

# ATTENTION AS LONGING

## God desires us and we desire God



### 1. SEEKING THE OX

Desolate through forests and fearful in jungles,  
he is seeking an Ox which he does not find.  
Up and down dark, nameless, wide-flowing rivers,  
in deep mountain thickets he treads many bypaths.  
Bone-tired, heart-weary, he carries on his search  
for this something which he yet cannot find.  
At evening he hears cicadas chirping in the trees.

The Ox has never really gone astray, so why search for it? Having turned his back on his True-nature, the man cannot see it. Because of his defilements he has lost sight of the Ox. Suddenly he finds himself confronted by a maze of crisscrossing roads. Greed for worldly gain and dread of loss spring up like searing flames, ideas of right and wrong dart out like daggers.

## 2. FINDING THE TRACKS

Innumerable footprints has he seen  
in the forest and along the water's edge.  
Over yonder does he see the trampled grass?  
Even the deepest gorges of the topmost mountains  
can't hide this Ox's nose which reaches right to heaven.



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## ATTENTION AS TESTING

we set out seeking what will satisfy our desire

### 3. FIRST GLIMPSE OF THE OX

A nightingale warbles on a twig,  
the sun shines on undulating willows.  
There stands the Ox, where could he hide?  
That splendid head, those stately horns,  
what artist could portray them?



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## ATTENTION AS GLIMPSEING

momentary extraordinary experiences of consolation

#### 4. CATCHING THE OX

He must tightly grasp the rope and not let it go,  
for the Ox still has unhealthy tendencies.  
Now he charges up to the highlands,  
now he loiters in a misty ravine.



Today he encountered the Ox, which had long been cavorting in the wild fields, and actually grasped it. For so long a time has it reveled in these surroundings that breaking it of its old habits is not easy. It continues to yearn for sweet-scented grasses, it is still stubborn and unbridled. If he would tame it completely, the man must use his whip.

**ATTENTION AS FINDING**  
**deciding on a vocation**

### 5. TAMING THE OX

He must hold the nose-rope tight and not allow the Ox to roam,  
lest off to muddy haunts it should stray.  
Properly tended, it becomes clean and gentle.  
Untethered, it willingly follows its master.



Text

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# ATTENTION AS COMMITMENT

## asceticism



### 6. Riding the bull home

Mounting the bull, slowly I return homeward.  
The voice of my flute intones through the evening.  
Measuring with hand-beats the pulsating harmony, I direct the endless rhythm.  
Whoever hears this melody will join me.

六  
騎  
牛  
歸  
家

# ATTENTION AS HABIT

## finding God in all things

### 7. The bull transcended

Astride the bull, I reach home.  
I am serene. The bull too can rest.  
The dawn has come. In blissful repose,  
Within my thatched dwelling I have abandoned the whip and rope.



