**Khaggavisana Sutta: A Rhinoceros**

Renouncing violence

for all living beings,

harming not even a one,

you would not wish for offspring,

so how a companion?

Wander alone

like a rhinoceros.

For a sociable person

there are allurements;

on the heels of allurement, this pain.

Seeing allurement's drawback,

wander alone

like a rhinoceros.

One whose mind

is enmeshed in sympathy

for friends and companions,

neglects the true goal.

Seeing this danger in intimacy,

wander alone

like a rhinoceros.

Like spreading bamboo,

entwined,

is concern for offspring and spouses.

Like a bamboo sprout,

unentangling,

wander alone

like a rhinoceros.

As a deer in the wilds,

unfettered,

goes for forage wherever it wants:

the wise person, valuing freedom,

wanders alone

like a rhinoceros.

In the midst of companions

— when staying at home,

when going out wandering —

you are prey to requests.

Valuing the freedom

wander alone

like a rhinoceros.

There is sporting and love

in the midst of companions,

and abundant fondness for offspring.

Feeling disgust

at the prospect of parting

from those who'd be dear,

wander alone

like a rhinoceros.

Without resistance in all four directions,

content with whatever you get,

enduring troubles with no dismay,

wander alone

like a rhinoceros.

They are hard to please,

some of those gone forth,

as well as those living the household life.

Shedding concern

for these offspring of others,

wander alone

like a rhinoceros.

Cutting off the householder's marks (hair and beard),

like a kovilara tree

that has shed its leaves,

the prudent one, cutting all household ties,

wander alone

like a rhinoceros.

If you gain a mature companion,

a fellow traveler, right-living and wise,

overcoming all dangers

go with him, gratified,

mindful.

If you don't gain a mature companion,

a fellow traveler, right-living and wise,

wander alone

like a king renouncing his kingdom,

like the elephant in the Matanga wilds,

his herd.

We praise companionship

— yes!

Those on a par, or better,

should be chosen as friends.

If they're not to be found,

living faultlessly,

wander alone

like a rhinoceros.

Seeing radiant bracelets of gold,

well-made by a smith,

clinking, clashing,

two on an arm,

wander alone

like a rhinoceros,

*[thinking:]*

"In the same way,

if I were to live with another,

there would be careless talk or abusive."

Seeing this future danger,

wander alone

like a rhinoceros.

Because sensual pleasures,

elegant, honeyed, and charming,

bewitch the mind with their manifold forms —

seeing this drawback in sensual strands —

wander alone

like a rhinoceros.

"Calamity, tumor, misfortune,

disease, an arrow, a danger for me."

Seeing this danger in sensual strands,

wander alone

like a rhinoceros.

Cold and heat, hunger and thirst,

wind and sun, horseflies and snakes:

enduring all these, without exception,

wander alone

like a rhinoceros.

As a great white elephant,

with massive shoulders,

renouncing his herd,

lives in the wilds wherever he wants,

wander alone

like a rhinoceros.

"There's no way

that one delighting in company

can touch even momentary release."

Heeding the Solar Kinsman's words,

wander alone

like a rhinoceros.

Transcending the contortion of views,

the sure way attained,

the path gained,

*[realizing:]*

"Unled by others,

I have knowledge arisen,"

wander alone

like a rhinoceros.

With no greed, no deceit,

no thirst, no hypocrisy —

delusion and blemishes

blown away —

with no inclinations for all the world,

every world,

wander alone

like a rhinoceros.

Avoid the evil companion

disregarding the goal,

intent on the out-of-tune way.

Don't take as a friend

someone heedless and hankering.

wander alone

like a rhinoceros.

Consort with one who is learned,

who maintains the Dhamma,

a great and quick-witted friend.

Knowing the meanings,

subdue your perplexity,

[then] wander alone

like a rhinoceros,

Free from longing, finding no pleasure

in the world's sport, love, or sensual bliss,

abstaining from adornment,

speaking the truth,

wander alone

like a rhinoceros.

