



ONE: The Search for the OX

In the pasture of this world, I endlessly push aside tall grasses in search of the OX.

Following rivers of no name, lost in a daze of crossing paths on far-off mountains,

My strength giving out and my vitality exhausted, I cannot find the OX.

At rest, un-resting,

I hear only locusts chittering and chirring through the forest at night.

Commentary:

I have lost the OX; or is it that I have lost myself? Unable to find the OX, I am unable to find myself. How did we become so separated? Looking ever further afield I cannot see my home, nor focus on the near at hand. Stones of sorrow bruise my steps. The whip and rein intended gently to lead the OX instead upbraid and entangle me, so that I cannot move. I must stop.

Yet what is that stirring at my back, over my shoulder?



TWO: Discovering Footprints

Along the riverbank, under trees, I discover footprints.
There!

Even among fragrant soft and springy grass, I see them.
Moving ahead, deep into remote country they go...

These tracks can no more be hidden than the nose on my face,
Raised heavenward.

Commentary:

Some part of the teaching becomes clear to me, as if I had known it all along. Although I cannot see my home, I know that all paths lead there. It is no more a question of this or that, of wet or fair weather, of high ground or valley.

Keeping all in mind together, I find a way, and follow it.

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