

Chappana Sutta : The Six Animals

SN 35.206

translated from the Pali by Maurice O'Connell Walshe

"Suppose, monks, a man catches six animals of different domains and different resorts of living — a snake, a crocodile, a bird, a dog, a jackal and a monkey, tethering each with a stout rope. Having tethered them with a stout rope, he fastens the ropes together in the middle, he lets go of them. Now, monks, these six animals of different domains and feeding habits would swing around and struggle, each trying to get to his natural domain. The snake would struggle, thinking 'I'll get to the ant-hill'; the crocodile: 'I'll get into the water'; the bird: 'I'll fly up in the air' the dog: 'I'll make for the village'; the jackal: 'I'll make for the charnel-ground'; the monkey: 'I'll head for the forest.'

"Now, monks, when those six hungry animals grew weary, they would yield to the one that was the strongest, go his way and be under his power. In the same way, monks, whenever a monk fails to practice and develop mindfulness as to body, the eye struggles to draw him towards attractive objects, while unattractive objects are repellent to him... The mind struggles to draw him towards attractive objects of thought, while unattractive objects of thought are repellent to him. This, monks, is lack of restraint. And what, monks, is restraint? In this, a monk, seeing objects with the eye, is not drawn to attractive objects, is not repelled by unattractive objects. He remains with firmly established mindfulness as to body, his mind being unrestricted. He knows in truth that liberation of the heart, that liberation by wisdom, through which those evil, unskilled states that have arisen pass away without remainder...

"Suppose a man catches six animals (*as before*), and he fastens the rope together to a stout post or pillar... Then, when those six animals grow weary, they would have to stand, crouch or lie down by the stout post or pillar. In the same way, monks, when a monk practices and develops mindfulness as to the body, the eye does not struggle to draw him towards attractive visual objects, nor are unattractive visual objects repellent to him... the mind does not struggle to draw him towards attractive objects of thought, nor are unattractive objects of thought repellent to him. This, monks, is restraint.

"'Tethered to a stout post or pillar,' monks, denotes mindfulness as to body. Therefore, monks, this is how you must train yourselves: 'We shall practice mindfulness as to body, develop it, make it our vehicle, our dwelling-place, our resort, we will build it up and undertake it thoroughly.' This, monks, is how you must train yourselves."

Maalunkyaputta Sutta

SN 35.95

translated from the Pali by Maurice O'Connell Walshe

[*The Ven. Maalu"nkyaputta said:*] "It would be well for me, Lord, if the Blessed One would teach me briefly a doctrine so that having heard it I might dwell alone, in seclusion, unwearied, ardent and resolute."

"Well now, Maalu"nkyaputta, what am I to say to the younger monks if you, a frail, aged, venerable man, far gone in years, at the end of your life, ask for instruction in brief?"

"What do you think, Maalu"nkyaputta? Objects cognizable by the eye, not seen, which you have not seen before, which you do not see now and do not wish to see — have you any desire, lust and fondness for them?"

"No indeed, Lord."

[*Similarly for sounds, scents, flavors, tangible things, mental objects.*]

"Well then, Maalu"nkyaputta, in things seen, heard, sensed, cognized: in the seen there will only be the seen, in the heard only the heard, in the sensed only the sensed, in the cognized only the cognized... Then, Maalu"nkyaputta, there will be no 'thereby' for you. Having no 'thereby' you have no 'there.' Having no 'there,' Maalu"nkyaputta, there is for you neither this world, nor the next, nor anywhere in between. That in itself is the end of suffering."

"Indeed, Lord, I understand in full the meaning of what the Blessed One has stated in brief."

Forms perceived cause loss of mindfulness, If we dwell on their endearing charms,
Passion grips the heart, and feeling flows, Clinging has us firmly in its grip: So
emotions rise and grow in strength, Of divers kinds, all based on what was seen. Some
of greed and some of hatred born — Grievously they all afflict the heart of man,
Heaping up his store of pain and woe: Thus for him Nibbaana's far away.

[*Similarly for sounds, scents, tastes, tangibles, thoughts.*]

He who's not inflamed by things he sees, Seeing forms retains his mindfulness, Not in
passion's grip, simply feels, On him clinging cannot get a hold. If he just observes the
things he sees, Not reacting to their shape or form, He'll pull down the pile, not build
it up. Mindfully proceeding on his way, Heaping up no store of pain and woe: Then
for him Nibbaana's very near.

[*Similarly for sounds, scents, tastes, tangibles, thoughts.*]

"Indeed, Lord, I understand in full the meaning of what the Blessed One has stated in brief."

