

## 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 allurements, this pain.  
Seeing allurements' 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.







**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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