

Hiding your light, you shun the tracks of sages of the past.

Though you attained this unexcelled realm of the absolute, you forget about that elevated realm completely and instead, clad in a ragged robe, return to the marketplace to settle among ordinary people. "The tracks of sages of the past" refers to the patriarchs, high priests and wise men of the past. The path which they have walked, here called "tracks", are likened to rails. Jion Oshō, in what looks like a heavily satirical mood, is saying that you have to get off those tracks.

The priests of old used to put on a gold brocade *kesa* over their regular robe and in addition to doing the rituals, would give a talk or a lecture. This was their way of helping people, but Jion is rebelling against this saying that such a fixed and formal way of doing things is not interesting.

Dangling your gourd, you come into town; thumping your staff, you return to your hut.

Hotei wanders about with no particular destination. Dangling his gourd, sometimes he heads to the outskirts of town, sometimes he heads downtown. And when he gets tired, he trudges on home with his staff. This is Hotei's state of consciousness.

Visiting bars and fish stalls, you turn all into buddhas.

Here "bars" refers to the local stand-up bars. Hotei visits these local bars. He sticks his head in at the late night fried chicken places and takes a seat at the roadside vendors' stalls. This is "Visiting bars and fish stalls". He shares a drink with the fish sellers, Tom and Harry, leaving them with a good feeling. He throws away his robe and naked, jumps right in among the ordinary people. He drinks with everyone he meets and leaves all feeling satisfied. He lets everyone attain some



peace of mind. The people in town, the gang of hoodlums, all are influenced by him and attain awakening. This how Hotei lives. Such is Kakuan's ideal. The ideal is not to put on a purple robe, wear a gold brocade *kesa*, and march in a procession of dignitaries with that sanctimonious I-would-not-harm-a-flea face of one who has attained satori. Instead you must throw everything away, become completely naked, melt completely in with the ordinary people, and live alongside everyone else covered in dust. Then those who come in contact with you will be saved. This is what "Entering the Marketplace with Extended Hands" means.

## VERSE:

With bare chest and feet, you come to the market.  
Under dirt and ash, your face breaks into a laugh.

Hotei reveals everything and has nothing to hide. He needs no shirt; he needs no title. Exposing his hairy chest down to his navel, barefoot he walks the streets of town or heads for the outskirts. Since people will be nervous if he shows that he has attained satori, he does not reveal that he has mastered the discipline nor does he show any trace of learning. He just laughs like a great fool, daubed with dirt and covered with ashes. That laugh! How would you describe it? "Laughter fills your face." He laughs so hard you think that his jaw would fall off. People who come in contact with that laugh return to their original good nature and awaken to their buddhahood. Though he does not preach or lecture, everyone who sees his old monk's face is saved.

Even in to-day's world, there are people who live eight to a tiny 10-foot square room, crowded together so badly that the baby is in danger of being smothered to death. If our religious leaders ignore the condition of society to-day and continue to strut around in their gold brocade robes, society at large can only have feelings of repulsion. To be proud of your purple robe is to be out of step with the times. If you cannot quickly doff those robes and go live at the bottom of the social scale, you are not a person of religion.

What society truly loves is the sight of monks in their hemp robes wearing those wooden clogs with the bamboo cord ties as they visit their parishioners. Children especially are pleased at the unusual sight. It is ridiculous to live in a great temple thinking only of your own life,

being proud of your gold and brocade robes. Kakuan Oshō seems to have exactly predicted modern society. Wearing old clothes, you go out to have tea with the elderly man down the street or share a cigarette with one of the young fellows there. If you can blend in with everyone making no enemies, then at your laugh everyone will experience a change of heart. That is how it should be. "It is not a real laughter, if only your face is laughing and your eyes are not." I do not know who said this but there is a point to this remark. Look at the eyes of a person, or even of a dog or a cat. If those eyes look with malice, then no matter how much laughter there is, you cannot laugh along. If the eyes laugh first, that shows the heart is also truly laughing.

With no display of magic powers,  
You make withered trees burst into flower.