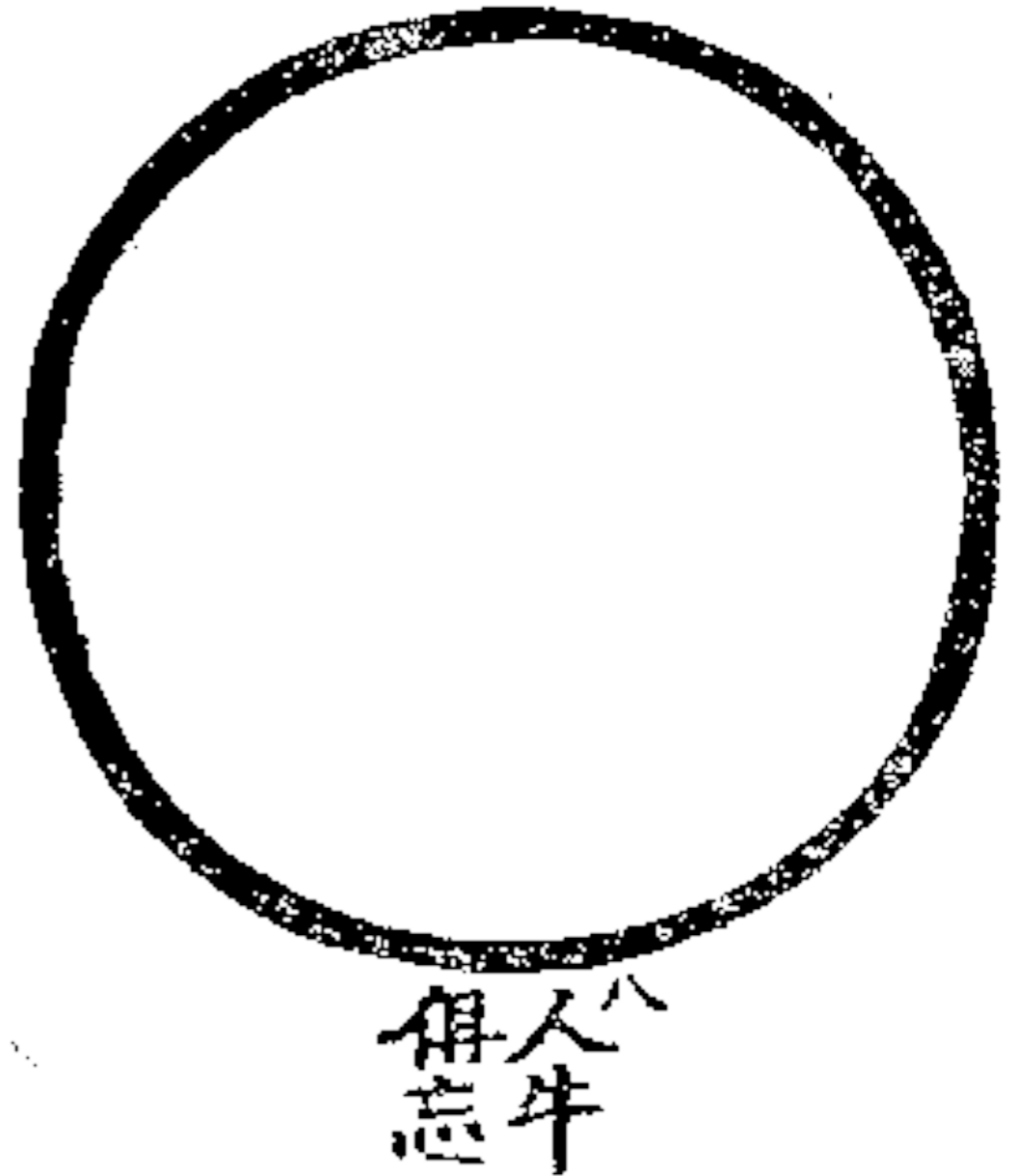
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# ATTENTION AS COMPLACENCY

## being found by God in all things

**8. both bull and self transcended**

Whip, rope, person, and bull -- all merge in No-Thing.  
This heaven is so vast no message can stain it.  
How may a snowflake exist in a raging fire?  
Here are the footprints of the patriarchs.



**ATTENTION AS EMPTINESS**

**nothing matters**

## 9. Reaching the source

Too many steps have been taken returning to the root and the source.  
Better to have been blind and deaf from the beginning!  
Dwelling in one's true abode, unconcerned with that without --  
The river flows tranquilly on and the flowers are red.



# ATTENTION AS SOURCE

## everything matters

10. In the world

Barefooted and naked of breast, I mingle with the people of the world.  
My clothes are ragged and dust-laden, and I am ever blissful.  
I use no magic to extend my life;  
Now, before me, the dead trees become alive.



即和辛卯夏  
富吉郎  
画並刻摺  
十  
入  
手  
鄺

ATTENTION AS CARE

sharing the gift

Illustrations are by Tomikichiro Tokuriki, famous modern woodblock artist from Kyoto.  
Poems by 12th century Chinese master, Kakuan.  
Translation by Nyogen Senzaki and Paul Reps, as presented in **Zen Flesh, Zen Bones**.