[*The Buddha confirms Maalu"nkyaputta's words; in due course Maalu"nkyaputta becomes an Arahant.*]

Introduction to Insight Meditation (Excerpts)

Ven. Sujiva

The Main Control

The main controlling faculty of the mind is mindfulness. Remember the moments when you were calm and composed? The awareness that comes with them is also bright and clear. As a direct opposite of it are those times you were panic-stricken or completely confused. Therefore, with mindfulness you can do any job as well as you possibly can, be it driving a car, cooking a meal or answering some examination questions. But this potential is not recognized as much as other things, like faith and concentration, and so is not emphasized. If we are to develop it until it is really strong, lasting and revealing, then life will breeze by, if not ecstatically, then at least smoothly.

Gaining a Hold on the Main Controls

Now that you realize (I hope) how important it is to have mindfulness, you may, perhaps, be interested to know how to go about cultivating it to make all the difference.

The main idea is to develop this awareness until it becomes habitual and continuous, and then apply it for more specialized purposes, such as gaining knowledge and skills.

To begin with, let me offer you certain suggestions which will be definitely be helpful in some way. These are simple exercises which you can safely try out. They come under three sub-headings:

- Walking Meditation
- Sitting Meditation
- Mindfulness of Daily Activities.

Walking Meditation

Can you imagine the extent of things which involve walking? You walk to the office, walk for exercise, for sight-seeing, to the dinner table, to ease yourself and many other wonderful – as well as unmentionable – things.

But one can feel and think quite differently when taking a casual walk along an isolated beach in the light of dawn, than when taking a walk heading for the dentist's chair. It's all in the state of mind. And mind you, that state of mind can determine where you will end up and how you fare. If you walk so unmindfully, you may end up either in the hospital or the grave. Of course, nowadays many people cut down on the walking, they go on wheels. At such speeds that modern technology provides, you may have to come up with even more mindfulness to ensure safety.

Let me offer you a few tips to start off your walking meditation:

To learn walking mindfully, you have to find a quiet spot with a fair distance, at least thirty feet. Preferably on a straight, clean and level path, without anyone around to stare at what you are about to do. Failing this, any distance of up to ten steps will also do.

First, you must try to bring to mind the clear awareness of your own standing posture. It's not visualization, but feeling one's body as it is – the tension, firmness and maybe a bit of swaying. Make sure you are relaxed, with a straight posture. Hold or fold your hands together to help keep your composure. You may close your eyes and make the mind free, calm, relaxed and happy. Learn to let go of all your problems and thoughts. They are not worth

clinging on to all the time. Give your mind a break. Just be with the present moment and be aware.

Now, after having gathered your calm composure, start walking, keeping the attention at the lower part of the moving foot, below the calves. Walk freely (with eyes opened) at a pace you feel most comfortable and relaxed with. To help keep the mind at the feet you may mentally say right, left or walking, walking – or whichever word you prefer. And remember, don't think, just keep the mind in the present moment.

When it's time to turn, be aware of the turning action.

Whenever the attention runs to thoughts, you will then have to recall your awareness, noting mindfully: thinking, thinking – and then return to the footsteps. If tension or boredom creep up, you will again have to stop walking, to bring back your awareness in the way you did. While standing, note tension or boredom mindfully, before resuming the walking meditation.

I would advise you to walk at a certain rhythm which the mind can catch on to. Once caught on, it will tend to flow along. Then, maintain that rhythm for the time being.

When you feel much calmer or somewhat tired, then you can slow down your pace, and at the same time be even more relaxed mentally and physically. People who have gained concentration in this way can walk for an hour or more, and yet feel as if only a minute has passed. They feel weightless and seem to be walking on clouds. You can end up very blissful!

There is, however, one thing to add. When you feel really relaxed, keep your mind keenly aware as it flows along with the footsteps. Try to feel or sense the sensations that flow along – the tension, pulling and pushing forces, the lightness or weight and, finally, the contact of the soles on the ground.

To help the beginner gain a keener perception of this, teachers have devised a method breaking each step into various phases, starting from two to six. Although three phases are sufficient for most people, they can be increased progressively – but only when one is ready for it.

During an intensive retreat or formal meditation exercise, the standard procedure is to do one hour of walking meditation, dividing it into three periods – the first twenty minutes for one-phase walking, a second twenty minutes for two-phase walking and the final twenty minutes (adding up to one hour) for three-phase walking.

The principle behind this is to gradually bring the mind to a more concentrated awareness, which can come about with slowing down, and a more thorough observation. As to the most suitable type of walking, it will be the type that arouses the most mindfulness.

The phases of the steps, from one to six, are:

1. right/left
2. lifting, stepping
3. lifting, pushing, stepping
4. (heels) raising, lifting, pushing, stepping
5. raising, lifting, pushing, lowering, stepping
6. raising, lifting, pushing, lowering, treading, pressing.

