

# What Buddha Taught

## Sutta Comentaries



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As you may know by now, the only way Buddha has to speak to us through time and the forces of Mara, the evil one, is through analogies. Almost everything Buddha shows us is in the analogies, not in the verbosity of the authors of the suttas. When common people try to convince you of their wisdom, they don't know “How”, so there is a constant repetition of Buddhist slogans. They pretend to know, but never show “How”. The “”How” remains a secret. If you read carefully, you find the toilet teacher. He repeats inspirational, meaningless slogans, and you get so inspired that you forget they are saying nothing and know nothing. You become so enslaved by the inspirational statements, that you learn and repeat the slogans, never coming to know what Buddha taught.

This booklet attempts to explain what Buddha was teaching about Jhana(dhyana) by way of the analogies.

## **Gavi Sutta: The Cow**

### **A new direction**

*"But suppose there was a mountain cow — wise, experienced, familiar with her pasture, skilled in roaming on rugged mountains — and she were to think, 'What if I were to go in a direction I have never gone before, to eat grass I have never eaten before, to drink water I have never drunk before!' She would lift her hind hoof only after*

*having placed her front hoof firmly and [as a result] would get to go in a direction she had never gone before... to drink water she had never drunk before. And as for the place where she was standing when the thought occurred to her, 'What if I were to go in a direction I have never gone before... to drink water I have never drunk before,' she would return there safely. Why is that? Because she is a wise, experienced mountain cow, familiar with her pasture, skilled in roaming on rugged mountains.*

Commentary:

What is a mountain cow? Cows are not grazed in the mountains, but in the valleys and low hills, where the grass is best. It is a special cow that goes into the mountains. A mountain is Buddha's symbol for the Ego, the body-mind consciousness. Mount Sumeru is a very common symbol for the human body-mind. Here the symbol refers to the common person who is learning Buddhist Dhyana meditation. This person is experienced with the body and mind, familiar with her pasture, skilled at roaming the rugged mountains of thoughts and ego. They have been meditating inside of mind consciousness for a long time. They are centered in their head and sometimes feel the Self at the heart, but they know the territory. It is a rugged mountain. The Ego is a rugged mountain, and they are skilled with mind-game meditation.

This cow has the thought, “*What if I were to go in a direction I have never gone before, to eat grass I have never eaten before, to drink water I have never drunk before!*” I know this thought. I was like this, an expert at the mind-game meditation, and I saw it was a waste of time. I knew that Dhyana could not be within mind consciousness, but I knew no other way. All the great gurus and books said liberation was inside the mind-body experience, but I could see that story could never be true. So I had this same thought, “*What if I were to go in a different direction.*” I searched diligently, alone, and without guidance. When I discovered the fourth dhyana, a presence came to me and whispered “*Vairochana*” and I knew someone cared. Buddha uses the symbol of water for dhyana rapture and bliss in many analogies. Here he adds eating grass never eaten before.

*She would lift her hind hoof only after having placed her front hoof firmly and [as a result] would get to go in a direction she had never gone before...*

If you watch a cow eating grass, they keep their head down chewing and eating fresh grass. They move in one direction very slowly. When they are just going in the same direction, they move their hind hoof first, as they may only be moving an inch or two, then they will move their front hoof when their face moves forward.

This is one of the most interesting analogies. What is the symbolism? Moving the hind foot first is mind-game meditation. It is the same as thinking, no difference. The cow is just doing the same old thing, thinking and dreaming. Even among some of the skilled Hindus it is said that Buddhist monks only sit and think, and never meditate. This is what is being said here. So moving the hind foot first is using the head, the head game, thinking and dreaming. When you start with the head-game, you will not find dhyana, you will only have a very busy mind, and what you call meditation, others will call thinking and dreaming, doing nothing.

