

Welcome to the year of the Ox



These photographs are reproduced with the kind permission of the sunims of Songgwang-sa, Korea.

In the twelfth century the Buddhist practice was put into pictures by a Chinese master named Kakuan. He drew a series of ten scenes — the oxherding pictures. These were not the first such pictures, earlier ones ended with the eighth 'Emptiness' (*shunyata*), but Kakuan's version became the most popular and is still being used today.

The following pictures come from Songgwang-sa, Korea, and are found on the outside walls of the Hall (left).

Here is the story of a boy and his ox, but if we want to use these pictures as they were intended, we need to relate them to our own lives.

The pictures represent a meditator, the oxherder, undergoing the process of training the ox (mind). As we see, the herder and his ox are not two.

The whitening of the ox indicates awakening to our true nature.

Did someone forward you this digital version of *Buddhism Now*? If so, welcome! We invite you to subscribe yourself. Simply [click here](#) to get a free subscription.

Regards, Eds



Searching for the Ox

1

Something is lacking from our lives.

The boy has lost the ox. He searches, but the ox is nowhere to be found.

We are just like the boy searching for something. The ox represents our original nature, the buddha-nature, and we are looking for it. We cannot find it anywhere. Where is it, this buddha-nature that we are said to have? All we can see is the confusion and entanglements of our own minds.

The thought occurred to me: 'Why am I, being subject to birth, aging, illness, death, seeking what is also subject to birth, aging, illness, and death?

What if I were instead to seek the unborn, unaging, unailing, undying?

The Buddha
The Noble Search
Middle Length Sayings

'There is, monks, an unborn,' said the Buddha, 'an unaging, undying. If there were not this unborn, unaging, undying, there would be no escape from birth, aging and death.'

Udana Sutta



Seeing the Footprints. 2

The boy spots some traces. He can see a few footprints on the ground where the ox has passed.

Through the teachings we learn that all things, no matter how differently they may appear in shape and form, are made of the same nature, and that we too are of that nature. We begin to understand something about ourselves; we see the traces of something, but do not know it yet as an experience. This is mere intellectual knowledge.

*The herdsman sees
the traces.*

*But what does the
ox look like?*

*Has anyone ever
seen him?*

*How kind the Buddha was
in pointing to the moon.*

The Oxherding Pictures
BPG booklet



Perceiving the Ox.

3

The boy hears the ox and catches sight of him, 'There he is!'

When we meditate, when the six senses are calmed (sound, sight, smell, taste, touch, and the thinking mind), we catch sight of our original nature.

The senses are not confusing the mind.

We see the buddha-nature here and now, and realise it is present everywhere in all things and in all activities — just like salt in seawater. The inner eye is opened and we see that nothing is in the slightest degree apart or separate from what we really are.

*Those who see the
dharma see me.*

The Buddha

Catching the Ox

4

The boy meets the ox for the first time. How wonderful! He throws the noose around the animal's neck and tries to hang onto him, but the ox is powerful and refuses to be controlled. The boy has to cautiously play the rein, otherwise he will lose him again.

Our minds become clear just long enough for the buddha-nature to be fully revealed. We must be careful — not be too lax and not hold on too tightly — otherwise we will lose it again. We need to take the initiative and use wisdom. If we think we are enlightened now because we have seen our true nature and do not have to do anything more, we shall immediately fall back into delusion.

'Who would have thought,' I said to the Patriarch, 'that the Essence of Mind is intrinsically pure! Who would have thought that the Essence of Mind is intrinsically free from becoming or annihilation! Who would have thought that the Essence of Mind is intrinsically self-sufficient! Who would have thought that the Essence of Mind is intrinsically free from change! Who would have thought that all things are the manifestation of the Essence of Mind!'

The Platform Sutra
The Sixth Patriarch, Hui Neng (638-713)

When the mind is clear and thoughts do not carry us away, everything is truth. But when we fall into thinking again and get swept along by it, everything becomes confused. We need to be alert to what is happening, stay awake in the moment, and not sink into the subjectivity which has been our habit.

Q: What method must we practise in order to attain deliverance?

Hui Hai: It can be attained only through a sudden illumination.

Q: What is a sudden illumination?

Hui Hai: 'Sudden' means ridding yourselves of deluded thoughts instantaneously. 'Illumination' means the realisation that illumination is not something to be attained.

Q: From where do we start this practice?

Hui Hai: You must start from the very root.