At each phase of a step, when observing closely, one will be able to perceive the sensations or forces that can be felt along with it. One can actually experience it as a flow of tension, thrusting forces, or a spread of hardness when stepping.

To make the picture complete, the intentions that arise prior to each length of walking, the intentions to stop, to turn, are also mindfully noted.

If you can do this, you may actually arrive at a point where you completely forget about yourself, and what is left is the process of awareness with its objects. Then you have begun the journey within, the path to realize the Nature of Who and What we really are. Then all conflicts with Reality, due to ignorance, which is the root problem of suffering, may finally see the end.

Sitting Meditation

The same principle used in walking meditation is applicable to sitting meditation, only with a difference of basic objects. What principle?

The principle of three steps in mindful observation:

1. To be mindful
2. To follow or attend to the object of observation mindfully.
3. To observe into the Nature of the object without thinking and concepts.

Nature, here, refers to the process of sensations which goes to make up the object which we are observing.

While one is walking, one mindfully follows the footsteps and observes the process of sensations that make it up. Sitting meditation makes use of the sensations of the abdomen as one breathes. Some, however, use the sensation of the breath at the nose tip.

Usually, people who meditate will sit cross-legged with their back straight and their eyes closed. Those with stiff knees can sit on chairs. Do not lean back, as this will not be too helpful in keeping up the awareness, although it will do very well if you intend to relax completely into sleep, in which case you might as well lie down.

Breathe normally and, as you do, keep the mindful attention on the sensations of the movement as the abdomen rises and falls.

Mentally, say 'rising' and 'falling' in conjunction with the respective movements.

To help beginners keep track of the sensations of motion, they may rest their palm lightly on that area, until they become familiar with the object.

When the mind wanders to other objects, such as thoughts, sounds, itches and so forth, recall your awareness as soon as you realize, noting mentally: thinking, hearing, etc. and then return to your original object.

You will notice, when you try to do this, how intractable and slippery the mind is. Well, at least you are getting to know yourself better and doing something about it!

With practice, the mind will wander less and stay with the rising and falling movements. Then you can proceed to the next step of thorough observation. At first you can only perceive up and down movements. With effort you can notice much more. The movements vary greatly from time to time. They can be long or short, fast or slow, smooth or jerky, and so on. Even within the rising movement there can be many various sensations arising and passing away. Again, it finally ends up as mere processes of the mind and its object.

Finally, pain is often the last to call before you give up. Try to ignore it if it is minor, but if it stands out and grabs your attention, then you will have to make it your main subject of observation.

The idea is to make use of it to train in mindfulness (and also, in this case, patience). The three-point observation principle also holds water here. You first have to watch pain with mindfulness. Then watch it for some time without being irritated by it. If you can do that, then you can look into the Nature of the pain, whether it is hard, hot or numb. It could also be pulling, twisting or cutting. There are more types than you can imagine, and it can be very interesting.

After that, you can proceed to discover its process – how it arises, changes and breaks up. It is possible to gain deeper understanding of your own Nature through observation of pain. Pain is part of your individual makeup. When you cannot bear it any longer, then it's time to get up.

Daily Activities

One of the first things to learn is about mindfulness itself. We read about it, hear about it – now we're getting to know it through direct experience. It's not just knowing something. It's knowing it with a clear, steady mind. In that way you can't be wrong. Besides, there cannot be any defilements – attachment, anger, delusion, sloth, restlessness, skeptical doubts, jealousy, and so on. Once you can define it, it is not difficult to call it up. It's just a matter of will. How wonderful it is to be mindful all the time! But before that can be so, you will have to be able to distinguish clearly between the states of mindfulness and non-mindfulness. After that, it is up to you to practise, practise and practise.

In a way, maintaining mindfulness is comparable to making a journey. There you are, on your bicycle, going along the rough roads and crossing torrential streams. You need to keep an eye on the road, balance your bicycle and keep on paddling. It takes considerable trials and errors before you acquire the skill. Similarly, in life or in meditation one needs to have experience in handling the various situations and objects that one comes across. And when something particularly trying comes along, one can become bogged down for quite a while until he has learned to get over it. Pain is an example. It is also an inescapable feature of life.

Once one is able to know what this mindfulness – and maintenance of it – are all about, then one may go on to be mindful of all one's own activities as best as one can, and as often as is practical. It will begin from the moment one wakes up from slumber, one notes mindfully the opening of the eyes. In the same way one maintains mindfulness when one gets up, washes, eats, drinks and so on, throughout the day – until one finally lies down to sleep again at the end of the day.

During eating, for example, one will have to mindfully note the actions involved step-by-step. Firstly, the intention to eat, then the looking at the food, the stretching of the hands, the scooping of the food, the bringing to the mouth, the opening of the mouth, chewing, biting, swallowing and all other steps. During a meditation retreat, one can afford to slow down one's actions to help concentrate the awareness as much as possible. In fact, one can be quite oblivious to the surroundings. Finally one will, as in sitting and walking, be left with mere processes.