Though Hotei does not use the divine powers or mystical arts of the celestials, though he is not the "old man who made flowers bloom" in the fairy tale, just by laughing and smiling, he leads those who are rough and coarse in heart to discover the light in their lives. He does not preach miracles. He just laughs. He just drinks with them. He just sings with them.

The housewife who thinks she has to support the whole household alone comes to feel there is some point in her life just through meeting this old monk once. The street girl who looks like she is about to freeze out on the corner is saved by this monk and gets involved in some large business. That young kid dressed in outrageous clothes, through sharing a drink with the monk, becomes a young man with sincerity and common sense. Without preaching, without offering his opinion, without giving a lecture, this monk gets in among the people and just by his laughing and smiling, all who meet him come to feel the point and purpose of life, like flowers blooming on a withered tree.

## WAKA:

Hands extended, feet planted in the sky—  
Otokoyama  
On a withered branch perches a bird.



Otokoyama refers to Otokoyama Yawate, a mountain in the Kyoto area. Hands extended, you join hand with ordinary people, with those cast off by the world, with those trampled underfoot, with those not worth a second glance; to go out and join hands with these people is "Entering the Marketplace with Extended Hands". But your feet are planted in the sky. Your consciousness soars like Mount Otokoyama. No matter how much you extend your hands, your feet are in heaven, in the Buddha's world. And though your consciousness is in heaven, your hands reach down to the bottom of hell, into the realm of hungry ghosts. "On a withered branch perches a bird"—like the withered tree that flowers again, light shines again in their hearts of those people who have been cast off into some corner of life.

You set out in search of the ox, spotted the track and caught sight of the ox. Then you caught the ox, tamed and trained the ox, and pushed yourself to the limit in discipline. But the object of all this effort must be to reach this final state of consciousness. When you have reached that highest awakened state where the world, just as it is, is the Pure Land, where you yourself, just as you are, are the Buddha, then you must throw away this satori and for the sake of those in suffering and distress descend to the bottom of society, to the farthest corner of society, and awaken everyone else to this Pure Land as well. You must give this light of Buddha to everyone else too. This is the ultimate purpose of The Ten Oxherding Pictures. With this in mind, I ask you to dedicate and exert yourself to the utmost.

## AFTERWORD

*Kōno Taitsū*

*Rōshi of the Shōfuku-ji Monastery*

In April of 1953, while Yamada Mumon was still the president of Hanazono College, he became the Rōshi of the Shōfuku-ji Zen Monastery. The new monks, recently graduated from Hanazono College in March, with their recently shaved heads were so fresh-faced that steam still seemed to rise from their heads. Taut with both worry and expectation, they passed through the gates of Shōfuku-ji in great numbers. I was one of those monks.

On May first, the opening day of the training term, the text for the lectures was the *Zenshū Shiburoku* (*The Four Texts of the Zen Sect*). I remember clearly that the lectures were first on the *Zazengi* (*The Principles of Zazen*), followed by the *Jūgyūzu* (*Ten Oxherding Pictures*), the *Shinjinmei* (*The Faith in Mind Inscription*) and the *Shōdōka* (*Song of Enlightenment*). The lectures on the *Ten Oxherding Pictures* which are published here were given at that time. Rōshi was 53 years old at the time.

These were Rōshi's first lectures in the Monastery, lectures to young seekers at the start of the path of practice, their eyes gazing at their original home, their feet already on the journey in search of the ox. As I read through them now more than thirty years later, I feel again the closeness and intimacy we monks felt, sitting below the Rōshi's lecture seat.

*Kakuan Oshō's Ten Oxherding Pictures* is called the Zen practitioner's guidebook to the seeker's path, but of course the seeker's



path is not the possession of monks alone. In that sense, it is an outline for life itself, a compass for the sea of life. In addition, it contains many Dharma resources which allow us to re-evaluate our society's culture and civilization from the bottom up.

As I said before, these lectures on the *Ten Oxherding Picture* are reproductions of Mumon Rōshi's lectures given in the monastery and so there may be places where his message not may strike home with lay people. Nevertheless, according to their experience and personality, there are many places where lay people will certainly nod in agreement, and in these lectures they will learn something of that which is ultimate. This was the intention of the original author, Kakuan Oshō.

