

SD 62.10j (Chakka) Uddhacca Sutta

The (Sixes) Discourse on Restlessness | A 6.116

Theme: A calm and clear wholesome mind sees true reality

Translated by Piya Tan ©2025

1 Sutta summary and significance

1.1 SUTTA SUMMARY AND TOPICS

1.2.1 Summary

The (Chakka) Uddhacca Sutta (A 6.116) lists the hindrances to mental and spiritual growth and their remedies. The hindrances to mental and spiritual growth are *restlessness, non-restraint and heedlessness*, all of which should be abandoned as soon as possible. Their opposites—calmness, sense-restraint and heedfulness—should be cultivated for mental and spiritual cultivation.

1.2.2 Sutta topics

The Sutta triads of states are as follows:

<u>The unwholesome triad</u>		<u>The wholesome triad</u>	
(1) restlessness	<i>uddhacca</i>	calmness	<i>samatha</i>
(2) non-restraint	<i>asaṁvara</i>	restraint	<i>saṁvara</i>
(3) heedlessness	<i>appamāda</i>	heedfulness	<i>pamāda</i>

1.2 THE 3 UNWHOLESOME STATES

1.2.1 Uddhacca

1.2.1.1 The Vibhaṅga defines *uddhacca* (restlessness) as follows:

Yaṃ cittassa uddhaccaṃ avūpasamo cetaso vikkhepo bhantattamā cittassa—idaṃ vuccati uddhaccaṃ. (Vbh 369,35 f)

That which is mental restlessness is a lack of stillness, mental disturbance, mental turmoil—this is called restlessness.

1.2.1.2 As a mental fetter (*nīvaraṇa*), *uddhacca* is paired with *kukkucca*, “worry,” to form the dvandva (“twin compound”), *uddacca,kukkucca*, “restlessness and worry.” When the mind strays into the future, wondering what to do after the meditation, and so on, one is likely to become restless, mentally and physically. When the mind loses itself in the past, recalling things done or undone, one is likely to become worried or guilt-ridden.

Or, one could be over-excited at one’s apparent progress, or discouraged at one’s perceived lack of progress: this is **restlessness and worry** (*uddhacca,kukkucca*), the 4th mental hindrance. This is like looking for one’s reflection *in water that is stirred and tossed about by a strong wind*.¹ The Majjhima Commentary compares one caught with restlessness and worry to be like a **slave** who worries or fears being

¹This parable, and 4 others (for each of the other hindrances) are found in (Nīvaraṇā) Saṅgārava S (S 46.55/-5:121-126), SD 3.12. For comy on these parables: MA 2:318-321; SD 10.13 App.

punished for actions done or undone. Similarly, a monastic who fails to keep to the Vinaya will become restless or worry about lapses in moral conduct.²

2 Uddhatta Sutta (U 4.2/37 f) with commentary

2.1 UDDHATTA SUTTA (U 4.2/37 f)

1 Thus it was heard by me.

2 On one occasion, the Blessed One was staying in the Upavattana sal grove of the Mallas at Kusinārā. At that time, a number of monks were staying in a forest³ hut not far from the Blessed One. They were distracted, hollow, frivolous, raucous, straying in speech, confused in mindfulness, lacking awareness, unconcentrated, with straying minds, of mundane faculties.⁴

3 And the Blessed One saw that these monks staying in that forest hut near him were *distracted, hollow, frivolous, raucous, straying in speech, confused in mindfulness, lacking awareness, unconcentrated, with straying minds, of mundane faculties*.

4 Then the Blessed One, fathoming the matter, uttered this udāna [inspired utterance]:

5 *Arakkhiteṇa kāyena*⁵ [*cittena*]⁶
*micchā, diṭṭhi, hatena*⁷ *ca*
thīṇa, middhābhibhūtena
vasiṃ māraṣṣa gacchati.

With the body unguarded,
slain by wrong view, and
overcome by sloth and torpor,
one goes under Māra's power.

