

*« Be what you are  
Don't meditate - Be  
Don't think that you are - Be  
Don't think about being - you are »*

*Ramana Maharshi*



*« The single brush stroke is at the origin of all things,  
the root of all phenomenon. »*

*Monk & Buddhist painter Shí Tāo*

Self-enquiry  
'Awareness Intensive Retreats'  
With Rakendra



The Search  
Who is Rakendra?  
The Retreats Series  
What is an Awareness Intensive Retreat?  
Why do it?  
Living Our True Nature

*Flip through.....*



In the course of time, this search for our true nature, for the truth of who we are has been described in numerous ways according to the tradition it was associated with.

In the tradition of Zen Buddhism this description of the search took the form of a series of short poems and accompanying woodcuts that are intended to illustrate the different stages of the practitioner's progression towards enlightenment.

These woodcuts & poems are known as the "Ten Bulls" or "Ten Ox Herding" pictures.

The search is on...



### 1. In Search of the Bull

*« In the pasture of this world,  
I endlessly push aside the tall grasses in search of the bull.  
Following unnamed rivers,  
lost upon the interpenetrating paths of distant mountains,  
My strength failing and my vitality exhausted, I cannot find the bull.  
I only hear the locusts chirring through the forest at night. »*

The bull never has been lost. What need is there to search? Only because of separation from my true nature, I fail to find him. In the confusion of the senses I lose even his tracks. Far from home, I see many crossroads, but which way is the right one I know not. Greed and fear, good and bad, entangle me.

*Chan master Kakuan*



## 2. Discovering the Footprints

*« Along the riverbank under the trees, I discover footprints!  
Even under the fragrant grass I see his prints.  
Deep in remote mountains they are found.  
These traces no more can be hidden than one's nose, looking  
heavenward. »*

Understanding the teaching, I see the footprints of the bull. Then I learn that, just as many utensils are made from one metal, so too are myriad entities made of the fabric of self. Unless I discriminate, how will I perceive the true from the untrue? Not yet having entered the gate, nevertheless I have discerned the path.

*Chan master Kakuan*

## Who is Rakendra?



Rakendra is passionate for a true connection with himself and for a true contact with others, for being 'in love'. Spirituality and personal growth work have played an important part in his life to remove what was preventing love

to flow naturally in him.

His 'quest' brought him to experience that awareness is the key. To be aware of oneself, of the 'strings' that are unconsciously pulling us in directions we don't necessarily want, is liberating. To be aware of what is happening in this ever-present present, to 'be' this present moment, brings tremendous joy, contentment and fulfilment.

Rakendra is now based in Chiang Mai, Thailand from where he travels to many countries sharing his passion for self-enquiry work.

### Rakendra by Rakendra

"I have been enthusiastic about the search, the search for truth since my teenage years. Over the years, I came to experience that 'Truth' is not something that one has to reach but that 'Truth' is always here - now.

On 'The Way', many awakened ones from different streams - Advaita, Zen and Tao helped to fill this heart-longing. paved the way to this experience.

Self-enquiry in different forms has been my path and while trotting along that path, passion came alive in me. It is this passion that brings me to share self-enquiry processes with others when offering intensive retreats or other courses.



I feel fortunate toward living my true nature and I am grateful to those, from different traditions, who have helped on 'The Way'. I also feel privileged to be able to share this 'passionate love affair' with others."

For a more personal contact, write directly to: [rakendra@livingourtruenature.com](mailto:rakendra@livingourtruenature.com)





### 3. Perceiving the Bull

*« I hear the song of the nightingale.  
The sun is warm, the wind is mild, willows are green along the shore,  
Here no bull can hide!  
What artist can draw that massive head, those majestic horns? »*

When one hears the voice, one can sense its source. As soon as the six senses merge, the gate is entered. Wherever one enters one sees the head of the bull! This unity is like salt in water, like color in dyestuff. The slightest thing is not apart from self.

