



PICTURE 6 – RIDING THE OX HOME

Allow yourself to be playing the flute,
totally carefree riding the ox home.

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?

[Daido Looi/Tanahashi Verse]

Following the winding road you ride the ox home.
The sound of your rustic flute pervades the evening haze.
Each note, each song: feeling unbounded.
Beyond lips and mouth.

[M.H. Trevor/Kennedy Verse]

Slowly and steadily the herdsman rides home on the ox.
In the spreading evening mist his flute sounds far into the distance.
Beat by beat and verse by verse the boundless feeling of the
herdsman rings out.
Listening to this song there is no need to say how things are with
the herdsman.

WAKA:

Lowling at mind

limpid and soaring
sky.

White clouds are coming back to the peaks.

Picture 6 – GUIDING QUESTIONS

Imagine what it would be like for you to live in complete ease with life as it is unfolding for you right now. What does this bring up for you? What vexations are arising for you? How can you practice effectively with these?

Reflect upon these phrases: “not identical, but not separate,” “distinct, but not different,” “not identical, not different.” How do these phrases express the principle of emptiness (sameness or equality) is unified in differences (relative) and cannot be separated?

Imagine that you can be Just As You Are (at Home!) – all your so-called warts and shadows, strengths and weaknesses, need not be hidden and are completely embraced by you. What is the unique expression of your Original Heart?

ASSIGNMENT(S)

1. Allow yourself to be drawn into the picture – feel yourself sitting on the back of the Ox playing your flute, totally carefree. Or peacefully lying on the back of the Ox gazing at the sky!
2. During the coming month, practice being At One with Life As Is, Now, Here. In Zen, we say that this ease comes when one experiences the essential emptiness or equality of all Life forms and how all are interwoven. What are you discovering about this fundamental principle?
3. Share with the eGroup how this fundamental realization is impacting how you are living.