

Imagery for Mindfulness

1. Just as in the last month of the rainy season, when the crops ripen, a cowherd would guard his cows by constantly tapping and poking them on this side and that with a stick to check and curb them. Why is that? Because he sees that he could be flogged, imprisoned, fined, or blamed [if he let them eat the crops]. So too I saw in unwholesome states danger, degradation, and defilement, and in wholesome states the blessing of renunciation, the aspect of cleansing. MN 19.7

Just as in the last month of the hot season, when all crops have been brought inside the villages, a cowherd would guard his cows while staying at the root of a tree or out in the open, since he needs **only be mindful** that the cows are there; so too, there was need for me only to be mindful that those states where there (i.e., thoughts of renunciation, non-ill will, and non-cruelty, having abandoned the opposites of these). MN 19.12

2. How is a monk unskilled in **pastures**? Here a monk does not understand the four foundations of mindfulness as they actually are. MN 33.12

3. Suppose a man were wounded by an arrow smeared with poison, and his friends brought him to a surgeon. The surgeon would cut around the wound with a knife, then he would probe for the arrow with a probe, then he would pull out the arrow and would expel the poisonous humour without leaving a trace of it behind. ...

This is the meaning: ‘Wound’ is a term for the six internal bases. ‘Poisonous’ humour’ is a term for ignorance. ‘Arrow’ is a term for craving. **‘Probe’ is a term for mindfulness.** ‘Knife’ is a term for noble wisdom. ‘Surgeon’ is a term for the Tathagata. MN 105.24-27

4. Just as the elephant tamer plants a large post in the earth and binds the forest elephant to it by the neck in order to subdue his forest habits... and to inculcate in him habits congenial to human beings, so these **four foundations of mindfulness are the bindings** for the mind of the noble disciple in order to subdue his habits based on the household life, to subdue his distress, fatigue, and fever based on the household life, and in order that he may attain the true way and realize Nibbana. MN 125.23

5.

The Dhamma Vehicle

Faith and wisdom are evenly yoked together.
Conscience is its pole, the mind is the rope tied to the yoke,
Mindfulness is the watchful charioteer.

SN V 6

Conscience is its leaning board,
Mindfulness its upholstery;
I call the Dhamma the charioteer,
With right view running out in front.

SN I 33

6. Suppose a king had a frontier city with strong ramparts and walls, with six gates. A wise gatekeeper keeps out strangers and admits acquaintances. A swift pair of messengers would come from the east and ask the gatekeeper: “Where is the lord of this city?” He would reply: “He is sitting in the central square.” Then the swift messengers would deliver a message of reality to the lord. ...

The meaning here is: ‘The city; is a term for the body. ‘The six gates’ is the six internal sense bases. **‘The gatekeeper’ is mindfulness.** The swift messengers are tranquility and insight. ‘The lord of the city’ is consciousness. ... ‘The message of reality’ is Nibbana.

SN IV 194

7. Any river can be stopped with the **dam of mindfulness.** I call it the flood-stopper. And with wisdom you can close the flood-gates.

Sutta Nipata 1035

VERBS FOR MINDFULNESS AND FOR CONCENTRATION PRACTICE

Mindfulness

focused (anupassana)
observes (anupassi)
knows (pajanati)
experiences (patisamvedi)
reviews/reflects (paccavekkhati)
comprehends (sampajana)
considers (upasamhanti)

Concentration

enters (upasampajja)
abides (viharati)
fills (abhisandeti)
pervades (parisandeti)
saturates (paripūreti)
permeates (parippharati)
touches (phuṭaṃ)

One enters and abides in the first jhana... [and] fills, pervades, saturates, and permeates this body... so no part of the entire body is not touched...