*Chan master Kakuan*





#### 4. Catching the Bull

*« I seize him with a terrific struggle.  
His great will and power are inexhaustible.  
He charges to the high plateau far above the cloud-mists,  
Or in an impenetrable ravine he stands. »*

He dwelt in the forest a long time, but I caught him today! Infatuation for scenery interferes with his direction. Longing for sweeter grass, he wanders away. His mind still is stubborn and unbridled. If I wish him to submit, I must raise my whip.

*Chan master Kakuan*



### 5. Taming the Bull

*« The whip and rope are necessary;  
Else he might stray off down some dusty road.  
Being well trained, he becomes naturally gentle.  
Then, unfettered, he obeys his master. »*

When one thought arises, another thought follows. When the first thought springs from enlightenment, all subsequent thoughts are true. Through delusion, one makes everything untrue. Delusion is not caused by objectivity; it is the result of subjectivity. Hold the nose-ring tight and do not allow even a doubt.

*Chan master Kakuan*

## The Retreats Series

### What is an Awareness Intensive Retreat?

An Awareness Intensive Retreat is a modern format, drawn from the Zen Sesshin, which supports the quest for Truth or Enlightenment. The aim of an Awareness Intensive Retreat is to lead the participant, via the use of a self-enquiry method of communication together with a single pointed instruction into directly experiencing himself in the present moment.

There is no other purpose than to 'Be who you are' or said differently, to 'Experience your True Nature'.

[FAQ's about Awareness Intensive Retreats](#)

## The Retreats Series

### Riding the Bull Home

Experience yourself directly in the present moment  
3-day awareness intensive retreat

Riding the bull home is a metaphor used in Zen to indicate that the practitioner is no longer lured by his illusory mind, by his identifications, his conditionings; he has gain mastery over mind and body.

The 3-day awareness intensive - Riding the bull home - is a fully residential silent retreat. A 72-hour structured process, during which participants are invited to use the self-pointed instruction « Tell me who is in » to directly experience who they are.

The repeated use of this unique koan « Who is in? » acts like an arrow piercing the layers of the mind -- our conditioning, our masks, our identifications with the personality, our beliefs, our pre-conceived ideas. It acts like a torch in the dark, bringing clarity and awareness to what we are not, thus unveiling what we are. It clears the way to experience a state of being where the thinking mind has no relevance.

It is an experience of inner freedom, a liberation from all that up to now was keeping the person in the illusion of identification, of having. The participant reconnects back with its vital energy, symbolized by the bull and move into a relaxed awareness, in the joy of being in the present moment. The door to his true nature opens.

« Man know thyself, then thou shall know the Universe and God -»

[Ancient Greek Aphorism](#)

[More detailed information about this course....](#)

The [Upcoming Events](#) page will tell you when and where the next one is scheduled.



## 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. »*

This struggle is over; gain and loss are assimilated. I sing the song of the village woodsman, and play the tunes of the children. Astride the bull, I observe the clouds above. Onward I go, no matter who may wish to call me back.

*Chan master Kakuan*

## The Retreats Series

### Letting Trust Be

#### Living & Being Trust 3-day awareness intensive retreat

Living Trust moment to moment is the essence of our true nature. Intrinsically we cannot be anything else but trust, we are the very manifestation of trust, we are Trust.

Yet, whether Western or Eastern our conditionings have lead us far away from being trust. Self-confidence, radiance are no longer our attributes. We constantly live in doubt, in fear, in jealousy and in mistrust.

This 3-day awareness intensive offers an opportunity, for those who are interested, to let go of their belief system, of their preconceived ideas related with trust and access a state of being trust, of living trust moment to moment.

« Existence has its own ways;  
Participate, trust and...  
the rest will follow naturally! »

More detailed information [about this course...](#)  
The [Upcoming Events](#) page will tell you when and where the next one is scheduled.





## 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. »*

All is one law, not two. We only make the bull a temporary subject. It is as the relation of rabbit and trap, of fish and net. It is as gold and dross, or the moon emerging from a cloud. One path of clear light travels on throughout endless time.