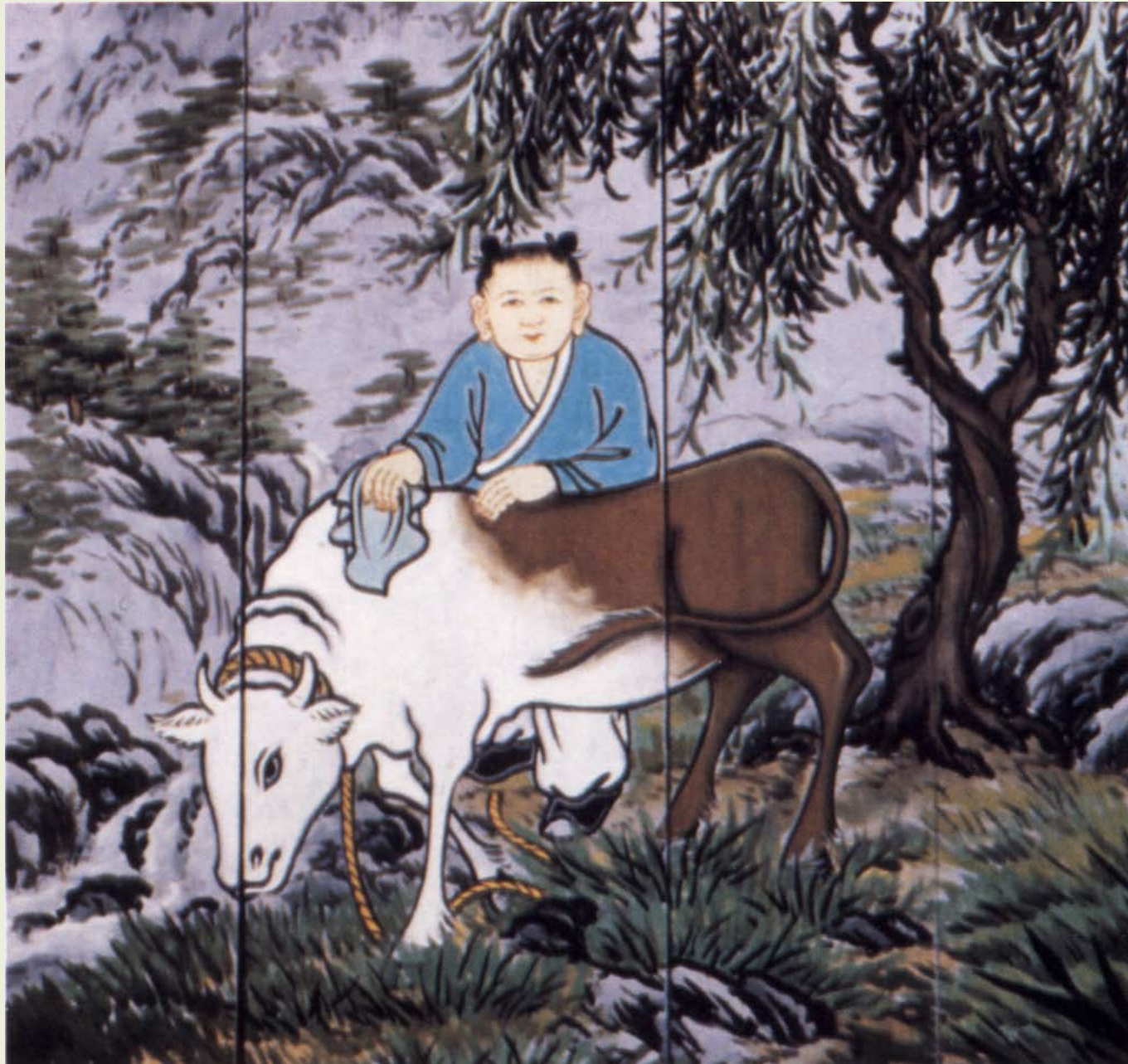
Q: And what is that?

Hui Hai: Mind is the root.

Zen Teaching of Instantaneous Awakening

The teaching of the Zen Master Hui Hai

Rendered into English by John Blofeld





The ox is Tamed.

6

The boy rides home on the ox while playing his flute. His eyes are not on the world as he moves onward. If he is called, he does not turn around; if someone tugs at his sleeve, he will not be enticed back.

The struggle is over. We are no longer enticed by the things of this world and have no concern for gain and loss. We are truly joyful and know that we are going home.