And what is the moving the front hoof? When a cow wants to move to a different location, they raise their head from the grass, they are alert and aware of where they are, and they move their front foot first in the new direction. When a person wants to do dhyana meditation, they are alert and know where they are. Their head and eyes are not down in the grass, they know where they are. For dhyana you know where you are. When you point with your hand to where you are, you point to your head or your heart. How do you know that? You feel your location inside your body, and you point there automatically.

This is your front foot. This is where your soul is located inside your body. I use the word soul for our common understanding. Your soul entered into this body-mind

extravaganza, and it is still there illuminating it. It leaves when the show is done. Now it seems trapped by the entertainment, but it isn't. The soul is not trapped, and within you is the knowledge of entering and exiting.

The body mind is the coarsest delusion of the soul. The human soul is the delusion surrounding the liberated soul. The human soul's power can take you anywhere in the world and through the first three dhyanas. That delusion is dropped, and you find the liberated soul, the fourth dhyana, which is dropped again, leading to the final dissolution into Vairochana Buddha, the timeless Buddha. Here Buddha is teaching the basics. Get the soul to go in a different direction. Get your head out of the grass, wake up, and move the soul first, forget the body-mind, forget the back hooves, they will take care of themselves.

Let me explain how important this analogy is. While it is just the first step to dhyana, it is, in my understanding, the only place in world spiritual literature, where the first step to liberation is explained. It is the only “How-to-do”, you will find. Only Buddha explained “How”.

## **Jhana Sutta**

### **Mental Absorption**

*"Suppose that an archer or archer's apprentice were to*

*practice on a straw man or mound of clay, so that after a while he would become able to shoot long distances, to fire accurate shots in rapid succession, and to pierce great masses."*

Commentary:

Here is one of the great instructions of the Buddha still remaining untouched and undestroyed by Mara. This analogy is about how to do the first three dhyanas. It is similar to the analogy in "The Cow: a different direction". It is beginning meditation. The Archer is the soul already having moved away from the straw man, the mound of clay, which is the human body-mind. The soul moves away from the body, and shoots arrows at greater and greater distances from the straw man. In doing this the archer moves into each of the first three blissful dhyanas. As his arrows pierce deeper into the body-mind, the greater and more profound the bliss.

There are no directions here on how the soul withdraws, just that dhyana is created like this. This is unfortunate, because most people will not know how to withdraw. I hope some day to find an analogy where Buddha explains how to withdraw. I hope such an analogy still exists and has not been destroyed by Mara and time. But here is the essence and beginning of dhyana meditation.

# Anuruddha Sutta

I have to include this line from the Anuruddha sutta just to show what nonsense common people who write suttas are disseminating. The monk writes, "*Anuruddha, when you think these eight thoughts of a great person, then — whenever you want — quite withdrawn from sensuality, withdrawn from unskillful qualities, you will enter & remain in the first jhana: rapture & pleasure born from withdrawal, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation.*" Here is a common person's great idea. All you have to do is have these eight thoughts, and you can enter the all the dhyanas. Unbelievable! I guess it was part of an advertising campaign to get people to pay money for a group meeting, where they would repeat the eight thoughts for a week or two and become Arhats. Reminds me of Japanese Buddhists who repeat the name of a Sutra and get new cars and houses. Now we go back to reality and find what Buddha taught.

## **Uddesa-vibhanga Sutta: An Analysis of the Statement**

*The Blessed One said this: "A monk should investigate in such a way that, his consciousness neither externally scattered & diffused, nor internally positioned, he would from lack of clinging/sustenance be unagitated. When —*

*his consciousness neither externally scattered & diffused, nor internally positioned — from lack of clinging/sustenance he would be unagitated, there is no seed for the conditions of future birth, aging, death, or stress."*

*Commentary:*

What is this! A word from Buddha? A nugget of gold. How did it survive? The English translation is a bit garbled, so maybe the Pali is also garbled. The sutta has a venerable monk explain it's meaning to the monks in the sutta, which seems quite misleading, so why mess it up any more. It all may have an effect of being a mystery, and so it has survived.