After retiring from the monastery, Mumon Rōshi filled his days living at the temple Hanazono Reiun-in, indulging in writing verses in calligraphy, radiating his warm smile to all around and in constant contact with people whose lives were thereby spontaneously bettered. He passed away in 1982.

On behalf of all the monks who trained under Mumon Rōshi, I want to say thank you to Yoshizawa Katsuhiko and the staff of the Institute for Zen Studies who transcribed the words from the aging tapes and put them into print form.

1 January 2004  
Shōfuku-ji Zen Monastery

## NOTES

### Foreword

1. Ch. *Guan-yin* 觀音, the Bodhisattva of Compassion.

### Preface

1. *Jūgyūzu* 十牛圖 *Ten Oxherding Pictures*; Kakuan Shion Zenji 廓庵師遠禪師 (Ch. Kuo-an Shih-yüan Ch'an-shih); Jion 慈遠 (Ch. Tz'u-yüan).
2. *Shinjinmei* 信心銘 (*The Faith in Mind Inscription*), *Shōdōka* 證道歌 (*Song of Enlightenment*), *Zazengi* 坐禪儀 (*The Principles of Zazen*).
3. Yamada Mumon Rōshi 山田無文老師, Shōfuku-ji 祥福寺.

### Introduction

1. Original face, J. *honrai no menmoku* 本来面目; Rinzai 臨濟 (Ch. Lin-chi), *kenshō jōbutsu* 見性成佛.
2. 大圓鏡智.
3. 兩鏡相對して中に映像なきが如し.
4. Ikkyū 一休 (1394-1481), an early Zen monk known for his unorthodox behavior and his poetry. A medieval street entertainer suspended a box around his neck which he used as a stage for his hand puppets. He told an entertaining story while manipulating these puppets back and forth from behind the box.
5. 般若の智慧は諸佛の母.
6. 一切衆生悉皆具有如來智慧德相.
7. 本有圓成佛.
8. Three Realms 三界.
9. Four Births 四生.
10. Four Teaching of Methods 化儀の四教, the Four Teachings of Doctrine 化法の四教, and the Five Periods and Eight Teachings 五時八教.
11. Emptiness of Perfect Wisdom: *Hannya no kū*, 般若の空.
12. Wondrous Being in True Emptiness: *Shinkūmyōū*, 真空妙有.
13. Manifold Dharmas are True Reality: *Shobōjissō* 諸法實相.
14. Kashō Sonja is Kāśyapa (Skt.), the Honored One.
15. Not founded on words or phrases: *furū moji* 不立文字. A separate transmission outside scripture: *kyōge betsuden*, 教外別傳.
16. Seigo Kōshō Zenji 清居皓昇禪師.



17. "Adding feet to a drawing of a snake" is a Chinese proverb to illustrate the foolishness of doing what is unnecessary. Several attendants of a lord had received a flask of wine, enough only for one person. They decided to have a competition, the winner to take all the wine. The task was to draw a snake. One man finished first. Congratulating himself on his speed, he said, "I even have enough time to add feet." So he added feet. When another man finished his drawing, he declared that a snake does not have feet and took the wine. Thus the man who finished first lost the wine.

18. *Gateless Barrier* Case 41.

19. To "take refuge" refers to the Buddhist ritual of the Three Refuges. The lay person becomes a Buddhist follower by repeating three times, "I take Refuge in the Buddha, I take refuge in the Dharma, I take refuge in the Sangha."

20. *Ninden Ganmoku* 入天眼目.

#### Picture One

1. *Hotsu bodaishin* 発菩提心, arousing Bodhi-mind.

2. 初発心時便成正覺.

3. Begging outside the gate: *Niwa zume* 庭詰 ("literally, "occupy the garden"). Requesting temporary stay: *Tangazume* 旦過詰, (literally "occupy the temporary quarters"). When a monk asks for entry into a monastery, the monastery refuses him. To show his earnest desire to engage in Zen training, the monk does not withdraw but instead "occupies the garden," remaining in the entranceway bent over in bowing posture all day. After several days, he is allowed to "occupy the temporary quarters" sitting erect in *zazen* all day long under the gaze of the head monk. The entire process may take from 5 to 7 days, after which the monk is accepted into the monastery.