*Chan master Kakuan*

## The Retreats Series

### Being at the Source

#### Be what you are 7-day awareness intensive retreat

The awareness intensive in its 7-day format is a unique opportunity, for the passionate seekers, old or new, to enter more deeply into experiencing directly their true nature. It is also the opportunity to let go of pre-conceived ideas, beliefs or conditionings linked with a specific aspect of our personality, of the way our mind functions.

To stay in contact day after day with the same question as for example « What is life? » enable the seeker to directly experiencing what life is, and to let go of all pre-conceived ideas and beliefs that we have regarding what life is. A profound de-identification takes place which opens the space to... the reality of what is.

In tune with your intuition or with what feels more appropriate for you, you'll be able to choose one of the koan from the list below and.... why not, directly experience the truth of it and be the answer!

Who is In? - Who am I? - What am I? - What is my true nature?

What is love? - What is sexuality? - What is beauty?

What is truth? - What is trust? - What is freedom?

What is relaxation?

What is another? - What is life?

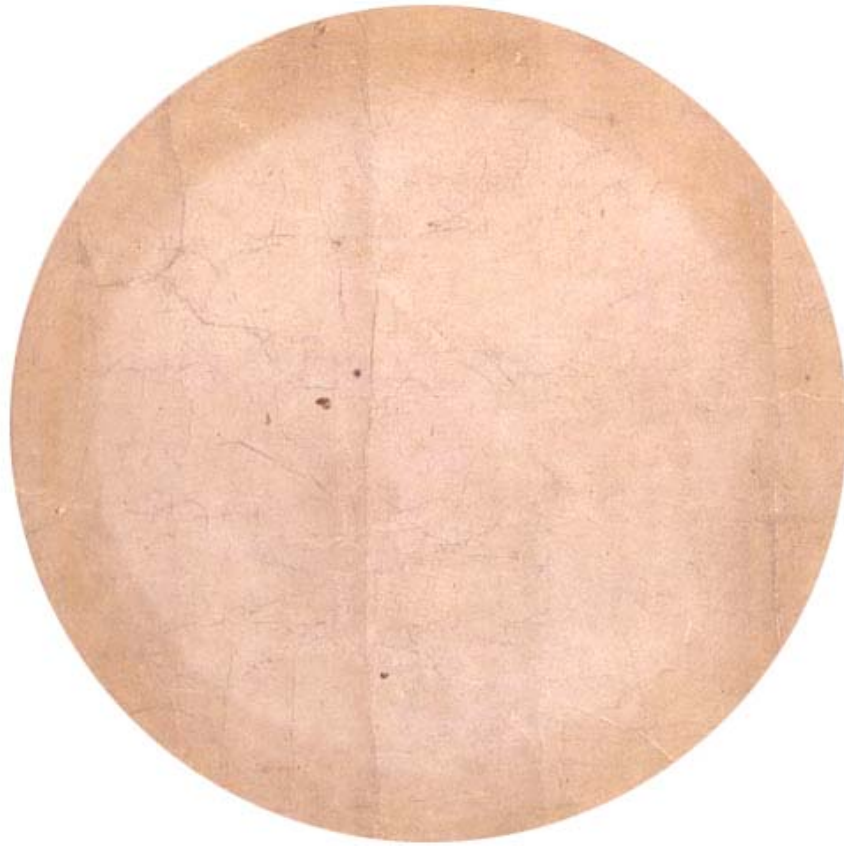
What am I like if completely alone?

What is consciousness?

Each of these koan will take the seeker into a new exploration, from the false to the truth, it will direct his search beyond body-mind identification where nothing is left to experience, where all has disappeared, where 'I' is no more and only awareness or existence is.

[More detailed information about this course...](#)

The [Upcoming Events](#) page will tell you when and where the next one is scheduled.



## 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. »*

Mediocrity is gone. Mind is clear of limitation. I seek no state of enlightenment. Neither do I remain where no enlightenment exists. Since I linger in neither condition, eyes cannot see me. If hundreds of birds strew my path with flowers, such praise would be meaningless.