We would love to find Buddha telling how the soul withdraws, but here is it's opposite. Buddha explains what dhyana is Not, what meditation is not. Buddha says your consciousness should not be scattered and diffused externally through the sense consciousnesses, nor should your consciousness be positioned inside the body, internally. This is where the common people writing the sutta insert the interesting paragraph so that if you're internally positioned or externally positioned, you go to the dhyanas. But Buddha's statement says you are “not internally positioned”. Rather, the soul moves in a different direction, such that you are unagitated because of the lack of “clinging-sustenance”, which is your ego-life. In other

words you withdraw the soul from the clinging attachment of the mind-body machine. When the soul is able to separate from the mind-body, there is NO seed for the conditions of future birth, aging, death, or stress. (this may be an exaggeration, but I love the sound of it, quite inspirational)

## **Parinibbana Sutta: Total Unbinding**

*Emerging from the first jhana he entered the second... the third... the fourth jhana. Emerging from the fourth jhana, he immediately was totally Unbound.*

This seems to be the original version of the dhyanas and the parinibbana of a Buddha, before the eight dhyanas made their way into sutta dogma. The extra four dhyanas are the one-upmanship of some clever monks misinterpreting the Brahma viharas of the Metta sutta. More will be written about this phenomenon in another booklet.

Suffice it to say that there are four Dhyanas, and when you transcend the fourth you merge into Vairochana Buddha, the timeless Buddha, the primordial Buddha. If there were eight dhyanas, Buddha would not have gone to parinirvana, but been born into a formless realm. But such

inconsistencies are to be found when common people create their own ideas and businesses, propounding holy books over many centuries.

## **Potthapada Sutta**

### **About Potthapada**

This is a very interesting sutta. We have no analogies, but possible dhyana teachings of Buddha. The story opens with Potthapada, the wanderer, is with a group of wanderers, and Buddha goes out of his way to meet with them. Potthapada says many priests and contemplatives have gathered in the hall to debate “How there is the ultimate cessation of perception”. I have just read this for the first time as I do this commentary, but here is the ultimate question to Buddha, “How”. Let's see what happens.

There are four beliefs that have been given by the contemplatives to describe cessation of perception. The contemplatives are doing mind-game meditation. They are located in their head, watching, and they know that perception, perception comes and goes. They are doing a high level of mind-game meditation, and they know the head-game pulsates. They do not cling to the image created in their brain, when their attention goes back to the heart. They are not aware of the movement of attention, but realize and witness that the head-me pulsates on and off.

They have their beliefs about why head-me perception pulsates on and off, but the think cessation is when perception is off.

Then strangely someone thought that this was the place to insert the standard dhyana liturgy, as if this would be an answer, and it is not. Then a common person tries to describe cessation of perception by saying, “if I just stop thinking and willing, the next perception will not occur and I touch cessation.” Unfortunately, this insertion makes no sense, and is completely false. The statement Buddha is making is that the pulsations of perception in the head have a cause. The sutra is not about cessation, or dhyana. The dhyana liturgy is not an answer. It is a interruption by common people attempting to be wise. To continue with Buddha's description of the cause, you need to skip down to:

*"Potthapada, perception arises first, and knowledge after. And the arising of knowledge comes from the arising of perception. (a rapid persistent cycle of perception / knowledge / perception / knowledge / perception / knowledge)*

Here is where Buddha shines. While the contemplatives were seeing the head-me perception pulsate on and off, Buddha explains that perception occurs first, then knowledge, then perception re-occurs. This is why you are

seeing perception pulsate. It is one half of a coin, and you don't know the other half of the coin, knowledge. This is the attention moving from head to heart, head to heart. When attention returns to the heart, you feel knowing. When attention goes to the head and senses, you know perception.