If the *hwadu* [koan] is suddenly broken, a vigour that shakes heaven and earth is produced. It is as if one snatches the great sword from General Guan Yu (the God of War), picks it up in one's hand, and if one meets the Buddha one kills the Buddha, and if one meets a patriarch one kills the patriarch. And even on the hill of birth and death one gains a great freedom, and even in the life of a sentient being, one can enjoy the samadhi of play.

Wumen guan, case one

© 2006 Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism

www.koreanbuddhism.net/hwadu/



Ox Transcended

7

The boy reaches home. He sits alone, quiet and at ease. The moon has come out from behind the clouds. The ox is forgotten.

We used a vehicle to carry us home to our original nature, but we do not need a vehicle now. We see that home is everywhere, and we sit observing the clarity of mind which was shining even before the world began.

Sentient beings are
primarily all buddhas:
It is like ice and water,
Apart from water no
ice can exist.
Outside sentient beings,
where do we find
the buddhas?

The Song of Zazen (Zazen
Wasan) by Hakuin Ekaku Zenji
Translated by Eido Tai Shimano



Emptiness (shunyata)

8

No boy, no ox.

In Zen the circle represents the void. That is not a void of nothingness, but a mind free of confusion. The ever-present nature of buddha, the awakened moment, comes to the fore. There is no thinking involved in this, no thoughts of 'me' and 'buddha', no resting in ideas of 'being at home' and 'at one with the buddha'. There is just the awakened nature without the mind creating ideas about what is being experienced.

Avalokita, the Holy Lord and Bodhisattva, was moving in the deep course of the wisdom which has gone beyond.

He looked down from on high, he beheld but five heaps, and he saw that in their own-being they were empty.

Here, O Sariputra, form is emptiness, and the very emptiness is form, emptiness does not differ from form, nor does form differ from emptiness; whatever is form, that is emptiness, whatever is emptiness, that is form.

The same is true of feelings, perceptions, impulses and consciousness.

Here, O Sariputra, all dharmas are marked with emptiness; they are neither produced nor stopped, neither defiled nor immaculate, neither deficient nor complete.

*The Heart of Perfect Wisdom, short form
Perfection of Wisdom*

The Short Prajñāpāramitā Texts, translated by Edward Conze



The Origin

9

Water is blue, mountains are green.

From the beginning there has been nothing but purity.

The mind has never been affected by confusions and defilements. We see that now. There is no more identifying with the transitory images of the world that we observe.

Life is just as it is.

You're probably asking how rocks, boulders and clumps of mud could give dharma talks. But if you come to understand Buddhism, you'll realise that you should listen to the dharma talks that the boulders are always giving, albeit not in what we know as spoken language. And the boulders aren't the only ones giving dharma talks. Even the formless, shapeless, invisible void gives an eternal dharma talk.

Dharma Talks by the Inanimate

Ven. SongChol

(see *Buddhism Now*, February 2006)

Opening the Eye: Dharma messages by Ven.

SongChol, Korean Chogye Zen master and patriarch,

translated by Brian Barry, 2002,

Gimm-young International, Korea.



Returning to the Marketplace. **10**

Transcending time and space.

We have matured; the buddha-nature functions freely.

We are at home wherever we go and have brought ultimate truth into our normal lives.

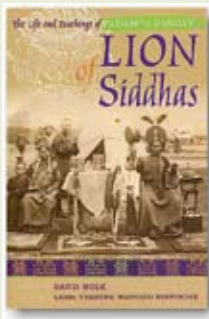
No one knows us. We go on our way with a huge smile and everyone we see is enlightened.

One who sets out on the bodhisattva path should continuously think, 'I must lead all beings to absolute *nirvana*; nevertheless, even when all beings have been led to *nirvana*, no being in reality has been led to *nirvana*.' For if the idea of 'a being', 'an entity' or 'a personality' should arise in him, he is not a bodhisattva.

Diamond Sutra
Perfection of Wisdom
The Short Prajñāpāramitā Texts,
translated by Edward Conze
Buddhist Publishing Group

New Books

* Pick of the pack



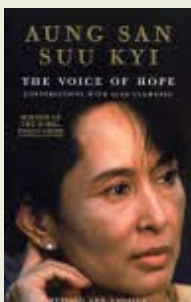
* **LION OF SIDDHAS:** The Life and Teachings of Padampa Sangye by Padampa Sangye, translated by David Molk with Lama Tsering Wangdu Rinpoche \$18.95 338pp Snowlion

Padampa Sangye's teaching methods were unorthodox and sometimes extreme. This transcendent and irascible teacher encouraged his disciples to disregard social conventions, disdain social contacts, and go beyond their cultural conditioning. He inspired innumerable highly realised disciples, many of whom were women.