6 *Tasmā rakkhita, citt'assa*⁸
sammā, saṅkappa, gocaro
sammā, diṭṭhi, purekkhāro
ñātvāna udaya-b, bayaṃ
thīṇa, middhābhibhū bhikkhu
sabbā duggatiyo jahe.

Therefore, one should guard one's mind;
keep to the pasture of right thought;
keep right view before one,
knowing rise and fall—
a monk who has overcome sloth and torpor
abandons all bad destinies.

2.2 COMMENTARY ON UDDHATTA SUTTA VERSES⁹

2.2.1 1st verse (U 4.2,5)

2.2.1.1 "With the body unguarded."

In the phrase, "with the body unguarded" (*arakkhiteṇa kāyena*), "the body" refers to the physical body and speech. "Unguarded body" refers especially to breaking of the 1st 3 precepts—those against killing, stealing and sexual misconduct. Moral conduct is rooted in lovingkindness and compassion. In spirit, "unguarded body" also comprises both body and speech; thus it encompasses harming others

² MA 3:315. For details, with parables, see **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2,68-74), SD 8.10; (**Nīvaraṇa**) **Saṅgārava S** (S 46.55), SD 3.12; **Nīvaraṇa**, SD 32.1.

³ "Were living in a forest hut," *kuṭikāyaṃ viharanti*. This is prob a forest lodge.

⁴ *Uddhatā honti unnaḷā capalā mukharā vikiṇṇa, vācā muṭṭha, satino asampajānā asamāhitā vibbhanta, cittā pakant'indriyā.*

⁵ This line is at S 2:231, 271, 4:112; 2:125, 126, 3:95 x2, 96, 98; Nm 2:387.

⁶ This verse is at Nett 85 but reads *cittena* instead of *kayena*, with comy.

⁷ Ee -*gatena*; Be Ce Se -*hatena*.

⁸ This verse is at Nett 85; also 47, 103-108 passim with comy.

⁹ The foll nn are mostly based on UA 2:239 f.

physically and any kind of physical violence; any kind of dishonesty or deceit related to appropriating or keeping things; and any kind of disrespect for the person or freedom of another.

To resolve this difficulty, without getting into technicalities, we can say that one should be mindful of whatever sense-experience that is before one, so that the mind is without greed, hatred or delusion. In this way, the mind, too, is pure, so long as it is not overcome by any negative thought. So long as one is mindfully engaged with a sense-object—seeing it as “impermanent,” for example—the mind is in the present moment of reality.

2.2.1.2 The Udāna Commentary explains “with the body unguarded” as referring to the arising of *covetousness, ill will and delusion* towards any of the 6 sense-objects by way of the sense-consciousnesses. When the sense-door (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body or mind) is unguarded by mindfulness, the mind seizes “signs” (*nimitta*) or general appearances of sense-objects, and then gets caught up with their details (*anuyāñjana*).¹⁰

The Commentary also notes that “others” (*apare*)—such as Nett 85—read “**with the mind unguarded**” (*arakkhitena citta*). The explanation for this is the same as the above (UA 1:239,16). The only difference is that the reading “**with the body ...**” (*kāyena*) roots itself in sense-objects, that is, *a sight, sound, smell, taste, or touch*, is experienced with any of the 3 unwholesome roots; the “mind” is the intention behind each of these objects attended.

The reading “**with the mind unguarded**” roots itself in the mind behind the experience; that is, how each of the objects is attended to by the mind. Technically, these happen at the level of the mind-consciousness elements (*mano, viññāṇa, dhātu*).¹¹

2.2.1.3 “Slain by wrong views.”

This means “fallen into wrong view” (*micchā, diṭṭhi, gatena*), that is, the mind is polluted or obscured by the eternalist view (such as believing in some external agency that “saves” us or some eternal heaven, and so on). Or, one’s mind is perverted by the annihilationist view (such as identifying with the physical body, and that one is annihilated at death). The middle way out of these extremes of views is that all things in this world are conditioned, arising from numerous causes and giving numerous effects, interconnected with all that live and exist.