*Chan master Kakuan*

## The Retreats Series

### Letting Love Overflow

#### Being & Living Love 3-day awareness intensive retreat

Being and Living Love can be a reality for anyone. Awareness is our true nature, love its fragrance and we all carry this intrinsic ability to be in life lovingly and joyfully, living our true nature.

Yet, due to our conditionings, wherever they come from, we have tinted, obscured this direct connection with love. We live our lives in concepts, ideas, beliefs about what love is; romantic love, ideal love, everlasting love, also often mixing love and sexuality.

This 3-day awareness intensive Letting Love Overflow is an adventure, a journey of opening to our heart, to our awareness, a journey where the repeated use of a single instruction 'Tell me what love is' help us to move beyond our conditionings, our masks, our identifications our beliefs, our pre-conceived ideas around love.

This journey will bring clarity and awareness to what love is not. It will clear the way to experience that « we are love », and help us stepping in a state of being where mind has no relevance, where only love is.

« All you need is love -

There is nothing you can do but learn how to be you - Love is all you need. » -

[John Lennon](#)

[More detailed information about this course....](#)

The [Upcoming Events](#) page will tell you when and where the next one is scheduled.



## 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. »*

From the beginning, truth is clear. Poised in silence, I observe the forms of integration and disintegration. One who is not attached to "form" need not be "reformed." The water is emerald, the mountain is indigo, and I see that which is creating and that which is destroying.

*Chan master Kakuan*

## The Retreats Series

### Awareness intensive training

#### How to share your passion... 12-day training

Whether you would like to learn how to share the awareness intensive process with others or are eager to strengthen your ability as a participant working with this method, this 12-day training will give you everything you need to achieve your goal.

This training can also be an opportunity of personal growth by shading light and taking away, obstacles that are hindering you in pursuing your intentions.

Systematic and comprehensive, this training will awaken the facilitator in you. It will give you all the necessary tools to understand better and easily facilitate the 3-day awareness intensive process. Practice sessions as well as individual guidance for each trainee will help gain confidence in presenting the awareness intensive as well as to give feedback and direction to participants.

Besides acquiring the needed tools to facilitate 3-day awareness intensive retreats, the understanding that you have of yourself and the way you are functioning in life will enrich. Your ability to communicate clarifies and becomes more efficient. You experience connecting with yourself as well as with other shorn of all the usual value judgment.

And... last but not least, this training can also become the dawn of a new era in your life.

More detailed information [about this course...](#)  
The [Upcoming Events](#) page will tell you when and where the next one is scheduled.





## 10. Return to Society

*« 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. »*

Inside my gate, a thousand sages do not know me. The beauty of my garden is invisible. Why should one search for the footprints of the patriarchs? I go to the market place with my wine bottle and return home with my staff. I visit the wine shop and the market, and everyone I look upon becomes enlightened.

*Chan master Kakuan*

## The Retreats Series

### The Source

#### A Taste of 'No-thing' 2-week awareness intensive retreat

Tasting 'No-Thing' is exactly what you can expect to gain from participating in this 2-week awareness intensive retreat.

In many ways, we do keep ourselves entangled in the belief - some call it 'the divine hypnosis' - that we are the doer of our actions, the author of our acts. We hold on to: "I am the one", to this sense of 'me' or 'I', the sense that 'I' exist, and that makes me the one in charge of my life.

The two-week awareness intensive is a possibility to challenge this belief and experience a different reality, a reality where "absence" is more the case than presence. To experience that 'I am not' is a truer reality than 'I am', to experience the 'empty sky' that is the background of all 'things'.

It offers a unique opportunity, for all passionate seekers to enter more deeply into experiencing directly their true nature. Staying in contact day after day with one's intention to experience «Who or What he is» sets the pace for a profound de-identification to take place, which, in turn, opens the space to... the reality of what is.