However, at home or at work, one will not be able to practise mindfulness in this concentrated manner. Usually one will be able to do so only at a general level. Only when one is free can one resume one's mindfulness during the formal exercises with the desired intensity.

Insight and Concentration

The next thing that you need is to be able to differentiate between concentration and mindfulness. It will determine the direction you are heading – whether you are on the path to tranquility or insight development.

Most meditation methods emphasize concentration. They bring the mind to focus on one point or object, thereby achieving strength of concentration. The results are very peaceful states, and in extreme cases give rise to supernormal powers. Isn't this what people are hoping to achieve? No wonder most head towards that direction!

For Buddhists, that way does not lead completely away from all our sufferings, although it can lighten them considerably for a period of time. The answer to the predicament is Insight, which is the realization of the real Nature of the world as it is, freed from concepts. In simple words, all mental and material processes that make up this world are really impermanent, unsatisfactory and non-self. Seeing thus, one turns away from them and finds refuge in the unconditioned state, the everlasting peace of the absolute reality, Nibbana. Without realizing the unsatisfactory state of conditioned existence, one is greatly attached to it and, therefore, emancipation is impossible.

To develop this Insight, mindfulness is emphasized as the main feature, and concentration steps down to second place as another necessary factor.

To differentiate between mindfulness and concentration we can quote their characteristics:

- Concentration holds on to and fixes the mind to the object. It is like when you are holding tightly to something and not letting go. It is also like when you are staring at the television screen, unable to tear yourself away from it.
- Mindfulness, however, is like making a careful observation of what is happening on the television screen.

In other words, concentration pins the mind to its object, while it is mindfulness that carefully and thoroughly gets a good look at it. When you have found out what that thing really is, then you have developed insight wisdom.

From here we can conclude that concentration can come without mindfulness, but when mindfulness is present, to some degree, there is concentration.

Normally in tranquillity practice, although concentration is the main objective, there must also be mindfulness to bring it about. But that mindfulness is not as thorough as you would achieve in Insight meditation. Besides, its objects differ, i.e. a conceptual one with tranquillity practice.

If one's aim is to really look within, to discover who and what one really is, then mindful observation must be borne in mind as the main factor. Then one is like a scientist, making a close and thorough observation of his subject. Once there is enough, one gets the full picture with all its details. That is when mindfulness is transformed into insight. So in insight meditation, one observes with concentrated awareness on the objects, eg. rising/falling of the abdomen, sitting/touching, pain, thinking, right foot/left foot, etc., and will soon discover that all these (including the observing mind) are just processes that arise and pass away so rapidly. The meditator then realises that all these processes are changing (impermanent), beyond individual control, and unsatisfactory. In insight meditation this also means an abandoning of clinging to the false self, and there is a return to original nature.

The abolishing of the "I am" – that is truly supreme bliss.

~ Udana ~

Follow-up Advice

Welcome to my favorite world. This world with nobody around, just mental and material processes going on. This is what I find most meaningful. This is where the real meaning of life is! When you are really aware of these things, there's no place for attachment, anger,

hallucinations and all those negative qualities. They just don't fit in when one is really aware of these things. There you are – the peace and meaning to live by, and that is to discover the final journey within, to be home with the absolute.

Unfortunately, the scope of this little booklet is such that I can only give an introduction to what Insight meditation is, and the basic exercises. There are definitely many more steps to be taken and it will be best if you approach the people who have done it before and are able to give you suitable advice. It is, of course, preferable that you attend a more complete course, under a qualified instructor, on a part-time basis or at an intensive retreat.

For those who are daring enough to try, using just the basic knowledge contained in this booklet, I have one or two more things to say.

Firstly, these minimal instructions are meant only for those without any serious psychological problems. If one is under medication or treatment for mental abnormalities, it is stressed further that this booklet is insufficient. They have to get in touch with a qualified teacher.

Secondly, if one gains concentration, one may meet with various experiences. There may be joyful feelings, visions, voices, or even fear. The simplest step is to note them mindfully. They should eventually subside and pass away within a minute. Do not be attached or panic if they don't. If worst comes to worst, just open your eyes and get up. Do this also if the mind goes into worse states of restlessness when the sitting progresses after half an hour. This can happen when your mind is burdened by tons of problems or unresolved issues. Do quick walking instead. The principle is to be Mindful. If mindfulness does not increase, but worsens instead, something is wrong.

Last, but not least, seize an opportunity to attend an intensive course or retreat on Insight (Vipassana) meditation. The progress and understanding of the practice in a retreat of about ten days can be better than that achieved in a period of one year, done by oneself on a daily basis.