2.2.1.4 “Overcome by sloth and torpor.”

As a mental fetter, “overcome by sloth” means that one is engulfed by the characteristic of lacking joy (*akalya*) in terms of the mind which does not arouse effort in making the mind calm and clear. “Overcome by torpor” means the lack of comfort (*akalya*) in the body, making it lethargic. A tired body with a tired mind is a hindrance to meditation progress. Broadly then, the twin fetters sloth-and-torpor means that the mind is bogged down by the body so that the mind is not free to rise free from the body, or to provide calm and clarity.

2.2.1.5 “One goes under the power of Māra.”

Psychologically Māra overpowers our mind when we are caught up with sense-based ideas which the mind has to process. Hence, the mind is thus drawn out of itself, as it were, and becomes embodied in the sense-experiences. The mind only senses “gross” sense-experiences. The mind is then unable to free itself from its own mental space to settle down, focused on itself, to gain the calm and clarity of joy and vision. The mind does not concentrate since it is serving the frivolities of the senses rooted in greed, hatred and delusion.

¹⁰ See *Nimitta and anuyāñjana*, SD 19.14.

¹¹ See SD 17.8a (12.1.3.3); SD 17.8b (5.1.3); SD 19.14 (2); SD 26.9 (1.6.4.2); SD 60.1e (Table 7.4.4).

2.2.2 2nd verse (U 4.2,6)

2.2.2.1 “Therefore, one should guard one’s mind; | keep to the pasture of right thought.”

Guarding the mind basically means not experiencing our senses as more than what they really are, as stated in **the (Arahatta) Māluṅkya,putta Sutta** (S 35.95), thus:

“Here, Māluṅkya,putta, ¹² in things ¹³ that are to be seen, heard, sensed, ¹⁴ known ¹⁵ by you: ¹⁶			
in the seen	there will only be	the seen;	<i>diṭṭhe diṭṭha,mattaṃ bhavissati</i>
in the heard	there will only be	the heard;	<i>sute suta,mattaṃ bhavissati</i>
in the sense	there will only be	the sensed;	<i>mute muta,mattaṃ bhavissati</i>
in the known	there will only be	the known.”	<i>viññāte viññāta,mattaṃ bhavissati</i> (S 35.95,12/4:73), SD 5.9

This means that a sense-experience is simply a present and passing reality:

The seen is shape or colour.	It arises and falls away.
The heard is sound or vibration.	It arises and falls away.
The sensed is smell, taste, or touch.	It arises and falls away.
The known is but a thought.	It arises and falls away.

2.2.2.2 “Keep to the pasture of right thought” means to habitually cultivate thoughts (that is, intentions) of *charity, lovingkindness and compassion*. Technically, “pasture” (*go,cara*) refers to having the right conditions and proper object for mindfulness and meditation. Charity, lovingkindness and compassion can be objects of meditation and also positive emotions we show to others for mutual well-being.

Charity (*cāga*) is the sharing with others *in appreciation of their being* (for life is of the greatest value to all). We give from what we rightly have and also with what we are. We give others what is *proper, good, pleasant and joyful*; we share our strength, skills, wisdom and time for the good, safety and happiness of others.

Lovingkindness (*mettā*) means accepting others just as they are, even seeing a reflection of ourself in them, rejoicing in beautiful commonalities and celebrating difference with understanding and patience. This also means that we understand that people change in time and circumstances. We rejoice in the present goodness of wholesome company.

¹² “Bāhiya” at U 1.10, SD 33.7, where this passage recurs and is called “Bāhiya’s teaching.”

¹³ “In things that are to be seen, heard, sensed, known,” *diṭṭha,suta,muta,viññātabbesu dhammesu*.” This is a summary of the 6 sense-experiences. See D 3,13 (5.2.2); also ***Diṭṭha suta muta viññāta***, SD 53.5.

¹⁴ *Muta*, ie, what is tasted, smelt and touched. See prec n.

¹⁵ On the seen, heard, sensed and known, see D 3,13 (5.2.2); also ***Diṭṭha suta muta viññāta***, SD 53.5.