Abandoning offspring, spouse,

father, mother,

riches, grain, relatives,

and sensual pleasures

altogether,

wander alone

like a rhinoceros.

"This is a bondage, a baited hook.

There's little happiness here,

next to no satisfaction,

all the more suffering and pain."

Knowing this, circumspect,

wander alone

like a rhinoceros.

Shattering fetters,

like a fish in the water tearing a net,

like a fire not coming back to what's burnt,

wander alone

like a rhinoceros.

Eyes downcast, not footloose,

senses guarded, with protected mind,

not oozing — not burning — with lust,

wander alone

like a rhinoceros.

Taking off the householder's marks (lay clothing),

like a coral tree

that has shed its leaves,

going forth in the ochre robe,

wander alone

like a rhinoceros.

Showing no greed for flavors, not careless,

going from house to house for alms,

with mind unenmeshed in this family or that,

wander alone

like a rhinoceros.

Abandoning barriers to awareness,

expelling all defilements — all —

non-dependent, cutting aversion,

allurement,

wander alone

like a rhinoceros.

Turning your back on pleasure and pain,

as earlier with sorrow and joy,

attaining pure equanimity,

tranquillity,

wander alone

like a rhinoceros.

With persistence aroused

for the highest goal's attainment,

with mind unsmeared, not lazy in action,

firm in effort, with steadfastness and strength arisen,

wander alone

like a rhinoceros.

Not neglecting seclusion, absorption,

constantly living the Dhamma

in line with the Dhamma,

comprehending the danger

in states of becoming,

wander alone

like a rhinoceros.

Intent on the ending of craving and heedful,

learned, mindful, not muddled,

certain — having reckoned the Dhamma —

and striving,

wander alone

like a rhinoceros.

Unstartled, like a lion at sounds.

Unsnared, like the wind in a net.

Unsmeared, like a lotus in water:

wander alone

like a rhinoceros.

Like a lion — forceful, strong in fang,

living as a conqueror, the king of beasts —

resort to a solitary dwelling.

Wander alone

like a rhinoceros.

At the right time consorting

with the release through good will,

compassion,

appreciation,

equanimity,

unobstructed by all the world,

any world,

wander alone

like a rhinoceros.

Having let go of passion,

aversion,

delusion;

having shattered the fetters;

undisturbed at the ending of life,

wander alone

like a rhinoceros.

People follow and associate

for a motive.

Friends without a motive these days

are rare.

They're shrewd for their own ends, and impure.

Wander alone

like a rhinoceros.

**Translator's note:** The refrain in this sutta is a subject of controversy. The text literally says, "Wander alone like a 'sword-horn,' which is the Pali term for rhinoceros. The commentary, however, insists that this term refers not to the animal but to its horn, for the Indian rhinoceros, unlike the African, has only one horn. Still, some scholars have noted that while the Indian rhinoceros is a solitary animal, rhinoceros horns don't wander, and that in other verses in the Pali canon, the phrase "wander alone like..." takes a person or an animal, not an animal part, for its object. Thus, for example, in Dhp 329 (repeated below), one is told to "wander alone like a king renouncing his kingdom, like the elephant in the Matanga woods, his herd." It's possible that the rhinoceros was chosen here as an example of solitary wandering both because of its habits and because of its unusual single horn. However, in a translation, it's necessary to choose one reading over the other. Thus, because wandering "like a rhinoceros" sounds more natural than wandering "like a horn," I have chosen the former rendering. Keep in mind, though, that the singularity of the rhinoceros' horn reinforces the image.

There is evidence suggesting that the verses here were originally separate poems, composed on separate occasions, and that they have been gathered together because of their common refrain.

**Source**: "Khaggavisana Sutta: A Rhinoceros" (Sn 1.3), translated from the Pali by Thanissaro Bhikkhu. *Access to Insight (Legacy Edition)*, 30 November 2013, <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/snp/snp.1.03.than.html> .

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