Then Buddha explains self (heart) and perception (head), the self being the self feeling inside a body feeling, and perception being the Self feeling of perception near the head and senses. The text is littered with the repetitions of meaningless statements making it difficult to comprehend. The key point is made in this statement: *then...perception would be one thing and self another...one perception arises...as another perception passes away... It's through this [insight] that one can realize how perception will be one thing and self another.*" The head perception arises as the Self perception ends, and the Self in the body perception arises as the head perception ends.

So the best mind-game meditators, who are stuck in their head, see perception come and go, and they say that the "end of perception" is between the pulsations of perception. Buddha says this is a mistake, because you are unaware of the other half of the coin, the self-feeling inside the body at the heart, creating the feeling of knowledge, the "I know" feeling. You have [head] perception arising and ending, then the [heart] self feeling, knowledge, arising and

ending. The perceptions alternate back and forth, head – heart – head – heart – head – heart. This experience is what the mind-game meditators remain unaware of, because they only know head perception.

Unfortunately, someone inserted a useless section on Buddha and Pottapada changing the subject. The editors of this sutta say Potthapada doesn't understand and changes the subject. If we ignore the change of subject, because it is the editor, who doesn't understand, and get back on track, Buddha explains his basic teachings. This is stress. This is the origin of stress. So, what is the origin of stress? It is what the Buddha has just described to Potthapada. The suffering, and the cause of suffering is the constant movement of consciousness from perception to knowledge to perception to knowledge endlessly. This is just attention moving from head to heart to head to heart endlessly.

What is interesting about the mind-game wanderers including Potthapada, who heard the Buddha explain the first step of insight, understood nothing. Potthapada did not understand, but thanked Buddha for speaking. The contemplatives, the wanderers, the monks sneered and jeered, but were blind and had no eyes. So Buddha's teaching are not only not understood, but are ridiculed by the ordinary people who are mendicants. Buddha does not speak to the preservation of mind-game meditation, so Buddha is ridiculed.

Potthapada comes back to Buddha at a later time for clarification on what he did not understand, the Self and knowledge, the other half of the coin. Buddha asks Potthapada whether the logic of the mind-game meditators is convincing, and Potthapada says their logic is unconvincing.

This leads to Buddha speaking about the three “Acquisitions of Self”, which the Buddha teaches are to be abandoned. If he teaches this now to Potthapada, then Potthapada understands the head-heart cycle, the cause of suffering, but it appears to be missing from the sutta. The editors were at work.

Buddha teaches the abandonment of the gross acquisition of Self of a common person, the abandonment of the mind-made acquisition of Self, which is the Self seen within the first two dhyanas, and the third dhyana formless acquisition of Self. The third dhyana body is called the karmic “Wheel of Life”, the “Wheel of Suffering”, which is created by the continual cycle of “perception-knowledge”, head-heart cycle described by Buddha here in this sutta. This is unknown in Buddhism. It was an ancient Hindu symbol, but within Buddhism it is symbolic. They don't know that it is real.

This is an incredible sutta, filled with the wisdom of the

Buddha, found nowhere else in any spiritual literature. Not only is it nowhere else to be found, but it is not found within Buddhism itself. Buddhists throughout the world, have never seen that their attention is moving continually between head and heart, between perception and knowledge. They stay stuck in their heads, and have no Insight into the Self. Because they have no knowledge of self, they don't know the “Wheel of Life”, they don't know the cause of suffering. For them it is all word-games and stories without direct experience.

In spite the heavy editing by common monks, there are awesome things to learn. One, the head-heart cycle of perception/knowledge are unknown by the common monks, who ridicule and jeer at such truth, because it does not support their mind-game. Two, the Self is unknown to the mind-game monks, and only Potthapada is willing to listen and understand, so it is a rare individual who will see the movement of attention from head to heart, from perception to knowledge, the cause of suffering. And when abandoning the head-heart suffering cycle, there are three levels of Self to be overcome. To me, this is why I love Buddha. He is the only person who knows this, and in the desert of religions, we see that his insight and wisdom has died long ago, but some of the greatest insights in recorded history still exist in the texts.

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