4. *Kanshō* 見性, literally "see one's nature" or "see buddha-nature", the experience of awakening in Zen practice.

5. *Kanshō* 喚鐘 bell. Several times a day, monks in a Rinzai Zen monastery must go to *sanzen* 参禅, where each monk individually enters the Master's room to give an answer to the *kōan* on which he is currently doing meditation. This is signaled by the ringing of the *kanshō* bell.

6. *Zendō* 禪堂, the hall for meditation.

7. *Ibuka Shōgenji no Tairyū* 伊深正眼寺の泰龍.

8. *Rōbatsu* 臘八, literally "12th month, 8". In Mahāyāna Buddhism, the Buddha's original awakening is said to have occurred on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of the 12<sup>th</sup> month. Accordingly the strictest week-long retreat of the year takes place in the first week of December culminating on the 8<sup>th</sup> day.

9. Morning board: *Shōten no han* 曉天の板. A thick block of wood is rhythmically struck with a wooden mallet to mark the time of day.

10. *Seiga-shitsu* 青峩室 *Rōshi* is *Seki Seisetu* 関精拙 of Tenryū-ji (1877-1945).

11. *Confucian Analects* IX, 22: a man must accomplish something by age 40.

12. The clerk Shōtetsu of the Tōfuku-ji: *Tōfuku-ji no shōtetsu shoki* 東福寺の正徹書記.

13. *Sesshin* 接心, literally "confronting the mind", a weeklong retreat of intensive meditation practice.

#### Picture Two

1. Hakuin Ekaku 白隠慧鶴 (1686-1730).

2. 治生産業、違背実相.

3. 草木国土悉皆成佛.

4. 一切衆生悉有佛性.

5. 応無所住而生其心.

6. Zen devil: *Zen temma* 禪天魔. A *Zen temma* is one who has had the experience of satori but has done no scholarly study of the literature.

7. *Tenchi to ware to dōkon. Bambutsu to ware to ittai.* 天地与我同根、万物与我一體. *Blue Cliff Record* Case 40.

8. Samadhi (Skt.): *Zammai* 三昧. Samadhi is a state of deep concentration and tranquility in meditation. It is not the same as the experience of awakening.

9. True insight: *shinshō no kenge* 真正見解 (*Rinzai-roku* §10).

10. 石火光中分縞素, 閃電機裏辨端倪.

11. 柳は染む観音微妙の姿, 松は吹く説法度生の声.

12. 古松談般若, 幽鳥弄真如.

13. In Japanese, the call of the nightingale is *hō—hokekyō*, which is also the Japanese pronunciation of the title of the *Lotus Sūtra* 法華經 *hokekyō*.

14. 溪聲便是廣長舌, 山色豈非清淨身.

15. Training term: *sei* 制. The Rinzai Zen monastery year is divided into two training terms, the "rain retreat" (*u angō* 雨安居), which usually begins in April, and the "snow retreat" (*setsu angō* 雪安居), which usually begins in October. In the early Indian Buddhism before there were fixed monasteries, monks wandered from place to place except for the summer rainy season, during which they remained in one place continuously. The word *angō* refers to the period of temporary residence.

#### Picture Three

1. *Baddabara* 跋陀婆羅 (Skt. Bhadrāpāla) is the unmentioned subject of *kōan* Case 78 of the *Blue Cliff Record*. In Zen monasteries, an image of *Baddabara* is placed near the entranceway of the bath-house.

2. *Shinnōmei* 心王銘.

3. *Mokugyo* 木魚: literally "wooden fish", a wooden percussion instrument, carved in the shape of a fish. It is thumped during the chanting to keep time.