[More detailed information about this course...](#)

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« A monk asked Jōshū:  
“Has a dog Buddha-nature or not?”  
Jōshū replied: ‘Mu’ »

To realize Zen one has to pass through the barrier of the patriarchs. Enlightenment always comes after the road of thinking is blocked. If you do not pass the barrier of the patriarchs or if your thinking road is not blocked, whatever you think, whatever you do, is like a tangling ghost. You may ask: What is a barrier of a patriarch? This one word, Mu, is it.

[Zen master Ekai, known as Mummon](#)

Excerpted from: [The Gateless Gate](#)

## Why do it?

Why not?  
What can you lose? - What can you gain?  
And Who will gain?

You will surely lose yourself, the 'you' that you think you are  
And thus gain immense freedom,  
Knowing that gain and lost are the two side of the same coin  
And as such far away from Truth

Yet you may gain an Absence that is full of Presence  
Who knows?



Before you embark on this journey, here's a couple of Advaita 'sign posts' in case you get lost and a little Chan story to... suggest the way.

*You may ask:*

*« What is enlightenment?*

*Enlightenment is total emptiness of mind. There is nothing you can do to get it.*

*Any effort you make can only be an obstruction to it.*

*Self-Realization is effortless.*

*What you are trying to find is what you already are. »*



*« The only ultimate understanding is that nothing is, not even he who understands. »*

**Ramesh Balsekar**



Monk & Buddhist painter Shí Tāo  
Also known as 'Bitter Gourd Monk'

« A Chinese emperor called all the painters of his empire, which was one of the greatest empires in the world. He himself was in deep love with painting and he told the painters: "I want to declare one of you the master painter of my empire. You are going to be my guest and you have to paint. I will come to see your paintings and whichever painting proves to be the best, the painter will become part of my royal court and the master painter of the whole empire - with many rewards."

Thousands of painters participated in this competition. One old painter said to the king: "It will take at least three years for me to complete the painting and I have few conditions. While I am making the painting, nobody should enter into my house. I don't want anybody to see the incomplete painting. When the painting is complete, I will invite you."

The king argued: "Three years? - this is too much."

The painter replied: "Then I can get out of the competition. Three years is nothing. You don't know what I am going to paint."

Reluctantly the emperor agreed. All the other painters finished their work, somebody in one week, somebody in two weeks, at the most four weeks. But the king was not satisfied. He was waiting for the old man because without seeing his painting he cannot declare his judgment.

After three years the old man came and told the emperor: "Now the painting is complete, you are welcome."

With great wonder in his heart he entered the palace where the painter had done his work.

He had painted on a whole wall of the palace, a beautiful forest with a small river flowing, and a small footpath going into the deep forest and disappearing into the mountains that he had painted. The king could not believe his eyes.



It was almost miraculous, magical. He was in awe. After a long silence he asked the painter only one question:

"I am very much interested in this little footpath that goes around the forest, it is seen sometimes around the mountains and then it seems to disappear. Where does it go?"

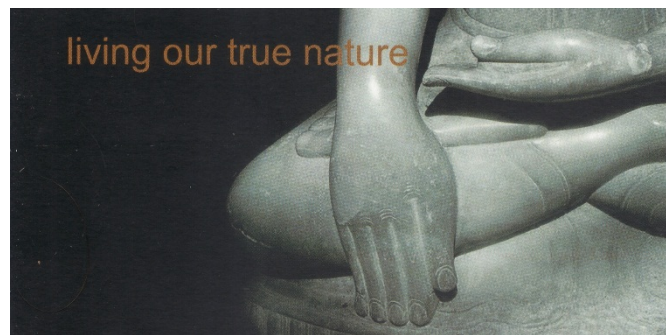


The painter said: "There is no other way to know unless you walk on it."

The king completely forgot that it was only a painting. He was so overwhelmed by the beauty that he took the hand of the painter in his hand and they both walked on the path and disappeared into the mountains.

They have not returned yet. »

The purpose of Living our True Nature is to create opportunities for those who have a longing to be who they truly are. Processes are offered that help each participant experience their true nature.



Living our True Nature does not propose any creed or belief system; it simply supports, with courses, retreats and/or individual sessions, anyone who wants to live as an individual in awareness.

Namaste