He [Padampa Sangye] brought the lineage of Chöd to Tibet, carried the Buddha's teachings to China, and is even asserted, in the Tibetan tradition, to have been the legendary Bodhidharma.

Lion of Siddhas presents two extraordinary texts: a biography of Padampa Sangye and a rare collection of his verbal and nonverbal teachings, called Mahamudra in Symbols, recorded by his chief Tibetan disciple almost a thousand years ago. Both are previously untranslated.

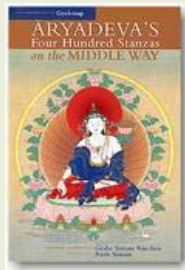
www.snowlionpub.com/html/product_9591.html



* **The Voice of Hope:** Conversations with Alan Clement £7.99 332pp Rider Aung San Suu Kyi is known for her courageous stand for democracy and human rights inside Burma (now Myanmar). Forced to endure many years of house arrest by the military junta, she continues to act as a focus for change inside a country that is ruled by one of the most hard-line dictatorships in the

world. Such is her determined action for the best interests of Burma that she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991.

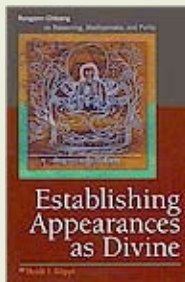
www.rbooks.co.uk/product.aspx?id=1846041430



* **Aryadeva's Four Hundred Stanzas On The Middle Way:** With commentary by Gyel-tsap trans. Ruth Sonam; additional commentary by Geshe Sonam Rinchen 400 pp. \$29.95 Snow Lion

Aryadeva's text is more than a commentary on Nagarjuna's Treatise on the Middle Way, because it also explains the extensive paths associated with conventional truths. The Four Hundred Stanzas is one of the fundamental works of Mahayana Buddhist philosophy, and Gyel-tsap's commentary is arguably the most complete and important of the Tibetan commentaries on it.

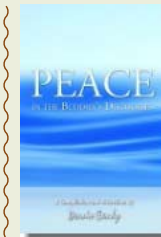
www.snowlionpub.com/html/product_9594.html



* **Establishing Appearances as Divine:** Rongzom Chözang on Reasoning, Madhyamaka, and Purity by Heidi I. Köppl \$29.95 160pp hb. (Tibetan text included.) Snow Lion

In Tantric scriptures one is instructed to visualize oneself as a deity, a divine identity who resides in a perfect sphere. By repeatedly training in this visualization one perfects the transformation and ultimately becomes the deity itself. Do the Tantric teachings hold sentient beings to be intrinsically pure and divine, or do they consider them initially flawed, to be later purified through the visualization of divinity? Is the practice of deity yoga merely a means, or is it more fundamentally connected to the nature of things? These questions were among the main concerns of Rongzom Chokyi Zangpo.

www.snowlionpub.com/search.php?isbn=ESAPDI



* **Peace In the Buddha's Discourses** Dennis Candy, \$3.50, 142pp. BPS The Buddha's discourses as recorded in the Pali Canon contain many references to the value of *santi*, or peace, at both the personal and social levels. The most significant of these refer-

ences have been carefully selected and brought together into this single volume to help those who are interested gain an understanding of the full range and depth of what the Buddha taught about this important subject.

www.bps.lk/peace.html

Introduction to Emptiness: As Taught in Tsongkha-pa's Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path Guy Newman \$14.95 126pp Snow Lion

In clear language, Introduction to Emptiness explains that emptiness is not a mystical sort of "nothingness," but a specific truth that can and must be understood through calm and careful reflection.

www.snowlionpub.com/search.php?isbn=INTOEM

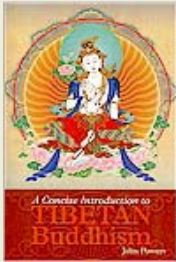
Tsong-kha-pa's Final Exposition of Wisdom by Jeffrey Hopkins \$29.95 410pp Snow Lion

Tsong-kha-pa's Final Exposition of Wisdom explicates ignorance and wisdom, explains the relationship between dependent-arising and emptiness, shows how to meditate on emptiness, and explains what it means to view phenomena as like illusions.

www.snowlionpub.com/html/product_9593.html

All of us at BPG hope that you enjoy reading this e-version of Buddhism Now.

If it has been forwarded onto you and you would like to join our email list please click here to get a free subscription.



