

Zen Ox-Herding Pics – Part 2 of 3 ~ Shinzen Young

00:00:00 Taming the ox.

00:00:19 You internalize the enlightenment to the point where it can't slip away from you and

00:00:29 doesn't run wild.

00:00:33 It follows you.

00:00:38 And as wonderful as that is, that cannot be compared to getting on the ox, actually riding

00:00:51 it.

00:00:52 This is awesome.

00:00:55 People are really afraid of this.

00:00:57 It's one thing to see the ox, even to catch it, even to sort of get it to be manageable.

00:01:07 This is the ox of consciousness.

00:01:11 The samgau.

00:01:18 When it comes to riding on the ox, that's scary.

00:01:23 Some of you are facing this stage.

00:01:28 If you look carefully, you'll see the ox is going this way.

00:01:38 See the boy?

00:01:40 He's playing a flute, quite relaxed, but he's looking the other way.

00:01:48 He's riding the ox backwards.

00:01:52 You understand?

00:01:56 There's no informed consent to enlightenment.

00:02:01 Enlightenment is better than you think it is and not nearly what it's cracked up to

00:02:06 be.

00:02:08 Which one of those did you want to hear?

00:02:11 Both or neither?

00:02:16 Enlightenment is like continually falling off a cliff and being completely comfortable

00:02:22 with that.

00:02:25 A great and powerful beast carries you.

00:02:33 You have to give up your investment with where it's going.

00:02:41 It's the ultimate act of surrender, riding the ox backwards.

00:02:46 The flow of impermanence.

00:02:51 It's like falling down, but you don't fall down.

00:02:56 You fall up into existence moment by moment, which is what pratityasamutpada

means.

00:03:03 It's a falling, but a falling up without any fixation, without needing to know what's going

00:03:13 to happen next.

00:03:14 You simply fall into what needs to be done moment by moment.

00:03:23 This might be called the act of true faith, as opposed to belief, which is holding onto

00:03:32 something.

00:03:33 Faith is letting go of the need to be oriented, the need to have answers.

00:03:45 This is surrendering to the flow of expansion and contraction, riding, riding on the wave

00:03:54 of the dynamic wave of nothing whatsoever, and letting it carry you.

00:04:06 So that's quite a profound act of faith.

00:04:12 What comes next?

00:04:23 The ox has now carried you home.

00:04:29 He's home.

00:04:34 And he's completely at rest.

00:04:40 He's found final repose of the spirit in his home.

00:04:48 And the ox is gone.

00:04:52 Only who he really was remains.

00:04:58 Just the person.

00:05:01 That true, authentic human with no fixated position whatsoever.

00:05:11 And no more need for a mind as an object.

00:05:19 He's home.

00:05:21 He rode the ox home.

00:05:24 Complete enlightenment.

00:05:27 Nirvana.

00:05:30 But there's three more pictures.

00:05:34 What could they possibly stand for?

00:05:38 Well if you read the books, they give you various explanations.

00:05:46 But I was privileged to discuss these pictures with a Japanese Zen master many years ago,

00:06:00 who told me that there's an oral tradition about these ten pictures that has not been

00:06:08 written down.

00:06:10 That really it ends here.

00:06:13 This is complete enlightenment, this is final repose.

00:06:17 Pictures eight, nine, and ten represent the substance, form, and purpose of enlightenment.

00:06:32 Substance in Chinese is called Ti, which literally means body.

00:06:41 The form is called Xiang, which means just that, the form or the appearance.

00:06:49 And then what it's good for, what it's used for is Yong, and that's the

application or

00:06:54 the use.

00:06:56 So Ti, Xiang, Yong.

00:06:59 According to this Roshi's oral tradition, the last three of these ox herding pictures

00:07:09 tell us the substance, the appearance, and the ultimate use of enlightenment.

00:07:20 So you can hardly wait, right?

00:07:23 Substance is coming up first.

00:07:25 What it's made out of, the matter.

00:07:29 The matter itself.

00:07:37 And here is the substance of enlightenment.

00:07:41 No substance whatsoever.

00:07:45 Right?

00:07:48 When the emperor asked Bodhidharma, what is the first principle of holiness?

00:07:58 What did Bodhidharma say?

00:08:00 Wide open and nothing holy.

00:08:06 That's the form of enlightenment.

00:08:13 The mountains and the cherry blossoms, the ordinary appearances of the world, every single

00:08:19 thing is the appearance of enlightenment.