¹⁶ This verse is the crux of the Sutta and *satipaṭṭhāna*. In sutta terms, such experiences are not to be seen as “This is mine” (*etam mama*) (which arises through craving, *taṇhā*), nor as “This I am” (*eso’ham asmi*) (due to conceit, *māna*), nor as “This is my self” (*eso me attā*) (due to wrong view, *diṭṭhi*) (**Anattā Lakkhaṇa S**, S 3:68), SD 1.2. In short, such experiences are not “beliefs” but direct experiences of reality. See Peter Harvey, *The Selfless Mind*, 1995:32 f. In simple Abhidhamma terms, such a process should be left at the sense-doors, and not be allowed to reach the mind-door. As long as the experience of sensing is mindfully left at its sense-door and taken for what it really is, that is an experience of “ultimate reality” (*param’attha*). When it has reached the mind-door and been evaluated, it can potentially become conventional (*paññatti*) reality that brings one suffering due to greed, hate or delusion. When such sense-experiences are mindfully left on the reality level, we would, in due course, see the 3 characteristics of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and non-self. See Mahasi Sayadaw, *A Discourse on Malukya-putta Sutta*, tr U Htin Fatt, Rangoon, 1981.

Compassion (*karuṇā*) is our ready response to others when they are in need of help, especially when we are capable to do so. Compassion is often simply expressed with kindness towards others even when they do not deserve it. Various circumstances have conditioned or prevented them from being better than what they are. Compassion is the sowing of the seeds of happiness to sprout at the right time.

For ourselves, **right thought** means that one should acknowledge our wrong views and work to give them up; especially those views rooted in eternalism and in annihilationism. For practitioners, this includes:

- not identifying oneself with any of the 5 aggregates or anything else;
- understanding and keeping up self-reliance in personal development and mental cultivation; and
- clearing spiritual doubts by cultivating wisdom of understanding true reality.

2.2.2.3 “Keep right view before one, | knowing rise and fall.”

Keeping right view “before one” (*purekkhāro*) is guarding the mind from any wrong view (those rooted in greed, hatred, delusion), and cultivating generosity, love and wisdom. The greatest gift to others is of course that of the Dharma, teaching them self-understanding, self-reliance and mental freedom.

Self-understanding begins with wisely examining ourselves as conditioned beings of body and mind. Our body is 4 elements—earth, water, fire and wind—just like the universe around us, from which we arise, in which we live and die, and to which we return. The mind comprises feelings, perceptions, formations and consciousness.¹⁷ Our body “feels” or experiences the world as sight, sound, smell, taste, touch and thought. What we feel we become and recall, returning us into the endless cycle of sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches and thoughts.

In practical terms, “keeping right view” is simply seeing the rise and fall of these sense-experiences. Our sense-faculties are the internal bases (*ajjhātāyatana*) and their objects are the external bases (*bahiddhāyatana*). Our mind experiences each of them as arising and falling away in the present. It comprises passing images of what we experience, none of which we can identify with. The moment we experience them (see, hear, smell, taste or feel them), they are gone into the past. There is only seeing, nothing seen; only hearing, nothing heard; only tasting, nothing tasted; only smelling, nothing smelt; only feeling, nothing felt; only thinking, nothing thought.¹⁸

2.2.2.4 The Abhidhamma speaks of **the 50 modes** or characteristics of seeing rise and fall in each of the 5 aggregates, that is, by way of conditioned arising. One sees the rise of the aggregates as follows:

(1) With the arising of	<u>ignorance</u>	<i>avijjā,</i>	there is the arising of form .
(2) With the arising of	<u>craving</u> ,	<i>taṇhā,</i>	there is the arising of form .
(3) With the arising of	<u>karma</u> ,	<i>kamma,</i>	there is the arising of form .
(4) With the arising of	<u>food</u> ,	<i>āhāra,</i>	there is the arising of form .
(5) With the characteristic of	<u>generation</u> ,	<i>nibbatti,</i>	there is the arising of form .