A Concise Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism

by John Powers \$14.95 166pp

A Concise Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism explains the core Buddhist doctrines and the practices of meditation and tantra and provides a survey of the four main schools of Tibetan Buddhism.

www.snowlionpub.com/search.php?isbn=COINTI

Destination Happiness

J.P.Vaswani, Rs250, 355pp. Sterling

What is it that you want most in life?

You might start off with money, power, fame, success and other incidentals, until you realize that there is just one thing all of us want out of life, though our backgrounds, personalities, aspirations and goals might seem very different- we all want to be happy!

www.sterlingpublishers.com/bookinfo.asp?na=8120731462

Also received

Wellbeing

Mark Vernon, £9.99, 144pp. Acumen

www.acumenpublishing.co.uk/display.asp?K=e2008011815104844

Vinegar into Honey: Seven Steps to Understanding and Transforming Anger, Aggression, and Violence

Ron Leifer \$14.95 143pp Snow Lion

www.snowlionpub.com/search.php?isbn=VIHOSE

Hurry Up and Meditate: Your Starter Kit for Inner Peace and Better Health

by David Michie \$14.95 182pp Snow Lion

www.snowlionpub.com/search.php?isbn=HUME

Buddhism for Busy People: Finding Happiness in an Uncertain World

by David Michie 14.95 236pp Snow Lion

www.snowlionpub.com/search.php?isbn=BUBUPE

The Wise Heart: Buddhist Psychology for the West
Jack Kornfield, £12.99, 429pp. Rider

www.rbooks.co.uk/product.aspx?id=1846041252

The Best Buddhist Writing 2008

Edited by Melvin McLeod \$16.95 352pp. Shambhala

www.shambhala.com/html/catalog/items/isbn/978-1-59030-615-4.cfm

The Wisdom Of The Buddhist Masters

Common and Uncommon Sense

Robert Sachs, £10.99, 229pp. Watkins

www.dbp.co.uk/book_preview.asp?b_id=581

The Secret Life Of The Universe

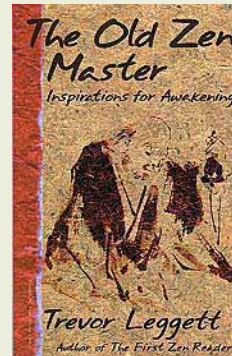
Amy Corzine, £10.99, 276pp. Watkins

www.dbponline.co.uk/book_preview.asp?b_id=579

The Old Zen Master web sale £2 + p&p was £8.99

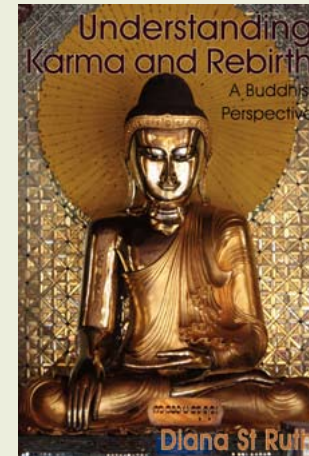
by Trevor Leggett

This is an ideal book for those who know nothing of Zen, and also for those who are long-term practitioners. The author points out that occasionally a new slant, a new angle, or a new illustration-especially if it is an unexpected one-can be a help in absorbing practice, study and devotion.



Trevor Leggett (1914 - 2000), was one of the leading writers on Zen Buddhism in the West. He knew Japanese and lived for a considerable time in Japan. He has written several well-known books on the subject. Among his many books on Zen are *A First Zen Reader*, *The Warrior Koans*, *Zen and the Ways*, *Yoga and Zen*, and *Fingers and Moons*. He was also head of the BBC Japanese World Service for 24 years.

Buy online



Understanding Karma and Rebirth

A Buddhist Perspective

Diana St Ruth

A look into the effects of karma, with meditations and exercises to help us go beyond the concepts of birth and death and to live from the unborn moment.

Buddhism is about becoming aware of what life actually is rather than being blinded by beliefs and

conditioning. The Buddha saw life as a changing procession of conditions, events, and circumstances, one thing leading to another without beginning or end, timeless and limitless. And he recognised that the part of ourselves which is aware, which sees and knows, is never born and never dies. He spoke of a direct 'seeing' into the nature of existence beyond words, beyond the intellect. Understanding the cause and effect process - the nature of karma and rebirth - and what lies behind it is the underlying message of this book.

Diana St Ruth points out that Buddhism is a personal journey of discovery which involves seeing through one's own delusions. She leads us by degrees to a place of awareness, clarity of mind, and understanding.