4. *Ippen Shōnin*: 一遍上人 (1239-89) was a practitioner and poet in the Pure Land Buddhist tradition. *Nembutsu* 念佛 is chanting the name of the Buddha, *Namu amida-bu*, the central practice in Pure Land Buddhism. *Hattō Kokushi* 法燈國師, literally "National Teacher Dharma Lamp," is the



title of Shinchī Kakushin (心地覺心 1207-98), the Japanese monk who went to China and on return to Japan, founded the Fuke Sect. At the end of his life, he retired to the temple of Kōkokuji in Yura (由良興國寺).

5. 久遠劫來、無初劫來。

#### Picture Four

1. The first line from Hakuin's *Zazen Wasan*, chanted regularly in Rin-zai Zen monasteries.

2. Here "spirit" translates *kyōgai* 境界. This difficult term could also be translated "world," "consciousness".

3. The ox of Fundamental Wholeness 本分の牛.

4. Rokkō and Arima are rural areas near Kōbe where Shōfukuji, Mumon Rōshi's monastery, was located. Shin-Kaichi and Motomachi are downtown areas in Kōbe.

5. Shichiri Oshō 七里和尚.

6. Gasan 峩山 Rōshi is Hashimoto Shōtei 橋本昌禎 (1853-1900) who was master of the Tenryū-ji monastery from 1895 to 1900.

#### Picture Five

1. Post-satori practice: *Gogo no shugyō* 悟後の修行.

2. The Japanese translation for Christian "minister" is *bokushi* 牧師, literally "herder".

3. *Samśāra* (Skt.) is translated into Japanese as *shōji* 生死, literally "birth and death".

4. Fundamentally there is not one thing: *Honrai mu ichi motsu* 本来無一物. From the poem which Hui-neng wrote to become the Sixth Patriarch.

5. Moment to moment mindfulness: *shōnen sōzoku* 正念相續.

6. Ransan: 懶瓚 (Ch. Lan-tsan), a figure in Zen legend famous for his laziness. The story of him baking a potato root can be found in *Blue Cliff Record*, Case. 34.

7. The long nurturing of the sacred embryo: *shōtai chōyō* 聖胎長養.

8. 已起者莫統未起者不要放起、便勝你十年行脚 (*Rinzai-roku* §19).

#### Picture Six

1. "Know sound" 知音.

#### Picture Seven

1. King Ion 威音王. See *Lotus Sūtra*, Chapter 20, "The Bodhisattva Never Disparaging."

2. The "three worlds" are the past, the present and the future. The "ten directions" are the four cardinal directions (NSEW), the four in-between directions and heaven above and earth below.

3. *Inka shōmei* 印可證明 is a document, or sometimes an object, conferred by a Zen master to his disciple authorizing him to teach.

4. Mount Sumeru, in the ancient Indian cosmos, is the huge mountain at the center of the universe. It stands 80,000 *yojanas* above the surface of the sea. From the top, one can look down upon the sun and moon which, far below, revolve around the base. Vast continents float in the seas in the four directions, including the continent to the south where human beings live.

#### Picture Eight

1. In the Japanese Pure Land Buddhist tradition, *myōkōnin* 妙好人 are persons considered particularly saintly. They are characterized by humility, joy, anonymity and a complete absence of self-regard.

2. Gozu Hoyū Zenji 牛頭法融禪師. Dōshin Zenji 道信禪師.

3. "Utter vastness, no holiness" 廓然無聖. *Blue Cliff Record*, Case 1.

4. The last phrase of the Waka is *uwa no sora*, which "sky above". This phrase contains a triple pun. *Uwa no sora* also means "absent-minded", with the same feel as the English "off in the clouds". As well, the character for sky (*sora*), 空, when read *kū*, is the Buddhist term for emptiness. "Lost in the sky" is our attempt to capture some of these nuances.

5. Gūdō Oshō 愚堂和尚, Miyamoto Musashi 宮本武藏.

#### Picture Nine

1. 真如法界.

2. 無一物中無盡藏, 有花有月有樓臺.

3. 内外打成一片.

4. 廬山烟雨浙江潮, 不到千般恨未消, 到得歸來無別事, 廬山烟雨浙江潮.

#### Picture Ten

1. Hotei Oshō 布袋和尚 (Ch. Putai Hoshang).