One sees the fall of the aggregates as follows:

(6) With the cessation of	<u>ignorance</u>	<i>avijjā,</i>	there is the cessation of form .
(7) With the cessation of	<u>craving</u> ,	<i>taṇhā,</i>	there is the cessation of form .
(8) With the cessation of	<u>karma</u> ,	<i>kamma,</i>	there is the cessation of form .

¹⁷ Technically, these are the 5 aggregates (*pañca-k, khandha*): SD 17.

¹⁸ See SD 19.13 (2.4.1).

- (9) With the cessation of food, *āhāra*, there is the cessation of form.
 (10) With the characteristic of change, *vipariṇāma*, there is the cessation of form.
 (Pm 1:54-57; Vism 20.97 f/630)

One sees these 10 modes of the rise and cessation of each of the other 4 aggregates, thus totalling 50 modes.

2.2.2.5 “A monk who has overcome sloth and torpor | abandons all bad destinies.”

“A monk” here refers to anyone reading this with faith, especially a meditator.¹⁹ Contextually, “sloth and torpor” refers to being bogged down by sensual distractions and not exerting oneself spiritually to free the mind.

On the other hand, the practitioner “who has overcome sloth and torpor” is one who is sensually restrained and mentally alert in keeping up with mental cultivation and arising of wisdom. The end result of this spiritual living is that one “abandons all bad destinies.” The bad destinies are those that are characterized by the threefold sufferings, or potentially can bring them on.

The threefold nature of suffering (*tividha,dukkhatā,yogena duggati,saṅkhātā*) comprises physical suffering (*dukkha,dukkha*), suffering connected with change (*vipariṇāma,dukkha*) and suffering that is the formations (*sāṅkhāra,dukkha*).²⁰

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¹⁹ See SD 4.9 (5.3); SD 13.1 (3.1.1). Addressing meditators: **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10,3A) n, SD 13.3.

²⁰ See **D 33**,1.10(27)/3:216; (**Sāriputta**) **Dukkha S** (S 38.14/4:259); **Dhamma,cakka Pavattana S** (S 56.11,5/5:421) + SD 1.1 (4.1.2, 6); SD 55.7 (1.2.3); SD 62.10a (3.4.2.2).

(Chakka) Uddhacca Sutta The (Sixes) Discourse on Restlessness

A 6.116

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| <p>1 (Originating in Sāvatthi.)</p> <p>2 There are, bhikshus, these 3 states.
What are the three?
 (1) Restlessness;
 (2) non-restraint;
 (3) heedlessness.
 These, bhikshus, are the 3 states.</p> <p>3 These are the 3 states, bhikshus, to be abandoned.</p> <p>4 Three (other) states are to be cultivated.
What are the three?
 (1) For the abandoning of <u>restlessness</u>
 (meditative) calmness should be cultivated.
 (2) For the abandoning of <u>non-restraint</u>
 restraint should be cultivated.
 (3) For the abandoning of <u>heedlessness</u>
 heedfulness should be cultivated.</p> <p>5 These, bhikshus, are the 3 states to be abandoned.

 These are the 3 states to be cultivated.</p> | <p>(<i>sāvatthī, nidanaṃ</i>)</p> <p><i>tayo’me bhikkhave dhammā
katame tayo
uddhaccaṃ
asaṃvaro
pamādo
ime kho bhikkhave tayo dhammā
imesaṃ kho bhikkhave tiṇṇaṃ
dhammānaṃ pahānāya</i></p> <p><i>tayo dhammā bhāvetabbā
katame tayo
uddhaccassa pahānāya
samatho bhāvetabbo
asaṃvaro pahānāya
saṃvaro bhāvetabbo
pamādassa pahānāya
appamādo bhāvetabbo</i></p> <p><i>imesaṃ kho bhikkhave tiṇṇaṃ
dhammānaṃ pahānāya
ime tayo dhammā bhāvetabbā ti.</i></p> |
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—evaṃ—

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